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MASTER THESIS

Letters and Foreign Languages English Studies

Literature and Civilization

American Exceptionalism

A Comparative Study: Obama Era Vs. Trump Era

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Academic Year : 2020-2021

Dedication

For all the souls that hearten virtue.

Acknowledgment

I am sincerely thankful to Allah for His grace and blessings and for granting me the capability to proceed successfully in my dissertation I would like to thank my supervisor, Mrs. Meriem Djaalal for her support and guidance. I would also like to show my sincere gratitude to my professors, Mr. Boulegroune Adel, Mr. Kerboua Salim and Mr. Chenini Abdelhak for their professionalism and excellence. An extension of gratitude is due to my classmates for their unconditional support.

Thanks are due to my friends for their support and encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for what can only be described as everything.

Abstract

American Exceptionalism is the belief that the United States of America is an extraordinary nation that should serve as a model community for the rest of the world and which had a great role to play in the human history. Indeed this nation is endowed with a specific uniqueness and superiority. Despite that the subject of American Exceptionalism has been always a controversial subject between several writers, many scholars tried to provide different justifications for American Exceptionalism among which we can cite Puritan belief in a Christian model, frontiers dismantlement of European culture and the rise of Individualism. American exceptionalism had a prominent position in US. Presidential rhetoric. It also had a substantial impact on policy making. 21st century marked a major shift in U.S. foreign policy under president Trump. By the end of the second world war the U.S. moved into a multilateral interventionism, this model of interaction persisted during the cold war era and the war on terror era. The election of Trump in 2016 saw a shift to unilateral policy with gradual return to Lodge's international participation model. The Syrian humanitarian crisis has posed a great risk to America's allies with the rise of ISIL. Both Israel and Saudi Arabia were under terrorist threat America was propelled to react. Obama used military force in the form of airstrike while Trump withdraw in an attempt to leave the international community to handle the post-ISIS impasse. The Iranian nuclear program posed a greater threat yet Obama tackled the issue leniently in making a deal which allowed Iran to moderately continue its nuclear program, Trump rejected the involvement of the US in the JCPOA and by 2018 withdraw from the deal arguing that Iran under all circumstances must not possess a nuclear weapon.

Keywords: American exceptionalism, unilateralism, multilateralism, political dichotomy, doctrine.

ملخص

الاستثناء الأمريكي هو الاعتقاد بأن الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية هي أمة غير عادية يجب أن تكون بمثابة مجتمع نموذجي لبقية العالم والتي كان لها دور كبير تلعبه في تاريخ البشرية. في الواقع ، تتمتع هذه الأمة بتميز محدد وتفوق. على الرغم من أن موضوع الاستثناء الأمريكي كان دائمًا موضوعًا مثيرًا للجدل بين العديد من الكتاب ، فقد حاول العديد من العلماء تقديم تبريرات مختلفة للاستثناء الأمريكي يمكننا من بينها الاستشهاد بالإيمان البيوريتاني بالنموذج المسيحي وتفكيك حدود الثقافة الأوروبية وصعود الفردية. كان للاستثنائية الأمريكية مكانة بارزة في الولايات المتحدة في الخطاب الرئاسي. كما كان لها تأثير كبير على صنع السياسات. شهد القرن الحادي والعشرون تحولًا كبيرًا في السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة في عهد الرئيس ترامب. بحلول نهاية الحرب العالمية الثانية ، انتقلت الولايات المتحدة إلى سياسة التدخل متعددة الأطراف ، واستمر هذا النموذج من التفاعل خلال حقبة الحرب الباردة وعصر الحرب على الإرهاب. شهد انتخاب ترامب في عام 2016 تحولًا إلى السياسة الأحادية مع عودة تدريجية إلى نموذج لودج للمشاركة الدولية. شكلت الأزمة الإنسانية السورية خطراً كبيراً على حلفاء أمريكا مع صعود داعش. تعرضت كل من إسرائيل والمملكة العربية السعودية لتهديد إرهابي ، اضطرت أمريكا للرد. استخدم أوباما القوة العسكرية في شكل غارات جوية بينما انسحب ترامب في محاولة لترك المجتمع الدولي للتعامل مع مأزق ما بعد داعش. شكل البرنامج النووي الإيراني تهديدًا أكبر ، لكن أوباما تعامل مع القضية بتساهل في إبرام صفقة سمحت لإيران بمواصلة برنامجها النووي بشكل معتدل ، ورفض ترامب مشاركة الولايات المتحدة في خطة العمل الشاملة المشتركة ، وبحلول عام 2018 انسحب من الصفقة بحجة أن إيران تحت كل شيء. يجب ألا تمتلك في كل الظروف سلاحًا نوويًا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستثنائية الأمريكية ، الأحادية ، التعددية ، الانقسام السياسي ، العقيدة.

List of Acronyms

AE	American Exceptionalism
AQI	Al Qaida Iraq
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JCPOA	the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
MAGA	Make America Great Again
USSR	the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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General introduction.

American exceptionalism is a long-standing theme in academic and popular culture.¹ It has also been controversial, at least on the academic plain. Sometimes, exceptionalism is taken to mean that Americans are morally superior to other people and are, therefore, entitled perhaps obliged to intervene in their affairs. At other times, American exceptionalism that American history is exempt from the usual laws and regularities of social science.

Concepts and beliefs associated with the term were prominently present in the 2012 US presidential election, bringing it from the relative obscurity of academia into mainstream political discourse. In the run-up to the election, American exceptionalism became a central part of the debate over which candidate had the better vision for restoring America's economic vitality, for preserving the country's role in world affairs and for revitalizing the American dream.

Exceptionalism is not merely a rhetorical device. It is not just one concept or argument, but an interwoven bundle of ideas that together represent an American creed or ideology. American exceptionalism implies a belief that the United States is unique among nations and, for some, even superior to others. Another twist on exceptionalism holds that America has a special or pre-ordained role to play in world affairs that requires it to lead. For some, American exceptionalism is about a mission or duty.

Exceptionalist thinking runs deep in American politics. It is an ethos tied to an American creed of individuality, liberalism, progressivism and pragmatism. It is a teleological construct that impels American expansion, leadership and interventionism to promote, export and defend that ethos.

The idea of exceptionalism increasingly resonates with America's body politic and shapes the voice of American domestic and foreign policy. In different forms, exceptionalist narratives have been used to promote American unilateralism; justify an aversion to subordinating US troops to international organizations; prevent America from signing international treaties or agreements that subject US forces or agents to foreign prosecution or criminal charges; and explain apathy among American voters towards strengthening foreign partnerships.

The exceptionalist narrative is more than an appeal to voters or a way of marketing policy decisions to the public. It also resonates overseas, where US policies wrapped in exceptionalist rhetoric can either rally support for American positions or lead to conflict over the implied vision for American leadership, power or influence.

Liberals have tended to disparage exceptionalism openly when they dare. They would like Americans to think of America as being more "ordinary" and in step with the advanced democracies in the world. In foreign affairs, "ordinary" refers to an America that does not always tout itself as the main world power, that is more attentive to the international community, and that does not proclaim a universal standard of right deriving from the puritan belief. Liberals criticize the spiritedness and narrow form of patriotism they see connected with the concept, they like to proclaim "the myth of American exceptionalism," pointing out that the doctrine makes it "harder for Americans to understand why other nations are often alarmed by U.S. policies and frequently irritated by what they see as U.S. hypocrisy. As Stephen M. Walt portrays it " US foreign policy would be more effective if Americans were less convinced of their own unique virtues and less eager to proclaim them"

President Obama appeared to embrace views along these lines early in his presidency. Asked by a reporter in Strasbourg, France, whether he subscribed, as his predecessors had, "to the

school of American exceptionalism that sees America as uniquely qualified to lead the world,” the president began by observing: “I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism.”¹ His words were a far cry from a “Lincolnian” rhetoric depicting America as “the last best hope of man on earth.”

