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Obama's and Trump's Policies Towards ISIS

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Declaration

I jihan Daas declare that the study entitled “Obama's and Trump’s Policies toward ISIS” submitted for the requirement of Master degree at Mohamed Kheider Biskra is my own hard work and efforts. I declare that this work has not been submitted for any other university or academic institution. I also declare that sources and data gathered have been properly referenced and acknowledged following the academic standards of university of Biskra.

DaasJihan

Date

Signature

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents for their support, care and trust .

To my brothers Ahmed ,Yousef, Mohamed, Badr al Din. And my sisters,
Khaoula, Meriam.

To my Dear Friends ,Imane , Meriam, Donia for their encouragement and love.

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Abstract

The study investigates Barack Obama and Donald Trump's foreign policies and responses to the ISIS threat. This research identifies and compares the strategies used by Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump to combat ISIS. It employs the historical method to examine the contextual policies and approaches each administration implemented in response to ISIS's rise and activities. The comparative approach assesses the strengths and weaknesses of each presidential response, allocating resources and information according to the research objectives. The qualitative approach reinforces this analysis. The results suggest that the Obama administration focused on managing the repercussions of the war on terror conducted during the Bush administration. Obama pursued diplomatic rapprochement with the Arab world to avoid direct intervention in the Syrian civil conflict. In 2014, he initially refused to recognize the existence of ISIS. However, in response to the significant threat posed by ISIS, Obama resorted to drone strikes, as pre-existing agreements prohibited the reassignment of military forces to Iraq. In contrast, President Trump's unpredictable disposition and persistent effort to reform the perception of the United States indicated an isolationist stance on global affairs. Contrary to expectations, Trump implemented aggressive strategies to defeat ISIS, including direct military engagements in Iraq and Syria, and increased drone strikes to target potential terrorists. The research findings suggest that although Obama and Trump employed different approaches to combating ISIS, both aimed to protect the United States from potential dangers.

Key words: Barack Obama, Donald Trump. Foreign policies, ISIS, The United States of America

List of Acronyms

AQ: Al Qaeda

AQI: Al Qaeda in Iraq

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

ISIL: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

SDF: Syrian Democratic Forces

TPP: The Trans-Pacific Partnership

US: United States

JSOC: Joint Special Operation Command

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General Introduction

1) Background of the study

The United States since its establishment sought to preserve its sovereignty and control as a world power. One of the threats that America worked to combat and eliminate is a group called ISIS which means Islamic state of Iraq and Syria. American presidents one after the other have created strategies and methods to combat ISIS in Iraq. Barak Obama used an approach that revolved around a more multilateral and coalition based strategy. Obama perceived that collaborative efforts can make more suitable and fruitful solution. The United States provided support, training and resources to the Iraqi forces, while encouraging regional powers to play an active role. Additionally, Obama focused on employing targeted airstrikes to reduce ISIS capabilities and curb its territorial advances.

On the other hand, President Trump took a different approach when it comes to fighting ISIS in Iraq. He adopted a more aggressive and unilateral stance, emphasizing on the use of military force to defeat the terrorist group. Trump authorized an increase in US, troop levels and intensified airstrikes against ISIS targets. His administration at times, diverged from the multilateral approach pursued by Obama. It prioritized direct US military involvement. The increased military engagement under Trump's leadership resulted in significant progress. It was shown in retaking key ISIS strongholds, such as Mosul and Raqqa. Furthermore, Trump wanted to invalidate ISIS by challenging their ideology and rhetoric.

In Conclusion, the diplomatic foreign policy approaches of Obama and Trump regarding ISIS in Iraq differed significantly. Both presidential terms presented an opposite strategies that demonstrated the extent that America can reach to protect its democratic principles. Each approach faced unique challenges in dealing with this ISIS threat.

2) Statement of the problem

Barack Obama and Donald Trump are two different entities that once had a presidential power as former US presidents. They both put forward different policies to treat crucial issues. Both presidents addressed the ISIS matter in Iraq differently. Obama took a more collaborative approach while Trump dealt with this threat more aggressively. The study seeks to examine and analyze both presidential eras in terms of diplomatic foreign policies. Moreover, the research aims to assess the levels by which both administrations achieved international cooperation and coalition foundation.

Furthermore, the study endeavors to compare both administrations and examine the way each president handled the ISIS threat. The proposed research seeks to explore the implications of the foreign policies applied towards ISIS. Furthermore, it examines how each president presented his agenda regarding the ISIS threat. The research focuses on comparing and contrasting totally different presidents when it comes to the different ideologies that affected the foreign policies to combat ISIS.

3) Research Aims

The study offers a detailed comparative review of two dissimilar presidents' foreign strategies in tackling urgent global concerns. The research, which emphasizes thorough investigation, attempts to deconstruct the various techniques utilized by these leaders in tackling the prevalent threat posed by ISIS. It explores further to uncover the fundamental contrasts in their methods, thoroughly assessing their strengths and flaws. Furthermore, the research will reveal the long-term consequences of implementing these opposing strategies in the context of Iraq. The study examines different presidential methods in order to shed light on the divergent pathways chosen by these presidents in handling complex global crises..

4) Research Questions:

In light of the above mentioned contextualization. The research probes the following primary research questions:

What are the foreign policy responses of Presidents Obama and Trump on ISIS ?

How did Barack Obama present his approach regarding ISIS?

How did Donald Trump treat the ISIS threat?

What are the major differences and similarities between both Barack Obama and Donald Trump strategies?

5) Methodology

The proposed study uses a number of methods to generate a reliable and well-structured research. Historical and biographical methods are used to examine both presidential decisions and tenures towards ISIS. A comparative study approach is used as well to study strengths and flaws of presidential responses towards ISIS threat. The materials and information attained are assessed and selected in agreement with the research objectives. To achieve relativity and meaning to the enquiry we use the qualitative approach. Primary sources, books, journal articles, scientific researchers are the main basis to present a well-versed consistent research.

6) Rational of the study

The research demonstrates two different political approaches that ruled The United States before. Moreover, it presents a distinctive study to both Donald Trump and Barack Obama. In addition, the study focuses on foreign policies and methods both presidents decided to put forward to tackle the matter of ISIS in Iraq. The research provides an extensive review about global challenges that threatened international peace. Nevertheless the research at hand, would provide a new perspective on the decision making process regarding global issues. This research identifies flaws and weaknesses to previously applied approaches that

tackled ISIS threat in Iraq. Consequently, this can give an insight to leadership requirements and the challenges they face.

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2. Definition of ISIS
- 1.3. Historical Overview on ISIS
- 1.4. Key Figures in ISIS
 - 1.4.1. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi
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- 1.5. ISIS Methodologies
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 - 1.6.2 Impacts of ISIS on the World's Peace and Security
- 1.7. Conclusion

1.1.Introduction

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is a militant group that embraced an extremist Islamic ideology under which they carried out various terrorist attacks all over the world. This group, which emerged in the 21st century, became a well-known and a notorious entity due to the strategies and tactics it used. That means, ISIS was not above mass killing, excommunications, suicide bombings, enforcing a strict sharia law in the territories they held under their control. Thus, it was determined a terrorist organization that was considered the number one threat on an international level when it comes to national security.

This organization interpreted the Islamic religion in a rigid manner. Violence was a key element in solving problems or punishing those who dared to stray from the version of Islam that ISIS presented. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria aims to establish a caliph under which all Muslims could practice their religion. The state they aim to create includes Iraq, Syria, and territories from the Middle East, and said state would be governed according to the sharia law ISIS will enforce.

