

THE CULTURE OF FEAR IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS – A WESTERN-DOMINATED INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AND ITS EXTREMIST CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT. A culture of fear is precipitated by an emotional response to uncertainty, instability and anxiety in social discourses and relationships. It is a powerful tool in the hands of ideologies stressing on conflict between Us and Others, notable of mention are nationalism, Marxism and religious fundamentalism. Fear can be an attractive political instrument for hiding motives, evoking irrational emotions and mobilizing people under the flag of populist gains. In international politics, the culture of fear is closely related to the Hobbesian political culture, which emphasizes a permanent state of war between international actors. Deviant actors may use the culture of fear in their resistance to the international system.

Key words: *culture of fear, cultural theory of international relations, political cultures, deviant states, international terrorism, international system, neo-conservatism.*

Introduction

A culture of fear is a term used in social sciences in order to describe the emotional response produced by actors using fear as a political incentive, which is often related to extremism. Extremism can be referred to as radical actions against prevailing social norms and rules recognized by the vast majority of actors in a certain environment. To realize their goals, the followers of extremist ideologies can turn to illegitimate tools. The culture of fear increases the role of instability and anxiety in social discourses and relationships and makes distinctions between friendly Us and hostile Others. These emotions may be deliberately used for political gains (e.g. in starting wars, in tensioning relations with other countries, but also in building a kind of national solidarity). Although in recent discourses the culture of fear is frequently connected to the rise of radical Islamic fundamentalism and the Global War on Terrorism (GwOT), which was evoked after the terrorist attacks in New York and

Washington on September 11, 2001, its roots descend from ancient times. The Ancient Greek historian Thucydides already regarded Sparta's fear of maintaining its way of life threatened by the growth of Athens as a main catalyst for the Peloponnesian War in the 5th century B.C.¹

A high-level Nazi leader Hermann Göring has said in his interview to G. M. Gilbert during the Nuremberg Trial:

Göring: ... Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia, nor in England, nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the *leaders* of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship.

Gilbert: There is one difference. In a democracy the people have some say in the matter through their elected representatives, and in the United States only Congress can declare wars.

Göring: Oh, that is all well and good, but, voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.²

Hermann Göring was quite outspoken in his descriptions of why emotional motives might be beneficial for political elites. Fear is a powerful incentive in the hands of populist politicians for shaping public opinion. Zbigniew Brzezinski has noted that a culture of fear “obscures reason, intensifies emotions and makes it easier for demagogic politicians to mobilize the public on behalf of the policies they want to pursue”³. Sometimes democratic politicians may also use popular emotional motives for achieving their political goals. In 2003, the US senator Robert C. Byrd introduced the excerpt from the Nuremberg Diaries in his speech of October 17, 2003, addressed to the President George W. Bush after the Iraqi invasion of 2003.⁴ Senator Byrd accused the President of the continuation of war based on falsehood.

¹ **Richard Ned Lebow.** Thucydides the Constructivist. – The American Political Science Review, 2001, p. 556.

² **Gustave Gilbert.** Nuremberg Diary. New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1947, pp. 278–79.

³ **Zbigniew Brzezinski.** Terrorized by “War on Terror”. – Washington Post, 25.03.2007. Available online at: <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/23/AR2007032301613.html>>, (accessed 07.05.2011).

⁴ **Robert C. Byrd.** The Emperor Has No Clothes by U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, October 17, 2003. Available online at: <http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2003/10/17_byrd_emperor.htm>, (accessed 30.04.2011).

Alexander Wendt⁵ has identified three phenomena (ideal types) that have influenced the development of European political culture and created premises for constructing engagement of international actors into the prevailing international system: the Hobbesian war, the Lockean rivalry, and the Kantian collective security/security community.⁶ There is a fundamental difference in the nature of Hobbesian/Lockean political culture on the one hand and the Kantian culture on the other hand. Fear is an important incentive, which is capable of precipitating the Hobbesian war of all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). The Kantian culture envisages the idealist tradition of cooperative international relations, introduces comprehensive cooperative tools for consolidating universal peace (e.g. security communities, collective and cooperative security arrangements) and intends to unite the world under common virtues.

There are different drivers, which would shape political cultures accordingly to their specific cultural environments: conflict for the Hobbesian culture, competition for the Lockean culture, and cooperation for the Kantian culture. The culture of fear is closely related to the Hobbesian political culture, emphasizing interstate conflict as a natural paradigm in international politics. The Lockean culture recognizes the state of war between international actors but desires to mitigate its effects. The Kantian culture intends to overcome fear in international relations by increasing mutual interdependence among actors.⁷ Ideologies, which emphasize conflict (state of war) between social entities, may promote fear-related motives in their political activities and tilt into political extremism.⁸ Eventually, the *ideological states*⁹ may practice state extremism against the valid international system.

⁵ **Alexander Wendt**. *Social Theory in International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

⁶ After the English philosophers Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and John Locke (1632–1704) and their German colleague Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).

⁷ Like the Hobbesian enmity, the Lockean rivalry manifests the Self-Other dichotomy with respect to violence, but they recognize the sovereignty of Others and do not try to conquer or dominate them. **Wendt** 1999, p. 279.

⁸ Ideologies like Nationalism (stresses conflict between national identities), Marxism (between social classes), Religious Fundamentalism (between religious identities) can be prone to follow extremist lines. Religious Fundamentalism may be also regarded as Religious Nationalism as the organization of the ideology is similar and the only difference is the object of identity.

