

# **Imperial Imaginations in American Geopolitics in Post Cold War Era: A Critical Analysis**

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**DECLARATION**

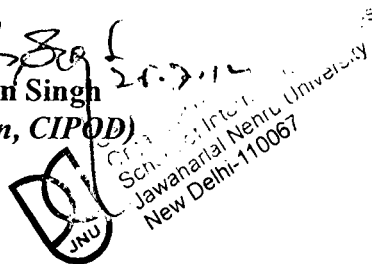
I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Imperial Imaginations in American Geopolitics in Post Cold War Era: A Critical Analysis**” submitted by me for the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

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**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*conventionally  
both introduction  
and conclusion  
are not  
termed as chapters*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missiles
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
PNAC	Project for the New American Century
UN	United Nations Organization
US	United States of America
USNSS	United States National Security Strategy
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
9/11	September 11



## Chapter-1

### Introduction: Imperial Imagination in American Geopolitics

#### 1.1 Introduction

Geopolitics for the better part of the history of its existence has been a form of knowledge that catered to the foreign policy needs of great powers, aided them in their power rivalries for control of territory, resources and dominance. In the Cold War era, it informed the US Cold War strategies and interventions throughout the world. Despite the fact that geopolitics cannot be defined in terms of a standard definition, it is accepted that geopolitics is not a neutral or scientific form of analysis away from the domain of politics. Critical geopolitics deals with the excesses of the classical, the German and the Cold War geopolitics. Revisionist historians trace an imperial character in American geopolitics in the wake of Second World War which became even starker as the Cold War progressed. In the post-colonial order it was US, which replaced the Britain and other European powers by assuming their imperial responsibilities in far flung lands and became the eminent western power of global presence. Fraser J. Harbutt (2002) calls it one of the basic conundrums of American Cold War History. How is it that the United States-historically the scold and hammer of old world imperialism and the champion of freedom everywhere-took upon itself so quickly, one is tempted to say so blithely, and in so many unpromising places, the inevitably conservative if not reactionary role being vacated by the exhausted Europeans (Harbutt, 2002).

With the Cold War over and 'other' super-power that is Soviet Union gone, the geopolitical discourses of United States continue to exhibit imperial characteristics. In the aftermath of the Cold War, United States lost its permanent external enemy, which had calibrated its foreign policy and geopolitics. Dismantling of the neat geography of two blocs, resulted in a situation what Gerard Toal (1994) called the "geopolitical vertigo" and soon there were attempts within American geopolitical discourse to re-inscribe a new geography of meaning to global affairs and to find the place of the United States within it. In the years following the end of the Cold War, it was expansion of market democracies and global trade, often dubbed as geoeconomics that gave some coherence to American geopolitical agenda but it was no match to the

unified geopolitical approach of the Cold War. It was only in the aftermath of 9/11 that United States discovered its new 'enemy' around which it consolidated and organized its geopolitical discourse and practice. The idea of an American empire became even more relevant in the wake of the Global War on Terror and an assertive role that US assumed in dealing with the so called rogue states wielding weapons of mass destruction.

The study defines geopolitics as discourse, as developed by political geographers like Gerard Taol, John Agnew, Simon Dalby, Mathew Sparke. It is through geopolitical discourses that elites of statecraft discursively define and spatialize people and places in order to justify and legitimize their strategies of domination.

The notion of geopolitics as discourse is historicist as it argues that there is a geopolitical tradition in which some fundamental beliefs persist over time such as national exceptionalism and subsequent discourses are influenced by previous discourses. Hence, the study begins with a brief overview of the American geopolitical tradition. Before that the notion of 'imperial geopolitics' is explicated so as to bring out the imperial nature of geopolitics, as it originated in the imperial capitals in Europe and was later practiced by expansionary and imperial states such as United States of America.

## **1.2 Imperial Geopolitics**

"It is within the imperialist discourse that geopolitics first emerges as a concept and practice". (Toal et al. 1998)

"As simultaneously ideology and technology of state power, modern geopolitics arose as part of specific historical and geographical assemblage of modern nation-state making and the rise of capitalism". (Deborah and Smith, 2009)

Geopolitics originated in the capitals of imperial nation states in Europe, at the end of the nineteenth century. The timing and place of its origin were no coincidence but they are indicative of what was to become the intellectual agenda of geopolitics. In order to understand concept of (imperial) geopolitics, it is important to understand the historical context in which it emerged.

The end of era of unification had brought forth large states. The US had fought a civil war to prevent states leaving the union. Japan with Meiji restoration of 1868,

created a strong central government with authority over the Japanese archipelago. Italy unified in the 1860s, as did Germany, culminating in the creation of German empire (1871) at the end of Franco-Prussian war. In the wake of unification a sense grew that larger states, integrated by railways and telegraphs, would emerge to control affairs (Blouet, 2001). It was widely accepted that unprecedented technological and economic developments were to be accompanied by political implications too. The shift from an older industrial capitalism based on steam, coal and iron to a newer version based on gas, oil and electricity seemed to change the ground rules by which the world economy functioned. America had already supplanted Britain as the global economic hegemon by the turn of century and the fact that the US was a continental-scale land power, with unprecedented rail and road connections linking major cities on both the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts, pointed towards a new relationship between space and state politics that was entirely at variance to the traditional European world order (Heffernan, 2000).

This growing sense about a future dominated by large states would lead imperial European states to “on an unprecedented ‘scramble’ for imperial space from the 1880s onwards”. Colonial expansion became an attempt to acquire comparative territorial advantage outside Europe in the hope that this would allow small European states to survive in the coming world order (Heffernan, 2000). Darwinian thinking was taking hold. Many policy-makers believed there would be a competition between states from which only the fittest would emerge as powerful players in international relations. Small states were vulnerable and big states, with large resource bases, were more potent (Blouet, 2001).

By the end of nineteenth century, colonial expansion had reached its limits and it was in context of fear and uncertainty about future of European imperial nation states and perceived necessity to control resource areas, strategic locations and routes that geopolitics was born as a new speculative science which promised to provide solutions to imperial dilemmas and direction in the uncertain future.

One significant aspect of geopolitics was that it theorized in terms of the whole world. Geopolitics emerged at a time when it was believed that even the remotest of land was discovered by the European explorers and hence it was possible for the first

time to theorize in terms of global space. John Agnew emphasizes this aspect of geopolitics, he writes:

World politics was invented only when it became possible to see the world (in the imagination) as a whole and pursue goals in relation to that scale. Geopolitics in this sense, or geo-politics, so as to distinguish it from what is being described, means trying to understand how it came about that one state's prospects in relation to others' were seen in relation to global conditions that were viewed as setting limits and defining possibilities for a states' success in global arena (Agnew, 2000).

Gerard Toal (2000) observes that modern geopolitics was “embedded within the imperialist projects of various states throughout the century, geopolitics generated comprehensive visions of the world politics while also proposing particular strategies for states to pursue against their rivals. Its dominant mode of narration was declarative (“this is how the world is”) and imperative (“this is what we must do”). “Is” and “we” marked its commitment to, on the one hand, a transparent and legible world and, on the other hand, to a particular state and its cultural/political version of truth about the world”.

The relation between empire and geopolitics is as old as the geopolitics itself. Noel Parker (2010) in his paper “Empire as a Geopolitical Figure” argues “that geopolitics can be simply understood as the study of the political, societal, and/or historical shaping of the space of the globe”. According to him “it makes better sense to trace nineteenth and twentieth century geopolitics to states' imperialism as distinct from their nationalism...the constitution of the nation in its domestic space was, (one might say), a shallower basis for geopolitics than the drive for imperial expansion” (Parker, 2010).

As far as a working definition of an empire is concerned, it can be argued that empire is a result of nation states' urge for ‘shaping’ the global space or establishing order (Parker, 2010). And for geopolitics, it is the imperial desire of nation states; the desire to dominate what is outside their territorial boundaries and often in other nation states' sovereign space, which constitutes its analytical field. An argument can be made that the concept of empire is at the heart of geopolitics and empire is a geopolitical identity, which transcends what is national to become “rather expansive and universalist in its self identity”.

The study will seek to examine this nexus between geopolitics and empire in the context of the American geopolitics in the Post Cold War era. It will examine the

American geopolitical discourse and the expansionary and imperial aspects of the same. The study will analyse the geopolitical discourses of President Clinton and George W. Bush essentially along three components: firstly President's definition of America's role in the world, secondly President's 'grand strategy' that will advance the US interest and thirdly presidential geopolitical representation of threats to the US.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

In order to put the topic in its historical context, the literature review covers some major works on the American geopolitical tradition, starting from the founding of republic to the Post Cold War era. The works reviewed have been selected on the basis of their relevance to the purpose of describing and analyzing the American geopolitical discourse.

This section gives a historical account of American geopolitical imagination and geopolitical representations during various periods by various presidents. It also traces the emergence of the United States on the international scene and how its geopolitical imagination has been changing over the period of one century.

#### **1.3.1 American Geopolitical Tradition**

Geopolitics defined as "geographical assumptions, designations and understandings that enter into the making of world politics" (see Agnew, 2003) has been present in the United States' policies from the time when Europeans first appeared on the Atlantic coast of North America and their subsequent conquest of the continent and elimination of native population. At the time when Mackinder was writing about the newly visible "closed global space" and importance of "relative efficiency" in the competition among the imperial powers, US was relatively well placed as a continental-scale land power. This was a time when competing imperial systems relied upon the territory and resources of their colonies and were jealously guarding their empires.

The geopolitical imagination is the product of a states' understanding of self-image which in turn defines its national interests, perception of threats, policy responses and its actions in the global arena. This geopolitical imagination is not a time defying character but it is a product of the material context, which Agnew (2003)

defines as the state of “dominant technologies, modes of economic organization, scope of state organization, capacity for violence”.

An important aspect of American geopolitical imagination is that, it has always betrayed moralistic appearances. In other words, American geopolitical discourse has always displayed and often obscured by a moral overlay about defence of freedom and democracy along with the defence of national interest.

Secondly, American geopolitical discourse has been very careful in constructing and maintaining an anti-imperial outlook. From the beginning American statesmen have warned against ‘territorial control’ and have been averse to acquiring colonies themselves or by other countries. Thus their idea of empire is based on “open –door” or free trade, freedom of movement, effectively meaning ‘globalization’.

John Agnew (2003) in an article titled “American Hegemony into American Empire? Lessons from the Invasion of Iraq” notes two distinctive impulses within the US geopolitics that have historically characterized American national self-images and their projection outwards. These two national self images are that of a “republic” and an “empire”. Agnew points out that in practice the republican model has always failed to contain the expansionist impulse. That republic and empire are inherently contradictory has usually been “resolved” by attempting to practice and portray the expansionist impulse as conforming to at least minimal republican principles: bringing “good government,” expanding “democracy,” building “international community,” and achieving “global consensus”.

John Agnew relates this element of morality in the geopolitical discourses to the founding of the republic of the United States of America. The anti-colonial origin of the republic and subsequent “breaking with the dynastic tensions and balance-of-power politics of 18th-century Europe” and the era of isolation that followed has invariably shaped American geopolitical imagination.

The settlement of the better part of a continent by thirteen original states seemed to be an act of civilization rather than of conquest and as such essentially different from, and morally superior to, the imperialistic ventures, wars of conquest, and colonial acquisitions with which the history of other nations is replete (Morgenthau, 1950).

There is another corollary of the republican origin which has semblances to the notion of “Whiteman’s burden” that was central to European expansion. Morgenthau (1950) notes that the ideal of a free, peaceful and prosperous world from which popular government had banished power politics forever, was a natural outgrowth of the American experience. It is belief in this ideal that is seen in the frequent renditions of a moral mission of spreading democracy and defending human rights throughout the world. In this mission of establishing “democratic peace” the non-democratic and authoritarian governments are always branded as “evil” which has to be eliminated and the contest between democratic and non democratic nation states is portrayed as a contest between “good” and “evil”.

### **1.3.2 Founding of the Republic and the Empire in the Western Hemisphere**

In his book “Globalization and Geopolitics in the Twentieth Century”, Brian W. Blouet gives an account of the geographical history, how United States accomplished its “manifest destiny” and became a continental scale imperial power in the Western hemisphere while keeping out of territorial struggle between European empires.

As soon as the ‘manifest destiny’ was achieved with the continental expansion, President Monroe in his seventh State of Union address in 1823 in the wake of the Spanish-American war, outlined the place Western hemisphere had in the American geopolitical imagination, and since then it has remained the cornerstone of the American geopolitical thinking. Speaking of “most friendly sentiments for the fellow man on the other side of Atlantic and American policy of not interfering in the wars of European powers”, President declared:

“We owe it, therefore, to candour and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety” (Monroe, 1823).

This was the most important doctrine ever espoused by any President and has remained fundamental to US geopolitical imagination. Many have argued that the Monroe Doctrine was founded upon the geographical fact of continental isolation.

David Slater (2007) argues that the US Empire was distinct from other previous empires in its origin. He suggests that a particular project of imperial power gradually emerged out of an initial anti-colonial struggle for independence from British rule so

that such an emergence has given the US a contradictory identity of being a ‘post-colonial imperial power’, with the determining emphasis falling on the ‘imperial’ (Slater, 2007). The post-colonial essentially refers to the specificity of origin and does not preclude the possibility of a coloniality of power, as was exemplified in the case of the Philippines, or (it can be argued) continues to apply to Puerto Rico.

But the most important insight of Slater (2007) is the linkage or juxtaposition of the “emerging American imperial power with a benevolent belief in America’s mission to spread democracy and liberty to the rest of the world”. Historically, the contradiction between support for the rights of people to decide their own fate (democracy) and a belief in the geopolitical destiny of ‘America’ has necessitated a discursive bridge. This bridge has been formed through the invocation of a democratic mission that combines the national and international spheres (Slater, 2007).

### **1.3.3 American Geopolitics in the Twentieth Century**

It was in twentieth century that US power was projected on to the world. US emerged as the most powerful nation, both economically and militarily in both the World Wars and hence it was seen as bound to lead the world. The superiority of American political and economic ideology was further established in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan was first to write about the need for US to play leading role in world politics and exploit naval power to that purpose. Alfred Thayer Mahan argued that sea power was vastly important to the state. He claimed that sea power was the key to commerce and economic competition, if not strategy and global political advantage. Mahan’s theories helped to shape America’s growing international interests at the turn of the century and deeply influenced Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt (Russell, Greg, 2006).

Given the anti-imperial and republican origin of the United States and the fact that US was a continental state, the budding geopoliticians in United States argued in favour of commercial expansion instead of territorial conquest in foreign lands. Admiral Mahan argued that “what the United States needed was an informal empire based on “open-door” trade and a string of overseas naval bases that would give its



navy the ability to project power in troublesome region whenever it needed to do so “(Toal et al, 1998).

World War I provided the first occasion for the massive projection of American military force into Europe. A heretofore relatively isolated power promptly transported several hundred thousands of its troops across the Atlantic—a transoceanic military expedition unprecedented in its size and scope, which signaled the emergence of a new major player in the international arena (Brzezinski, 1997).

It was in the peace treaties after the end of First World War that the principles of American geopolitics were argued in relation to the postwar world. Isaiah Bowman, a geographer was instrumental in formulations of Wilsonian principles and new world order it sought to espouse in the Paris Peace Conference, 1919. Neil Smith (2003) in his book “American Empire: Roosevelt’s Geographer and the prelude to Globalization” offers an account of Isaiah Bowman’s view of the geography of power during the decades of US ascension. Smith unravels the imperial aspects inherent in Wilsonian ideals. He observes that American internationalist sought to establish a US dominated new world order. The American expansionist project was not to be based on territorial aggrandisement but it was an “economic expansion” based on unhindered international trade under global leadership of US.

This was the first time that the distinct brand of American Expansionism based on “global liberalism” was argued, which went to become the bedrock of American imperial project. Peter Gowan (2004) in his review of “American Empire” argues that “the breakthrough of the US internationalists of the Wilson period lay in their insight that the linkage between the economics and the political geography that undergirded European capital accumulation could be uncoupled. Economic expansion could be divorced from territorial aggrandisement and the result would be perfectly in tune with US national interests” (Gowan, 2004).

But it was in the wake of “widespread cultural fears and fantasies about Nazi” that geopolitics ‘as an intellectual concept’ entered into the US political discourse and then during the Cold War that it rose to prominence. For Americans geopolitics was a new form of global thinking, an intellectual doctrine that the citizens and strategists of any aspirant Great Power needed to take seriously (Toal, 1996). Gerard Toal (1996)

argues that the exaggerated accounts of German geopolitics shall be explained within a larger tradition of discourses of danger on foreign threats throughout U.S. history.

US entered World War II to check Germany from dominating the Eurasian landmass and then to global supremacy. America had initially shown an isolationist attitude and declared neutrality but as the war progressed and Germany and Japan wrought wreckage in Europe, US saw the danger in terms of how Axis expansion would curtail American trade and shipping activity and the direct threat that Germany would become if it was going to dominate Eurasia (Blouet, 2001).

Walter Lippmann, a widely read commentator on world affairs, argued in an article titled “US Foreign Policy: shield of the Republic” published in 1943 that “the Atlantic Ocean is not the frontier between Europe and the Americas. It is the inland sea of community of nations allied with one another by geography, history and vital necessity (Blouet, 2001).

This notion of “Atlantic Community” captures the unity of geopolitical purpose between the United States and the Western Europe especially Great Britain and it led United States to commit itself with Western Europe, first in defense against Fascist Germany and then Soviet Union and consolidating what became the “Western bloc”.

This notion of “Atlantic Community” is synonymous with what others will call the maritime geopolitical realm. At the beginning of 1942 the world had been divided into warring geopolitical realms. The realms were: Europe under German military and economic hegemony; the totalitarian, autarkic, centrally planned Soviet Union; the Maritime World Alliance of the US, the British Commonwealth and the remnants of the Belgian, Danish and Dutch overseas empires; the Pacific Rim dominated by Japan’s Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity sphere (Blouet, 2001). The Second World War ended with the demise of the Nazi regime, which was defeated by the joint efforts of Soviet Union and the maritime world alliance of the US and the British Commonwealth.

Brzezinski (1997) argues that “the European era in world politics came to a final end in the course of World war II, the first truly global war”. He argues that the (that) (the. “Germany’s defeat was sealed largely by the two extra-European victors, the

United States and the Soviet Union, which became the successors to Europe's unfulfilled quest for global supremacy (Brzezinski, 1997).

