Michael Hunt’s Foreign Policy Ideology in the Clinton Administration

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INTRODUCTION

Because the actions of the United States in the realm of foreign affairs impact the entire world, American foreign policy is, and always has been under constant scrutiny, both at home and abroad. Negative criticisms flared up at the time of George W. Bush because of his Doctrine showing in the Iraq War, but even the more moderate policies of the Obama administration have attracted quite a lot of criticism. With regard to foreign policy Obama has been accused of having a split personality, of lacking a coherent grand strategy, or of having a strategy that it is not working. Because of the critiques and the difficulties after 9/11, some commentators seem nostalgic about the 1990s, when there were no major challenges to American primacy and the U.S. had a firm grip on the actions and the attitudes in the international community.

There are also many critics, however, who believe that the current problems of the U.S. originated in the 1990s. In That Used to be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back, journalist Thomas Friedman and foreign policy expert Michael Mandelbaum, claim that the problems the U.S. faces today are caused mainly by the fact that Americans seem not to be aware that the world has changed dramatically after the Cold War, and thus they have not properly adapted to this new world. Former National Security Advisers Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft argue something similar in America and the World. They believe that “a cold war mindset persists among U.S. policy makers—and that it blinds [them] to the new balance of forces in the world.” Political science professors Steven Weber and Bruce Jentleson add that this cold war mindset leads to outdated responses to increasingly trans-national problems.

Before the end of the Cold War, history professor Michael Hunt argued that in discussing foreign policy, one should go back in time, not just decades, but even centuries. In his 1988 book Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy, he claims that the main driving force behind American foreign policy is ideology. He believes that this aspect is often overlooked, disregarded, or simply ignored because it is a complicated concept. Too often, Hunt argues, the past is considered irrelevant while in reality

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there is “remarkable continuity of our thinking on basic foreign policy.” Hunt defines three ideological elements in American history which he believes have shaped American foreign policy. The cornerstone, he claims, is the idea of national greatness linked with the advancement of liberty; secondly, he identifies the element of racial hierarchy which defines how other people are viewed; his final element is apprehension towards political and social revolutions.

In this thesis I will take a closer look at foreign policy in the 1990s by examining the policies of the Clinton Administration and discussing to what extent Hunt’s ideological theory can still be applied to the “new world order” emerging at the time. My goal for this essay is not to dictate what needs to be changed in current American foreign policies, but rather to see whether an ideological approach like Hunt’s is applicable to Clinton and thus can perhaps also be an important tool to analyze U.S. foreign policy (problems) of today. I will argue that the aspects of Hunt’s theory can still be found in Clinton’s reasoning, but that where Hunt accuses others of giving ideology too little attention, he can be accused of giving it too much attention, which causes him to ignore several other factors that, especially in Clinton’s policies, often play a more decisive role than ideology.

I have chosen to examine Hunt’s theory because, although it is not perfect, it does present an interesting and extensive addition to the debate about the influences on American foreign policy. Hunt is right in arguing that the role of ideology has not always received as much attention as it perhaps deserves. More than two decades after the appearance of Ideology in U.S. Foreign Policy, there are still very few foreign policy commentators who have discussed the subject as thoroughly as Hunt. His theory is not as limited as those of many other theorists who have focused on only one aspect of America’s ideology, because he uses a broad definition of ideology and the three facets of his theory make it multidimensional.

Also, he traces the origins of America’s foreign policy ideology back to the very first U.S. policymakers, which makes it more likely that his theory would still be applicable in the 1990s. He argues that the main parts of the ideology have remained unchanged, but he does note that there have been small shifts in how these ideas were translated to specific foreign policies. It is inevitable that foreign policies will not remain exactly the same after major changes in the international community; Hunt’s theory is able to accommodate these changes. A theory that is applicable to the U.S. in the 18th century as well as in the 1980s, despite the changes in foreign policies, seems more likely to also be applicable to the U.S. after the Cold War, than theories with a more limited time-frame. As will become clear in the rest of this essay, Hunt’s theory is not flawless, but I believe that, because of its comprehensiveness, it is still the best starting point for a discussion about the role of ideology in American foreign policy.

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9 Ibid., 17-18.
I will test his theory on the policies of Bill Clinton because he was the first president to be in power for two full terms after the collapse of the Soviet Union and he is seen by many as “the first true post-Cold War president.” As a result, there was a lot of pressure on Clinton to map out a new strategy of international behavior in a world where the U.S. was the only superpower; Jason Edwards and Joseph Valenzano explain that Clinton was expected “to provide directional clarity for their country in the ‘new world’ they confronted [and] rearticulate the course of American foreign policy.” They also noted that the decisions of Clinton’s administration would not only influence his own presidency, but also those after him; he would “set the tone for his successors in how they would deal with opportunities and challenges within a new foreign policy environment.” Thus, if Hunt’s theory is still applicable in the drastically changed 1990s, it seems likely that it can also still be applied after the turn of the century, which would mean that the foreign policy problems of today did not just start after the Cold War, but are rooted much deeper in an American foreign policy ideology that can be traced back to the early beginnings of the Republic.

In the first chapter I will consider how Hunt’s approach differs from other theories on foreign policy, how the ideological elements his theory focuses on came into existence, and what he sees as the negative consequences of these elements on America’s foreign policy. To determine the extent to which Clinton was influenced by the same ideology Hunt attributed to his predecessors, I will assess the policies of his administration through analyses from critics and newspapers, and comments from Clinton and other important administration officials. Because many critics have argued that the administration’s policies were guided by non-ideological factors, I will also consider domestic and foreign pressures and economic motives. In the final chapter I will look at some of the specific foreign policy cases that Clinton had to deal with and analyze which factors played an important role in the decisions that were made.

11 Ibid., 304.
12 Ibid., 305.
1) THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – IDEOLOGY IN AMERICA’S FOREIGN POLICY

Almost as long as there has been interaction between states, there have been theories on why states behave the way they do; in the decades since the Second World War, the debate has really taken off. By this time America had developed into the most important power in the international community, leading it to become a favorite object of study for theorists and commentators. As a result of these countless studies, historian Ronald Steel concludes, “one of the anomalies of American foreign policy is the lack of a clear consensus on the forces that drive it.”

Arguably the most dominant and the oldest way of explaining state behavior comes from realists, who date their theories back as far as Ancient Greece and the Renaissance, referring to ideas by Thucydides and Machiavelli. These observers, and many after them, have argued that the main drive behind state action is a drive for power. States are only interested in their own national interests, they argue, and because they live in anarchy—there is no world government to dictate their behavior—the only way to protect their interests is by becoming as powerful as possible. Over the years, however, these assumptions have been challenged on many different grounds and numerous other theories to assess state behavior have arisen; from the well known liberalist theories, which argue that states can cooperate because they often share similar values of liberty, justice and order, to smaller subfields that have studied how foreign policy has been shaped by the personalities of policymakers, public opinion, the media, big business, lessons from the past, lobbies, technology, or culture.

Where Martin Wight in 1966 was still asking the question “Why is There No International Theory?”, now there seems to be an abundance of theories, almost too large for any overview. Renowned international relations theorists Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater indicate that “the 1960s and 1970s saw the rapid development of the study of International Relations...the boundaries of the discipline expanded [among other things] to include foreign policy analysis.” They also note that there are many factors that influence how people perceive the world, and thus how they look at international relations; “Language, culture, religion, ethnicity, class and gender are a few of the factors that shape world views. Indeed it is possible to understand and interpret the world only within particular cultural and linguistic frameworks: these are the lenses through which we perceive the world (emphasis in original).” Political science professor Terry Nardin adds that for political

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16 Ibid., 17-18.
theorists “detachment [from what is being studied] is hard to achieve and one must always be willing to acknowledge one’s own commitments and biases or risk hypocrisy and self-deception.”

As all theorists, Michael Hunt also has certain biases that can be explained by the time in which he produced his theory. Hunt grew up in a time when the field of international relations really started to develop and he was a student during the Vietnam War. Like many of his peers he became increasingly dissatisfied with America’s foreign conducts, and was looking for new ways to analyze international relations and foreign policy. One reviewer of Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy notes that Hunt’s critique “reflects the profound unhappiness felt by many historians of the author’s generation with the course of U.S. foreign policy since the 1960s.” During the 1980s, in which Ideology was published, the international debate took place not only between realists and liberals, but also between these more traditional theorists (referred to as rationalists) and new theorists who challenged the conventional ways of studying international relations.

Critical theorists, and later constructivists, found that the academic debate of international relations was focused too much on realism and that “the influence of these assumptions extended far beyond the academy to structure policy making, particularly in the United States….they informed Washington’s Cold War politics.” These new theorists, Hunt being one of them, disagreed with the premises on which rationalists built their theories, especially the conception that interests are easy to discern and that only material considerations influence state actions. Constructivists believe that all states differ from each other—politically, cultural, economically, social, religious etc.—and thus all have a unique view on the world and relations between states. Ideas, they argue, also have an important influence on the way states conduct themselves internationally. As a result, many new studies arose concerning the influence of non-material aspects on foreign policies, such as “culture, bureaucracy, the social basis and nature of authoritarianism [and] the structure of the family.”

