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UNITED STATES IDEOLOGICAL LEGACY IN THE FLAT WORLD

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Abstract:

This article argues change of image of fundamental US principles in modern international relations. While the creators of USA had not had any kind of agenda regarding spreading American values outside the borders of the Union, shift in foreign policy from the beginning of 20th century till today made completely different narrative about US basic principles. On one hand this approach was necessary in the period of the Second World War and Cold War that followed, representing strong ideology of freedom against Soviet bloc. On the other, in American global military and economically overstretching in last twenty years, narrative about US mission in promoting freedom and democracy is no longer accepted as a justification for a number of steps taken in the field of foreign affairs.

Keywords: *Founding Fathers, fundamental principles, US foreign affairs, flat world, democracy*

NOW AND THEN

American state and American nation are founded on a few basic principles which have never changed. Throughout its history, all the way from the War for Independence up till now, the ideology of political system and mythology of US birth have prevailed as the very same narrative. Each president elected called upon Founding Fathers¹ and their ideas and principles that are kept alive in the two vital political document of American birth, The Declaration of Independence and US Constitution. It seems without reasonable doubt that each president strongly believed in those principles and ideals, regardless of differences in the expression of those inherited values. That fact is one of the pillars of strength of the US system and, in a broader sense, strength of American nation. Those principles are rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, representative government, religious freedom, freedom of speech, republican system and the Constitution as supreme law of the land².

In terms of international relations, Founding Fathers were extremely precise about possible involvement in other countries affairs. For creators of US, interfering with other societies was justified only in terms of precise economic interests. Every other relationship abroad had been considered as a threat to heavily gained independence and freedom. In a world of 18th century, European empires were main chessboard³ players in global politics. Leaders of the young nation were well aware that young and fragile republic could easily found itself in the crossfire of their big interests and agendas. At the moment of leaving the Office, George Washington, the Supreme Founding Father, said to his compatriots “that the essence for US should be in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European Ambition,

¹ Founding Fathers is a common name for people who participated in the creation of United States. The most prominent names, such as those of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and Jon Jay are well known as part of general history education. However, to this group of people belong all men who participated in the War for Independence (1765 – 1783) and signed fundamental political documents, The Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation or US Constitution.

² *Constitution of United States*, Article VI, Section 2.

³ Referring the global political relations, Zbigniew Brzezinski created this expression, using it as for a title for his famous book.

Rivalship, Interest, Humor or Caprice?”⁴ In a very similar way, Thomas Jefferson confirmed the legacy of the Father of the Nation. In his first Inaugural Address as the third US president elected, Jefferson said that “peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none”⁵ should be among essential principles of the US government in international affairs.

America has changed since those times. Nowadays she doesn't look like at all to the country established in the struggle against British Empire, after which she emerged as a first modern representative democracy. But, from the end of World War II until today US has been recognized by international community as one of the modern empires. USSR was the major opponent to USA throughout the Cold War. Dead heat of two titans held the world in a fear of final destruction. After the historic Berlin's breakthrough in 1989 and dissolution of Soviet Union two years later, America was left at the scene as the one and only global superpower and probably the last one⁶. USA was left alone and Charles Krauthammer's⁷ unipolar moment took place. Developments that followed in last two decades, however, created an unprecedented odium towards United States. From the relatively acceptable narrative of superpower⁸, the story of US image ended up with the idea of American imperialism and hegemony. Savior and protector of the free world somehow transformed in unloved and sometimes almost hated but inevitable participant of all significant political events and processes, in such extent that even the strongest allies sometimes had been reluctant in supporting US foreign policy. Yet, from the dissolution of USSR, Yugoslavia crisis, Somalia and all the way to the Second Gulf War, intervention in Afghanistan or Iran nuclear crisis - in every situation US leadership relied on

⁴ George Washington, *Writings*, The Library of America, 1997, Farewell Address, p. 974-975

⁵ Besides those principles, Jefferson numbered also “equal and exact justice to all men, or whatever state of persuasion, religious or political; the support of the State governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies; the preservation of the General Government in its whole constitutional vigor, as the sheet anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad”, in Thomas Jefferson, *Writings*, The Library of America, 1984, First Inaugural Address, p. 494

⁶ See in Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard (American Primacy and Geostrategic Imperatives)*, Basic Books, 1997, p. 209

⁷ Charles Krauthammer is an American Pulitzer Prize-winning syndicated columnist, political commentator, and physician. He invented the term "The Unipolar Moment" to describe the world after the dissolution of USSR. He used this term in his well-known article published in *Foreign Affairs*.

