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The Theoretical Paradigms of the US Foreign Policy from 1989 through 2006

In 1752, Frederick the Great, “the pioneer of enlightened absolutism,” wrote, “The ruler is the first person of the state” who has to be well paid and “return to work effectively for the well-being of the state” (Ferguson, ch. 2). This statement has become the basis of just one of the theoretical frameworks for maintenance of the state’s role within the global arena formulated as an opposition to the Machiavellian approach to the issue. In particular, the latter believed that authority is impossible to be established without appropriate arms and power to enforce it (Ferguson, ch. 2). However, the classical models towards state power versus authority transformed with time and have evolved into more current ones. For instance, realism, with its offensive and defensive modifications, can be named among others. Therefore, the paper attempts to trace the possible implications of the ideas of Frederick the Great and Machiavelli in the realist approach through the prism of the US international relations from 1989 through 2006.

Realism is mostly opposite to Frederick’s vision of power and state.

Foremost, this is due to the fact that this ideology does not appreciate leadership as important for foreign policies as it is anarchy-oriented in this case. Nevertheless, the international policies implemented by this monarch substantially enlarged the country's military capabilities, making the Prussian army the third largest in the world in its time. This is a salient factor for realists as well since it is a direct way to maintain the state's hegemony in the world for ensuring its survival. The US has followed this line in its foreign policies whereas within the indicated timeframe it has made its army the second largest (after China) and the most financed and advanced as compared to other countries. Hence, although Frederick seemingly promoted avoiding a conflict, this was an ample manner for demonstrating Prussia's relative power as contrasted to other nations. This has become one of the leading principles in realism, especially its defensive dimension, whereas the US has increased its armed forces capabilities in a quest for security or rather transforming into a multinational superpower.

Military capability is also relevant for Machiavellianism, though in a different interpretation of this concept. Machiavelli was confident that it is people's fear that ensures abiding the law under state power. Such an indicator is appropriate for offensive realism where the US constantly tried to expand its areas of influence on politics outside its borders. To illustrate, its invasion in Iraq can be named as well as overseas operations veiled by the "war on terror" policies. What is more, the first example referred to expansion of the country's economic interests, while the second one was linked to security and international hegemony issues.

Drawing upon the above discussion, it is clear that the US international relations of the intended period are of offensive realism

nature. Specifically, the US preferred to maintain its world hegemony to the every extent possible. The country pursued its own security, political and economic interests based on the exploitation of the other states and transforming allies into subordinates. In any case, this approach also assumes certain strengths. First, the country has practically the greatest military capability in the globe, which undoubtedly leads to its supremacy over others. Second, this paradigm in international relations allowed creating powerful intra-country alliances as a means to balance power and accumulate the strengths of the most advanced states within the framework of few organizations in order to ensure security of a wider scope of nations. This is regardless of the fact that actual superiority and decision-making is focused on the willingness of the US representatives.

Work Cited

Ferguson, Niall. *Civilization: The West and the Rest*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2011. Kindle file.