1.2.Definition of ISIS

The term ISIS is used to refer to a group that has changed and regrouped itself many times. It is called the Islamic State (IS). However, it is also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS). In the Arabic language, a derogatory name is used to describe the group and it is Daesh (Stern and Berger 26). The process of defining ISIS is a rather complex task due to the fact that ISIS is not what the media portrays to the world. ISIS, for the media and news channels, is more than a single group or an organization that operates in Iraq or Syria. It is an umbrella organization which oversees several other groups and organizations. Generally speaking, the groups that partake in action with ISIS are more inclined to be the former Ba'athists who want Iraq to restore its former place and control the Sunni nationalists. Even though this particular group is less radical

when it comes to their religion, their actions are still guided by their faith. Other groups that are Sunni nationalists want that Iraq and Syria to rule the Sunni leadership and promote dominance over Syria and Mesopotamia. Many other various groups and organizations are inspired by religion. For instance, salafi-jihadis, which can be people or/and groups, adopted a violent approach to achieve their goal. That is to say, they use force to fight because of their belief that they have a duty to purify the Islamic religion from those who do not believe. Indeed, salafi-jihadis tend to approach matters violently. Nonetheless, they may not adopt all ideologies that are declared by ISIS. The groups in ISIS include members who made it their lifelong mission to commit to the role in ISIS while others simply contended themselves with temporary role, knowing full well that they would eventually return to their home (Steed 26-27).

Regardless of the fact that many refer to ISIS in relation to its ideologies and strategies like terrorism, the reality of the matter is that ISIS is an insurgent group. In other words, insurgent groups are armed factions that want to rebel against the authority of the government. Unlike other organized military forces, insurgent groups contain noncombatant individuals. The orders of similar factions are executed by the people of a particular state. That is to say, various individuals would work and rebel to overthrow the authority of a state and replace it with another (Dagher et al 10).

1.3.Historical Overview on ISIS

The surge of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria could be traced from the US occupation of the Iraq soil in 2003 until the expansion of the state to reach beyond the borders of Iraq, into Syria. This particular time frame would help in understanding the motivation behind the Islamic State's rebellion throughout that period. Many other Arab countries, like Algeria, Egypt, and Libya, witnessed Jihadist movements or insurgencies. Iraq, however, had not encountered such incident before the US military invaded the country. Before said invasion,

Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda Central had no functional relationship simply because both parties were unable to trust the other's intention. Regardless of his pious image, which was the product of a decade in his rule, Saddam Hussein had no intention to take a chance and cooperate with Salafi-jihadists (Gerges 58).

The president Barak Obama traced the origin of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and recognized the role the US played into its emergence. In other words, the former president noted the relation between the insurgency of ISIS and George Bush's decision to send the US military to lead an invasion against Iraq. In an interview with Vice News, he stated that the emergence of the Islamic State could be linked directly with the US invasion of Iraq. He maintained that, "ISIL is a direct outgrowth of Al-Qaeda in Iraq that grew out of our invasion, which is an example of unintended consequences. Which is why we should generally aim before we shoot" (Gerges 58). The former president Barak Obama discerned the unfortunate fact that ISIS came into existence because of the US invasion in 2003.

Before the invasion of Iraq, Bush's administration relied mainly on grounds that: Saddam Hussein has in his possession weapons of mass destruction, and he supported the Islamic extremism called Al-Qaeda. Nonetheless, after the invasion of Iraq, there was no proof of said weapons. Thus, the administration of Bush altered its concentration to the other claimed reason which was the cooperation between Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda. However, both assertions that led the US troops to march into the Iraqi soil were unfounded. Later on, it was found that the US had no legitimate evidence that Iraq and Al-Qaeda had any connection to the terrorist attack of 9/11. There was no operational relation between Saddam Hussein and the Jihadist network. In fact, Seif al-Adl, who was a senior military commander in Al Qaeda, asserted that the relations between Saddam Hussein and his faction are non-existent, and that they consider him an enemy (Gerges 59). All in all, after years, it was found that the invasion of Iraq was illegitimate, and that it was a direct cause to the birth of ISIS.

As it was mentioned before, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria surged from what remained of al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The Islamic State (IS) was created in 2004 by Abu Musab al Zarqawi and it vanished for years after the increase of the U.S. military in Iraq after 2007. Later on, however, this faction resurfaced in the scene in 2011. From then on out, it sought to exploit the instability in Iraq and Syria to execute strikes and strengthen their ranks. In 2013, the group altered its name to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In June 2014, ISIS attacked Mosul and Tikrit, and on June 29, the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, declared that establishment of a 'caliphate' which extends from Aleppo in Syria to Diyala in Iraq ("Timeline", Par1-2).

In August 7th, 2014, the coalition that was led by the U.S. troops launched airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq and this attack was expanded to Syria as well in the following month. This particular operation was, later on, called "Operation Inherent Resolve". During the following year, the U.S. did not lessen their airstrikes on either Iraq or Syria. In fact, it executed over 8000 airstrikes against ISIS which made the latter suffer and lose some of their territories. In 2015, ISIS' network expanded in a least eight countries. The supporters of ISIS carried out orders beyond the faction's territories. For instance, the Egyptian ally of the group launched an attack against a Russian airplane, killing 224 people. In 2017, ISIS lost 95 percent of its lands including two of its largest. The Iraqi Prime Minister, Haider al Abadi, announced the country's victory over ISIS. Nonetheless, the organization carried out its attacks all over the world. In 2018, the focus of the forces against ISIS shifted to the east of Syria where Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a coalition that was backed by the U.S., was able to apprehend essential figures from ISIS. The Islamic State's territory was declined to contain a few villages after the SDF forces had control over the town of Hajin. On December 19, 2018, ISIS was declared defeated by Donald Trump. He announced that the 2000 U.S. troops that supported the SDF against ISIS will return to the States. Regardless of that, the SDF

continued its attacks until the Islamic State no longer had any territories ("Timeline" Par 2-4).

1.4.Key Figures in ISIS

ISIS was known for few figures that represented them and advocated for their ideologies

1.4.1. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi

Ahmad Fadil al-Khalayleh, who the world knew later as AbuMusab al-Zarqawi, was born in October 1966 in place called Zarqa. This particular city was extremely poor that was located not far from Jordan's capital, Amman. Jordan was undergoing great changes when AbuMusab al-Zarqawi was in his formative years. The country's ideals, traditions, and theology clashed with westernization of the Jordanian society that was led by the United States. al-Zarqawi's father died in 1984 when he was 18 years of age. Shortly after that, he was incarcerated based on charges of drug possession and sexual assault. In prison, al-Zarqawi obtained radical ideas that he held dear even after his release. Al-Zarqawi became a well-known figure at the al-Hussein Ben Ali mosque near Zarqa. He also became known with Islamist radicals. That is how he came to the knowledge of the Jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Not long after that, the Afghan-Arab Bureau, it was an organization that was charged with providing jihadists to the Islamist army that was warring with Moscow (Taneja 13-14).

Al-Zarqawi traveled to Afghanistan in the late 1980s so that he could join the fight against the Soviets. However, he did not get to fight since he arrived when the Soviets were leaving the country. Nonetheless, during the time it was reported that he met Osama bin Laden. After he returned to Jordan, he assisted in the establishment of combatant faction that was named jund al-sham. He was caught and arrested due to his entanglement with this group. His sentence lasted from 1992 until 1999. The time in prison polished the religious beliefs of al-Zarqawi along with his role as a leader. He had been in contact with Abu Muhamed al-Maqdisi. In recent times, this person whom al-Zarqawi had associated with in prison was

considered to be one the most potent salafi-jihadi intellectuals. Many authors believe that this particular association between the two men had strengthened the ideologies and notions that al-Zarqawi had (Steed 31).

After his release, al-Zarqawi escaped from Jordan to Afghanistan after he tried to revive the group he made. In Afghanistan, he collected money from Osama bin Laden in exchange of his expertise with training soldier. Hence, he began training a camp for Al-Qaeda where he recruited supporters for his own group that expanded to Iraq later. This group, which was named jama'at al-tawhidwa al-jihad Organization of Monotheism and Jihad, had been one of the early groups that fought with the troops that the U.S. led into Iraq. Al-Zarqawi's group evolved over time. The tasked this faction carried over time varied from assassinations, bombing, and kidnapping. Al-Zarqawi, who favored violence, terrorized his home country with attacks; he organized suicide bombings, and he attacked multiple hotels where westerners were staying in a single night. Due to his actions, al-Zarqawi was considered to be the number one enemy of the army led by the U.S. (Steed 31-32).

Violence, for al-Zarqawi was needed to bring his vision of the caliphate. That is to say, the various attacks led the Sunnis to unite against the Shia and coalition attacks. With this reasoning, al-Zarqawi launched attacks against Shia shrines and mosques. Regardless of his beliefs or the violent approach he adopted, this man was considered to be the founding father of ISIS. His actions paved the way for Jihadism in the Middle East to a way that included violence and terror to achieve their goals (Steed 33).