⁸ The term *superpower* doesn't always include explicit negative meaning. It does imply exceptional and privileged position in international community (politically and military at the first place), but doesn't have a certain unclear discourse regarding whether the country which is recognized as superpower really is that or not. Considering the fact of two block and tensions between them, the term superpower had a certain positive psychological impact at allies of US and USSR, whenever it was referred to the country on the particular side of Iron Curtain.

rhetoric of the Uncle's Sam obligation and call to be savior, protector and supplier of democracy and freedom.

Story about American mission in the world is not an idea created for the needs of USA contemporary foreign policy. Quite the opposite and unexpected, this idea has long and colorful history. In early 17th century John Winthrop⁹ said that the very first settlers in Massachusetts “shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us”¹⁰. Official history of American exceptionalism was created around this very idea and the lack of this knowledge is common mistake in process of understanding some basic mechanisms in American activities abroad. First puritan colonists¹¹ were obsessed by creating the New Zion, a land of perfect harmony between their religious beliefs and political community. Idea of mission, however, had prevailed through time. US entry on the global scene after WWII as a leader of the free world made this myth globally engaged and ever-present till today. Since the victory of Allied forces in 1945 to this day, guided by deeply rooted idea of mission in the world, United States had started to act like some kind of world government¹², a government with limited authorities but with no risk of reelection. It is necessary to emphasize that US acted like world government randomly, skipping many regions and territories, regarding their geostrategic and economic interests, and very often basic founding principles had been put aside.¹³ In all foreign political engagements of American leadership narrative of spreading democracy and freedom was the leading ideological discourse. Even though all presidents and administrations have relied on the ideological concept US political system had been established on, discrepancies and gaps between now and then are huge and significant. Never before US has been so engaged globally and unpopular as it has been in last ten years. The problem that emerged in the period between 1945 and 2011 is the huge gap between the US ideas about its mission in the world regarding protection of liberty, freedom, democracy and market economy on one side, and the global economic and political reality in the world on the other, including US itself.

⁹ John Winthrop (1588-1649) was a colonial leader and founder of Massachusetts Bay Colony. He was second governor of New England and one of the Boston founders.

¹⁰ John Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity* (1630 on board Arbela), <http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/charity.html>

¹¹ Puritan cultural heritage in US history is well elaborated in David Hackett Fisher's book, *Albion Seeds, Four British Folkways in America*, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1989

¹² Michael Mandelbaum explains the term in his book *The Case of Goliath (How America Acts as the World's Government in the Twenty-First Century)*, Public Affairs, New York, 2005

¹³ In the same time, many actions, like interfering in South American political processes during 70's and 80's were led by everything else than corpus of universal ideas based in the Declaration of Independence.

Founding Fathers, on the other hand, had significantly different idea of leadership in comparison to the manner it has been implemented by 20th and 21st century administrations. American Founders were against political alliances with other nations and reluctant to put strong emphasis on foreign relations. Even today they have almost mythological aura on which American national identity has been constantly revised. There is a kind of ideological and symbolic distance between the Founders and all other political leaders in USA history, the endless barrier, empty space that exists between them and real history that cannot be skipped.

Present day presidency is reversed mirror image of above mentioned. US is so engaged in international relations that idea of backing off seems not only impossible, but dangerous and highly risky. Justifications for many actions taken since WWII, beginning with Korean War (1950-1953) were direct consequence of changed position of United States in international system after the victory in 1945 and growing economic needs in the same time. During the Cold War the main goal of US administrations was containment of USSR and its allies, holding them out of Europe and under most possible control in Eurasia. US permanent military presence in Europe and engagements in South America and Middle East were not in accordance with Founding Fathers legacy. But justification was found in the new narrative which was made on those principles – taking care of republic and rights of man at home ideology shifted towards the mission of protection of similar political systems abroad in the name of rights of man and free world. After the end of Cold War some practices have remained by default, such as military presence in Europe and surviving of NATO with controversial interpretation of Article 5. Some recent US foreign policy objectives¹⁴ are consequences of new political geostrategic and economic changes that took place in last twenty years, such as economic development of China, India, Brazil, global terrorism, Euro-Atlantic integration, transition of former socialistic countries etc... Heavily burdening, confused and overstretching, US presence on the global scene causes more and more negative reactions and growing resistance. One of the reasons for US controversial position in the contemporary world that made fundamental principles not as strong ideological background as they had been before is the process of alignment of the world.

¹⁴ Engagement in Iraq, South American economic development, Iran nuclear program, sensitive bilateral relations with Pakistan...

