A Fortuitous Hegemon: Cold War Presidential Foreign Policies

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Abstract

Following the Cold War, the United States attained the pinnacle of global influence; however, new threats and challenges have arisen that possess the potential to unseat America from its position of global dominance. While the United States' global power has remained unchallenged since the end of the Cold War, threats have formed that take the form of both maverick upstart nations, such as Iran and China, as well as foreign powers that are clamoring to retain the status of their former glory, such as Russia. In plotting the course with which the United States should address these new threats, an examination of the lessons learned from presidents during the Cold War would provide invaluable lessons that might prove useful in addressing the contemporary threats America faces today.

A Fortuitous Hegemon: Cold War Presidential Foreign Policies

Introduction

For decades the world has enjoyed the stability of a Pax Americana, where the United States has risen and maintained its status as the sole global hegemon. On the geopolitical world stage, where nations are continually in a state of flux, the United States has utilized its position and taken an active role in the world, utilizing its position to stabilize and secure its global interests. As of late, numerous other powers, such as Russia, China, and Iran, have risen and now stand present to challenge the United States' hegemony, at a time when the United States seems determined to accept a reduced or more passive role in the world. This reduced role has come at the behest of our current president and raises the important question as to how a nation should best address threats to their global presence. In order to answer such a question and determine the most effective foreign policy stances to employ in such a circumstance, the foreign policies of United States Presidents during the Cold War and the impact of their different choices on the United States and its rival the U.S.S.R. must be examined. As the United States faces circumstances similar to the environment that enveloped the Cold War, the successes of individual presidential foreign policies of the past serve as immensely impactful lessons to consider in addressing the current dilemmas of today.

Overview of Contemporary Threats

In the dynamic nature of international relations and consequently foreign policy, the belief that a country's presence would remain static is both untenable and unreasonable. The United States' current status, under the recognition of the dynamic

nature of foreign policy, could not be expected to remain unchallenged, and its status as global hegemon will continue to evolve as global rivals arise and attempt to usurp greater power.[1]

China

Today, numerous threats have emerged under the Obama administration, with the greatest threat taking the form of China. China's economic and military growth is increasing at a more rapid rate than the United States, despite the United States maintaining superior strength in comparison.[2] This severe decrease in comparative economic and military growth rate will embolden China to interfere in United States' interests.[3] Already China has become more willing to utilize its strength, as ever since China's military has grown rapidly over the past years, it has asserted greater dominance in its region and employed its newfound ability to pursue its interests unchecked.[4]

Evidence of this emboldened Chinese nation is perceptible in an analysis of China's recent objective to grow its borders, especially its maritime borders. In the South China Sea, an area that is often characterized by numerous nations disputing territorial claims to the supposedly oil rich and geographically significant territory, China has not

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1. National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2008), p. vi. http://www.aicpa.org/research/cpahorizons2025/globalforces/downloadabledocuments/globaltrends.pdf.

2. Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson and Michael Beckley, "Debating China's Rise and U.S. Decline," *International Security* 37, no. 3 (2012): 172-181, accessed March 1, 2016, https://muse.jhu.edu/.

3. Ibid.

4. Richard Bitzinger, "Modernising China's Military, 1997-2012," *China Perspectives*, no. 4 (2011): 7-15, accessed March 1, 2016, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1497378523?accountid=12085.

only thrown its hat in the ring, but taken military actions to assert their claim.[5] Although it is not unusual for a nation to keep and maintain vigilance over territory it lays claim to, China has gone one step further, attempting to establish an airbase in the middle of the territory, and conducting regular military patrols in the sea and air. [6] This increased action has bestowed China with extraordinary strategic leverage and sent a chilling message regarding the veracity with which they are willing to defend their claim.

Elsewhere, China has continued its aggressive growth, establishing not only a foothold into the lucrative North Sea oil trade, but also by recently becoming the world's number one oil producer in that area.[7] In a world where oil is considered liquid gold, China's sudden and truculent advancement into this area is especially alarming, particularly considering their previous docile disposition in the not so recent past.

In both of these regions, China does not appear to be half-hazardly asserting its claim and their rights to these territories, in fact, on numerous occasions they have instigated aggressive military action in response to the movements of other nations that they perceive as threats, including the United States Recently and with increasing manifestation, China has sent warplanes, in maneuvers the United States has deemed "unsafe," to intercept United States aircraft that China determined were too close to their

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5. "China's Dangerous Game" *The Atlantic,* accessed September 1, 2016, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/11/chinas-dangerous-game/380789/

6. Bonnie Glaser, "Armed Clash in the South China Sea," *Council on Foreign Relations,* April 2015, accessed September 1, 2016, http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/armed-clash-south-china-sea/p27883.