#### **1.3.4 American Geopolitics during the Cold War**

As the war ended the 'strategic space of geopolitics became global' (see (Blouet, 2001) with the world divided in what looked like two neat geopolitical blocs, with maritime realm pitted against Soviet Union which had control over major part of Eurasia. Brzezinski (1997) argues that in some respects, the contest between the United States and the Soviet Union represented the fulfillment of the geopoliticians' fondest theories: it pitted the world's leading maritime power, dominant over both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, against the world's leading land power, paramount on the Eurasian heartland. The geopolitical dimension could not have been clearer: North America versus Eurasia, with the world at stake. The winner would truly dominate the globe (Brzezinski, 1997).

The Cold War was a geopolitical conflict between the Soviet Union's and the United States. The conflict was between two competing political and economic ideologies that is between liberal democracy and free market versus communism and centrally planned economies. The conflict was also about controlling territory and maritime and air space.

During the Cold War it was basically the Soviet threat that shaped US geopolitical concerns, attitudes about the world and kept the allies united. The imperative of fighting an overwhelming enemy provided substantial coherence to US geopolitics during the Cold War. Robert E. Hunter (1992) observes the three paradigms of the Cold War—"containing the Soviet Union, containing the spread of communism (whether or not directly related to the increase of Soviet power and position), and promoting a growing, global economy under US leadership. They made for as close to a unified field theory of foreign policy (including domestic components) as any nation has ever had".

The Cold War geopolitical practices were consequential for future of American geopolitics for a variety of reasons. Desmond King (2006) in his paper "When an Empire is not an Empire: The US Case" argue that "the Cold War years tied US foreign policy to democratic values and to their defence internationally". However the

perceived need to save countries fighting for their independence from colonial rule, led the US to support retention of colonial rule in strategically important areas of the world lest they fall under communist dominance.

The Cold War geopolitical thinking and the blueprint for action was established by the President Truman, and it guided his successors during the Cold War. In 1947, in a special message to Congress on Greece and Turkey, President Harry S. Truman defined the policy framework or in other words geopolitical gaze which was to inform the US engagement with the world during the Cold War. President Truman argued for the US the role of the leader of the free world with responsibility of protecting free people from the onslaught of totalitarian and communist forces. This articulation of a world-wide responsibility subsequently led the US to assume the responsibilities that Great Britain was no longer able to shoulder in the post WW II period. President argued:

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations...I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms (Truman, 1947).

President Truman committed United States to support the countries which were fighting for independence from the colonial powers. The support was extended to bring liberal-democratic form of governments and contain communist influence in these countries.

Truman doctrine sought to put the situation in Greece and Turkey in the perspective of the US national security. President stated that “this is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed upon free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States. Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East”. The ideas espoused in this speech got consolidated as “Truman doctrine” and provided rationale for most of the foreign policy and actions during the Cold War.

This is how the US President constructed the geopolitical discourse about extending “support” to the people in need, creating for itself a benign image and

obscuring the geopolitical agenda. Geir Lundstead (2008) in his article, "Empire by invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952" writes about the "Western Europe's economic and military invitations to Washington" immediately after the WW II and US was invited to play an active role in European affairs.

According to John Agnew three geopolitical concepts were invoked during the Cold War in order to naturalise and legitimise the Americans' 'understandings of space and global politics' in relation to the Soviet Union. These concepts were containment, domino effects and hegemonic stability. Susanne Peters argue "that the concept of the domino theory has re-entered the geopolitical discourse in a modified fashion". While "the concept of 'hegemonic stability' is still being used by scholars to refer to the necessity of a benevolent hegemon for an optimal world economy and inter-state cooperation, with the United States as the only state eligible for this role" (Peters, 1999).

The Cold War shaped the US geopolitical imagination in profound ways and many scholars argue that even after the Soviet Union disintegrated and the Cold War ended, the mental map of world politics created during the Cold War continued to inform US politics for a long time.

### **1.3.5 American Geopolitics in the Aftermath of Cold-War**

The end of the Cold War brought profound changes in its wake. The understandings, policy frameworks of past decades were found wanting in the changed international political scene and there was a need to re-vision and re-write the guiding paradigm. Firstly, it is important to understand the consequences of the end of Cold War as far as American geopolitics is concerned.

With the implosion of the Cold War territoriality of blocs, the spatial understandings of international politics became muddled and fragmented. Gearard Toal argued (1992) that "no longer facing a single, overwhelmingly powerful adversary, the US today lacks both a map of its own identity in global affairs and a workable image of gamesmanship to define its current role".

In the wake of Cold War, two narratives gained currency. The first narrative concerned a return to the isolationist attitude. They argued that the United States would retreat from an active role in global affairs and turn inward to deal with the

pressing domestic issues, which have been neglected at the expense of Cold War priorities. Many argued that the domestic agenda must come first, “while the rest of the world takes care of itself, without benefit of US leadership, intervention, and, in some cases, even interest” (Hunter, 1992). Robert E. Hunter observes that “the earlier turning away from the world was an active policy that flew in the face of facts about America’s situation; this one is more passive and, up to a point, is a valid response to recent events”.

The other narrative argued that a triumphant US would assume increasing leadership in the international politics and would consolidate and its Cold War gains of promoting “market democracy’ and liberal economic order.

The end of Cold War also resulted in the loss of the “unified field theory” that had guided the US policy and actions during the Cold War. The absence of the main adversary was also seen to affect the unity of allies. “There will be no encompassing paradigm of thought and action to rival those that dominated the past 40 years” (Hunter, 1992). Noting the problem of mobilizing support, Robert E. Hunter writes that “as desirable as it would be to garner global commitment to act on pressing realities like poverty and pollution, this will not happen to the degree that the Western world mobilized in the Cold War. In two words, America’s future approach to the world will be far more decentralized and disaggregated” (Hunter, 1992).

However there were others who argued that in the Post Cold War era the US will have more freedom of action as far as the international politics is concerned. John Agnew (2003) argues that “the presence of this (the Soviet Union) powerful competitor meant that the United States had to tread carefully for fear from alienating others from its “republican promise”. The end of the Cold War has removed this constraint”.

The end of the Cold War meant restructuring of the American geopolitical thinking and discourse. But this restructuring was not to be neat in the sense there was no single paradigm or grand narrative that would replace the Cold War discourse.

#### **1.4 Definition, Rationale and Scope of Study**

The study will seek to examine the nexus between geopolitics and empire in the context of the American geopolitics in the Post Cold War era, for the period of 1992

to 2008. The study will emphasize on the institution of president for it is the president of the United States which has an enormous power and influence in the making of the US foreign policy and conditioning the conduct of geopolitics. The study does not focus on the role of the institution of the president or the presidency itself but on the geopolitical discourses that emanates from it.

The time period under study covers two terms of Clinton presidency and two terms of President George W. Bush, which will help in a consistent, systematic and also a comparative analysis of geopolitical discourse, its imperial imaginations and also the shifts in the discourse from one president to the other. The study will focus on the durable practices, attitudes that condition the geopolitical discourse spearheaded by the president and in his speeches, doctrines aimed at justifying foreign policy actions.

However, the focus would remain on the presidential geopolitical discourse but the study will also analyse the works of contemporary academics, public intellectuals and journalists whose writing influence and impact public debate over global change and the conduct of foreign policy.

This study is important in the sense it will examine the imperial content of the American geopolitics from a critical geopolitical perspective. The study will seek to analyze the geographical bases, spatial understandings of American geopolitical discourse during the two presidencies. It will analyse the practical geopolitical understanding of the United States and presidential geopolitical discourse.

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

1. To analyze the practical geopolitical reasoning of United States from 1992 to 2008.
2. To examine the discourses in which nexus of geopolitics and empire comes into existence.
3. To examine the role of September 11 in American geopolitical discourse.
4. To compare the imperial imaginations and rationale of Clinton and the Bush presidencies.

## 1.6 Hypotheses

1. The Cold War geopolitical reasoning continues to inform American foreign policy and its engagement with the world, despite the end of the Cold War.
2. The imperial agenda of United States has become more explicit after September 11 and geopolitics was at the forefront of policy and strategy in the second term of President Bush.

## 1.7 Methodology

The study would be interpretive and descriptive in nature and will mainly utilize the methods of qualitative research. In interpretive or descriptive Approach, the methodology centres on the way human beings make sense of their subjective reality and attach meaning to it. Qualitative research claims that the experiences of people are essentially context bound, that they cannot be free from time and location or the mind of the human actor (Flick, 2009). ?

The interpretive researcher's ontological assumption is that social reality is locally and specifically constructed (Guba and Lincoln) "by humans through their actions and interactions" (Orlikowski, Baroudi, 1991:4). The study will make use of critical discourse analysis, which is interpretive and explanatory in terms of approach. Critical discourse analysis will seek to spell out the relation between discourse access and control and power or how more powerful institutions and groups control public discourses. The critical discourse analysis (CDA) will also mount a critique of the official (presidential) discursive interpretation of geopolitics and their spatial understandings which perpetuate imperialism and inequality. CDA will be historicist in the sense that will seek to analyse the continuities in the discursive interpretations of geopolitics and the deterministic influence that previous geopolitical discourses might have on the subsequent discourses. no reference

Apart from the available secondary sources like books, periodicals, Journals, newspapers, official reports, and documents will be used in this research work. Various speeches and statements by the presidents and other officials as secretary of state and publications from the US departments of State and Defense departments would be examined. Internet sources would be useful in accessing above mentioned official documents and other secondary sources.



## **1.8 Chapters**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter introduces the study and it defines “imperial geopolitics” and it reviews the literature concerning imperial imaginations in American geopolitics. The imperial imaginations in American geopolitics are traced from the founding of the American republic and then over the period of twentieth century and then in Post Cold War era.

### **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework**

This chapter defines the various theoretical concepts and notions that are used in the study and it also discusses in detail the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis that is used in the study. The concepts of the critical geopolitics, geographical/geopolitical imagination, geopolitical discourse, threat discourses, practical geopolitical reasoning and the role of American presidency in the making of geopolitical discourse are discussed at length.

### **Chapter 3: Defining Post Cold War Geopolitics: Geopolitical Discourse of Clinton Administration (1993-2001)**

This chapter critically analyses the geopolitical discourses of the Clinton administration. It starts with the Post Cold War geopolitical imagination and the transformation of presidency in the Post Cold War era and then it progresses to analyse the geopolitical discourse. The geopolitical discourse is analysed in terms of President’s interpretation of America’s role in the world, grand strategy and the threat discourse.

### **Chapter 4: September 11 as a Discursive Event and Geopolitical Discourse of Bush Administration (2001-2009)**

This chapter analyses the geopolitical discourse of Bush administration. It begins with President Bush’s explanation of America’s role in the world and then it analyses the post 9/11 geopolitical discourse. The varied threat discourse that emerged in the wake of 9/11 terrorist attacks is critically analyzed in detail. The chapter analyses the imperial imaginations of the presidential geopolitical discourse surrounding the invasion of Iraq in detail.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

This chapter will summarize the findings of the study and validate the hypotheses.

## **Chapter-2**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Critical geopolitics is central to this study of imperial imaginations in American Geopolitics in Post Cold War era. The introductory chapter has given an account of the historical genesis of geopolitics along with the rise of modern imperial nation states. While describing “imperial geopolitics” the approach has remained critical, that is not reifying the imperial geopolitical understandings but exposing their anti-geographical nature, which has often worked by generalizing and universalizing and therefore ignoring the geographical differences and complexities. In this scheme, geographical knowledge was subservient to the needs of modern nation states and geographical knowledge and representations were used to naturalize power. This notion of geopolitics has semblances to the realist approach to international relations.

Critical geopolitics, on the other hand seeks to problematise the fusion of geographical knowledge and power, and it belongs to the realm of constructivist approaches (Virginie Mamadouh and Dijkink, 2006). These two programs are not mutually exclusive but rather the later exists on the infrastructure provided by former.

In the present chapter, after giving a background of critical geopolitics, the notion of “geopolitical imagination” is discussed, first, as it was conceived by imperial geographers such as Mackinder and then it is conceptualised in the light of ideas of critical geographers such as John Agnew and David Newman.

Afterwards the notion of geopolitics as discourse is discussed at length by focussing on the works of Gerard Toal and other critical geographers. It is argued that practitioners of geopolitics, such as the President spatialize and interpret international politics because they have access to discursive resources and through them they exercise power.

After discussing the concept of geopolitical discourse the notion of threat discourse is elucidated. Threat discourses are predominant form of discourses in the

American geopolitics. However, the discussion of threat discourse in this chapter limits itself to analysis of its fundamental roots and position within the geopolitical discourse.

The notion of practical geopolitical reasoning is also explained because it is the practical geopolitical reasoning which informs the geopolitical discourse of statesmen and elites of statecraft. The institution of president is also discussed in context of its paramount position in the foreign policy domain and its role in constructing geopolitical discourses.

## **2.2 Background of Critical Geopolitics**

“One of the great ironies of the discipline of modern geography is that it remained remarkably blind to the politics of its own gaze and geographical history for so long”. (Gerard Toal, 2002)

Just like the imperial geopolitics which emerged in the wake of imperial expansion by the modern nation states, critical geopolitics emerged only when these empires started dismantling for a variety of reasons and the most important among them being the resistance from below. It was not until the formal decolonization of the European empires beginning in the late fifties and the emergence of a small but significant dissident intellectual culture in the sixties that the imperial heritage of modern geography came to be recognized and questioned. Civil rights struggles, protests against the Vietnam War, and a growing urban crisis within the United States provoked the emergence of a self-consciously 'radical geography in the Anglo-American realm in the late sixties (Gerard Toal, 1996).

Phil Kelly (2006) writes that critical geopolitics “springs largely from the academic studies of political and cultural geographers. Critical geopolitics has not placed itself within the IR post-structuralist perspective, and instead the radical French philosopher Michel Foucault, is recognized as the philosophical inspiration behind critical geopolitics”. He identifies two critical versions within the critical geopolitics. The first stream is associated with “the de-constructivist stance of examining texts, scripts and discourse contained within foreign policy and traditional geopolitical statements and theories”. This version is associated with the works of Gerard Toal particularly his *Critical Geopolitics* (1996). About the second version he writes “a good example of a second variant that is more attuned to Marxist political

economy and to critiquing and revising traditional theory within a more structural yet critical mode is seen in Agnew and Corbridge's *Mastering Space*, where these authors discuss the 'changing geographical basis to the international political economy in different historical periods' and the 'impact of increasing economic globalization and political fragmentation in future international relations.'

Among the two stances, the de-constructivist stance is central to the present study and it will be explicated in further detail.

### **2.3 The Concept of Geographical Imagination**

"Geographical imaginations are hegemonic discursive perceptions of geopolitical space" (Toal, 2002).

Geographical imagination has to do with how people in charge of conducting a state's affairs think of space in relation to the political processes or in other words about "spatiality of world politics". It is about the understanding of space in which political processes unfold and operate. It informs understanding of self and others, both friends and enemies. The geographical imagination of a state is reflected in its geopolitical discourse.

The notion of "geographical imagination" is very much evident in the works of British geographer Halford Mackinder (1861-1947). His works are quintessential of the works that sought to develop an imperial geographical imagination or subjectivity.

As the age exploration was over and even the most remote and previously 'blank' lands were 'occupied', Mackinder claimed that for the first time it was possible to witness and theorize about the worldwide system of closed space.

He laid down some of the fundamental principles of what later developed as the "science of geopolitics". There are two principles, espoused by Halford Mackinder that underpins the very concept of geopolitics. These two principles are geographical 'visualization' and 'imagination'. By visualization Mackinder meant a natural and positive visualization but this kind visualization, he believed is possible after a regulated training. A trained geographer, according to him is enabled to see in terms of global space and has insight into beyond what is immediate and visible. The contradiction within his argument is apparent. It is not a natural and neutral gaze but a trained and guided gaze that he is advocating for the imperial masters (Toal, 1996).

From a survey of literature on Mackinder's geographical methods, it becomes clear that for him 'visualization' and 'imagination' were one and the same thing and were united by the purpose they were directed to. The purpose was to enable the British rulers to visualize the global picture and "think visually" of their interests in terms of the same. Gerard Toal (1996) observes the social imperialism inherent in Mackinder's geography. This social imperialism was about colonizing the minds of British public and inciting them with a new imperial identity and an imperial imagination. He wished to use geography to inculcate an imperial subjectivity, to make the future cadres of empire think of British Imperium as the white man's inheritance and collective responsibility. Mackinder's geography was, second, an incitement of an imperial imagination, a challenge to ordinary British people to think of their interests in global terms (Toal, 1996).

The notion of geographical imagination is state centric as pointed out by the very fact that some spaces were thought to be "blank" before they were brought under the control of one or other nation state. Secondly the modern geographical imagination operated in global terms.

Agnew observes that modern geopolitical imagination was rooted in the "state centric account of spatiality" characterized by three geographical assumptions: (1) that states have sovereign power over their territories; (2) that "domestic" and "foreign" are separate and distinct realms; and (3) that the boundaries of state define the boundaries of "society". Gerard Toal argues that these longstanding assumptions have always been contestable as description of the spatiality of world politics, but they delimit a bounded territorial imagination historically favored by geopolitical discourses and practices (Toal, 2000).

John Agnew (2003) in his book "Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics" defines the notion of "geopolitical imagination". He emphasizes on its historical roots and the material context in which it was and is produced.

The modern geopolitical imagination is a system of visualizing the world with deep historic roots in the European encounter with the world as a whole. It is a constructed view of the world, not a simple spontaneous vision that arises from simply looking out at the world with "common-sense". As a system of thought and practice, the modern geopolitical imagination has not existed and does not exist in a material vacuum. It first developed in a Europe coming to terms with a new global role and the disintegration of the religion-based image of universal order formerly dominant among its intellectuals and leaders. An insistence on taking charge of the world is key feature of European modernity. Its realization has changed significantly over

time as the material context (dominant technologies, modes of economic organization, scope of state organization, capacity for violence) has changed (Agnew, 2003).

At any time, geopolitical imagination or for that matter imperial imagination is a product of the historical experience and the material context. Geopolitical imagination is inherently subjective and partial and it works in self serving ways rather than as an objective and neutral perception of world.

Geopolitical imagination is similar to what Neil Smith and Deborah Cowen call the “geopolitical social”. They argue that geopolitics is more than an “arm of foreign policy and international relations, it is also about practices and discourses through which “national society” is imagined and bound to “national territory”. The making of modern territorial state – at once a process of assembling the specific capitalisms of national economies and the logics and authority of state security, and of establishing national population with its racialized, classed and gendered ordering—is simultaneously the making of geopolitical social (Deborah and Smith, 2009).

It is in the project of making of the territorial state that geographical imagination of state is constituted and is constantly shaped by discourses and practices of geopolitical social.

