

The Middle East Policy of America after the Cold War

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to discuss the Middle East policy of the United States' (U.S.) after the Cold War. In the period following the Cold War, the Middle East has been a place that the U.S.' has projected upon as if it were its own private land. This is an attractive and important issue for political research area. In briefly, it can be divided the policies of the U.S. in the post-Cold War concerning the Middle East into three just like a tripod and these are security, economy and politics. Firstly, eliminate the danger of radical Islamic groups, especially war against to acts of terrorism, secondly; controlling oil and energy resources and the finally is ensuring the security of Israel state. This paper will examine the September 11 attacks and the U.S. Greater Middle East Project and the U.S. occupation of Iraq. In that period U.S. tend to use the hard power. Than after this period, new President Barack Obama has changed the American Middle East policy discourses. The Obama's foreign policy discourses show us that he is tend to use soft power instruments. This study argues that the U.S. foreign policy in Middle East after the Cold War has changed periodically. However the aim of Middle East policy of the U.S.' has not changed, but the policy instruments have been changed from hard power to soft power Then, the question has been raised about the whether the U.S. will be success or not with this new policy. These concerning issues are going to be discussed.

1. Introduction: A Brief Overview of the Pre-Cold War Situation

The policies of the U.S. towards the Middle East date back to 1920s, when it was first recognized that there were huge oil reserves in the region. In parallel with this, this process proceeded as American oil companies got involved in the competition to be able to acquire shares and rights from the oil privileges in this area¹. Indeed, interest of the U.S. in the Middle East was aroused with the foundation of Israel, and it got more serious with the

¹ Tayyar Ari, "Washington'un Orta Doğu Politikası Yeni mi?", www.tayyarari.com/download/eskiyazi/abdninortadogupol.doc, (available at 20.05.2010).

Iranian Revolution that caused the Shah regime to be terminated². After the Gulf Crisis that actually enabled the U.S. to increase its influence and dominance in the region.

The military engagement of the U.S. with the region, in fact, coincides with the years following the Second World War, namely the Cold War period. In this rather unstable period, one of the primary concerns of Washington was the Soviet expansion and Communist ideology. In this sense, the main problem was security, the Soviet threat and whether the U.S. could stand against the challenge of U.S.S.R.³. When we looked from the Middle Eastern perspective, a powerful Soviet presence in this strategically significant region could have shifted the control of Middle East oil reserves to Soviets, thus inducing the economy of the “free market” to fall apart. The collapse of the Soviet Union and lack of international power and authority at the end of the Cold War paved the way for the U.S. to stand out as the world leader⁴. In the Cold War period, what the U.S. announced as its foreign policy was to protect the countries against the Communism threat. With the elimination of the Communism danger, the U.S. felt the inevitable need for a new strategy that would facilitate its expansion and ever-increasing influence over other countries. From then on, U.S. would both try to prevent a counter power from gaining strength and strive to impose its dominance by even going beyond its already strong position in the international system.⁵

2. The Middle East Policy of the U.S. in the Post-Cold War Period

At the end of the Cold War, the U.S. got hold of the position of “Super Power” in the “The New World Order”. A vital event clearly illustrating the determining position of the U.S. in the international system occurred with the Gulf Crisis. The U.S. intervened in Iraq with the support of the United Nations and the first stage of the start of unipolar period became evident.⁶ With this change, after expanding its area of impact, the Gulf balance that was maintained with the U.S. policies in the Cold War period opened the literature and era of “The New World Order”.⁷ In a public speech in June, 1992, Bush mentioned “The New World Order”: the world used to consist of two military camps until now, however, from now on there is only one Super Power. The world accepts this with absolutely no fear in their heart because they believe in us and they are right. They believe that we will be just and modest. They believe that we will always do what is right”.⁸ As I said before, in the postwar period, foreign policies of the United States were “to fight against Communism”. After the Communism threat disappeared, it could straightforwardly be seen that America set “fighting against and protecting the countries from threats of Middle Eastern Countries” as its main policy in foreign politics. Accordingly, countries such as Iraq and Iran and certain groups were defined as threatening factors for the stability in the Middle East. According to the U.S.,

² Kenan Dağcı, *Büyük Orta Doğu Projesi Yeni Oluşumlar ve Değişen Dengeler*, (İstanbul: Tasam Yayınları, 2006), p. 176.

³ Michael Roskin and James J. Coyle, *Politics of the Middle East Cultures and Conflicts*, (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), p. 316.

⁴ Thomas J. McCormick, *America's half-century: United States foreign policy in the Cold War and After*, (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp.1-6

⁵ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomasi*, translated by İbrahim Kurt, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2002), pp. 781-786.

⁶ NPQ Türkiye, “Jeopolitik Sarhoşluk ve Amerika'nın Rolü”, *Yeni Dünya Düzeni Meselesi* 5 (1993), pp. 6-19.

⁷ Charles William Maynes, “The Nature of The Post-Cold War World”, www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub246.pdf, (available at 20.05.2010), p. 15.

⁸ Burcu Bostanoğlu, “ABD'nin Latin Amerika Retoriğinden Örnekler”, *Avrasya Dosyası* 4 (1995)

these states were described as producing mass destruction weapons, favoring violence and supporting terrorism and they were also named the “Rogue States”.⁹ Primary goal of American administrations were to become a benevolent hegemony and fulfill the necessary financial, political, military and geographical needs to sustain this position.¹⁰ So as to comprehend the policies of the U.S. more elaborately, it is utterly necessary to look into the “Bush Doctrine” and the “The Greater Middle East Initiative”.