International relations professor Christian Reus-Smit explains that constructivists wanted “to demonstrate the heuristic power of non-rationalist perspectives.” Hunt chose to contribute to this debate by researching the difficult concept of ideology.

17 Terry Nardin, “International Political Theory,” in Theories of International Relations, 288.
19 Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” in Theories of International Relations, 212.
20 Ibid. 218.
Hunt’s conclusion is that ideology has a profound influence on America’s foreign policy, which becomes visible by looking at the country’s past. According to Hunt, the past “instructs us in the special ways we are compromised by circumstances not of our own making, and at the same time it equips us to rise above those circumstances.”

Already in the 19th century Marx understood that “men make their own history [not] under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past.” It is important for both the public and the policy makers to realize that the past is the key to the future.

Hunt argues that the reason that most policymakers and the public do not realize the extent to which they are shaped by their past and ideology is that the social and political culture in the U.S. has been relatively stable. The foreign policy ideology has thus also been quite stable and as a result Americans are no longer aware of its influence on their foreign policy outlook. The underlying ideas are taken for granted and commonly accepted, he concludes, “the dictates of the American foreign-policy ideology have from time to time been challenged, defied, or finessed but not dislodged” and it “continues to exercise [a powerful grip] on the policy elite and the public alike.” As a result of this continuity in ideology and people’s unawareness of it, even the many Americans who do admit that certain foreign policies have been ineffective or too costly are not willing to accept that the basis on which these policies were build are flawed.

Most historians, according to Hunt, “have unwittingly become accessories to the perpetuation of this national foreign-policy myth by reinforcing the public’s fixation with the present and neglecting the role of cultural values.” As Williams did, he wants to revise the conventional way of looking at foreign policy, and he believes that it is not enough for Americans to simply note that some of America’s policies are flawed and need to be altered, it is also important that they realize how and why these flaws originated.

If ideology does indeed play such an important role in foreign policy as Hunt suggests, it would mean that not only the policies need to be changed, but the entire mindset of the American public and its policymakers. In the remainder of this chapter I will first look at some of the other critics that have dealt with ideology in American foreign policy, after which I will discuss Hunt’s understanding of this ideology and the problems it has led to.

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26 Ibid., 189.
27 Ibid., 4, 13-14, 189.
28 Ibid., xi.
29 Ibid., xii-4.
1.1) CRITICAL APPROACHES TO IDEOLOGY IN AMERICA’S FOREIGN POLICY

Many critics at the end of the Cold War, like Earl Ravenal and Richard Feinberg, agreed with Hunt that American foreign policy was built on a misunderstanding of the world and they called for a more limited foreign policy. Both men also agree with Hunt that policymakers have been shaped by ideology and that this ideology has led them to create or uphold the misguided policies, and they realize that the nationalism that followed from ideology has given both policymakers and the public a welcome sense of security and destiny which they do not want to lose. The main problem of these critics, according to Hunt, is that they lack historical perspective and “they do not consider systematically the dimension of that ideology, the roots that sustain it and may render it resistant to change, and the precise relationship it bears to policy.”

William Walker agrees that “by failing systematically to evaluate the role of ideology in American decision making, [one] cannot adequately address the crucial issue of motivation.” The problem with most articles that do discuss the influence of ideology in foreign policy is that they are not as extensive as Hunt’s analysis. Whereas Hunt’s theory goes back to the 18th century and describes foreign policy ideology as a combination of multiple factors, many of the other analysts focus on a shorter timeframe and consider only one aspect of ideology, like Elaine Tyler May’s focus on gender, Allan Carlson’s family-centered approach or Mary Dudziak’s study of the influence of American race relations. Therefore most of these approaches did not reach a large audience and have not gotten a lot of following.

Two critics who have discussed the influence of ideas on foreign policy quite extensively and did receive much attention for their approaches are George F. Kennan and William Appleman Williams. Even Hunt admits that these critics have done a much better job than most to factor in ideology to explain international politics and the decisions of policymakers. He still believes, however, that their approaches have some significant flaws; Kennan’s realist approach is “superficial, even anemic” and he considers the study of economic determinist Williams to be “narrow and at times mechanical.”

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31 Hunt, Ideology, 2.
34 Hunt, Ideology, 4-5.
In *American Diplomacy: 1900-1950*, George Kennan argues that the main problems of U.S. foreign policy were its moralism and legalism, claiming that the government too often made its decisions based on morality instead of a rational pursuit of national interest and it tried to export domestic concepts to countries where they did not work. For Kennan “realism” was the solution to this problem; the U.S. needed a more realistic and pragmatic foreign policy that would serve a set of clearly defined national goals. To accomplish this, foreign policy would need to be executed by experts that could separate themselves from politics and popular opinion. Ronald Steel explains that, for realists, “the national interest is like a polar star, fixed in place and true, capable of being clearly discerned by those open of mind and clear of eye.”

Kennan thus believed that the moralistic and legalistic tendencies of American policymakers were superficial. A group of experts, he believed, would be able to see the realities of international politics and make logical decision accordingly without being influenced by any kind of ideology. This belief that ideology is so superficial that America’s foreign policy problems can be easily solved by putting experts in charge who will not be influenced by it, is what, according to Hunt, makes Kennan unqualified to provide the proper solutions to foreign policy problems. It also makes Kennan’s theory unsuited for the purposes of this essay; if the theory would still be applicable in the 1990s it would be self-contradicting, because it would prove that ideology was in fact not as superficial and easy circumvent as Kennan argues.

William Appleman Williams did not share Kennan’s reluctance to admit the persistent influence of ideology. In fact, he often advocated its centrality. Williams argued that American foreign policy was primarily guided by economic interests and he saw ideology as a tool used by the capitalistic elites to preserve their economic and political power. He describes these views in his most influential book, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, which is often mentioned as a prime example of revisionist history—an approach to one or more historical events that diverges from the established canon. Like Kennan, Williams wrote his book because he believed that the current U.S. foreign policy was flawed. He believed that America had to try “to sustain democracy and prosperity without imperial expansion.” What distinguished him from Kennan and the established historical canon at the time, was that he did not see these policies as the result of decisions by naïve or misguided policymakers, but as consequences of calculated decisions made by a skilled and insightful “interlocking business and political elite.”

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35 Steel, “Birth of an Empire.”
39 Ibid., 9.
The problem with Williams’ approach is thus not that he believes ideology to be easily ignored, but what he believes this ideology entails. Hunt applauds him for making the American public more self-conscious about the role of ideas in foreign policy, but he worries that his one-dimensional view could “blind us to the importance of concerns that are neither rooted in nor sustained by economic forces or calculations.”40 This view makes his theory less interesting to apply to the foreign policy of the 1990s, because it considers only the economic aspect of ideology while there have been significant changes in other aspects as well. Another feature—also present in Kennan’s study—that makes Hunt’s approach better suited for our purposes, is that Williams starts his analyses in the 1890s, whereas Hunt argues that ideology can be traced back to the very beginning of the republic. Williams argued that America’s foreign policy ideology originated from major changes at the end of the 19th century in America and the world, so it would make sense that the ideology was also affected by the major changes after the Cold War, which would make the theory inapplicable to the 1990s.41

1.2) MICHAEL HUNT’S IDEOLOGY AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
Hunt’s theory can be considered post-revisionist, because he expands (and alters) Williams’ revisionist approach in both scope and time-frame.42 Hunt defines ideology as “an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduce the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggest appropriate ways of dealing with that reality.”43 Because the concept of ideology is not the focal point of this article, I will simply adopt Hunt’s broad definition. He believes that ideology is not just a tool used by elites, and it is not something that can be easily cast aside: “Ideologies are integrated and coherent systems of symbols, values and beliefs.”44 They serve as a way for people to make sense of their history, to deal with their present, and guide them to a better future. Contrary to what Williams argued, he believes that ideologies are not one-dimensional. They arise from a combination of factors such as economic, religious, racial, ethnical, regional or nationalistic ideas. Together, these ideas create a powerful ideology that is hardly noticeable because it is so encompassing. Because both the public and the policymaking elite are influenced by this ideology, policies will automatically reflect these ideas. In the case of foreign policy, strategies will reflect the way Americans see the world and what they believe to be their role in it.45

40 Hunt, Ideology, 11.
41 Ibid., 8-11; Williams, Tragedy.
42 This term is used to describe Hunt, for example, in: Bruce Cumings, “‘Revising Postrevisionism,’ or The Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History,” Diplomatic History 17, no. 4 (1993): 539-569.
43 Hunt, Ideology, xi.
44 Ibid., 12.
As said before, Hunt traces the origin of American foreign policy ideology back to the very beginnings of the republic. From the start, ideology and nationalism were closely intertwined. In the chaos of becoming independent and creating a new government, Americans tried to produce a new identity for themselves and their country. Because they were very diverse in their race, religion and ethnicity, they needed a shared purpose to unite them. The resulting dominant foreign policy ideology served “to affirm the received definition of nationality, to override divisions at home, and to proclaim American virtue and destiny.”46 Where domestic issues tended to divide the country, foreign affairs united the people. As America became a stronger and more confident nation, it might no longer have been a conscious decision to use foreign policy to unite a divided country, but according to Hunt their foreign policy ideology has never been clearer than it was in the 20th century, and it still often fulfilled a nationalistic purpose. This ideology is formed by three core ideas; the idea of national greatness linked to the advancement of liberty, a racial hierarchy which defines how other people are viewed, and an apprehension towards most political and social revolutions.47