Conservatives have rallied around exceptionalism, often passionately so. Conservatives want Americans to think of themselves as special, and they take great pride in pointing to how America is unlike other advanced democracies. Conservatives hold the idea of the nation in high esteem and bristle at the notion of America being governed by order of the international community. They regard America as the premier world power and, therefore, necessarily and rightly subject to different rules than other nations.

In his inaugural address Trump declared: ‘America First ... We will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world—but we do so with the understanding that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first.’ He also said ‘We do not seek to impose our way of life on anyone, but rather to let it shine as an example.’ A derivative of John Winthrop’s “we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.”

This research therefore aims to highlight the impact of American exceptionalism on the political doctrines of both Barack Obama and Donald Trump, its impact on their foreign policy and their attitude towards the international community. In order to demonstrate the impact on foreign policy two international crises were investigated, the Iran nuclear program and the deal associated with it additionally the Syrian crisis and the presence of ISIL in the region. In order to study the aforementioned points a study of the origin and traits that define American

exceptionalism is necessary. Highlighting the direness and similarities of both doctrines is required. The present research investigates to the following questions:

- How did American exceptionalism influence political doctrines of both Obama and Trump?
- What constitutes these doctrines and to which extent they were present in US dealings with other nations ?
- Why did Trump shift from a long-standing multilateral internationalism to unilateral non-interventionist internationalism ?

This research deals with several objectives:

- To present the the dichotomy associated with American exceptionalism and its projection on the American political spectrum where Obama represents the liberal pole and Trump the conservative.
- To examine Obama's and in a wider scope liberals' utilization of inherent traits in American exceptionalism.
- To investigate the basis of Trumps political repulsion of Obama's doctrine and the premise of his shift.

Concerning methodology, this research follows a multimethod approach, spanning from the historical and the comparative approaches, to critical and argumentative analysis of primary sources. the thesis relies on different primary and secondary sources. The primary sources used in the research are in the form of presidential statements and other official statements taken from official governmental websites. Additionally, the research also includes several secondary sources

in the form of books and articles written by different international relations scholars, students, analysts and scientists.

The research includes an abstract, a general introduction, three chapters, and a general conclusion. The abstract gives a brief overview about the research. The general introduction contains the main ideas of the research as well as the key questions. First Chapter deals with the origin and characteristics of American exceptionalism and its effects on the American identity. The second chapter tackles the impact of American exceptionalism on the Obama doctrine and in consequence on his foreign policy concerning the Iran nuclear program and the Syrian crisis. third chapter is concerned with the impact of American exceptionalism on the Trump doctrine and his foreign policy in regards to Iranian and Syrian files. In the end a general conclusion to finalize the research.

Chapter One

American Exceptionalism.

1.1. Introduction.

This chapter studies the theoretical and historical background of American exceptionalism in addition to its origins and development. However, the main goal stays the same. It is the perception of both poles of American politics of this notion, and how it affected their tendencies in shaping their foreign policy in their pursuit of Americas “Manifest destiny”.

Historians long debate the existence and merits of American exceptionalism. Even though it’s not within the primary aims of this research. It’s unavoidable in regards to this topic proving its existence will be inherently present throughout this chapter. This chapter however mainly aims to investigate its effects on American policy making, its role in shaping the American identity and the presidential rhetoric.

1.2. Establishing a Distinct Nation.

Unlike European nations, the United States of America was founded on ideals, principles and a creed rather than history. The founding fathers in their attempt to create this nation they investigated prior nations, they learned from the experiences and failures of prior and older nations. It was with this approach and mentality that they were able to establish a unique system and constitution. (Turner)

Product of a revolution the U.S managed to manifest into an ideology. Americanism is a set of beliefs or more boldly a set of dogmas on what constitutes a good society. G. K. Chesterton stated that: "America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed. That creed is set

forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence...» Americanism, therefore; is outlined by five main principles liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire. (Edwards)

Unlike European nations which derive their identity from a common history. In this sense nationality to Europeans and others is rooted in belonging to a community. Therefore, the detachment from such association is not possible. For example, French born cannot be un-French. Americanism on the other hand and as stated earlier is an ideology consisting of a set of principles and values, therefore; being an American is a commitment to this ideology. Renouncing these values is considered un-American. (Lipset)

1.3. American Identity.

“We shall be as a city upon a hill; the eyes of all people are upon us,” are the words of John Winthrop in his sermon A Model of Christian Charity. This is how puritans viewed themselves in their journey to Massachusetts Bay Colony. Although initially meant to describe the settlers of Massachusetts, this notion eventually, although simple, has come to describe American exemplary approach towards the old world. (Restad)

American exceptionalism through this variant, the American exemplary approach, embodies the notion of a promised land where Americans are regarded as the chosen people to lead the world. John Quincy Adams States that America “does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy,” but rather, “is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all.” It’s apparent in this quote that John Quincy Adams meant to separate America from the old colonial and imperial world in what is referred to as isolationism. (Restad)

America is leading the world to betterment, America is the “leader of the free world” and “policeman of the world” are slogans describing the United States as a missionary nation. This nation is the symbol of progress and its proponent therefore the duty of leading the world to betterment falls upon it. This demonstrates the internationalist side of American foreign policy.

It is apparent that American foreign policy is dictated by a dichotomy deeply inherited in the foundation of this nation. In retrospect America is founded on two very powerful ideas, religious reform and political enlightenment, which resulted in America being either religious exemplar or political reformist. Whether the American identity is either missionary or exemplary, the validity of this dichotomy will be investigated further in the next chapters.

1.3.1. The Exemplary Identity.

Religion in the early part of American history played a vital role in forming the American identity. North America was viewed by puritans as the new holly land the “new Jerusalem”, they also viewed their departure from England to this land as the “new exodus”. To them as stated by Anders Stephenson, “[the New World] was a sacred testing ground of nothing less than world-historical importance.” Set to rework rather than follow the path of the Jews in the Old Testament they embarked on their reformation. (Restad)

Winthrop’s viewed his community in Massachusetts as God’s chosen people hence inheriting divine election from the Hebrew tradition. In his sermon “A Model of Christian Charity” he said:

For we must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw

His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word
through the world. (Restad)

Winthrop intended and envisioned his community to be a model of religious rigidity to the old world, specifically England. Winthrop's community; however, was not alone in the pursuit of reform. William Penn's Pennsylvania, and Lord Baltimore's Maryland are few of many who sought to show the old world the true way (Restad).

The results of American Revolution, therefore; solidified the religious view that America is the "chosen land". United States free from England has become a sanctum for the persecuted in accordance with God's divine plan. The revolution was initiated partly by Thomas Paine's appeal to American nationalism. Examining his writings, Paine demonstrates the ideological influence of American exceptionalism, as the new formed revolutionary republic. United States became a world exemplar particularly since couple of decades after the French revolution begins which could be seen as a consequence of the American Revolution. (Restad)

Paine also believed North America to be the Promised Land. Unlike religious views, however; Paine saw America as beacon of freedom. He wrote in Common Sense "Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart." Paine envisioned the American Revolution as a revival a savior of freedom around the globe. He explicitly proclaims this in the crisis where he says "[h]ad it not been for America, there had been no such thing as freedom left throughout the whole universe." (Restad)

The new formed republic now in the eyes of Paine is set to "begin the world over again" setting an example by the principles of governing established by the founding fathers. John Adams

describes it as a “singular example in the history of mankind,” the founding fathers influenced by the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and other enlightenment thinkers managed to create a federalist governing system based on universalist ideas and ideals. A republic founded on the idea of it being exceptional and universalistic as a consequence the American identity has been shaped by civic ideas rather than historical heritage. (Restad)

One thing Winthrop and puritan idealists did not take into account is that the landscaped in which their religious views have been formed and the one they now inhabit are vastly different. England had no frontiers nor did it have the sheer number of opportunities north America had. Adherents of Winthrop failed to resist these temptations. Although collective groups in the colonies failed especially religious groups, individuals found opportunity and prosperity. Social mobility characterized this period of time. In his Letters Crèvecoeur noted that in this land “the idle may be employed, the useless become useful, and the poor become rich.” Equality of opportunity has become rooted in the principles of these colonies and consequently later on the United States. Adam Smith provided evidence when he noted that there is no hereditary nobility in the colonies. America offered vast open wilderness, a free land for the brave and adventurous. Filled with individual opportunity where they can fulfill their dreams and be masters of their own destiny. (Restad)

1.3.2. The Missionary Identity.

Although Americans opposed and rejected the practices of the old world especially imperialism, their sense of mission is derived from imperial Britain and the Reformation. America in this sense is not meant to function as a world exemplar but it is rather on a mission of world salvation as John Adams wrote in his diary:

“I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence for the illumination of the ignorant, and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth.” So according to Adams, the mission of America is to educate and free the world as is mentioned before.