The study will analyze the geopolitical imagination of the state of United States of America in the Post Cold War era. To put it more clearly, the study will analyze as to how the US state perceives itself or its ‘self-image’ (Agnew, 2003), which in turn informs how it engages in world politics.

## **2.4 The Concept of Geopolitical Discourse**

“Geography as a discourse is a form of power/knowledge itself” (Foucault, 1980 quoted in Toal, 1989).

The notion of geopolitics as discourse is based on the foundational premise that denies “objective materialism” of geopolitical analysis and argues that “geography is a social and historical discourse which is always intimately bound up with questions of politics and ideology (Toal, 1989).

Agnew and Toal (1992) re-conceptualize geopolitics as a discursive practice by which intellectuals of statecraft “spatialize international politics in such a way as to represent it as a world characterized by particular types of places, peoples and

dramas”. In their understanding, the study of geopolitics is the study of spatilaization of international politics by statesman of core powers and hegemonic states. Hence, critical geopolitics focuses on the “practitioners of geopolitics”, “institutions”, their occupants and their rhetoric, dialogues and conversations.

The understanding of discourse is associated with critical social theory and the works of Michel Foucault and Edward Said. This varied literature specifies discourse as a “matrix of reasoning”, “an ensemble of ideas and concepts” or a “regime of truth” that functions as a power knowledge system constituting, representing and interpreting ‘the real’ (Toal, 2002). “Discourse refers to a specific series of representations and practices through which meanings are produced, identities constituted, social relations established, and political and ethical outcomes made more or less possible...a concern with discourse does not involve a denial of the world’s existence or the significance of materiality” (Bailasiewicz et al, 2007).

Robert L. Ivie (2005) observes the discursive dimension of politics. Although there is a material, nonsymbolic world beyond language and interpretation, it can be experienced and understood only within the framework of symbolically constructed meaning...objects exist external to thought but, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe state, they cannot “constitute themselves as objects” in our collective consciousness outside of discourse or without a “discursive field” (Ivie, 2005).

One can argue that it is through geopolitical discourses that complex geopolitical circumstances and events are constituted and materialized. Geopolitical discourses are partial and subjective interpretations of complex geopolitical happenings and no geopolitical event exist outside geopolitical discourses.

Geopolitical discourses are championed by coalitions of powerful interest groups within the dominant state and across allied states. These coalitions are complex but they conventionally feature as an iron triangle of conservative politicians, military institutions, and powerful corporations in a state (Toal, 2001). The discourses emanate from powerful institutions and therefore are subjective as they seek to project a particular interpretation of reality. These discourses, which emerge from powerful institutions, seek to monopolize the definition and interpretation of geopolitical events.



Secondly, these discourses are product of a reductionist geopolitical reasoning and often construe a complex geopolitical situation in binary and abstract formulations. Toal (2001) observes that geopolitical discourses are frequently simplified spatial visions of world affairs that organize the complex political struggles across the globe into abstract conceptual categories and geographic zones (Toal, 2001).

The present study takes the institution of president as its point of departure and will analyse the imperial aspects of the geopolitical discourses that emanates from it.

### **2.5 Threat Discourses**

Gerard Toal (2001) notes that Geopolitical discourses are discourses of danger that specify a parade of threats powerful interest groups consider important. Toal (1996) argues that geopolitics does not have any essential meaning in and of itself and discourses of danger—the enemy “site of power” along with the “imperative of responding”—may define geopolitics. He observes the “tradition of discourses of danger on foreign threats throughout the US history” and its fundamental role in geopolitical discourses.

Critical Geographers (see Simon Dalby (2003), Toal (1996), and Campbell (2007)) have written about how geopolitical identities are often constructed around an ‘Other’. The United States has long constituted its identity at least in part through discourses of danger that materialize others as a threat (Campbell, 1992).

Threat discourses are constructed around an ‘other’. “It involves the social construction of some other person, group, culture, race, nationality or political system as different from ‘our’ person, group etc. Specifying difference is a linguistic, epistemological and crucially a political act; it constructs a space for the other distanced and inferior from the vantage point of the person specifying the difference. Otherness involves exclusion and exclusion is inherently spatial” (Toal, 1996). Dalby notes an “essential geopolitical moment”, a “basic process of geopolitics” in defining the ‘other’:

The exclusion of the other and the inclusion, incorporation and administration of the Same is the essential geopolitical moment. The two processes are complementary; the Other is excluded as the reverse side of the process of incorporation of the Same. Expressed in terms of space and power, this is the basic process of geopolitics in which territory is divided, contested and ruled. (Toal, 1996: 142)

It can be argued that the 'self' is dialectically constituted along with the 'other' but at the same time the 'other' is distanced and differentiated from the 'self'. This distancing of the 'other' is reflected in the constructs such as 'civilization' where the 'other' is imagined as outside the civilization as 'barbarian', 'savage' 'enemy' of civilization or 'evil'. The 'self' is imagined as uniform and universal in opposition to an 'other' and 'outside' and ideological hegemony is established within what is defined as the 'self'.

This conception of 'self' by 'othering' with its inherent 'epistemological imperialism' can be traced back to earliest modern geopolitical writings. Toal (1996) observes how Mackinder aimed to inculcate an imperial identity among British around the 'savage' other which they were supposed to govern. The 'savage' is the outside, the other by which European colonial discourse consolidated its own enlightened subject position as a universal standard and naturalized its own authority to rule over colonized territories (Toal, 1996).

The primacy of the 'other' in defining the 'self' is seen in the geopolitical discourses of the Cold War and the Global War on Terror. Alexander Ward (2011) observes parallels in the imaginary geographies of the Cold War and the Global War on Terror and traces their origin to the 'oriental' discourse.

The imaginary geographies of both the Cold War and the War on Terror are binary in nature in so far as they serve to draw a line between two antagonistic constructions, e.g. good vs evil. The conceptual origins of these distinctions lie in Orientalism. In their heyday, colonial and orientalist discourses "did not necessarily refer to the real Orient but to the field surrounding the word" (Said, 1978, p60). This highlights a fundamental element of imaginary geographies; the fact that they are inherently constructed through perceptions of the 'other', rather than the actual characteristics of those perceived. Thus, the "system of knowledge about the Orient" (Said, 1978, p6) created certain representations that served to distance it from the West, both culturally and politically.

The 'orient' does not exist on its own but it is discursively materialized by the 'West' or the 'occident'. "The discourses constitute the objects of which they speak" (Bialasiewicz, 2007). There is an imaginative geography at work, which "spatializes places and people' or attributes meaning to space and places. It is through an

imaginative process that “space gains a whole series of meanings that are otherwise not naturally embodied in any given material space”. Spaces are made intelligible through geopolitical discourses and practices.

Threat discourses are partial and subjective as far as they are based on perceptions and discursively materialize or constitute a threat so as to legitimize and justify domination, control and also violence.

## **2.6 Practical Geopolitical Reasoning and Construction of Geopolitical Discourse**

It is the “practitioners of the geopolitics” such as president, and their geopolitics that constitutes the subject of the present study. The geopolitics that emanates from the statesmen or the practitioners of the geopolitics is called practical geopolitics and it is the base on which geopolitical discourse builds on.

Virginie Mamadouh and Dijkink (2006) differentiate between three domains of geopolitics. The formal geopolitics, the domain of academics and advisors, and more grand narratives; practical geopolitics, the domain of policy making and geopolitical reasoning justifying concrete foreign policy actions; and popular geopolitics, the domain of public realm and media that foster support and legitimacy-or fail to do so-for foreign policy.

John Agnew and Gerard Toal (1992) argue that the “most geopolitical production in world politics is of a practical and not a formal type. Practical geopolitics refers to the spatializing practices of practitioners of statecraft such as statespersons, politicians, and military commanders. These intellectuals of statecraft are those who concern themselves with the everyday conduct of foreign policy” (Toal et al, 1992).

Practical geopolitical reasoning is the reasoning of the practitioners of geopolitics that is intellectuals of the statecraft and it is central to the formulation of geopolitical discourses. This reasoning is employed in formulating simplified geopolitical discourses which often draw on previous discursive analogies and images.

Since geopolitical discourses seek to educate the public about the complex geopolitical events and circumstances, the practical geopolitical reasoning that

informs them “tends to be of a common-sense type which relies on the narratives and binary distinctions found in societal mythologies”.

Geopolitical discourses are often simplified interpretations and are defined in terms of binaries and hence their reasoning “is of reductive nature, it works by the active suppression of the complex geographical reality of places in favour of controllable geopolitical abstractions”.

Practical geopolitical reasoning basically informs the way politicians (president) makes sense of world politics. The representations coming from the politicians basically aim to maintain credibility in the domestic and international arena and should be analyzed through the lenses of critical geopolitics (Toal, 2001). The study will examine the practical geopolitical reasoning that informs the presidential geopolitical discourses.

### **2.7 The Presidency and Making of Geopolitical Discourse**

The institution of president is the highest one in the US political system. The President of the United States of America is the head of state and the Chief Executive of the federal government and the Commander-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces. Through most of the American history, the presidency has been much more than a simple instrument of executive power. Presidents, far from merely executing laws conceived and passed by others, have been source of some of the most important shifts in the nation’s public policy and political ideology (Brinkley, 2004).

With regard to production of geopolitical discourse, the institution of president is the most crucial one. Constitution mandate creates a number of foreign policy roles for the president—commander-in-chief, chief diplomat and in last century, world leader. Aaron Wildavasky (1966), in his hypothesis of two presidencies argue that the foreign policy presidency enjoyed relative independence in managing America’s foreign relations as opposed to domestic policy which was subject to debate and vagaries of partisan politics found within American democracy, especially Congress.

Sicherman (2000) observes that from Harry Truman onward foreign affairs was the fulcrum of presidential success or failure. The Cold (and sometimes not so cold) War required unprecedented grants of authority and power to the White House, which the Congress often resented but rarely prevented. It was during the Cold War and

predominant role that president played in foreign policy making that the notion of an imperial presidency developed.

Paul Starobin (2006) argue that “like all institutions created by the human hand, the imperial Presidency is a work in progress. It is foremost the combined creation of the men who have held the presidential reins over the last six decades”. The Cold War was one such period, which saw a significant increase in the importance of the institution of the American president.

The Imperial Presidency can be defined, succinctly, as a structure in which enormous discretionary power to respond to national security crises and perceived dangers is concentrated in the office of the president. In this scheme, Congress, willingly or not, is only a bit player. Although the term has a pejorative connotation, it is not so much the existence of an Imperial Presidency that has spurred public backlashes as it is the abuses of power that have sometimes come with it. Richard Nixon comes to mind (Starobin, 2006).

It is argued that the notion of “imperial presidency” is related with the constitutionally vested full “executive powers” including the “war powers that authorizes the president to unilaterally use military power in defense of the United States’ national security” (Rudalevige, 2005). Noting the increasing importance of presidency in foreign affairs along with the increasing American role and leadership in global affairs, Paul Starobin argues that:

The birth and sustained growth of the Imperial Presidency are inseparable from America's self-adopted "world responsibilities," in the apt phrase of Harry Truman. "In one generation, we've come from an isolated republic, to the position of the leadership of the world," Truman declared a few months into the Korean War, which began without congressional authorization in June 1950. The American Age ushered in a new kind of presidency, designed to anticipate and, if need be, respond to threats from virtually anywhere on the globe.

These enormous executive powers and supreme decision making authority allows the president a significant control over the geopolitical discourse. For every major foreign policy action the rationale and justification is articulated by the president himself. Gerard Toal and John Agnew (1992) note the key role the Presidency plays in the assemblage of meaning about international politics within the United States (and internationally since the US became a world power). In ethnographic terms, the US President is the chief bricoleur of American political life, a combination of storyteller and tribal shaman. One of the great powers of the Presidency, invested by the sanctity, history and rituals associated with the institution- the fact that the media take their primary discursive cues from the White House- is the power to describe, represent, interpret and appropriate (Toal et al, 1992).

Emphasizing the importance of presidential rhetoric, Jason Allen Edwards (2006) argues that it is through America's foreign policy vocabulary that the president orders America's foreign policy universe, defines its reality, and educates the public on US foreign affairs. He identifies "three rhetorical components that have provided framework for presidential discourse on US international relations since the nation was founded. Presidents' vision for foreign affairs are structured by these three characteristics, which are definitions of America's role in the world, the identification of enemies that we face, and the grand strategy by which we advance America's and our allies interest".

However the president has an immense power to "describe, represent, interpret and appropriate" the global political space but his autonomy is constrained by a few factors. President defines foreign policy reality through overarching principles, as well as specific situations. It is also argued that Presidential geopolitical discourse is also shaped by and must have resonance with the perennial ideals of American national experience. Edwin Hargrove (1998) argued the first task of presidential leadership is to: teach reality to publics and their fellow politicians through rhetoric...teaching reality involves the explanations of contemporary problems and issues but, at its best, must invoke and interpret the perennial ideals of American national experience as expressed in the past and the present, and as guides for our future.

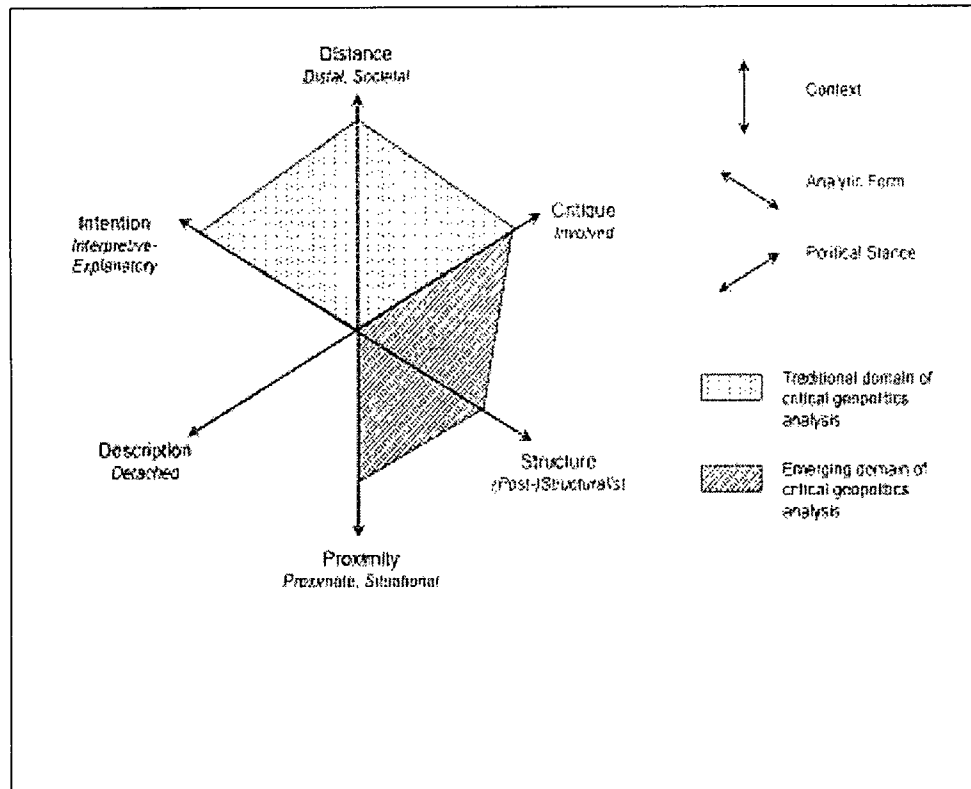
In a study titled "Mapping the Dynamism of the United States' Geopolitical Code: The Geography of the State of the Union Speeches, 1988-2008", Colin Flint et al. (2009) note that a single text should not be interpreted as a snapshot in time but the product of previous geopolitical actions by multiple geopolitical actors. In their understanding of discourse, representations of historical and contemporary elites should be seen in terms of sequence of representations within the context of global events. Discourse is more than the text or speech under analysis, but the layers of previous statements, each power-laden and linked to previous layers, which current utterances rely upon and maintain. The result is that the autonomy of the geopolitical agent, such as a president and his speechmakers, is constrained by previous layers of discourse.

Gerard Toal et al. (1992) note that the presidential power of description and appropriation must have resonances with the Congress, the established media and the American public. The generation of such resonances often requires the repetition and re-cycling of certain themes and images even though the socio-historical context of their use may have changed dramatically. This later point about the deterministic influence of previous discourses in shaping subsequent discourses has been discussed by many scholars. In a study titled “Geopolitics, International Relations and Political Geography: The Politics of Geopolitical Discourse”, Virginie Mamadouh and Dijkink (2006) note a kind of determinism in the way historical geopolitical discourses inform subsequent discourses. While the study of geopolitical representations and ideas has been introduced to liberate geopolitics from its alleged geographical determinism, the field of geopolitical representations and ideas might elicit a new kind of determinism (Mamadouh, 2006).

The study of the imperial imaginations in American geopolitics in Post Cold War era will focus on how the two presidencies, namely that of President Clinton and President George W. Bush construed the global political scene, their rhetorical strategies to support their foreign policy actions and their articulation of geopolitical discourse and the imperial aspects of the same.

## **2.8 Methodology of Discourse Analysis**

Martin Muller (2010) argue that there is no established “how-to-do-a-discourse analysis-scheme and “different forms of discourse analysis need to be tailored to both the goals of the study and to the respective concept of discourse in order to fully harness their analytical power”. For the purpose of present study, which seeks to examine imperial aspects of American geopolitical discourses, the methodology can be explicated along the three core dimensions of approaches to discourse analysis in critical geopolitics, proposed by Muller. These three dimensions are: the context of analysis (proximate and distal), the analytic form of analysis (post-/structuralist and interpretive-explanatory) and the political stance of analysis (involved and detached).



**Figure 1: Three Core Dimensions of Approaches to Discourse Analysis in Critical Geopolitics**

(Source: Martin Muller (2010) Doing Discourse Analysis in Critical Geopolitics)



### **2.8.1 The Context of Analysis**

The present study conceives empire as a geopolitical identity and is concerned with the institutional sites of the production of the imperial identity and discourses.

The study will focus on the institution of president as the site of discursive construction of the imperial discourses. President is the ultimate signifier, who defines and makes sense of 'the real' and educates others about the same.

However, the focus is on the discourse from the white house, "the centrality of geopolitical culture in the study of geopolitical identities cannot be understated. Geopolitical culture is understood as formed not only by the institutions of a state, its historical experiences, geographical embeddedness, but also by networks of power within society, prevailing geopolitical imaginations, codified geopolitical traditions and the institutional processes by which foreign policy is made in the state (O'Loughlin, Toal, and Kolossov, 2005, p. 324).

