Recently Imperial?
Assessing Supposed Discontinuities in U. S. Foreign Policy

David Sylvan
Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva
sylvan@hei.unige.ch

Stephen Majeski
University of Washington
majeski@u.washington.edu

Abstract

Over the last few years, it has become a commonplace among commentators that United States foreign policy has recently become far more imperial than was previously the case. There are numerous descriptive, theoretical, and logical problems with this position, and we thus advance a counterargument stressing the imperial continuity of U. S. foreign policy over the last century. That continuity largely stems from a policy which revolves around the acquisition and maintenance of client states, a policy of varied means, ideological goals, speed, and scope. Historical assessment of the "recently imperial" position and the continuity argument lends support to the latter, including on the very criteria of military activism typically cited as having changed within the last three to 13 years.

<u>Introduction</u>
In recent years, the nature of United States foreign policy has become a major topic of debate. Although numerous issues are being fought out, what seems widely accepted among participants with otherwise divergent views is the claim that the U. S. is now behaving toward many other countries in a way – often characterized as "imperial" – fundamentally different than was the case in the not-so-distant past. Even critics who insist that the U. S. has been imperial for a long time see important changes as having recently taken place.[1]

However, such unanimity, striking as it may be intellectually and politically, ought not necessarily to be accepted at face value. The problem is that almost every feature of U. S. foreign policy cited by participants in the debate can easily be found well before the supposed turning points of the end of the Cold War and/or September 11, 2001. This does not mean that U. S. policy perforce is unchanged; but it does indicate that the consensus on change needs to be looked at carefully.

This paper provides a preliminary assessment of the change versus continuity alternative. In part, the assessment is preliminary because to address the topic adequately requires a full-blown discussion of U. S. foreign policy, a task whose scope is obviously far beyond that of a convention paper. In part, however, the assessment is preliminary because the question needs to be sorted out logically and theoretically before any actual assessment can be undertaken. What does it mean, for example, to characterize a phenomenon as complex as a state's foreign policy (across issues, dyads, and time) by a single label? Which information is most relevant to this description, and why? Are there particular criteria by which a given description can be confirmed or, conversely, dismissed as incorrect?[2]

Of course, every participant in the debate over U. S. foreign policy has implicitly answered these preliminary questions. Whether these answers make sense, though, is another matter. To claim, for instance, that the 2003 war with Iraq shows the U. S. has shifted its policy in an increasingly unilateral direction presumes that unilateralism can be assessed by seeing whether the U. S. decides to employ force even when close allies refuse to help out. Note what is involved in this claim: that allies such as France and Germany count for less than those such as Britain and Spain; that policy toward Iraq in 2003 is more typical of U. S. policy than that toward, say, North Korea or Haiti in 2004; that previous instances of unilateral U. S. intervention in the Caribbean in the 1990s, 1980s, 1960s, and so on (not to mention in Vietnam in the face of both French and British refusal to send troops) are unimportant in claiming the U. S. had earlier been less unilateral; that concertation with the EU on Afghanistan, on anti-terror policies, and on economic issues (e.g., at Cancún) is of minor importance compared to policy toward Iraq (though all of a piece with policy regarding the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court); and so forth. Each of these positions is in itself debatable; taken together, they represent a point of view which one may well doubt was thought through as such by the advocates of the "new unilateralism" claim.

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[1] For example, the claim that "Cheney-Rumsfeld-Powell and their associates are officially *declaring* an even more extreme policy, one aimed at permanent global hegemony by reliance on force where necessary": Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), 16 (emphasis in original).

[2] We are struck by the similarity to an earlier historiographical debate, on the Robinson-Gallagher hypothesis about the so-called "imperialism of free trade." There, too, the debate revolved less around the piling up of facts as to the continuity or lack thereof of British imperialism than, in the end, around methodological issues. An interesting, if somewhat dated, introduction can be found in Wm. Roger Louis, ed., *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976).

To correct these problems, the preliminary questions adverted to above need to be answered explicitly. At the minimum, those who argue for or against the claim that the U. S. recently became imperial must construct an argument that is synoptic in three ways: to make clear that certain elements in U. S. foreign policy are central compared to (or subsuming) others; to demonstrate that the central elements are interlocking and, as such, provide a warrant for the policy being characterized as imperial or, conversely, as non-imperial; and to show that, for a given period of time, there are both numerous instances of U. S. policy compatible with the characterization and few to no instances incompatible with it – and that, depending on the argument, this characterization either is the same or different from that of the preceding time period. In effect, for a debate on the continuity or discontinuity of recent U. S. foreign policy to progress intelligently, participants must describe American foreign policy, theorize it, and provide a historical analysis of it.

In this paper, we take the first steps in this direction. We begin with a brief summary of the discontinuity position, then try to isolate core elements of its claims on all three of the above dimensions: descriptive, theoretical, and historical. We next lay out a description and theory of a continuity position. Finally, we engage in an extremely brief, preliminary historical analysis, one that suggests that the evidence in favor of the continuity position is considerably stronger than for the discontinuity one.

The Current Debate: Discontinuity

As indicated above, there are now numerous books on how U. S. foreign policy has or has not changed in an imperial direction in the last few years. To the authors of these works, this question may not be at the center of their concerns, which typically revolve rather over such issues as whether or not the U. S. can maintain its power and if so for how long; whether or not the U. S. is in the process of losing its democratic character; whether U. S. policy is efficacious and/or wise; and so forth. Nonetheless, each of the works cited below either assumes or argues explicitly that the U. S. recently became imperial.[3] To isolate this issue further, it is useful to

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[3] To focus just on books published in the last two years, though without trying to be comprehensive: Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U. S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003); Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003); Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2003); Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Company, 2003); Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Knopf, 2003); Charles Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U. S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Knopf, 2002); Robert Jay Lifton, *Superpower Syndrome: America's Apocalyptic Confrontation with the World* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2003); James Mann, *The Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Viking, 2004); Michael Mann, *Incoherent Empire* (London: Verso, 2003); Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Clyde Prestowitz, *Rogue Nation: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions* (New York: Basic Books, 2003); George Soros, *The Bubble of American Supremacy: Correcting the Misuse of American Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2003); Emmanuel Todd, *After the Empire: The Breakdown of the American Order*, trans. C. Jon Delogu (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004; orig. publ. 2002). The list could easily be doubled if one were to go back several more years; inclusion of journal articles would increase it yet further (for example: Samuel P. Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* 78,2 [1999]: 35-49).

start by summarizing two of these studies: by Bacevich (*American Empire*) and by Johnson (*The Sorrows of Empire*).

Bacevich, whose book appeared toward the end of 2002, argues that since "the end of the Cold War the United States has in fact adhered to a well-defined grand strategy," the purpose of which "is to preserve and, where feasible and conducive to U. S. interests, to expand an American imperium. Central to this strategy is a commitment to global openness ... the creation of an open and integrated international order based on the principles of democratic capitalism, with the United States as the ultimate guarantor of order and enforcer of norms" (2-3). Even after the Soviet Union disappeared, the U. S. would still need a powerful military to pursue this goal; indeed, Bacevich suggests that to U. S. elites, openness facilitated new and even more far-flung security threats – and thus necessitated an even stronger military – than had been the case during the Cold War (ch. 5). However, if particular situations did not seem to the mass public to pose an imminent security threat to the U. S., the military would be told to deal with those circumstances by means other than direct ground combat, i.e., by air power ("gunboats") and by relying on U. S. -trained, -supplied, and, often, -commanded proxies ("gurkhas") for such ground combat as was necessary (ch. 6). To prepare for the latter situations, U. S. foreign policy increasingly was led to establish close ties with the militaries of states around the world, ties maintained by regional commanders in chief ("proconsuls", ch. 7).

On Bacevich's argument, these various features of U. S. foreign policy were accentuated in terms of budgetary and geographical scope during the Clinton Administration. Indeed, Clinton and his advisers were really the first to articulate a doctrine, which explicitly linked the economic, and political goal of openness to the various military policies they undertook. Moreover, since the latter were often seen by U. S. policy makers as incompatible with certain international initiatives, Bacevich concludes that Clinton was the real unilateralist, his successor simply following in his footsteps (213): there was an "elite consensus" on the U. S. military (221). Thus, it was the end of the Cold War which was a real turning point, the moment at which the radical, messianic goal of global openness and of a concomitant military buildup became both possible to, and were avidly pursued by, American policy elites.

