

Liberal Democracy and National Security Continuities in the Bush and Obama Administrations

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Abstract

The antiterrorist policy of the George W. Bush Administration established a relationship between democracy and security that implied the limitation of the former as a necessary condition for the achievement of the latter. This strategy led to the diminishing of the basic liberties promoted by liberal democracy through legal means with the putative objective of guaranteeing the 'security' of American citizens. A key starting point of these policies can be found in undercover operations carried out abroad by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Department of State at the beginning of the Cold War. This article focuses on the continuities and ruptures between the official discourse of the G. W. Bush Administration and that of the first years of the Cold War, focusing on the realist and liberal patterns present in those discourses. This leads to an analysis of the relationship between democracy and national security under the antiterrorist policy implemented by the G. W. Bush government, approached from a power elite perspective. The aggressive foreign and homeland policies of the US government were based upon a booming military–industrial pole, closely bound to free market expansionism and liberal democracy as key dimensions in the reproduction of capitalism. Included in this consideration are the 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategies, the Patriot Act (2001), and the Domestic Security Enhancement Act (2003) (or 'Patriot Act II') put in place by the G.W. Bush Administration, as well as the National Security Strategy (2009) established by President Obama.

Keywords

Cold War, foreign relations, liberal democracy, national security, power elite, sociology, US antiterrorist policy

Introduction

The antiterrorist policy of the George W. Bush Administration established a relationship between democracy and security that implied the limitation of the former as a necessary condition for the

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achievement of the goals of the latter. This strategy led to the suppression – through legal means – of the basic liberties promoted by liberal democracy, with the objective of ‘guaranteeing’ the security of American citizens. We find a key starting point of these kinds of policies in the undercover operations carried out abroad by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Department of State at the beginning of the Cold War. These policies were also implemented at home during the McCarthyism period and after its decline became institutionalized in the FBI-headed program COINTELPRO (Glick, 2009). The mechanisms of repression, pursuit, and persecution applied by those organizations were adopted by the George W. Bush Administration, putting basic civil liberties in danger once more. However, those liberties – according to the official discourse – formed the pillars of the ‘American way of life’ and were the same liberties that this government ostensibly fought to extend to the rest of the world.

It is often said that security acquired a central role in United States foreign policy during the Cold War, based on the principles of the realist approach. These principles fell into an ‘apparent’ tension with the liberal or idealist viewpoint of foreign affairs.¹ Taking these trends into account, I will first try to point out the continuities² between the official discourse of the Bush Administration and that of the first years of the Cold War, focusing on the realist and liberal patterns present in those discourses.³ This first instance will pave the way toward the analysis of the relationship between democracy and national security of the antiterrorist policy under the G. W. Bush government. The subject will be approached from a power elite perspective. Our starting point for this analysis is that the aggressive foreign and homeland policies of the US government were based upon a booming military-industrial pole, closely bound to free market expansionism and liberal democracy, both key dimensions in the reproduction of capitalism.⁴

In developing this analysis, I seek to examine facts against discourses to show an important continuity between different administrations referring to a certain idea of national security and a particular concept of democracy. These continuities find their foundation in a historical process characterized by the reproduction of the power elite (Mills, 1978) that has direct or indirect influence in decision making and policy making processes. This implies economic, political and military dimensions, including national security affairs and foreign affairs.⁵ I point out these aspects because we often read about United States government covert operations and intervention in other countries (especially during the Cold War) but it is less common to read about ‘homeland’ covert operations, repression, and pursuit programs (even when this tendency started to change once the Patriot Act came into force). I maintain that foreign policy should not be separated from internal affairs because the articulation between the two embodies the scope of the ‘national security’ concept that has guided the United States establishment since at least the Second World War up to the present.

The US government discourse will be addressed by means of analysis of presidential speeches, archives on the creation of the National Security Council, the National Intelligence Agency and Department of State, and documents related to the doctrine of contention. I will also review the 2001 and 2006 National Security Strategies, the Patriot Act (2001), the Domestic Security Enhancement Act (or Patriot Act II) (2003), belonging to the G. W. Bush Administration and the National Security Strategy (2009) pursued by the Obama Administration.

National Security and Democratic Values during the Early Cold War Decades⁶

At the beginning of the 1930s, the question about the traditional ‘isolationist policy’ acquired great prominence in foreign affairs discussions. Owing to the increasing tension in and between Europe and Asia between 1934 and 1937, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration began to change this

policy (Chiaramonte, 2003: 3). In this context, the validity of isolation and peace as the main goals of United States foreign policy were being questioned. Soon the United States entered World War II and after the war applied the policy of 'containment', a concept proposed by George F. Kennan. In his view, this idea was based upon an economic approach to political problems in avoiding military force. Here is how it was described in a mid-1947 *Foreign Affairs* article:

The main element of any United States policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.... Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points. (Miscamble, 1992: 31–2)

Following these parameters, we can say that the idea of national security acquired a peculiar vitality at the end of the Second World War (Leal, 2003). One of the first speeches to unveil this tendency was the Truman Doctrine. The idea of 'containment' was expressed along with directly linking national security and democracy. Both were seen as inherent characteristics of 'occidental' society as opposed to the communism of the 'East':

The theme of our new approach should be that the security of the United States depends upon our going to the aid of any and all democratic governments.... We are not supporting any country in aggression but we will help them defend themselves. (Truman Doctrine, 1947: 4)

In another document the differences between occidental democracy and communism are clearly stated:

One way of life is based on the will of the majority and stands out because of its free institutions, representative government, free elections, guaranteeing individual liberties of expression and religion, freedom from police repression. The second way of life is based on the will of a minority imposed by force on a majority. It is based on terror and oppression, the press and the radio are controlled, elections prearranged and individual liberties suppressed. (Griffith and Baker, 2001: 202–3)

The National Security Act of 1947 created the Department of Defense to replace the War Department and encompass the US Marines. It also created the National Security Council to advise the president and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Norton et al., 1999: 555). These institutions were empowered to act abroad 'undercover' as it was believed there was 'vital information' for the security of the United States that could only be obtained through clandestine operations. The secret 'intelligence operations' would include espionage and counter-espionage mechanisms overseas, whereas this type of action was 'strictly prohibited' on US territory.⁷ However, this prohibition did not interfere with the practices and institutions endorsed by McCarthyism that were not limited to 'legal' and public operations,⁸ but which enabled 'black operations' at home.⁹