### **2.8.2 The Analytic Form of Analysis**

Discourse studies put emphasis on human construction rather than on the environment as determinant of discourses. The present study will rely on interpretive-explanatory form of analysis. In the interpretive form of analysis, methodology centres on the way in which human beings make sense of their subjective reality and attach meaning to it. According to Muller (2010), interpretive-explanatory form of analysis centres on the actor as the producer of the meaning and is in line with the Ricoeur's agent centric hermeneutics, which captures both intentionality of textual production and its social context. In the present study, the agent under scrutiny is the institution of the president and the objective is to examine the enduring understandings and reasoning of American presidents in conduct of their foreign policy and geopolitics in the context of dynamic global politics and crises.

Interpretive-explanatory research acknowledges discourses as super subjective structures which are both enabling and constraining human agency but in its analysis often tends to be concerned with the agency of individuals in meaning creation, 'telling the right kind of stories to the right audiences at the right moment' (Alvesson

and Kärreman, 2000, p. 1132). The study will examine the various important speeches such as the state of the union speeches, which are often an occasion of articulating and reiterating the national identity and also representing others. Political speeches and the like afford us means of recovering the self understandings of influential actors in world politics. They help us understand the social construction of worlds and the role of geographical knowledge in that construction (Toal and Agnew, 1992).

### **2.8.3 The Political Stance of Analysis**

A central notion in most critical work on discourse is that of power and more specifically the social power of groups or institutions...we will define social power in terms of control (Van Dijk, 1998). It is argued that power relations are discursive and in the power-discourse circle there are those powerful groups who have privileged access to scarce social resources (such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information etc) and there are others, dominated group, who more or less resist, accept, condone, comply with, or legitimate such power, and even find it “natural” (Van Dijk, 1998). Teun A Van Dijk splits the issue of discursive power in two simple questions for a critical discourse analysis research:

1. How do (more) powerful groups control public discourses?
2. How does such discourse control mind and action of (less) powerful groups, and what are the social consequences of such control, such as social inequality.

What Muller calls political stance of analysis centrally asks the questions of how phenomena variously termed dominance, hegemony, unequal power relationships or social inequality come about and how the constitution of the social world might be imagined alternatively?

The critical analysis of how geopolitical discourses embody forms of power/knowledge and are engaged in ideological inscription of space lies at the heart of critical geopolitics that challenges common sense understandings on which many discourses are built (Toal and Agnew, 1992). In nutshell, discourse analysis unravels the structures of inequality, in this case empire (American) which are discursively produced. The study will seek to critique the geopolitical discourse construed by the President and will expose how complex reality of world politics is materialized through geopolitical discourses in ways that promote American dominance.

The discursive foundations and imaginary geographies of geopolitical practices that perpetuate imperialism and inequality will be analysed and critiqued.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the different theoretical concepts that will be utilized in analysing and de-constructing the geopolitical discourses of Clinton and Bush presidencies. The concept of discourse has developed in the writings of critical geographers and believes that geopolitics is basically discursively materialized. Geopolitical discourses are primarily partial representations and interpretations of the world politics by the elites of statecraft of hegemonic states. These interpretations are informed by a reductive geopolitical reasoning which works in simplistic categories and binaries. The methodology of critical discourse analysis for analysing the geopolitical discourses will be interpretive and explanatory with institution of president as the site of production of discourse.

## Chapter-3

### Defining Post Cold War Geopolitics: Geopolitical Discourse of Clinton Administration (1993-2001)

#### 3.1 Introduction

President William J. Clinton was the first Post Cold War president as his was the first presidency that unfolded in the Post Cold War era. As President Clinton took office he compared early 1990s to the late 1940s, when President Truman took the office and, together with his secretary of state Dean Acheson, spent two or three years defining the institutions and ideas that would become the contours of the Cold War map of meaning in global politics (Acheson 1969). The comparison with 1940s is significant the end of Cold War had essentially made the Cold War geopolitical discourses redundant and new geopolitical discourse, which could interpret the changed geopolitical condition was to be construed by the first Post Cold War president. It was a particularly daunting task as the enemy which had calibrated America's identity and also its role in the world was gone. No longer facing a single, overwhelmingly powerful adversary, the US today lacks a map of its own identity in global affairs and a workable image of gamesmanship to define its current role (Toal, 1994).

The 1992 presidential campaign was described as one which "takes place in politically uncharted territory" and was vague as far as the "vision" was concerned. Gerard Toal (1994) argue that the presidential campaign of 1992, in its gestures towards the Cold War discourse, proved to be the last election of the Cold War rather than the first campaign of the twenty first century.

Clinton administration was faced with a complex and diverse challenges and no single overwhelming threat that will make for a unified strategy. The policy on international front requires coherence and it is the president who has to devise a doctrine to educate his fellow politicians and the American public on the challenges and opportunities of the time and the American strategy to advance the national

interest. Richard Hass (2002) observes the significance of presidential doctrine in the foreign policy.

“A doctrine not only gives overall direction to policy, but it also helps establish basic priorities. It also signals to our allies and our adversaries abroad, and to our Congress and public at home, where our policies are heading, what they will entail, and what can be expected from American leadership. A doctrine offers strategic clarity. It must emerge as much from experience as from intellect. Doctrine is discovered more than invented” (Hass, Richard, 2002).

The task discovering a doctrine was going to be a difficult one in the Post Cold War where there were multiple challenges and competing issues and past was of little help in understanding the present.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the presidential geopolitical discourse during Clinton presidency and discover its imperial aspects. This analysis has three components. First and foremost an analysis of President Clinton’s definition of America’s role in the world and secondly, an analysis of President Clinton’s geopolitical representation of enemies of the US. And thirdly, an analysis of the President’s ‘grand strategy’ that will advance the US interest.

The rhetoric of President Clinton’s administration provides evidence of the new forms of geopolitical discourse. Hence, it is imperative to examine the geopolitical imagination of the Post Cold War era as it was the different from the Cold War geopolitical imagination.

### **3.2 Post Cold War Geopolitical Imagination**

The modern geopolitical imagination operated in terms of territorial nation states with its rigid and substantially controlled boundaries that permitted an understanding of domestic and foreign, inside and outside. States conceived of themselves as territorial container of societies and claimed sovereignty within their territorial boundaries. These understandings resulted in an inter-national system of world politics.

Thomas L. Friedman, foreign affairs columnist for the New York Times notes the differences between the Cold War system and the system that followed it, which he calls as the “globalization system”.

“The world was divided-up, chopped-up place, and whether you were a country or a company, your threats and opportunities in the Cold War system tended to grow out of who you were divided from. Appropriately, this Cold War system was symbolized by a single word—

wall, the Berlin wall. The globalization system is different. It also has one overarching feature – and that is integration. The world has become an increasingly interwoven place, and today, whether you are a company or a country, your threats and opportunities derive from who you are connected to. This globalization system is characterized by a single word—web, the World Wide Web” (Friedman, 2002).

Friedman (2002) also notes a key change in terms of how power is structured within the system. In the Post Cold War, globalization system, nation states are not the only player as was the case with the Cold War system. In the globalization system there is a “complex interaction” between the three actors that is states, global markets and individuals

Gerard Toal (2000) notes deterritorialisation of geopolitics and its consequent changes for threat discourse and (post)modern geopolitical condition. The deterritorialization of geopolitics has become a familiar theme in contemporary discussion of international affairs as threat discourses have broadened from an overwhelming concern with territorially defined ‘enemies’ during the Cold War to embrace post territorial ‘dangers’ (environmental degradation, infectious diseases, computer crimes, proliferating weapons of mass destruction, global webs of terrorism) and deterritorializing globalization.

The modern territorial imagination rooted in a bounded sovereign and territorial state, a separation of domestic and foreign (see Agnew, 2000) is being transformed as territoriality and sovereignty of state is being challenged by forces of globalization and the boundaries between domestic and foreign are increasingly blurred. Post modern geopolitical imagination is a product of changing territoriality, produced by the social, economic and political and technological machines of our postmodern condition.

This post modern geopolitical imagination is evident in the new geopolitical discourses.

Gerard Toal (2000) defines what he means by the post modern geopolitical condition.

“Post modern geopolitical condition is one where the boundaries that have traditionally delimited the geopolitical imagination are in crisis...Globalization, informationalization, and the end of the Cold War have unleashed spatial transformations that have seriously eroded state sovereignty, blurred boundaries between the “inside” and “outside” of states, and produced a common global society facing dangers and threats that emanate from no single state but from the successes and excesses of advanced modernity” (Toal, 2000).

This is a situation where “international-system” becomes inadequate in understanding world politics and terms like “global politics” and “international community” become more prominent in geopolitical discourses.

The contemporary geopolitical condition is, Gerard Toal (2000) argues, characterized by boundary transgressing processes and tendencies that are undermining the state centric assumptions of conventional geopolitics. This is provoking the new form of geopolitical discourse and practice that require critical investigation.

Speaking of the discourse of Clinton’s campaign, Gerard Toal (1994) notes that to the extent that the Clinton’s geoeconomic rhetoric reconstituted America’s geographical imagination; it did so by advancing a new temporal horizon for the country. “Change” was a central Clinton theme, whereas “trust” and “stability” were the key motifs of the Bush Campaign. He writes about the discursive horizon of Clinton campaign:

“Clinton’s horizon lay in the future, in an ecologically correct, culturally diverse, U.N. supporting, trilaterally cooperative U.S., an America wired with information superhighways, producing for global markets, consuming global products, and beaming out a pro-democracy message to less fortunate parts of the world” (Toal, 1994).

### **3.3 Post Cold War Presidency**

Steven E. Schier (2000) in his book “The Postmodern Presidency: Bill Clinton’s Legacy in U.S. Politics” writes that end of the Cold War altered the “job description” of the president. President was no longer required to have Olympian characteristics such as military service, heroic war time performance or significant symbols of personal success and Clinton possessed none (Schier, 2000). About the unique changes that President Clinton brought to the presidency, he writes:

“Clinton redefined the presidency as an exalted governorship, aimed at solving the immediate domestic problems of citizens (Weisberg, 1999). The public’s interest in foreign policy shrank considerably, allowing domestic policy to dominate the presidential elections in 1990s. a policy arena Bill Clinton knew well and in which he could excel. The end of the Cold War also produced great uncertainty over the course of American foreign policy. Without a great rival, how do we define American interests? How do we pursue them? These questions plagued Clinton and rest of the Washington during his presidency” (Schier, 2000).

John Dumbrell (2005) notes that Clinton came to power in an era relatively devoid of inherited international doctrine. State Department policy planners in the immediate Post Cold War years consciously saw themselves, with containment of the

USSR removed as the basis of US international engagement, as painting on a blank canvas: these were the famous ‘Kennan sweepstakes’ (Dumbrell, 2005). Dumbrell argues that there is no such thing as complete freedom. As Mick Cox has put it, US foreign policy has long had one clear objective: ‘to create an environment in which democratic capitalism can flourish in a world in which the US still remains the dominant actor’ (Dumbrell, 2005). This ideal of expanding the reach of ‘democratic capitalism’ was form the cornerstone of President Clinton’s foreign policy as well.

### **3.4 America’s Role in the World**

Clinton’s presidency was the first presidency to unfold in the Post Cold War and President Clinton made the strategic choice of continuous engagement in the global affairs instead of retreating to an isolationist position. The commitment to sustained international engagement was manifested more fully through several significant economic and military actions that the administration undertook.

In his inaugural address, exhibiting a post-modern geopolitical imagination President Clinton linked domestic and international arena and articulated opportunities and challenges facing the America in global terms.

“There is no longer a clear division between what is foreign and what is domestic. The world economy, the world environment, the world AIDS crisis, the world arms race: they affect us all. Today, as an older order passes, the new world is more free but less stable. Communism’s collapse has called forth old animosities and new dangers. Clearly, America must continue to lead the world we did so much to make” (Clinton, 1993).

Defining these ‘challenges’ and ‘opportunities’ that will in turn underwrite the geopolitical discourse of his presidency, was the primary task for Clinton and his foreign policy team.

President Clinton, as a democrat presidential candidate had campaigned on economic and domestic issues and it was through a domestic-economic lens that he viewed the new geopolitical condition and the challenges and opportunities it presented. He followed what is called the liberal internationalist tradition and had a multilateralist approach.

Charles Krauthammer (2003) argues that early in the Clinton years, Madeleine Albright formulated the vision of the liberal internationalist school then in power as “assertive multilateralism”. Its principal diplomatic activity was the pursuit of a



dizzying array of universal treaties on chemical weapons, biological weapons, nuclear testing, global environment, land mines, and the like (Krauthammer, 2003). He argues that Clinton years were obsessed with “international legality” which was driven by the fear of being left isolated in case US acted unilaterally. He argues that the multilateralism had a geopolitical objective that is “it is a means that defines the ends”. Its means-internationalism (the moral, legal and strategic primacy of international institutions over national interests) and legalism (the belief that sinews of stability are laws, treaties, and binding international contracts)—are in service to a larger vision: remaking the international system in the image of domestic civil society (Krauthammer, 2003).

President Clinton in his book ‘Between Hope and History, Meeting America’s Challenges for the 21st Century’ gives an account of president’s perception of America’s role in the world in what he calls an “era of unparalleled possibility and hope.” President Clinton saw it as an opportunity to expand the free markets and democracy to the world and he argued that this strategy will avail American people with more jobs as the American export expands, more opportunities to American business as more countries open their markets for trade and the world would be a safer place as more and more countries become democratic and multi-cultural.

President argues that “as a result of our efforts to create a new global trading system, the world isn’t just a batter place for Americans to do business, make money, and create jobs; it’s also a safer place. This strategy believed that the benefits of “free trade’ extend beyond economic gains and can help integrating countries. Articulating the merits of “fair trade among free markets”, President Clinton argued that

“it raises consumer demand for our products worldwide, encourages investment and growth, lifts people out of poverty and ignorance, increases understanding and help dispels long-held hatreds. That’s why we have worked so hard to build free-market institutions in Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Soviet republics. That’s why we have supported commercial liberalization in China—the world’s fastest growing market. Just as the democracy helps make the world safe for commerce, commerce helps make the world safe for democracy. It’s a two-way street” (Clinton, 1996).

President Clinton was devoted to the cause of globalization. Brands (2010) observe that “every president from Truman to Clinton strove to extend the principle to new products and areas. Clinton ensured that Congress approved the NAFTA treaty negotiated by Bush, and he embraced the global economy with conviction. For Clinton, globalization was solution to the problems of the new era. “The challenge

before us is to adapt our international institutions, to deepen the cooperation between the nations so that we can confront a new generation of problems that know no national borders”, he told the World Economic Forum in January 1995. “Indeed the job of constructing a new international economic architecture through our trade agreements and the revitalization of our institutions is, for our generation, as pressing and important as building a post-war system was to the generation of Marshall Plan and Bretton Woods” ( President Clinton’s remarks at World Economic Forum, 1995).

### **3.4 President Clinton’s Threat Discourse**

With the Cold War over there was no overwhelming enemy that the US had to deal with but there were various challenges that required the attention of the Clinton administration. The spread of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and various regional conflicts were the challenges that were identified by President Clinton. Sichertman (2000) argue that in the Post Cold War world, an overarching geopolitical struggle has merely given way to numerous “under-arching struggles”.

The dominant belief in the Clinton administration was that “the collapse of Soviet power had made the “enlargement” of democracy and free markets possible, and indeed, inevitable” (Sichertman, 2000).

The National Security Document of 1995 acknowledges that a unitary threat has been replaced by a complex set of challenges. “Our nation’s strategy for defining and addressing these challenges”, the document states “has several core principles that will guide our policy”. The most important principle is that US has to exercise global leadership but (chastened by the Vietnam experience) it categorically rules out prospects of overstretch and espouses a policy of selective engagement guided by a clear understanding of long term national interests. It states “we are not the world’s policemen, but as the world’s premier economic and military power and, with the strength of our democratic values, the US is indispensable to the forging of stable political relations and open trade”. As far as the tools are concerned to meet the diverse and complex challenges of the Post Cold War world, the selective approach translates into “being willing to act unilaterally when our direct national interests are most at stake; in alliance and partnership when our interests are shared by others; multilaterally when our interests are more general and the problems are best addressed by the international community”.

The notion of 'rogue state' was expounded in 1999 State of Union address and it was an attempt to claim a much needed threat discourse that could give direction to US engagement with the world.

Clinton's vision of a world of deterritorialized dangers grounded in certain territorial "rouge states" is a noteworthy variation on the modern geopolitical imagination. The 'rogue' concept has no basis in the international law. It constituted, rather, a realist component of the early 'selective engagement' policy: a means of mobilizing domestic and international opinion, and ultimately of justifying unilateral American action, against regimes deemed to embody some kind of sustained threat to US interests (Dumbrell, 2002).

The notion of rogue nations can be traced back to Carter administration and it was to continue in the subsequent Bush administration.

### **3.5 Geo-economic Vision**

"Globalization is not something that we can hold off or turn off...it is an economic equivalent of a force of a nature...like wind or water". (President Clinton at Vietnam National University, November 17, 2000)

Geoeconomics was not new as far as the US leadership was concerned. Neil Smith (2003) notes, that the US leadership was aware that the American expansionist project was not to be based on territorial aggrandisement but it was an "economic expansion" based on unhindered international trade under global leadership of US. He argues that in the late nineteenth century when most part of globe was under colonial control US leadership and "capitalist class became increasingly convinced "that global ambition could be satisfied not by territorial acquisition, 1898 notwithstanding, but by economic power in and over the market" (Deborah Cowen and Smith, 2009).

Historically speaking, Post Cold War "US-centred geoeconomics globalism" is not a new phenomenon as it has existed in the past century; firstly as pre World War I Open Door trade policy and post-war reconstruction in Woodrow Wilson administration, secondly with Franklin Roosevelt's "New World Order" and Breton Woods institutions, which was "wrecked on the shoals of the Cold War".

Therefore the end of Cold War was a moment of opportunity as there was no overwhelming security threats to the United States and collapse of communism had

resulted in a worldwide “democratic revolution”. Thus economic expansion was at the forefront of US geopolitical agenda.

In the Post Cold War world geopolitics was an inadequate guide to understand global politics. If geopolitics emerged as a technology and ideology in the creation of global political, economic and cultural geography organized by national states, the erosion of geopolitics also lies in the transformation of that global system (Cowen et al, 2009).

This is a situation of crisis of (modern) geopolitics as an effect of crisis of nation states boundaries. The geoeconomics logic is made simple by Deborah Cowen and Smith (2009). “Where geopolitics can be understood as a means of acquiring territory towards a goal of accumulating wealth, geoeconomics reverses the procedure, aiming directly at the accumulation of wealth through market control. The acquisition or control of territory is not at all irrelevant but is a tactical option rather than a strategic necessity” (Cowen et al, 2009). They argue that is not a situation where geopolitics is replaced by geoeconomics in one dimensional, irreversible manner.