Recent historians argued that English puritans although escaping from “moral deterioration” in England, their goal was to reform the Anglican church in their mother land through reform in the new world. One of the first explicit proofs of American missionary identity, however; would be Jefferson’s first inaugural speech where he said: “A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry, engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye.” It is evident that these historians, Jefferson and other American figures saw America on a destined and divine mission to save the old world from its slavishness. (Edwards)

1.4. The Significance of the Frontier in Constructing the American Identity.

With the end of the great migration and the completion of its settlement, a crucial period of the American history was closed. The West now had a great importance in the nation’s self-image becoming a central part in the construction of the American identity. According to Fredrick Jackson Turner, the founding father of Western history, the westward movement “Americanized the pioneer, shaped American institutions, and promoted democracy.” Turner was most famous for a lecture he gave in 1893, entitled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" which later on became the foundation for the Frontier Thesis. (Turner)

Turner describes the history of America prior to the closing of the frontier in 1890 as “The history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of settlement westward, explain American development.” To him the frontier shaped American institutions, society, and culture. This dividing line between civilization and wilderness is the source of Americanization. (Turner)

The frontier stripped the colonists of their European heritage. It created a new people "a mixed race, English in neither nationality nor characteristics" (Turner 23). The frontier Americanized the pioneers by destroying his culture, it returns him to primitiveness to start constructing a self-identity devoid of European influence.

"The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin"(Turner 3)

In this sense the Frontier redefines its inhabitants' cultural and national identity. It is not only the moves west but it is also the move from European to American. The frontier in this sense develops and instills American characteristics into the new comers, American characteristics such as individualism, optimism energy and enthusiasm.

Turner long rejected the “germ theory” in regards to America and the notion that the American identity is a derivative of the English identity. Although credited for highlighting the separation between them. Turner was not the first to acknowledge that the American identity is

separate and new. In 1782, J. Hector St John de Crèvecoeur wondered: "What then is the American, this new man?"

Turner acknowledged in his lecture that the Atlantic coast settlements were heavily influenced by Europe and that these settlements had an effect on the development of the American identity, but in his mind and in contrast to the westward expansion, it was a minor effect.

The germ theory although applicable to other nation's development, America was peculiar place, geographically isolated from the old world, constantly expanding to the west. America's development in Turner's view was primarily credited to the recurring process of evolution in each western area reached due to the expansion. Therefore, America did not exhibit a linear development process but rather a constant return to primitive conditions on continually moving Frontier line. "American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier."(Turner 2) This process resulted in excessive devotion by Americans to individualism.

1.5. Socialism in America.

Although the ideas behind American exceptionalism trace back to seventeenth century and the first colonies, the term itself was coined in the 1920s by American communists. In his efforts to explain the failure of socialism in the U.S, Jay Lovestone, leader of the American communist party at the time, argued that American social and economic structures are "exceptional". Joseph Stalin did not share the same views as Lovestone and described them as "hearsay of American exceptionalism". Lovestone was ousted of the party. (Pease)

The term, however; was not meant to express U.S dominance or sense of grandeur, it only conveyed that America was odd and different in the eyes of the communists. The American revolution along with the westward expansion nourished and strengthened the individualistic,

egalitarian, and anti-statist characteristics previously present in the colonies. H. G. Wells argues that these traits led to the failure of socialist parties and the absence of a European-type conservative party in twentieth century USA. According to him the social and economic environments were dominated by middle-class individualistic values as he forthrightly wrote “Essentially America is a middle-class [which has] become a community and so its essential problems are the problems of a modern individualistic society, stark and clear.” This instills the notion that America is a liberal society, and although American politics is divided into two parties, they both represent one European party: the liberal party. The American conservative party according to political analysts is more aligned, in terms of policies, with classical liberalism than with conservatism. This liberal ideology gave rise to the anti-state mentality and hence the failure of socialism and communism in America. (Lipset)

1.6. Isolationism, Internationalism and the Turn-Around Theory.

In 1919, the United States Senator Henry Cabot Lodge proposed a set of reservations for the U.S to accept the Treaty of Versailles and to join the League of Nations. Joining the league under the Lodge Reservations was voted down by the Democrats in the Senate. In response, the Republicans refused joining the league without the reservations and under President Woodrow Wilson terms. In consequence, The United States did not join the league. (Restad)

It is mistakenly believed that the result of World War 1 and the Lodge Reservations incident is the cause of American isolationism. Historians have long argued that isolationism is a trait that has been present in American identity since the time of puritan colonists as it is present in their exemplar ideal.” we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.” (Winthrop et al.) The aim here was to stay at home and show the rest of the world how to live in a New World. (Restad)

American isolationism and American foreign policy during the 18th and 19th century were described by George Washington in his farewell address:

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence, she must be engaged in frequent controversies the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Only Later on to be solidified by Thomas Jefferson's in his inaugural speech "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."

Interventionism similar to isolationism is a product of puritan belief in the mission to reform the world and "manifest destiny". According to Hilde Eliassen Restad, both "faces" of American exceptionalism, exemplary and missionary, produced or had a major influence on the dominant foreign policy approaches in U.S history, isolationism and Interventionism respectively. While isolationism was present throughout the formation of the nation and the 19th century, Interventionism started to dominate the U.S foreign policy during the events of World War II as measure to stop Nazi Germany's expansion. (Restad)

Historians like Restad and Hixson argued that America has always been interventionist, and that there was no major shift in American foreign policy. Hixson argued that America was

influential in Asia, Europe and Latin America during the 20th century. Although that was not the case prior to 20th century, as stated earlier and as proven by Washington's Farwell Address and Jefferson's inaugural speech. The shift according to Hixson and Restad happened during World War II from Unilateralism to Multilateralism. Even though admitting the change, Restad argued that it was a minor change "did not entail a fundamental turn-around in U.S. ideas about foreign policy." Hence refuting the validity of the Turn-Around Theory, he argued that the U.S. maintained unilateral internationalism in the pursuit of its "manifest destiny" of reforming the world. (Restad)

1.7. Cold War and the War on Terror.

The end of the World War II and the alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States lead to a bipolar world order. Communism started to spread in eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, essentially third world countries. The American destiny of world leadership and world reform was under threat. This threat has increased U.S efforts to move into multilateral policy. By joining the North Atlantic Alliance, U.S.A, for the first time in its history, has allowed a foreign entity to dictate its involvement in international issues. The USSR military threat also led to an unconventional U.S measures. In order for the U.S to contaminate the soviet bloc, it built overseas military bases. U.S.A kept minimal international military interference up to this point in time. (McEvoy-Levy)