Our purpose here is not to criticize Bacevich or any other participant in the debate but to clarify the major fault lines in that debate. Nonetheless, before proceeding to the Johnson book, it is worthwhile pointing out that there is a curious set of historical blinders in place in Bacevich's argument. Writing as he did in 2001 and early 2002, he could not, of course, foresee the enormous controversy occasioned by the Bush administration's pursuit of a preventive Iraq war in the face of massive disapproval around the world, nor, a fortiori, the enormous rift in the ranks of U. S. policy elites over whether to proceed with that war under those circumstances. However, looking backward in time, it is difficult to see openness as a new goal, dating as it does at least back to the World War II planning for a world of liberalized, open exchange (the Atlantic Charter, Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks) and doctrinally established in 1950 in NSC 68. (In fact, although Bacevich largely skips over these episodes, he does recall that both Charles Beard and William Appleman Williams discussed what the latter called "Open Door imperialism" as a theme of U. S. foreign policy beginning in the 1890s; unfortunately, this insight is then more or less ignored in the rest of the book.) Nor can one readily claim that the U. S. reliance on bombing and proxy forces is new: recall the air war against Japan and North Vietnam (the latter controlled by CINCPAC), the Truman Doctrine, and the multiple forms of military aid and training throughout the Cold War. In short, if the end of the Cold War ushered in an American empire, that empire differed, if at all, only in degree and not in kind from the U. S. position in the

world during the Cold War.

Let us now turn to the book by Johnson. He argues that the United States has for a long time been an imperial power, exercising "dominance over half the globe" by 1991 and, in the decade since then, mounting "many actions to perpetuate and extend" [its] global power, including wars and 'humanitarian' interventions in Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Colombia, and Serbia, while maintaining unchanged [its] Cold War deployments in East Asia and the Pacific." However, the attacks of September 11 "produced a dangerous change in the thinking of some of our leaders, who began to see our republic as a genuine empire..." (3). This empire ("the domination and exploitation of weaker states by stronger ones," 28), with its numerous bases around the world (more than 725 acknowledged by the Pentagon), its regional and Special Forces commands, has taken a militaristic form (30): the U. S. military has become increasing professional, the ideal of military professionalism is increasingly glorified, the military plays an ever more central role in foreign policy making, and finally, of perhaps most importance, "a devotion to policies in which military preparedness becomes the highest priority of the state" (63).

Of course, many of these developments were, as Johnson acknowledges, years in the making (he dates the origins of militarism to the Spanish-American War and emphasizes that the largest expansion of bases took place after World War II). Nonetheless, since the end of the Cold War, two qualitative shifts have occurred. One is the replacement of earlier, more defensive and/or more limited goals of U. S. foreign policy by more expansive and, significantly, more circular goals: the "discovery of our immense power, rationalized by the self-glorifying conclusion that because we have it we deserve to have it. ... an impulse on the part of our elites to dominate other peoples largely because we have the power to do so, followed by the strategic reasoning that, in order to defend these newly acquired outposts and control the regions they are in, we must expand the areas under our control with still more bases" (152). To Johnson, this circularity is the subject of a wide consensus among U. S. elites, as evidenced not only in congressional votes and Op-Ed pieces but in the reports regularly produced by various groups about national security.[4] The second shift, precisely as a result of September 11, is an increasing intrusion into everyday life of certain tenets of elite consensus: the acceptance of frequent wars even in the face of U. N. or allied disapproval, an increased status for the military, a willingness for "security" issues to lead to infringements on civil liberties, and so forth.

As with Bacevich, Johnson's argument can also be contextualized historically. Ideological fervor and political intolerance are not exactly new phenomena in U. S. history, dating at least back to the Mitchell Palmer raids in World War I and including, notoriously, the McCarthy witch-hunts of the 1950s. Nor is circularity in means and ends unique to the post-Cold War era: for decades, American leaders' fetishization of "credibility" was, in effect, a blank check for engaging in military action almost anywhere around the world where the U. S. happened to have some kind of

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[4] For example, the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century: "New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century," 15 September 1999; and "Road Map for National Security: Imperative for Change," 15 February 2001;. the National Intelligence Council ("a small center of strategic thinking in the U. S. Intelligence Community"): "Global Trends 2015," December 2000 (this was preceded by an earlier project, "Global Trends 2010" and has now been followed by the "NIC 2020 Project); and the Project for the New American Century: "Rebuilding America's Defenses," September 2000. Although the last of these was identified with prominent conservatives, many of whom became officials of the Bush *fils* administration, the other two groups span a much wider political spectrum. In all of these reports, it is taken for granted that the U. S. is, will, and must continue to be militarily dominant, and overwhelmingly so.

presence. For that matter, the network of bases decried by Johnson was created at the time of the Spanish-American War (in fact, the bases in Hawaii, Samoa, and Midway Island are even older), and expanded regularly ever since World War II.

We suspect that neither Bacevich nor Johnson would argue much with these caveats. To them, such criticisms would, we think, be beside the point: even if one can easily find antecedents for the phenomena on which they focus, to search for such precedents misses the fundamental shift in U. S. policy. For Bacevich, that shift can be summed up as "since the end of the Cold War, the U. S. is aiming at creating a global economic and political order; a powerful military, preferentially operating through proxies, is a vital means to that end." For Johnson, the shift would rather be that "since the end of the Cold War, and even more so since September 11, U. S. domination by military means has become an end in itself." We thus have two competing, albeit partly compatible, points of view: as to the goals of U. S. policy, as to the role and modus operandi of the military in pursuing those goals, and as to the end of the Cold War as the unique moment at which these goals and means came to be central.

Schematically, the positions staked out by Bacevich and Johnson can be presented as follows:

Goal	Military role	Military MO	Shift
Open order	Protect ag. security threats	Proxies, bombing	1991
Dominance	Control through war, bases	Overt action, training	1991, 2001

Note that both authors, although emphasizing different aspects of U. S. foreign policy, nonetheless agree that an important shift took place some time after the end of the Cold War. That shift, as another commentator puts it, was from "hegemony" to "empire": a change from a policy in which the U. S. operated, as a leader, usually through multilateral institutions, and in which the military was deployed largely (with certain regional exceptions) as a secondary, albeit important, instrument to defend those portions of the world considered threatened by forces deemed hostile to U. S. goals and leadership; and toward a policy in which the U. S. now operates in a primarily unilateral and largely military fashion.[5]

Seen in this way, discontinuity arguments depict United States foreign policy as falling rather naturally into three historical eras. The first is the pre-Cold War period, an epoch in which the U. S. was not facing a particular enemy and in which the military's role was to protect United States interests in the Western Hemisphere; elsewhere, the U. S. goal was economic, to achieve access to markets in European colonial empires and in areas (e.g., China, Japan) which had not been annexed. The second era is that of the Cold War, in which U. S. -planned rules and institutions extended past the Western Hemisphere into Western Europe and various parts of Asia; the military's role, along with that of other government agencies, was to protect these regions from forces considered hostile to U. S. goals. The third era is that following the Cold War, in which U. S. ambitions now are no longer geographically limited and face no one single enemy; given this geographical and adversarial diversity, the military has become much more aggressive, resorting

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[5] Bruce Cumings, "Is America an Imperial Power?" *Current History* 102 (November 2003): 355-60 (note that the entire issue is on the U. S. as an imperial power).. See also other recent pieces by Cumings in *The Nation*: "The American Ascendancy," 8 May 2000; "Reflections on 'Containment,'" 4 March 2002; and "Making the World Safe From Evil," 28 October 2002. Many of Cumings's arguments draw on his *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), chs. 1-5; these arguments in turn are, as Cumings acknowledges, based in part on Franz Schurmann, *The Logic of World Power* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

to hostile and frankly deterrent (perhaps also preemptive) interventions. (There may be a fourth era, after September 11, but this is a matter of controversy for those advocating the discontinuity position.)

This periodization poses several theoretical problems. To begin with, if a given historical era is characterized for U. S. foreign policy by a particular combination of goals and means, then how are means mapped onto goals? Can a given policy instrument, e.g., bombing, be used to accomplish more than one goal? Logically, it would seem as if the answer is yes, since there also appears to be considerable "inheritance" of means across historical eras; but then why can a given goal not be satisfied by more than one means and vice versa? This calls into question the uniqueness of the goals/means combination for a particular era.

Similarly, if there can be inheritance of means, then why not also of goals? Simply to say that communism appeared as a threat after World War II and then disappeared in 1991 says nothing about whether other threats were functionally equivalent before and after, calling for the same means. By the same token, if means did indeed continue, then what is the bureaucratic/organizational logic governing this inertia, and how can that logic be incorporated into the radical historical changes adduced by advocates of the discontinuity position?

Finally, the above periodization lays stress on particular quantitative spikes: a rapid and massive increase in the geographical scope of U. S. commitments, or in the development of bases, or in the supposed reliance on a particular kind of means. Implicit in this emphasis is the assumption that changes should normally be gradual or incremental, an assumption that needs explicit justification and that both limits the extent to which growth can feed on itself and the influence (except at rare epochal moments) of major political decisions on such organizational growth.

