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UNIPOLARITY: BENEFITS AND LONG PERSPECTIVE DURABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Present unipolar international relations' structure is a previously unknown situation. Authors present some aspects of the phenomenon discussed among scientists and scholars. Paper is focused on the following issues: arguments for long durability of unipolarity, and the benefits of the system – for the unipole and the lesser partners. Not only theoretical arguments are presented, but also the empirical data for different interpretations of unipolarity are presented. Some examples form the history of the last quarter of century, up to present times (summer 2015).

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Unipolarity, as the international relations system that lasts a quarter of century, is named an extraordinary state in the world's history. There had never been such situation, when one state dominated all of the other powers combined, both in military and economic power. In this article we present the academic discourse concerning different aspects of fundamentals, characteristics, threats and future of the unipolar world, in the context of its benefits and stability.

UNIPOLARITY AS A SYSTEM

For ages the international relations system was based on multipolar world, consisting of several great powers, competing economically, making coalitions against each other, fighting great wars on global scale (since the Modern Period, especially the Seven Years' War, 1754–1763),

including the most disastrous I and II World Wars, that had brought the known world to the end. Not only the borders or societies had been dramatically changed, but the world's system as well.

As we know, even the great wars in multipolar systems did not provide ultimate tests of the power of the victorious coalition; neither major powers faced total defeat at the end of the struggle. Both the winners and the defeated managed to preserve their potential to continue the rivalry.

After 1945 the bipolar great powers, USA – Soviet Union pivot dominated the international relations, although several major powers Western Europe and Far East were still the important parts of the system, but to have the influence on the global affairs, they needed to join Western or Eastern political bloc. Despite many

TABLE 1
ECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR THE MAJOR POWERS^a
(2006)

	GDP Current Prices (\$ Billion)	% Great Power GDP, Current Prices	% World GDP, Current Prices	% World GDP, PPP	GDP per Capita, Current Prices	Public Debt (% GDP)	Productivity (\$ GDP per Hour Worked)
United States	13,245	46.1	27.5	22.5	44,190	64.7	48.3
China	2,630	9.2	5.5	9.7	2,001	22.1	n.a.
Japan	4,367	15.2	9.1	7.4	34,188	176.2	34.4
Germany	2,897	10.1	6	4.6	35,204	66.8	44
Russia	979	3.4	2	3.1	6,856	8	n.a.
France	2,232	7.8	4.6	3.4	35,404	64.7	49
Britain	2,374	8.3	4.9	3.5	39,213	42.2	40.1

SOURCES: *International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2007*, at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2007/01/data/index.aspx> (accessed November 7, 2007); *World Bank, 2005 International Comparison Program, Preliminary Results*, at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ICPINT/Resources/ICPre-portfolio.prelim.pdf> (accessed December 12, 2007); *Central Intelligence Agency, CIA World Factbook*, at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/> (accessed November 8, 2007); *Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation, OECD Employment Outlook 2007, Statistical Annex*, at http://www.oecd.org/document/26/0,3343,en_2649_33927_38551002_1_1_1_1,00.html (accessed November 8, 2007); *Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation, OECD Compendium of Productivity Indicators 2006*.

^a % World GDP, PPP is World Bank estimate for 2005; differences between PPP and market exchange rate measures are discussed in Brooks and Wohlforth (fn. 10), chap. 2. Data for United States public debt are from 2005. Productivity estimates are from 2005.

particular differences in interests among all the players, and disadvantages for many smaller nations, bipolar system was quite stable (without analyzing the conditions of this “stability”). And suddenly, one of the competitors collapsed, leaving another as the only great power (superpower) – which was more decisive than most wars¹.

Thus unipolarity became a part of the academic discourse. Scientists and scholars discuss the possible strategies for the hegemon, types of managing the international system, the advantages and threats of unipolarity, trying to predict how long the domination of the world by USA will last, and what can bring it to the end.

The first obvious question to be answered is if there really is a unipolarity, and if USA dominates other major powers. To be precise, academic discourse defines major powers as the countries that have real influence on the international politics, which is the effect of their combined military and economic power; although all of the countries possessing nuclear weapons should be included in this category. Great powers (further used as a singular noun – in the unipolar context) are the most powerful major powers, having a great quality and quantity ad-

vantage in economic and military potential, resulting in the highest ability of managing and creating international politics.

