**DRUFT**

**The exceptionalism concept in contemporary American political science thinking**

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Within the framework of this paper we will try analyze several patterns of the development of American exceptionalism and correlate them with the modern stage of development of the American foreign policy.

Firstly, the United States of America is a *universal nation* whose values are congenial to the whole mankind and the principles are understandable for all people. To take the motto of the Great Seal of the US, E Pluribus unum – “From many, one” – in this context suggests that manyness should be melted down into one, but there should be a coexistence of many-in-one under a unified citizenship based on shared values. S. M. Lipset describes the American ideology in five words which are clear and brief: “liberty, egalitarianism (including the equality of opportunity and respect), individualism, populism, and laissez-fair”. Characterizing the relationship of ethnicity and American identity, historian P. Gleason asserts: “To be or to become an American, a person did not have to be of any particular national, linguistic, religious, or ethnic background. All he had to do was to commit himself to the political ideology centered on the abstract ideals of liberty, equality and republicanism. Thus, univesalist ideological character of American nationality meant that it was open to anyone who willed to become an American”. This is a basis for “Democracy Enlargement” Concept.

American identity, according to S. Song, “is not defined by a particular racial or ethnic group or religious views, but is determined by universal moral ideals embodied in the American political culture that differs from ethnic culture”. That’s why so –called “universal values” is a key element of contemporary American Foreign Policy.

America and Americans, then, are assumed to be defined politically – that is, by a set of political ideals assumed universal in their applicability – rather than culturally, or, in the words of historian Arthur Mann, by "the bond of common paternity."

The USA is the best example of a multicultural society where constitutional principles have taken root in a political culture without depending on all citizens’ sharing the same language or the same ethnic or cultural origins.

As a consequence, the USA is the laboratory of the whole world, and the objective of its external policy must be the global spread of the principles of the free expression of will and the free market.

Secondly, the USA is a *Western nation*, which is historically determined by the European roots and the European institutions that once sprang from the self-government of Angles and Saxons who formed the “ethnic core” or the “WASP (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant) centre” of the American nation.

Thus, the American identity relates not to the “whole world” but only to the “Western” one, and in this case the USA must take the European political, economic and other interests into consideration.

Thirdly, the US is a *unique nation*, exceptional in its history and created in inimitable conditions. The American culture was moulded on a new continent without having firm traditions. It was developed out of very different elements including the advanced social ideas derived from the ideology of the French Enlightenment as well as the Anglo-Saxon concept of liberty and the European Reformation. The national version of Protestantism bolstered with social and political individualism has made the USA different from any other country. The emphasis in the American value system, in the American Creed, has been on the individual. Citizens have been expected to demand and protect their rights on a personal basis. “The exceptional focus on law here as compared to Europe, derived from the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, has stressed rights against the state and other powers. America began and continues as the most anti-statist, legalistic, and rights-oriented nation”.

Fourthly, these days the USA is a state that is *changing* and *transforming* under the influence of the flow of immigrants faster than any other country. Every time the appearance of the American nation and culture changed as a result of a new wave of immigrants. Special attention must be paid to the flow of immigrants who prevail at the present historical moment. T. Kuznetsova and A. Utkin say: “The immigrants to the USA are not included in the indifferent monolithic culture, but rather join the consciously pluralistic multitude of subcultures, racial and cultural identities”.

In many research papers devoted to American exceptionalism conducted in recent years it is asserted that in the 21st century the USA will transform from “a nation of nations” or “a community of communities” into a so-called “*a majority-minority nation*”, which will result in the so-called “death of the West”.

Such changes in the society can’t but worry the US government which tries to do its best to strengthen civic solidarity in the USA. It’s necessary to note that America’s history of racial and ethnic exclusions has also meant sharing a national culture. A sense of civic solidarity can help foster mutual sympathy and respect, which in turn support citizens’ orientation toward the common good. People have a deep need for belonging in communities and common political culture is an alternative to the racial, ethnic or religious identities. Thus, the American government undertakes innovative moves in order to enhance political culture which is quite separable from ethnical-cultural forms of lie.

A newly revised US citizenship test was instituted in October 2008 with the hope that it will serve as an instrument to promote civic learning and patriotism. The revised test attempts to move away from civics trivia to emphasize political ideas and concepts. It asks more open-ended questions about US government powers and political concepts. For example, “What does the judicial branch of government do?”, “What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?”, “What is freedom of religion?”, “What is the rule of law?” etc.

Thus, at the present historical moment of global changes the transnational principles and ideology are becoming too weak to unite the political society of the USA. The American national identity is menaced owing to the processes of globalization such as, above everything, the influence of transnational diasporas and the increasing number of immigrants. Immigrants preserving transnational identities (e.g. Mexican immigrants) form bilingual regions that belong to dual cultures and identities and are potentially separatist, which, in turn, undermine a unified national and political culture of the American society.

Republicans and Democrats have championed American exceptionalism. But the GOP has more forcefully made that case, often framed as a moral imperative, in recent years. The 2012 Republican Party platform outlined  a commitment to “American exceptionalism,” defining it as “the conviction that our country holds a unique place and role in human history.” Now, however, Clinton is going out of her way to embrace the idea of American exceptionalism, while Trump has disavowed it. Now, exceptionalism is an idea Clinton can use against Trump. And this is a unique situation.