

U. S. Foreign Policy: Structure of Elite Opinion

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Abstract. *This research revisits Carlson, Blum, and McKeown's "The Structure of Attitudes Toward America's World Role," published in Operant Subjectivity (1995/1996), which investigated elite opinion regarding America's world role in a post-Cold War environment. The collapse of the Cold War created an opportunity for the United States to reshape its foreign policy goals and strategies. Similarly, the events of 9/11 and the subsequent "war on terror" have reset American foreign policy. In the present study, foreign policy experts sorted statements from seven major issue areas, salient for contemporary U.S. foreign policy: the war on terrorism; climate change; human rights; global trade and finance; United Nations reform; defense spending; and arms control. A balanced factorial design was employed to construct the sample of statements to ensure comprehensiveness. The research aimed to reveal the structure of elite opinion regarding the nature and scope of U.S. foreign policy in the modern international environment. Q sorts were correlated and subjected to factor analysis, and the resultant factors were interpreted. Given the increasing fragmentation among U.S. elites concerning foreign policy preferences, Q methodology offers a very promising avenue to identify the scope of outlooks among various groups of elites engaged in the U.S. foreign policy discourse.*

The doctrine of containment guided U.S. foreign policy during the first four and a half decades following the Second World War. While the commitment to containment was never quite universal, its basic precepts were so widely accepted among both Democratic and Republican elites that opposing viewpoints were pushed to the margins of the U.S. foreign policy establishment. This near consensus meant that disagreements within the foreign policy establishment were usually limited to debates about the best means for achieving the policy aims dictated by the containment doctrine. In the Cold War's aftermath, policymakers and academics in the United States struggled with re-defining the United States' global role. Without the focus provided by the overriding concern of confronting the Soviet Union, both threats and

opportunities in the new era appeared much more diffuse. The absence of a single focus for U.S. policy in the post-Cold War era meant that no single doctrine could provide a single overarching conceptual lens through which most policy choices could be assessed (Haas, 1994, p. 44). In short, without the possibility of a successor to containment, the spectrum of opinion within the establishment about the goals as well as the means of U.S. foreign policy expanded.

The changes brought about by the end of the Cold War were particularly problematic for two reasons. First, this new era was perceived by many to be unprecedented, in that the United States found itself in a position of unrivaled military and political dominance without parallel since the advent of the modern state in 1648 (Brooks & Wolforth, 2002). Debates over how to react to this unipolar moment ranged across the spectrum of both political and academic opinion (Krauthammer, 1990/1991; Mearsheimer, 1990; Huntington, 1999; Brooks & Wolforth, 2002; Nye, 2002; Ikenberry, 2002; Jervis, 2005). Second, much of the Cold War era's institutional structure remained intact. NATO, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the U.S. bilateral alliance with Japan, and the United Nations all continued to exist and, to a greater or lesser extent, to rely on U.S. leadership to function effectively. U.S. foreign policy was still very much embedded in the institutional structures it had been instrumental in creating as part of its efforts to contain the Soviet Union.

Initially, Republican President George H. W. Bush optimistically embraced the possibilities of a new world order based on active multilateral engagement. The 1990–91 Persian Gulf War represented, for Bush and for many others, the opening of a new era of multilateral activism. In his September 1990 speech before a joint session of Congress the President proclaimed that “We’re now in sight of a United Nations that performs as envisioned by its founders,” and characterized the confrontation as “a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times . . . a new world order . . . can emerge.” (<http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3425>).

The Gulf War was not the only intervention justified on this basis. Between 1991 and 2005, the United Nations ran 43 separate peacekeeping missions, many of which lasted several years (Weiss, Forsythe, Coate, & Pease, 2005, p. 47). Throughout the 1990's Democratic President Bill Clinton continued the momentum of U.S. involvement in multilateral engagement. In 1999, with strong U.S. support, NATO formally expanded its functional responsibility to include providing peacekeeping in the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO broadened its functional scope again after September 11th to support the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan (www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e).

htm). The alliance's first actual use of force occurred in 1995, not to repel a Soviet invasion, but to force a settlement to Bosnia's civil war. As the last superpower, the United States was increasingly expected to exercise a leadership role in many of these military missions or at least to help provide funding and transport to make the missions possible. A variety of international crises in Africa, the Balkans, and the Middle East created pressure for international interventions; both Republican and Democratic presidents tended to respond to these pressures with an increasing foreign policy activism and intervention.

The wave of post-Cold War multilateral activism was not limited to security institutions. In global economic affairs the creation of NAFTA, the EU and the WTO heralded the development of an era of increasingly intrusive international governance in the economic arena. In human rights, the international community in the guise of the Hague War Crime Tribunals on Yugoslavia and Rwanda revived the idea of *ad hoc* courts to try the perpetrators of serious human rights violations. Then it went a step further, creating a standing permanent court, the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was given complementary jurisdiction to try war criminals. Even policy areas that had been largely left to individual states during the Cold War, such as environmental regulation, were increasingly being subjected to international regimes.

While demands for U.S. participation in various multilateral enterprises were increasing, the consensus among elites within the United States over this involvement was breaking down. Much of the multilateral framework that the United States had helped to construct after the Second World War had been accepted across the American political spectrum as necessary to effectively meet the Soviet threat. With the Soviet Union no longer in existence, the consensus for continued international engagement began to fray. The breakdown in this consensus was probably accelerated by both the desire to reap a "peace dividend" and by the increasingly active and expensive agenda being pursued through multilateral institutions by their supporters.

Pushback against multilateralism in U.S. foreign policy began in the 1990s when several initiatives championed by the Clinton administration, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the ICC-Rome Statute and the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, either failed to pass the Senate or were not brought before the Senate because the administration felt they would have failed had they been put to a vote.

