

WORLD GEOPOLITICS AND AMERICA'S GRAND NATIONAL STRATEGY: INSEPARABLE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIALOGUES

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ABSTRACT

This work aims to analyze the epistemological connection between world geopolitics and the national security strategies of the United States of America. In this sense, within the framework of the post-Eurocentric world, studies are conducted on the North American strategic models and their impacts on the formation of the geopolitical world. To do so, we study the main global strategies of the United States, from the strategic model of the Containment of George Frost Kennan to the Trump Doctrine of America First, first passing through the strategic paradigm of Bill Clinton's Engagement and Enlargement, by the strategic construction of the Bush Doctrine of the post-September 11 era, and finally by Barack Obama's National Rebuilding and Global Leadership Strategy. In this sense, today's international relations scholar has the task of identifying the inseparable links between global geopolitics and the evolution of North American strategic thinking.

Keywords: National Strategy of Containment. National Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement. Bush Doctrine (Defending The Nation Against Its Enemies). Obama Doctrine (Nation Renewal and global leadership). Trump Doctrine (Making America Great Again)..

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INTRODUCTION

The scholar of contemporary international relations, regardless of whether he is of geopolitical or internationalist inclination, must be able to understand the epistemological links that bind the actions of central states and their respective structures of hegemonic power, which intermingle in such a way they end up building a specific world order paradigm.

In fact, since the emergence of the post-1648 Westphalian world, the center of world geopolitics has been devising strategic archetypes that transcend the scope of mere nationality to invade the territoriality of other countries, thus shaping the international landscape according to its own vital interests².

That is why this academic work aims to systematize the inseparable epistemological dialogues between the post-Eurocentric world (post-World War II world) and the great national security strategy (NSS) of the United States.

We intend therefore to examine each of these North American archetypes, with the academic desire to understand their meaning, to organize them systematically and, finally, to point out, in conceptual terms, their theoretical foundation. It is our strong conviction that the 21st century strategist has the challenge of understanding the evolution of world order paradigm in light of these great American strategies, as they are in essence the genesis of its construction.

Therefore, one must examine five major US strategies from the end of World War II to the present day:

a) Containment Strategy (Kennan Doctrine), a strategic paradigm designed to halt Soviet expansion and was enforced throughout the Cold War³;

b) Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (Clinton

² This means that to examine the international conjuncture of a certain epoch in the history of humankind does not mean to evaluate the reflexes of the great national strategies of hegemonic powers, which are projected on the other states of the international system. As André Beaufre points out, "strategy should not be a single doctrine, but a method of thinking, allowing for the classification and ranking of events and then choosing of the most effective procedures. Each situation corresponds to a particular strategy; every strategy may be the best at one possible juncture, and detestable at other junctures. That is the essential truth. (BEAUFRE, 1998, p. 20).

³ Under the generic label of Containment Geostrategy, a series of United States foreign policies aimed at stopping the spread of communism across the planet. Their main creator was George Frost Kennan.

Doctrine), conceived in the early 1990s and developed from the collapse of the Soviet Empire, being the basis for the phenomenon of economic globalization⁴ ;

c) War on Terror Strategy (Bush Doctrine), a post-September 11 configuration whose dominant line is the imposition of the so-called *pax americana*, here envisioned as a unipolar order based on the “either with me or against me” worldview⁵ ;

d) Transatlantic Alliances Strategy (Obama Doctrine), a strategic archetype that seeks to reconstruct US hegemony from the resumption of its global leadership and economic aggrandizement⁶ ;

e) “America First” Strategy (Trump Doctrine), a strategic conception that denies the triad theory and lays the foundations for the era of economy (de)globalization and US international isolationism⁷ .

Therefore, it is urgent to move to the centrality of contemporary academic studies, the epistemological dialogue that is formed between two distinct scientific orders, namely: the evolution of the world geopolitical order on the one hand, and the evolution of national security strategies of the United States on the other.

With such intellection in mind, it is easier to read world order or disorder⁸ from a more sophisticated scientific framework and that is

⁴ UNITED STATES. U. S. National Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement. Administration of William Clinton. Washington, D.C. Press, feb. 1996.

⁵ UNITED STATES. U.S. National Strategy of Defending The Nation Against Its Enemies. Administration of Georg W. Bush. Washington, D.C. Press, sep. 2002.

⁶ UNITED STATES. U.S. National Strategy of Nation Renewal and Global Leadership. Administration of Barack Obama. Washington, D.C. Press, may. 2010.

⁷ UNITED STATES. U.S. National Strategy of Making America Great Again. Administration of Donald Trump. Washington, D.C. Press, dec. 2017.

⁸ In such context there is an era of world disorder, so well written by the late master Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira when he points out that: “Political Science needs to study the ontogenesis of the State, in the process of the oppressive accumulation of capitalist power, which is not only denied, ... but also nullifies negation throughout the history and evolution of the world economy ... There is a reciprocal relation of action and reaction between events, hence we have to study them in all their ontological dimensions, from new and diverse angles, as history evolves ad infinitum, not in a rectilinear form but in a spiral and sometimes in alternating curves, folds and lines.” (MONIZ BANDEIRA, 2016, p. 24/25).

coherent, at the same time, with the geopolitical power play of dominant states and the degree of effectiveness of their global hegemony structures.

In fact, world geopolitics has suffered and have been suffering in recent years from the impacts of a dense set of strategic mutations, identified under the generic label of *pax americana*. This attempt to impose a unipolar world order controlled by the United States is based on the “ontogeny of geopolitical leviathan”, the only entity capable of guaranteeing peace and security to the international system.

Thus, focusing on the logical and conceptual contribution brought about by the strategic turn of US international politics, the figure below summarizes the dialectical tension between the world power distribution framework and the vital interests of the United States, i.e., between world geopolitics and national security strategies of that country, from 1945 to the present day.



TRADUÇÃO DOS TERMOS NA FIGURA: World Geopolitics and US Strategies - End of World War II in 1945 / Kennan’s Containment Geostrategy - End of Cold War in 1989 / Clinton’s Engagement and Enlargement Geostrategy - Twin Towers Attack in 2001 / Bush’s War on Terror Geostrategy - 2008 World Crisis / Obama’s Geostrategy of Hemispheric Alliances (Europe and Japan) - Deglobalization and Commercial War in 2017 - Trump’s America First Geostrategy - INSEPARABLE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIALOGUES

Thereupon, this academic work aims to investigate the evolution of the world geopolitical order since the collapse of the Eurocentric world in 1945, passing by the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, by the fall of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, by the neoliberal financial crisis in 2008, until finally reaching the present day, where a new and surprising fact emerges linked to the phenomenon of (de)globalization. Ultimately, this is the thematic spectrum of this article.

KENNAN DOCTRINE (NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF CONTAINMENT) AND THE MACKINDER-SPYKMAN PARADIGM OF COLD WAR.

For a better understanding of the epistemological link between the Cold War context and the US National Security Strategy of Containment, it is only natural to refer briefly to its previous geopolitical paradigm, the Eurocentric world order⁹.

