

War Policies of Democrats and Republicans in USA since 9/11: Perils and Prospects

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Abstract

In light of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks the war policies of both Republicans and Democrats in the United States have been strategically different. This study examines how the two main political parties took different tracks in dealing with the problems of terrorism and upholding U. S. security even though they both shared a commitment to national security. The historical background of pre-9/11 war policies and the immediate bipartisan consensus that characterized the early response to the attacks are described at the beginning of the paper. The study concentrates on Republican administrations and explores the neoconservative policies of the George W. Bush administration marked by the use of unilateral action and military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. It also looks at Donald Trump's America First strategy which prioritized stepping up counterterrorism efforts while reducing military engagement overseas. Barack Obama's emphasis on diplomacy covert operations and multilateralism as well as Joe Biden's emphasis on putting an end to forever wars and giving non-military means of power priority are used to evaluate Democratic war policies. A comparative analysis reveals differences in multilateralism military engagement and the balance between security and civil liberties while highlighting similarities in counterterrorism priorities and technological advancements. This study also assesses how these policies affect the US's reputation and standing in the world. Through analyzing academic discussions and critiques of the strategies of both parties this study offers a sophisticated perspective on how political ideologies have influenced U.S. post-9/11 war policy and its wider ramifications for upcoming foreign policy plans.



Received:
28 January 2025

Revised:
17 April 2025

Accepted:
19 May 2025

Published:
20 May 2025

Keywords: War on Terror, Unilateralism vs. Multilateralism, Neoconservatism, Drone Warfare, Authorization of Use of Military Force (AUMF), Forever Wars.

Introduction

The September 11, 2001, attacks caused a dramatic change in the political climate of the world and reshaped American priorities – both foreign and domestic policies. In a single day, the biggest terrorist attack in American history occurred causing widespread fear throughout the country and an urgent need for quick action. It ushered in a new era for the U.S.S. international cooperation known as the War on Terror which aims to destroy terrorist organizations and stop further assaults. This reaction changed not just the U. S. not only changed its position in the world but also its interactions with international organizations enemies and allies. The ideological underpinnings of America's political leadership were at the center of these shifts. Republican and Democratic political philosophies had a significant impact on the course of the War on Terror influencing diplomatic strategies military intervention and the harmony between civil liberties and national security. Although both parties worked together to address the threat in the immediate wake of 9/11 the years that followed showed stark differences in how each party handled war policy. These distinctions which stemmed from their different worldviews became essential to US plans in Afghanistan Iraq and other places making a significant impact on world politics.

This study seeks to answer the question: How have the war policies of Democrats and Republicans diverged and converged after 9/11? In answering this question, this study tried to unpack the ideological underpinnings, policy decisions, and long-term consequences of both parties' approaches to war and security for global peace.

For this research work, the emphasis and conceptual statement is, “Although they both pledged to put national security first after 9/11, Democrats and Republicans have taken quite different tacks. Republicans have tended to prioritize short-term security objectives and emphasize military interventions and unilateralism. Democrats on the other hand have tended to favor diplomacy and multilateralism striking a balance between civil liberties international cooperation and national security. These variations show how complicated the US’s foreign policy and its underlying ideologies in the wake of 9/11.”

An examination of U. S. Realism liberalism and neoconservatism are three important international relations theoretical frameworks that can be used to understand war policies after 9/11. These theories offer an organized method for analyzing the strategic and ideological decisions made by Republican and Democratic administrations. A fundamental theory of realism in international

relations holds that states pursue power primarily for their own benefit in order to survive in anarchic international systems.

Both Democrats and Republicans post-9/11 policies are consistent with realisms focused on power projection and security. One example of the realist idea of taking preventative action to eliminate threats is the Bush administrations unilateral invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama also demonstrates a practical approach to upholding U. S. security through his strategic shift to drone warfare and covert operations dominance at a low cost. Liberalism on the other hand places a strong emphasis on the collaboration multilateralism and international institutions that support world peace and stability. With their focus on diplomacy coalition building and interaction with international institutions like the UN and NATO Democratic administrations—especially those led by Obama and Biden—exemplify liberal ideals. The Paris Climate Agreement and multilateral sanctions on Iran are examples of liberalisms emphasis on cooperative problem-solving. These acts demonstrate Democrats propensity to strike a balance between international interdependence and national security.

