

THE LIBERAL WORLD ORDER AND THE HISTORY OF UNITED STATES' ILLIBERAL APPROACH TO POWER: A CRITIQUE

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Abstract

The present work examines United States history of what it terms illiberal approaches to power and international relation as a unipolar entity which is observed in her accomplishment of the earliest mission of expansionism and exceptionalism, pursuit of liberalism of imposition and unilateralism in its prosecution of wars and sanctions among others. It shows that the ultimate cost have been economic, perception and legitimacy costs, all of which have been a major factor in its gradual losing of global hegemonic hold today. The work of course acknowledges that this is only a factor among myriads of factors but by no means insignificant. In order to effectively do this it uses the hermeneutical and analytical approaches while it first espouses what liberal values and liberal theory of international relations vis a vis other theories. It then locates the illiberal approach within the larger context of liberal world order dilemma and crisis while highlighting the need for a concerted scholarly articulation to surpass the dilemma as it advocates for more restraint in liberalism of imposition and where expedient for more multilateral engagement.

Introduction:

The end of the cold war was met in many quarters with great enthusiasm and optimism about the advent of a new world order, “a liberal world order driven by liberal democratization and economic globalization to a world of peace, cooperation and prosperity.”ⁱ Winston Churchill spoke flamboyantly about what Fukuyama referred to as ‘liberal moment’ⁱⁱ and this was repeated with the same flamboyancy by President Bush Senior in his 1991 address to the Congress. The new world order according to Churchill will be a world order in which “the principles of justice and fair play...protect the weak against the strong...fulfill the historic vision of its founders. A world in which freedom and respect for human rights finds a home among all nations.”ⁱⁱⁱ But the U.S was indeed the grand patron of this order and worked to ensure it progresses. Specifically, the U.S type of international order had a number of characteristics that are in tune with the liberal values even if in approximations. It was built around open multilateral trade; it was defined by its commitment to a ‘managed’ open world economy; it was built around new and permanent international institutions; it had special emphasis on relations among the western liberal democracies in such a way that the core underlying principles and norms could be construed to be universal.^{iv} Thus, across a variety of economic and security areas, the U.S. pursued an expansive agenda of institution-building, enlargement of NATO, creation of NAFTA, APEC and the WTO. The liberal order which has U.S. as its grand patron has championed such values as open market economies, liberal democracy, civil and political liberty. The U.S had been the major architect behind the multilateral system of institutions and transnational and transgovernmental networks have proliferated. In spite of this and like Georg Sørensen did acknowledge, there is not yet a peaceful cooperative liberal order in any simple way. One of the reasons for this drawback,

according to him, is that the strong political forces are pursuing a liberal order with the elements that are essentially illiberal.^v The write-up has chosen to look at America and its illiberal approach to power because being purportedly the super power; the effects will be far reaching. The write-up tries to closely look at the features of such illegal approaches. To do this it finds that there is the need to espouse what liberal values and liberal theories of approach to power entail in contradistinction to illiberal theories. What effect does this illiberal approach portend for the legitimacy of U.S hegemony. The work discovers that this approach has led to the battering image and legitimacy of U.S authority. Locating this illiberal moment in the whole context of a certain crisis and dilemma of the liberal order, it underscores the need for restraint and shared responsibility when some form of illiberal liberalism becomes expedient.

The Concept and Features of Liberal Order

A liberal world order is a world permeated by liberal values. The 1997 Manifesto of the Liberal International captures the content of what it refers to as central values of liberalism, namely “Freedom, responsibility, tolerance, social justice, and equality of opportunity...” The Manifesto moving on also articulates the means of realizing these core liberal values in the following lines:

We believe that civil society and constitutional democracy provide the most just and stable basis for political order....We believe that an economy based on free market rules leads to the most efficient distribution of wealth and resources, encourages innovation, and promotes flexibility...We believe that close cooperation among democratic societies through global and regional organizations, within the framework of international law, of respect for human rights, the rights of ethnic and national minorities, and of a shared commitment to economic development worldwide, is the necessary foundation for world peace and for economic and environmental sustainability.^{vi}