Against the warnings of former president John Quincy Adams of following a foreign policy that is based on "searching or monsters." According to Hixson, U.S presidents sought and created monsters to rally public support for their interventionist plans. Michael Rogan stated this clearly: "The creation of monsters as a continuing feature of American politics by the inflation, stigmatization, and dehumanization of political foes". The rhetoric of presidents depicted enemies as "evil", "demonic" tyranny" and more. An example of this is the Kennedy's description of the

Cold War “struggle for supremacy between two conflicting ideologies: freedom under God versus ruthless, Godless tyranny.” Presidents after the cold war gained more power and discovered new means to justify their interventionism. The war on terror, Vietnam, Iraq and many others were according to Hixon a stepping stones to reach American world leadership through military intervention. According to Michael Cox and Doug Stokes, U.S presidents used a set of “representation strategies” to describe alien nations which they saw as a threat to the U.S. One of these would be demonization. An example would be the description the Soviet Union as an “evil empire” by President Reagan. Another strategy would be Bestialization. George W. Bush used this strategy as he described Iraq and Afghanistan’s militants as “parasites” that “leech” onto “host” countries. (Cox and Stokes)

1.8. Conclusion.

American exceptionalism, originating from puritan beliefs in world reform, has played a major role in the creation and shaping of the American identity. Its influence has not been limited to that, as it also shaped the political landscape. Although this chapter only dealt with foreign policy in that regard, American exceptionalism as an inherent belief shifted American policy from an isolationist policy into a unilateral international one and again into multilateral foreign policy, from exemplary to missionary, from fighting the monsters within to searching and fighting the monsters outside. The consistency of this last notion will be discussed in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter Two

The Obama Administration.

2.1. Introduction.

Barack Obama took office in 2009 left with unresolved files on the international landscape by his processor, and multiple promises of resolving these issues in his campaign. His rhetoric inspired hope, resolve and a hastily solutions to the Iraq and Iran issues. This chapter aims to investigate the influence of American Exceptionalism on Obama's foreign policy, his attitude towards AE and encapsulate the "Obama doctrine". In order to achieve these aims a study of two major issues during Obama's two terms, The Iran nuclear program and the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq and its consequences in regards to Syria and ISIL.

2.2. Brief Biography About Barack Obama.

Barack Obama was the 44th president of the United States and the first African American commander-in-chief. He served two terms, in 2008 and 2012. The son of parents from Kenya and Kansas, Obama was born and raised in Hawaii. He graduated from Columbia University and Harvard Law School, where he was president of the Harvard Law Review. After serving on the Illinois State Senate, he was elected a U.S. senator representing Illinois in 2004. (Biography.com Editors, "Barack Obama Biography")

Barack Hussein Obama II was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, on August 4, 1961. While living with his grandparents, Obama enrolled in the esteemed Punahou Academy. He excelled in basketball and graduated with academic honors in 1979. As one of only three Black students at the school, he became conscious of racism and what it meant to be African American. (Biography.com Editors, "Barack Obama Biography")

Obama later described how he struggled to reconcile social perceptions of his multiracial heritage with his own sense of self: "I noticed that there was nobody like me in the Sears, Roebuck Christmas catalog. . .and that Santa was a white man," he wrote. "I went into the bathroom and stood in front of the mirror with all my senses and limbs seemingly intact, looking as I had always looked, and wondered if something was wrong with me." (Biography.com Editors, "Barack Obama Biography")

Many commentators heralded the presidential candidacy of Barack Obama as the triumph of a post-racial politics pursued by a deracialized African American politician (Ifill, 2009; Clayton, 2010; Caesar et al., 2011; Carter &Dowe, 2015). Puzzlingly, this narrative of Obama's 'deracialized' politics sits incongruously with his political *curriculum vitae*. Barack Obama's pre-presidential political career was spent largely in contexts which are difficult to describe as deracialized. For his first political job, Obama turned down the offer of a clerkship at the prestigious District of Columbia Circuit Court to become the state director of an organization which registered African Americans to vote. In the same decade, Obama was a lecturer in race and the law at the University of Chicago, a partner at a prominent civil rights law firm, and an author about a memoir on 'race and inheritance'. He represented a majority-Black seat in the Illinois state senate and ran for Congress in the longest-standing historically Black district in the United States. When he ran for the US Senate, Obama cited his achievement as the first Black president of the Harvard Law Review in television advertisements, and he spoke openly about race and civil rights in interviews. (Nelson)

Obama's time in office has been mostly challenging as he faced a majority ruled republican congress. Which posed restriction on his domestic policy making. Especially on racial issues, taxes, budgets, and the deficit. Obama refocused on actions that he could take unilaterally,

invoking his executive authority as president. In foreign policy, Obama concentrated during the second term on the Middle East and climate change.

2.3. The Obama Doctrine.

2.3.1. American exceptionalism and multilateralism.

Since election in 2008 Barak Obama discourse focused mainly on change both domestically and internationally. It was apparent throughout his campaign that he was not satisfied with how the Bush administration handled issues such as the war on Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama sought an end to America unilateral interventionism in foreign affairs, by this he refreshed the diplomatic climate and sought a more cooperation with other nations, marking a shift from Bush's unilateral interventionism to multilateral interventionism. (Hixson)

Although his proponents accused him of “anti-Americanism” and none belief in American exceptionalism:

This is a president who won't proudly proclaim American exceptionalism, maybe the first president ever who truly doesn't believe in that. Look at his foreign policy. Doesn't believe America as a force for good, it doesn't seem. Seems like instead, he believes in multilateralism as a goal, not a tactic. He allows foreign capitals to have veto power over our foreign policy.(Jindal)

Obama has long been subjected to these kinds of accusations even before his presidency. Governor Jindal, by extensions republicans, in this interview highlights the traits that he believes are anti-American exceptionalism. “multilateralism”. Obama however is a strong believer in AE. As he showed multiple times in interviews and speeches:

I believe in American exceptionalism with every fiber of my being. But what makes us exceptional is not our ability to flout international norms and the rule of law; it is our willingness to affirm them through our actions...America does not simply stand for stability or the absence of conflict, no matter what the cost. We stand for the more lasting peace that can only come through opportunity and freedom for people everywhere...American leadership: Our willingness to act on behalf of human dignity.(Obama)

Nonetheless Obamas vision of AE is not aligned with that of republicans. Obama in his eight years in office has engaged in multiple international military interventions Syria, Libya, Iraq etc. he was also involved in fighting proxy wars in Yemen, Libya and Syria. Although known for his great rhetoric abilities his later foreign policy was more in line with the proverb” actions speak louder than words.”

Although the Bush administration adapted a multilateral approach to the Iraq war, bush was forced to resort to this approach in order to bypass the refusal of congress in the engagement in such war. Obama however, influenced by former president Woodrow Wilson, adapted multilateral approach in the Iran nuclear program issue, Syrian civil war and Libya not due to lack of support in congress, although he faced opposition, he was a proponent of international coalition when he was member of congress. Obamas campaign speeches also focused on international collaboration. Coming from a family of mixed races and being raised in an immensely different culture than the American in a third world country.

psychological traits of an individual, developed not just as a result of political education but due to other long-standing environmental influences such as religious upbringing, ethnicity, or class, may influence a leader's predispositions and/or lead to misperceptions which affect policy. (Levy 37)

Obama was influenced by these factors that made him look for the betterment of no-American lives and made him trust that different cultures and circumstances does not necessary translate to different goals. He sought a sustainable peace through cooperation.