3. September 11, 2001: Pentagon Attack “You are either with us or against us”

The Post-Cold War era brought new problems such as security, economic and political troubles that countries were not prepared on how to deal with them. After September 11, both U.S. and other European countries came across or invented a common threat term and concept for the first time: “global terror or war against terror”. Thanks to this progress, they had a common ground to take action. Terrorist attacks were directly aimed at the democratic values of the West; thus, a common ground for action was created again in this “anti-terror camp”.¹¹ Whereas the threat in the Cold War period was massive, one way and obvious, modern risks and threats are diverse, hidden and with an “Asymmetrical Threat” basis. In this sense, terrorist attacks with an unfamiliar style and unprecedented destructive impact that occurred in New York and Washington in September 11, 2001 showed the world how far the impacts and limits of “Terrorism”, the most obvious form of asymmetrical threat, could go.¹² That is the turning point in terms of both international relations and the security strategies U.S. the source and the characteristics of threat in the Cold War period greatly differed from today’s security conditions. Because the source was “states” and the threat itself was conventional and nuclear weapons, however, after the Cold War came to an end, international security conditions changed quite rapidly. In this atmosphere, widely known state based threats started to be replaced by transnational terrorist organizations that gained power with the increasingly strengthening globalism. On the other hand, spread of mass destruction weapons and possibility of their use by terrorists or rogue states are cited as the most important security issues for the international society in the 21st century.¹³ After 9/11 attacks, U.S. first attacked Afghanistan and then invaded Iraq in the name of “war against global terror” and increased its military presence in these countries and many others thus dramatically changing the international balances.¹⁴ Even though Afghanistan and Iraq operations in the September 11 process established and sustained stability in the Middle East and the Middle Asia in the short term, it was a trigger for new and more severe crisis for the world in the long term.¹⁵

The President Bush was ready to do whatever was necessary to destroy Al-Qaida in Afghanistan and the leader of the organization Osama bin Laden whom he declared as

⁹ Noam Chomsky, “Rogue States”Z *Magazine* (1998).

¹⁰ Tayyar Arı, *Irak, İran ve ABD, Önleyici Savaş, Petrol ve Hegemonya*, (İstanbul: Alfa, 2004), pp.248-257

¹¹ Arı, 2004, p. 250.

¹² Emre Kongar, *Küresel Terör ve Globalleşme Sürecinde Türkiye*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitapevi, 2001), p. 6.

¹³ Fatma Taşdemir, “Uluslararası Anarşiye Giden Yol: Uluslararası Hukuk Açısından Önleyici Meşru Müdafaa Hakkı”, *Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika* 5 (2006), p.76.

¹⁴ Cold War period and its conditions made two enemies, Russia and China come closer. For example, Shangay Cooperation Organization was established in 2001. See Kenan Dağcı, “ABD’nin Yeni Güvenlik Yaklaşımı ve Terörizm”, *Avrasya Dosyası* 3 (2006), p. 87.

¹⁵ Kongar, 2001, p. 47.

responsible from the September 11 attacks. From then on, anyone could be terrorists for the U.S. and wherever these people were would be seen as enemies for the U.S. In October 7, 2001, the U.S. and the UK started a military operation with the name of Operation Enduring Freedom against Afghanistan; although there wasn't a clear authorization from the U.N. Security Council, they based their operation on the right of self defense which is illustrated in Article 51 of the U.N. Agreement. In Article 51, United States of America based its self-defense claims on two interrelated assumptions. Firstly, U.S. defined the terrorist attacks as armed assault within the framework of the U.N. Agreement Article 51. Secondly, Al-Qaida organization was held responsible for the terrorist attacks and this organization resided within the borders of Afghanistan which was ruled with the Taliban regime. International law presents the countries which suffered from terrorist attacks the right to use of force on the countries that provide shelter and support to these organizations.¹⁶ However, the U.N. Security Council made certain decisions after the attacks about the situation and none of these decisions included statements allowing military operations and there were no declarations that gave information about who the real criminals were. U.S. put forward that it had the right for preemptive self-defense for its national values and security. It also depended this on the principle of preventive war which was called the "Bush Doctrine" in the Afghanistan operation.¹⁷

4. "Whether soft or hard power period" in Middle East Policies of the U.S. and the Bush Doctrine

The Bush Doctrine is linked with the new "National Security Strategy" that was officially announced in September 2002 the next period after September 11, 2001. The Bush Doctrine has been defined as a collection of strategy principles security, practical policy decisions, and a set of rationales and ideas for guiding United States foreign policy.¹⁸ Bush Doctrine or National Security Strategy includes 3 main elements:

Pre-emptive Strike /Preventive War: Under the Bush Doctrine, Pre-emptive strikes against potential enemies and promoting democratic regime change. According to Mackubin Owens, the United States reserves the right to undertake preventive war. Preventive war would play in the future of American foreign policy and national defense. In Bush speech we can observe the aim of this security policy: "We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systemically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long — Our security will require transforming the military you will lead — a military that must be ready to strike at a moment's notice in any dark corner of the world. And our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives."

Owens claims that, while international law and norms have always acknowledged the right of a state to launch a preemptive strike against another when an attack by the latter is imminent,

¹⁶ Taşdemir, (2006), p. 157.

¹⁷ E. Mary O'Connell, "The Myth of Preemptive Self-Defence", *The American Society of International Law* (2002), pp. 3-6.