The Eurocentric world is born from the transition from feudalism to monarchical absolutism from the end of the Religious Wars (Thirty Years' War), in which the paradigm of dual or split sovereignty of the Middle Ages (temporal power of the King versus the ecclesiastical power of the Pope) is deconstructed, emerging in its place the absolute sovereignty of the modern state governed by the post-1648 Westphalian order .

At the level of global geopolitics, the 1648 Peace of Westphalia marks the beginning of the international society of sovereign national states, based on the balance of power of great European powers. In this sense, Benno Teschke, trying to dispel the Westphalian myth as the inaugural event of modern statehood, points out that the post-1648 territorial state had an absolutist character, which knew no kind of restriction, hence the need for balance of power between empires:

Was there any systemic limit to absolutist geopolitical

⁹ In Henry Kissinger's view "There was never a world order that was truly global. (...) A century of sectarian conflicts and political upheavals across Central Europe had culminated in the Thirty Years War of 1618-1648 - a conflagration in which political and religious disputes intermingled. (...) The Westphalian peace reflected a practical accommodation to reality, not exceptional moral insight. (...) It was based on a system of independent states that renounced interference with each other's internal affairs and limited their ambitions through a general balance of power." (KISSINGER, 2015, p. 10-11)

expansion? Can we identify some geopolitical principles of the early modern period that were generally recognized? These questions can be answered by placing them in the context of rival conceptions of geopolitical order: empire and balance of power. (TESCHKE, 2003, p. 233¹⁰).

In fact, the Empire-Balance of Power duality ruled the Eurocentric world, controlled by the central powers, notably the United Kingdom, France and Germany, whose geopolitical disputes spawned the Great Wars of Human History, namely the Napoleonic Wars and the two Great World Wars.

Based on such duality, one can say the Eurocentric system experienced disruptive geopolitical realities¹¹, which, however, did not depart from its central characteristics, namely: momentary loss of the balance of power and subsequent rebalancing of power (lack of a single hegemonic terrestrial superpower in Europe) and zero-sum game wars (some win and some lose).

Note carefully that, during the lifetime of the European world, the United States was experiencing the thesis of geopolitical isolationism, also known as the America First Strategy, which is now being reissued by the Trump Doctrine. Therefore, one must understand from the start that the strategic initiative of "America First" is not new and was widely used at different times in US national life, especially in the interwar

¹⁰ "Were there any systemic limits to absolutist geopolitical expansion? Can we identify any generally acknowledged principles of geopolitical order in the early modern period? These questions may be answered by setting them within the context of the rival conceptions of geopolitical order: empire and the balance of power". (TESCHKE, 2003, p. 233)

¹¹ Indeed, this binding geopolitical reality of the European system is unquestionable, based on the breakdown of the balance of power from the initiative of a terrestrial power with aspirations of hegemonic dominance in Europe and its subsequent defeat, which, in turn, enables the resumption of balance of power, completing the crisis-rebalancing cycle of the European power system. In this regard, note carefully that the Eurocentric world order begins with the balance of power gestated by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, but loses its stability during the Napoleonic Wars with the hegemonic pretensions of Napoleon's France and whose defeat allowed the Concert of Europe obtained at the 1815 Congress of Vienna; then the European system is once again in crisis with the reunited expansionist project of Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II, generating the First World War and whose rebalancing will be achieved with the 1919 Treaty of Versailles; and, finally a further breakdown of the balance of power with the Hitler's Blitzkrieg during World War II, whose defeat no longer symbolized a new equilibrium, but the collapse of the European world and the consequent geopolitical rise of the United States.

period, during the Eurocentric world order¹².

With the end of World War II, the Eurocentric system is no longer geopolitically relevant and is, thus, replaced by the Cold War. In this post-1945 context of geopolitical bipolarity, the great strategies of the United States come to govern the international relations of the western world.

That is, from this historical moment the North American hegemony is no longer implicit and, in fact, begins to dispute geopolitical spaces with the Soviet Union, within a dynamic of ideological confrontation developed under the influence of the imperial condominium on the world (ALVES PEREIRA, 2007, p. 22).

Faced with such confrontation, therefore, emerges the US National Security Strategy of Containment, a strategic construct whose purpose was to contain the Soviet advance on a planetary scale.

In its early days, more precisely, from the 1945 Yalta and Potsdam Conferences¹³, the builders of the American strategy were divided over the geopolitical stance of the Soviet Union¹⁴.

Kennan's denunciation showed that it was not Russian military might that threatened the US, but rather its strategy of expanding political power, hence the main idea of containment, namely to avoid direct military confrontation and to enforce political restraint indirectly. In this sense, Noam Chomsky, analyzing classic work by John Lewis Gaddis (GADDIS, 1986), highlights the author's agreement with Kennan's

¹² Defended with ardor by a considerable portion of the strategic community of that time, "America First" was the thesis responsible for the splendid American progress between 1919 and 1941, when the country enters World War II, as a result of the attack of the Japanese Imperial Navy to Pearl Harbor. Certainly this theme will be taken up again in the analysis of the current Trump Doctrine; for now, it is sufficient to point out that the concept of "America First" was the model used by the United States during the life of the Eurocentric world order.

¹³ The Yalta and Potsdam conferences were held at the end of World War II under the leadership of the War Winners' Summit, consisting of Winston Churchill, Josef Stalin and Franklin Roosevelt (later Harry Truman). Such conferences made the geopolitical division of the world. By the Yalta Conference, in the city of Crimea, the area of influence of the USSR was limited to eastern Europe, while at the Potsdam Conference the division of Germany took place (Berlin was divided into four zones of influence: British, North American, French and Soviet). Still in Potsdam, Korea was divided between the US and the USSR, with South Korea under US control and North Korea under Soviet influence.

¹⁴ It was in this environment of doubt that the prospective vision of George Frost Kennan, the first strategist to realize that the USSR was not simply a difficult ally in the post-war negotiations but, on the contrary, it was unquestionably the main geopolitical opponent of the United States in the emerging world context.

perception of the primacy given to Russian political power:

He also agreed with George Kennan's systematic view - a pattern among political articulators and analysts - that "it is not Russian military power that threatens us, but Russian political power" (October 1947). Despite these flashes of insight, Gaddis did not move away from the conventional framework of "deterrence" and "restraining the Soviet threat", although he acknowledged - by way of addition - that this was not the whole of history at all, nor the central theme. (CHOMSKY, 2003, p. 39).

Thus began the Cold War, with on the one hand the Mackinderian expansion of the USSR and on the other the spykmanian containment of the US.

In fact, the Soviet Strategy, based on Mackinder's Land Power Theory, bet on the progressive conquest of World-Island as a means of controlling the planet, i.e., starting from the Mackinderian heartland, the USSR should expand its borders along the Eurafrikan and Eurasian continental masses, conquering therefore the three continents that form the World-Island (Europe, Africa and Asia), thus dominating the world. On the other hand, Kennan's Containment Strategy, based on Nicholas John Spykman's Rimland Theory, relied on rimland control as the cornerstone of the Soviet Union's isolation in the heart of the Earth.

Here is, hence, characterized the Mackinder-Spykman paradigm that prevailed throughout the Cold War.