2.3.2. Political Realism.

Political analysts claim that realism is the prominent school of thought in foreign relations. They argue that nation by inherent instinct of survival they seek military power and security on the cost of morality and ethics. Based on this rational desire these unitary nations adapt the ideas of proponents of realism such as Machiavelli and philosophers such as Thucydides. (Hixson)

Obama's caution stemmed from accepting the reality of Americas limited ability to influence world events. The international atmosphere has changed and the threats it poses did as well. The US overwhelming military strength no longer permitted it to shape the world. He's pragmatism was similarly rooted in a realistic, rather than idealistic, view of the complexity of challenges that were facing the United States. Combating climate change and international terrorism, for example, required increased collaboration, not unilateralism. And the increased strength and assertiveness of emerging powers like China, India, Brazil, and others needed to be treated as an opportunity as well as a threat. (Cox and Stokes)

The Obama administration's war policies on Iraq and Afghanistan show this approach at work. In Iraq, Obama's challenge has been to pull out US troops according to schedule. He achieved this by acting based on two propositions: that "our commitment in Iraq is changing from a military effort led by our troops to a civilian effort led by our diplomats, "and that we needed to let the Iraqis muddle through, even if this at times seemed a quite hopeless plan. In articulating an Afghan strategy in his December 2009 West Point speech, the president described our goal as "to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future." (Loy)

Obama spoke in congress about rebuilding Iraq and Afghanistan, but once he took office, he saw the difficulty and the effects of such a task on US economy therefore his decisions and actions were more grounded in reality than chasing idealist fantasies.

2.3.3. Diplomacy.

Obama faced criticism for the inability to withdraw from Iraq and ending the war in Afghanistan or closing the Guantanamo Bay promises he made in his inaugural speech. Critics from his party, Democratic Party, labeled his policy as "Bush-lite" while the opposite republicans accused him of being naïve for his reliance on diplomacy. His diplomacy failed to bring an end to the Iran nuclear program, or end the terrorist control in Afghanistan. (Loy)

Obama however did not implement diplomacy as a soft power but rather as a tactic to avoid war. Diplomacy although a major part of Obama's rhetoric it was implemented as a default approach that for most cases failed to bare the desired results, in consequence his administration resorted to military intervention. As is observed in the situations relating to Syria and Libya where Obama was reluctant to use military intervention and favored engagement in diplomacy which led

to the escalation of the situation. Only when Gaddafi and Al-Assad deployed the military and started using force which resulted in civil wars that Obama sought firstly international intervention through the UN and allied countries and eventually US military intervention.

2.4. Losing an Enemy, The Iran Deal.

US, Iran relations have been entangled for many years, state relations have been experiencing tremendous setbacks that have locked both countries into longstanding enmity. The first discourse between the nations presidents since 1979 was a phone call made by President Rouhani to President Obama. The phone call was the result of an extensive back and forth between the White House and Rouhani's office in the lead-up to the UN General Assembly meeting. American and Iranian leaders rarely show much respect for each other. But the UN meeting in September 2013 was an exception to this decades' long rule. Rouhani attended Obama's address to the United Nations in a show of respect. Obama, in turn, mentioned Ayatollah Khamenei's fatwa against developing and using nuclear weapons in his address, which the Iranians deeply appreciated. (Parsi)

Certainly, a resolution to the Iran nuclear program would be reached. Obama said, and both Iran and the United States should seize It. The United States respected Iran's right to civilian nuclear energy, granted that it would accept limitations and inspections that would prevent it from building a bomb, Obama continued. While both leaders agreed that the talks had to focus solely on the nuclear issue, Obama left the door open for a broader opening between the two countries. (Parsi)

Obama's intentions towards Iran differed from his predecessor, he engaged the situation with the objective of exhausting the diplomatic efforts before contemplating military options. As such, Obama showed his readiness to talk to the Iranian elite without preconditions stating in a major speech in Cairo that "There will be many issues to discuss between our two countries, and we are willing to move forward without preconditions on the basis of mutual respect" (Al Barasneh and Khatib)

The election of Hassan Rouhani in 2013 as Iran president saw the negotiations advance with fast pace, but it was El-Khamenei rule in authorizing the establishment of the Oman Channel that initiated the talks. This happened after Obama garnered international support to impose sanctions on Iran. Obama did not dismiss the possibility of a military option as his administration officials frequently declared. Before 2011 however Iran was economically and politically isolated. Tension raised substantially during the Bush administration, talks between the nations were non-existing. It was Secretary of State, John Kerry then chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, presented the idea to Oman's leader Qaboos, who welcomed it and agreed to facilitate the meetings. (Parsi)

In 2015 a deal was struck which sought to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon capability and at the same time to enable Iran to normalize its relations with the western world by lifting the imposed sanctions. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action marked the success of Obama's "Dual track strategy" that integrated both diplomacy and sanctions with particular emphasis on a diplomatic track with Tehran. The multilateral negotiations between Iran and the P5 + 1 (US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany) resulted in the 2015 nuclear agreement, known officially as the JCPOA. This agreement had provided Iran with an opportunity to lift the sanctions in exchange for a substantial reduction in its stockpile of enriched uranium and its

number of centrifuges. The deal also included Iran's acceptance for periodic inspections of its nuclear fuel cycle by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Indeed, Iran was building steadily its leverage and by early 2013 Obama realized that if Washington did not make a compromise and reach out to a certain agreement, then Washington would have to either accept Iran as a de facto nuclear power or, alternatively, going to war with Iran. (Entessar and Afrasiabi)

2.5. Filling the Vacancy, The Syrian Crisis.

Bush's plan was to keep the troops in Iraq in the hope of creating a safe environment for his suni allies to rebuild and lead the nation to economic and social stability and marginalize the extremists and keep them out the government. Obama on the other hand determined to fulfill his promises of withdrawal broke negotiations with Baghdad over the extension of the deployment of US troops. This resulted in the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq on 18 December 2011. Shortly after ISIS was formed from the remnants of a local branch of al Qaida in Iraq, with the objective of filling the gaps left by US troops and expanding in order to create a caliphate consisting of the entirety of the Middle-East. (Phillips)

This led to Iran, Saudi Arabia to engage in a proxy war over the rule of El Assad backed by Tehran and the Sunni rebels backed by Riyadh. Russia and Qatar joined the proxy war which led to the escalation of the crisis from local to regional. Obama initially tried the diplomacy route but the crisis escalated even more when the Syrian army started deploying chemical weapons based on reports from the UN investigations. The UN was ready to launch an aircraft assault but their action needed the involvement of the US which Obama kept as a last resort which he eventually succumbed to. ISIS took advantage of Obama reluctance to use military force and his concentrated efforts to disarm Assad from all chemical weapons and they seized 70% of the region. On 7 August 2014, at the request of the Iraqi government, Obama authorized US airstrikes in Iraq. Appearing

on television, he told the Yazidi people that ‘America is coming to help’, reassuring skeptical citizens that ‘boots on the ground’ was not an option and that he believed there was no American military solution in the region. Obama in response to the killing of the first US citizen James Foley by ISIS, outlined a four-part strategy to ‘degrade and destroy’ ISIL, which included plans for US airstrikes inside Syria, with or without congressional approval. (Holland, “The Syrian Civil War”)

Standing at the crossroads of the Middle East’s fractured ethnic, religious and geopolitical landscape, the crisis and civil war in Syria has split the region and its various international sponsors, all the way up to the UN Security Council. Although cooperation in specific areas has been achieved – for example, coordinated US–Russian airstrikes against ISIL in areas such as Palmyra – Syria has helped to initiate the onset of a contemporary bipolarity reminiscent of the Cold War. This division has repeatedly demolished efforts at negotiation and peace talks. The crisis in Syria has divided the country, the region and the world. This division has come, first and foremost, at the expense of the Syrian people, although its implications reach much further. (Holland, *Selling War and Peace*)

2.6. Conclusion.

Although Obama has stated frequently that he is a big believer in American exceptionalism it appears that he is not akin to the use of soft power as a means to influence other nations. Obama’s vision of AE is a product of his multicultural upbringing. He is convinced that although The US is the strongest military force in the world, it is not a model to be adapted. He views America as a model to be, with the help of the international community.