These measures were followed by a rise in the defense budget and the constitution of what was later termed by President Dwight Eisenhower the 'military-industrial complex'. This militarization of the economy was simultaneous with the political militarization of a governmental elite, made up of politicians, businessmen, and high ranking military closely related and with similar interests (Mills, 1978: 16). Thus, military precepts tended to uniformly permeate American foreign policy and this influence in political decisions favored the legitimacy at all levels of foreign relations based on intervention, whether it be military, political or economic, direct or indirect (Chomsky, 1984). This effectively led to the naturalization of the possibility, and even the need, for

direct intervention on ‘certain’ occasions as an option to guarantee and consolidate American national security. In the case of Latin America after the Cuban Revolution, the American government insisted on not being able to ‘afford another Cuba’ as the fall of another country in the sphere of influence of the communist bloc implied a ‘direct threat to the United States’ (United States Department of State, 1961–3).¹⁰

This overall shift in thinking was justified in the framework of an economy that grew out of a military–industrial complex. One of the academic discourses that helped legitimize this practice was ‘realism’ in the field of international relations. This current of thought became consolidated with the Cold War (Walt, 1998: 32) and was based on the following premises: international order is anarchic; the logic of national interest always prevails; interests are understood in terms of power predomination; cooperation among states turns out to be very limited; and the state is the core of international relationships and is considered ‘rational’.

Even though realists enhanced the ‘rational’ character of the states and tried to explicitly divert from moral precepts, I consider that these moral aspects made up one of the pillars of the official discourse. Cold War was ‘sold’ to the American people as a ‘moral crusade’, despite the fact that several statesmen and think tanks in power at that time (such as Kennan, Kissinger, and Rostow) denied it and insisted on the need to assume a ‘rational’ and ‘profitable’ viewpoint on national and international matters.¹¹ Consequently, the ‘threat to American values’ (liberty, equality, property), summed up as essential to the existence of liberal democracy, was directly associated with the idea of national security, which implied both a guarantee of the territorial security and the protection of the American values or the ‘American way of life’ (Barnet, 1973). These values should not only be preserved but ‘extended’ to the rest of the world as well, especially democracy, due to the fact that democratic states are inherently pacific following Wilsonian principles (Walt, 1998).¹²

This conception of national security that tended to meld aspects of realism and liberalism was characterized by a terminology oriented to identify occurrences that posed a ‘threat’ to the order institutionalized by such ideals.¹³ Some concepts such as ‘deterrence’, ‘insurgency’, ‘subversion’, and ‘contention’ were at the leading edge of the official discourse over the first decades of the Cold War. Deterrence implied defense strategies facing an expansion of communism, missile and conventional weapons development, and training and cover for intelligence operations (United States Department of State, 1964–8).¹⁴

Insurgency was defined as ‘the systematic use of violence to destabilize the established political and social order. Coup d’états carried out by military forces, vandalism and spontaneous disorder are not included in this definition’ (United States Department of State, 1964–8).¹⁵ Meanwhile, the policy of containment ‘seeks by all means short of war to: (1) block further expansion of Soviet power; (2) expose the falsities of Soviet pretensions; (3) induce a retraction of the Kremlin’s control; and influence and (4) in general, so foster the seeds of destruction within the system such that the Kremlin is at least brought to the point of modifying its behavior in conformity to generally accepted international standards’¹⁶ (Griffith and Baker, 2001: 305–7).

These notions were present in most of the ‘intelligence estimates’ and diagnoses carried out by the American government on the expansion of communism. The question remains as to precisely which notions allowed a strategy of national security based upon contention and the elimination of the ‘communist threat’ to so heavily impact the discourse of equality and freedom as the main aspects of liberal democracy. A possible answer lies on the danger socialism and communism were perceived to imply for the ‘American way of life’, that from the moral point of view, was conceived not only as the best,¹⁷ but also as the only one capable of promoting a ‘pacific’ and ‘democratic’ world system. Furthermore, the preservation of this way of life was closely linked to the expansion of liberal democracy towards other countries since it was functional to the economic and political interests held by such an order.¹⁸

Effective Democracy and National Security in the War against 'Global Terrorism'

Taking into account the established Cold War relationship between national security and democracy in the United States, I now seek to trace these characteristics in official discourse following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In the US National Security Strategies (NSS) of 2002 and 2006, there are important references to these two concepts. They are still part of the basic pillar for plans to 'guarantee' United States security, carrying forward the fusion between the typical principles of realism (such as security, the importance of the military, unilateral intervention, etc.) and liberal precepts (expansion of democracy, multilateral decision making, pacific negotiation, etc.). It was now argued that as democracies are the 'most responsible members in the international scenario', promoting this system of government is the most effective measure to reinforce internal stability, reduce regional conflict and counteract terrorism (including in the states that support the US strategy) as well as to expand peace and prosperity (NSS, 2006: 1). The concept of 'democracy' is defined as 'effective democracy' that focuses on the procedural formal aspects of liberal democracy.¹⁹ This includes a process of fair elections; governability that implies transparent institutions operating within the law, including autonomous legislature and judicial powers; a strong and independent civil society; and freedom of expression through mass media, contributing to keeping the honesty of the government, the involvement of the citizens, and the encouragement of reforms (US Human Rights and Democracy Strategy, 2006).

The urgency to expand this form of government rests on the assertion that 'United States democracy and its security depends on the capacity to expand this political regime to the rest of the world' (Berkowitz, 2004). In this democracy, one of the uppermost values of liberalism (mainly after the fall of the USSR) has been its very role to 'increase American national security trying to organize world affairs so as to meet the needs of the political, economical and cultural interests of the United States' (Smith, 1999: 179). One of the outstanding aspects of the NSS is, therefore, to maintain the economic benefits deriving from the democratic system (NSS, 2006: 4). Taking this into account, it seems democracy is especially 'effective', in the first place, for expanding the 'free market' doctrine to achieve a better and wider access to the resources of other countries, and it is cheaper than war.

As to the concept of national security, it is clear in following the NSS that terrorism is the main enemy, emphasizing the need for a 'total war' that is bounded neither by time nor by space (NSS, 2002). The core of the antiterrorist policy is 'preventive war'²⁰ which implies attacking terrorism where it is born, 'before being attacked in one's own territory' (NSS, 2002: 15). The justification for this 'preventive' action results from the fact that 'with the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, US security suffered deep transformations'. Today, the environment of security is seen as getting 'more complex and dangerous' (NSS, 2002: 13).