1.4.2. Abu Ayyub al-Masri

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was the leader of al Qaeda at the time, was killed in airstrike in north Baghdad in 2006. Shortly after, the position for the leader was occupied by Abu Ayyub al Masri. This quick move demonstrated how well a Qaeda was organized. Besides, both bin Laden and Zawahiri were pleased with al-Zarqawi's death. The real name of

the new leader as the U.S. believed was Abu Hamza al-Mujahid. Al-Masri, who was born in Egypt in 1968, was a close associate of Zawahiri ever since the early 1980s. He moved to Iraq while under al-Zarqawi to join a Kurdish Sunni militia. Later he joined al-Qaeda and became an important man in this organization. His tasks were varied from gathering information to finding and recruiting new individuals. After al-Masri filled the position of leader of al-Qaeda in 2006, he restructured and established the Islamic State of Iraq. The U.S. led coalition struggled over time to believe that al-Masri was indeed the leader of al-Qaeda in 2007 even though it was reported back to the U.S. that he was in control of the Islamic State. In April 2010, al-Masri was killed in an attack that was organized by the Iraqi army and the American troops (Taneja16).

1.4.3. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's real name was Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri. He was born in 1971 in Iraq, specifically in Samarra. This man was the son of a religious man who taught the Quran in a local mosque. Al-Baghdadi was remote, shy, and whenever he spoke, his voice was barely heard. Even during soccer matches when other people would crash into him, he would remain impassive. Early on in his life, al-Baghdadi was named 'the believer' for whenever he had free time from school, he would be found in the mosque. He would be absorbed into his religious studies, and whenever someone would drift from the Islamic teachings, he would rebuke them. However, the world knows al-Baghdadi as the leader of the Islamic State or ISIS, the organization that brought terror and destruction upon the world. He, not only has the power and capacity to reprimand those who stray from Islam, but also is able to severely punish them. Said punishment could be in the form of an execution. Those who follow him granted him the name "Commander of the Believers," which, to them, is a title that suits the caliph. Al-Baghdadi had millions of followers. Some were devoted to him and what he represented while others followed him because they fear the consequences they

would face if they opposed him (McCants 5).

In 2003, after the U.S. invaded Iraq, which ultimately led to the end of Saddam Hussein's party, al-Baghdadi had fought against the U.S. troops along with the government that was established on a temporary basis. In February 2004, he was incarcerated by the U.S. forces and had to stay in a detention facility. However, due to him a person of a low interest, he was released shortly after that in the same year. Early on, the activities he conducted for the Islamic State of Iraq, which was known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq until 2006, were found to be of no importance. Hence, him being the leader of the ISI in 2010 was odd at best. When al-Baghdadi became the leader of the ISI, the organization was feeble and inconsequential. Nonetheless, the opportunity rose with the increase of the instability in the region. That is to say, the conflict that commenced in Syria, which caused a power vacuum in the east of the country, created the perfect chance of the ISI to cross the borders between Iraq and Syria. The ISI obtained many followers who were either interested in the organization or its veterans. In 2013, al-Baghdadi made the decision to join the ISI with another group, named NusrahFront, that was affiliated with it in Syria. This decision was met with refusal from the group in Syria because that meant that al-Baghdadi and the ISI would have control over them. The competition between both of the groups rose due to the recruiting process. This was an obstacle that led the ISI and the Nusrah Front to fight. In January 2014, the ISI removed the other group from the city called Al-Raqqah and made it a territorial base (Zeidan).

During the same time, the Sunni population opposition to the Shi'i government kept rising. In December 2013, the government's forces endeavored to subdue a protest movement that was located in the centre of fallujah. There was resistance from the protestors which caused disturbances and battles in the streets. Not long after that, the ISIL joined the Local militias. In January 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant held the city under its control. Many Sunnis, who regarded the ISIL with distaste before, came to see the group as the liberating

force they needed against their government. Due to the shift and acceptance of many Sunnis, the ISIL moved to the north and by June they seized the second largest city in Iraq, Mosul. Soon after that, the ISIL elected al-Baghdadi as a caliph of the Islamic State, and merely days after, he went to jum'ah prayers in Mosul's Great mosque. His public appearances were scarce because they were directed through audio recordings. This fuelled rumors about his death or injury while various forces advance on ISIL. In 2019, a video recording illustrated al-Baghdadi's survival even though both Iraq and Syria had announced to the world that ISIS had been defeated in 2017. In October 2019, al-Baghdadi made the decision to kill himself through detonating a bomb when the U.S forces found his location in Idlib governorate, Syria.

1.5. ISIS Methodologies

Within ISIS ideologies and ideas differ depending on their stances and their interpretation of the Sharia law.

1.5.1 Salafi-jihadism

Both ISIS and al-Qaeda share the same ideology which is Salafi-jihadism. Furthermore, the both believe that the state and religion are intertwined. It indicates that any order or decision the government should make had to rely on the rigorous interpretations of the sharia law. However, the ideology of Salafi-jihadism employed by the two factions is different when it comes to creed (Aqidah) and methodology (Manhaj). In fact, the main point of their disagreement rose from the excommunication (Takfir) that ISIS used in an outrageous manner (Jasko et al 12-13).

1.5.2 Creed Issue

The views of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria regarding excommunication are different from that of Al-Qaeda. Following the leadership of Al-Zarqawi, the ideology ISIS followed remained clear on the matter. It means that they believe that the Islamic religion should be purified from those who are not strict when it comes to Islam. In other words, this group

believed that Muslims who do not accept and follow the interpretation of the religion that ISIS provided should be asserted as apostates and then executed. For instance, the Shiites enemies to the religion because of their different practices of the Islamic religion like self-flagellation. Hence, they were declared apostates by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Shiites are not the only Muslims that were branded heretics because of ISIS's ideology of creed. In a list that was released by IS under the title '*Aqidah wa Manhaj al-Dawlah al-Islamiah fi al-Takfir*' the group proclaims that Muslims who accepts notions of democracy and secularism are apostates.

In other words, all states that does not govern their people according to sharia law are heretics. Thus, killing them would be legitimate. The violent approach ISIS adopted was the source of concern for many. Leaders in al-Qaeda condoned ISIS for their excessive use of excommunication and maintained that they are straying from the real Islamic religion. The former mentor of al-Zarqawi urged him to tone down the violence. Yet, all that had fallen on deaf ears and al-Zarqawi ignored them (Jasko et al 13-14).

1.5.3 Methodology Issues

Regardless of sharing the same ideology in relation to Islam, the tension between ISIS and Al-Qaeda erupted when the IS was created in 2006. The jihadists of both groups were bewildered over the different approaches used. Indeed, to the world, that confusion was disguised under the false image of a united front. Nonetheless, Al-Qaeda with one particular ideological move ISIS made. In other words, the establishment of the caliph was not the correct decision by ISIS in 2014. The methodology used by ISIS was criticized for they did not follow the correct one to elect the caliph. Also, the leaders of Al-Qaeda believed that ISIS simply had no right to create the Islamic State. One of the leaders of AQ declared their group's refusal to adhere to any other faction or individual that would enforces himself on Muslims without the majority's consent and choice. For al-Qaeda, the election of the head of the Islamic State should be done in regards to the Islamic population. That was their goal

concerning this particular point. Hence, there is a disapproval of ISIS's actions regarding the matter (Jasko et al 14-15).

1.5.4 Violence

ISIS opted for the use of violence to achieve its goals. They attacked both Muslims and non-Muslims. Unlike al-Qaeda leaders who are against high-profile western individuals. ISIS, on the other hand, had legitimized killing anyone who disapproved of their ideologies and worldview. That included Shiites, Yazidis, and other minorities. Al-Qaeda had little regard to Shiites and those which disagreed of their worldview. Nonetheless, they were not a priority to the leaders of AQ who believed they would be merely a distraction from their plans for the west. In 2015, a distinction was made regarding both groups and their use of violence. When two Shiite mosques were attacked in Yemen, ISIS affirmed its role in the attack while AQ repudiated any association to said attack. This shows that unlike ISIS, AQ's attacks are organized to not include mosques (Glenn).

