**Murky American politics posing global foreign policy dilemma**

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The United States of America since end of Second World [War](https://dailytimes.com.pk/369606/second-world-war-veterans-voices-recorded-for-online-sound-archive/) has predominantly led the global politics following introduction of successful Capitalist System, which has been kept in place through IMF, World Bank, Regional Trade agreements, other International Financial Institutions and above all with firm hold in UN Security Council and most potent military Alliance called NATO. In particular, since the end of Cold war and world politics becoming greatly uni-polar, USA’s foreign policy has greatly impacted Global foreign policy with most countries aligning and readjusting, while others attempting to react with lethal consequences. This American free ride on global affairs came to be challenged with emerging China and resurgent Russia on the global scene in the last ten years though; yet nothing has impacted USA Foreign policy more than its own handling of it through apparently maverick handling by the current and last two American presidents. Whether it was leading from the rear Obama or ultra interventionist Bush and Trump’s presidency, the role of congress as for oversight and effective say by the state department, DoD and Langley appeared weak and inadequate putting American morality standards and largely accepted principles at stake; however, some analysts may call it a plan in projected chaos by the deep state for attainment of strategic objectives largely kept in grey shade.Nevertheless, as an obvious consequence, not only America seem to have suffered greater internal polarisation but other countries are also finding it hard to remain exclusively in the orbit of USA, hence the world has seen a lot of realignment of poles in the last decade.

The appreciation of a complex world in fine-grained shades of gray, the recognition of which once indicated an active and fertile mind has given way to a binary world of absolutes

It is a truth universally accepted that a foreign policy community in possession of great power must be in want of peace of mind. Climate change, the Middle East, terrorism, trade, non-proliferation, there is never a shortage of issues and areas for those who work in international relations to fret about. The American foundations undergirding the liberal international order are in grave danger, and it is no longer possible to take the pillars of that order for granted. In foreign policy, failures garner more attention than successes. During the Cold War, the “loss of China,” the rise of the Berlin Wall, the Vietnam War, the energy crisis, and the Iran hostage crisis all overshadowed the persistently effective grand strategy of containment. Only once the Soviet Union broke up peacefully through greater role played by Pakistan, was the United States’ Cold War foreign policy viewed as an overarching success. Since then, the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, along with the 2008 financial crisis and the rise of populism, have dominated the discussion. It is all too easy to conclude that the United States’ recent foreign policy has been a sheerfailure. Washington made mistakes, of course, such as invading Iraq and forcing countries to remove restrictions on the flow of capital across their borders. As misguided as these errors were, and as much as they alienated allies in the moment, they did not permanently weaken the United States’ position in the world. U.S. soft power suffered in the short term but recovered quickly under the Obama administration. The United States was able to weather the occasional misstep in large part because its dominance rested on such sturdy foundations. Its geographic blessings are ample: bountiful natural resources, two large oceans to the east and the west, and two valued partners to the north and the south. The country has been so powerful for so long that many of its capabilities seem to be fundamental constants of the universe rather than coincidence. The United States has had the most powerful military in the world since 1945, and its economy, as measured by purchasing power parity, became the biggest around 1870. Few people writing today about international affairs can remember a time when the United States was not the richest and most powerful country.

At the same time as the international system cemented the United States’ structural power, the country’s domestic politics helped preserve a stable foreign policy. A key dynamic was the push and pull between different schools of thought. A balance was maintainedbetween those who wanted the country to adopt a more interventionist posture and those who wanted to husband national power, between those who preferred multilateral approaches and those who preferred unilateral ones. When one camp overreached, others would seize on the mistake to call for a course correction. Advocates of restraint invoked the excesses of Iraq to push for retrenchment. Supporters of intervention pointed to the implosion of Syria to argue for a more robust posture. For decades, these dynamics, global and domestic, kept crises from becoming catastrophic. U.S. foreign policy kept swinging back into equilibrium. So what has changed? Today, there is no more equilibrium, and the structural pillars of American power are starting to buckle.

On the flip side, regardless of the remarkable consistency of U.S. foreign policy, behind the scenes, some elements of American power were starting to decline. As measured by purchasing power parity, the United States stopped being the largest economy in the world a few years ago. Its command of the global commons has weakened as China’s and Russia’s asymmetric capabilities have improved. The accumulation of “forever wars”and low-intensity conflicts has taxed the United States’ armed forces. To be fair, the hostility to foreign policy experts is not without cause. The interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya were colossalcrumple. No wonder both Barack Obama and Trump have taken such pleasure in bashing the Washington establishment. Institutional checks on the president’s foreign policy prerogatives have also deteriorated; mainly because the other branches of government have voluntarily surrendered them. Trump as a presidenthas governed mostly by tantrum. He has insulted and bullied U.S. allies. He has launched trade wars that have accomplished little beyond hurting the U.S. economy. The repeated attacks on the EU and NATO represent a bigger strategic mistake than the invasion of Iraq. After Trump, a new president will no doubt try to restore sanity to U.S. foreign policy. Surely, he or she will reverse the travel ban, halt the hostile rhetoric toward long-standing allies, and end the attacks on the world trading system. These patches will miss the deeper problem, however. Political polarization has eroded the notion that presidents need to govern from the center. The factors that give the United States an advantage in the international system i.e. deep capital markets, liberal ideas, world-class higher education, have winner-take-all dynamics. Other actors will be reluctant to switch away from the dollar, Wall Street, democracy, and the Ivy League. These sectors may withstand a few hits. Excessive use of financial statecraft, alliances with overseas populists, or prolonged bouts of anti-immigrant hysteria, however, will force even close allies to start thinking about alternatives.

As the 2020 presidential campaign heats up, U.S. politics is getting harder and harder to explain to the rest of the world.In Washington these days there is no conversation or debate about foreign policy; there is only politics. The appreciation of a complex world in fine-grained shades of gray, the recognition of which once indicated an active and fertile mind has given way to a binary world of absolutes. It is not so much that foreign policy was always insulated from politics, but it was often insulated from outrage. That no longer seems to be the case, and we are worse off for it. In such an uncertain and shifting global environment, countries like Pakistan, which are faced with multiple internal challenges and external threats, it is an imperative to follow a multi-vectored foreign policy rather than traditional orbital one, which should be based on geo-economics in the lead for attainment and safeguarding envisaged national interests.

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