To give effect to Spykman's Rimland Theory, the pragmatic genius of the North American strategist made use of an old and well-known axiom of their foreign policy, namely to articulate international alliances for their own benefit.

Observe, with the help of the figure below (MAFRA, 2006, p. 54), the system of multinational alliances created to isolate the Soviet Empire in the hard core of Heartland, whose foundation derived from the theoretical construct formulated by Spykman.

“Containment Geostrategy” - Spykman’s Rimland Theory



Fig. 12

Fonte: (MAFRA, 2006, p. 54).

Hence, to occupy the Rimland of the World-Island while maintaining Soviet isolation at the Heart of the Earth, the Containment Geostrategy engendered the following sequence of multilateral alliances:

- a) to defend Western Europe, they formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO¹⁵);
- b) to protect the Middle East and Central Asia regions, they created the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO¹⁶);
- c) to counteract the communist projection on the Asian continent, they constituted the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO¹⁷).

Based on this geopolitical theory, the Western world, after the occupation of the “Heartland” by the USSR, tried to seize the Fimbria or Rimland to prevent communist expansion throughout the world (MAFRA,

¹⁵ Sigla em inglês: NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

¹⁶ Sigla em inglês: CENTO - Central Treaty Organization.

¹⁷ Sigla em inglês: SATO - South-East Asian Treaty Organization.

2006, p. 53-55).

Finally, with its sophisticated strategic culture and high capacity for international articulation, the United States, using the Mackinderian-Spymanian paradigm, won the Cold War, deconstructing Soviet economic power and inaugurating a new era of world geopolitics.

Such an era was immediately celebrated by the famous End of History thesis (FUKUYAMA, 1998), which saw it as the end point of the ideological evolution of humanity and the universalization of western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.

However, Samuel Huntington soon challenged this idea of one world of euphoria, harmony, and the end of significant conflicts in global politics, within a Kantian idealistic perspective of harmonious international cooperation by nature, noting that:

In the post-Cold War world, for the first time in history, world politics has become multipolar and multicivilizational. In the late 1980s, the communist world collapsed and the international Cold War system became history. In the post-Cold War world, the most important distinctions between peoples are not ideological, political or economic. They are cultural. (...) The rivalry of superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilizations. World politics are being reconfigured along cultural and civilizational lines. (HUNTINGTON, 1998, p. 19-21)

In a way, Huntington's view continues to move across the realistic theoretical path of international relations, notably when the author expressly points out that "this realistic picture of the world is a very useful starting point for analyzing international relations and explaining much of state behavior. States are and will remain the predominant entities in world affairs." (HUNTINGTON, 1998, p. 35).

Faced with such a picture of high complexity, uncertainty and instability, which is not in line with either one Fukuyamanian world or the two worlds of the universal geopolitical condominium, the American

strategist, with his peculiar pragmatic reasoning¹⁸, soon realized the inadequacy of the Mackinder-Spykman paradigm to continue governing the scenario that emerged with the end of Cold War in 1989, which evidently led him to engender a new strategic archetype, now focused on the neoliberal epistemological project of world trade opening and the legal reduction of State.

CLINTON DOCTRINE (NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF ENGAGEMENT AND ENLARGEMENT) AND ECONOMY GLOBALIZATION

Academically speaking, the end of Cold War marks the birth of a new **world order**, now called **postmodern**, which comes into force with the collapse of the Soviet Empire and endures to this day¹⁹.

Certainly, the very concept of postmodernity is still very controversial within the doctrine. The proposed study on postmodernity tends to examine state-of-the-art values in different fields of human knowledge. The term is commonly used and often brings more confusion than clarification. All of this evidently reveals that such a concept, although a strong and contemporary subject in academic thought, still lacks further scientific development in terms of its axiological, philosophical, legal, and geopolitical foundations.

In this sense, therefore, the idea of postmodernity presents a high degree of epistemological inconsistency, as different theoretical constructs dispute the primacy over the subject²⁰.

¹⁸ Strategic thinking is inevitably very pragmatic. It depends on the realities of geography, society, economy and politics (...) The history of strategic thinking is not that of pure reason, but of applied reasoning. (PARET, 2001, p. 18)

¹⁹ In this sense, the controversy surrounding the idea of postmodernity in the field of geopolitics is not unknown. Notwithstanding the relevance of this theme, the reader should be warned that such a subject goes beyond the scope of this work, which is why a minimal analysis was chosen, allowing a scientific path to describe this possible postmodern world order, here envisioned as the world order that comes with the end of the Cold War.

²⁰ Hence a pleiad of fractal elements willing to represent it, among others: the distrust on the discourse of modernity metanarratives and their pretensions of timelessness and universality (LYOTARD, 2004), in which the postmodern condition brings the incredulity of science as the only definitive source of truth in its essence, from the development of artificial intelligence; the cultural logic of late capitalism (JAMESON, 2002), whose dynamics are incapable of promoting social transformation, especially in late industrialization; the critique of the theory of communicative acting (Habermas, 2003), which rejects the neo-Marxist stance, concerned that it was fighting Enlightenment ideals,

In this sense, in the field of geopolitics, the idea of postmodern world order is also very controversial, however, it must be recognized that the post-1989 world has a high degree of instability and complexity, symbolizing a paradigmatic transition regarding the existing world power structure.

That is why the view defended here is that geopolitical postmodernity should be analyzed less as an academic fetish and more as an irrefutable new reality, born of the collapse of a world superpower, creating a new archetype of hegemonic power relations, very different from its predecessors, which are the Eurocentric order and the bipolar order.

Indeed, under the influx of a possible geopolitical postmodernity, it exudes a plexus of poststructuralist antinomies, moving towards an era of chaos, as Ignacio Ramonet shows²¹, from an era of deregulation and limitless economic transactions, such as teaches Natalino²² Irti, from an era **of the market state**²³, as (BAUMAN, 2008), which highlights the antagonism between security and freedom, as axiological values per se, i.e., more security presupposes a lower degree of freedom, as well as more freedom means giving up greater security.

replacing it with the proceduralist conception of deliberative democracy; the theoretical construction of hypermodernity (LIPOVETSKY, 2004), which nonetheless represents an anti-Khunan view that there was no breaking of the paradigm of modernity, but only a Popperian approach to current reality, as the values of modernity, such as individualism, the explosion of consumerism, political liberalism, the metamorphosis of ethics, etc. still reign in contemporary society; and, last but not least, the epistemic lineage of liquid fear

²¹ In fact, Ignacio Ramonet exposes the idea of chaos civilization of the new lords of the world (private financial and industrial conglomerates), of the sacked planet (systemic destruction of the environment), of the metamorphoses of power and their negotiated, reticular and horizontal forms (media, pressure groups and nongovernmental organizations), the clash of new technologies (side by side with the clash of civilizations of ethnic wars) and all this exuding, in this postmodern western society, a stench of remorse and the like with a feeling of nausea. (RAMONET, 1998, p 7-12).