Over the course of the Cold War, several explanations were given referring to 'preventive intervention' as 'an action that should be organized quickly since its purpose was to prevent a crisis before communism had the possibility to profit from this situation' (Plank, 1965: 45). This argument coincides with 'precautionary' advice:

On the basis of a country by country review, the Communists' chances for gaining control of any Latin American country in the foreseeable future seem slight. Yet the same could validly have been said of Cuba in 1957. There is a real danger inherent to the situation and that danger will persist for at least a generation. (United States Department of State, 1964-8)²¹

Such assertions are not very far from the ones that justify recent 'preventive war'. Since there was no certainty about how, where, and who would carry out 'threatening' actions, measures could be taken to 'prevent them'. 'Some conflicts pose such a threat to our interests and values abroad that intervention to restore peace and stability may be necessary' (NSS, 2006: 16). The ambiguity in this type of discourse is not unknown to the US establishment as it guarantees preventive actions inherent to its own defense. But it would not always 'prevent' emerging threats, trying to avoid military actions when possible, and always make it clear that no country should ever make use of prevention as a pretext for aggression (NSS, 2006: 18). It therefore became clear that the US government itself was conscious of the implicit danger associated with the blurred boundaries separating a 'preventive war' from a war waged for some other motive, at the same time strongly suggesting that the only government able to distinguish between 'prevention' and 'aggression' is the US government itself.

Despite the emphasis on the 'new' doctrine of 'prevention', research done by the Rand Corporation (prepared for the Secretary of Defense) posed the need to return to a focus on the strategies of 'subversion' and 'insurgency' to know how to neutralize them (as in the 'contention doctrine'), without neglecting the changes in tactics and resources now available to the 'rebels' (Rosenau, 2007). This coincides with the suggestion of formulating a 'counter subversion' doctrine so that the army and personnel abroad can have access to specific manuals, not limited to mere recipes. That is, a 'new counter subversion doctrine could be used to train US personnel, both military and civilian, but it could also serve as the foundation for country or region-specific manuals for assisting internal security personnel abroad' (Rosenau, 2007: 15).

The enforcement of the logic earlier presented during the Cold War reveals that American foreign policy remained supported by realism. National security and unilateral action were brought to the foreground whenever it was considered that the former was at stake, thus creating an apparent 'tension' with the Wilsonian idealism of expansion of democracy and peacekeeping through international forms of organization. This tension is apparent because the NSS makes evident not only the possibility but also the need to fuse both paradigms to legitimize the aggressive intervention of the American government abroad and to legalize domestic antidemocratic actions.

Counterterrorism Measures within the US State

Intelligence and counterintelligence operations carried out by the George W. Bush Administration were obviously not something new. Although it is clear that this administration had enlarged the scope of those mechanisms designed to fight against 'global terrorism' at home, we should consider previous experiences and policies to contextualize the way in which the American establishment historically performed to guarantee 'national security'. The presence of continuity in this decision making process does not at all signify the absence of contradictions and conflicts. This becomes clearer if we recall that as soon as Bush became president he tried to carry out modifications related to security, but his proposal was rejected. It was only after the events on 9/11 that such reforms achieved national 'consensus'. Thus, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence was created, assigned a higher budget, charged with more tasks and delegated more personnel. A National Counterterrorism Center was set up and further changes were also extended over to the FBI (NSS, 2006: 43).

It was within this framework that the Patriot Act was fostered, an umbrella law that accounts for the 'diminishing' of civil liberties in the US (mainly relative to immigrants) with the principal aim to condemn any type of action associated with national or international 'terrorism'. It is essential here to remember that the fight against terrorism was actually inaugurated by President Ronald

Reagan, who at the same time was the first to explicitly resume in his speeches the Wilsonian democratic principles (La Feber, 1999). Further inspiration was drawn from other counterterrorist norms such as the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996; by the Counterterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996; and by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978. The Counterterrorism Act mainly addressed foreigners, allowing for their 'immediate' exclusion and deportation. It also sanctioned the use of secret information and wiretaps by the designated government officials to guarantee the security of the United States and its citizens (Doyle, 1996). The FISA focused on spotting foreigners related to 'intelligence activities' and expanded the use of wiretaps and electronic surveillance.

The Patriot Act contained norms similar to those mentioned, although any American citizen fell within its scope. Despite supposed care not to discriminate, its target remains immigrants who are Muslims, Arabs or Asians, as detailed at the beginning of the Act's text.²² In Sec. 202, the Patriot Act empowers government officials to carry out a 'roving wiretap', that is, to wiretap any communication that is allegedly related to terrorist actions, and allows the sharing of information on criminal investigations including foreign intelligence and counterintelligence. These types of norms account for the wide scope reached by the measures, since they can be applied to 'domestic terrorism' issues and to domestic 'criminal' action. The concept of domestic terrorism refers to: 'activities that (A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; (B) appear to be intended: (i) to intimidate or coerce the civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.'²³

This definition (like those concerning 'terrorism', 'federal terrorism', and 'terrorist activity')²⁴ accounts for the ambiguity and wide scope of what is understood to be 'terrorist activity', since any 'criminal' action can be considered as such. This expanded definition also stressed the 'global scope' of measures to be applied abroad, without taking into account the sovereignty of other states and the advice of international organizations.

The scope of Federal executive power was eventually widened still further 'to guarantee national security' through the Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003, more commonly referred to as 'Patriot Act II'. The text of this executive document was not initially meant to be published, but it inadvertently fell into the hands of an organization of independent journalists (the Center for Public Integrity) that published it on the internet. It is necessary to point out that as with the first Patriot Act, there was no real intention of public debate. As Bill Allison of the Center for Public Integrity put it, 'perhaps the government was expecting another terrorist attack to enforce this body of new norms' (Jones, 2003).