The present US position as the only superpower is based not only on the Francis Fukuyama’s *end of history* political concept, which explains the end of the Cold War as defeating the East by the West, due to its cultural and economic values. Several empirical arguments can be pointed here to show the advantages of United States over major powers².

As shown, it is obvious that no other power has the capabilities and even a near perspective of reaching US level of overall capabilities. It maintains a military power that is far more powerful than any other; US military spending is nearly more than half of global defence expenditures; blue-water US Navy is superior to all the world’s fleets combined; research and development budget is several times bigger than the R&D budget of its most obvious future competitor, China. As William Wohlforth concludes, in the paradigm of neorealist balance theory: *Unipolarity is a structure in which one state’s capabilities are too great to be counterbalanced*³.

1 W. C. Wohlforth, *The Stability of a Unipolar World*, “International Security”, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999), p. 20.

2 Presented Tables 1–3 come from G. J. Ikenberry, M. Mastanduno, W. C. Wohlforth, *Unipolarity. State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences*, “World Politics”, January 2009, vol. 61, issue 01, p. 7–9.

3 W. C. Wohlforth, *The Stability...*, p. 9.

TABLE 2
DEFENSE EXPENDITURES FOR THE MAJOR POWERS^a
(2006)

	<i>Defense Expenditures (\$ Billion)</i>	<i>% Great Power Defense Expenditures</i>	<i>% World Defense Expenditures</i>	<i>Defense Expenditures % of GDP</i>	<i>Defense R&D Expenditures (\$ Billion)</i>
United States	528.6	65.6	46	4.1	75.5
China	49.5	6.1	4	2	n.a.
Japan	43.9	5.4	4	1	1.1
Germany	36.9	4.6	3	1.4	1.1
Russia	34.7	4.3	3	4.1	n.a.
France	53	6.6	5	2.5	3.9
Britain	59.2	7.3	5	2.7	4.4

SOURCES: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, "The 15 Major Spending Countries in 2006," at http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_data_index.html (accessed November 8, 2007); Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Military Expenditures Database, at http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_database1.html (accessed November 8, 2007); Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation, *OECD Main Science and Technology Indicators* 2006, no. 2 (Paris: OECD, 2006), 49.

^a Defense expenditures as % GDP are 2005 estimates; R&D expenditures are for 2004.

TABLE 3
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INDICATORS FOR THE MAJOR POWERS
(2003–6)

	<i>High Tech Production (\$ Millions (2003)^a</i>	<i>% World High Tech Production (2003)</i>	<i>Gross Domestic Expenditure R&D (\$ Million PPP) (2006)</i>	<i># of Triadic Patent Families (2005)^b</i>	<i>Science and Engineering Doctoral Degrees (2003)^c</i>	<i>PCs per 1000 People (2004)</i>	<i>Internet Access per 1000 People (2005)</i>	<i>Secure Internet Servers^e per Million People (2006)</i>
United States	1,351,048.7	39	343,747.5	16,368	26,891	762.2	630.1 ^d	869.2
China	423,825.9	12	115,196.9	433	8,153	40.9	85.1	0.4
Japan	376,250.1	11	130,745.4	15,239	7,581	541.6	667.5	331.9
Germany	146,494	4	62,493.2	6,266	10,796	545.3	454.7	348.6
Russia	n.a.	n.a.	16,668.7	49	10,409	104.3	152.3	3.2
France	136,665.7	4	40,392	2,463	6,890	495.7	429.6	96.5
Britain	116,200.2	3	35,171.10	1,588	8,810	599.8	473.5	561.5

SOURCES: World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2007*, at <http://go.worldbank.org/3JU2HA60D0> (accessed November 8, 2007); Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation, *OECD Main Science and Technology Indicators*, 2007, vol. 1, at http://www.oecd.org/document/33/0,3343,en_2694_34451_1901082_1_1_1_1,00.html (accessed November 8, 2007); National Science Board, "Science and Engineering Indicators 2006, Volume 2," at <http://nsf.gov/statistics/seind06/pdf/colume2.pdf> (accessed November 8, 2007).