1.2.1) National Greatness and Liberty

Already the very first settlers in America expressed the belief that they had a special destiny. In 1630 colonist John Winthrop famously expressed this by proclaiming that their community would be “a city upon a hill”. In the 1770s these feelings developed into the notion that England and Europe were holding this special society back and thus they should separate themselves from their mother country and the entire European sphere. Revolutionaries like Thomas Paine widely advertised the possibilities that independence would bring to the country. America would have the opportunity “to begin the world all over again,” and it could become “the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty.”48 The main ideas behind America’s fight for independence were the concept of liberty, and the belief that “the cause of America is...the cause of all mankind.”49 Newly independent, Americans needed to decide how they would implement the ideals of the revolution into their policies, and, with regard to foreign policy, they needed to decide what their role in the world would be. Most politicians agreed on the notions of national greatness and freedom, but they did not agree on the exact definition of these ideas and how they should shape their foreign policy.50

The first debate arose during the country’s first administration with Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson representing the different camps. Jefferson focused primarily on maintaining and

46 Hunt, Ideology, 190.
47 Ibid., 17-18, 189-191.
49 Ibid.
developing America’s liberty. He believed that a detached foreign policy would serve this cause best and argued that the U.S. only needed a small navy and diplomatic course to protect their trade and negotiate treaties. Hamilton, on the other hand, was preoccupied by his vision of America’s national greatness to which liberty only came second. He believed that nations were destined to fight each other over wealth and power, and therefore the country needed a strong government to guide economical development, and a strong navy for protection. Under their guidance the U.S. would grow stronger and eventually America would be able “to dictate the terms of the connection between the old and the new world.”

The debate ended in a victory for Hamilton’s grand visions of greatness. In his farewell address President George Washington copied the belief that the U.S. would emerge as “a great Nation,” and when Jefferson himself became president he also seemed to agree that a strong government and an expansionist foreign policy could go hand in hand with liberty.

Between 1803 and 1853 U.S. land tripled and “increasingly American leaders were coming to accept a close relationship between liberty and the active promotion of national greatness defined more and more in terms of territorial expansion.” To describe their special purpose in the world, John O’Sullivan coined the term “manifest destiny.” It became commonly accepted that the U.S. was different from other great powers, because it would not be corrupted by its dominance. They would use their power not only to better their own country, but to better the whole world and whenever they made mistakes or used force in the expansion of territory it was acceptable because of their underlying noble republican ideals. In the 1850s and at the end of the 19th century doubts about the combination of liberty and an expansionist foreign policy returned. Economic crises, however, stressed the importance of foreign markets, and after having been divided by domestic issues, Americans turned to foreign policy to reunite the country. By this time, the public and the politicians had become used to hearing that America was unique and that they had a special purpose in the world; they did not want to limit this role. The combined vision of national greatness and liberty was victorious and remained firmly in place during the 20th century.

1.2.2) Racial Hierarchy

Hunt begins his chapter on racial hierarchy with the statement: “Benjamin Franklin, that paragon of Enlightenment optimism, versatility, and virtues, was also a racist.” This claim is easily supported by

53 Ibid., 30.
55 Hunt, Ideology, 29-45.
56 Ibid., 46.
quotes of Franklin calling black people “of a plotting disposition, dark, sullen, malicious, revengeful, and cruel in the highest degree” and stating “I could wish their Numbers [of white people] were increased...Perhaps I am partial to the Complexion of my Country, for such Kind of Partiality is natural to Mankind.”\textsuperscript{57} Franklin views were by no means disparate from those of his contemporaries, in fact, it was quite normal to draw distinctions based on physical features, especially skin color.\textsuperscript{58}

On the racial ladder, white people stood at the top, and among these white people Anglo-Saxons were considered superior. Their superior traits were that they spoke English, they were (Protestant) Christians, they were lead by a democratic government, they were intelligent and they worked hard to earn an honest living. Americans believed that white people would bring peace and welfare to the whole world and that it was their duty to fight barbaric races that did not share their superior values. Most inferior races would be thankful for their interference and happily follow their example. People with the lightest complexions stood at the top of the hierarchy and the bottom was occupied by those with the darkest complexions, who were seen as a brutal, savage, backward and ignorant race. The peoples of “mixed” color found themselves somewhere in the middle of the hierarchy; not quite as detestable as the blacks, but still condescendingly looked down upon by whites. Latinos were often depicted as “superstitious, obstinate, lazy, cowardly...and corrupt.”\textsuperscript{59} Orientals or Mongolians were seen as “dangerous ...subhuman yet cunning, unfeeling yet boiling inwardly with rage, cowardly and decadent”; and American Indians were considered to be “ignorant, intractable, and savage.”\textsuperscript{60} These mixed races, however, were also sometimes portrayed as having the potential to become better peoples and to adopt the values of the superior white people; all they needed was the guiding hand of “Uncle Sam.”\textsuperscript{61}

Like the concept of national greatness, racial hierarchy provided a sense of unity among the American people (at least among the white population). Social Darwinists even provided “scientific proof” that their ideas were correct, so there was little controversy about it. Dividing the people based on their races was simple and it made the world easier to comprehend and foreign policy more accessible. It justified America’s claim of national greatness with its accompanying expansionist policies, and it supported their vision of the U.S. leading the world to peace and freedom. Also, by depicting the “enemies” that stood in their way in negative stereotypes, Americans legitimized using force and trying to convert their adversaries to Christianity and republicanism. Race quickly became an essential feature of U.S. foreign policy. In the twentieth century explicit racism and the


\textsuperscript{58} Hunt, Ideology, 46.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 59.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 69, 53-58.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 46-79.
importance of skin color eventually became less prominent in America’s foreign policy, however, a division between “modern” and “backward” people always remained.62

1.2.3) Revolutions

Americans have always had an ambivalent attitude towards revolutions. They knew the positive aspects of a revolution because their own country was born out of one and it had brought them freedom and prosperity, but the events in France quickly taught them that there were also dangerous sides to rebellions. People with improper motives could rise to power, or, even worse, anarchy could ensue. John Adams warned that “a thousand tyrants are worse than one” and thus revolutions should only be fought when anarchy could be averted and a new democratic government could be put in place quickly.63 Jefferson and the Republicans believed that revolutions were inevitable because all people deserved freedom and would eventually strive for it, but he did realize that revolutions were not always easy or pretty. He described revolutions as “the manure essential to healthy growth of the tree of liberty.”64 Over the years, became generally agreed upon that revolutions had a tendency to be contagious and that their success would depend on the virtue of the public and the ability of the elite to guide them. The possibility of a successful revolution thus grew smaller as the people were further down the racial ladder. Even white people, however, should only rise against their oppressors when their rights and liberties were violated severely and consistently. Most importantly, America’s own revolution should be viewed “as a model of revolutionary moderation and wisdom.”65 People should thus not easily start a revolution, but when they did so for the right reasons, they should follow America’s example and be careful to never lose sight of their virtue.66

Americans thus responded to foreign uprisings with both suspicion and content. As the U.S. grew stronger and more influential, presidents started to actively intervene in revolutions, either to guide or suppress them. America quickly developed a paternalistic view especially towards Latin-American countries. During the Mexican Revolution in the 1910s for example, President Woodrow Wilson argued that it was America’s duty as “the great nation on this continent” to lead Mexico “back to paths of quiet and prosperity...they shall take help when needed.”67 Whenever the U.S. became invested in a revolution, Hunt argues, it always led to a “cycle of hope and despondence.”68 Because Americans did not understand countries that were different from them, they misunderstood

63 John Adams quoted in Hunt, Ideology, 94.
64 Hunt, Ideology, 95.
65 Ibid., 96.
66 Ibid., 92-97.
68 Hunt, Ideology, 112.
the conditions in foreign countries and their reasons for rebellion. Americans compared all revolutions to their own and “expected to find a neat unilinear advance from traditional to modern ways in countries whose course of development in fact bore little if any resemblance to the American pattern,” and as a result America “exposes itself to feelings of frustration and humiliation after each counterrevolutionary failure.”69 The fact that the U.S. was one of the few countries in the world to have a proper revolution affirmed their ideas of national greatness and superiority over other races, and thus their right to intervene in other countries whenever they deemed it necessary.70

1.3) CONSEQUENCES OF AMERICA’S FOREIGN POLICY IDEOLOGY
In the 20th century, Hunt argues, all three ideological aspects had developed into strong ideas that were agreed upon by the majority of Americans. Together they formed “a coherent foreign policy ideology validated by a remarkable string of successes.”71 All presidents, some more than others, showed clear signs that they believed that America was destined for greatness, that they divided people along some kind of hierarchy, and that they were suspicious of revolutions, especially by people that did not resemble Americans.72 According to Hunt, the foreign policies that were influenced by this deep-rooted ideology were the cause of some serious problems for America.