THE WORLD IS FLAT

Thomas Friedman's¹⁵ thesis about the flat world which replaced Christopher Columbus round world at the first glance seems to refer only to economy. Economic globalization caused by IT revolution in last twenty years led to the third great revolution which has started in 2000 and for the first time in history allowed individuals to cooperate and compete with each other globally.¹⁶ That is so at the first glance. Summarizing his conclusions about global networking of capital, workforce, working processes and technological changes that led to the new economic environment, Friedman claims that winners in the flat world would be only countries which adopt following three principles:

1. Infrastructure (technology) for connecting with the rest of the world
2. Educated individuals who can compete in that world
3. Good management, inspirational leadership¹⁷

Vast number of contemporary political events and processes were caused primarily by economic interests of big multinational corporations and finance. The most recent examples are demonstrations in US and throughout European Union and political changes in several Arab countries. There is no mechanism of media spinning strong enough to explain these phenomena other than question of money that some have and others do not. If you have Google, you are not gated – it is the basic message of Egyptian revolution and clear evidence that the periphery is not what was used to be just a decade before. Arab spring was surprise for the public in developed countries, unaccustomed to see Arabs as politically awakened citizens. Civil protests in Egypt and other countries affected by that process have explicit political agenda, representing breakthrough point in establishing civil societies in that region. The cause of current phenomena in Arab world, in US or in EU does not originally come from the demand for broader political,

¹⁵ Thomas Friedman (born 1953) is American journalist, columnist and author. He is one of the most prominent and influential intellectuals in US, predominantly occupied with foreign affairs, three times Pulitzer Prize winner.

¹⁶ First revolution, by Friedman, came in 1492 with the discovery of America, while the second took place between 1800 and 2000. The first one made the world from large to middle, and the second one made it from middle to small. See in Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat (A Brief History in Twenty First Century)*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2005

¹⁷ See in Friedman, Op. Cit, chapter 2, “America and the flat world (Silent Crisis)”, pp. 250-270 (Translated in Serbian and titled “Svet je ravan”, published by Dan Graf, 2007, Belgrade)

but for economic rights. Political agenda appears as the consequence, rather as mechanism which is necessary for exercise of better economic conditions. Arab renaissance directly has risen from global economic turmoil. Who comprehended whole vision and power of the Web and Netscape in the moment they had been created, he could predicted that interesting times are about to come. Thanks to IT revolution educated young elite in those societies have become leaders of political processes. General awareness about possibilities of better life for ordinary people arises rapidly, even though the final outcome is not clear yet. Many problems and opposite political forces are at the scene¹⁸, guaranteeing only heavy road to law - regulated society.

Simultaneously, economic crisis which affected the western societies, increasing expenses and decreasing incomes of the citizens, led to mass demonstrations, suspicions and resistance towards the their own system they live in. While Arab youth accepted electronic media as a strong political tool, highly developed capitalism of Western world¹⁹ and US especially faces with the boomerang effects of technological development. Internet and social networks revolution had caused particular problem of 21st century that had never existed before - visibility of the huge gap between rich and the poor. Now everyone can see enormous economic and therefore political discrepancies between people, regions and countries. Even though average people in developed and middle developed countries live much better than their ancestors had lived just few decades ago, distribution of wealth has become irritating and unbearable. Millions of people who have to work longer for less and less money, with permanent fear of losing a job, or not having job at all transformed from silent to loud majority. The problem extremely difficult for apprehension is the fact “the communication and transportation revolution not only changes conditions in the periphery; it also modifies the center. It makes center life not only more visible but also more accessible, at least for the spectators. It is less shrouded in mystery, more available for everybody to see in mass media and on close inspection through travel...”²⁰

¹⁸ Poverty, civil rights issues, natural resources, education, religious fractions and conservatism, undeveloped institutions are only part of the list. It would be hard to predict in what direction the processes would go, let alone huge differences between those countries among themselves.

¹⁹The term West in the flat, globalized world lost his economic, political meaning and cultural meaning had during the Cold War. Development of East Asian countries such as China or India and rise of Russia in economic sense made the meaning of the West fade away as paradigm of only developed part of the globe. Every serious attempt to deal with contemporary interdependent world should start with changing vocabulary..