^a In 1997 dollars.

^b Triadic patents families represent attempt to receive patents for an invention in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

^c The data for China are from 2001; the data for France are from 2002; and the data for Russia are from 2000.

^d Data are from 2005, with the exception of the U.S. data, which are from 2004.

^e Secure Internet servers use encryption technology in internet transactions; see www.netcraft.com.

There is a key question to be asked: what are the consequences for international relations, when one of the players has such a superiority? There are some different proposals to name this model, but all of them agree, that it is something different from what we know from the history. Unipolarity is not an empire – as Robert Jervis says: *unipolarity implies the existence of*

*many juridically equal nation-states, something an empire denies. Empire also implies that the unipole is receiving tribute; under unipolarity the flows can go either way*⁴. Some scholars argue, that the US position should be called

4 R. Jervis, *Unipolarity. A Structural Perspective*, "World Politics" 61, no. 1 (January 2009), p. 191–192.

a hegemony; they are pointing some possible strategies for such an unipolar hegemon.

Basing on Robert Gilpin, who defines hegemony as *the leadership of one state (the hegemon) over other states in the system*⁵, US as the only great power can be defined in terms of hegemony. According to Nuno P. Monteiro, a unipole can implement one of three grand strategies: *defensive dominance, offensive dominance, or disengagement*⁶. According to the author, unipole can pursue different strategies for different part of the world. For instance, between 1990 and 2001, the United States implemented a strategy of *defensive dominance everywhere except in Africa, from which it largely disengaged after withdrawing from Somalia in 1994. Between late 2001 and 2005, when the Bush Doctrine was in full force, the United States shifted to an offensive dominance strategy in the Middle East, toppling regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, while maintaining its defensive dominance in Europe and East Asia and remaining largely disengaged from Africa*⁷. Christopher Layne says that this is a new type of hegemony – liberal hegemony, where domination is based not only on pure military strength, but on effective managing the international relations system: *The United States can gain others' willing acceptance of its hegemony by adopting policies that benefit other states, acting with self-restraint, and comporting itself as a liberal hegemon*⁸. Author gives an extensive definition what he calls a hegemony:

First, hegemony is about raw, hard power. Militarily, a hegemon's capabilities are such that "no other state has the wherewithal to

put up a serious fight against it." A hegemon also enjoys "economic supremacy" in the international system and has a "preponderance of material resources." Second, hegemony is about the dominant power's ambitions. A hegemon acts self-interestedly to safeguard its security, economic, and ideological interests. Third, hegemony is about polarity. Because of its overwhelming advantages in relative military and economic power over other states in the international system, a hegemon is the only great power in the system, which is therefore, by definition, unipolar. Fourth, hegemony is about will. A hegemon purposefully exercises its overwhelming power to impose order on the international system. Finally, hegemony is fundamentally about structural change, because "if one state achieves hegemony, the system ceases to be anarchic and becomes hierarchic"⁹.

The unipolar world is the fact, but what does it really mean for the international system? Does it have positive or negative consequences? Is it just a moment in history, or a stable optimum? If it is to be ended – rather due to internal or external factors? Four main fields of discourse needs to be shown:

1. Long durability perspective (unquestioned domination),
2. Benefits for international community,
3. Short durability (rising competitors),
4. Costs (threats) for international community.

This should be seen only as a model useful for analytical purposes; authors generally combine some of these aspects, concerning i.e. unipolarity as a stable system because of its benefits – this perspective is presented in this article.

The main discussion about unipolarity is based on two questions, used by William C. Wohlforth as a rhetorical figure: *does unipolarity is safer and cheaper than bipolarity or multipolarity? is*

5 R. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press 1981, p. 116, n. 6.

6 N. P. Monteiro, *Unrest Assured. Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful*, "International Security", Vol. 36, No. 3 (Winter 2011/12), p. 14.