“The rise of geoeconomics calculation is highly uneven temporally as well as spatially, it is episodic, and it can never supplant geopolitics...as a territorial expression of power, geopolitical calculation is not extinguished by this rise of geoeconomics, but it is significantly circumscribed and reworked” (Cowen et al, 2009).

Geopolitics and geoeconomics are to be understood as the alternative strategies in a geo-strategic discourse. Both geopolitics and geoeconomics remain at the disposal of the imperial power and can be utilized in a pragmatic manner.

### **3.6 Successor to the Grand Strategy of Containment: The Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement**

Anthony Lake, President Clinton’s National Security Adviser, in a speech at SIAS, John Hopkins University on September 21, 1993 described how the United States would transform its grand strategy “from containment to enlargement.” “Throughout the Cold War,” Lake explained, “we contained a global threat to market democracies; now we should seek to enlarge their reach, particularly in places of special significance to us. The successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement—enlargement of the world’s free community of market democracies.”

Markets and democracies were Lake's solution to all foreign policy problems: "The expansion of market-based economics abroad helps expand our exports and create American jobs, while it also improves living conditions and fuels demands for political liberalization abroad. The addition of new democracies makes us more secure because democracies tend not to wage war on each other or sponsor terrorism." Supporting markets and democracies, therefore, was both self-interest and the common good (Suri, 2010).

The strategy of enlargement, as an outgrowth of the Cold War doctrine of 'containment' was articulated by President Clinton in his September 27th, 1993 address to United Nations General Assembly in the New York City. President Clinton stated

"In a new era of peril and opportunity, our overriding purpose must be to expand and strengthen the world's community of market based democracies. During the Cold War we sought to contain a threat to the survival of free institutions. Now we seek to enlarge the circle of nations that live under these free institutions. For our dream is of a day when the opinion and energies of every person in the world will be given full expression, in a world of thriving democracies that cooperate with each other and live in peace" (Clinton, 1993).

This emerging doctrine of "democratic enlargement" was elaborated in the National Security Strategy document called "Engagement and Enlargement" document. The National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement was released by the White House in February, 1995. It assesses America's role in this new international context and describes the administration's strategy to advance the US interests at home and abroad.

President Clinton's security strategy had 'economy' at its centre and aimed to "promote prosperity at home by a vigorous and integrated economic policy designed to stimulate global environmentally sound economic growth and free trade to press for open and equal US access to foreign markets" (USNSS, 1995). This strategy is one of the key components of the administration's geopolitical discourse and can be called as the 'geoeconomic discourse'.

The other primary objective that strategy document enlists is "promoting democracy". The objective was to develop "a framework of democratic enlargement that increases our security by protecting, consolidating and enlarging the community of free market democracies". The strategy of promoting democracy was related to the economic agenda of expanding free trade and was a central component of the

administration's security strategy. It was a product of the notion that as free states grew in numbers and strength, the international order would become both more prosperous and more secure.

The geopolitical imagination of Clinton administration was one of an increasingly integrated world. The end of the Cold War signified an opportunity of enlarging and expanding the reach of market democracies.

### **3.6.1 Globalization and the Grand Strategy**

The Clinton administration embraced globalisation as the 'Grand Strategy' of the USA, its two key prongs being the accelerated integration of markets and production by transnational corporations and the creation of a multilateral system of global governance, the pillars of which were the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank ( Bello, 2006).

Michael Walker (1996) writes in *The New Yorker* that "for the steady resolve with which the President has pursued his grand strategy of geoeconomics, that strategy should be dubbed the Clinton Doctrine.... With the support of then Senator Robert Dole and Speaker Newt Gingrich for his free-trading strategy, Clinton managed to forge what looks very much like a new consensus--one based on the vision of a world of free-trading democracies, led by the United States as linchpin and guarantor (Walker, 1996).

Enlisting policy legacies of Clinton administration McCormick (2000) notes that his long term policy bequeath --is the placement of foreign economic policy at the centre of America's international agenda...the bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements negotiated by the administration are, and will remain, a significant policy legacy.

Clinton made his first State of the Union speech on February 17, 1993, that is before he completed his first month in the office that he had assumed on January 20th, 1993. The presidential State of the Union speech is a geopolitical act that may be analysed to explore the geopolitical foci of the United States. It is a combination of practice and representation within a broader context of global geopolitical events and dynamics (Colin et al, 2009).

President's view of Post Cold War world was invariably focussed on economic challenges and opportunities presented to the United States. President Clinton stated "at this historic moment, as communism has fallen, as freedom is spreading around the world, as a global economy is taking shape before our eyes, Americans have called for change".

"Standing as we are on the edge of a new century, we know that economic growth depends as never before on opening up new markets overseas and expanding the volume of world trade. And so, we will insist on fair trade rules in international markets as a part of a national economic strategy to expand trade, including the successful completion of the latest round of world trade talks and the successful completion of a North American Free Trade Agreement with appropriate safeguards for our workers and for the environment" (Clinton, 1993).

To this end a National Economic Council was formed, which would operate in much the same way the National Security Council did, bringing all the relevant agencies together to formulate and implement policy. The initiatives like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), Asia-Pacific Economic Council (APEC) and trade agreements with Japan were part of the strategy of opening new markets for American products and investment and build a global trading system.

Enhancing access to foreign markets through bilateral, regional and multilateral arrangements was a primary goal of the Clinton administration's economic strategy. On regional level NAFTA, Summit of Americas and APEC were the most significant trading arrangements. While the former two were to establish free and integrated markets in the traditional areas of US influence, that is Western Hemisphere. While, APEC sought to open the "fastest growing economies" of South-East Asia for US investment and trade.

On December 3, 1993, President Clinton signed the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA), which created a free trade zone among the United States, Canada and Mexico. Summit of Americas was to accelerate progress towards the hemispheric free trade zone in the region, which is the US largest export market.

In November 1993, President Clinton convened the first-ever summit of the leaders of the economies that constitute the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. U.S. initiatives in the APEC forum will open new opportunities for economic cooperation and permit U.S. companies to become involved in substantial

infrastructure planning and construction throughout the region. The trade and investment framework agreed to in 1993 provided the basis for enhancing the "open regionalism" that defines APEC.

US-Japan Framework for Economic Partnership was established for increasing foreign access to Japanese markets and reducing the trade balances.

The successful conclusion in December 1993 of the Uruguay Round of the negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) significantly strengthened the world trading system. The Uruguay Round accord is the largest, most comprehensive trade agreement in history. For the first time, international trade rules will apply to services, intellectual property and investments, and effective rules will apply to agriculture.

During Clinton administration economic matters took precedence over military matters. His vision was more geo-economic than geopolitical. Simon Dalby (2008) writes about Clinton years:

"Economic matters took precedence, and to the alarm of the neo-conservatives, military matters were seen to be of less importance. Globalisation was more important than pax-Americana; trade liberalisation and financial matters were the order of the day. The political protests of the 1990s were about these matters, the economic dislocations and inequities of neo-liberalism discussed in terms of an anti-globalisation movement, not a matter for either peace or critiques of imperialism" (Dalby, 2008).

### **3.7 Globalization and Imperial Imaginations**

There is a burgeoning scholarship which relates globalization with the US imperial impulse under what is called "new imperialism" (Harvey (2003), Smith (2004)). The most significant aspect of globalization is the 'globe' in the 'globalization'. Its imagination was global in scope and in an operative sense it was about integration and networks and contraction of space. Most significantly this imagination as Harvey argues was absolutely imperial. As he argues that empire is not simply about establishing imperial rule or even commercial supremacy but about extending the logic and imperatives of the domestic economy and drawing others into its orbit (Harvey, 2007).

#### **3.7.1 Neo-liberal Imperialism**

"Imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, is that highest stage of capitalism in which this separation reaches vast proportions. The supremacy of finance capital over all other



forms of capital means the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchy; it means that a small number of financially “powerful” states stand out among all the rest” (Lenin, 1917)

Marxist intellectuals, most notably Vladimir Lenin argued that capitalism has an inherent expansionary component, the need of constant capital accumulation and absorption necessitate a never ceasing expansion.

Harvey (2007) gives a conceptual reformulation of imperial question in relation to the inherent spatiotemporal dynamics of capital accumulation by integrating the a-spatial theory of capital accumulation derived from a reading of Marxist political economy and spatial/geographical theory of imperialism that invokes geopolitical and geoeconomic struggles between nation states. His account is useful in understanding the geoeconomic imperial agenda of the US of opening global markets for American business in various free trade agreements.

Harvey argues that there have been many kinds of empire and we should entertain the idea of many of imperialisms. He argues for a transformation of the conception of empire to one ‘that is not simply about establishing imperial rule or even commercial supremacy but about extending the logic and imperatives of the domestic economy and drawing others into its orbit”.

Globalization is indeed about opening the doors for American products and services and investment that would create jobs and profit for the US. It is the imperatives of domestic economy especially capitalist/business class that is the force behind globalization.

Harvey argues that it is for finding the ways for absorbing the capital surplus that geographical expansion or access to foreign markets becomes of paramount importance. Geographical expansion is one of the most potent of paths for surplus absorption (Harvey, 2007). He speaks of the dialectical relation between the capitalist and territorial logics of power.

Harvey notes that the US imperialism is driven by the capital surpluses and geographical or territorially based practices aimed at its absorption or devaluation. He writes:

“Battering down of the closed doors of other nations, by military, economic, political, subversive or cultural means continues to be central to the way US imperialism both works and legitimises its global actions...What is called globalization is nothing more than a massive

resort to geographical displacement and restructuring, the systematic breaking down of all spatial barriers and the ‘battering down’ of the closed doors of recalcitrant nations (dramatized by the end of the Cold War and the opening of China to capitalists forms of development)” (Harvey, 2007).

Harvey (2001) claims that contemporary form of globalization is another round in the capitalist production and reconstruction of space and interprets globalization in terms of a theory of “the spatial fix”. The spatial fix refers to the physical fixation of capital in places or the spatial expansion of capital activities (Mercille, 2008). Capitalism, he says, is addicted to geographical expansion much as it is addicted to technological change and endless expansion through economic growth. Globalization is the contemporary version of capitalism’s long standing and never ending search for a spatial fix to its crisis tendencies.

What is argued here is that geographical expansion is inherent in the capitalism and its crisis tendencies.

Prabhat Patanaik (2005) argues that the pursuit of neo-liberal policies that is liberalization and privatization has opened up third world economies for capital accumulation through encroachment resulting in centralization of capital on a global scale.

Accumulation through encroachment happens when “certain blocs of capital grow through the displacement (meaning either expropriation, or purchase at “throwaway prices” or snatching away the space) of other blocs, or through the displacement of pre-capitalist production, or through the displacement of State sector production, or through the sheer appropriation of common resources that have hitherto not formed part of private property” (Patnaik, 2005).

Globalization is a “new phase of imperialism” where accumulation through encroachment is happening at a pronounced scale.

### **3.7.2 Imperial Imaginations in NAFTA and Free Trade**

The case of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) gives another insight about the geographical expansion associated with the contemporary imperialism. Banarjee (2007) argues that “that trading economies are likely to coalesce in a particular manner rather than in a random fashion...the process would have an expansionary component, with contiguous territories being added to existing

regional blocs". The point is that geographical expansion takes shape of regional integration. Fernandez (1996) notes that "from a historical perspective, this "integration process" should be seen as a fresh manifestation of the Monroe Doctrine; there is a direct link between NAFTA and the expansionist tradition of the United States". The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) "is reminiscent of an earlier era, when mother countries such as England offered preferential trade terms, or Commonwealth preferences, to their former colonies in order to ensure their continued economic, financial, and political dependence...The motives of the [U.S.] government with regard to Mexico certainly remind us of those of the British Empire." This was written by Robert Kuttner in Business Week in mid-1991.

It can be argued that NAFTA is a contemporary expression of long-standing imperial imagination that sees Western Hemisphere as the backyard of US as it was argued for the first time in the Monroe doctrine.

The global trade and regional trade blocs are presented as a mechanism which will provide investment and technological know-how to developing countries and developed economies will score high growth. But in effect it means that the developing economies are integrated in a way that re-enforces their third world status. The global trading system is premised on the unregulated movement of capital. Capital is moving to the countries where it can make most profits hence it is directed to the countries which have low wage and repressive labour.

These trade arrangements cater to the interests of transnational corporate or international economic elite. These transnational corporations make profit by relocating their factories from high wage areas to low wage and repressive labour areas and in developing countries where they do not have to provide for security of the labour and can also pollute the environment with hardly any responsibility.

Figure: 2 illustrates the impact of free trade on the workers, where shifting of industries leads to loss of jobs for US workers and exploitation of workers in other countries.

Noam Chomsky argues that such agreements have only a limited relation to free trade. One primary U.S. objective is increased protection for "intellectual property," including software, patents for seeds and drugs, and so on. The U.S. International

Trade Commission estimates that American companies stand to gain \$61 billion a year from the Third World if U.S. protectionist demands are satisfied at GATT (as they are in NAFTA), at a cost to the South that will dwarf the current huge flow of debt-service capital from South to North. Such measures are designed to insure that U.S.-based corporations control the technology of the future, including biotechnology, which, it is hoped, will allow protected private enterprise to control health, agriculture and the means of life generally, locking the poor majority into dependence and hopelessness.

### **3.8 Democratic Enlargement**

“Just as democracy helps make the world safe for commerce, commerce helps make the world safe for democracy. It’s a two way street” (Clinton, 1996).

The 1990s also involved an intensive effort to extend the remit of democratic regimes as a strategy of enlargement, a direct reversal of the prior spatial direction of American policy in terms of containment (Dalby, 2008). National Security Strategy document elaborates democratic enlargement as the core strategy and it is argued to have a synergistic relation with the other goals of economic prosperity and security. It states “we believe that our goals of enhancing our security, bolstering our economic prosperity, and promoting democracy are mutually supportive. Secure nations are more likely to support free trade and maintain democratic structures” (USNSS, 1995).

The ideal of free, peaceful and prosperous world and a moral mission of spreading democracy and defending human rights is a permanent feature of American foreign policy (Morgenthau, 1950). In his 1994 State of the Union address President Clinton claimed “ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and stability and build a durable peace is to advance the spread of democracy because democracies don’t attack each other”. However the strategy of “democratic enlargement” was not a “democratic crusade” but it was supposed to be selective and targeted and focus on the regions of geostrategic interests and emerging economies. Enlargement would have to begin with the nations that were well on the way to becoming open-market democracies: the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Rouge or terrorist regimes would be dealt with firmly, if they tried to undermine the new order (Brinkley, 1997). The National Security Strategy document states:



Figure 2: Free Trade and Its Impact on Workers

(Source: Globalization in Pictures, May 1, 2010, URL: <http://jacobsongj.wordpress.com/>)

“Our national security strategy is based on enlarging the community of market democracies while deterring and containing a range of threats to our nation, our allies and our interests. The more that democracy and political and economic liberalization take hold in the world, particularly in countries of geostrategic importance to us, the safer our nation is likely to be and the more our people are likely to prosper” (USNSS, 1994).

The vision of democratic enlargement was econocentric: Only countries with free spending middle classes, it was believed, could become democratic and adopt the Western values of embracing ethnic diversity, protecting citizens’ rights, and cooperating with the world community to stop terrorism (Brinkley, 1997).

Clinton likened enlargement to the old anticommunist theory in reverse: it posited where communist command economies collapsed, free markets would eventually rise and flourish (Brinkley, 1997). In many ways, Clinton’s notion of enlarging the numbers and powers of democracies echoes earlier appeals by Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy. At most Clinton’s policy highlights how “an expanding community of market democracies not only serves our own security interests,” but makes “but makes more reliable partners in trade, in diplomacy, and in the stewardship of our global environment” (Clinton 1993) (Toal, 1994).

### **3.9 Imperial Imaginations in Democracy Promotion**

David Slater (2007) argues that “the desire to penetrate other society and help reorder that society is a key part of the imperial project”. Seen in this light, the mission of democracy promotion translates into an imperial project. The penetrative power of imperialism goes together with a determination to impose a set of institutions and values on to the imperialized society—for example to ‘impose democracy’—and this imposition is rooted in a lack of respect and recognition for the society being penetrated. The geopolitical will to intervene resides with the agents of power working in and through the apparatus of the imperial state (Slater, 2007).

Another important point that Slater makes is about the linkage between democracy promotion and the promotion of free trade. The twin concepts of promotion of democracy and free trade are combined together in the phrase ‘market democracies’. Slater argues that “the appeal and impact of the democratic US political system has been accompanied by an entrepreneurial economic model which emphasizes global free trade and the benefits of competition. In this sense it can be

suggested that the US exports a neoliberal democratic model which represents one form of democratic politics” (Slater, 2007).

The notion of ‘liberal imperialism’ puts the ‘democracy promotion’ project in a historical context and the hegemonic promotion of liberal values that define the American national identity. Liberal imperialism is rooted in the belief that “liberal values are universal and that the intrinsic moral and practical superiority of liberal values gives them the right to claim the future of mankind” (Morgenthau, 1950).

Liberalism has always been a prominent feature of US foreign policy, strongly linked to its leading role in creating the League of Nations and the United Nations, and, since the end of the Second World War, in its promotion of both a liberal international economic order and a political (not economic) version of human rights (Buzan, 2006). Global democratization, in the image of liberal democratic internationalism, emerged from the era of containing communism to become the linchpin of US foreign policy.

Robert L. Ivie (2006) observes the imperial nature of ‘democracy promotion’, which has actually been about “manipulating world’s democratic aspirations”. Ivie refers to what Roger Burbach calls the “the tragedy of American democracy”. A condition in which ~~in which~~ United States manipulates the world’s democratic aspirations to advance capitalism and special economic interests” (Ivie, 2006).

Noam Chomsky (1997) argues that the US democracy promotion is inherently related to promotion of a neo-liberal order. “U.S. is as close to the "ideal case" of state capitalist democracy as can be found and "democracy" abroad must reflect the model sought at home: "top-down" forms of control, with the public kept to a "spectator" role, not participating in the arena of decision-making, which must exclude these "ignorant and meddling outsiders," according to the mainstream of modern democratic theory”.

Chomsky (1997) provides useful insight into the concepts of democracy and markets in their operative sense and he quotes Thomas Carothers, who provides an “insider’s perspective” after having worked on "democracy enhancement" programs in Reagan's State Department. His general conclusion is that the U.S. sought to maintain “the basic order of...quite undemocratic societies” and to avoid “populist-

based change,” “inevitably [seeking] only limited, top-down forms of democratic change that did not risk upsetting the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied” (Chomsky, 1997).