7. "China's pivot to Britain? Beijing's foothold in North Sea oil rattles security experts," Reuters, August 23, 2016, accessed on September 1, 2016, https://www.rt.com/uk/356878-china-north-sea-oil/.

freshly claimed territory.[8] In light of China's increasingly aggressive military interactions, as well as China's public statements and warnings to the United States to not infringe upon their freshly declared sovereignty over disputed territory, China's activities certainly portray that of a nation that is not in any way intimidated nor wary of the consequences of their actions, but rather they appear to be more characteristic of a nation that is beginning to directly challenge the United States in a way that has not occurred in decades.[9]

Iran

Comparative to the rising threat of China, over the past decade Iran has engaged in a constant pursuit of nuclear capabilities that could threaten the world and it has drawn closer to its goal under the Obama administration.[10] Although the Middle East often represents a turbulent and ever changing landscape of nations struggling, and a nearly constant usurping of power by different people groups, the Iranian pursuit of nuclear weapons has been a constant threat for much of the last decade. Following the nuclear deal with Iran that was broached by the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany, the world hoped that Iran would be appeased and not only act as a positive actor in the tempestuous Middle East but also follow through on the

8. Simon Denyer, "U.S. Spy Plane Buzzed by Chinese Jets in 'Unsafe' Intercept," *The Washington Post*, June 8, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/us-spy-plane-buzzed-by-chinese-jets-in-unsafe-intercept/2016/06/08/160d607f-770a-484c-8339-62c0816487fe_story.html.

9. "'Don't infringe upon our sovereignty!' China warns US ahead of South China Sea ruling," *Reuters*, July 7, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, https://www.rt.com/news/349843-south-china-sea-us/.

10. Il Hyun Cho, *Iran's Nuclear Pursuit and the Shifting Regional Order in the Middle East*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, 125-146.

agreements of the deal as accepted by both parties. Instead, the behavior exhibited by the nation of Iran has shattered expectations as they have acted in a manner that is more akin to outright defiance and boasting of an attitude that openly flirts with disobedience and transgression of the deal. Although the Iran nuclear deal was crafted and fabricated with the intention of preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear missiles, Iran has consistently continued to test and launch ballistic missiles in efforts that the U.N. declared were "not consistent with the constructive spirit" of the treaty.[11]

Iran's candid and consistent disdain for the treaty and the western powers has not been localized solely to their missile testing program. Indeed, Iran has begun to act with increasing aggression towards western powers, emboldened by the West's continual reluctance to strike back and their seemingly perpetual submission to Iran's demands. Militarily, Iran has begun, similarly to China, to stretch their territorial boundaries, sending their military to harass and harangue foreign nations, violating international law. Most notably, Iran's seizure of an American sailing vessel and the 10 American sailors on board, exemplified the increasing contempt with which Iran has begun to exude. Furthermore, in their arrest of the 10 American sailors, who were subsequently held at gunpoint and humiliated on Iranian television, Iran had violated the sailors' international right to progress unimpeded through Iran's territorial waters under the concept of innocent passage.[12] Under the current United States administration, the Iranians have

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11. Michelle Nichols, "Iran Missile Tests 'Not Consistent' With Nuclear Deal Spirit: U.N Report, *Reuters,* July 7, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-missiles-un-idUSKCN0ZN2JV.

12. David Larter, "Experts: Iran's Arrest of U.S. Sailors Broke International Law," *Navy Times*, January 27, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016,

received little to no consequence for their violation of international law. This direct violation and flouting of international law depicts a defiant and eager nation, ready and more than willing to strike out against the U.S., but it appears that the United States itself, under the Obama Administration, is increasingly willing to parry any call for punishments with additional deals. Unfortunately for the U.S., so far these deals and diplomacy have yielded little in return, as the Iranians have continued to harass United States military personnel, most recently targeting the USS Nitze.[13] The Iranians themselves, have shown an increased willingness to make deals with western nations, such as the United States. However, the Iranians often appear to be the beneficiaries in greater proportion than other members of the deals, as seen in the United States sending $400 million dollars' worth of cash to Iran in return for the release of four American prisoners unlawfully held in Iran.[14] Despite their supposed willingness to make deals with the placating current administration, the nation of Iran has depicted itself as a threat worthy of United States concern through their continuous defiance of International law and their willingness to use military action even in light of direct caution from nations in the Western hemisphere.