Most of the measures detailed in the Patriot Act II are oriented toward foreigners and reinforce or enhance the possibility of investigation and surveillance by state agencies, providing even greater access to wiretapping over all types of communications, archives of consumers or any private entities, access to e-mail and phone lists, etc.²⁵ In addition, it allows the identification of foreigners' DNA and the acceleration of the autopsy process and deportation.²⁶ One of the points it dealt with was the 'scope' of the National Security Letters that empowered the FBI and government officials to obtain information without a Court order.²⁷ It was stipulated in the Patriot Act that these 'Letters' would be used in cases of 'international terrorism', but with the amendment by the Patriot Act II, its application in cases of 'domestic terrorism' was allowed: 'The scope of the national security letter provisions on the terrorist side is generally limited to international terrorism; however, the distinction between international and domestic terrorism is increasingly elusive in contemporary circumstances.'²⁸ According to the claims of the Bill of Rights Defense Committee

(2007) these ‘Letters’ were used in emergency situations that later turned out not to have such character. Moreover, the exact number of ‘Letters’ actually used remained hidden from the US Congress. Information collected about thousands of persons – who were found not guilty – was not erased and would remain available for government officials and companies. Adding to these claims, in the first months of 2008, information was published confirming that the CIA was using these ‘Letters’ (*The Washington Post*, 2008).

Even though the Patriot Act II was not legally enforced, the Protection for America Act was. It introduces modifications to the FISA,²⁹ together with the suggestion of extending the functions and attributions of the state security agencies. The Bush Administration intended for those reforms to become ‘permanent’ and in fact, former Vice-President Dick Cheney wanted telecom and information companies to become immune from lawsuits after they turned over American citizens’ private telephone and e-mail records to the government without warrants (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 2008).

The resistance toward enforcing these types of rules demonstrated that the US public³⁰ did not uniformly agree with the ‘false dichotomy’ proposed by the government in asserting the necessity to diminish civil liberties in order to guarantee their security. However, this discourse was quite strong and gained considerable legitimacy because its moral principles were clearer than those that had characterized the Cold War discourse (Eisenberg, 2005). The moral aspects were summed up in the idea that the leading role played by the United States in the world was to guarantee peace and freedom. In his last speech to Congress, George W. Bush reinforced those ideals: ‘So America is using its influence to build a freer, more hopeful, and more compassionate world. This is a reflection of our national interest; it is the calling of our conscience’ (Bush, 2008). When words were not enough to convince the American people, the executive power was ready to impose its decisions, avoiding Congress and public debate as happened in the case of the Patriot Act.

The Power Elite as Foundation for the Relationship between Democracy and Security

How can democracy ‘adjust’ to the needs of ‘national security’? I consider that part of the answer is to be found in some of the aspects that have characterized American liberal democracy since its origins. First, I think that the democratic regime carried out by the American government seems to have been effective in relation to the liberal political and economic precepts conjugated in the capitalist mode of production. Thus, capitalism has made possible a democracy in which formality of the equality in political rights has minimum effect on inequality or on domination and relationships of exploitation in other spheres (Meiksins Wood, 2000: 272).

In the second place, it is worth clarifying that one of the basic aspects of liberal democracy – if not the most important – is the ‘procedure’ implied by that form of government. Joseph Schumpeter (1996) approached the relationship between the political dimension and the economic dimension in the core of liberal democracy focusing on its procedural-formal aspect, considering the electoral process as a competition for votes similar to the competition in the core of the free market system.³¹

One of the characteristics of the ‘procedure’ in liberal democracy is the possibility of representation. Here, it should be pointed out that since the beginning of this political regime the men qualified to be representatives were owners that instead of representing the majority, tended to ‘represent’ the interests of the group they belonged to. As suggested by Meiksins Wood (2000: 251–2), the federalists who founded American democracy saw representation not as a way to establish, but to avoid, or at least partially hedge democracy. Thus, the inclusion of farmers and middle-class

workers functioned as a deterrent for the participation of the lower sectors in the American society. This allowed elites to keep power and control through a 'minimum coercion, maximum legal force and overall coating of patriotism and unity' (Zinn, 1999: 79).

We have already seen the relationship between capitalism and democracy and the specific historical process involved in the consolidation of the discourse of the American liberal-procedural democracy. The elitist explanatory current was one of the theoretical lines that focused squarely on this limitation of liberal democracy, drawing the line of contrast with pluralism³² and supporting, in opposition to the latter, the notion of bonds and common interests among the groups in the top political, business, and military circles that influence the decision taking process (Mills, 1978; Miliband, 1970).

In recent times, these networks of power could be easily spotted after the events of 9/11 when those groups with greater influence upon decision making promoted an expansionary surge of the 'military-industrial complex' and consolidated the bond of the Pentagon with companies supplying goods and services for the war and national security. The invasion of Iraq counted upon the devoted help of Vice-President Dick Cheney, who some years before (1995) had been CEO of Halliburton Co., one of the companies signing contracts with the Pentagon for about US\$7 billion between 1998 and 2003 (Markinson, 2003). Likewise, Sullivan Haave Associates, a company owned by the husband of former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Security and Information Operations Carol Haave, managed to get a contract with the Pentagon through Science Applications International Corp., 'one of the most successful and best politically connected government contractors doing work in Iraq' (Williams, 2003).

A similar case is that of Michael W. Wynne, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, who was president of the Space Division at Lockheed Martin and vice-president of General Dynamics (Serrano, 2005). It is worth noting that Lockheed Martin signed contracts with the US government between 1998 and 2003 amounting to US\$94 billion (Markinson, 2003). Another example is that of Anthony Thether, director of the agency in charge of military investigation in the framework of the Department of Defense (DARPA), who had previously been vice-president of Ford Aerospace Corporation and member of the board of Dynamic Technology (Markinson, 2003). There were more than 70 American companies related to the Afghanistan and Iraq war, and 60 of these companies have employees or board members closely related to government officials, members of Congress, and members of the military elite (Baron et al., 2003).

The big companies not only 'sponsor' war, but also back and finance electoral campaigns and invest in the political lobby. That is how in just six years (1998–2003), AT&T gave US\$9.9 million for election campaigns, SBC Communication invested US\$9.2 million, and FedEx, US\$8 million. At the same time, when George W. Bush started his campaign, he collected US\$4.5 million from 737 leading companies in the defense business (Markinson, 2003). The politicians of the 'privileged minority' that get this support from the big companies make up the group of citizens who are able to run for the presidency and are usually part of the economic elite of the nation. Thus, Republican 'Mitt' Romney, who has a fortune of US\$200 million, allotted US\$18 million in 2007 for his own campaign expenses (*El imparcial*, 2008). Democrat Barack Obama has a personal fortune 'scarcely reaching' a million dollars (Brooks, 2008), but he managed to gather about US\$32 million for his campaign just in the month of January, 2008 (*Clarín*, 2008). Democrat John Edwards, when gearing up his high-profile political career (1997), already had a personal fortune between US\$13 and 38 million (Lewis, 2004). Democrat Bill Richardson, as New Mexico governor, had a personal fortune of US\$3.5 million in 2006. Democrat Hillary Clinton gathered US\$26.5 million for her political ambitions over the last third of 2007 (*Clarín*, 2008).