For US democracy amounts to opening up of foreign markets for US business and a control of society by foreign corporations and this connection is often articulated by the President himself at a number of occasions. President states “by expanding trade, we can advance the cause of freedom and democracy around the world. There is no better example of this truth than Latin America, where democracy and open markets are on the march together” (Clinton, 1997).

The author, Sanford Lakoff, singles out the “historic North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)” as a potential instrument of democratization. In the region of traditional U.S. influence, he writes, the countries are moving towards democracy, having “survived military intervention” and “vicious civil war” (Chomsky, 1997).

Chomsky exposes the ‘doublespeak’ in the discourse promoted by authors such as Lakoff. The primary “barriers to implementation” of democracy, Lakoff suggests, are the “vested interests” that seek to protect “domestic markets” - that is, to prevent foreign (mainly U.S.) corporations from gaining even greater control over the society. We are to understand, then, that democracy is enhanced as significant decision-making shifts even more into the hands of unaccountable private tyrannies, mostly foreign-based (Chomsky, 1997).

So it can be argued that imperial expansion in service of economic and strategic interests is pursued under the garb of democracy promotion. As Agnew (2003) points out that empire and republic are contradictory and “explicit territorial control over other places—ones judged as moral and political equivalents (unlike the native Indian groups of North America), at least—has been accepted as problematic unless such control could be placed in some positive relation to the republican mode”.

That republic and empire are inherently contradictory has usually been “resolved” by attempting to practice and portray the expansionist impulse as conforming to at least minimal republican principles: bringing “good government,” expanding “democracy,” building “international community,” and achieving “global consensus” (Monbiot 2003) (Agnew, 2003).



The imperial discourse becomes a democracy discourse. Democratic imperialists marry the realism of Bismarck with the moral sensibilities of Woodrow Wilson. They believe the United States should use its overwhelming military, economic and political might to remake the world in its image -- and that doing so will serve the interests of other countries as well as the United States (Daalder and James M. Lindsay, 2002).

Slater's argument is awake to the discourse evoked by the democratic imperialists. He argues that whilst force has been used, democratic imperialism requires a more subtle and multi dimensional legitimization. This includes the idea that democracy is being called for, or in other words that democracy US style is being invited by people yearning for freedom (Slater, 2007).

### **3.10 Conclusion**

President Clinton, the first Post Cold War president can at best be called a 'globalization president'. His administration strived to formulate an all encompassing doctrine that could succeed Cold War doctrine of 'containment'. The strategy of 'engagement and enlargement' was aimed at expanding the area under market-democracies, was argued to be the successor of 'containment' doctrine. The discourse of globalization had two aspects; one was opening of domestic markets and structural adjustment of economies under the auspices of international institutions and secondly establishing free trade zones. The imperial imagination of the Clinton administration was defined by globalization and was of global scope. However the geographical focus was not even across the globe and was rather selective and focussed "on the regions of geostrategic interests and emerging economies". What has been argued that globalization was rather aimed at providing the 'spatial fix' (Harvey, 2001) to America led capitalism and it sought to extend the logics of American domestic economy to the rest of the world. Intensive globalization brought about major reconfiguration of space and power, with power moving from the nation states to Transnational Corporations and International institutions (largely based in and controlled by the US).

Democracy promotion was imagined as spreading the model of liberal democracy to the areas which were of geostrategic importance and which had been under communist rule before the end of the Cold War. The strategy of democracy

promotion was a subset of the strategy of enlargement and it was driven by econocentric logic. Democracy promotion was a continuation of the Cold War policy of promoting the top-down “liberal democracy” while “manipulating the democratic aspirations” and popular democratic movements across the world. It was consistent with the over-arching aim of making the world political and economic system favourable for the US to do business.

## Chapter-4

### September 11 as a Discursive Event and Geopolitical Discourse of Bush Administration (2001-2009)

#### 4.1 Introduction

George W. Bush, son of a former President, assumed the office of the President of the United States on January 20th, 2001 after defeating then Vice-President Al Gore with a very narrow margin. To many the return of Bush Junior meant picking up from where the Bush Senior had left off. The new administration was to bring pursuit of American primacy and military power to the forefront of foreign policy and bracketed Clinton presidency for squandering the opportunity presented at the end of the Cold War. There are stark differences between the President Clinton and President Bush in their policy priorities, not least because of the differences in party affiliations. While Clinton administration focussed on domestic and economic issues and was known to view foreign affairs through a domestic lens, President Bush “was to lead a revolution in foreign policy” (Greenstein, 2003).

As the Bush presidency unfolded the similarities with the senior Bush administration and the Cold War geopolitical representations and practices became clearer and obvious. The incidence of September 11 was transformative for the Bush presidency and its geopolitical agenda. The notions of ‘war president’, ‘global-ideological struggle’, ‘empire’ and ‘enemies’ returned to dominate the geopolitical discourse, in a way reminiscent of the Cold War era.

September 11 attacks were transformative for Bush administration and ushered in a securitized, militaristic and as this study will argue an imperial discourse. The discourses of empire became particularly powerful in the wake of so called “Bush doctrine” and Iraq war.

Fighting the ‘open-ended’ Global War on Terror, President Bush declared himself a “war president” and it dominated his two terms in office. The “War President’s emphasis on war, terrorism and national security –issues that he said has shaped his presidency and his leadership—was evident in his re-election campaign

and continued in the second term (Mariucci, 2004). However after Iraq War the discourse became less and less credible amongst the American public.

This chapter will analyse the geopolitical discourse of President Bush along three components: definition of America's role in the world and secondly, an analysis of the President Bush's geopolitical representation enemies of the US and thirdly the 'grand strategy' that will advance the US interest.

#### **4.2 9/11 and the Transformed Geopolitical Imagination**

"But on Sept 11, 2001, a different challenge arose to the notion of a global imagination. On 9/11, as the Americans have taught us to call it, the 21st century was born. If, as the historian Eric Hobsbawm has suggested, the 20th century really began with the assassination in Sarajevo that sparked the First World War, it is fair to suggest that, in the impact it has already had on the shape of our era, the 21st century began with the demolition of the World Trade Centre" (Tharoor, 2003).

September 11, 2001, signifying the end of any illusion that the US "homeland" is distant from the rest of the world changed the geopolitical imagination in an irreversible manner. Brands (2010) note that that "the shock of 9/11—the shorthand soon applied to events of September 11, 2001—was unlike anything in American history. He observes that "months of tension, and years of war in Asia and Europe, had preceded the Japanese attack on Hawaii, giving Americans a frame of reference for interpreting the 9/11 attack. More to the point, no one outside Hawaii saw the attack occur; Americans read about it after it was over. The utterly unexpected events of 9/11 unfolded in real time on television in the homes and offices of the entire country" (Brands, 2010).

9/11 attacks revealed a new threat. The new threat was 'unexpected' and 'unknown' and could not be deterred and it required new strategies of response.

Luke Cordon (no year) observes a transformation of what Agnew calls "modern geopolitical imagination", which consists of structuring "practices based on a set of understandings about the way world works". He quotes Zedner (2007), whose notion of 'cultural shift' emphasizes the transformed geopolitical imagination that also underwrites the pre-emption doctrine.

"We are on the cusp of a shift from a post- to a pre-crime society, a society in which the possibility of forestalling risks competes with and even takes precedence over responding to wrongs done"(Zedner, 2007, cited in Cordon, no year) .

This change in geopolitical imagination meant that American public which had been averse to involvement and ground troops in military ventures, especially after Vietnam experience was willing to support an offensive on terrorist, who had violated their sense of security. The reason September 11th attacks were “a transformative moment” was that “it drastically reduced the American Public’s usual resistance to American military involvement overseas, at least for a while (Lehmann, April 1, 2002).

9/11 was significant for it brought military to the forefront of geopolitical discourse and practices. Sept. 11 rubbed in the lesson that global power is still measured by military capability (Igntieff, 2003).

Richard Hass, director of the Office of Policy Planning Staff for the Department of State sums up what the attacks of September 11 meant for the Bush administration.

“The tragic events of September 11, 2001 the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon did not create the post-Post Cold War world. But they helped end the decade of complacency. They forced Americans to see clearly that foreign policy still matters, and that our oceans and our intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) alone do not make us safe. They brought home the stark reality that if we do not engage with the world, the world will engage with us, and in ways we may not like” (Hass, 2002).

#### **4.3 9/11 and Transformation of Presidency**

The successful terrorist attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon and the unsuccessful one directed at the White House and the Capitol were transformative for Bush Presidency. The attacks of 9/11 and Bush’s response to them radically altered his presidency, U.S. foreign policy, and the lives of million people around the world (Brads, 2003).

While 9/11 gave the neo-cons the pretext on which to make their strategy of military primacy the operational code for the American state, it convinced initially ambivalent Bush in favour of assertive engagement. He came to office believing that a confident and unilateral exercise of American power was the best way to promote America’s national interests...rather than transforming Bush’s beliefs about the world and America’s place in it, September 11 confirmed them (Greenstein, 2003).

Nicholas Lemann (2001) writes “it is only now, six months after the attacks that we are truly entering the realm of Presidential choice, and all indications are that Bush is going to use September 11th as the occasion to launch a new, aggressive American

foreign policy that would represent a broad change in direction rather than a specific war on terrorism”.

He imagined and declared himself as the “war president”. “I’m a war president. I make decisions here in the Oval Office in foreign policy matters with war on my mind” said Bush in an interview with NBC on February 9, 2004. War provided legitimacy to George W. Bush as president which his contested election in 2000 had not (Dalby, 2003). John Agnew (2003) comments that President Bush has thrived as Commander-in- Chief of the “good” in the war with “evil,” rather than as the chief executive of the federal government.

#### **4.4 America’s Role in the World**

President Bush, a republican followed the legacy of former republican presidents notably Reagan and Senior Bush. After accepting Republican nomination, George Bush in his acceptance speech before the Republican National Convention, started from the end of the Cold War and the ‘opportunities’ it presented to the United States. “Little more than a decade ago, the Cold War thawed and, with the leadership of Presidents Reagan and Bush, that wall came down. But instead of seizing this moment, the Clinton/Gore administration has squandered it. We have seen a steady erosion of American power and an unsteady exercise of American influence” (Bush, 2000). Bush promised to provide a leadership capable of exploiting that opportunity.

When George W. Bush decided to make the first major foreign policy speech of his quest for the White House, he made a pilgrimage to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. There was intended symbolism. With former first lady Nancy Reagan and Reagan administration Secretary of State George Schultz cheering him on, Bush and his advisers made clear that he wanted to be identified with the man many credit with having been the final straw that broke the back of Soviet communism and ushering in the Post Cold War world (November 29, 1999, Chicago Tribune). However, the connection and continuities with the former Cold War republican administrations became further clear as the administration went on to define its vision of the America’s role in the world.

The President’s foreign policy team was dominated by those who had served in Reagan and senior Bush presidencies and had a Cold War worldview and they were to

have an important role in foreign policy making given Bush's admitted lack of experience in foreign affairs is. President-elect nominated General Colin Powell, who had served as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Bush Senior administration, Condoleezza Rice as national security adviser, who was a member of National Security Council in Bush Senior administration and Dick Cheney was civilian secretary of defence under George Bush Senior. The Economist wrote that "all of these people had had foreign policy experience but their views differed sharply from the foreign-affairs gurus of the outgoing Clinton administration. The result may not be the isolationist policy some commentators have predicted—but if the public positions of General Powell and Ms Rice are any guide, the new Bush administration is likely to take a more stand-offish, unilateral approach, to the consternation of friend and foe alike" (The Economist, December 17th, 2000).

In his inaugural address President Bush reiterated what other presidents had said before him. At the level of broad goals, Bush outlined a foreign policy hardly distinguishable from Bill Clinton's. Like virtually every major presidential candidate since World War II, Bush's foreign policy aspirations were Wilsonian. The United States, he argued, had a "great and guiding goal: to turn this time of American influence into generations of democratic peace" (Greenstein, 2003). President Bush stated in his inaugural address "through much of the last century, America's faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea. Now it is a seed upon the wind, taking root in many nations" (Bush, 2001). In his first address before joint session of Congress on administrative goal, his enunciation of America's role had more in common with the Clinton administration than marking a new innovation. "America has a window of opportunity to extend and secure our present peace by promoting a distinctly American internationalism. We will work with our allies and friends to be a force for good and a champion of freedom. We will work for free markets, free trade, and freedom from oppression". The discourse of freedom, free market and democracy was in conformity with the long term goals of American foreign policy but emphasis on having a "strong military" and "missile defenses" was indicative of the emerging geopolitical discourse.

In his early months in the office or in other words months before incidences of September 11, administration did not make any new foreign policy initiatives but focussed on extracting the US from existing ones. Beginning with the withdrawal of

the United States from Kyoto Protocol, arguing that “idea of placing caps on CO2 does not make economic sense for America”, administration declared its determined opposition to a string of international agreements: a pact to control trafficking in small arms, a new verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court (Greenstein, 2003).

The terrorist attacks of September 11 proved transformative for Bush administration as far as their foreign policy and the role of America in the world was concerned. In the aftermath of September 11, administration found a new enemy which would direct and define America’s role in the world. Post 9/11 American geopolitical discourse became reactive but it can be argued that the terrorist strikes gave America a pretext to pursue an assertively unilateral, militaristic and arguably imperial agenda.

#### **4.5 Threat Discourse: Presidential Representation of September 11**

The discursive structure of Bush administrations geopolitical discourse in the wake of September 11 attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon can be critically analysed to explore the representations of enemy or threat, its geographical specification. It is important to analyse the Presidential discourse for these “discourses seek to monopolize the definition and interpretation of the threats faced by the nation-state” (Toal, 2001). The discursive definitions of administration reflected the previous threat discourses about Nazi Germany and the ‘evil empire’ of Soviet Union, showing a kind of deterministic influence that previous discourses have in shaping subsequent discourses.

##### **4.5.1 Defining the Attacks**

On September 11, President Bush viewed the attack as one on American freedom and way of life. “Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts... America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world” (Bush, 2001).

President saw it as an act of war as he stated—



“On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars, but for the past 136 years they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war, but not at the centre of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks but never before on thousands of civilians. 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, 2001).

What is argued here is that it is for the first time that US was attacked right at its heart in the New York City and Washington and the attack was a surprising one like the Pearl Harbour attack on December 7, 1941.

President Bush maintained that “America was attacked because of what it, rather because of what it does”. President argued that the “symbol of American prosperity” was attacked. Thomas Friedman wrote on September 13, “think of what they hit: the World Trade Center, the beacon of American led capitalism that both tempts and repels them, and the Pentagon, the embodiment of American military supremacy”. The discursive structure on which such reasoning plays is the spatialised separation of cause and effect. Security problems are external to the fundamental operation of the essential elements of the Western system (Dalby, 2005). On the other hand a critical geopolitical analysis will analyse the attacks within the injustices caused by the operation of global economy or as related to American policy, action or lack of it in the Middle-East in particular. This radical separation, the spatialised “Othering” of threats, acts to perpetuate geopolitical knowledge practices that emphasize conflict and militarised understandings of security (Dalby, 2005). Such kind of geopolitical reasoning underwrote the President Bush’s geopolitical discourse about September 11.

#### **4.5.2 Defining the Attackers**

Defining “who attacked our country”, President stated “Al-Qaida is to terror what the Mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money. Its goal is remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere”. Al-Qaida is defined as an ideological enemy, with a vision for the world. President Bush also explicated a coming “global ideological struggle” comparable to ones fought against Fascist Nazi ideology or totalitarian and expansionist Soviet ideologies. President stated “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" (Bush, 2001).

President invoked the imageries of previous struggles and the present one is seen as another in the series of historical struggles against an 'enemy', an 'other'.

Al-Qaida and terrorists were defined as "global terror network" in order to prepare ground for a "Global War on Terror".

#### **4.5.3 Defining the Response: Global War on Terror**

How the incidence of September 11 was discursively defined by the President to the American public and world at large was also related to the counter-strategy that was to follow. Bush saw it as an act of war that necessitated a war in response. Since it was a "global terrorist network" which attacked the United States, the war against them had to be of a global reach.

The attacks were compared with the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941. The comparison is significant as the Pearl harbour attack was followed by American entry in World War II and declaration of war on Japan the very next day. "Mass civilian killings of 9/11 triggered a world war between the United States and a political wing of Islamic fundamentalism, sometimes called Islamism" (The Weekly Standard, 2003).

On September 16, Bush commented to reporters, "This crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take awhile." His use of the word crusade drew instant attention because of its historic and religious connotations. Bush may not have chosen the word intentionally and did not use it subsequently, but he did continue to refer to the terrorists as evildoers or evils (Brads, 2003). Riding the wave of popular support, the president declared a Global War on Terror. "Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda (the terrorist network associated with bin Laden), but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated...Americans should not expect one battle but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen" (Bush, 2001).

#### 4.6 A Critical Analysis of September 11 Attacks and the Global War on Terror

“Mutually exclusive spaces of ‘here’ and ‘there’ and political dyads of ‘us’ and ‘them’ allow us to see the world more clearly, but less honestly” (Jennifer Hyndman, 2003).

Peter McLaren (2003) argues that “we cannot divorce the recent acts of terrorism from their historical contexts”. He argues that it is important to examine the history of US imperialism and the crisis of global capitalism to understand the historically specific backdrop against which hatred of America incubates and terrorism sprouts. This Marxist analysis does not establish a cause and effect relationship, labelling US imperialism as the cause of terrorism rather argues that “US policies and practices are a factor in creating an environment for terrorism” and eschews any simplistic explanation. To say that US imperialism caused the terrorist attacks skips over the notion that acts of terror are often the outcome of an irreducible plurality of causes and overlooks the fact that some forces, such as the terrorist factions of Osama Bin Laden, are as regressive as anything done in the service of US imperialism (McLaren, 2003).

McLaren notes similarities in the reasoning and discourses of US imperialists and terrorist groups namely Al-Qaida. These attacks were, in the words of Peter Hudis (2001), “the reverse mirror image of capitalism and imperialism” and not the opposite of capitalism and imperialism.

Noam Chomsky (2001) reveals how Bush administration justified its own violence of “war on terror” while outlawing and delegitimizing the terrorist violence. He points out that the “control of doctrinal systems” allows them to justify their violence and get their way around. Eqbal Ahmad (1998) observes that the moral revulsion in response to terrorism is highly selective. He writes that “we are to feel the terror of those groups, which are officially disapproved. We are to applaud the terror of those groups of whom official do approve”. These same terrorists were supported and funded by CIA and US administration in “Jihad against Communism” and were proclaimed “heroes” in the US press (McLaren, 2003).