Russian Federation

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https://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/01/27/unclos-iran-law-of-the-sea-obama-administration-sailors-arrested-farsi-island/79398324/.

13. Sam Lagrone, "Video: Destroyer USS Nitze Harassed by Iranian Patrol Boats," *USNI News*, August 24, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, https://news.usni.org/2016/08/24/video-destroyer-uss-nitze-harassed-iranian-patrol-boats.

14. Jay Solomon and Carol Lee, "U.S. Sent Cash to Iran as Americans Were Freed," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 3, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, http://www,wsj,com/articles/u-s-sent-cash-to-iran-as-americans-were-freed-1470181874.

Additionally, although a shell of its former self, the Post-Cold War Russian Federation, still wields vast strength both regionally and internationally and has begun to reassert itself as of late.[15] Despite maintaining a relatively low profile for the better part of a decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union that subsequently ended the Cold War, Russia has begun to reemerge as a preeminent geopolitical force that the United States must comprehend and be wary of moving forward. In recent years, the Russian Federation has revitalized long dormant tensions held with the United States and has pursued its objectives with rigorous tenacity. In recounting Russia's resurgence, it would be remiss not to mention its military growth and strength, as well as its startling willingness to seize additional territories and challenge others militarily. Beginning as early as 2008, Russia entered into armed conflict with the nation of Georgia that bordered its southern territory, and in doing so displayed an ardent willingness to utilize military force for the first time since the end of the Cold War.[16] Far more alarming and a better display of Russia's ravenous desire, was the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea, which once had belonged to Ukraine. Capitalizing upon the unrest within Ukraine by its citizens, as well as the existence of a potent Russian Separatist movement, Russia infiltrated and took over Ukrainian military bases within Crimea, and in all of a few hours

15. Cristian Mosnianu, "Russia: Regional and Global Actor," *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2014): 85-90, accessed March 1, 2016, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1699251523?accountid=12085.

16. CNN Library, "2008 Georgia Russia Conflict Fast Facts," *CNN*, March 31, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, http://www,cnn,com/2014/03/13/world/europe/2008-georgia-russia-conflict/.

they had established complete control over the former Ukrainian territory.[17] In spite of their continual denial of any involvement within the nation of Ukraine, Russia's actions in seizing the strategically located territory of Crimea revealed to the rest of the world the lengths that they were and are willing to go to achieve their goals. Unfortunately for Ukraine, Russia has not stopped their aggression following the annexation of Crimea. Despite the development of a brief cooling period in tensions between Ukraine and Russia, Russia has amassed a large military force on the new Crimea-Ukraine border, causing Ukraine to warn the international community that Russia could invade "at any minute."[18] The potential willingness that Russia holds for an invasion of a country the size of the Ukraine should be alarming not only for its boldness, but the West should be exceptionally alarmed at their apparent lack of readiness to combat a re-assertive Russia, as according to the U.S. Secretary of Defense's deputy assistant, "Russia could potentially overpower NATO forces in the Baltics in 60 hours."[19] Russia, much like China and Iran also seems to becoming increasingly emboldened as they continue to send

17. John Simpson, "Russia's Crimea Plan Detailed, Secret and Successful," *BBC News*, March 19, 2014, accessed September 1, 2016, http://www,bbc,com/news/world-europe-26644082.

18. Mishgea, "Russia Masses Troops on Crimea Border; Ukraine Warns Russian Invasion Possible 'At Any Minute,'" *Mishtalk*, August 8, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, https://mishtalk,com/2016/08/08/russia-masses-troops-on-crimea-border-ukraine-warns-.