He notes that ideology is often used to make the world and its realities easier to understand—which is sometimes necessary in the complex world of international affairs—but that the U.S. has the tendency to oversimplify, to the point where they believe that with the right tools the world can be changed rather quickly and it can be controlled. When in reality things turn out different than they expected it leads to disappointment and frustration. Hunt uses the analogy of “the bewilderment of the chess master who discovers that in fact no square is like another, that pawns often disturbingly assume a life of their own, and that few contests are neatly two-sided.”73

This oversimplification, he believes has also kept both policymakers and the public from developing an accurate understanding of other people and other cultures. Their sense of superiority and the tendency to see others in negative stereotypes have not only created false expectations at home, but abroad they have also generated a negative image of America and increased opposition towards U.S. policies. Also, the inability of policymakers to accurately assess the consequences and costs of their actions, and their reluctance to admit defeat did not only have political consequences, but also severe economical consequences, such as a huge debt increase. Furthermore, he believes

69 Hunt, Ideology, 175.
70 Ibid., 97-124.
71 Ibid., 125.
72 For examples of Hunt’s ideology in 20th century foreign policy, see Hunt, Ideology, 125-170.
73 Hunt, Ideology, 176.
that presidents tend to use foreign policy to justify or divert the attention from these kinds of domestic problems.\textsuperscript{74}

Hunt conclusions about the problems of American foreign policy are convincing, as is his evidence of the presence of a foreign policy ideology consisting of an idea of national greatness, a racial hierarchy and opposition to most revolution. The main problem with Hunt’s work, however, is that the connection between the ideology and the flawed foreign policies is not clear. His impressive research of original texts, cartoons, and commentaries shows that there were indeed some clear similarities between the worldviews of U.S. policymakers throughout history, but it does not explain how these views translated to specific policies. Still, it will be interesting to see whether Clinton also shared a similar ideology to his predecessor and to what extent this ideology has been visible in his foreign policies.

\textsuperscript{74} Hunt, \textit{Ideology}, 174-181.
2) IDEOLOGY AND FOREIGN POLICY OF THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

Only a few years after Hunt wrote his book, several major changes altered the international community drastically, making it interesting to see how American foreign policy adapted to these new realities. The end of the Cold War led to confusion and uncertainty about the future of the international community. Foreign policy specialist David Wurmser notes that in the 1990s both “the role of the sovereign state in the international system and the role of ideas in determining state behavior have become matters of sharp debate.” The majority of the critical attention was directed at the United States, because it had become the sole superpower and the decisions that the American government made would influence the entire world. Most critics agreed that the context in which U.S. foreign policy was conducted in 1990s had changed dramatically from earlier decades.

When the threat of communism had largely disappeared after the fall of the Soviet Union, so did the foreign policy consensus that had existed between Democrats and Republicans and between the government and the public. Richard Haass, one of George H.W. Bush’s foreign policy advisers, understood that future administrations would have to acknowledge “the unpleasant reality that…no comparable consensus exists today on either the nature of the post-Cold War world or on what the United States should do to shape it.” Another changing reality was a declining interest in foreign policy. International affairs professor Stephen Walt argued that “Americans are not interested in foreign policy because they recognize how favorable the current situation is” and thus they elected “a Congress whose disdain for foreign affairs is almost gleeful. Two-thirds of the Republicans elected to Congress in 1994 reportedly did not possess passports.”

Other important changes were caused by the expansion of democracy, free trade and the upcoming Internet which intensified globalization and resulted in increasing interdependence between countries. Problems also became increasingly global, such as international crime, pandemic diseases and environmental dilemmas. Many critics argued that with great opportunities also came great responsibilities, which led to even more debate about which conflicts the U.S. should engage itself in. During the Cold War, the main focus of foreign policy had always been clear—containing the spread of communism and the power of the Soviet Union—and the importance of foreign policy had been widely recognized. In the 1990s, however, there was disagreement about what the main focus should be and the amount of time and money foreign policy should take up.

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77 Richard N. Haass, “Fatal distraction: Bill Clinton’s foreign policy,” Foreign Policy 108 (Fall 1997): 112-123.
79 Wurmser, “Charting a Course Between Realpolitik and Ideology”; Naim, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy”; Haass, “Fatal distraction.”
As the debate about the future of U.S. foreign policy became more and more divisive, so did the debate about Clinton’s role in it. More than a decade after his final day in office, commentators still do not agree on one vision of Clinton’s foreign policy conduct. Political scientists Aubrey Jewett and Marc Turetzky aptly conclude: “One thing is clear about the president’s foreign policy worldview: it profoundly puzzles reporters, pundits, and academics alike.”

2.1) DIVERGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS CLINTON’S FOREIGN POLICY RECORD

A common theme among Clinton’s critics is the perceived lack of a coherent foreign policy view. Some have argued that Clinton had no vision at all, and was merely reacting to events as they came along. International affairs specialist Lawrence Kaplan, for instance, claims that “to credit this administration with coherence in any foreign policy enterprise...is to glean evidence of ideology where there is none.”

His colleague Fawaz A. Gerges agrees that “more than any other recent president, Clinton appears to conduct foreign policy on an ad hoc basis.” Even Clinton’s own former chief of staff, Leon Panetta, described the administration’s policies as: “acting more like a fireman than somebody who’s trying to develop insurance policies to protect against these kinds of disasters.” Republican senator Arlen Specter suggested that Clinton’s foreign policy was nothing more “than a surprised reaction to world events.”

Other critics did occasionally detect a vision in the Clinton administration, but believed that is was too incoherent and inconsistent. Former member of the George H.W. Bush administration, Paul Wolfowitz, called Clinton’s vision “confused and inconsistent,” and in his article on Clinton’s foreign policy, international politics commentator Moisés Naim summarizes how Foreign Policy editors and opinion leaders all over the world agree with this vision:

> From Tokyo, Yoichi Funabashi points to a “notable lack of the ‘vision thing’”; France’s Jacques Attali notes, “lacking a long-term vision, his administration seeks to impose its fancied solutions on an ad hoc basis.”...while in Moscow, Yegor Gaidar concludes that “one of the chief distinguishing characteristics of President Clinton’s foreign policy has been his unwillingness to make clear choices or to provide a coherent vision” [and] from Hamburg, Christoph Bertram writes that “while Kohl’s agenda is clear, Clinton’s, if it exists at all, is difficult to decipher.”

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86 Naim, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy.”
Historian Douglas Brinkley agrees that Clinton’s foreign policy was often inconsistent, but suggests that this was a deliberate choice: “elastick foreign policymaking appealed to Clinton; it allowed him the freedom to maneuver as the day’s headlines dictated and to be an exponent of realpolitik one week and of Eleanor Roosevelt’s idealism the next.”

Richard Haass, Fawaz Gerges, and other critics have suggested that Clinton was simply not very interested in international affairs, claiming that he gave foreign policy “only episodic attention,” and that there was a clear “lack of presidential engagement in the making of U.S. policy.” Other commentators have argued that Clinton spent more time on domestic and economic policies than on foreign affairs because he lacked experience and knowledge of foreign policy. It has also been argued that Clinton tried too hard to please everybody and that “in his White House, achieving narrow, short-term, political goals...always [took] precedence over attaining broad strategic objectives.” Many critical commentators thus believe that Clinton did not succeed in formulating an adequate new strategy to guide them in a new age. Historian Howard Zinn concludes:

He left no legacy of bold innovation in domestic policy or departure from traditional nationalist foreign policy...The bombing of Baghdad was a sign that Clinton, facing several foreign policy crises during his two terms in office, would react to them in traditional ways, usually involving military action; claiming humanitarian motives, and often with disastrous results for people abroad as well as for the United States.

Richard Haass agrees and notes that “It speaks volumes about this administration that, in his second term, the first post-Cold War president has focused most of his foreign policy efforts on NATO, a child of the Cold War.”

Not all commentators of Clinton’s foreign policy, however, share these harsh critiques. Many believe that the mistakes and inconsistency in foreign policies in the 1990s were caused by the unique circumstances of the time and thus not the result of the effort or capabilities of the Clinton Administration. Stephen Walt, for instance, argues that commentators have been too dismissive of Clinton’s record: “The problems that [critics] emphasize are not solely attributable to his disinterest in foreign affairs, the misguided views of his advisers, a disorganized policy process, or a failure to set

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88 Haass, “Fatal distraction.”
90 See for example Kiefer, “Taking Stock of Clinton’s Measured Foreign Policy”; and Gerges, “A View From the Middle East.”
91 Naim, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy.”
93 Haass, “Fatal distraction.”
clear priorities. Rather they stem from America’s unusual international position and the political incentives this position reinforces.”94

Several critics have even argued that Clinton did provide a new strategy to guide the country in a new age. Edwards and Valenzano believe that “President Clinton did offer a direction for American foreign policy that moved it away from the Manichean logic of the Cold War,” but that it was perhaps not as noticeable as the visions of his predecessors because “the directional clarity that Clinton offered could not be encapsulated in a catchphrase.”95 International management professor Llewellyn Howell concludes that even though the Clinton also made a few mistakes, “successes far outnumber failures,” and “more importantly, there is policy continuity that runs throughout his efforts and reflects planning and strategy.”96

Giving the intense debate surrounding Clinton’s foreign policy accomplishments, several critics have made the logical conclusion that he has a mixed record on this account. A few of them argue that Clinton started with a clear (idealistic) foreign policy vision, but that he abandoned this in later years for a more reactive policy.97 A more common notion is that he started out struggling, but that during his time in office he gained a lot of foreign policy knowledge and formed a clear and coherent worldview.98 Jewett and Turetzky support this view after extensively researching Clinton’s foreign policy speeches between 1993 and 1996. They counted the number of times Clinton mentioned certain issues and actors and concluded that “In 1993, Clinton’s worldview was relatively unidimensional and unsophisticated, [but], by 1996, the president’s worldview showed increasing signs of complexity.”99

2.2) CLINTON’S FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY
It is clear that commentators do not agree on whether or not the Clinton administration had a clear strategy or vision to face the challenges of the post-Cold War world and even those who believe that Clinton did have a strategy do not agree on what his strategy was. There are, however, a few themes that recur in many articles and in Clinton’s own references to foreign policy: interdependence, democracy, human rights, and the economy.

