

THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL LIBERALISM ON THE WESTERN WAY OF WARFARE

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***Abstract:** Throughout human history, War used to be one of the most serious state affairs, maybe the most important one. Wars that were well conceived and well led had all chances to improve the status of entities, states and proto-states, acting in a “world without rules and without umpires”. Thus, War was used only in special situations, after all other instruments that might have brought the wanted results had been exhausted. And this for a very simple reason – the outcome of a war was most rarely the desired one.*

This vision however changed after the fall of Communism. After 1989, War seems to have become the prime instrument western states resort to, especially the various US-led alliances and coalitions, and now, instead of being used to achieve finite outcomes, War is used to impose political values, in their western understanding, on populations from far-away places, outside the western civilization, in locales like Central Asia and the Middle East.

***Keywords:** strategy; Liberal Democracy; Human Rights; Francis Fukuyama; End of History?*

Introuduction

In Issue no. 16 of *The National Interest*, in the summer of 1989, Francis Fukuyama, subsequently turned into a *deity of political sciences*, published an article declaring the final victory of Liberalism as a foreign policy strategy. According to Fukuyama, Liberalism had defeated Nazism and, then, Communism, thus remaining the sole viable political ideology, the human kind reaching the apex of his ideological development. From this point forth, nothing note-worthy was bound to happen, western-style Democracy would install itself in each corner of the world, and a real *Pax*

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Democratika would gain its reign¹. The gravest problem of humanity would be boredom².

Today, three decades after the publishing of the *End of History?*, its author fears for Democracy's future³.

The fact that of the thirty years that have brought the West from ecstasy to agony, twenty-eight have been marked by the fight, mostly armed, for the spread of liberal democracy and human rights, could not be a simple coincidence. In this article we set out to accomplish two objectives – firstly, to shed some light on thought path that has brought the West to this way of war and secondly, to evaluate this way of war.

1. War starts being waged for unheard-of objectives

The fall of the Berlin Wall did not only mark the demise of the European Communism and of the Soviet Union. It also marked the beginning of an era of unipolarity. Phenomenon most rarely met in history, unipolarity meant that the power at the helm of the international system, the United States of America, had the advantage of not being threatened by anyone, in any area of importance, enjoying a situation of hegemony.

This modification of the strategic situation placed the new hegemon in a decisional dilemma, of which nobody seemed aware. The demise of the former competitor, ideological, economic and military, was apparently a blessing for the US who was free to take whatever measures it considered fit to put more distance between itself and possible adversaries, just like any other hyper-power in history had done⁴. In reality, the US, unlike any other

¹ In his introduction to the 1993 edition of the *National Security Strategy of the United States*, president George H.W. Bush called it "*Age of Democratic Peace*", age that would be led by the US. *National Security Strategy of the United States*, January 1993, pag. ii;

² John J. Mearsheimer – *The Great Delusion. Liberal dreams and international realities*, Yale University Press, New Haven, SUA, 2018, pg. 11;

³ Ishaan Tharoor – "*The man who declared the 'end of history' fears for democracy's future*", available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/02/09/the-man-who-declared-the-end-of-history-fears-for-democracys-future/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.144095b2cb47, accessed on 23.06.2019;

⁴ The term belongs to Amy Chua, who places the US in the hyper-power category, alongside the Persian Empire, the Roman Empire, China during the Tang dynasty and Genghis Khan's Mongolia. For more details, consult Amy Chua – *Day of empire. How*

hyper-power of the past, had a characteristic which, misunderstood, would become an insurmountable handicap – it was a country build on the democratic-liberal values.

Liberal Democracy is the synthesis of two different concepts – Democracy and Liberalism. While Democracy means only reflecting the will of the people in state policies, by voting those who write and enforce the said policies, Liberalism is a political ideology that has at its center the individual and respecting their *fundamental rights*. Even though no democratic and liberal society has reached a logical conclusion, unanimously accepted, as to what really the fundamental human rights mean, these clamored rights can only exist where a State exists. The State is that which gives them substance, recognizing and enforcing them. In the absence of such an authority, the respective rights remain but abstractions, object of philosophical dispute, nothing more.

In their fight against international Communism, represented by the Soviet Union, which could oppose its adversaries only such *hard power* capabilities as mechanized divisions and nuclear weapons, the western powers were able to develop also *soft power* capabilities, by discursively promoting Liberal Democracy, which for the populations under the communist yoke sounded like a nice and very wanted dream, contributing to the further destabilization of the communist regimes. However, in the vast majority of cases where strategic decisions had to be made, these were based on *Realpolitik*, Liberalism playing only a decorative role in international relations.