1.5.5 Territoriality

Territory was essential for ISIS to expand its control. That is to say, it was one of ISIS's priorities to claim lands of its own to influence other Muslims to migrate to the newly established caliphate. ISIS needed a territory to have a legitimate caliphate. As a result, they were able to entice many Muslims who had the desire according to sharia law. Al-Qaeda had a similar way of thinking. However, their priorities were different. They wanted to eliminate their enemies before they concentrate on territorial conquests. In 2011, the last link that bonded ISIS and al-Qaeda vanished due to the Syrian revolution. Unlike the plans made by ISIS, Jabhat al Nusra did not wish to rebuild Syria and create a new state. They joined the opposition after fighting with them against the Syrian president Bashir al Assad. Therefore, the leader of Jabhat al Nusra objected when al-Baghdadi claimed that his faction was linked and loyal to ISI. He asserted that he is only loyal to al-Qaeda, and that his group would not be

annex to ISI. The leader of Jabhat al Nusra turned to al-Qaeda to solve the issue between his group and ISIS. The peacemaker that was sent to ISIS by al-Qaeda was killed in early 2014. After months of struggle, AQ severed any ties that bonded it to ISIS while accusing it of transgression. Many supported Al-Qaeda's decision including al-Zarqawi's former mentor al-Maqdisi. The competition between the ISIS and AQ for the support of the jihadist movement grew. At the beginning, many pledged their loyalties to ISIS from various countries like Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Yemen. This could only prove that ISIS attracted many jihadists. Thus, it is essential destination and worth to the jihadist Market (Jasko et al 15-16).

1.6. The Impact of ISIS

The emergence of ISIS had many repercussions and results on the Islamic world and on international scene

1.6.1 Impacts of ISIS on The Islamic World Peace and Security

There could be found two groups in the Muslim world that are very different. These groups argued over the possibility that faith and beliefs should accept the rigid interpretation of Islam which was presented by ISIS or simply doing what Turkey has done and embraces the modern world. Evidently, the debate over ISIS between conservative Muslims and those who look forward the future is intense. Yet, regardless of the outcome of this debate, these groups agreed that the western world should not interfere in this matter. For them, the west should focus its security and law enforcement on those that could turn jihadists. They also asserted that the western powers should keep their military aircrafts away from the Levant (Polus and Guido 12).

Islam is considered to be the fastest growing religion in the world. That is to say, people all over the world are embracing the religion. The combination of that growth, the influence ISIS and other extremist groups had, and the increased numbers of Muslim migrations turned

Muslims and their religion into political debates. Not many are aware of the fact that Islam is the religion of peace. In other words, Islamic countries are peaceful place where people are content. Only a small minority of extremists adopt violent approaches in their day to day life. That was proven by the survey that was conducted by Pew Research Center. The research that was made in 2015 demonstrated that extremists represent only a small percentage of the Muslim population. The focus of this study was the countries that contained majority of Muslims such as Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Malaysia, Senegal, and Pakistan. The results of this research conclude that less than 15% of the population in those countries agrees to the ideologies adopted by ISIS (Polus and Guido 12).

1.6.2 Impacts of ISIS on the World's Peace and Security

It has been noted that ISIS is a threat to the entire world. Their numbers increase due the constant recruiters who join the Islamic State in order to fight alongside of them. That is to say, many people from various countries adopted the radicalized interpretation of Islam that ISIS provided. Thus, they are easily swayed to join their ranks. Due to this increase in numbers, the activities ordered by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria are carried out effortlessly all over the world. ISIS was proficient in the sense that they were able to convince and inspire their followers to act in their behalf and launch attacks in around seventeen countries while remaining in Iraq and Syria. Said countries that were attacked include: Algeria, Afghanistan, Canada, Egypt, Australia, France, Lebanon, Kuwait and many other Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Also, the Islamic State of Iraq claimed lands around the countries that were attacked fulfilling its plans for world conquests (Polus and Guido 12-13).

All over the world, people recognize that the threat presented by ISIS is similar to the dangers of climate change on the planet. Both threats are risks to national security according to the new Pew Research Centre Survey. This particular survey inquired about possible eight threats. Regardless of the fact that the answers varied, the common one remained ISIS and

climate change across the 38 countries the survey included in the study. In 18 countries, which are mostly in the Middle East, the U.S, and Asia, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria is concluded to be the number one threat to national security. While in other 13 countries in Latin America climate change was defined the top threat, the risks presented by the terrorist organization came close in spot number two (Poushter and Manevich).

1.7. Conclusion

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria was established in Iraq after the American invasion of the Iraqi soil in 2003. It was an insurgent entity that worked relentlessly against the troops of the U.S. ISIS emerged under the leadership of an Islamic extremist named al-Zarqawi, whose ideals and futuristic image of the Islamic religion included violent approaches and brutal tactics. This man's vision of Islam included establishing a caliph where the sharia law is the only guideline through which the state will be governed. Therefore, he sought to bring that vision into life regardless of the strategies and tactics he would employ.

Many other extremists groups, like al-Qaeda, did not approve of ISIS's actions against the Islamic nation. Especially, there was an excessive use of excommunication. In other words, ISIS deemed their interpretation of Islam, the Quran in particular, absolute. Hence, anyone who disagreed or strayed from their teachings was found an apostate which was legitimate enough for the group to kill them. The strictness in which ISIS behaved against Muslims was concerning and disturbing to other leaders and Islamic intellectuals who urged the leader of ISIS to tone down his violence. The latter did not heed their warnings, and ISIS became a group that terrorized the world and Muslims alike.

To establish to the caliph, ISIS needed to acquire territory of its own. Thus, the tension and instability in the Middle East was the perfect opportunity for ISIS to expand on other Lands. In other words, the civil war that began in Syria in 2011 led to a power vacuum in a particular part of the country which allowed ISIS to enter Syria and establish a base there.

Furthermore, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria was a popular entity in the salafi jihadi community. They were able to attract and recruit various individuals from all over the world. The increase in their numbers and the connections they obtained around the globe allowed them to carry their plans without needing to leave the Iraq and Syria which posed risks to the national security for many countries. As the group became a force the world feared, the US and other powers deemed ISIS their responsibility and planned to rid the world from them. Consequently, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria lost their territories in the Middle East, and their leader was killed in 2019.

Chapter Two

- 2.1. Introduction
- 2.2. The Administration of Obama
- 2.3. American Foreign Policies and ISIS
 - 2.4. President Barack Obama policies toward ISIS (2009-2017)
 - 2.4.1 The Administration of Barack Obama and ISIS in Iraq
 - 2.4.2 The Administration of Barack Obama and ISIS in Syria
- 2.5. Conclusion

2.1.Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of a prominent and distinct American president who held the office of the presidency in the United States of America. The chapter provides an analysis of the governance of Barack Obama. Causes that contributed to his election, significant changes implemented, and policies pursued by the president. The president showed a certain level of consistency in giving importance to domestic issues, but had notable differences in his overall foreign policy approaches and his desire to interact with the global community. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the groundwork for analyzing the distinctions and resemblances of each foreign policy employed in relation to ISIS.

2.2.The Administration of Obama

As a newly elected president, Barack Obama came with a formidable program. In America, Obama faced serious economic difficulties, unemployment, a crumbling infrastructure, an unfit health insurance system, and many other problems. On the international level, he was burdened with two wars that were considered costly and unpopular. He had to deal with the constant threat from al-Qaeda, and dangerous conflicts with Iran and North Korea. On top of all that, the American-Russian relations were unstable, China was posing multiple obstacles, the ongoing Israel-Palestine stalemate, the rising issues of climate change, pandemics...etc (Lowenthal 1).

Due to these struggles Obama had to face, few commentators expected dedicate much attention to the Caribbean and Latin America. These countries in these regions were not posing any risks the national security of U.S. and none of them were viewed as possible future source of terrorist activities. During his campaign, the mention of Latin America in Obama's was confined to one speech on the region. However, when in office, Obama and his administration exhibited their interest in Latin America and the Caribbean. Before entering the office, Barack Obama met with one leader, and that was Felipe Calderón of Mexico.

Obama met with multiple foreign leaders from Latin America such as the president of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Michelle Bachelet president of Chile, and many others (Lowenthal 2).