Whereas the Cold War era was essentially marked by a division between internationalists and isolationists, opposition to U.S. multilateral involvement in the post-Cold War era emerged from two distinct views. While some argued that the United States should reduce its overseas commitments in the aftermath of the Cold War, a second

distinct viewpoint also emerged reflecting the opinions of those who were skeptical of multilateral institutions but optimistic about the exercise of U.S. power abroad. The views of the neo-conservatives cut across the traditional realist/idealist divide that had dominated the foreign policy debates during the Cold War. Traditionally, realists grounded their support for U.S. military intervention in an understanding of the “national interest,” which emphasized balance of power considerations over Wilsonian liberalism, dismissing the latter as mere ideology. Cold War idealists accepted Wilsonian liberalism and argued that U.S. military actions should be constrained by the moral imperatives of obeying a rule-based international order.

Neo-conservatives came to reject the very terms of this debate, rejecting the claim that the unilateral exercise of American military power is opposed to a global liberal order. Rather they argued, American unilateralism is a necessary condition for such order to survive (Drolet, 2010, p. 556). Whereas traditional realists viewed American military intervention as a consequence of the Hobbesian anarchy that characterizes international relations, the unilateral exercise of American power became for the neo-conservatives a critical instrument for both democracy promotion and international stability. International acquiescence to American intervention was simply the price of having U.S. unilateral power providing global security (Ikenberry, 2005, p. 8). In the neo-conservative view, military intervention is neither imposed on the United States by the anarchy of international relations or by the requirements of balance of power, but rather reflects an expanded notion of national interests based on the imposition and enforcement of a global liberal order (Nuruzzaman, 2006, p. 252).

While this viewpoint became closely associated with the neo-conservatives who helped shape George W. Bush’s foreign policy, it is important to recognize that skepticism about the effectiveness of multilateral organizations existed beyond the confines of the neo-conservatives. The September 11th attacks dramatically exposed the need to reconsider the organizing principles of the international order in light of the twin realities of the contemporary era—America’s unipolar moment and international terrorism (Ikenberry 2002, p. 45). Evidence of the drift towards unilateralism in U.S. foreign policy can be seen in the later period of the Clinton Presidency. Richard Haas identified this distinct approach to U.S. foreign policy in a 1994 *Foreign Affairs* essay (Haas 1994, p. 50). Unilateralists emphasized the uniqueness of the U.S. hegemony in the contemporary international system, and the need to not be constrained by the rules of multilateral arrangements.

A second debate emerged over the importance of reputational concerns in an era of U.S. military superiority. The unipolar moment, initiated a good deal of scholarly debate about the need to obtain

international goodwill, pitting realists against neo-liberals. This debate over reputational concerns largely replaced earlier ones about the prospects for cooperation as the main axis for the disagreement between the two paradigms. Realists, grounded in an intellectual tradition that reputation largely follows material power (Morgenthau, 1973) argued that material dimensions of U.S. superiority made reputational considerations largely irrelevant. As Brooks and Wolforth contended, "The United States cannot be scared into meekness by warnings of inefficacy or potential balancing. Now and for the foreseeable future the United States will have immense power resources that it can bring to bear to force or entice others to do its bidding on a case-by-case basis" (2002, p. 31). From the realist point of view the United States could be less concerned with its reputation, since its power would be sufficient to achieve its international objectives. Perhaps the most succinct neo-liberal response was penned by Joseph Nye, who argued that "if the United States represents values that others want to follow, it will cost us less to lead" (2002, p. 552). The United States can do this by helping to establish and follow rules for international affairs which are consistent with its values.

These differences were clearly at stake in the intellectual and policy debates during the 1990s and 2000s. Theoretical frameworks make assumptions about what concepts and beliefs should fit together. Carlson, Blum and McKeown's study (1995/1996) was one of the first attempts to explore the subjectivity surrounding the post-Cold War policy and academic debates taking place in the aftermath of the collapse of the Cold War. They employed the utility of Q methodology to structure this subjectivity. Their analysis revealed four operant factors among the 40 academics and others involved in the policy process that sorted their Q sample. Others have used Q to explore elite opinion. Pu and Zhang (2007) examined the attitudes of China's emerging elites with respect to China's foreign policy. Brown (2006) reported an earlier Q study, in which international experts sorted statements with regard to the unrest in Central America in the 1980s.

Design of the Study

The research design in this paper is similar in nature and draws heavily from the Carlson, et al. article. As in that article, we employ Q methodology to investigate the structure of elite views regarding U.S. foreign policy. The first study, which was conducted much earlier in the post-Cold War era, used a framework drawn largely from Cold War era categories—*isolationist/internationalist* and *realist/liberal*. The intellectual debates of the post-Cold war debates were still taking shape when that study was conducted. We have the advantage of looking back over the past twenty years of policy debates to develop a concourse

of statements that better reflect the dimensions of the post-Cold War foreign policy debates. The aim of our research is to explore the subjectivity surrounding U.S. foreign policy and to reveal the segmentations that exist among a group of foreign policy experts and practitioners.

Following the design employed by Carlson, et al., (1995/1996), a concourse of statements was gathered from academic and popular sources. However, the realist-idealist and internationalist-isolationist categories utilized by Carlson, et al., (1995/1996), are inadequate for capturing contemporary variations in opinion among the U.S. foreign policy elite. Without peer competitors the post-Cold War world is largely absent the balance-of-power dynamics that distinguished the realist from idealist paradigms during the Cold War period. We updated the earlier conceptual framework to better reflect contemporary differences among the views held by various segments of the U.S. foreign policy elite.