⁹ Countries, which declare that there is an official ideology of the state. Extremist ideologies – Extreme Nationalism, Communism, Religious Fundamentalism, etc. – can often monopolize the state establishment and produce ideological societies.

A Hungarian-born British sociologist Frank Furedi has significantly contributed to the research into the origins of the culture of fear.¹⁰ The current work uses the framework of cultural theory of international relations envisaged by Richard Ned Lebow¹¹ in examining how the culture of fear can impact on international politics, justify the activities of deviant actors and produce enmities and polarizations within the international system.

The culture of international systems

Hedley Bull stated that an international system comes into force “when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another’s decisions to cause them to behave as parts of a whole”¹². Although since the 1990s the role and importance of other actors (e.g. international institutions, transnational networks, etc.) has notably grown, states have still maintained a status of principal international actors within the international system.

An international system is a governing body that has an ability to arrange relations between different political, social, and cultural entities and operates by using various international regimes for this purpose. It is a self-regulative structure, not a cultural entity, but various political cultures can influence the development of a system. In its turn, the system has an ability to shape its cultural environment. Modern and post-modern international systems have been predominantly influenced by the Western political cultures, and therefore can be identified as Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian systems depending on which political culture prevails within the system.¹³ The international actors will normally accept mutually recognized norms, which support interactions within the system.

Various social forces may intervene for the transformation of anxious emotions into fear.¹⁴ The extremist actors and ideologies may force the culture of fear facilitating their political gains. The culture of fear is also influenced

¹⁰ In his books *Culture of Fear: Risk Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation* (1997/2002), *The Politics of Fear. Beyond Left and Right* (2005), *Invitation to Terror: The Expanding Empire of the Unknown* (2007), all of them published by the Continuum International Publishing Group.

¹¹ **Richard Ned Lebow**. *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

¹² **Hedley Bull**. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, pp. 9–13.

¹³ See also **Holger Mölder**. *Cooperative Security Dilemma – practicing the Hobbesian security culture in the Kantian security environment*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2010, pp. 94–100.

¹⁴ See also **Frank Furedi**. *The Politics of Fear. Beyond Left and Right*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005.

by the concept of security dilemma, which refers to a situation in which actors provoke an increase of mutual tensions in order to improve their own security.¹⁵ There will emerge a ‘*moral panic*’ – that occurs when a “condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests”¹⁶. If the culture of fear is empowered by populist politicians from both sides, it may lead to the non-solvable security dilemma transferred into the sphere of emotions and irrational narratives powered by fear. Such dilemmas are most complicated to manage.

The culture of fear, practiced by powerful international actors, can destabilize international systems. Which is important, certain ideologies, particularly Nationalism and Marxism in their extreme representations, tend to play an important role in producing system-related security dilemmas. Eric Hobsbawm called the 20th century the age of extremes with two global wars and the rise and fall of the messianic faith of Communism.¹⁷ The ideological societies, which emerged rapidly after the World War I, promoted the culture of fear not regionally as it happened in the 19th century but already in global terms. The Marxist revolution in Russia set up an ideological alternative to the world society and positioned Russia as a deviant actor, similarly to North Korea or Iran within the current international system, having only a limited access to mainstream international politics. Systemic confrontations between the international system and deviant actors continued through the activities of Fascist Italy from 1922, Nazi Germany from 1933 or Shōwa Nationalist Japan from 1920s-1930s. These three ideologies founded common paradigms in uniting nationalism, socialism and militarism together for creating an alternative subsystem to the post-World War I Versailles system.¹⁸

The Westphalian concept of national sovereignty is based on two general principles: recognition of territorial integrity of states and recognition of the rule that external actors have no right to interfere into the domestic matters of states.¹⁹ These principles have prevailed throughout modern society, until the last modern international system, the Cold War’s bipolarity, ended. The end of the Cold War marks another breakthrough from the overwhelmingly Hobbesian/Lockean modern international systems to the Kantian post-modern one. The transition was accompanied by a cultural clash, which stems from

¹⁵ **Ken Booth and Nicholas J. Wheeler.** *The Security Dilemma. Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, p. 9.

¹⁶ **Stanley Cohen.** *Folk Devils and Moral Panics.* St Albans: Paladin, 1973, p. 9.

¹⁷ **Eric Hobsbawm.** *The Age of Extremes. A History of World, 1914–1991.* London: Michael Joseph and Pelham Books, 1994.

¹⁸ The Versailles system may be identified as the first Kantian international system, see **Mölder** 2010, pp. 94–100.

¹⁹ See also **Stephen D. Krasner.** *Sovereignty: organized hypocrisy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

different cultural practices and narratives used by modern and post-modern actors within the system.

Since the 1990s, a liberal democracy has been the main incentive for stimulating cooperative international regimes in the Euro-Atlantic security environment, which is shifting towards a global community of democratic states. The majority of European states started to follow the principles of the Kantian political culture, which helped to end the emergence of violent international conflicts in the most parts of Europe. However, the introduction of the Kantian international system did not exclude the co-existence of the Hobbesian actors and environments with the Kantian trend of the system. The cultural differences between the Hobbesian/Lockean actors and the Kantian actors reflect the ideological clash between the Western liberal democracy and the rest of the world, where the modern ideologies like Nationalism or Marxism retained their influential positions in many countries and regions

The logic of postmodern society recognizes supranational principles (e.g. human rights, liberal democracy), which do not entirely fit with the concept of national sovereignty prevailing in the modern society. The conflict between the logic of modern society and the logic of post-modern society may produce cultural security dilemmas between actors and environments representing different cultures and values. Several powerful countries, first of all China and Russia, prefer to keep alive modern principles of the international system, which complicates the involvement of international society in stabilizing the whole system by emphasizing peace, stability, and human rights.