Another important dimension is to recall how some officials of great influence during the George W. Bush Administration such as Cheney and Rumsfeld also participated in the Bush, Sr administration and, indeed, in previous administrations such as that of Gerald Ford (1974–7). All the while, they were (and remain) fellows of nongovernmental organizations, such as the New American Century, that since 1997 has been devoted to establishing ‘new security patterns’.³³ Another key case is the bureaucrats of the Rand Corporation. This ‘independent’ organization, according to its 2004 report, carried out half of its research studies specifically on national security. Among its ranks were officials of great influence over the George W. Bush Administration, among them Condoleezza Rice (who was a member of the Administration Council between 1991 and 1997) and Donald Rumsfeld himself, who was CEO of Rand between 1981 and 1986.

The Obama Administration

The discourse during the George W. Bush Administration focused on ‘security’, even though it perpetually made mention of democratic principles. What it revealed was a continuity of certain Cold War policies that aimed to fuse realism and liberalism in such a way as to legitimize the imperialist maneuvers of unilateral and aggressive intervention abroad and the persecution and stepped-up surveillance at home. This behavior was based on the link between the CEOs of important companies and high-ranking military and governmental officials. Their relationship played a crucial role in decision making on homeland and foreign policies, chief among them the guidelines concerning security. In this case, the procedure reproduces a system that reaches a climax when legally diminishing the civil liberties of its own citizens, a situation that steadily contributes to weaken the ‘historical legitimacy’ of the liberal democratic discourse.

The victory of Barack Obama, the first African-American president of the United States, seemed to indicate a change in the course of the United States homeland policy and at the same time was widely viewed as a change in orientation at the world level. Most countries in the world received this news with pleasure and the hope was that this change would lead to important modifications in the participation of the United States in the international order. Some compared this victory to John F. Kennedy’s at the beginning of the 1960s (*The New York Times*, 2008).

Taking into account how democracy has been undermined in the United States (as well as in the peripheral countries after the ‘structural adjustment’ of the 1990s), Obama’s victory certainly seemed to change the pessimistic image that this democracy projected by reassuring that ‘yes, we can’ – that democracy actually exists and that it is through democracy that great changes can be generated. This kind of reading failed of course to question the basis and very foundation upon which American democracy rests and its capacity to legalize and legitimize inequality between classes. In this sense, we benefit from Chomsky’s view that notwithstanding the fact that Obama is an African-American, and without trivializing a great achievement of racial vindication in the United States signified by his successful presidential campaign, it does not change the fact that Obama emerges from the same background as any individual from the upper middle-class, Harvard educated, privileged white elite. Indeed, he achieved huge financial support from big business to carry out his campaign. All of this essentially qualifies him as belonging to a privileged minority (Valenzuela, 2008). Even if Obama actually intended to carry out substantial reform, the system ensures that his performance would be limited by the webs of power knitted between the public and private sectors. That is why we consider it a matter of some consequence when Argentine theorist Borón (2008) states that there is a difference between ‘reaching government’ and ‘reaching power’.

It is in the foreign policy arena that these limitations are most rapidly perceived because the continuities in this field 'are imposed by a set of power factors and internal and external phenomena that limit the capacity of action and innovation of a person with power despite his/her being the president of the United States' (Tokatlián, 2008). Even from as strictly liberal a viewpoint as the one exposed by Escudé (2008), it was suggested that believing that this democrat candidate is less pro-war than his republican opponent would be simply naïve. 'If Obama suggests a 16-month deadline to leave Iraq, it is to dispatch more troops to Afghanistan.' Indeed, many argued early on that his standpoint as far as the military intervention in Pakistan was more daring than his Republican opponent McCain.

The analysis of Obama's victory was largely centered – as already mentioned – on his status as an African-American and on the change this implies by itself both at the national and international levels. His being a Democrat is also perceived as positive, since Democrats are often associated with less pro-war policies than the Republicans. However, very little attention was paid to how Obama managed to become a candidate, that is, how he got financial support to get to the primaries and to win over Hillary Clinton. Indeed, the power networks underlying the electoral campaigns have still not been fully considered, despite all that this signifies in the United States. Still less attention has been paid to the significant continuities with the Clinton staff and even with members of the George W. Bush Administration.

Concerning the alleged ruptures³⁴ between the current and former administrations, we can mention, first, the pronouncement in favor of the recovery of the civil rights that have been threatened since the enforcement of the Patriot Act and the amendments to the FISA (Organizing for America, 2008), promoting greater security concerning personal data, and granting greater authority to the Civil Rights Board so that it can work without pressure. This has included the investigation of torture cases performed by the CIA, fostering discussion about the validity of this method (ABC, 2009a).³⁵ Another modification is centered – according to official information – on the fact that the government would be making greater efforts to achieve better security at the borders (White House Agenda on Homeland Security, 2009).

If we take into account the Overview of United States of America's National Security Strategy (Jackson, 2009), we can see in this document that one of the key sentences (within the analysis of the previous strategies) justifies the Bush Administration guidelines: 'In light of the many dangers which the United States faces, the previous administration sacrificed some liberties in the name of security. This sacrifice was often deemed necessary to ensure our common security' (Dorn, 2009: 139).

However, Dorn (2009: 142) suggests that this should be changed, and recommends as long-term goals the need to effectively balance security and liberty, restore US global credibility, and increase multilateralism by adhering to international law and norms. This same author further states:

The USA Patriot Act, which was enacted in 2001 following the terrorist acts of 9/11, has done more to diminish civil liberties in the United States than any other piece of legislation before or since.... The FISA allows government agencies to use wiretapping and surveillance of communications on these foreign powers with a warrant from a special FISA court.... The FISA Amendment Act (FAA), signed in on July 10th, 2008, came as a compromise to the Bush Administration's desire to continue the warrantless wiretapping program. (Dorn, 2009: 150–2)

However, Dorn then expresses regret about the previous statement and the critical comments about the Patriot Act that he had appeared to make:

To scale back to a time when all wiretapping had stringent restrictions would not only be unrealistic but would almost definitely hurt our security. The ideals of many policies are correct. We must find a way to discover terrorists and their plans within our borders, and monitoring their communication is one of the most effective ways to do this. (Dorn, 2009: 155)