The above quotation from the manifesto indicates various path to realization of liberal values and ultimate peace, though it seems that these four paths have become different traditions within the one liberal order, each laying claimant to being the most efficient in ensuring world peace. But there is no reason why the four cannot be viewed in their complementarity. These four paths/traditions as they appear in the above lines include^{vii}: Sociological liberalism which “draws on the notion that relations between people (i.e. civil society) are more cooperative and more supportive of peace than are relations between national governments;” Economic liberalism which “argues that economic actors in a free market economy are the strongest forces for a truly liberal world order;” Republican liberalism which “is based on the claim that democracies are more peaceful and law-abiding than are other political systems;” and Institutional liberalism which “emphasizes the role of international institutions in promoting cooperation among states.” Liberal values were captured again in 2000, when more than 150 states at the UN General Assembly made the Millennium declaration which identified certain fundamental values to be essential to international relations in the twenty first century:

Freedom (democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people) Equality (opportunity to benefit for development; equal rights of women and men); Solidarity (equity and social justice; those who suffer deserve help from those who benefit); Tolerance (respect for diversity of belief, culture and

language); Respect for nature (unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed); Shared responsibility (for managing economic and social development and threats to peace and security, A central role for the UN)^{viii}

In the words of Sorensen “this is surely an impressive set of aspirations for world order.”^{ix} And this indicates how states have an expanded ambition of the emerging world order being not just concerned about stable peace and security and the good life not just a domestic concern for individual state, but about good life for all mankind. Like G. John Ikenberry observed, the liberal world provided “a framework for the liberalization of trade and decades of growth across the advanced industrial world. Incomes and life opportunities steadily increased for the postwar generations of Europeans, Japanese and Americans.”^x Paul Johnson argues that the liberal order’s open system ushered in ‘the most rapid and prolonged economic expansion in world history.’ The order provided a container within which liberal democracies could gain greater measures of security and protection as well. With the emergence of globalization the order as it were globalized these gains though it must be added that not a few have seen in globalization a thriving inequality and a number of nations left at the periphery. Yet there is no gainsaying that it has made for more cooperation, even though the inequality tells in its face but comparatively to other alternatives, there may not be any better than for instance open market system which the liberal order promotes, liberal democracy, universal values of freedom, justice, civil and political liberty etc. By and large liberal order’s general logic is captured according to Ikenberry^{xi} in a cluster of five convictions, namely, the first concerns openness for “an open international order facilitates economic growth, encourages the flow of knowledge and technology, and draws states together.” Second is “commitment to some sort of loosely rules based set of relations” or what is referred to as multilateralism which “facilitate cooperation and create capacities for states to make good on their domestic obligations.” Third is the view that it entails ‘some form of security cooperation.’ Fourth is the idea that international society is corrigible and so reform is possible and power politics can be tamed to ensure more stable relations for mutual gains. Fifth is the expectation that it will move states to be put in a progressive direction and this is simply path of liberal democracy, providing institution, relationships and rights and protections which ensure local growth and advancement. Thus cooperation, shared values, connectivity are the highlighted values without undermining freedom which in international relations is captured by the principle of sovereignty.

Liberal and Illiberal Theories of Power in International Relations

Of course, liberal approach/paradigm of power stems from the ideals and values of the liberal order as enunciated above. J. Srivastava and A. Sharma write that liberal vision of world order adopts a broader meaning of world order which aims at creating conditions for coexistence and mutual gains through cooperation. They term this craft of order. According to the authors, the liberals see the international order as anarchical and posit that it is through locking institutions and regimes together in a network of institutions and interdependent relationships that the conflict could be mitigated.^{xii} A. Moravcsik argues that ‘the pattern of interdependent state preferences imposes a binding constraint on state behavior.’^{xiii} This pattern of interdependence include instruments of ‘open markets, international institutions, cooperative security, democratic community [democratic peace], progressive change, collective problem solving, the rule of law all of which have a modernizing and civilizing effect on states, the undercutting illiberal tendencies and strengthening the fabric of international community.’^{xiv} Thus the liberalists concentrate more on cooperation rather than on conflict. In fact “liberalists take a step further to make the argument that in order to