²² Natalino Irti, an Italian jurist of escol and professor at the Università La Sapienza di Roma, wisely shows that: "Behind every legal system there is always a victim of power. (...) Economic transactions ignore the limits. While the tribes are at war, among other things, in the darkness of the night, the markets, which offer goods and trade, rotate, feeling out of any homeland. A no man's land is one that lies between the two shores, between the borders of two countries, of two different spaces. The economy is (or aspires to be) an indefinite no man's land. (IRTI, 2007, p. 1-4).

²³ Philip Bobbitt shows that throughout the history of mankind, international relations have always been based on two major foundations: war and trade. In this sense, the eminent author shows that a new form of state (the market-state) is emerging from this relationship, much as previous forms have emerged since the fifteenth century: as a consequence of war. (BOBBITT, 2003, p.1).

professes Philip Bobbitt, or even of an era of geopolitics, as advocated by Gearóid Ó Tuathail²⁴.

What cannot be denied, therefore, is that the idea of geopolitical postmodernity brings with it a new concept of lebensraum, namely the conquest of markets and minds. This is no longer the classic concept of lebensraum linked to the conquest of territories; on the contrary, what matters now is to gain geopolitical muscularity to conquer new markets, which are open on a planetary scale²⁵

Therefore, regardless of whether or not the end of Cold War was accepted as the starting point of a postmodern world order, the fact is that the fall of Berlin Wall generated major transformations in world geopolitics, thus justifying the idea of implementing a new age, a new paradigm, whose characteristics can be summarized as follows:

a) In the field of state social evolution, it represents the mitigation of the Welfare State, operated within a context of state interventionism, in favor of a revitalization of the Liberal State, carried out within the context of world opening of trade;

b) At the international level, it symbolizes the transition from a bipolar order of high strategic stability to a world order still under construction, but one that is intensely disputed by two major mutually exclusive perspectives: on the one hand, the maintenance of the American world, led by the hegemonic pax of the United States, acting as the only military and technological superpower on the planet and, on the other,

“Geopolitics”, which envisioned the state as a living geographical organism and, in its wake, the view that the state’s lebensraum was the conquest of territories.

emergence of the post-American world, characterized by the

²⁴ Gearóid Ó Tuathail teaches - when introducing the concept of geopolitics - that geography is about power. In this sense, the author shows that “although often assumed to be naive, world geography is not a product of nature, but a product of stories of struggle between authorities vying for power to organize, occupy, and manage space. (TUATHAIL, 1996, p. 61)

²⁵ This shows that there is a disruptive mutation from classical geopolitics as glimpsed by its main precursors, Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), founder of Political Geography during the German unification process, and Rudolf Kjellén (1864-1922), Professor from the Universities of Gothenburg and Upsala and author of the neologism

consolidation of a multipolar world order, with growing balance of power from global and regional powers such as China, India and Russia²⁶.

Finally, the lack of a clear view on this sort of considerations may obscure the true meaning of the new times of a post-1989 statehood (whether regarded as postmodern or not, in the reader's exact conviction), within which neo-Darwinian globalization unfolds, sponsored by the worldwide opening of trade, the Westphalian state's discredit, the state's legal reduction and the pursuit of international competitiveness²⁷.

All analysis thus far serves to introduce the study of the epistemological connection between Bill Clinton's Strategy for Engagement and Enlargement and the phenomenon of neoliberal economic globalization, as well as the implantation of the American world.

Indeed, in the concrete terrain of pragmatic ideas, as already said, the American strategist soon realized that the Mackinder-Spykman paradigm was no longer able to shape the emerging post-Cold War world.

This led to the establishment of a new national security archetype in the US, totally different from its predecessor (spykmanian containment). Such a change of direction has led to a revitalizing revision of strategic principles, which will form the NSS of Engagement and Enlargement, a document issued by former-President Clinton in February 1996.

Indeed, the pragmatic genius of the American strategist was soon to systematize the Engagement and Enlargement model from a grand multilateral scheme of trade cooperation involving two great strategic partners of the hegemonic triad of the capitalist system.

With refined strategic sophistication, the United States created a very well-designed mechanism, the aim of which was to interconnect three major areas of trade integration, namely:

²⁶ Gilberto Bercovici points out that: "From their original territorial and spatial base, the nomos are shaped by the economic domain, which is not in stable and determined territories and places, but in the volatile spaces of markets. The great spaces of our time are, for (IRTI, 2005), the free economy spaces, the markets. Economics and technique demand a new world space, building a new and diverse nomos of the Earth, whose formation is still marked by conflicts between the localized power of territories and the planetary power of the world economy. (BERCOVICI, 2007, p.66)

²⁷ As well highlighted by Luís Roberto Barroso: "Planet Earth. Early 21st century. Still no contact with other inhabited worlds. Between light and shadow, postmodernity is revealed. The generic label houses the mixture of styles, the disbelief in the absolute power of reason, the discredit of the state. The age of speed. Image above content. (...) There is the anguish of what could not be and the perplexity of a time without sure truths. A seemingly after-all epoch: post-Marxist, post-Kelsenian, post-Freudian." (BARROSO, 2003, p.2).

- a) Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA²⁸) ;
- b) Transatlantic Market (TM²⁹) ;
- c) Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC³⁰).

To support these three major mechanisms of multilateral integration, the ability of the US strategist conceived the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994, thus completing the framework of US hegemonic power structures, which began at the Breton Woods Conference in 1944.

The very US National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (UNITED STATES, 1996, s/p) highlights this double-three dimensionality archetype, namely:

- a) a first dimension of direct inductors (the three major free trade zones: FTAA, TM and APEC); and
- b) a second dimension of indirect inducers (IMF, IBRD and WTO).

Finally, based on this double three-dimensional geometry (FTAA-TM-APEC in combination with IMF-BIRD-WTO), the US empire would find the ideal path to neoliberal capitalist triumph according to the postmodern condition of global geopolitics, namely: the conquest of markets and minds .

BUSH DOCTRINE (DEFENDING THE NATION AGAINST ITS ENEMIES) AND AXIOLOGICAL NEUTRALIZATION OF PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW

²⁸ Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

²⁹ Transatlantic Market (TM). US Alliance with the European Union ³⁰ Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

³⁰ In this regard, the lesson of realistic thinkers is very precise when they stress the strong idea that national states seek to achieve their strategic objectives by employing international organizations and regimes as potential sources of leverage for ambitious governments; thus we should expect, in a period of rapid change, to see them used as arenas; or the exercise of influence. "Realist thinkers emphasize that states seek to attain purposes through the exercise of power. International organizations and regimes are potential sources of leverage for ambitious governments; thus we should expect, in a period of rapid change, to see them used as arenas; or the exercise of influence." (KEOHANE, NYE, HOFFMANN, 1994, p. 395).

Originally named *Defending The Nation Against its Enemies*, Bush's strategy receives from the American pax theory the inputs needed for a confluence of strategic initiatives focused on protecting US territory against terrorist attacks.

In this regard, as Michael Hirsh well points out, George W. Bush, also overwhelmed by the sense of anger and determination that many Americans were feeling, sent the world on September 20, 2001, the following message: "You are either with us or with the terrorists." You are either with civilization and good (us), or barbarism and evil (them). Choose. And for those nations that choose wrong, be careful. (HIRSH, 2002, s/p³¹).