As far as US foreign policy is concerned, the decisions and actions of the Obama Administration are not necessarily ‘changes’. Considering again the Overview of United States of America’s National Security Strategy (Jackson, 2009), it is crucial to point out that this document starts by saying:

America is at war ... because of the terrorist menace, it would be necessary to revisit the Cold War strategies of containment and deterrence while focusing our efforts on intelligence gathering and law enforcement directed toward rooting out an enemy that does not respect the traditional rules of warfare. (Jackson, 2009: 7–8)

It is also mentioned that:

The maintenance of stability in the Middle East has been a national security priority for the United States. Long time objectives have been to ensure the unobstructed flow of fossil fuels to world energy markets.... (Jackson, 2009: 25)

So terrorism is still the enemy, and even though Obama’s establishment identifies itself with a liberal and democratic approach towards international relationships, the fact is that:

democratic reforms ought not to be mandated a necessity for receiving US counterterrorism aid.... We do not view democracy as inversely proportioned.... If forced to choose between democratic reform and providing assistance to combat operationally capable terrorist organizations, the United States – while in support of both – should choose the latter. (Jackson, 2009: 48–9)

Many specialists would argue that the foreign relations strategies are mainly based on ‘soft power policies’. But the truth is that soft power policies do not and will never realistically eliminate the need for military force to be employed in some circumstances (Ellzey, 2009). ‘While a shift towards demilitarized foreign relationships may be on the horizon it is important not to completely sacrifice the capabilities of the US military in order to keep the United States secure and retain the ability to engage hostile actors that cannot be swayed by soft power policies’ (Ellzey, 2009: 114).

We consider that these continuities can in part be explained by the presence of former government members in crucial positions: Hillary Clinton serving as Secretary of State; Rahm Emmanuel serving as Obama’s first Chief of Staff before stepping down – he was a Senior Adviser to Clinton’s Administration; Susan E. Rice, the new United States Ambassador to the United Nations, worked for eight years for Clinton’s government; Lawrence Summers as Obama’s National Economic Council Director – he was Treasury Secretary under Clinton (1999–2001) and later was president of Harvard University for five years; Janet Napolitano as United States Secretary of Homeland Security – she was United States Attorney for the District of Arizona under Clinton’s government; Gregory B. Craig as Obama’s White House Counsel – he was State Department Director of Policy Planning under the Clinton Administration; Carol M. Browner as Obama’s Director of the Office of Energy and Climate Change Policy – she was the Director of the Environmental Protection Agency under Clinton; Peter Orszag as Obama’s Director of the Office of Management and Budget – he was Clinton’s Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy (1997–8) and Senior

Economist and Senior Adviser on the Council of Economic Advisers (he was also a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution (*The New York Times Magazine*, 2009)). Many other staff consisted of academics from the most important universities in the United States and politicians from the Democratic Party.

The most telling continuities, however, were those positions in government regarding security and defense, some held by very influential officials of the George W. Bush Administration: Robert Gates was Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush and Barack Obama. He was also CIA director under the George H. Bush Administration and was a member of the Security Council for nine years. Donald Winter served as Secretary of the Navy under George W. Bush and Barack Obama. He was CEO at Northrop Grumman, one of the most important clients of the Pentagon (UPI, 2009). Pete Geren served as United States Secretary of the Army for both Obama and George W. Bush. Michael Donley served as Obama's Secretary of the Air Force and back in 2005 he had been appointed by Donald Rumsfeld to be Director of Administration and Management for the Department of Defense's Washington headquarters that included the Pentagon (UPI, 2005). The continuity of some officials in their offices does not necessarily mean that they are unwilling to carry out different policies, but it does suggest that a major change in direction is not very feasible,³⁶ something that should surely be taken into account, since these officials are in the field of security and defense and the United States remains the largest military power in the world (Rothkopf, 2008).³⁷

On the other hand, the fact that these officials are at the same time directly related to nongovernmental organizations is a pattern that repeats itself (as mentioned in the case of the RAND Corporation). For instance, John Podesta, an adviser to the Obama Administration, is also president of the Center for American Progress. Melody Barnes and Denis McDonough are part of this Center as well; the former is Director of the Domestic Policy Council for the Obama Administration and the latter is currently Deputy National Security Advisor (ABC, 2009b). It is interesting to add that Rudy de Leon, former Deputy Secretary of Defense (2000–1) and former CEO of Boeing is now Senior Vice President of National Security and International Policy at the Center for American Progress in Washington (Center for American Progress, 2009).

We can also highlight the bond with big companies in the careers of others, such as Rudy de Leon, just mentioned. Obama's former National Security Advisor, James L. Jones, who was part of the Marine Corps for over 40 years, served as a Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. Later in 2007, he was part of a special group sent by George W. Bush to Iraq to guarantee security in the Middle East. Jones collected more than US\$1.1 million in fees for his management of firms that included some, such as Boeing and Chevron, that had contracts with the Department of Defense. Another example of the bond with big companies would be David Lipton, currently special assistant to President Obama in the National Economic Council and the National Security Council. Lipton in 2008 received a bonus of US\$1.275 million from Citigroup in addition to his US\$225,000 income as manager of the Global Country Risk Group (ABC, 2009b). Likewise, there are many direct bonds to be highlighted with international financial institutions: United States Secretary of the Treasury Timothy F. Geithner was Senior Official of the IMF (2001–3); Lawrence Summers, Obama's former Director of the National Economic Council, was formerly the Chief Economist of the World Bank.

Conclusion

Taking this information into account, we state that even though there was a change in the discourse by Obama's establishment, we find many policies that continue George W. Bush Administration

proposals for national and foreign affairs. Initial proof of this is the continuity of certain influential individuals. This group of people form part of the US power elite, directly or indirectly influencing decision making in the web of interests³⁸ that maintain and support the link between democracy and capitalism in the United States. This makes it highly improbable that the Obama government will effect 'structural change'.