Indeed, the areas of Latin America and the Caribbean did not pose any threat to the national security for America. But the main reason for America's interest and the engagement of these countries early on is because some of them, like Mexico, were believed of great importance to United States of America and its future. This belief was cemented quite early by the surging problems in Mexico. That is to say, the Mexican government struggled against the drug cartels resulting in the increased numbers of homicides near the American border (Lowenthal 3).

2.3. Obama's Foreign Policies and ISIS

From 2009 to 2017, the foreign policy which was implemented by the Obama administration in the Middle East was considered to be intricate and versatile. That is to say, the administration of Obama had to face various issues and threats in the region. Hence, they opted for a multifaceted method to attempt and solve those issues. Another difficulty the administration faced was the constant change in the Middle East. For instance, the landscapes of the Middle East were continuously shifting due incidents such as the Arab Spring, the rise of ISIS, and the continuous tension between Palestine and Israel (Mathew 4).

2.4. Barack Obama Policies Toward ISIS (2009-2017)

The foreign policy that the Obama administration implemented during the first year is that he sought to restore the reputation of the United States of America to the world. It was anticipated that the administration would have a positive multilateral involvement so that America would assume leadership when partaking in global and regional matters. Many were optimistic that America would have good relations with Russia, the Middle East, Iran, the Islamic World, and other international organizations. Furthermore, the Obama administration

was believed not to favor a unilateral approach when dealing with international issues. The administration concentrated, however, on the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (Ari 52).

The policy used by the Obama administration toward the Middle East aimed to reduce the damage the Bush administration caused. The American invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan led the region to respond to the occupation. Thus, it was essential for the administration to reduce their military forces in these regions. Nonetheless, according to the decision that was made in August 2014 to fight ISIS, the United States of America began its aerial operations in September, disregarding the Obama doctrine, which stressed that the American military would not intervene in regional conflicts (Ari 55).

Following Obama's September 10, 2014, strategy to weaken and eventually destroy the Islamic State, the Obama Administration has resumed an active military presence in Iraq due to the progress made by the group since June 2014. When the gravity of the ISIL threat became apparent in late 2013, the US stepped up its attempts to provide military support to the Iraqi government. The following were the steps that the U.S. made from late 2013 to June 2014, when ISIL captured Mosul :

Sold and delivered more weapons: Iraq received several hundred HELLFIRE air-to-surface missiles from the Defense Department in order to use them against ISIL training sites. Additionally, the Administration secured 50 Congress approvals to make the thirty Apache assault helicopters mentioned earlier available for purchase or leasing (Katzman 28). The DSCA informed Congress in May 2014 of possible sales to Iraq of up to 200 armored Humvees, up to 24 military aircraft powered by propellers (AT-6C Texan LL), and associated equipment valued at around \$1 billion in total (Katzman 28). *Drone sales: Iraq purchased multiple unmanned aerial vehicles from the United States to monitor Islamic State camps in

the western province of Anbar. At the beginning of 2014, the United States also sent ten Scaneagle aerial vehicles (Katzman 28).

The United States significantly increased its response when the Islamic State brutally killed two American citizens and took control of Mosul in mid-2014. Then, they advanced towards Irbil. On September 10, 2014, Obama gave a speech outlining a comprehensive plan to fight the Islamic State, which came after the US placed conditions on additional support for the development of a more inclusive administration in Iraq under the direction of Lieutenant General James Terry, who leads Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve, the operation, dubbed "Operation Inherent Resolve" is supervised by US Central Command and has its headquarters at Camp, 3,100 US military personnel have been sent by President Obama to safeguard US personnel and installations and provide training and advice to Iraqi forces. Following the receipt of \$1.6 billion in train and equipment money, 1,500 men were deployed, and by working out of two Joint Operations Centers, the task involved providing brigade-level advice to the ISF and Peshmerga. Since August 8, 2014, the US military has carried out airstrikes against Islamic State targets and infrastructure in Iraq while also delivering humanitarian aid to affected minority groups. Additionally, several other countries, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Britain, have conducted airstrikes in Iraq. Also, Jordan has conducted airstrikes in Iraq, primarily targeting Islamic State forces in Syria (Katzman 29-30)

2.4.1 The Administration of Barack Obama and ISIS in IRAQ

The administration of Barack Obama opted for an interventionist approach when dealing with the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), also known later as ISIS, in early August 2014. To illustrate, the administration decided to intervene when the Islamic State occupied a territory in the north-west of Iraq and made a threatening move on the Iraqi capital Irbil. Due to the Islamic State's threats to people devotees to the Yazidi faith, who were

forced to leave the town of Sinjar and endure difficult situations on a mountain near their home, Obama sanctioned American military flights to rescue those people from the area. He also arranged for the military forces to protect high profile Americans in the city of Erbil. Obama warned the Islamic State that if they opted for progress, America would retaliate with air attacks (Siniver and Lucas71-72).

Barack Obama did not legitimize the group by refraining to use any of their labels when addressing them. He simply referred to them as 'terrorists' who are a danger to the American security. Nonetheless, while in an interview, the president casually dropped the name ISIL when the reporters used both ISIL and ISIS. Even during his statements, Barack Obama refused to acknowledge the label of the Islamic State when proclaiming administration's plans to protect American people, and aid those who suffered at the hand of the ISIL. On 20 August, the group beheaded an American journalist daring the president to repudiate them as an entity (Siniver and Lucas72).

2.4.2 The Administration of Barack Obama and ISIS in SYRIA

Policies implemented by the administration of Obama can be classified into two areas: before and after the Syrian Civil war. At first, the United States of America endeavored to rebuild its relations with Syria. Nonetheless, after the Arab Spring and the Syrian civil war, the administration's reactions to the situation had been mixed (Ateş 1438). The shift in Obama's foreign policy could be remarked in 2011 after the Syrian president, Assad, forcefully curbed a peaceful protest. After some serious thinking, Obama announced that, "for the sake of the Syrian people, the time has come for President Assad to step aside" (qtd in. Ateş 1438). The administration of Obama urged the United Nations to censure the actions of the Syrian government. Later on, the administration shut down its embassy in Damascus and its officials began to partake in the Syrian opposition. During this time, the Obama foreign policy limited the Administration's actions. That is to say, even though the president called for

the removal of the Syrian president, the effort made by the Obama administration did not move beyond the statements of the American president (Ateş 1438-1439).

The United States of America led the coalition, which consisted of the American allies, and began its aerial attack on terrorist groups in Syria, including ISIS and Jubhat al-Nusra on September 22, 2014. Barack Obama addressed the United Nations prompting the world to join forces against their common enemy and put an end to terrorism. The UN Security Council endorsed the decision of Obama and supported America on its war on terrorism. This approach marked a remarkable shift in the strategy opted by the Obama administration toward Syria and the broader Middle East. The objective for years was to decrease the numbers of American military in the region. However, Obama made it America's mission to commit to the ongoing events in Iraq and Syria. In addition to that, the president established an international coalition, which includes conservative Sunni Arab States (Lynch 8).

2.5.Conclusion

The Obama administration stressed domestic issues over its broad foreign policy agenda. His objective was "nation-building at home" rather than overseas. Both of these themes advocated for a more limited engagement of the United States in global affairs to prioritize jobs, infrastructure, and the economy. Obama supported international collaboration and multilateral agreements such as the Iran nuclear deal and the Paris Climate Accord. When dealing with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Obama opted for an interventionist approach. He worked to restore American relations with Syria. Nonetheless, the administration's response to the Arab Spring and the Syrian civil war was varied. It might be said that Obama first attempted to restore foreign relations with Syria but changed his attitude due to changes in the world political environment.

Chapter Three

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 - 3.3.1 Counterterrorism
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- 3.8 Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria is a terrorist organization that caused massive destruction in the Middle East. This terrorist group carried out offensives all over the world. ISIS had affiliations in various countries, which allowed it to launch attacks in various places. Consequently, it became a global threat that needed to be stopped. The United States of America, which began its campaign on terror, was adamant to fight the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and put an end to the threats it posed. When Trump was elected to be the president of the United States of America, he found himself inheriting a raging war against the terrorist group. This chapter will analyze the American foreign policies that were implemented against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. It provides the similarities and the differences of the policies that the administrations of Obama and Trump used.