After the implosion of Communism, the West, under US leadership started to perceive the situation in a completely erroneous way, according to which Communism had not been defeated by cold-hearted calculations – the Truman and Reagan doctrines had instantaneously been erased from memory – but by the promotion of liberal principles. The *logical* action the West could take in this own reality was to embark on an international crusade for spreading Human Rights and Liberal Democracy in all corners

hyperpowers rise to global dominance—and why they fall, Double Day, New York, SUA, 2007;

of the world. In this parallel reality, internationally promoting democracy had a double quality, moral and strategic⁵.

From a moral perspective, leaders of western countries, many of them as far from religion as it got, could live the religious feeling of apostleship, just like the Spanish and Portuguese catholic orders after the discovery of the New World, preaching *the fundamental human rights* to populations who had never heard about something like that, but whose human rights had been violated by dictators, not too long ago the West's allies⁶.

From a strategic perspective, the western political establishment maintained, based only on the very recent history, that a world populated with nothing but liberal democracies will be of an Elysian peace, because "*democracies do not fight each other*"⁷. It would be in vain to detail how nobody gave a serious thought to the way this state of affairs would be reached – would all the countries in the world accept such a system voluntarily, and in case they did not, how much would the interventions cost to implement democratic regimes everywhere?

2. Is this way of strategic thinking good or bad?

In line with this way of reasoning, the West in general, and the US in particular, started to re-consider the entire international system, to see deadly foes in the former allies and to refuse negotiating even highly serious security problems with governments that did not respect human rights and were not implementing gender equality. It is easy to conceive that the new line of strategic thinking has brought neither more allies, nor more peace and stability.

Thus, under the auspices of the new liberal vision, the US and the West make amongst the most disastrous decisions.

In 1996, after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the CIA is able to broker a deal with the Islamist regime in Kandahar, based on which Osama bin-Laden would be handed over to the Americans against US recognition

⁵ John J. Mearsheimer – *The Great Delusion*, pg. 10;

⁶ It might be worth remembering the case of Saddam Hussein, strongly supported by the US during the Iran-Iraq war, suddenly fallen from West's grace after the demise of the Soviet Union;

⁷ John J. Mearsheimer – *The Great Delusion*, pg. 10;

for the Taliban and the development of a UNOCAL project in the Taliban-controlled part of Afghanistan. In a pre-1989 world, the decision would have been quite easy, both parts drawing substantial benefits from the proposed deal. However, in the post-1989 world, the US Senate, lobbied intensely by feminist pressure groups, voted a resolution prohibiting the US Government to sign accords with governments that did not grant women equal rights with men. Thus, the US Senate ensured that bin Laden and his brothers-in-arms would have a sanctuary from where to plan and oversee the execution of the nefarious 9/11 attacks⁸.

A second example of decisions taken under the influence of the democrat-liberal reasoning represented a perversion of the Reagan doctrine. If the Reagan doctrine provisioned for support to any rebel movement, of any stripe, as long as it was fighting a common adversary – i.e. the support to the mujahedin during the Soviet-Afghan war – the new leadership decided they would only support movements promoting liberal democracy and, where these movement did not exist, they would have to be invented⁹. Thus, western support would be canalized towards groups or even individuals, like Hamid Karzai, who had no real connection with the local populations of a given country or power base, but had declared themselves prone to building democratic-liberal systems in the most-improbable places, like the strongly islamised Afghanistan of year 2002.

The international democratic crusade would produce profoundly negative results in two main areas. At the one end, the result was a strengthening of sentiment amongst the local populations that external interventions were implementing puppet regimes and leaders. In the Muslim world, every western intervention for democracy gives more credence to Osama bin-Laden's assertions that the US and the West are dedicated to the eradication of Islam in its pure form, which does not accept man-made laws, laws that are the essence of democracy¹⁰.

Moreover, without being even provoked, the West is putting itself in a profoundly schizophrenic discursive position when, on the one hand, it

⁸ Michael Scheuer – *Marching toward Hell*, pg. 68-69;

⁹ The most influent such current of thinking was *The Bush Doctrine*, developed in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, available at <https://georgewebush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/>, accessed 26.02.2020;

¹⁰ Michael Scheuer – *Marching toward Hell*;

promotes democracy while, on the other hand, it subverts democracy when popular vote does not bring to power liberal forces, which are insignificant or inexistent in these parts of the world. The most telling example is Egypt where the dictatorial regime of Hosni Mubarak, allied with the West, was forced by the Obama administration to abdicate in 2011, the popular vote bringing to power Mohammed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate. Subsequently, Morsi was ousted from power by a military coup led by Abdel Fattah Sisi (2006 graduate of the US Army War College¹¹), who crowned himself president with support from the West¹². Thus, after three years of social convulsions and great costs in lives and treasure, in 2014, Egypt returned to the exact unrepresentative form of government it seemed to have left in 2011, the only palpable result being a strengthening of the public perception in the Muslim World that the West cannot tolerate a government based on Islam.