The issue of the power structure in the United States of course goes beyond Obama and Bush. It is a structure that has been legitimized by different institutions, being the government of the United States and its agencies primarily, but also multilateral organisms and even nongovernmental organizations that harbor former influential officials and former CEOs. We understand the link between public and private institutions and influential individuals from the viewpoint of the power elite, that is, the web of affiliations linking the government, the military, and big business leaders, as we have already mentioned. This conception implies linking the development of the capitalist system with the institutions, groups, and individuals that 'from above' legitimize these institutions.³⁹

Notes

1. Considering the main currents in the field of international relations, liberal thought argues 'that economic interdependence would discourage states from using force against each other because warfare would threaten each side's prosperity. A second strand, often associated with President Woodrow Wilson, saw the spread of democracy as the key to world peace, based on the claim that democratic states were inherently more peaceful than authoritarian states' (Walt, 1998: 32). This perspective also conveniently included the creation of international organizations oriented to help the states choose cooperation and pacific options instead of using force. On the other hand, we find the 'realist' approach to international relationships, which 'depicts international affairs as a struggle for power among self interested states and is generally pessimistic about prospects for eliminating conflict and war' (Walt, 1998: 31). Usually, the liberal approach is associated with democrat administrations, while the realist viewpoint seems to orient republican and conservative administrations. Even though this labeling appears too simple (and after much discussion), we only want to highlight that during the Cold War realism was the dominant theoretical tradition approach.
2. As we try to develop a critical approach to facts and processes, we need to clarify why we do not pay attention to ruptures, which are crucial to Marxist dialectic, as Cox (1981) reminded us. This warning conveys the fact that pointing out continuities could lead us to turn conflicts invisible; however, this is not our intention. We focus on continuities because we understand that in its last months the Bush Administration found itself becoming 'demonized' (owing to the Iraq war and the Patriot Act at home) by a media that was scarcely attempting to be objective. Even though those policies had put civil rights in danger and went beyond international organizations in foreign affairs, they were not new at all if we consider the 'way of doing things' of the United States government. We also consider that this way of 'demonizing' George W. Bush helped to whip up an extremely positive image of Barack Obama.
3. After the fall of the Soviet Union, in the field of international relations, realism and liberalism became targets of the critics, which allowed the growth of new approaches, such as constructivism, which tries to investigate the complexity of the historical processes, identities, ideas, and discourses that shape international relationships, which means that the state is not the only agent in this process (Walt, 1998: 40–1). However, taking into account the current discourses and the practices that shape United States foreign policy, we realize that they are still colonized by a kind of 'mixture' between liberal and realist principles oriented to legitimize the discourses and actions carried out by the government.
4. This line had been developed in the works of Lenin and Luxemburg, resumed by neo-marxists such as Baran and Sweezy (1974); the Imperialism studies done by Williams (2007), La Feber (1999), and Kolko (1968); and the Dependency School intellectuals, such as Caputo and Pizarro (1975), and Dos Santos (1972, 1975). A critical approach towards liberal democracy also was developed by Mills (1978), Chomsky (1984, 2004) and Meiksins Wood (2000).

5. When we point out the characteristics that remain along a historical process, we are also taking into account the modifications that happened within a singular structure. That is why we find it pertinent to recall the concept of 'historical structure' that implies a particular combination of thought patterns, material conditions, and human institutions which has a certain coherence among its elements. These structures do not determine people's actions in any mechanical sense but constitute the context of habits, pressures, expectations, and constraints within which actions take place (Cox, 1981: 135).
6. Within a wider conception of the Cold War, it could be said that it was the product of the confrontation between two contradictory and antagonistic social-economic systems (Capitalism vs. Communism) and was characterized by the fight at the diplomatic, political, military, and economic levels. Its causes were related to the post-war development as well as to the rising power of the powerful nations involved, and with complex situations at home both in the USSR and the United States (Pozzi, 2003: 14–19). There are different interpretations about this period in the contributions of the following authors: Gaddis (2003), Schlesinger (1990), Williams (2007), La Feber (1999), Sweezy and Magdoff (1972), and Leffler (1999).
7. In a Department of State document the suggestions are present as follows: '3. That such an agency should be prohibited from carrying on clandestine activities within the United States and should be forbidden the exercise of any police functions either at home or abroad.... 6. That this agency, as the sole agency for secret intelligence, should be authorized, in the foreign field only, to carry on services such as espionage, counter-espionage and those special operations (including morale and psychological) designed to anticipate and counter any attempted penetration and subversion of our national security by enemy action. (Office of Strategic Services, 1945)
8. Some of the legal measures were enabled by the Smith Act of 1940 and the McCarran Act or Internal Security Act of 1950. Some of the crucial institutions that characterized McCarthyism were 'the loyalty review boards' in federal, state, and local governments, and also private investigations carried out for small and big corporations that were worried about the presence of communists in their staffs. In the Congress, the primary bodies that investigated communist activities were the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, and the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. These constitutional organisms carried out illegal and covert operations, including black lists, persecution, illegal means to collect information, etc. E. Hoover, who had been FBI Director in the 1920s, organized the COINTELPRO program in the mid-1950s to carry out illegal operations to collect information, having as a main target the activists of social movements during the 1960s. COINTELPRO implemented the mechanisms that the CIA and the Department of State applied in foreign operations, as 'black operations' and 'psychological warfare', which included false media stories, bogus leaflets, pamphlets and other publications, forged correspondence, anonymous letters and telephone calls, pressure through employers, landlords and others, tampering with mail and telephone service, and so on (Glick, 1989, 2009). In accordance with information collected by Brian Glick, COINTELPRO was still working during the 1980s and the 1990s (Glick, 2009). See: <http://what-reallyhappened.com/RANCHO/POLITICS/COINTELPRO/cointelpro.html>.
9. The 'black operations' show us the articulation between the internal and the foreign policies, both oriented toward the same objective, 'national security'. Harry Rositzke, retired chief at the CIA, stated in his book that: 'During the fifties these covertly sponsored activities sounded many of the themes that permeated American official and unofficial propaganda. Politics was reduced to a simple black-and-white formula of East or West, slavery or freedom.... [para.] In the late fifties, and during the sixties, as the American propaganda effort shifted to the third world, this simple general line had to be tempered for the new non-capitalist audiences. (Glick, 1989)
10. Document 76.
11. From a critical approach, even the prevailing currents of 'neo-realism' and 'liberal-internationalism', that were meant to overcome simplistic realist perspectives, are also trapped in the 'moral principles' and the normative elements, even when they have criticized realism because of that (Cox, 1981: 130–2).
12. W.W. Wilson's (1913–25) postulates can be summarized as follows: the nations would be better formed if they could be autonomous and democratic; a politically plural world would tend to be economically open, anti-imperialist, economically interdependent, and politically plural; a world order would call for

the creation of international organizations without precedent in history that would have peace keeping as their main goal (Smith, 1999: 174). As Wilson's contemporary, Lenin (1972[1917]: 163) held, the foreign policy of conquest in American imperialism was concealed by Wilson and his followers by means of false demagogic concepts such as 'democracy' and the 'League of Nations'. He also stated 'Wilson's idealized democratic republic eventually became the wildest form of imperialism, the most shameless oppression and crushing of the weakest and smallest peoples'. Along this line, La Feber (1999: 266–8) holds that the challenge lies in elucidating whether Wilson's pro-democratic policies were actually democratic or merely oriented toward paving the way for the expansion of capitalism.