promote cooperation and avoid conflict there needs to be a spread of democracy, higher levels of development, increasing the role of international organizations and last but not least promoting international law.”^{xv} There is no doubt that what has been submitted so far flies in the face of the realist theory of international relations for which power politics and security dilemma would never go away. They visualize endemic conflict over power where war is seen as the strategic necessity for the survival of the units. War in this case and power politics become inevitable, though war may not be a constant occurrence. They assume that “in varying degrees that the best description of world politics is a ‘jungle’ characterized by a ‘state of war’ not a single continuous war or constant wars but the constant possibility of war among all states.”^{xvi} This state of war according to the realists is premised on the human nature, the character of the states, and/or the structure of the interstate system which allows war to occur. Politics was therefore according to a struggle for power, for national interests and balance of power.^{xvii} In this way, the state ends up being consumed in “anarchy, self help, maximization of relative power, national security, preparation for war, and calculations of relative balances of power.”^{xviii} Accordingly, authority becomes “a prerequisite that erects, enforces and valorizes a particular order.” Kenneth Waltz remarks that since anarchy is the order of the day, that is absence of political authority, then it is the balancing of power mechanism that is the key. In this way authority and order are linked to capabilities and asymmetry of power is seen as a virtue and a necessary guarantee for peace and a match to recalcitrance among states.^{xix} But it must be noted that the asymmetry of power is only for the moment because it is always exposed to power struggle so as to maintain balance of power. For the liberalists, asymmetry of power is very important for the crafting and sustenance of world order.^{xx} But like Ikenberry representative of the liberalist position notes, the powerful state and the hegemon must be universalistic, acting with restraint in the exercise of their power, promoting visions which are universal rather than parochial.^{xxi} There is therefore an intractable connection between legitimacy, hegemony and order. Without legitimate leadership of a hegemon, the order predicated by it would not sustain. According to Ian Hurd the hegemon and powerful states, to ensure legitimacy must abide by “a minimum standard of compliance with legitimized rule or institution...”^{xxii} Robert Keohane argues that “the formation of international regimes can ensure legitimacy for the standards of behavior that the hegemon plays a key role in maintaining”^{xxiii} There are other forms of approaches to power and international relations but they are simply efforts to surpass the especially the limitations of the liberal theory. None of them share semblance at all with the realist approach so they are more or less take cue from the liberal order. For instance the club of order theory of relations conceives order in terms of a group of states who come together by dialogue, consent on common rules and institution for the conduct of their relations and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements. The operative condition for co-existence are discussed, the relation is based on the principle of sovereignty and non-intervention though for the solidarist tradition within the theory, the principle can be violated in cases of grievous human right violation while the pluralist tradition such intervention remain illegitimate notwithstanding unwholesome violations. According to the latter, such intervention threatens the very foundational premise of the order. The order acknowledges the centrality of power attributes-balance of power, great powers as mechanisms for maintaining order. Again though war can be emblematic of breakdown it is also seen as mechanism of maintaining order. Great powers are accorded special duties but this is to the extent they muster legitimacy which is based on the consent of the group. Well this theory’s conception of the world order thus tries to ensure some equity and equality to avoid abuse of power. In the liberal, realist and theory of the English school’s club of order theory, there is obvious presupposition that the state is anarchical and this is what informs the relation and approach to power only that in liberal theory and its adaptation, the state is taken to be

corrigible. The constructivist theory of international relation primarily seeks to demonstrate how core aspects of international relations are socially constructed, that is they are given their form by ongoing processes of social practice and interaction. Alexander Wendt notes that the basic tenets of constructivism is that “the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature.”^{xxiv} Specifically, constructivism criticizes focus on material structure (anarchy) as misplaced. Anarchy is not the problem but the way anarchy is conceived, the idea of anarchy as well as how the state conceives of their interest, identities. Thus for instance anarchy is not necessarily self-help but it is taken as such when state conceive security as competitive, relative concept where the gain of security for any state means loss for another. But if state holds the alternative conceptions namely ‘cooperative’ where states can maximize its own security without negatively affecting that of another, or as ‘collective’ where states identify the security of other states as being valuable in themselves, then anarchy will not lead to self-help.^{xxv} The question of legitimacy and with the normative follows the same path for they are contingent on the inter-subjective understanding which is dynamic and open to changes and revisions. It may appear that there are some practical vacuum given that most often ideas vary across board, but of course the constructivist theory is merely a reaction to neo realist view of order for whom basis for understanding of power is purely material but constructivist adds the factor of discursiveness. Thus it could not be pitching tent with coercion which according to Friedrich Kratochwil proves costly in the long run but rather to the idea of collective intentionality which according to John Gerard Ruggie prove more important for the sustenance of order.^{xxvi} Critical theoretical traditions hold a broader conceptualization of world order which underpins a normative core and leaves open the normative and pragmatic possibilities of resistance, contestations and revolution which could not only confront but also provide alternatives to transcend it. It thus questions the order, for every order is seen as imposition and this is key for emancipation of man. Critical theorists focus on questioning the logics and hierarchies associated with the state system which must be inverted and/or interpreted from different vantage points. They underline particularly the centrality of equality and justice as an indispensable condition of legitimacy otherwise one witnesses challenges and resistance to the existing order. This already shows the type of power relation that would be found in such a world order. The power relation must be legitimized by the extent it approximates equality and justice.