Obama adopted a realist view point in engaging international issues. He resorted to diplomacy in a multilateral frame, even though it was a coercive approach to diplomacy. He has

left intervention as a last resort in some cases he was obliged to follow the UN into interventions that he planned to avoid. He wanted to liberalize and democratize the world but also saw that the US can adapt and integrate principles from other nations. This policy that he followed was exploited by other leaders which subjected him to Appeasement by which he was accused several times.

Obama's indecisiveness and uncertainty displayed the US as a weak nation that is no longer able to lead. He freed the international landscape for countries like Russia, Turkey, Iran and China to be able to play a bigger role. Some analyst even suggest that he planted a seed of a second cold war. Obama's belief in American Exceptionalism although mentioned frequently in his rhetoric barely influenced his policy. The elusive attempt to search for a comprehensive "Obama Doctrine" is simply futile, the doctrinal approach to foreign policy no longer making sense in Obama's complex and multi-layered approach and should simply be abandoned as unhelpful to understanding the multifaceted nature of Obama's internationalism.

Chapter Three

The Trump Administration.

3.1. Introduction.

United States foreign policy has sought to maintain primacy on the global stage, but every U.S. president has maintained U.S. foreign policy in their own context. Counter to previous administrations, President Donald Trump has focused U.S. foreign policy through the lens of transactional realism concentrating on counterterrorism and challenges to U.S. interests and allies in the Middle East.

This Chapter aims to investigate the extent of American Exceptionalism's traits impact on Trump's policy making and which module of AE influences Trumps Doctrine. In order to achieve the desired aims, one must firstly underline the characteristics of the Trump doctrine. Secondly an investigation into the application of said doctrine and how its characteristic translate in the international landscape is necessary.

3.2. Brief Biography About Donald Trump.

Donald Trump was the 45th President of the United States; he took office on January 20, 2017. Previously, he was a real estate mogul and a former reality TV star. Trump turned his attention to politics, and in 2015 he announced his candidacy for president of the United States on the Republican ticket. Trump became the official Republican candidate for president on July 19, 2016, and upset Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton on November 8, 2016, to become the 45th president of the United States. (Biography.com Editors, "Donald Trump Biography")

Donald John Trump was born in Queens, New York, on June 14, 1946. His father, Fred Trump, was a highly successful real estate developer. Donald was educated at the New York

Military Academy and the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania. Even before he graduated, he was drawn to real estate and construction, and as a young man he took over his father's firm, renaming it the Trump Organization. (Whitehouse.gov Editors)

Although raised Presbyterian by his mother, he identifies as a mainline Protestant. At age 13, Trump's parents sent him to the New York Military Academy, hoping the discipline of the school would channel his energy in a positive manner. He did well at the academy, both socially and academically, rising to become a star athlete and student leader by the time he graduated in 1964.(Whitehouse.gov Editors)

In his inaugural speech on January 20th, Trump sent a populist message that he would put the American people above politics. "What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by the people," he said. "January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again." He main themes of Trump's inauguration speech were pride in the American identity, patriotism and promising actions rather than "empty talk". Trump ended his speech with "Together, we will make America strong again. We will make America wealthy again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. And yes, together we will make America great again." This excerpt of the speech defines his political doctrine.

3.3. Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Theory.

Unlike his predecessor, Trump believed in the uniqueness of America, he demonstrated a true belief in American exceptionalism. The emphasis in his rhetoric throughout the years has been America, his campaign slogan "Make America Great Again" demonstrates his belief that America

was great but at one point in time it ceased to be. He credited the deterioration of American greatness to the Obama administration.

Trump foreign policy influenced by his business background, his views on AE and the “failures” of the Obama administration, can be described as transactional and business oriented, it moved from Obama’s multilateralism to a unilateral non-interventionist approach. His rhetoric demonstrates that he regards the interest of the US and its people as his primary if not only duty.

3.4. The Trump Doctrine.

3.4.1. Trumpism.

Trump is a departure from the conventions of US presidential politics. Trump however is not an outlier in the global political spectrum, on the contrary global Trumpism is a reaction to the failures of pre-established systems in overcoming the 2008 recession and managing to revert its consequences. Global Trumpism is a systematic-shift into a new anti-system politics. The reemergence of aggressive nationalism can be attributed to the harsh policies imposed by nations to save financial institutions on the expense of the public, high unemployment and high taxes should have been predicted to cause populist resentment similar to that of the golden age. This crisis established that the elites that govern the nations through business conglomerates and lobby are either unable or un-willing to govern the interests of the broader public. (Vormann and Weinman).

Trump’s rhetoric may seem simplistic but it was able to captivate the interests of the public. “America first” a slogan that although uninspiringly basic it exposes a long underling theory in the US liberal order, in essence the governing elite have not been prioritizing US and Americans interests. This was made more credible by the lenient Obama policies regarding illegal immigrants,

the southern border and the immense economic aids to foreign nations in a period of economic uncertainty. Obama outsourced manufacturing jobs to an economical and political rival China he enabled Russia to gain political influence over Syria and Iran.

Trumpism therefore is the prioritization of the interests of low and middle earning groups. It is a process by which the US will regain leadership of the world, not by joint efforts or multilateral decision making but rather by a unilateral and local decision making. Global Trumpism is present in Brexit, in the election of Boris Johnson and the various antiestablishment movement in varied states.

3.4.2. The Art of The Deal.

Richard Neustadt argues that “presidential power is the power to persuade”, therefore his model is based on negotiation and inveiglement. Presidency according to him is more a source of weakness than power as president Lyndon Johnson acknowledged “...the only power I’ve got is nuclear, and I can’t even use that!”. Neustadt reasoning behind this model is rooted in the uniqueness, fragmentation and conflictual nature of US political system. Based on this model compromise is an essential tool in the presidents’ hands, however bargaining can be conducted from a position of strength or one of weakness. According to Neustadt the two main components of presidential power are public support “prestige” and elite support “reputation”. (Schaefer)

Trump unaware or unrecognizing the importance of Neustadt model did not adhere to the importance of “prestige” and “reputation”. He has alienated the opposing party’s elite by calling them “crazy”, “sleepy”, “crooked” and so on, he has also frequently accused them of betraying the interests of Americans. Aside from republicans the public disliked him as proven by his very low approval rating. Trump seemed to believe that his success story is all what was needed to garner support. To him he is a model of American exceptionalism, as a leader of the free world his power

was unaccommodating, and therefore compromise and persuasion were not options. Trump's rhetoric implies that he believes he has the stronger stance in the negotiations he has conducted whether with congress or foreign nations. His approach to negotiation was rooted in business rather than diplomacy and the arts of attraction that his predecessor emphasized.

3.4.2.1. *Think Big.*

“I like thinking big. I always have. To me it's very simple: if you're going to be thinking anyway, you might as well think big... I wasn't satisfied just to earn a good living. I was looking to make a statement. I was out to build something monumental, something worth a big effort.”
(Trump, *Trump*)

According to Trump to be successful you have to “driven”, “single-minded”, “obsessive” and to some extent even “maniac”. He argues that fear of failure, success and making decisions makes people under-reach and that he is devoid of those fears. This is strongly evident in how he conducts himself. Whether Trump is as His rivals describe him a pseudo-hyper-individualist or is he describes himself an overconfident individual Trumps has frequently set his goals too high and by extent expectations, this is evident in the southern boarder wall deal. One could argue that he has also set himself for failure.

3.4.2.2. *Maximize Your Options.*

“I never get too attached to one deal or one approach. For starters, I keep a lot of balls in the air, because most deals fall out, no matter how promising they seem at first.” (Trump, *Trump*)

Flexibility in dealings seems an essential trait in Trumps multilayered approach to negotiations. Business wise trump has followed these rules to some extent. Although “I keep a lot of balls in the air” denotes pre-setting of contingency measures in the cases of failure, Trump rarely

does. This habit has intensified once he took office as he gained more power and therefore, he no longer needed to concern himself with the probabilities of failure.