This further exposes the fact that the simplistic explanations provided by the Bush administration is neither historically correct and rather conveniently interprets the events in a way that supports an offensive against the regimes hostile to American

interests. Douglas Kellner (2003) uses the concept of “blowback” developed by Chambers Johnson to expose to US complicity in the emergence of the “Islamic fundamentalist” groups in Afghanistan that were involved in the 9/11 attacks. The term “blowback” refers to the unintended consequences of the policies that were kept secret from the American people. What the daily press reports as the malign acts of “terrorists” or “drug lords” or “rogue states” or “illegal arms merchants” often turn out to be blowback from earlier operations”. He argues that the “events of September 11 can be seen as classic example of blowback”. The events are product of contradictions of US foreign policies in Afghanistan and Middle East.

There are others who see international terrorism as by-product of globalization or as the “dark side of globalization” as called by Colin Powell and former President Clinton. Kellner (2003) argues that the September 11 events dramatized that globalization is a defining reality of our time and that the much-celebrated flow of people, ideas, technology, media, and goods could have a down side as well as an upside, and expensive costs as well as benefits. The 9/11 terror attacks also call attention to the complex and unpredictable nature of a globally-connected networked society and the paradoxes, surprises, and unintended consequences that flow from the multidimensional processes of globalization (Kellner, 2003).

Gerard Toal (2001) notes that the Post Cold War geopolitical condition is characterized by global dangers and is different from the threats that defined the Cold War era. His conceptualization of “global dangers” captures the range of “dangers” and “risk” that are result of the ever expanding technoscientific modernization and globalization.

“Global dangers” are produced not by warring states but by the regular and taken-for-granted operation of technoscientific modernization and capitalist globalization as they expand and deepen our dependence on complex production systems, fossil fuels, information networks and technoscientific processes and products. The contemporary geopolitical condition is characterized by the boomerang effect of technoscientific progress. That which we attribute our prosperity and security to is also that which threatens us with infrastructural vulnerabilities, systemic failure, environmental degradation, and a range of potential catastrophes (Toal, 2001).

What can be argued is that the international terrorism should be seen with the analytical category of borderless “global dangers” rather than in orthodox geopolitical analysis of “national security” in state centric and territorial terms.

The invocation of the term global as the premise for the war on terror immediately confused matters in terms of the specific geographies of danger, but made sense in the terms of the PNAC formulation of America as the pre-eminent global power (Dalby, 2005). He criticises the “distorted geography and geopolitical categories of Global War on Terror”. Getting this geography right suggests that the war on terror is one directly related to matters in the Middle East and the extraordinarily distorted societies based on huge oil wealth, a social order kept in place by American support, both directly in terms of security guarantees and a military presence, and indirectly in terms of business links, arms trading and training of security services of the elites in the Gulf and elsewhere (Dalby, 2005).

The binaries reminiscent of the Cold War discourses were to be seen in the Bush administrations geopolitical discourse. “This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom. Freedom and fear are at war” (Bush, 2001). The purpose of binaries is to provide simplistic explanation and avoid any critical inquiry of the complex geopolitical issues. The binary construction, upheld by the iteration of political ideals through various cultural outlets allowed a political climate whereby “the complexity of global politics was reduced to abstract absolutes” (Agnew, 1998, p210, quoted in Ward, 2011). Douglas Kellner (2003) notes that “all of the rightwing and Bush administration discourses are fundamentally Manichean, positing a binary opposition between Good and Evil, Us and Them, civilization and barbarism. Such dualism can hardly be sustained in empirical and theoretical analysis of the contemporary moment... And associating oneself with “good” while making ones enemy “evil” is another exercise in binary reductionism and projection of all traits of aggression and wickedness on to the “other” while constituting oneself as good and pure (Kellner, 2003).

The use of cultural political ideals performs an important role of redeeming US (in present case) of any accountability in causing the events in present case the terrorist strikes of 9/11. Substituting national identity or a country to far more abstract political ideals such as “freedom” and specification of enemy in equally abstract categories such as “fear” is helpful in constructing grounds for an expansive and open-ended war with loosely defined goals.

## **4.7 Imagining an Axis of Evil**

The discourse of Bush administration consolidated and materialized the threat facing the United States and the “civilized world” in what was called the “axis of evil”. The “axis of evil” discourse made a connection between the “terrorists”, “tyrants” and the potential use “weapons of mass destructions” by them. Such linkages were largely devoid of empirical evidences but they were to play on the sense of insecurity and vulnerability generated in the aftermath of 9/11.

Kerugman (2005) notes that “after 9/11 President declared himself a “war president”. And he kept the nation focused on martial matters by morphing the pursuit of Al-Qaeda into a war against Saddam Hussein”.

President Bush’s second state of union speech on January 29, 2002 was to be remembered as the ‘axis of evil speech’. This was president’s first assertion “to morph the Pursuit of Al-Qaeda into a War against Saddam Hussein” starting with connecting Iraq and Al-Qaeda, a connection that would become increasingly untenable and indefensible for Bush himself.

The notion of the axis of evil is deconstructed and the historically loaded meaning of the “Axis” and the “evil” is discussed.

### **4.7.1 Constructing ‘Axis’ in the Axis of Evil**

Geopolitical threats are important in the sense they provide certainty and direction to the American foreign policy. ‘Scripting’ of axis of evil was revealing in this regard. The Economist (January 31, 2002) wrote that in the speech President made two “broad points”. “He pointed a finger directly at three countries—Iraq, North Korea and Iran—which he accused of arming themselves with weapons of mass destruction and forming that soon-to-be-famous axis of evil. In effect, he pledged to disarm them, whether by military or other means, and to do so sooner rather than later...he made a clear pledge that this would form the core of America’s—i.e., his—foreign policy”.

The “axis of evil” links terrorists with the states, who are alleged to be developing weapons of mass destruction, which they could provide to their terrorist allies.

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic (Bush, 2002).

This “geopolitical script of fear” effectively spatilized threat along an ‘axis of evil’ linking Iran, Iraq and North Korea.

The use of the word “Axis” in the “axis of evil” is not without a historical context. Frum (2003) chose the word with the “Axis Powers” of the World War II in mind as he found similarities in the character of the “Axis Powers” and the terrorist states. He writes:

The Axis was not a union of head and heart like the Atlantic Alliance between the United States and the British Commonwealth. The Axis powers disliked and distrusted one another ...nor did the Axis powers have much in common ideologically ...they shared only one thing: resentment of the power of the West and contempt for democracy.

Drawing parallels between the Axis powers and the so-called terror states, Frum argued that “much as they quarrelled with each other, Iraq, Iran, Hezbollah, and al-Qaeda shared beliefs that harked back to European fascism: disdain for free enquiry and rational thought, a celebration of death and murder, and obsessive anti-Semitism. They all resented the power of West, and they all despised the humane values of democracy”.

Axis of Evil geographically defined the threat by arguing that “together, the terror states and terrorist organizations formed an axis of hatred against the United States” (Frum, 2003).

#### **4.7.2 Constructing ‘Evil’ in the “Axis of Evil”**

The use of word ‘evil’ was significant for its theological and moral overtones. President Bush had used theological words like ‘crusade’ for the war on terrorism, in his unscripted remarks (the word was later renounced by the White House) hence the use of word ‘evil’ was rather a continuation of previous discursive categories. Frum (2003) writes “Gerson (Michael Gerson, Head of the White House Speechwriting Team) wanted me to use the theological language that Bush had made his own since September 11—so “axis of hatred” became “axis of evil”.

This was also consistent with the tradition of using “moralistic abstractions” in geopolitical discourse in which non-democratic and authoritarian governments are always branded as “evil” which has to be eliminated and the contest between democratic and non democratic nation states is portrayed as a contest between “good” and “evil” (Morgenthau, 1950).

Gerard Toal (2001) notes that “the catastrophic terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 have generated a strongly moral and religious geopolitical discourse that envisions a permanent war between virtuous civilized states and barbarian networks of global terrorists and those that harbour them. The failed state of Afghanistan, however, is a poor and absurd substitute for the USSR’s Cold War role as the territorial home of evil”.

#### **4.7.3 Warning to Potential Aggressors**

David Frum (2003) one of the speechwriters who were instrumental in scripting “axis of evil speech”, reveals the logics that played in constructing the term “axis of evil”. He starts by drawing comparison to what Pearl Harbour meant for FDR as he reads the speech he made in aftermath of Pearl harbour and before Germany declared war against USA. “For FDR, Pearl Harbour was not only an attack—it was a warning of future and worse attacks from another, even more dangerous enemy. The soft-on-Iraq lobby promised that Saddam Hussein could be deterred forever. But if deterrence always worked, there would never have been a Pearl Harbour”. Hence, deterrence was considered dead (President would denounce deterrence later in his West Point speech).

The use of word ‘axis’ betrays a comparison of the so called “rouge states” with the Axis powers of the World War II. Frum (2003) argues that Japan and Germany were ‘reckless’ to attack the United States. “Unlike Stalin, Hitler was reckless, and the Japanese even more so—and it was this recklessness that made the Axis such a menace to world peace. Saddam was as reckless as the Japanese had been. He had started two mad wars already—one against Iran, one against Kuwait...no country on earth more closely resembled one of the old Axis powers than present day Iraq”.

The recklessness of Iraq combined with possession of nuclear weapons made Iraq as a threat comparable to most dangerous of the Axis powers (Frum, 2003). Frum argues that “just as FDR saw in Pearl Harbour a premonition of even more terrible



attacks from Nazi Germany, so September 11 had delivered an urgent warning of what Saddam Hussein could and almost certainly would do with nuclear and biological weapons. The more I thought about it, the more the relationship between the terror organizations and the terror states resembled the Tokyo-Rome-Berlin Axis (Frum, 2003).

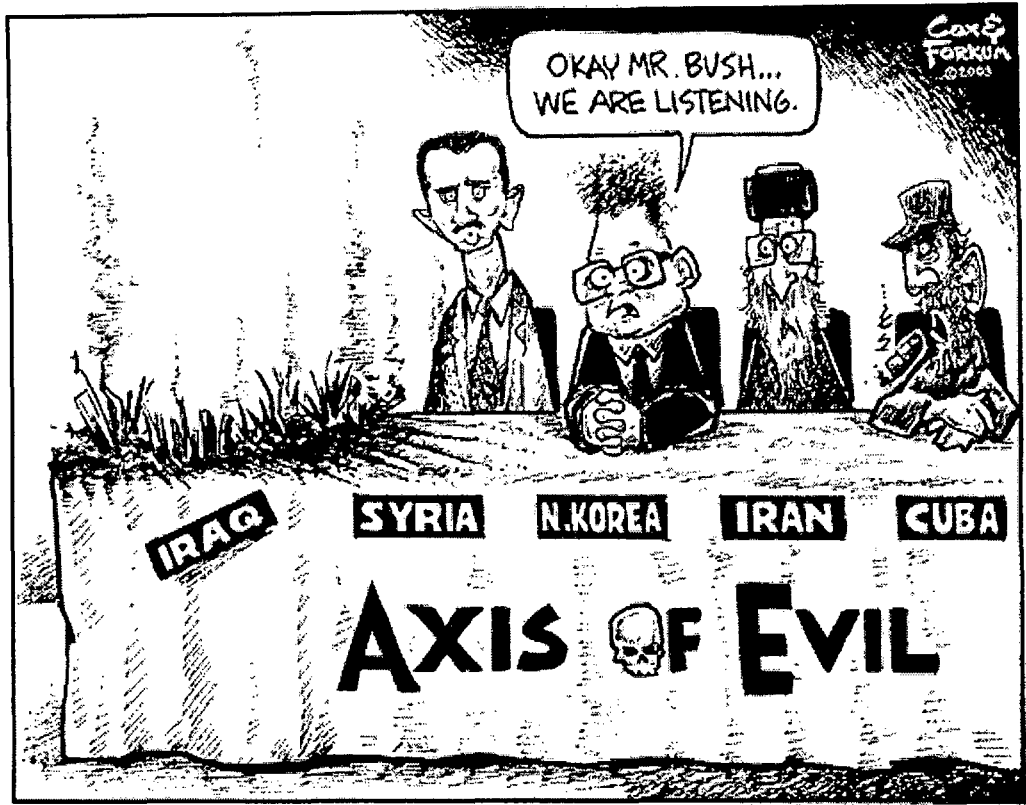
It warns those failing to adopt US values (principally liberal 'representative' democracy and market capitalism), that they will be excluded from an American centric world (Bialasiewicz et al, 2006). Figure: 3 illustrate the imagination behind the axis-of-evil. The Bush administration thought that the act of singling out countries and then undertaking military action against one should deter the others from their anti-American course of action.

#### **4.8 Claiming of Ideological Hegemony**

“America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere. No nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them. We have no intention of imposing our culture -- but America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law ... limits on the power of the state ... respect for women ... private property ... free speech ... equal justice ... and religious tolerance” (Bush, 2002).

The articulation of liberal values as “true and unchanging for all people everywhere” is in continuation of what has been called “liberal imperialism”. Liberal imperialism is rooted in the belief that “liberal values are universal and that the intrinsic moral and practical superiority of liberal values gives them the right to claim the future of mankind” (Buzan, 2006).

The invocation of values is essential to sell a war to the American public, who has to pay for it but a rigid set of 'non-negotiable' standards can upset those allies who do not measure up to these standards and formation of any potential coalition. “This policy would be steered by a clear set of values: “non-negotiable demands”, no less, of human dignity”. Invocation of values was anything but new for an American President and more so for Bush. “What is important here, though, is how the talk could bite. Many of America's allies do not meet his list of values, let alone its enemies... the danger that President Bush might take too rigid an approach, with a ruinous effect on his other foreign-policy goals, is particularly acute in the Middle East (The Economist, January 31, 2002). But as often is the case, interests will take precedence over values.



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**Figure 3: Axis of Evil – Warning to Potential Aggressors**

(Source: North Korea Hearts Freedom, Sends Cartesian plane of Terror into Chaos, June 26, 2008,

URL: <http://mssassypants.wordpress.com/2008/06/>)

#### 4.9 Geopolitics of Fear: Imagining an Iraqi Threat

An important aim of “axis of evil” discourse was to prepare grounds for a pre-emptive war against Iraq. And hence the justification for such a war can be provided by linking the Iraq with terrorist and fear of another 9/11 like terrorist attack or still worse if Iraq provides terrorists weapons of mass destructions. President asserted “I will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons”.

Gerard Toal (2003) notes the geopolitical window of opportunity provided by the 9/11 attacks and how it was exploited and manipulated to invade Iraq, which did not have any connection with perpetrators of 9/11 attacks and perpetuate an open ended war.

“In the geopolitical window of opportunity generated by September 11, 2001, the Bush administration interpreted the attacks in a sweeping, simplistic, and politically opportunistic manner, and after a brief war against Afghanistan, turned its “war against terrorism” into a campaign against the regime of Saddam Hussein” (Toal, 2003).

The issue of Iraq when seen in the light of September 11 looked rather different. September 11 provided those who wanted to topple Saddam Hussein’s regime an opportunity to make a case for a pre-emptive war against Iraq.

“Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world” (USNSS, 2002).

President Bush effectively spatialized and defined Iraq as different from the “civilized world” and as a regime “supporting terror”, “murdering its own citizens” and “has something to hide”. The ideas about openness appear in this discourse and lack of openness becomes a site, where fears can be projected and discourses of ‘danger’ can be produced. “The climate of fear in the aftermath of 9/11 and the apathy and/or lack of knowledge about the Middle East among most Americans, constituted the context for the steady support for the war on Iraq inside the US” (Ghadban, August 10, 2003, Al-Jazeera).

“While no connection has ever been uncovered between Bin Ladin and the regime of Saddam Hussein, the neocons seized the opportunity to make the hypothetical scenario of a potential connection between Saddam Hussein and Bin Laden. Such a scenario was based on two erroneous assumptions: One is that Iraq had massive quantities of chemical and biological weapons, and the other that Saddam would be willing to supply such weapons to al-Qaida in the fight against a common enemy. After the events of 11 September 2001 the change of focus onto Iraq was a natural progression for the neocons” (Ghadban, August 10, 2003, Al-Jazeera)

Mathew Sparke (2007) calls this “geopolitics of fear”. Speaking of the geopolitical discourse about the threats posed by Saddam Hussein, Sparke notes two big fears dominated that this discourse. “The first fear was that the Hussein’s regime possessed weapons of mass destruction, or WMD, and the second was that these WMD could easily be passed on to terrorist because of ties between Hussein and Al-Qaeda”.

#### **4.10 Bush Doctrine: the Grand Strategy**

Julian Mericille (2008) argues that the geographical and historical contingencies or crises are used to justify military expenditure and interventions and that the fundamental roots of such expenditures were inherently geopolitical and geoeconomic lying in American attempts to organize the post war world economy along capitalist lines. And September 11 is the latest episode in the long series of such crises. Terrorist strikes at the heart of US resulted in the loss of security long provided by oceans and the fact that no major war was ever fought on the US mainland. This “newfound sense of vulnerability” and quest for security gave way to declaration of an open ended war against a global enemy.

Bush’s National Security Strategy was published in September 2002. The Bush USNSS offers the most comprehensive statement to date of America’s globe-straddling Post Cold War ambitions (Bacevich, 2002).

Dalby (2005) observes that the strategy that unfolded in the wake of 9/11 was not completely new as there were “notable continuities in geopolitical thinking since the end of the Cold War”. He argues that it is important to read this sequence of documents, from the defence guidance documents through PNAC (Project for New American Century) and on to the National Security Strategy of 2002, as having considerable continuity. Then it is easy to understand that 9-11 gave the neo-cons the pretext on which to make their strategy of military primacy the operational code for the American state.

USNSS, 2002 states a “distinctly American Internationalism” as the bases of its national security.

“The U.S. national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better. Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity” (USNSS, 2002).

Bacevich (2002) argues that “the Bush strategy does qualify as truly distinctive in one specific sense: its fusion of breathtaking utopianism with barely disguised machtpolitik”. On the one hand it declares that “United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world”. It argues that increasing integration and openness, both political and economic will make the world a “better and safer” place.

Then it also states that in the new world order that US seeks to make will be underwritten by “unparalleled military strength” of US as it repeatedly asserts the right of the US to act pre-emptively.