U.S. And History of Illiberal Approaches to Power

Permit me to immediately submit that the U.S illiberal approach to power, specifically the realist approach is early enough rooted in its ideology of expansionism but became more audacious with the rise of radical Islamic fundamentalism and violent terrorism. The rise of America as world power was the case since the World War II when with USSR it formed a bipolar world order. However it became the World’s Power with the collapse of the Soviet Union. United States saw in this collapse, a great opportunity to expand the sphere of its influence and dominance to the whole world. Guided by pragmatism the overriding interest has always been the mission of expanding and perpetuating the empire as it were, creating something akin to a global Pax Americana. The defining characteristic of this mission was simply expansionism guided by philosophy of expediency and pragmatism laced with opportunism. Theodore Roosevelt in 1899 corroborating this view admitted with regard to United States of America “of course our national history has been one of expansion.”^{xxvii} In this history of expansion, one sees pragmatism of “any means necessary” sometimes playing out. This ranges according to circumstances and various realities on ground, from “diplomacy, hard bargaining, bluster, chicanery, intimidation, or naked coercion.”^{xxviii} At one

point treaties were considered sacrosanct and at other times solemn agreements are reneged. Sometimes the democratic and liberal nation who had touted America's great liberation devoted to ending tyranny in the world acted in accord with principles of democracy and at other times it made a *rendez-vous* with even the most heinous of tyrants. It did not mind collaborating with Joseph Stalin, making a pact with him to destroy the reign of Hitler, a pact that vaulted United States to a position of unrivalled global economic supremacy. The assistance of the Chairman Mao Zedong was sought in bringing down the Soviet empire, a feat that secured for America the World's power.^{xxxix} In the bid to incorporate Central Asia into Pax Americana, Ronald Reagan collaborated with Mujahideen, Afghan warlords and insurgents who were known to them as freedom fighters in the Afghan war^{xxx}; It could support Saddam Hussein and when his use was out run, and considered as a threat, they sought for his head; it could involve itself in a contradiction during Iran-Iraq war: Supporting Iraq and at the same time engaging in what has been referred to as Iran-Contra affair in which wide range of arm support were secretly offered to Iran.^{xxxi} This is simply realpolitik, a situational politics or diplomacy which is based primarily on considerations of given circumstances and factors rather than on ideological notions or moral and ethical premises. This approach shares aspects of its philosophical approach with those of realism and pragmatism. It is simply pursuing pragmatic policies which are "chiefly based on the pursuit, possession and application of power."^{xxxii}

How militarization became part of the leader of liberal world is still hard to factor. But it became more pungent after the 9/11. This ideology seems to be built on four key convictions. The second inaugural address of President Bush copiously highlights these convictions^{xxxiii}: Firstly, history has a purpose set by freedom. It "has a visible direction set by liberty and the author of liberty." In this, there is an epic struggle between "oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right." Secondly, the chief exemplar and embodiment of this freedom remains United States. Thirdly, "Providence summons America to ensure the ultimate triumph of freedom" and it is this precisely that "is the mission that created our Nation" which has a "great liberating tradition." Fourthly freedom must prevail everywhere because "the survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands." Speaking in terms of epic struggle, ensuring triumph of freedom, survival of one's liberty being dependent on the success of liberty in other land shows immediately a certain departure from the liberal values or inclination to pursue liberal values tainted by power projection by illiberal means. In this light, the National Security Strategy(NSS) of 2002 vows to 'defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere'^{xxxiv}. Military was wielded to ensure that this freedom prevails everywhere but most often it is far away from real liberation. Here is a typical instance of what has been categorized as liberalism of imposition as against liberalism of restraint, though the proponents of the former seem more moved by the frustration of the latter in that it achieves too little. Classical liberalism has always favoured liberalism of restraint while modern liberalism fundamentally expresses liberalism of imposition due to the fact that liberalism of restraint is seen to be less in its result. However, Isaiah Berlin draws attention to the tendency of liberalism of imposition due to its quest for positive liberty to undermine liberty itself and tend towards authoritarianism. This is because it operates from the presumed standpoint of its claim of knowing what the best is for others of knowing what others ought to want. This is obvious in the NSS formulation on its mission to "defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere." Continuing, Berlin writes,

Once I take this view, I am in a position to ignore the actual wishes of men or societies, to bully, oppress, torture in the name, and on

behalf, of the 'real' selves, in the secure knowledge that whatever is the true goal of man . . . must be identical with his freedom.^{xxxv}

Already in such a thought is evident some unfortunate psychology of power which is daring and arrogant. If psychology of power is this way what about psychology of super power! This is where another factor is added, namely unilateralism! In most cases it is the urge of sustaining American global preeminence rather than mere national security that fuels such militarization. This was already there during the Reagan's presidency when unambiguous global military supremacy became a standing aspiration; for the Pentagon, anything less than unquestioned dominance now qualified as dangerously inadequate. This became more pungent in the years following the September 9/11 event. It must be noted that in the immediate aftermath of the attack, a strong multilateralism was coordinated by the United States. As such "diplomatic efforts were made to create an effective coalition against terrorism, and the UN as well as NATO and the OAS were integrated into the US efforts."^{xxxvi} This however did not last long for unilateralism became increasingly the favoured option. Bush went contrary to Western Tradition that has categorically rejected the concept of preventive war. Rejecting the concepts of containment and deterrence that were prevalent in the cold war, the United States arrogated to itself the unlimited first strike prerogative. The national Security Strategy in September 2002 had pungently declared:

Given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past... . We cannot let our enemies strike first... . To forestall or prevent [such] hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act pre-emptively (NSS, 2002: 15)^{xxxvii}

Among other things by the document include an unmitigated commitment to a unipolar world with the United States as an unrivalled dominant power, elimination of terrorist threat, readiness to intervene anywhere to destroy the terrorist threat; right to unilateralism as well as awareness of the depreciation of international rules, treaties and security partnerships etc.^{xxxviii} By all it proved to be a very disastrous ideology. For Reinhold Niebuhr the concept of preventive war is both normatively wrong and pragmatically a failure. The promise of Iraq invasion which was to be an urgent necessity flouting Saddam's weapons of mass destruction which eventually was nonexistent became an illusion. Its cost turned out to be far greater than had anticipated. The danger of Islamic extremism though real became so hyped that United States since Bush administration became enmeshed in an open-ended global war that has remained unsuccessful. Overall the American unilateralism and doctrine of preventive war as well as its imperialist outlook is simply a preponderance of realist ideological understanding of order. Accordingly,

The realists *a priori* presume the existence of order amongst states and virtues associated with its maintenance. The realists visualise endemic conflict overpower where war is seen as the strategic necessity for the survival of the units and hence immutable, even though not a continuous occurrence. The state in a warrior's cloak/*avatar* is the order of international politics.^{xxxix}

The realist concept of order has always been a uni-dimensional way, predicated by great powers who radiate a set of behavioural pattern amongst the existing state. Authority is seen therefore as prerequisite in erecting, stabilizing, enforcing and valourizing a particular order. Asymmetry of power is therefore viewed as a virtue and a necessary guarantee for peace and force for change of behavior of "rogue" states. There is of course a problem in this kind of

thinking because it increasingly becomes impossible to connect this authority of capability to authority of legitimacy for most often there is the dearth of normative considerations because it is more inclined to be driven by power considerations. There is the tendency of sinking into authoritarianism and tyranny. Liberalism of imposition contains the tendency of routinely ignoring constitutional limits of power, unrestrained by international institutions and international law. That is why Montesquieu writes that unlimited authority can never be legitimate. Legitimacy is a key institutional virtue insofar as it helps to align institutions' operations with their justifying purposes and motivate support for valuable governing functions.^{xl} While the promise of liberalism of restraint is too little and is potentially a recipe for inaction, the liberalism of imposition appears too much and could be catastrophic considering the reflection above. Little wonder that Edward Rhodes writing about the sort of liberal crusade preached by Bush administration noted that they promise to lead to failure and tragedy.^{xli}

Besides, military action and wars remain unpredictable even when it is about the greatest super power and weakest state especially in a globalized world even with all precision instruments of wars. War yielded more glitter than gold. While "war's essential nature is fixed, permanent, intractable, and irrepressible", "war's constant companions are uncertainty and risk."^{xlii} Writing about war, Carl von Clausewitz posits that "war is the realm of chance, no other human activity gives it greater scope: no other has such incessant and varied dealings with this intruder."^{xliii} Not even all high tech and precision guided munitions have been able to overturn this. Churchill accordingly writes that "the statesman who yields to war fever, is no longer the master of policy, but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events."^{xliv} Bacevich collaborates with more force to the effect that "any notion that innovative techniques and new technologies will subject war to definitive human direction is simply whimsical."^{xlv} All these show the unpredictability and contingency that is war and to think otherwise is simply to engage in illusion. This is true even when the world super power is the prosecutor of the war. It is even truer as it were when the prosecution happens unilaterally! Like noted above, liberalism of imposition is potentially a recipe for overreaction. There is always correlation between imposition and resistance. This is evident for instance, in the failure of United States to eliminate the leadership of Al Qaeda, the failure to eliminate Taliban movement although it toppled the Taliban regime; the protracted war that is Afghanistan war inspite of the fact that it was meant to be a brief campaign; inspite of the banner proclaiming "mission accomplished" six weeks after the invasion of Iraq, the occupation continues unending.

Evaluation: Illiberal Approach, U.S. Hegemony and Liberal Order

The havoc that these wars, this has to do directly with perception of the United States as Super Power and such failures does not in anyway help the perception. For instance it has been observed elsewhere about Middle East that there is a divergence of U.S militarism and economic interests. Thus apart from a few military contractors, American business has as it were not followed the flag into, for instance, the ruins of Iraq and other war zones. China is tipped to be Iraqi's largest trading partner, for Afghanistan, it is Pakistan; for Somalia it is the United Arab Emirates and for Libya, it is the European Union. China and European Union have become the major trading partners of most countries in the world. One does not go far to appreciate the correlation between economic power and political power. Thus

Instead of opening doors for American big business or supporting America's diplomatic position in the world, the U.S. war machine has become a bull in the global china shop, welding purely destructive power to destabilize countries and wreck their

economies, closing doors to economic opportunity instead of opening them, diverting resources from real needs at home and damaging America's international standing instead of enhancing it.^{xlvi}

Dwight Eisenhower had spoken out against unwarranted influence of America's military-industrial complex. This was simply a prediction about the danger and futility, a "dangerous dichotomy between the real economic and social needs of the American people and a war machine that costs more than the next ten militaries in the world put together but cannot win a war or vanquish a virus, let alone re-conquer a lost empire."^{xlvii} It has been Corelli Barnett who rightly posits that "war is the great auditor of institutions." This perception is the legitimacy question already underscored above which most often evades liberalism of imposition especially when unilaterally undertaken by the super power with the glaring of psychology of a super power. The present writer follows the concept of legitimacy espoused by Terry and Kate Macdonald.^{xlviii} Legitimacy therein denotes support-worthiness on the basis of which a particular act or process of an institution enjoys political acceptability to real political agents in some concrete operational context. Thus to call an institution legitimate is to say not only that it can motivate the political support required for its operation, but also that it is worthy of this support. In other words, it motivates support for the right reasons. When this is lacking in something as devastating as war, a super power may court a number of enemies even among its allies which with the passage of time can become more tensed. Depending on the strength of the said nation, it can also lead to a whittling down of the super power's political influence in its own sphere of influence. Besides such illegitimate war and unilateralism is likely to attract more sympathies for the attacked even if in a subterranean way or even out of some interests which could end up spoiling the show for the super power, adding thereby to the perception problem already highlighted. Little wonder Trump administration did not wage any new war and tried to pull a number of troops from the Middle East. Yet he spoke in terms of America First and there is no problem about that for the present writer, but unfortunately he became increasing isolationist, another strand of unilateralism, this time unilateral protectionism. No doubt it may have been reached to put a number of economic injustices against America on check, but it has its repercussions for it renewed the fragile relationship between America and its allies as well as created global leadership vacuum which China jostled to fill. Besides protectionism and unilateral isolationism simple rocks the very basis of liberal order. U.S. under Trump withdrew from Paris accord which was ratified by nearly 190 nations, the Iran nuclear deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, UNESCO, the United Nations Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization. There were also numerous other long-standing international commitments which were not honored. These may be good for the economic standing of the nation but certainly it does not play well the chord of a superpower. This may be expressing a deeper crisis for a unipolar liberal order which need to be resolved not just by policies but by scholarly articulations. In America's unilateralism in politics it overreached itself that there is need to look inwards but the isolationism ought to be cautiously crafted so that it does not become offensive. Well Biden may be taking a different stand but neither unilateralism nor isolationism could be the answer. What has happened is that America acting unilaterally through coercion by way of sanctions and interventions, conceived her unipolarity purely in terms of hegemon instead of toeing the path of using their supremacy and resources "in unipolar world in aims of providing efficient cooperation and unity amongst other countries to cope with global threats in ways that answers the American national interests but not injuring their image on the international arena."^{xlix}