Here, we must understand that Bush's message reflected America's drastic geopolitical repositioning as the only remaining superpower of the Cold War. It was not merely an unilateral act of a particular national state without major consequences on the world stage, but a volitional act of hegemonic power that challenged the international legal order itself and its multilateral bodies³².

In fact, the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, symbols of US power, has inaugurated a new national security archetype aimed at fighting the Islamic fundamentalist organization al-Qaeda, to prevent both its freedom of action, increasing the sense of security in the country, and a new attack on US soil.

This is the root of such radicalizing mutation of US geopolitics: for the first time in its history, the homeland was vilified by foreign actions.

That is why the fight against terrorism, embodied in the figure of Osama bin Laden, will take proportions unimaginable until then, even to the point of disregarding international treaties and conventions, which evidently led the United States to accelerate the invasion of Iraq in the name of a peace that is not yet guaranteed to this day.

³¹ Bush's message to the world, first delivered on September 20, 2001, was this: "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." Either you stand with civilization and good (us), or with barbarism and evil (them). Choose. And to those nations that choose wrongly, beware. (HIRSH, 2002, s/p).

³² There is no doubt that this US geopolitical repositioning, done by Bush's *Defending the Nation's Against Its Enemies Strategy*, has a markedly Antikantian inspiration as it disregards the prospect of perpetual peace, (KANT, 1989) disqualifying the path of international cooperation. and opting for a harmful unilateralism such as "either my friend or my enemy".

There are scholarly doctrines who radicalize their discordant position with this US geopolitical repositioning; Noam Chomsky, for example, sees signs of state terrorism in US foreign actions:

Over the past few centuries, the United States has wiped out indigenous populations (millions of people), conquered half of Mexico (actually indigenous territories, but that's another matter), intervened with violence in neighboring regions, conquered Hawaii and the Philippines (killing hundreds of thousands of Filipinos) and, in the last fifty years, in particular, have used strength to impose themselves on much of the world. The number of victims is colossal. For the first time, the weapons turned against us. It was a dramatic change ... We must recognize that in much of the world the US is seen as the leading state of terrorism, and for good reason. We can consider, for example, that in 1986 the US was convicted by the World Court for illegal use of force (international terrorism) and then vetoed a UN Security Council resolution urging all countries (referring to the United States) to adhere to international law. This is just one among countless examples. (CHOMSKY, 2002, p. 12-25)

Without agreeing with Noam Chomsky's strong exegesis regarding the US framework as the leading state of international terrorism, it is important, however, to consider that the Bush Doctrine has presented itself as an antikantian element of axiological neutralization of Public International Law (PIL) and the Law of War itself (International Humanitarian Law). In this sense, Giorgio Agamben shows that:

The immediately biopolitical meaning of the state of exception as the original structure in which the law includes the living being itself through its own suspension appears clearly in the military order, promulgated by the President of the United States on November 13, 2001, and which authorizes the indefinite detention and prosecution before military commissions (not to be confused with military courts provided for the Law of War) of non-citizens suspected of

involvement in terrorist activities. (AGAMBEN, 2004, p. 14)

In this sense, Bush's lack of commitment with the DIP and the Law of War is clear, which now adopts a militaristic and unipolarist bias, thus highlighting, among others, the following elements that inform this geopolitical repositioning of the USA: reissue of the "Star Wars" project, missile defense shield, which had been shelved during the Clinton administration; abandoning the strategic design of the "Shrinking Force", which was expected to reduce military spending by approximately 35% over the coming decades, as stipulated in the then Secretary of Defense's, Les Aspin, 1993 bottom-up review; non-adherence to the Kyoto Protocol, a complementary treaty to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, setting emission reduction targets for developed countries; considered to be historically responsible for the current climate change; failure to recognize the applicability to US military forces of the rules governing the performance of the International Criminal Court (ICC); the abandonment of the Conference on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (anti-racist agreement); and the denunciation of the important Anti-Balistic Missile Treaty (ABM) ³³nuclear weapons reduction treaty with Russia, which is necessary for the resumption of the construction of the Strategic Missile Defense System (Star Wars Strategy Reissue).

It follows, therefore, that the model of Bush's pre-emptive strike reversed the Engagement and Enlargement model, i.e., while the Clinton NSS sought to maintain US global leadership by controlling the world economy (soft power) rather than using hard power, Bush's NSS did the opposite³⁴.

³³ Bush's strategy did not hesitate to remove the United States from the ABM Treaty, which was a deal with the former Soviet Union, whose aim was to limit the number of anti-ballistic missiles (ABM) used to defend home territory against nuclear-loaded missiles. Such an agreement was signed on May 26, 1972, between US President Richard Nixon and former Communist Party Central Committee Secretary-General Leonid Brezhnev. It is easy, then, to grasp the Machiavellian-Hobbesian character of the post-September 11 American strategy that sought to reprint the Cold War-era Star Wars. In addition to rejecting the strategic concept of Bill Clinton's Reducing Force (reducing military spending), the missile shield aimed to break the balance between nuclear powers as the United States would become immune to attacks fired on its territory. Such an anti-missile shield was rejected by Bill Clinton's Great Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, whose strategic axis was the worldwide opening of trade, sponsored by the liberal epistemological project.

³⁴ Note that Clinton's NSS prioritizes soft power (economics) over hard power (military), following Joseph Nye's theoretical path when he advocated that: the basic concept of power is the ability to influence others to do what you want them to do. There are three ways to

Such is the source of all criticism of Clinton's Strategy of Engagement and Expansion: the prioritization of the economic dimension (soft power) has degraded the military dimension (hard power) in such a way that resulted on the Twin Towers attacks, a very high price the American society had to pay for the wrong choice of its own National Security Strategy.

As a result, the Bush Doctrine somewhat mitigated US control over the world economy, concerned as it was with the political crusade of War on Terrorism. With due sharpness of mind, one must understand that the Bush NSS has not maintained the same enthusiasm about Clinton's Strategic World Trade Constellation (FTAA, Transatlantic Market and APEC/IMF, IBRD and WTO), thus allowing for the gradual Chinese penetration in Africa, Latin America and part of Asia³⁵.

In this sense, the United States has not considered Henry Kissinger's warning advocating, since the 1970s, that "US international policy must find its core in power and national interest rather than abstract moralist principles or political crusades" (KISSINGER, 1977, p. 26).

Starting from the hybrid nature of fourth-dimensional warfare, as well as pervaded by the image of a direct assault on the symbols of his world power, the American strategist opted for the "military-political crusade", neglecting some of his ability to command neoliberal globalization through the worldwide opening of trade, actions that were very well fenced by the Clinton Engagement and Enlargement Strategy³⁶.

do this: the first is to threaten them with sticks; the second is to bribe them with carrots; the third is to attract or co-opt them so that they want what you want them to want. If you are able to seduce them so that they do what you want, it will mean less spending on carrots or sticks. (NYE, 2004, p. 10-11).