19. Reuters, "Overrun in 60 Hours: Pentagon Says NATO Lacks Force To Oppose 'Russian Aggression' In Europe," *Reuters*, June 10, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, https://www,rt,com/news/346041-nato-baltics-russian-aggression/.

jets to harass United States ships and planes, in an effort, that in light of its recent actions, shows Russia's keenness to challenge the United States role in the geopolitical market.[20]

Reflection and Introduction to Presidential Cold War Foreign Policies

As the world enters the infancy of twenty-first century, the rise of China and reemergence of Russia, among other threats, contain the potential of reigniting the long-dormant Cold War.[21] Already, Russian sentiments following the Cold War have been increasingly nationalistic, favoring a resurgence of strength.[22] Despite relatively neutral relations for a majority of the post-Cold War period, the resurgence of Russian military strength poses a grave threat to America's ability to pursue its interests globally, especially concerning Russia's mammoth geographic size that ranges from Eastern Europe to the Far East. Facing the increasingly aggressive Russian Federation and rapidly growing nations such as China, America's prospects for the future as the sole global hegemon resemble a peculiar uncertainty that draws parallels to its status during the Cold War. Considering the growth of new threats and the potential for the development of a new Cold War, reflection upon the previous strategies implemented by past presidents and determination of the correct course of action moving forward has become of paramount importance.

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20. Ryan, Browne, "Russian Jets Keep Buzzing U.S. Ships and Planes, What Can the U.S. Do?" *CNN*, April 19, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, http://www,cnn,com /2016/04/18/politics/russia-jets-buzz-u-s-ship-rules-of-engagement/.

21. M.G. Roskin, "The New Cold War," *Parameters*, 44, no. 1 (2014): 5-9, accessed March 1, 2016, http://exproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/ docview/1532990139?accountid=12085.

22. Ibid.

President Harry S. Truman

At the onset of the Cold War, President Truman was responsible for the United States' response and opening salvo. Having seen the United States through to the conclusion of World War II, Truman was well aware of the military capabilities of the United States, as well as those of our ally turned competitor, the Soviet Union. Even before the war was over, Truman was already at odds with the Soviet Union. Both nations soon came into conflict following the Soviet Union's reneging on their agreement stemming from the Yalta Conference, where they had originally agreed to set up free democracies in Eastern Europe.[23] Recognizing the conflict that was developing in its infant stages, President Truman moved to adopt a framework of ideology based upon the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, George Kennan's, recommendation and testimony regarding the Soviet Union's fervent anti-western ideology.[24] In light of Kennan's recommendation and in comprehending the threat posed by the Soviet Union, following the conclusion of World War II, Truman acted quickly to shore up alliances with additional nations in preparation for containing the USSR and Communism; an effort that would soon take the form of NATO and the United Nations as we recognize them today.[25] Additionally, Truman vastly strengthened his resolve in issuing the Truman Doctrine, which declared United States support for the pro-Western governments of

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23. Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, "Harry S, Truman: Foreign Affairs," accessed September 1, 2016, http://millercenter,org/president/biography/truman-foreign-affairs.

24. Ibid.

25. Anthony Hartley, "John Kennedy's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy*, no. 4 (1971): 77–87, accessed March 1, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147736.

Greece and Turkey, as well as any similarly threatened government that was being swayed by the threats of either the USSR or Communism.[26] Under the newly issued Truman Doctrine, the United States not only declared its support for, but also vowed that it had a duty to support "free peoples who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."[27] In pursuance of stemming the tide of the Soviet Union's extension into Western Europe, Truman also implemented what would become known as the Marshall Plan, which was meant to prevent nations in poverty from succumbing to Communist ideologies from within and subsequently complement the Truman Doctrine.[28] In this manner, Truman adopted a hardline stance with the developing threat of the USSR, most often attempting to deal from a position of strength.[29] While attempting to shore up the strength of Western Europe through the formation of West Germany, Truman additionally displayed a willingness to confront the USSR on numerous occasions, most directly through the establishment of the Berlin Airlift as a diametrical response to the Soviet Union's aggression and blockade of Berlin.[30] Furthermore, in light of the USSR's continual development and testing of nuclear weapons, Truman again increased United States respect by rearming the military and instituting further research

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26. Miller Center, "Harry S. Truman: Foreign Affairs."

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Arnold A. Offner, "'Another such victory': President Truman, American foreign policy, and the Cold War", *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2 (Spring, 1999): 126, *Political Science Complete*, accessed March 1, 2016, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-7709.00159/pdf.