A continuity argument should address each of these problems. It should emphasize the multiplicity of means for a given goal, incorporate bureaucratic and organizational factors into the core characteristics of policy making, and make room for both incremental and rapid growth. This does not of course, mean that a continuity argument incorporating such features must perforce be correct (we will discuss below criteria for comparative evaluation of both arguments); but it does at least indicate some of the general characteristics of a claim about continuity.

A Continuity Argument: Client States

Whatever the particular goals of U. S. foreign policy, we would stress that for over a century, the means have involved the acquisition and maintenance of client states. Such states – briefly, countries with regimes whose performance is overseen by the United States, which considers itself responsible for them – are typically taken on by the U. S. in the face of perceived danger from an enemy or in the aftermath of a war against such an enemy. Once a state is a U. S. client, the U. S. assumes the task of maintaining a particular type of regime in power against potential external and internal threats, a task that involves extensive and routine bureaucratic surveillance. Most of the time, most U. S. clients are not in any danger; but if they are, all sorts of means may be employed, ranging from aid to covert activities to overt direct or proxy military force. Policy toward clients thus encompasses most of the phenomena pointed to as historically distinct by advocates of the discontinuity argument, except that we see such phenomena as being resorted to in every one of the supposedly distinct historical eras. Let us now lay out this argument in some detail.

Client States

At least as far back as ancient Rome, powerful political units have acted through a network of clients.[6] To the patron, the advantages of having clients rather than, say, imperial provinces are twofold: the administrative and political costs of administering clients are considerably less than those occasioned by direct rule; and to have clients (referred to by the Romans as "friends") is significantly more flattering to one's self-image as a free political unit than to have subjects. Counterbalancing these benefits, of course, is an obvious disadvantage: clients, by virtue of their formal independence, are often obstreperous and able to manipulate the patron for their own ends. If two or more clients enter into conflict with each other, or if they are judged to be utterly incompetent, the patron will feel compelled to step in; this, historically, is how client networks were transformed into formal empires.

The reverse is also true. When imperial provinces revolt, especially when such revolts take place simultaneously or in rapid succession, the costs of putting down the rebellion are often too high for the empire as a whole to be maintained. The temptation is then great to grant formal independence to the remaining provinces. If regimes deemed to be compliant could be set up (often staffed by former provincial officials and by bureaucrats from the metropole), provinces can be transformed into clients. This, in sum, is what the French and to a lesser degree the British succeeded in doing during the era of decolonization; it is what the Russians have been attempting after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

For several decades, the United States has had the single largest network of client states. They fall into several, quite distinctive, categories. First come states with which the U. S. has a formal military alliance. These include most of Latin America (via the Rio Pact); the original and some of the more recent NATO countries; Australia and New Zealand; Japan; and South Korea.   A second group comprises states with which the U. S. has intimate military ties, furnishing extensive military aid and maintaining close links with the indigenous armed forces. These include several states in the Middle East, such as Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia; they also include states with whom the U. S. formerly was allied, such as the Philippines, Thailand, and Pakistan, or with whom there are long-standing political links, such as Indonesia and, for many decades, Ethiopia. Most states in this category also receive extensive U. S. economic aid. Third come pro-Western states with which the U. S. has close economic and military ties. These include various states in the Caribbean and Pacific, as well as several African countries, such as Uganda and, formerly, Liberia fell into this category for many decades. Since the first Iraq War, several states in the Red Sea or Gulf area would also be included here. Fourth are formally neutral but pro-Western states with whom the U. S. maintains not only significant economic connections but, increasingly, military links as well: Sweden is the most prominent case in point. Fifth, although their status as U. S. clients is by no means firmly cemented, are several newly independent states in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, such as Bosnia, Tajikistan, and, most recently, Afghanistan. In our view, at least 60 states today are American clients.[7]

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[6] S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Political System of Empires* (New York: Free Press, 1963); idem and L. Roniger, "Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22,1 (1980): 42-77. An extensive bibliography on patron-client relations is available from the authors.

[7] The web of formal and informal relations that the United States has with its clients is extensive. The list of formal bilateral treaties and other international agreements on all kinds of topics is available as a Department of State document: *Treaties in Force: A List of Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States in Force on*

What these states all have in common is that the maintenance of their type of regime (though not by any means the individual leaders or political groupings comprising any given regime) is a) considered by the U. S. government as a legitimate matter of concern, which b) is worth considerable political and, if need be, economic and military efforts, should it be seen as endangered. In addition, the dominant political forces in each of these states also c) consider that characteristics a) and b) are themselves normal and legitimate. This, then, is a more complete definition of client states.

In order for regime maintenance to be an American goal and for that goal to be accepted as legitimate by the regime, the U. S. must receive explicit permission to engage in surveillance. This phenomenon is at the core of the concept of a client, and serves both as a measurement criterion for categorizing states and as a distinctive feature separating patron-client relations from related phenomena such as alliances. As a measurement criterion, looking for whether or not surveillance exists leads us to treaties and executive agreements permitting the U. S. to have military attaches and other sorts of overseers, but also, and more fundamentally, to the types of activities frequently reported routinely in daily cables and other messages from the embassy to Washington. This last point is important, since in the early years of the last century, U. S. bureaucratic mechanisms were not nearly as developed as they have subsequently become (e.g., military aid programs had not yet become regularized; there were no CIA stations; and so forth). By the same token, these mechanisms have now become common, so that any kind of U. S. bilateral relations with a given country are more likely than not to involve some sort of military-to-military contacts, even if surveillance is not terribly extensive.

Patron-client relations are conceptually distinct from alliance relations. The former, as we have said, involve oversight by the patron of the client's internal affairs, with the client giving its (perhaps reluctant) assent to this oversight. Alliances, however, tend to be restricted more to situations of external attack and, importantly, need not involve surveillance. Hence, the U. S. can be allied to a given state, in the sense of guaranteeing its security in case of external attack, but without protecting the regime in question against many potential domestic enemies. Conversely, the U. S. can oversee the client's performance without giving the kinds of explicit guarantees typically involved in alliance relations. Of course, most clients are allies and vice-versa, but the two concepts are distinct.

It is important to understand that client status need not involve lining up with the patron on many foreign policy matters, nor that relations between the two are harmonious. Clients may and do take a stance on various issues at odds with that of the patron, a possibility strengthened by feelings of resentment on the part of the client at its status. Since, for the patron, what counts is maintenance of the regime type, this more overriding concern may even facilitate the client blackmailing the patron. Also, multiple levels of patron-client relations are possible. Clients of the U. S. can themselves be patrons for other states. We exclude for logical and practical reasons that the client of a client also be the client of its patron's patron, i.e., that the U. S. can reach down directly to a client while the latter also remains a client of its former colonial power. We

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rule this out simply because, given the intrusiveness of surveillance and the notion of responsibility for regime-type maintenance, it simply is not possible for two patrons to be surveilling the same client for more than a limited time.

Most U. S. clients are states with perfectly stable regime types. They do not require obtrusive surveillance or (except for economic and military aid) significant assistance. However, if the situation is deemed to warrant it, surveillance can easily become more intensive and assistance granted. Some regimes are seen as considerably more endangered. In such cases, U. S. officials engage in active policies aimed at buttressing the regime. These policies go well beyond transferring resources; they frequently involve daily advice to politicians, bureaucrats, the military, and various other political forces in the country. Of course, certain regimes are sufficiently thin in trained administrators that they rely routinely on the U. S. for advice even when there is no imminent danger in sight. At times, however, the client is faced with a problem for which its own resources, even buttressed by U. S. aid, are insufficient. In those cases, U. S. intervention may be resorted to.[8] We will return to this issue below, when we discuss motives for acquiring clients.

Not all U. S. clients remain in that status. At times, revolutions or other domestic upheavals result in major changes in regime type, leading to the "loss" of the client. Often, the U. S. is led to intervene overtly or covertly to contain or head off such upheavals, and there are no guarantees that intervention of this sort will succeed.

Finally, and with rare exceptions, it is worth noting that the U. S. client acquisition seems to have little to do with either power or profit; instead, as we will argue below, U. S. acquisition of clients was and is undertaken to maintain or restore order and stability, which were or are at that moment threatened (or potentially threatened). Of course, American policy makers are not averse to promoting economic interests, nor are they shy about projecting power. But the U. S. sees itself as beset by problems which it (often reluctantly) has to solve, since its clients (who themselves may be patrons) are simply unable to do so themselves. We would note that this sense of being dragged into new commitments is not uncommon among imperial powers; British policy in the nineteenth century was marked by a similar sense of self, as was that of Rome centuries earlier.