³⁵ In this sense, Thomas Friedman's vision is precise when he highlights: Thus, the forces of the "How to globalize" dispersed, and as the number of people in the Third World that benefited from globalization increased, and as the Bush administration the United States began to exercise greater unilateral military power, the anti-American element in the anti-globalization movement came to have much more voice and role. As a result, the movement itself has become both more anti-American and more unable and unwilling to play any constructive role in shaping the global debate on the form of globalization (FRIEDMAN, 2007, p. 348).

³⁶ In other words, the abandonment of the Clinton Strategy World Trade Constellation drastically changed the world geopolitics hitherto prevailing as it shifted away from US economic empowerment through the double three-dimensional multilateral cooperation inducing mechanisms (the triad FTAA, TM and APEC combined with the triad IMF, IBRD, and WTO), with the unilateral militarist geometry of the George W. Bush Strategy emerging in its place. Here is a dichotomous court that replaces the era of market-centricism

In this sense, one may infer that, as paradoxical as it may seem, it was Georg W. Bush's NSS lack of commitment to world economy that made China's geopolitical rise possible³⁷. Similarly, Luciana Mascarenhas da Costa Marroni accurately highlights:

One of the main changes undertaken by the [Chinese] government was the policy of gradually reducing state interference in enterprises, to the benefit of the market economy. In the mid-1980s, four Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were created along the southeastern coast to attract foreign investment, stimulate exports and enable imports of high-tech products³⁸. (...) The proliferation of foreign as well as private and public industries has spread to the interior of the country, boosting the economy and increasingly pushing away state control (MARRONI, 2008, p. 204-205)

It was in this adverse context of the 2008 crisis that a new world power distribution framework emerged, in which counter-hegemony mechanisms thrived, now complemented or even opposed to the traditional hegemonic power structures of the American world, such as:

of a predominantly economic-commercial world (Clinton's strategic archetype) with the era of pre-emptive strike of an essentially ideological-militaristic world (Bush's strategic paradigm).

³⁷ In this sense, Acemoglu Daron points out that geographic factors are useless in explaining not only the differences we see between different parts of the world today, but also why many nations, such as Japan or China, go through long periods of stagnation and then start a process of accelerated growth. (...) Similarly, current Chinese growth has nothing to do with values or changes in local culture; it is the result of a process of economic transformation triggered by the reforms implemented by Deng Xiaoping and his allies - who, after the death of Mao Zedong, were gradually abandoning socialist economic institutions and policies, first in agriculture, then in industry. China, for example, is one of the countries that has replaced economic policies conducive to the poverty and hunger of millions with those that stimulate economic growth. (DARON, 2012)

³⁸ This theme has only recently aroused the interest of the Brazilian strategist and that is Brazil's firm role in leading the Commercial G20 within the WTO. Certainly, in the present agenda of this International Organization, as said before, there are only industrialized products, patents and government purchases, i.e., all that matters to the countries at the center of world geopolitics. Out of this agenda, the commodities. As a result, it is easy to see that there is something wrong with the 2001 Doha Round, since, strategically speaking, the key question is why late-capitalist nations should reduce their barriers to industrialized products, at the same time Usually such sovereign wealth funds result from the

- a) the firm action of the G20 Commercial that paralyzed the 2001 Doha Round at the WTO, impeding the decision on tariff reductions for industrialized products, patent protection and government procurement without proper liberalization of agricultural products ;
- b) the emergence of the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which side with the Bretton-Woodian hegemonic structures (IMF and IBRD);
- c) on the same pitch, the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), China's globally-initiated financial institution with the aim of promoting investment in infrastructure and productive sectors in the Asia and Oceania regions and, in particular, in less developed countries;
- d) the inability of the G-7 (Group of Seven Richest Countries in the World) to counteract the ill effects of the 2008 crisis, requiring therefore the dialogue with the Financial G-20 (Group of Twenty Richest Countries of the world). Note here, with due sharpness of mind, that the formulation of world policies is no longer done exclusively by the traditional G-7 but now also by the financial G-20. It is in this sense that the idea of G-ZERO WORLD arises, as envisioned by (BREMNER, ROUBINI, Foreign Affairs, 2011). This concept starts from a disruptive geopolitical reality, in which the Old Order (The Old Boys' Club) represented by the G-7 is no longer worth anything, while the G-20 and its emerging actors such as China, India, Brazil and Russia, represent too broad of a block to be effective in creating unison policies on a planetary scale, hence the G-Zero force idea;
- e) China's grand One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project, whose geopolitical latitude re-inks, with postmodern paints, Mackinder's Theory, as it projects China's expansion toward the conquest of the African and Eurasian masses of World-Island³⁹; and
- f) the creation of sovereign wealth funds, also called

³⁹ In fact, it should be noted that the Economic Silk Road Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road symbolize the creation of a China-centered geopolitical space where infrastructure projects and investments will be made in countries of Europe, Asia and Africa, part of the Mackinderian Island.

Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWF), which are state-controlled financial investment mechanisms that can now speculate in the international financial market as if they were private investors⁴⁰.

Of all these complex analyses that emerge from a scientifically multinucleated mosaic, what is worth noting is the view that the post-financial crisis world creates a new world power distribution framework in which the US weakens in its task of controlling directly the process of economic and financial globalization.

In other words, the post-2008 world is no longer driven solely by the inducers of global hegemony in the US, that is: alongside the G-7, the Financial G-20 emerges; WTO highlights the performance of the Commercial G-20; alongside the IMF and IBRD are the Asian Bank and the BRICS Bank, and, finally, alongside the large private holders of speculative capital, the role of the Sovereign Funds of national states outside the capitalist triad, e.g., the Sovereign Fund of China.

One should see, therefore, that it is in this unfavorable scenario that Obama's Strategy of National Renewal and Global Leadership presents itself as a tool to contain China's inexorable expansion on a planetary scale. Hence the precision in Henry Kissinger's lesson:

The argument that China and the United States are bound to collide presupposes that both treat each other as a competitive bloc on the opposite shore of the Pacific. But that is the road to disaster on both sides. One aspect of the strategic tension in the current world situation lies in China's fear that America is seeking to contain China - alongside US concern that China is seeking to expel the United States from Asia. (Kissinger, 2011, p. 506).

Here is the great paradox of the post-2008 crisis world order: a turnaround in the American world, a result of liberal globalization, which escapes or at least gradually moves away from its

⁴⁰ Usually such sovereign wealth funds result from the use of part of their international reserves from their balance of payments, such as from the sale of oil. Note carefully that such sovereign wealth funds also represent anti-hegemonic structures that destabilize the process of financial globalization controlled by the capitalist triad.

direct and immediate control.

That is why one can say Obama's NSS is the reprint of the Spykmanian strand of the old Kennan Containment Strategy, just as the China Belt and Road Initiative is the reprint of the Mackinderian strand of the former Soviet Strategy for World-Island conquest.

With this kind of intellection in mind, it becomes easier to understand the pragmatic thinking of the American strategist: reprinting the Mackinder-Spykman paradigm, now inked with postmodernity, conceiving the grand schemes of transoceanic alliances with their traditional partners within the triad of democratic capitalism, namely:

- a) Transatlantic Alliance with Europe (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership);
- b) Trans-Pacific Alliance with Japan (Trans-Pacific Partnership).