Despite having a realist foundation neoconservatism departs by embracing ideological goals like advancing democracy and American ideals overseas. This strategy is best illustrated by the Bush administrations War on Terror which aimed to both combat terrorism and support democratic regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. Neoconservative influence on Republican war policies is highlighted by this ideological desire to use military intervention to change world politics. Constructivist insights which emphasize how concepts identities and norms influence state behavior are also supported by this framework. After 9/11 the U. S. S. reshaped its national identity in the context of counterterrorism impacting rhetoric and policy. For example, the bipartisan defense of terrorism as an existential threat to the world justified extensive military operations and monitoring schemes. This study analyzes the strategic and ideological differences between Democratic and Republican war policies by using these theoretical frameworks. While liberalism and neoconservatism highlight their different strategies for accomplishing these goals realism explains the common emphasis on power and security. A thorough grasp of how political ideologies and strategic imperatives have shaped the United States is provided by this synthesis of theories. S. foreign policy following 9/11.

Background

Pre – 9/11 War Policies

Prior to the terrible events of September 11, 2001, the US in most cases geopolitical interests Cold War legacies, and sporadic humanitarian reasons combined to drive military interventions. In a number of international hotspots both the Republican and Democratic administrations had used military force but the scope and character of their interventions differed significantly. Republicans especially under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush had a tendency toward military action that aided the US overseas interests. The Middle East policy of the Reagan administration which included the 1983 bombing of Lebanon and assistance to anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan established a standard for US interference in the area (Reagon, 2007).

During the first Gulf War (1990–1991), George H. W. Bush reaffirmed the Republican Party's inclination for forceful military action to safeguard regional stability and defend American interests (Clinton, 1999). Conversely, military interventions were typically handled more cautiously by Democratic administrations. Despite its involvement in the Balkan conflicts especially in Bosnia and Kosovo, the Clinton administration favored diplomacy and multilateral strategies as evidenced by NATO interventions. Conversely, the Clinton years saw a comparatively calm U. S. S. often had a limited scope and was centered on preserving European stability or achieving humanitarian goals. The starkly different approaches to war and security that followed 9/11 were made possible by this disparity in military operations.

Immediate Post 9/11 Consensus

The September 11 attacks brought the US government together in an unprecedented agreement between both parties. Republicans and Democrats alike agreed that the country needed to move quickly to dismantle terrorist groups and stop further attacks. Since both parties agreed that strong and swift action against terrorism was necessary, this sense of unity cut across political divides. After that, on September 18, 2001, the US Congress approved the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) enabling President George W. the power to employ military force against the attackers which Bush did. Both the House and the Senate passed the AUMF with nearly unanimous votes demonstrating its strong bipartisan support. A strong swift response to the threats posed by Al-Qaeda and other extremist organizations was demonstrated by this action (Bush, 2001).

There was agreement on more than just military action. The establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Patriot Act which increased surveillance capabilities and sought to strengthen national security were enthusiastically embraced by both parties. Despite raising discussions about how to strike a balance between security and civil liberties these actions were deemed essential to address the evolving threat landscape. There was a rare moment of unanimity in the United States in the early post-9/11 period. S. politics as Republicans and Democrats agreed that a comprehensive approach to countering terrorism was essential.

The Republican War Policy Post 9/11

George W. Bush Administration (2001 – 2009)

War on Terror and Neoconservatism

Following 9/11 George W. Bush Administration's war strategy was significantly influenced by the neoconservative philosophy which placed a strong emphasis on American military dominance and taking preventative action against imagined threats (Gaddis, 2004). The Bush administration was given a clear mandate to restructure the United States following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. S. foreign policy centered on fighting terrorism worldwide. The War on Terror which included military operations homeland security protocols and initiatives to advance democracy in the Middle East came to define the story.

During the Bush administration, neoconservatives promoted the idea that the US should play a pivotal role in changing world politics. A foreign policy that would use military intervention and regime change to establish American dominance and thwart future threats was promoted by leaders like Paul Wolfowitz Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney (Frum, 2003). In addition to providing justification for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, this ideology supported the administrations' emphasis on making foreign policy decisions alone.

Afghanistan and Iraq Wars

The invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 marked the initial section of the Bush management's army response to Sept 11. The primary goal becomes to dismantle Al-Qaeda and put off the Taliban regime that harbored its leadership (Woodward, 2002). The venture to begin with succeeded in achieving those goals, but the prolonged occupation highlighted sizeable strategic missteps via 2003, the focal point had shifted to Iraq, primarily based on claims that Saddam Hussein possessed guns of mass destruction (WMDs).

The Iraq war became a cornerstone of the Bush management's foreign policy but additionally a subject of sizeable controversy. at the same time as proponents argued it become vital to prevent future threats, critics highlighted the dearth of credible evidence regarding WMDs and the war's destabilizing impact at the vicinity (Gordon, 2006). via 2006, the war in Iraq had devolved into a long insurgency, with US forces embroiled in a complicated sectarian battle. The choice to invade Iraq, framed as part of the wider "warfare on Terror," stays one of the maximum polarizing aspects of Republican warfare policy submit- Sept 11.

Unilateralism

Bush's foreign policy was characterized by using a reliance on unilateral motion, frequently bypassing global institutions like the United countries. The administration justified its movements beneath the doctrine of preemptive self-protection, putting forward that the US had the proper to act independently to defend its country wide security. This technique alienated traditional allies and drew complaint for undermining multilateralism, a cornerstone of post-international war II global relations. The refusal to build wide coalitions in Iraq, for example, strained U.S.-EU relations and brought about significant global competition.

Trump Administration (2017 – 2021)

'America First' Doctrine

Donald Trump's foreign policy departed drastically from his Republican predecessors, reflecting his "The First USA" doctrine. This approach prioritized domestic economic hobbies, decreased military commitments overseas, and emphasized bilateral over multilateral engagements (Mead, 2017). Trump turned into critical of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, labeling them expensive mistakes, and encouraged for retreating troops from what he termed "limitless wars". but, this rhetoric frequently conflicted along with his management's movements, as troop discounts were incremental and frequently reversed (Landler, 2019). The "The First USA" doctrine also pondered a transactional approach to alliances and global commitments. Trump often criticized NATO allies for not meeting defense spending targets and expressed skepticism approximately US commitments to conventional allies, signaling a shift inside the Republican birthday celebration's approach to global engagement.

Increased Drone Strikes and Counterterrorism

Notwithstanding Trump's rhetoric of reducing US involvement overseas, his management significantly escalated the usage of drone strikes and special

operations in counterterrorism efforts. by means of loosening operational constraints on drone battle, Trump increased the geographic scope and frequency of strikes in areas which include Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan (Zenko, 2019). This strategy aimed to decrease US army casualties whilst retaining stress on terrorist businesses. Whilst the extended reliance on drones allowed the US to venture strength with decreased risks, it also drew grievance for its impact on civilian populations and the dearth of transparency surrounding strike choices. Human rights businesses raised concerns about the ethical and legal implications of the increased drone software, noting its potential to fuel anti-American sentiment in affected areas.

The Democratic War Policy Post-9/11

Obama Administration (2009–2017)

Emphasis on Multilateralism

Barack Obama's presidency marked a giant shift in US struggle coverage, emphasizing multilateral cooperation and a departure from the unilateral method of the Bush management. Obama sought to repair America's photo on the worldwide stage and worked intently with international groups which includes NATO and the United international locations (Obama, 2009, June). This shift was evident in the management's diplomatic efforts, particularly in securing the new start treaty with Russia and negotiating multilateral sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program (Pifer, 2012).

Obama's emphasis on multilateralism additionally prolonged to army engagements. for example, the 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya, carried out beneath the guise of the "duty to shield," highlighted his desire for coalition-building. even as the intervention succeeded in toppling Muammar Gaddafi, it additionally raised questions about the unintentional effects of U.S.-led regime change. Those efforts underscored a Democratic desire for working with allies to proportion the weight of world conflicts even as decreasing the belief of yank hegemony.

Afghanistan Strategy

Afghanistan remained a vital cognizance of Obama's battle policy. In 2009, he authorized a troop surge, deploying an additional 30,000 forces that allows to stabilize the USA and weaken the Taliban's insurgency (Woodward, 2002). This choice reflected Obama's perception in Afghanistan as the "simply battle," awesome from Iraq, which he had criticized as a battle of choice but, the surge confronted complaint for its restricted lengthy term effect and high human and

economic costs via 2011, the administration started out moving its cognizance closer to a exit strategy, emphasizing the schooling of Afghan forces and a gradual withdrawal of US troops. The killing of Osama bin laden in May 2011 become a pivotal second, permitting Obama to border the withdrawal as a victory within the battle on Terror (Obama, 2009, June). Despite those efforts, Afghanistan remained unstable, with the Taliban regaining energy as US forces drew down. This highlighted the iconic challenges of counterinsurgency and kingdom-constructing within the region.

Shift to Covert Operations

Obama's warfare policy additionally saw a dramatic growth in the use of covert operations and drone struggles. The administration appreciably increased drone moves in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia, focused on Al-Qaeda and affiliated groups (Zenko, 2019). This technique aimed to decrease US military casualties while maintaining stress on terrorist groups. But, the reliance on drones sparked extreme grievance over civilian casualties and the lack of transparency surrounding this system (International, Will I be next? U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, 2019 October). The Obama administration additionally trusted special operations force for focused missions, which include the raid that killed Osama bin laden. those operations, while effective in removing high – price objectives, raised questions about the felony and moral implications of extraterritorial assassinations and the erosion of due system in counterterrorism efforts.

Biden Administration (2021–2024)

End of 'Forever Wars'

Joe Biden's presidency was defined by his commitment to finishing America's "forever wars," a term that encapsulates prolonged navy engagements without clean objectives. This method culminated within the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in August 2021, efficiently finishing the longest war in American history. whilst Biden defended the withdrawal as vital to consciousness on rising international demanding situations, the chaotic nature of the evacuation drew sizable complaint. The management's selection to go away Afghanistan reflected a broader strategic pivot far from counterinsurgency and toward counterterrorism. Biden argued that America's safety may be maintained thru "over-the-horizon" talents, decreasing the need for big troop deployments abroad (Crowley, 2021). This marked a departure from conventional Democratic rules, emphasizing cost- powerful and focused navy techniques over good sized state-building efforts.

Focus on Diplomacy

Biden sought to reinvigorate US international relations as a primary device of overseas policy. This is evident in his administration's method to rebuilding alliances strained at some stage in the Trump generation and re-getting into multilateral agreements which includes the Paris climate Accord. While the administration prioritized strategic opposition with China and Russia, it additionally emphasized international relations in addressing conflicts inside the center East. As an instance, efforts to restore the Iran nuclear deal signal a return to the Obama-generation emphasis on negotiation and multilateralism. Biden's struggle policy underscores a Democratic shift towards international relations and strategic restraint, aiming to lessen the United States's army footprint while addressing worldwide demanding situations through collaboration and talk.

Comparative Analysis of Policies

Points of Convergence

After the 9/11 attacks, both Democrats and Republicans, even with their different ideologies, agreed upon the need to act against terrorism. They strongly supported the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF). This showcased that both parties understood how critical it was to quickly and strongly respond to international terrorist threats (Bush, 2001). Their agreement made it clear that national security was a top priority within US foreign policy, no matter the political differences.

Each event also embraced the multiplied use of drone warfare initiated under George W. Bush and drastically ramped up by Barack Obama, drones became a key counterterrorism tool, taking into consideration precision moves with reduced dangers to American personnel. This coverage meditated bipartisan agreement on leveraging era to combat terrorist networks whilst minimizing direct navy engagements (Zenko, 2019).

Additionally, Afghanistan served as a focus for each event. Bush's preliminary intervention sought to dismantle Al-Qaeda and oust the Taliban, whilst Obama's surge in troop deployment underscored a persisted commitment to stabilizing the region. Even at some point of Biden's withdrawal, the administration emphasized maintaining "over-the-horizon" competencies to save you the resurgence of terrorist threats (Biden, 2021).

Points of Divergence

Approaches to Multilateralism vs. Unilateralism

An enormous divergence lies inside the technique to multilateralism. Republican administrations, specially beneath George W. Bush, frequently preferred unilateral movement, as exemplified by means of the 2003 Iraq invasion, which bypassed vast opposition from worldwide allies and the United international locations (Haass, 2009). In comparison, Democrats, appreciably during Obama's tenure, emphasized constructing coalitions and engaging worldwide organizations. The NATO-led intervention in Libya in 2011 highlighted the Democratic choice for shared duty and multilateral engagement in army movements.

Military Strategy and Engagement

Republicans, particularly at some point of the Bush years, prioritized huge-scale military interventions as visible in Iraq and Afghanistan, grounded in a neoconservative notion in the use of military pressure to reshape the worldwide order. Conversely, Democrats have leaned toward reducing military footprints. Obama's pivot to covert operations, along with using unique forces and drones, reflects a desire for precision over protracted wars. Biden's whole withdrawal from Afghanistan marked a continuation of this fashion, signaling a shift far from prolonged military engagements in prefer of strategic retrenchment.

Civil Liberties and Surveillance

Some other factors of divergence lie in balancing countrywide security and civil liberties. Under Bush, measures together with America PATRIOT Act and the established order of Guantanamo Bay drew complaints for undermining civil rights. while Obama to start with continued a number of those regulations, his management driven for reforms, along with efforts to shut Guantanamo and introduce extra stringent oversight of surveillance applications (International, Guantanamo: A decade of damage to human rights, 2012). Democrats have commonly been extra vocal about the ethical and criminal implications of counterterrorism regulations, highlighting the need to stability security with constitutional rights.

Focus on Emerging Global Challenges

Democrats have also demonstrated a broader focus on addressing systemic global challenges, including climate change, cyber warfare, and great-power competition with China and Russia. Biden's foreign policy reflects this shift, as seen in his

emphasis on diplomacy and rebuilding alliances. By contrast, Trump's Republican administration focused more narrowly on counterterrorism and conventional military power, often sidelining multilateral solutions to global issues.

Rhetorical and Ideological Underpinnings

Republican rhetoric put up-9/11 has often framed US overseas policy in terms of good as opposed to evil, reflecting a neoconservative worldview. The "conflict on Terror" was provided as a moral campaign, justifying preemptive strikes and regime modifications. Democrats, even as sharing concerns about terrorism, have often adopted an extra pragmatic tone, emphasizing the complexity of worldwide conflicts and the significance of diplomatic answers along navy interventions.

Conclusion of the Comparative Analysis

The struggle policies of Democrats and Republicans publish- September 11 reveal both convergence and divergence. at the same time as both parties have embraced army pressure and counterterrorism as significant pillars in their techniques, their approaches reflect deeper ideological divides. Republicans have tended in the direction of unilateralism and expansive army interventions, at the same time as Democrats have prioritized coalition- constructing, covert operations, and balancing safety with different worldwide challenges. these differences underscore the role of political ideology in shaping US foreign policy, whilst shared countrywide hobbies force positive commonalities.

Impact of War Policies on US Global Standing

Reputation and Soft Power

The conflict rules carried out by using both Republican and Democratic administrations submit 9/11 appreciably affected the united states' popularity and soft power on the worldwide degree. initially, the US garnered big sympathy and aid following the 9/11 attacks, with allies rallying to aid its counterterrorism efforts, however, the unilateral decision by using George W. Bush to invade Iraq in 2003, based totally on disputed claims about guns of mass destruction, eroded international believe in US management (Haass, 2009). The notion of the United States as a competitive actor pursuing regime exchange brought about a decline in its soft power, particularly in Europe and the middle East.

Democratic administrations sought to rebuild this popularity. Barack Obama's emphasis on multilateralism, exemplified by using his engagement with NATO at some point of the intervention in Libya and the Iran nuclear deal, briefly advanced

the united states' status abroad (Obama, 2009, June). Obama's Cairo speech in 2009, which aimed to reset family members with the Muslim global, changed into a calculated attempt to melt the image of the US as a unilateral hegemon. however, rules along with the continuation of drone moves and the failure to close Guantanamo Bay complex those efforts, leaving blended perceptions of US intentions. Donald Trump's "the United States First" rhetoric marked some other shift, prioritizing transactional international relations over conventional alliances, in addition straining relationships with long-time allies like Germany and Canada. The chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan under Joe Biden in 2021 in addition broken the U.S.'s credibility, with critics arguing that it pondered poorly on its dedication to allies and companions.

Long-Term Consequences

The long- time period results of put-up September 11 battle policies increase beyond instant reputational harm. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which spanned over two a long time, drained US assets, costing trillions of dollars and leading to vast loss of existence amongst both navy employees and civilians (Bilmes, 2013). This financial and human toll spurred domestic debates about the sustainability of America's function as a worldwide policeman. Globally, the protracted conflicts created energy vacuums in regions just like the middle East, allowing extremist agencies which include ISIS to benefit footholds. The rise of ISIS within the aftermath of the Iraq battle underlined the unintentional results of regime alternate policies, leading to further instability and necessitating additional navy interventions (Rashid, 2008). Every other long- time period effect has been the shift in worldwide energy dynamics. at the same time as the US centered heavily on counterterrorism, China and Russia capitalized at the opportunity to enlarge their impact in regions like Africa and Japanese Europe.

Critics argue that the overemphasis on middle Japanese wars diverted attention from strategic competition with those notable powers, diminishing America's worldwide status. Domestically, the battle policies fueled polarization, with growing public skepticism about navy interventions. The bipartisan assist for the preliminary battle on Terror waned through the years as people wondered the efficacy of extended wars.

President Biden's choice to pull troops out of Afghanistan showcases a shift in focus, bringing an end to the so-called "forever wars" and hinting at a possible change within the US foreign policy goals. Even with these challenges, the US still has a strong presence globally, i.e., its military alliances and economic power continue to influence upon the global events. However, in order to rebuild trust

and soft power, the US needs to carefully balance its military strength with its diplomacy, work more with other nations, and put more of its focus upon global problems like climate change and cybersecurity.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

The war strategies of Democrats and Republicans after September 11 show a mix of similarities and differences influenced by their beliefs and practical needs. It is clear that foreign policy was approached by both parties with focus on national security, both parties supported the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) and relied heavily on the use of drones by various administrations. Both counties also decided to fight against terrorism especially against groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

However, there were differences in terms of how both of them carried out these policies. Republican governments (under the George W. Bush leadership) followed a unilateral approach and utilized large-scale military actions, i.e., the Iraq invasion. However, within the Obama and Biden administrations, Democrats preferred working with other countries and involve fewer military forces. For their part, Republicans have justified their actions as a moral duty to reshape the global order, as opposed to Democrats who have wanted to focus more on diplomacy, building alliances and combining counterterrorism with all of this.

In dealing with long standing challenge such as climate change and rivalry with other powerful countries, Democrats prioritized the equilibrium between security and constitutional rights. These policies have had a critical impact on the U.S.'s position in the world. Even though America's military power has remained unchallenged; however, its reputation and trust have faded due to long wars, unilateral actions and shifting alliances.

Reflection on Future Implications

Looking ahead, the effects of these war strategies create both challenges and opportunities for the US foreign policy. The Afghanistan withdrawal marked a major shift, possibly ending the "forever wars" era and focusing upon the new global issues. The Biden administration's efforts to prioritize diplomacy and address competition with powers like China and Russia showcase a change in focus. Still, earning back trust from other countries and dealing with problems caused by past actions, i.e., regional instability and the rise of extremist groups, remain important tasks.

Regionally, public fatigue with extended navy engagements has reshaped the discourse at the US function in international affairs. Future administrations, irrespective of birthday celebration affiliation, will possibly face extended scrutiny over navy interventions and extra pressure to justify their strategies in terms of exact results. Moreover, advancing technology, together with cyber war and artificial intelligence, would require both parties to rethink traditional notions of battle and adapt their rules hence. In conclusion, the put up- 11th of September era has established the resilience and flexibility of US foreign coverage however additionally highlighted the prices of overreach and unilateralism transferring forward, putting a balance among navy electricity, diplomatic engagement, and addressing systemic international challenges can be crucial to preserving the US's leadership function in increasingly multipolar international.

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