

Abstract

In the aftermath of the demise of the Cold War, it was noticed that the divergence of findings in the US foreign policy attitudes towards multilateralism via the UN and NATO and unilateralism was dominant. Three main wars reflected the US variation of behaviors:

A) Iraq 1990/1991: the US leads a war against Iraq/Saddam approved by the UN. In 1991, the US went positively to highly engage the UN in solving or dealing with the Iraqi conflict.

B) Yugoslavia and the US: the US suppresses Serbia through NATO intervention in 1999 without an authorization from the UN.

C) Iraq 2003: the US attacks Iraq unilaterally. Turning to the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of unilateralism has obviously been prevailing in the US military action against Iraq in 2003.

The US fluctuating behaviors have been challenging the major theories of international relations which created some downsides. Neo-Realists and institutionalists / pluralists have strongly argued over the interrelationship and interaction between a superpower and international organizations. Each theory views such interaction differently and this yields to totally diverse interpretations and findings. Institutionalism contends that international organizations profoundly matter in foreign policy whereas neorealists counteract such allegations claiming that institutions in their best shape have minimal influence on state behavior. Accordingly, a theoretical setback has emerged when it comes to scrutinize the US three wars.

My endeavor here is to find out an answer to the thesis question: **How can we explain the three different paths used by the US: with the UN, with another international organization, and then unilaterally?** The three case studies mentioned above are going to be subjects to explore the applicability and explanatory value of the two theories, neorealists and institutionalists, and which of them is so powerful to better describe the three cases studies. Besides, I would add the democratic domestic politics hypothesis in my analysis. This attempt will cover an important and indispensable aspect in international relations where its contribution was disregarded by the two theories although US political leaders in all cases never ignored such variable in their decision - making process. Moreover, the substantial

analysis will show the major flaws of each theory in terms of their comprehensive coverage of the US behavior. I would suggest the pendulum instrument as a measurable, clarifying tool to substantially demonstrate the interaction among international theories and the US foreign politics. In the end, we will come up with the conclusion whether one of them is pertinent to perfectly and extensively describe and explain the US behavior or rather we wind up to a totally different analysis.