International systems existentially depend on two dependant paradigms: polarity and stability. Polarity implies that there are competing antagonistic subsystems within a system. The Hobbesian and Lockean systems are polarized international systems, while the Kantian system intends to avoid the polarization and if any actor will find itself in opposition with the Kantian system, it may be identified as a deviant actor, outside of the system. The stability within the system may be changed by actions usually taken by major powers. In the long-run, the Soviet invasion to Afghanistan in 1979 caused the crash of the Cold War system. The invasion of the US-led coalition to Iraq in 2003 destabilized the post-modern Kantian system.

Societies stemming from the Hobbesian and Lockean political cultures tend to treat polarity as a natural behavior of the international system. This would indeed describe the 19th century society wherein the ideological differences had a minor influence on the international society and the motives of actors manifested quite similar characteristics. A century later, major powers under the auspices of the Western democracy were forced to find consolidating factors and curb their national interests in standing against the competing extremist ideologies from German National Socialism to Soviet Communism. Lebow explains that, contrary to the realist assumptions, within a non-polar system powerful actors attempt to conform to the rules of the system as the

system would help them to use their power capabilities in the most efficient and effective manner.²⁰ In return, they should limit their national goals to those which others consider as legitimate and the interests of the community as a whole.

Extremism in international politics

The culture of fear polarizes and destabilizes international systems as it is able to force emotional motives, which are able to avoid rational calculations and lead to a political extremism. In their extreme manifestations,²¹ Nationalism, Marxism and certain religion-affiliated ideologies may produce ideological states and ideological societies. Lebow explains fear as one of the general motives shaping international relations, which settles security as a primary goal for fear-based societies and uses power as an instrument to achieve more security in eternal competition for increasing security-related capabilities.²²

Organic ideologies may attribute a certain status of ideal to the community – *we are going the right way, and all those who behave differently, are trying to hinder the achievement of the desired ideal*. Consequently, it would be necessary to provide for all those who as renegade deviate from these ideals. In extreme cases, it may lead to the use of violence in order to bring the renegades back to the ‘right track’. The ideological societies, which are based on a strong sense of identity with Us and Others contrasted and polarized, would impact their positioning towards the system related to some other cultural environment. “As a general rule, individuals, groups, organizations and political units attempt to create, sustain and affirm identities in their interactions with other actors.”²³

In interstate relations, a fear is an emotion, which demands that security is guaranteed through the direct acquisition of military power and economic well-being is a tool for establishing such a power requirement. Brian Frederking includes interactions that produce mistrust and hostilities between actors (traditional nation-state warfare, Israeli-Palestinian relations, imperialism, and Global War on Terrorism) as manifestations of the Hobbesian security culture,²⁴ which is traditionally characterized by producing uncertainty and misperceptions between actors. The Lockean culture in its turn intends

²⁰ Lebow 2008, p. 497.

²¹ If ideologies are capable of forcing conflict within societies, their behavior can be identified as extremist. For example, Chauvinism is an extreme manifestation of Nationalism and Communism respectively refers to Marxist extremism.

²² Lebow 2008, p. 90.

²³ Lebow 2008, p. 497.

²⁴ Brian Frederking, Constructing Post-cold War Collective Security. – American Political Science Review, 3/2003, p. 368.

to create some collective actions in balancing security-related fears (i.e. doctrines increasing state security under the circumstances of international anarchy like power balancing, bandwagoning or neutrality).

The Kantian culture of the post-Cold War international society looked for opportunities to produce a more stable non-polarized environment. In Europe, Kantian principles progressed significantly through the European Union and the transforming of NATO. The post-Communist societies of Eastern Europe could fall under the influence of extremist ideologies, if they did not succeed in the transition to consolidated liberal democracies. State extremism can more easily emerge in illiberal democracies and non-democracies than in consolidated democracies.²⁵ The experience of the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, which in many cases were not able to avoid violent post-dissolution conflicts, confirms this assessment. Therefore, the immediate objective of the European institutions after the Cold War required the engagement of the Central European countries with the rest of Europe.

The Gulf War, the Yugoslavian conflicts, the Afghanistan operation and many others manifest violent interactions between the Kantian and the Hobbesian environments in the post-modern international system. Some environments in the European neighborhood and beyond are mistrustful of the Kantian security culture and hold cultural security dilemmas to be actual. The Greater Middle East, which includes vast areas from Morocco and Mauritania in West Africa to Afghanistan and Pakistan in Central Asia, represents a foremost security concern for the Kantian international system in the near future, as the region is marked by recurrent violence and instability. Despite some progress in the peace processes, the Middle-East remains to be an unstable and polarized region. Besides the Middle-East, Africa poses another serious concern for Europe, as it is still an unstable continent with huge amounts of potential global and regional security risks, including civil wars, ethnic clashes, political, economic and social instability, poverty and famine among others.

The Self-Other binary draws support from Foucault's assertion²⁶ that order and identity are created and maintained through discourses of deviance (Lebow 2008, 476).²⁷ If the self-identification of a particular actor contrasts with the culture used by the international system, it may cause the appearance of extremist behavior in the actor-system relationship. There are countries on the world map, which submit challenges to the valid Kantian international system, while practicing the Hobbesian culture towards the system – i.e.

²⁵ This does not refer to other formations of extremism.

²⁶ Reference is made to **Michel Foucault's** book: *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

²⁷ **Richard Ned Lebow**. *Identity and International Relations*. – *International Relations*, 4/2008 (a), p. 476.