7 Ibidem, p. 22.

8 Ch. Layne, *The Unipolar Illusion Revisited...*, p. 17.

9 Ibidem, p. 11.

*unipolarity durable and peaceful, and the chief threat is U.S. failure to do enough?*¹⁰

A LONG DURABILITY PERSPECTIVE

William C. Wohlforth proposes a kind of unipolarity manifesto, with three main aspects that will make the system last for a long time, and give the world decades of peaceful growth:

First, the system is unambiguously unipolar. The United States enjoys a much larger margin of superiority over the next most powerful state or, indeed, all other great powers combined than any leading state in the last two centuries. Moreover, the United States is the first leading state in modern international history with decisive preponderance in all the underlying components of power: economic, military, technological, and geopolitical. To describe this unprecedented quantitative and qualitative concentration of power as an evanescent “moment” is profoundly mistaken.

Second, the current unipolarity is prone to peace. The raw power advantage of the United States means that an important source of conflict in previous systems is absent: hegemonic rivalry over leadership of the international system. No other major power is in a position to follow any policy that depends for its success on prevailing against the United States in a war or an extended rivalry. None is likely to take any step that might invite the focused enmity of the United States. At the same time, unipolarity minimizes security competition among the other great powers. As the system leader, the United States has the means and motive to maintain key security institutions in order to ease local security conflicts and limit expensive competition among the other major powers. For their part, the second-tier states face incentives to bandwagon with the unipolar power as long as the expected costs of balancing remain prohibitive.

Third, the current unipolarity is not only peaceful but durable. It is already a decade old, and if Washington plays its cards right, it may last as long as bipolarity. For many decades, no state is likely to be in a position to take on the United States in any of the underlying elements of power. And, as an offshore power separated by two oceans from all other major states, the United States can retain its advantages without risking a counterbalance. The current candidates for polar status (Japan, China, Germany, and Russia) are not so lucky. Efforts on their part to increase their power or ally with other dissatisfied states are likely to spark local counterbalances well before they can create a global equipoise to U.S. power¹¹.

Several arguments are used for supporting this vision. The first to be mentioned is based on the specific nature of US dominative position – it is not a result of long and bloody war, but was suddenly “given” as a result of the collapse of the major opponent. Therefore America is not the iron-fisted ruler but rather a “benevolent hegemon”. To ensure other countries of this type of attitude, some measures can be recommended as: *using force with restraint; avoiding unilateral military action; adopting a defensive realist military posture; acting multilaterally and allowing others to have a voice in how the United States exercises its power; and making concessions to others’ interests to secure their cooperation¹².*

This strategy of liberal domination is successfully put through using soft power – countries tend to oppose the military threat, but may accept cultural influence. America reasonably assumes that her institutions, values, and standards are attractive abroad, and therefore can be used as more acceptable means for enforcing her interests. Great Britain’s policy in the nineteenth century can be used as a model for US as an “offshore balancer” – which seems to be the optimal strategy for a powerful country

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 7–8.

¹² Ch. Layne, *The Unipolar Illusion Revisited...*, p. 17 n. 36.

¹⁰ W. C. Wohlforth, *The Stability...*, p. 8–9.

isolated from the main competitors by oceans. America's position as a leading sea power, its consequences for unipolar world, and the context of balance of power theory will be discussed latter. It is to be said here, that the key attribute for offshore balancing is the economic expansion and concentration rather on markets control and investment than conquering the land. On the other hand, USA as a balancer tries the ancient Roman *divide et imperia* method, preventing any country or group of states from gaining comparable power or control of a disproportionate amount of resources.

Therefore, USA acting as a global naval superpower, seeking economic not territorial expansion, does not cause vital threat for other major powers. Their sovereignty is also secured by possession of big military capabilities (in most cases nuclear weapons), what makes direct invasion almost impossible. Climate of major powers rivalry does not have such high temperature as in the multipolarity or bipolarity era, because the struggle is no more for the physical existence of states.

The model of "benevolent hegemon" / "offshore balancer", the superiority without direct aggression, stabilizes the international relations system and makes it durable (permanent?). As William C. Wohlforth says, *the leading state's power advantage removes the problem of hegemonic rivalry from world politics, and it reduces the salience and stakes of balance-of-power politics among the major states*¹³. He also points, that the great powers rivalry is possible only when the distance between them is quite short¹⁴.

In unipolar world the US present advantage over other major powers surpassed the threshold and her military, economic, and technological potential discourages major powers even form an attempt of competing. As Robert Gilpin concluded, *leading states will attempt to change the international system if the expect-*

*ed benefits exceed the expected costs*¹⁵. It was possible for Soviet Union to compete with United States but the price was very high – total militarization of economy, resulting in permanent consumer goods shortages. At the end it resulted in severe economic crisis, dramatic collapse of the state and dissolution of created superpower potential, made with such effort; present major powers does not even have the SU potential, so rivalry is not possible. America's domination is told to had been simply accepted; major powers rather prefer to focus on their closer interests and local issues, in their close (land) neighborhood¹⁶. As a result, the larger and clearer concentration of power in the dominating state, the more peaceful international system is. Explanation of this phenomenon is given by the hegemonic theory: *a clear preponderance in favor of a leading state with a comprehensive power portfolio should eliminate rivalry for primacy*¹⁷. No rivalry for supremacy for hegemon removes the necessity for counterbalancing other major powers, that can easily lead to overstretch its potential. Therefore unipolarity is to last "forever".

The other reason for long time perspective of unipolar world is that no counterbalancing coalitions against US as hegemon (of an offshore type) are actually build. Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson¹⁸ have made an interesting study based on the enquiry of hundreds of alliances signed between great powers, focusing on their aim as an attempt to counterbalance the influence of the greatest land and the greatest sea powers at particular time. They explain that an alliance against leading land sea pow-

13 W. C. Wohlforth, *The Stability...*, p. 23.

14 Ibidem, p. 27.

15 R. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press 1981, p. 10.

16 See S. M. Walt, *Keeping the World "Off-Balance": Self-Restraint and U.S. Foreign Policy*, [in:] *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, Cornell University Press, 2002, p. 137.

17 W. C. Wohlforth, *The Stability...*, p. 25.

18 J. S. Levy, W. R. Thompson, *Balancing on Land and at Sea. Do States Ally against the Leading Global Power?*, "International Security", Vol. 35, No. 1 (Summer 2010).

er is much less likely to be signed than against leading land power: *States' highest priorities are to provide for their territorial and constitutional integrity. The greatest threats to those interests come from large armies. (...) Maritime powers have smaller armies, fewer capabilities for invading and occupying, and fewer incentives to do so. They pose significantly weaker threats to the territorial integrity of other states, particularly to other great powers, but greater threats to each other than to leading land-based powers*¹⁹.

Furthermore, United States has created a worldwide military treaties system, having the most major powers among their allies. This is also confirmed by Levy and Thompson's research, which can be shortly presented in the tables created by the authors²⁰.

	Naval Leader Share ≤ 50%	Naval Leader Share ≥ 50%	Total
No alliance against naval leader	325 (81%)	131 (92%)	456
Alliance against naval leader	76 (19%)	12 (8%)	88
total	401	143	
Chi square = 8.67 $p = 0.003$			

Number of Major Powers in Coalition	Naval Leader Share ≥ 50%	Naval Leader Share ≥ 45%	Naval Leader Share ≥ 40%	Naval Leader Share of Any Value
2	6	14	15	23
3	0	0	4	8
4	0	1	2	3
5	0	0	0	1
total	6	15	21	35

	Concentration of Naval Power		
	≥ 40%	≥ 45%	≥ 50%
Probability of alliance with leading power	27%	31%	34%
Chi square significance	$p = 0.065$	$p = 0.000$	$p = 0.001$

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 16; of course USA is the leading sea as well as land power – for the discussion with the authors see i.e. D. W. Blagden, Jack S. Levy, W. R. Thompson, *Correspondence. Sea Powers, Continental Powers, and Balancing Theory*, "International Security", Vol. 36, No. 2 (Fall 2011), p. 191.

²⁰ J. S. Levy, W. R. Thompson, *Balancing on Land and at Sea...*, p. 32, 34–35.

Table 6. Alliances and Dominant Powers on Land and Sea

	Dominant Land Power	Dominant Sea Power
Alliances against	55%	8%
Alliances with	13%	34%

Table 7. Size of Coalitions with and against the Strongest Sea Power

Number of Major Powers in Coalition	Number of Coalitions with the Leading Sea Power	Number of Coalitions against the Leading Land Power
2	10	15
3	12	4
4	15	2
5	6	0
3–5	33 (77%)	6 (29%)
total	43	21

Therefore we can see the other basis for long durability of unipolarity under United States rule – possible rivals such as China or Russia are continental powers, with many countries seeking US support to counterbalance their pressure. As John J. Mearsheimer concludes, *offshore balancers do not provoke balancing coalitions against themselves*²¹. United States' overall power and her long-term international policy of seeking allies and establishing friendly relations with key countries in particular regions, results in concentration of c.a. 80% of global military spending by America and her supporters²². What is more important, these alliances and friendly relations were mostly established initiated in the Cold War era. A stable network of political and military support has been created, linking US with smaller regional "pivotal states", her allies against an aspiring regional power.

This global political engagement is called a Grand Strategy: *for more than sixty years, the United States has sought to advance its core interests in security, prosperity, and domestic lib-*

*erty by pursuing three overlapping objectives: managing the external environment to reduce near- and long-term threats to U.S. national security; promoting a liberal economic order to expand the global economy and maximize domestic prosperity; and creating, sustaining, and revising the global institutional order to secure necessary interstate cooperation on terms favorable to U.S. interests*²³.

Military potential of unipole, compared to its military spending, is seen as another basis for unipolarity stability. US technological advantage in the defence sector is even hard to estimate, American military technology is at least one generation in advance and the distance to main possible opponents like China and Russia grows. *The unipole is so far ahead militarily that it finds it relatively easy to maintain and even widen its capability lead over that of would-be peers—especially if, as some scholars argue, the contemporary U.S. defense industry benefits from increasing returns to scale*²⁴.

This advantage is achieved with relatively low military expenditures compared to GDP, which has the potential – if necessary – to be increased without repeating the inefficient mil-

21 J. J. Mearsheimer, *The Future of the American Pacifier*, "Foreign Affairs", Vol. 80, No. 5 (September / October 2001), p. 49.

22 S. G. Brooks, G. J. Ikenberry, W. C. Wohlforth, *Don't Come Home, America. The Case against Retrenchment*, "International Security", Vol. 37, No. 3 (Winter 2012/13), p. 19.

23 Ibidem, p. 11.

24 G. J. Ikenberry, M. Mastanduno, W. C. Wohlforth, *Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences*, "World Politics", Volume 61, Issue 01, January 2009, p. 23.

itarized Soviet economy model. What is more significant, US possess the most powerful fleet, exceeding potential of all other's navies combined – but naval military expenditures are far greater than those needed to maintain the land forces. That means United States has large reserves and can transfer some economic resources within present amount of military spending; America's naval superiority is also secured due to the simple fact, that it is much easier for the states to compete with land powers than sea powers, where economic needs for rivalry are disproportionally bigger, and the predicted benefits are harder to achieve.

William C. Wohlforth summarizes the scale of America's advantage: *The United States is the only state with global power projection capabilities; it is probably capable, if challenged, of producing defensive land-power dominance in the key theaters; it retains the world's only truly blue-water navy; it dominates the air; it has retained a nuclear posture that may give it first-strike advantages against other nuclear powers; and it has continued to nurture decades-old investments in military logistics and command, control, communications, and intelligence. By devoting only 3 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to defense, it outspends all other great powers combined—and most of those great powers are its close allies*²⁵.

It seems that the main concern of US policy is to successfully reassure other states while simultaneously maintaining its capability lead over them²⁶.

BENEFITS OF UNIPOLARITY

Some examples of academic analyses, predicting unipolarity as the only possible world order in the present situation of United States' technological and military superiority, supported with worldwide alliance system, has already been presented. But is it possible, that unipo-

larity is not only “enforced”, but also an optimal world order? Some examples of beneficial effects (either for hegemon and “subjects”) of unipolar system are presented below; of course it is impossible to create a threshold between “long-lasting” and “benefits” – the arguments for long perspective usually stress the benefits of the system as well.

As shown previously, the stronger the leading sea power is, the more likely it is interested more in extending control over markets, rather than over territory, especially in regions where other major powers are present. Indirect control is preferred to direct rule. On the other hand, with the sea-based hegemon, major powers are more worried about local threats to regional hegemony. The extra-regional balancer is rather a supporter not a threat. This bandwagon thinking means that the states, including major powers, tend to ally with predominant sea power than to ally against them. If the opportunity for maintaining the global alliance network is to be taken by the United States, the Grand Strategy has to be implemented²⁷.

America's cumulated strength capabilities, her broad political relations system and the will to engage may give her a legitimacy to moderate international relations. The United States' overseas presence gives it the leverage to restrain partners from taking provocative action²⁸. On the other hand, once the hegemon is deeply engaged in one region, a conflict in other part of the world may erupt. That happened in 1999, while US was providing air bombardment operations against Serbia, a Indo-Pakistani War over Kashmir broke out. It lasted nearly two months and could have been a serious threat for the world's stability – both major powers

25 W. C. Wohlforth, *The Stability...*, p. 18.

26 G. J. Ikenberry, M. Mastanduno, W. C. Wohlforth, *Unipolarity, State Behavior...*, p. 24.

27 Several arguments for Grand Strategy are presented in M. Mastanduno, *Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy after the Cold War*, “International Security”, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Spring, 1997); S. G. Brooks, G. J. Ikenberry, W. C. Wohlforth, *Don't Come Home, America...*

28 S. G. Brooks, G. J. Ikenberry, W. C. Wohlforth, *Don't Come Home, America...*, p. 34.

possess nuclear weapons. The war, fortunately, was been fought only on local scale and was ended soon after the end of war in Balkans, under American pressure²⁹.

The international major powers institutional channels of communication can also be used in non-military cases of emergency. Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth quote an example of this solution described by Ikenberry's interviewee: *We could not have organized the Core Group (India, U.S., Australia, Japan) in response to the 2004 tsunami without the deep bilateral military relationships that had already been in place. It was much easier for us to organize with these countries almost immediately (within forty-eight hours) than anyone else for a large-scale humanitarian operation because our militaries were accustomed to each other*³⁰.

The security engagement may look a costly strategy – but maybe the benefits are worth the price? An obvious deduction is that this makes the world a more stable and safe place, with less full-scale conflicts, allowing to keep the military and security budget at relatively low level (as a percentage of GDP). Apart from that, host countries participate in the maintaining of US forces stationed abroad, which significantly reduce the costs of having a large armed forces necessary for a balancer role.

Another pole of benefits, more measurable, is that US, as a naval power, supports international trade, economic globalization and open-market policy, which can be mutually beneficial. Of course, the more profitable party is always the United State. Americans do not hesitate to enforce their economic interests in the trade negotiations even with the closes allies, i.e. with the Korea (KORUS FTA, 2012)³¹, Australia

FTA (2005) and Japan. According to Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth: *Japan's current interest in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Obama administration's most important long-term economic initiative in East Asia, is widely understood to be shaped less by specific Japanese economic interests than by the belief of Yoshihiko Noda's administration that it will strengthen alliance ties with the United States*³².

CONCLUSION

We can summarize that world's order is favorable to US interests and open for economic expansion. That makes United States a *status quo* defender, which is much easier to provide than to try to impose a new project, rebuilding the present societies and borders³³. The *status quo* as a reflection of America's preferences, is symbolically underlined by the use of US Dollar as the world's currency³⁴. Thus, the long durability of unipolarity, as the most beneficial international system, is a popular scientific perspective for many scholars, but the opposite approach is also significant.

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29 N. P. Monteiro, *Unrest Assured...*, p. 29.

30 S. G. Brooks, G. J. Ikenberry, W. C. Wohlforth, *Don't Come Home, America...*, p. 49–50.

31 The Korea – US Free Trade Agreement is estimated to enrich US GDP by \$10 – \$25 billion over a ten-year period; W. Cooper, M. Manyin, V. Jones, S. Cooney, R. Jurenas, *The Proposed U.S.–South Korean Free Trade*

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32 S. G. Brooks, G. J. Ikenberry, W. C. Wohlforth, *Don't Come Home, America...*, p. 43, 45.

33 W. C. Wohlforth, *The Stability...*, p. 33.

34 C. Norrlof, *America's Global Advantage. US Hegemony and International Cooperation*, Cambridge 2010, p. 2–3.

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