While some realists argued that U.S. hegemony would be short-lived and that balance-of-power dynamics would soon return (Mearsheimer, 1990), most felt that the U.S. hegemonic position was likely to last for some time. Instead a debate emerged over the degree of American superiority and over the need to maintain international legitimacy for American actions. On one side of the debate were those who argued that American material superiority was so vast, and not likely to dissipate in the near to medium term, that U.S. decision makers would be relatively unconstrained in the pursuit of their objectives (Brooks & Wolforth, 2002). This type of analysis was built on realism's traditional understanding of military and economic preponderance as the underlying motives behind international behavior. Liberalism too turned its attention to the question of American power. Joseph Nye's concept of "soft power" captures the divide nicely. Nye accepted the material dimensions of American superiority, but argued that these elements of hard power are supplemented in important ways by the acquisition of soft power, which rests on the perceived legitimacy of American actions (Nye, 2002).

In essence, the debates between realism and liberalism had turned from an analysis of balance of power to an analysis of American hegemony. The focus of the debate was over the extent to which America could exercise its hard-power advantages when their behavior violated international norms. The split between internationalists and isolationists represents long-standing division within U.S. foreign policy elites. While few can imagine a real return to isolationism as practiced prior to the Second World War, the modern incarnation of this debate is between those advocating a scaled-back version of U.S. overseas commitments and those advocating continued global engagement and

leadership. Former President George W. Bush's now famous statements during his debates with Vice-President Al Gore, about engaging in a more "humble foreign policy" and avoiding "nation-building," were aimed precisely at capturing some of the sentiment that the United States should scale back its international commitments now that the Cold War was over. Part of the Clinton administration's desire for NATO expansion had been aimed at providing a plausible rationale for maintaining U.S. overseas commitments. While the terminology of isolationism and internationalism represent overstatements about what is really being debated, they remain valid insofar as they are viewed as the end points of a continuum aimed at gauging the degree the United States should maintain an activist foreign policy.

A further distinction in our structure of the concourse reflects the division over the extent to which the United States should exercise its foreign policy within multilateral frameworks. Unilateralists tend to view existing multilateral frameworks as unnecessarily restricting U.S. freedom of action. This division emerged even before the advent of the Bush Doctrine, as American leaders became concerned about the willingness and capabilities of its allies. President Bill Clinton spent considerable energy in cajoling reluctant NATO allies to support his more muscular policy stances toward Serbia. The recent Bush administration often abandoned the idea of working through pre-existing multilateral frameworks, instead opting to create *ad hoc* coalitions in support of U.S. actions, as expressed by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld: "the mission determines the coalition" (Jervis, 2005, p. 582). Multilateralists remained committed to exercising U.S. power and influence through multilateral frameworks, arguing that these institutions help to spread the economic and political burdens associated with interventions abroad and provide legitimacy for U.S. actions. Unilateralists prefer more *ad hoc* arrangements such as "coalitions of the willing," which maximize U.S. freedom of action.

To develop a Q sample, collected statements were first provisionally differentiated by their reflection of either a "hard" or a "soft" power orientation. The statements were then further divided by classifying them as isolationist, unilateralist, or multilateralist with regard to U.S. action. For each of the possible combinations (hard-isolationist; soft-isolationist; hard-unilateralist; soft-unilateralist; hard-multilateralist; and soft-multilateralist), a statement was chosen for each of seven separate issue domains. Table 1 represents the design for the 42-item Q sample that was ultimately drawn from the concourse designed to cover a number of issues thought to be salient to the U.S. foreign policy discussion.

Referring to the Table, a hard power-isolationist (*ac*) statement would emphasize the economic and military costs of international

Table 1: Q-Sample Design

Main Effects	Levels		N
A. Ideological	(a) Hard power	(b) Soft power	2
B. Strategic Perspective	(c) Isolationism (e) Multilateralism	(d) Unilateralism	3
C. Issues	(f) Globalization (h) Human rights (j) War on terror (l) Climate change	(g) Arms control (i) Defense spending (k) UN reform	7

entanglements, while a soft power-isolationist (*bc*) statement would emphasize U.S. moral superiority and the need to keep the ideals of American society from being undermined by international entanglements. A hard power-unilateralist (*ad*) statement would emphasize the indispensability of the economic and military dimensions of U.S. global leadership, with favorable outcomes requiring U.S.-led initiatives. A soft power-multilateralist (*be*) statement would emphasize the reputational and moral imperatives of global cooperation and the need for the United States to participate in multilateral cooperation to achieve favorable outcomes. Finally, a hard power-multilateralist (*ae*) statement would emphasize the material benefits of U.S. engagement in multilateral cooperation and the need for such cooperation in order to achieve favorable outcomes, while a soft power-unilateralist (*bd*) statement would emphasize the moral imperatives of U.S. global leadership.

This balanced factorial design was chosen to help ensure comprehensiveness in our statement collection and selection. These categories remain, however, conditional and provisional, as in Q a concept is “not assumed to have *a priori* meaning apart from and independently of the respondent’s self-reference” (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 22). In other words, unlike in scaling theory, “there is no assumption that these categories will (or should) hold together once the participants begin to respond to the statements” (Rhoads, 2006, p. 799).

Our P set was chosen purposively among foreign policy elites including those in academia, (professors of international relations and related subfields), those employed by the U.S. government in related areas, and experts in “think tanks” associated with foreign policy. Many of the sorts were completed in person, while some returned the sorts by mail. We reached out to experts thought to be across the political spectrum, but conservatives were less willing to respond to our entreaties, and are, therefore underrepresented. Women, too, are underrepresented in our P set. We collected Q sorts from 29 experts. The data were correlated and factor-analyzed using PQMethod, and a three-

factor solution was produced (See Appendix 1 for the factor matrix).

Factor A: Rule-Based Internationalists/Realpolitik

Factor A is bipolar, and defined by six “pure” loaders. The bipolarity indicates that loaders share a similar understanding about what issues are important to U.S. foreign policy, but fundamentally disagree about their preferences for how the United States should orient its policy. All of the sorters at the positive end of the factor (A+) are self-described liberals, three of whom work at the same private, non-profit think tank, and two are academics. Factor A- is defined by an academic who describes himself as a political moderate.

Factor A+ types emphasize the need for a rule-based international order grounded in universal organizations such as the United Nations and respect for the application of rule-of-law principles to international relations. They are also deeply skeptical of the exercise of U.S. military power abroad, which from their view undermines the development of a rule-based international order. For example, support for the United Nations can be seen in their reactions to statements below (here, and subsequently, the statement text is followed by the factor score for the statement):

35. *The UN is imperfect; but it is also indispensable. There can be no substitute for the legitimacy the UN can impart or its potential to mobilize the widest possible coalitions. (+5)*

13. *The UN does extraordinary good around the world—feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, etc. But it also struggles to enforce its will and live up to the ideals of its founding. I believe that those imperfections are not a reason to walk away from this institution—it is a call to redouble efforts. (+4)*

38. *The US should withdraw from the UN. The UN has turned into a do-nothing bureaucracy that believes it has the right to impose its will on free people while giving aid and comfort to totalitarian regimes. (-5)*

17. *The UN should not limit the ability of the US to ensure its own security and that of other democratic nation-states. The UN Charter should be revised to allow for the use of pre-emptive action against rogue regimes and state sponsors of terrorism. (-4)*

19. *UN member states need to exercise their rightful authority, and not allow the continuation of a bureaucratic structure under the Secretary General that seeks to undermine that authority. (-3)*

7. *The UN has too frequently provided a forum for virulent anti-Americanism. (-3)*

Additionally, sorters on this factor desire an enhanced rule-based international order, as can be seen in the following statements:

-
1. *As a nation committed to human rights and the rule of law, the US should be embracing an international system of justice, even if it means that Americans, like everyone else, might sometimes be scrutinized. (+4)*

 21. *America can reclaim its leadership role in the world economy—it must lead by example and embrace multilateralism. Unilateralism is no longer a viable strategy. (+3)*

 25. *The US must actively promote international standards on human rights and abide by them ourselves. This will require the US and its allies to leverage their influence: sometimes diplomatically, sometimes economically, and sometimes militarily to advance human rights. (+3)*

 17. *The UN should not limit the ability of the US to ensure its own security and that of other democratic nation-states. The UN Charter should be revised to allow for the use of pre-emptive action against rogue regimes and state sponsors of terrorism. (-4)*

 19. *UN member states need to exercise their rightful authority, and not allow the continuation of a bureaucratic structure under the Secretary General that seeks to undermine that authority. (-3)*

 3. *The no-testing, unlimited duration of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty would fatally undermine confidence in the reliability of the US's nuclear stockpile as a sturdy hedge against international aggression. (-3)*

Their skepticism of U.S. power (especially military power) can be seen in their reactions to four statements:

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16. *The US is cutting money for education, healthcare, housing, and more money is going to the military. I would support a move to effect a 15% across-the-board cut in Pentagon spending. (+3)*

 17. *The UN should not limit the ability of the US to ensure its own security and that of other democratic nation-states. The UN Charter should be revised to allow for the use of pre-emptive action against rogue regimes and state sponsors of terrorism. (-4)*

 39. *There are few greater threats than a terrorist attack with WMD. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts, the US must, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising its inherent right to self-defense. (-4)*

 3. *The no-testing, unlimited duration of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty would fatally undermine confidence in the reliability of the US's nuclear stockpile as a sturdy hedge against international aggression. (-3)*

Adherents to this viewpoint would like to bind U.S. foreign policy while increasing U.S. participation in a rule-based international system centered around strengthening the United Nations, limiting the ability

of the United States to exercise its political and military influence outside of those structures. They are generally skeptical about the “war on terror”, and are the closest to the tradition of Wilsonian idealism that we uncovered in this study. Promoting international law, universal human rights and strengthened rule-based international organization should be the key goals of U.S. foreign policy.

Sorter 16 agrees with Factor-A+ types about the key issues around which U.S. foreign policy should be oriented, but holds the opposite viewpoints regarding the desirability for these things. In other words, those statements most agreed with by Factor-A+ types are those that Q sorter 16 most disagrees with, and those most disagreed with by Factor A+ are those that he most agrees with. His view seems to come closest to the ideals of *Realpolitik* in his foreign policy preferences. This individual is deeply skeptical of the United Nations, he recognizes that enmeshing the United States into this kind of rule-based international system will limit the exercise of U.S. power abroad and therefore, he opposes this prescription. Instead, he would prefer to withdraw the United States from organizations like the United Nations (statement 38) and to oppose treaties such as the Comprehensive Test ban, which would limit U.S. military power. He supports a foreign policy based on enhancing U.S. military power and opposes limits on the exercise of that power. He is deeply skeptical towards the United Nations, which in his view is both anti-American (statement 7) and overly bureaucratic (statement 19).

Factor B: Establishment View

Factor B is defined by six sorters, all self-described moderates. Four of the sorters are academics, one is employed by a private, non-profit organization, and one is a U.S. government employee. This factor captures the “establishment” view of U.S. foreign policy. The statement ordering reflected in this factor is consistent with the sort of international activism which the United States embarked upon at the end of the Second World War and which was carried through into the post-Cold War era by the presidential administrations of both George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. The three key elements of this viewpoint are commitment to U.S.-led multilateralism, free trade, and global democracy promotion. Adherents to this view (unlike those adhering to Factor A+) are generally positive about both the role that American leadership provides in international organizations and, unlike Factor A-, the institutions themselves. Commitment to U.S.-led multilateralism can be seen in the following statements:

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2. *The US needs the support and concerted action of friends and allies. The US must join with others to deny the terrorists what they need to survive: safe haven, financial support and protection that nation-states have historically given them. (+4)*
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-
8. *Through its collaboration with key allies and partners abroad, the US not only helps avert crises but also improves its effectiveness in responding to them. (+3)*
-
38. *The US should withdraw from the UN. The UN has turned into a do-nothing bureaucracy that believes it has the right to impose its will on free people while giving aid and comfort to totalitarian regimes. (-5)*
-
10. *The US should reject human rights treaties that infringe on US domestic jurisdiction. The President should not sign, nor should the Senate ratify, treaties that abrogate the authority of the American government. (-3)*
-
24. *Non-proliferation efforts succeed when the US and other global actors help satisfy whatever concerns drove a state to want nuclear weapons in the first place. (-3)*
-

Additionally, Factor B types are optimistic about the role of U.S. military power within this framework, as evidenced by the ranking of the following statements:

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4. *US military forces must plan and prepare to prevail in a broad range of operations that may occur in multiple theaters and in overlapping time frames. This includes the ability to prevail against two capable nation-state aggressors. (+3)*
-
16. *The US is cutting money for education, healthcare, housing, and more money is going to the military. I would support a move to effect a 15% across the board cut in Pentagon spending. (-4)*
-
3. *The no-testing, unlimited duration of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty would fatally undermine confidence in the reliability of the US's nuclear stockpile as a sturdy hedge against international aggression. (-3)*
-

Support for global free trade can also be seen:

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40. *One of the enduring lessons of the Great Depression is that global protectionism is a path to global economic ruin. (+4)*
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32. *Today, the American economy depends upon foreign trade, and most of the world's potential consumers live outside the US. Consequently the US only harms itself if we engage in protectionism and shuts itself off from the world. (+3)*
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11. *Someone once said, "There's no such thing as a free lunch." The same thing applies to "free" trade. Except this time, it's the American worker who pays and pays and pays. (-4)*
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Finally, commitment of the promotion of democracy can be seen in the reactions to two statements:

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15. *The US must wage a war of ideas against international terrorism. This includes using effective public diplomacy to promote the free flow of ideas and kindle the hopes and aspirations of freedom. (+5)*
-
24. *Non-proliferation efforts succeed when the US and other global actors help satisfy whatever concerns drove a state to want nuclear weapons in the first place. (-3)*
-

This factor generally supports the idea of a “war on terror” and argues that, like previous challenges, this can best be met through a foreign policy based on international engagement, where U.S. power is multiplied by working within international frameworks and with key allies. Unlike factor A+, adherents of this view tend to see multilateral institutions not as an impediment to the exercise of U.S. power but as something which enhances it. This also distinguishes them from A-.

Examining the factor loadings for all 29 sorters, only one respondent (13) is negatively correlated with this factor, and that correlation is not significant (-.16). The fact that there is no direct opposition to this viewpoint might be suggestive of its durability, even in the face of dramatic changes in the external environment, through periods of the Cold War, post-Cold War, and the “war on terror.”

Factor C: Neo-Isolationist/Cosmopolitan

Factor C is bipolar and defined by three “pure” loaders. The sorters at the positive pole (C+) are an academic, who is a self-identified conservative and an individual employed by a libertarian private, non-profit group. The Factor C+ view comes closest to a neo-isolationist position. They seem most concerned with the United States engaging in too many overseas commitments, whether military or non-military. New issues like climate change score negatively on Factor C+, along with deep concern over extending arms control agreements. Whereas Factor A+/A- adherents argued over circumscribing American power through international organizations, Factor C+ adherents seem to want to keep the United States free from both international entanglements and an overly activist foreign policy.

Suspicion of international agreements can be seen in the ranking of statements 36, 20, 34, 23, and 25, while a fear of being committed is evidenced in statements 22, 33, 25, and 39:

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36. *The US should not pursue an overly ambitious arms-control strategy, to conclude addition agreements at a breakneck pace or make concessions in order to conclude negotiations. (+3)*
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20. *We fool ourselves if we believe that general agreements impose substantial barriers to those determined to acquire new capabilities, e.g., nuclear weapons. (+3)*
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34. *We know that our planet's future depends on a global commitment to permanently reduce greenhouse gas pollution. (-5)*
-
23. *If the US does not lead the world in reducing fossil-fuel consumption, and thus emissions of global warming gases, a series of global, environmental, social, political and possibly military crises loom, that the US will have to address. (-4)*
-
25. *The US must actively promote international standards on human rights and abide by them ourselves. This will require the US and its allies to leverage their influence: sometimes diplomatically, sometimes economically, and sometimes militarily to advance human rights. (-3)*
-
22. *The US can't be all things to all people in the world. I am worried about the US over-committing its military around the world. I want the US to be judicious in its use. I don't think nation-building missions are worthwhile. (+5)*
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33. *The US has worked to build the security capacity of allied and partnered states and to ensure that the US military has ample opportunity to train with and learn from counterpart forces. Afghanistan and Iraq prove that this defense strategy has never been more important. (-3)*
-
25. *The US must actively promote international standards on human rights and abide by them ourselves. This will require the US and its allies to leverage their influence: sometimes diplomatically, sometimes economically, and sometimes militarily to advance human rights. (-3)*
-
39. *There are few greater threats than a terrorist attack with WMD. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts, the US must, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising its inherent right to self-defense.(-3)*
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One of the issues of particular concern to this group, which doesn't get a strong reaction on the other factors, is the issue of climate change (statements 34 and 23). Climate change is a typical example of an issue which generated a great deal of interest in the post-Cold War era in an area (environmental regulation) which had previously been primarily a domestic politics issue.

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34. *We know that our planet's future depends on a global commitment to permanently reduce greenhouse gas pollution. (-5)*
-
23. *If the US does not lead the world in reducing fossil-fuel consumption, and thus emissions of global warming gases a series of global, environmental, social, political and possibly military crises loom, that the US will have to address. (-4)*
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The increasing assertiveness of the international community parallels a similar post-Cold War concern with establishing international

human rights regime and arms control agreements. Attitudes towards human rights are reflected in statement 25 (shown above), while skepticism towards arms control can be seen in the following:

36. *The US should not pursue an overly ambitious arms-control strategy, to conclude additional agreements at a breakneck pace or make concessions in order to conclude negotiations. (+3)*

20. *We fool ourselves if we believe that general agreements impose substantial barriers to those determined to acquire new capabilities, e.g., nuclear weapons. (+3)*

42. *While we still have a long way to go, a consensus must be reached that the trend toward an even smaller role for nuclear weapons should be reinforced and that work toward their ultimate elimination should be continued. (-4)*

Factor C+ types are not opposed to all international activity, as they support global trade (statement 32) and the promotion of U.S. values abroad (statement 15), and given their opposition to arms control they seem to support a strong U.S. military, though they do express some skepticism towards the security discourse around the “war on terror” (statement 39). This opposition might be a result from the use of this as a rhetorical device to engage in large-scale U.S. military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

32. *Today, the American economy depends upon foreign trade, and most of the world’s potential consumers live outside the US. Consequently the US only harms itself if we engage in protectionism and shuts itself off from the world. (+3)*

15. *The US must wage a war of ideas against international terrorism. This includes using effective public diplomacy to promote the free flow of ideas and kindle the hopes and aspirations of freedom. (+4)*

39. *There are few greater threats than a terrorist attack with WMD. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts, the US must, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising its inherent right to self-defense. (-3)*

Like Factor A, Factor C is bipolar in nature. Adherents to Factor C- seem most closely to approximate views consistent with the cosmopolitan tradition of international relations. Cosmopolitans believe in a progressive evolution towards a universal order (Hehir, 2010, p. 73). They are less concerned with strengthening intergovernmental organizations; rather they emphasize the development of universal moral principles among transnational actors. Cosmopolitanism de-emphasizes state sovereignty because its adherents are skeptical about the utility of maintaining a division between internal and external affairs (Kaldor, 1995, p. 115).

Factor C- reflects views similar to cosmopolitanism in the prominence assigned to statements related to social and humanitarian issues such as climate change, arms control, and human rights. Cosmopolitans are more willing to set aside idea of state sovereignty and the international law which supports it, which they view as narrow and outdated, when these limit the application of universal principles in international affairs.

In this regard the views of cosmopolitans differ substantially from the traditional idealist views largely reflected in Factor A+. Factor A+ adherents seek the development of enforceable international law and the key to strengthening global governance. Factor A+ types are much more interested in binding the foreign policies of states to the authority of universal international organizations such as the United Nations. The debate over humanitarian intervention is perhaps the issue which best illustrates the difference between "rule-based internationalists" and "cosmopolitans." Responding in a timely and effective manner to genocides or ethnic cleansings often requires key international actors to involve themselves in the internal affairs of states in the midst of civil wars. Debate over the "legality" of such interventions arises when the formal rules of international organizations limit or prevent such interventions from occurring (examples include Rwanda, Kosovo and most recently Libya). Cosmopolitans tend to prioritize the value of protecting civilians over the rules of international organizations. They are much less willing to limit humanitarian interventions to those sanctioned by international bodies such as the U.N. Security Council. Factors A+ and C- reflect the emphasis of each position. Factor A+ types have stronger reactions to statements that emphasize the role of the United Nations (35, 13, 17, 19, and 7) than does factor C-.

Summary and Conclusions

This study revisits the approach by Carlson, et al., (1995/1996) in examining elite opinion concerning U.S. foreign policy. Carlson and his co-authors were interested in looking at the attitudes of foreign policy experts in the wake of the collapse of the Cold War, while the present study investigated elite opinion in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the subsequent U.S. foreign policy debates.

Q methodology revealed three factors in the present study, one which captures a rule-based international/realpolitik orientation, one which embodies an establishment view, and one that embraces a neo-isolationist/cosmopolitan perspective. Ideology seems to play a key role in this segmentation, as all Factor-A+ types are self-described liberals, all Factor-B types are self-described moderates, and Factor C has a conservative/liberal divide. This breakdown hints at the significance of ideology in the data. However, the analysis also points to the

pervasiveness and durability of the “establishment” view (Factor B). Just as the policy of “containment” provided a unifying framework of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War period, this establishment view may have emerged from the collapse of the Cold War and the subsequent “war on terror,” as a paradigmatic structure. However, our research suggests that a set of new issues and the degree to which the United States “needs to play with others,” remains among the themes that those outside the establishment view are most concerned about.

We find it interesting that our analysis could not uncover evidence of any bipolarity in Factor B, the establishment view. Our other two factors are both bipolar. Yet, only one of the 29 Q sorts we collected was even modestly negatively correlated with this factor (the negative correlation was only $-.16$, the respondent was a 23-year-old male who works for a private non-profit). This suggests to us that there may be little direct opposition to the views expressed in Factor B. Because this viewpoint closely correspond to the views expressed in official statements about U.S. foreign policy—hence our labeling this factor the “establishment” view—we suspect that this lack of direct opposition might help explain the consistency with which these views are expressed within official documents. Our study reveals that the set of opinions expressed in factor B hang together in the minds of respondents, and that this set of opinions is distinct from the more easily labeled opinions of Factor A and Factor C respondents. As Richard Haas observed in 1994, no overarching doctrine could replace containment. He may have been correct, but our Q study reveals that there is a coherent and distinct set of views which seem to distinguish the adherents of this viewpoint. There does appear to be a coherent set of opinion, a unique factor revealed by Q methodology, which exists despite the absence of a formal overarching doctrine that academics can label.

Our study reveals that the opinions held within the international relations community may have evolved in important respects since the Carlson, et al. study (1995/1996) was conducted. That study revealed four factors (pp. 46–49): an idealist factor that corresponds fairly closely to our Factor A+, the “*rules-based internationalist*”; a realist factor emphasizing the appropriateness of using force abroad, similar to our Factor A-; an isolationist factor similar to our Factor C+; and a factor that Carlson, et al. described as “*limited internationalism*,” for which no direct analog appears in our results. It is also important to recognize that none of the factors revealed in the earlier work directly corresponds to our Factor B. The differences between our study and the earlier one may be a product of the times in which each was conducted. The “limited internationalist view” discovered by Carlson, et al. revealed respondents who were “unsure about investing American resources to promote economic development and human rights” but who were not ready to

abandon longstanding overseas commitments like NATO. Carlson, et al. describe this as an “ideological perspective in flux” (1995/1996, p. 47). They may have captured in their factor the uncertainty of the early 1990s over the continued international role of the United States. This debate over the continued activity of the United States seems to have receded in the aftermath of September 11th and the embracing of the “war on terror.” Our Factor B, the “establishment” factor, seems reflective of the contemporary reality that the United States has not, after all, substantially scaled back its international commitments since the 1990s. These respondents clearly look favorably on the continued need for the United States to exercise a global leadership role through an active and interventionist foreign policy. What these respondents seem to have ambiguous feelings about is over the means—multilateral or unilateral—that this activity should take.

The significant changes in the international environment over the past twenty years have spawned serious debates within the international relations community over both what ought to be the fundamental goals of U.S. foreign policy and over the best means for achieving those goals. We believe that our study has helped to identify the beliefs actually held by participants in those debates and how those beliefs coalesce, in the minds of participants, into distinct foreign policy viewpoints.

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Appendix 1: Factor Loadings

<i>Sort</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Citizen</i>	<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Employ</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>
01	F	45	USA	Liberal	Acad.	.68	.14	.13
06	M	63	USA	Liberal	Acad.	.77	.03	.14
09	M	27	USA	Liberal	Priv, NP	.73	.38	-.21
10	M	23	USA	Liberal	Priv, NP	.79	.21	-.01
11	F	29	USA	Liberal	Priv, NP	.81	.26	.03
16	M	65	USA	Moderate	Acad.	-.80	.24	.06
02	M	37	Greek	Moderate	Acad.	.18	.50	.19
07	F	34	USA	Moderate	Acad.	.00	.70	.22
14	M	40	USA	Moderate	Acad.	.14	.72	.00
17	M	27	USA	Moderate	Priv, NP	.22	.73	-.22
19	M	49	USA	Moderate	Acad.	.27	.76	-.26
26	M	55	USA	Moderate	USG, NM	-.06	.76	.20
13	M	32	USA	None	Priv, NP	.15	-.16	.60
15	M	52	USA	Liberal	USG, NM	.14	.03	-.40
29	M	42	USA	Cons.	Acad.	-.12	.10	.65
03	M	66	USA	Moderate	Acad.	.45	.40	.61
04	M	67	USA	Liberal	USG, M	.71	.42	-.25
05	M	44	USA	Moderate	Int l. Org.	-.03	.64	.46
08	F	23	USA	Moderate	Priv, NP	.53	.47	-.23
12	M	46	USA	Liberal	Priv, NP	.51	.63	.20
18	M	56	USA	Moderate	Acad.	.56	.51	-.11
20	M	51	USA	Liberal	Acad.	.53	.60	-.15
21	M	62	USA	Moderate	Acad.	.43	.63	-.17
22	M	55	USA	Moderate	Acad.	.54	.55	.09
23	M	68	USA	Cons.	Acad.	-.68	.41	.37
24	M	35	USA	Liberal	Acad.	.61	.46	.31
25	M	31	Chinese	Liberal	Acad.	.57	.29	.46
27	M	52	USA	Liberal	Acad.	.68	.53	-.11
28	M	30	USA	Moderate	State Gvt	.59	.45	-.16
% Explained Variance						28	24	9

Key: Priv, NP = Private Organization, Non-Profit; USG, M = US Government, Military; USG, NM = US Government, Non-Military. **Bold** indicates a "pure" loader.

Appendix 2: Q-Sample with Factor Q-Sort Values for each Factor (Factor A+, B, C+, respectively)

42. As a nation committed to human rights and the rule of law, the US should be embracing an international system of justice, even if it means that Americans, like everyone else, might sometimes be scrutinized. (+4, +1, +1)

30. The US needs the support and concerted action of friends and allies. The US must join with others to deny the terrorists what they need to survive: safe haven, financial support and protection that nation-states have historically given them. (+1, +4, +2)
31. The no-testing, unlimited duration of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty would fatally undermine confidence in the reliability of the US's nuclear stockpile as a sturdy hedge against international aggression. (-3, -3, -1)
32. US military forces must plan and prepare to prevail in a broad range of operations that may occur in multiple theaters and in overlapping time frames. This includes the ability to prevail against two capable nation-state aggressors. (-2, +3, +2)
33. The wrong way to address climate change is to unilaterally impose regulatory costs that put American businesses at a disadvantage with their competitors abroad. (-1, +1, +1)
34. The US must embrace boldly and resolutely its duty to lead, to put a human face on the global economy so that expanded trade benefits all peoples in all nations. (+2, 0, -2)
35. The UN has too frequently provided a forum for virulent anti-Americanism. (-3, -1, +1)
36. Through its collaboration with key allies and partners abroad, the US not only helps avert crises but also improves its effectiveness in responding to them. (0, +3, 0)
37. Because the world still relies on leadership from the United States, the US must pass legislation intended to cap American emissions. (+2, 0, -2)
38. The US should reject human rights treaties that infringe on US domestic jurisdiction. The President should not sign, nor should the Senate ratify, treaties that abrogate the authority of the American government. (-2, -3, +2)
39. Someone once said, "There's no such thing as a free lunch." The same thing applies to "free" trade. Except this time, it's the American worker who pays and pays and pays. (-1, -4, -1)
40. For the US, defeating enemies abroad requires renewing democracy at home. (+1, -1, -1)
41. The UN does extraordinary good around the world—feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, etc. But it also struggles to enforce its will and live up to the ideals of its founding. I believe that those imperfections are not a reason to walk away from this institution—it is a call to redouble efforts. (+4, 0, 0)

19. To build a future of energy security, we must trust in the creative genius of American researchers and entrepreneurs and empower them to develop a new generation of clean energy technology, based on domestic resources: wind, clean coal, etc. (+1, +2, 0)
20. The US must wage a war of ideas against international terrorism. This includes using effective public diplomacy to promote the free flow of ideas and kindle the hopes and aspirations of freedom. (+1, +5, +4)
21. The US is cutting money for education, healthcare, housing, and more money is going to the military. I would support a move to effect a 15% across the board cut in Pentagon spending. (+3, -4, +2)
22. The UN should not limit the ability of the US to ensure its own security and that of other democratic nation-states. The UN Charter should be revised to allow for the use of pre-emptive action against rogue regimes and state sponsors of terrorism. (-4, -2, 0)
23. Pressuring Sudan to comply with the ICC, or deterring Russia from invading its small neighbors—the list, alas, goes on—it falls to the US to lead if a rules-based system is going to work in the hard cases. (-1, +1, -2)
24. UN member states need to exercise their rightful authority, and not allow the continuation of a bureaucratic structure under the Secretary General that seeks to undermine that authority. (-3, -2, +1)
25. We fool ourselves if we believe that general agreements impose substantial barriers to those determined to acquire new capabilities, e.g., nuclear weapons. (-2, 0, +3)
26. America can reclaim its leadership role in the world economy—it must lead by example and embrace multilateralism. Unilateralism is no longer a viable strategy. (+3, 0, -1)
27. The US can't be all things to all people in the world. I am worried about the US over-committing its military around the world. I want the US to be judicious in its use. I don't think nation-building missions are worthwhile. (0, -1, +5)
28. If the US does not lead the world in reducing fossil-fuel consumption, and thus emissions of global warming gases, a series of global, environmental, social, political and possibly military crises loom, that the US will have to address. (+2, 0, -4)
29. Non-proliferation efforts succeed when the US and other global actors help satisfy whatever concerns drove a state to want nuclear weapons in the first place. (0, -3, +4)

8. The US must actively promote international standards on human rights and abide by them ourselves. This will require the US and its allies to leverage their influence: sometimes diplomatically, sometimes economically, and sometimes militarily to advance human rights. (+3, +2, -3)
9. The US military has proven capable of brilliance beyond its borders. The US must now tap its expertise and resources within the borders— by better integrating the Department of Defense into homeland security plans. (-2, -2, 0)
10. The US needs to increase political and financial support for non-proliferation and threat reduction programs. (+1, +1, 0)
11. The interests of US workers and their families must come ahead of what may be good or best for the global economy. (-1, -1, 0)
12. The ICC in its present form of assigning the ultimate dilemmas of international politics to unelected jurists—and to an international judiciary at that—it represents such a fundamental change in US constitutional practice that a full national debate and the full participation of Congress are imperative. (-2, -1, -1)
13. America's national security and defense strategies depend on strong foreign ties and cooperation. The US will need to improve its ability to understand the concerns of foreign governments and populations, as well as the way in which her words and actions may affect allies and partners. (+2, +2, -1)
14. If the US is an arrogant nation, they'll be resented. If the US is a humble nation, but strong, they'll be welcomed. The US stands alone right now in terms of world power. And that's why the US has to be humble and yet project strength in a way that promotes freedom. (0, +1, +2)
15. Today, the American economy depends upon foreign trade, and most of the world's potential consumers live outside the US. Consequently the US only harms itself if we engage in protectionism and shuts itself off from the world. (0, +3, +3)
16. The US has worked to build the security capacity of allied and partnered states and to ensure that the US military has ample opportunity to train with and learn from counterpart forces. Afghanistan and Iraq prove that this defense strategy has never been more important. (-1, +1, -3)
17. We know that our planet's future depends on a global commitment to permanently reduce greenhouse gas pollution. (0, +2, -5)
18. The UN is imperfect; but it is also indispensable. There can be no substitute for the legitimacy the UN can impart or its potential to mobilize the widest possible coalitions. (+5, -2, +1)

1. The US should not pursue an overly ambitious arms-control strategy, to conclude additional agreements at a breakneck pace or make concessions in order to conclude negotiations. (0, -2, +3)
2. Without an ambitious new global climate change agreement, it will be difficult to reign in both the emissions of highly industrialized countries and burgeoning emerging economies. (+2, 0, -2)
3. The US should withdraw from the UN. The UN has turned into a do-nothing bureaucracy that believes it has the right to impose its will on free people while giving aid and comfort to totalitarian regimes. (-5, -5, -2)
4. There are few greater threats than a terrorist attack with WMD. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts, the US must, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising its inherent right to self-defense. (-4, +2, -3)
5. One of the enduring lessons of the Great Depression is that global protectionism is a path to global economic ruin. (0, +4, +1)
6. While many foreign critics of the US express relief at the erosion of American influence, events in places like Burma and Darfur show the downside of a diminished US standing; a void in global human rights leadership. (-1, 0, 0)
7. While we still have a long way to go, a consensus must be reached that the trend toward an even smaller role for nuclear weapons should be reinforced and that work toward their ultimate elimination should be continued. (+1, -1, +4)