The figure below shows the Obama NSS spykmanian geometry (Transatlantic Alliance and Transpacific Alliance) in contrast to the Mackinderian geometry of China's Belt Initiative and and Silk Route Strategy.



Fonte: Slides apresentado pelo autor em conferência proferida para o Curso Internacional de Estudos Estratégicos da ECEME em maio de setembro de 2015.

at the US strategist rethought the national security model, trying to enable it to sustain the hegemonic structure of pax americana, trying to avoid disintegrating the Chinese projection on the three continents of the mackinderian world-island (Asia, Europe and Africa).

It remains to be seen if the resumption of this Mackinder-pykman paradigm will achieve the same success as the Cold War era? This is the subject we intend to develop next.

TRUMP DOCTRINE (AMERICA FIRST NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY) AND THE NEGATION OF ALL PRIOR POST-1945 MODELS

The implementation of the “America First” archetype does not mean the US will now come to think of its vital interests in the first place.

It should not be forgotten that, since the end of Eurocentric globalization, the US has always controlled the international scene with its vital interests in the first place. Therefore, without strategic ingenuity and academic zotism, one must understand that all the major strategies prior to the implementation of “America First” always put the US first.

In this sense, the systematic study hitherto conducted has already demonstrated the hegemonic dimension that guides the North American role in the international system, i.e., since the end of World War II, the pragmatic genius of the American strategist has been using axioms that articulate grandiose international alliances for their own benefit⁴¹.

Therefore, the novelty the Trump Doctrine brings is not the prioritization of American interests, but the attempt to keep the American world in place since the end of the European world. Please note that America First is a strategic paradigm for strengthening the US state from the protection of its internal market, which, as noted earlier, was successfully used during the Eurocentric world order throughout the between-wars period (from 1919 to 1939).

With due academic sophistication, one must see that Trump’s NSS

⁴¹ Strictly, US strategic constructions have the ability to export their own threats to countries in the rest of the world, which in turn will move on the international scene under the influence of the US leadership, but thinking that it is their authentic and legitimate interests, when, in fact, they are nothing but goals of the hegemonic nation.

In the Foreword to the twenty-year-old Brazilian edition of Edward Hallett Carr’s crisis, Eiti Sato points out that the United States had become the largest producer of industrial goods and the largest exporter of capital, while remaining the largest producer of primary goods. This has brought several important consequences. In financial terms, the weight of this huge economy developing an autonomous policy, to the liking of its tradition of isolationism, which had manifested itself politically by not participating in the League of Nations, was in itself a destabilizing factor or, in the expression of Cleveland, made the United States “a moving bull in the world’s monetary system porcelain store.” (CARR, 2001, p. xix).

does not communicate with either the concept of disengagement from the global leadership of the United States or the first archetype of the “America First” Eurocentric order, whose logic of construction abdicated the direct and immediate control of the international order .

On the contrary, it is undeniable that the power engineering traced by the Trump Doctrine seeks to mitigate the Chinese geopower on a planetary scale and the consequent resumption of US global leadership. That is why a significant portion of the country’s strategic community prioritizes the US domestic space previously reserved for the diffuse interests concealed in the large multilateral arrangements supposedly controlled by the United States.

As a result, Trump’s NSS departs from Zbigniew Brzezinski’s classic theory of the triad (democratic-capitalist alliances with the European Union and Japan), establishing in its place the concept of “America First,” a protectionist archetype developed against China, classified as a rival power, along with Russia, by its own national security strategy:

The United States will respond to the growing picture of political, economic, and military competition that rages around the world. China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, a device to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make the world economy less free and fair, to increase its military powers, to control the dissemination of information and data to repress its internal societies and to expand its influence. (UNITED STATES, 2017, p.2⁴²).

That is why, in Trump’s view, there is no more room for multilateral trade arrangements, which do nothing but harm the US economy, so it is imperative for the country to confront China directly, hence the implementation of the Trade War as a way to maintain US influence, values and wealth.

⁴² “The United States will respond to the growing political, economic, and military competitions we face around the world. China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, a emptying to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence”. (UNITED STATES, 2017, p.2)

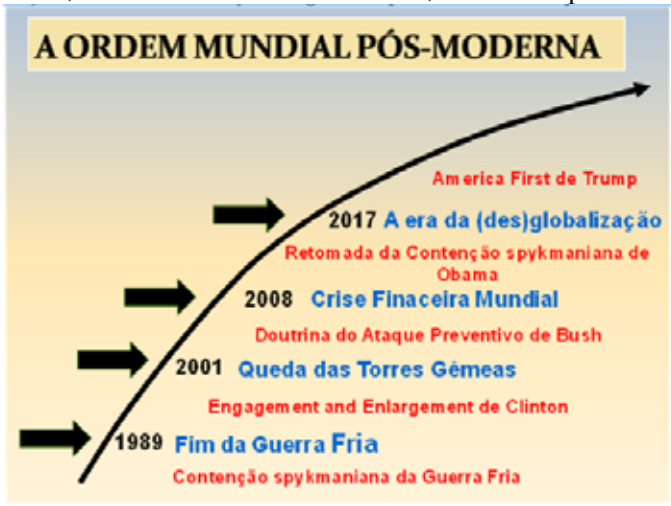
In this sense, one must ask: what are the geopolitical reasons that lead the pragmatic genius of the American strategist to deconstruct their own creation, perhaps their masterpiece of present time and which is the initiative of the great transoceanic alliances (Atlantic and Pacific), conceived by his predecessor Barack Obama, precisely to contain the Chinese advance in the globalized world?

It follows from all of this that Trump's NSS is apparently contradictory to the position of leader of the neoliberal world order hitherto occupied by the United States. How to understand that, in the 21st century, American geopolitics is deconstructing the⁴³ neo-Darwinist globalization they have built directly since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989?

What is important to understand is that America First National Security Strategy has not been linked to the epistemological project of pax americana, based on the resumption of US global leadership. What changes is the strategic archetype that is now considered to be qualitatively superior to the other previous models focused on large multilateral alliances.

That is, in the view of its builders, the Trump Doctrine, as

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43 A neoliberalism, as well as the needs of planetary circulation of the most concentrated fractions of transnational capital. (EZCURA, 1998, p. 19).

44 As Eric Hobsbawm well points out: "Fortunately for US allies, the situation in Western Europe in 1946-7 seemed so tense that Washington felt that the strengthening of the European economy, and a little later of Japan, was the most urgent priority, and the Marshall Plan, a massive project for European recovery, was launched, in June 1947". (HOBSBAWM, 1995, p. 189)

The Post-Modern World Order - Trump's America First - 2017 (de)globalization era - Resumption of Spykman's Containment by Obama - 2008 World Financial Crisis - Bush's Preemptive Attack Doctrine - 2001 Fall of the World Trade Center - Clinton's Engagement and Enlargement - 1989 End of the Cold War - Spykman's Cold War Containment

In this sense, the reader will have to agree that the Trump Doctrine not only represents the last epistemological stage of American thought, but rather symbolizes the break with all other models that preceded it. Strictly speaking, what we want to reaffirm here is the change in Trump's NSS worldview, which moves away from the liberal economic opening of world trade to approach the isolationist, truly protectionist rationality that enables the "geopolitical turn of (de)globalization" of the present time, provoked, in turn, by the "Chinese Geopower Enlargement Turn," which materializes with the onset of convergence between the Silk Road Economic Belt (by land) and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (by sea).