North Korea, Iran, Sudan, and Venezuela among others. The extremist stance in international politics may directly or indirectly force deviant countries to support illegitimate actions, international terrorism among others. The Global War on Terrorism has been regarded as a manifestation of the culture of fear in the post-Cold War society,²⁸ which was able to evoke challenges to the prevailing Kantian political culture and thus destabilize the whole international system.

Lebow notes that deviant actors “attempt to gain attention and recognition by violating norms of the system”²⁹. Countries like North Korea, Cuba, Libya, Sudan, Iran, Syria, Iraq of Saddam Hussein, Yugoslavia of Milosevic, or Afghanistan of the Taliban have taken actions that did not fit with the general principles of the international society. The elaboration of weapons of mass destruction (North Korea, Iraq, Iran), give support to international terrorism (Libya, Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan), violent behavior against minorities or political opponents (Sudan, Yugoslavia, Libya, Iraq) have been condemned by the overwhelming majority of the international society and may cause the international reaction of the Kantian system with their involvement into the “internal matters” of violating countries.

State extremism at the threshold of post-modern society and the Axis of Evil

Since many international actors – states, organizations of citizens, armed groups, and individuals – may depart from the universally accepted norms and practices of the international society, extremist status may also be accredited to states, which violate against the norms of the system. The ‘*pariah*’ or ‘*rogue*’ state refers to a country, which has an ‘outsider’ status within the international system, occupying the lowest ranks in the international hierarchy. According to Lebow, “these are relatively new concepts that made their appearance during the Reagan administration, and were applied to states like Libya or Cuba that the administration chose to ostracize because of their leadership and policies. The Clinton administration introduced the less offensive term ‘states of concern’”³⁰. The main pretenders to the role of ‘pariah’ or ‘rogue’ state were different actors usually representing other civilization than Western.

Already in 1979, during the Cold War, the US Department of State had listed Libya, Iraq, South Yemen and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism. Later Cuba (1982), Iran (1984), Sudan (1993), and North Korea (1988) had

²⁸ Brzezinski 2007.

²⁹ Lebow 2008, p. 544.

³⁰ Lebow 2008, p. 488.

been added to the list. Iraq was initially removed from the list in 1982, enabling the US to provide military assistance during the Iran-Iraq War. After the invasion of Kuwait, Iraq returned to the list and was removed again in 2004. Yemen was removed in 1990 with the unification of North Yemen and South Yemen. North Korea, however, was removed from the list in 2008, because of nuclear inspection requirements. Libya was removed in 2006 following Gaddafi's decision to renounce the support of international terrorism and Libya started to change its policy towards the Western world and attempted to normalize relations with the United States and the European Union. The Libyans abandoned their programs concerning weapons of mass destruction and paid compensations to the families of victims of the Pan Am flight 103 as well as the UTA flight 772.

On January 29, 2002, the US President George W. Bush first introduced the term the *Axis of Evil* in describing countries which tend to support international terrorism and seek weapons of mass destruction, namely Iran, Iraq and North Korea.³¹ The list of Axis of Evil predominantly coincides with the list of state sponsors of terrorism. The former speechwriter of G. W. Bush, David Frum invented the term *axis of hatred* for Iran and Iraq in making parallels between modern terror states and the Axis Powers from the World War II.³² However, differently from the Axis Powers of the World War II, the so-called modern terror states do not cooperate in their international goals and do not form coalitions. They may be ideologically and/or culturally diverse entities which would confront each other to the same extent as the international system. Initially, the Axis of Evil included six countries – Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Cuba, Libya, and Syria. Later, after the ousting of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and the democratization process initiated, Iraq was excluded from the list.

A support to international terrorism and/or intentions to develop weapons of mass destruction are main causes that countries would be listed as states of concern, but also violations against human rights have caused international sanctions or other similar reactions against extremist states. Countries like Belarus, Myanmar and Zimbabwe have most often been mentioned among the extremist countries.³³ All these countries can be identified as ideological societies, and as a rule, ideological societies tend to be more favorable to authoritarian or even totalitarian regimes. Ideologically, regimes of the Axis

³¹ **George W. Bush.** State of the Union Address, 29.01.2002. Available online at: <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>>, (accessed 29.08.2010).

³² **David Frum.** The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush. New York, Toronto: Random House, 2003.

³³ Former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called these three countries “outposts of tyranny”. For further information see: **At-a-glance: Outposts of tyranny.** Available online at: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4187361.stm>>, (accessed 30.04.2011).

of Evil differ from each other. Iran practices a strongly ideological Shia fundamentalist theocratic regime. North Korea and Cuba represent vanishing communist ideologies. The regimes of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Syria refer to secular pan-Arab nationalist and socialist ideologies directed by their ruling Baath parties.³⁴ Also Gaddafi's Libya practices its particular ideology (the Third International Theory), which is a mixture of pan-Arab nationalism, secular socialism and Islamic culture. The table below describes deviant (extremist) countries in the post-modern system since 1990.

Table: the Axis of Evil – extremist countries³⁵

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Wars vs international community</i>	<i>UN sanctions implemented</i>	<i>State sponsors of terrorism</i>	<i>Weapons of Mass Destruction</i>
Cuba	Communism			1982–	
Iran	Shia Fundamentalism		2006–	1984–	suspected
Libya	Arab Nationalism/ Socialism		1992–2003 2011–	1979–2006	
North Korea	Communism		2006–	1988–2008	declared 2006
Sudan	Arab Nationalism/ Islamism		1994–	1983–	
Syria	Arab Nationalism/ Socialism			1979–	suspected
Belarus	Post-Communism, ³⁶ Nationalism				
Myanmar	Nationalism		<i>EU 1990–</i>		suspected
Zimbabwe	African Nationalism/Socialism		<i>EU 2002–</i>		

³⁴ The **Arab Socialist Baath Party**, which means “resurrection” or “renaissance” and bases on Arab Socialism, Arab Nationalism and pan-Arabism. It was founded in 1940, was ruling party in Syria since 1963 and in Iraq 1963–2003.