²⁰ Johan Galtung, *The Fall of the US Empire – And Then What? (Successors, Regionalization or Globalization? US Fascism or US Blossoming?)*, Kolofon Press, 2009, p. 181

Problem of visibility in highly developed countries is the fact that majority of citizens have realized their own situation as undemocratic. Crisis in Eurozone is one of the main threats to global economic structure. Massive demonstrations in US, under the title Occupy Wall Street (OWS), are the first civil movement at such extent established explicitly on economic issues. Ironically, it seems that this mass political awakening could be the biggest problem developed countries faced with, because noncooperation and civil disobedience could seriously jeopardize economic, but ultimately political structures. Even though other global challenges are still present „in a highly developed society, the establishment cannot survive without the obedience and loyalty of millions of people who are given small rewards to keep the system going. These people –the employed, the somewhat privileged – are drawn into alliance with the elite. They become the guards of the system, buffers between the upper and lower classes. If they stop obeying, the system falls.”²¹ Economic contradictions which constantly make political problems growing worldwide are discrepancies between growth and distribution of goods, between real economy and financial elite and between high production and pollution with limited natural resources. Being first global economic and political power, USA is facing with those problems simultaneously at home and abroad. In such environment it is highly unlikely that majority would easily accept fundamental principles narrative without actual benefit in everyday life.

While the world was round, United States was not an empire, but only a big country across the ocean. In the round world main chess players on the global chess board were European empires and kingdoms that have been in constant state of war with each other over territories, natural resources or religion. In those times political factors were limited, countable and therefore accessible to deal with. In the flat world, however, United States has to deal with numberless players and factors upon many hot topics, under permanent exposure to mass media and global Internet network. Problem of visibility that had emerged in the flat world considering USA image is serious. Altogether with world transformation from round to flat, the nature of US imperial position has changed itself.

The structure of the power became dispersed but not fluid. The political power is decentralized which is a democratic mechanism against arbitrary power, but problem is that one part of the power flows not only through huge number of political agencies but through global business and financial interdependence. The dispersion of the political power had happened in

²¹Howard Zinn, *The Twentieth Century*, Perennial, 2003, p. 418

such manner that part of the power shifted in the area of economy. The profit of multinational corporations, the biggest American companies and most of all financial sectors are often generators of many political tactical steps. US - China bilateral relations or military industrial complex are just two biggest examples. While the assumption that decentralized power emphasis limitation of government²² is true, the problem with contemporary decentralization, rather dispersion lies in paradox that follows: dispersion did not happen within political area only. High politics partly went into the economy area and the direct consequence of this relocation is an outflow of political power. The title of the massive demonstrations in US - Occupy Wall Street - clearly indicates where the real threat is coming from according to those who demonstrate. The correlation of economy and politics is a basic mechanism how human civilization functions, but acceleration and augmentation of the capital and, most of all, financial sector at the end of 20th century faces the whole world with particular and serious situation: history changing people are not members of political elite any more, but rather of economic centers of power. Reducing and alignment of the world created reverse pyramid of political power at the expense of political structures. Increasing number of politicians resulted in all the less statesmen. And it doesn't have much with personal qualities but with the power and where it is located.

If we compare American beginning and foreign policy agenda of Founding Fathers, we will see peculiar, rather contradictory situation: smaller country and smaller agenda went altogether with greater personalities. USA officially became an independent state in 1781.²³ At the beginning there were thirteen British former colonies united in fragile republic with enormous territory surrounded with European empires.²⁴ But what they had it was political elite and leadership unprecedented in modern history, where one of pledges was “an inflexible determination to maintain peace and inviolable faith with all nations, and that system of neutrality and impartiality among the belligerent powers of Europe which has been adopted by this Government and so solemnly sanctioned by both Houses of Congress and applauded by the

²² First American political thinkers on the subject were two Founding Fathers, James Madison and John Adams. Madison elaborated issue of the ruling of majority as a dangerous in Federalist Papers, especially concentrated on the problem in his famous Federalist No. 10, while Adams insisted on bicameral legislation body as essential mechanism in limitation of arbitrary government.

²³ Independence was declared in 1776 with the Declaration of Independence, and Treaty of Paris in 1783 was official end of the War for Independence.

²⁴ At the end of War for Independence, young American republic was surrounded with Britain, France and Spain on the North America continent. France was superseded by Louisiana purchase 1803, made by Thomas Jefferson. Great Britain remained in Canada and Spain was slowly

legislatures of the States and the public opinion, until it shall be otherwise ordained by Congress”²⁵.