¹⁸ The National Security Strategy of the United States of America September, 2002, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/national/nss-020920.pdf>

it has rejected any right to preventive war. President Bush argued that in an age of globalization, catastrophic terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction, this distinction had become meaningless. If an attack is imminent, it is now too late to preempt it.¹⁹

Negative points of concepts of preemptive strike and preventive war are a hot topic to be discussed in terms of international law. Başeren explains why *Article 51 self defense* must be interpreted narrowly in a suitable way by claiming that “presence of such a right requires the intentions of a probable enemy to be found out for sure on a particular topic. A mistake that could be made while deciding on the presence of an intention for attack, although it is actually impossible to come to such a conclusion, can bear unacceptable consequences with respect to the protection of international peace and security. Traditional right of self defense requires that the force used must be in good proportion with the threat itself.”²⁰

Defense: U.S. must have such a strong military power that no state and army could dare stand against it under any conditions. In this direction, U.S. will be able to protect both itself and its allies better by increasing its defense capacity with advanced missile systems.²¹

In addition Jervis argues that Bush doctrine has four elements. “First, there is a strong belief in the importance of domestic regime in determining its foreign policy and the related judgment that this is an opportune time to transform international politics. Second, there is perception of great threats that can be defeated only by new and efficient policies such as preventive war. Third, there is a willingness to act unilaterally when necessary. Fourth, there is an overriding sense that peace and stability in the world require the US to assert its primacy in world politics”²²

In a briefly, Bush administration announced a “National Security Strategy” and on the basis of this was the belief that a military intervention or action is necessary for those striving to change the current system and this whole process should be carried out under the name of “fighting against terrorism”. With this official document, it was made public that the U.S. had the natural right to employ every kind of defense or attack mechanisms against assaults on the unity of the country, its citizens and the very system of the country.²³ According to the strategy, in this century, the countries with human rights, economic and political freedoms must be the ones winning and people must struggle for this ultimate goal. Another really interesting point about the strategy is that statements at certain points are rather vague and open-ended in this document.

However, in this document, U.S. mentioned that terrorism is the most serious enemy but there is no clear-cut definite description or criteria as to “who is a terrorist” or “what kinds of actions are terrorist assaults” and there are only clues instead of straightforward guidelines. Hence, this couldn’t complete the notion of terrorist and terror; in turn, giving way to new

¹⁹ Mackubin T. Owens, “The Bush Doctrine: The Foreign Policy of Republican Empire”, *National Security Studies*, (2009), p.26 & Christine Gray, “The US National Security Strategy and the New Bush Doctrine on Preemptive Self Defence”, *Chinese Journal of International Law* 1 (2002), pp. 438-440.

²⁰ Sertaç Başeren, *Uluslararası Hukukta Devletlerin Münferiden Kuvvet Kullanmalarının Sınırları*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 2003), pp. 109-111.

²¹ Lee Hamilton, “Bush Doktrini nedir?” *Irak Müdahalesi ve Amerika’nın Yeni Dünya Politikası*, *İktisat, İşletme ve Finans Dergisi* 204 (2003), p. 9.

²² Keir A. Lieber and Robert Lieber, “The Bush National Security Strategy”, *U.S Foreign Policy Agenda*, Volume 7, Number 4, (December 2002), p.32

²³ Richard Falk, *The New Bush Doctrine*, in *The Iraq war, Reader, History Document and Opinions*, edited by Micah Sifry and Christopher Chery, (New York: Touchstone, 2003), p. 272.

arguments. According to this strategy, terrorists or the people giving support to terrorism are;

- Those not letting girls attend schools and get a decent education (Muslim societies),
- Totalitarian regimes (one-party regimes established around a certain ideology),
- Those using dangerous technologies (even though the target or the victim is unknown, those responsible in this statement are certain individuals and countries that possess mass destruction weapons)
- Radical communities,
- And those helping and enabling all these organizations and individuals.²⁴

By listing those, illiterate girls who is not attend the schools and not get a decent education within the category of terrorists in the doctrine, U.S. directly pointed towards many Muslim countries including Iran and attracted attention and hatred on these states. Another aspect about which this doctrine will give rise to problems within the context of international affairs is that it generally causes Muslim countries to become targets. After September 11 events, evaluation of the President of the U.S. about the actions to be practiced against terrorists as a “Crusade” is a statement that would induce people with opposite ideas against U.S. hegemony to intensify their terrorist activities even more. Even the word “crusade” he erroneously said in his speech brought about serious concerns among Muslim peoples. Western societies might still have some residues from the past kept in their mind; however, they have to be careful about what they say against the threat of “asymmetrical terror” that could breed such tendencies because it would be almost inevitable to see anti-Americanism at seriously disturbing levels in other Muslim countries or Muslim peoples.²⁵ For this reason the U.S. must take the sensitivities of Muslim communities into consideration continually. Muslim-Christian bloc may emerge instead of the East-West bloc that collapsed due to radical Islam and terror’s so-called connections. A post-Cold War period may simply be replaced by a Cold Peace Period.

The Bush Doctrine is essentially what best demonstrates the aims of U.S. towards the Middle East and according to this doctrine, U.S. can attack any country if it perceives the country as a potential threat to itself. That the boundaries of this policy are not certain makes it widely open for different interpretations. For instance, U.S. has the right to describe a state as terrorist or rouge if it desires to war with a country and with that made-up excuse it can take preventive action. This threat may be eliminated before it develops into an attack; (Preventive war and Preemptive Strike Strategy); furthermore, if military power of a country develops and catches up with the American army, they can attack on their army too.²⁶ Besides, the U.S. actually gave signals about that these actions and interventions could be realized one way and without necessarily getting an international support which would be a behavior one can expect from a world leader! That is to say, the U.S. withdrew from Anti Ballistic Missile Agreement on his own without getting any consent of others in December 2001 after 9/11 events and declared that it wouldn’t approve Kyoto Protocol and International Criminal Courts Agreement. The U.S. announced that it would withdraw all its support and approval

²⁴ Beril Dedeoğlu, “ABD’nin 21. yüzyıl stratejisi ve olası küresel etkileri”, *2023 Dergisi*, (Kasım 2002), pp.26-32.