30. Miller Center, "Harry S. Truman: Foreign Affairs."

into more powerful atomic weapons.[31] The most visible of Truman's direct confrontations and his willingness to utilize direct intervention to stymie the Soviet Union and Communism's aggression, took shape in the American military intervention in the conflict, which soon became known as the Korean War.[32] Despite entering into the conflict in Korea at first through a UN Security Council condemnation of the North Korean invasion, Truman showed little wavering in his decision to commit United States military personnel in an effort to prevent the spread of Communism and Soviet influences. In light of frequent and recurring USSR advances, Truman's response clearly began to take form as he became a champion of military buildup and direct intervention to stymie Soviet aggression; a pattern that continued throughout his administration with varying degrees of success.[33]

President Dwight. D. Eisenhower

Differing vastly from Truman's policies, President Eisenhower often forwent the use of force when faced with international trials, and relied instead upon building a strong coalition of stable states.[34] Entering as the extremely respected commander of allied forces during World War II, President Eisenhower brought a strong military perspective and a new look to both the White House and his foreign policies. Chief among

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31. Ibid.

32. Miller Center, "Harry S. Truman: Foreign Affairs."

33. Ibid.

34. Richard M. Saunders, "Military Force in the Foreign Policy of the Eisenhower Presidency," *Political Science Quarterly* 100, no. 1 (1985): 97–116, accessed March 1, 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2150862.

Eisenhower's main objective during his tenure was his desire to maintain the vitality of the United States economy, while still recognizing the importance of a strong military and building sufficient strength to compete and succeed in the Cold War that was now in full swing.[35] Unlike Truman, who abhorred the notion of nuclear weapons, Eisenhower was much more willing to utilize nuclear capabilities as a deterrence, threat, or in the worst case scenario, as a necessary means of fighting in a conflict. This willingness to utilize nuclear weapons was also complemented by a new emphasis that Eisenhower bestowed upon the intelligence and espionage forces, such as the CIA, to carry out secret action against governments that were sympathetic to Soviet influences.[36] However, without a doubt, the key component that occupied the bulk of Eisenhower's foreign policy plan was his desire to strengthen allies and win the friendship of governments which had yet to side themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union. In essence, Eisenhower focused upon maintaining the balance of power between the US and the USSR, moving militarily only when the USSR threatened the balance of power.[37] Even though Eisenhower attempted to avoid military conflict and favored diplomacy, the foreign policy of the Eisenhower administration did allow for the provision of military aid to countries threatened by Communism under his coalition of states.[38] Often times

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35. Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, "Dwight D. Eisenhower: Foreign Affairs," accessed September 1, 2016, http://millercenter,org/president/biography/eisenhower-foreign-affairs#contributor.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Offner, 79.

this military force did not materialize, but instead reflected Eisenhower's nuclear diplomacy, where he utilized the threat of nuclear war to influence opposing nations, such as China and the Soviet Union.[39] Paradoxically, despite his willingness to threaten nuclear actions, Eisenhower was still very keen on developing discussions with the Soviet Union and China, meeting most prominently in Geneva.[40] In spite of the continual Soviet rejection of Eisenhower's proposals, Ike did oversee a brief thaw in relations between the two global powers. This brief relief, however, was abruptly ended by the development of an international crisis in which an American U-2 spy plane was shot down over Soviet territory, thus rekindling the simmering tensions between the two nations.[41] Elsewhere, Eisenhower continued efforts to stem the tide of Communism, supporting endeavors to prevent the formation of a united communist Vietnam via aid and support for a non-communist South Vietnam that would lay the foundation for the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War.[42] Ultimately, despite President Eisenhower's efforts throughout his Presidency, the USSR often reacted undeterred to such policies and extended its influence during Eisenhower's tenure.[43]

President John F. Kennedy

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39. Miller Center, "Dwight D. Eisenhower: Foreign Affairs."

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Tucker and Spencer C. Tucker, "Overview of the Vietnam War," In *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, edited by Spencer C. Tucker, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011.

43. Miller Center, "Dwight D. Eisenhower: Foreign Affairs."

Although his term in office was cut short by his untimely murder, President John F. Kennedy's policies, especially his foreign policies, contained lasting impacts for the United States and its relationship with other global powers. Throughout Kennedy's brief tenure, his foreign policies focused greatly upon pursuing stances that favored greater preemptive military action than any of his predecessors.[44] In adherence to this bias, Kennedy doggedly pursued both diplomacy and strong military action to counter the advance or encroachment of the USSR into sovereign nations that occurred during his brief term as president.[45] In recognition of this objective, Kennedy often took actions to achieve these goals; however, his Presidency suffered a great debacle and inauspicious start following his failure in the Bay of Pigs invasion. In response to the growing Communist presence in Communist Cuba led by Fidel Castro, Kennedy sponsored an invasion of Cuba by CIA trained, anti-Castro refugees, who were subsequently routed, embarrassing Kennedy on an international scale.[46] This early failure, however, did not completely deter Kennedy, who subsequently attempted to achieve great diplomatic gains meeting Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna and Berlin. Again, however, Kennedy's plans went awry as in their June 1961 meeting, Nikita Khrushchev threatened to solve the Berlin problem unilaterally, forcing Kennedy to renew his pledge to respond

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44. Thomas G. Paterson, "Bearing the Burden: A Critical Look at JFK's Foreign Policy," *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 54, no. 2 (Spring, 1978): 193, accessed March 1, 2016, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1291785482?accountid=12085.