Today, time of the hierarchy in such manner in politics has gone. Power structures are no longer based on up & down model with special emphasis on personality, but rather on horizontal interconnections between political and financial elite, media, international organizations and civil society. Does the pyramid of power somehow lost its top, or is it just upside down and what this change in political discourse really means sociologically? It is not a question of quality of the people. After a long time current US president came to the Office on the wings of change and vision of US rebirth that inspired so many people, many of whom were not only Americans. But just during first term Barack Obama’s administration has faced with huge problems – two war engagements with enormous budget and costs, deadlock in Israel-Palestinian negotiations, economic crisis, WikiLeaks scandal, Osama bin Laden death and vast number of domestic issues, only some of which are taxes, mid-term elections, health care debate and economy crisis.

IDEOLOGICAL LEGACY IN THE FLAT WORLD

Highlighting foreign affairs as a basic area of presidential interest in USA was made by Theodor Roosevelt. Ambitiously seeking for the zone of authority that had not been loaded with attention of US senators, Roosevelt established international relations as one of the pillars of US policy, anticipating future US ambitions outside of Western hemisphere. In his Inaugural Address, delivered in March 4th, 1905 he emphasized that „Our relations with the other powers of the world are important; but still more important are our relations among ourselves”²⁶. Woodrow Wilson inherited and expanded his legacy, with his mission in saving the world from the hell of World War I and his project of the League of Nations. Delivering his speech regarding his historical 14 points, he concluded that „ An evident principle runs through the whole program I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they were strong or weak. Unless this principle be made its foundation no part of the structure of international justice can stand.

²⁵ John Adams, *Inaugural Address*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/adams.asp

²⁶ Theodor Roosevelt, *Inaugural Address*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/troos.asp

People of the United States could act upon no other principle; and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honor, and everything they possess.²⁷

After three not so distinct presidents²⁸, came Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) completely shaping strong presidency as a model which will prevail since those hard times of the depression until contemporary days and presidents. As the first one after Thomas Jefferson as perhaps the strongest president before him, FDR created and confirmed image of US as savior of the world, torch of democracy and unquestionable world power. Historical circumstances in which he found himself, Great Depression and horror of World War II, were difficult and challenging. Upon the legacy of Founding Fathers and Theodor Roosevelt, FDR clearly understood influence of the media²⁹, which he used for easier implementation of economic reforms and political education of the nation concerning necessity to enter the war after the Pearl Harbor tragedy. In dealing with complex task that history had faced him with, FDR used narrative that already existed: “We are working toward a definite goal, which is to prevent the return of conditions which came very close to destroying what we call modern civilization. The actual accomplishment of our purpose cannot be attained in a day. Our policies are wholly within purposes for which our American Constitutional Government was established 150 years ago.³⁰ “And in the difficult hours of this day - through dark days that may be yet to come - we will know that the vast majority of the members of the human race are on our side. Many of them are fighting with us. All of them are praying for us. But, in representing our cause, we represent theirs as well - our hope and their hope for liberty under God.”³¹

Post-war division of the world and establishment of two military alliances shaped strong executive as a paradigm of US political reality. Nuclear and thermonuclear threat made the presidents who came after FDR leaders of the free world, pledged to defend civilization against

²⁷ Woodrow Wilson, speech delivered in Joint Session of US Congress, January 8th, 1918, http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson%27s_Fourteen_Points

²⁸ Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover

²⁹ Using a radio broadcast he delivered his famous *fireside chats* to the air, reaching every single American citizen. Chats were a series of thirty evening radio addresses given between 1933 and 1944. Founders, however, also used media for advocating idea of resistance to the Britain colonial politics. The colonies had a multitude of local publications and political mobilization of the American population toward independence was carried out by several-year long influence of the press. See author's article, Gordana Bekčić Pješčić, *Creation of the United States of America – the first media aided political campaign*

http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/culturaldiplomacynews/index.php?en_participants-papers_symposium-on-cd-usa-2011

³⁰ FDR, Outlining the New Deal <http://www.mhric.org/fdr/chat2.html>

³¹ FDR, *On the Declaration of War with Japan*, <http://www.mhric.org/fdr/chat19.html>

those who would threaten it. In the world where balance of power had been proclaimed for only a few decades, the effective mechanism for saving global peace, forefather's legacy in political discourse again possessed the same inspirational strength because „the world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe - the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God. We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution.”³² The US presidency became something it had never previously been, but the construction rested on foundation laid by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, each in his own way were man determined to enhance the office granted them by a kindly fate.³³

During second half of 20th century together with George W. Bush, with expanding of presidential prerogatives and expanding foreign affairs issues and military engagements abroad, American image has been declining. John Quincy Adams³⁴ prediction about all the dangers of US emerging in international scene as an actor in affairs abroad today sounds as a prophecy. He pointed out that America “well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force.... She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit....”³⁵ Putting this statement into the context of US foreign relations since the 1945 till today, it's easy to make conclusions there is a truth in those words that have been said so long ago. The question is: how the paradoxical twist that never had been wanted actually emerged?