³⁵ These countries have or had problems with entering into the international society in the last decades. This list is incomplete. Since 1990, the UN has exposed economic sanctions or arms embargo also against DR Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, Haiti, Angola for different reasons. Online: available at <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/>.

³⁶ Post-Communism refers to some post-ideological societies that emerged in the 1990s after the collapse of Marxist ideology on the basis of former Communist movements, which often practiced an authoritarian regime with mixed elements of Marxism and Nationalism used in building a new ideological formation (source: author's compilation).

Table: continuation

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Wars vs international community</i>	<i>UN sanctions implemented</i>	<i>State sponsors of terrorism</i>	<i>Weapons of Mass Destruction</i>
Afghanistan – until 2001 (Taliban)	Sunni Fundamentalism	2001	1999– (Taliban)		
Iraq – until 2003 (Saddam Hussein)	Arab Nationalism	1991–2003	1990–	1979–1982 1990–2004	suspected
South Yemen – until 1990	Arab Socialism			1979–1990	
Yugoslavia – until 2000 (Milosevic)	Post-Communism, Nationalism	1994–1995 1998–1999		1991–1996 1998–2001	

The Iraqi invasion of 2003 made some changes in the classification of evil forces, while Iran, North Korea and to lesser extent Syria have remained core members of the Axis of Evil. After the resignation of their charismatic leader Fidel Castro, Cuba has often been believed to be moving towards liberalization of the Communist regime, although these signs are very modest as yet. Venezuela under the leftist anti-Americanism of President Hugo Chavez, the Mugabe's regime of Zimbabwe, Myanmar having long-time troubles with human rights, and Sudan with her continuing Darfur problem have often been named as countries alternating themselves against the Western-dominated international system.

The division between liberal states and authoritarian others may introduce the ideological confrontation between the so-called the Axis of Evil and the Axis of Good.³⁷ Especially as the President of Venezuela Hugo Chavez and the President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have played an active role in continuous attempts to build up a systemic confrontation that may lead to a Cold War's dichotomy between democratic and authoritarian regimes. Hugo Chavez has used the term Axis of Good in merging partnership between leftist-governed Latin-American countries – Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Since the end of World War II, anti-Americanism has historically proved itself to be a strong and capable ideological movement in uniting some nations against Western liberal democracy.

Relations with international terrorism have been considered in the emergence of an 'outlaw' status in the discursive recognition of *evil* by the US Government. The reasons empowering the use of a terrorist method include a wide area of reasons. "Terrorism is the deliberate and systemic murder,

³⁷ Lebow 2008 (a), p. 476.

maiming, and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political ends.³⁸ Terrorist methods are traditionally typical of smaller groups, which may be in difficulties when using traditional political methods through popular support in achieving their goals. This may be one reason why terrorism is frequently practiced by extremist groups, which can hardly pretend to take a leading role within a democratic society.

Similarly, deviant states would turn to international terrorism for achieving political goals that they are not able to achieve without extremist measures. Besides that, they may spread the culture of fear for deterrence. Ideologies that would provoke certain actors to use terrorism for recognition of their political goals include nationalism, anarchism, communism, neo-fascism, and religious fundamentalism among others. Frank Furedi explains that terrorism, which is traditionally applied as an attempt to influence the population for a specific political end, can be now feared more because of ideological appeals of terrorist actors.³⁹

In addition to supporting international terrorism, deviant states may be interested in developing weapons of mass destruction, not necessarily for offensive purposes but for deterring punitive actions from the international society. In 2006 and 2009, North Korea conducted nuclear tests. Some other countries (e.g. Iran, Myanmar, and Syria) are suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction. If some nations fear international involvement or intervention into their domestic affairs, a culture of fear may appear and deviant actors may start to reproduce practical and discursive actions supporting their evolving military capabilities. In the cases of Iraq, Iran, and Korea, the development of their nuclear capabilities or intentions to move in that direction may be used on behalf of a deterrence against possible international intervention. The international society, however, can take their intentions to maintain their ideological regimes as a threat to its peace and stability and a system-related security dilemma is established.

Asymmetric axis

The post-Cold War arrangement in international relations favors globalization and an enhanced interdependence between nations. Collective punitive actions against Iraq in 1991 and against Serbia in Bosnia and Kosovo some years later symbolize the cooperative goals of the international society, which corresponded to the principles fixed within the UN Charter, chapters VI and VII. Even while the states have remained as main actors in the international arena, the role and importance of non-governmental entities has rapidly

³⁸ **Christopher C. Harmon.** *Terrorism today.* London: Routledge, 2008, p.7.

³⁹ **Frank Furedi.** *Invitation to Terror: The Expanding Empire of the Unknown.* London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007.

grown. These trends have been accompanied by the increasing importance of asymmetric risks and threats. These are risks and threats with possible international influence, which can emerge at some other level than states, from global risks to domestic risks as well. Asymmetric actors may include international interest groups, non-governmental organizations, transnational companies, individuals – which all may go beyond a particular citizenship.