²⁵ Birol Akgün, “Küreselleşme Çağında Terör ve Karşı Terör: Amerikanın İşi Neden Zor?” *Stratejik Analiz* 18 (2001), p.119

²⁶ Mustafa Oral, “Tarihsel Perspektifte ABD’nin Ortadoğu Politikası ve Türkiye”, <http://www.turksolu.org/ileri/28/oral28.htm>, (available at 30.05.2010).

from those engagements that do not serve its own benefits and it also indicated that it would act on its own if and when necessary. To illustrate, it was in search of legitimacy in Kuwait whereas in the Afghanistan there was not such search for legality. The same topic was again discussed in the point of invasion of the Iraq. Thus, the fact that a decision was not made by the UN Security Council to allow the use of power was not enough to stop the U.S. In short, it became evident that the U.S. is no longer interested or cares about international legitimacy.²⁷

Pax Americana, an ideology that aims to shape the international system again around American values, has raised in the Bush administration thanks to this revolution. Therefore, the new policies of the U.S. with the introduction of new concepts such as not caring about the law, defining everybody as enemies except the ones like it, preventive action, regime change, illegal warrior, have become a policy full of use of hard power.²⁸ Lastly, operation exercised on Iraq in 2003 is the clearest evidence for this. Bush Doctrine that is determined to eliminate the existing threats even if it is all by itself is essentially regarded as a legal doctrine and evaluated as a political doctrine contradicting the letter and spirit of the U.N. Agreement.

5. The U.S. and the Greater Middle East Initiative

The Greater Middle East is a political term coined by the Bush administration that is one of the most debated international political issues of recent years. American administration took the first steps towards the Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI) by initiating the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) in 2002. Collin Powell had spoken of a US-Middle East Partnership Initiative. He said, “I am announcing today an initiative that places the US firmly on the side of change, on the side of reform and on the side of a modern future for the Middle East, on the side of hope. It is a bridge between the US and the Middle East, between our government and our people, an initiative that spans the hope gap with energy ideas and funding.²⁹ In the project draft were the following important goals with many others included: creating a free trade zone between the Middle East and the U.S. within the course of subsequent ten years, forming a forum with the primary aim of assisting the juridical reforms, ensuring a freer environment for the companies and encouraging the improvement of literature and translation. In fact, this speech constituted the core of the GMEI and actually assigned it a plausible reason for it to exist: Muslims predominantly live in undemocratic and developing or underdeveloped countries. As they inevitably envy the lifestyle and lied standards of the West, terrorism emerges and just keeps getting more powerful. If they are not capable of dealing with their problems, they need to be provided with due assistance and even these problems should be solved by the West for their own good. In the same years, in a speech made in Heritage Foundation, Colin Powell-the secretary of foreign affairs in the U.S. declared that they commenced the Partnership Initiative with the Middle East and this

²⁷ Tayyar Arı, (2004),p.251

²⁸ Tuğçe Ersoy Öztürk, “ABD’nin “Yumuşak Güç” Kullanımı: Barack Obama İmajı Üzerinden Amerikan Dış Politikasının Yeniden İnşası”, <http://kamudiplomasisi.org/pdf/abdninyumusakguckullanimi.pdf>, (available at 02.06.2010)

²⁹ Nasim Zehra, “The Greater Middle East Initiative”, <http://usa.mediamonitors.net/content/view/full/5616/>, (available at 02.06.2010)

program would be allocated 90 million dollars for 2003. Thanks to this “incredible” amount, political and economical improvements would be encouraged and the role and education of women within the society would be boosted and strengthened.³⁰ Later on, this program was considered to take up democratic reforms in cooperation with the Bush Administration. It was officially started with a speech of the president in November 6, 2003³¹. Even though there aren't any completely official documents as to GMEI, controversial arguments were created by the U.S. by mentioning its name in diverse projects with various aims.

During a G-8 Summit held in the U.S., America introduced the GMEI, which was already quite popular in the global agenda, to the countries that constitute the G-8 namely France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada, England and Russia with the purpose of obtaining their support. Having been examined closely in these countries, this initiative was discussed elaborately in a G-8 summit in America in June 2004. The report called *Arab Human Development* published by the United Nations for the GMEI is one of the most crucial references for the Greater Middle East Initiative. Arab Human Development Report, the initiative sets three reform priorities: promoting democracy and decent governance, building an educational system for the society, and expanding economic opportunities. Cutting across these three areas is the goal of furthering women's rights and empowerment. The proposal defines a series of measures, mostly aid programs, to be taken by G-8 members to help the Greater Middle East countries achieve progress on these fronts.³² In addition Charles Kupchan argues that the U.S. interests in the Middle East have remained stable since the early post-war years with various aims and these have been maintaining their access to oil, restricting and preventing direct and indirect Soviet advances and protecting Israel's security.³³

The Greater Middle East expands over a very large area and has been described for years with different maps by the authorities. In the discourse of this project use of the word “Great” is of utmost importance as it refers to a larger area than only the current Middle East and this larger landmass additionally includes Arab states, Israel, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan.³⁴ Furthermore, forenamed areas are rather problematic; however, they are among the few richest places on Earth in terms of energy. Sea transportation routes connecting the Far East to Europe as well as the Basra Gulf, Strait of Babulmende, Suez Channel and Cyprus-Crete-Malta-Gibraltarian energy transportation routes are all in this area; hence, it is possible for the country or the power ruling this geography to control the Mediterranean and remarkable energy routes of Europe.³⁵ This region is important in terms of both delivering the raw material sources to the Western powers and marketing of these processed goods from the western economies to all over the world.

Greater Middle East Initiative is a project covering more than 20 countries and in immensely

³⁰ Kerem Topuz, “Büyük Orta Doğu Projesi Bazı Veriler, Bazı Bilgiler Ve Bazı Görüşler”, www.iksv.org/hi/genel/kg/bildiri/kerem_topuz.doc, (available at 02.06.2010)

³¹ Kenan Dağcı, “AB ve ABD'nin Ortadoğu Stratejileri ve Büyük Ortadoğu Projesi”, *Büyük Ortadoğu Projesi*, ed. Atilla Sandıklı ve Kenan Dağcı, (İstanbul: Tasam, 2006), p.178

³² Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, “The Greater Middle East Initiative: Off to a False Start”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* 29 (2004), pp. 1-7.