Trojan horse of so-called American imperial position is embedded in the fact that US became global power after the World War II, in the dawn of globalization processes which have

³² John F. Kennedy, *The Inaugural Address*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/kennedy.asp

³³ Stephen Graubard, *The Presidents* (The transformation of the American Presidency from Theodore Roosevelt to George W. Bush), Allen Lane, Penguin Books, 2004, p. 8

³⁴ John Quincy Adams (1767-1848) was the sixth president of United States of America. He was a son of the second president John Adams (1735-1826).

³⁵ John Quincy Adams, *Speech to the U.S. House of Representatives*, July 4th, 1821
<http://www.ffp.org/comment/AdamsPolicy.asp>

led to merging of capital, strengthening and merging many other political systems and factors. In the same time, state apparatus was affected by fragmentation in order to effectively cope with increasing number of goals and objectives. Although accused of numerous unilateral actions, since the atomic engagement against Japan till the Second Gulf War, in the same time US was among the biggest advocates of multilateralism. From Woodrow Wilson's idea of the League of Nations, FDR's Atlantic Charter³⁶, through Marshall Plan and establishing number of international organizations starting with UN, America and her leadership had been always engaged in multilateral processes. Numerous challenges and problems administrations have been faced called for an increasing number of players in American team, simultaneously networking with external factor such were UN, MMF, WTO, NATO, regional organizations such as NAFTA and sovereign counties. United States has always been and still is the main propagator of multilateralism. But considering herself as a first among *relatively* equal, however, America allowed herself to react unilaterally in situations in which she had found her own vital interests jeopardized, justifying all taken actions as her right to protect fundamental principles of liberty, peace and republican values: "Today, we utter no prayer more fervently than the ancient prayer for peace on Earth. Yet history has shown that peace will not come, nor will our freedom be preserved, by good will alone. There are those in the world who scorn our vision of human dignity and freedom."³⁷

Together with alignment of the world as a negative surrounding for US ideological legacy, development of mass media also in a way contributed to that process. Political structures throughout 20th century relied great part of their power on media impact. Their 21st century ancestors on the main political positions, however, altogether with endless options for global media influence, have become collateral damage of the same thing. New, electronic media are not in the hands of power structures as traditional media were and still are in the great extent. Every single person who has access to the Net can be creator of media message and free to share it with the whole world. As much as political elites have been able to exploit traditional media in order to exercise their interests and goals, all other anonymous and individual actors, those

³⁶ Even though Atlantic Charter initially was drafted as an informal statement of two leaders regarding WWII, FDR and Churchill in August 1941, it became a list of goals set for postwar world to achieve. In a year after it was drafted, numerous countries signed the Charter, making in that way initial coalition against Axis alliance.

³⁷ Ronald Regan, *Second Inaugural Address*, <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres62.html>

without political power can use and abuse the very same or even more subversive tools in propagating their individual or group attitudes, interests or just critiques of official policies. Visibility of economic differences is not the only side effect of the globalization process.

Visibility of political actions and decisions represents a sum of several weaknesses of contemporary political systems, two of them particularly interesting: flat world that we live in erased history and created reality without magic of any profession. In a situation of global and rapidly growing access to information, knowledge and 24/7 media coverage everything we surrounded with, even the greatest and serious political events, fast become yesterday news. Democratization of access to the large number of information has created certain overdose of information and too close approach to those who run the world.

Lack of history led to the death of historical personas. History is going *on the air* and people of 21st century are nothing but spectators. Flat world abolished the category of time, leaving only space contemporary world live in. The whole world watched terrorist attack to New York almost in real time, just like we have been watching political revolution in Arab world on daily basis. Everything significant is presented almost instantly and every eventually important person can be seen on TV in all day news. Woody Allen said that 80% of success is showing up. In the terms of serious problems the world is facing with overdose of showing is necessary to self - promotion and concern of political factors to get into the political arena. But in a long run it creates too familiar approach on both sides: from the top to bottom and vice versa. Too much showing up ended in the situation that personalities in charge are not statesmen in eyes of the public, regardless their vision, plans of actions and even results, if there are some. Too close and too fast - there is no distance to the event or to those who manage them. Considering the number of political factors to deal with – its own government, other countries government, international organizations, financial sectors, media, all that makes first people of the country, in US especially but in other counties as well, nothing more than managers of the processes they imposed to. And it's not the consequence of lacking the quality of people, but it has with the flat world. As Thomas Friedman said, "the world has gotten messier and America has lost leverage"³⁸.