After 2001, the international societal environment fostered the emergence of a culture of fear, while terrorism, which has never been a ‘mainstream political tool’, has been promoted to the next level by a small and relatively little-known Islamic fundamentalist group Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda succeeded in increasing the amount of uncertainty, which produced instability within the whole international system and caused political risks to be taken by actors.⁴⁰ As follows, the international society was confronted “with an increased awareness of risks because more decisions are taken in an atmosphere of uncertainty”⁴¹. International terrorism has often been mentioned among the most important manifestations of a new asymmetric axis, which involves transnational networks and therefore comes into conflict with the traditional approaches to international systems based on national interests performed by states. Jessica Stern, while analyzing the effectiveness of Al-Qaeda, notes its capability for change, which makes Al-Qaeda more attractive for new recruits and allies.⁴² Colin Wight notes that Al-Qaeda followed a structural form without clear lines of hierarchy and channels of control over the cells, which makes it harder to detect and destroy it.⁴³

A global transnational network corresponds to the timely principles of the post-modern society. It is somehow symbolic as NATO for the first time throughout its history used its article V against the asymmetric threat, terrorism, and on behalf of its major military power, the United States. The attacks organized against international terrorism are justified in that they are not against states but terrorist organizations, the United States fought in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and in 2006 Israel fought against a Lebanese Shia extremist militant group Hezbollah, not Lebanon, which moves asymmetric groups to the level comparable with states.⁴⁴ Notably, the United

⁴⁰ See **Mary Douglas; Aaron Wildavsky**. *Risk and Culture: An essay on the selection of technical and environmental dangers*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

⁴¹ **Frank Furedi**. *Culture of Fear: Risk Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002, p. 8.

⁴² **Jessica Stern**. *Al Qaeda: the Protean Enemy*. – *Foreign Affairs*, 4/2003.

⁴³ **Colin Wight**. *Theorising terrorism: The State, Structure, and History*. – *International Relations* 1/2009, p. 105.

⁴⁴ **Daren Bowyer**. *The moral dimension of asymmetrical warfare: accountability, culpability and military effectiveness*. – Baarda, Th. A. van; Verweij, D. E. M. (eds.). *The moral dimension of asymmetrical warfare: counter-terrorism, democratic values and military ethics*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2009, p. 139.

Nations performed sanctions against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in 1998 and against Hezbollah in 2006.⁴⁵

In 1990s Samuel Huntington invented a descriptive theory that prescribes general trends in international politics while emphasizing a possible cultural conflict between opposing civilizations.⁴⁶ The attack of September 11, 2001 led to the Global War on Terrorism with the world divided between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ once again and polarity-based policies started gradually to return. The offensive strategy characterizing the counterterrorist policies carried through the western world during the GWoT, which frequently demonized the Muslim faith and the Islamic civilization, fitted more with the Hobbesian security culture practicing enmities between different entities and has evidently promoted the direction towards the clash of civilizations, once predicted by Huntington and damaged hopes for the end of history as described ten years ago by Francis Fukuyama.⁴⁷

Although the defensive actions against international terrorism, including military operations in Afghanistan, have been widely approved by the international society, the Kantian world favoring democratic peace, multiculturalism and international cooperation did not satisfy apologists of power policies. Extremist movements were successful in splitting a still fragile Western unity. The emerging culture of fear could be observed as a counter-ideology to the rising Islamic fundamentalism especially in the United States, where the neo-conservative ideological movement strengthened with Bush’s presidency of the United States.

During the Cold War, the Islamists were often treated as natural allies of the Western bloc because of their fighting against the spread of Communist ideologies. Their opposition to Atheism practiced by the Communist regimes made Islamism a powerful competing ideology especially in the Third World countries. Huntington mentioned that “at one time or another during the Cold War many governments, including those of Algeria, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel, encouraged and supported Islamists as a counter to communist and hostile nationalist movements”⁴⁸. Pro-Western countries provided massive funding to the Islamists groups in various parts of the world. The United States often saw Islamists as an opposition to the Soviet influence under the circumstances of the bipolar competition of the Cold War.

⁴⁵ **UN Security Council Sanctions Committees.** Available online at: <<http://www.un.org/sc/committees/>>, (accessed 06.05.2011).

⁴⁶ **Samuel P. Huntington.** *The Clash of Civilizations. Remaking World Order.* New York: Touchstone Book, 1997.

⁴⁷ In his book: **Francis Fukuyama.** *The End of History and the Last Man.* New York: Free Press, 1992.

⁴⁸ **Huntington** 1997, p. 115.

At the same time, secular movements in Islamic countries, contrariwise, often flirted with Marxism and thus gained support from the Soviet Union. The Pan-Arabist leaders of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria shared the anti-American and anti-Imperialist views of the Soviet ideological establishment. From 1979, the situation gradually started to change with the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which strengthened Islamic solidarity instead of socialist and nationalist sentiments. Whilst pan-Arabism followed the structure of Western ideologies and settled it into the specific Nationalist environment with Socialist influences, the contemporary Islamic Fundamentalism is a direct challenge to the Western model of the state and politics, and constitutes a form of political resistance.⁴⁹

In 1980s, the Western governments supported the Sunni resistance in the Afghanistan conflict and only a smaller Shia community of Islam was mostly involved in the anti-Western confrontation. The revolution in Iran established a new regime that was simultaneously anti-Western and anti-Soviet and did not suit with the Cold War's bipolarity. Sunnis remained silent and used Western support in Afghanistan and other conflict areas, whereby they fought for their values and identities. Paradoxically, in the course of the Iraqi-Iran war 1980–1988, the East and the West both supported the leftist Arab nationalist regime of Saddam Hussein against Iran.