13. Schlesinger, in his famous essay 'The Origins of the Cold War' published in 1967 (Schlesinger, 1990: 195, 215), asserted that American external policy during the first decades of the Cold War merged the realist approach with liberal principles to confront the Soviet pressure oriented to divide the world into 'spheres of influence'. From our point of view, however, we think that for the US government to legitimate – throughout the 'free world' – its imperial practices, it was not enough to rely upon the 'national security' argument. Liberal democracy was crucial to that aim, as it was presented as a complement to realist principles of security. Moreover, this is clear in the statement that 'democratization' contributed to the 'stabilization' of societies (Gaddis, 2003: 94).
14. Document 24.
15. Document 38.
16. National Security Paper no. 68. It is important to highlight that Williams (2007: 179) asserted that this document embodied the imperialist essence of the foreign policy of the United States.
17. This is related to the 'American exceptionalism' that is based on 'a deep and long faith in the "singular" character, without "precedents" and "unrepeatable" of the United States and its mission as an exceptional democracy' (Hoffman, 1988: 16). We also recommend Busso (2008).
18. The problem was that the only possible definition of 'democracy' was the one that was provided by the United States government, which implied imposing this definition to the world's 'free countries'. This was particularly clear in Latin America between 1950 and 1970, when different governments tried to carry out democratic policies based on income redistribution, nationalization of natural and energy resources, and the expropriation of foreign capital. Apparently this was not the 'idea' the United States government had about democracy, so with the help of local powerful elites, the overthrow of democratically elected presidents such as Arbenz in Guatemala (1954), Goulart in Brazil (1964), and Allende in Chile (1973) was carried out. Most of its interventions were justified in the name of the 'national security' of the United States. The actions toward the governments that we have mentioned above were taken to deal with the 'communist menace' that was apparently extending over Latin America (even though Arbenz, Goulart, and Allende did not call their governments 'communist'). The main argument for direct or indirect intervention – overt or covert operations – in the internal affairs of Latin American countries was based on the need to guarantee national security and the 'national interests' (of the United States).
19. This concept will be described under the heading of elite, democracy, and security.
20. The characteristic of 'prevention' is that it can be applied against any dissidence, as insignificant as it appears to be, as it constitutes a danger and the possibility of a future war (Ceceña, 2004).
21. Document 24.
22. 'Sense of Congress condemning discrimination against Arab and Muslim Americans. (b) Sense of Congress. (It is the sense of Congress that) (1) the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans, including Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and Americans from South Asia, must be protected, and that every effort must be taken to preserve their safety; (2) any acts of violence or discrimination against any Americans be condemned; and (3) the Nation is called upon to recognize the patriotism of fellow citizens from all ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds' (Patriot Act, Title II, Sec. 201).
23. Patriot Act, Title VII, Sec. 802.
24. Refer to: Patriot Act (2001) Title IV, Sec. 411.
25. Domestic Security Enhancement Act, Title I, Sec. 101, 102, 105, 107.
26. Domestic Security Enhancement Act. Title I, Sec. 127, Title III, Sec. 129.

27. 'In substance, National Security Letters are administrative subpoenas that may be issued by FBI officials, or in some instances other authorized government officials, to obtain specified types of records or information for use in national security investigations...' (Domestic Security Enhancement Act. Title I, Sec. 129).
28. Domestic Security Enhancement Act, Title I, Sec. 129.
29. To get more information on FISA modifications see the official page on 'Homeland Security': <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/homeland>.
30. There are several organizations that were against the internal policy of the George W. Bush Administration: American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Center for Public Integrity, Info-War, Electronic Privacy Information Center, et al.
31. According to this author: 'democratic method is that institutional system to achieve political decisions, in which individuals acquire power by competing to get the vote of the people' (Schumpeter, 1996: 345). This idea is complemented with the assertion that: 'The procedures to make up trouble that are found in worship, public opinion and public will are similar to those used in commercial advertising' (Schumpeter, 1996: 336).
32. Pluralism holds that the political system is made up of numerous opposing groups that try to influence the decision making process and that the government is guided by the interest of everyone and not only by a group or alliance of groups (Evans, 1997: 237).
33. George W. Bush's proposal, as unveiled by the terms of defense and security he presented just as he was being inaugurated as president, is similar to what appears in an article of The New American Century organization, entitled 'Rebuilding America's Defense'.
34. We understand ruptures as those political decisions or policies that tend to make differences between the current administration and the former, and in this specific investigation, we are particularly focused on the relationship between foreign and homeland policies of the United States.
35. Even though the decisions mentioned are a step forward in terms of democratic principles, it is important to highlight that it is impossible to compare the policies on homeland security of the current administration to the homeland security policies of the George W. Bush government, since the main problem Obama faces is the economic and financial crisis and not 'global terrorism', as it was called by the George W. Bush Administration.
36. The participation of the same individual in different public and private institutions (at the same time or at different moments) does not mean that there is always a continuity of interests, that is, if an official belongs or had belonged to an influential nongovernmental organization or company this does not imply that he or she is always transferring the interests of those institutions to the government (and vice versa); but this link can often guarantee the contact between institutions, strengthening the net among them.
37. This ex-official of Clinton's Administration, citing the International Institute of Peace Investigations (Stockholm), states that from the total budget of defense spending of all the governments around the world of US\$1.2 trillion in 2006, US\$529 billion dollars (almost half) were spent by the United States (Rothkopf, 2008: 257).
38. For a graphic example, refer to http://www.muckety.com/Query?SearchResult=8565&SearchResult=91847&graph=MucketyMap?_r=2D.
39. Following Cox's (1981: 136) statement, we understand institutionalization as 'a means of stabilizing and perpetuating a particular order. Institutions reflect the power relations prevailing at their point of origin and tend, at least initially, to encourage collective images consistent with these power relations.'

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