3.2 Trump's Foreign Policies

Donald Trump used measures and policies to maintain stability and to preserve America's sovereignty and its status as world power.

3.2.1. Counterterrorism

During his campaign, candidate Trump declared terrorism to be the greatest jeopardy to America's national security. While interviewed by the New York Times, Trump stressed that terrorism is an international enemy. He concentrated on the identities of the major elements that sought and helped the evolution of ISIS. Candidate Trump critiqued the U.S. foreign policy that previous presidents opted for since the end of the Cold War. For instance, Trump complained that the American interventionism in the Middle East had destabilized the region. Consequently, the chaos ensued by those actions facilitated the growth of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Hall 52-53).

According to, Donald Trump has drastically altered the discourse of U.S. counterterrorism policy. Unlike Obama, who sought to continue the plan of War on Terror, which was introduced by the Bush administration, Trump's aggression opposed Obama's control when it comes to fighting terrorism. One of Trump's promises when he became a president was to fundamentally reform the counterterrorism policy used by previous administrations. He critiqued Obama's plan and argued that ISIS rose due to policies used by Obama's administration, especially the president and Clinton (Biegon and Watts 14).

To hinder any future attacks, the Trump administration preferred the use of 'remote intervention' in the Middle East and Africa. For instance, the use of armed drones that were employed for killing targets increased considerably in its attack quantity and detecting the geographic sphere in which these actions took place. The Trump administration add a few countries they believed contained hostile individuals. That is to say, the administration of Obama assigned Iraq, Syria, and parts of Libya as areas that confined terrorists. The administration of Trump added Somalia, Pakistan, Yemen, and the entire of Libya to the list, which allowed the United States of America to use its military drones freely. For instance, the Trump administration increased the airstrikes against al-Shabaab in Somalia in 2018 and 2019. This attacks targeted larger groups of alleged terrorists. This was achieved due to the fact that the restrains the Obama administration posed on the use of force in Somalia were loosened and the deduction of U.S. military operations in places like Syria. That is to say, as the U.S. reduced its military operations in some place, drones and other assets were released to target other groups like the one in Somalia (Biegon and Watts 16).

3.2.2. Defense

Trump has advocated for boosting military support by advocating for more funds for defense, making significant advancements in weaponry, and establishing a space-focused branch. He also pledged to decrease U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan and the Middle East,

shifting attention to rivalry with major powers like China. In his first two years in office, Trump increased the defense budget, which reached \$716 billion in 2019. The national defense strategy, which is the first review since 2014, stressed the significance of the Asia-Pacific and European regions, with a specific focus on competing with China and Russia. Despite campaigning to withdraw U.S. forces from Afghanistan, he increased troop levels in 2017. However, he later engaged in on-and-off talks with the Taliban,, culminating in a February 2020 agreement to reduce U.S. troop presence in exchange for assurances from the Taliban regarding terrorism. Consequently, by July 2020, U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan had decreased to 8,600 from approximately 12,000 earlier in the year ("Donald J. Trump" par2).

3.2.3. Trump's Policies toward ISIS (2017-2021)

The method Trump's administration opted for toward the Middle East was considered more nationalist than realist. Indeed, there were no alliances to protect and balance power in the region. President Donald Trump deemed that the U.S. troops did not need to be permanently stationed in the Middle East. The United States of America would continue being ready to intervene, like its intervention against ISIS. However, the objective behind that action was to terminate the group and leave the area. The issue with that is whether Israel and the Arab allies, which Saudi Arabia led, will be successful in hindering any suspicious actions from Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Russia. That is, to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham, Trump attempted to establish a coalition of Arab powers that were in a situation near unstable areas in the Middle East. This coalition had to maintain a position in eastern Syria where the terrorist group might resurface and stop Iraq from establishing land bridges to deliver military equipment to terrorist groups in southeastern Syria (Renshon and Suedfeld 86-87).

Donald Trump, on the other hand, focused on the slogan "Make America Great Again" by giving the American people hope. This also means that American foreign policy will be somehow different from the Obama era, and there will be a new transformation concerning

American Foreign Policy. He focused in his election on many issues, but the most important one was the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal, Trump said that he could focus on fighting ISIS instead of Bashar al-Assad. He also stated that ‘every country that shares the goal of defeating terrorism will be our ally ‘(Dere 10.11). Trump called for carpet-bombing of the Islamic State group or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, which still controlled Mosul and other parts of northern Iraq. He also called for kidnapping and menacing the family members of the ISIL leadership. Trump’s Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, completed his work on the strategy developed by the Obama administration to defeat ISIL. The U.S. continued to station 6,000 troops in Iraq. The majority of them were trainers or special operations forces. The United States also sought to support the National Iraqi Army, which had collapsed in 2014 because the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant came to Mosul (Juan 5-6). Mattis, who made his desire clear concerning the capture of Raqqa, deployed approximately 1,000 U.S. troops into northern Syria in order to aid the Raqqa offensive, which would double the U.S. number of forces in Syria if approved. Additionally, the Trump administration planned to abolish the troop caps, which were mandatory in the American Army during the Obama administration. On March 17, 2017, the United States started an airstrike against ISIS at the request of the Iraqi forces in a populated place, which led to the death of 137 civilians; the U.S. military started investigating the accident (Phillips 67-68).

Nine months into his presidency, Donald Trump has made military action against terrorist organizations, especially ISIS, a top priority. He has increased the scope of active hostilities, removed restrictions on the use of force by giving the military more authority, and approved a sharp increase in airstrikes; a new draft counterterrorism policy calls for a more significant weight to be placed on partners and avoidance of expensive military engagements. In the short run, more terrorists are anticipated to be killed by this tactic. According to the

nonprofit monitoring group Air-wars, the civilian deaths in Syria and Iraq as a result of coalition airstrikes have also grown dramatically, with over 2,200 deaths estimated during his first five and a half months in office. The White House has also expanded the number of troops on the ground, especially in Iraq and Syria, in addition to stepping up airstrikes (Brechenmacher 58-59).

3.3 Similarities: Obama and Trump Foreign Policies toward ISIS

Donald Trump and Barack Obama faced the significant threat posed by ISIS during their presidencies. Each administration implemented policies aimed at countering the influence of terrorist organizations. Despite the differing approaches and tactics they used against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, they adopted some of the same policies.

3.3.1. ISIS as a Priority

During the final State of the Union address in 2016, Barack Obama detailed a more belligerent project to fight the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. The Pentagon disclosed the operations that would take place. The American soldiers who were sent to fight ISIS would not be officially confined in Iraq. Also, the U.S. engagement in the fight would include training the Iraqi army and sending Special Forces. President Obama pressed Congress to accept sending regular soldiers. The plan that the Pentagon devised comprised taking over significant centers of ISIS and launching coordinated strikes on Mosul, which was the place from where ISIS operated. The foreign policy the Obama administration opted for during this period was considered a crucial alteration in the U.S. since Washington objected to any military intervention in Syria. However, it permitted the possibility of sending American troops to the Middle East to fight ISIS (Milczanowski 1).

The foreign policy followed by Trump's administration was expected to magnify the interests of America and its national security. Nonetheless, the administration also stressed that stopping ISIS and other 'radical Islamic' groups was on the country's list of priorities. To

achieve that goal, the United States of America would use its military power and be supported by coalitions. Also, to fight ISIS and other terrorist groups, there will be international cooperation to curb the financial resources of said groups in exchange for information (Ari 61- 62). As the fight between the United States of America and ISIS, the U.S. increased its aerial attacks. The number of troops modestly increased in Iraq and Syria. Furthermore, President Donald Trump gave military commanders more authority regarding decision-making concerning operations. Regardless of the policies, Trump's administration used against ISIS; these policies paralleled those of Obama's administration. By the time Trump entered office in 2017, the momentum had already shifted against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. The administration of Obama misjudged ISIS before they controlled Mosul. President Obama joked that ISIS was merely a 'JV team', which refers to a sports team at a U.S. school. Only months later, the terrorist group seized Mosul. ISIS had been made a U.S. priority long before the end of Obama's term. Not only that, but significant military actions were made against the terrorist group, which facilitated its destruction (Barnes and Barron 1-2).