Certainly the above expositions already indicate a unipolar entity that is losing its hegemonic hold. Well it must be noted that myriads of factor attends to this a part from what has been espoused above. Yet the U.S illiberal approach to power where it is used to ensure the sustenance of liberal values must be understood within the question of the dilemma of liberal order, namely the choice between liberalism of restraint and liberalism of imposition which has been at logger head between classical liberalism and modern liberalism. While the former pitches tent with liberalism of restraint at the exclusion of liberalism of imposition, the latter embraces liberalism of imposition. Liberalism of restraint is about negative freedom which requires simply to be protected and non-interference. At the international scene it is basically about respect for the principle of sovereignty and non-interference. Unfortunately, negative freedom as Sorensen arguesⁱ, is not a guarantee to ensure that one has good life and have the requisite condition for self determination because there is the tendency of its marring social justice and equality. It becomes therefore necessary that positive liberty be defended and requires some positive steps to ensure that one become a master of oneself and this requires intervention, a sort of imposition. This is why modern liberalism gives a nod to liberalism of imposition which requires that the state for instance secure the proper conditions for real freedom. But there is the possibility of going overboard and this is usually the case that makes classical liberalism to pitch with negative freedom and so liberalism of restraint since liberalism of imposition risks jeopardizing liberty itself. There might not be problem with economic interventions and other social interventions that are geared towards assisting weaker states but certainly such move as imposition of sanctions and outright war do raise ire. It means then that liberalism of imposition would appear to be too much, threatening the very liberal values it seeks to promote and is potentially a recipe for overreaction. On the other hand liberalism of restraint appears too little to deal with arrays of human problem and it is potentially a recipe for inaction.ⁱⁱ That is a dilemma which calls for more theoretical articulation of what liberal values are and how they are to be obtained and what compromise are to be made between the two paths here espoused for what is clear is that the two are important. In doing this care must be taken to take into account the positive ideals of other theories: critical theories, constructivism and English school theory. Perhaps more of soft power may be better used and when really hard power is needed, an eye must be kept on the import of moral authority and so concern for legitimacy beckons. This immediately excludes unilateralism or exceptionalism of any sort because legitimacy requires cooperation and consent as well as adherence to rules and principles. This is the path United States must take to remedy its battered image as the unipolar of the liberal order. And talking of U.S as the unipolar, not a few would like to remind me that their unipolar moment is fast going. Some have even gone ahead to talk about a world order where China is the unipolar. There is no gainsaying the fact that unilateralism has not helped United States in furthering its hold of hegemony. It has whittled down the connection with its allies. Well as for China unipolar moment but I do not think that this is in the nearest future. In this Hatta's analysis is apt.ⁱⁱⁱ Naohiko Hattahas shown that the ascendance of China as super world power that replaces US is far from being realized. Thus he writes "Nevertheless, for many reasons, a future of Chinese global supremacy is far from certain. China is faced with numerous problems, from geopolitical barriers, to problems stemming from the authoritarian, undemocratic nature of its system-not mention ethnic divisions within the country."ⁱⁱⁱⁱ In this he compares United States as a world super power and China as a potential world power. In his analysis he sees this potentiality to be a potentiality that is not imminent. Here it seems that China's ideology is more confined and nationalistic instead universalistic. Thus Hatta writes to the effect that, "while the United States offers a conception of universal human rights and democracy—and while the Soviet Union offered the idea of achieving global communism—China lacks a universalist narrative or imperial mission." Ikenberry shares

similar view but he reads this in terms of “a gradual diffusion of power away from the West. China will probably not replace the United States as an illiberal hegemon, and the global South will probably not emerge as a geopolitical bloc that directly challenges the US-led order. But the United States –and its old allies—will continue to be a smaller part of the global whole, and this will constrain their ability to support and defend the liberal international order.”^{liv} But could the decline of US hegemony mean an end to liberal order? It is not likely for it makes a great appeal to the generality of the people. Besides there is simply no grand ideological alternative to a liberal international order. Neither Russia nor China has an appealing model. These are simply authoritarian capitalist states that offer no broad set of ideas for the organization of world order. More importantly is that ‘the values, interests and mutual vulnerabilities that drove the rise and spread of liberal internationalism are still with us.’^{lv} I share the view of Ikenberry to the effect that though America hegemonic organization of liberal order is weakening, it nevertheless still has a future. He makes his case that in spite of the weakening, the more general organizing ideas and impulses of liberal order run deep in world politics. Besides it is not simply a creature of American hegemony. It is rather a more general and long standing set of ideas, principles and political agendas for organizing and reforming international order. It is a way of thinking about and of responding to modernity. This is not in any way to keep blind to the fact that the liberal order is in crisis and so needs reformation, today's flight to isolationism, nationalism, shifting movements of culture and civilization, protectionism signal this crisis and this must not be taken for granted. The United States must work with others no longer as hegemon with some form of exceptionalism but in collaboration to become great promoters of liberal world and scholars must come to desk to continue to reflect on true democratic values.

Conclusion

What has been shown is simply about how U.S derogated from the values of liberal order which account for the declining nature of the hegemonic hold of the nation. This hinged on the question of economic cost, perception cost as well as legitimacy cost of such unilateralism. So the U.S. would need to continually adopt the following attitude which are more in tandem with the liberal order “using force with restraint; avoiding unilateral military action; adopting a defensive realist military realist posture; acting multilaterally and allowing others have a voice in how the United States exercises its power; and making concessions to others’ interest to secure their cooperation.”^{lvi} But not just this it must with Europe and its allies work to sustain the liberal values and order. In this they must regain their legitimacy both in their dealings with other states and international policy as well as in their internal democratic ideals this is because global leadership hinges on state power and at the same time on the appeal and legitimacy of the ideals and principles which the great power embody and project.

End notes

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ⁱⁱⁱ George Bush ‘New World Order’ Speech to Congress March 1991 as in Georg Sørensen, “Liberalism of Restraint and Liberalism of Imposition”

^{iv} G. John Ikenberry, “The End of Liberal International Order” *International Affairs* 94: 1 (2018) 7-23.

^v Georg Sørensen “Liberalism of Restraint and Liberalism of Imposition, p. 254

^{vi} As cited in Georg Sørensen, “Liberalism of Restraint and Liberalism of Imposition,” p.254.

^{vii} For a full treatment see Sorensen, Liberalism of Restraint and Liberalism of Imposition, p.254.

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- ix Sorensen "What Kind of World Order?: The International System in the new millennium", *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* vol. 41 (4) 2006, p. 343
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- xxvi See JayatiScrivastava and Ananya Sharma International Relations Theory and World Order, p.30
- xxvii See Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Henry Holt and company, 2008), p.20
- xxviii Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power*, p.20.
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- xxxiii Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power*, pp 74-75
- xxxiv Georg Sørensen, Liberalism of Restraint and Liberalism of Imposition, p. 262.
- xxxv Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 132-3; See Georg Sorensen, Liberalism of Restraint and Liberalism of Imposition p.
- xxxvi Georg Sørensen, "What Kind of World Order," p. 347.
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