³⁸ Thomas Friedman, *Barack Kissinger Obama*, article published in New York Times, October 25th, 2011 http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/26/opinion/barack-kissinger-obama.html?_r=1&ref=thomasfriedman

HOW TO DEAL WITH THAT?

The ideological legacy of American Revolution is unquestionable. If it is not have been the case, whole story about American dream, values and attractiveness would have vanished long time ago. There is no doubt that American mythology and principles are still alive. Faith in liberty, democracy and happiness are still deeply rooted into American culture, and current president confirmed inherited legacy saying “at these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because we, the people, have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebears and true to our founding documents”.³⁹ Problem with the image of America lies in the atmosphere of lacking confidence in and out of US that those values are not engaged in foreign policy any more strongly as much as they had been in previous periods of history.

Yet, even in proclamation of its own principles, USA should let others to “read” that narrative in their own way. Persistence in claiming of exclusive US pretension on those values and principles is irritating. If we all have accepted as a fact that life, liberty and pursuit of happiness are universal rights, than any particular understanding of those three is equally legitimate as any other. All major religions and ancient teachings since the beginning of written history have been searching for the answer of basic human values and necessities. It is fair to say that Founding Fathers made effective system for obtaining those needs. Searching for the best solution, however, they carefully explored political history and theory. They searched from ancient Greece and Rome to Venice, finally realized they have to make the republic on their own, the one which would be perfectly shaped upon basic needs, values and habits of American people. If it was right thing to do, and various spectacular US achievements are the best proofs of that decision, then in the best manner of fundamental principles should be to greet others on their path to better political system. Getting to the end of road is one thing, journey is much more. Founding Fathers were searching and tested republic during six unsuccessful years of Confederation. After half of a century US ended up in the blood of Civil War. US system survived illnesses, but there were some imperfections which have cost a lot. But that was the journey which is; in the perspective of USA history from the first settlers till Obama’s second term is something priceless.

³⁹ Barack Obama, *The Inaugural Address*, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address/>

If we have to define in which direction these trends of flat world will lead the international community and USA as well, the best answer we have to offer follows: very same ideological discourse but different implantation of proclaimed principles. Universal values doesn't need special interpreter with the monopoly above them. There is no reason to suspect that Wall Street demonstrators are not struggling for the very same things written in the Declaration of Independence. On that base the question of democracy also should be seriously reconsidered relativizing its definition only by western model of society. The fact is that „most of the world loves the USA, but not its foreign policy. Change the latter and love will sprout“⁴⁰, because people love to love USA.

Fundamental American principles are basic human values – that's the secret of their attractiveness. Would it be in years to come something similar that president Eisenhower said, contemplating about his own time, in a period of Cold War and massive proliferation of WMD that “this is not a way of life at all, in any true sense? Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron”.⁴¹ Much of this dark prediction, although based on rational and statistical data and facts of that time, could have been avoided in our own time by changing perspective of leadership of rich and politically significant counties at the first place. USA is not the only country which should have to make the shift from the contemporary approach of international relations into something new. But, having the ambition to still be a leader of the world, first step should be made there. It's easy to accept Joseph Nye's prediction⁴² about US as a most influential country in 21st century and that fact, according to him, justifies preservation of current international system. However, flat world could easily turn the whole system upside down in a way that could easily be converted to global threat. Proliferation of nuclear weapons, serious climate changes, economic decline of developed world, political processes throughout less developed regions, growing unemployment, all of that together with the spectacular breakthroughs in science and technology are serious problems of our time.

New age demands new views and new approaches and glorification of US decline is nothing than shortsighted perspective and political illiteracy in interdependent world. Therefore

⁴⁰ Johan Galtung, *The Fall of the US Empire – And Then What? (Successors, Regionalization or Globalization? US Fascism or US Blossoming)*, Kolofon Press, 2009, p. 135

⁴¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Chance for Peace*, April 16, 1953, http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/speeches/ike_chance_for_peace.html

⁴² Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power (Why the World's Only Superpower Can't go it Alone)*, Oxford University Press, 2002

American involvement in global issues should not be considered only as a problem. But in US rejection of learning from history and assumption that everyone and nations as well could always start from the very beginning could jeopardize certain realistic approach in US foreign policy⁴³ in the future. Fast but serious rethinking “what the role of the government ought to be”⁴⁴ should be carefully considered in order to deal with this century problems. Because, “if we continue to think of our government as the policeman of the world and as the Great Provider from cradle to grave, our problems will grow worse and worse and our downward economic spiral, the first signs of which we now witnessing, will only accelerate.”⁴⁵ US should go back to its foundation period and rethinking Founding Fathers legacy in the context of global, interdependent world without conviction that those inherited values have only one interpretation. Maybe the part of the solution is in a new way to embrace *E Pluribus Unum* as universal principle of the same magnitude. That approach is risky, highly complex and tough and political leaders do know that, but unfortunately, contemporary world is not safe place for anyone of us and that is the saddest and most ironic truth of the flat world.