Much like his predecessor Clinton, American mission is identified as the one of “expand(ing) the circle of democracies by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy. Like his predecessor Bill Clinton, he is certain that the United States has deciphered the deepest secrets of history and understands its direction and purpose. There is, he declares, only “a single sustainable model for national success,” one to which all people aspire and to which all societies must ultimately conform. That model is ours (Bacevich, 2002). Free trade, free markets, liberty and peace are the supposed universals in the National Security Strategy document and America is situated alongside all states seeking such goals (Dalby, 2005).

These claims are part of the routine exercise of American exceptionalism, which forms the bedrock of American engagement with the rest of the world.

The Bush administration’s grand strategy reeks of imperial hubris. Yet one may also detect in its sabre-rattling occasional notes of desperation. America today is, by any measure, the most powerful nation on earth, enjoying a level of mastery that may exceed that of any great power or any previous empire in all of history (Bacevich,

2002). What qualifies for an innovation or the status of presidential doctrine was the right of waging a pre-emptive war.

#### **4.10.1 The Grand Strategy and the Pre-Emptive War**

President Bush in his speech to the cadets at West Point argued that the war on terror was not a defensive one and it would “confront the worst threats before they emerge”.

“Yet the war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge...A military that must be ready to strike at a moment's notice in any dark corner of the world. And our security will require all Americans to be forward looking and resolute, to be ready for pre-emptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives” (Bush, 2002).

He declared in the same address that “the Cold War strategies of deterrence and containment still apply in some instances. But new threats also require new thinking”. “Deterrence--the promise of massive retaliation against nations--means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies”. Thus, pre-emption, striking before the enemy does, sooner rather than later (The Weekly Standard, June 17, 2002).

The National Security Strategy document concretised the pre-emptive war doctrine. Arguing a changed geopolitical condition, validity of deterrence is repudiated owing to what is called a “profound transformation” of the security environment and a case is made for ‘pre-emptive wars’. The documents argues that the strategy of deterrence, and “mutually assured destruction” of states that prevented the Soviet Union and the U.S. from annihilating each other, was now outdated and it did not and could not deter terrorists “who are organized to penetrate open societies and to turn the power of modern technologies against us”.

“Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the federal government. Today, the task has changed dramatically. Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capacities to endanger America. Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring chaos and sufferings to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank. Terrorists are organized to penetrate open societies and to turn the power of modern technologies against us...When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology—when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations” (USNSS, 2002).

Legitimacy for pre-emptive war is derived from assertions about the existence of an imminent threat. “We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries. Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means” (White House, 2002). Secondly, potential transfer of WMDs to terrorists by rogue states was effectively argued to support the case for pre-emptive strikes.

“The United States has long maintained the option of pre-emptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction— and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act pre-emptively” (USNSS, 2002).

In order to make grounds for pre-emptive action, fear is given precedence over certainty and fact as prevention and pre-emption are justified by possibility of a dooms’ day scenario. As President Bush stated in his UN speech (September 13, 2002), “the first time we may be completely certain he has nuclear weapons is when, God forbid, he uses one. We owe it to all our citizens to do everything in our power to prevent that day from coming”.

A pre-emptive war aimed at eliminating threats before they develop suggests the possibility of an all-seeing-eye or panopticon. Constant possibility of observation is expected to securitize societies’ unconscious minds (Corden, no year).

Mohamed Sid-Ahmed (2002) captures the anticipatory nature of pre-emptive doctrine in what he calls ‘anticipatory-war’. The aggressive doctrine of ‘anticipatory-war’ (which contemplates not just pre-emption in the narrow sense, when an attack seems imminent, but preventive action taken before a threat even emerges), became a principle of US foreign policy even before the events of 11 September.

“With no other state capable of challenging its military might, the balance of terror suddenly vanished. Nothing could hold Washington back from striking the first blow in case of war. Thus, the United States could wage an anticipatory strike -- a pre-emptive war -- with total impunity, without fear of any retaliatory measures” (Ahmed, 2002).

Najib Ghadhbhan (2003) argues that it was “to justify targeting Iraq and to dress up their motives in the language of terrorism prevention, the Bush Administration devised the principle of “pre-emptive strike”. He argues that “the war on Iraq was planned over several years, promoted by an influential group of neo-conservatives,

made possible by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and marketed by the right-wing pundits and media”.

It is the doctrine of per-emption that fanned the talk of an empire. “In an era where old forms of deterrence and traditional assumptions about threats no longer held, “the logic of neo-imperialism” has simply become “too compelling to resist” (Cox, 2003).

Simon Dalby (2008) points out that “as far as the military attempts to dominate many parts of the globe are concerned, it (US) is acting in an imperial manner. Michael Ignatieff (2003) argues that the unilateral exercise of military power especially in toppling hostile regimes by United States of America that has brought the notion of empire back in the geopolitical discourses. He argues that “regime change is an imperial task par excellence, since it assumes that the empire’s interest has a right to trump the sovereignty of a state.

Thus, it can be argued that the grand strategy of Bush administration was premised on the use of unilateral military power, which could be used to topple regimes considered hostile to US national interests.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

From the beginning the Bush administration exhibited a unilateralist posture, as US withdrew from international treaties and commitments such as Kyoto protocol and International Criminal Court and ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) treaty. The September 11 attacks of World Trade Center and Pentagon proved transformative for the American geopolitical imagination, the presidency and its geopolitical discourse. 9/11 provided an opportunity for militaristic and securitized geopolitical practices and discourse.

The discourse that unfolded in the wake of attacks, namely the manner in which attacks were interpreted and responded was similar to the Cold War discourse in its uses of binaries and cultural and political ideals of democracy, freedom and liberty.

The Global War on Terror was discursively defined in terms of the “civilization’s fight” and “world’s fight” and its imagination was global in scope. This



open-ended war with loosely defined goals placed emphasis on use of military power as the most influential instrument in shaping the geopolitical order.

The imperial geopolitical practices and discourses became unmitigated as the Iraqi threat was discursively materialized leading to invasion of Iraq and toppling of Saddam Hussein regime. The notion of axis-of-evil and the subsequent invasion of Iraq suggests that the war on terror was effectively morphed into a war against anti-American states, especially the ones (such as Iraq and secondly Iran) geopolitically and geo-economically important.

The discourse of threats and war dominated the two terms of the “war president” George W. Bush.

## **Chaper-5**

### **Conclusion**

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study as well as comments upon the research objectives and validates hypotheses outlined in the introductory chapter.

#### **5.1 Practical Geopolitical Reasoning of American Geopolitics from 1993 to 2008**

Practical geopolitical reasoning is the reasoning relating to the policy making domain of the statecraft. It is practical because it is the reasoning of those who can be called practitioners of geopolitics. This reasoning is a commonsensical kind of reasoning and is reflected in the manner statesman choose to represent the world and the geopolitical conditions.

In the Post Cold War era, defining and representing the geopolitical condition fell on the President Clinton. After running a successful campaign based on largely domestic and economic issues, Clinton was faced with the task of defining the Post Cold War era and the America's role in it, its grand strategy and the enemies and threats.

What followed for practical geopolitical reasoning for Clinton administration was not an innovation but reflected on the ethos and views of the Democratic Party. It was Wilsonian internationalism that was at the base of the Clinton geopolitical reasoning as it sought to promote liberal democracy and free-market across the globe.

Liberalism has been a guiding principle in American engagement with the outside world. After the cold war in which the political and economic principles of liberal democracy and free market had won over Communism and centrally planned economy, the former were argued to be as universal. Francis Fukuyama argued that the end of cold war also mean "end of history ". He argued that history as "single, coherent and evolutionary process" had come to an end "with the liberal democracy remaining as the only coherent political aspiration that spans different regions and cultures around the globe". And liberal principles in economics—the "free market"

was argued to be the most successful model to bring prosperity for both the industrially developed countries and the third world.

Such beliefs went into the making of the strategy of engagement and enlargement, which was presented as the successor of the cold war strategy and principle of containment.

Secondly, trans-nationalization and de-industrialization that is loss of manufacturing and shift to services had resulted in the loss of jobs, called the “great sucking sound” by Ross Perot. Clinton entered the office campaigned almost exclusively on domestic issues (Brads, 2003). “It is economy, stupid” campaign gave way to a geopolitical logic that argued about the “inexorable force of globalization”.

President Clinton saw the Post Cold War era as an opportunity to expand the free markets and democracy to the world and he argued that this strategy will avail American people with more jobs as the American export expands, more opportunities to American business as more countries open their markets for trade and the world would be a safer place as more and more countries become democratic and multi-cultural. This was the geopolitical reasoning of globalization and what was called the strategy of engagement and enlargement.

The geopolitical reasoning and the subsequent discourse of the Clinton presidency had originated in a situation where they had substantial freedom while deciding on their grand strategy and America’s role in the world as they did not face any overwhelming threat or any other geopolitical imperative. So the administration had to deploy what were called ‘Kennan sweepstakes’ to come up with an all encompassing doctrine that will give coherence to Clinton foreign policy.

However, in the case of George W. Bush such freedom was absolutely absent given the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Post 9/11, the administration’s geopolitical reasoning and its geopolitical discourse was reactive. However, the crisis did shape the geopolitical reasoning and the discourse but the beliefs and worldview of the statesman, especially the president rooted in his own historical experience and understanding had a significant bearing on what followed for geopolitical reasoning and discourse in Bush administration.

One of the most important aspects of the geopolitical reasoning of the Bush administration was its similarities with the Cold War geopolitics. This reasoning operated in terms of binaries of 'us' and 'them'. The geopolitical struggle was represented in abstract concepts such as war between 'freedom' and 'fear' or struggle between 'civilization' and 'enemies' of civilization. The notion of "axis-of-evil" had obvious similarity to the Reagan's notion of Soviet Union as the "evil empire".

The second most important aspect of geopolitical reasoning in the wake of 9/11 was that it provided an opportunity for pursuing an assertive and militaristic geopolitics. The war on terror was defined as an open-ended war of global reach. Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated...Americans should not expect one battle but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen" (Bush, 2001).

The war on terrorism quickly morphed into a war against the anti-American regimes or what was called the 'axis-of-evil'. This geopolitical reasoning emphasized on military means and even unilateral exercise of force in order to eliminate the threats facing the United States of America.

## **5.2 Empire in the Geopolitical Discourses in the Post Cold War Era**

The Cold War saw a contest between two opposing blocs led by the United States and the Soviet Union. Both superpowers exercised hegemony with the blocs they controlled. The end of cold war left what was called a unipolar world (Charles Krauthammer, 1991) in which United States was the sole superpower.

In the beginning of the study it was argued that "empire is a result of nation states' urge for 'shaping' the global space or establishing order". In the Post Cold War era, the efforts to shape and revamp global economic and political order were conceived in terms of global scope.

In Post Cold War era the US geopolitical imagination and the geopolitical practice operated at the global scale. Whether it was the "inexorable force of globalization" or the "Global War on Terror" their imaginative geographies were global in scope.

Globalization was argued to be natural and inevitable. It was a tool to export market democracies across the world. Globalization discourse sought to dismantle the boundaries between the inside and outside, the domestic and the foreign. The scale of spatiality was global. David Slater (2007) argues that “the desire to penetrate other society and help reorder that society is a key part of the imperial project”. Globalization, with its emphasis on openness and integration and neo-liberal model that was projected globally was indeed an imperial practice. The notion of global economy was an important innovation as it was about re-ordering the global economy to the advantage of global capitalist class.

The regional blocs particularly NAFTA and APEC were prominent expression of the exercise of US geo-economic power and reflected the strategic/territorial ambition of the United States of America.

The talk of empire becomes far more evident in the geopolitical discourses of the Bush administration. It was the unilateral and pre-emptive exercise of military power to fulfil geopolitical ends, that fanned the talk of empire with respect to the geopolitical practices in the post 9/11 era. As United States invaded Iraq in face of international protest and with what President Bush called the “Coalition of willing”, it became clear that US was willing to go alone in order to pursue its geopolitical ends.

Post 9/11 geopolitical discourse was securitised and militaristic discourse that justified what was called the Global War on Terror. The so called Global War on Terror itself became an imperial war when Iraq, a country which was not related to perpetrators of terrorist violence against the United States of America was invaded.

Much like the globalization discourse, the geopolitical discourse of the Bush administration also sought to legitimize the use of force for organizing the Post Cold War global economy along the capitalist lines.

### **5.3 September 11 and Discourses Of Empire**

The discourses of empire are the discourses which operate in terms of global scale, wherein use of military force is justified in the name of freedom and security of abstract concepts such as civilization. Imperial discourses are those wherein ideals and principles of one country or culture are projected as universal, applicable to all the regions. Imperial discourses are those wherein complex geopolitical problems are

reduced to simplified equations and other possible or alternative discourses are sidelined and delegitimized. The discourses that emerged in the wake of 9/11 had many of these attributes.

Bush administration interpreted the 9/11 attacks as an act of war against United States of America and subsequently declared a Global War on Terrorism to eliminate a terrorist outfit which was argued to be of global reach. President Bush declared what he called a “long and open ended war” that began with war against Taliban in Afghanistan followed by the invasion of Iraq. Present Bush argued “Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda (the terrorist network associated with bin Laden), but it does not end there” (Bush, 2001).

Bush administration’s Global War on Terror is a classic example of imperial discourse. The use of word ‘global’ confuses matters in terms of specification of areas of action and rather enlarges it to a global scale. In effect it legitimized the expansion of American military presence on a global level.

Post 9/11 the American geopolitical discourse became primarily a threat discourse, where the cause of fighting global terrorism became the defining feature. Most importantly, President Bush sought to prolong the mandate of fighting an enemy by discursively constructing and imagining new enemies.

The single most important attribute of post 9/11 geopolitical discourse and which underscores its imperial aspects was that it sought to justify unilateral use of military force by the United States. Not just that, the unilateral military force was used in the imperial task of regime change.

The following discourse of “axis of evil” went beyond the agenda of eliminating terrorists that had wide support of international community. Axis of evil identified the three regimes—Iraq, Iran and North Korea which were hostile to American interests. Axis of evil argued a problematic link between these regimes and the terrorist outfit involved in 9/11 attacks and the US administration indicated its intentions military action against these states. International community opposed the military action against the three states singled out by the US President. But the United States invaded Iraq, while violating the will of its European partners and international community.

Secondly, President's articulation of America's right of pre-emptive war which sought to "forestall hostile attacks" and anticipatory action against countries with potential threats was an example of imperial imagination par excellence. The right of pre-emption, while claimed for United States of America, it was effectively denied to any other country. It promised the use of unilateral military action against any country which United States deemed as a threat.

By claiming the right of pre-emptive war, the United States assumed an arbitrary and imperial power of acting on its will without any regard for the will of international community or the United Nations. In this way the US freed itself from any binding international norms and became a unilaterally acting imperial power.

The right to wage a pre-emptive war was justified by existence of an imminent threat. This threat was more imaginary than real as it was discursively constructed in an exaggerated manner.

Before the Iraq invasion, President and his administration played what is called "geopolitics of fear" and imagined an Iraqi threat. The administration argued that the Iraq which is building of WMDs was capable of supplying them to the Al-Qaeda. Both the assumptions proved erroneous. Iraqi threat proved to be a hypothetical one and later on it became unsustainable for even the President to defend it. Five years after the Global War on Terror was started, President said in an interview to CBS evening news anchor that "one of the hardest parts of my job is to connect Iraq to the war on terror" (Bush, 2006).

Iraq war was an imperial war as US invaded Iraq amidst international protest and many countries of the NATO alliance that was fighting Taliban in Afghanistan did not support. Invasion of Iraq significantly weakened "European Unity and United Nations" (see Farid Zakaria (2003) "Arrogant Empire"). It was an example of how Bush administration took the opportunity of fighting terrorist to serve its larger geopolitical and geoeconomic interests.

#### **5.4 Continuation with the Cold War Geopolitical Discourse**

As the Cold War was discursively waged as a fight between the opposing cultural ideals namely liberal democracy and 'capitalism' versus 'communism', the Global War on Terror was also discursively defined by the President Bush as a fight

between 'freedom' and 'fear'. These simplistic discursive categories preclude any debate on the as far as the causes of crisis are concerned and the gloss of abstract ideal is used to facilitate the pursuit of a military force to vanquish the ones defined as enemy.

Geopolitical struggles are often defined in ideological terms. The discourse of Bush administration in the wake of 9/11 attacks was constructed around abstract and ideological concepts such as 'civilization', 'evil' serve to sustain the ideological hegemony of the US. Presidential discourse during the war on terror used the discursive categories of Cold War geopolitical discourse.

The use of religious and moralistic categories is also visible in the discourse of the Global War on Terror. The terrorists and later on the so called terror states were defined as the 'evil' or the 'evildoers', which is in line with the representation of the Soviet Union as the "evil-empire".

President Reagan's Manichean geopolitical vision of Cold War being "a struggle between right and wrong and good and evil" was reflected in the President Bush's proclamation of "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists". This discourse was again indicative of the Cold War imaginary geography that sought to divide the world in neat, binary geopolitical divisions.

The self-righteous and morally condescending attitude of the President Bush was a conspicuous feature of the Presidential discourse. President Bush said in his speech to the cadets at West Point that "some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different methods, but not different moralities" (Bush, 2002).

On a broader level, the guiding philosophy of both the Cold War and later on the Global War on Terror was same. Cold War was primarily waged against the countries which did not follow liberal democracy and market capitalism and it sought to contain the spread of communism. In the same way as the discourse of the 'axis of evil' points out, the Global War on Terror targeted countries who presented a challenge to America led capitalism and did not follow liberal democracy.

And the discourse of democracy promotion that was central to both the Clinton and the Bush administration was underpinned on the longstanding belief of



universality of American ideals. As Desmond King (2006) argues that the “Cold War years tied the US foreign policies to democratic values and their defense internationally”, the Post Cold War geopolitical discourse and practice continued on the same trajectory.

As far as the geopolitical practices are concerned post 9/11 era was defined by assertive and militaristic approach reminiscent of Cold War era, where use of force was justified in fighting an overwhelming enemy. In post 9/11 era, threat of terrorists and hostile regimes wielding weapons of mass destruction which could be passed on to terrorists was constructed to legitimize military action against countries such as Iraq.

In the Post Cold War era US geopolitical discourse has continued to reflect an imperial imagination which functions on a global level. The geopolitical discourses of globalization and the Global War on Terror were the bedrock of the imperial discourse during Clinton and the Bush presidency, respectively. The Post Cold War geopolitical discourse and practice has been calibrated to the overarching geopolitical goal of establishing liberal democratic political order and free-market economic order, which have been the overarching principles for the conduct of US foreign policy in the Post War era. Post 9/11, the war against terrorism has come to the forefront of the geopolitical agenda, and military actions were also legitimized in the name of bringing democracy and integrating countries such as Iraq with the global economic order.

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