³³ Charles A. Kupchan, “American Globalism in the Middle East: The Roots of Regional Security Policy”, *Political Science Quarterly* 103 (1988-1989), p. 587.

³⁴ Ottaway and Carothers, (2004), pp. 1-7.

³⁵ Nejat Eslen, “Türkiye'ye kilit ülke rolü”, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=110779>, (available at 02.06.2010).

large area with a population of 650 million. 640 million of these 650 million people are from Muslim peoples. That's why there are some people accepting this project as a huge attempt to control and oppress Islam.³⁶ U.S. aims to shape such a large region to make it suitable for its own benefits and ensure its interests by bringing Turkey to the key country position of the project and profiting from Turkey's contributions. Taking these sources in hand means not only absolute control over the transportation routes but also halting possible rival states or state groups in the Middle East.

Since there doesn't exist a clear explanation from an authority concerning the Greater Middle East Initiative, it is possible to come across greatly differing interpretations from various groups or political or religious views. Some define it as "an attempt to destroy Islam" while others assert that it is a strategy to protect Israel or another group of people claim that it is the application on "Clash of Civilizations". U.S. puts forward that it endeavors to bring democracy and freedom to the Middle East with GMEI. Considering the U.S. authorities and their explanations, primary aim of the program is demonstrated as the democratization of the Middle East countries, thus ensuring to put an end to terrorism. As a force for democracy in the region, according to Christopher Candlandthe; "initiative is inherently self-limiting for two major reasons. First, the Initiative fails to take seriously U.S. support of authoritarian and dictatorial governments in the region. The military equipment that the U.S. government sells to the governments of the region does not promote peace. Rather they are themselves sources of violence. Second, the Initiative takes insufficient account of the dire educational and employment needs of the region. In many countries of the Greater Middle East, unemployment, by the most conservative estimates, is greater than 20%."³⁷

The programme is serving the purpose of the promote democracy however, for democratization process, it is an undeniable fact that diversity, liberty, freedom, opposite sides and pressure groups are utterly necessary in order for democracy to exist in a country and these sides can only appear in the presence of economical power. Nonetheless, this principle is different in the Middle East in that the sole economical source is controlled by only one person or an institution and so whoever has control over oil directly gets hold of the power; thus, there won't be any financial competition in this situation. As there won't be any competition, it is not sensible at all to expect to have democracy in these countries and this is only one of the points why democracy reform of GMEI has been heavily criticized.³⁸

Another criticism is that countries in the region after being neglected for many decades are now considered as significantly valuable and this should be regarded with skepticism. When looked from the perspective of political and financial causes of GMEI, it is obviously pointed out that the project aims to speed up the capitalism with respect to both terminal sales of goods and services and creating a new market for increasing production.³⁹ Accordingly, U.S. desired to enlighten the people in the states in that region, introduce them to the new age of

³⁶ Gonca Hacırfaşlıođlu, "Sođuk Savađ Sonrası Amerika'nın Ortadođu Politikası", p.5
http://www.jeopolitik.net/wp-content/abd_ortadogu.pdf (available at 25.05.2010)

³⁷ Christopher Candland, "The U.S. Greater Middle East Initiative: Implications for Persian Gulf Economies and Politics",
<http://www.wellesley.edu/Polisci/Candland/USGMEI.pdf>, (available at 03.06.2010), p. 10.

³⁸ Mahir Kaynak, "Büyük Ortadođu Projesi", <http://www.scribd.com/doc/16800623/mahir-kaynak-buyuk-ortadogu-projesi>, (available at 03.06.2010), p. 18.

³⁹ İbrahim Öztürk, "Büyük Ortadođu Projesinin Siyaset ve İktisadi Felsefesi", http://www.turkishtime.org/27/32_tr.asp, (available at 04.06.2010), p. 3.

information; in other words, to create a chance for a new market for itself.

Except for the bilateral trade agreements that the U.S. signed with a several countries in the region in the field of economy, GMEI, for now, seems to be a project without a past or tradition of its own and details. %2 of American foreign trade and less that %1 of America's foreign investments is related to this area. When the Gulf countries, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Mauritania are also included, the share of entire Great Middle East in foreign trade of the U.S. climbs up to %3.9.⁴⁰ These figures enable us to see that the U.S. is too late in fulfilling the previously declared goals and this stands out as a credible factor that decreases the positive opinions concerning the applicability of the program. In addition, information about how and when the GMEI will be ended is not presently available.

So as to conduct GMEI successfully, cooperation of Middle East countries as well as Western or other countries is required, because U.S. doesn't seem liable to be successful on his own in a project about this region because of its obvious support for Israel and its policies in this area. Therefore, U.S. regards Turkey as an important means in this project as it is a Muslim and democratic country in the area. So, are we as Turkey in this project as a means for the U.S. despite all this negative criticism, and if not, what is our policy in the region? This is a vital matter that needs to be reasoned and given due thought. When the principles of the GMEI are read positively, they are in perfect harmony with Turkey's foreign policies. We act in conformity with the U.S. but our goal is to bring freedom and democracy to the Muslim countries. Furthermore, applicability criterion of the GMEI is dependent upon ending the Israel-Palestine war for establishing a permanent peace in the Middle East. The main cause of the failures of the attempts of U.S. in 1940s and 1950s to conduct a series of projects is that it couldn't find a solution for the Palestine-Israel issues. This never-ending problem in the region strikes us as a bleeding wound in the Middle East for years.

6. The U.S. – Iraq War

In the period between the post-cold war and 9/11 attacks, the most common basis put forward by the U.S. to eradicate the governments in countries it perceives as a threat are (as mentioned above) “fighting against terrorism, annihilation of mass destruction weapons and taking democracy to those countries.” In parallel with these goals, it first invaded Afghanistan and then attacked Iraq because Iraq is a part of the Middle East and the new world order in the Middle East where America has been endeavoring to institutionalize its financial, political and military hegemony. That is to say, this is the second application of a war doctrine that was previously tested in Afghanistan with the support of U.N. and ended with the destruction of the Taliban regime and establishment of an American friendly government.

Undertaken by U.S. and England and known as Operation Iraqi Freedom or Gulf War 2 or the Second Iraq War, U.S.A –England invasion operation was launched on March 19, 2003. On March 17, President Bush had given Saddam an ultimatum to leave the country or face military conflict. In November 2002, the Security Council had adopted Resolutions 1441, giving a final opportunity to “comply with its disarmament obligations” or “face serious consequences”. The U.S. allegation and the factual background of Iraq occupation can be

⁴⁰ Topuz, 2006.

outlined:

- _ destroying such stores of nuclear, chemical, biological and other weapons of mass destruction as Iraq may have⁴¹
- _ claiming that they had a connection to the Al Qaida, the responsible organization for the September 11 attacks⁴²
- _ that Saddam was acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and that his gassing of Kurdish towns and Iranian troops in the 1980s had proven his willingness to use them;
- _ that Iraq had been defying United Nations resolutions since the end of the Persian Gulf War;
- _ that the regime was a destabilizing influence in the region, having invaded Kuwait and Iran, and launched Scud missiles against Saudi Arabia and Israel;
- _ that Saddam supported terrorism, even to the point of paying off Palestinian suicide bombers who killed Israeli citizens;
- _ that a democracy in Iraq would set a badly needed example for the Arab world;
- _ that such a government, in turn, would make it easier to forge a lasting peace in Israel and Palestine;
- _ and that Saddam and his sons and his secret police had inflicted unimaginable horrors on the Iraqi people who have every much as right to be free as Americans.⁴³

John Mearsheimer and Waltz asks that; should the United States invade Iraq and depose Saddam Hussein? Their claim is that every argument Bush administration resorts to with the purpose of justifying the invasion of Iraq is fallacious. Iraq didn't pose any kind of a direct threat for the U.S. It didn't even have a close relationship with Al-Qaida or terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Claims about the presence of mass destruction weapons and other war dissertations were already refuted.⁴⁴ Another powerful argument is that America wanted to attack Iraq not as it constituted a serious threat but as it was remarkably weak and broken in terms of armed forces. This is a fact that led the UK Government to face comprehensive criticisms both in the country and globally.⁴⁵ Another fact is that America mistook aims for the means and these sentences by the President completely contradict with the photos and images during the Iraq War. "Freedom is not America's gift to the world," Bush said many times. "It is the Almighty's gift to every man and woman in this world." Bringing freedom to a country cannot be carried out with the help of bombs, tanks, weapons and nonhuman treatments in the prisons. Wishing to get long term results in quite short time, U.S. also contradicted with the content and logic of democracy. While U.S. tried to emphasize the huge threat imposed by Iraq with these harsh policies, it actually proved it to the world that America itself is a detrimental factor. In the public opinion polls not only in the Middle East but also all over the world prior to Iraq War, it was witnessed that not Iraq but U.S. was

⁴¹ Rabinder Singh QC and Alison Macdonald, *Gray's Inn Legality of use of force against Iraq*, (London: Public Interest Lawyers, 2002), p. 3.

⁴² Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay and Evan Lewis, "Mispreception, the Media and Iraq War", *Political Science Quarterly* 4 (2003), p. 559.

⁴³ George Walker Bush, "Foreign Affairs", <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/gwbush/essays/biography/5>, (available at 04.06. 2010).

⁴⁴ **John J. Mearsheimer** and **Stephen M. Walt**, "An Unnecessary War", *Foreign Policy* (2003), p. 51.

⁴⁵ Akgün, 2006, p. 83.

regarded as the most serious threat for world peace.⁴⁶ In addition, according to Washington Post ABC survey found Bush's job approval rating at %45, down seven points since January and the lowest ever recorded for the president in Post-ABC surveys. Fifty-three percent disapproved of the job Bush is doing. This is absolutely the worst case President Bush was confronted with. As a matter of fact, Bush lost his seat with the actions and moves thanks to which he expected to attract the support of people on the government in the time of war⁴⁷

For the U.S., the Iraq War bore the ultimate goal of shaping the Middle East and the world as a whole and the choice of Iraq was not random at all (it was chosen because of an embargo lasting twelve years, UN inspections and military and psychological weakness). Upon looking into the Iraq Operation of the U.S. in terms of security, America can be claimed to have given way to some doubt by putting forward the security matters for the Iraq Operation. For example, some question marks naturally appear in the comparison of Iraq which was asserted to provide assistance to the terrorists and threaten the U.S. with the Saudi Arabia. Reactions and objections against U.S. starting in the Saudi Arabia right after the Gulf War caused the opposition to arrange protests for closing of the U.S. bases in the countries and afterwards bombs started to explode in Saudi Arabia. With the first bombs going off in Riyadh and Hobar in 1996, American targets were mostly hit. What's more, people involved in these attacks were not terrorists coming from other countries but Saudi Arabia citizens. However, after these events U.S. kept its composure and although their relations were severely damaged, it didn't feel the urge to action against this country. Even though its neighbors didn't complain or refrain from it as it imposed a tremendous threat on global peace, U.S. announced that Iraq was a threat to its security since only Iraq is in the inclination of harming the benefits of U.S. Therefore, it is quite possible and plausible to ground the security concerns of the U.S. on the Israel's well-being.⁴⁸

The foremost reason for America's existence in the Gulf is to have access to oil resources in a trouble-free environment with low prices. Even though Khazar oil reserves changed the rates, %65 of the world's oil reserves are still in this region. %19 of America's, %24 of Western Europe and %70 of the Japan's oil needs are supplied from this area. By 2025, %71 of America's, %68 of Western Europe's and %73 of the China's consumed oil will be provided from the sources out of their countries. Dependency on the foreign countries in such a vital sector as energy actually is enough to explain or understand the oil wars that big powers and oil companies started among themselves in Middle East, Africa and Middle Asia and especially the Iraq War. In case of a victory in the war, %12 of the reserves will be controlled by the U.S. and it would be possible to talk about a dominance in terms of oil reserves over other future possible rivals-E.U. and China. With the disarmament of Iraq, Israel was able get rid of a really serious regional threat and Iraq turned into an Israel friendly state in the region just like an American friendly Afghanistan just on the border with Russia.⁴⁹ Together with these, U.S. will menace the possible rivals after creating the necessary

⁴⁶ İ. Yaşar Hacısalihoğlu, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Gelişmeler ve Türkiye, Sorular, İlişkiler ve Algulamalar*, In Uluslararası Çatışma Alanları ve Türkiye'nin Güvenliği, Edited by G. Kona, (İstanbul: IQ Yayınları, 2006), p.21

⁴⁷ Antony Arno, *Iraktan Çekilmenin Mantığı*, (İstanbul: Agora, 2006), p. 82.

⁴⁸ Önder Öngör, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Abd'nin Ortadoğu Coğrafyasında Uyguladığı Güvenlik Politikaları ve Bu Politikaların Türkiye Üzerine Yansımaları", Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gebze Üniversitesi, Strateji Bilimi Anabilim Dalı, 2005, p. 87.

⁴⁹ Akgün, 2006, p. 83.

conditions and take them under its control geographically and economically. Moreover, Israel took advantage of this situation in the regions and watched out for its own profits by regaining its value in the eyes of the U.S. with regard to “common fighting against terrorism”. With this new approach, Israel is described as a vital ally in the global war against terrorism and the enemies of the U.S. are automatically counted as the enemies of Israel. Thus, Israel is no longer the basis or the main cause for the problems between U.S. and Arab and Islam world.⁵⁰ Besides, U.S. proved with its invasion in Iraq that according to its new principles, it would “count everything as legitimate on the way to destruction of all terrorist organizations and individuals.” The right of preventive legitimate defense will shock the stability of the system and bear unacceptable consequences. Recognition of such a right will cause great harm on the universal limit on power use and it will increase the armed conflicts more and more. International public opinion has to persist in and standing against this horrible right. Otherwise, we will all go back to 19th century self-help doctrine in which the society is regulated not with jurisdiction but with power and so anarchy will be everywhere.

After September 11, India once named Pakistan as the central headquarters of terrorism. By holding on to the same baseline that President Bush used for the invasion of Iraq, Israel started to attempt assassinations on the Palestinians who were chose as targets, it bombed Syria and threatened to open fire on Iran. These are also some other indicators as to how Iraq War and the faulty strategy U.S. had been following can cause tremendous damages both in the Middle East and in the international arena. Anthony Arnove asserts that although America has made a lot attempts to thwart the expansion of nuclear and chemical weapons, on the contrary, they will encouraged by what the U.S. has been doing throughout the history. That is to say, as no country would want to be the second Iraq from now own, they may get directed towards nuclear weapon program as a deterrent power.⁵¹ In addition, U.S. administration has been turning a blind eye for years to the fact that Israel has been threatening its neighbors, has occupied Lebanon and used intemperate power in Palestine with its military power supported with nuclear power. However, this Israel policy of the U.S.A is not a surprise because it is not new at all. After the end of British mandate government, U.S. became the number one protector of the Jewish people and in this direction, it actually was an equal or even better substitute for the British mandate in the period after the Second World War. Together with Bush administration, Israel’s security has become a more important matter for the U.S. therefore, security of Israel, security of the economical interests and world leadership policies have all become interdependent and interrelated. It is also crucial to consider America’s paying importance to the stability in the countries in the region within this framework of this aim. This infinite support of the U.S. for Israel used to and still does make it difficult to find a solution to the problem of Palestine. When mentioning the rising of Israel as an independent state on the stage of history, it is crucial to state that America administration has made innumerable contributions to Israel on this path.

Another country that America recognizes as a danger for the process of reshaping the Middle East is Iran and we can readily be aware of the fact that it is endeavoring to form a legitimate basis for a possible invasion operation with excuses or made-up causes such as encouraging

⁵⁰ Hacifazlıoğlu, p.2.

⁵¹ Arnove, pp. 89-90.

nuclear power programs against Iran or providing assistance for the resistance in Iraq. Ever since the 1979 Iranian revolution, Iran and the U.S. have always maintained a tense and vulnerable relationship. However, September 11 was a turning point that clearly indicated that some things had to change and not everything could stay the same after all these horrible events from both times. An obligation to go for a chance naturally emerged under those circumstances and this change also includes marginal alternatives such as “negotiations” or “military conflicts” within itself.⁵² According to U.S.A, the main function of Iran’s nuclear activities is to produce nuclear weapons. Indeed, American authorities are sure that Iran has been running a nuclear policy for some time but they don’t know if they are yet trying to convert that energy into making nuclear weapons.⁵³

6. Conclusion and Evaluation

Since September 11, Bush administration has pursued two specific strategies: first of these was to find and destroy the terrorist so as to maintain secure and confidence in America against terrorism; and the second one appeared as fighting against the countries that threaten the global peace by obtaining mass destruction weapons and as making other nations accept and adopt its own policies. This understanding requires the U.S.A. to use military power while fighting against global terrorism and means that it can still act as unilateralist even if other states do not share this view. After the horrible attacks on U.S. on September 11, albeit America indirectly caused all the perceptions of Islam all over the world to be named either as Radical –Islam- or, Islamic- terrorism.

