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ДОНОВАН Дин Шон

**<<Доктрина Буша>> после президентства Дж. Буша мл.: Принципы односторонних действий и упреждения во внешней политике США в 2009-2020 гг.**

**The Bush Doctrine Post-Bush: Unilateralism and Pre-Emption in U.S. Foreign Policy in 2009-2020**

Выпускная магистерская квалификационная работа по направлению 41.04.05 <<Международные отношения (на англ. языке)>>

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**Abstract**

This research focuses on the Bush Doctrine, and how it was used to pursue unilateral and pre-emptive foreign policies from 2009-2020, under presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump, as well as analyzing the Doctrine itself. This includes associated events and policies that may not fall directly within the stated timeframe.

In this study, several key events that exemplify the unilateral and pre-emptive nature of current U.S. foreign policy are evaluated, such as the Libyan invasion under Obama, and the U.S. support of Saudi Arabia in Yemen. The results, overall, indicate a large amount of unilateral action from the U.S. in regards to their foreign policy in the last decade (and the ones before it), and the disasters that have been created as a result of such policy, such as regional instability. Other topics include the failure of the U.S. in their stated mission of bringing peace and democracy to a country in question, as well as consequences, intended or otherwise, of such intervention on the part of the U.S.

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**Chapter I: Introduction and Theoretical Aspects of the Dissertation: Research Framework**

The overall purpose of the dissertation and research is to provide a clear compendium of examples of unilateralism and pre-emption (compared to the rest or most of the rest of the Western world) in U.S. foreign policy, specifically over the last two decades, as well as a limited expose how it has impacted the afflicted countries. The research that is being presented in this dissertation does not exist in the same structure elsewhere.

In particular, there will be a special focus on some notable events in recent years. While an event like the Iraq/Afghanistan invasions fall out of the scope of this work, others, such as the Libyan intervention, Trump’s handling of Yemen, and the Israel/Palestine debacle under Trump, to name a few, will be fleshed out. The aim is, in short, to provide the build-up to these events, what transpired, the methods by which the U.S. executed them, who they sided with/consulted (if applicable), and the outcomes for the nation and the native population.

While it isn’t entirely accurate to say, “in recent years”, as the U.S. has been engaged in a multitude of proxy wars for a very long time (Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan, etc.), things have been accelerated due to the Bush Doctrine. The Doctrine, which is not an actual Doctrine, but a collection of policies, will be expanded upon in the second section of this dissertation. In addition, this research will also focus on examples of the aforementioned Bush-Doctrine-influenced policies or actions under Obama (in chapter 3) and Trump (in chapter 4). It is important to note, that, due to the recent nature of this study, it is possible for things to be out of date or missing certain pieces of information, especially in chapter 4. This is inevitable, as there are constant updates to U.S. foreign policy actions are always occurring, a good example of this being the assassination of general Qasem Soleimani during the Trump administration, and the subsequent media flurry. Lastly, this work will also compare similar policies under both Trump and Obama, such as the drone program.

It is important to note that this dissertation will be unique not because it creates new research; indeed, U.S. foreign policy has been evaluated ad nauseam. This dissertation shall amalgamate research and data, both older and very recent, to draw conclusions and, explore the consequences of the effects of recent U.S. foreign policy, both to those on the receiving end of it and the U.S.’s relationships with her allies, as well as a detailed breakdown of such policies to a concise degree that is not, to the author’s knowledge, found in any other publication. This work will be something unique in that aims to demonstrate clear and concrete connections between Bush-era policy and policy of the Obama and Trump administrations.

* 1. **Significance of the dissertation/study**

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First, although, as previously mentioned, a significant amount of research has been done regarding U.S. foreign policy, there is (comparatively) a relatively small amount regarding the Bush Doctrine, specifically. Thus, it is fair to state that concise information regarding the Bush Doctrine, and the extent at which it can be tied to Obama and Trump-era policies, is relevant.

Secondly, this specific sort of structure, where the Bush-Doctrine influenced policies of the past decade or so are compared, contrasted, and evaluated between the two latest presidents, does not exist. Thus, such a study will assist in more easily and directly drawing parallels between the policies of the presidents, how they impact peoples around the world, and by what factors they were influenced.

Thirdly, because of the constantly evolving nature of current U.S. foreign policy discourse, and how it is a hot topic of media discussion, as will be made abundantly clear in later chapters. Any research that can demonstrate ties between current U.S. foreign policies and the sparsely-discussed Bush Doctrine, especially present-day ones (like a potential war with Iran) is also highly relevant in today’s world, especially when one considers that mainstream U.S. news sources, like CNN or Fox News, have very significant biases that are apparent at face value, and the “whole story” is not always told.

* 1. **Research Questions and Research Objective**

The primary research question will be. “How and to what extent has the Bush Doctrine shaped the foreign policy of the US over the post-Bush administrations”?

The research objective will be to expand and make concrete connections (if they exist) to the Bush Doctrine in the context of the past two administrations.

There will also be several, “sub-questions” that will be covered in this dissertation. There are 3 of these, and they are as follows: “What have the US and her allies done, and how do these actions fall under Bush Doctrine principles”; “What have the effects of US foreign policy been, on both the countries being directly influenced, and the response of allies who have been adversarial to these actions”; And lastly, “when data is permitting, what has been the US public’s opinion on these various aforementioned foreign policy issues?”

Through these questions/sub-questions, and the research objective, the author hopes to fully explore the extent of Doctrinal influence over the past two administrations.

* 1. **Methodology, Approach, and Structure**

The methodology for this dissertation will be based upon several types of approaches –

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mainly, that of comparative case study, and the two secondary approaches will come from two fields of international relations – Structuralism, or “Neo-realism”, and Neo-Marxism.

Comparative case study is simply the comparison of similarities and differences between two or more cases, in the scope of a similar/the same idea or concept. Considering the nature of this work will be to espouse the rhetoric, doctrinal connections, and policy behind the foreign policies of two presidents, then compare and contrast them at the end with an extended conclusion/comparison section, this is an appropriate methodological approach for this body of work. Of special note is that several cases which will not be covered in the main text shall be covered in the compare and contrast section as well – that of the African Shadow Wars, Cuba, and Venezuela. In addition, while all cases from the main body of work shall be covered, not all cases will be fully analyzed under both presidents. The additional cases are being covered due to the embodiment of core doctrinal principles, precluding their inclusion, but either not having enough information for a full section, a lack of media/journalistic coverage, or a combination thereof.

Structuralism, Structural Realism, or Neo-Realism essentially asserts that war, or power, is the most important component in international relations, and that war is a possibility at any time. It was first articulated by Kenneth Waltz in 1975 and 1979. Because the stated nature of this work is to explore the Bush Doctrine, which is itself a more aggressive and war-like take on U.S. foreign policy, as well as to explore connected policies and conflicts that were influenced by it1, Structuralism is adopted as a conceptual-methodological framework for this research.

Neo-Marxism is essentially the application of some Marxist principles to contemporary politics. Neo-Marxism acknowledges that Socialist revolution is not necessarily inevitable, and that capitalism does provide some freedoms for those that are under capitalist systems. However, it retains the classical Marxist notion that humans are unequal, and that inequality is rampant and impossible to avoid. In addition, states are classified by exploiters and the exploited, the Global North and South respectively.2 What is not important is whether or not a country is an authoritarian state, or a liberal democracy, but the interests of the rich state or group of states in question3. Because the nature of this work will be to explore the power dynamic of a Global North country and the effects of its foreign policy on various countries of the Global South, a Neo-Marxist perspective is both an appropriate and necessary method of approach for this work.

1. Timothy McKeown, *Neorealism* (Oxford Bibliographies, last modified 28/04/2014)
2. Dmitrii Suslov, *Rise of Neo-Marxism* (Coursera.org, accessed 31/03/2020)
3. Ibid

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In addition, several methods of analysis will be used in this work. The methods being used will be event analysis, as well as discourse analysis.

Event analysis will be used because different historical and current events are being looked at and evaluated in comparison to others. This is why event analysis is one appropriate method of analysis.

The second will be discourse analysis. This will be used because this work will be focusing, in part, on interactions between actors, sometimes referencing government or inter-government documents, as well as different social interactions between countries (e.g., the Libyan citizens’ response to the Libyan Intervention). In addition, because different polls, articles, books, scholarly resources, and other information will be analyzed, but without the requisite to software and special methods to claim something such as content analysis, the content and events must be analyzed upon their own merit, by comparing the implicit and explicit meanings of discourse between various actors and the publications of various organizations. This is why discourse analysis is both an appropriate and necessary method of analysis.

Lastly, the general structure, which will be maintained throughout the chapters focusing on policies and incidents of the Trump and Obama administrations will be as follows – the naming of the event and a brief introduction, what happened during said event during respective presidencies, the effects on the population, any requisite polling data from the American public on the matter, and the connections to the Bush Doctrine/conclusion. This will both accomplish all stated research questions and sub-questions, maintain a structure that is within the scope of the objective, as well as establish a consistent and easy-to-follow structure for the work.

**1.4 Literature Review**

**1.4.0 – Details**

Although touched upon briefly, the literature review will consist of a combination of scholarly articles and full-length books. This is due to the fact that there are such a plethora of high-quality scholarly articles and pieces written about my topic, as well as quality journalistic reporting (such as that on websites like The Guardian). This is why reviewing solely books and scholarly articles will not be sufficient, or even advisable, in the case of this dissertation.

Therefore, larger publications will be used primarily when they contain more in-depth or abstract information, such as a deep policy analysis, or on something such as the Bush Doctrine

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itself. This is beneficial because it not only takes advantage of news reporters who have people on the ground or who have access to primary sources, but it leaves broader, more philosophical or doctrinal questions in the hands of the experts.

**1.4.1 – The Economic Roots of U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan**

*The Economic Roots of U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan*, by K. T. Thomas, illustrates, in an excellent way, that the U.S. is more than willing to ignore human rights abuses when it suits them for financial reasons, and that the root of this conflict not only gave rise to a more aggressive brand of foreign policy after the 9/11 attacks (the titular doctrine) in a unilateral way, despite creating their own problems themselves. Thomas’s essay provides a clear and accurate picture of reasons for the invasion of Afghanistan, which include previous regional tensions4, as well as a clear, economic motivator. It is an excellent essay for understanding the conflict in Afghanistan. Which is, as Thomas puts it, “For the US, Central Asian oil and gas could be transported…only through Afghanistan. The US war on terror is nothing but an ideological justification for its aggressive interference in Afghanistan5”.

**1.4.2 The Libya Intervention (2011): Neither Lawful, nor Successful**

Patrick Terry’s essay is an excellent expose on how the Libya intervention was not only a violation of international law, by the UN’s own accords, but also arguably made the situation in Libya even worse. Despite not being entirely unilateral, it does display some other tenants of the Bush Doctrine, to be discussed later6.

Terry essentially makes the case that, despite Gaddafi being a “bad guy”, he wasn’t guilty of many of the worst allegations levied against him, and the situation in Libya deteriorated even further after the intervention7.

In the essay, Terry demonstrates how the Libyan Intervention was less about concern for human rights, and more about deposing someone that the global North found distasteful, and is

1. K.T. Thomas, *The Economic Roots of U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan* (Proceedings of the Indian History of Congress, Vol. 68, Pt.2, 2007) pp. 1215
2. Thomas, 1221.
3. Patrick CR Terry, *The Libya Intervention (2011): Neither Lawful, Nor Successful* (The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa, Vol. 48, No. 2, July 2015) pp. 163
4. Terry, 164-177.

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not only an example of Western hypocrisy8, but Bush Doctrine mentality.

**1.4.3 – Understanding the Bush Doctrine: Psychology and Strategy in an Age of Terrorism**

*Understanding the Bush Doctrine,* edited by Stanley Renshon and Peter Suedfeld, is a collection of chapters/essays by various different authors, numbering 13 in total. It is a very useful compendium for, as the title says, understanding the underlying principles behind the Doctrine and things associated with it, such as the future of the Doctrine in U.S. foreign policy, and if the Doctrine was a change in foreign policy, or just a continuation, among other things.

The author has used this work, not only to identify the 5 key Bush Doctrine principles9, (which are the basis for the book, and will be explored more in-depth later), but also for analyzing specific doctrinal aspects for further case study and evaluation, such as the tenant of pre-emptive war, or whether or not the Bush Doctrine will die out soon.

All in all, *Understanding The Bush Doctrine* is a tremendously helpful piece of literature, because not only are opinions that could be considered on both sides of the spectrum present (for example, Jack Levy, one of the contributors seems to be a bit more anti-Doctrine than Renshon, who is not “supportive” of it, but defends it more), but the central tenants itself are reviewed in great detail from multiple perspectives. Such a tome is crucial to understanding the Doctrine itself and the debates surrounding it, and has been (and will be) an invaluable resource for future research and reading.

**1.4.4 Obama’s Legacy on Israel/Palestine**

In this excellent piece by Josh Ruebner, the false promises of the Obama administration are exposed, and a picture is painted of how what looked like a promising start/solution to the Israel/Palestine debacle ended in more unilateral and decidedly Israel-sided foreign policy.

Ruebner points out that while Obama initially seemed like a different kind of politician, one that would take such a one-sided position on the Israel-Palestine issue as had his predecessors. In his words, Obama’s tarnished legacy is that of enabling Israel’s right-wing prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu10.

1. Terry, 179-180
2. Stanley Renshon, Peter Suedfeld, *Understanding the Bush Doctrine: Psychology and Strategy in the Age of Terrorism* (Taylor and Francis Group, 2007) pp. ix
3. Josh Ruebner, *Obama’s Legacy on Israel/Palestine* (Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 46, No. 1, Autumn 2016) pp. 50-51

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Ruebner goes over several examples of this in the essay, such as how the Obama administration enabled Israeli abuses of Palestinian human rights11.

Overall, this article serves as a great template for the start of research on the topic of Israel/Palestine under Obama, and dispels a popular myth that Obama was a man with few scandals and a great presidency.

**1.4.5 Obama at War: Congress and the Imperial Presidency**

In *Obama at War: Congress and the Imperial Presidency*, by Ryan C. Hendrikson, Obama’s “imperialist” presidency is discussed. A variety of cases, including the drone campaign in Pakistan/Yemen, troop surges in Afghanistan, and Obama’s anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean are evaluated12. Hendrikson makes several key observations through these evaluations that are vital to this work.

First, the notion that Obama, despite campaign trail rhetoric, has continued to protect the power of the executive branch to determine if U.S. military forces will be used abroad13. The second is that, “Congress’s abdication of its constitutional war powers to the president is the norm, which occurs regardless of political party14”.

This has several meaningful implications for this work, which will be highlighted in later chapters. Some of the major topics covered by Hendrikson include troop surges in Afghanistan, and Obama’s escalation of the drone program and the legality question regarding it.

Overall, the book explores a variety of policies under Obama, including some more unorthodox ones in the mainstream discourse, such as that of Obama’s war in Africa or his campaign against Somalian pirates. The book demonstrates quite succinctly that there is not only significant disagreement between scholars and among the international community regarding Obama’s policies (emphasizing Unilateralism), but pushes home the “imperialism” theme that appears over and over in U.S. foreign policy discourse.

**1.4.6 Yemen’s Humanitarian Disaster: Halting the Famine Threat**

In this article/pamphlet by Theodore Karasik and Giorgio Cafiero, the extent of the current man-made Yemeni crisis involving the US and Saudi governments is discussed, including the

1. Ruebner, 52-56
2. Ryan C. Hendrikson, *Obama at War: Congress and the Imperial Presidency* (The University Press of Kentucky, 2015) pp.3-6
3. Hendrikson, pp.3
4. Ibid

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current widespread famine15. Some of the issues discussed are the broken Yemeni economy, the blockade of the main Yemeni port, and how the US response under the Trump administration has significantly worsened the situation16. The article, while short, succinctly explains the recent history of the US towards Yemen. The general evaluation is that, while the US response during the Obama years was not great, it was not a full-on enabling of Saudi Arabia, and how the current US response has exacerbated the situation and caused the current humanitarian crisis17. Policy recommendations are included at the end.

Overall, the article is a short, yet concise and useful summary of the current Yemeni situation, that explores one of the premiere foreign policy issues of the Trump era in relative depth.

**1.4.7 Trump, Israel, and the American Jewish Community**

In this short paper by the Institute for National Security Studies’s Ari Heistein, the dichotomy between the Trump administration’s relationship between Israel, and between the American Jewish community is explored. Essentially, because the Trump admin primarily appeals to the Right wing in Israel, this puts the administration, through its rhetoric and actions, at odds with the U.S. Jewish community, which is significantly more liberal, non-Orthodox, and un-supportive of Israeli policy than in the past18.

While another short article that is more akin to an editorial in length, it provides an interesting look at the split between Jews in Israel and the US, and how Trump- era policies, while appealing to the Israeli government (such as the moving of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem), appears to appeal less to the Jewish community at large.

**1.4.8 Under Donald Trump, Drone Strikes Far Exceed Obama’s Numbers**

In this article from the Chicago Sun Times, it is pointed out how the controversial drone war under the Obama administration (which was already greater in magnitude than under the Bush administration19) was escalated even further under the Trump administration. While this is

1. Theodore Karasik, Giorgio Cafiero, *Yemen’s Humanitarian Disaster: Halting the Famine Threat,* (Middle East Institute, Oct. 2017)
2. Karasik, Cafiero, pp. 3-8
3. Karasik, Cafiero, pp. 4-8
4. Ari Heistein, *Trump, Israel, and the American Jewish Community* (Institute for National Security Studies, 19/01/2017) pp. 1-3
5. Jessica Purkiss, Jack Serle, *Obama’s Covert Drone War in Numbers: Ten Times More Strikes Than Bush* (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 17/01/2017)

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not the only article on the subject, it points out some simple numbers, such as 238 strikes in the first two years of Trump’s presidency in Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan, as opposed to 186 during the first two years of Obama’s20. In addition, surges of strikes in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq have surged, according to experts21. The author herself performs a brief political analysis on why, as well as coverage of the issue, but the point is that the drone wars are continuing to escalate post-Bush era, regardless of the administration.

**1.4.9 Donald Trump is Cutting the Knot with Afghanistan**

In a financial times article, the Trump administration’s parallels with the Obama administration’s are drawn, and the inability to find a satisfactory regional peace deal are highlighted. The author points out how the Taliban, after previous peace talks were discussed, later resumed attacking Kabul, the capitol of Afghanistan, and how the Taliban, in fact, are in the position of power here22. Another article from Al-Jazeera points out how the Taliban still has significant presence in districts comprising over 40% of the country23.

The picture that is painted is one where U.S. negotiations in the Trump era, much as they did in the Obama era, are continuing to fail, and how violence still plagues the country 19 years after the initial invasion. This article, while not unique, continues to paint the same picture as so many others, namely, that the U.S. war in Afghanistan may not end any time soon, and that peace talks are continuing to advance unsuccessfully, resulting in continuous economic turmoil and civilian and military casualties.

**1.4.10 Afterthoughts**

While the books, scholarly articles, and news articles presented here are not exhaustive, they represent major parts of the issues that will be addressed by this work, such as the conflicts in Yemen, Israel, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc. They are meant to set a general tone for what is to come, and will be expanded upon in later chapters dealing with administration-specific policies and responses.

**1.5.0 Primary Sources Evaluation**

As has been addressed above, books will play less of a role in this dissertation, due to the

1. S.E. Cupp *Under Donald Trump, Drone Strikes Far Exceed Obama’s Numbers* (Chicago Sun Times, 08/05/2019)
2. Ibid
3. Edward Luce, *Donald Trump is Cutting the Knot with Afghanistan* (Financial Times, 05/03/2020)
4. Alia Chughtai *Afghanistan: Who Controls What* (Al-Jazeera, 24/06/2019)

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fact that 1) There aren’t as many books on Trump’s presidency, as it is still ongoing/new; there is far more news reporting on it, and 2) Because there is a large quantity of scholarly articles written about the Obama administration’s foreign policy and an equal amount of quality journalism, one can easily make a case with reliable sources without poring over huge tomes to do so. The same logic can be applied to primary sources.

**1.5.1 Personal Quotes/Video**

These primary sources are things that Obama, Trump, Bush, or whatever other relevant persons have said themselves. An example of this would be a YouTube video of Obama saying he would pull troops out of Iraq by the end of 2011, or when Trump conceded that the US destabilized the Middle East and called the Middle East interventions, “stupid”, and that we need to rebuild domestic infrastructure (thus implying that we should not be in the Middle East and should be improving the situation in the U.S.)24.

**1.5.2 Documents/Speeches**

These primary sources are those that come directly from the White House themselves, or leaked documents/interviews. These would include any official White House Statement (for example, the January White House statements on Iran sanctions) or the leaked Afghanistan paper interviews/document database25. It should be noted that there can be some overlap between these documents and “personal quotes”, making the two categories not totally mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, these are some of the most valuable primary sources, because they take information from those who were “on the ground” or actually present at whatever event.

**1.5.3 Polls/Statistics**

Self-explanatory; any polling, statistics, or numbers otherwise taken by people who asked participants of an event or people’s opinions. These include any opinion polls on the popularity of wars, something like the civilian death rate of drone strikes, or statistics from the Global Terrorism Index.

**Structure of the Paper**

After a thorough literature review and explanation of objectives, the rest of the

1. CNN correspondents, *Trump: We’ve Destabilized the Middle East and…* (YouTube, “CNN”, published 15/07/2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBD9cDn52w8>)
2. Craig Whitlock, Leslie Shapiro, Armand, Emamdjomeh , *A Secret History of the War* (Washington Post, 09/12/2019)

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dissertation shall be divided into 6 sections. Section 2 will be regarding the Bush Doctrine, Section 3 will be regarding relevant Obama-era policies, Section 4 will be regarding relevant Trump-era policies, and section shall be an extended conclusion, including a compare-and-contrast section between previously discussed and undiscussed cases, a summary of findings, recommendations, and contributions to existing research.

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**Chapter II: The Bush Doctrine: Original Meaning and Overview**

The Bush Doctrine, called as such after the president under whom this set of policies arose in force (George W. Bush, Jr.). The Bush Doctrine is not a doctrine in the sense that it is an iron-clad set of official rules and policies, codified in U.S. law; rather, it is a set of loose but interconnected ideas that Bush used to shape U.S. foreign policy following the September 11th attacks on the U.S. It has been referred to as, “one of the most consequential statements of national security policy in contemporary American history 26”, and this is an accurate statement. In this chapter, the basis for this Doctrine will be established, whether it was through speeches or official documents from Bush administration members, and then the principles laid out in Peter Suedfeld’s and Stanley Renshon’s *Understanding the Bush Doctrine* shall be laid out and evaluated.

**2.1.0 The Basis**

To understand where the Bush Doctrine came from, it is important to not only look at the build-up, policy and rhetoric-wise, but statements put out by officials leading up to, at the time of, and shortly after 9/11. This section shall attempt to do just that.

The principles, as will be addressed below, have several underlying principles, rooted in realism. They all have some connection, or combination of statements regarding alliances, power, or democracy. As such, one would expect official statements, memos, etc., to reflect such things. And this is exactly what one finds.

For example, in Bush’s first speech after 9/11, while short and concise, the main point was clear enough: that the US would immediately go after those involved27. Another clip, broadcasted on NBC on 9/11, Bush contrasts the power dynamic, and paints it as “us vs. the terrorists”, exemplifying America’s strength. He says that America was attacked because it is the, “brightest beacon of freedom28” in the world. He highlights the strength of the US, both domestically and militarily. To protect US citizens at home and around the world from further attacks29. Interestingly enough, he also highlights how the economy is still going strong.

1. Renshon, Suedfeld, Op. cit., pp. ix
2. Telegraph correspondents, *George W Bush Delivers his First Speech after 9/11* (The Telegraph, published 05/09/2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QP1K84iRZPo>)
3. NBC correspondents, *George W Bush’s Oval office Speech on 9/11* (NBC News, published 12/09/2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/now/video/from-the-archives-george-w-bush-s-oval-office-speech-on-9-11-68719685777>)
4. Ibid.

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Bush makes it clear that the search is underway for those who committed the acts, and that “no distinction will be made between the terrorists that committed these acts, and those who harbor them30”. As will be addressed below, this statement is integral to the Bush Doctrine. The last section of the speech is mostly full of high-browed rhetoric, such as America going forward to defend freedom and justice, as well as religious rhetoric.

Now, one might view this as simply a normal speech after a domestic terrorist attack. After all, the author clearly does not condone terrorism or civilian deaths, and it is fairly normal for a leader to try and keep the morale of those under him or her high after such an incident. However, when one considers the revelations addressed above regarding the economic roots of the intervention in Afghanistan, as well as the official government memo in August of 2001, which detailed that the CIA had strong suspicions that Osama bin laden would attack within the US31. This combined with reports from the 9/11 commission report that the US had a significant amount of information that something would happen, as far as a terrorist attack32, as well as the poignant observations from a 2003 Guardian article that not only was there no quick response to the hijackers themselves and the US government had ignored a significant amount of pre-attack indicators, but several key members of Bush’s cabinet had accepted a plan (entitled “Rebuilding America’s Defenses”) drawn up by the Project for the New American Century, a neoconservative think tank33. This report points out that the US government had plans for military intervention in the gulf states, whether or not Hussein was in power, and was drawn up in 200034. A particularly damning quote from the plan, as indicated by the article’s author, is, “…while the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein35”.

While the author is not a conspiracy theorist, the aforementioned evidence provided, both from primary sources and credible secondary sources paints a picture of military intervention and the formation of the Bush doctrine and subsequent policies being in spite of 9/11, not because of

1. Ibid.
2. Wikimedia contributors, *CIA Memo: Bin Laden Determined to Strike Inside the US* ( original document 06/08/2001, accessed 26/04/2020,<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CIA_Memo.JPG>)
3. Various authors, *9/11 Commission Report* ( 22/07/2004, pp.254-260, <https://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>)
4. Michael Meacher, *This War on terrorism is Bogus* (The Guardian, 06/09/2003)
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

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it. The Bush administration and the US government before Bush had demonstrable interest in the region, and had already considered action there. 9/11 can therefore be painted as an “excuse”, or vessel, of sorts to implement the Bush Doctrine, which is the proverbial arm behind the sword that is/was the US military.

Now that the basis has been explored, the principles themselves shall be examined and evaluated.

**2.2.0 Explaining the Principles of the Doctrine**

The Doctrine has several unifying principles, according to Suedfeld’s and Renshon’s *Understanding the Bush Doctrine*. This paper is known for the clear and concise manner in which it explains and characterizes the doctrine, and later on in the chapter, examples regarding each of these core principles shall be presented. These principles are as follows.

The first is, “American Pre-Eminence”, which is the reality that America is the most powerful country in the world, but that power has its limits.36

The second is, “Assertive Realism”, the judgement that, when it comes to catastrophic terrorism, the best defense is a good offense. This includes (when necessary) the use of pre-emption and preventative war.37

The third is, “Strategic Stand-Apart Alliances”. This is the understanding that allies are supporters to varying degrees, and all have their own interests. These interests won’t necessarily coincide with U.S. interests on a particular matter. In addition, these allies also have varying levels of commitment to U.S. national security interests (the most important point in this principle). 38

The fourth is, “The New Internationalism: Selective Multilateralism”, which essentially states that existing international institutions are not presently structured with U.S. national security interests in mind, and must be reformed if they are ever capable of being depended upon. 39  
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36. Suedfeld, Renshon, Op. cit., pp. ix

37.Ibid

38. Ibid

39. Ibid

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The final one is, “Democratic Transformation”. As is stated in the book, this is where the Doctrine uses a new twist to solve old problems. This is debatable, but it essentially says that while Bush is not the first to want to make the world safe for democracy, he is the first to explicitly voice the strategy of democracy as a tool to transform and/or neutralize dangerous countries. 39

This chapter, however, will not be a review of Renshon and Suedfeld’s book. Instead, it will take this flexible framework’s core principles, give relevant examples from the Trump and Obama eras, and expand upon them slightly, as a means of demonstrating the cursorial link between Bush, Trump, and Obama-era policies. These examples, among others, will be expanded upon in greater detail in their respective chapters.

Many of these principles have overlap. The first one, American Pre-Eminence, is one of those. While the authors quantify this with American power having limits, it is the opinion of the author that, especially in this day and age, those limits are not so clearly defined. This is especially true when one considers that the U.S. acts as if it is the “world police” and that it is above the law in many respects. The most straightforward example of this would be something like the Iraq War, but a more recent, and perhaps interesting example is the U.S. pulling out of the Human Rights Council in 2018. This was done due to the UNHRC’s hostile attitude towards Israel (in the words of the UN ambassador at the time from the U.S., Nikki Haley), and how the UNHRC has many human rights abusers on the council, like Venezuela, Cuba, and China40.

This is, however, an unusual criticism from the U.S., considering it has itself long been accused of a multitude of human rights’ abuses, but also backs such countries as well, like Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Israel was itself the reason for the dispute, them being chastised for their treatment of the situation with Palestinians41. This example, therefore, exemplifies the first principle, because the U.S., despite being apparently guilty (in greater scope, arguably) of the same sorts of abuses, takes a “moral high ground” over the other Council, pulling out without any sorts of consequences whatsoever. This is a move that is only possible because of the perceived power of the U.S.

39. Ibid.

40. BBC contributor(s), *US Quits ‘Biased’ Human Rights Council* (BBC, 20/06/2018)

41. Ibid.

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The second principle, Assertive realism, is straightforward. The best defense is a good offense. Again, this could be exemplified by the War in Iraq. While the aforementioned war is the best example in the past two decades, another recent example would be the Trump administration’s posturing of war with Iran. From the assassination of Qassem Soleimani to threatening the destruction of cultural sites in Iran42, despite the fact that Iran poses no imminent threat to the U.S. militarily. The motivation for this posturing is clear; the U.S. views certain Middle Eastern countries like Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, etc., as threats, and potential spots for terrorism, and would like to defeat or destroy any perceived threats, credible or not, before they may strike the U.S. The same rhetoric is even being used, such as the Trump administration saying Iran and Soleimani were imminent threats to the U.S.43, much the same way the Bush administration argued that Saddam Hussein and Iraq were imminent threats back in the early 2000’s.44 Neither had any concrete evidence. These examples, therefore, exemplify the second principle.

The third principle, strategic stand-apart alliances, follows the notion that the U.S. isn’t afraid to break from allies when it doesn’t suit them. There are myriad examples of this. The aforementioned instance of the U.S. leaving the UNHRC. The US-NATO invasion of Libya under the Obama administration, which was certainly championed the most by the U.S. The Trump admin’s posturing with Iran. Nearly anything concerning the U.S. reaction to the Israel-Palestine conflict. This principle even has domestic examples, such as the state of U.S. healthcare compared to other developed countries.

Where the author would break from Renshon and Suedfeld in the third principle is that this principle doesn’t only apply to national security interests, as in the context of the aforementioned authors’ book. Any issue that the U.S. sees its allies as “out of line” on, or where the U.S. is viewed internally as “correct”, the concerns of its allies are invalidated. This principle is also tied to an idea of American supremacy, i.e., the way the U.S. does it is the correct way by default. If someone doesn’t like it, it’s their problem.

The fourth principle, New Internationalism: Selective Multilateralism, is quite similar to

42. Dennis Romero, Yuliya Talmazan, *Trump Threatens Attack on 52 Sites if Iran retaliates for Soleimani Killing* (NBCNews, 05/01/2020)

43. Lara Selegman, Robbie Gramer, *Trump Team Sends Muddled Message on Iran* (ForeignPolicy, 13/01/2020)

44. Maura Reynolds, *Bush Calls Iraq Imminent Threat* (LA Times, 29/01/2003)

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the third principle. Existing international institutions are unreliable and must be reformed if they are to be trusted. The underlying principle of only a tepid trust for allies and their institutions when it serves U.S. interests is present in both principles.

And the examples for this one are also similar. Ignoring the UN/UNHRC response to criticisms of Israel; pulling out of the Paris Climate Accords; the Wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya; posturing with Iran, etc. The U.S. clearly holds its own word over that of allies, whether or not outside observers would consider the course of action to be “just” or “wise”. Simply put, the US government is of the opinion that it knows its own interests best. Whether or not it does is not the point.

The fifth and final principle, “Democratic Transformation”, is the rhetoric of using Democracy as a tool to transform countries that are hostile to Democracies. Alternatively, this can be taken to mean, “using the veneer of Democracy to make non-compliant countries do what the U.S. wants them to do/exploit them for their resources”. This claim, while bold, has a significant amount of empirical evidence to back it up. Much of it, however, comes from the 20th century, such as the Latin American banana republics45, or the U.S.-UK coup of Iran in 195346. There are still more recent examples, such as the war in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan, the U.S. government support of the coup in Bolivia47, etc.

This principle is special, insofar as that it requires no evidence of anything for it to be utilized. The U.S. may simply claim that the government in question is un-Democratic or some other sort of foul play is going on, and then use that as a justification to invade the country, depose a leader, etc. It is the author’s opinion that this principle is the most dangerous one of the Doctrine.

**Conclusion**

These are the basic principles of the Bush Doctrine and some examples, both past and contemporary. While not all of them will be explored in detail, due to the stated focus of this dissertation, the general idea is the same, and they all demonstrate the same thing – that the U.S. has a history of doing the things that it is currently doing. Coups, invasions, disregarding other

45. Rachel Rozak, *The Truth Behind Banana Republic*, (Panoramas Scholarly Platform, 13/03/2017)

46. History.com editors, *CIA Assisted Coup Overthrows Government of Iran*, (13/11/2009)

47. Beyza Binnur Domez, *Morales: US Aid to Bolivia in 2020 Proves Role in Coup* (Anadolu Agency, 08/01/2020)

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countries’ opinions (or even the opinion of entire international organizations) is nothing new to the U.S. It was not new to the administrations of Bush, Obama, or Trump – what made the Bush administration special is how they refined these already existing but unwritten concepts to a tool that could be used to justify more “active” U.S. participation in the world, with less forms of recourse for the international community. This is the framework for how the Bush Doctrine is simply an extension and refinement of previous U.S.; foreign policy, and how the foreign policies of both Trump and Obama are extensions of Bush-era policy as well. In the following sections regarding Obama and Trump-era policies, specific and relevant policies, some of which have already been mentioned, will be discussed in detail, with relevant ties back to the Bush Doctrine.

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**Chapter III: Obama-era policy, or, The Obama Doctrine: Continuation of the Bush Doctrine**

As has been previously alluded to, Obama-era policy, while not exactly the same as that of the Bush era, has some striking similarities, especially regarding the parallels in execution of foreign policy.

As a way of exemplifying this, the author shall focus on a variety of relevant, major Obama-era cases that demonstrate this assertion accurately. The cases that shall be examined, in no particular order of scale or relevance, are the Libyan Intervention, Obama on Iraq and Afghanistan, Israel under Obama, the drone program under Obama, Obama on Pakistan, and Obama on Yemen. This list encompasses most, if not all, of what would be considered the major foreign policy endeavors under Obama. The structure of exposition will include the event, what happened, the effect on the population, any polling data, and the connection to the Bush Doctrine. All references to principles will be based on the principles as discussed above.

**3.1.0 – The Libyan Intervention**

The Libyan Intervention refers to the intervention, orchestrated by NATO and the US, between March and October of 2011, in which the government of Muammar Gaddafi was deposed, and replaced with the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC)40. A case can be made that the situation became worse in Libya post-intervention, with the country degenerating back into violence afterwards, as will be made here.

**3.1.1 – What Happened**

The Arab Spring protests spread to Libya in February of 2011. The Gaddafi administration disliked these protests, and cracked down on the protestors. Following these actions, on 26 February 2011, the UN passed resolution 1970, demanding an end to this crackdown41. Libya was suspended from the Human Rights Council, the NTC was recognized as the legitimate government by France on March 10th (and later by other countries), and on March 17th, Resolution 1973 was passed, 10-042. 5 countries abstained. This resolution imposed a no-fly zone over Libya, reconfirmed an arms embargo passed with Resolution 1970, and on March 19-20, the US and France initiated use of force, which marked the true start of the physical

40. Terry, Op. cit., 179.

41. Terry, 164.

42. Terry, 165.

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intervention in Libya43. By the end of March, NATO member states had already performed several hundred air strikes and sorties in Libya, and the campaign only ramped up in intensity, with other non-NATO members joining, such as Sweden or the UAE44. Military operations continued until October, when the NTC was recognized by over 100 countries as the legitimate governmental apparatus of Libya. Gaddafi was subsequently killed, and the military campaign ended on October 31st. Terry points out in his work that by the end, NATO claimed to have executed over 26,000 sorties in Libya45. Afterwards, the country promptly degenerated into violence, with random militias taking over parts of the country in 2012, and many embassies leaving by 201446.

**3.1.2 Effects on Population**

The effects on the Libyan population were decidedly negative, both during and after the conflict, despite the pre-conflict conditions that led to it in the first place.

The NATO intervention, which was originally done on a humanitarian basis, was not consistent with these principles during the intervention. As Terry crucially points out, a large portion of the country supported Gaddafi, roughly 50%47, were not considered to be part of the civilian population to be protected, even if they were civilians as a matter of fact48. In addition, because NATO moved to supporting a side in an internal civil war by supporting the rebels’ decision to reject all terms of a ceasefire proposed by the Gaddafi administration49, which is both a violation of international and contrary to their originally stated aim of providing humanitarian relief against an oppressive government, it can be further extrapolated that any effects on any pro-Gaddafi supporters would not have been positive, nor on the population as a whole, due to the UN’s policy shift.

After the war, things became markedly worse as well. There are still internal conflicts

43. Ibid.

44. Terry, 166.

45. Ibid.

46. Terry, 179.

47. Terry, 172.

48. Terry, 173.

49. Terry, 174.

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occurring in Libya, such as the current conflict between the Libyan National Army and the UN-sponsored Government of National Accord50. Humanitarian missions have been outlawed51, and migrants live in terrible conditions, with many dying or being at risk from constant violence52. The country is in complete disarray, and is in complete political turmoil, with rebels and militia groups controlling ports and beaches, and carrying out torture and extra-judicial killings at will and with impunity53. In addition, there are reports of slave markets in Libya from several news sources, such as Reuters54, the BBC55, and NPR56, among others. It is clear from the testimony of migrants, citizens, and outside evaluation by experts of the conditions, that the results have been negative on the civilian population.

**3.1.3 – Polling Data**

Three sources were used in the acquisition of polling data, with the overall consensus edging towards the American public’s weariness towards the intervention at the time, and disapproval afterwards. A 2011 Gallup Poll found that 47% of Americans approved of intervention/action, while 37% disapproved (with the remainder having no opinion). These numbers in the Gallup poll were lower than approval towards action for other countries, such as Kosovo or Iraq57.Alternatively, a Pew Research Poll that occurred at roughly the same time found the opposite result, with 27-63% against the US doing something about the fighting in Libya58. The same poll found that while 51-40% favor increasing sanctions, 44-45% were

50. Michael Neu, Robin Dunford, *Libya: Ongoing Atrocities Reveal the Trouble with International Military Intervention* ( The Conversation, 16/08/2019)

51. Ibid.

52. James Reinl, *Libya Attack Revives Calls for Closing Migrant Detention Centres* (Al Jazeera, 04/07/2019)

53. Stephanie Nebehay, *Executions, Torture, and Slave Markets Persist in Libya: UN* (Reuters, 21/03/2018)

54. Ibid.

55. BBC Contributors, *Libya Migrant Slave Market Footage Sparks Outrage* (The BBC, 18/11/2017)

56. Ruth Sherlock, Lama Al-Arian, *Migrants Captured in Libya Say They End up Sold as Slaves* (NPR, 21/03/2018)

57. Jeffery Jones, *Americans Approve of Military Action Against Libya, 47% to 37%* (Gallup, 22/03/2011)

58. Pew Research Contributor(s), *Public Wary of Military Intervention in Libya* (Pew Research Center, 14/03/2011)

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against enforcing the no-fly zone passed by Resolution 1973, 23-69% against sending arms to anti-government groups, 16-77% against bombing Libyan air defenses, and 13-82% against sending troops to Libya59.

Lastly, data from PollingReport.com, an aggregator of various polls, shows that the public reaction post-Libya has been negative. For example, a 2015 CNN/ORC poll found that 38-58% disapproved of the way Hillary Clinton, the Secretary of State in the Obama administration, disapproved of the handling of the Benghazi terrorist attacks, with similar results being found in a 2014 CNN/ORC poll, as well as in a 2014 ABC/Washington Post Poll60. The majority of the Libya coverage after 2012 was regarding the Benghazi attacks, which were perceived negatively. In addition, PollingReport provided additional 2011 polls, such as from CBS (which found that, among all political affiliations, 37-49% disfavored involvement in Libya) or Fox News (which found that 38-56 were not confident that the new government would cooperate with the USA after Gaddafi’s death)61.

Overall, the data shows that in 2011, Americans’ reactions towards the intervention were lukewarm at best, with most of the data showing disapproval towards military actions. Post-intervention, most data shows disapproval of how the government handled the situation in Benghazi and in general with Libya.

**3.1.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The Libyan Intervention embodies the 1st (American Pre-Eminence), 2nd (Assertive Realism), and 5th (Democratic Transformation) principles of the Bush Doctrine. The US and NATO became involved in an internal Libyan conflict, which violated international law, in a way itself that did not improve the situation; in fact, the situation became worse afterwards. The intervention occurred due to the might of the NATO/US militaries compared to that of Libya (essentially, they did it because they could) in order to attempt to bring order and peace to a nation whose civilians were being harmed (directly embodying the 5th principle, this backfired shortly after, as demonstrated).

Overall, the Libya Intervention is a clear extension of Bush Doctrine principles, which had long-term negative effects for the civilians that persist to this day.

59. Ibid.

60. PollingReport.com contributors, *Libya* (Polling Report, various dates, accessed 11/04/2020)

61. Ibid.

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**3.2.0 Iraq and Afghanistan During the Obama Administration**

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which were started on 20/03/2003 and 07/10/2001 respectively, were part of the “War on terror”. Initially in response to the 9/11 attacks, the war in Iraq branched out due to the alleged danger Saddam Hussein posed to the US. While neither of these were started under the Obama administration, both persisted throughout, despite promises/intentions to the contrary. While one should note that there was a withdrawal from Iraq in 2011, troops were returned in 2014 (and they stayed in the area during the intermediate period). Both conflicts persist in some form through today.

The two conflicts are being grouped together due to their close proximity towards each other, enduring length, and similar reasoning/events for invasion. They should be highlighted, as they persist to this day, but as they were started under the Bush Administration, they shall not be explored at length as other events will be.

**3.2.1 What Happened**

The US had had some difficulties with the Taliban years prior to the invasion of Afghanistan in the early 90’s, trying to engage in deals to build a large oil pipeline with the Taliban acting as security, but failing. Thus, the area was already “ripe for regime change” before the invasion62, due to the present US administration’s dislike for the Taliban. The September 11 attacks were the excuse that the government needed, and on 07/10/2001, the U.S. and allies invaded Afghanistan in response to these attacks, in order to depose the Taliban and kill Osama bin Laden. Following the invasion, a lengthy war ensued that persists to this day.

The Iraq War, part of the same series, was done, according to the US Department of State, to, “Defeat a regime that developed and used WMD’s, harbored terrorists…, committed outrageous human rights abuses, and defied the just demands of the UN and the world…63”. In 2002, in response to the aforementioned allegations, the UN passed Resolution 1441, which basically stated that Iran comply with the Resolution or face consequences64. These two US Dept. of State memos present the reasoning as to why the invasion happened.

The legality of these wars under international law, while questionable, will not be debated at present.

62. Thomas, Op. cit., 1216-1220

63. Bureau of Public Affairs, *Winning The War on Terror* (US Dept. of State, 11/09/03)

64. US Dept. of State Archives, *UN Security Council Resolution 1441* (US Dept. of State, 25/02/2003)

26

During the Obama administration, troops levels in Iraq declined from around 150,000, down to 40,000 in 2011, until the full withdrawal in December 201165. While difficult to find an exact number of troops from 2014 onward, the best estimate is between 7-10,000, based on articles such as a 2014 BBC report of the US sending several thousand troops in an advisory role66, or a 2017 report placing the number of troops in Iraq at roughly 8,90067. This is on the back of inauguration promises to end the war in Iraq68, and on a war which destroyed the Iraqi country/economy, and left hundreds of thousands dead.

One can see a similar story in Afghanistan. Despite his promises to end the war by 201469. Several thousand troops still remained in Afghanistan in 2016 and through today. Thus, it can be said that what happened in the wars on terror under Obama were the drawing down of troops, accompanied by promises to end the wears, yet a marked persistence of them.

**3.2.2 Effects On Population**

The effects in Iraq have been disastrous. The power vacuum created by Saddam Hussein’s deposition and death arguably led to the rise of ISIS; roughly 200,000 civilians have been killed over the duration, with nearly 300,000 total deaths70. The invasion also destroyed the economy and de-stabilized the country even further, a problem compounded by historical mismanagement, corruption, and economy primarily based on petroleum71 72. The result was a predictably disastrous effect on the population that requires little research to discern.

65. Leo Shane III, *All US Troops Coming Home from Iraq by Year’s End* (Stars and Stripes, 21/10/2011)

66. BBC contributor(s), *Islamic State: Coalition Pledges More Troops for Iraq* (BBC, 08/12/2014)

67. Tara Copp, *26,000 US Troops Total in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, DoD Reports (*Military Times, 27/11/2017)

68. *Iraq Timeline* (White House Archives, 20/01/2009)

69. *Statement by the President on the End of the Combat Mission in Afghanistan* (White House Archives, 28/12/2014)

70. *Documented Civilian Deaths from Violence* (Iraqbodycount.org, constantly updating, accessed 12/04/2020)

71. Anthony Cordesman, *War and the Iraqi Economy: A Case Study* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 15/09/2015)

72. Saad Hasan, *What Happened to Iraq’s Economy Post US Invasion?* (TRT World, 10/05/2018)

27

In Afghanistan, the story is, again, a similar one. In the last 10 years, over 100,000 civilian casualties have been documented, with successive years reaching over 10,000 (with 2019 marking the 6th consecutive year73). In addition, the economy has been devastated; the foreign and overall investor rate has decreased dramatically (by 26% overall), with the lowest point in foreign investments occurring in 2018. Additionally, GDP per capita has shrank to just under $600, making Afghanistan among the poorest countries in the world74.

Therefore, it can be said to be very clear that the effect on the population of these wars, even under the Obama administration, have continued to be disastrous for the civilian population of Iraq and Afghanistan, despite campaign and inauguration promises ti withdraw troops and improve the situation.

**3.2.3 Polling Data**

Overall, according to various polls, support for the war in Afghanistan has waned over time. All polls come from the aforementioned polling aggregator, Polling Report. For example, an ABC/Washington Post poll found that from July of 2010 to December of 2014, 53-44 said that the war had contributed to the long term security of the US in 2010, whereas in 2014, it shifted to 47-48 said has not, with 6% unsure75. Between February 2007 and December 2014, the same news organizations found that in 2007, 56-41 said that the war was worth fighting, and in 2014, 56-38 said it was not worth fighting76. An NBC News Poll in 2014 found that only 27% of Americans said the war was “worth it”, with 65% saying the opposite77. A 2014 CBS News poll found that 68% of Americans think that Afghanistan won’t be stable after US departure, which indicates a lack of faith in the war itself78. Lastly, a 2014 Pew research Poll found that only 38% of Americans thought the US had mostly succeeded in Afghanistan, whereas 52% were of the opinion that the US had mostly failed. The same Pew poll found that from 2006 to 2014, the

73. DW Contributors, *Afghanistan: 100,000 Civilian Casualties over Last Decade: UN* (Deutsche Well, 22/02/2020)

74. Musa Shafiq, *The Cost and Economic Consequences of the War in Afghanistan: Analysis* (Eurasia Review, 18/01/2019)

75. pollingreport.com Contributors, *Afghanistan* (Polling Report, various dates, accessed 12/04/2020)

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

28

portion of people who felt that the war was the right decision vs the wrong decision fell from 69-20 to 51-4179. Summarily, in can be said that support for Afghanistan is generally moderate to negative, with support dropping markedly over time.

The public opinion on the war in Iraq seems to be far more hostile. Using the same aggregator, a 2015 Quinnipiac poll found that from 2007 to 2015, the portion of people who felt that the Iraq was right vs wrong went from 39-55 to 32-5980. The same university in 2014 found that only 37% of people thought that the US should have ground troops in Iraq, with 55% opposing81. Pew research polls, spanning from 2003 to 2018, found that those who thought the war was the right vs the wrong decision dropped precipitously from 74-19 in 2003 to 43-48 in 201882. An NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll in 2014 found that 26% said the war was worth with it, versus 66% who said it was not83. A different 2014 Qunnipiac poll found that, between 2011 and 2014, 74-21 were in favor of withdrawal in 2011, as opposed to 58-37 in favor in 2014. In the same poll, 63 versus 29% of Americans opposed the US sending in soldiers to help the Iraqi government against terrorists in 201484. Every poll, from Gallup to CNN/ORC, to Washington post and Wall Street Journal, to Pew research, finds general opposition to the war and the handling of the war in Iraq.

**3.2.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

As these were the wars that started the Bush Doctrine (or, more appropriately, that the Bush Doctrine started), they embody all 5 principles of the Doctrine. The US, under the guise of Democracy, used allegations of terrorism and WMD’s to invade two separate countries in a short period of time. While the 9/11 terror attacks certainly did happen, allegations of WMD’s have never been demonstrated against the Iraqi government. The general narrative was always a “freedom vs tyranny” narrative. In addition, the US, despite allies not necessarily wanting to engage in such a war, became the first and only country in history to invoke Article 5 of NATO,

79. Ibid

80. Pollingreport.com Contributors, *Iraq* (Polling Report, various dates, accessed 12/04/2020)

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

29

in response to the 9/11 attacks85, which perfectly embodies the 3rd and 4th principles, Strategic Stand-Apart Alliances and Selective Multilateralism, respectively. The 5th has already been alluded to, and the dominant showing of force from the US directly after the wars’ beginnings demonstrate the 1st and 2nd.

Overall, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are the legacy of the Bush Doctrine, and are the wars that are most closely associated with it, and most clearly embody it. They have, by any objective measure, gone poorly for the native populations, and do not enjoy widespread support in the US. From the perspective of the author, these are and were the defining wars of the 21st century, and perfectly summarize 21st century US imperialism under the Bush Doctrine.

**3.3.0 The Israeli Situation under Obama**

This refers to how the Obama administration handled the conflict, debacle, situation, etc. between Israel and Palestine. The Israel/Palestine situation itself refers to the ongoing issues between Israel and Palestine and international involvement. This often comes in the form of criticism of Israeli treatment of Palestinians, with a popular analogy being to that of South African apartheid86 87.

**3.3.1 What Happened**

The Obama administration essentially handled the Israel/Palestine situation like other presidents, in a similar manner to George W. Bush or how Donald Trump is today. This is pointed out in the aforementioned article by Josh Ruebner, how “lofty rhetoric and good intentions don’t change policy88”. The situation, while it had the initial optics of potentially improving, did not in any meaningful way. Ruebner points out how, when in 2009, the Obama administration told Israel to stop all settlements, the Israeli lobby essentially said no, with support from hundreds of members of congress. Following this, Obama immediately capitulated89. While Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu disliked each other, it essentially didn’t

85. Suzanne Daley, *After the Attacks: The Alliance; For First Time, NATO Invokes Joint Defense Pact with US* (New York Times, 13/09/2001)

86. Ronnie Kasrils, *I Fought South African Apartheid. I See the Same Brutal policies in Israel* (The Guardian, 03/04/2019)

87. Ben White, *UN Report: Israel has Established an ‘Apartheid Regime’* (Al Jazeera, 18/03/2017)

88. Ruebner, Op. cit., 51.

89. Ruebner, 52-53.

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change the policy interactions in a meaningful way between the US and Israel90.

**3.3.2 Effects on Population**

Due to the fact that the Palestinian people are the ones who are in the role of the oppressed in this situation, the evaluation will be on the effect on them.

It should be first pointed out that, despite rhetoric, settlements were expanded during the time of the Obama administration. According to an Associated Press report, the amount of settlements grew significantly under the Obama administration, and even exceeded the growth from under the Bush administration91. While it is pointed that, ultimately, the Israeli prime minister drives settlement growth, the US still gave billions in dollars in military assistance (including a 3.8 billion USD/year deal, signed during the Obama administration92) to the Israeli government, so it is reasonable to assume that, if the Obama administration had really tried, they could have gotten a more permanent freeze than the short one obtained in 2009-201093.

Nevertheless, the effects on the Palestinian population from the settlement-building is negative. OCHA, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, found that 250 settlements and settlement outposts have been established since 196794. These settlements, while being illegal under international law, also result in physical violence, seizure of property/property or land destruction, blocked access to land, harassment/intimidation, and lack of access to water, among other things, which require protection from the international humanitarian community as a result95. In addition, the United Church of Canada (UCC), pulling sources from personal testament, Amnesty international, the Foundation for Middle East Peace, and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, among others, point out that Palestinian homes are often confiscated/destroyed to make space for these settlements96. In addition, while

90. Ruebner, 53-55.

91. Josef Federman, *Israeli Settlements Have Grown During the Obama Years* (Associated Press, 16/09/2016)

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. OCHA contributor, *Humanitarian Impact of Settlements* (UN OCHA, various dates, accessed 13/04/2020)

95. Ibid.

96. UCC contributors, *How do the Settlements Affect Palestinians?* (UCC, accessed 13/04/2020)

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homes for settlers are allocated 487 liters of water for daily needs, Palestinian West bank citizens are allocated between 37-73 liters, in addition to having a less stable supply97. In addition, certain Israeli settlers, numbering 10,000 also have access to the Jordan Valley water supply, which is one of the largest supplies in the region and contains roughly 1/3 of the total water supply being allocated to the entire Palestinian population of 2.5 million98.

In addition, the Israeli government has constructed Several hundred kilometers of wall as a separation barrier around the West Bank. According to B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights’ group, roughly 85% of the barrier does not follow the 1967 Green Line border and often is built on Palestinian land, which makes it more difficult for those who work or go to school on the opposite side of the wall99.

Overall, the negative impacts of settlement-building on the Palestinians in the West Bank are clear, as well as how the Obama administration, despite certainly having the capacity to stop or reduce them, did not in any meaningful way.

**3.3.3 Polling Data**

The American people, overall, have more sympathy for Israel and the Israeli cause, generally speaking. In Gallup polls, conducted between 2009 and 2019, 63-29 had a favorable opinion of Israel in 2009, 71-24 had a favorable opinion in 2016 (Obama’s last full year), and 69-28 had a favorable opinion in 2019100. The same polls found mostly unfavorable views of the Palestinian authorities, with all responses from 2009-2019 being unfavorable, generally being around the 20-70 favorable vs. unfavorable point101. 2013-2014 NBC and Wall Street Journal polls found that, while 53% in 2013 and 55% in 2014 said they should be treated equally, both years found that only 4% said that Palestinians should be supported more, with 31% in 2013 and 34% in 2014 saying Israelis should be102. In a variety of Pew Research polls between 2009-2014, 2009 results found that 49 vs 11% were more sympathetic towards the Israelis, with the 2014

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.

100. Pollingreport.com contributors, *Israel/Palestinians* (Polling Report, various dates, accessed 13/04/2020)

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

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results being similar, at 51-14%. Lastly, a separate set of polls conducted by Pew between 2009-2014 found that, when asked if Obama was favoring Israel too much, the Palestinians, or striking the right balance, found the results were 6-17-62 in 2009, 5-20-37 in 2011, and 9-22-45 in 2014103. This last set of polls seems particularly unusual, when contrasted with the data exhibited in sections 3.3.0-3.3.2.

**3.3.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The Obama administration’s support of Israel embodies principles 1, 4, and 5. The military and political might of the US behind Israel makes it difficult for anyone or any organization, even the UN, to do anything. This is contrasted with the reality that if the US threatened to suspend all financial aid to Israel, there would almost certainly be an immediate capitulation to whatever US demands were made.

In addition, because Israel generally is viewed more favorably among the American people than the Palestinians, it makes sense, strategically, for the US to favor them in the conflict. This coupled with the fact that the Israel and US media often portray Palestinian violence/terrorism as being a real problem104 105, with the same degree of scrutiny almost never given to Israel, creates a media environment that paints an almost solely positive picture of Israel and a negative one of Palestine/Palestinians. This is how principles 4/5 are embodied; it is strategically intelligent for the US government to favor Israel in a conflict, because the media apparatus often portrays one side as being “terrorists” or “backwards”, thus lending credence to the notion that, by the US supporting Israel, it is supporting Democracy in the region.

Overall, the situation between Israel/Palestine only became worse for the Palestinians during the Obama administration, with lofty rhetoric and promises amounting to very little over Obama’s two terms, instead being more of the same policies that are enacted today.

**3.4.0 The Drone Program under Obama**

The drone program(s) is the program by which the U.S. military sends in various unmanned aerial vehicles(UAV’s) to execute precision strikes on targets that would otherwise

103. Ibid.

104. CNN correspondents, *Hamas Uses Human Shields For a Reason* (CNN, 22/07/2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bcP6SaYZpk>)

105. FOX News correspondents, *Israel Pounds Gaza with Airstrikes After Attack on Jihad Leader* (Fox News, 12/11/2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bcP6SaYZpk>)

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be difficult to engage with under normal circumstances. This section will simply evaluate drones during the time of the Obama administration.

**3.4.1 What Happened**

During Obama’s time in office, drone strikes exceeded that of those under George W. Bush, by roughly a factor of 10 (563 vs. 57 under Bush106). Strikes were conducted in multiple countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia107. While the Obama administration claimed that their drone strikes were quite precise, with the implication that civilian collateral was rare or nonexistent108. This was, however, demonstrated to be untrue; civilians are documented to have been killed in all 7 countries mentioned109 110. While different websites have various figures, all document some percentage of civilian killings; for example, the previously mentioned Bureau of Investigative Journalism report says that, in Somalia between 2009-2016, 3-12 civilians were killed, out of a total of 242-254 deaths. The same report concluded that, in Afghanistan, 125-182 civilians were reported killed, out of a total of 2371-3031 drone strike kills111. AirWars, which documents government and civilian releases/responses to air strikes in Libya, Syria, and Iraq, documented over 2,000 civilian deaths being confirmed or having a reasonable amount of evidence for them during the Obama presidency112.

It should be noted that finding exact and/or accurate numbers for civilian drone death statistics are difficult. For example, the Libyan National Army (which is/was supported by the countries such as the UAE, France, USA, etc113) and the UAE armed forces conducted a strike in Murzuq on September 19, 2019. The official AFRICOM report says that no civilians were killed

106. Jessica Purkiss, Jack Serle, *Obama’s Covert Drone War in Numbers: ten Times more Strikes than Bush* (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 17/01/2017)

107. ibid.

108. Chris Woods, *US Claims of No Civilian deaths are Untrue* (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 18/07/2011)

109. Purkiss, Serle, Op. cit.

110. AirWars contributors, *Civilian Casualties* (Airwars.org, various dates, accessed 14/04/2020)

111, Purkiss, Serle, Op. cit..

112. Airwars Contributors, *Conflict Data* (AirWars.org, various dates, accessed 14/04/2020)

113. Ramy Allahoum, *Libya’s War: Who is Supporting Whom* (Al Jazeera, 09/01/2020)

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in the resulting strike114; this is, however, directly contradicted by reporting from several local news outlets, as well as FaceBook posts with accompanying pictures from locals115. The author would like to note that these attacks did not happen under Obama; that is not the point of this example. The point is simply that it is difficult to accurately pinpoint the numbers, because official sources are not always forthcoming about the results of these strikes.

Overall, it can be said that the Obama administration continued to carry out air strikes in multiple countries over his two terms, to a great quantity than under George W Bush, and that there were a multitude of civilian deaths (and, to be fair, the deaths of terrorists as well) and casualties as a result. This is despite administration claims that drone strikes are precise, and often do not result in civilian casualties.

**3.4.2 Effect on Population**

The effect of drone strikes on civilian population has already been alluded to in the previous section. Despite the obvious effect of invoking terror in the population, living in constant fear where drone strikes are more common, and civilian deaths/casualties/infrastructure loss. A study conducted by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom on the humanitarian impact of drones found that the impact could be divided into five major categories: Humanitarian harm, psychological, environmental, harm to global peace/security, and harm to governmental transparency116. The first two categories have been covered in this work already. Regarding the environment, toxic compounds from munitions can harm the environment, as can the targeting of certain facilities, such as energy or petrochemical facilities. This sort of damage is difficult to prevent, because it requires in-depth knowledge of the area and facilities being targeted beforehand and how it will impact the environment. All of this is assuming that the executor of the drone strike cares about the environmental impact enough to account for these factors117.

While some categories, such as the last two, do not directly impact the population, and are more about lack of transparency or the totality of global peace, it is clear that these issues,

114. Airwars Contributors, *Military Claims* (AirWars.org, various dates, accessed 14/04/2020)

115. Airwars Contributors, *Civilian casualties* (AirWars.org, various dates, accessed 14/04/2020)

116. Various authors, *The Humanitarian Impact of Drones* (Women’s Int’l league for Peace and Freedom, Oct. 2017)

117. Ibid, pp. 29-34.

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intrinsically, are inter-connected with the first three. For example, in the section regarding global peace and security, it is pointed out how drones are viewed as risk-free, and how their inclusion into warfare has lowered the threshold for the use of armed force. This results in greater ease of acceptance/support for drones among politicians/civilians, which translates to greater ease of execution for the military118.

Overall, the impact on drones on the population is decidedly negative for a number of reasons, including but not limited to environmental harm, death/injury, psychological harm, eroding historical limits on warfare, de-humanizing individuals, and the destruction of infrastructure.

**3.4.3 Polling Data**

The results are mixed on drone strikes under the Obama administration. A 2013 Gallup poll found that, when people were asked if the US should use drones against terrorists abroad, 65% said yes. However, the number dropped to 41% with the same question, with the caveat being that the terrorists were US citizens. The same two questions, but asked about launching air strikes within the US dropped to 25 and 13%, respectively. In addition, the poll found that Republicans were more likely to support any of these policies than Democrats, with the first question being split between Republicans, Independents, and Democrats 79-61-55%119.

A 2013 Pew Research poll found a similar conclusion for striking terrorists abroad, with a total approve vs. disapprove of 56-26%. This study also confirmed that Republicans were more likely to support such policies, with their rates at 68-17, vs. Democrats at 50-31120.

An AP poll published on the Fox news website in 2015 found similar results, with 6 in 10 Americans supporting such strikes against terrorists abroad. This one, while finding that 60% of Democrats are for and 16% opposed, and 72% of Republicans favor it while 10% are opposed, this poll found that only 45% of Independents favor it, while 12% were opposed121.

118. Ibid, pp. 48-57

119. Alyssa Brown, Frank Newport, *In US, 65% Support Drone Attacks on Terrorists Abroad* (Gallup, 25/03/2013)

120. Pew Research contributors, *Bipartisan Support for US Drone Strikes* (Pew Research Center, 08/03/2013)

121. Associated Press contributors, *AP Poll: Most Democrats, Republicans Support Drone Strikes Against Terrorists Overseas* (Fox News, 01/05/2015)

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Lastly, a 2015 AP-Gfk poll published on PBS found similar results, again, with 6 in 10 Americans supporting strikes overseas. In this poll, however, when data was examined, it was found that support dropped below a majority, to 47&, if it was pointed out that civilians could be collateral in such operations122.

The data is quite clear that, generally, Americans support using drone strikes on perceived terrorists overseas, although this support does not translate to support for domestic drone strikes against terrorists.

**3.4.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The drone program embodies the principles 1,2 and 5. All are quite apparent as to why; the US government under the Obama administration used the US military’s technological superiority to carry out hundreds of drone strikes in 8 years, often with the stated intention of stopping terrorists before they could act, to help further the goal of spreading Democracy/quashing terrorism abroad.

Overall, during the Obama administration, drone strikes increased both in number and quantity of victims, with the US public supporting it throughout, despite many problems that were raised during or shortly after the Obama years regarding the efficacy and safety of the drone program.

**3.5.0 Pakistan Policy under the Obama Administration**

This section will focus on developments in US-Pakistan relations during the Obama administration. The general consensus of journalists and scholars is that the Obama administration, much like with Palestine, had good intentions, but they more or less feel flat for a variety of reasons.

**3.5.1. What Happened**

Initially, the Obama administration had high hopes with the broadening of relations with Pakistan. As Afghanistan was a central focus for the Obama administration, the US moved to improve relations with Pakistan during the Obama years. After the 2009 troop surge in Afghanistan, the Obama administration drafted a bill in September of the same year to provide

122. PBS Contributors, *Americans Approve of Drone Strikes on Terrorists, Poll Finds* (PBS.org, 01/05/2015)

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7.5 billion USD in aid to Pakistan123.

However, from 2010 onwards, there would be little good news regarding US-Pakistan relations to come forth from the Obama administration. There was an extensive drone war in Pakistan, with drone strikes under the Obama administration being several orders of magnitude higher than that of the Trump or Bush administration’s124. These numbered 353 in total, and had between a 5-10% civilian death rate125. This came with not only a sizable CIA presence in Pakistan to supplement the expanded drone wars126, but several high-profile incidents that soured ties between the US and Pakistan. Some of these include the Osama bin Laden raid in 2011, an incident in February 2011 where a US spy shot two men in broad daylight (including his release and the subsequent denial of the Obama administration that he was a spy127), as well as a November 2011 incident where NATO accidentally killed 24 Pakistani soldiers in an airstrike128. The US later apologized for this, but the damage had already been done.

All of these issues were compounded by several other factors, such as the US’s focus on India as a growing partner, which was part of Obama’s Asia-Pacific strategy to combat Chinese influence in the region, to whom Pakistan was a key ally129 130. In addition, with troops being pulled out of Afghanistan in 2011, this eliminated the need for Pakistani assistance in the region131.

Overall, all of these events combine to paint a picture of Pakistan-US relations essentially

123. Michael Kugelman, *High Hopes, Great Disappointments: US-Pakistan Relations Under Obama* (World Politics Review, 01/06/2016)

124. New America contributors, *The Drone War in Pakistan* (Newamerica.org, various dates, accessed 15/04/2020)

125. Ibid.

126. Kugelman, Op. cit.

127. Ibid.

128. Huma Imtiaz, *After US says Sorry for Salala Attack, Pakistan Reopens GLOCs* (The Express Tribune, 03/07/2012)

129. Kugelman, Op. cit.

130. Stephen R. David, *Obama: The Reluctant Realist* (Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 01/06/2015) pp. 15-18

131. Kugelman, Op. cit.

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freezing by late 2011, and prospective progress being halted for the remainder of the Obama administration.

**3.5.2 Effects on Population**

The effects of drones on populations has been covered at length in the previous section, therefore, it shall not be extrapolated upon further. However, to briefly reiterate, there were several hundred strikes with a 5-10% civilian death rate. This, combined with the other aforementioned policies, led to widespread civilian disproval of the US administration at the time. A 2013-2014 Pew research poll demonstrated this, which found that only 3% of Pakistanis approved of the US drone program, only 31% in 2014 believed the US respected personal freedoms, the US being voted the country as the greatest threat by Pakistani citizens, a 14% overall favorability rating in 2014, and a 7% approval rating for Obama in 2014132.

Overall, in addition to the effects already explained, while not as severe as the war that ravaged countries such as Libya or Iraq, the population of Pakistan had an intense dislike of the US under the Obama administration.

**3.5.3 Polling Data**

Regarding US citizens’ views, while there is less information than on other topics, the opinion of the American public is similar to that of the Pakistani public opinion on the US. A 2013 Gallup Poll found that just 4% of Americans considered Pakistan an ally, and 18% considering them friendly but non-allied, with the rest either saying they were unfriendly, an enemy, or unsure133. A 2011 CBS News poll found similar results, with just 2% saying Pakistan was an ally, and 21% saying friendly but not an ally, with remainder divided among the previous 3 categories134. Lastly, a 2011 Fox News poll found that only 16% of Americans said Pakistan was a strong ally to America against the war on terrorism, with 74% saying the opposite. The same poll found that 73% of Americans said the US should cut off aid to Pakistan until they “prove commitment” to fighting terrorists, with 19% saying otherwise135.

Overall, this indicates that most Americans held a negative view of Pakistan during the

132. Pew Research contributors, *Global Opposition to US Surveillance and Drones, but Limited Harm to America’s Image* (Pew Research Center, 14/07/2014).

133. Polling Report contributors, *Pakistan* (Pollingreport.com, various dates, accessed 15/04/2020)

134. Ibid.

135. Anderson Robbins/Shaw & Co. researchers, *Fox News Poll* (Fox News, 18/05/2011)

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Obama administration.

**3.5.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The situation in Pakistan embodies principles 1, 2, 3, and 4. The strong US presence in Pakistan with drones and CIA operatives to address terrorism embodies the first two, while the tepid alliance with Pakistan than abrupt stoppage of it when it was no longer deemed necessary in 2011/2012 embodies the latter two.

Overall, during the Obama administration, the situation in Pakistan drew comparisons to that with the situation in Israel/Palestine. There were initial high hopes and promises, but when more valuable allies and different interests were found by the US, the other group was abandoned. This resulted in a very poor opinion of Obama and the US by Pakistani citizens during the Obama administration.

**3.6.0 The Yemeni Crisis during the Obama years**

This refers to the 2011 revolution in Yemen, and subsequent civil war/war between the new Yemeni government and the Saudi Arabian and US forces. It is popularly referred to as a crisis, due to the fact that, according to UNICEF, more than 24 million people (including 12 million children), which represents roughly 80% of the population, are in need of humanitarian assistance136. This section will focus on the Obama administration’s response, and how it interacted with various actors involved in the crisis.

**3.6.1 What Happened**

Following an Arab spring uprising in 2011, the then-president of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced to give power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. Hadi, however, had to deal with the chaos and many problems with the country. The transition of power and lack of order essentially allowed Houthi Shia Muslim rebels to take control of their homelands in the northern part of the country. Many frustrated Yemenis supported the Houthis, and by late 2014/early 2015, the Houthis took over the capital, forcing Hadi to flee137.

This led to alarm among regional Sunni Muslim countries, the largest of which was Saudi Arabia, who figured that the rebellion was supported by Iran. This led to the start of a military campaign which persists to this day that is supported by several Western countries, including

136. UNICEF contributors, *Yemen Crisis* (UNICEF, updated 03/2020, accessed 16/04/2020)

137. BBC contributor(s), *Yemen Crisis: Why is There a War?* (BBC, 10/02/2020)

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France, the UK, and the US138. The US in particular provided billions in weapons, fuel, and crucial intelligence, with the Atlantic pointing out that, “The Saudis would be crippled without direct US military assistance, particularly aerial refueling, which continues unabated139”.

A large portion of the controversy regarding Yemen are the human rights’ violations. While a more detailed look will happen in the next section regarding this, a large portion of the criticism and events regarding the Obama administration were the Saudi-led and US-supported humanitarian issues that persisted in the Yemeni crisis. It is important to point out, that, while the Trump administration continues such policies, the Obama administration has still refused to admit culpability for allowing the situation to begin in 2015, and that, according to Jehan Hakim (the chair of the Yemeni Alliance Committee) “The Yemeni Community does not see the war in Yemen as a Trump war140”.

**3.6.2 Effects on Population**

The effects on the population of the war in Yemen have been nothing short of disastrous. As indicated earlier, roughly ¾ of the population needs humanitarian assistance. An air/naval blockade on ports is leading to a scarcity of essential resources, such as food, fuel, and medicine141. According to the Conversation, pulled from the Yemen Data Project, 1/3 of targets of air strikes have been civilians, with another 1/3 being unknown, which amounts to a total of 5168 non-military targets and 5460 unknown targets in the first three years of the operation (2015-2018)142. Of those on non-military targets, over 2,000 have been confirmed attack on civilian targets, such as hospitals, schools, mosques, markets, vehicles/buses, and residential areas143. Yemeni civilian infrastructure has bene targeted 2052 times, including airports, farms, roads, factories, bridges, oil/games facilities, and ports144. The constant strikes, damage to crucial

138. Ibid.

139. Samuel Oakford, Peter Salisbury, *Yemen: The Graveyard of the Obama Doctrine* (The Atlantic, 23/09/2016)

140. Daniel Larison, *Obama and the War on Yemen* (The American Conservative, 26/11/2018)

141. Jeff Bachman, *US Complicity in Saudi-Led Genocide Spans Obama, Trump Administrations* (The Conversation, 26/11/2018)

142. Ibid.

143. Ibid.

144. Ibid.

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infrastructure, deliberate targeting of non-combatants, and blockading of essential supplies, it is clear why many publications, authors, and organizations are referring to the situation as a genocide.

**3.6.3. Polling Data**

While there is scant polling data on the subject, the few polls that do exist show a distinct lack of support for the war in Yemen. A 2018 poll by YouGov found that 75% of Americans are opposed to US support of the Saudi Coalition, and 82% saying that the US should either cut off or decrease arms sales145. In addition, a grassroots poll on a website called “ISideWith” found, in an ongoing poll with over 140,000 respondents, that only 15% support the war in Yemen, with 85% opposed. While it should be noted that all of these respondents are surely not Americans, it is still consequential, due to the fact that it is grassroots through no other intermediary, has a very large number of votes, and still is consistent with previous data146.

It is important to note that polling data from the Obama administration is either scant or non-existent, due to US involvement starting towards the end of his presidency. None was found by the author, despite the fact that some could exist. Based upon previous evaluation of articles regarding the Obama administration’s activities in Yemen, the lack of polls that were conducted specifically during the Obama years does not detract from this section.

**3.6.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The Yemeni crisis/conflict/war embodies the 1st and 3rd principles. The 3rd is the most important in this case, as the US government wants to/wanted to support their Saudi allies against a perceived Iran-backed rebel group. The 1st is embodied by the crucial US support toe the Saudi coalition. The 5th could be argued, but because no articles have surfaced that the author has read of US officials painting the Houthis as terrorists, although it has surely been said, will not be included.

Overall, the Yemeni crisis, supported and started by the Obama administration’s support of the Saudi coalition, has gravely harmed the country and the population, causing what is often referred to as, currently, the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. It is another example of

145. Rescue.org press release, *New IRC/YouGov Poll: As Pressure Mounts for Yemen Ceasefire, US Opinion United: End Support for the War* (Rescue.org, 26/11/2018)

146. *Should the US Provide Military Aid to Saudi Arabia During its Conflict with Yemen?* (ISideWith.com, ongoing project, accessed 16/04/2020)

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the US’s allegiance to certain allies for specific regional goals undermining individual freedoms and human rights, as well as, ultimately, causing more harm than good.

**Conclusion**

The Obama administration’s foreign policy is replete with Bush Doctrine influence, which includes not only the direct extension of the Bush administration’s policies regarding terrorism and the spread of Democracy, but the extension and ramping up of these policies as well, such as with the drone programs. This can be seen in Table 1, at the end of this chapter. This chapter has demonstrated this by providing an in-depth, yet simplified, look into multiple major foreign policy issues under the Obama administration that have clear connections with essential Bush Doctrine principles.

In the next chapter, a similar analysis shall be done on various Trump-era policies.

**Table 1: Obama-era policies and Bush Doctrine influence**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | American Pre-Eminence | Assertive Realism | Strategic Stand-Apart Alliances | Selective Multilateralism | Democratic Transformation |
| Obama in Libya | X | X | - | - | X |
| Obama in Iraq/Afghanistan | X | X | X | X | X |
| Obama with Israel/Palestine | X | - | - | X | X |
| Drone Program | X | X | - | - | X |
| Obama in Pakistan | X | X | X | X | - |
| Obama in Yemen | X | - | X | - | Debatable |

In the above table, “X” denotes the presence of the Bush Doctrine principle, and “-“ denotes the absence. Exceptions where noted

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**Chapter IV: Trump-era policy, or, the Trump Doctrine: The Bush Doctrine Persists**

The Trump administration, being more ideologically aligned with the Bush administration than Obama’s, naturally shares and adopts some Bush Doctrine policy from the former’s administration. Despite the fact that the Trump administration is ongoing (necessarily resulting in a less complete case study of foreign policy being able to be made), there are still obvious connections to the Bush Doctrine that exist.

This chapter will have the same structure as the previous one, in order to maintain consistency. The topics being covered, in no particular order of importance or chronological order, are as follows; Trump in Syria, Trump in Yemen, Trump with Israel/Palestine, Drones under Trump, Pakistan under Trump, and Iran under Trump. These might not be all of the Bush Doctrine related policies under Trump (for example, one might consider the situation with Venezuela under Trump an extension of the Doctrine), but these are the more major events, or are continuations of previous events (such as Israel/Palestine), and will allow for a more in-depth evaluation of comparisons of US foreign policy between presidents in the context of the Bush Doctrine.

**4.1 Syria during the Trump Administration**

This refers to the Syrian Civil War and the actions that were undertaken regarding it during the Trump administration, which is still ongoing. This section will focus on the Trump administration’s actions during the war, many of which have been aggressive.

**4.1.1 What Happened**

The Syrian Civil War, which grew from a 2011 pro-Democracy movement, is still ongoing to this day. The Trump administration has largely continued the Obama administration’s foreign policy, despite withdrawing troops147, in the sense of general aggression towards the Syrian government, through both strikes and backing rebel groups148. While the Trump administration has a stated goal of “killing IS149” as their current primary goal in Syria, the administration has done/said other noteworthy things. Some of these include the April 2017 and 2018 air strikes in Syria, which were in response to alleged chemical weapons attacks on Syrians

147. Alex Pearson, Lewis Sanders IV, *Syria Conflict: What do the US, Russia, Turkey and Iran Want?* (Deutsche Welle, 23/01/2019)

148. Ibid.

149. Ibid.

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earlier in the month150, the claim by Trump himself that US troops were only in Syria to take Syrian oil in 2020151, as well as the aforementioned draw-down of troops in 2019, which drew heavy international criticism152. In addition, the drone program has continued in Syria, with AirWars compiling sources that reported strikes in February 2020, as well as many times in 2019/2018153.

Overall, aggressive US foreign policy towards Syria has continued under the Trump administration, with US actions drawing controversy and confusing allies in the process.

**4.1.2 Effects on Population**

The effect of drones on the population, as addressed above, have been devastating to the population. However, the Syrian population, in addition to facing “normal” wartime conditions such as internal displacement or violence, is undergoing a massive refugee crisis. Over 50%(more than 12 million people) of the pre-war population have either been killed or displaced154, with a variety of problems plaguing the country, such as a large amount of internally displaced Syrians, many child refugees, and a lack of funding to provide humanitarian aid to those in need155. In addition, the Syrian Network for Human Rights is continuing to document human rights abuses to this day. For example, their January 2020 report listed the deaths of 286 civilians (including 73 children), torture, arbitrary arrests, attacks on vital civilian facilities, and the usage of cluster munitions, among other things156.

Overall, the Syrian conflict ranks as one of the worst humanitarian crises today, with

150. BBC contributor(s), *Syria Air Strikes: Trump Defends Claiming ‘Mission Accomplished’* (BBC, 15/04/2018)

151. David Brennan, *Trump Says US Troops Stayed in Syria, ‘Because I kept the Oil’* (Newsweek, 15/01/2020)

152. Uri Friedman, *What America’s Allies Really Think About Trump’s Syria Decision* (The Atlantic, 14/11/2019)

153. AirWars contributors, *Civilian Casualties in Syria* (AirWars.org, various dates, accessed 22/04/2020)

154. Mercy Corps contributors, *The Facts: What You Need to Know about the Syria Crisis* (MercyCorps, 30/03/2020)

155. Ibid.

156. SNHR contributors, *The Most Notable Human Rights Violations in Syria in January 2020* (Syrian Network for Human Rights, released 01/2020, accessed 22/04/2020)

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civilians/the general population enduring many hardships because of it.

**4.1.3 Polling Data**

Overall, during the Trump administration, there is tepid or negative support for most issues regarding Syria, with some issues receiving favorable support from the American people. A 2019 ABC/Washington Post poll found that only 12% thought that pulling out US troops would strengthen the US position, with 44% saying it would weaken and 37% saying it made no difference; the same poll found that only 8% of respondents thought that the Trump administration ending the Kurdish alliance help the US, with 51% saying it hurt the US and 36% saying it made no difference157. A 2019 CNN poll found that only 42% approved of the withdrawal, while 50% disapproved. The same poll found that 69% suspected that US actions would result in ISIS’s re-emergence in Syria, 75% displaying some level of concern about Syria, and 51%( as opposed to 43%) saying that the US has the responsibility to be involved158.

Regarding the bombing of Syria in response to chemical weapon attacks, a 2017 NBC/Wall Street Journal poll found that 62 vs. 33% supported the strike159, while a 2017 Quinnipiac poll found similar results at 61-31 saying it was the right vs the wrong decision. The Quinnipiac poll also found close results on whether or not the Trump administration should have gotten Congressional approval or not, with 5-046 saying Trump should have vs. should not have, although only 30% said that this strike was likely to stop future chemical attacks, with 62% saying it wasn’t160. A 2017 Marist poll found that 77% of Americans think Syria poses some kind of threat to the US, 64% saying the US should either actively or passively support the deposition of Assad, and 56% favoring the aforementioned strikes, although, only 34% said that the Trump administration has a clear idea of what they’re doing, with 59% saying otherwise161. A 2017 CBS poll found that 57 vs 36% approved of the strikes, with Republicans having the highest percentage at 84-11, and Democrats the lowest, at 40-53. The same poll found that 41 vs 54% have confidence in the Trump administration regarding the ability to handle the situation, with republicans at 79-19, Democrats at 11-84, and Independents at 39-53. In addition, 69 vs.

157. Polling Report contributors, *Syria* (PollingReport.com, various dates, accessed 22/04/2020)

158. Ibid.

159. Ibid.

160. Ibid.

161. Ibid.

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25% said that it was necessary to get approval from Congress before subsequent strikes, with even a majority of Republicans saying that it was necessary (53%)162. Lastly, a 2016 Gallup poll (which was before but only shortly preceded the Trump administration) found that 90% of Americans considered Syria either a critical or important threat, and that 34 vs. 30% said the US should be more vs. less involved in Syria, with 29% saying involvement was about right163.

Overall, the US public while having a dislike for Syria, generally speaking, and approving of the strikes in 2017 (and likely 2018 by extension) do not have confidence in how the Trump administration has handled, or how it will handle the situation going forward.

**4.1.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The Syrian conflict embodies all principles. 1 is obvious, due to the overwhelming funding and air power the US provides, 2 coincides with the notion that both the Trump administration and the American people view Syria as a threat. 3 and 4 build off of 2, with the notion that international condemnation for certain actions won’t prevent the US from carrying out its goals. Lastly, 5, Democratic Transformation, is nearly always present, from Trump continuing intervention out of alleged care for civilians after chemical attacks, and because Assad is a “brutal dictator”, as repeated by Trump and on every major news network in the country.

Conclusively, the Syrian conflict, which the Trump administration continued to be involved in via hard power actions and funding, helped worsen a large humanitarian crisis, which shows no signs of ending anytime soon.

**4.2.0 Trump in Yemen**

This refers to the Trump administration’s actions in Yemen. Despite the fact that, as addressed above, the Yemeni people do not necessarily see this as “Trump’s war”, this does not mean that the Trump administration has not done anything novel or of note.

**4.2.1 What Happened**

The Yemeni crisis itself has already been addressed; instead, this section shall focus on what the Trump administration specifically has done to progress the conflict, either positively or

162. Ibid.

163. Ibid.

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negatively. Presently, the current information available seems to indicate that Trump has progressed it negatively. This is based upon several factors; the first is that the drone program still continues under the Trump administration, with strikes being conducted throughout the administration, the most recent being in January or February of 2020164 165. The second is Donald Trump’s veto of the bipartisan congressional bill to end the support for Saudi Arabia in Yemen166. This in particular is important, as before this, the Trump administration and Trump himself could have viably claimed that this was the Obama administration’s war, not theirs, but after this, they “owned it” as much as the previous administration did.

Overall, the Trump administration is doing roughly the same things the Obama administration did in Yemen, and what novel things they have done are not helping the Yemeni population, or the international community, to end the war.

**4.2.2 Effects on Population**

As has already been addressed above, the Trump administration is doing all that it can do support the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. This includes refueling, providing intelligence/military support, and continuing an air strike campaign, and other effects on the population as addressed above in section 3.6.2. Otherwise, there is no new information to add regarding this matter.

**4.2.3 Polling Data**

As addressed in section 3.6.3, it was noted that little polling data exists on the matter, although that which does exist indicates a lack of support for the backing of the Saudi-led coalition by the US. This has not changed for this section, although the results are more poignant for the Trump administration than that of Obama, as both of the polls noted in section 3.6.3 were taken/started during the Trump administration.

In addition, the author would like to indicate that a poll from nearly 2 decades ago during the bush administration, where CNN found that only 8% of respondents thought that the next

164. Abigail Fielding-Smith, Jessica Purkiss, *Yemen: Reported US Covert Actions 2019* (The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, various dates, accessed 23/04/2020)

165. Brett Samuels, *Trump Announces Death of Al-Qaeda Leader in Yemen after US strike* (The Hill, 06/02/2020)

166. Simon Tisdall, *Trump’s Veto over Yemen is a Scandalous Abuse of Presidential Power* (The Guardian, 17/04/2019)

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battlefield in the war on terror should be in Yemen167. While this poll is not recent, it is at least noteworthy, due to the large number of respondents (174,212). In addition, because it happened after the Bush Doctrine was already put in to effect, it could be extrapolated further into the future. This means, while this poll, cannot be taken as an indication of support of lack thereof for the Trump administration’s actions in Yemen, it can be seen, in combination with the more recent polls, as a basis for a trend among US popular opinion; namely, that the American public has not, does not, and likely will not support intervention in Yemen in the future.

**4.2.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The Yemeni war under Trump embodies not only the 1st and 3rd principles, but also the 2nd and 5th. The addition of principles 2 and 5 is due to the fact that Trump has said (for example when giving his reasons for blocking the aforementioned congressional bill) that he is keeping Americans safe/protecting America by staying in Yemen168. This, coupled with the fact that the Trump administration is conducting strikes against suspected terrorists in Yemen, at least gives a rhetorical basis for including principles 2 and 5 in this section as well, whereas the Obama administration, to the author’s knowledge, never gave such a reason for being in Yemen in the first place; they were simply there.

In conclusion, the Yemeni crisis has continued unabated during the Trump administration, with Trump himself stopping a measure that would have helped the population greatly. The status of the crisis has not improved for the population of Yemen in any measurable way.

**4.3.0 Trump in Israel/Palestine**

This refers to the actions that the Trump administration has taken, regarding the conflict between Israel and Palestine. This section will analyze the actions that the Trump administration has taken regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict, and try to discern which side has been favored.

**4.3.1 What Happened**

The Trump administration has decidedly favored the Israelis during his time in office. This may be demonstrated in a number of ways. Building upon the fairly close personal relationship that the Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald trump appear to share, according to a

167. CNN contributor(s), *Where Should the Next Battlefield be in the War against Terror?* (CNN, 17/01/2002)

168. Tisdall, Op. cit.

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number of sources169 170 (and in spite of Trump distancing himself from Netanyahu in September of 2019171 172. This personal relationship, combined with historically warm relations with Israel on a governmental level have led to policies that clearly favor the Israeli side of negotiations. One of the most notable examples of this is the 2018 moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv and recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by the US government173 174. This move famously created difficulties for the two-state solution, and was an insult to Palestinians, as the historically disputed territory of Jerusalem was recognized as Israel’s capital in a power move by the Trump administration. Some other examples include the naming of a Golan Heights settlement Trump Heights, after the Trump administration recognized the area as part of Israel (which is, in addition to being contrary to international law175, very strange); Trump’s specific vilification and description of Palestinians as terrorists, while praising Israel as a land of Democracy and civility in the unveiling of his peace plan (despite ignoring Israel’s own history of terrorism176); as well as the peace plan itself177, which is viewed negatively by everyone or nearly everyone other than the US and Israel178 179 180 , and heavily

169. Aaron David Miller, *Trump, Netanyahu Relationship Erodes Core Values of US-Israeli Bond: Today’s Talker* (USA Today, 16/08/2019)

170. Matthew Lee, Catherine Lucey, *Trump, Israeli Leader Have Mutually Beneficial Relationship*

171. Middle East Monitor contributor(s), *In Snub to Netanyahu, Trump says ‘our Relations are with Israel’* (Middle East Monitor, 20/09/2019)

172. TOI Staff, *Trump Says he hasn’t spoken to Netanyahu: ‘Our relationship is with Israel’* (Times of Israel, 18/09/2019)

173. Barbara Plett-Usher, *Jerusalem Embassy: Why trump’s Move was not about Peace* (BBC, 15/05/2018)

174. White House contributor(s), *President Donald J Trump Keeps His Promise to Open US Embassy in Jerusalem, Israel* (Whitehouse.gov, 14/05/2018)

175. Oren Libermann, Michael Schwartz, Rob Picheta, *Israel Announces new Golan heights Settlement named ‘Trump Heights’* (CNN, 17/06/2019)

176. Edo Konrad, *Trump Vilifies Palestinians for using the same Violence that Birthed Israel* (972 Magazine, 30/01/2020)

177. White House contributor(s), *Peace to Prosperity* (Whitehouse.gov, accessed 30/04/2020)

178. Neil Quilliam, Reni Zhelyazkova, *How Donald Trump’s Peace Plan Looks to the Gulf and Europe* (Chatam House, 19/02/2020)

179. Salam Fayaad, *Trump’s Middle East Peace Plan: What’s there to be Upset About?* (Brookings Institute, 21/02/2020)

180. BBC contributor(s), *Trump Releases Long-Awaited Middle East Peace Plan* (BBC, 28/01/2020)

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favors the Israeli side in the negotiations by letting Israel keep settlement territory, the majority of Jerusalem, and absorb further territory that the Trump Plan deems Israel is deserved of, among other things. Described by one publication as a “superpower endorsement of apartheid181”, the plan is generally viewed as a plan that is in violation of international law, and that the Palestinians are very unhappy with. One poll found that 94% of Palestinians reject the Peace Plan182

Overall, in addition to building on Obama-era foreign policy, the Trump administration’s policy on Israel/Palestine decidedly favors the Israeli side, even more so than under Obama.

**4.3.2 Effects on Population**

The Trump administration’s policies are simply exacerbating the effects on the population as addressed above, in section 3.3.2; the Peace Plan is more of a giveaway to Israel than anything, which will only worsen conditions for Palestinians. The painting of Palestinians as terrorists will only further demonize them among the American people and lead to worse negotiations, depending on the next administration. The Trump administration is not necessarily doing anything novel, other than being more aggressively pro-Israel; they are simply making it clear that they are not interested, on a policy level, of the needs and wants of the Palestinian people/authority.

**4.3.3 Polling Data**

Overall, the American people’s support tends to be with Israel over Palestine. A 2019 Quinnipiac poll found that a combined 61% of Americans said that the current administration is sufficiently supportive or not supportive enough of Israel, with 24% saying too supportive. The same poll found that 47-16% supported Israel over Palestine, with 37% being unsure183. A 2017 CNN poll found that 44 vs 45% approved vs disapproved of the Trump administration’s recognition of Jerusalem as the capital. While 36 vs 49% said the US should vs should not move the embassy, when respondents were asked in the same poll who the US should support in the conflict, the majority did say neither side (67%), but 24-2 said Israel over Palestine, as well184. A separate 2017 Gallup poll found that those respondents who had heard of Benjamin Netanyahu

181. Omar Rahman, *Trump’s Deal Gives Israel a Superpower Endorsement of Apartheid* (972 Magazine, 30/01/2020)

182. Adam Rasgon, *Poll: 94% of Palestinians Oppose US Peace Plan* (Times of Israel, 11/02/2020)

183. Polling Report contributor(s), *Israel, The Palestinians* (Pollingreport.com, various dates, accessed 29/04/2020)

184. Ibid.

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49% viewed him favorably, with 30% saying unfavorable, with only 8% being unsure, a significant drop in lack of sureness from previous years185.

Overall, under the Trump administration, while the American people don’t necessarily support moves such as the moving of the embassy, their support still lies with Israel over Palestine.

**4.3.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The Trump administration’s actions towards Israel/Palestine embody principles 1, 3, 4, and 5. The administration is backing Israel in contravention to international law in a stronger manner than ever, both in terms of the continuation of arms sales and military support186, and the strengthening of alliances with Israel, and in spite of the international community. The pro-Israel/America, and anti-terrorism rhetoric (the Palestinians being painted as terrorists in this case) is more explicit than ever before, as evidenced by Trump’s speech regarding Palestinians during the unveiling of the Peace Plan.

Overall, the Israel/Palestine situation become more one-sided, under the Trump administration. While the Trump administration has not necessarily done anything novel, in terms of actions, the actions that it has taken, coupled with the personal relationship between Netanyahu and Trump, have caused the further deterioration of the peace process and hope for a more bilateral solution than under the Obama administration.

**4.4.0 The Drone Program during the Trump Administration**

This refers to the drone warfare program during the Trump administration. The areas of engagement are largely the same as under the Obama administration, with differences largely being in quantity. In general, the program has continued relatively unabated during the Trump era.

**4.4.1 What Happened**

Broadly, the Trump administration’s drone program has killed a significant amount of civilians, rolled back Obama-era legislation for program accountability, and increased the quantity of strikes (in certain areas). The first example comes from a NewsWeek article, pulling

185. Ibid.

186. Anna Badillo, *The US-Israel ‘Special Relationship’ Subsidizes American Military Industry and Israeli Colonialism* (The Defense Post, 09/04/2019)

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data from AirWars, which points out that, under the Trump administration (this was as of August, 2017), more civilians had already been killed in the US fight against IS in Trump’s first 7 months than in the 3 years that this program existed under the Obama administration187. This corroborated and substantiated by statistics from the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, which shows that under Trump, more strikes have already occurred in Yemen and Somalia than under Obama. There is less data on Afghanistan, but the Trump administration has done at least several thousand strikes there188. In addition, AirWars provides data, though not exact, that showed that civilians have continued to die, and strikes have continued in Libya, Iraq, and Syria under the Trump administration189. In an article by S.E. Cupp, as addressed above, strikes have increased in most countries, save for Pakistan190.

However, other than quantity, the drone program remains largely unchanged from under the Obama administration, despite notable incidents, such as the aforementioned Dahyan air strike where several dozen children were killed by an American-made, Saudi missile191, or the 2019 air strike that accidentally killed 30 pine nut farm workers in Afghanistan( the same article also provided graphs that show how thousands or civilians have been killed and injured annually since the start of the Trump administration in Afghanistan192. The real “meat” of the Trump administration’s changes to the drone program were the rollbacks on drone program accountability, done on March 6th, 2019193. The author points that while, under Obama, drone strikes did increase, the administration at least tried to provide some accountability by providing the numbers of civilian casualties, thus meaning that, in combination with the overall expansion of the drone program and decrease of accountability leads to a more dangerous US drone

187. Tom O’ Connor, *Trump has Already Killed more Civilians than Obama in US Fight Against ISIS* ( NewsWeek, 22/08/2017)

188. BIJ contributor(s), *Drone Wars Database* (Bureau of investigative Journalism, various dates, accessed 01/05/2020)

189. Airwars, Op. cit.

190. S.E. Cupp, Op. Cit.

191. CNN contributor(s), *Bomb that killed 40 Children in Yemen was Supplied by the US* (CNN, 17/08/2018)

192. Ahmad Sultan, Abdul Qadir Sediqi, *US Drone Strike Kills 30 Pine Nut Farm Workers in Afghanistan* (Reuters, 19/09/2019)

193. Daniel Bruntstetter, *Trump’s Executive Order on Drone Strikes Sends Civilian Casualty Data back into the Shadows* (The Conversation, 13/03/2019)

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program in general194.

Overall, the Trump administration has increased the quantity of strikes in already affected areas, as well as reducing regulations. This makes a program that was already harmful to civilian populations even worse (by that metric), and consequently, the drone program under the Trump administration a dangerous one for anyone deemed a threat to the US.

**4.4.2 Effect on population**

As addressed above, drone strikes have harmful effects on the population (physical and mental) and the environment. However, as the Trump administration has only changed the quantity of strikes and the regulations regarding them, no further harmful effects on the population can be reported that have already not been.

**4.4.3 Polling Data**

There is scant data on general opinions regarding drone strikes that happened during the Trump era. A US News article pointed out that, regarding the decision to eliminate Qassem Soleimani, 47% of Americans supported vs. 40% who opposed the decision195. In an ISideWith poll, with over 9.1 million respondents, 69% of American respondents said that the US military should fly drones over foreign countries to kill terrorists and gather intelligence, while 31% said no196. This poll was created in March of 2013, but the huge number of respondents and constant updates give this poll some merit, especially considering it is somewhat consistent with past data.

Overall, what little statistics there are show support for the drone program in the case of those who the public views as terrorists under the Trump presidency.

**4.4.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The drone program embodies principles 1, 2, and 5. These are clear, as the display of US might, accompanied by the rhetoric that it is to combat terrorists, makes the inclusion of these

194. Daniel Davis, *Trump Expands CIA Drone Strikes while Reducing Accountability* (InsideOver, 01/10/2019)

195. Alexa Lardieri, *Nearly Half of Americans Support Airstrike that Killed Iranian Leader, Poll Finds* (US News, 08/01/2020)

196. ISideWith contributor(s), *Should the Military Fly Drones Over Foreign Countries to Gain Intelligence and Kill Suspected Terrorists?* (ISideWith, various dates, accessed 01/05/2020)

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principles necessary for the same reason as under the Obama administration.

Overall, the drone program under Trump has only grown in size and reduced in accountability, as addressed above. There is little to be said about it, overall, other than that it is more deadly and active than ever before.

**4.5.0 Pakistani Policy under the Trump Administration**

This refers to the Trump administration’s foreign policy regarding Pakistan. While the beginning of the administration’s mood for Pakistani foreign policy was unsure of even negative, developments in 2019 have since put the US and Pakistan on a path of cooperation. Whether or not this cooperation will be fully realized remains to be seen, but for now, things appear to be positive.

**4.5.1 What Happened**

The Trump administration’s relations with Pakistan were tense, at the beginning, with several inflammatory marks made about Pakistan by Trump in August of 2017, accusing them of frequently harboring criminals and terrorists, and saying that, “they have much to lose by continuing to harbor criminals and terrorist197”. In addition, an infamous New Year day tweet in 2018 read that, “The US has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools. They give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!198” Additionally, earlier media reports reported that the US was thinking of taking a more hard-line stance towards Pakistan, as a 2017 Reuters article reported that two anonymous officials reported the administration might crack down on Pakistan-based terrorists launching attacks in Afghanistan. Responses discussed were the redirection or withholding of aid towards Pakistan, or possibly the downgrading of Pakistan’s status as a major non-NATO ally199.

However, the Trump administration’s actual reaction has been the polar opposite. Based on the Trump administration’s dealings with Pakistan in 2019, as well as the speeches given,

197. White House contributor(s), *Remarks by President Trump on the Strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia* (Whitehouse.gov, 21/08/2017)

198. Donald Trump (Twitter, 01/01/2018)

199. Phil Stewart Idrees Ali, *Exclusive: Trump Administration Eyes Hardening Line towards Pakistan* (Reuters, 20/06/2017)

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the administration has been treating Pakistan with “kid gloves” and their early, tough rhetoric was “all bluster200”. The reason for this is fairly clear, according to a number of publications. The Trump administration, at present wants to do something about the situation in Afghanistan more than they want to get tough on Pakistan201 202. This all came to a head in July of 2019, where president Trump, during a speech where the prime minister of Pakistan was present, where a picture was painted of the US either winning the war quickly (and killing “10 million people” whilst wiping Afghanistan off the face of the Earth203) or coming to proper negotiations with the Taliban – with Pakistan as the key mediator between the US and the Taliban – with mentions even of increased aid coming back to Pakistan204. This meeting bore fruit for Pakistan, and was covered extensively in the news. Some of the boons Pakistan received shortly before and after this were $125 million in military aid for Pakistan205, as well as the declaration of the Balochistan Liberation Army as a terrorist group by the US206, an armed separatist group that has given Pakistan trouble since 2006.

Overall, the Trump administration has softened the US’s position with Pakistan, as compared to that of his predecessor’s, due to strategic reasons in Afghanistan and with the Taliban.

**4.5.2 Effects on Population**

One of the largest effects on the population is the lack of drone strikes in Pakistan. There was only a single recorded drone strike in 2018, 5 in 2017, none in 2019, and none in 2020, to the best of the author’s knowledge207. This is a clear contrast from pre-Trump administration

200. Michael Kugelman, *Trump’s Hard Line on Pakistan is All Bluster* (Foreign Policy, 22/07/2019)

201. Ibid.

202. Adnan Aamir, *Trump Bets on Pakistan to Deliver Peace in Afghanistan* (The Interpreter, 07/08/2019)

203. Donald Trump, *Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Khan of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan before Bilateral Meeting* (Whitehouse.gov, 22/07/2019)

204. Ibid.

205. News18 contributor(s), *US Approves Military Sales Worth $125 Million to Support Pakistan’s F-16 Fighter Jets* (News18, 27/07/2019)

206. Ashfaq Ahmed, *Pakistan Hails US Decision to Declare Balochistan Liberation Army as a Global Terrorist Group* (Gulf News, 03/07/2019)

207. BIJ contributor(s), *Drone Wars: The Full Data* (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, various dates, accessed 02/05/2020)

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years. It should be noted that overall positive developments in US-Pakistan relationships has not improved the image of the US in Pakistan in any significant way; a 2019 Gallup article on a poll that it conducted noted that, through 2018, Pakistani disapproval/approval of the US still remained at 73% and 14% respectively, which are not significant positive changes for the US208.

Overall, although the Trump administration has had an overall positive impact for the civilian population, the population still disapproves of the US overall, likely due to past tensions between the two countries.

**4.5.3 Polling Data**

The author could not locate recent data on Pakistan. The most recent data found on PollingReport was from 2013, and even Gallup’s most recent country favorability polls were from 2016, which saw a combination of 21% of Americans viewing Pakistan as favorable to some degree, and a combination of 70% viewing Pakistan as unfavorable to some degree209. This cannot, however, be taken as an accurate reflection of the public’s opinion on Pakistan, especially considering the developments that the Trump administration has made towards Pakistan. It should be noted, however, that these results are fairly consistent with results from the last decade or so before the 2016 poll was taken210.

Overall, fair and accurate polling data for the trump administration could not be found, however, past trends would indicate that the US opinion of Pakistan remains largely negative, among the public.

**4.5.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

The US relationship with Pakistan during the Trump administration embodies all principles of the Bush Doctrine. The author would consider this issue in particular and its connections with the Bush Doctrine to be a “sleeper pick” of sorts, because while it may not seem initially like it embodies key doctrinal principles, considering the positive swing in US-Pakistan relations during the Trump administration, it does. It embodies the 1st and 2nd due to the increase in relations (including the designation of a major Pakistani state enemy as a world terrorist group, and the giving of military aid to Pakistan) concerning the heightening of the

208. Julie Ray, *Reset with Unpopular US may be Tough Sell in Pakistan* (Gallup, 24/07/2019)

209. Gallup contributor(s), *Country Ratings* (Gallup, various dates, accessed 02/05/2020)

210. Ibid.

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US and Pakistan both to fight terrorism. It embodies the 3rd and 4th, due to the re-forging old alliances out of alleged necessity for US interests, despite some potential concern from allies, such as India211. Lastly, it embodies the 5th principle in the US’s potential usage of Pakistan as a mediator with the Taliban in the Afghanistan conflict.

Overall, the Trump administration’s Pakistani policy is a very interesting study in Bush Doctrine application to modern foreign policy, especially considering the manner is not as straightforward as many of those cases examined.

**4.6.0 Iran under the Trump Administration**

This refers to the Trump administration’s policy towards Iran. Generally speaking, the administration has a pugnacious policy towards Iran, and has been wrought with aggressive actions, unique during this administration for the level of aggression. This chapter will explore that policy.

**4.6.1 What Happened**

As addressed above, the Trump administration’s actions towards Iran have been entirely aggressive. The most notable early example of this was the US pulling out of the Iran Deal212(known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action/JCPOA), as well as re-imposing sanctions on Iran removed during the Iran Deal213, the latter of which has harmed the Iranian economy deeply214. This includes driving down oil production and exports, diminishing GDP growth, increasing the cost of living, and driving down the value of the currency215, among other things.

The other major cycle of events with Iran started in December of 2019, when the US conducted airstrikes on an Iran-backed militia in Iraq216. This escalated further in January when

211. Avishek Jha, *Trump’s South Asia Policy: Strategic Alignment with Pakistan, Ambivalence towards India?* (South Asian Voices, 22/08/2019)

212. Anthony Zurcher, *3 Reasons behind Trump Ditching Iran Deal* (BBC, 08/05/2018)

213. Donna Borak, Nicole Gaouette, *US Officially Re-imposes all Sanctions Lifted under 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal* (CNN, 05/11/2018)

214. BBC contributor(s), *6 Charts that Show How Hard US Sanctions Have Hit Iran* (BBC, 09/12/2019)

215. Ibid.

216. Julian Borger, *US: Strikes on Iran-Backed Militia a Response to ‘Campaign’ of Attacks by Tehran* (The Guardian, 30/12/2019)

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the Trump administration authorized a strike that killed Iran’s top general, leader of the Quds force, and the 2nd most powerful man in the country, Qassem Soleimani217. The proper analogy to this strike would be if the Iranian government had assassinated Mike Pence. Soleimani’s assassination, which occurred while he was on a peace mission218, drew a response from Iran in the form of an attack on US bases in Iraq in the following days219. While the Trump administration did back off from total war in the days following, and seemed to extend an olive branch of sorts220. Afterwards, the Coronavirus took the world by storm, and little more happened in the way of US-Iran relations since then, other than the Iranian government accusing the US of economic terrorism due to the sanctions affecting medicine entering Iran amid the pandemic221. A March article notes that Iran has recently tripled its stockpile of Uranium, in violation of the Iran Deal, and has been slowly violating the terms since the US unilaterally pulled out in 2018222. This violation is almost certainly in response to the US’s response.

Overall, the Trump administration’s response to foreign policy in Iran has been much aggressive posturing, bringing the countries closer to the brink of war, and harming the Iranian economy severely. Noted as nearly incoherent by several authors 223 224, the administration’s Iran strategy has certainly de-stabilized not only the region further, but US-Iran relations.

**4.6.2 Effects on Population**

217. Mark DeCambre, *Who Was Qassem Soleimani, and why is His Death a Major Development in US-Middle East Relations?* (Market Watch, 08/01/2020)

218. Max Blumenthal, *Iraqi PM Reveals Soleimani was on Peace Mission when Assassinated, Exploding Trump’s Lie of Imminent Attacks* (The Gray Zone, 06/01/2020)

219. BBC contributor(s), *Iran Attack: US Troops Targeted with Ballistic Missiles* (BBC, 08/01/2020)

220. Peter Baker, *Trump Backs away from Further Military Conflict with Iran* (New York Times, 08/01/2020)

221. Nic Robertson, *‘Maximum Pressure’ on Iran Amid Coronavirus Could Backfire for Trump,* (CNN, 08/04/2020)

222. Associated Press in Vienna, *Iran Triples Stockpile of Enriched Uranium in Breach of Nuclear Deal* (The Guardian, 03/03/2020)

223. David Sanger, *Trump’s Iran Strategy: A Cease-Fire Wrapped in a Strategic Muddle* (New York Times, 08/01/2020)

224. Stephen Walt, *Trump’s Iran Policy is Brain-Dead* (Foreign policy, 03/01/2020)

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As addressed above, the Trump administration is going with a “maximum pressure strategy”, in relation to Iran. Two notable effects on the population under the Trump administration have been observed by the author. The first one is the effects of the sanctions. The above article addresses it quite well; currency inflation spiked from 9% in 2017 to about 30% in 2018225. Meat products were 116% more expensive, year-by-year, in April 2019, food and beverage prices were up 60%, and tobacco was up 80%226. The 12-month household rate of inflation was 42% in October 2019227. All of these, in addition to oil export bans and currency devaluation228, in addition to significant personal testimony on how the sanctions are negatively impacting the lives of civil servants, students abroad, business owners, would-be house buyers, etc.229, the imposition of the sanctions have clearly had a harsh impact on the Iranian populace.

The second is the further radicalization of the populace against the current US administration. This was especially true after the assassination of Soleimani by the trump administration, where, in the following days, thousands of protestors turned out to mourn the death of Soleimani and espouse anti-American sentiments230. While multiple authors do point out that a huge government effort was put forth to help people mobilize231 (to make a statement), and how just because the Iranian people are anti-American does not make them pro-government232, it is clear that the populace of Iran is feeling increasingly more hostile towards the US during the Trump administration. This sentiment is further supplemented by polling data; the favorability of the US went from 28-71favorable vs unfavorable in mid-2014, to 13-86 in

225. BBC contributor(s), *6 Charts…*, Op. cit.

226. Ibid.

227. Ibid.

228. Ibid.

229. BBC contributor(s), *Iran Sanctions: How Iranians are Feeling the Impact* (BBC, 05/11/2018)

230. Kasra Naji, *Soleimani: Why Huge Crows Turned out for Iranian Commander’s Funeral* (BBC, 07/01/2020)

231. Ibid.

232. Jen Kirby, *How Thousands of Iranians Went from Mourning a General to Protesting the Regime, in a Week* (Vox, 16/01/2020)

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August of 2019233, according to a Conversation article that sampled data from IranPoll. The same polling indicated that, in August 2019, 12% of Iranians thought that the US is a model country for its values and freedom, 66% thought that the US is a dangerous country that seeks control and confrontation, and 20% think the US is no better or worse than other country234. Overall, this paints a bleak picture of Iranian opinion towards the US.

Overall, the Trump administration’s policies have had tangible negative effects on the Iranian populace, and have further promoted anti-Americanism within the country.

**4.6.3 Polling Data**

Polling data indicates, that, while the American people have an unfavorable view of Iran, they might not necessarily support Trump administration policies wholeheartedly. Regarding the overall view of Iran, the Gallup Country Ratings poll has the February 2017/18/19/20 Iran results, regarding favorability, all between 11-17%, whereas the unfavorable ratings for the same time period are all between 79-88%235. PollingReport has a variety of Trump-era polls, as well; a 2020 Gallup poll notes that 53 vs. 45 approved vs. disapproved of the Trump administration’s actions against Soleimani236. A 2020 CBS poll asking whether or not Iran was a threat that required immediate action, could be contained, or wasn’t a threat received a 14-64-17 split, respectively237. A 2020 Qunnipiac poll, regarding Soleimani and war tensions with Iran found that 45 vs 41% thought killing Soleimani was the right action vs the wrong one. The same poll found that 32 vs 45% thought that the strike made the US more vs less safe (with 18% unsure); 44 vs 46% approving vs disapproving sending more troops to the Middle East after the strike; and 26 vs 64% supporting vs opposing going to war with Iran238.

A 2019 CNN poll found that a combined 66% of Americans thought Iran was a very or

233. Monti Datta, *What Iranians Think of the US and Their Own Government* (The Conversation, 15/01/2020)

234. Ibid.

235. Gallup contributor(s), *Country Ratings* (Gallup, various dates, accessed 04/05/2020)

236. Polling Report contributor(s), *Iran* (PollingReport.com, various dates, accessed 04/05/2020)

237. Ibid.

238. Ibid.

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moderately serious threat, with 30% saying Iran was only a slight or no threat at all239. Lastly, regarding the Iran Deal, a 2017 Quinnipiac poll found that 31 vs 47% supported vs opposed the deal, with 21% unsure240, whereas a series of 2017-2018 CNN polls found that 27 vs 67% in 2017 and 29 vs 63% in 2018 thought the US should vs should not withdraw241. Interestingly enough, the same CNN poll found that 62% of respondents thought that Iran had violated terms of the deal in 2018, while 19% said they had not, while 19% were unsure or refused242. This is particularly notable, as Iran was, in fact (according to the International Atomic Energy Agency) following the deal at the time243, making these 62% of Americans factually incorrect.

Overall, Americans, while continuing to view Iran as a dangerous country and in a negative light, do not necessarily support Trump administration policies.

**4.6.4 Connection to Bush Doctrine**

Overall, the Trump administration’s policies towards Iran embody principles 1, 2, and 3. The 1st and 2nd, due to the use of the US’s military might and economic sanctions to control/hurt Iran and “stop terrorism”. The 3rd, because the US broke from its allies (most notably regarding the Iran Deal) in the name of what the Trump administration considered to be US interests.

Overall, Trump administration policy towards Iran has driven a rift further between the two countries, has caused harm to the local population, and has likely further de-stabilized the region.

**Conclusion**

Overall, much like during the Obama years, the Trump presidency has been replete with bush Doctrine influence in its foreign policy, and will likely continue to be so, as detailed in the table below. The long-lasting effects are harm to the countries and question and the US, both

239. Ibid.

240. Ibid.

241. Ibid.

242. Ibid.

243. Arms Control Association contributor(s), *IAEA Report Confirms Iran’s Compliance with JCPOA* (Arms Control Association, 08/06/2018)

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reputation-wise, and in a more tangible way, such as direct harm to the populace or the economy. In the next chapter, a comparison shall be done between similar issues, where they are relevant to the Bush Doctrine, between trump and Obama-era policies.

**Table 2: Trump-Era Policies and Bush Doctrine Influence**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | American Pre-Eminence | Assertive Realism | Strategic Stand-Apart Alliances | Selective Multilateralism | Democratic transformation |
| Trump in Syria | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| Trump in Yemen | **X** | **X** | **X** | **-** | **X** |
| Trump in Israel/Palestine | **X** | **-** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| Drones under Trump | **X** | **X** | **-** | **-** | **X** |
| Trump in Pakistan | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| Trump in Iran | **X** | **X** | **X** | **-** | **-** |

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**Chapter V: Conclusion: Comparative analysis; Findings, Summary, Recommendations, and Contributions.**

As an analysis has now been done regarding both Trump and Obama-era foreign policy, a chapter drawing general comparisons between the two, in the context of the Bush Doctrine policy and influenced countries, will follow. This will help construct an accurate portrayal of the findings of the cases examined here, as well as some that haven’t, which will then be summarized in a more general findings and summary section.

**5.1.0 Trump and Obama in Yemen**

In a practical sense, neither administration is very different from the other on the issue of Yemen. Both have provided support for the Saudi coalition, in the way of intelligence, equipment, and fuel. Both have orchestrated drone strikes, or aided them. While, as addressed above, the Yemeni people did not initially see this as “Trump’s war”, since the Obama administration was the one got the US into the conflict, the Trump administration certainly “owned” it, by doing things such as vetoing the bill to stop aide to Saudi Arabia. Both administrations underwent these operations in Yemen for primarily strategic reasons, likely to protect the US’s relations with Saudi Arabia.

As far as doctrinal principles, the Trump administration embodied principles 1, 2, 3, and 5, while the Obama administration embodied principles 1, 3, and possibly 5. This demonstrates that, despite the relative similarities, the Trump administration had a more intense approach regarding the Yemeni crisis.

Overall, as complex and severe as the crisis in Yemen is, the comparison between administrations is an easy one. While the Trump administration was/is certainly more overtly aggressive regarding the Yemeni situation, neither administration is necessarily “worse”, and both have contributed in an overwhelmingly negative manner towards the situation.

**5.1.1 The Drone program under Trump and Obama**

The drone program under the Trump and Obama administrations were also, largely the same. While the amount of strikes in different countries differed, the major strike sites (Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, etc.) were largely the same, with both also having much higher strike counts than the Bush administration, as addressed above. Both primarily embodied the 1st and 2nd principles of the Bush Doctrine, and both largely either ignored or denied the harmful

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effects of the drone program. Again, there is little to say about it, despite the fact that the trump administration has been more aggressive (such as when the regulations regarding the tracking/reporting of civilian death tolls were rescinded) about it.

Both administrations embodied principles 1, 2, and 5. These reflect the mask that the actions of the US under the Bush Doctrine utilize (e.g. using “freedom” as an excuse to kill civilians), and both were quite similar in regards to each other.

Overall, the drone program started in the Bush era ramped up heavily under the Obama administration, and continued to be quite active under the Trump administration. There was more accountability under the Obama administration, but one cannot say that it was necessarily better or worse, either way, and both administrations’ programs contributed in an overwhelmingly negative manner to the afflicted countries.

**5.1.2 Pakistani Policy under the Obama and Trump Administrations**

Pakistani policy under the Obama and Trump administrations were quite different, with the Trump administration, which is currently far more friendly with the Pakistani administration, embodying more doctrinal principles than under Obama. The Obama administration took an approach that was more on the side of strategic alliance, essentially discarding the Pakistani administration, especially after the temporary troop pull-out from Afghanistan in 2011. Other factors, such as the focus on a partnership with India during the Obama years, and a drone and espionage program compounded the problem, led to not only poor inter-governmental relations, but a poor view of the US by Pakistani citizens, as addressed above.

The Trump administration had the opposite “approach”. While it initially seemed like things would very rocky, with Trump himself making a particularly inflammatory Tweet in 2018, as well as some comments in official speeches, the need for the administration (by their view) to withdraw from Afghanistan and make a deal with the Taliban, using Pakistan as a key mediator, contributed to the warming of relations between the two countries. The trump administration is not apathetic towards India, but the focus on Pakistan seems to be key, currently.

The Obama administration embodied principles 1-4, while the Trump administration embodied all 5, but for different reasons. The former’s drone and espionage program within the country, and the usage of Pakistan only as a strategic partner for their personal interests led to the realization of certain principles, while the latter’s administration presented the might of the US

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by giving military equipment and giving their backing, in a way, behind the Pakistani government, such as when the BLA were declared terrorists, as addressed above. A different set of strategic alliances and reasoning behind them were crafted by the Trump administration. This gives you two separate administrations that embodied the core of the Bush Doctrine, using opposite approaches. Thus, the Pakistan case demonstrates, perhaps better than any other, the flexibility of the Bush Doctrine, which is a testament to its omnipresence, and why it may exist for many years to come within US foreign policy.

Overall, the Pakistan case, while very different under both administrations, is a prime example of the Bush Doctrine influencing US foreign policy, and its high degree of flexibility. While the view of the US did not improve significantly in the eyes of Pakistani civilians during either administration, the relations with the government were drastically different. Under the Obama administration, the US certainly had a negative relationship and contribution with/in Pakistan, while the Trump administration, at this point, appears to be having a positive influence.

**5.1.3 Trump and Obama in Israel/Palestine**

The Obama and Trump administrations had largely similar Israel/Palestine policy, despite different attitudes and approaches. The Obama administration was notable, in that Barack Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu were not fond of each other, yet the Obama administration’s foreign policy, after some high rhetoric in the beginning, was in favor of the Israeli side of the dispute, and encouraged the expansion of settlements. The Trump administration’s policy has been largely the same, yet more involved than under Obama. Trump, who had a personal relationship with Netanyahu, as addressed above, was on Israel’s side from the start. The most notable example of this would be the movement of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and the recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.

The Obama administration embodied principles 1, 4, and 5; the Trump administration embodies 1, 3, 4, and 5. Despite very different feelings and relationships towards the prime minister, and vastly different rhetoric in the beginning of their administrations, the Trump and Obama administrations were largely the same. This is why the principles embodied are nearly identical, despite such differences, and importantly demonstrates how policy is far more important than any kind of rhetoric.

Overall, both administrations were solidly in favor of one side over the other, the Israelis, and contributed to settlement expansion and practices that caused the suffering and abuse of the Palestinian people. Both had negative impacts on the Palestinian people, and positive impacts on

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the US-Israel relationship, although the Trump administration’s was notably greater than that under Obama.

**5.1.4 Trump and Obama on Iran**

Regarding Iran, the Trump and Obama administrations were very different. While the Trump administration has had a highly aggressive and negative relationship with Iran, as addressed above, the Obama administration, despite sanctions in the early years244, actively tried to improve the US-Iran relationship with the Iran Deal in 2015, as well as improve thing for Iran in general on the world stage, straying from the previous containment policy245.

The Trump administration embodies principles 1, 2, and 3. The Obama administration embodied principles 1, 3, 4, and 5. This is another example of the flexibility of the Bush Doctrine, especially concerning the 3rd and 4th principles. While the Obama administration initially used sanctions, the administration tried a different tactic later in the administration, one that not only embodied the alliance principles (3/4) but one that was clearly aimed at the pacification of Iran. The trump administration has done the opposite; not only did the administration end the Iran Deal, thereby increasing the chances of Iran procuring nuclear weapons and adding instability to the region, but continuing aggressive actions and sanctions through 2019/2020.

Overall, while neither administration was “good” for the Iranian people, one could say that the Obama administration at least tried, with the Iran Deal, and wasn’t nearly as overtly aggressive as the Trump administration. The latter has simply had a wholly negative impact towards US-Iran relations, regional security, and on the condition of the state of Iran.

**5.1.5 Trump and Obama in Syria**

The Trump and Obama administrations, essentially, had opposite Syria policies. The Trump administration has had an extremely involved Syria policy, conducting many strikes, and saying troops are there to take the oil, as addressed above. This is despite the 2019 draw-down of troops, which drew international criticism. By contrast, the Obama administration took the opposite approach to Syria as he did to Libya, the events of which were occurring at roughly the same time. While the Libya intervention was very aggressive and involved, the Obama administration, despite setting a “red line” of sorts, allowed Syria to violate it with chemical

244. White House contributor(s), *Fact Sheet: Sanctions Related to Iran* (Whitehouse.gov, 31/07/2012)

245. Mario Loyola, *Obama Should Never Have Appeased Iran* (The Atlantic, 12/01/2020)

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weapon attacks in the eyes of many, and never really ended up doing anything of significance there, instead choosing to pursue a path of diplomacy with Russia and Syria instead246 247.

The Trump administration embodied all 5 Doctrinal principles, while the Obama administration did not necessarily embody any Doctrinal principles. This shows that, in addition to necessarily never being able to “win”, no matter what you do regarding foreign policy, that a measured and non-aggressive response, favoring diplomacy, is a response that is in direct contravention to the Bush Doctrine, making this one of the few cases in the last several decades where a president did not use the Bush Doctrine, in some way.

Overall, the Trump administration certainly has angered the international community and made the Syria situation worse, but it is more complicated with the Obama administration. Many were displeased with the reaction of the Obama administration, as addressed above and in myriad articles about the topic, but there was a variety of reasons for Obama’s decision, such as fear of further Middle East conflicts248. One could argue that the administration’s lack of response made the situation worse (due to not stopping more civilian deaths sooner), or that it was the correct decision (due to an early strike sparking an early conflict, which one could easily argue would have contributed more long-term deaths in the region). This shows that, in modern times, it is not easy to even make a non-doctrinal response, despite the demonstrable destruction doctrinally-influenced policies often cause.

**5.1.6 Trump and Obama in Iraq and Afghanistan**

Iraq and Afghanistan, the “original wars” in the Bush Doctrine, both persist to this day. Both persist to this day, and the war in Afghanistan is the longest war in the history of the US. The Obama administration’s response has been criticized, as addressed above, by keeping thousands of troops in the region and contributing to the problems in the region. The Trump administration has largely been the same. Despite espousing a desire to leave the region249

246. Ballotpedia contributor(s), *The Obama Administration on Syria, 2009-2017* (BallotPedia, various dates, accessed 07/05/2020)

247. Alex Lockie, *Inside the Most Embarrassing Foreign Policy Failure of Obama’s Presidency – The Syrian ‘Red Line’* (Business Insider, 04/06/2018)

248. Ibid.

249. Courtney Kube, Carol Lee, *Trump Admin Intends to Announce Withdrawal of about 4000 troops from Afghanistan* (NBC News, 15/12/2019)

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the Trump administration continues to have troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite a more diplomatic approach, as addressed above regarding Pakistan and the Taliban, the situation in Afghanistan has still not improved or changed significantly in Afghanistan250. The trump administration’s Iraq policy is markedly more negative; after the killing of Soleimani, the Iraqi parliament voted to expel all US troops, and the caretaker prime minister, Adil Abdul mahid, said that, “Iraqi priorities and the US are increasingly at odds”, and that a US troop withdrawal was the only way to, “protect all those on Iraqi soil”251. US troops still remain there.

The Obama administration embodied all doctrinal principles, as does the Trump administration. Despite taking a more diplomatic approach regarding Afghanistan, the Trump administration has not done so regarding Iraq. Destructive drone policies are still in place, and although rhetoric would suggest that leaving is a priority, it has not happened yet, and may not within the foreseeable future.

Overall, the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have posed strategic problems for both administrations, with both being heavily involved, despite rhetoric suggesting the contrary. The situations have not improved significantly in either country, and with no end in sight to either conflict, the original Bush Doctrine wars are still going strong.

**5.1.7 Trump and Obama in Libya**

Obama-era Libya policy was characterized by extensive military intervention, and the overthrowing of an elected government (which was a dictatorship, but enjoyed a large amount of popular support). The situation, for both the state of government in the country and the civilians, become markedly more negative, with human rights’ violations ramping up significantly, as the various tribal leaders and other militant groups started to wage war with each other, shortly following their appointment to lead Libya by the UN. The Trump administration’s Libyan policy, is not as involved or as discussed in the media, and plays a diminished role compared to that under Obama, despite sending mixed signals. While in early 2019, Trump expressed support for the general who commands the faction that is against the UN, Khalifa Haftar and his Libyan National Army, stating that Haftar had a significant role in fighting terrorism and securing Libya’s oil (as well as blocking a UNSC statement regarding a July

250. Vanda Felbab-Brown, *President Trump’s Afghanistan Policy Hopes and Pitfalls* (Brookings Institute, 09/2017)

251. Tamara Qiblawi, Jomana Karadsheh, Arwa Damon, *Iraq Has Voted to Expel US Troops. Whether They’ll Actually Be Kicked Out is far from Clear* (CNN, 06/01/2020)

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airstrike that killed more than 40 people252 253), the Trump administration has also repeatedly snubbed Haftar, especially in June of 2019 and in the beginning of the administration254 255. While the Trump administration’s role is far less clear than under Obama, it is clear that the US still has some role in Libya under Trump.

The Obama administration embodied policies 1, 2, and 5 of the Bush Doctrine. The Trump administration can be said to support principles 3, 4, and possibly 5. The Trump administration appears to have a mostly incoherent Libyan policy, as addressed above, although the author could find no evidence of confirmed physical intervention under the Trump administration, despite some sources claiming the contrary256. The trump administration might just be angling for some sort of advantage, especially regarding oil, but nothing is clear, at present.

Overall, the Libyan situation, created during the time of the Obama administration by NATO (with significant support from the US and allies) has only gotten worse, with a civil war raging to this day. While the current administration can be said to be not nearly as involved, it is still unclear what exact role the US plays to this day, only that it has a background presence.

**5.1.8 Trump and Obama on Cuba**

The Trump and Obama administrations have had very different Cuban policy. While the Obama administration had very positive relations with Cuba, stating that isolating Cuba had failed to advance US interests257, relaxing various sanctions and diplomatic issues, and orchestrating the historic 2014 Cuban thaw258. Obama-era policy was met with support from citizens of both countries, as well as, significant private sector growth in Cuba, increasing liberalization and improving the economy259. The Trump administration’s policy has been nearly

252. Patrick Wintour, *Libya: EU Officials Hope Trump Will Pull Support for Haftar* (The Guardian, 23/04/2019)

253. Allahoum, Op. cit.

254. Ibid.

255. Martin Chulov, Julian Borger, *Trump Officials Snub Strongman Khalifa Haftar as US Shifts Course on Libya* (The Guardian, 08/06/2019)

256. CGTN contributor(s), *US Officials Say Trump backed Haftar’s Attack on Tripoli* (China Global Television Network, 25/04/2019)

257. CFR contributor(s), *US-Cuba Relation* (Council on Foreign Relations, last edited 27/03/2020)

258. Ibid.

259. Ibid.

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the opposite. Some Trump administration policies include the re-imposition of sanctions, banning Cuban officials from entering the US, severely restricting travel (including educational groups), and allowing US nationals to sue entities that traffic in or benefit from property confiscated by the Cuban regime260 261 262. The last of these examples drew international backlash.

While the Obama administration does not represent any bush Doctrine principles, the Trump administration represents principles 1, 3, 4, and possibly 5 (due to the banning of Cuban officials for associating with the Venezuelan government263, although this one is debatable).

Overall, while the Obama administration saw a historic improvement of relations between the two countries, which drew widespread support and benefitted the civilian population of Cuba in particular, the Trump administration essentially reversed all of these policies, embodying the combative and aggressive nature of the Bush Doctrine in an exemplary manner.

**5.1.9 Obama and Trump in Venezuela**

Venezuela has recently been a popular topic in American political and media discourse, most notably being held up as the prime example of Fox News’s, Trump’s, and any Republican’s example of what will happen if “socialism” comes to America. The country is going through economic and political turmoil plaguing the country, and has been the target of significant attention from the previous 2 administrations.

The Trump administration has had what can only be described as a highly aggressive and confrontational foreign policy with Venezuela. From declaring a different Venezuelan politician as the interim leader of Venezuela (Juan Guaido over Nicholas Maduro)264, to sanctioning the country’s oil sector heavily during an economic crisis265, to potentially being behind a failed

260. Ibid.

261. Sophie Perryer, *The Cuban thaw Goes Cold* (Business Destinations, 29/03/2019)

262. Victoria Gagliardo-Silver, *Cruise Ships Forced to Leave Cuba as Trump Re-Imposes Sanctions* (The Independent, 06/06/2019)

263. CFR contributor(s), Op. cit.

264. White House contributor(s), *Statement from president Donald J. Trump Recognizing Venezuelan National Assembly President Juan Guaido as the Interim president of Venezuela* (Whitehouse.gov, 23/01/2019)

265. Nidhi Verma, Aftab Ahmed, *Trump Warns of more US Sanctions on Venezuelan Oil Sector* (Reuters, 25/02/2020)

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coup (and responding that he would, “send an army, not two mercenaries” in response266), the Trump administration has overall, had postured quite aggressively towards Venezuela throughout, with the former acting FBI director Andrew McCabe pointing out that trump asked in 2017 why the US couldn’t go to war with Venezuela because they, “have all that oil267”. The Obama administration, meanwhile, set the mold for the Trump administration’s Venezuela policy. While not as aggressive, as is often the pattern, the regime of sanctions started by the Obama administration assisted in crippling the country’s economy268. The Obama administration targeted the Venezuelan government with similar measures multiple times, labelling them an, “unusual and extraordinary threat to national security269”. While not as overtly aggressive as the Trump administration, the Obama administration has certainly been confrontational in its own way.

The Trump administration has embodied principles 1, possibly 2, 3, and 5 of the Bush Doctrine, while the Obama administration has embodied 1, 3, and 5. Both have heavily sanctioned and disrupted the Venezuelan economy/state, due to allegations of human rights abuse. Both have had fairly similar responses in principle, with the Trump administration only differing slightly, as addressed above.

Overall, both administrations have exemplified how primarily economic warfare is an extremely effective method of expressing dissatisfaction with a regime, and can be almost as effective as conventional warfare, on occasion. The sanctions are causing the civilian population a significant amount of hardship270, and neither administration has had positive or productive relations with the present administration.

**5.1.10** **Obama and Trump in Africa**

The African shadow war, which has received very little media coverage until recently. It

266. Justin Vallejo, *Donald Trump Says He Would Send an Army, not Two Mercenaries, to Overthrow Venezuela’s Maduro* (The Independent, 08/05/2020)

267. Alex Ward, *Andrew McCabe Claims Trump Wants War with Venezuela because “They Have all that Oil”* (Vox, 20/02/2019)

268. Moises Rendon, *Are Sanctions Working in Venezuela?* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 03/09/2019)

269. Rachael Boothroyd-Rojas, *Obama Extends Executive Order Targeting Venezuela for Second Time* (Venezuelanalysis.com, 16/01/2017)

270. Teresa Bo, *US Sanctions on Venezuela likely to Add to People’s Woes* (Al-Jazeera, 07/08/2019)

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is the most obscure case being studied and has the least information available on it. Nevertheless, there is significant US military presence in Africa, with 50 of the 54 African countries being occupied as of December 2017271. With experts referring to the wars as having unclear objectives despite having several thousand military personnel present272, the only discernible objective is something akin to, “fighting terrorism”273. With nearly 20% of all special forces deployed in Africa as of late 2016274, and the Trump administration only ramping up operations and strikes in Africa275, as addressed above, both of the past administrations have had a quiet, yet very active presence in Africa.

Both administrations embody principles 1, 2, and 5. With a huge military presence (some reports estimate at least 100 special operations missions to be happening simultaneously276), under the guise of fighting terrorism, the US is involved in nearly every African country, with special ops presence and drone strikes in certain countries as well, as addressed above.

Overall, while there is little information regarding the conflicts, it is likely that as time goes on, more shall become available, as the US plans to expand its presence in Africa277. With US presence doing little to stop terrorism, and harming civilian populations and already fragile democracies in an area that is historically highly unstable278, the shadow wars, in terms of civilian impact, regional security, and global security, are counterproductive. The wars themselves are a good example of how almost anything can be excused as acceptable under the Bush Doctrine, despite violating national law (for it is illegal to engage in war without official Congressional approval, under the 1973 War Powers Resolution279).

271. Les Neuhaus, *US Military Stretched Thin in 50 African Nations* (The Observer, 01/12/2017)

272. Wesley Morgan, Bryan Bender, *America’s Shadow War in Africa* (Politico, 12/10/2017)

273. Ibid.

274. Nick Turse, *US Special Operations Numbers Surge in Africa’s Shadow Wars* (The Intercept, 31/12/2016)

275. John Haltiwanger, *Trump Inherited Obama’s Drone War and he’s Significantly Expanded it in Countries where the US is not Technically at War* (Business Insider, 27/11/2018)

276. Nick Turse, *The US is Waging a Massive Shadow War in Africa, Exclusive Documents Reveal* (VICE News, 18/05/2017)

277. Ibid.

278. Salih Booker, William Hartung, *America’s Shadow War in Africa is Dangerous and Counterproductive* (The Hill, 05/01/2018)

279. Office of the Law Revision Council contributor(s), *Chapter 33 – War Powers Resolution* (OLRC of the US House of Representatives, accessed 17/05/2020)

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**5.2.0 General Summary and Findings**

As addressed above, the Bush Doctrine has been, in nearly all cases, the framework for highly confrontational foreign policy. In all cases examined, the effect on the civilian population is negative. In many, but not all cases, the American public does not even necessarily support doctrinally-motivated policies, such as in Afghanistan or Iraq; the only similarity is often a dislike by the American people of a certain country or region in question. Overall, the conclusion the author has reached over the course of their studies is that the Bush Doctrine, on the whole, leads to one or more of the following effects in the affected global South countries: economic sanctions, military presence (that may or may not be legal under US/international law), an adverse effect on civilian life, regional instability, change of governments, and animosity towards the US.

Therefore, in light of the author’s findings, addressed in the work above, and the extensive comparisons and contrasts addressed in the section earlier in this chapter, the author can come to no other conclusion, other than that the Bush Doctrine is a doctrine that, despite being omnipresent in nearly every foreign policy decision in past 2 decades, often increases domestic and international security concerns, and has a negative impact on the afflicted countries. This sharply contrasted with foreign policy issues where no or little Bush Doctrine influence was felt, such as in the Obama administration’s Cuba foreign policy, where the effects were approved of by both populations and the ramifications were generally thought to be positive.

**5.3.0 Recommendations**

The author would like to make 2 types of recommendations; recommendations on hypothetical future US foreign policy, as well as for future research.

The former is entirely goal-dependent. If one’s goal is to enrich the power of the US, including global influence and especially economic gains and military presence, one would persist in executing the Bush Doctrine. The Doctrine has been thoroughly demonstrated to often have economic or military interests in mind, under the guise of fighting terrorism. The Doctrine provides a simple way to become involved in any country for whatever reason, as long as it is reasonably plausible to call them “bad guys”.

Alternatively, if one’s goal is to promote diplomatic solutions and help bring the global South out of its current destitute state (especially in Africa and the Middle East), then the

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abandonment of the Bush Doctrine as the current primary influence on US foreign policy is the only solution. As extensively addressed above, foreign policy influenced by the Bush Doctrine always or nearly always has a negative effect on any sort of goal not concerning US soft/hard power, or the US economy. In order to promote peace and diplomatic solutions, the US must let international institutions come up with peaceful solutions, and abandon doctrinal principles entirely and their architects.

As far as future research, the author considers what would be the most significant contribution to be further case studies applying the aforementioned doctrinal principles to future US foreign policy. The author does not deem it likely that the Bush Doctrine will die anytime soon, so the negative effects that the Bush Doctrine has on the world at large must continue to be categorized and explained properly.

**5.4.0 Contributions to Knowledge**

The contributions to the field of knowledge made by this work are primarily in the scope of the aggregate information collected and evaluated, as well as the comparisons. To the author’s knowledge. Not only is there no other work that directly evaluates specific cases of US foreign policy with a critical lens that directly links them back to specific Bush Doctrine policies, but the comparison and contrasts section provides a valuable look into how the policies are not only replete with doctrinal influence, but oftentimes mirror each other and previous administrations. This is of particular significance regarding Obama, as many left-wing individuals consider Obama to be “good president” without having many scandals under his belt; the author has successfully demonstrated the opposite in this work.

Overall, the author has made this a unique work by taking existing work and drawing conclusions regarding Bush Doctrine policy that have not only not been previously done, but are not traditionally thought of as existing. It is the hope of the author that the critical analysis of this work will help to establish a more critical framework for those who are interested in researching and contributing to the field of US foreign policy regarding the Bush Doctrine.

**5.5.0 Final Thoughts**

The 9/11 attacks created a whirlwind of policy, the effects of which could never have been imagined today. The policies that so many Americans (without explicitly knowing much about them) would have considered to be a keystone in improving the world, making it safer, and fighting terrorism, has done the opposite on all accounts. Global instability has increased, while

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the most abused and marginalized people have only become more enveloped in their destitute state, largely thanks to the policies of the US and her allies. From a humanitarian and security concern, the Bush Doctrine has been the most destructive doctrine of the 21st century, bar none, and will likely continue to influence US foreign policy (and, by extension, global policy) for decades to come. It is the hope of the author that both the world and the American people will not only elect officials with the will to dispel such harmful policies, but take it upon themselves to combat them, as well.

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