

THE VALUES AND MYTHS OF MODERN SOCIETY IN THE USA

PETR SUMKIN*

During the last decade important changes have happened in the global structure of world politics. The collapse of the USSR was one of the main reasons for this process, which also led to a decay of the bilateral system of relations and redefinition of strategic interests of world leading countries.

The destruction of the USSR put a final end to the Cold War, however it couldn't prevent the development and expansion of the military interests of the USA, because it was the only country, which possessed a powerful political and military potential. The USSR had been a very dangerous opponent during many years, and its collapse formed a curious situation: the US had no enemy and this produced a vacuum in values and norms, because there wasn't any stimulus to develop its nuclear forces, anti-ballistic missile system etc. But the vacuum couldn't last long and one of the main purposes of the new American government was to fill the vacuum with new values, which would be useful for government foreign policy. Probably, that's why I consider this process to be very interesting to investigate and understand what the main values of modern American society are and how much the last decade has influenced on them.

From the very beginning the USA tried to spread its influence and political model in other countries, American democracy proclaimed itself the best one and this laid the foundation for shaping a new chain of values in the consciousness of a typical American: 'Our country is the best one', 'Our democracy is the best one', 'Our country is an example for the whole world to follow' and 'We have a right to develop our democracy everywhere'. This was the start of an active expansion of the foreign policy of the USA.

* Petr Sumkin is a student at MGIMO

In 1990 the vice-secretary for European relations J. Dobbins stated in the Congress that the NATO was necessary in Europe and hadn't lost its role since 1949 when the alliance had been created. He defined the US as the key member of the organization, because without any control European states would go back to their 'bad behavior', old military games and alliances.

The inheritance of Truman's politics and its success was perceived as the main idea of American foreign policy. Much attention was paid to the words of State secretary Acheson (1947), that building of a successful system of international relations is impossible without the USA and creation of the system must become the purpose of American leadership. That's why all efforts to change the US foreign interests show disability of those, who try to do it, to understand the values of American policy, which are much more important than the confrontation with the USSR.

S. Huntington, commenting on the problem, stated that the US develops contradictory policy, playing the role of the world hegemony, which possesses all democratic values, but actually working in its own interests, indeed. In his work, Huntington proved that the US foreign policy can be characterized as unfair :

Forced introduction of American values and political institutes into the culture of other countries

Strong resistance to the military development of other countries so, that they mightn't be able to compete with the USA, although NATO doesn't guarantee security of independent states

Breaking the principles of state sovereignty, intervening in international conflicts of independent states, the USA promotes its interests, while declaring free trade

The US also exerts pressure on the policy of the IMF and economic and strategic preferences of independent states making them favorable to the United States

The USA refuses even to pay the payment in the UN, but exerts pressure on the results of the elections of the UN General Secretary.

Introduction of economic sanctions against Iraq, although it prevents the development of economic cooperation between the countries of the region

Today the USA even divide some countries into dangerous and non-reliable states which can't be admitted into any international organizations, but in general these countries get refusal only because they don't admit American leadership. Big military operations in Yugoslavia and Iraq were not necessary to protect the US, but to benefit them in developing economy and getting new easily controlled territories.

The US even decided to break the contract of anti-missile ballistic defence, and in December 2001 the American officials announced their withdrawal from the contract in order to build national anti-ballistic missile system.

But what were the results of the self-centred policy of the United States? All the main interests, which were officially stated, turned out to be myths: promotion of state interests has replaced the ideals of democracy. All the efforts to settle quickly conflicts in Europe and Asia (Israel, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan) were not very successful or even became the reason for civil wars and an escalation of local conflicts. The destruction of the World Trade Centre proved disability of any national defence to protect the state.

I don't think that any conclusions will be made from the results of the American foreign policy, and I'm sure that if the tendency of global hegemony is the main principal of the policy, there will be no foundation for real partnership between the USA and Russia.