The post-Cold War era produced some regrouping between international powers and groups of interests. The Islamic militants started to stand against the spread of western liberal democracy, which did not fit with their ideological goals. In the 1990s, the clash between western liberal democracy and Islamic fundamentalism developed rapidly. The Sunni fundamentalist Taliban movement established their control over Afghanistan in 1996. More serious signs of ideological clash emerged in 1998, when Al-Qaeda terrorists attacked the US embassies in East-Africa. With the GWoT, cultural conflicts became indeed more visible. The confrontation between Western liberal democracy and Islamic fundamentalism verified that Huntington was right in predicting a clash of civilizations.

The transnational character of asymmetric actors allows them to introduce non-traditional methods effectively (e.g. international terrorism) as they have no territoriality or sovereignty to defend, which makes it more efficient in balancing the possible sanctions from the valid international system. Legally, there is a difference between asymmetric transnational terrorism and symmetric state terrorism – terrorist organizations have no legitimate right to kill, contrariwise to political communities, though they may apply to some form of revolutionary vanguard the term, “good people” who destroy

⁴⁹ Wight 2009, p. 104.

“bad people”.⁵⁰ The promotion of a culture of fear would be one of the most important challenges caused by international terrorism. Strategies of terrorist groups aim to produce chaos and political, economic, social and military damage, hoping that the destabilization of existing societies following the terrorist attack may help them to validate their ideological goals.

The rise of neo-conservatism and the culture of fear in Western democracies

The activation of Islamic terrorism was followed by the appropriate reaction from the United States, where a neo-Trotskyite neo-conservative ideology increased its influence on the US foreign policy. The so-called “Bush Doctrine” referred to the following principles: the idea of pre-emptive or preventive military action; the promotion of democracy and regime change, and a diplomacy tending towards unilateralism, a willingness to act without the sanction of international bodies such as the United Nations Security Council or the unanimous approval of its allies, which according to Robert Kagan, however, is a traditional US policy rather than a new concept in American foreign policy.⁵¹

The emergence of the neo-conservative movement, which fed on destabilizing emotions like fear and uncertainty and intended to implement the Hobbesian political culture on behalf of the ideals of liberal democracy, greatly influenced the ideological stanchions of George W. Bush’s administration. Neo-conservatism is a syncretic movement, which uses US patriotism (nationalism), a Marxist methodology and conservative philosophical discourses for the forceful introduction of US hegemony in international affairs. It emerged in 1970s on the basis of former leftists, who turned to the right after the Vietnam War. For its opponents, it is a distinct political movement that emphasizes the blending of military power with Wilsonian idealism.⁵²

According to their ‘founding father’ Irving Kristol, neo-conservative postulates in foreign policy issues are based on five pillars: patriotism as a necessity; world government as a terrible idea; statesmen should have the ability to accurately distinguish friend from foe; protection of national

⁵⁰ **Carl Ceulemans.** Asymmetric warfare and morality: from moral asymmetry to amoral symmetry? – Baarda, Th. A. van; Verweij, D. E. M. (eds.). The moral dimension of asymmetrical warfare: counter-terrorism, democratic values and military ethics. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2009.

⁵¹ **Robert Kagan.** End of Dreams, Return of History. – Policy Review, No. 144, July 17, 2007. Available online at: <<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>>, (accessed 20.08.2010), p. 2.

⁵² **John J. Mearsheimer.** Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: realism versus neo-conservatism. London: Open Democracy, 2005. Available online at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-americanpower/morgenthau_2522.jsp>, (accessed 30.04.2011).

interests both at home and abroad; and the necessity of a strong military.⁵³ Their ideology borrowed a lot from the ideas of American philosopher Leo Strauss. Strauss described liberalism as a generally Utopian ideology actively defended the prevalence of values in social sciences and he was against the world-state because he feared that this would lead to tyranny.⁵⁴ During the Cold War, the neo-conservatives had paid only a little attention to international relations and their main interest has been directed towards the rebirth of the American society based on its traditional values. In the 1990s they started to loudly criticize US foreign policy because of the lack of *moral clarity* and lesser willingness to pursue the US strategic interests.⁵⁵ Step by step, the neo-conservative ideology gradually reorganized itself as a particular school of International Relations, which is distinctive from Realism as well as from Liberalism.

During the Bush presidency, US unilateralism in world politics started to emphasize modern values of sovereignty and national interests again instead of multinational cooperative regimes. As a result of cultural change in their foreign policy, the United States practically unilaterally opposed the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, complicating global cooperation in environmental issues. Besides that, the Americans fiercely fought against the involvement of the International Criminal Court in US military matters. The liberal democracy remained in the slogan but there were no other gods besides Zeus himself. The rise of patriotism, strong criticism towards the United Nations (standing against world government), identifying enemies and promoting polarity (distinguishing friend from foe), settling the US interests over global interests (protecting national interest), preferring the use of military power in conflict regulation (strong military) – this all characterizes a trend of change in international politics initiated by neo-conservative strategists.

The ideological schism between the United States and some of her European allies was a result of neo-conservative militant unilateralism. Heated discussions about the role of the United States in post-Cold War Europe, especially considering the dependence of European on the American military power shot up more vigorously after 2001. Some experts expressed their fears about the ability of Europe to defend itself after the American forces leave the Europe. The reference of an orthodox neo-conservative theorist, Robert

⁵³ **Irving Kristol.** The Neoconservative Persuasion. Available online at: <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Utilities/printer_preview.asp?idArticle=3000&R=785F2781>, (accessed 04.09.2007).