Considering the Mackinder-Pykman paradigm bears the permanent tension between an expansion based on Mackinder's theory of land power and a restraint based on Spykman's rimland theory, Trump's NSS soon realized that the NSS's transoceanic alliances engendered by Obama had no cratological latitude to stop China's expansion.

With attention, the reader will note that the negation of the Mackinder-Spykman paradigm, to some extent, signals American limitations on competing with China within the market economy. Therefore, the resumption of the America First concept can only be fully understood from this perspective of US economic and commercial

protectionism towards China.

The apotegma is simple: in times of postmodern statehood, the one that protects its internal market is the one that has lost international competitiveness.

In a nutshell, China's binding geopolitical rationality is the convergence of land and sea, which places side by side the Economic Silk Road Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Hence the importance of such geopolitical rationality, namely to allow China to expand towards the Euro-African (Europe and Africa) and Eurasian (Europe and Asia) land masses, while avoiding the congested road of Malacca Strait and the conflicting path of the South China Sea.

Given this, the American strategist did not hesitate to adopt a disruptive movement regarding the large arrangements of multilateral cooperation, replacing them with protectionist modeling that can strengthen the geopolitical muscles of the United States. Thus, the markedly protective-isolationist role of the America First Strategy ends up sending contradictory signals to the process of economic globalization.

This is why cooperation between rivals as a weapon is important to avoid that Clausewitzian image of the decisive battle of the zero-sum game that turns into a game of opposing geopolitical forces, an image that ultimately serves as a scientific substratum to the view that *pax americana* and *pax sinica* do not match⁴⁵.

Simply put, neither China is able to impose on the world a *pax sinica* nor does the US have the ability to reissue the *pax americana*⁴⁶ under the post-1945 model (heyday of its global power). In this sense, Noam Chomsky says:

⁴⁵ China entered the new millennium from a reality that is totally different from that experienced by Russia and characterized essentially by the continuation of a high growth strategy under the control of the Chinese Communist Party. (...) China's increasing dependence on energy imports and the disruption of the regional status quo resulting from its economic and political rise have marked a reality of greater rivalry with US strategic interests. (...) From the standpoint of the United States, China has become a power dissatisfied with its regional status. China, for its part, has come to regard the United States and its Pacific policy and support for Taiwan as a major obstacle to its "peaceful ascent" process. (FIORI, 2008, p.272)

⁴⁶ In José Luis Fiori's view: "This is certainly not a final crisis of US power, nor is its global military power being challenged right now. Paradoxically, the United States is losing its ability to intervene unilaterally in almost every region of the world, increasing the degree of freedom of other states, in particular their old and new world system powers." (FIORI, 2007, p. 181).

Moreover, the proposed corollary - that power will change hands for China and India - is doubtful. These are poor countries with serious internal problems. The world is becoming more diverse; contained, despite the decline of the United States, in the near future there is no competitor to global hegemonic power. (Chomsky, 2017, p.78).

By way of conclusion, today's cratological enumeration of hegemonic power shows that the postmodern world order walks in geopolitical uncertainty, which is no longer expressed only by neoliberal globalization, now supposedly led by a not entirely democratic triad (China, Europe and Japan), but which also expresses itself with the protectionist North American nationalism, directed to the reinforcement of its geopolitical musculature, that opposes or, at least, tension with the epistemological project of world trade opening and legal reduction of the State. Amidst all this, countries of late modernity (states on the periphery of the world system) are disoriented and do not know where to go.

In this sense, today's strategist must investigate such a postmodern order under two major epistemological axes, namely:

a) the horizontal axis that is formed from the disconcerted game between global powers (the USA, China, Europe and Japan), characterizing here the multidimensional competition at the center of world geopolitics; and

b) the vertical axis that is established by the concerted game between the global powers and the rest of the world, characterizing here the verticalization of asymmetrical relations of leonine nature between world power centers and peripheral areas of late modernity.

CONCLUSION

This scholarly work sought, *ab initio usque ad finem*, further analyze the epistemic-conceptual relationship between world geopolitics and the evolution of US strategic thinking.

From the systematization performed, we could verify the international order does not build itself alone, but rather is the direct result of interferences by hegemonic nations, whose cratological dimension is

capable of shaping the system of international relations. In fact, because of their strategic dimension, US national security models tend to have extraterritorial effects, which advance directly into the internal space of other nations in the world. Endowed with extraordinary construction logic, US strategies always seek theoretical conceptions that serve as the foundation for the geopolitical aggrandizement of the country.

From this point of view, it is fair to say the student of geopolitics and international relations will have difficulty understanding the dynamics of the Cold War without knowing either George Frost Kennan's Strategy of Containment, inspired by Spykman's rimland theory, or the Soviet expansion Strategy grounded in Mackinder's theory of land power.

Similarly, there is difficulty in understanding the globalization of economy and the neoliberal opening of world market without first knowing the grand scheme called "World Trade Constellation", engendered by Bill Clinton's Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement. Or even, in recognizing the foundations that inform the War on Terror, as well as China's geopolitical rise, without knowing George W. Bush's Preventive Attack Strategy and its strategic shift toward hard power (resumption of military power preeminence) to the detriment of soft power (mitigation of the economic-commercial field).

Still along these lines, capturing the hegemonic forces recomposition made with Europeans and Japanese, glimpsed by the Strategy of the Great Transoceanic Alliances (Transatlantic Alliance and Transpacific Alliance) and whose purpose was to contain the Chinese world expansion from the confluence of the Silk Road Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

Finally, how can we understand the negation of the phenomenon of globalization (deglobalization), the neoconservative revival of American isolationist nationalism, and China's role as a new diffuser center of the neoliberal trading system, without knowing the theoretical underpinnings of the "America First" Strategy of the Donald Trump Administration?

On a higher academic level, we understand the US NSS is pouring from the strong idea that national security and economic prosperity go hand in hand. In fact, we believe it is in this sense the American statesman and legislator will have to rethink the current America First paradigm, now considering new forms of international interaction and new formulas of technological and commercial competition.

It is imperative to understand the complex reconfiguration of the postmodern world order, which stands out for the geopolitical game of

dispute for hegemonic structures of world power, having on the one hand the attempt to re-establish an American world (*pax americana*) and, on the other, the attempt to implant a Chinese world (*pax sinica*), or at least a multipolar world order.

Naturally, we must acknowledge the international scenario of the current historical moment does not allow for such enthusiasm regarding the consolidation of an effectively multipolar world, based on the Kantian axiological project of perpetual peace and guarantee of human rights on a planetary scale.

That is, we are neither living under the yoke of *pax americana*'s geopolitical unipolarity nor under the multipolar world order of Kantian cosmopolitan democracy.

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