3.4.2.3. Leverage.

“The worst thing you can possibly do in a deal is seem desperate to make it.” (Trump, *Trump*)

According to Trump negotiations is granted to go in the favor of those with the position of strength. He views strength in dealings as leverage therefore it is paramount to either have it or convince the other party that he is in a need of what you already have. Leverage according to him varies in degree from “want”, “need” and up to “can’t do without”. Therefore, failure in negotiations is failure to persuade the other of the importance of said leverage. Trump the president unlike the businessman believed that him being the leader of the strongest nation in the world is sufficient and there is no need for promoting this leverage.

3.4.2.4. Fight Back.

“...there are times when the only choice is confrontation...if you're fighting for something you believe in - even if it means alienating some people along the way – things usually work out for the best in the end.” (Trump, *Trump*)

Although not explicitly stated Trump denotes the notion of not withdrawing from negotiation and escalating the situation if a probability of success is found. success here is critical and no alternative is satisfactory. This trait will be observed later in the inquiry of the Iran deal.

3.4.2.5. *Deliver the Goods.*

“You can’t con people, at least not for long. You can create excitement, you can do wonderful promotion and get all kinds of press, and you can throw in a little hyperbole. But if you don’t deliver the goods, people will eventually catch on.” (Trump, *Trump*)

People did catch on, at least a decent portion of the American public has insinuated that trump has been gulling them. At least that is how Trumps rivals depict him. His acknowledgment in the previous quote suggest that he does not believe that deceiving the public as an optimal measure. Based on this and although trump failed to deliver most of his campaign promises, he has intended to deliver the goods.

3.4.3. Self-Reliance.

Trump stated that his father’s financial contribution to his success was negligible, however he acknowledges that his fathers has provided him with the appropriate education. His father represents to him a model of hard work and independence. Trump frequently speaks about self-reliance, independence and hard work. Fredrick Jackson Turner argued that these traits define the American identity. Trumps plan to restore the outsourced labor to American hands is a manifestation of these ideas into policies. “Buy American, hire American” (Trump)

Trump’s self-reliance principles extend to both domestic and international issues. His plan to fight unemployment and homelessness was to retrieve manufacturing, outsourced by the Obama administration to China and east Asia, to American hands. Trump administration’s African strategy states “We hope to extend our economic partnerships with countries who are committed to self-reliance and to fostering opportunities for job creation in both Africa and the United States.” Although the main reason behind encouraging African nation to rely on themselves is to reduce

the burden on the American treasury and in conjunction with Trump's nationalistic "America first" strategy, self-reliance is recurring theme in Trump's doctrine.

3.4.4. Neo-Nationalism, Make America Great Again.

Trump's presidency was not a consequence of chance rather it is a result of a long building division dating back to Ronald Regan, intensifying and brought to light during Obama's presidency. Obama's focus on gender, sexual and racial equality the emphasis on group identity divided the social landscape. Trump's election was not an "anti-Hillary" protest, he was elected because voters liked his national policies, his "anti-establishment", "anti-emigration" and "pro-family" stances. (Haynes)

Trump's attempt to appeal to the public with a simple slogan "make America great again" was met with wide approval. But when was America great in the eyes of Trump? And what does greatness mean? Haynes explains that the greatness meant by Trump is the "American dream" the existence of varied multitude of opportunities for the simple citizen to seize the ability low-income individuals to enhance their living style, the ability of social mobility and the equality of opportunity. The time that America was great is the time that these endeavors were achievable. (Haynes)

MAGA could also mean the purification of the American political system of corruption and the isolation of corrupt politicians as Trump calls them "the swamp". MAGA also accused some trading partners of cheating and swindling America China, Turkey and the European union are few of the accused. Trump's accusation is based on unfair treatment of America in these deals thus resulting in the reduction of well-paid, skilled, and semi-skilled employment. Trump claimed that jobs were unjustly relocated to low-income partners on the expense of the American people. The final point that Trump made is that the previous administration has engaged in bilateral and

multilateral agreement that were against US national interests. Focusing on these issues in his rhetoric trump rallied support especially from low and middle earning voters.

Nationalism is identifying with one's nation and supporting its interests even in the expense of others. Religious nationalism on the other hand views a nation on religious ground and seeks to advance the interests of such religious group. Trump combines both secular and religious nationalism, projecting what Bergmann calls "neo-nationalism". (Haynes)

3.4.5. The Leadership Ideology.

Trump frequently quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson and seemed to admire his ideas, one of these quotes was "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Trumps ideas on leadership coincide with the above quote his vision is one of forging one's own destiny. The idea of following others pre-established routes of success seemed appalling to Trump. He did not follow the path that his father has set in real estate he made his own. Trump's America is destined it does not need to follow other nations models of success nor should it allow others to set its path, America possess a "manifest destiny" which is achieved by forging a new path and leaving it for others to follow. US needs to be the leader of the world in every respect. "The idea of American Greatness, of our country as the leader of the free and unfree world, has vanished". In addition, Trump claimed that making the USA lead the world needs a strong leader who runs the country and the world as a company.(Fuchs)

3.4.6. Unilateralism.

Although experts expected an isolationist approach to Trumps foreign policy, he seemed to adopt a unilateral internationalist approach which seeks to limit foreign nations effect on American decision making. Trumps unilateral approach also incorporates a slight variation of isolationism as he sought to circumscribe U.S military intervention in foreign lands. Trump used

economic instruments to enforce this approach i.e., he imposed tariffs against China and sanctions against Venezuela... etc. With passing time trump grow more confident as consequence his unilateral, nationalist and sovereigntist impulses increased, these impulses resulted in matters from withdrawing US forces from Syria and Afghanistan to nuclear diplomacy with North Korea. (Renshon and Suedfeld)

3.5. Coercive Diplomacy, Iran policy in the age of Trump.

Obama approach to Iran was one of confinement and diplomacy. He sought to reduce Iran's nuclear program with the JCPOA and remove sanctions in hopes that Iran will be open to international cooperation and change in policy, unfortunately for Obama that did not happen. Trump however predicted that Tehran will continue its belligerent behavior in the region and that a deal with a terrorist funding nation is regarded as submission and weakness. Trump threatened to engage in military operations against Iran prior to his election, but he realized after taking office that the ramification for both nations and the region are too great. Trump withdraw from the deal and reinstated the sanctions in an attempt to force Iran into abolishing it's nuclear program. (Al Barasneh and Khatib)

Secretary of the state Mike Pompeo declared a return to US foreign strategy of pressuring Iran via reimposing sanctions he stated:

We'll continue to work with allies to counter the regime's destabilizing activities in the region, block their financing of terror, and address Iran's proliferation of missiles and other advanced weapons systems that threaten peace and stability. We will also ensure Iran has no path to a nuclear weapon – not now, not ever.

He adds that the deal has “fatal flaws” and it does not “address Iran’s continuing development of ballistic and cruise missiles” (Pompeo)

The Trump administration has changed policy because it believed that the JCPOA has deficiencies and weaknesses as it focused on nuclear issue only and disregarded other important issues as Trump states “The deal does nothing to constrain Iran’s destabilizing activities, including its support for terrorism” (Trump, “Remarks by President Trump on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action”) in addition it restricted us ability to reduce Iran military and missile capabilities.