94 Walt, “Two Cheers for Clinton’s Foreign Policy,” 63, 66.
95 Edwards and Valenzano, “Bill Clinton’s ‘New Partnership’ Anecdote,” 304.
97 See for example Walt, “Two Cheers for Clinton’s Foreign Policy,” 78; and Charles William Maynes, “Bottom-Up Foreign Policy,” Foreign Policy 104 (Fall 1996): 36.
2.2.1) Increasing Interdependence in a New Age

One of the new realities of the 1990s was an increasing cooperation and interdependence between countries because of the spread of democracy and free trade. For the Clinton, the increasing interconnectedness of the world meant that he would lose some of his authority to the international community, because the U.S. was increasingly faced with global problems that it could not solve by itself. Clinton, however, believed that interdependence was a two-way street in which the U.S. would indeed need the help of others to solve some of its problems, but where the international community also increasingly needed the help of the U.S. to lead the world in this new age. Many countries did indeed turn to the U.S. for guidance and Edwards and Valenzano rightly argue that “in a sense, Clinton became not only a U.S. president, but also a world president...Not only was the United States an indispensable nation, but President Clinton was the indispensable leader...for providing a narrative of the future (emphasis in original).”100 Whether they liked it or not, the fates of the U.S. and the international community were tied together.101

Clinton seemed to realize this and he was optimistic that most countries would realize the importance of cooperation and would work together to face the new global problems. Many critics have argued that “Clinton recognized from the day he took office that the post-Cold War world was different than the Cold War and that the United States must define its interests differently.”102 Jewett and Turetzky found that in all four researched years, the “global economic and security institutions category” was the “actor” that Clinton mentioned the most in his foreign policy speeches.103

As a presidential candidate Clinton promised that under his leadership the U.S. would “stand up for [its] interests, but...will share burdens, where possible, through multilateral efforts to secure the peace [because] multilateral action holds promise as never before.”104 In his inaugural address he repeated this resolution to work more closely together with other countries and lead them in this new age: “we will not shrink from the challenges nor fail to seize the opportunities of this new world. Together with our friends and allies, we will work to shape change, lest it engulf us.”105 Throughout his eight years in office, Clinton continued to stress “the imperative of American leadership in the face of global change,”106 stating that the U.S. was an “indispensable nation”107 and “must serve as a

102 Edwards and Valenzano, “Bill Clinton’s ‘New Partnership’ Anecdote,” 318; see also Jewett and Turetzky, “Stability and Change,” 645; Zinn, The Twentieth Century, 439; and FP Editors, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy.”
fulcrum for change and a pivot point for peace.”108 At the end of his second term he concluded, “If I have learned anything in these last eight years, it is, whether we like it or not, we are growing more interdependent. We must look for more solutions in which all sides can claim a measure of victory and move away from choices in which someone is required to accept complete defeat.”109

To sell this internationalism to a public and Congress who had lost most of their interest in international affairs, Clinton often tied his foreign policy to domestic policies. Clinton continually reminded his country that they could not ignore the rest of the world because “our security still depends upon our continued world leadership for peace and freedom and democracy. We still cannot be strong at home unless we’re strong abroad.”110 In San Francisco he summarized this view to an audience of foreign policy experts as follows:

The true measure of our interests lies not in how small or distant these places are or in whether we have trouble pronouncing their names. The question we must ask is, what are the consequences to our security of letting conflicts fester and spread? We cannot, indeed, we should not, do everything or be everywhere. But where our values and our interests are at stake, and where we can make a difference, we must be prepared to do so. And we must remember that the real challenge of foreign policy is to deal with problems before they harm our national interests.111

Not all critics, however, were convinced that even the president himself believed in these words.

Even though the San Francisco speech was given towards the end of Clinton’s presidency, several critics have argued that Clinton’s initial internationalism diminished quickly after he became president, noting that “the Administration became increasingly skeptical about the utility of UN peace-keeping missions in general,” which resulted in “strict limitations on the launching of future peacekeeping operations and the assignment of American troops to their forces.”112 Walt even argued, “Clinton may cloak U.S. policy in the rhetoric of ‘world order’ and general global interests, but its defining essence remains the unilateral exercise of sovereign power.”113

2.2.2) Democratic Enlargement: Democracy, Human Rights and Free Trade

One of the reasons that there is so much debate about Clinton’s vision of international affairs is because he did not have a clear catchphrase. One of the foreign policy officials from Clinton’s

111 Ibid.
112 Michalak, “Bill Clinton’s Adventures.”
113 Walt, “Two Cheers for Clinton’s Foreign Policy,” 78.
administration, Nancy Soderberg, argued that it was a conscious choice not to have a foreign policy that “could be put on a bumper sticker.” Instead, Clinton “defined it in a set of principles that guided his policies and America’s engagement.” The principles that are mentioned most in regard to Clinton’s foreign policy are democracy, human rights and free trade, and if there was one overarching catchphrase to that could have fit on a bumper sticker and replaced the Cold War’s “containment,” it was “democratic enlargement.”

The term “enlargement” was first used in a speech by Anthony Lake at John Hopkins University in September 1993. In an effort to “communicate anew why [foreign] engagement is essential,” he argued that in a world where “America’s core concepts—democracy and market economics—are more broadly accepted than ever,” and where “the pulse of the planet has accelerated dramatically and with it the pace of change in human events,” it is America’s duty “not only to be engaged, but to lead...animated both by calculations of power and by this belief: to the extent democracy and market economics hold sway in other nations, our own nation will be more secure, prosperous and influential, while the broader world will be more humane and peaceful.” For him the logical conclusion was that “the successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement—enlargement of the world’s free community of market democracies.” In this enlargement strategy the elements of democracy, market economics and human rights were inextricably linked: “we need to pursue our humanitarian agenda not only by providing aid, but also by working to help democracy and market economics take root in regions of greatest humanitarian concern.”

Many critics thus rightly concluded that the Clinton administration saw democracy “as both a means and an end,” that “Clinton’s form of democracy promotion was not only constitutional government, but included free markets and human rights,” and that he “considered democracy to be at the core of basic human rights.” Clinton often advocated this new strategy of enlargement: “During the cold war we sought to contain a threat to the survival of free institutions. Now we seek to enlarge the circle of nations that live under those free institutions.” It was also clearly

115 Ibid., 97.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
122 Clinton, United Nations General Assembly.
summarized in the White House national security strategy of 1995: “The more that democracy and political and economic liberalization take hold in the world...the safer our nation is likely to be and the more our people are likely to prosper.”

This spread of democracy was closely linked to human rights and the spread of free trade. The latter aspect was often seen as a strategy or goal on its own. Douglas Brinkley claimed that “free trade remains the heart of enlargement and the core of [Clinton’s] foreign policy,” and Jewett and Turetzky argued that “President Clinton’s worldview during his first year in office can best be summed up as the expansion of commerce in a changing world or, more succinctly, ‘it’s the global economy, stupid.’” It is not surprising that several critics have argued that Clinton did not have foreign policy, but only an extended domestic or economic policy, because he was very vocal about the importance of the economy, telling the Congress in his 1994 budget address that “we have put our economic competitiveness at the heart of our foreign policy,” and stressing that “we must understand, as we never have before, that our national security is largely economic. The success of our engagement in the world depends not on headlines it brings to Washington politicians, but on the benefits it brings to hardworking middle-class Americans.”

As with interdependence, there were also critics who argued that Clinton’s talk of democracy and economic liberalization throughout the world was merely a farce that he discarded as soon as it did not suit a short term goal. Howard Zinn, for instance, recalls how the principles of free trade and human rights were ignored in Clinton’s policies towards Iraq and Cuba:

In [a] flagrant violation of the principle of free trade, the United States would not allow shipments of food or medicine to Iraq or to Cuba, the result being the deaths of tens of thousands of children. In 1996, on the television program 60 Minutes, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright was asked about the report that “a half million children have died as a result of sanctions against Iraq...That is more children than died in Hiroshima...Is the price worth it?” Albright replied: “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price, we think the price is worth it.”

Again, there is a clear disagreement about Clinton’s vision and his underlying motives present.

2.3) HUNT’S FOREIGN POLICY IDEOLOGY IN CLINTON’S ADMINISTRATION
With all these differing notions on Clinton’s worldview, it seems unlikely to find clear ideological motives in his foreign policies. According to Hunt’s theory, however, no matter how different the circumstances were that Clinton faced, the same underlying ideology that guided his predecessors should also be present in his foreign policies.

125 Bill Clinton quoted in Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement.”
127 Zinn, The Twentieth Century, 445.
It is not difficult to find evidence of the first aspect of Hunt’s theory in Clinton’s foreign policy ideology. One clear similarity was Clinton’s resolve to not only act—“with peaceful diplomacy whenever possible, with force when necessary”—when U.S. interests were at stake, but also when “the will and conscience of the international community is defied.”\(^{128}\) Also, he often talked about the fact that “American leadership matters. American leadership is welcome. American leadership is necessary.”\(^{129}\) He believed that drawing from the country’s own “democratic experience and ideals,” America could “lights fires in the hearts of millions of freedom-loving people around the world,”\(^{130}\) and he often emphasized that “The defense of freedom and the promotion of democracy around the world aren’t merely a reflection of our deepest values; they are vital to our national interests.”\(^{131}\) Clinton believed that it was America’s duty to lead the world: “Never has American leadership been more essential — to navigate the shoals of the world’s new dangers and to capitalize on its opportunities. American assets are unique.”\(^{132}\)

Political Science professor Michalak believed this idealism to be a major weakness of Clinton’s foreign policy: “what flawed Clinton’s diplomacy was his belief that ideals and moral principles could be realized not through the application of force, but through their own compelling, universal, and transcendent nature.”\(^ {133}\) Similar to Michael Hunt, Michalak believes that America’s moral superiority has led to a negative image of the U.S. abroad. He points out that “while the U.S. truly may believe that its values are universal, others may disagree—and honestly so...while presidents such as Carter and Clinton might think they are fighting for unchanging universal values, others abroad have viewed such rhetoric as varying American fashion at best, and, at worst, a chic, ethnocentric cultural imperialism.”\(^ {134}\) Even American journalists have often negatively talked about “America’s compulsive urge to right all the world’s wrongs.”\(^ {135}\)

Signs of racial hierarchy are less obvious in Clinton’s policies. Explicit racism had disappeared completely from the presidency, but this did not mean that all hierarchical thinking had disappeared. Sharing Hunt’s view, Augelli and Murphy have argued that “elite white racism in the United States changed its form, not its substance...not the perspective of ‘who are the best people’ but rather ‘what makes them best’...changed dramatically, [but] the invidious comparisons are still made, and

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128 Clinton, “First Inaugural Address.”
134 Michalak, “Bill Clinton’s Adventures.”
the old hierarchy of foreign peoples is still maintained, not by Social Darwinism and ‘scientific’ racism but by the new science of development economics.” 136 These development economics were still clearly present in Clinton’s policies. The Clinton administration believed in the superiority of American principles and that democratization and economic liberalization could solve almost any foreign policy problem. This is why they were the central tenets of their foreign policy strategy. Just like his predecessors, Clinton still distinguished between civilized and non-civilized countries claiming that “Iraq may rejoin the community of civilized nations by adopting democratic processes, respecting human rights, treating its people equitably, and adhering to basic norms of international behavior.” 137

This distinction between countries also led to an ambivalent attitude towards revolutions, which Hunt claims is the third aspect of American foreign policy ideology. Enlargement of the democratic community was an important theme in the Clinton administration “as long as [it] did not allow chaos or barbarianism to totally disrupt the world order.” 138 So while democratic revolutions were supported and even encouraged, other revolutions were not. An example of the latter was the revolution in Haiti; when the democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown by a military regime, Clinton felt compelled to interfere and restore democracy in Haiti. The U.S. sent “American military officers, foreign aid experts, economists, and diplomatic officials” to help, leading Michalak to ask “at what point does even the best-intentioned intrusive and constant involvement become a denial of the very value of self-determination that the U.S. went into Haiti to secure?” 139

Thus, all elements of Hunt’s theory can be found in Clinton’s foreign policies. There are, however, also many critics who argue that Clinton was not guided by ideology at all, or, at least, that other influences were much more important.

136 Augelli and Murphy, “Ideology and American Foreign Policy,” 69-70.
138 Michalak, “Bill Clinton’s Adventures.”
139 Ibid.
3) NON-IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES ON THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

Several theorists or commentators of Clinton’s foreign policies have reached conclusions that contradict Hunt’s theory in general or in regard to the policies of the Clinton Administration. Political Science professor Valerie Sulfaro argues that foreign policy attitudes do not need to be looked at through a difficult new model. She believes that they can be regarded in the same way as domestic policy attitudes, through “the liberal-conservative continuum and…party identification,” because “foreign policy attitudes are not distinctive, different, or nonexistent.”¹⁴⁰

With regard to Clinton, Snow and Brown believe that as the first “baby boomer” president, Clinton does not have a lot “in common with the life experiences and shared worldview of the generation of Cold War leaders,”¹⁴¹ and while Haass concedes that Clinton’s administration may have had some ideologically guided ideas such as enlarging the democratic community, he argues that they “might look good on paper, [but] provided few policy-relevant guidelines for pressing foreign policy problems...In the real world, the active promotion of democracy must normally take a back seat to other principal interests.”¹⁴² Naim points out that even Clinton’s peers sometimes questioned his sincerity in wanting to help the world:

At the NATO summit in Madrid, Spain, on July 9, 1997, an open microphone inadvertently caught Canadian prime minister Jean Chretien joking about Bill Clinton’s priorities...with the prime ministers of Belgium and Luxembourg...It's all done for short-term political reasons, to win elections. Take the quarrel over whether to admit the Baltic states. That has nothing to do with world security. It's because in Chicago, Mayor [Richard M.] Daley controls lots of votes for the nomination.”¹⁴³

There are quite a few others who have also accused Clinton of only striving for short term successes and easily succumbing to pressure if it would help his popularity; as Naim notes, “the reasons for the administration’s strategic void are many, but one that seems to dominate is the primacy Clinton gives to political calculations.”¹⁴⁴ He, and others with him, have also argued, however, that all struggles cannot be solely blamed on how the Clinton Administration conducted foreign policy, noting that “as the rosy afterglow of freedom’s victory in the ‘long, twilight struggle’ begins to fade, new limits—or old limits given new force—on the president’s ability to conduct foreign policy are beginning to emerge.”¹⁴⁵ Below I will discuss some of the non-ideological influences on Clinton’s foreign policies that commentators have noted.

¹⁴² Haass, “Fatal Distraction.”
¹⁴³ Naim, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy.”
¹⁴⁴ Ibid.
¹⁴⁵ Ibid.
3.1) DOMESTIC INFLUENCES

One of the new problems the Clinton administration had to face was the loss of a domestic consensus concerning foreign policy goals. Cold War fears had led to cooperation, but in the 1990s both Congress and the general public increasingly developed opinions that were not always in sync with the ones the president advocated. Haass has argued that to face “domestic constraints upon the formulation of foreign policy...The president will have to invest heavily in foreign policy and not waver in the face of public or congressional pressure.”\(^{146}\) Not everybody believes that Clinton has succeeded in this.

Although presidents have always faced a certain degree of opposition from Congress, it can be argued that it was more difficult for Clinton, because during most of his presidency, the Democratic president had to work with a Congress in which the majority in both Houses was Republican. Also, congress members gained more influence on foreign policy. Whereas Augelli and Murphy in 1988 still argued that “American foreign-policy-makers have been a surprisingly small group of men centered around the American president,”\(^{147}\) less than 10 years later, Haass argued that “now, authority is less concentrated in the hands of a few influential members or committees; instead, foreign policy decisions have been delegated among 535 increasingly independent members who, backed by their large staffs, can introduce or block change to an extraordinary degree.”\(^{148}\)

Haass also noted that Clinton’s lack of a clear foreign policy strategy left a void that “other political forces are more than willing to fill. Chief among those political forces is Congress.”\(^{149}\) The “Contract With America,” a document released by the Republican Party a few weeks before the 1994 mid-term elections, made it clear that the Republicans planned to have a significant influence on both domestic and foreign policy if they were to become a majority party in the House of Representatives. Among other things it called for no more cuts in defense spending, restricting foreign command of U.S. troops, and strengthening the NATO.\(^{150}\) Brinkley notes that “by late summer 1993, the administration was under attack from House Republicans, conservative Democrats...and foreign affairs commentators for its over reliance on the U.N. in Somalia, its timidity in Haiti, and its fickleness in Bosnia,”\(^{151}\) and Jewett and Turetzky claim that “the GOP attacks on the use of United Nations commanders for U.S. troops probably depressed global economic and security institutions in the last year of Clinton’s first term.”\(^{152}\)

\(^{146}\) Haass, “Fatal Distraction."

\(^{147}\) Augelli and Murphy, “Ideology and American Foreign Policy,” 60.

\(^{148}\) Haass, “Fatal Distraction.”

\(^{149}\) Ibid.


\(^{151}\) Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement;” see also Haass, “Fatal Distraction.”

\(^{152}\) Jewett and Turetzky, “Stability and Change,” 656; see also Haass, “Fatal Distraction.”
It is often argued that the American public does not really care about foreign politics and is much more interested in domestic affairs.\textsuperscript{153} To a certain degree, this was true in the 1990s; one of the reasons that Clinton was elected was that he promised to focus primarily on economics and domestic affairs. Several critics argued that public interest in foreign affairs declined after the Cold War, resulting in a lower budget and relatively little debate about the subject during the 1992 elections.\textsuperscript{154} On multiple occasions, however, the public still had plenty of interest for America’s foreign expenditures, and Clinton was not unaware of, or indifferent to their opinion.

One problem that Clinton has encountered to a greater degree than his predecessors is summarized by Naím in the saying “Great mountains grow more impressive as you get closer to them. Great men don’t.”\textsuperscript{155} With close media attention to almost every move that he makes, it has become much more difficult for the president to maintain his credibility and be seen as a man of great wisdom and knowledge who should be followed without question. Naím explains:

Global coverage, the demand for instant reactions to complex policy dilemmas, the opening to public scrutiny of previously private arenas, and the growing population and popularity of policy pundits have turned the once lofty realm of presidential foreign policy pronouncements into a free-for-all, with presidents and their cabinet members struggling to put their “message” out before a cynical press and distracted public.\textsuperscript{156}

It is thus no longer possible to make backroom deals, and because the public knows almost everything about the president’s public and personal life, he has lost the “the aura of power and majesty.”\textsuperscript{157}

Many critics have argued that, for Clinton, popular support and getting reelected was often more important than it should have been. The Foreign Policy editors concluded that “there is no doubt that [Clinton] allowed public opinion at times to excessively influence his national security decisions.”\textsuperscript{158} Howard Zinn claims that already during the 1992 elections Clinton presented “a formula not for social change but for electoral victory: Move the party closer to the center,”\textsuperscript{159} and even Anthony Lake, who has worked closely with Clinton, has said that “every White House is highly political, or should be, if it wants to get things done...But in the Clinton White House, politics was too

\textsuperscript{153} Matthew A. Baum and Henry R. Nau, “Foreign Policy Views and U.S. Standing in the World,” paper presented at 2009 meeting of the American Political Science Association, Toronto, Canada, 1.
\textsuperscript{154} See for example Haass, “Fatal Distraction”; Naím, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy”; Walt, “Two Cheers for Clinton’s Foreign Policy,” 65.
\textsuperscript{155} Naím, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy.”
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{158} FP Editors, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy”; see also Naím, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy.”
often seen as an end in itself.”160 According to Walt, Clinton—who “is nothing if not sensitive to the vox populi”—thus chose the only foreign policy strategy that the public would support, namely “hegemony on the cheap,” which means that the U.S. should remain the number one superpower at as little cost and with as little lives lost as possible.161 Jewett and Turetzky’s assessment of Clinton’s speeches shows that during the year of his reelection in 1996, the number of foreign policy statements dropped significantly in relation to the three previous years, leading them to conclude that Clinton “still sees downplaying foreign policy issues and actors as smart election year politics in the post-cold war era.”162

3.2) ECONOMICAL MOTIVES

As touched upon before, Clinton’s foreign policy strategy was closely tied to economics. Already in his 1992 presidential campaign he promised to “focus like a laser beam on the economy.”163 Although several critics have argued that Clinton “saw the global economy not only as a vehicle for increasing U.S. prosperity, but as a medium for enhancing international stability,”164 many others have accused him of only having American interest and popular support at heart. Brinkley argues that “U.S. economic interests [were a] high priority in Clinton foreign policy,” and that “only when anarchy reigned in a major trade pact region...would Clinton play global peacemaker.”165

Contradictions in Clinton’s foreign economic policies do indeed suggest that, at least at times, he was more interested in America’s economical gain than in making the world more peaceful. For example, the U.S. continued to supply arms to Indonesia even though they used them in a bloody invasion of East Timor. Similarly, arms were sold to the Turks who used them against the Kurds, and Clinton continued to support Yeltsin even after it used excessive force against Chechnya. Furthermore, a discrepancy became clear in the administration’s policies towards the communist countries of Cuba and China, where the former was punished much more severely even though the latter had a more violent record of suppressing dissenters.166 This led Zinn to conclude that “human rights clearly came second to business profit in U.S. foreign policy,” agreeing with the Boston Globe that “Americans seem a people willing to overlook genocide for the sake of commerce.”167

Clinton’s focus on economy can be seen as a means to please voters, but also as a logical result of a changing international environment. Jewett and Turetzky note that “the collapse of the

160 Anthony Lake quoted in FP Editors, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy.”
161 Walt, “Two Cheers for Clinton’s Foreign Policy,” 79.
164 FP Editors, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy.”
165 Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement.”
166 Zinn, The Twentieth Century, 441-446.
Soviet Union [allowed] economic issues to emerge in importance after a forty-year legacy of cold war-driven security issues: without this change, it was unlikely that the economy category would have dominated Clinton's views about foreign policy to the extent that it did. The Foreign Policy editors conclude on a positive note that “Clinton gave economics the role it deserves in foreign policy.”

3.3) INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

The shifting focus towards economics was not the only way in which the international community influenced the Clinton Administration. The end of the Cold War also led to the return of long-standing ethnic or religious rivalries in formerly suppressed countries, and an increase in the importance of the Asian continent, both of which “affected the worldview and actions of the president, directing his focus toward different areas of the globe.” Several other important foreign events also affected Clinton’s policies; the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin redirected his focus to the Middle-East peace process, the World Trade Center bombing led to an increased attention towards terrorism, North-Korea’s development of weapons of mass destruction encouraged new talks of arms control, and Clinton could not continue to ignore the situation in Bosnia because of Milosevic’s continued disregard of U.S. and U.N. demands.

Furthermore, the administration increasingly had to deal with non-state actors in international affairs. The influence and number of multinational organizations, non-governmental organizations and pressure groups grew significantly. Naím explains that an increasing number of people have access to an increasing amount of information which is increasingly easy to share: “coupled with a freer political environment...technological innovations have not only spurred international trade and investment but have formed the sinews of an emerging civil society where nongovernmental organizations increasingly limit the autonomy of governments.” The Foreign Policy editors noted similar changes in globalization and access and argued that they influenced Clinton’s policies greatly because he did not want America to be “carried along by the currents and tides of globalization,” and thus he “sought to accelerate and harness these forces and mitigate their volatility [and] led intense efforts to lower trade and investment barriers...the White House pressed the World Bank and industrialized countries to increase public health funding...Clinton pushed for initiatives to combat international [crime, and] made the environment a high priority.”

169 FP Editors, “Clinton's Foreign Policy.”
171 Ibid., 660-661.
172 Naím, “Clinton's Foreign Policy.”
173 FP Editors, “Clinton's Foreign Policy.”
Because of all these changes in both the national and international landscape, and an increasing number of actors that need to be taken into account, it would probably have been difficult for even the most ideological of presidents to put a clear stamp on the foreign policies of his administration. Below I will look at some of the most important foreign policy challenges that the Clinton administration faced and see which considerations were made and what could have been the decisive influences.
4) CLINTON’S FOREIGN POLICY CASES

Those who believed that what Fukuyama had described as “the end of history” and the victory of liberal democracy, would mean the end of violence and conflict in the world, were severely disappointed in the 1990s. Although the number of democracies did increase in this decade, the number of conflicts did not decline.\(^{174}\) All over the world, old tensions and clashes resurfaced and new ones arose. Clinton might have won the presidency by promising to focus primarily on domestic issues, but conflicts in Africa and the Balkans repeatedly forced him to turn his attention to foreign affairs.

4.1) AFRICA

Jewett and Turetzky’s study shows that during Clinton’s first term, Africa played a relatively small role in his communication towards the public about foreign policy. The continent was mentioned in only 7 percent of his speeches in 1993 and in less than 5 percent of his speeches in the following three years.\(^{175}\) This did not mean that nothing happened in Africa during those years; it did mean that the events there, and U.S. involvement in them, were not something the president boasted about.

The first real foreign policy crisis that Clinton had to deal with took place in Somalia where different warlords were fighting for power. U.S. involvement had started during the Bush administration as a U.N. peacekeeping mission led by America. When he became president, Clinton turned the mission into a nation-building operation, because he argued that there was no point in sending troops to feed a starving nation without addressing the underlying causes of famine. Events took a turn for the worse when on 3 October 1993 two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters were shot down during an attempt to capture the leaders of the clan led by warlord Mohammed Aaidid. During the attack and the following rescue mission 18 American soldiers died. The American public was outraged, especially after footage was shown of one soldier being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu behind a car. Consequently, public support for humanitarian missions severely declined and Clinton quickly set a deadline for the withdrawal of American troops even though the claimed that

> We cannot leave now...Our own credibility with friends and allies would be severely damaged. Our leadership in world affairs would be undermined at the very time when people are looking to America to help promote peace and freedom in the post-Cold War world, and all around the world, aggressors, thugs, and terrorists will conclude the best way to get us to change our policies is to kill our people.\(^{176}\)

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\(^{174}\) Howell, “Clinton’s Foreign policy.”


It is often argued that Somalia was the first real test of Clinton’s belief that America should act in world affairs to better the world, not just when it serves U.S. interests, and that its failure led to a reappraisal of his foreign policy strategy. In May of the following year, the Clinton administration issued the Presidential Decision Directive 25, which stated that the U.S. would only participate in future U.N. peacekeeping missions if they would promote American interests, if they were supported by Congress, if they had a clear deadline for American involvement and if the involved parties consented to U.N. interference.177

Initially, Clinton expanded the mission in Somalia guided by an ideological belief that the U.S. should lead the world. When things did not go as well as he had hoped, however, Clinton succumbed to the pressures of a Congress and public who were increasingly critical of multilateral operations. He became less enthusiastic about humanitarian intervention and more critical of the U.N., and after 1993 Somalia was hardly ever mentioned again by the president.178 Many claim that the events in Somalia were the direct cause of the much criticized policy towards Rwanda in the next year, where Clinton was apparently not guided by ideological reasons to intervene.

Following the murder of the Rwandese Hutu president in early April 1994, the Hutu majority commenced genocide of Tutsi’s and moderate Hutu’s. In the next 100 days approximately 800,000 people were murdered while the international community did nothing. The U.S. was one of the nations on the Security Council that did not want the U.N. to actively intervene in a “local conflict,” and that did not want to use the term genocide. Initially, the Clinton administration claimed that at the time they did not intervene because they did not realize the severity of the situation, but most commentators claim that the administration was well aware of the situation from the start, because of briefings by intelligence agencies and the extensive coverage of the events by the media. Later most high officials of the U.N. and the U.S.—including President Clinton, U.N. ambassador Madeleine Albright and secretary General Kofi Annan—admitted their mistakes and apologized for their inaction. Clinton himself has called the inaction in Rwanda the biggest foreign policy mistake of his administration; Albright, most critics, and even his wife, agreed.179

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In Rwanda, again, the fear of opposition was more important than the ideological will to lead the world in reaching a more peaceful international order. When shortly after the Rwanda disaster, Clinton did intervene in Eastern Europe, one journalist concluded that it was “as if a decision had been made, somewhere, that Africa and Africans were not worth justice,”\(^{180}\) suggesting the continuing presence of a racial hierarchy in foreign policy.

### 4.2) BALKANS

Clinton’s resolve to better the world, however, was also tested in the Balkans. After the Cold War, many former Yugoslav republics declared their independence which created a lot of tension in the region. One of the most brutal conflicts was the war between Bosnian Serbs on one side, and Bosnian Croats and Muslim Bosniaks on the other side. Clinton initially faulted Bush for doing too little to help the Bosnian Muslims and claimed that in Bosnia he would make “the U.S. the catalyst for a collective stand against aggression,” but when he became president he could not live up to his promises.\(^{181}\) Clintons attempts to convince Western Europe and Russia that U.N. or NATO interference was necessary were only half-hearted and when they were unsuccessful he quickly acquiesced and “dithered shamefully for [several] years.”\(^{182}\) The president even vetoed two resolutions passed by the Congress that called for the lift of the arms embargo to Bosnian Muslims, because he did not want to go against his international allies. The first two years of his presidency, Clinton hardly ever spoke of the Balkans; it was not until 1995 that it became a more important issue, because the NATO finally intervened with air strikes and the U.S. became involved in peace negotiations in Dayton.\(^{183}\)

It was claimed that one of the reasons that Clinton wanted to showcase his doctrine of humanitarian intervention in Somalia, was so that he could lay low in the Balkans, because he believed the latter conflict to be more complicated. Unlike in Rwanda, however, eventually the U.S. did help put an end to the conflict. Several commentators have argued that when the U.S. finally did become involved, it was not out of humanitarian reasons, but because the events took place on European soil and American interests were directly linked to European interests. Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, seems to confirm this argument with claims that “Bosnia matters to Americans because Europe matters to America...At issue here is not just an outrage against humanity but a

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180 Scott Peterson quoted in Zinn, *The Twentieth Century*, 441.

181 Clinton, “American Foreign Policy and the Democratic Ideal.”

182 Kaplan, “Trading Places.”

challenge to American interests and American leadership.”\textsuperscript{184} He did also add an ideological component, arguing that “Far away peoples look to us and count on us...because of what we stand for.”\textsuperscript{185} Perhaps having learned from Rwanda, in this instance the Clinton administration did show some signs of idealism again, but it was held back by international pressures, and the memory of Somalia.\textsuperscript{186}

At the end of Clinton’s second term, the situation in the region escalated once more, this time between Serbs and Albanians in the Kosovo province who wanted independence from Serbia. During negotiations early in 1999, NATO demanded complete and unrestricted access to all Serbian territory and wanted Kosovo to become an autonomous province in Serbia under NATO administration. After several negotiations, the Serbs were willing to accept the political conditions, but not the military ones. The NATO would not budge, however, and at the end of March, the talks were declared a failure, and the NATO started a bombing campaign. Milosevic proved more persistent than expected and British prime-minister Tony Blair wanted to send ground troops, but Clinton was reluctant. Because Milosevic finally backed down in June, the peacekeeping troops that were gathered did not have to fight.

Critical response to U.S. and NATO involvement in Kosovo has been highly divided. Sometimes it is referred to as the first humanitarian war, and seen as a high point for coalition warfare, because the countries in the NATO worked together to help a region under attack and shared the costs and responsibility of the operation. America’s involvement is also praised because there were no real American interests at stake, but they still supported international intervention. It showed the return of a certain degree of idealism in Clinton’s foreign policy.\textsuperscript{187}

Critics like Kaplan, however, argue that, in Kosovo, Clinton might have done “the right thing for the right reasons [but], with an eye on the polls, he did it with the wrong tools.”\textsuperscript{188} Thus Kosovo still “showed the extraordinary degree to which political calculations drive the Clinton administration’s use of force.”\textsuperscript{189} Others have also argued that bombing from great altitude, and sending missiles from afar might have been the safest way to conduct the war, but not the best way. Because of this strategy, many mistakes were made, such as the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade and an Albanian refugee convoy. Another complaint was that the bombings were not

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{186} Hastings Dunn, “Innovation and Precedent in the Kosovo War,” 533; Talbott, “U.S. Leadership and the Balkan Challenge”; Zinn, \textit{The Twentieth Century}, 441.
\textsuperscript{188} Kaplan, “Trading Places.”
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
backed by the U.N. Security Council. Also, Clinton has been accused by several commentators of using the Kosovo War to divert attention from the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Howard Zinn does not accuse Clinton of starting a war because of personal reasons, but he does believe that the conflict could have been resolved diplomatically and that it showed “the U.S government as disposed to use force rather than diplomacy in solving matters of international concern.”190 Whether or not this was true is of course impossible to ascertain, but it does again show that also in Kosovo, Clinton’s reasons to get involved were probably not only humanitarian.191

190 Zinn, The Twentieth Century, 447.
CONCLUSION

More than two decades after the first appearance of Hunt’s *Ideology*, there still is no other theory that discusses the influence of ideology on America’s foreign policy to the same extent as Hunt has, and looking at the Bill Clinton’s policies, it seems as though his theory has not lost its relevance after the end of the Cold War. All three elements are still visible in Clinton’s rhetoric and he has been especially outspoken about the fact that he still sees America as a unique nation with a special destiny to lead the world. Clinton’s actions, however, show that despite his idealistic rhetoric, ideological considerations have not always been the primary factor in his decision-making. Especially domestic pressure from the Congress and the public have often led Clinton in a different direction than his idealism might have.

I agree with Hunt’s argument that ideology should not be overlooked in discussing foreign policies, but neither should some of the other influences. Hunt does briefly admit that there are other aspects that work together with ideology to determine the foreign policies of American administrations, but he never discusses the degree to which these other aspects can overrule the influence of ideology. In Clinton’s case, his ideology has shown several similarities to the ideologies of previous presidents, yet his policies have been quite different from those of the Cold War presidents. Thus, Hunt may argue that America’s foreign affairs problems cannot be solved without considering its foreign policy ideology, but they can also not be solved by looking solely at ideology.

The extent to which ideology is overshadowed by other concerns in foreign policy decision-making depends on the president and his administration. It might be true that Clinton’s personality and other personal circumstances made him less inclined to be guided by ideology as some of his predecessors were, and that this could be different for his successors. But, especially in a postmodern world where foreign policy is no longer made by an elite group, I believe that the context in which foreign policy is made will increasingly be at least as important, if not more important, than ideological considerations.

As is the problem with Hunt’s theory in general, evidence of the three aspects of a foreign policy ideology can be found in the 1990s as well, but the link between these ideas and the foreign policies of the Clinton Administration are not clear. Of course it is possible to find policies that could be seen as, and perhaps were, the results of ideological considerations, like the policies of developmental economics. But, at least in the case of the Clinton Administration, there are too many policies that do not fit Hunt’s ideological mold. The actions in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo, and the differences between them, cannot be (solely) explained by a belief in national greatness, a racial or cultural hierarchy or a fear of revolutions diverging from the American model.
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