American Political Scientist Samuel P. Huntington advocates the idea that 21st century will be determined by “clash of civilizations predominantly based on religion”. In this thesis, he emphasized that the Middle East and the Eurasia would be the center of these clashes. According to Huntington, ending of the ideological separation in Europe made the huge cultural division and differences between Christianity of Europe and Islam world to re-appear but this time on a larger and more serious scale.⁵⁴ Somehow proving this thesis right, new blocs in the system have started to rise on “Christian West” and “Muslim East”. While presenting the “radical Islam” as a new threat to the world’s public opinions among the provocation screams yelling “crusades”, the geography of the Great Middle East whose population is primarily Muslims has been pointed to as “an international threat producing region”. Beyond this, U.S. supported the idea that as the people attacking the WTC and the Pentagon on September 11 had Muslim names, carried Muslim symbols and had connections with the Al Qaida organization, with radical –Islam-was recognized as a threat.⁵⁵ Both before and after the Cold War, U.S. continually included the notions of freedom and democracy in their discourses; however, after the Cold War, U.S. has been observed to be an aggressive state, not a peaceful and democratic one. This naturally raises the question whether America is spending its Super Power on the way of being a “global aggressive state”. September 11 was a turning point for all humanity but especially for the U.S. and U.S. stated that these assaults

⁵² İsmail Akaya, Devrim Sonrası İran-ABD İlişkileri (1979-1991), <http://www.populertarih.com/devrim-sonrasi-iran-abd-iliskileri-1979-1991/> (available at 05.05.2010)

⁵³ Güner Özkan, “ABD-İran Arasında Nükleer Güç ve Güvenlik Sorunu”, *Finans Politik & Ekonomik Yorumlar* 44 (2007), pp. 21-23.

⁵⁴ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996)

⁵⁵ İdris Bal, *Türkiye-ABD İlişkileri ve 2003 Irak Savaşı'nın Getirdikleri*, (Ankara: AGAM Yayınları, 2006), p. 154.

were not on America itself but on the civilization and civil and free nations as a whole for attacking one the cradle of civilization. Bush-the President of the U.S. is provided states with a two way alternatives: “You are either on our side or theirs”. Western countries preferred to be on America’s side and they treated Muslim Arabs in their country or the people thinking differently from their own ideas oppressively and violently.

In the recent periods after the president Bush, the Obama is the new president of the USA, has tried to change this perception of the Islam all over the world. He pointed out with his discourses “new beginning between the United States and Muslims”. U.S. turned a white page with its new president Barack Obama and gave the signals of the transition from hard power to soft power and entered in a period of restoration in the foreign political affairs. As a matter of fact, Obama or more generally U.S. has been striving to restore the “friendly state” image in the eyes of the public which it was really close to losing it may be forever. His first international phone call as President was to Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.⁵⁶ In addition, Obama’s giving his first interview to a Saudi channel-Al-Arabiyya, stressing that America is not and will not be an enemy for the Muslim world and highlighting that he would listen to both sides on the way to solution of Palestine problems and mentioning about cooperation can be considered as indicators that show he will use soft power. He emphasized that, there was no clash of civilizations; he underlined the America’s long-standing benefactor and cultural engagement with the Arab world, and he acknowledged that American actions in Iraq and inaction regarding Palestinian-Israeli peace had undermined faith in America.⁵⁷ In order to be able to interpret America’s aforementioned policies as democratic and peaceful and so as to promise to fight against “all kinds of terror”⁵⁸, it should stand by Palestine and its people. Otherwise, America’s concept of security and defense will prove to be only one sided and determined only by the Israeli lobby. The horrible Israel attacked (31 May 2010) on the civilian ships whose only aim was to deliver the foods, beverages, materials and medical equipments to Gaza and these attacks were bloody unlike what the whole expected. Israel attacked the ships loaded with 600 civilian activists from 33 diverse countries and according to official figures, 9 activists who had no guns and no cruel intentions were killed. Authorities in the Under secretariat of Maritime Affairs made a statement to the press stating that: “Search and rescue region for Israel is 45 miles; however, the attack took place on 72 miles namely international waters. Using the forces of a state and attacking a trade or humanitarian aid relief ship in the international waters is what we call “piracy” in the naval literature.” Israel’s this attack on the ships taking humanitarian relief aids to Gaza can be considered the September 11 of Muslims and this disgrace has been named as “state terrorism” and attracted so much reaction from all over the worlds Now, if U.S. truly favors democracy, independence, freedom and peace in the Middle East, then, its first station should be Palestine and nowhere else. U.S. persistently ignored the Palestinians and favored Israel in the problem between Palestine and Israel. What’s more, it also neglected ever increasing Israeli settlement sites and

⁵⁶ Gregorio Bettiza, Christopher Phillips, “Obama’s Middle East Policy: Time to Decide”, Analysis, 10-15

⁵⁷ Ussama Makdisi, The Tragedy of Obama’s Middle East Policy,

<http://www.juancole.com/2010/09/makdisi-the-tragedy-of-obamas-foreign-policy.html>, Tuğçe Ersoy Öztürk, “Barack Obama İmajı Üzerinden Amerikan Dış Politikasının Yeniden İnşası”, *TASAM*, <http://www.tasam.org/index.php?altid=2929>, (available at 04.06.2010).

almost explicitly encouraged Israel to take over what is left of poor Palestine and it even stated that Palestinians are the problematic side in every dispute. In addition to that, the US has vowed to veto the Palestinian request for membership in the United Nations, at great risk to its reputation in the Muslim world. These are only several of the countless reasons why hostility towards Americans has been mounting so sharply and why there are so big reactions and protests. In other words, new strategy of the U.S. couldn't go beyond creating more and more enemies in the Middle East.

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