

## **Evolution of US Foreign Policy**

In considering the strategies employed by US capitalism in furthering its international interests (i.e., US “foreign policy”), it helps to look at how these different strategies evolved. However, no strategy exists free-floating in the atmosphere like some noxious gas; it exists in the minds of individuals and groups of individuals. Therefore, it also helps to look at the role of some of the leaders. One key such leader is Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Brzezinski was an advisor to John F. Kennedy as well as Lyndon Johnson, but it was under the Carter administration that he really came into his own, as Carter’s National Security Administrator. In this role, he had a weekly and direct line to the president and regularly exchanged ideas about strategy and tactics. (He also at that time more or less predicted the downfall of Stalinism in the Soviet Union.)

From his earliest days, Brzezinski sought a multi-pronged attack in the goal, shared by all factions and strategists of US capitalism, to maintain the US as the pre-eminent power in the capitalist world. One element that somewhat distinguishes the approach Brzezinski represents over competing approaches, is the major use and encouragement of popular oppositions to those powers considered to be in competition to US capitalism. For instance, Brzezinski encouraged the rise of Solidarity in Poland, but under the control of the Polish wing of the Catholic Church. He encouraged nationalist oppositions to the Soviet Union’s domination of Eastern Europe. He and his policies supported the rise of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia.

Perhaps most famous were his policies in Afghanistan, where he first advocated a policy that reportedly encouraged the Soviet invasion of that country, something which he now denies at times. Brzezinski advocated US support for the Mujahedeen and various conduits were found (from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia) for US military support to these religious/nationalist forces.

### **Necessity for Allies**

The Brzezinski wing of US capitalism recognized that their interests could not succeed without allies, which they see as secondary, supporting actors whose sole role is to support the interests of US capitalism while a few crumbs fall off of the table for them. Thus Brzezinski talks about the need for “vassal states” to support US capitalism. He was one of the key architects of the 1978 peace accord between Egypt and Israel; in other words, putting into practice the attempt to draw Egyptian capitalism into US capitalism’s alliance with Israel. However, there should be no mistake as to this strategy’s real aims. For instance, Iran under the Shah was an important such “vassal” state, and Brzezinski called for direct US intervention to prevent the Shah’s downfall.

When the Soviet Union collapsed and then broke up, the view strengthened within the US capitalist class since there was no other apparent competitor for world domination other than US capitalism, the US did not need allies in achieving its goals. This view became

known as “unilateralism” and the neo-conservatives became the chief representatives of this approach, one which the Brzezinski wing always opposed.

One of the terms that best exemplifies the neo-conservatives’ views is that of “full spectrum dominance.” They write of this term: "Full-spectrum dominance means the ability of U.S. forces, operating alone or with allies, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the range of military operations." In other words, complete and total control of all situations by military means, with or without allies.

Brzezinski’s present role as National Security Advisor to Obama represents a rejection by US capitalism’s main schools of thought of this unilateral, neo-conservative strategy. This does not mean that their view of the Muslim world is any different. Here is what he wrote in his best-known book, “The Grand Chessboard” (a title which, in itself, shows contempt for working class people):

*For the first time ever, a non-Eurasian power has emerged not only as a key arbiter of Eurasian power relations but also as the world's paramount power. The defeat and collapse of the Soviet Union was the final step in the rapid ascendance of a Western Hemisphere power, the United States, as the sole and, indeed, the first truly global power." (p. xiii)*

*"For America, the chief geopolitical prize is Eurasia... Now a non-Eurasian power is preeminent in Eurasia - and America's global primacy is directly dependent on how long and how effectively its preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained." (p.30)*

*"To put it in a terminology that harkens back to the more brutal age of ancient empires, the three grand imperatives of imperial geostrategy are to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep tributaries pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together."*

His reference (elsewhere) to Islamic fundamentalism as “a few stirred up Moslems”, his reference here to preventing “the barbarians from coming together” – these show the true world view of US capitalism. And for all their talk about “peace”, human rights and democracy, the reality of their intention is shown by the fact that Brzezinski, a chief founder of the infamous Trilateral Commission, was also a member of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International.

### **Afghanistan & Vietnam**

Presently, some are comparing the US’s war in Afghanistan with the former war in Vietnam. While there are some valid military comparisons, there is also a fundamental difference: In Vietnam, the enemy of US capitalism was Stalinist nationalism. Among other things, this force proposed to at least crush the landlord aristocracy of capitalist Vietnam. In Afghanistan, much of the resistance is supported by exactly similar, semi-feudal elements. This makes the resistance there weaker. On the other hand, the larger size, the even more difficult terrain, and the weakened position of US capitalism all serve to weaken the US’s forces in Afghanistan.

US capitalism spends more on military arms than all the rest of the world combined. However, all the arms spending in the world, to be put to use repressing peoples around the world as expressed by Brzezinski's contempt for "barbarians" and "stirred up Moslems" will not maintain US capitalism's domination. The cracks are only starting to appear in this domination. However, that is the subject for future discussion.