The economic dimension of Trump’s new Iran strategy formed the centerpiece of his strategy that was part of a broader US Middle East policy targeting Iran and its regional allies. The new coercive economic measures adopted by US government were nothing short of economic warfare, explicitly aimed at hindering Iran’s economy in hopes of a regime change in Tehran. President Hassan Rouhani accused Trumps of “bullying” and denounced his multilateral approach he also alleged that Trump’s administration is “harboring Nazi dispositions” although Trump seemed to fuel the tension his aim was to coerce Iran into agreeing to a new deal where Tehran abandons its nuclear ambitions. In contrast to Obama however Trump did not dismiss other threats posed by Iran he accused Iran’s leaders of “sowing chaos, death, and destruction” across the Middle East. Claiming that Iran’s rulers “do not respect their neighbors or borders,” Trump cited Syria as an example and blamed Iran for the humanitarian crisis in Syria: “Every solution to the humanitarian crisis in Syria must also include a strategy to address the brutal regime that has fueled and financed it: the corrupt dictatorship in Iran.” (Entessar and Afrasiabi)

3.6. The Implementation of the Trump doctrine on the Syrian Crisis.

Since the emergence of the Arab spring in 2011 the middle east witnessed various conflicts. The US maintained it's position as the main "actor" in the region. It sought to preserve peace, it's interests and the interests of its allies mainly Israel. Although US foreign policy witnessed major changes under the Trump administration and various withdrawals from the international landscape the US seemed to maintain a similar approach concerning the Syrian crisis. Through a policy of economic achievement and bargaining, Trump maintained international cooperation in the region. (Issa and Babaker)

Although Obama has planned to withdraw from the region after he deemed the mission complete, a mission to hinder ISIS influence on the region, Trump's administration refused to abandon US allies and acted on the basis of protecting Americas interests and the interests of the Kurds, Israel and Saudi Arabia. Another reason for pursuing a policy in the region is the abundance of external actors in Syria. Trump sought not to repeat his predecessors mistake of leaving a vacancy for rivals or other terrorist groups to occupy. (Issa and Babaker)

The Trump administration maintained political and economic engagement in the region in the form of aids and political pressure on major actors in the region in an attempt to deter their influence mainly Russia and Turkey. Trump never intended however to maintain military involvement. the Trump administration, U.S. engagement was approached using smart power, thereby limiting the need for deep and intensive military engagement. Of particular note, the Trump administration consistently stated that U.S. involvement was limited to counterterrorism efforts and that with the defeat of ISIS "[U.S. presence] in Syria was not open ended and it was never intended to be permanent..." (Trump, *Remarks by President Trump in Briefing at Al Asad Air Base*). Trumps withdrawal from the region raised some criticism secretary of the state Mike

Pompeo assured the international community that US this move will not affect US policy regarding terrorism nor does it mean that the US is abandoning the region. This strategy emphasizes that the US under Trump is willing to assist in international issues but it refuses the sole reliance of other nations on US assist. The ISIL influence in the region has diminished, the damage caused by the war and the domestic problems that it resulted in are the sole responsibility of the nations in question. (Issa and Babaker)

Trump administration refused to participate in the post war reconstruction of Syria emphasizing that a political reformation is necessary in Syria and that Syrian people's participation in determining their future is essential to furthering diplomatic and economic relations. A political settlement must be reached and US involvement in rebuilding Syria is contingent on the existence of El-Assad regime. This settlement under the UNSCR 22545 and the Geneva communiqué 2012 with the Constitutional draft must be implemented. (Issa and Babaker)

In a response to the heinousness of the Assad regime in the Trump administration released the "Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019".

"The law provides for sanctions and travel restrictions on those who provide support to members of the Assad regime, in addition to Syrian and international enablers who have been responsible for, or complicit in serious human rights abuses in Syria. The law also seeks to deny the Assad regime the financial resources used to fuel his campaign of violence and destruction that has killed hundreds of thousands of civilians. The Caesar Act sends a clear signal that no external actor should enter into business with or otherwise enrich such a regime." (Pompeo)

The Trump administration demanded the implementation of a constitution committee for Syria where freedom, liberty, democracy with a free election, and voting enfranchisement for all must be guaranteed. To wit a return to coercive diplomacy in a zero-sum policy framework to achieve the aims of the Trump administration.

3.7. Conclusion.

Unlike his predecessor Trump did not resort to the international community for decision making regarding the protection of US and its allies' interests. "America first" encapsulates the essence of the Trump doctrine. Similar to his predecessor Trump relied on coercive diplomacy to achieve his aims although unilaterally. Trump attempted to enforce American leadership over the world through deterrent. the foreign policy of the United States covered by many perspectives and concepts toward the world would make the world a market for achieving U.S. national interest. The United States, under the Trump administration, was unable to withdraw totally from world affairs; however, Trump worked hard to isolate America from many world affairs, which he thought do not concern the U.S. Furthermore, he sought to prevent the loss of U.S. lives and money in the world. His policy was to press allies and adversaries to take some of U.S. burden, in War on Terror, and pursuing global security.

Trumps view of America as a leader as decision maker rather than an enforcer of decisions coincide with the notions of A model to be aspired to, and a reformer to shape the world on America's form set forth by John Winthrop. His emphasis on self-reliance and individualism are depictions of the deductions of Fredrick Jackson Turners on the role of the frontier in the shaping of the American identity.

General Conclusion.

The debate over the validity of the notion of American exceptionalism has baffled the minds of scholars and historians. This study asserts that the belief in American exceptionalism impacted American lives both on the domestic level and international. Both strains of American exceptionalism, missionary and modular, have been present in U.S. foreign policy.

At first glance Obama seems to believe in American exceptionalism as he himself declared few times. Yet he contradicted himself in others by describing the U.S. as “ordinary” and expressing that every society believes in a form of exceptionalism that is associated with its nation and the belonging to said nation. Obama’s presidency as some argue in itself is a proof of American exceptionalism. An African-American takes the presidential office in a historically slave owning nation. Obama’s decision making and policy towards the world indicate that he was not a proponent of AE. He joined international communities and submitted to their multilateral decisions which weakened U.S. position as leader of the world. The post-cold war unipolar international system was shattered under Obama he was lenient on China and managed to allow U.S. manufacturing to be exported to the prominent economical threat on U.S. his withdrawal plan from Iraq give rise to ISIL. U.S. participation in the JCPOA was regarded as a betrayal by allies in the middle east. Examining these events and Obama’s rhetoric it appears that he was not confident of America’s ability to lead and to make decisions based on its interests. By the end of Obama presidency U.S. hegemony on the international order has never been weaker.

Trumps campaign rhetoric signaled that he understood what he was inheriting from his predecessor. “America first” signified that the previous administration under the rule of international communities prioritized the interests of those collective entities which are separated from the U.S. on cultural and geographic levels meaning their interests rarely coincide with the

interests of the U.S. “buy American, hire American’ Trump realized that the retravel of outsourced labor to American hands will revive American manufacturing and by extension the economy, it will also weaken the economy of China. American products made outside of U.S. although for cheaper labor has raised unemployment and poverty numbers. “make America great again” America is shadow of its former self it is no longer revered as it used to be. Trump promised to revive the land in which an individual is able to seize opportunities and change his situation the “American dream”, social mobility and the “land of opportunities” were lost under Obama and Trump believed a “leader” is needed to retrieve them. Although his rhetoric has been criticized for being populist, he resonated with the public due to the validity of his arguments. Trump a devoted Anglican believed in American exceptionalism and sought to teach it. His zero-sum approach to negotiations indicates he believes in the leadership of the U.S. and its appeal. The use of soft power and coercive diplomacy as means to achieve goals depicts his confidence in U.S. cultural, economic and military superiority. These beliefs drove Trump to shift U.S. foreign policy from multilateral to unilateral.

Obama and Trump represent to different sides of U.S. politics, liberals and conservative respectively. Studying both Obama and Trump demonstrates the underlying beliefs of both poles. Liberals believe that America is ordinary and should cooperate with the world to garner its interests this translates into multicultural and multilateral policies. Conservatives believe in American exceptionalism which translates into a unilateral-self-reliant non-interventionalist policies.

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