3.3.2. The Use of Drones

During the war on terror, drones have been used. However, the administration of Obama, which was launching a covert war on terror, used drones ten times more than the previous administration. President Obama sanctioned more air strikes in his first year than Bush during his entire presidency. During Obama's two terms, the number of strikes was estimated at 563, and the targeted countries were Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan. According to the bureau, the number of casualties was between 384 and 807 civilians. President Obama was determined to maintain the war that was raging against al-Qaeda in Iraq. The war on terror cost the United States of America large amounts of money, and the president had to withdraw the American troops from Iraq. Consequently, the use of drones is suited to the Obama

administration. Nonetheless, regardless of how well drones suited Obama's ambitions, the program that was used has been harshly critiqued. When they chose the drone program, the administration of Obama stressed that drone strikes are meticulous when doing the job. They also maintained that when drones are used, there would be fewer casualties, and the lives of innocent people would be saved. Human rights groups objected to this, and the record of casualties that the bureau kept indicated that often, that was not the case (Purkiss and Serle1).

When Trump became president, he vowed to make America great again. The foreign policy under his administration stressed "America First". The approach that Trump opted for on the international level was isolationism. However, less than a year later, Trump's administration sanctioned the deployment of additional troops to the Middle East. The numbers in the region increased by 33 per cent, and the president stressed that he planned these troops would have an 'enduring presence' in Iraq and Syria. The increased numbers of fatal drone attacks and covert operations, which were directed by the military's elite Joint Special Operation Command (JSOC), and the installation of CIA in faraway areas from the regions the United States of America proclaimed as war territories could be regarded as a deviation from the isolationist approach Trump adopted at the beginning of his term. The boost in the use of drones could indicate that Trump's administration adopted Obama's warfare policy and a more blatant militarization when it comes to its foreign policy. The use of drones by Trump exceeded its use by Obama's administration. Based on an assessment of the Council on Foreign Relations fellow Micah Zenko, President Donald Trump sanctioned 75 in his first 74 days in office. The military campaign that Trump's administration launched extended across areas of Southern Arabia, the Afghanistan-Pakistan borders, the Horn of Africa and North Africa. This drone could also extend to other African and Asian areas (Niva Par1).

During his campaign, President Trump promised that he would 'bomb the shit' out of ISIS. Later on, it became apparent that he would keep his word. When Trump became president, the war against ISIS in Iraq and Syria was ongoing. The president was adamant that he would fight against terrorism. However, Trump opted for a new method to fight ISIS; the number of traditional bombing and drone attacks substantially increased. According to *Newsweek*, the United of America has launched a significant number of bombs on the Middle East under the administration of Trump. The numbers estimated were approximately 10 per cent more than the previous administrations. Furthermore, President Trump eased the rules of engagement, which aimed to preserve the lives of civilians. Consequently, the number of casualties under the administration of Donald Trump doubled (Niva, Para2).

3.4 Differences

Barack Obama and Donald trump differed in terms of policies used to face threats of ISIS in some aspects.

3.4.1. The Iranian Nuclear Agreement

Regardless of the similarities between Trump's and Obama's policies in Iran, there were differences concerning the diplomacy that the two opted for. The American government opposed the Uranium processing in Iran to create nuclear weapons. Obama approached this issue through diplomacy, believing that that would resolve the problem with Tehran (Ari 14).

In 2009, the Obama administration declared that the Iran nuclear problem negotiation would have no preconditions. This was an alteration to Bush's diplomacy, which required nuclear activities in Iran as a precondition to start the negotiations between the two countries. The most significant obstruction to these negotiations was to halt the nuclear activities in Iran. Furthermore, no additional sanctions were imposed, and the administration did not stress its military strength as an option. Nonetheless, the period through which the United States of

America had the power to enforce its sanctions on Iran was prolonged to coerce the country to negotiate with America (Aliyev 35).

Obama's administration was successful in reaching an agreement with Iran concerning their nuclear activities. The administration was able to curb the Iranian nuclear activities and limit their program. Nonetheless, Donald Trump was adamant that he would end the American-Iranian agreement if elected president. He believed this deal to be the worst thing that happened to America. Hence his wish to abolish it. During Trump's early days, the agreement was expected not to be annulled; however, later on, these predictions altered. That is because the newly elected Trump began to carry out his plans concerning Jerusalem, especially the Iranian matter (Aliyev 36).

Even though President Trump was publically against the Iran nuclear agreement from the beginning, he could not help but concede to the fact that Iran complied with all the conditions of the agreement after he became president. According to the Iran Nuclear Deal Assessment Law, issued in 2015, every president must confirm or deny whether or not Iran is acting according to the agreement and whether it still seeks the best interest of the United States. The terms of the agreement did not please Trump. Consequently, he attempted to amend it by additional sanctions on Iran and conditions for the deal to continue. However, later on, President Donald Trump declared that the United States of America withdrew from the Iran Nuclear Agreement (Aliyev 36-37).

3.4.2. American Foreign Policy towards Syria

It has become apparent that both presidents Obama and Trump did not have a clear method when dealing with the Syria since its civil revolution began. That is to say, the strategies and policies they chose sought the best interests of the United States of America regarding the various resources, which was at its disposal (Deweerd1).

The Syrian Civil War broke out when the regime of Bashar al-Assad used force against the protests during the Arab Spring. Consequently, various groups united against the Syrian government. As the war continued, it became apparent that the country had been dealing with division and fragmentation because the rebels were fighting the government, each other, and other extremists like ISIS, which emerged from that turmoil. Both presidents objected and condemned the Syrian president. They urged him to abdicate. However, the United States of America had limited action when the Civil War broke out. Also, both presidents' plans were found insufficient when dealing with the problems in Syria (Deweerd 4).

The Obama administration struggled for a long time over whether or not they should provide support to groups opposing the Syrian regime. That is to say, U.S. military intervention was a subject that was discussed in Washington for a long time. In 2012, President Obama opted for a covert intervention instead. To illustrate, the president sanctioned a plan that the CIA carried out to arm the group of rebels fighting against the government. Nonetheless, this decision made the White House uneasy because some of the groups that were armed were jihadists. Furthermore, the rise of the Islamic State in 2014 altered the American plan to support the groups opposed to the Syrian government. These groups had to aid the United States of America in dealing with the significant threat, which was ISIS. In 2015, it became evident that Obama's support plan was a complete failure, and Trump had to end it (Deweerd 4).

When Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons in 2013, the Obama administration failed to act. The president wanted to intervene. However, the congress refused that decision. Even Donald Trump opposed the idea of an intervention. However, that changed when chemical weapons were used again in 2017. In a press conference in April 2017, Trump asserted that the Syrian government crossed many lines over the years and faced no consequences. Merely days after the press conference, Trump sanctioned a U.S. intervention responding to the

chemical strikes in Khan Shaykhun. The attack targeted particular parts of the al-Shayrat airbase, through which the U.S. believed the chemical attacks came (Deweerd 4-5-6).

3.4.3. The Muslim World

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the administration of Bush waged an international war that relied on interventionist policies in Afghanistan. The policies against terrorism indicated that strategies that were used in the Middle East left the region unstable in several aspects. Critics claimed that the Bush administration was unsuccessful in its protection of the country from terrorism. The president's duty of improving the previous administration's failure was the president's. That is to say, Obama was forced to deal with the aftermath of the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan after realizing that America's strategy was wrong. Consequently, Obama became devoted to cooperating with Muslims, altering the negative image Muslims have of America and stressing that the United States of America would not be going to war against Islam. A fundamental transformation was brought with Obama's speech. That is to say, President Obama wanted to alter the perception of the West toward Islam and the Islamic World and establish relations built on respect and interest. President Obama's visit to Cairo demonstrated that the United States of America was willing to mend and rebuild relations that were destroyed after 9/11 (Bahari 277).

The U.S. foreign policy that Trump's administration implemented altered significantly from those which preceded it, including Trump's perception of Islam. During his campaign, it became apparent that Trump was not in favor of Islam or Muslims, especially after the negative enticements against the Islamic religion after 9/11. Trump's declarations concerning Muslims confirmed that. For instance, President Trump had the notion of supervising mosques in the United States of America to prevent future terrorist attacks. When Donald Trump won the presidential election of 2016, the stain between America and the Islamic World was revived. The U.S. foreign policies were the cause of this tension. To illustrate, on

January 27, 2017, President Donald Trump introduced a controversial policy under the Muslim Ban. Muslims were banned from entering the United States of America, and President Trump declared that the objective behind the policy he used was to protect the United States of America from Islamic terrorist attacks (Bahari 284-285).