Why and How Does the U. S. Acquire Clients? Motives and Mechanisms

From the prior discussion, it is clear that the U. S. has been in the business of acquiring and protecting clients for a long time. Why have generations of U. S. foreign policymakers chosen to acquire clients? Since 1898, and arguably before, the United States has had political, economic and security interests to foster and protect on an increasingly global scale. For sure, particular interests have emerged, evolved, and changed. Threats, created by the particular enemies of the day that threaten those interests (revolutionaries, communists, drug traffickers, authoritarian despots, narcoterrorists, religious fanatics, kidnappers, pirates, among others), have come and

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[8] For a detailed discussion of various forms of U. S. support for clients and various types of intervention see Sylvan and Majeski, "An Agent-Based Model of the Acquisition of U. S. Client States," paper presented at the 44th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Portland, 2003. For a more detailed discussion of many of the interventions, see Stephen Majeski and David Sylvan, "From Easy Win to Basket Case: Extending a Theory of U. S. Overt Military Interventions to Cases of Covert Operations," presented at the 39th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Minneapolis, 1998; and Stephen Majeski and David Sylvan, "Client States and U. S. Intervention in the Cold War and Post-Cold War," presented at the 40th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Washington, D.C., 1999.

gone. In our view, what has been a constant, across time and space, are the overarching U. S. goals of law and order, and stability. U. S. foreign policymakers have consistently believed that their political, economic, and security interests of the day require order and stability.[9] From time to time, of course, those interests may indicate that certain regimes should be countered or even overthrown (or, for many decades, that U. S. clients should lose their colonial empires), but such actions are always seen as a restoration or, conversely, the initial establishment of a certain kind of just international order.

In the American view, the way in which order is indicated is via the existence of states with regimes, which know, their place in this order and which uphold its current principles. Such regimes must be defended; otherwise order is by definition threatened. This defense is partly against external threats; but to U. S. policymakers, the principal threats to such regimes are internal. Accordingly, existing clients must be scanned and surveilled on a regular -- ideally, a daily -- basis; and such is precisely the role of the enormous U. S. foreign policy bureaucracy as it is implanted in each U. S. client.[10] (Of course, this bureaucracy took quite a while to be built up, but by the late 1940s it was well in place.) But since U. S. clients may themselves have clients, those clients too should be scanned regularly to check on their health, even if this scanning might not be as frequent or as intrusive as for U. S. clients and even if it is directed more at "sub-clients" with regimes reported already to be shaky.[11] So too should "free agents" -- i.e., clientless states -- be scanned (though not necessarily surveilled widely and deeply), since if they are threatened or plunge into chaos, this risks spreading and undermining international order. If such signs appear in either sub-clients or free agents, then, other means failing, it is a natural step for the U. S. at least to consider solving those problems itself; and this implies taking on the actor in question as a client.

As we have presented it, there is an intimate tie between client acquisition and client defense. This link becomes clearer when considering the way U. S. foreign policy has been (and appears to continue to be) made. We have argued elsewhere that high-level U. S. foreign policy making regarding security has been the province of a small, largely autonomous, normatively cohesive, and secretive group of persons.[12] These groups of policymakers are constantly dealing with new

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[9] U. S. foreign policy makers often make remarks articulating this position. It is perhaps no more clearly stated than in the famous national security document NSC-68. "Our overall policy at the present time may be described as one designed to foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish. … This broad intention embraces two subsidiary policies. One is a policy, which we would probably pursue even if there were not a Soviet threat. It is a policy of attempting to develop a healthy international community. ...Even if there were no Soviet Union we would face the great problem of the free society, accentuated many fold in this industrial age, of reconciling order, security, the need for participation, with the requirement of freedom. We would face the fact that in a shrinking world the absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable." *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950,* Vol. 1. (Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office), 252, 262-3.

[10] For a discussion of the vast bureaucracies and the administrative apparatus constructed and deployed by the United States in the post-World War II era see David Sylvan and Stephen Majeski, "Overseeing a War: The 1961 Military Commitments," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1993; and, with a particular focus on the regional military commanders, Dana Priest, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's* Military (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), chs. 1-5.

[11] We originally had thought that the U. S. would not be surveilling clients of its clients (e.g., Britain's clients) for the reasons presented above. However, a careful reading of one of the classic cases where the U. S. took over a client from its former patron (Greece in 1947) suggests that the U. S. was scanning the situation in the non-client for a year before the patron (Britain) gave up on its patron status (see Stephen Ambrose, *Rise To Globalism,* 2nd rev. edn*.,* Penguin Books: New York, 1980), 125. Such anticipation is also found (and fictionalized, in Greene's famous novel) in the U. S. presence in Indochina during the final years of French rule. Note that scanning and surveilling of either a client of a client or of a colony of a client requires the "middle" patron's or metropolitan power's agreement.

[12] We see this problem-solving culture as engaged in three central activities: constructing recommendations,

and recurring problems and attempting to solve them. Such problems are typically brought to the attention of high-level policy makers by the reports of the foreign policy bureaucracy. Thus, when serious problems arise, information about them is passed upward to the high-level policy makers, who in turn are faced with the question of how to solve that problem. As one might expect cybernetically, the way a solution is constructed is by looking around at which actors (the client's military or bureaucracy; the client's patron's military or bureaucracy) are currently failing in the immediate task at hand. Solutions then present themselves quite simply: can the actor carrying out those tasks augment its efforts? If so, the U. S. should help it to do so. If not, then the issue on the table is whether the U. S. should take over responsibility for carrying out those tasks; and this obviously implies the possibility, if things go badly, of some kind of intervention. In this sense, the "inheritance" of tasks is the key micro-aspect of U. S. policy making, and it applies equally to existing U. S. clients (hence the notion of client defense) and to free agents and sub-clients (hence the notion of client acquisition).

There are two principal mechanisms of U. S. client acquisition.[13] The first is a response to the presence of a danger perceived by U. S. officials as arising from a specific "enemy," one whose appearance offers the serious chance of a given state being undermined. This kind of danger is based on place: where a client is located relative to the putative enemy. The second hypothesized mechanism is based on time: not that there is a specific enemy somewhere in particular, but that the moment is perceived by U. S. officials as particularly propitious for states in a certain type of situation to avoid future problems by acting at that moment.

The first mechanism involves dealing with an enemy near enough to threaten countries not already shielded. Here, there are two considerations: "near enough" and "already shielded." U. S. officials seem to reason about nearness by using a simple heuristic of the region: an enemy in a given region is by definition a potential threat to every state in the region; this helps get at the "nearness" of both potential external attack and of sources of internal subversion. As to "already shielded," this is determined by whether a country is deemed to have a protector already on the job; lack of shielding means in practice whether the country is a patron-less independent state. Of course, U. S. officials recognize that not all shields are of equal value in the face of particularly dangerous enemies and so if the latter had until recently been U. S. clients, they are deemed sufficiently dangerous to threaten even clients of patrons other than the U. S.

None of this, of course, means that countries deemed endangered will automatically become U. S. clients. At the minimum, since clients are formally sovereign, there has to be a willingness on the part of the state concerned to accept client status, with all that that implies as to surveillance and intrusiveness. We can think, therefore, of the "dangerous place" motive as implying a two-step mechanism: first the U. S. identifies states as enemies and offers client status to patron-less independents in the same region as the enemy, with the offer being extended to clients of other patrons as well if the enemy was a former U. S. client. Second, the recipient of the client offer can accept or reject the offer, depending on whether its internal political situation permits U. S. surveillance and, of course, with whether the state agrees that the designated enemy is in fact an enemy.

The second mechanism of client acquisition involves time. Certain historical moments are seen as particularly threatening, or, conversely, as particularly propitious to eliminating present or future threats. These moments seem to revolve around the imminence or immediate aftermath of interstate wars. Thus, if a major war is considered significant, great powers will attempt to prepare for war by establishing alignments with states that they consider as in their own security domain. At the other end of the time line, there is a convention that winners of wars set up new alignments in an attempt to ward off a future war of that sort. These two generalizations, applied to client acquisition, suggest a mechanism involving wars impending or having recently occurred. If the U. S. considers a major war as impending, it will offer client status to states in its own backyard, i.e., in the Western Hemisphere. And if the U. S. was the leading state in a successful interstate war, it will offer client status to patron-less states in the region or regions in which it led the winning war.

As before, these offers can be accepted or rejected by states, depending on their willingness to be aligned. There is one exception to this purely voluntary relation: states who were enemies and were subsequently occupied by the U. S. The idea here is that the occupation will serve to remake these former enemies into model international citizens, with the result that, when readmitted to the community of states, alignment will be voluntary.

From the above discussion, we can see that the motives and mechanisms of client acquisition we have put forward are in principle applicable to *any* period in which the U. S. had the will and the power to acquire clients beyond its immediate borders. At any point, the appearance of enemies will spark the U. S. to acquire clients, perhaps large numbers of clients, whether or not there is a particular enemy seen as most dangerous of all. And at any moment, an impending or successfully-led war can result in additional client acquisition, no matter what the particular justification may be at that instant. For the most part, the mechanisms associated with these two motives seem fairly easy to distinguish. "Ducks in a row" mechanisms yield "wholesale" client acquisitions; "enemy" mechanisms yield "retail" acquisitions. But any given year may be marked by both types of acquisitions, and in certain cases, the mechanisms may be hard to distinguish (e.g., is the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War a matter of regional realignment or instead of shielding states against an enemy?).

Client Maintenance and Intervention

From the above discussion on U. S. foreign policymaking, it appears that U. S. policymakers are constantly scanning states in the international system to discern threats to clients, threats to possible clients (non-clients that might be acquired), and dangers posed by U. S. enemies. At any given moment in time, U. S. policymakers characterize states in one of three ways: U. S. clients, U. S. enemies, and non-U. S. enemies who are not U. S. clients. We have argued that U. S. enemies can arise from two types of entities: non-U. S. enemies who are not U. S. clients, and U. S. clients whose regime has transformed so that U. S. policymakers now characterize it as unacceptable.[14] Thus we can think of classifying states along two dimensions: whether they are

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[14] Sylvan and Majeski, "An Agent-based Model of the Acquisition of U. S. Client States." In the client acquisition model we distinguish between enemies and so called bad states. For a state to be an enemy it must be considered to represent a threat to other countries, whether by invasion or subversion. A number of states are "bad" but not threatening to their neighbors. For the analysis that follows we put both these categories into the enemies category. A tentative list of states which are not non-enemies (i.e., are either enemies or bad states) includes Mexico 1913-16, Germany 1916-18, Russia 1918-20, Japan 1931-45, Germany 1941-45, Italy 1941-43, U. S. S. R. 1946-89, China

U. S. clients or not; and whether the U. S. characterizes them as friends or foes. Friends are U. S. clients with acceptable regimes and non-U. S. enemies who are not U. S. clients. Foes are U. S. clients with unacceptable regimes and U. S. enemies. This in turn creates a four-fold classification scheme.[15]

    a. U. S. clients with acceptable regimes   [client/friend]
    b. U. S. clients with unacceptable regimes [client/foe]
    c. Non-U. S. enemies who are not U. S. clients [non-client/friend]
    d. U. S. enemies [non-client/foe]

A state, which is in category (a) can stay in category (a) or it can shift to category (b). In some instances a state in category (a) can shift to category (d) (e.g., Iran from the Shah to Khomeini). A state can stay in category (b) for some period of time but over the long run it will either move into category (a) if the U. S. is successful in overthrowing the regime and installing an acceptable regime (Guatemala, 1954; Panama, 1989) or move to category (d) if the U. S. fails to overthrow the regime and pushed it into enemy status (Cuba 1959-60). A state in category (c) can stay in this category (India) or can move to category (a) via the client acquisition mechanism discussed earlier, but is can also move to category (d) (Japan, Germany). Finally, a state in category (d) can remain there or, if the U. S. intervenes successfully, can move into category (a) (Iraq 2003).[16]

This categorization scheme suggests that we can think of two distinct forms of U. S. intervention: friendly intervention to help a client and hostile intervention to overthrow either a client with a currently unacceptable regime or a U. S. enemy.[17] By friendly intervention we mean the use of U. S. resources (direct – e.g., military and economic aid, U. S. military force – or via proxies, whether overtly or covertly[18]) in another country on behalf of the government of that country. American policy makers see protecting U. S. clients as both a political and moral obligation. By having a given state as a client (particularly as a longstanding client), the U. S. has thereby committed its prestige to the maintenance of its client. It is essential to "not let our guys down." If the client asks the U. S. for help and this help is declined, the U. S. would immediately appear as selfish and unwilling to defend any of its other clients. This would be a devastating charge for U. S. policy makers who would then fear the prospect of many clients breaking with the U. S. and

1949-78, North Vietnam 1954-94, Egypt 1956-74, North Korea 1953-present, Cuba 1959-present, Iran 1979-present, Iraq 1990-2003, Serbia 1991-99, Libya (until December 2003), Cambodia under Pol Pot, Somalia in the 1990s, Indonesia under Sukarno, Guyana under socialism, Angola until the mid-90s, Nicaragua 1979-89, and Grenada under New Jewel.

[15] In earlier time periods there are two additional relevant categories: non-U. S. colonies and U. S. colonies. Note as well that category (c) contains two distinct types of statuses: patronless states and clients of states other than the U. S.

[16] It appears that client or enemy status in the eyes of U. S. policymakers is "sticky." That is, once a state becomes a client, it almost always stays a client (of course there are exceptions as some clients move to category d and to category b or a while). Similarly, once a state becomes an enemy it stays an enemy unless the regime is overthrown. The U. S. can and has co-existed with enemies for long periods of time but always regards them with some suspicion and would be ready to rejoice in a change in their regime type.

[17] This characterization of intervention is similar to that employed by Vertzberger, who defined intervention as the "coercive military intrusion into the internal or foreign affairs of another state. Intervention can be on behalf of an incumbent government … against an incumbent government … or in a situation of political chaos." Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger, *Risk Taking and Decisionmaking: Foreign Military Intervention Decisions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 3. We argue below that Vertzberger's third type of intervention should be classified as a different kind of action.

[18] The use of covert intervention via proxies to help a regime is significantly different than the use of covert proxies in the hostile intervention context; see below.

proclaiming that U. S. promises meant nothing. U. S. credibility, in the eyes of allies and enemies, is on the line once a client is established. And in the domestic arena, if U. S. policy makers fail to successfully protect a client, they suffer tremendous political damage (e.g., the "loss" of China). This necessity of aiding the client in its travails opens up the possibility of using military means, i.e., of intervention. Most importantly, intervention on behalf of a client is relatively easy to justify to both the international community and U. S. domestic constituencies. As a result, U. S. friendly intervention is typically overt, involving the direct use of U. S. military assets, and often carried out without allied participation but with international support.

By hostile intervention, we mean the use of U. S. resources (overt U. S. military force to overthrow the regime or covert force to overthrow, punish, or harass the regime) in another country against the regime in control of that country. Intervention to overthrow a regime is far more difficult to justify both to the international community and to U. S. domestic constituencies. It runs counter to both international norms and the U. S. representation of itself as a non-imperial power that does not condone the use of force to alter the internal affairs of another sovereign state.[19] As a result U. S. hostile intervention since around 1945 (when the norm of nonintervention was inscribed in the UN Charter) is typically covert and often involves the use of proxy forces to carry out the dirty work. Under these circumstances the U. S. often has few if any allies in support of its objectives and typically it lacks international support. On the rare occasions when overt U. S. force is used in hostile interventions is it typically done with allies and with international support.

This distinguishes intervention from other forms of military action abroad. Intervention in this context does not include the use of force at either the top or the bottom of the scale. Intervention is different from a war such as the U. S. military actions following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 where the goal is less to support or overturn a regime than to obliterate the enemy or to force it to surrender. Intervention also does not include various low-level uses of military force where the objective is to protect U. S. assets (human and property) and not the regime, or to protect international peacekeeping or humanitarian efforts. For example, the U. S. military action in Somalia in 1992-3 was at first a humanitarian effort and only when the military mission changed to punish various warlords did it become an intervention. Military actions in Lebanon in 1982-3 followed a similar path: U. S. forces were first involved in peacekeeping and only afterward directed at certain factions to punish and hurt them.

This classification scheme demonstrates clearly the close connections between client acquisition and maintenance, and between polices designed both to support clients and to overthrow enemies. To see these connections even more clearly, it is useful to put it into the form of a pseudo-decision tree (Figure 1). (We attach the adjective "pseudo" because what we present as a sequential series of decisions is more likely to be part of a simultaneous decision.) The tree should be considered as bearing on situations in client state, non-U. S. enemies who are not U. S. clients, and U. S. enemies. There are a total of 21 different endpoint decision nodes in the pseudo-decision tree. A list of typical cases for each node is provided below.

1. Most client states – today, for example, Brazil, Greece, Turkey, Japan, South Korea, France, UK, Belgium, Jamaica, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Egypt, Japan, Australia

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[19] Indeed, as we pointed out above, tremendous efforts were made in both the case of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 to have the use of military force justified by the international community and to have the force be as multinational as possible. Note that the U. S. sedulously labels its troops in Iraq as "coalition forces."

2. A significant portion of all client states at specific times – today, e.g., Mexico, Egypt
3. Italian elections 1948
4. Iran 1979
5. El Salvador 1980s, Colombia 2000, Philippines 2002
6. South Vietnam 1965
7. South Vietnam late 1950s to 1961
8. Laos 1961, Bosnia 1994
9. Lebanon 1958, Dominican Republic 1965, Gulf War 2001 (Saudi Arabia as client)
10. Guatemala 1954
11. Panama 1989, Dominican Republic 1963, Haiti 1994-5, Haiti 2004
12. South Vietnam 1963 (Diem), Dominican Republic 1961 (Trujillo), Chile 1973 (Allende),
     Venezuela 2002-3 (Chavez)
13. Non-U. S. clients who are non-enemies (India)
14. Albania late 1940s, Nicaragua 1980s, Afghanistan 1984
15. China, Soviet Union, North Korea, Iran post-1988, Cuba post-mid-1960s
16. Tibet 1950s
17. Serbia (Kosovo) 1998
18. Cuba 1961, Indonesia 1957, Angola 1975
19. Syria 1949, Guyana 1960, Cuba post-Bay of Pigs and pre-Missile Crisis, Guyana 1953-64
     (though technically a British colony), Libya 1986
20. Bosnia 1995, Afghanistan 2001
21. Iraq 2003, Grenada 1983, Somalia 1993

As U. S. policymakers scan states in the international system to discern threats to clients, threats to possible clients (non-clients who might be acquired), and dangers posed by U. S. enemies, the first question is whether or not a given state is a client. If the state is a client, then the next question is whether it is a friend or foe, i.e., is the regime acceptable or not? If the regime is acceptable (a friend), the next question is whether or not there is a problem facing the client that it cannot solve on its own. If the answer is no, then the status quo holds [node 1]. Most U. S. clients, at any given time, are in this position. Most clients do not have problems that require significant U. S. resources to solve. If the client does have a problem, the next question is whether or not the problem is of a military nature. If not, then the next question is whether it is politically possible (given the domestic climate of the client state) to provide overt aid. If the answer is yes, then overt economic aid is provided to the client [2]. The U. S. routinely provides economic aid to many nations but there are also many instances of specific economic packages designed to solve serious problems, e.g., the Marshall Plan in the late 1940s, economic aid to Egypt on a continuing basis, and the economic bailout of Mexico in the 1990s. If the answer is no (i.e., it is not politically possible to give overt aid), then covert aid is provided to the client [3]. There are many contexts where anti-U. S. sentiment in the client state is high or simply where overt aid from the U. S. would undercut the regime. For instance it was necessary to provide covert aid to support the Christian Democrats in the 1948 Italian elections.

If the client faces a military problem, then the question relates to whether or not there is sufficient time for the U. S. to be able to help the regime. That is, do American officials think that the client can hold out long enough so that actions taken by U. S. or its proxies can make a difference. If there is not sufficient time, then the policy response is to give up and accept the fact that the client will become a foe: either an enemy or an unacceptable regime [4]. The overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 is an example of a situation where the U. S. lost a client and a transition from category (a) to (d) occurred. The success of Castro's revolution in Cuba in

1959 represents a transition initially from (a) to (b). After a short period when unsuccessful attempts were made by U. S. policymakers to get the Castro regime to "reform," Cuba in effect became categorized as an enemy and shifted to category (d).

For clients facing a military problem where U. S. policymakers believe that there is sufficient time to help, a key issue for U. S. policymakers is whether or not the client has sufficient military manpower to handle the problem. If the client has the military manpower, then the solution is to provide military aid (strictly speaking, to increase aid, since typically some level of military aid is almost always provided to clients in any case) and/or military advisers [5]. The U. S. government provided both large increases in military aid and military advisers in the l980s to help the government of El Salvador in its armed conflict with the FMLN. Similarly, this policy response is currently being employed by the U. S. to help the government of Colombia in its armed struggle against the FARC.

If the client lacks sufficient military manpower to solve the military problem it faces, then the issue posed for U. S. policymakers is whether or not to intervene directly with U. S. military forces. We have argued elsewhere that two key features of the situation in the client state – whether or not the U. S. considers the client regime competent and the client's enemy tough – determine the type of U. S. policy response.[20] If the client is judged to be competent and the enemy deemed tough, then the U. S. will overtly intervene with the expectation of fighting an open-ended war [6]. This is precisely the situation faced by the Johnson administration in July of 1965 with respect to its client South Vietnam, and a massive and open-ended escalation of U. S. military forces ensued. If, though, the client is deemed competent but the enemy is not tough, the presumed incompetence of the enemy means that U. S. policy makers have little fear that the client will fall in the near term; there is thus no need at that moment to deploy significant numbers of U. S. combat troops. Policy solutions in this circumstance typically include providing resources (more military aid, more military advisers, and more economic aid so that the client can build up its own military manpower) [7]. U. S. policymakers characterized the situation in South Vietnam from the late 1950s to the fall of 1961 and perhaps even until early 1965 in this fashion and pursued a policy of building up the South Vietnamese military capability.

If the client is judged to be incompetent and the enemy to be tough, then given the disparity in competence between the client and the enemy, U. S. policymakers assess direct U. S. involvement as pointless. The likelihood of success is low and thus does not warrant putting U. S. prestige on the line by deploying U. S. troops or providing resources to an incompetent client. Instead, U. S. policymakers intervene on behalf of the client using proxy forces; such interventions we have referred to as on behalf of "basket cases" [8]. For example, in 1961 the Kennedy Administration assessed the Royal Laotian government as incompetent and its enemy the Pathet Lao as competent. As a result it began a policy of supporting a proxy force, the Hmong. Finally, if the client is deemed incompetent and the enemy to be not tough, the presumed incompetence of the enemy means that U. S. policy makers have little fear of an open-ended commitment: intervention occurs at the invitation of the client and is expected to be over without much difficulty (limited casualties and a short time frame for conflict) for U. S. forces; such interventions we have referred to as "easy wins" [9]. The Eisenhower administration deployed forces in Lebanon in 1858 under these circumstances. Note that U. S. policy at nodes 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are designed to maintain a client, that is, to keep a client in category (a).

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[20] See Sylvan and Majeski, "Continuity," for a detailed discussion of this argument.

Let us now return to the situation where the problem is in a client state but policymakers assess the regime as not acceptable, i.e., as a foe. An important issue U. S. policymakers need to determine in this situation is whether or not the wayward regime has the backing of its military. A regime enjoying the backing of its military is far more difficult to dislodge; in such circumstances, a coup or assassination effort is not likely to succeed. Therefore, policymakers need to look for other options and a standard alternative is whether proxy forces to intervene are available. If so, then an assessment is made about the proxy's capabilities and whether there is sufficient time for a proxy intervention to overthrow the regime. If the proxy is capable and there is sufficient time, then proxy intervention is employed. Such interventions are typically covert [10]. The policy developed by the CIA and implemented to dislodge the Arbenz regime in Guatemala in 1954 is an example of this form of intervention. If, however, U. S. policymakers determine that either there is not sufficient time or that the proxy is not sufficiently capable, then the U. S. resorts to direct intervention [11]. The U. S. assessment of the Noriega regime in Panama in 1989 and its subsequent overt intervention fits this category. If, though, it is determined that the military does not back the unacceptable regime, then this opens up the possibility of using cheaper, more covert means to remove the regime. Under these circumstances, U. S. policymakers employ covert means such as a coup or assassination to overthrow the leadership of the regime [12]. U. S. policymakers employed this approach to remove South Vietnamese President Diem in 1963 after coming to the conclusion that progress could not be made with Diem as President. These three policy nodes are all designed to move a client in category (b) to category (a).

As noted earlier, U. S. policymakers scan states in the international system to discern threats to clients, threats to possible clients (non-clients who might be acquired), and dangers posed by U. S. enemies. If a state is not an enemy, then the U. S. assesses the threats and dangers facing that non-client/non enemy. For U. S. policymakers, the question then is whether or not to acquire this friend as a client; in these circumstances, the two mechanisms of client acquisition discussed earlier – "ducks in a row" and "enemy" – come into play [13].

If the state being scanned is assessed as an enemy, a different set of features of the situation determine U. S. policy responses. A key question in determining U. S. policy with respect to enemies is whether or not the enemy is militarily strong. Obviously, more opportunities are available to U. S. policymakers to eliminate enemies who are militarily weak. For these latter types of enemies, another feature that shapes policy is whether or not the regime has international political support. Such support operates to constrain U. S. efforts to eliminate or overthrow an enemy; the U. S. will thus seek to use proxies at the least to harass and hurt the enemy regime, if not to try and overthrow it [14]. For example, the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua was seen by the Reagan administration as militarily strong but also having international political support and legitimacy. As a result, the policymakers created and employed a proxy group, the Contras, to harass and hurt the Sandinistas. In situations where the enemy is militarily strong, has international political support, and where no proxies are available, the U. S. takes no action [15]. The Soviet Union and, for many years, China fit this category as well as post-1979 Iran and post-mid-1960s Cuba. These cases are examples of how the U. S. has had a history of co-existing with enemies, even if such coexistence is strained and, for decades, involved nonrecognition or other limitations on treating the enemy as legitimate. On the other hand, if the enemy lacks international political support and proxies are available, then the proxies are used to harass the enemy regime [16], such as with CIA support for Tibetan guerrillas in the 1960s. Finally, for militarily strong enemies lacking international political support but where no proxies are

available, the U. S. must resort to overt punishment [17]. Serbian actions in Kosovo in 1998-9 and the U. S. response, initially a substantial bombing campaign with subsequent plans for an overt intervention involving U. S. combat forces, is an example of this policy node.

Consider now the situation where an enemy is assessed by U. S. policymakers as militarily weak. If the regime does have international political support, then the U. S. determines whether proxies are available to help the U. S. overthrow the regime. If the answer is yes, then those proxies are employed to attempt to overthrow the regime [18]. The CIA plan to employ the Cuban Brigade to overthrow the Castro regime in April of 1961 is an example of this policy approach. If proxies are not available, then given the regime's international support but lack of military strength, the U. S. will resort to other covert means to overthrow the regime: assassinations or coups [19]. The various attempts to assassinate Castro during 1961 and 1962 and the attempt to assassinate Libyan leader Qadafi are examples of this type of policy. Alternatively, if the enemy does not have international political support and if proxies are available, then the U. S. employs those proxies (along with its own forces) to intervene overtly [20]. The use of the Northern Alliance to overthrow the Taliban Regime in Afghanistan in 2001 represents this policy situation and U. S. response.   However, if proxies are not available, then the U. S. will directly intervene with its own ground troops [21]. U. S. intervention in Somalia in 1993 to remove warlords fits this category. So too does the U. S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Note that the policies associated with nodes 14, and 16-21 are designed, to varying degrees, to move an enemy (category d) to category (a) or perhaps category (c). By contrast, as indicated above, enemies who are strong militarily, who have international political support, and against whom proxies to harass or punish are not available (node 15) are basically left alone.

By our reckoning, there are currently between 65 and 70 U. S. clients in the international system. This represents about 1/3 of the recognized sovereign states. Since the U. S. started acquiring U. S. clients just before the Spanish-American war when the international system had about 60 recognized sovereign states, there has been an ample supply of states which are neither U. S. enemies nor U. S. clients, and which could therefore logically become clients or enemies. While the number of U. S. enemies has varied across this time frame, the actual numbers, in our view, have always been relatively small. Also, at any given moment in time the number of clients deemed to have unacceptable regimes is also relatively small. Thus, at any given moment in time, the vast majority of states "reside" in either category (a) or category (c). Indeed, most clients with acceptable regimes usually do not have problems requiring U. S. involvement [1]; and most non-enemies who are not clients do not face dangers that warrant client acquisition [13].

As can be seen from this somewhat lengthy discussion, analyzing U. S. foreign policy as focusing around the acquisition and maintenance of client states is a continuity argument addressing each of the three problems with the discontinuity position. First, it emphasizes the enormous array of means – from economic aid to overt warfare – open to the U. S. to pursue its goals vis-a-vis client states, including those states deemed to be enemies of the clients. Second, the argument incorporates bureaucratic and organizational factors into the core characteristics of policy making. Surveillance depends on the routine activities of various U. S. government agencies; client maintenance is a core mission for most parts of the U. S. foreign policy apparatus; and the standard operating procedures in these organizations are continually mirrored in a worldview that sees client status as the most normal state of affairs for those countries not deemed enemies. Third, a focus on clients is able to incorporate both incremental changes and short spikes of rapid

growth: at times, wars or the presence of enemies lead to spurts of client acquisition; at other times, the number of new clients barely changes from year to year. In all these ways, the client state argument provides a continuity position both at odds with, and potentially an improvement on, the discontinuity claims currently prevalent.

Terminological Interlude: "Imperial"

Before proceeding to an assessment of the relative accuracy of the continuity and discontinuity positions, it is useful to consider which label is most appropriate the policies described in each position. We would begin by emphasizing that there is no right or wrong definition of "imperial"; indeed, an even cursory skim through the literature reveals dozens of definitions of that term. The issue is not, therefore, whether U. S. policy since 1898 is imperial, or if, conversely, it only became imperial since the end of the Cold War (or, for that matter, if it was imperial in different ways at different times), but rather, in identifying U. S. policy at some point in time as imperial, one would therefore be led to have additional expectations about the U. S. role in the world. For example, if "imperial" means aiming at military domination, such as is claimed to be the case by Johnson, then one would expect that U. S. leaders would perceive the use, threat, or deployment of U. S. military force as leading other states to forego particular policies for fear of possible U. S. attack. But in fact, the evidence on this point is rather sparse: yes, officials in the Bush administration did see U. S. policy as intimidating "rogue" states or other actual or potential enemies; but since the number of such states is small, U. S. military actions would therefore be irrelevant to dominating most states. Thus, on Johnson's argument, the U. S. imperium only extends to a handful of countries.

An alternative definition is that of Schurmann: "the organization of large parts of the world from the top down."[21] This definition, which seems compatible with the way in which Bacevich uses the term, presumes that American policy makers, though admittedly being required to improvise frequently, nonetheless integrate (or at least aim at integrating) economic, political, and military goals across numerous countries and significant periods of time. This may well have been the case at certain moments of creation, to borrow Acheson's famous term, but it is both logistically and cognitively impossible most of the time. As do actors in any other organization, U. S. officials satisfice, reason analogically, rely heavily on precedents and standard operating procedures, and both inherit and accrete commitments. Here too, U. S. policy looks imperial only in certain times and places.

Our objections to the applicability of these definitions of imperialism are more general. Most definitions of which we are aware tend to be unidimensional, focusing on a particular goal or modus operandi.[22] However, empires, at least those of the past, were multifaceted and notoriously resist reduction to a single dimension (rule? power? order?). This is why, in a classic study of nearly 700 pages, one historian of imperial Rome concludes, "the emperor was what the emperor did" and ends up focusing on his typical daily activities rather than on any single

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[21] Schurmann, *Logic*, 6; see also his recent characterization of an empire as "a political entity that rules over diverse peoples and territories": "America: The World's Next Great Empire," Pacific News Service, 1 February 2002 (www.doublestandards.org/schurm1.html).

[22] This is true even for Hardt and Negri who, although denying that any state can now be "world leader," define "empire" as "a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule." Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), xix, xii.

function.[23] So too with the United States for decades: in a myriad of ways, the U. S. is and was always present in the daily life of its clients, through surveillance, appeals for help, existence as both a distant model and a crude, intrusive menace to local culture and politics. This ubiquity is arguably the hallmark of all empires and accounts for their being both admired and loathed. Hence, there is some basis for considering that the definition of empire most conducive to the continuity argument is also useful for the light it sheds on other empires of the recent and distant past.

Some Tests: Assessing Continuity and Discontinuity

Let us now turn to the issue of historical assessment. Both the continuity and the discontinuity positions are a priori reasonable, even if we have indicated some significant problems with the latter. Both positions also account for a number of aspects of U. S. foreign policy, now and in the past. This does not mean, however, that historical evidence cannot be marshalled to test the arguments against each other.

In principle, we would like to find some sort of negative criterion: a phenomenon that, by the discontinuity position, ought not to be present prior or subsequent to a particular historical era. On the continuity argument, such phenomena should not exist; hence if we find them, we have strong grounds for concluding in favor of the discontinuity position. Unfortunately, none of the variants of the latter lend themselves well to assessment by a negative criterion. The reason for this is simple: discontinuity advocates are not claiming that certain phenomena (e.g., multilateral consultations) no longer occur; rather, they are claiming that such phenomena are distinctly secondary as compared with the principal goal/means/M.O. combination characteristic of a particular historical era. This absence of a smoking gun in fact makes it difficult to invalidate the discontinuity claims.

Thus we must switch perspective, as it were, and look for evidence compatible more with the continuity claim than with arguments about discontinuity. One type of such evidence is quantitative: are there significant differences between historical eras regarding U. S. attempts either to maintain client states by military force (direct or using proxies) or to overthrow enemy states by various means (military force, coups d'etat, assassinations)? Counting such attempts, of course, is a crude exercise in more than one way: it does not take into account the size of the intervened-in state or the scope (troops, money, months/years, casualties) of the intervention; nor does it deal with the fact that a truly effective type of imperial arrangement would obviate the need for intervention in the first place. Nonetheless, the numbers are revealing. We have constructed the total attempt figure (with the number of intervened-in states in parentheses, to give an idea about repeated interventions in the same place) as the sum of attempts by the U. S. using its own combat forces (in all cases, whether to aid a client or to overthrow a regime deemed hostile); of attempts using proxies (note that these attempts always involve weapons, training, or financing by the U. S., often all three); and of other activities (for example, large-scale covert aid to one side in elections, attempts to foment a coup d'etat, assassination attempts).[24]

[23] Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977, 1992), 6.

[24] The table is derived from various lists and monographs, notably Richard F. Grimmett, "Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2001,"Congressional Research Service, 5 February 2002 (note that we have only counted instances of the use of force where the aim was to support or overthrow a regime); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963); Thomas G. Paterson, J. Garry Clifford, and Kenneth J. Hagan, *American Foreign Relations: A History*, 4th edn. (Lexington,

Historical era	Total attempts	Direct U. S.	Proxies	Other
pre-1898	6 (5)	6	0	0
1898-1939/40	17 (9)	17	0	0
1945-1989	66 (59)	20	19	27
1989-2001	8 (8)	10	6	2
2001-present	7 (6)	4	1	2

It is difficult to see much of a trend in this table. A crude division of total attempts by the number of years gives, for each supposed era, quite varying results: respectively, 0.46 (dating from the first intervention), 0.41, 1.32, 0.66, and 2.33 (if we combine the last two time periods, given that the post-2001 period is only 3 years old, the resulting figure is 1.00). Does this show a tendency toward greater activism by the U. S.? It could just as well show that the U. S. has been an actively intervening state for over a century, although the extent of that activism waxes and wanes at different moments. The only thing that seems clear is that the Cold War era saw the invention and extensive use of proxy and other means.

A better means of assessment, in our opinion, comes from the fact that, as we observed, U. S. foreign policy has multiple means at its disposal. Ideally, U. S. leaders would prefer to maintain a client by peaceful, politically inexpensive means, such as statements of support and economic aid. However, if need be, they employ various covert means or use force, whether by proxies or directly. The same range of means is evident when it comes to how the U. S. combats enemies. This suggests that, if there really is continuity in U. S. foreign policy, the means chosen vis-a-vis particular states should span the same range for each of the supposed historical eras. This in fact is the case, as can be seen in numerous countries. Consider three pairs of examples.

In the period from 1898 to World War II, the U. S. aided both overtly and covertly "revolutionaries" in Panama to proclaim independence from Colombia. After that, the U. S. had troops stationed in the country for over a decade, along with a base on territory granted to the U. S. "in perpetuity." In Nicaragua, the U. S. sent Marines to the country several times, staying for all but four years between 1906 and 1933. During the first and third of these interventions, U. S. troops were engaged in combat, in the latter case fighting a prolonged insurgency. Withdrawal came only when the Marines had created a Nicaraguan National Guard and installed a dictator; the U. S. retained a naval base and handled Nicaraguan customs collections for another decade thereafter.

A similar mixture of means can be seen during the Cold War. The United States helped to create a putatively independent South Vietnam, choosing a president (who had been living in the U. S. for years and was close to politically influential groups there) and providing him with both economic and covert political assistance. As we indicated above, when the insurgency that had toppled French rule resumed, the U. S. trained, equipped, and "advised" indigenous troops; it also covertly created a separate army of highland peoples. When these means proved inadequate, the U. S. engaged in bombing campaigns not only in South Vietnam but in North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia (the latter supposedly a secret) and then sent ground troops (augmented by symbolic detachments from other countries) to engage in prolonged combat operations. Meanwhile,

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MA: D. C. Heath, 1995), 1: chs. 5-8; 2: ch. 5; and (with considerable cross-checking) William Blum, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, updated edn. (London: Zed Books, 2003), ch. 17.

economic aid continued, along with various covert operations, ranging from sabotage attempts in North Vietnam to assassination campaigns in South Vietnam.

Policy toward Cuba, though not as wide-ranging, was still varied as to means. As we discussed above, several months after the revolution, repeated rebuffs by the Cubans to U. S. advice led to plans being drawn up for a U. S. -organized, -trained, -supplied, and –financed covert intervention aimed at toppling the regime; this was accompanied by highly secret attempts to get the Mafia to assassinate Castro. When, in the end, the intervention (backed, significantly, by Somoza in Nicaragua) failed, Kennedy redoubled efforts to overthrow the regime: plans for a new proxy invasion (these plans, like those of Operation Zapata, involved extensive collaboration with the U. S. military and envisaged direct U. S. intervention under some circumstances); numerous sabotage attempts; and continued efforts at assassination. Meanwhile, a trade embargo decreed prior to the Bay of Pigs continued (and does so to this day).

After the Cold War, U. S. policy toward its clients and enemies has remained multiple in its means. In Bosnia, for example, the U. S. began by lending verbal support to the regime; it then arranged for retired American military officers to equip and train a Bosnian-Croat army. When that army began to make significant advances in 1995, the U. S. and its NATO allies engaged in bombing; during this time period, the U. S. consulted closely with the Bosnian government, as it also did (both directly and using former U. S. officials) during the Dayton negotiations. Since then, the U. S. has stationed troops in Bosnia and constructed one of the largest U. S. military bases in the world.

An even broader range of means is apparent in U. S. policy toward Iraq. Following the invasion of Kuwait, when the U. S. reversed several decades of support for the Ba'ath regime, American policy has run the gamut of hostile means: two invasions (one of them backed by the United Nations) with massive U. S. troop involvement; a prolonged period, between invasions, of intermittent bombing; attempts by the CIA to construct armed opposition forces to the regime in the Kurdish areas as well as elsewhere in the country; assassination attempts against Saddam Hussein; an economic blockade; and no doubt other means as well.

We do not think these examples are in any way unique. Rather, the record of U. S. policy since the 1890s to the present is one of aiding clients and trying to overthrow enemies by a wide range of means. To be sure, certain bureaucracies, and hence the means at their disposal, did not exist back in 1898 (e.g., the CIA; the Air Force); but this is not, in our view, a fundamental difference, any more than is the fact that the list of potential clients and enemies back in 1898 was, due to the existence of colonial empires, far more limited in numbers and geographic scope than at present. In short, looking at matters historically supports the continuity argument we have advanced. It seems that the United States has been imperial – and in the same way – for quite a long time indeed. Whatever worries citizens of the U. S. (and around the world) may have about the imperial nature of U. S. policy ought not to be focused on the current administration.

Figure 1

Is it a current
client state?

    /   \

Yes
Is regime
Acceptable?

    /   \

No
Is it a
non-
enemy?

Yes
Is there a
Problem?

No
Does
Military
Back
regime?

    /   \

Yes
Does US
Acquire
as
a client?
(see client
acquisition
model)
[13]

No
Is it strong
militarily?

Yes
Is
problem
Military?

No
Status
quo
[1]

Yes
Is proxy
interv
possible?
time,
capability

No
Overthrow
Leader
Coup or
assassination
[12]

Yes
Does
regime
have
Intl.
pol
support

No
Does regime
have intl.
pol
support?

Yes
Can client
hold on
long
enough to
make a
difference?

No
Is overt
Aid to
govt.
politically
Possible?

Yes
Proxy interv
(usually
covert)
[10]

No
US
interv
overt
[11]

Yes
Are
proxies
available?

No
Are
proxies
available?

Yes
Are
proxies
available?

No are
proxies
available?

Yes
Manpower
Problem?

No
Give
up
Accept
Enemy
[4]

Yes
Economic
Aid
[2]

No
Covert
Aid
[3]

Yes
Harass
[14]

No
Status
quo
[15]

Yes
Harass
[16]

No
Overt
punishment
[17]

Yes
Covert
use of
proxies
[18]

No
Coups or
assassinations
attempts
[19]

Yes
US
overt
with
proxi
es
[20]

No
US overt
use of mil
force
[21]

Yes
Client
competent?

No
Military
aid, mil
advisers
[5]

Yes
Is enemy
tough?

No
Is enemy
tough?

Yes
[6]

No
[7]

Yes
[8]

No
[9]

23