

## **BUSH'S UNACKNOWLEDGED DOCTRINE**

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It was not President Ronald Reagan who coined the phrase "The Reagan Doctrine," connoting America's 1980s assertive foreign policy; it was columnist Charles Krauthammer.

Now, in a major article in *The Weekly Standard*, doctrine-maker Krauthammer is at it again, announcing the advent of "The Bush Doctrine." The article is sub-titled "ABM, Kyoto and the New American Unilateralism." The key word is "unilateralism." Oooh, it's a bad word. It plays right into the European charge that America is seeking to "go it alone."

Even Robert Kagan of the Carnegie Endowment, who's just as hawkish as Krauthammer, is critical of the terrible U-word. Somewhat more importantly, President Bush flatly denies he is a unilateralist. Is it just the "Krauthammer Doctrine" that Krauthammer's preaching? I think not.

Krauthammer offers two major examples of Bush's "Bush Doctrine." First is his administration's push for a national missile defense system, which requires the abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. Second is the out-of-hand rejection of the Kyoto Treaty on greenhouse gases.

Each of these positions, by my lights, is correct. Surely, neither would have taken place in a Gore administration. And each of these actions can be described as "unilateral."

Perhaps the best way to see what's going on is by looking at what the parties to this debate agree about. Most everyone everywhere agrees -- for good or ill -- that America is the "sole surviving superpower," or, as the French would have it, the "hyper-power," or, as the Chinese say, "the hegemon." Even the sometimes-

mushy Clinton administration kept pronouncing that America was the one "indispensable" nation.

Yes, the Cold War is over; we won it, and at least for now, there ain't no one left in the big leagues. We are Number One in a way that no nation in history has ever been before: militarily, geo-politically, scientifically, linguistically, demographically, educationally, culturally -- and globally.

In many parts of the world, even where we are criticized, our geo-political presence is requested, required and demanded. The nations on the Chinese rim, including Japan, make up one such area. Europe is another.

That given, what should we do about it?

I believe that, if asked, Americans would reflexively and appropriately say our primary goal should be to stay first. Why? Because it's good for us and it's good for the world. Most Americans believe that we stand for something special -- liberty. If that idea becomes ever more global, we are ever more secure, and our existence is more meaningful. Just as important, democratic nations may bicker, bicker, bicker -- but unlike dictatorships, they almost invariably stop well short of shooting.

Hegemons pay a price. Try as hard as we can to stay away, we get involved in a lot of places. Some examples, big and small: Taiwan, Israel, Bosnia, Cuba, China, Russia. But hegemons also get a bonus. We can try to make the rules, not just play by them. We don't have to cede sovereignty to international organizations if we don't think their proposed actions are in our best interest. The overblown and misunderstood power of so-called "international public opinion" need not hold much sway for America. After all, the U.S. is a nation that could, if it wanted to, which it doesn't, "go it alone."

So Bush can withdraw from the Kyoto Treaty, which was a fool's errand in any event. America catches some flak for it. But no other nation will say, "... and therefore, we won't trade with you." Bush can maintain that the missile defense of America is an American matter and will be dealt by Americans, hopefully in cordial consultation with our allies, but at the end of the day, by Americans. And no one will put us on a list of "rogue nations."

A nation with an ideology seeking to stay Number One should promote its cause. This is done every day by our private sector, in business, universities, entertainment and science. But the U.S. government is not doing its job in this field. In a craven act of picayune budgetary manipulation, the Clinton administration eliminated the United States Information Agency just when the world wanted plenty of information about the United States. The function, and perhaps the name, of the USIA ought to be restored.

So, is there a Bush Doctrine? Apparently there is. But Bush denies it, if it involves the U-word. That's all right. Truth be told, sometimes doctrine-purveyors are the last to know. Over a period of years, Reagan went on the offensive in Angola, Nicaragua and Afghanistan. Only then did the shape of "The "Reagan Doctrine" become doctrinal.

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