Elementary truth about free and democratic societies is that government should be agency of the citizens. If the people in high offices, however, are only managers of their expensive governments, who then would be statesmen and political visionaries capable to make those visions real? It is impossible for today’s leaders to be at the same time history changing people with 24/7 task in answering the questions from all over their countries and world. When history is made every day⁴⁶, it is almost impossible to determine what is historically significant and what steps are right to be made in order to confirm system of values and principles set up in the days of Founding Fathers. In days of FDR or Woodrow Wilson, no matter what others thought about their actions in particular, all of their allies would had agree upon proclaimed ideas of US leadership. During the period of Cold War, USSR seemed to the West Europe too serious threat not to take advantage of American presence and engagement. If that means that only with real global danger American ideology was accepted as a leading policy, regardless the ways of its implementation, it is about time to reconsider our common historic legacy of recent time. Nowadays even Europe is not always happy to follow USA and there are two main reasons for

⁴³The subject is well elaborated in Henry Kissinger’s *Diplomacy*, chapter “The New World Order Reconsidered”, Simon and Shuster Paperbacks, NY, London, Toronto, Sidney, 1995

⁴⁴Ron Paul, *The Revolution, (A Manifesto)*, Grand Central Publishing, New York, Boston, 2008, p.158

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ The main advertising message on History Channel

that. First one is political developments of European region, breakdown of military blocs, the rise of Russia and integration of EU. All that caused the expansion of purely European interests within its exclusive sphere of influence. The second one is the fact that Euro-Atlantic world is not lonely in running the world economy any more. As Thomas Friedman vividly pointed out, the third globalization that we are living in, is led by non-western, rather, non-white groups of individuals. Huge number of highly educated Indians and Chinese are the source of economic development of their own countries. Multiplied by a huge population and the rate of its further growth represents political and economic power that the world has to accept and adjust.

It seems that acceleration of time in the flat world confirms Fukuyama's thesis about the end of history in one anthropologically dangerous sense: living in the media generated present, our civilization is lacking in great personalities who should be the visionaries of tomorrow. It doesn't mean there are no great leaders and personalities. Quite contrary, contemporary access to education, knowledge, skills and information technologies are most solid foundation for making great people, much more than it was possible in earlier periods. But, political agenda, number of problems, expanding of political factors and media coverage – all together are too difficult to deal with. Something has to be changed in approach to the idea of leadership. People would voluntary follow only if at least two things are fulfilled. First one is overlapping leader's interest with the interest of the followers in significant extent. The other is deep respect of those on the top of the pyramid. International relations rely on the organic connection between money and power, but respect is deeply rooted in anthropology and that fact has to be taken into account. Alignment of the world is also made from the individuals political participants, just by having a mobile phone and wireless Internet. Voting once in a while is only the outcome of permanent political exercise.

Status and role of the US presidency has been changing during the 20th century almost from one president to another. Since Theodor Roosevelt to Barack Obama, US interests, its international position and global political and economic circumstances have shaped and directed each presidency, together with personal specificity of the particular chief executive. American presidency has become overwhelmed by international relations because the list of foreign policy goals has grown. At the moment when economy took over part of position the politics and international relations once held, possibility to have history changing people such as were Founding Fathers is greatly reduced. And this is not a case only with United States but with the

world as a whole. Opposition and critical approach are common perspective from which the public would look and observe members of political elite, especially presidents and prime ministers. Problem with US image is the fact that whole world represents that critical public majority. This is almost unbearable burden for current president and his administration, who inherited so many problems with global economic crisis on the top. His vision and call for change came after a decade of lost illusions, despair and fear. President Obama, like many others before him in the White House, clearly understood legacy and obligation toward history, saying “Founding Fathers faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man - a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience sake.”⁴⁷ According to Obama’s agenda and global problems he has been facing as 44th president of US, seems that his task are as tough as those of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and other founders of the American republic.

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