3.5 Consequences on the International level

The approaches and policies used by both presidents had consequences on the international scene

3.5.1. Regional Consequences

The Iraqi city of Mosul was seized by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in June 2014. Consequently, the number of people who fled the city to Kurdistan was estimated to be around one million. The people who were unfortunate to stay in a city controlled by ISIS were subjugated to some rigid rules. That is to say, under the rule of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, crossing any line would result in severe punishment. More often than not, people were punished for the smallest of violations. The seizure of Mosul ended with an intense military offensive called "the liberation", which took place in east Mosul in October 2016. During the waging war between ISIS and the United States of America, Iraq suffered greatly from the casualties that were lost and the destruction of its infrastructure. Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Abadi formally declared that Mosul was liberated on the 10th of July 2017. The city was left in shambles. The ruin in the east of Mosul was great, but the west of the city was wrecked due to the military offensive. Many places in the city were still deserted, where approximately 7.6 million tons of debris were found in Mosul. Much of this debris contained unexploded bombs and traps. In 2018, approximately 17,000 explosive instruments were extracted, while the number of the remaining devices was unknown (Lafta et al. 2).

3.5.2. Financial Consequence

The costs of terrorism extend beyond the effects of the lives that were lost, the various injuries, and the disruptive economy. They also include other economic consequences like the substantial expenses governments and the international community paid while responding to terrorist threats. That is to say, governments would spend large amounts of money to strengthen their national security and fund operations that would contain violence. In 2017, the world's expenditure on military, internal security, and private security reached \$5.5 trillion, \$3.8 trillion, and \$810 billion, respectively. These categories that were used to contain violence collectively cost the world nearly \$9.4 trillion in a single year due to the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria ("Measuring_the_Economic_Impact" 1-3).

3.5.3. Human Consequences

The loss of lives and injuries that were caused by the wars in Iraq could never be guessed accurately. The direct impact of the war resulted in a tremendous toll of deaths that could have been killed or injured during battles. That is to say, they could have been killed due to fire, bombs, or bullets. Furthermore, the categories of the lives lost in the war vary from the lives of innocent children to soldiers, to humanitarian workers, to journalists. The question that arises during such situations is about the one doing the killing. In other words, the debate concerning wars concerns the responsible party. More often than not, the responsible for the death toll is not a single party. For instance, the Syrian government and ISIS, like many others, had purposely directed their attacks on civilians. Civilians were also killed unknowingly. That is to say, in warzones, people were often accidentally due to explosive devices that were implemented. Also, both the United States of America and Russia been the reason people were killed in Syria (Crawford 13).

3.6 Conclusion

Barack Obama and Donald Trump's approaches to fighting ISIS used different strategies and tactics. Obama followed a multilateral and careful approach in order to control the expansion of The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. He depended on making solid coalitions with strong countries, such as Iran, and also some countries in the Middle East, as Saudi Arabia, in addition to the alliance with the local forces in Iraq and Syria, by supporting them with military aid, while Trump, on the other hand, adopted a direct and more aggressive stance, by increasing the frequency and intensity of airstrikes, and like Obama, Trump continued to support local forces but placed a greater emphasis on quick and decisive military actions. The combined efforts of both administrations significantly weakened ISIS as a territorial entity, though the group remains a threat through its insurgency tactics and global presence.

General Conclusion

The study examined methods and policies used by two prominent figures in American politics Barack Obama and Donald Trump. The research illustrates two distinct political ideologies that once governed the United States. Furthermore, it offers a unique analysis of both Barack Obama and Donald Trump. Furthermore, the research centers on the foreign policies and approaches that both presidents chose to implement in order to combat ISIS. The research conducted a comprehensive examination of global challenges that posed a risk to international harmony. The research offered a fresh viewpoint on the process of decision-making in relation to global issues. This study aimed to identify deficiencies and susceptibilities in previously implemented strategies that addressed the ISIS threat. As a result, this can provide an understanding of the demands placed on leadership and the obstacles they encounter.

The study is composed of three chapters. The first chapter presented an overview on the emergence of ISIS reasons, ideologies, and consequences of its occurrences. The second chapter presented an overview on Barack Obama and his administration, the policies he followed and approaches he opted for towards ISIS. On the other hand, the third chapter began by presenting Donald Trump as far from the usual president, his distinct views, and his policies to combat ISIS threat. Moreover, the chapter examined similarities and differences between the two presidential policies used towards ISIS and the results of their strategies on different spectrums.

The study found that Barack Obama presidency mainly focused on dealing with the legacy left of the Bush Administration and its resistance against terror. Obama opted for diplomatic approach in the Middle East. Obama desired to restore the relationships between America and the Arab world. Obama had no intention to intervene during the Syrian civil war

and he did not acknowledge the existence of ISIS when it rose in 2014. However, after they presented a threat to American nation, Obama used drones to launch attacks due to the fact that military forces could not intervene in Iraq because of prior withdrawal agreements.

On the other hand, Donald trump as unpredictable personality and his call for restoring America's image made the expectations that he would follow an isolationist approach when dealing with international matters. However, Trump used aggressive methods and sanctions when it comes to fighting ISIS. Trump sanctioned direct interventions in both Iraq and Syria when ISIS presented a threat. Moreover, he sanctioned military operations and increased the use of drones in the Middle East to eliminate high profile terrorists. The results indicate that both presidents put forward different approaches to deal with ISIS threat. However, the similar aspect for Trump and Obama is their desire to protect American nation from any possible threat.

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الملخص

تقدم الدراسة تحقيقاً في السياسات الخارجية لباراك أوباما ودونالد ترامب، وردود الفعل على تهديد داعش. يحدد هذا البحث ويقارن أساليب وسياسات الرئيسين باراك أوباما ودونالد ترامب في التعامل مع تهديد داعش. استخدمت الدراسة الأساليب التاريخية والسيرة الذاتية، وهي تدرس السياق والسياسات والأساليب التي نفذتها كل إدارة ردًا على صعود داعش وأنشطته. وتم اعتماد منهج الدراسة المقارنة لتقييم نقاط الضعف والقوة في كل استجابة رئاسية، مع تخصيص الموارد والمعلومات وفقاً لأهداف البحث. ويعزز النهج النوعي هذا التحليل. وتشير النتائج إلى أن التركيز الأساسي لإدارة أوباما كان على إدارة التداعيات الناجمة عن الحرب على الإرهاب التي جرت خلال إدارة بوش. واصل أوباما تقارب العلاقات الدبلوماسية مع العالم العربي في محاولة لمنع التدخل المباشر في الصراع المدني السوري. وفي عام 2014، رفض في البداية الاعتراف بوجود داعش. ومع ذلك، وفي ضوء التهديد الكبير الذي يشكله تنظيم داعش، لجأ أوباما إلى استخدام ضربات الطائرات بدون طيار، حيث كانت الاتفاقيات القائمة تحظر إعادة توزيع القوات العسكرية في العراق. بل على العكس من ذلك، فإن التصرفات التي لا يمكن التنبؤ بها وتفاني الرئيس ترامب المستمر في إصلاح النظرة إلى الولايات المتحدة يشير إلى موقف انعزالي بشأن الشؤون العالمية. وعلى النقيض من التوقعات المذكورة أعلاه، نفذ ترامب استراتيجيات عدوانية في سعيه لهزيمة داعش، والتي شملت الاشتباكات العسكرية المباشرة في العراق وسوريا بالإضافة إلى زيادة استخدام الطائرات بدون طيار لاستهداف الإرهابيين المحتملين. وتشير نتائج البحث إلى أنه على الرغم من أن أوباما وترامب طبقا نهجين مختلفين لمكافحة داعش، إلا أن كلاهما كان لهما هدف أساسي وهو حماية الولايات المتحدة من المخاطر المحتملة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: باراك أوباما، دونالد ترامب. السياسات الخارجية، داعش، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية