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Continuation in US Foreign Policy: An Offensive Realist Perspective

Bledar Prifti
University of South Florida, bprifti@mail.usf.edu

Continuity in US Foreign Policy: An Offensive Realist Perspective

by

Bledar Prifti

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Chair: Linda Lucas, Ph.D.
Major Professor: Earl Conteh-Morgan, Ph.D.
Abdelwahab Hechiche, Ph.D.
Pratyusha Basu, Ph.D.
Bernd Reiter, Ph.D.

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Dedication

To my wife, Suela, for all she had to endure while I was writing this dissertation

To my son, Joel, for bringing joy in my life, faith in myself, and power in my soul

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ABSTRACT

     This dissertation is a study of US foreign policy that aims at maintaining its regional hegemonic status and preventing the emergence of another regional hegemon by implementing the offshore balancing strategy. US intervention during the 2003 Iraq War, strained US-Iran relationship, and the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in early 2014 compel a reevaluation of US foreign policy. Two major claims of this dissertation include: (1) US foreign policy is consistent with offensive realist theoretical claims; and (2) US foreign policy is characterized by continuity when it comes to issues related to America's strategic interests. Utilizing a case study and comparative case study methodology, this dissertation outlines the following findings.

     The first finding of this dissertation is that US foreign policy actions under the Bush Doctrine, which led to the 2003 Iraq War, were dictated by the anarchic status of the international system, the possession by Iraq of military capabilities that could harm or destroy America, fear from and suspicion of Iraq's intentions, the need to ensure survival in an anarchic system, and the need to maximize relative power vis-à-vis other states. All these factors led to three main pattern of behavior: fear, self-help, and power maximization. Because there was no other regional great power capable and willing to balance Iraq, the US was forced to rely on direct balancing by threatening Iraq to take military actions, creating an anti-Iraqi alliance, and maximizing its relative power by destroying Iraq's military capabilities.

     Second, US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine was a continuation of the 20th century foreign policy. US foreign policy during the 20th century was dictated by three major patterns of

behavior: fear, self-help, and power maximization. In realizing its foreign policy goals, the US had to rely on buck-passing and balancing strategies. Whenever there was no regional great power able and willing "to carry the buck", the US would rely on direct balancing by either threatening the aggressor, creating alliances with other regional states, or utilizing additional resources of its own. Four major presidential doctrines and related occurrences were utilized to test the claim: the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine.

The last finding of this dissertation is that US foreign policy toward Iran constitutes continuity and is dictated by US need to maintain regional hegemony by acting as an offshore balancer. In addition, the US and Iran share mutual strategic interests in several occasions, and a strategic win or loss for one state is a win or loss for the other. Like that of the US, Iran's foreign policy is guided by rationality. The Iran-Contra affair, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, and the Russia-Chechnya conflict support the claim that Iran's foreign policy is based on rationality instead of religious ideology as argued by many scholars. Also, the 2001 Afghanistan war, the 2003 Iraq war, and the establishment of the ISIL support the claim that the US and Iran share mutual strategic interests. Cooperation is often desirable and in some cases inevitable. Despite this strong claim, US-Iran relationship has its own limitations because neither the US nor Iran would accept a too powerful other that could establish absolute dominance in the region.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy is defined as strategies pursued by states to achieve their international

goals while statecraft is the way how states implement foreign policy (Rourke and Boyer 2010,

141). Foreign policy can be expressed through actions and decisions. Foreign policy actions

represent what states actually do to achieve their international goals while foreign policy

decisions represent initiatives that do not always translate into real actions and are sometimes

used to deceive or conceal the true decisions or goals of a state (Hudson 2013, 5). Explaining the

foreign policy of a state is a fairly daunting task not only because decisions and actions of a state

often do not match but also because there exist a plethora of theoretical approaches that focus on

particular facts, factors, or variables and look at foreign policy from different perspectives. At

the same time, explaining foreign policy is like seductive puzzle, the more you get into it the

more attractive it becomes, even though at times it may be challenging. This is the case

especially with U.S. foreign policy, the foreign policy of the most powerful country on earth.

The recent developments, including the 2003 Iraq war, US-Iran controversial relationship, and

the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) provide significant incentives

to reexamine US foreign policy in order to have a better understanding of its role and status in

the international system.

This dissertation is a case of continuity in US foreign policy, which aims at maintaining

US regional hegemony, expanding its influence when possible, and preventing the emergence of

another regional hegemon by implementing the offshore balancing strategy. As a distant hegemon, the US prevents the emergence of a competitor regional hegemon by using a local great power to balance the aggressor (passing the buck) or balance the aggressor whenever the buck-passing strategy is not possible (Mearsheimer 2001, 237). These foreign policy goals dictate US relationship with other states in the international system. Offensive realism provides a consistent and systematic theoretical guidance for US foreign policy.

The first objective of this dissertation is to explain US foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq War by utilizing an offensive realist approach. The second objective is to explain whether the foreign policy toward Iraq represents continuity or change in US foreign policy of the 20th century. The last main objective of this dissertation is to analyze the nature of US-Iran relationship as it relates to the overall US foreign policy goals. Three major claims will be tested. First, the aggressive US foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq war was influenced by the anarchic status of the international system, the possession by Iraq of military capabilities that could harm or destroy America, fear from and suspicion of Iraq's intentions, the need to ensure survival in an anarchic system, and the need to maximize relative power vis-à-vis other states. All these factors led to three main pattern of behavior: fear, self-help, and power maximization.

The second claim is that the foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq war represents continuity rather than change from the 20th century foreign policy, as it is argued by some researchers (Glassmann 2005; Mead 2005; Yordán 2006; Kaplan 2008). Like US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine, US foreign policy under the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine was influenced by the anarchic status of the international system, the possession by aggressor states of military capabilities that could harm or destroy America's interests, fear from and suspicion of states' intentions, the need to ensure

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survival in an anarchic system, and the need to maximize relative power vis-à-vis other states. All these factors created behavioral patterns of fear, self-help, and power maximization. In all these case, the US utilized the offshore balancing strategy by relying either on buck-passing or balancing strategy.

The last claim of this dissertation is that US foreign policy toward the Islamic State of Iran represents continuity when it comes to issues involving the strategic interests of the US and Iran. Both states share mutual strategic interests in several occasions, and the presence of these interests has led both countries to cooperation while still engaging in hostile political rhetoric against each other. This claim runs counter to conventional view within the academic circles, which see US-Iran relationship as being based on feelings of hatred and hostility rather than on rationality of pursuing strategic interests.

The aforementioned claims also represent a test for offensive theory of international relations. If the outcomes of the phenomena under study are congruent with theoretical claims of offensive realism, then the theory passes the test, meaning that it can be considered a powerful tool to explain US foreign policy. Several steps will be followed in order to fulfill this task. First, this dissertation will provide a version of offensive realism that addresses in particular the phenomena under study. Second, it will identify historical cases whose outcomes will be applied to the congruence method. Next, the dissertation will match the theoretical explanations and expectations with the outcomes of the cases under study. A detailed analysis of every case will be conducted in order to assess whether the congruence is casual or spurious.

It is important to note that offensive realism defines the US as a regional hegemon whose foreign policy goal is to maintain the *status quo* of the international system and prevent the emergence of another regional hegemon by pursuing the offshore balancing strategy

(Mearsheimer 2001, 40-42, 237). Unlike other great powers, the US is the only status quo power in the world, and while its behavior is characterized by aggressiveness, it major goal is promoting and preserving peace and stability. In doing so, the US pursues two major strategies: (1) the buck-passing strategy—using other regional states to balance the aggressor—and (2) balancing strategy—balancing the aggressor directly (Mearsheimer 2001, 155-159). Balancing strategy is a substitute for the buck-passing strategy whenever there is no other regional power capable and/or willing to balance the aggressor. These foreign policy goals and strategies dictate US relations with Iran and other states in the international system. While there are limitations to their relations, the US and Iran need each other to advance their respective strategic interests.

Case study and comparative case study analysis of several foreign policy actions of the US will be utilized to test the aforementioned claims. The first part of the dissertation includes a case study analysis of US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine that led to the 2003 Iraq war. The second part of the dissertation incorporates a comparative case study analysis of several cases in an attempt to test whether US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine represents continuity or change from the 20th century foreign policy. Cases that will be utilized include the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine. It is very important to note, however, that even though the dissertation will be referring to the presidential doctrines, it will analyze specific events that gave birth or are related to these doctrines. Thus, foreign policy will be about how the US dealt with specific events and issues.

Accordingly, the Roosevelt Corollary was a reinstatement of the Monroe Doctrine and dealt with the Venezuela Crisis of 1902-03, the Truman Doctrine was a strategy to contain the spread of the Soviet influence in Greece and Turkey after the withdrawal of the Great Britain in 1947, the Carter Doctrine was launched in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in

1979, and the Reagan Doctrine, also known as the Reagan Corollary to the Carter Doctrine, aimed at "rolling back" the Soviet expansion throughout the world during the mid- and late 1980s, while emphasizing the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf. For the purpose of maintaining simplicity and clarity, this dissertation will be referring to the presidential doctrines when analyzing US foreign policy.

Lastly, the third part of the dissertation will conduct a case study analysis of US-Iran relationship. This case study analysis will incorporate an analysis of several other observations or mini-case studies. These mini-cases will include of the Iran-Contra affair, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, the Russian-Chechen war, the 2001 Afghanistan war, the 2003 Iraq war, and the establishment of the ISIL. The first three mini-cases will test the claim that the US and Iran are rational actors and behave rationally to advance their strategic interests. Despite the political rhetoric against each other, the US and Iran have cooperated in different instances as their strategic interests are often mutually inclusive. The last three mini-cases will test the claim that the US and Iran share mutual strategic interests in several areas, and a strategic win or loss for one will be a strategic win or loss for the other. However, their relationship has limitations as none of them will accept a too powerful other. The respective needs to maintain hegemony and survive in an anarchic system will always wave a "red flag" in the US-Iran relationship.

Foreign Policy Variables and Levels of Analysis

Defining variables or levels of analysis is important to explain US foreign policy. James N. Rosenau (1966) defines several main variables, such as the external environment of the international system, domestic politics of a state, the governmental structure, the bureaucratic structure, and individual characteristics of the leaders and the governing elite. Kenneth Waltz (1959) simplifies the issue by outlining three major levels of analysis—individual, state, and

international—through which a state's foreign policy actions can be explained. While each level has its own advantages and disadvantages, they do not override each other, and the selection of each level depends on the researcher's objectives (Singer 1969, 90). At the individual level, scholars focus on *leadership personality and cognitive characteristics* (O. Holsti 1967; Winter 1992; Walker 2003), *perception and misconception* (Jervis 1976), *presidential character* (George 1974; George and George 1998;), *ideas and beliefs* (Goldstein 1988; Goldstein and Keohane 1993), *emotions and motivations* (Walker 1983; Crawford 2000; Mercer 2013), and *leadership psychological traits in selecting foreign policy advisors* (Walker, Schafer, and Young 1999; Garrison 2001).

At the state level, scholars focus on the impact of *norms and national identity* (Onuf 1989; Wendt 1999; Kubalkova 2001), *domestic structures* (Eichenberg 1989; Risse-Kappen 1991), different types of *decision units and political structures* (Stern and Sundelius 1997; Hagan and Hermann 2001), *advisory structure to leadership* (George 1980; Preston 2001), *groupthink* (Janis 1972, 1989; 't Hart 1994; Badie 2010), *forms of political opposition* (Hagan 1993), *religion* (Judis 2005), *culture* (Hudson 1997; Hudson and Sampson 1999), *public opinion* (Rosenau 1961; Foyle 1997; Shapiro and Page 1988; Holsti 1992), *domestic political calculations and strategic choice* (Putnam 1988; Bueno de Mesquita 2002), *bureaucratic and organizational behavior* (Allison 1971; Allison and Zelikow 1999), and *crisis* (George 1991; Hess 2001). Finally, at the international level, scholars focus on the role of states as competitors (Morgenthau 1948; Waltz 1979; 2008) and cooperators (Keohane and Nye 1980; Doyle 1983; Keohane 2005). At the same level we may include works from *(neo)Marxist* and *critical perspectives*, which accept the primacy of the state but argue that the state represents the interests of a particular class or power (Negri and Hardt 2000; Harvey 2005; Little 2008; Lockman 2010).

Attempts have been made to structure the above-mentioned approaches to a single foreign policy analysis (FPA) theory (Hudson 2005; 2013). FPA is recognized as an actor-specific (agent-oriented) theory that provides the theoretical micro-foundations upon which the International Relations (IR) theory is grounded (Hudson 2005, 21). It claims that as an actor-general theory based on the role of the states, IR is grounded on actions of human decision makers as individuals and groups. As such, FPA is a *multilevel theory*, incorporating elements from more than one level of analysis, and *multidisciplinary* in nature, borrowing from other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, organizational behavior, economics, etc (Hudson 2005, 2). FPA is built on the classical works of Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (1954), Rosenau (1966), and Sprout and Sprout (1965), all of which incorporate more than one level of analysis and borrow from different disciplines—a claim made by Hudson 2005, 5).

On the other hand, Waltz (1979, 65) is concerned about the multilevel and multidisciplinary nature of FPA because it may lead to wild proliferation of variables and subjectivity. Instead, he argues that the international level of analysis provides a better explanation of a state's behavior because the structure of the international system imposes constraints on its behavior (1979, 74). The lack of a supranational authority, the uneven distribution of capabilities in the system, the uncertainty about their future, and the fear thereof will urge the states to rely on self-help to ensure survival (Mearsheimer 2001, 3). Depending on the distribution of their relative capabilities, states will devise strategies to protect them from external threats.

However, scholars disagree on when to use the international-level analysis. Some argue that the need to analyze international-level factors is more important in the study of small states foreign policy than in the study of great powers because those factors impose fewer constraints

on great powers than on small states (Rosenau 1966; Jervis 1978; Snyder 1991). Waltz (1979, 72-73) disagrees with this position and argues that great powers are concerned about threat coming from other great powers and tend to focus more at the international-level constraints and ignore the role of the small states. As a result, small states will experience fewer constraints from the international system and larger ones from individual- and state-level factors. Although the distribution of capabilities defines the structure of the international system, the latter is not a direct cause because its actions are conditioned by states' socialization and competition within the system (Waltz 1979, 74).

In addition, while the international-level analysis focuses on states as the unit of analysis, this does not mean that it ignores the impact of individuals and internal structures. Seeing that the international system imposes constraints on the behavior of individuals and internal structures, the actions of both will resemble those of the state itself. This perspective is also supported by the *poliheuristic theory*. According to this theory, political decision-making follows a two-stage process (Dacey and Carlson 2004; Kinne 2005; Red 2005). In the first stage, policy makers use shortcuts to eliminate policy options that are considered unacceptable while in the second stage they use plain rational analysis (Mintz 2004). At the second stage, policy decision makers set aside individual factors and domestic politics to focus on strategic and realpolitik interests of state (DeRouen and Sprencher 2004; James and Zhang 2005). Thus, individuals and internal structures are part of the same mechanism—the international system—and behave in accordance with predetermined patterns.

Research Questions and Unit of Analysis

US foreign policy, unlike that of any other state, is intrinsically linked to global politics. Not all world politics is about America, but all American foreign policy initiatives impact world

politics. It is for this reason that explaining US foreign policy transcends local boundaries and interests, both academic and political in nature. While previous studies have made significant contributions to explain US foreign policy, there still exists considerable room for improvement. This dissertation will do just that—build on the existing literature/work by providing an innovative explanation of American foreign policy. In doing so, first, it is important to identify the unit and level of analysis. Much has been discussed about the agent-structure debate in foreign policy analysis and international relations (Wendt 1987; Dessler 1989; Carlnaes 1992; Friedman and Starr 1997) and how the unit of analysis will also determine the level of analysis applied by a researcher. The focus on individuals as unit of analysis means that the researcher is utilizing an individual-level analysis, the focus on states systems or characteristics means that the researcher is applying a state-level analysis, and the focus on states and the international system created by them means that the researcher is utilizing an international-level analysis of a political phenomenon. Because the theoretical framework of this dissertation is based on offensive realism theory of international relations, this study will use the international-level analysis, meaning that it will consider the state as the unit of analysis. Considering the United States of America as the unit of analysis, this dissertation starts by asking the following questions:

Research Question I

- What factors explain US foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq war?
  - How did US foreign policy objectives influence its strategy toward Iraq?

Research Question II

- Was US foreign policy toward Iraq a continuation of or a break from the 20th century foreign policy pursued under the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine?

o If yes, why so? If not, why not?

Research Question III

- What factors explain US foreign policy toward the Islamic Republic of Iran?

  o How do strategic interests influence US-Iran relationship?

Establishing the Theoretical Framework: Offensive Realism

In order to answer the aforementioned questions of this dissertation, it is important to rely on a theory. Theory is a set of propositions and concepts that endeavor to explain political phenomena by specifying the relationship among variables (Mingst 2008, 56). For Talcott Parson (1938, 14-15), a theory provides selective criteria of facts on the ground, a basis for coherent organization of facts, a source of "cross fertilization" of related fields, and it reveals the gaps in our existing knowledge and their importance. Parsons also argues that any empirical science cannot be developed to a high point without reference to theory and that our study of facts is always guided by "the logical structure of a theoretical scheme".

In the field of international relations, Brian Schmidt (2008, 8) argues that a theory is "necessary and unavoidable" in order to understand international politics because (1) theories determine what factors are relevant for the study and (2) both policy makers and scholars rely on theories that are generated from their world views. In addition, John J. Mearsheimer (2001, 8) argues that none of us could understand the world we live in or make decisions without applying a theoretical approach. Mearsheimer (2001, 9) adds that "some are aware of it and some others are not, some admit it and some do not; but there is no escaping the fact that we could not make sense of the complex world around us without simplifying theories." Parsons (1938, 20) makes the same point when he argues that we are like Moliere's hero, speaking prose all our lives without knowing it. In the same vein, Schmidt (2008, 8) follows Waltz's approach and argues

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that the complexity of the foreign policy-making process and the interdependent impact of external and internal factors make it impossible to construct a theory of foreign policy. It is for this reason, argues Waltz, that we need to rely on a theory of international relations to provide general explanations for actions and interactions of states within the international system (2001, 71).

The application of a specific theory of international relations to explain a state's foreign policy depends exclusively, as Schmidt and Mearsheimer argue, on the paradigmic approach or the world view of the policy maker or scholar. It is reasonable to admit that we can view the world from different angles and come out with different explanations of global politics. Simply put, there is no universal objectivism, and each theory provides its own side of objectivism. Bernd Reiter (2013, 3) argues that we need to debunk the myth of the possibility of neutral, objective, and value-free scientific research. There cannot be a single version of objectivity but plethora versions of objectivity (Haraway 1988, 578). Research cannot start from nowhere, and our interests, backgrounds, training, and culture influence what questions we ask, how we ask them, and even what we accept as confirming evidence impact case study research at any stage (Reiter 2013, 2). Even theories, hypothesis, and approaches are a reflection of our "unreflected bias".

Thus, we cannot claim universal knowledge, "the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere", detached from the environment of the scholar who produces knowledge; instead we can better claim "situated knowledges" (Haraway 1988, 581). As a result, there cannot be a theory that explains everything or that cannot be falsifiable. Instead, a good theory is the one that is logically possible to be verified and falsified (Poper 2005, 17). What scholars need to do is to use a theory that they believe explains more than other theories. In cases when a theory survives

a series of repeated testing, it would be viewed as an acceptable truth—a paradigm (Collin and Martin 2013, 54). For Kuhn, a paradigm shift occurs not because the new paradigm is more objective than the previous, but because the scientific community loses confidence in the previous paradigm. While a paradigm is an accepted truth by the scientific community, a theory is an academic struggle to discover the truth by continuously testing and reformulating theories (Kuhn 2005). It is important for scholars to understand the nature of theory and be aware of the fact that no theory holds the hegemonic status in the scientific community. If this awareness is not present, then researchers may fall short of understanding the limitations of their research explanations or even providing basic explanation. An academic endeavor that aims at explaining everything about a political phenomenon may result in explaining nothing or becoming a myth.

What is Offensive Realism?

As mentioned previously, this dissertation utilizes offensive realism as theoretical framework to frame and test the aforementioned claims. Even though offensive realism is discussed in detail in the theoretical approach section, it is important to provide a short introduction at this stage of the dissertation. The theory was coined in 2001 by John J. Mearsheimer in his book, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. One important element of offensive realism is that it does not deal with all the states in the international community. Instead, it focuses on what are called "great powers", such as the US, China, or Russia. The reason offensive realism focuses on great powers is because "the fortunes of all states—great powers and smaller powers alike—are determined primarily by the decisions and actions of those with the greatest capability" (Levy 1982, 568; Mearsheimer 2001, 5). For example, at this point in time, the decisions or actions of the Albanian government do not ultimately dictate the development at the global level; however, the opposite can be argued about the decisions made

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by the US, Russia, China, or any other country whose actions may disturb the balance of power at the world stage. Great powers are defined as states that have sufficient military capabilities to engage in conventional war against the most powerful state in the world. A great power does not need to have capabilities to defeat the most powerful state, but it should be powerful enough to turn the conflict into a war of attrition that weakens the leading power, even though the later wins the war (Levy 1982, 568; Mearsheimer 2001, 5).

In addition, offensive realism is a theory of "high politics", politics that deal with national security of states. While it recognizes the fact that states do pursue non-security-driven policies, offensive realism argues that security policies supersede any conflicting non-security policy. This is what can be called the supremacy clause of offensive realism.

In addition, the anarchic structure of international system and the uneven distribution of capabilities create powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to gain power at the expenses of rival states in order to ensure survival. States are never certain about how much power is needed to feel secure. Because of this uncertainty, states are in a permanent quest for more power until they dominate all other states in the system. Thus, a state will always be power-hungry until it dominates all other states, becoming a *global hegemon* (Mearsheimer 2001, 40). However, becoming a global hegemon is impossible because it is hard for great powers to project power across the world's oceans onto the territory of a rival great power (Mearsheimer 2001, 41). For this reason, the world is "condemned" to perpetual great-power competition as great powers will continue their dream of becoming hegemon or will satisfy their needs by not allowing other states to become hegemons (Mearsheimer 2001, 2).

The best outcome a state may fight for is becoming regional hegemon, dominating all states in a particular region. The US is the only state that has achieved the status of regional

hegemon because of its dominance of the Western Hemisphere. The US was able to establish regional hegemony in the 19th century by pursuing expansionist foreign policy under the Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine (Mearsheimer 2001, 239). Besides being a hegemon in the Western Hemisphere, the US is the only state to have come close to projecting its power across the world's oceans. As a regional hegemon, the US is interested in maintaining the status quo of the international system and preventing the emergence of other regional hegemons (Mearsheimer 2001, 141).

Research Design

According to Dessler (1999, 395), a researcher should ask two basic questions at the beginning of the research: "What is this a case of?" and "From what historical pathway did this event emerge?" The way in which the researcher develops research design is fundamentally affected by whether the research question is exploratory or explanatory (de Vaus 2001, 1). A descriptive research would answer the question "*What is going on*?" while an explanatory research design would ask the question "*Why is it going on*?" (de Vaus 2001, 1). Other researchers argue that the research question may be exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Saunders et al. 2007). An exploratory question aims at finding out what is going on, a descriptive question aims at providing an accurate description of an event, and an explanatory question seeks to explain an event by establishing causal relationship between variables. John Gerring (2001, 231) argues that exploratory research design is used to properly define and "align" concepts, theories, and evidence of a case study research. On the other hand, explanatory research design envisions empirical analysis as a process of confirming or disconfirming a previous stipulated hypothesis (Gerring 2001, 231).

This dissertation will conduct both exploratory and explanatory because its research questions deal with the "what" and "how" of foreign policy phenomena under study. Some scholars believe that a "how" question is frequently used in case studies for both exploratory and explanatory purposes (Saunders et al. 2007). Often the explanation of social phenomena may demand some form of exploratory research to make up for the complex nature of the social world. Also, a "how" question is suitable to be used with case studies because the latter deal with causal mechanisms of social phenomena, such as conflicts and wars, which occur over a period of time (Yin 2009, 9-11).

Methodology: Case Study, Comparative Case Study, and the Congruence Method

In order to explain US foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq war, whether it was a continuation of or a break from past foreign policy, and the nature of US-Iran relationship, this dissertation will analyze several case studies that incorporate the Bush Doctrine, the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, the Reagan Doctrine, and major events related to these presidential doctrines, including the 2001 Afghan war, the Iraq war, and the establishment of the ISIS. David de Vaus (2001, 238) argues that case study designs are selected strategically rather than statistically. They all are relevant to the objectives of this dissertation.

First, this study will conduct a case study analysis of the 2003 Iraq war and the Bush Doctrine as foreign policy document that shaped the U.S foreign policy at the dawn of the 21st century. The goal is to see how this foreign policy fit within the offensive realist theoretical framework. Second, the aforementioned presidential doctrines and major events related to them will be used to explain whether U.S. foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq war was a continuation of or a break from foreign policies implemented under the aforementioned presidential doctrines. Thus, this task demands a case study and comparative case study analysis

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of different foreign policy initiatives during different periods. Lastly, this study will use the 2001

Afghan war, the Iraq war, and the Syria crisis as case studies to explain U.S.-Iran foreign policy

relationship from an offensive realist framework of analysis.

For Alexander George and Andrew Bennett (2005, 5), case study research is "the detailed

examination of an aspect of historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may

be generalizable to other events." A case is an instance of a class of events while the latter is a

phenomenon of scientific interest, such as conflicts, wars, revolutions, etc (George and Bennett

2005, 7). In addition, Gary Thomas (2001, 513) endeavors to broaden the definition of case study

by trying to relate it to methods. He argues that a case must comprise two elements: (1) a

"practical, historical unity he calls subject of the case study, and (2) an analytical or theoretical

frame that he calls object of the case study. This leads Thomas to define case studies as "analyses

of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are

studied holistically by one or more methods" (Thomas 2001, 513). On the other side,

comparative case study analysis involves comparing two or more case studies to explain a

particular social phenomenon. Some scholars argue that scientific research is inevitably

comparative in nature (Lasswell 1968, 3; Lijphart 1971, 682). In a case study analysis, the

researcher engages in comparing different observations while in a comparative case study

analysis the researcher compares cases and observations within.

Because this dissertation involves the testing of a theory, it will utilize the congruence

method. In essence, when utilizing the method, the researcher begins with a well-established

theory and then attempts to assess how the theory explains or predicts the outcome in a particular

case or several cases (George and Bennett 2005, 181). There are four main steps that a researcher

follows whenever utilizing the congruence method (George and Bennett 2005, 200-201). In the

first step, the researcher formulates a version of the deductive theory that addresses more specifically the foreign policy phenomenon under study. In the second step, the researcher identifies historical cases whose outcome will enable the researcher to apply the congruence method to test, assess, or refine the theory's explanatory and predictive power.

In the third step, the research matches the theoretical explanations, predictions, and expectations with the outcomes of the case(s) under study to see if they are congruent. Lastly, the researcher may decide to utilize process-tracing of each case in order to assess whether the congruence is spurious or causal, to identify any possible intervening causal process that connects the deductive theory with the case outcomes, and to provide an explanation for deviant cases that the theory may fail to explain or predict correctly (George and Bennett 2005, 201). This dissertation will utilize process-tracing in support of the congruence method for all case studies.

Data Collection

Data collection methods for this dissertation will include gathering foreign policy documents of the American government, declassified documentation, declarations made by high-ranking officials of states in conflict, findings of academic papers, and media coverage of major foreign policy actions related to the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, the Reagan Doctrine, and the Bush Doctrine. These events will include, but are not limited to, the Venezuelan crisis of 1903, the Greek-Turkish crisis soon after the WWII, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the 2001 Afghan war, the 2003 Iraq war, and the establishment of ISIS. This combination of sources will allow for the validation of data and results and satisfy the triangulation approach. The same data sources will be used to conduct case study and comparative case study analysis as outlined previously.

Academic and Political Contributions

Contributions of this study will be both academic and political in nature. One major contribution of this dissertation will be analyzing U.S. foreign policy during the 20th century by relying on offensive realism and adding more support to existing studies that have followed this theoretical approach but that have not incorporated other distinct cases studies. For example, John M. Mearsheimer, the founder of offensive realism, has used only the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny in order to test the offensive realist nature of U.S. Foreign policy. Other authors have used the Bush Doctrine as a presidential doctrine that shows an offensive realist perspective of U.S. foreign policy. Nevertheless, these studies do not incorporate an inclusive analysis of several other presidential doctrines, such as the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine.

This dissertation will focus on these "forgotten" doctrines to explain U.S. foreign policy during the 20th century, adding more to Mearsheimer's work on offensive realism. The second major academic contribution of this study will be providing an offensive realist explanation of U.S. foreign policy different from most or all previous studies. While many offensive realist studies make the general claim that U.S. foreign policy is conducted to impose or maintain U.S. hegemony around the world, this dissertation will make a more specific claim by arguing that U.S. foreign policy has to do with the regional hegemon status of the U.S. and its strategic interest to prevent the emergence of any potential regional hegemon around the world. Lastly, this dissertation endeavors to break the taboo about U.S.-Iran relation. Today it is a taboo in the academic and political circles to argue that the US and Iran share mutual strategic interests and are inevitably allies of each other. A strategic win or loss for the U.S. will also be a strategic win or loss for Iran. The 2001 Afghan war, the 2003 Iraq war, and the establishment of the ISIS

provide strong support for this claim. These findings have political implications because they redefine Iran-US relations and open the door for a new set of foreign policy initiatives between the two countries.

Dissertation Roadmap

This dissertation is structured as follows. The following chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the current literature on foreign policy in general and U.S. foreign policy in particular. The goal of this section is to provide the reader with the status of the academic research on U.S. foreign policy and to discern potential gaps within it. The next chapter will deal exclusively with explaining offensive realism theoretical framework and the bases it provides in support of the arguments of this dissertation. At the same time, it will expose strengths and limitations of offensive realism. Chapter four will be about research design and methodology. This chapter is very important because it deals directly with data collection and analysis, and as such it will determine whether the data support the theoretical claims or not. It will also provide a more detailed explanation of the case study and comparative case study methodology and will provide additional information about data collection and analysis and conceptual definitions. Chapter five will be a case study of U.S. foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq war, which is incorporated in the Bush Doctrine. Following the findings of chapter five, chapter six will implement a comparative case study analysis of U.S. foreign policy to find out whether the foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq war, the Bush Doctrine, was a continuation of or a break from major foreign policy initiatives of the 20th century, which were incorporated in the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine. Chapter seven will engage in an analysis of U.S-Iran relationship by utilizing a case study analysis of the 2001 Afghan war, the 2003 Iraq war, and the Syrian crisis. This chapter utilizes

findings from previous chapters to provide an innovative and provocative explanation of U.S.-Iran relationship. The concluding chapter will discuss findings, foreign policy implications, and the future of U.S.-Iran relations.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)—Human Research Protection Program (HRPP)

This dissertation will rely exclusively on previous academic studies, governmental documents, and other public sources of information, and it will not use in any way human subjects in research. As such, pursuant to *USF System Policy #0-305*, this dissertation does not need approval from the *Institutional Review Board* to conduct research about the subject matter.

CHAPTER TWO:

FOREIGN POLICY-INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS NEXUS

Introduction

Studying foreign policy is always a very interesting enterprise, but often a challenging for

two main reasons. First, it is a methodological challenge because researchers are faced with the

dilemma whether to apply a singular foreign policy or a comparative foreign policy (CFP)

approach. Some researchers support the singular foreign policy approach (Hearman and Peacock

1987; Carlsnaes 2002; Hudson 2013). They argue in favor of using a case study analysis,

applying middle-range theories, and aiming at providing rich, contextual explanations of political

phenomena rather than law-like generalization. On the other side, some other researchers support

a comparative approach that involves cross-national study analysis, applies grand theories, and

aims at providing generalization across units (Rosenau 1968; Kaarbo and Beasley 1999). Second,

arguably more important than the first, the study of foreign policy imposes theoretical challenges

upon researchers. Finding theoretical explanation is not the problem researchers are facing today

when it comes to explaining foreign policy. Instead, the field is oversupplied with theories, and

the real challenge is making proper theoretical choices (Ikenberry 2005, 7). In addition, deciding

whether to use foreign policy analysis (FPA) or international relations (IR) theory poses a

significant challenge to the researchers.

FPA and IR are recognized as two major theoretical sources used in the field of foreign

policy. The former is recognized as an actor-specific theory that provides the theoretical micro-

foundations upon which the latter (IR theory) is grounded (Hudson 2005, 21). Such a similar

claim is also made by Daniel Little (1998, 4) when he argues that grand theory explanations depend on "identifying the micro-pathways by which macro-phenomena occur." Supporters of FPA claim that FPA is a *multilevel theory*, incorporating elements from more than one level of analysis, and *multidisciplinary* in nature, borrowing from other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, organizational behavior, economics, etc (Hudson 2005, 2). On the other hand, IR theory is based on an "actor-general" approach and views structure as the most important element that dictates the behavior of micro-factors. This leads us to the actor-structure debate, arguing about the impact of individuals on structure and vice versa (Wendt 1987; Dessler 1989; Carlnaes 1992; Friedman and Starr 1997). This debate is similar to the individual-society debate in sociology or the egg-chicken casualty dilemma.

In order to understand the relation between FPA and IR, it is important to have an understanding of different levels of analysis (Waltz 1959; Jervis 1976; Ikenberry 1988) or variables (Rosenau 1966), or "explanans" (Hudson 2013, 5) employed to explain foreign policy. Waltz (1959) recognizes the individual, the state, and the international levels of analysis through which foreign policy can be explained. Ikenberry et al. (1988) recognizes the three-level analysis but name each level differently—society-centered, state-centered, and system-centered. Similar to Waltz and Ikenberry et al., Jervis (1976) follows level-bases analysis but uses four different ones—the decision making level, the bureaucratic level, the state level, and the international level. Unlike Waltz, Ikenberry et al., and Jervis, James N. Rosenau (1966) focuses on variables related to individual characteristics of the leaders and the governing elite, the bureaucratic structure, the governmental structure, domestic politics of a state, and the external environment of the international system. Following the same structure, others define source categories, which include the individual characteristics of foreign policy-making elites, the roles occupied by

policy makers, the societal environment of the nation, the governmental setting in which policy making occurs, and the external environment (Wittkopf et al. 2008, 18).

The international-level analysis generally falls under the roam of international relations theory while the other levels of analysis fall under the umbrella of foreign policy. Again, it is not about one excluding the other; instead, it is about one complementing and, at times, preceding the other. An IR theory is not a foreign policy theory; instead, it is a theory of constraints on foreign policy (Waltz 1996). From a theoretical perspective, Waltz (1979, 65) is concerned about the multilevel and multidisciplinary nature of FPA because it may lead to wild proliferation of variables and subjectivity. He argues in favor of a more simple approach by applying a theory of international relations. This is based on his claim that the international level of analysis provides a better explanation of a state's behavior because the structure of the international system imposes constraints on its behavior (1979, 74). The lack of a supranational authority, the uneven distribution of capabilities in the system, the uncertainty about their future, and the fear thereof will urge the states to rely on self-help to ensure survival (Mearsheimer 2001, 3). Depending on the distribution of their relative capabilities, states will devise their foreign policy strategies to protect themselves from external threats.

Nevertheless, scholars disagree on when to use the international-level analysis. Some researchers argue that international-level variables may be most important in times of international crises while domestic variables are most important in times of peace (Jervis 1976; Ikenberry 2005, 9-10). In addition, some argue that the need to analyze international-level factors is more important in the study of small states foreign policy than in the study of great powers because those factors impose fewer constraints on great powers than on small states (Rosenau 1966; Jervis 1978; Snyder 1991). Waltz (1979, 72-73) disagrees with this position and argues

that great powers are concerned about threat coming from other great powers and tend to focus more at the international-level constraints and ignore the role of the small states. As a result, small states will experience fewer constraints from the international system and larger ones from individual- and state-level factors. Although the distribution of capabilities defines the structure of the international system, the latter is not a direct cause because its actions are conditioned by states' socialization and competition within the system (Waltz 1979, 74).

Although some scholars argue that the domestic system imposes greater constraints than the international system does on foreign policy of a state (Joyner 2005), the majority admit the primary role of the international level of analysis. They argue that international relations analysis is grounded on actions of human decision makers as individuals and groups (Hudson 2005, 7-14; Ikenberry 2005), and incorporating different levels of analysis would provide a better explanation of foreign policy (Singer 1961). While attempts have been made to mix individual- and state-level factors with systemic factors (Rose 1988; Snyder 1991; Taliaferro et al. 2009), most of them lack theoretical rigor (Legro and Moravcsik 1999, 28), theoretical synthesis, and methodological issues (Tang 2009, 800-802). Despite their emphasis on either one level of analysis or a combination of levels, each approach has made a significant contribution in the field of foreign policy or international relations.

Individual-Level Analysis

At the individual level of analysis, scholars have always been concerned about the role of individuals in foreign policy. The impact individuals have on foreign policy falls mainly under the political psychology study domain, which incorporates a set of theories dealing with the influence individual's beliefs, perception, cognition, motivation, information processing, and the like factors. Many scholars have emphasized the importance of the psychological approaches in

foreign policy studies (de Rivera 1968; Deutsch 1983; Mercer 2005; Cottam et al. 2010; Levy 2013). Very often, they would focus on the behavior of leaders as the most important individuals who participate in decision-making process (George 1974; Hermann 1980; Barber, 2008; Jervis 2013). "Who lead matters", argue some scholars (Hermann 2010; Jervis 2013). For example, many scholars have discovered a significant impact of the president's character and personality on foreign policy and the overall performance (George 1974; Winter 1992; George and George 1998). It is for this reason that different leaders react differently to foreign and domestic pressure (Hermann and Hagan 1998; Greenstein 2000).

In addition, the behavior of leaders is analyzed in the context of their interaction with other cabinet members and advisors (Allison 1969; Janis 1982; Haney 1997; Allison and Zelikov 1999). In most cases, these scholars take a rational choice approach, arguing that leaders will make rational decisions based on their interests (Allison 1969; Oneal 1988; Bueno de Mequita et al. 1999). Some others would pursue a poliheuristic approach, arguing that the decision-making process goes through a two-stage process (Dacey and Carlson 2004; Kinne 2005; Red 2005). In the first stage, policy makers use shortcuts to eliminate policy options that are considered unacceptable while in the second stage they use plain rational analysis (Mintz 2004). In the second stage, policy decision makers set aside individual factors and domestic politics to focus on strategic and realpolitik interests of state (DeRouen and Sprencher 2004; James and Zhang 2005). Rational choice is also incorporated in the models of game theory of international relations, which aim at explaining interactive decision-making process by using mathematical models (Morrow 1994).

On the other hand, other scholars recognize the limitations of rational choice approach and how other factors may impact decision-making process (March 1994; Jones 1999). Several

studies have found that the decision-making process is also influenced by ideas and beliefs, images, and cognition of individual leaders. The argument is that actions of individuals depend heavily on their beliefs and ideas (Goldstein 1988, 182; Goldstein and Keohane 1993, 5). Also, beliefs may influence the creation of a distinct image of an "enemy" that may lead to lack of cooperation and hostility (Holsti 1962; 1967; Herrmann 1985; 2003; Koopman et al. 1989). When there exists a systematic perception of a group as "enemy" over a long time, it may lead to misperceptions and potential conflict. For example, Robert Jervis (1976) argues that most international conflicts that occurred during the Cold War were heavily impacted by misperception of others. From this perspective, U.S. viewing the Soviet Union as an "evil empire", Iran viewing U.S. as "the great Satan", and the like perceptions may lead to misperceptions and conflict.

Moreover, attached to beliefs is the issue of operational code and its impact on foreign policy decisions and actions. Operational code can be defined as a general belief system about the nature of politics, which influences actors' perceptions of the political reality and provides norms and standards that dictate the selection of strategies to deal with the reality (George 1967, v). Many studies have analyzed how operational code impacted foreign policy decisions during the Vietnam War (Walker 1977), Carter's foreign policy (Walker et al. 1998), and the British and U.S. foreign policy under Blair and Clinton, respectively (Schafer and Walker 2006). Besides the operational code, some studies show that actions of individual leaders can be influenced from what they have learned from history. Historical events like Pearl Harbor attack, the Vietnam War, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and other similar events influence foreign policy decisions of leaders (Mendelson 1993; Roskin 2002).

Nevertheless, emotions and motivation add more to explaining the decisions of individual leaders. Many scholars believe that emotions and motivations can be influential factor in foreign policy decision-making process (Cottam 1977; Janis and Mann 1977; Crawford 2000). The basic argument is that actions of rational individuals cannot be understood without taking into consideration emotions as the latter explains the issue of personal reputation, preferences, and the consequences thereof (Mercer 2013). Motivations, on the other side, are viewed as a set of factors that "predispose a government and people to move in a decisional direction in foreign affairs" (Cottam 1977, 31).

Furthermore, the behavior of individual leaders as members of a decision-making group provides some more explanation about foreign policy decisions and actions. Some scholars argue that foreign policy is a product of decision units and the interaction of individuals within these units (Hermann and Hermann 1989; Hermann 2001). In this context, the beliefs, the operational code, the character and personality, and leadership style will influence the leader's decision on who to include in the decision-making group, or the advisory system (Kowert 2002; Mitchell 2005). The importance of small groups in the decision-making is emphasized by many scholars (Minix 1982; 't Hart 1990; Baron et al. 1992; Verbeek 2003). While recognizing the importance of group decision making in general, many have focused their studies on the issue of groupthink, the subjugation of individual thinking to the dominant thinking of the group (Janis 1982, 7). Groupthink has influenced decisions on different cases related to foreign policy (Janis 1982). In some case the influence has been positive (Yetvin 2003), in some other cases it has been negative (Janis 1982; Badie 2010), and in some others scholars have also argued that the impact of groupthink has been exaggerated (Kramer 1998). Despite the fact that it has been used for

decades, groupthink is still being considered an ambiguous model with testing limitations (Rose 2011).

State-Level Analysis

The foreign policy analysis at the state level views the role of individuals and their behavior as subjugated to a broader structure, the social structure, which incorporates civil society and the political institutions of the state apparatus. Following David Easton's definition of politics as an "authoritative allocation of values of society", it is reasonable to consider both the political institutions and the civil society as being intertwined parts of the same social structure or state structure. At this level of analysis, scholars argue that domestic politics influence foreign policy ((Rosenau 1967; Levy 1988; Fearon 1998; Schultz 2013). Public opinion is one aspect of domestic politics that is found to have a significant influence in foreign policy (Almond 1950; Rosenau 1961; Risse-Kappen 1991; Holsti 1992; Knecht and Weatherford 2006). Gabriel Almond (1950) defines public opinion toward U.S. foreign policy as "a mood" instead of a position based on informed decision, which is due to lack of interest, knowledge, and involvement in foreign policy issues. Nevertheless, as the case of the U.S. indicates, public opinion may change foreign policy orientations from an isolationist to internationalist and vice versa (Wittkopf et al 2008, 250). Public opinion cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the media. Many scholars have written about the influence of the media not only when it comes to setting the agenda for public discussion but also as it relates to persuading the public to support a particular alternative (Cohen 1963; Reston 1967; Strobel 1997).

While public opinion can be used as a factor that influences foreign policy, sometimes it can also be a result of foreign policy. In this case it falls under what is known as "audience cost". Audience cost is punishment and criticism made by the domestic audience toward leaders for not

properly conducting or succeeding in foreign policy initiatives (Fearon 1994; Tomz 2007). From this perspective, audience costs act as constraints on the decisions made by leaders. Thus, the assumption is that leaders will take into account audience costs whenever they make a foreign policy decision. In addition, scholars argue that masses play an important role in defining the role of the state in the international relations, and as a result, in dictating foreign policy decision making (Cantir and Kaarbo 2012). National role conception refers to the perceived role of a state within specifics international context or in relation with other states (Banchoff 1999, 268; Barnett 1999, 9). However, even though national role conceptions (i.e. as a hegemon or balancer) often enjoy consensus among the elite and the masses, in a few cases these conceptions are contested both vertically, between elites and masses, and horizontally, among elites (Cantir and Kaarbo 2012, 11-12).

In addition, national role conceptions provide links to national identity and how a nation identifies itself. Some scholars argue that identity is a powerful tool to explain foreign policy because it dictates public opinion, national role conception, and the foreign policy goals of a state (Onuf 1989; Lapid and Kratochwil 1996; Wendt 1999 D'anieri 2002; Ripley 2002). Sometime people may view or identify their society as being exceptional compare to other societies. For example, the American exceptionalism is an important element of the American identity as "city upon the hill" to which the Manifest Destiny was given by the divine power. Seymour Martin Lipset (1996, 18) defines the American exceptionalism as an ideology called "Americanism".

Other scholars have tried to explain foreign policy by emphasizing the influence of ideas (Goldstein 1993; Goldstein and Keohane 1993), ideology (George 1987; Haas 2005) and culture (Huntington 1996; 2005; Hudson 1997) on foreign policy goals and decisions made by

individuals or small groups. Some scholars have used religion as a significant factor that shapes

relations among states (Huntington 1996; Snyder 2011). Samuel P. Huntington (2005, 229)

argues that like the previous empires, U.S has its own national interests defined in terms of

power, wealth, and security, all of which dictated by distinctive political principles and values

making up the American culture. U.S. foreign policy initiatives have deep intellectual roots in

the American foreign policy tradition involving moralism, cultural realism, and global ambition

(Dueck 2005; Hastedt 2011). G. John Ikenberry (2005, 286) argues in the same vein by stating

that "American foreign policy is only part of what generates and sustains the American liberal

orientation." It is part of a pragmatic and sophisticated approach, known as liberal grand

strategy, which aims at creating a stable international political order and a friendly security

environment (2005, 268).

Moreover, some scholars have focused their attention on the structural elements of a

society. The presence of different interests and ethnic groups influences foreign policy. At the

end of his term, President Eisenhower coined the phrase "the military-industrial complex" to

define the relationship between the military and big corporations and the influence of this

relationship on foreign policy. Some scholars have used "the military-industrial complex" to

explain how the industrial greed for profits influenced foreign policy decisions (Mills 1956; Lens

1970; Melman 1970). The basic argument under this approach is that the real motive for going to

war is to benefit big corporations and political leaders. Also, other scholars have focused on the

influence of lobbies. The argument is that foreign policy is conducted in such a way that it

benefits the interests of particular groups (Hughes 1978; Frieden 1991). Additional studies have

been conducted about the influence of lobbies on U.S. foreign policy. Most of these studies

analyze the influence of ethnic lobbies on U.S. foreign policy (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007;

2009; Smith 2000; Paul and Paul 2009). John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt (2007; 2009) have written extensively on the influence of the Israeli lobby, and have argued that this lobby aims at advancing Israel's interests even if a particular foreign policy runs against the American interests. However, this argument seems to be loose and without much empirical data to support it (Liberman 2009).

Furthermore, some scholars have emphasized the importance of formal institutions to explain foreign policy. These institutions can range from political institutions within a government to general political systems. The main argument is that institutions, in general, impose constraints on decisions made by individuals and groups (Milner 1998; Rogowski 1999). A significant number of studies have been conducted to identify the role of the legislative branch of government in foreign policy (Lindsay 1994; Elman 2000; Henehan 2000; Kesgin and Kaarbo 2010).

Other studies have focused on the influence of departmental agencies, such as the Department of State and Defense Department (Huntington 1961; Simpson 1967; Andreski 1971). In addition, scholars have paid significant attention to the organizational element of institutions because of its importance. The argument holds that organization matter and can influence foreign policy formulation and implementation (Levy 1986; Kaufman 1994; Allison and Zelikow 1999; Halperin et al 2006; Sinno 2008). While it provides considerable explanation of foreign policy, the organizational model is vague, and it also undervalues the importance of the generational mind-set and domestic politics as they relate to how top decision-makers approach foreign policy (Krasner 1972; Art 1973; Dawisha 1980).

Neo-Marxism is another approach used by scholars to explain foreign policy. The assumption of this approach is that the structure of a political system is determined by the

division of means of production within a society. If means of production are privately owned, then the political system will have a capitalist structure and the ideology running this structure would be capitalism. In a capitalist state, foreign policy, by default, serves the interests of the dominant class. Because capitalism has a permanent need to spread in every corner of the world in search of markets and raw materials, as Marx and Engels argued in *the Communist Manifesto*, foreign policy of a capitalist state would aim at fulfilling this objective. Lenin (1939) used the Marxist perspective to identify the imperialist nature of U.S. foreign policy. Later, the world system analysis was added to provide a structural analysis at the international level (Wallerstein 1980; 2004). According to this structural analysis, the world system serves the interests of the wealthy capitalist states at "the core" whose goals are to extract cheap raw materials from and sell back expensive manufactured goods to the poor states at the "periphery".

Some scholars followed Lenin's ideas about imperialism as the leading force of the foreign policy of capitalist states (Magdoff 1969; Weisskopf 1989). Other scholars have also attempted to build a Marxist theory of international relations to explain relations among states in the world system (Kubalkova and Cruickshank 1980) while some others argue that the world system is moving away from imperialism toward an empire system that will be characterized by a new type of warfare to advance the interests of the ruling powers (Negri and Hardt 2000, 6). Falling in line with the economic perspective of the Neo-Marxist perspective is the claim that the waning of the Cold War marked a shift from geopolitics to geoeconomics (Luttwak 1990). Unlike during the Cold War when states used the logic of war in the military grammar, during the post-Cold War era states are using "the logic of war in the grammar of commerce" (1990, 126).

International-Level Analysis

The Neo-Marxist approach provides a link between the system-level analysis and the international-level analysis. Like the neo-Marxist approach, non-Marxist approaches at the international-level analysis emphasize the influence of structure in dictating foreign policy of a country. The latter approaches are known as international relations (IR) theories. It is important to note that an IR theory is not a foreign policy theory; instead, it is a theory of constraints on foreign policy (Waltz 1996). Liberalism and realism are two major theoretical approaches that have been used to explain international relations, and each of them has other theoretical subdivisions, known as neo-theories. Like neo-Marxist theories, liberalism also emphasizes the importance of domestic political system. The roots of liberalism can be found in thoughts of Immanuel Kant. Kant understood that the anarchic state of the international system would lead states to cooperate with each other to establish "perpetual peace". Establishing perpetual peace required, according to Kant, "the transformation of consciousness, republican constitutionalism, and a federal contract between states to abolish war" (as cited in Baylis et al. 2008, 110).

Republican constitutionalism is considered a prerequisite for states to cooperate with each other. This assumption is the building block of the democratic peace theory, which argues that countries that have democratic political system do not go to war against democracies (Doyle 1983; Levy and Thompson 2010). The fall of the Soviet Union in late 1990s let to the belief that the future of world politics belongs to liberalism (Fukuyama 1989). Cooperation among states was also emphasized by President Woodrow Wilson in his "Fourteen Points", arguing that cooperation was needed to avoid war and preserve peace. Wilson's ideas led to the creation of the collective security system, which is based on the "one for all and all for one" principle, meaning that states respond to each other's security needs (Roberts and Kingsbury 1993).

Liberal institutionalism, which is also known as *neoliberalism*, provides some more explanation about cooperation among states. This approach is based on several major assumptions (Keohane 2005). First, states are key actors in the international system but not the only significant ones. Non-state actors, such as non-governmental organization and transnational corporations have a significant influence in world politics. The argument is that these actors influence world politics and relations among states (Keohane and Nye 1972). Second, states are guided by rationality and the quest to maximize their interests in issue-areas. It may not be simply about states' desire to cooperate, but it may be about the existence of mutual interests and the dependence of states on each other to advance their interests (Little 1996). Some scholars have argued that high economic interdependence makes states less likely to engage in wars against each other (Baldwin 1980; Keohane and Nye 1980). Third, states seek the maximization of their absolute gains through cooperation. This is in line with the idea that the world is moving away from the political realism of geopolitics and embracing the geo-economic, which means that states use 'the logic of war in the grammar of commerce" (Luttwak 2003). Lastly, states will shift loyalty and resources to institutions if they are viewed as mutually beneficial and if these serve the international interests of the states and provide them with opportunities to secure those interests (as cited in Baylis et al. 2008, 132).

However, cooperation among states does not happen by default in a free market system as commercial liberalism argues. Institutions are needed to take advantage of the incentives provided by the system and to deal with the issue of anarchy at the international stage (Keohane and Nye 1977; Keohane 1984; 1989; Haas, Keohane, and Levy 1993). This liberal institutionalist approach recognizes the fact the world system is in a state of anarchy and that states' foreign policy should aim at building and empowering international institutions that

further cooperation among nations (Keohane and Martin 1999). A perfect example of such institutions is the Bretton Woods system of 1944, which incorporates the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These institutions aim at facilitating cooperation and trade among states and assisting countries in economic needs. Because U.S. is the biggest contributor leading these institutions, Marxist scholars have argued that U.S. foreign policy is driven by the principles of neoliberalism and the need to advance America's economic interests around the world (Chomsky 1999; Harvey 2005). Others have followed the same argument and applied it to specific cases, such as the 2001 Afghanistan and the 2003 Iraq wars (Amin 2003; Smith 2005; Gregory 2008).

Realism provides an alternative explanation to international relations. Unlike liberalism and neoliberalism, which focus on state cooperation, realism focuses on state competition. Competition is about states' interests, which are defined in terms of power. As a result, foreign policies of states are dominated by the "lust for power" (Morgenthau [1948] 1955). Principles, morals, and laws are subordinated to power politics and fluctuate as power interests change in world politics. While classical realism focused on power as the end in itself, other scholars, known as structuralists or neorealists, looked at power as a means to ensure a state's survival in the international system (Waltz 1979; 1989; Mearsheimer 2001). According to these scholars, the competitive nature at the international stage comes as a result of several main elements: statism, anarchy, survival, and self-help. Statism refers to the role of the states as the only real actor at the international. Anarchy refers to the lack of a supranational government that would regulate relations among states. This is in contrast to the liberal perspective, which claims that anarchy is a result of imperialism, failure of the balance of power, and problems with undemocratic regimes (2008, 110). In addition, survival refers to the primary goal of a state in an anarchic system.

Lastly, self-help refers to the strategy states pursue in order to ensure survival. Thus, states aim at ensuring their survival by relying on self-help and their capabilities. The distribution of states' capabilities dictates the structure of the international system. While liberals and neoliberals focus on absolute gains and international political economy, realism and neorealism concentrate on relative gains and survival as the primary goal of every state (Baldwin 1993; Greico 1997).

Neorealism, in addition, is divided in two main approaches: defensive realism and offensive realism. The former argues that states are security maximizers while the later are power maximizers. Defensive realists argue that the primary goal of states is to maximize security by relying on the balance of power and deterrence (Jervis 1978b; Waltz 1979; Walt 1987; 2005). Defensive realist scholars also argue that states are status quo powers, which aim at maximizing security and minimizing relative losses. Attempts to maximize power and become hegemon have a blowback impact since they trigger the formation of a coalition to balance the threatening power of the prospective hegemon (Wight 1973; Waltz 1979; Walt 1987). Thus, states should avoid engaging in aggressive foreign policy. On the other hand, offensive realism argues that states pursue aggressive foreign policy and aim at maximizing power as a strategy to ensure survival in world politics (Mearsheimer 2001). The argument is that security can be maximized as states maximize their power. The highest level of security is reached when a state becomes hegemon. Once a state becomes a regional hegemon, it will pursue the offshore balancing strategy to prevent the emergence of another regional hegemon (2001).

Several studies have been conducted from the offensive realist perspective. Christopher Layne (1997) focuses on the importance of the offshore balancer strategy even though he does not exclusively follow offensive realism. Layne's argument is that throughout the Cold War, U.S. pursued a grand strategy of "preponderance". Instead, he argues in favor of pursuing the

offshore balancing, which used the balance of power logic to prevent the emergence of another

regional hegemon (1997). Layne argues that the changing distribution of powers in the

international system and the relative decline of US power make the grand strategy of

preponderance untenable (1997, 87). On the other side, an offshore balancing strategy would

minimize the risk of the U.S. involvement in a future great power war (nuclear war included) and

will enhance America's relative power in the international system. While Layne's argument has

many connections to offensive realism, it has two slight differences. Offensive realism argues

that U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War was based on an offshore balancing strategy

(Mearsheimer 2001) while Layne argues that it was based on a grand strategy of preponderance.

Second, while Layne (1997, 88) argues that the grand strategy of preponderance was based on

America's goal to create a U.S-led world order and maximize its political, military, and

economic power, offensive realism argues that the foreign policy was driven by the offshore

balancing strategy to prevent the emergence of the Soviet Union as a new regional hegemon.

Carlos L. Yordán (2006) explains US foreign policy from an offensive realist perspective.

Yordán uses the case of the 2003 Iraq war to test offensive realism. He concludes that offensive

realism provide an accurate explanation of the war, claiming that the primary goal of the US was

to maximize power and become a global hegemon. However, Yordán's argument focuses

exclusively on the US' goal to become a global hegemon, and it misses the main claim of

offensive realism, which is that the primary objective of U.S. as a regional hegemon is to prevent

the emergence of another regional hegemon (Mearsheimer 2001, 41-42). Basically, Yordán

misses the status of U.S. as a current regional hegemon and its foreign policy actions, the Iraq

War, as an offshore balancing strategy that aimed at preventing the emergence of Iraq as a

potential hegemon in the future. This dissertation will also improve Yordán's explanation of the

Iraq war and extend it to include some major implications related to US foreign policy. The main argument will be that the 2003 Iraq war was a continuation of US foreign policy to advance America's interests as regional hegemon. The primary objective of the US as a regional hegemon is to prevent the emergence of any other potential regional hegemon. The US achieved this goal by either acting as an offshore balancer whenever possible or relying on self-intervention whenever needed. Besides explaining the Iraq war, offensive realism also provides considerable explanation of US-Iran relations and how both states continue to share mutual strategic interests despite their antagonistic political rhetoric.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: OFFENSIVE REALISM

Introduction

Offensive realism is a theoretical derivate of realism. It has everything is needed to be despised by those who follow non-realist approaches in academia or elsewhere. It incorporates the basic tenets of classical realism when emphasizing the primary role of states as rational actors that play in an anarchic international system by relying on self-help and aim at power maximization. It also borrows from structural realism the assumption that the international system is a political jungle in which states rely on self-help to ensure their survival. In addition, offensive realism incorporates the pejorative term "offensive", which means that the best way for states to ensure survival in an anarchic system is to maximize their relative powers. The aforementioned theoretical assumptions may make offensive realism look despicable but never irrelevant to the dreadful reality of the international politics. Offensive realism avoids taking a normative approach about how the reality should be; instead, it focuses on how to better explain the political reality of global politics.

Explaining offensive realism and its main propositions is important in order to understand the way how empirical data are selected and used to explain the relationship among the variables related to US foreign policy. Offensive realism provides selective criteria of facts that are relevant to this dissertation study and a basis for coherent organization of facts (Parson 1938, 14-15; Schmitt 2008, 8). None of us could understand the complex world we live in or make

decisions without applying a theoretical approach (Mearsheimer 2001, 8). Nevertheless, offensive does not explain everything about US foreign policy. It cannot and should not. However, it is a powerful tool that can be used to explain political actions in an anarchic world embroiled by conflicts and wars.

John Mearsheimer (2001, 11), the founder of offensive realism, considers it "a powerful flashlight in a dark room: even though it cannot illuminate every nook and cranny, most of the time it is an excellent tool for navigating through the darkness." Also, offensive theory is a theory of "high politics" because it deals with issues that directly concern the survival of the states. At the same time, offensive realism is an elite theory of international relations because it deals with great powers politics, politics of the most powerful states in the international system. The reason for focusing exclusively on great powers is because these powers shape the structure of the international system and dictate the fate of other states (Mearsheimer 2001, 5). For example, colonial powers dictated how the world would look like after WWII when they created artificial states around the world. Also, the fate of Kosovo and Iraq was dictated by the American willingness to intervene while the fortune of Crimea (and maybe Ukraine's) was dictated by Russia. Nowhere else is the role of great powers better defined and even institutionalized than in the structure of the United Nations Security Council in which five permanent members, great nuclear powers, hold veto power to decide whether a state should exist or not.

Offensive realism relies on a combination of five "bedrock assumptions" in order to explain the aggressive behavior of states (Mearsheimer 2001, 30-31). The first assumption is that the international system is in a state on anarchy, meaning that sovereign states obey to no higher authority. It means that the international system lacks a central authority or a supranational government. As a result, conflicts and wars happen in an anarchic international system "because

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there is nothing to prevent them" (as cited in Mearsheimer 2001, 232). The second assumption is that great powers possess some offensive military capabilities that can be used to cause damages or even destroy each other. The most dangerous powers are those that possess greater military strength. For this reason, states rely on relative power (power compared to other states' power) instead of absolute power, the actual power of a state.

The third "bedrock assumption" is that states are suspicious of other states' intentions. States fear each other and believe that there cannot be any guaranty that they would not attack each other. Intentions of the states are dynamic and depend on opportunities given to them. The *security dilemma* is a perfect example of how states being suspicious of other states. Another example is the Iraqi's aggression against Iran in 1980. Iraq attacked Iran less than six years after they had signed in a "brotherly" manner what is called *The 1975 Algiers Agreement*. Iraq viewed domestic turmoil within Iran and the loss of the American support for Iran as opportunities to take advantage of Iran. Thus, the aspiration for brotherhood was soon converted into an ambition for power and territory.

The fourth principle holds that survival is the primary goal of every state. There is no higher priority for a state than its survival. All the other goals succumb to the instinct of survival. Mearsheimer argues that states can also pursue non-security goals "as long as the requisite behavior does not conflict with the balance-of-power logic" (2001, p. 46). The last assumption of *offensive realism* is that states are rational actors, and their actions are dictated by the need to survive and the constraints imposed by the international system. Mearsheimer argues that states involve in *game theory* through which "they consider the preferences of other states and how their own behavior is likely to affect the behavior of those other states, and how the behavior of those other states is likely to affects their own strategy for survival" (2001, 31).

It is important to note again that none of these five assumptions alone mandates that states behave competitively or aggressively. Taken together, however, these assumptions create powerful incentives and motivations for states to think and act aggressively toward each other (Mearsheimer 2001, 29). These bedrock assumptions taken together lead to fear, self-help, and power maximization as three behavioral patterns that influence the actions of states (Mearsheimer 2001, 32). In an anarchic international system, states realize that in order for them to survive the aggressive actions of other states, they have to rely on self-help and power maximization. Because states are not certain about how much power is needed to ensure survival, they will aim at becoming the most powerful state on earth, a *global hegemony*. Thus, great powers will never accept the *status quo* of the international system until they dominate the entire international system. This view is also supported by Immanuel Kant when he states that "It is the desire of every state, or of its ruler, to arrive at a condition of perpetual peace by conquering the whole world, if that were possible" (as cited in Mearsheimer 2001, 34). In his own version, Mearsheimer (2001, 35) argues as follows:

> *"Given the difficulty of determining how much power is enough for today and tomorrow, great powers recognize that the best way to ensure their security is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibility of a challenge by another great power. Only a misguided state would pass up an opportunity to become hegemony in the system because it thought it already had sufficient power to survive."*

However, Mearsheimer (2001, 41) believes that a *global hegemony* is not possible because of the stopping power of water that hinders the inability of states to project military power all across the globe. Because of this obstacle, "the world is condemned to perpetual great-power competition (Mearsheimer 2001, 2). The ideal scenario for a great power would be becoming a regional hegemon, having absolute control over its region. Becoming a regional

hegemon is thus the ultimate goal of great powers (Mearsheimer 2001, 236). According to

Mearsheimer, U.S. is the only great power that has achieved the status of regional hegemon

because it controls the Western Hemisphere but does not control other regions like Northeast

Asia or Europe. In addition, as a regional hegemon, the primary goal of U.S. is to maintain the

status quo of the international system and prevent the emergence of a competitor regional

hegemon (Mearsheimer 2001, 41, 236-237). This is an important and powerful claim of

offensive realism that is often ignored by researchers. For example, Carlos L. Yordán (2006)

argues US foreign policy is a revisionist one because prior to the 9/11 terrorist attack, the US

acted as a status quo power while after the attack the US switch to an offensive realist foreign

policy that aimed at becoming a global hegemony. This is not true under offensive realism

because a regional hegemon is considered a status quo power that aims at preventing the

emergence of any other regional hegemon. Thus, the US did not revise its foreign policy after the

9/11 terrorist attack; it simply changed the strategy to advance its strategic interests as regional

hegemon.

But how can we identify that US foreign policy is based on offensive realist approach?

Making a general statement that the US is acting as a regional hegemon or is aiming at becoming

a global hegemon is not enough. We need to look at major objectives of great powers and

specific strategies that they pursue to achieve their objectives. According to offensive realism,

great powers have four main objectives: (1) become regional hegemon and prevent other states

from becoming regional hegemons, (2) maximize the amount of the world's wealth under their

control, (3) dominate the balance of land power, and (4) have nuclear superiority (Mearsheimer

2001, 140-147) . Offensive realism outlines four main strategies through which states can gain

relative power. First, states gain power by going to war with the other rival states. Going to war

is a controversial strategy because the offensive states may lose wars they initiate even though data show that these states have often been winners of wars (Mearsheimer 2001, 147). Also, the cost argument so much debated during and after the 2003 Iraq war does not seem to have strong basis. For decades, the US has been investing more than any country on earth on its military sector, and it still continues to have a robust economy compare to other states'.

Second, states gain power by threatening rival states to use military forces against them--*"blackmail"*. While blackmail is a preferred strategy to war, it does not seem to have much success in reality. The US used blackmail without success to force Iraq out of Kuwait in 1989 and stop the alleged nuclear activity and the support for terrorist groups. In addition, the US used blackmail without success to prevent the Syrian government from using chemical weapons against its own citizens. Moreover, the US has been using blackmail to also force Iran to stop its nuclear activity or to prevent Russia from annexing Crimea. A third strategy applied by states to gain power is the *bait and bleed* strategy. Through this strategy, a state causes other rival states to engage in a "protracted war" against each other, so that "they bleed each other white, while the baiter remains on sideline with its military strength intact" (Mearsheimer, 2001, 147-155).

Perfect examples of the bait and bleed strategy are the continuous attempts by Saudi Arabia to convince Israel to attack Iran. The problem with this strategy is that it is difficult to convince states to engage in a war that does not benefit them in long term. As rational actors, states are able to realize when their actions serve their strategic needs. The last strategy that states implement to gain power is the *bloodletting* strategy, which aims at causing rival states to fight against each other in a long and costing conflict. This strategy does not involve baiting but a strategy that would prolonged the ongoing war between two rival states. A perfect example of

the bloodletting strategy is the Afghan-Soviet war, which lasted for nine years. The US made sure that the rival state, the Soviet Union, suffered considerable military losses.

On the other hand, great powers also aim at preventing other aggressive states from gaining power at their expenses. In order to achieve this goal, great powers implement two major strategies (See *Figure 1* and *Figure 2* below). The first strategy to prevent other states from gaining power is by using the *buck-passing* strategy. The state implementing this strategy attempts to get another state bear the burden of preventing, confronting, or even fighting against aggressor state that aims at upsetting the balance of power. This strategy requires high diplomatic sophistication in order to "pass the buck" to the other state (Mearsheimer 2001, 157-159). There are four main measures taken by a great power to facilitate buck-passing. One measure is to establish good diplomatic relations with the aggressor state, hoping that the latter will focus its offensive power against the intended "buck-catcher" state. Second, the buck-passer decides to maintain strain diplomatic relations with the buck-catcher in an attempt to avoid a possible scenario of being dragged into war in support of the buck-catcher.

In addition, a threatened state can increase its power by mobilizing additional resources in an attempt to threaten the aggressor and make it focus its aggressive power against the intended buck-catcher. Lastly, a threatened state may allow and even facilitate the growth in power the buck-catcher state in order to increase the real chances for the latter to deter the aggressor state. Buck-passing strategy is impossible in a bipolar international system (as was the case during the Cold War) because there exists no third state to catch the buck. However, this strategy is prevalent in a multipolar international system because there is a high probability of finding a buck-catcher state (Mearsheimer 2001, 270-272).

The second strategy that great power use against the aggressors is *balancing strategy*. A great power uses balancing by taking direct precautions to prevent another state from disturbing the current balance of power. If the aggressor state is not deterred, then the balancing state will use its power to prevent the aggressor from disturbing the balance of power (Mearsheimer 2001, 156). Defensive great powers achieve this goal by either sending clear signals to the aggressor, creating defensive alliances, or balancing against the aggressor by mobilizing additional power resources, meaning reliance on self-help.
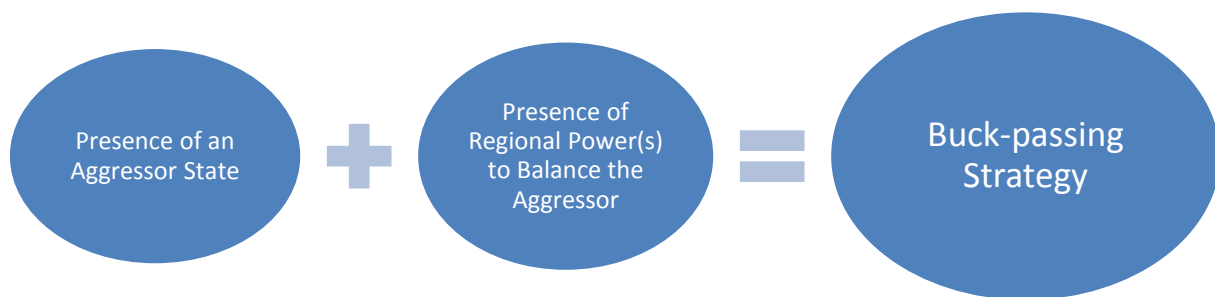
Figure 1: Diagram of Buck-Passing Strategy
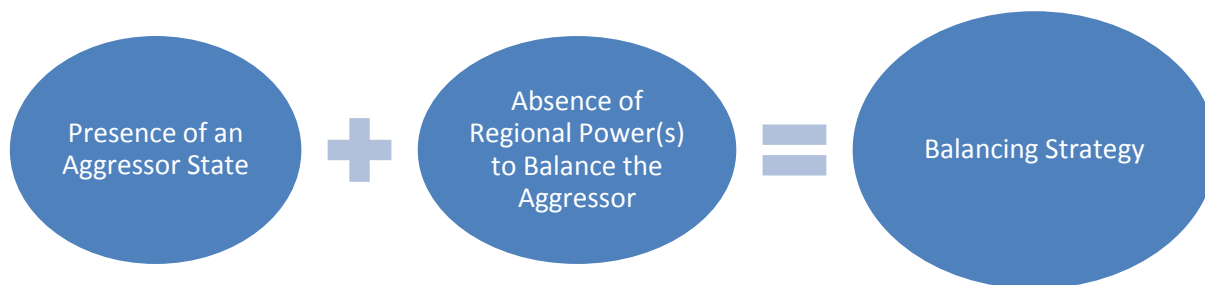
Figure 2: Diagram of Balancing Strategy

The regional hegemonic status of the U.S. dictates its foreign policy strategies as an

offshore balancer.[1] As a regional hegemon, the strategic goal of U.S. foreign policy is to enhance

its relative powers and prevent the emergence of any other regional hegemon.[2] In order to

achieve this objective, the US acts as an offshore balancer in other regions (Mearsheimer 2001,

237). As an offshore balancer, the US engages in two major strategies (See Diagrams 1 and 2).

First, it uses the buck-passing strategy, which means relying on local great powers to balance

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[1] For more information on offshore balancing see Layne, Christopher. 1997. "From
Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America's Future Grand Strategy," *International Security*
22(1): 86-124; and Layne, Christopher. 1998. "Rethinking American Grand Strategy: Hegemony
or Balance of Power in the Twenty-First Century?," *World Policy Journal* 15(2): 8-28.
2 See Layne, Christopher. 1997. "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America's Future
Grand Strategy," *International Security* 22(1):86-124. Layne argues that the US has been
implementing the strategy of preponderance, and it needs to be substituted with the offshore
balancing strategy.

each other and, thus, preventing the emergence of a regional hegemon. If regional powers fail to balance the aggressor state, then the offshore balancer would intervene to balance the aggressor (Mearsheimer 2001, 237). This is the most important and direct claim that offensive realism makes in connection to strategies pursued by the US to advance its strategic interests as regional hegemon.

Offshore Balancing and US Power Projection

In order to better understand the offshore balancing strategy, we also need to examine how the United States has projected its military power around the world and how that power projection corresponds to the offshore balancing strategy. Power projection is vital to supporting a state's strategic interests around the world because it makes it easy for a state to conduct expeditionary warfare. Very often, great powers have relied on sea power (Mahan 1890), land power (Mackinder 1904), or air power (Mrozek 1988; Philpott 2013). The U.S. is the only state to have a diverse power projection like no other state on earth's history.

As shown in *Figure 3*, the US has projected its military power in such a way that every region of the world corresponds to an area of responsibility (AOR) within the Department of Defense. For example, USEUCOM is responsible for the European region, USAFRICOM is responsible for the African region, USPACOM deals with issues in the Pacific region, and so on. The U.S. also has military bases (ground, sea, and air) on several states within each AOR, such as in Germany, Italy, Djibouti, South Africa, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Israel, South Korea, Japan, Australia, etc. It is logical to believe that this power projection is in line with the offshore balancing strategy to prevent the emergence of any other regional hegemon. Thus, it is legitimate to claim that offshore balancing is a grand strategy that dictates how the US deals with each state and region around the world (Layne 1997; 1998).

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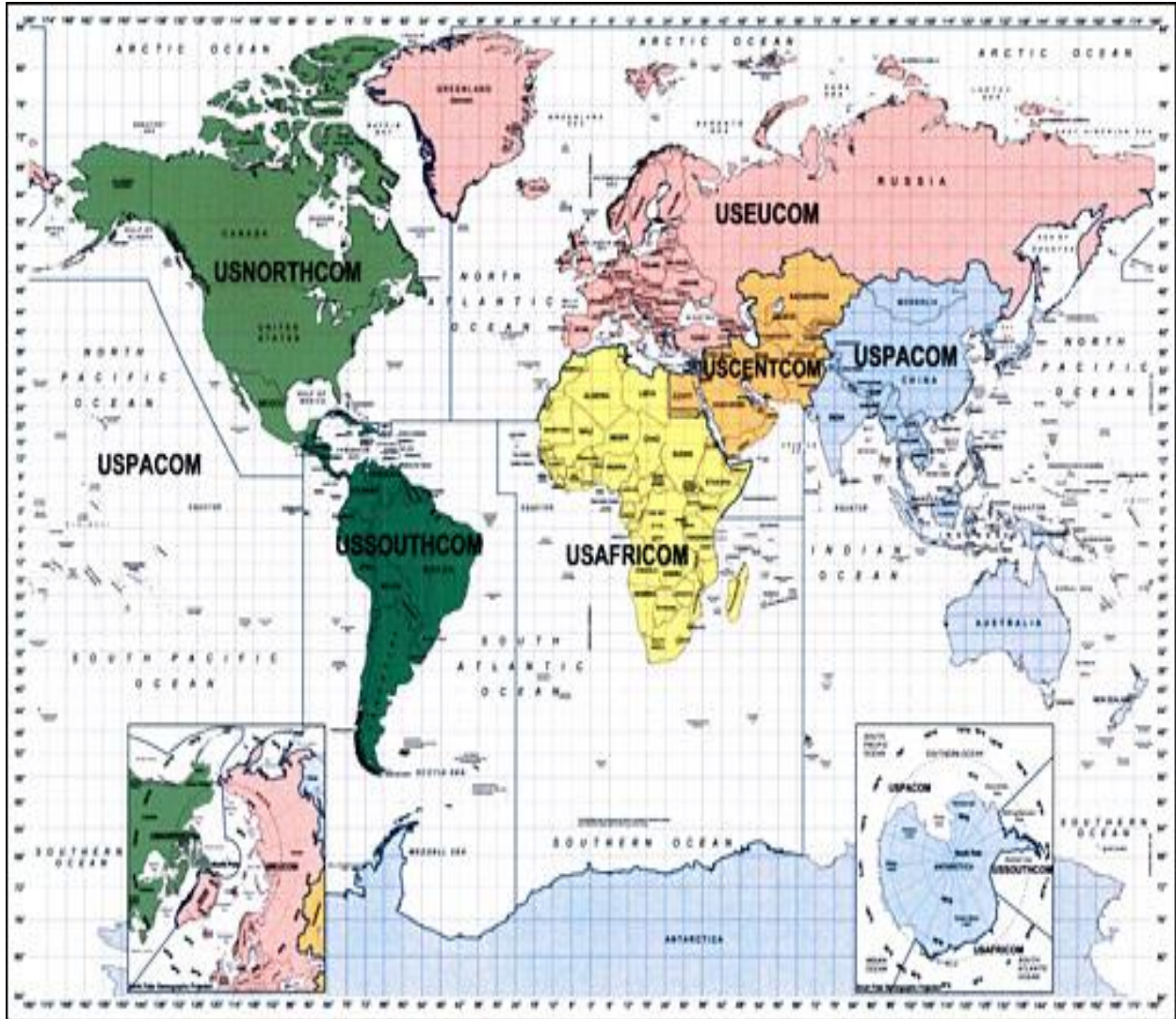
Figure 3: Areas of Responsibility
Source: The U.S. Department of Defense Web Site, http://www.defense.gov/ucc/

Theoretical Propositions

In conclusion, there are several theoretical propositions that will be tested in this

dissertation. First, US foreign policy actions were dictated by the anarchic status of the

international system, the possession of military capabilities by aggressor states that could harm

or destroy America, fear from and suspicion of other states' intentions, the need to ensure

survival in an anarchic system, and the need to maximize relative power vis-à-vis other states.

Second, all these factors combined led to three major patterns of behavior by the US: self-help,

fear, and power maximization. Third, as a regional hegemon, during the 20th century, the US aimed at preventing the emergence of another regional hegemon around the globe by implementing the offshore balancing strategy. Fourth, as an offshore balancer, the US had to rely on the buck-passing and balancing strategies. Lastly, whenever there was not great power "to pass the buck", the US had to rely on direct balancing by either threatening the aggressor, creating alliances with other regional states, or utilizing additional resources of its own.

Why Offensive Realism?

There are several reasons why I selected offensive realism to explain U.S. foreign policy. First, the US is considered by Mearsheimer as being well-suited to be "the poster child for offensive realism" because of its aggressive behavior during the nineteenth century when it became a regional hegemon and the twentieth century when it implemented foreign policy strategies to maintain its regional hegemonic status (Mearsheimer 2001, 238). Second, offensive realism is a relatively new theory and additional testing is needed to cover a wide range of cases over an extensive period. The strength of a theory depends on how well it explains a political phenomenon, to what extent its findings can be generalized, and whether it matures or weakens with passing of time. As a new theory, offensive theory needs further testing in order to see its explanatory depth, whether its propositions can be generalized to other cases, and whether or not it will pass the test at all. This dissertation will test offensive realism by utilizing a variety of case studies. It will follow the six "ideal-typical stages" of theory testing process: (1) specify the theory to be tested, (2) derive a set of conceptual propositions, (3) restate conceptual propositions as testable proposition, (4) collect relevant data, (5) analyze data, and (6) assess the theory (de Vaus 2014, 14).

The third reason I selected offensive realism is that, despite claims made after the Cold War that offensive realism was useless and the world had entered "the end of history", the reality has been showing that offensive realism is alive and practical. The conflictual situation in many different regions of the world and, especially, the annexation of Crimea from Russia in 2014 and the continuous threat to annex additional Ukrainian territories are strong indicators that support the claim. In addition, more than a decade ago, Mearsheimer used offensive realism to predict that China would become the biggest threat to the US because the former has the potential— economic and military—to challenge the US regional dominance and become the hegemon in Northeast Asia (2001, 401). In November 2013, China unilaterally announced the creation of an "Air Defense Identification Zone" over several islands disputed by Japan (Starr and Botelho 2013). Soon, the U.S. reacted by flying its military planes over the claimed space in an act of defiance. This is the first direct and military challenges that China is posing to US influence in the region, and offensive realism predicts that the problem will exacerbate in the future as China's power continues to increase.

The last reason for selecting offensive realism as a theoretical framework is because it provides an explanation of the relationship between military capabilities and foreign policy strategies or goals. Military capabilities vis-à-vis other states define the place of a state in the international system and whether it is a great power or regional hegemon. Foreign policy strategies or goals will change whenever there is a change in capabilities of a state. Power capabilities of a state determine its position in the international system and how foreign policy is formulated and implemented (Waltz 1979, 97). For examples, the US approached the issue of the Barbary Pirates in the Mediterranean Sea differently before and after building naval power. Before building the navy, the US relied exclusively on paying tribute to pirates in exchange for

captured sailors and merchandise. The US even signed the *Treaty of Tripoli* (1797) through

which it "admitted" that its roots were not Christian only to please the awkward demand of the

pirates. Once the navy was built, the US declared war on "Barbary States" and finally won it in

1815. In addition, Russia had an aggressive foreign policy approach during the Cold War as a

superpower, which changed into a mild foreign policy soon after the fall of the Soviet Union and

the rapid deterioration of its military power. Once the economic and military power of Russia

increased, its foreign policy became more aggressive, which can be easily noticed by its active

role in global politics, especially during the Syrian crisis, and the annexation of Crimea in 2004

despite severe condemnation by the US and many other states. Thus, if US military power

deteriorates, and it loses the regional hegemonic status, then we should expect its foreign policy

to change. Otherwise, one should not expect any major changes in US foreign policy.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In explaining the research methodology of this dissertation, it is important to understand how data are collected and analyzed and how they are used to test the claims made about US foreign policy. Alexander George and Andrew Bennett (2005, 73) define three main phases in the research process: the research design phase, carrying out the case study, and drawing the implications for theory. In the research design phase, the researcher specifies the problem and research objective. For example, the researcher defines the problem and decides whether he/she wants to use it to test a theory or develop a new theory. In the first three chapters, this dissertation defined the problem, conflicts and wars, and established the research objectives. These objectives include: (1) explaining US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine, which led to the 2003 Iraq war, (2) explaining whether the Bush Doctrine constitutes continuity or a break from the 20th century US foreign policy, and (3) identifying the nature of U.S.-Iran relationship by using the offensive realist approach as theoretical framework of analysis. Thus, instead of developing a new theory, this dissertation aims at testing a well-established theory—offensive realism. Testing the theory means discovering whether US foreign policy actions fit within the offensive realist theoretical framework of analysis as explained in chapter three.

The next step of this dissertation will be carrying out the case study and comparative case study analysis. Carrying out the analysis means implementing a research methodology that would test the aforementioned claims. Research methodology is crucial to research outcomes

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because it provides the structure and procedures how facts are collected, analyzed, and connected to theoretical framework. While theoretical framework determines the relevance of facts in a study, research methodology provides a systemic approach of how to describe, explain, or predict phenomena of interest to researchers.

In the phase of carrying out the case study, researchers need to consider several important issues. First, researchers need to consider the provisional character of case explanation. For Karl Popper (2005, 17), a good work must be falsifiable. If a statement cannot be proven false there is very little sense in which it may be considered true (Gerring 2001, 14). Thus, findings of this dissertation should not be considered to be irrefutable; they cannot and should not. Offensive realism is a powerful tool that explains relations between states and how the international system imposes constraints on states' foreign policy; however, it does not claim to explain everything. It cannot and should not. In addition to theoretical falsifiability, researchers need to consider the problem of competing explanations, the task of providing an analytical explanation, the challenges to reconstruct decisions, and the problems related to evaluating case studies (George and Bennet 2005, 89-105).

Case study is the detailed analysis of an aspect of historical episode (i.e. conflict, war, or revolution) to test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events (2005, 5). A case must comprise two elements: (1) a practical, historical unity called *subject* of the case study (of inquiry), and (2) a theoretical frame called *object* of the case study (Thomas 2011, 513). There are two main types of case study analysis: *single case study* and *comparative case study*. A single case study is defined as the intensive study of a single case which aims at generalizing on a large set of cases (Gerring 2007). A single case study is very often misconstrued and attacked for lacking capability to test a theory or generalize across a set of units. Some researchers have

the perception that a single case study means a single observation at a single point in time; however, this is not true (Gerring 2007).

A single case study comprises several observations. Also, some researchers argue that the problem of representativeness should not be ignored if we want the case study to reflect on a broader population of cases (Seawright and Gerring 2008, 294). On the other hand, some other scholars believe that researchers should not aspire to select cases that represent a diverse populations and nor do they have to make a claim that their findings are applicable to such populations, unless provided contingent ways (George and Bennet 2005, 30-31). In addition, while most scholars believe that a single case study can be useful in developing theories, there are researchers who argue that a single case study can also be used to test theoretical propositions and provide persuasive causal explanations (Rueschemeyer 2003, 318).

On the other hand, comparative case study involves a nonstatistical comparative analysis of a small number of cases. Traditionally, comparative case study analysis uses John Stewart Mill's methods of agreement and difference in order to identify a causal relationship ([1843] 2002, 454-455). According to Mill's method of agreement, if two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstance in which alone all the instances agree, is the cause (or effect) of the given phenomenon. Thus, the researcher may select two cases whose independent variables differ in all but one variable. That independent variable that is common for both cases is the explanation for the outcome. Mill's method of difference, on the other side, aims at comparing cases that are similar in all but one variable, which will then be the explanation for the phenomenon ([1843] 2002, 454-455).

Some researchers prefer the method of agreement over the method of differences because when using the method of differences, the complexity of social phenomena makes the process of

removing similar characteristics shared by one group system unrealistic (Przeworski and Tune 1982, 39). Other issues challenging the methods of agreement and differences include the bias in selecting cases for comparison and the presence of too many variables when dealing with too few cases.

As mentioned previously, this dissertation will use both single case study and comparative case study analysis. The case of U.S. foreign policy that led to the intervention in Iraq in 2003 is a single case study which will test the claim that the foreign policy that led to the intervention fits within offensive realism theoretical framework. Offensive realism theory postulates that U.S. acted as a regional hegemon to prevent the emergence of Iraq as a potential regional hegemon that could threaten US interests. Also, fear from Iraq was exacerbated by the continuous support that the Iraqi government was providing to anti-American terrorist organizations like *al Qaeda*. In addition, US foreign policy actions under the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine will be utilized to test the claim that US foreign policy actions under the Bush Doctrine constitute continuity rather than a break from previous foreign policy actions. Lastly, the cases of Iraq war together, the 2001 Afghan war, and the establishment of ISIS will be utilized to identify the patterns and nature of US-Iran relationship.

In addition, this dissertation will apply a comparative case study analysis to test whether U.S. foreign policy that led to the Iraq war was a continuation of or a break from foreign policy initiatives pursued by the US during the 20th century. It is important to note that this comparative case study analysis does not follow Mill's methods of agreement and differences because the goal is not to define causal relationship. Instead, the goal of this comparative case study is to discover major similarities or differences among cases, which will be identified by applying the

offensive realist framework of analysis. The presence or absence of similar factors, which are considered to be important elements of offensive realism, such as the anarchic nature of the international system, the possession by states of real and potential military capabilities, and spread of influence or containment of threats, will determine whether there has been a continuation or a break in foreign policy. For example, if in one case the US allowed an aggressor state, a great power, to expand its influence by dominating other states and in another case the US acted to encounter the aggressor state, then we may claim that there exists a break in foreign policy.

Regardless of the outcome, whether it is a continuation or a break in foreign policy, it is important to answer the "why" question—why there is a continuation of or a break in foreign policy. Offensive realism is a powerful tool that deals with the issue of change and continuation in foreign policy, and everything relates to constraints that the international system imposes on a state's actions. According to offensive realism, a continuation of or a break in foreign policy is dictated by a combination of several factors: the presence or absence of the anarchy in the international system that leads states to focus exclusively on survival, the real and potential military capabilities possessed by states and the position they attain in the international system, and the opportunities and threats emerging from within the system. But it is important to remind the reader that offensive realism deals with and explains actions of great power states because they are able to influence world politics while small states do not have this "privilege".

Congruence Method

Because the analysis of the case studies constitutes a test for offensive realism, this dissertation will utilize the congruence method. The congruence method is applied to test whether the propositions of a well-established theory, such as offensive realism, explain foreign

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policy actions of states. The congruence method is deductive in nature. The researcher begins the study with a well-established theory and then attempts to assess its ability to explain or predict the outcomes in particular cases. Thus, the researcher first defines the value of the independent variable in the case and then asks what predictions or expectations about the outcome of the dependent variable should follow from the theory (George and Bennet 2005, 181). If the outcome in the case is consistent with the theoretical outcome, then the researcher may claim causal relationship.

In order to claim causal relationship in a congruence method, the researcher needs to ask first whether the relationship is spurious or whether it is insignificant. In addition, the researchers should ask whether the independent variable is a necessary condition for the outcome of the dependent variable and how much explanatory or predictive power does it have (George and Bennet 2005, 185). In order to define whether the congruence is spurious or causal, whether any possible intervening causal process connects the deductive theory with the case outcomes, and to provide an explanation for the deviant case(s) that the theory fails to explain it is important to utilize the process-tracing approach in addition to the congruence method.

Methodological Strengths and Weaknesses

Before proceeding with the analysis of different case studies, it is important to emphasize the strengths and weaknesses of this methodology. One of the main strengths of case study research includes the capability to achieve high conceptual validity, making a clear connection between the hypothesis and the theory to be tested (George and Bennett 2005, 20). Case study analysis allows for further explanation and testing of concepts, such as regional hegemon, great power, offshore balancing, or constraints. Conceptual validity is also related to achieving high construct validity, the extent to which a case study measures the concepts it claims to measure

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(Johnson et al. 2001, 86). Construct validity deals with the objective collection of data that are used for testing purposes, and the way how certain concepts are defined determines the type of data a researcher collects.

The second major strength of case study research is its ability to foster new hypotheses. In the process of conducting research, the researcher may encounter different findings that may lead to a new hypothesis. Even though the primary objective of this dissertation is to test how offensive realism explains certain foreign policy phenomena, it does not exclude the opportunity to discover instances when foreign policy initiatives may fall outside the offensive realism framework. It is for this reason that case study analysis is also able to test and reformulate theories, and even propose new theories (Rueschemeyer 2003, 310-318).

Third, case study research has the potential to examine causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases. A case study provides a very in-depth analysis of the case that leads to a well-defined causal mechanism (Gerring 2004, 348-349). Fourth, case study analysis has the capability to address complex causal mechanisms. The complexity of the social reality very often makes causal mechanisms very complex. In such a situation, case study is well equipped to deal with complex causal relations, such as equifinality (when different independent variables lead to the same effect) and path dependency (George and Bennett 2005, 22). Lastly, and related to previous strengths, case study research has the potential to reach a high level of internal validity because of the capability to define hidden variables and explain complex causal mechanisms. This means that case studies analyzed in this dissertation will provide an in-depth explanation of the political phenomena related to them.

However, high level of internal validity in case study research is achieved at the expense of external validity. External validity deals with the extent to which the findings of a case study

research can be generalized to other cases within the same class of events. Jason Seawright and John Gerring (2008, 294) argue that the problem of representativeness should not be ignored if we want the case study to reflect on a broader population. There exists a widely-held belief that case study research, unlike the statistical method, does not allow for statistical generalization or to claim generalizability within a particular population. This is not the case.

There are two types of generalization: statistical generalization and analytic generalization. While statistical generalization is based on inferences made about a population via a sample, analytic generalization is depended on how well the empirical results of a series of case study uphold a particular theory (McCutcheon and Meredith 1993; Yin 2009, 43). Whereas statistical method claims generalization from empirical observation to a specific population, case study research may claim generalization from empirical observation to a theory (Yin 2009, 43-44). Thus, case study research in this dissertation may claim generalization from empirical observation to offensive realism if the theory passes the test.

This dissertation will do just that—claim generalization from empirical observation of several case studies related to U.S. foreign policy to offensive realism theory. Besides the issue of generalizability, as mentioned previously, case selection is another issue surrounding case study research. The argument is that researchers are biased in selecting cases, and they do so to fit their theoretical argument. While it is considered a weakness of case study research, selecting cases to fit a researcher's objective is a normal way of conducting scientific research.

Justification for Case Study Selection

Each case study should be selected carefully to either predict similar result compare to previous findings or predict contrasting results (Yin 2009, 54). The primary factor for case selection is its relevance to research objective. All cases share common traits, such as

opportunities for the U.S. to expand its influence, threats to U.S. influence in particular regions of the world, and strategies to achieve U.S. international objectives. Very often, case-selection issue involves a trade-off among the goals of the researcher for attaining theoretical parsimony versus the goal to provide an in-depth analysis of the casual mechanism of a specific case study. For case study researchers, this trade-off means sacrificing theoretical parsimony for a rich exploratory analysis of the case.

Some researchers believe that researchers do not aspire to select cases that represent diverse populations, nor do they make a claim that their findings are applicable to such populations unless the explanation involves contingency (George and Bennett 2005, 30-31). Gerring (2001, 257) argues that the trick is to use social science research to solve our daily problems "without sacrificing the rigor that qualifies it as a science…It is not an easy trick, but it is the trick of the trade." George and Bennett (2005, 69) follow the same line and argue about the need to employ variables of theoretical interest for purpose of explanation that aims at solving a problem.

Another reason for selecting these presidential doctrines and events is because they deal with specific situations that were imperative to U.S. foreign policy, to either take advantage of an opportunity or deal with an actual or potential threat to U.S. strategic interests. In addition, these cases are selected because they cover a long period of U.S. foreign policy (1904-2003), which makes it very helpful to explain any variation or continuation in US foreign policy. Furthermore, these presidential doctrines are selected because they allow for some form of control over the state-level and individual-level variables.

For example, all presidential doctrines were launched by different U.S. presidents who had different individual characteristics and ideologies. President Carter is known to be a staunch

liberal while President Reagan is known to be a conservative or President Bush is known to be a neoconservative. Also, all these presidents served in different periods of American politics, with Roosevelt serving prior to WWII, Truman serving during the Cold War and prior to the Civil Rights Movement, Carter serving in a post-movement America engaged in the Cold War, and Bush serving in a post-Cold War era. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that these presidential doctrines and events allows for some control over individual- and state-level factors.

When it comes to the case of U.S.-Iran relationship, there are two major reasons for selecting Iran. First, Iran was the primary benefactors of the Afghan and Iraq wars as it was able to expand its sphere of political influence after the overthrowing of Talibans in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The second main reason for selecting Iran is because it is considered regional power, which is able to dictate or shape regional politics. This claim is supported by offensive realism theory, which claims that great powers like Iran have the capabilities to influence global politics. While states with minimal capabilities have their place in the international system, they are not powerful enough to dictate global politics.

Lastly, these presidential doctrines were selected because they have one major element in common: aggressive foreign policy to safeguard America's interests around the world. And that is the case starting with Roosevelt's "speak softly, and carry a big stick" and ending with Bush's preemptive actions or Obama's use of predatory drones ("sticks"). As such, the selection of these case studies serves the academic objectives to build up on the previous studies and the political objectives to analyze and predict foreign policy developments.

The Iraq War and Its Realist Critics

The 2003 Iraq war is closely related to what is known as the Bush Doctrine, a set of

domestic and foreign policy objectives and strategies formulated and implemented during the

tenure of President George W. Bush. For the purpose of this dissertation, this chapter focuses on

the foreign policy aspect of the Bush Doctrine. Robert G Kaufman (2007, 3-4) argues that the

Bush Doctrine is based on two major premises. The first premise states that the fundamental

purpose of US foreign policy has remained unaltered since the birth of the state, and its objective

has been to "assure the integrity and vitality of a free society" (Kaufman 2007, 3). The second

premise asserts that "the cardinal virtue of prudence" serves as the standard to determine the best

grand strategy, which determines the appropriate means and ends of US foreign policy (Kaufman

2007, 4). In addition, in *Understanding the Bush Doctrine: Psychology and Strategy in an Age of*

Terrorism, Stanley A. Renshon and Peter Suedfeld (2007, ix) argues that the Bush Doctrine

incorporates the following elements: American preeminence, assertive realism (which involves

preemption and preventive war), strategic stand-apart alliances, selective multilateralism, and

democratic transformation. Like Renshon and Suedfeld, Robert Jervis (2003, 365) identifies four

major elements of the Bush Doctrine, which include maintaining US hegemony, conducting

preemptive war whenever deemed necessary, taking unilateral actions whenever the situation

dictates, and spreading democracy. Understanding the differences between different versions of

the Bush Doctrine, this dissertation will rely on Jervis' version of the Doctrine to explain US foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq war.

John Mearsheimer (2005) argues that the 2003 Iraq war was a result of the neo-conservative ideology embodied in the Bush Doctrine. He defines neoconservatism, and the Bush Doctrine by default, as being "essentially Wilsonsianism with teeth", meaning an approach that aims at spreading democracy by using military power (2005, 1). This approach is similar to the argument made by other scholars, who claim that neoconservatism encompasses "contradictory imperatives", and those imperatives are the utopian goal of spreading democracy and the use of power to advance that goal (Lieberfeld 2005, 17). Their argument is that from a realist perspective, states do not use their resources to pursue utopian goals, such as spreading democracy, helping failed or troubled states, or engaging in humanitarian actions (Layne 1997, 112). Because of the aforementioned reason, Mearsheimer became a staunch opponent of the Iraq war. Besides Mearsheimer, many prominent scholars of international relations (mostly with a realist background) argued in a letter published by *The New York Times* (2002) that the war would not be in America's national interests. They considered it an "unnecessary war" (Mearsheimer and Walt 2003) or a "war of choice" made by the Bush administration (Hass 2009).

However, Mearsheimer and other scholars have ignored the difference between political rhetoric and political action and have not considered the spread of democracy as a secondary objective of U.S foreign policy or a consequence of the U.S. advancing its national interests. Very often, states use different political rhetoric to advance different political, strategic interests. G. John Ikenberry (2005, 286) argues that the promotion of democracy by the U.S. is a pragmatic and sophisticated approach on how to create a stable international political order and a friendly

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security environment. Ikenberry calls this approach *liberal grand strategy*. In addition, Stephen M. Walt (2010)—another realist scholar who paradoxically opposed the war on the same grounds as Mearsheimer— argues that realists accept the use of a liberal and idealistic rhetoric in order to advance their realist agenda.

Moreover, Mearsheimer (2001, 25-26) agrees that despite the liberal political rhetoric, behind the closed doors "the elites who make national security policy speak mostly the language of power, not that of principle, and the United States acts in the international system according to the dictates of the realist logic." He also argues that "when power considerations force the United States to act in ways that conflict with liberal principles, 'spin doctors' appear and tell a story that accords with liberal ideal" (2001, 26). Thus, Mearsheimer accepts that even when America's foreign policy actions contradict liberal ideals like the spread of democracy or liberalism, the government rushes to promote a political rhetoric that would provide cover for the real objectives. In addition, Lunch and Singh (2008, 36-43) argue the U.S. has always used alliances and institutions whenever they fitted its strategic interests rather than for other non-realist purposes. In the same vein, Paul Wolfowitz (1994, 37), former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense under President George G. Bush, cautioned the US to participate in multilateral actions when these actions do not conflict with the national interests of the state.

From a different perspective, Condoleezza Rice (2000), a very influential figure in the Bush administration, former National Security Advisor and Secretary of State in the administration, argues that the spread of democracy is a secondary goal of U.S. foreign policy. She also argues that there is nothing wrong with humanitarian actions and the spread of democracy, but she views them as consequences of the U.S. advancing its strategic national interests.

Offensive Realism and the 2003 Iraq War

Taking into account this discrepancy between political rhetoric and political actions, one can argue that the Bush Doctrine, as an embodiment of U.S. foreign policy toward Iraq, is in line with the tenets of offensive realism. The elements of the Bush Doctrine bear striking similarities with the three main pattern of state behavior in offensive realism, fear, self-help, and power maximization. In the Bush Doctrine, these patterns of behavior can be classified as fear from terrorist attacks and state-sponsor terrorism, self-help through unilateral and preemptive actions, and power maximization to maintain U.S. regional hegemony. Even though the spread of democracy mentality is considered by many scholars to have been a primary element of the doctrine, the belief on the American hegemony is what really builds the foundations of the Bush Doctrine and brings all of its other elements together (Jervis 2003, 376). The spread of democracy element can be considered, at best, a consequence of the U.S.' pursuing its national interests, or "at worse" a perfect example of how political rhetoric is used to hide the real strategic objectives of the state.

As such, instead of viewing the Bush Doctrine as a foreign policy document comprising "contradictory imperatives", this dissertation considers it an offensive realist foreign policy document that essentially aimed at maintaining U.S. regional hegemony around the world. Connecting it to offensive realism framework of analysis, this case study argues that the 2003 Iraq war was a result of the U.S. acting as a regional hegemon and pursuing a foreign policy that aimed at maintaining U.S. regional hegemony and preventing the emergence of Iraq as a regional hegemon in the Middle East.

Carlos L. Yordán (2006) explains U.S. foreign policy toward Iraq from an offensive realist perspective; however, his analysis focuses exclusively on the U.S. goal to become a global

hegemon and misses the main claim of the offensive realism: the U.S. is a regional hegemon and its foreign policy is driven by the offshore balancing strategy. This means that the real reason behind the Iraq war was U.S. strategy acting as an offshore balancer, which aimed at stopping the emergence of Iraq as a regional hegemon, not simply the desire of the U.S. to become a global hegemon. While Yordán emphasizes global hegemony as primary goal of the U.S., Christopher Layne (1997; 1998) emphasizes the offshore balancing strategy as the best strategy for the U.S. to achieve its strategic objectives. Layne claims that the U.S. pursued a grand strategy of preponderance during the Cold War while arguing in favor of an offshore balancing strategy. He argues that offshore balancing strategy would minimize the risk of U.S. involvement in a future great power war (nuclear war included) and will enhance America's relative power in the international system. Like Yordán's, Layne's argument has many connections to offensive realism; however, the latter is not consistent with offensive realism. Offensive realism argues that U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War was based on an offshore balancing strategy while Layne argues that it was based on a grand strategy of preponderance. Second, while Layne (1997, 88) argues that the grand strategy of preponderance was based on America's goal to create a U.S-led world order and maximize its political, military, and economic power, offensive realism postulates that U.S. foreign policy was driven by the offshore balancing strategy to prevent the emergence of the Soviet Union as a new regional hegemon.

Offensive realism explains U.S. foreign policy and its aggressive behavior toward Iraq by focusing on five theoretical bedrock assumptions, which in combination with one another cause states to fear one another and rely on self-help and power maximization. The case of U.S. foreign policy toward Iraq validates these assumption by explaining that: (1) the international system was/is in a state of anarchy (Morgenthau 1978; Waltz 1959; 1979; Mearsheimer 2001) , (2) Iraq

possessed some military capabilities that could cause damage or destroy U.S. interests, (3) the

U.S. was suspicious of Iraq's intentions and there was no guarantee that the latter would not

attack the interests of the former, (4) survival was the highest priority of the U.S., and (5) the

U.S. acted rationally, and its actions were dictated by the need to survive and maintain regional

hegemonic status.

These assumptions are embedded in the Bush Doctrine. First, the absence of a world

government, its anarchic nature, compelled the U.S. to rely on self-help and unilateral actions

(Elman 2008). Second, the suspicions and fear the U.S. had from a military powerful Iraq led the

U.S. to rely on preemptive actions. Lastly, the need to survive and defend its strategic interests

around the world forced the U.S. to increase its military capabilities in order to maintain

hegemony and encounter any other potential regional hegemon (Mearsheimer 2001, 43). For this

purpose, the U.S. acted aggressively and pursued the offshore balancing strategy. The scheme

bellow (Figure 2) describes the process how several factors contributed to the aggressive

behavior of the U.S against Iraq.

First, the anarchic nature of the international system was a main factor that dictated U.S.

foreign policy toward Iraq. The international system has a long history of anarchy, or absence of

a supranational government, starting with the creation of the state system under the Westphalia

Treaty in 1648. Because states value sovereignty more than anything else, they tend not to accept

the authority of a supranational government, especially when their strategic interests are at stake.

The absence of a supranational government has led to continuous conflicts and wars around the

world as states strive to pursue their national interests (Waltz 1959, 188). Were there a

supranational government in place, it would have controlled Iraq's alleged development of

weapons of mass destruction and/or the mistreatment of its people or would have prevented the

U.S. from attacking Iraq. Thus, the war itself is a testament that the international system is in a state of anarchy.

Factors that Led to Aggressive Behavior

Anarchy	Iraq's Military Capabilities	US Suspicion and Fear from Iraq	Survival of the US	Rationality

Patterns of Behavior

Fear from Iraq and Terrorism	Self-Help	Power Maximization

Aggressive Behavior Against Iraq
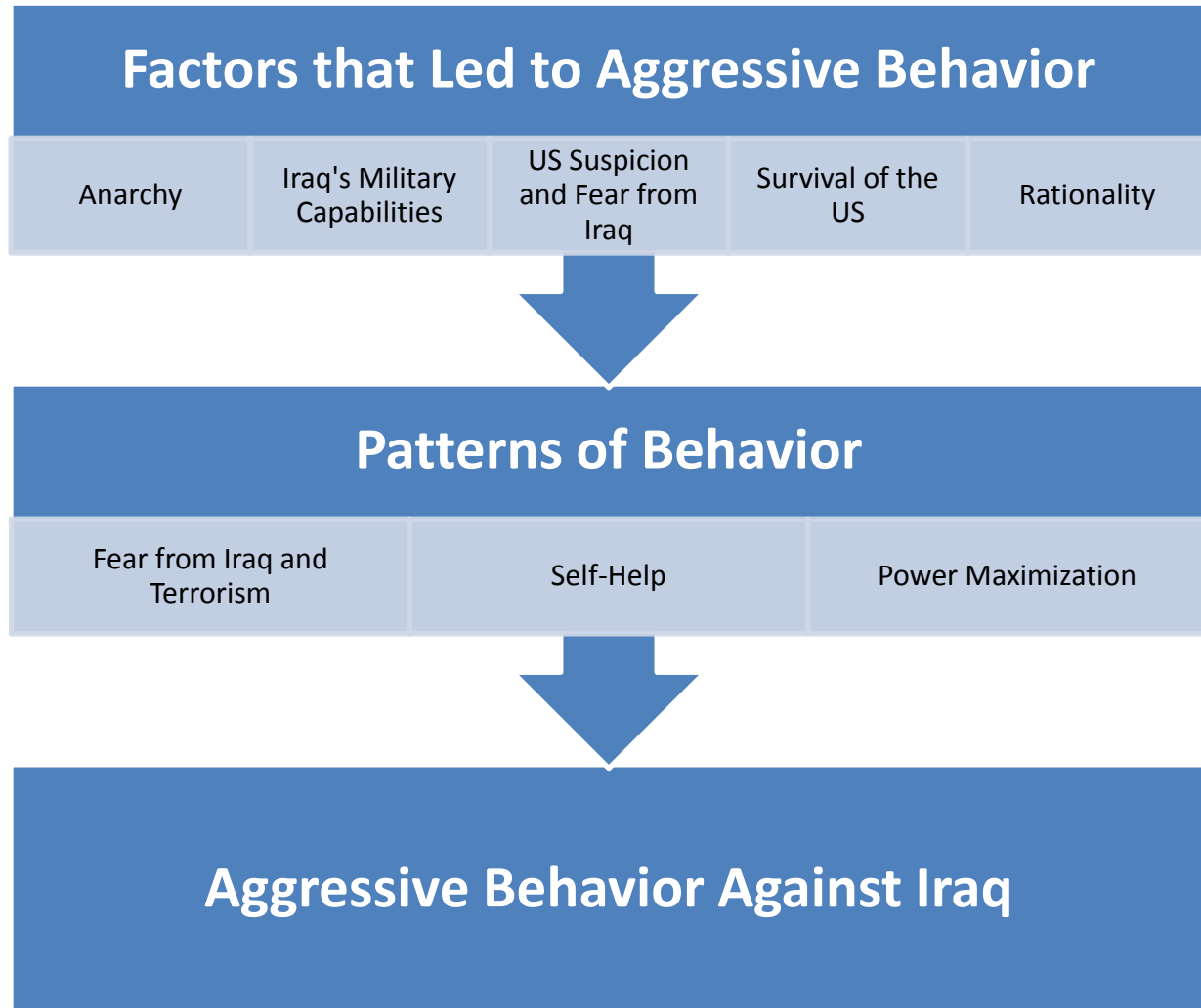
Figure 4: *Factors that Led to Aggressive Behavior*

Anarchy produces unilateral actions because national interests of great powers are supreme, diverse, and rarely converge, and each state advances its own interests. With unilateral actions I mean actions taken by a state or a group of states in pursuance of their strategic interests, which may not necessarily converge. States may build alliances; however, more than

multilateral actions, alliances are "temporary marriages of convenience" and changes as the interests of the states change (Mearsheimer 2001, 33).

Multilateral actions, on the other hand, are those actions taken by states that are nonrealist in nature and aim at advancing idealist or humanitarian interests, of which an absolute number of states agree. More states can come together to support humanitarian actions than to oppose a strategic action taken to advance states' interest, such as the Iraq war. Also, some states will always be willing to join another state in its unilateral actions, turning them into multilateral actions if definition is based on the number of states participating in conflict.

Many scholars have defined multilateralis`m and unilateralism based on the number of states coordinating their foreign policy actions with one another rather than on states' interests. Robert O. Keohane (1990, 731) defines multilateralism as coordination of foreign policy actions between three or more states "through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions". The problem with this definition is that every action can be defined as being multilateral, including the 2003 American intervention in Iraq, which was supported by more than 40 other states. Would the intervention be considered a multilateral action if we drop 40 states from *the coalition of the willing* and add four great powers, Russia, China, Germany, and France, into it? I do not think there would be a proper definition of multilateralism either. While arguing that multilateralism is not part of American tradition as the U.S. has always used alliances and institutions whenever they fitted its interests, Lunch and Singh (2008, 36-43) claim that it is impossible to correctly define multilateralism. Probably, Charles Krauthammer would call it unilateralism dressed in multilateralist clothing.[3]

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[3] See Krauthammer, Charles. 1990. "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70(1): 23-33, 26. Krauthammer argues that for domestic reasons, American politicians make sure that unilateral actions are dressed in multilateral clothing.

Also, relying on institutions as "persistent and connected sets of rules, formal and informal", as defined by Keohane (1990, 732), still leads to arbitrary definition of multilateralism and unilateralism because persistent and connected sets of formal and informal rules may include anarchy as well. Anarchy, for that matter, is not only a status; it is also the oldest institution of the international system, which proscribes states' roles, constrains their foreign policy, and shapes their expectations based on the distribution of capabilities.

In the case of the 2003 Iraq war, the U.S. had to rely on unilateral actions because maintaining the status of regional hegemon was imperative and other great powers, such as Russia, China, Germany, or France, would never accept a powerful America. On the other side, actions of Russia, China, and other states that opposed U.S. intervention in Iraq can be considered unilateral actions because their real goal was not to promote idealist interests or advance humanitarian effort but to advance their own interests. While many scholars of international relations viewed the unilateralist element of the Bush Doctrine as a recent phenomenon, the history of world politics is inundated with unilateral actions of states.

During the Cold War, the U.S. and the Soviet Union engaged repeatedly in unilateral actions around the world, Iraq took unilateral actions when it invaded Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990, Israel and Arab states have been engaging in unilateral actions during the 50-year-long Israel-Arab conflict, and so on. U.S. intervention in Iraq was just another unilateral action that was dictated by the anarchic nature of the international system, the diversity of interests distributed within the system, and power competition among great powers. As Wolfowitz argues (1994, 37), the U.S. should be prepared to act with only those states that share its purpose and interests, and that is what America did in 2003.

Another factor that influenced U.S. aggressive behavior was the possession by Iraq of considerable power, military capabilities that could harm American interests in the region and abroad. Power, from this perspective, is considered the possession by a state of specific assets or material resources that can be used to advance strategic interests of a state (Mearsheimer 2001, 57). External threats to its national security and the need to maximize power vis-a-vis other states have urged Iraq build formidable military capabilities. Historically, Iraq, or Modern Mesopotamia, has been known as a major political and military power in the Middle East (Held and Cummings 2013, 412). Its geostrategic location and natural wealth make Iraq a very important state in the Middle East (See *Figure 5* below.). According to U.S. Energy Information Administration, as of 2010, Iraq has the world's fifth largest proven oil reserves in the world after Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Canada, and Iran (2013, 1). Natural wealth has allowed Iraq to build formidable military capabilities and influence regional politics. Because military capabilities are subject to secrecy, they vary depending on the source. Different sources provide different data; however, data differences fall within a reasonable range.

Iraq's military capabilities increased significantly during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) and prior to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and remained considerably strong until the 2003 intervention. Iraq significantly increased its military capabilities during the period between 1972 and 1980. In 1972, Iraq spent approximately fourteen percent of its GDP in advancing and strengthening its military power (Geller and Singer 1998, 147). In 1980, the military expenditure increased drastically to twenty-one percent of the country's GDP (Geller and Singer 1998, 147) due to Iraq's fear of the post-revolutionary Iran and opportunities emerging as a result of the U.S-Iran conflict. By 1984, Iraqi's spending on weapons went up to $14 billion or close to fifty percent of its GDP (Timmerman 1991, 16). Main weapons providers of Iraq were the U.S.,

France, Germany, and Britain (Timmerman 1991; Friedman 1993; Phythian 1997). At the same time, Iraq numbered 212,000 men in the armed forces, of which 28,000 were part of the air forces and 4,000 men in navy forces (Geller and Singer 1998, 148). In order to provide its army with sufficient expertise, Iraqi government collaborated extensively with 2,000 Soviet advisors and received considerably weaponry assistance (Geller and Singer 1998, 148; GlobalSecurity.org n.d.).

Figure 5: The Map of Iraq
Source: CIA-The World Factbook

By the end of the Iran-Iraq war and the beginning of the Gulf War, Iraq had turned itself into a regional superpower. Iraq had managed to build up a military force of about one million soldiers. Its military arsenal included seven corps and over 50 divisions, around 5,500 main battle tanks, 10,000 other armored vehicles, 3,700 major artillery weapons, and 160 armed helicopters (Cordesman 2001, 2). In addition, Iraq possessed around 600 operational combat aircraft, 1800 light and major surface-to-air missile launchers, up to 6000 antiaircraft guns, and some modest navy power, such as Italian frigates and anti-ship missiles (Cordesman 2001, 2). In December 1989, Iraq claimed to have produced and tested the satellite launch missile, *al-'Abid*, and the ballistic missile, *Tammuz 1*, each with a range of about 1,200 miles; however, this claim has not been validated (Nolan 1991, 55-56; Hoyt 2007, 146). On top of the conventional arsenal, Iraq developed programs to produce weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons, which were used during the Iran-Iraq war.

While Iraq lost about 60% of its major combat equipment during the Gulf War, it managed to replace the losses within a short period. Its population a year prior to the 2003 U.S. intervention was a little more than 24 million people, of which more than six million were of the age range 15-49 years old and available for military service (CIA-The World Factbook 2002). In addition, as of 2000, Iraqi's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 59 billion, of which 1.3 billion were spent for military purposes. Moreover, Iraq counted more than 400,000 active servicemen in the military and the same number of reserve troops (Cordesman 2001, 5). Furthermore, it possessed around 2,200 battle tanks, 3,700 armored weapons, 2,200 artillery weapons, up to 90 armed helicopters, 360 combat aircraft, around 800 major and light surface-to-air missiles, and nearly 3,000 antiaircraft guns (Cordesman 2001, 5). Besides conventional military power, there was a belief among most countries and scholars that prior to the 2003 U.S. intervention Iraq also

possessed unconventional weapons, such as chemical and biological weapons, and was in the process of building nuclear weapons. However, in report sent to the President of the Security Council on January 27, 2003 from Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamad ElBaradei, it was revealed that Iraq was not engaged in any prohibited nuclear activity. Despite these findings, the U.S. and its allies maintained that Iraq was actually engaged in prohibited nuclear activity.

Besides the anarchic status of the international system and the possession by Iraq of considerable military capabilities that could harm U.S. interests, fear from a militarized Iraq influenced aggressive actions of the U.S. against Iraq. The intensity of fear is determined by whether or not states possess nuclear weapons second-strike capability to retaliate, whether or not they are separated by a large body of water, and whether or not power capabilities are shared evenly (Mearsheimer 2001, 43-45). Even though both states were divided by a large body of water and power was not distributed evenly among the two (U.S. military capabilities were far more superior than those of Iraq), the intensity of fear was high because the U.S. feared a potential nuclear Iraq, feared that those nuclear weapons could be used by terrorist organizations, and realized that its power projection capabilities would ease an attack on Iraq. All these factors, combined, led to preemptive actions as emphasized under the Bush Doctrine. When states fear each other, they are more likely to either increase their national security by enlarging their military capabilities, which becomes part of the security dilemma, or attack the threatening state preemptively in an attempt to gain or stop it from gaining power. The U.S. had three major reasons to fear Iraq.

First, Iraq had a long history of being an aggressive state with expansionist ambition. The first major case was the Iraqi invasion of Iran in 1980. One scholar argued that Iraq was

"motivated by fear, opportunism, and overconfidence, a mixture of defensive and offensive calculations...Iraq's decision to resort to force was a compound of a preventive war, ambition and punishment for a regional rival." (Hiro 1991, 39). After the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, Iraq feared that the revolution could expand to other states of the Persian Gulf, and a potential Islamic Shi'a movement could also be a serious threat to the regime in Iraq. In addition, Saddam Hussein perceived Iran as an easy target due to the vulnerability created internally by the Islamic Revolution. Most important, because of the growing hostility between the Islamic government and the United States, the U.S. cancellation of military aid for Iran, and the demoralization of the Iranian armed forces, Iraqi leadership realized that this shift in the military balance would favor Iraq. Thus, Saddam thought it was the opportune moment to attack Iran and expand it power and influence in the region.

Another case that shows Iraq's ambition to become a regional leader is the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, soon after the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988. The Iraqi aggression was followed by immediate reactions of the U.S. and the United Nations Security Council. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 660 in which it condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and demanded a full and prompt withdrawal of Iraqi military from Kuwait. In November 1990, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 678, authorizing the states cooperation with Kuwait to use "all necessary means" to force Iraq out of Kuwait by early 1990. This led to what is known as the Gulf War. Unable to encounter the U.S. almighty military power, Iraq surrendered and accepted the UNSCR 687, which, among others, demanded Iraq to destroy its weapons of mass destruction. In both cases, Iraq aimed at increasing its power and expanding its sphere of influence in the region. It may be even for this reason that Richard McCutcheon (2006,

11) argues that the 2003 Iraq War was indeed the end of the 1991 Gulf War, and both these two wars should be analyzed as one.

The second main reason why the U.S. feared Iraq was the continuous support of the latter for terrorist organizations. Iraq was considered major sponsor of terrorism as it provided financial support to the families of the suicide bombers that had lost their lives during terrorist attacks (Layne 2002; Esterbrook 2009). In addition, Iraq provided logistic support to many terrorist organizations, including the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO), Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), and the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). Iraq's support for these terrorist organizations was based on pure realist reasons, which aim at advancing Iraq's strategic interests in the region by harming other countries (Byman 2003). For example, Iraq supported MEK because the latter was a fierce opponent of the Iranian regime. At the same time Iraq supported PKK in order to cause damage on the neighboring Turkey. Fearing these strategic tactics and believing on Iraq's ongoing nuclear program, the U.S. feared that Iraq would provide al-Qaeda with nuclear arsenal to attack American interests around the world. It is for this reason that President George W. Bush (2003) warned that whoever harbors terrorist will be treated as a terrorist and whoever develops weapons of mass destructions that will be used by terrorists will be held accountable.

Besides Iraq's past aggressive history and its support for terrorist organizations, Iraq's pursuance of the nuclear program (and continuous defiance of U.S. requests to stop the program) was another major element that made the U.S. fear Iraq. Iraq is notorious for the use of chemical weapons against the Iranians and the Kurdish population during the Iran-Iraq war. Also, Iraq engaged in a program to develop biological and nuclear weapons. In mid-1970s, Iraq purchased a nuclear reactor from France (Ramberg 1980, xvii; Cordesman 1999, 605). At the outbreak of the

Iran-Iraq war, Iranian air forces attacked Iraq's nuclear facilities, and in 1981, Israeli air forces launched another attack against the same target (Ramberg 1980, xvi-xvii; Scott, Billingsley, and Michaelsen 2009, 182). On Apri 3, 1991, Iraq accepts the UN Security Council Resolution 687 to destroy its chemical weapons but denied possession of biological weapons (CNN Library 2013). In August 1991, Iraq admits the possession of biological weapons only for "defense purposes", which urged the Security Council to pass Resolution 707, demanding that Iraq reveal all its prohibited weapons (CNN Library 2013). However, it declined to cooperate with the U.S. weapons inspectors. Its continuous defiance of the UN authority led to the U.S-British attack on Iraq in 1998.

Since then, U.S.-Iraq relationship was characterized by deep suspicion and conflict. Major clashes between the U.S. and Iraq were related to the nuclear program of the latter. In February 2000, Iraq declared that it would not allow the UN weapons inspectors to investigate its disarmament program, which had halted in 1998 after the American and British airstrikes against Iraq's nuclear facilities. In 2001, President Bush demanded Iraq to let inspectors back in Iraq. In the same year, U.S. Congress authorized the President to use armed forces to constrain Iraq (U.S. Congress. Joint Resolution 2002). Following the joint resolution of U.S. Congress, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1441, which gave Iraq the final warning to comply with its disarmament obligations. In 2002, British intelligence provided U.S department of Defense with information alleging that Iraq was trying to buy yellowcake uranium from Nigeria (Hersh 2003). In his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush branded Iraq, Iran, and the North Korea as the "axis of evil" that threatened world peace and pledged to ensure America's national security (Bush 2002a). On March 19, 2003, President Bush ordered the attack on Iraq.

Lastly, and in combination with the aforementioned factors (the anarchic status of the international system, Iraq's possession of considerable capabilities, and U.S. fear of Iraq), the need to maintain U.S. regional hegemony dictated U.S. aggressive behavior against Iraq. As stated previously, maintaining U.S. hegemony is the most important element of the Bush Doctrine. President Bush (2002b) declared the objective to maintain U.S. hegemony during a graduation ceremony of the army cadets at West Point military base when he stated that America's goal was to build supreme military capabilities and surpass any challenge. This goal was officially outlined in *The National Security Strategy* a few months later. According to the strategy, defending America against its enemies is "the first and fundamental commitment" of the government. In doing so, the military had to provide security to allies and friend, prevent future military competition, deter threats against the U.S. and its allies, and defeat any adversary when deterrence fails (The White House 2002, 29). Also, the primary goal was to prevent other states from building a military force stronger or equal to that of the U.S. The strategy stated that "Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States." (The White House 2002, 30). Despite the fact that the strategy emphasized frequently the need to cooperate with other great powers, it also stated that the U.S. should be prepared to take unilateral actions when "our interests and unique responsibilities require" (The White House 2002, 31).

As a regional hegemon, the U.S. has a strategic interests in maintaining the status quo of power in the international system and prevent any disturbance of the balance of power, and for this reason the U.S. is recognized as offshore balancer. The U.S. had relied traditionally on buck-passing and balancing strategies to prevent any aggressor state from disturbing the balance of power (Mearsheimer 2001, 139), and it did so with Iraq. The buck-passing strategy was about

using regional powers to bear the burden of balancing, preventing, confronting, or even fighting

against Iraq. As offshore balancer, the U.S. has used the buck-passing strategy in several cases.

Its foreign policy toward the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) is a perfect example of the offshore

balancing strategy used to prohibit any of the states in conflict to emerge victorious. In

Kissinger's mind, the best scenario for the U.S. would have been if both Iran and Iraq had lost

the war (Everest 2003, 30-31). In order to make this happen, the U.S. provided diplomatic and

military assistance to both parties at war. Another case when the U.S. acted as an offshore

balancer was its support for Pakistan against India during the Cold War in an attempt to

counterbalance the increasing economic and military power of India (Rudolph and Rudolph

2006).

The back-passing strategy did not work in the case of Iraq because there was no regional

great power willing to balance. First, Iran, as a traditional balancer of Iraq, feared that another

war with Iraq would have been devastating. The memories of the Iran-Iraq bloody war and how

the U.S. made both states bleed (Everest 2003, 30-31) prevented Iran from directly balancing

Iraq. Iran feared a strong U.S. presence adjacent to its borders, but at the same time feared its

traditional adversary, Iraq. This caused Iran not to take a stance on whether to attack Iraq or not.

Second, Turkey could not be used as a balancer because it feared that the war would destabilize

the Middle East and chaotic Iraq would cause Kurds to seek their own state; thus, threatening

Turkey's sovereignty. In addition, Saudi Arabia could not be used as a balancer for several

reasons. First, it did not perceive any imminent threat coming from Iraq. This position was made

public by Prince Saud Alfaysal who claimed that Saudi Arabia had no intention to join the U.S.

against Iraq because there was no proof about an imminent threat coming from Iraq (Iraq Watch

2002). Also, Saudi Arabia it feared the aftermath of the war, a possible Shia regime that would

be hostile to it. Lastly, Saudi Arabia feared that after the war, the U.S. would install a puppet

regime and would increase oil productions based on US demands, challenging Saudi Arabia's oil

supremacy in the region.

Because the buck-passing strategy did not function, the U.S. had to rely on the second

strategy, *balancing*. When regional great powers fail to stop the ambitions of another great

power, then the distant hegemon would intervene to balance against the rising power (Layne

1997, 113-116; Mearsheimer 2001, 237). Through balancing, the U.S. would assume direct

responsibility to balance Iraq. According to offensive realism, balancing can be achieved by

sending clear signals to the aggressor to change its behavior, creating a defensive alliance against

the aggressor, and mobilizing additional resources for confrontation (Mearsheimer 2001, 156-

157).

By November 2002, the U.S. had already built the "coalition of the willing", made of

countries that joined the U.S. against Iraq. Immediately after the attack on Iraq started, the White

House (2003) made available a press release claiming that 49 countries had already joined the

coalition forces. In addition, as a regional hegemon, the U.S. had sufficient military capabilities

to win over Iraq. Besides the large coalition and sufficient military capabilities at its disposition,

U.S. government also made several attempts to deter Iraq and force it to accept U.S. terms and

conditions. One attempt was made in October 2002 when U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution

that authorized the use of armed forces to "defend the national security of the United States

against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and enforce all relevant United Nations Security

Council Resolutions regarding Iraq." (U.S. Congress. Joint Resolution 2002). Around the same

time, President Bush declared that the U.S. would not seek a regime change if Iraq complies with

the UN Security Council resolutions related especially to weapons of mass destruction and prohibited missiles and armament (Kemper 2002).

About a month later, the UN Security Council adopted *Resolution 1441*as the last opportunity for Iraq to comply with disarmament obligations set forth in previous resolutions, which included not only weapons of mass destruction but also prohibited missiles and armaments, and payment of reparations to Kuwait caused by actions of Iraq during the Gulf war. As Iraq continued to defy the U.S. authority, in January 2003, President Bush reiterated the demand for Iraq's disarmament, stating: "…[Resolution] 1441 gives us the authority to move without any second resolution. And Saddam Hussein must understand that if he does not disarm, for the sake of peace, we, along with others, will go disarm Saddam Hussein." (CNN 2003). In March 16, President Bush declared that Saddam Hussein leave Iraq within 48 hours or face the US military forces (CNN 2003). On March 19, U.S. armed forces started the *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, and soon Iraq came under the American control and hegemony.

Conclusion

The analysis of the foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine reveals that the actions of the US against Iraq fit within the offensive realist theoretical framework analyzed above. US foreign policy actions were influence by the presence anarchy in the international system, the possession by Iraq of considerable military power that could threaten US strategic interests, the fear from and suspicion of Iraq's intentions, the need to survive in an anarchic system, and rationality to behave strategically in order to achieve its strategic objectives. All these factors combined led to three main patterns of behavior that were clearly stated under the Bush Doctrine: fear from terrorism and aggressor states like Iraq, which urged the US to engage in preemptive actions, self-help in an anarchic system, which forced the US to take unilateral actions (if we apply the

international law requirements), and power maximization, which focused US foreign policy on maintaining hegemony and maximizing its military capabilities.

In addition, as a regional hegemon, the US was forced to pursue the balancing strategy because there was no regional power capable and willing to balance Iraq. The US utilized the bait-and-bleed strategy and double containment during the Iran-Iraq (1980-1988) by supporting both sides in order to prolong the war and make sure they would suffer severe damages (Fayazmanesh 2008, 12-51). This outcome would keep unchallenged US influence in the region for years to come. It is reasonable to believe that Iran was suspicious of the intentions of the US and feared that balancing Iraq would be an American bait like the one Iraq "swallowed" in 1980. In the case of Iraq, the US pursued the balancing strategy by applying three main measures. First, the US send clear diplomatic threats to force Iraq comply with US demands. Once this measure failed, the US decided to create an anti-Iraq alliance to confront Iraq. And lastly, because all other options had been exhausted, the US was forced to launch an attack on Iraq on March 20, 2003. Years after the start of the war, it has been argued by many researchers that the US lost the Iraq war (Allawi 2007; Walt 2012; Fawcett 2013). Lost compare to what?

CHAPTER SIX:

THE BUSH DOCTRINE: CONTINUITY OR CHANGE IN US FOREIGN POLICY

Introduction

Once, U.S. Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg asserted that "politics stops at the water's edge", meaning that U.S. foreign policy should not be influenced by internal political disputes or struggles over power; instead, it should be guided by strategic interests of the state. But as we have seen in the literature review portion of this dissertation, different scholars have different perspectives on this matter. This is also the case with U.S. foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq war, a policy that is outlined in the Bush Doctrine. The debate has been whether the Bush Doctrine is characterized by continuity or change. The literature on this topic is abundant, but for the purpose of this dissertation, a few representative studies will be mentioned.

It is understandable that from an individual-level analysis, most scholars would claim that the Bush Doctrine represents a change because individuals with different characteristics would craft different foreign policies. For example, Mead (2005) and Kaplan (2008) argue that neoconservative ideology was the major factor that dictated a major shift in U.S. foreign policy. According to these scholars, neoconservatives like the Vice President, Dick Cheney, the Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, and their assistants aimed at protecting domestic security and remaking the world into democracy (Mead 2005, 7; Kaplan 2008, 4). In another study, Dina Badie (2005) argued about how groupthink influenced U.S. foreign policy under the bush administration, claiming that ideological predispositions of a small group of people dictated foreign policy outcome.

On the other hand, a state-level analysis would be more likely to view the Bush Doctrine as a continuation rather than a break in U.S. foreign policy because the political system and social structure and characteristics rarely experience considerable and rapid changes. For example, Huntington (2005, 229) emphasizes the role of American culture and argues that like the previous empires, U.S has its own national interests defined in terms of power, wealth, and security, all of which are dictated by distinctive political principles and values making up the American culture. G. John Ikenberry (2005, 286) argues in the same vein by stating that American foreign policy is part of a pragmatic and sophisticated approach, known as liberal grand strategy, which aims at creating a stable international political order and a friendly security environment (2005, 268). From a different perspective, Mearsheimer and Walt (2007; 2009) argue about the influence of Israeli lobby in U.S. foreign policy, but it is reasonable to expect that such influence normally does not change overnight and so does foreign policy.

From international-level perspective, changes within the system would impose changes on foreign policy. Because systemic changes happen slowly or slightly, there is an expectation that even foreign policy would experience little change. For example, from a neo-Marxist perspective, some scholars argue that the foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine, while characterized by major continuity patterns, signaled the birth of "the new imperialism", which was due to the "unilateral militarism" of the administration (Glassmann 2005, 1527). From a realist perspective, some scholars argue that the Bush doctrine represented a sharp break from the pre-September 11 foreign policy because the U.S. was moving away from its traditional role as a global leader in a quest to become "something very like an empire" (Jervis 2003, 365). As mentioned previously, other international relations scholars of the realist school argued that US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine was a break from the traditional American foreign policy

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because of its focus on the spread of democracy element, which they saw as a major goal of the administration, not as a consequence or political rhetoric. One may argue and say that these studies are realist explanations wearing nonrealist lenses, and that may be true.

It is important to note that while these scholars view the spread of democracy as a goal in itself, for some attached to the realist goal of the American hegemony, Condoleezza Rice (2002), a powerful person within the Bush administration, viewed the spread of democracy as a consequence of the U.S expanding its hegemony around the world. Concerned with U.S. hegemony, Christopher Layne (1997; 1998) makes a prescriptive analysis and argues that the U.S. had been pursuing a foreign policy, grand strategy, of preponderance and that the end of the Cold War demanded a new grand strategy in order for the U.S. to maintain superiority over other states. He prescribes this new foreign policy by considering major changes that happened to the international system after the Cold War and the emergence of the "unipolar moment" (Krauthammer 1990). Layne proposes the offshore balancing grand strategy through which the U.S. uses regional power to maintain the balance of power. This strategy was later incorporated into offensive realism theory to explain U.S. foreign policy throughout its modern history, until 2001, time when the theory was launched. From the offensive realist perspective, Carlos Yordán (2006, 125) argues that U.S foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine was a revised version of the one pursued before the September 11th terrorist attacks. While the pre-9/11 U.S foreign policy was status quo oriented, he argues, the post-9/11 foreign policy was expansionist in nature, aiming at making the U.S. a global hegemon.

On the other hand, some scholars do not agree with the *change* perspective and argue that US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine was characterized by continuity. Sylvan and Majeski (2009, 2) argue that U.S. foreign policy in the last hundred years is characterized by continuity

and has resorted in the use of the same strategies, or "policy instruments", such as surveying the political and economic activities of other countries, providing political, economic, and military assistance to its allies, and running covert operations or waging wars against its adversaries. According to these authors, the U.S. resorts to these foreign policy initiatives because it has capabilities to do so; thus, capabilities are those that impact its foreign policy. The process of policy making, they argue, does not aim at achieving long-term or structural goals by any means; instead, it aims at choosing a particular means that "corresponds to whatever the immediate problem is faced by a client or represented by an enemy" (2009, 2).

Like Sylvan and Majeski, Lynch and Singh (2008) argue that U.S. foreign policy under President George W. Bush is in line with previous foreign policy initiatives. While Sylvan and Majeski use a cybernetic approach to explain U.S. foreign policy, Lynch and Singh shun away from known theoretical approaches, such as realism, liberalism, social constructivism, or other aforementioned state- or individual-level explanations. Instead, they claim that they use an approach that combines international system factors with domestic factors, without referring to or proposing any particular theory. They divide U.S. history of the last century in two major periods, which were and are (and will be) dealt with similar foreign policy framework. The first period was the fight against communism (the Cold War), which they call *the First Cold War*. U.S. foreign policy during this period was embedded in the Truman Doctrine, and it dominated the entire First Cold War era. The second period is the fight against *the Islamist terror*, which they call *the Second Cold War* (2008, 9-15). They argue that U.S. foreign during this period is and will be embedded in the Bush Doctrine, which is equivalent to the Truman Doctrine, and the former will also "outlast the president whose name it bears" for reasons deriving from the international system and domestic politics (2008, 3). Unlike Sylvan and Majeski who focus

solely on resolving problem, Lynch and Singh (2008, 7) argue that American primacy, as a means and end, will not be rejected, and preemptive actions will not be abandoned.

Similar to the two aforementioned studies, in this chapter of the dissertation I argue that U.S. foreign policy that led to the Iraq war represents continuity, instead of change, in U.S. foreign policy. However, I do so by utilizing offensive realism as a theoretical framework. In order to support the argument, I will conduct a case study analysis of four important presidential doctrines of the 20th century, which are linked to important foreign policy events. These doctrines include the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine. Major events respectively linked to each doctrine include the Venezuelan Crisis of 1902 and its aftermath, the British withdrawal from Greece and Turkey in 1947, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and its aftermath, and the support for Mujahedeens in Afghanistan and the Iran-Contra affair.

The Roosevelt Corollary: Maintaining Hegemony with a Big Stick

Throughout the nineteenth century, U.S. foreign policy aimed at establishing regional hegemony in the Western Hemisphere (Mearsheimer 2001, 236). The U.S. managed to become regional hegemon by pursuing two major strategies (Mearsheimer 2001, 239). First, under the Manifest Destiny, it pursued an expansionist strategy by extending its territories across North America and built the most powerful state in the regions. Second, under the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. diminished the influence of the United Kingdom and other European great powers by declaring the Western Hemisphere as its sphere of influence and every intervention from outside forces would be considered a direct threat to U.S. sovereignty. While in the nineteenth century, the U.S. successfully pursued a foreign policy that aimed at establishing regional hegemony, during the twentieth century, it pursued a foreign policy that aimed at exercising regional

hegemony and preventing the emergence of another regional hegemon that would threaten U.S. strategic interests.

The Venezuelan Crisis of 1902-1903

The Roosevelt Corollary, also known as the Roosevelt Doctrine, it is widely argued, was a reinstatement of the Monroe Doctrine and aimed at preventing the European great powers from expanding their influence in the Western Hemisphere. It was launched in response to the Venezuelan Crisis of 1902-03, and it aimed at preventing the expansion of European great powers in the Western Hemisphere, an expansion that was deemed a threat to US regional hegemony. At the end of the nineteenth century, Venezuela was engulfed in political turmoil and civil unrest. The already-poor economic situation deteriorated significantly because of the high foreign debt and the destruction of foreign assets in the country during the chaotic period. In 1899, Cipriano Castro, a military leader, came into power and refused to pay the foreign debts and losses during the chaotic period that Venezuela owed to Britain, Germany, and Italy. Castro made this decision convinced that the U.S. would not allow European great powers to attack a sovereign country in the Western Hemisphere, which, according to the Monroe Doctrine, fell under U.S. sphere of influence.

Initially, the U.S. proved Castro wrong because the Monroe Doctrine prevented acquisition of territories by European great power but not "spanking" and the demand to fulfill their obligations following from treaties and economic cooperation with European great powers. In November 1902, the European great powers informed the U.S. about their intentions to impose a blockade and sent an ultimatum to the Venezuelan government. Britain and Germany signed the Iron-Clad agreement, which obliged both countries to support each other until the issue was resolved (Mitchell 1999, 71-74). In early December of 1902, the two great powers

captured four Venezuelan gunboats and bombarded Puerto Cabello, a fortified town on the

Venezuelan cost which was known for its strategic location (Mitchell 1999, 84-86; Brune and

Burns 2003, 308).

Faced with this situation, Castro invoked the Monroe Doctrine in order to have the U.S.

intervene and resolve the issue in Venezuela's favor (McPherson 2013, 77). Venezuela soon sent

a request for arbitration to the U.S., which was soon forwarded to Britain and Germany. Both

Britain and Germany agreed on the proposal even though the latter was reluctant to accept it

(Parson 1971, 437; Mitchell 1999, 198-199). The issue was then sent for arbitration to Permanent

Court of Arbitration at The Hague. In February 1904, the Court ruled that the blockading powers

were entitled to preferential treatment in the settlement of their financial claims (Smith 2005, 69;

Maass 2009, 383). The decision of the Court was not welcomed by the U.S. because it was

viewed as a precedent that could encourage the European powers to intervene in the future

(Maass 2009, 383; Sexton 2011, 227). Aware of similar financial problems faced by other Latin

American countries and in an attempt to discourage European powers from intervening in the

Western Hemisphere, President Roosevelt invoked a slightly revised version of the Monroe

Doctrine, widely recognized as the Roosevelt Corollary.

The Iron-Clad agreement between Britain and Germany raised concerns about a potential

alliance against the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere. The intensification of military actions

against Venezuela by European powers made the U.S. to react fiercely and demand that

European great power stop their military actions and withdraw from the region (Livermore 1946;

Parsons 1971; Morris 1989). In addition to the alliance and military actions against during the

Venezuela crisis, the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in favor of European great

powers frightened the U.S. These changes urged President Roosevelt, through a message sent to

U.S. Congress in December 1904, to declare the Roosevelt Corollary, a new presidential doctrine that would guide U.S. foreign policy. Like the Bush Doctrine, the Roosevelt Corollary incorporates five bedrock assumptions as outlined in offensive realism, which caused the U.S. to act aggressively toward European great powers and the states in the Western Hemisphere.

First, the anarchic status of the international system was present and recognized by the US government. There is no doubt that there was no supranational government to resolve the Venezuelan crisis and other issues involving international disputes. Instead, the international system was multipolar, with many great powers competing to advance their own interest (Kennedy 1987, 194-256; Mearsheimer 2001, 356). The anarchic status of the international system can also be understood by the fact that during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century several wars were waged around the world, such as the First Sino-Japanese war, Italo-Ethiopian war, Greco-Turkish war, Spanish American war, Second Boer war, Philippine-American war, Ruso-Japanese war, etc. In addition, international institutions were either nonexistent or powerless and used whenever it suited states' interests. This fact was also emphasized by President Roosevelt in a message sent to Congress in December 1904.

> "…*But in international law we have not advanced by any means as far as we have advanced in municipal law. There is as yet no judicial way of enforcing a right in international law. When one nation wrongs another or wrongs many others, there is no tribunal before which the wrongdoer can be brought…*"

Another factor that motivated U.S. foreign policy during the Venezuelan crisis was the possession by European great powers of significant military capabilities, which could cause harm or destroy other states. Anarchy dictated the maintenance of a military power to protect a state from other states. Even though it is relevant to other great powers like Great Britain and

Germany, President Roosevelt (1904) emphasized the need to have a strong military in his message to Congress:

> *"When one nation wrongs another or wrongs many others, there is no tribunal before which the wrongdoer can be brought… Until some method is devised by which there shall be a degree of international control over offending nations, it would be a wicked thing for the most civilized powers, for those with most sense of international obligations and with keenest and most generous appreciation of the difference between right and wrong, to disarm…"*

Germany and Great Britain were no different from the US. By 1900, Germany had a population size of 56 million people, a Gross Domestic Production value of about 36 billion dollars, and 34% of the relative share of European wealth and 21% of the relative share of world wealth (Kennedy 1987, 199; Mearsheimer 2001, 66, 220). This latent power and the need to survive the threats coming from other European great powers like France and Great Britain forced Germany to build a formidable military force comprising a standing army of about 550 thousand military and naval personnel and about three million available for active military duty (Kennedy 1987, 203; Mearsheimer 2001, 187). While the center of affairs in Europe was the triangular relationship between Britain, France, and Germany, the latter had "the all-important middle position" (Kennedy 1987, 194). Germany was also considered the biggest power in the continental Europe (Winter n.d.). On the other side, Great Britain had considerable latent and military power. By 1900, it had a population of about 41 million people and military and naval personnel of more than 600 thousand soldiers (Kennedy 1987, 199; Mearsheimer 2001, 248). During that time, Britain was considered the largest empire the world had seen, which comprised twelve million square miles of land and the quarter of the world's population (Kennedy 1978, 224).

Besides anarchy and the possession of significant military capabilities by Germany and Britain, U.S. had deep suspicions and feared that the great powers would challenge U.S. hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. Both Germany and Great Britain had a rich record of implementing expansionist foreign policies as they both were colonial powers. German leaders argued that industrialization and overseas conquests were "as irresistible as natural law", and the question was not whether to expand or not, but where to expand (Kennedy 1987, 211). In pursuing its expansionist goals, Germany engaged in a rapid buildup of its navy, and within a short period, the German fleet became the second largest naval power, trailing only the Royal Navy (Kennedy 1987, 196, 212). Germany had enlarged its colonial expansion in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Because by the end of the nineteenth century most of the world's territories were partitioned between other great powers, Germany was left with no other alternative choice but to seek "a redivision of the globe" (Kennedy 1987, 213). On the other hand, by late nineteenth century, Great Britain was considered the most powerful empire the world had ever seen, and its expansionist goals were not to be ignored despite the fact that its power was in decline (Kennedy 1987, 224-232). It was for this reason that the U.S. viewed British-German intervention in the Venezuelan crisis with deep suspicion and concern.

Another factor that impacted the aggressive behavior during the Venezuelan crisis was U.S. need to ensure its survival from external threats. Survival is the ultimate goal of any country because without sovereignty a state will not be able to pursue other goals (Mearsheimer 2001, 31). The anarchic structure of the international system and the suspicion and fear that states have toward each other lead to a great concern about their survival through self-help. The British and German expansion in the Western Hemisphere would have made the U.S. vulnerable to future attacks from the European powers. While the U.S. did not have direct interests in protecting

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small Latin American states from foreign threats, it had direct interests in preventing the creation or establishment of powerful threatening rivals in its backyard, making it possible for them to project immense power against the US. The US could not wait for Germany and/or Britain to attack after the latter had attacked and conquered other states in the hemisphere. That would have been short-sighted and reckless foreign policy. Preemptive foreign policy is preferred to reactive foreign policy because the best way to deal with a problem is not to allowing it to occur. This can be understood by using the analogy of the German tragedy so vividly described by Pastor Martin Niemöller.

First they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist
Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me

The last factor that led the U.S. to act aggressively against Germany and Britain was its rational behavior to pursue its strategic interest, survival, in an anarchic environment. Very often states utilize zero-sum rationality, meaning that one state's losses are viewed as another state's gains. And based on this rationality, the best way for states to ensure its survival is to take advantage of other states and gain power at their expense (Mearsheimer 2001, 36). The German and British

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expansion in the Western Hemisphere would have been made at the expense of U.S hegemony because the expansion for these great powers would mean contraction for U.S. influence in the region. Rationality and pursuance of interests are notable characteristics of U.S. foreign policy. Despite the fact that U.S. foreign policy incorporates terms such as international law, justice, and humanity, it always recognizes self-interests as primary factor dictating the policy. This is also encountered in the message that President Roosevelt (1904) sent to Congress as part of the Roosevelt Corollary.

> *"...It is our duty to remember that a nation has no more right to do injustice to another nation, strong or weak, than an individual has to do injustice to another individual; that the same moral law applies in one case as in the other. But we must also remember that it is as much the duty of the Nation to guard its own rights and its own interests as it is the duty of the individual so to do. Within the Nation the individual has now delegated this right to the State, that is, to the representative of all the individuals…...In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, and in endeavoring to circumscribe the theater of war in the Far East, and to secure the open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large…"*

The aggressive behavior of the U.S. as regional hegemon is guided by its strategic interest to maintain hegemony and prevent the emergence of another regional hegemon that would threaten U.S. interests around the world. There is no doubt that the U.S. viewed itself as the master of the Western Hemisphere, and this was made clear by President Roosevelt in the same message to Congress.

> *…Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence,* *to the exercise of an international police*

power… Under any circumstances a sufficient armament would have to be kept up to serve the purposes of international police; and until international cohesion and the sense of international duties and rights are far more advanced than at present, a nation desirous both of securing respect for itself and of doing good to others must have a force adequate for the work which it feels is allotted to it as its part of the general world duty…

While the Monroe Doctrine was utilized to make the U.S. a regional hegemon in the Western Hemisphere, the Roosevelt Corollary was a foreign policy initiative that aimed at applying and maintaining hegemony, and this is the reason why the Roosevelt Corollary is viewed as being more aggressive than the Monroe Doctrine. As a regional hegemon, theoretically speaking, the U.S. had two alternative strategies to consider in order to maintain hegemony and prevent the expansion of Germany and Britain in the region. First, it could have tried to use the buck-passing strategy, using other regional powers to confront the aggressors. However, the problem was that there was no other regional power to balance Germany and Britain. Even though the international system was a multipolar system (Kennedy 1987, 197), there was a little chance that other great powers, such as Britain and France, would act to stop German ambitions in the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, the concern was that the British-German "Iron Clad" Agreement forced the U.S. to believe that the two great powers had reached an agreement that would challenge U.S. influence in the region. While U.S. relations with Britain improved with the passing of time, U.S. suspicion and fear toward Germany increased (Dobson 1995, 26).

For these reasons, the U.S. was forced to intervene by itself in order to balance the European great powers and maintain its status as regional hegemon intact. As part of the balancing strategy, the U.S. had three optional measures to take. First, it could sent clear messages to the aggressor states through diplomatic challenges, create an alliance to balance the aggressors, and mobilize additional resources that could be used against the aggressors. As

mentioned previously, the U.S. could not create an alliance against Germany and Britain because there were no states in the region that could add significant power to the alliance and turn the balance of power against the European great powers. However, the U.S. had significant military power and power projection capabilities, given its geographic location, to counter German and British naval forces in the region. President Roosevelt knew that the possession of a strong military force was vital to U.S. strategic interests. Being a strong believer of the "sea power" and influenced by thoughts of Alfred A. Mahan, President Roosevelt paid special attention to the army and the naval power (Chambers II 1999, 624; Ricard 2011). In his message to Congress, he states:

> *In treating of our foreign policy and of the attitude that this great Nation should assume in the world at large, it is absolutely necessary to consider the Army and the Navy, and the Congress, through which the thought of the Nation finds its expression, should keep ever vividly in mind the fundamental fact that it is impossible to treat our foreign policy, whether this policy takes shape in the effort to secure justice for others or justice for ourselves, save as conditioned upon the attitude we are willing to take toward our Army, and especially toward our Navy… Until some method is devised by which there shall be a degree of international control over offending nations, it would be a wicked thing for the most civilized powers, for those with most sense of international obligations and with keenest and most generous appreciation of the difference between right and wrong, to disarm…*

By 1900, the U.S. had a population size and an industrial potential far superior than Britain and Germany (Kennedy 1987, 199-202; Mearsheimer 2001, 246-248). These two important latent power elements helped the U.S. build a military powerful enough to challenge any great power trying to interfere in the Western Hemisphere. Military capabilities of the U.S. increased significantly after the success of the naval forces during the Spanish-American War (1898), and the Venezuelan crisis coincided with this rapid buildup in army and naval power

(Kennedy 1987, 247-248). In 1898, the U.S. used to spend $22 million on naval power and by 1813 that amount increased to $139 million (Kennedy 1987, 247).

In addition to building up its military power, especially naval power, the U.S. used diplomatic channels to demand a full withdrawal of Germany and Britain from the Western Hemisphere. Fearing a possible establishment of German bases in Venezuela, which would threaten U.S. strategic interests in the region, President Roosevelt demanded Germany to stop its military actions against Venezuela and send the issue for arbitration within ten days (Jones 2009, 310). In a meeting with the German Ambassador Theodor von Holleben, President Roosevelt expressed its concerns about Germany's actions against Venezuela and warned that the U.S. would intervene if Germany conquered Venezuelan territories (Lenz 2008, 114). While there are scholars who claim that the diplomatic threats against Germany are exaggerated, most scholars agree that it was the diplomatic pressure applied by President Roosevelt that caused Germany and Britain to stop their military operations and withdraw from the Western Hemisphere (Livermore 1946; Parsons 1971; Morris 1989).

There is no doubt that during the Venezuelan Crisis of 1902, the U.S. acted as the regional hegemon of the Western Hemisphere. Its aggressive behavior toward Britain and Germany was influenced by the anarchic status of the international system, the possession by Germany and Britain of considerable military capabilities, the suspicion of and fear from intentions of the European great powers toward the U.S., the need to survive in an anarchic world, and the rational behavior that emphasizes the need to pursue its strategic interests. As a regional hegemon, the U.S. aimed at maximizing its power and preventing Britain and Germany from expanding their influence in the region at the U.S. expenses. The U.S. successfully followed a balancing strategy by relying on its military power and using diplomatic channels to

advise the aggressors that military actions would be taken by the U.S. to prevent the disturbance of the balance of power. Following the Venezuelan crisis, the Roosevelt Corollary was successfully applied in Dominican Republic (1904-05), Cuba (1905-06), and Central America (1906-07) in an attempt to prevent any foreign power from intervening in the Western Hemisphere for reasons provided during the Venezuelan crisis. Globally, the U.S. pursued a back-passing strategy to prevent the emergence of a superpower in Europe by using Britain, France, and Russia to contain Germany (Mearsheimer 2001, 253).

The Truman Doctrine: War on Communism

During WWII, the U.S. applied both the buck-passing and balancing strategy to prevent the emergence of a regional hegemon. Seeing that Germany had emerged as a superpower at the outbreak of WWII, the U.S. rushed to militarily assist European great powers through the *Lend-Lease* policy, also known as *An Act to Further Promote the Defense of the United States*, in an attempt to contain the spread of German influence all over Europe. The *Lend-Lease Act*, signed months before the *Pearl Harbor* attack, provided military assistance to Britain, France, and the Soviet Union in confronting Germany and the Nazi-Fascist alliance. This buck-passing strategy aimed at containing Germany and making sure that no state would emerge victorious out of the conflict (Kennedy 1987, 341). When European powers failed to contain Germany, following the British and French failures and the nullification by Hitler of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact when he decided to attack Russia, the U.S. was forced to balance Germany by itself, declaring war on the Nazi-Fascist axis. (Mearsheimer 2001, 255-256).

During WWII, the U.S. and the Soviet Union were allies against Germany; however, once the war ended, both countries emerged as two fierce competitors for global domination. In 1944, Great Britain and the Soviet Union had agreed to divide Eastern Europe into spheres of

interests, and Greece went to Great Britain (Jones 1989, 5). Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was also focused on Turkey in an attempt to have control over the *Dardanelle Strait*. In 1945, the Soviet Union called for a revision of the 1936 *Montreux Treaty*, which gave Turkey the whole control over the strait, and demanded a joint Soviet-Turkish control of the strait (Jones 1989, 8-9; Bostdorff 2008, 30). At the same time, the Soviet Union threatened to terminate the 1925 treaty of friendship with Turkey. While Turkey refused the Soviet demand, it agreed on U.S-proposed international conference on the Dardanelles as long as Turkish sovereignty and territorial integrity remained intact (Jones 1989, 8). In 1946, the Soviet Union rejected the option to put the Dardanelles under the international control and reinstated the claim that the waterways should be controlled by a joint Soviet-Turkish defense system (Jones 1989, 8). The Dardanelles Strait was of a very strategic importance for the Soviet Union because it would give it access to the Middle East and establish permanent presence in the eastern Mediterranean (Jones 1989, 8-9). The U.S. reacted by advising Turkey to turn down the Soviet demand. It also sent a message to the Soviets, stating that Turkey had authority over the Dardanelles (Jones 1989, 9). To show support for Turkey, President Truman ordered aircraft carrier *Franklin D. Roosevelt* to join the battleship *USS Missouri* already stationed in Istanbul for an unrelated task (Jones 1989, 9; Paterson 2010, 244). Adding to this tense situation was the Soviet refusal to withdraw its troops from the 1941 occupied territory in Iran as agreed upon in the *Tripartite Treaty* of 1942 between Iran, Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

In the midst of this situation, in March 1947, Great Britain notified U.S. Department of State that it would no longer keep Greece under its sphere of interests for economic reasons (Paterson et al. 2010, 244). Fearing that Greece and then Turkey would succumb to the Soviet pressure if the U.S. did not intervene, President Truman, in a speech to a special joint session of

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Congress, asked for an economic assistance of $400 million for both states, a request that was soon approved (Hastedt 2011, 13; Margolies 2012, 339). This speech gave birth to the Truman Doctrine, whose main goal was to contain the Soviet expansion by providing economic and military assistance to troubled democratic countries. As was the case with the Bush Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary, the anarchic status of the international system, the possession by the Soviet Union of considerable military capabilities, U.S. suspicion of and fear from the Soviet Union, the need to survive in anarchic system, and the rational behavior to pursue its strategic goals are five main factor that, in combination, dictated the U.S. response under the Truman Doctrine.

First, the offensive foreign policy under the Truman Doctrine was a reaction to the anarchic status of the international system of which the Soviet Union could take advantage (Leffler 2007, 57-69; Wyss 2013, 42). The end of the World War II (WWII) followed a shift in the structure of the international system from multipolarity into bipolarity, with the U.S. and the Soviet Union emerging as the two most powerful states in the system (Kennedy 1987, 347; Mearsheimer 2001, 356). There was no supranational government to resolve disputes among states. The creation of the United Nations in 1945 did not change the anarchic structure of the international system as it was too weak to deal with strategic issues involving great powers. The President was aware of this fact when he addressed the issue of Greece and Turkey to Congress.

> *We have considered how the United Nations might assist in this crisis. But the situation is*
> *an urgent one requiring immediate action and the United Nations and its related*
> *organizations are not in a position to extend help of the kind that is required.*

The other main factor that influenced U.S. behavior against the Soviet Union was the possession by the latter of significant military power that could cause harm to U.S. vital interests. During the period 1939-1945, the Soviet Union counted around 22.4 million people mobilized

for war (Mearsheimer 2001, 320). At the end of the war, it had the largest defense establishment in the world, and its military power consisted of 175 divisions, 25,000 front-line tanks, and 19,000 aircrafts (Kennedy 1987, 363). As an example of Soviet naval power, the Soviet Pacific Fleet possessed 2 heavy cruisers, about 20 destroyers, and 60 submarines (Friedman 2001, 53). In addition, after the war, the Soviet Union engaged in a rapid process of transforming its air and naval forces and developing a Soviet "A-bomb" (Kennedy 1987, 363-364). Moreover, in 1948, the Soviet Union was spending the largest percentage (13%) of its GDP on defense compare to other great powers, and military expenditures increased progressively every fiscal year, reaching an astounding 72% in 1970 (Kennedy 1987, 384).

Besides the anarchic status of the international system and the possession by the Soviet Union of considerable military capabilities, suspicion and fear that the Soviet Union would use its military power to attack U.S. vital interests significantly impacted U.S. foreign policy as outlined in the Truman Doctrine. The offensive foreign policy under the Truman Doctrine was a reaction to the anarchic status of the international system and the fear that the Soviet Union could take advantage of it (Leffler 2007, 57-69). The U.S. was deeply involved in collecting information about the intentions of the Soviet Union against U.S. strategic interests. In a top secret report provided by the Office of Reports and Estimate (ORE), an office within the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the intelligence agency analyzed the possibility of a direct Soviet military action against the U.S. interests during 1948 (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 1948a). The report concluded that such actions would occur if the Soviet Union had seen U.S. moves as direct attacks on the Union and its satellites. In the same year, another top secret report of CIA feared the scenario in which the Soviet Union would conquer Western Europe and the Near East (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 1948b). Suspicion and fear of the Soviet Union continued

even after the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and were made apparent in another top secret report in which CIA concluded that the Soviet Union was ready to undertake a major war given its formidable military strength and ambitions (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 1951).

Thus, on one hand, the U.S. had deep suspicions and fear of the Soviet Union, a position that was analyzed in detail by then U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, George F. Kennan. In *The Sources of Soviet Conduct* ("X" 1947), also known as *The Long Telegram* (1946), Kennan argues that the actions of the Soviet Union were expansionist in nature, and the U.S. had to implement a strategy of containment. On the other hand, the Soviet Union followed the same approach. In response to Kennan's Long Telegram, then Soviet Ambassador to the U.S., Nikolai Novikov, sent a telegram to Moscow, arguing that the main goal of the U.S. was to establish world dominance (Duiker and Spielvogel 2010, 774). Fearing each other, both superpowers engaged in a security dilemma in which each party aimed at increasing its security at the expense of the other (Mearsheimer 2001, 36). Both sides engaged in a rapid process of militarization, which led to an arms race between the two superpowers, including the development and multiplication of nuclear weapons (Ojserkis 2003; Burns and Siracusa 2013).

The fear factor is closely related to another factor that impacted U.S. foreign policy in dealing with Greece and Turkey, which is the survival of the state. Some believe that President Truman was the first president to face a growing existential threat for the U.S., or even the entire Western World, coming from the Soviet Union (Sand 2004, 8; Colucci 2012, 311). US government believed that Europe and Asia had very strategic places which if controlled by the Soviet Union would provide the latter with superior manpower, resources, and territory that

would threaten the survival of the U.S. (Dobson 2002, 80). President Truman emphasized the importance of state integrity and survival in his address to Congress,

> *"...It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East...Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East...If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world -- and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation..."*

The last factor that impacted U.S. foreign policy outlined in the Truman Doctrine was its rational behavior. This means that the U.S. was aware of the anarchic status of the international system and acted strategically in order to survive (Mearsheimer 2001, 31). At the same time, it was important for the U.S. to understand other states' positions in the system, their intentions and behavior, and the threats they posed to U.S. strategic interests and act accordingly. As indicated above, the U.S. was aware of the military capabilities of the Soviet Union and its intentions to increase its power at the expense of the U.S. and other states. The Soviet refusal to withdraw from Iran, repeated attempts to have control over the Dardanelles, and other events provided sufficient rationale to believe that the Soviet Union had expansionist goals (Jones 1989, 74-75; Harbutt 2002, 19-20). Government documents, such as the *Long Telegram* and the *Clifford-Elsey Report* to the President that followed, corroborate this position. Aware of the anarchic status of the international system, the U.S. relied on self-help and relative power maximization in order to ensure its survival.

As a regional hegemon, the U.S. was interested in maintaining the status quo balance of power and preventing the Soviet Union and any great power from disturbing it. In an attempt to

control the rising Germany in early 1940s, the U.S. "passed the buck" onto the Soviet Union, France, and Great Britain by providing them economic and military assistance (via the *Lend-Lease Act* of 1941) and letting them directly confront Germany. The U.S. then intervened to "finish the job" after Germany and the Soviet Union had bleed each other white and when France and Great Britain failed to balance Germany in Western Europe (Mearsheimer 2001, 160-161, 254-255). After the war, the Soviet Union emerged as the only superpower that has the capabilities and the willingness to challenge the status quo. As a regional hegemon, the U.S. had to prevent this from happening. Masking it with a nonrealist rhetoric, President Truman emphasized the importance of maintaining the status quo in his address to Congress.

> *"…The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration…"*

The U.S. had two alternative strategies to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining power and disturbing the balance of power. First, it could utilize the buck-passing strategy. As explained before, the buck-passing strategy was using regional great powers to prevent the aggressor state from disturbing the balance of power. However, the problem with this strategy in late 1947, and throughout the Cold War, was that there was no regional great power that could challenge or control the Soviet Union. The absence of a regional great power to balance the Soviet Union forced the U.S. to utilize the second strategy—the balancing strategy. Based on this strategy, the U.S. could implement three potential measures. First, it could send clear messages to the Soviet Union stating that the U.S. would never allow a change in the status quo. The U.S. utilized this measure but without any effect on the Soviet aggressor.

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The other measure was creating a defensive alliance against the Soviet Union. In April 1949, the U.S. announced the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and created permanent military bases in Europe, accompanied by a significant increase in the number of military forces and means (Mearsheimer 2001, 256). According to NATO's first Secretary General, Lord Ismay, the purpose of NATO was "to keep the Russians out, the Germans down, and the Americans in" (as cited in Krige 2006, 17). Besides creating the military alliance to contain the Soviet expansion, the U.S. also mobilized additional resources to balance against the aggressor. Within a five-year period, from 1948 to 1953, the U.S. defense expenditures increased from about 11% to an astonishing 50% of the GDP (Kennedy 1987, 394). At the end, the US successfully managed to contain the Soviet Union by resolving the Greek crisis. In addition, the US utilized Turkey and Iran as two main barriers that stopped the Soviet Union from expanding in the Middle East and other adjacent regions.

The Carter Doctrine: "Spreading Democracy" in the Middle East

Like the Roosevelt Corollary and the Truman Doctrine, which were reactions to the Venezuelan Crises of 1902-1903 and the Greek and Turkish crisis of the late 1940s, respectively, the Carter Doctrine was launched in reaction to another major international event, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The Carter Doctrine is also considered a successor of the Truman Doctrine and is patterned according to its core element, containing Soviet expansion around the world (Brzezinski 1988, 688-689; Davis 2011, 69). At the same time, the Carter Doctrine can be considered a reinstatement of the Eisenhower Doctrine whose goals were to protect US oil interests and to contain the spread of Arab nationalism and the Soviet expansion

in the Middle East due to the power vacuum created after the departure of the French and the British (Yaqub 2004, 58; Kupchan 2011, 21).

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan can be considered as the tipping point that made the US aware of the potential threat coming from Soviet expansion. In the State of the Union Address in 1980, President Carter recognized that US foreign policy was being challenged by three major global developments:

> *"...the steady growth and increased projection of Soviet military power beyond its own borders; the overwhelming dependence of the Western democracies on oil supplies from the Middle East; and the press of social and religious and economic and political change in the many nations of the developing world..."* (U.S. President 1980)

While considering each of these factors as being important, President Carter also emphasized that the "excessive dependence on foreign oil is a clear and present danger to our Nation's security" and Soviet expansion and invasion of Afghanistan represented "the most serious threat to the peace since the Second World War." (U.S. President 1980). The importance of Middle East oil for US national security was previously emphasized by presidents Roosevelt and Truman in their messages of support for Saudi Arabia (Yergin 1991, 428; Klare 2004, 33). Because it was considered a threat to US oil interests and influence in the region, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan made President Carter change US foreign policy toward the Soviet Union from a détente foreign policy into a balance-of-power foreign policy (Kennedy 1987, 410). This led the President to make a precise statement, which became the cornerstone of the Carter Doctrine and US foreign policy toward the region:

> *Let our position be absolutely clear: Any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital*

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interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by
any means necessary, including military force.

US foreign policy under the Carter Doctrine bears striking similarities to the two previous doctrines. Foreign policy under the Carter Doctrine was dictated by five main factors: the anarchic status of the international system, the possession by the Soviet Union of significant military capabilities that could harm or destroy the US, the fear and suspicion the US had about the Soviet Union's intentions, the need to survive in an anarchic system, and the rationality to pursue its strategic interests. These five main factors, in combination, led to three major patterns of behavior: fear, self-help, and power maximization. First, the international system was in a state of anarchy and characterized by bipolarity, a fierce competition between the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union, for global domination (Kennedy 1987, 395-412; Sayigh and Shlaim 1997, 1; Mearsheimer 2001, 355-356; Hurst 2005, 85; Magstadt 2013, 463). Second, as a superpower, the Soviet Union possessed significant military capabilities that could harm or even destroy the US and its interests around the world. By mid-1970s, both states possessed enough nuclear capabilities to have a second strike capability, meaning the ability to retaliate in case of a nuclear attack (Kennedy 1989, 395).

In addition to the anarchic status of the international system and the possession by the Soviet Union of considerable military capabilities, the American suspicion of and fear from potential aggressive actions of the Soviet Union is another factor that contributed to the foreign policy actions under the Carter Doctrine. The US had reasons to see actions of the Soviet Union with deep suspicion and fear its intentions. Both states had engaged in indirect or nonmilitary conflicts on several occasions, starting with the struggle over the control of Berlin soon after WWII and continuing with the Vietnam War and the Cuban missile crisis. Also, the US saw with deep suspicion and feared the growing influence and military engagement of the Soviet Union in

the third world countries (Poter 1984). The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan triggered the

American counteraction because the latter feared that the aggressor could expand its dominance

in the Persian Gulf, thus controlling the flow of oil to the international market. This situation was

exacerbated by the loss of influence over Iran due to the domestic political turmoil that led to the

overthrowing of the Shah and coming into power of religious forces. The fear from Soviet

expansion was made public by President Carter during his speech.

> *"The region which is now threatened by Soviet troops in Afghanistan is of great*
> *strategic importance: It contains more than two-thirds of the world's exportable*
> *oil. The Soviet effort to dominate Afghanistan has brought Soviet military forces*
> *to within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Straits of Hormuz, a*
> *waterway through which most of the world's oil must flow. The Soviet Union is*
> *now attempting to consolidate a strategic position, therefore, that poses a grave*
> *threat to the free movement of Middle East oil."* (U.S. President 1980)

Furthermore, the need to survive the Cold War was an important factor that dictated

actions of the US. The survival element takes into account other elements as well, such as the

anarchic structure of the international system, the military capabilities of other states, and their

aggressive intentions. All these elements were present at that time. Being aware of all these

elements, President Carter stated that it was vital for the US to face the world as it was in order

to ensure survival. Thus, rationality became a final major element of the Carter Doctrine. As a

liberal politician who had promised during the presidential campaign to advance global peace,

human rights, and humanitarian actions, President Carter soon realized that there is an enormous

gap between how we want the world to be and how it is in reality.

During the presidential campaign, President Carter had promised to bring a drastic

change in US foreign policy, focusing it more on human rights issues and peace initiatives and

moving away from previous realist foreign policies of Nixon (Colucci 2012, 372). Also, during

the first years of his presidency, the President was able to advance his nonrealist objectives. In

1977, he issued a directive stating that the promotion of human rights would be a core element of

US foreign policy and created the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (Colucci

2012, 374). In addition, impacted by his left-wing ideology, Carter's approach on global human

rights became a double standard enterprise (Kirkpatrick 1979; Colucci 2012, 374). On one side,

Carter strained relations with pro-American right-wing governments because of their human

rights violations while continuing to maintain cozy relations with left-wing governments despite

their human rights violations and often anti-American foreign policy. Applying an inconsistent,

double-standards foreign policy and ignoring US strategic interests led to a dangerous national

security strategy that would soon show the results (Colucci 2012, 375).

Major developments in the international system threatened US national security and

forced President Carter to move away from his initial nonrealist foreign policy and reinstate a

foreign policy based on rationality and realism. Two major consecutive events dictated this shift

in foreign policy: the fall of the pro-American regime in Iran in hands of anti-American Islamic

forces in November 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan a month later (Lorentz 2007,

66). The fall of the Shah can also be viewed as a decrease of US influence in the region while the

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan can be viewed as a direct threat to US influence and interests.

Besides the fear of Soviet global expansion at the expense of America's interests and

reliance on self-help in an anarchic international system, power maximization would be the last

pattern of behavior of the US. However, seeing that the US was already a regional hegemon, its

primary objective was not to maximize its power but to prevent the emergence of the Soviet

Union as a rival regional hegemon and maintain the status quo. President Carter made it clear in

his address to Congress that maintaining US hegemony was a top priority for the state. The President stated that he was "determined that the United States will remain the strongest of all nations…" (U.S. President 1980). Power maximization at the expense of other states is desirable, but it is a secondary strategy to the need to prevent the emergence on another regional hegemon. Often the need to prevent the emergence of another regional hegemon may lead to power maximization as was the case with the security dilemma during the Cold War.

As a regional hegemon, the US had two alternative strategies to contain the spread of the Soviet influence in the Persian Gulf. First, it could apply the buck-passing strategy—using a regional great power to contain the Soviets. The problem was that there was no regional power that had the will or capability to contain the Soviets. Because of this fact, the US was forced to rely on the second strategy—balancing. As part of the balancing strategy, the US could send direct threats to the Soviet Union through diplomatic channels, could form a coalition to encounter the aggressor, or could utilize additional resources to encounter the threat. Because blackmailing through diplomatic channel could work to contain the Soviets, the US relied exclusively on the other two measurements.

First, the US provided financial and military assistance to regional states, like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel, in order for them to contain Soviet expansion in the region (Congressional Quarterly, Inc 1983, 180). In addition, the US provided financial and technical, military support to Mujahedeen forces that were fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan in an attempt to directly force the Soviets out (Crile 2003, 15-16; Joes 2010, 216-217). Second, the US utilized additional resources to increase its military power, including spending for NATO forces (Sanders 1983, 262-263; Yetiv 1995, 54-57; Busch 2001, 403). Along with the military spending increase, the US took steps to project its military power in the Persian Gulf (U.S. Congress

1983). Soon after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Carter authorized the creation of

the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Forces (RDJTF) as a military force that would be responsible

for military operation in the region in case of a potential Soviet threat (Romm 1993, 39; Hurst

2009, 27; Flint 2012, 243). Under President Reagan, RDJTF would become what is today US

Central Command or USCENTCOM.

The Reagan Doctrine: Dealing with the Rogue Empire

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and, especially, the triumph of the Islamic revolution

in Iran in December 1979, followed by long-time kidnapping of US diplomats in Tehran,

resulted in a political disaster for President Carter, who lost the presidential elections of 1980 to

the Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan. The new president inherited an international political

system dominated by anarchy and conflicts. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America most conflicts

resembled proxy wars as the Soviet Union was trying to install pro-Soviet regimes while the US

was trying to do the opposite (Trofimenko 1981; Katz 1982; David 1986). In a few words, both

superpowers were trying to force states in "the third world" to take sides and behave as mini-

balancers in favor of one of the superpowers. President Carter's détente foreign policy with the

Soviet Union had given the latter the opportunity to expand its influence around the world, which

was recognized by the American president and became a great concern soon after the Soviet

invasion of Afghanistan. President Carter reacted by launching the Carter Doctrine, which aimed

at containing the Soviet expansion in the Persian Gulf, and creating a military force that would

project power in the region.

While President Carter focused exclusively on the Persian Gulf, and because of his early

departure from the White House office, President Reagan would have to deal not only with the

Soviet expansion in strategic areas, such as the Persian Gulf, but also with its expansion around

the world. For this reason, President Reagan launched a foreign policy doctrine, the Reagan

Doctrine, that resembled the Carter Doctrine in substance but that differed from it in the

magnitude of the scope. And it is for this reason that many scholars viewed the Doctrine as the

Reagan Corollary to the Carter Doctrine (Khoury 1990, 74; Tanter 1999, 71-72; Kuniholm 2001,

292-293). Other scholars view the Reagan Doctrine as an embodiment or expansion of the

Truman Doctrine because the former pledged support to all countries threatened by Soviet

Communism (Mott 2002, 45; Staib 2011, 69). Some others viewed it as an offensive foreign

policy that aimed at rolling back Soviet expansion from many regions of the world (Zwick 1988,

100; Carpenter 1989, 177). This foreign policy objective was made public by the President in

1985 State of the Union address when he stated:

> *"We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with
> those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to
> Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have
> been ours from birth…Support for freedom fighters is self-defense and totally
> consistent with the OAS and U.N. Charters."*

Like in the previous presidential doctrines, US foreign policy under the Reagan Doctrine

was influenced by five major factors. First, the international system was in a state of anarchy

because there was no supranational government that could regulate relations among states and

enforce those regulations. The system continued to have a bipolar structure with the US and the

Soviet Union trying to expand their influence around the world. Second, the Soviet Union

possessed significant military capabilities that could harm or even destroy US strategic interests

around the world. According to a 1984 national intelligence report, the Soviet Union had access

to distant air and naval facilities, had an increased capability to mount airlift and sealift to distant

places, and had "substantial means for undercutting US interests in the Third World by

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encouraging and supporting opposition groups, subversion, and insurrection." (Director of Central Intelligence 1984, 3).

Third, the US was suspicious and fearful of the intentions of the Soviet Union. Like President Truman and President Carter, President Reagan viewed Soviet interventions in foreign countries with deep suspicions and feared its intentions. Following George F. Kennan's ideas on the sources of Soviet conduct, Reagan believed that the Soviet Union aimed at spreading Communism around the world. This position was later corroborated by intelligence information, which stated that primary objectives of the Soviets included obtaining political support from Third World countries against the US and the West and gaining, or denying to the latter, access to air and naval facilities that would be used to promote Moscow's foreign policy goals and that could be used in crisis or wartime situation (Director of Central Intelligence 1984, 4-5). In addition, the same intelligence report states that another objective was to enhance Soviet access to regions rich in raw materials or prevent the US and the West access to those regions. These findings go in line with President Reagan's concern about oil-rich Saudi Arabia and his strong statement that he would not allow it to become another Iran, implying that the US would not allow Saudi Arabia to fall in Soviet hands (Yetiv 2004, 19-20; Tietelbaum 2010, 11). Fourth, and related to the previous factor, the primary objective of the US was to ensure national survival and territorial sovereignty. These concerns were expressed in the intelligence report, which states that the "overall Soviet advance has bolstered the USSR's claim to be a global power, and has created new threats to US and Western interests." (Director of Central Intelligence 1984, 3).

Lastly, the US acted rationally to achieve its objectives. As a regional hegemon and offshore balancer, it had two alternative strategies to pursue: the buck-passing and balancing strategies. The buck-passing strategy could not work because there was no great power capable

of balancing the Soviet Union. Because of this absence, the US was forced to balance the Soviets

by itself. In order to accomplish this objective, it had to rely on two alternative measures: (1)

creating a defense alliance of regional states to contain the Soviets and (2) mobilizing additional

resources to encounter the adversary. The first alternative measure, defined also as "external

balancing", had significant limitations in a bipolar system because of the absence of great-power

alliance partners (Mearsheimer 2001, 156). As a result, the US was forced to rely on minor

powers to contain the Soviet Union. On the other side, the Soviet Union, too, relied on minor

powers to attack US interests. It was for this reason that both superpowers indirectly fought

proxy wars in Third World countries like Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, and

Nicaragua. A 1984 US intelligence report had come to the conclusion that the Middle East and

Southwest Asia were the most important regions for the Soviet Union because of their proximity

to the Union and the fact that those two regions constituted the center of the East-West conflict.

On the other side, Africa and Latin America were considered less important but, nonetheless,

"useful for diverting US resources and fortifying an image of expanding Soviet power."

(Director of Central Intelligence 1984, 5). Thus, both the US and the Soviet Union created

alliances with minor regional powers in an attempt to cause as much damage as possible to the

opposing superpower.

The second measure taken by the US in order to balance the Soviet Union was mobilizing

additional resources and projecting power more effectively. The Reagan administration engaged

in the largest military buildup in the American history in time of peace (Wirls 2010, 19). Defense

spending increased significantly from $134 billion in 1980 to $253 in 1985 (Busch 2001, 404).

Another source indicates that US defense spending increased from $325.1 billion in 1980 and

339.6 in 1981 to 456.5 in 1987 (Schneider and Merle 2004). Defense spending increased to

support military projects, including spending on the Strategic Defense Initiative program, also known as "Star Wars", which aimed at defending America from a potential nuclear attack, deployment of middle-range missiles in Europe to challenge the Warsaw Pact, and the production of a variety of fighting jets, missiles of different range, and other military weapons (Holland 2013, 43-44).

Figure 6: USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility
Source: US Department of Defense

In addition to increased military spending, the US also focused on overseas power projection. In April 1981, President Reagan announced the intentions to upgrade of the RDJTF

into a unified command, named CENTCOM, and the plan got executed officially in January

1983. The "area of responsibility" (See *Figure 5*) under by the CENTOCOM jurisdiction

included nineteen countries in a region stretching from Kenya to Pakistan (Amirahmadi 1993,

219). Following on the Carter Doctrine, the main task of the CENTCOM was to ensure free flow

of oil from the Persian Gulf and react to any possible advancement of the Soviet Union in the

region (Bell 1989, 19). In addition, the Central Command was created to also "get to the war on

time", meaning that the US would have military facilities in the Middle East that would make it

possible for the US to respond to potential threats on time (Wenger 1984). For this purpose, the

US sought to have access, establish, or maintain temporary or permanent military facilities in

several regional or surrounding countries, including Turkey, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt,

Morocco, etc. In December 1989, the Soviet Union collapsed, and the US emerged as the winner

of the Cold War. While some scholars attribute the fall of the Soviet Union to its domestic

politics, some others believe that the collapse was caused or expedited by aggressive US foreign

policy.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and

the Reagan Doctrine reveals that US foreign policy actions go along with the propositions set

forth by offensive realism theory. The main proposition is that the presence of anarchy in the

international system, the possession by aggressor states of considerable military power that could

hurt or even destroy US strategic interests, fear from and suspicion of other states' intentions, the

need to survive in an anarchic system, and rationality to think strategically about how to survive

all together caused three main patterns of behavior in US foreign policy: fear, self-help, and

power maximization (Mearsheimer 2001, 31-32). Findings in all the aforementioned cases show

that US foreign policy was dictated by the same factors and demonstrated the same patterns of behavior. In all cases, the US demonstrated that it feared actions of aggressor state(s) and relied on self-help and power maximization.

In addition, as a regional hegemon, the US aimed at preventing the emergence of a competitor regional hegemon. In doing so, the US pursued the offshore balancing strategy. As an offshore balancer, the US had two alternative strategies. First, it could consider using the buck-passing strategy, using a regional power to balance the aggressor. All the cases show that the US could not implement the buck passing strategy for different reasons. For example, the US could not use the buck-passing strategy in the case of the Venezuelan Crisis of 1902-03 because there existed no regional power in Latin America to balance or confront Great Britain and Germany. It also could not use the buck passing strategy to balance the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War because there was no power that had the capabilities to confront the aggressor.

Instead, the US implemented the balancing strategy in all four cases. The balancing strategy consisted of three major measurements. First, the US could send direct diplomatic threats to the aggressor state(s). Second, it could create alliance with other states to confront the aggressor. Lastly, the US could utilize additional resources of its own. In the case of the Venezuelan Crisis, the US relied on direct diplomatic threats, and it succeeded. Both Britain and Germany withdrew once President Roosevelt sent direct threats that he would reinstate the Monroe Doctrine by even using its naval forces against the aggressors. In the case of the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine, diplomatic threats did not work, and the US was forced to create alliance with other states and to maximize its power by using additional resources of its own in order to encounter the Soviet Union. The creation of the NATO is a perfect example of a military alliance. In addition to it, the US also created alliances with

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threatened states by providing them economic and military assistance to confront the Soviet influence. This was the case with Turkey and Greece in 1947, Afghanistan's Mujahedeen forces in 1979, and other third world countries during the Reagan administration. Also, the US used additional resources of its own to increase its military power, which is proven by the increased spending for defense purposes that culminated with "Star Wars" programs that aimed at defending the US from potential nuclear attacks.

Moreover, the aforementioned cases show that US foreign policy during the 20th century is characterized by continuity rather than change. Based on these findings, other foreign policy actions not analyzed in this dissertation are likely to constitute continuity in US foreign policy. Some major foreign policy actions of the 20th century include the Eisenhower Doctrine, which dealt with the Suez Canal crisis, the Kennedy Doctrine, which dealt with the Cuban Missile crisis, and the Nixon Doctrine, which dealt with the post-Vietnam War issues. What these presidential doctrines have in common is their objective to contain the expansion of the Soviet Union (Deibel and Gaddis 1987; Powaski 1998, 169-171; Viotti 2005, 222). Foreign policy under the Eisenhower Doctrine was dictated by the fear of Soviet Union expansion in the Middle East due to power vacuum created by the departure of Britain and France after the Suez Canal imbroglio (Yaqub 2004, 88). In addition, the Kennedy Doctrine was a response to the fear from Soviet Union expansion around the world and especially in Latin America (FitzSimons 1972). Like the Eisenhower and Kennedy Doctrines, the Nixon Doctrine grew out of the fear of Soviet expansion and emphasized the responsibility of threatened states to confront the Soviet Union while the US would continue to provide economic and military assistance (Powaski 1998, 169-170). Thus, US foreign policy under these three doctrines does not appear to constitute a change from other foreign policy doctrines.

Furthermore, foreign policy continuity is a result of the unchanged status of the US as regional hegemon and the dominance of its military power over other great powers. Because US foreign policy actions fit within the offensive realist theoretical framework, it is reasonable to say that it dictated the same pattern of political behavior of the US throughout the 20th century. Of course, military capabilities dictate US position in the international system, and its status as regional hegemon is an indicator of US military supremacy vis-a-vis other states. Following this theoretical proposition, if US military power diminishes with passing of time, then it is likely to see that the US will lose its status as regional hegemon, which will eventually lead to changes in its foreign policy. The decrease of US military power should be measured relative to the powers of other states in the system, and the more power other states gain, the more power the US loses, always in relative power terms (Greico 1988). And it should not be a surprise that such a change in the international system will be accompanied by a series of wars due to the inability of the US as former regional hegemon to prevent the aggressor states from engaging in expansionist wars, a scenario that would prove today's relevance of Gilpin's hegemonic stability theory. This scenario is intertwined with the scenario that aggressor states will take advantage of the power vacuum created by the retreat of the US from taking an active role in global politics as a result of the loss of military power.

Lastly, finding from the analysis of the aforementioned case studies reveal that US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine was not different from that of the 20th century. The Bush Doctrine was influenced by the presence of anarchy in the international system, the possession by Iraq of considerable military power that could hurt or even destroy US strategic interests, fear from and suspicion of Iraq's intentions (especially after its public support for terrorist organizations), the need to survive in an anarchic system (especially after the September 11,

2001 terrorist attack), and the rationality to think strategically about how to deal with the threats. The presence of all these factors caused three main patterns of behavior of the US toward Iraq: fear (which led to preemptive actions), self-help (which led to unilateral actions), and power maximization (which aimed at maintaining hegemony). Also, the US did not implement the buck-passing strategy because there was no other regional power capable or willing to balance the aggressor. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran had their own strategic concerns that forced them not to balance Iraq. As a result, the US had to rely on balancing strategy by implementing three measures. First, the US sent repeated diplomatic threats to Iraq to force it to obey. Once Iraq ignored all diplomatic threats, the US moved forward to create an alliance with other states and prepare for a direct attack on Iraq. In doing so, the US also utilized additional resources of its own by increasing its defense spending. Thus, US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine, despite its name, is no different from that under the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, or the Reagan Doctrine.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

BREAKING THE TABOO ABOUT IRAN-US RELATIONS

"*...wherever Iran goes, it faces the United States. This includes Iraq.*"
Hassan Rowhani, Iranian Nuclear Negotiator

"*That is right, but there is another side to it. Wherever the U.S. goes, it faces Iran.*"
Hussein Mousavian, Iranian Nuclear Negotiator (arrested in 2007 on espionage charges)

Introduction

Having analyzed the US foreign policy actions that dealt with major events of the 20th

century and its foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine, this chapter continues with an offensive

realist approach of the US-Iran relationship. There are three main reasons why I extended the

explanation of US foreign policy to include its relationship with Iran. First, Iran is considered a

great power and thus fulfills the requirements under offensive realism, which is a theory of great

powers (Mearsheimer 2001, 5). Second, since the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in 1979,

US-Iran relationship has been characterized by an unprecedented degree of hostile political

rhetoric while prior to the revolution, for more than four decades, both states were strategic

allies. Third, Iran is located in the Middle East, a region that is of high strategic interests for the

US because of its volatile nature and oil richness (Graeber 2007, 131-134). As analyzed

previously, the Middle East has been of high strategic interests since the departure of the Great

Britain and France in 1956. The Eisenhower Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan

Doctrine emphasized the importance of the region.

The objective of this chapter is to identify the nature of US-Iran relationship and factors

that influence it. The first claim is that US-Iran relationship is dictated by US foreign policy

acting as an offshore balancer to maintain regional hegemony and prevent the emergence of any other regional hegemon. The second claim to be tested is that the US and Iran share mutual strategic interests with the exception that neither of them would allow a too powerful other. The strategic interests of both states are dictated by geography and the military capabilities and the place both states resume in the international system. Geography determines the proximity to vital resources, such as oil, that can be used to enhance military capabilities of states. In addition, geography determines the proximity to aggressor states. Bordering the Persian Gulf to the south, surrounded by Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the Caspian Sea to the north, Afghanistan and Pakistan to the east, Turkey and Iraq to the west, and being close to Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, Iran is vulnerable to attacks from local and global forces (See Iran's map below). Had the US been bordered by Russia in the North, instead of Canada, from China in the East, instead of being secured by the Atlantic Ocean, and so on, US foreign policy would have been dramatically different. The same analogy holds true for Iran.

Moreover, military capabilities of both the US and Iran dictate their positions in the international system and the way how they act to advance their own strategic interests. Were Iran as powerful as the United Arab Emirates, or Kuwait, or Albania, it would have not enjoyed the current "publicity" at the world stage or the American attention, nor would it be able to engage in a nuclear program and challenge the US and other regional powers. The same is true for the US and other great powers in the system. For example, US foreign policy toward the pirate states in the 19th century was different before and after the building of the naval power. Also, Russia's foreign policy (under the Soviet Union) was aggressive during the Cold War because it had the status of a superpower, became dormant soon after the fall of the Soviet Empire and the destruction of its economic and military capabilities, and it is becoming aggressive today because

of the economic strength capable to sustain its military power. Moreover, Iraq's foreign policy after the 2003 American attack and the chaos that followed significantly diminished its military capabilities and changed its foreign policy.

Figure 7: The Map of Iran
Source: The University of Texas—Produced by CIA

Because the geographic locations and military capabilities of the US and Iran have remained moderately unaltered for decades, it is reasonable to expect that their strategic interests and foreign policy to remain moderately unchanged despite radical changes in domestic politics. While both states can allow themselves to behave irrationally on issues that does not threaten

their strategic interest, they are forced to act rationally when it comes to "high politics" and issues that directly threaten their strategic interests. This claim runs counter to the conventional view held by most researchers and scholars who argue that "The Islamic republic is not a normal nation-state seeking to realize its legitimate interests but an ideological entity mired in manufactured conspiracies." (Edelman, Ross, and Takeyh 2014).

If Iran's foreign policy is guided by the Islamic ideology, how would these researchers and scholars explain Iran's continuous support for Christian Armenia against Shia Azerbaijan, its continuous support for Christian Russia against Muslim Chechnya, its cooperation with Israel and the US during the Iran-Iraq war and the Iran-Contra Affair, and the later cooperation with the US in Afghanistan against the Talibans? All these cases challenge the conventional view of Iran as irrational actor.

Strategic interests lead to the second major claim of this chapter. Because the US and Iran have been strategic allies for about four decades (1941-1979), then it would be reasonable to claim that the US-Iran relationship after the departure of Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1979 and the coming into power of the Islamic forces have remained unaltered when it comes to issues related to their strategic interests. Thus, both states should share mutual strategic interests as they did throughout the Cold War and beyond despite their limitations. While both states can allow engaging in fierce political rhetoric against each other, they cannot permit any form of irrationality that would interfere with the pursuance of their strategic interests. Whenever strategic interests are at stake, cooperation between the two states is likely to be inevitable. When asked about a potential American-Turkish cooperation to deal with the ISIS, an official close to the US Secretary of Defense stated that "Turkey, by the fact of its geography, is inevitably a partner." (Stewart 2014). If that is true for Turkey, it should be true, more so, for Iran as well.

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This claim runs counter to the argument held by many scholars that "The United States and Iran stand at opposite ends of the spectrum of Middle East politics." (Edelman, Ross, and Takeyh 2014). The 2001 Afghanistan war, the 2003 Iraq war, and the emergence of the ISIL provide significant support for the claim that both states share mutual strategic interests in several important areas despite the limitations they face.

US Foreign Policy: Fearing Iran

As in other cases involving the US foreign policy toward great powers, the case of Iran also shows that US foreign policy was dictated by the presence of anarchy in the international system, the possession from Iran of significant military power that could harm or destroy US strategic interests, fear from and suspicion of Iran's actions, the need to ensure its survival, and the rationality to act strategically in order to achieve its foreign policy objectives. All these factors combined, created three main pattern of US behavior: fear, self-help, and relative power maximization. Because there are several regional powers willing and capable to balance Iran, such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, etc., the US has relied exclusively on the buck-passing strategy and direct threats to prevent Iran from becoming too powerful.

First, following the analysis of the Carter Doctrine, the Reagan Doctrine, and the Bush Doctrine, it is reasonable to claim that the international system is characterized by anarchy, the absence of a supranational government. Second, Iran possesses significant military capabilities that could challenge the US strategic interests in the region and abroad. As of July 2014, Iran's population exceeds 80 million people of which more than 45 million are of age 16 to 49 and available for military duties while more than 40 million of the same age bracket is fit for military duties (CIA World Factbook). While different sources provide different numbers with regard to Iran's military capabilities, it is certain that it has been enhancing its capabilities by conducting

"asymmetric, low-intensity wars", modernizing its weapons systems, developing "indigenous" missile and antimissile systems, and developing a nuclear program (Milani 2009). In addition, the discovery of Iran's secret nuclear program in 2002, followed by its support for anti-American terrorist groups in Iraq, raised deep suspicion and fear for the US. The US viewed Iran's actions with deep suspicion and feared that it aimed at extending its influence throughout the region. The destruction of Iraq and the triumph of pro-Iranian forces helped Iran further to emerge as a regional power (Nasr, 2007, p. 212).

A nuclear Iran would challenge the US influence in the Middle East and would profoundly alternate the balance of power in the region at the expense of the US. Fearing this scenario, the US has taken measures to prevent it. It has been encountering Iran by sending clear diplomatic threats and imposing economic embargo. Besides these measures, the US has been relying on other regional powers to contain Iran. Saudi Arabia and Israel has shown public willingness to use force in order to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Israel has gone much further to threaten that it would take unilateral actions to destroy Iran's nuclear sites by implementing surgical strikes similar as the *Operation Babylon* against Iraq in June of 1981. In addition, it is uncertain whether Russia is willing to allow its neighboring Iran to acquire a nuclear arsenal. Normal judgment would argue that Russia has no interest in allowing a nuclear Iran that could become a threat for Russia, too. In a few words, the US should be aware of the fact that there are several regional powers willing to "carry the buck" and balance Iraq.

Given the many adversaries it has in the region, Iran should also be seen as an opportunity that can be used to balance other regional forces. The US used Iran in some periods of the Cold War to contain the Soviet Union and Iraq (Halabi 2009, 82; Shareef 2014, 193). Iran was even recognized as America's policeman in the Middle East (Hamilton and Inouye 1987,

157). This strategy allegedly changed soon after the triumph of the Islamic revolution, and since then, US-Iran relationship has been characterized by fierce political rhetoric (Takeyh 2002, 23; Limbert 2009, 180-181; Mousavian and Shahidsaless 2014, 43). The question remains whether Iran is an irrational actor or a rational one.

The Rational Iran

Thus, first, it is important to answer the question: Does foreign policy rhetoric of Iran match its actions in cases that involve its strategic interests? This dissertation has proved already in several cases that US foreign policy is based on rationality. Despite these findings, the analysis in this chapter will reevaluate whether US foreign policy toward Iran is also based on rationality. Answering the aforementioned question about US and Iran's political rhetoric and interests will provide additional support to the following combined question: Are the strategic interests of Iran and the US mutually inclusive or exclusive and how do they influence the US-Iran relationship? Answering these questions will reveal the real nature and factors that dictate US-Iran relationship.

The truth of the matter is that too much attention is being given to political rhetoric, ideology, and sentimentalisms following the Islamic Revolution and the hostage crisis rather than to actions and strategic interests benefiting both countries. Some researchers and scholar also claim that it is the Islamic ideology that put both states "at opposite ends of the spectrum of Middle East politics" (Edelman, Ross, and Takeyh 2014). The academic and political discussion is focused on either the US considering Iran an enemy state led by crazy, irrational Mullahs, who are going to build the atomic bomb to destroy anti-Islamic forces, or Iran being angry at the US for the 1953 coup d'état and its support for the state of Israel. It is hard to claim that US-Iran relationship is impacted by a coup d'état or revolution that happened, respectively, about fifty or

thirty years ago and at the same time to ignore that about sixty years ago, almost all great powers were involved in a total war against each other.

Besides focusing on Iran's political rhetoric, it is also important to investigate its strategic interests and foreign policy actions. Strategic interests are the strongest indicators of foreign policy because states act rationally to maximize their power and ensure survival in an anarchic system. Engaging in political rhetoric does not mean that the state is irrational actor because often political rhetoric is used to conceal the real objectives of a state. Regarding Iran, and the US for that matter, some scholars have argued that both states should act rationally and focus on their mutual strategic interests when implementing their foreign policy (Brzezinski 1999, 314; Nakhleh 2009, 125).

Because I have already discussed the actions of the US as a rational actor in the international system, it is important to focus primarily on Iran and explain whether its foreign policy actions are based on rationality or political rhetoric as many argue. An analysis of the Iran-Contra Affairs, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the Russian-Chechen war, and the 2003 Iraq war shows that the political rhetoric of Iran is not reflected in many of its actions. Even though its political rhetoric resembles that of an irrational actor, Iran is a rational actor, and its foreign policy actions aim at advancing its strategic interests in the international system. The first case shows how the Islamic was willing to cooperate with Israel and the US because it needed weapons to fight the war against Iraq. The other two cases show how Iran sided with two Christian countries, Armenia and Russia, against its Muslim brothers, Azerbaijan and Chechnya, for pure strategic reasons, to ensure territorial sovereignty and increase its military capabilities. Lastly, the case of the Iraq war shows that Iran behaved rationally when it "bled" the US by supporting anti-American terrorist groups in Iraq.

Iran, the US, and the Iran-Contra Affair

The Iran-Contra Affair is a political scandal that engulfed the Reagan Administration in 1986. Like the two previous cases, this case indicates that both Iran and the US acted rationally to advance their strategic interests, setting aside antagonist political rhetoric. The affair was a secret arms deal between US, Israel, and Iran that happened at a time when both the US and Iran were struggling in the international arena. Israel acted as the middleman, providing weapons shipment to Iran and payments to the US in return. Israel had previously sold ammunitions to Iran totaling a value of around $136 million (Beit-Hallahmi 1988, 13-14). Israeli Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon, had notified the American authorities about the arms deal with Iran in his visit to Washington in 1982 (Beit-Hallahmi 1988, 13). Israel had expressed its concerns about the invasion of Iran soon after the outbreak of the war. In a press conference, the Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan, called on the US to forget the past events (especially the hostage crisis which was ongoing at that time) and to provide assistance to Iran (Parsi 2007, 105).

According to another source, weaponry shipments occurred on several occasions: on 96 TOW missiles were shipped on August 20th 1985, 408 TOWs were shipped on September 14th, Hawks missiles were shipped in November, and 500 TOWs were shipped on February 19,th 1986 (Wroe 1991, ii-iii). The arms deal also included the purchase of 250 tires for *Phantom* jet fighters, communication equipment, 106mm recoilless guns, ammunitions, mortars, 150 M-40 antitank guns, 24,000 shells for each gun, spare parts for tanks and aircraft engines, shells for 106mm recoilless rifles and for 130mm, 203mm, and 175mm guns, and TOW vehicle-mounted launchers and missiles, totaling a cost of $75 million (Bergman 2008, 44-45). According to another arm dealer working at that time for the Iranian government, approximately 80 percent of the weapons sold to Iran soon after the beginning of the war came from Israel (Parsi 2007, 106).

According to one source, with assistance from Israel, the United States secretly provided Iran through six shipments with more than 2,000 TOW anti-tank missiles, 235 Hawk anti-aircraft missiles, and considerable spare parts, all of which with a cost of about $64 million (Marschall 2003, 183). At the beginning of November 1986, a Beirut magazine published details of the secret trip to Iran of the National Security Adviser to President Reagan, Robert C. McFarlane, and the weapons deal behind it. Surprisingly, after the discovery of the affair, both Iran and the US engaged in an even more aggressive political rhetoric against each other.

While the content and number of weapons shipments and their cost vary depending on the source, it is certain that Islamic Iran, Israel, and the US cooperated together in weapons deals soon after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the hostage crisis. How come Iran and the US (not to mention Israel) cooperate together at a time their political rhetoric toward each other was much more hostile than it is today, more than thirty years after the Islamic Revolution? How come Iran was willing to cooperate with the "Great Satan" and the US was willing to cooperate with the "Crazy Mullahs"? The answer is simple: Both states followed their strategic interests, not feelings of hatred or love. Through the arms deal, the US aimed at releasing the U.S. citizens taken hostages by the Lebanese Shi'ite terrorist organization *Hezbollah*, preventing Soviet expansion in Iran, stabilizing oil prices, and collecting money for *Contras* in Nicaragua (Tarock 1998, 108; Marschall 2003, 183). As a matter of fact, in a secret meeting, representatives of the US and Iran agreed on the threat that a potential Soviet intervention would pose to Iran (Hamilton and Inouye 1987, 238). On the other side, Iran needed weapons to fight the desperate war against Iraq. Due to its desperate need for weapons to fight Iraq, Iran was willing to buy weapons from everyone, including *the Great Satan* and *Small Satan* (Milani 1994, 212). In sum, the Iran-Contra affair revealed that despite their hostile political

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rhetoric against each other, Iran and the US are willing to act rationally and cooperate when it benefits their strategic interests.

Iran and the Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict

The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an important case to understand the difference between Iran's political rhetoric and political actions. This conflict is important because both states involved in it have geographic proximity to Iran, the conflict impacts Iran's territorial sovereignty, and Iran and Azerbaijan share cultural similarities. First, both Armenia and Azerbaijan (Republic of Azerbaijan) are Iran's neighbors and share land borders with one another. The geostrategic location of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Iran raises certain geopolitical issues, including pipelines, division of the Caspian Sea, Nagorno Karabakh region, and the issue of Southern Azerbaijan. The pipeline politics has divided Iran and Azerbaijan. On the one hand, there is the bloc created by Azerbaijan in cooperation with the US, Turkey, European Union, and Georgia. On the other hand stands the other block comprised of Iran, Russia, and Armenia, who find their interests challenged by the first bloc. When it comes to the division of the Caspian Sea, alliances change but still Iran and Azerbaijan oppose each other. Azerbaijan has joined a coalition with Russia, Turkey, the US, and Kazakhstan while Iran is left on the other side with Turkmenistan.

The second reason for selecting the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict is because Azerbaijan has historical territorial claims over Iran. During the Russo-Persian wars, much of the Caucasus was occupied by Russian troops and was formally ceded to Russia under the terms of the treaties of *Gulistan* (1813) and *Turkmenchay* (1828). This event brought about the creation of two "Azerbaijans"—the south and the north Azerbaijan. While Northern Azerbaijan became independent soon after the official demise of the Soviet Empire, Southern Azerbaijan had

become part of Northern Iran. There is a lack of consensus regarding the actual number of Azeris population in the northwest of Iran. Some researches indicate that Azeris comprise from one-fifth to one-third of the Iranian population, while the total number varies from twenty to twenty-seven million Azeris (Shaffer 2000, 473).

The third main reason for studying Iran's policy toward Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is the fact that both Iran and Azerbaijan are known as Shia countries while Armenia is a Christian country. After Iran, Azerbaijan has the second largest Shi'a population in the world. Approximately 95% of Azerbaijan's population is of the Muslim religion, and both countries are members of the Organization of Islamic Conference. On the other hand, Armenia does not share many values and traditions with Iran. The majority of Armenians practice an orthodox form of Christianity, and its church is named the *Armenian Apostolic Church*.

Just by looking at the demographics and the religious affiliations of both countries, we would assume that Iran would side with Azerbaijan. Indeed, it was not a choice for Iran. It was mandatory under the Islamic Constitution for Iran to help their fellow Muslims in need. *Article 3(16)* of the Constitution states that the government of Islamic Iran has the duty of directing all its resources to, among others, the goal of "framing the foreign policy of the country on the basis of Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and unsparing support to the freedom fighters of the world".

However, Iran's political rhetoric in support of the Islamic cause does not match its actions in the case of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Prior to the demise of the Soviet Empire, Iran did not interfere in the conflict and considered it an internal affair of the Soviets. However, the collapse of the Soviet Empire brought a new era of politics in the region. After the declaration of the independence by Azerbaijan, Iran became concerned about the links between

its northern Azeri population and the newly-independent republic. In January 1993, Iran's Ministry of Interior's General Foreign Citizen and Emigration Affairs Office announced that "any Iranian citizen intending to marry a citizen from Azerbaijan must get a permit from the Ministry of Interior" (Freij 1996, 72-73).

Throughout the conflict, Iran promoted a foreign policy that aimed at preventing Azerbaijan from being able to make territorial claims over Northern Iran. To make the matter worse, a potential Azeri separatist movement could serve as an incentive for separatist movements from Arabs in South (3% of the Iranian population), Kurds in West (7%), Turkmen (2%) in Northeast, and Baluchis (2%) in Southeast of Iran (Sadegh-Zadeh 2008, 36). This fear of insecurity and national unrest became a real concern for Iran in 1992 when Abulfez Elchibey, a nationalist and anti-Iranian, became the president of Azerbaijan. Elchibey publicly declared his government's aspiration for unification with *Southern Azerbaijan* (Souleimanov and Ditrych 2007, 104; Gresh 2006, 4).

Iran countered Azerbaijan by aligning itself with Armenia. By the end of 1992, Iran and Armenia signed a bilateral treaty of friendship and economic cooperation (Gresh 2006, 5). Rumors spread that Iran had allowed the transit of weapons from Russia to Armenia during the conflict. It was also reported that Iran trained the Armenian secret army forces, which were directly involved in the conflict (Gresh 2006, 5). Besides the impact of the Azeris separatist movements, Iran also feared a possible involvement of the neighboring states and the US, which would destabilize and weaken Iran. In sum, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict shows that Iran's political rhetoric as the guardian of the Muslim faith and people does not match its political actions. Instead of being driven by the Islamic ideology, Iran's actions are dictated by its strategic interests.

Iran and the Russian-Chechen Conflict

The *Russia-Chechnya* conflict is important because Chechnya is a republic predominantly of Muslim population and Russia is a Christian country and has been historically a threat to Iran's sovereignty. According to the 2002 census, Chechnya had a population of 1.1 million, 93.5% of whom were Muslims. Seeing that Chechnya's population is predominantly Muslim and was fighting for independence against a non-Muslim country, many would think that Iran would side with Chechnya against Russia. The Constitution of Iran clearly demands the government to frame its foreign policy based on "*Islamic criteria*, fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and unsparing support to the freedom fighters of the world".

However, as strange as it may sound, the Iranian policy toward the Russian-Chechen conflict was completely different from what one would expect. While many other Muslim countries condemned the Russian aggression against Chechnya, it became obvious that Iran had no intention of jeopardizing its "fruitful relations" with Russia. It was not a common political relationship. It was "a strategic relationship" (Freedman 2000, 70). It was the time again for Iran to set aside its political rhetoric and act to advance its own interests. In March 1996, months before the end of *the First Chechen War*, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, in a visit to Moscow, stated that Iranian-Russian relations were "at their highest level in contemporary history" (as cited in Freedman2000, 71). In 1999, then the Iranian Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi, expressed this political position to his Russian counterpart, Igor Ivanov, by adding that Tehran was ready "to undertake effective collaboration in the struggle against terrorists to destabilize the situation in Russia" (as cited in Samii 2001, 49). In the midst of the *Second Chechen War*, in early January 2000, President Sayyed Mohammed Khatami congratulated Vladimir Putin on assuming the office of the Russian President and emphasized

the hopes for further intensification of contacts with Moscow (Malek 2008, 2). In 2003, Hamid Reza Assefi, the Iranian representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, declared that the conflict was an "internal affair" of Russia (Malek 2008, 2).

The Iranian policy toward the Russian-Chechen conflict brings forth the questions: "Why didn't Iran support its Muslim brothers in Chechnya?" and "Why did Iran side with Russia?" Iran's cooperation with Russia and its neutral position toward Chechnya was a result of Iran acting rationally to advance its strategic interests. Iran calculated that support for Chechnya would cause Russia to stop providing military assistance and military-related technology that Iran so desperately needed. In addition, in supporting the Chechen separatist movement, Iran would inadvertently encourage the Azeri separatist movement in Northwestern Iran, or fear that Russia would support the separatist movements in Iran in a retaliatory strategy. Thus, the main strategy leading the security and foreign policy of Islamic Iran toward the Russian-Chechen conflict was to enhance its military capabilities and to prevent the rise of Azeri separatist movement.

Attempts to expand it military power had started in 1989 when Iran launched an ambitious effort to rebuild its military potential and transform itself into a regional military power. Iran's military arsenal at that time included 100-200 combat aircraft; 1,000-2,000 armored vehicles; several submarines; and as many as a dozen missile boats (Eisenstadt, 2001). Parallel with this military strategy, Iran had accelerated its attempt to enhance its missile technology, which culminated on February 3rd, 2009 with the launching of the first satellite into space (Fathi and Broad, 2009). Having a sophisticated missile technology would give Iran significant advantage in fighting against other aggressive states, which cannot be reached by the

conventional weapons in Iran's disposition. It also would provide Iran with the capability to deliver warheads to distanced locations.

The first main agreement between Iran and Russia dated back in 1989 when Rafsanjani negotiated with the Soviets in Moscow. Russia inherited this agreement and implemented part of the agreement due to Russian demand for direct payment and Iran's lack of economic power to buy them all. From this agreement, Iran received 422 T-72 tanks, 413 BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, and self-propelled artillery; SA-5 and SA-6 surface-to-air missiles (SAMs); 12 Su-24 and 24 MiG-29 fighters; and three Kilo-class submarines, along with advanced torpedoes and mines (Eisenstadt 2001; Samii 2001, 55). Under American pressure, the Russian President Boris Yeltsin pledged to stop the arms trade with Iran in September 1994. In June of 1995, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and US Vice President Al Gore signed an agreement in which Russia promised "it would fulfill existing contracts by the end of 1999 and would not sign any new ones" (Eisenstadt 2001).

In January 1995, Iran and Russia had signed an agreement which dealt with the construction by Russians of a nuclear power plant at Bushehr. In July 2002, notwithstanding the US opposition, Russia declared that it would help Iran build five additional nuclear reactors. Iran's nuclear activity intensified in 1999. Despite the *Gore-Chernomyrdin Agreement*, Russian and Iranian officials allegedly met in early 1997 to discuss new arms deals. These supposedly involved the possible sale of eight Su-25 attack aircraft; 25 Mi-17 transport helicopters; hundreds of T-72 tanks; 500-1,000 SA-16/18 Igla shoulder-launched SAMs; several battalions of SA-10 and SA-12 SAMs; air-surveillance radars; and several other items (Eisenstadt 2001). In violation of the agreement, Russia transferred to Iran other five Mi-17s starting in January 2000, while in November 2000, an Israeli newspaper reported "the imminent departure of a shipment" of 700

SA-16/18 Igla missiles for Iran (Eisenstadt 2001). Like the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the

Russian-Chechen war showed that Iran's political rhetoric does not match its foreign policy

actions and the rationality of pursuing strategic interests prevails over the Islamist –driven

sentimentalism.

Iran and the 2003 Iraq War

The 2003 Iraq war is another case which proves that Iran pursued rational strategies to

advance its own interests and expand its influence in Iraq. Iran implemented two main strategies.

First, it supported pro-Iranian forces to gain control over Iraq's government. Second, it supported

anti-American terrorist groups in an attempt to diminish the U.S. influence in the region, thus

increasing its own. As the US accomplished its mission to overthrow Saddam Hussein, Iran

initiated its strategy to join all pro-Iranian factions in Iraq in a cohesive group to gain control of

Iraq. For this purpose, Iran managed to assemble all the factions in a Shiite Islamic bloc called

United Iraqi Alliance. The bloc encompasses the *Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq* (ISCI), the

Da'wa (Islamic Call) party, and the faction of the young cleric Moqtada Al Sadr. Iran's goal was

to take advantage of the Iraqi's Shiite majority population and turn it into a source of political

power to control the state apparatus. The election results proved that the Iranian strategy had

worked: the bloc won 128 of the 275 seats in the December 15, 2005, election for a full term

parliament (Katzman, 2008, p. 1). The profile of the political figures coming out of this election

showed that they all had direct or indirect ties with Iran. Nuri al-Maliki, who was selected as

Prime Minister, was from the *Da'wa Party*, whose leaders were in exile mostly in Syria and Iran.

Also, most leaders of ISCI had spent their years of exile in Iran. In 1982, Ayatollah Mohammad

Baqr Al Hakim, leader of ISCI, who was killed in an August 2003 car bomb in Najaf, was

anointed by then Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini to head a future "Islamic Republic of Iraq" (Duss and Juul, 2009, p. 10).

In addition to expanding its influence within Iraq, Iran put a significant emphasis on its strategy of gaining power at the expense of the US by using anti-American terrorist and paramilitary groups. Iran aimed at not allowing any US permanent military bases in Iraq by making it "bleed". By promoting this strategy, Iran would "kill two birds with one stone". First, it would keep Iraq out of competition for regional hegemonic power, which may also turn in a servant of Iran's ambitions, and second, it would keep America "bleeding", resulting in declining of its regional influence. For this purpose, Iran provided political and military support to ISCI's militia, the "Badr Brigades, which were recruited, trained, and armed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (Katzman, 2008, 1).

In addition, Iran sought to establish close relationship with Sadr's faction, a large and dedicated following among lower-class Iraqi Shiites, and which built an estimated 60,000 person "Mahdi Army" (Jaysh al-Mahdi, or JAM) militia after Saddam's fall (Katzman 2008, 2). JAM became very aggressive toward the US troops and pro-American Iraqi politicians. Realizing that JAM would be the best military group through which to advance the strategic interests, Iran began supplying arms to JAM through the Revolutionary Guard's Qods Force (Katzman 2008, 2). Qods Force officers are not combatant forces. Their main task is to identify Iraqi trainees and create traffic route for weapon shipment into Iraq.

In his report to the members and committees of Congress, Kenneth Katzman, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs for the *Congressional Research Service*, provided the following information about the Iran support for armed groups:

On February 11, 2007, U.S. military briefers in Baghdad provided what they said was specific evidence that Iran had supplied armor-piercing "explosively formed projectiles" (EFPs) to Shiite (Sadrist) militiamen. EFPs have been responsible for over 200 U.S. combat deaths since 2003. In August 2007, Gen. Raymond Odierno, then the second in command and who in mid-September 2008 will become overall commander in Iraq, said that Iran had supplied the Shiite militias with 122 millimeter mortars that are used to fire on the Green Zone in Baghdad. On August 28, 2008, the Washington Times reported that pro-Sadr militias were now also using "Improvised Rocket Assisted Munitions" — a "flying bomb" carrying 100 pounds of explosives, propelled by Iranian-supplied 107 mm rockets. On July 2, 2007, Brig. Gen. Kevin Bergner said that Lebanese Hezbollah was assisting the Qods Force in aiding Iraqi Shiite militias, adding that Iran gives about $3 million per month to these Iraqi militias. He based the statement on the March 2007 capture of former Sadr aide Qais Khazali and Lebanese Hezbollah operative Ali Musa Daqduq. They were allegedly involved in the January 2007 killing of five U.S. forces in Karbala. (Katzman 2008, 3)

Moreover, in his testimony, General David Petraeus stated that Iran continues to arm, train, and direct "Special Groups" – radical and possibly breakaway elements of the JAM — and to organize those groups into a "Hezbollah-like force to serve Iran's interests and fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces..." (as cited in Katzman, 2008, 3). In a brief press conference, Petraeus told journalists that Iran's Ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Kazemi-Qomi, was himself a member of the Qods Force (Yates 2007).

Thus, the use of the terrorist and paramilitary groups to gain power in Iraq and to fight against US forces show that Iran's foreign policy not only was based on field operatives but was orchestrated by its high-ranking officials with clear strategies in mind. The Islamic government of Iran considers the establishment of permanent US military bases in Iraq a serious threat to its national interests. For these reasons, Iran implemented political and military strategies to expand its influence in Iraq and diminish and obstruct the US influence in the region. At the same time,

in order to increase its influence in the region, Iran has also continued the modernization of the armed forces and the growth of its military arsenal. During an army parade on April 18, 2009, the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stated that "The power of the Iranian armed forces is at the service of the nations ... and will help to preserve the region's security and stability." (Dahl 2009)

Iran and the US: Sharing Mutual Strategic Interests

Besides the clash during the Iraq war and Iran's nuclear program, there are several other cases that show that the strategic interests of the US and Iran are mutually exclusive, such as Iran's closer ties to Russia and China and its support for Hamas and Hezbollah (Maleki and Reardon 149-150). But one may argue that this happens because of Iran's need to balance either the US or Israel. Despite these differences, a close look at US-Iran relationship reveals that both states share mutual strategic interests in many areas, which are also emphasized by other scholars (Mafinezam and Mehrabi 2008, xii-xiv; Maleki and Reardon 149-166).

From the balance-of-power logic, the US needs Iran to balance any potential regional aggressor, and Iran has done so with Iraq continuously. On the other side, Iran needs the US to balance the overwhelming power of the Arab states. This claim goes along with Mohamad Reza Shah Pahlavi's saying that "neither Israel, nor Iran wanted to be surrounded and alone in a sea of Arabs." (Helms 1981, 188; Tarock 1998, 103). In our case, the saying would be: Neither the US, nor Iran wants to be surrounded and alone in a sea of Arabs. It is fairly impossible to refute this claim, at least given the many cases that support it.

President Reagan used to say that "That person who agrees with you 80 percent of the time is a friend and an ally; *not* a 20 percent traitor." The same hold true for states relations because rarely in this world will we be able to find states whose strategic interests are all

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mutually inclusive. Depending on their strategic interests and power configuration in the international system, today's ally may be tomorrow's adversary and vice versa. In international relations there are no permanent allies or adversaries; there are simply permanent interests and different strategies to pursue those interests in an anarchic, volatile system.

What is even more important, because both the US and Iran share mutual strategic interests in several cases, it is likely that a strategic loss or gain for Iran most likely would be respectively a loss or gain for the US, and vice-versa. Thus, if the strategic interests of the two states are mutually inclusive, then we should expect that a loss or gain for one will be a respective loss or gain for the other. In order to test this claim, I will conduct an analysis of three major cases: the 2001 Afghan war, the 2003 Iraq war, and the establishment of the ISIL. Because the establishment of the ISIL is an ongoing case, its analysis will also incorporate counterfactual arguments. Counterfactual analysis is used in congruence method when one or more comparable cases are not available (George and Bennett 2005, 189); however, in this chapter it is used to provide more support to the claim.

The 2001 Afghanistan War

First, the 2001Afghan war is the first case in which strategic interests of the US and Iran converged. At that time, Iranian Foreign Minister stated that Iran had "some common points with the US over Afghanistan" (as cited in Takeyh 2009, 212). The US viewed the Taliban government as being accomplice in the September 11 terrorist attack and for being a safe haven for terrorist organizations, especially Al-Qaeda. Overthrowing the Taliban government meant retaliating for the losses from the terrorist attack, destroying support for state-sponsored terrorism, and increasing US influence in the region by establishing a pro-American government. On the other side, Iran's interest in overthrowing the Taliban government was to

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expand its influence over the western part of Afghanistan known as being pro-Iranian and to support the Shi'a population in Afghanistan (Gladstone 2001, 13). Iran came close to a war with the Talibans in 1998 when they killed ten Iranian diplomats in the consulate of Mazar-e-Sharif.

Sharing mutual strategic interests in overthrowing the Taliban government in Afghanistan is not as important as is the fact that both the US and Iran were aware of this fact and cooperated to overthrow the Talibans (Milani 2006, 255-256; Haas 2012, 99). Several meetings between Iranian diplomats and their American counterpart occurred in Geneva and the US-sponsored Bonn Conference, which dealt with the establishment of a new government in the post-Taleban Afghanistan and the issue of the Afghan refugees. James Dubbins, the US special envoy to Afghanistan at that time, highly cherished the role of the Iranian delegation during Afghanistan discussions and stated that "None was more [helpful] than the Iranians", referring to their input about the new Afghani government (Dubbins, 2004). Iran provided support to the US on several occasions during the war and during the reconstruction era of post-Taleban Afghanistan. The support also included intelligence and military assistance against the Talibans (Gladstone 2001, 13; Takeyh 2009, 212; Hass 2012, 99). In sum, both the US and Iran were aware of mutual strategic interests they shared in overthrowing the Talibans. The presence of these mutual interests led both states to cooperate before, during, and after the war. It is for this reason that the empowerment of Iran after the overthrowing of the Talibans cannot be viewed as an "unintended consequence" of the war.

The 2003 Iraq War

Previously, I explained that the 2003 Iraq war was a rational action of the US to advance its strategic interests in the Middle East. The war aimed at preventing Iraq from becoming a great power that would threaten US interests and destroying state-support for terrorist organizations.

Likewise, Iran viewed the Iraq war as an opportunity to eliminate a historical ideological and military enemy and establish a pro-Iranian government led by Shi'a. After the 2001 Afghan war, Iran realized that the Iraq war could provide another opportunity to expand it influence even further. And it was right. Two years later, many realized that even the Iraq war empowered Iran (Maloney 2008; Hursts 2009, 232). As expected, the U.S. invasion of Iraq was followed by the coming into power of Shi'a-dominated government. Nothing has better served the Iranian regional interests and none has profited more from the 2003 Iraq war than the Islamic Republic of Iran. Vali Nasr (2006, 212) argues that "The Shi'a ascendancy in Iraq is supported by and is in turn bolstering another important development in the Middle East: *the emergence of Iran as a regional power.*" Years after the deposition of Saddam Hussein and the coming into power of Shi'a forces, many analysts believe that Iraq has become a satellite of Iran (Fiderer 2006; Al-Sheikh and Sky 2012).

There is no doubt that the 2003 Iraq war empowered Iran; however, the question remains whether the empowerment of Iran was an intended or unintended consequence of the war. The evidence and common sense make me believe that either the US was aware of the fact that the war would empower Iran and could not do anything to prevent it or the US intended to empower Iran. Claiming that the empowerment of Iran was an unintended consequence of the war is not plausible and is not supported by credible evidence. During the 2001 Afghanistan war, the US cooperated with Iran to overthrow the Taliban government, and the war empowered Iran because the Talibans were as obstructive and dangerous to US strategic interests as they were to Iran's. It is naïve to say that Iran's empowerment was an unintended consequence of the Afghan war, and it is beyond the conventional wisdom to claim that two years after the "unintended consequences" of the Afghan war we would face the "unintended consequences" of the Iraq war.

Indeed, the attempt at a "grand bargain" between Iran and the US, which was initiated by Iran after the Afghan war, proves the opposite, that the US was aware of the fact that Iran was interested in overthrowing Saddam Hussein and expand Iran's influence in Iraq (Kristof 2007).[4]

Setting aside the scenario about a possible behind-the-scene cooperation between the US and Iran, even though it may be possible, one may convincingly argue that the US was aware of the potential consequences of the Iraq war but could do nothing to prevent them even if it wanted to. The US can damage Iran's strategic interests only if it damages its own interests and vice versa. The fact that a loss or gain for the US would be at the same time a loss or gain for Iran, and vice-versa, is a strong indicator that both states share mutual strategic interests, which are dictated by the geographic location, power capabilities, and their position in the international system. It seems that the balance-of-power game always puts Iran and the US on the same side. As mentioned previously, the removal of the Sunni government and the destruction of Iraqi power were as strategically expedient for the US as they were for Iran.

However, it is very important to emphasize that sharing mutual strategic interests does not mean that the US and Iran should not fear or take advantage of each other when possible. It also does not mean that they are in a permanent alliance because such alliance does not exist in international politics. The opposite is true. Both states fear each other and will take advantage of each other whenever an opportunity arises. Despite the shared mutual strategic interests, Iran will never allow or accept a too powerful US with permanent military bases in Iraq, and the US will never allow a too powerful (nuclear) Iran that could challenge its interests in the future. Seen from this perspective, Iran's support for terrorist groups in Iraq during the war (Katzman 2008, 2-3) aimed at achieving three major objectives: (1) cause long-lasting damages on Iraq, keeping

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[4] For the last version of the "grand bargain" see: http://www.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/opinion/20070429_iran-memo-expurgated.pdf (September 10, 2014).

it out of competition for regional hegemonic power, (2) make America "bleed" and decrease its political and military influence in the region, and (3) extend its influence in troubled Iraq and across the region. Given the fact that the support for Iran in the region is very limited and that there are many regional states willing to balance Iran once it becomes a serious threat, the US does not feel threatened by Iran's empowerment. Indeed an empowered Shia Iran constitutes a powerful tool to control and balance potential anti-American threats coming from Sunni, Arab states.

The ISIL in Iraq and Syria

Previously, I argued that Iran and the US shared mutual strategic interests and that a loss or gain for Iran would most likely would be a loss or gain for the US, and vice-versa. The cases of the 2001 Afghan war and the 2003 Iraq war have shown that a gain for Iran or the US was also a gain for the US or Iran. The case of the ISIL follows the same patterns but the opposite outcomes: a strategic loss for Iran in Syria and/or Iraq is at the same time a strategic loss for the US and vice-versa. Iran and the US will both lose if Syria and Iraq fall under the control of the radical Islamic forces of the ISIL.

The radical Islamic forces proclaimed the establishment of the ISIS on June 29, 2014, and the new Caliphate claims territories from Aleppo in northern Syria to Diyala province in Iraq (Withnall 2014). It is reasonable to say that the case of ISIL, its political nature and geographical spread, directly involves Syria, Iraq, and the US. Both Syria and Iraq are considered two strategic allies of Iran in the region, and together they have given birth to what King Abdullah of Jordan warned about in 2004—"the Shia Crescent". Besides the Iran-Iraq strategic alliance after the 2003 war, many scholars have emphasized the Iranian-Syrian strategic alliance (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch 1997; Goodarzi 2006; Maltzahn 2013). In addition, the US is directly involved

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in the recent development because the ISIL forces aim at spreading their influence across the region, thus, presenting a challenge to US strategic interests. There is no doubt that besides the disturbance of the balance of power in the region, the ISIL represents a direct threat to US strategic interests because anti-Americanism is at the core of its *reason d'état*.

The emergence of ISIL can also be viewed as a result of power competition between the regional states. Each regional stated wanted to expand its influence in Syria by either supporting or fighting the current Syrian government. The Syrian crisis started as a domestic struggle for power between different social groups but soon became a proxy war as many regional powers intervened to advance their own strategic interests (Kelley 2013; Rogers 2013; Jones 2014; Sen 2014). Indeed, the overthrowing of the Syrian regime with the assistance of some regional powers has more to do with Iran rather than Syria. It is a pure balance-of-power action that aims at decreasing Iranian influence in the Middle East and putting an end to "the Shia Crescent". It was for this reason that many Arab states, including Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and Turkey provided financial and military support to Syrian opposition forces. And also it was for this reason that Iran provided its support to the current Syrian regime.

While Iran will definitely be a loser if Syria and Iraq fall to the ISIL, the US will be the other loser. Iran's Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, recognized this mutual strategic challenge in an interview he gave to *The National Interest* magazine. Zarif went even further to provide a strategic advice to the US to support the government of Iraq and Syria because "You need a strong central authority in order to be able to deal with this terrorist menace." (Zarif 2014). This "advice" is in response to US decision to provide military assistance to Iraq and Syrian opposition forces. It is important to note that this decision is consistent with US foreign policy as offshore balancer and its need to use regional powers to contain the threat in an attempt

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to avoid the direct balancing of the aggressor and loses that occur thereby. If regional forces fail to contain and eradicate ISIL, then the US will have to intervene by using its ground troops.

In addition, identifying himself as a realist, Zafir stated that he does not believe that "tensions in [US-Iran] relations are inherent or unavoidable" and that resolving the nuclear issue would significantly reduce tension and lead to cooperation. Mohsen M. Milani, a scholar and an expert of Iranian politics, states that the US and Iran might me entering a period of "detente", and that it is surprising that cooperation is coming not through negotiations over Iran's nuclear program but as a result of the threats coming from the ISIL (Milani 2014). It seems that if Iraqi and Syrian opposition forces fail in their mission, the US would be more likely to cooperate with Iran and Syria rather than engage in direct balancing by using its military power on the ground.

Because the ISIL and the Syrian crisis are ongoing events, it's important to add a counterfactual analysis in order to better support the claim that the success of the ISIL will be a loss for both the US and Iran. Had the US attacked Syria, as President Obama argued after the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against its own citizens, the ISIL would take the control of Syria. This victory would make it easy for the ISIL to advance in Iraq because the former would have had significant military power to advance. Having control over Syria's military arsenal, including chemical weapons, would make the ISIL the most dangerous force in the region. Comparing the current advancement of ISIL in Iraq, it would be reasonable to say that had the ISIL gained control over Syria and its military arsenal, Iraq would fall to the terrorist group in a matter of months. Had this occurred, Iran would be facing an even more dangerous enemy than the Iraq of the 1980s, which would condition its security and foreign policy. Given a probable support by other Arab states, the ISIL would initiate an attack to invade Iran or at least to destroy its capabilities.

On the other side, these developments would challenge US strategic interests in the region. A victorious ISIL would be a real threat to the balance of power in the region to the extent that it would have turned the entire region into chaos. Besides being a threat to Iran, the ISIL would become a threat to the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to the global market. This would directly impact US interests. In addition, the threat to the flow of oil would cause other world powers, such as China, to intervene in order to protect their interests. Moreover, the ISIL would constitute a threat to other regional states, such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and anti-Americanism would be used as justification for the ISIL's expansion in those states.

Several main options would be possible. First, following the balance of power logic, the US and all regional states will try to pass the buck to each other in order to contain the ISIL. This means that the US and other regional powers will avoid using or jeopardizing their own valuable resources, including boots on the ground. Kurdish forces are the only ones willing to fight the ISIL; however, local states like Turkey will make sure that Kurds will never win the battle. It is reasonable to say that the Kurdish revival is as dangerous to Turkey's sovereignty (and even Iran's) as the expansion of the ISIL. The second option includes a possible cooperation between the ISIL and other regional states at the expense of the US, which means that the US today's allies would become its adversaries. This would be a reality because the ISIL has significant support within these states. The third option would include the ISIL's expansion and control over major regional states, which means a direct threat to US strategic interests. The final option includes a coalition of Arab states to encounter the ISIL. This scenario would be possible, but there would be no guarantee for its success given the actual support the ISIL enjoys in those states. Under this situation, the intervention from other (non)regional forces, such as Israel, Turkey and Russia, would be highly probable. As all these scenarios indicate, there is little

probability that a victorious ISIL would not represent a threat to both the US and Iran and there is a high probability that both states will cooperate against the ISIL in order to defend their mutual strategic interests.

Conclusion

In this study, I tested several claims by using case study analysis. First, I claimed that the foreign policy rhetoric of both Iran and the US do not match their foreign policy actions toward each other. The cases of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the Russian-Chechen conflict, and the Iran-Contra affair show that Iran's political rhetoric as the torchbearer of the Islamic cause does not match its actions. Instead, Iran's actions show that its security and foreign policy is determined by pure rational goals to advance its strategic interests, and often at the expense of the Islamic cause. In addition, the cases of the Iran-Contra affair and the 2003 Iraq war (discussed previously) show that US foreign policy is driven by its strategic need to maintain its hegemonic status rather than by the desire to spread democracy or feeling of hatred or love. Thus, strategic interests dictate the foreign policy of Iran and the US. By looking at the strategic interests of the two states, it is easy to realize that they both share mutual strategic interests and a loss or gain for one would most like be a loss or gain for the other. The 2001 Afghan war and the 2003 Iraq war show that a gain for Iran was a gain for the US, or vice-versa. On the other side, the case of the ISIS shows that a loss for Iran in Syria and/or Iraq will most likely be a loss for the US. While this will be certain in Iraq, it will be highly probable in the case of Syria.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

This dissertation was about US foreign policy. By utilizing an offensive realist theoretical framework and a case study and comparative case study methodology, it claimed that US foreign policy has been characterized by the continuous need to prevent the emergence of another rival regional hegemon. It is this need that has also dictated its relations with other states in the international system. It is important to note that this claim did not include all foreign policy actions of the US but only those major actions that dealt with the survival and strategic interests of the state. Offensive realism recognizes that states, great powers, can pursue nonsecurity goals for as long as they do not conflict with the balance-of-power logic and in some cases the former are used to complement "the hunt for relative power" (Mearsheimer 2001, 46). By using the congruence method, this dissertation utilized the offensive realism theoretical framework to explain US foreign policy in several important situations that involved US strategic interests.

There are several important findings of this dissertation. First, US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine, which led to the 2003 Iraq war, fit within the offensive realist theoretical framework. US foreign policy action toward Iraq was influenced by a combination of several factors, including the presence of anarchy, the possession by Iraq of significant military power that could harm or destroy US strategic interests, fear and suspicion of Iraq's intentions, the need to survive, and the rationality to pursue its strategic interests. These factors created three main patterns of behavior—self-help, fear, and relative power maximization—that directly impacted the US foreign policy action against Iraq. In addition, as a regional hegemon, the US

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implemented the offshore balancing strategy by relying on its own power because there was no other regional power capable and willing to balance Iraq. The US sent clear diplomatic threat to Iraq. Once these threats were ignored, the US reacted by creating an anti-Iraq coalition and using the military force to constrain the adversary.

Second, this dissertation found that there are several other case studies that fit within the offensive realist framework. These cases include the Roosevelt Corollary, the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine. While these cases provide significant theoretical support to offensive realism, they also support the claim that US foreign policy in cases that deal with "high politics" (strategic interests) has been characterized by the continuous need to maintain regional hegemony and prevent the emergence of another rival regional hegemon. The Bush Doctrine, which is argued by many researchers to be a dramatic shift in foreign policy, is nothing else but a continuation of previous US foreign policy actions. The main principles of the Bush Doctrine—maintaining the US hegemony and taking unilateral and preemptive actions— are found in the other aforementioned doctrines as well. For example, the Roosevelt Corollary aimed at keeping the US hegemony in Latin America unchallenged by the European forces while the Truman Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrines aimed at maintaining US regional hegemony and prevent the emergence of the Soviet Union as a rival regional hegemon. These preventive policies also imply that US foreign policy was based on preemptive actions just as the Bush Doctrine. Moreover, the unilateral principle is shared in all cases since there was no supranational government or international law to authorize the actions of the US besides the need to advance its strategic interests. Finally, in all cases, the US acted as an offshore balancer by implementing either the buck-passing strategy or the balancing strategy.

Thus, US foreign policy is characterized by continuity rather than change. The reason why the foreign policy is characterized by continuity can be found within the offensive realism framework. Neorealism, or structural realism and it related theories, including offensive realism, emphasize the structure of the international system as being characterized by its ordering principle, anarchy, and the distribution of state capabilities in the system (Waltz 1979, 88). Accordingly, the US has its own position in the international system, and according to offensive realism, that position is identified as regional hegemon. Because capabilities dictate the place of a state in the international system, it is fair to claim that the US has maintained significant capabilities to enjoy the position. In addition, offensive realism recognizes geography as another important factor that dictates a state's foreign policy. Geography dictates foreign policy because it dictates the ability of states to project power and have access to vital resources like oil. It dictates not only how the US projects power against other states but also how other states can project power against the US. US foreign policy has been characterized by continuity because it has been able to maintain significant capabilities relative to other states in the system and has maintained the same geographical patterns. By default, this means that if US relative capabilities diminish in the future (or if geographic changes occur, which is less probable), then it should not be a surprise for the country to lose its regional hegemonic status and for its foreign policy to change.

Lastly, this dissertation found that US foreign policy toward Iran fits within the offensive realist framework. The US fears Iran and is suspicious of its actions given the fact that the latter has considerable military capabilities that could harm or even destroy US strategic interests. However, Iran's relative capabilities and its geographic location have dictated cooperative foreign relations with the US given the fact that both states share mutual strategic interests in

balancing other regional powers. The claim of Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi that neither Iran nor Israel wants to be left alone and surrounded in a sea of Arabs also holds true for Iran and the US. As a regional hegemon and offshore balancer, the US needed Iran to contain the Soviet expansion during the Cold War (until 1979) and to balance Iraq. Iran needed the US for the same reasons. The Iran-Contra Affairs, the 2001 Afghanistan War, the 2003 Iraq War, and the establishment of ISIL showed that the US and Iran continue to share strategic interests in fighting and containing the aggressive Iraq, fighting Talibans, and containing and destroying ISIL. Sharing strategic interests in several cases is a strong indicator that both the US and Iran are likely to share the same interests in the future for as long as their geography, capabilities, and positions in the international system remain unchanged. While the political rhetoric against each other is extremely antagonistic, both states act rationally when their strategic interests are at stake.

However, there exists one major limitation to their relationship: none will accept a too powerful other. Iran's nuclear program is an example of this limitation. The US will never allow a nuclear Iran because possessing nuclear capabilities would make Iran too powerful and influential in the region. As a regional hegemon, the US is interested in maintaining the status quo and preventing Iran from disturbing the balance of power in the region. Apparently, Iran is aware of this constraint. Many Iranians believe that even ISIL is "an American invention", which aimed at containing the Iranian expansion in the Middle East (Erdbrink 2014). On the other side, Iran would never accept a too powerful US in the region that would threaten Iran's strategic interests. Iran's support for the anti-American terrorist groups during the Iraq war proves the claim that while Iran benefited from the 2003 Iraq war, it was threatened by a too powerful America with military bases adjacent to its borders.

Many researchers also argue that Iran's foreign policy toward Israel is another limitation to US-Iran relationship. This is not completely true. For the US, Israel and Iran are equally important. Had Israel been populated by different people, had it the same military capabilities, and had it constituted a minority in the region, US foreign policy would have still been the same. Indeed, the US did not have military or strategic relationship with Israel until the Six Day War in 1967, when Israel proved in the eyes of Washington to be a regional power (Graeber 2007, 131). Another reason why the US shares mutual strategic interests with Israel and Iran is because they both can help to contain potential regional threats. At the same time, because Israel and Iran, each, constitute a minority in the region, compare to the Arab states, and are threatened by other regional powers, it is easy to control and contain them in case they increase their capabilities and challenge the strategic interests of the US. For example, if Israel or Iran directly threatens US strategic interest, then the US can use one state against the other or the Arab states to balance the aggressor. In the case of Iran's nuclear program, Israel and Saudi Arabia have "volunteered" to contain Iran. Thus, given the current power configuration in the region, US foreign policy under President Obama will continue to be that of an offshore balancer.

How Does the Real Obama Doctrine Look Like?

Following the offensive realist theoretical framework, it would be reasonable to claim that US foreign policy under President Obama would be characterized by continuity rather than change as argued by most researchers and commentators. In his first year in office, many commentators claimed that the Obama Doctrine is based on Obama's previous convictions that the US has much to apologize for acting aggressively, arrogantly, and wastefully for more than one century and that multilateralism offers the best hope for restraining US power (Feith and Cropsey 2011). However, as Obama's words failed to become actions, it became clear that his

attempt to devise an "AntiDoctrinal Doctrine" failed as the President was co-opted by the "structural-institutional continuity" (Gerges 2012, 89-149).

On September 24, 2013, in a speech given to the UN General Assembly, as if he wanted to clarify any confusion about the real Obama Doctrine, President Obama introduced US foreign policy by stating: "So let me take this opportunity to outline what has been U.S. policy towards the Middle East and North Africa, and what will be my policy during the remainder of my presidency."[5] He then continued by outlying all elements of his doctrine. First, the US will protect its core interests by using all elements of power. Second, the US will defend its allies from any external aggression. Third, the US will ensure free flow of energy to the global market. Forth, the US will dismantle any anti-American terrorist organization. Lastly, the US will prohibit the development and use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

It is reasonable to say that all the elements of the Obama Doctrine are offensive realist in nature and focus exclusively on the pursuance of US strategic interests. All these elements are a testimony of the presence of three main patterns of US behavior—fear, self-help, and power maximization. In addition, President Obama's decision to circumvent the United Nations Security Council and authorize air strikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria signaled the continuation of American unilateralism, much emphasized and debated about during the presidency of his predecessor.

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[5] The White House. 2014. *Remarks by President Obama in Address to the United Nations General Assembly*. September 24. http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/24/remarks-president-obama-address-united-nations-general-assembly (September 5, 2014).

Dealing with Russia and China

While the Middle East appears to be relatively under control, despite the recent developments and the ISIL threat, the rise of Russia and China represent a real challenge to US foreign policy. The Russian annexation of Crimea and the continuous threat it possesses to the sovereignty of Ukraine and other regional states have raised the concerns about a new Russian expansionism. While Russia is reinstating its expansionist goals, the US will need to confront it by reinstating the containment strategy of the Cold War. This means that the US will again need Europe, Turkey, and Iran to contain Russia. While this may sound a little exaggerated, there is no guarantee that what happened more than sixty years ago will not occur again under different circumstances, in different ways, and by using different means and methods. Because Russia is a nuclear power and with considerable military capabilities, the US will need to focus on economic means in order to make Russia unable to sustain its military capabilities as it did at the end of the Cold War. Damaging Russia's economy would create a negative economic capability deficit, which means that Russia's military capabilities will far surpass its economic capabilities, and the latter won't be able to sustain the former. As a result, military capabilities would become a detriment to Russia rather than a threat to other countries.

The same foreign policy would also work against the rising China because, like Russia, it is a nuclear power. In addition, China has overwhelming economic and military power to seriously threaten US regional hegemonic status. China has close economic relations with the US and owns about $1.3 trillion of US government debt (Egan 2014). These economic relations have made both countries dependent on each other, and each may play a significant role in destabilizing the economy of the other despite the claim that China would suffer more than the US. It is also important to note that the rise of China may also be a "false alarm" like that which

occurred during the 1980s when Japan challenged US economy by gaining considerable access

to global markets (Oatley 2012, 32). However, this is hard to predict. What is important for the

US is to prevent the emergence of China as a regional hegemon by using regional powers, such

as Japan, to balance it and destabilizing its economic system, making it impossible to sustain the

military power. If the US fails to balance China, then the world will enter a new era of *Pax*

Sinica as Mearsheimer (2001) predicted in his offensive realism theory.

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