But, beyond these self-inflicted foreign policy defeats, the West suffers internally, too. The more efforts are being made to implement democratic regimes in place where they have not been locally developed, the need for social engineering comes in direct clash with a much stronger force – Nationalism. This conflict tends to become permanent, the local populations being more inclined to side with the local rulers, however authoritarian¹³. This permanent state of war inflicts on the active state two types of costs, or losses.

On the one hand, due to the presence of Nationalism, conflicts have the pre-requisites to become insurgency-counterinsurgency wars, the costs supported by the counterinsurgent being enormous. Moreover, establishing *a priori* for itself the objective of changing political systems and implementing democracies, the West has self-eliminated the possibility of waging wars for limited objectives that can be realized before reaching the Culminating Point of Victory¹⁴ and, by its own will, but completely irrationally, has assumed an illusory objective that fits perfectly with a

¹¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/05/24/world/middleeast/sisi-doc.html>, accessed on 23.06.2019;

¹² <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/sisis-useful-idiots-how-europe-endorses-egypts-tyrant-leader>. Also, see John J. Mearsheimer – *The Great Delusion*, pg. 93;

¹³ John J. Mearsheimer – *The Great Delusion*;

¹⁴ Carl von Clausewitz – *On war*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984;

strategy built by insurgents who, even if did not have the time to study Mao Zedong's works, have had the time to watch the abridged version thereof on YouTube¹⁵.

On the other hand, democracy itself in the aggressor state will suffer, the respective nation becoming less and less democratic. To the end of supporting the war effort, the government will see itself forced to diminish the civil liberties of its own population and to resort to manipulating public opinion through secrets and deceit¹⁶.

So, it is not wonder the shock felt by Francis Fukuyama faced with data like that contained in Fig. no.1

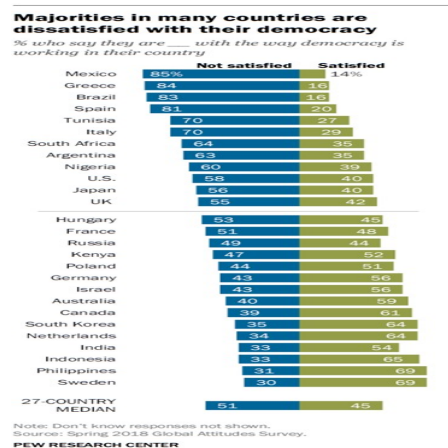


Fig.no.1 – The degree of satisfaction with national democracy in different populations from democratic countries¹⁷

¹⁵ Mao Tse-Tung – *Problems of War and Strategy*, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6o1LviM4U&list=PLpZtIN2QRvzYT4LHk30jfBA3Fnb0Vs-9l&index=12>, accessed on 30.03.2019;

¹⁶ John J. Mearsheimer – *The Great Delusion*, pg. 99;

¹⁷ David Kent - *The countries where people are most dissatisfied with how democracy is working*, available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/31/the-countries-where-people-are-most-dissatisfied-with-how-democracy-is-working/>, accessed on 12.02.2020;

While the attitude towards own democracy of such nations as Mexico and the Philippines is somewhat expected, not the same can be said about countries that started the modern democratic movement, like the United Kingdom, or that perfected it, like the US, countries where the lack of trust in the national democratic system rates 55% and 58%, respectively.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the security decisions have to take into consideration that „we need to use not only observation, perception and sensation, but also thinking, imagination, creative capacity, namely the whole potential available to the person and humanity, the only one which is not degradable. The security concept keeps crystalizing the essential for the things and beings studied, for the objective reality, as well as for acknowledging the phenomena that are connected to security.”¹⁸

Thus, the West’s inclination towards spreading Liberal Democracy is irrational, representing an effort that is undermining itself through the growth in resistance of the target populations, in parallel with a weakening of democratic institutions at home, in the aggressor states. With regards to this way of fighting wars, democratic governments, who feel responsible for the well-being of the entire planet, not only of the peoples who have invested them, are tending to unconsciously assume vague, difficult-to-achieve objectives, fact which makes winning these kinds of wars improbable, if not impossible.

One of the logical steps for exiting this strategic *cul-de-sac* will be for the missionary peoples to return to the basic mission of providing for their own well-being, without worrying too much if there will ever be a Jeffersonian democracy in Iraq or the Sudan. The populations living in undemocratic countries can always rise, tear down political systems that do not suit them anymore and build new, more inclusive ones, just like the Thirteen Colonies rose against the British Crown. Based on the recent history, still on display in Iraq and Afghanistan, *democratic missionary-ism*

¹⁸ Siteanu E., „Objective security”, Annals Series on Military Sciences, volume 11, 2019, Issue 2, page 64.

and social engineering have the worst of effects on both, the target and the activist side.



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