⁵⁴ **Jim George.** The Contradictions of Empire. Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and the US Foreign Policy: Esoteric Nihilism and the Bush Doctrine. – International Politics, 2/2005.

⁵⁵ **William J. Bennet.** Why We Fight: Moral Clarity and the War on Terrorism. New York: Doubleday, 2005.

Kagan that Europeans are from Venus and Americans from Mars has gained a noticeable popularity.⁵⁶

For some, mostly North American writers, disagreements between Western European states over the appropriate institutional configuration for Europe reflects the states' concerns about their relative power. Others saw in the European project a desire to continue the age-old practice of balancing power whilst others caricatured post-Cold War Europe as being led by a 'benign unipolar' hegemon – the United States.⁵⁷

The Iraqi operation of 2003, initiated by neo-conservative strategists and widely criticized by some allies and partners in NATO and the EU, caused a significant divergence in opinions concerning the future global security order. Some analysts predicted the return to the Hobbesian world, characterized by permanent clashes and polarities. The others insistently aimed the gradual change towards the Kantian world, placing a high value on cooperation and tolerance between different civilizations.

Neo-conservatism idealizes the perpetual fight for World revolution even if it could be called a liberal democratic revolution and objects to hegemony in the world order. These appeals are close to Leon Trotsky's conception of permanent revolution. Despite the fact that the neo-conservatives may use different narratives, their methodology remains close to the Marxist one, in which their founding fathers grew up. Discursively, the neo-conservatives may follow the Kantian concepts as their ultimate goals, but rather, these goals are hegemonic international systems, which do not accept competition of values within a system. They do not believe that different civilizations can make peace between each other and prefer to use power in order to establish peaceful settlements under a hegemony.

Theoretically, the neo-conservative approach to international relations is close to a post-Marxist World system approach. Immanuel Wallerstein, a leading post-Marxist theorist, elaborated the World system theory that describes a world system as a social system that is made up of the conflicting forces looking for their advantages.⁵⁸ Wallerstein characterizes this system as an organism, which is able to change in some respects but retains its stability in others.⁵⁹ While the world-system theory lies in the core and periph-

⁵⁶ **Robert Kagan.** *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order.* New York: Knopf, 2003.

⁵⁷ **Alex J. Bellamy.** *Security Communities and their Neighbours. Regional Fortresses or Global Integrators?* Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004, p. 65.

⁵⁸ **Immanuel Wallerstein.** *The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist system: Concepts for Comparative Analysis.* – *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4/1974, pp. 387–415.

⁵⁹ **Immanuel Wallerstein, Terence K. Hopkins et al.** *World-Systems Analysis: Theory and Methodology.* Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982.

ery conflict, the neo-conservative hegemony emphasize a perpetual conflict between liberal states and authoritarian others. In this respect, Lebow⁶⁰ compared the influence of George Bush's neo-conservatism to the post-World War I international system with the influence of Adolf Hitler's National Socialism.⁶¹ They both succeeded in destabilizing the valid world system – Hitler's ideological movement destabilized the Versailles system and the neo-conservatism destabilized the post-modern system, both of which are the Kantian systems.

Ideological movements emphasizing powerful ideas of nationalism, religious fundamentalism or Marxism and using a culture of fear as a political instrument for achieving their political goals can destabilize international systems if they are able to enter into the power projection. The manifestation of neo-conservatism with its nationalist and Marxist origins and politicized Islamic fundamentalism added an ideological dimension to the Global War on Terrorism. The neo-conservative policy offered an ideological confrontation between contrasting values accordingly to the Hobbesian cultural approach, while the Kantian approach made it possible to hold the potential conflict of values within a framework of the international system and deviant actors. The neo-conservative influence on world politics was at its height from 2001 to 2008. After the presidential elections of 2008 in the United States, the new Obama administration came to power and ended the neo-conservative influence to the US foreign policy, after that they quickly started to be marginalized.

Conclusions

A culture of fear most effectively supports the logic of the Hobbesian culture, which emphasizes a state of war between international actors. It may provoke extremist challenges against peace and stability and conflicting ideologies compose a powerful agenda for initiating fear-based polarizations. Fear in the hands of ideologies has an enormous capability to provoke irrational decisions and security dilemmas. At first glance, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the culture of fear seem to depending on each other. The Hollywood-like scenario of September 11, 2001, by which the charismatic leader of Al-Qaeda Osama Bin Laden recorded himself in the history of the world, caused the worldwide diffusion of fear, which in its turn opened the door for the extremist neo-conservative reaction in the United States. Recent news about the liquidation of the protean enemy hardly makes the world safer.

⁶⁰ Lebow 2008, p. 439–443.

⁶¹ There are of course differences in the two ideologies themselves, and practices those ideologies used and the similarity of two ideological movements first of all concerns their methodological treatment of the world politics, which is culturally deeply Hobbesian in both cases.

The post-modern Kantian international system continually includes multiple Hobbesian security environments. The variety of cultural environments makes the whole international system conflict-prone and it is able to produce a culture of fear involving different civilizations, identities or ideologies. Deviant actors often find themselves manipulating the culture of fear in justifying their legitimacy within the international system. The axis-building policies between good and evil can destabilize the international system by introducing new polarizations. Various factors reproducing a culture of fear (e.g. social problems, ethnic tensions with strengthening national sentiments, nuclear dilemmas) may inflict the emergence of most problematic security dilemmas into the Kantian international system. The successful alternative to fear-based political incentives largely depends on maintaining a non-polarized cooperative framework within the valid international system. A less ideologized world tends to be a safer world.

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