45. Offner, 79-81.

46. Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, "John F, Kennedy: Foreign Affairs," accessed September 1, 2016, http://millercenter,org/president/biography/kennedy-foreign-affairs.

to a move of aggression by the Soviets with every means necessary, including nuclear weapons.[47] Fortunately for Kennedy, these tensions were eased substantially when two months later, the Soviets and East Germans built the Berlin Wall, effectively allowing Kennedy to play a greater reserved role over the conflict in Berlin with the USSR.[48]

Despite the momentary reprieve provided by the wall, Kennedy was again faced with another great trial when it was detected that the Soviet Union had attempted to put nuclear weapons within range of the United States on the island of Cuba. In response, Kennedy refused to back down and scored one of his greatest foreign policy achievements, instigating a naval blockade of Cuba, forcing the USSR to withdraw their missiles from Cuba in exchange for the United States removing theirs from Turkey.[49] Building upon this success, Kennedy was very keen to stem the tide of Communism, especially in Latin America where Kennedy developed the Alliance for Progress as an organization which worked to prevent the conversion of Latin American countries to Communist sympathies.[50]

Elsewhere, Kennedy's foreign policies did not see the same success that he achieved in Latin America, especially regarding Vietnam, where in 1961, Kennedy increased the number of military advisors that were being sent to train the South

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47. Frederick Kempe, "The Worst Day of JFK's Life," *Reuters,* May 27, 2011, accessed September 1, 2016, http://blogs,reuters,com/berlin1961/2011/05/27/the-worst-day-of-jfks-life/.

48. Miller Center, "John F, Kennedy: Foreign Affairs."

49. Ibid.

50. Miller Center. "John F, Kennedy: Foreign Affairs."

Vietnamese, eventually reaching a total of 16,000 by the end of his Presidency with no immediate end to the conflict in sight.[51]

Outside of direct military action, Kennedy did reach victories in the fields of diplomacy in his efforts to negotiate limits to nuclear testing, securing an agreement with Great Britain and the Soviet Union to limit the testing of nuclear weapons in the earth's atmosphere shortly before the end of his presidency.[52] Ultimately, Kennedy's foreign policy achieved mixed results throughout the course of his brief tenure, and while his favoring for direct military intervention did mire the United States further into the conflict in Vietnam, his complementary diplomacy did achieve greater results in easing direct tensions with the Soviet Union.

President Lyndon B. Johnson

Following Kennedy's untimely death, President Johnson's foreign policies represented a continuation of much of Kennedy's positions, especially the growing conflict in Vietnam. Although Johnson had advocated behind closed doors for Kennedy to "minimize escalation" in Vietnam, by the time Johnson assumed office, the war had swiftly spiraled to a point where de-escalation was far from negotiable.[53] Johnson, who was "…committed to maintaining an independent South Vietnam" in order to achieve success in Southeast Asia and stymie the spread of communism, supported the South Vietnamese in their ongoing counter-insurgency fight against the communist forces,

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51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. "Foreign Affairs," *PBS*, accessed October 3, 2016, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/lbj-foreign/.

before eventually escalating to direct military intervention when the war became sluggish and lacked positive results.[54] Although he advocated for an increasingly greater presence in Vietnam, Johnson was not dissuaded from broaching new negotiations with the Soviet Union. In fact, over the course of his Presidency, Johnson signed the Outer Space Treaty, which banned nuclear weapons in earth orbit, the moon, planets, or deep space, as well as other significant collaborations, which brought the Soviet Union to the negotiating table.[55] Further achievements were successfully made when in 1968 the United States became a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which subsequently prohibited the transfer of nuclear weapons to other nations, as well as attending numerous meetings with then Soviet Premier Kosygin where they eventually agreed to work together to diffuse the tensions that had been building in the Middle East.[56] Although overall, President Johnson, strongly supported foreign policies which depicted him as an ardent supporter of a strong and growing military, as seen in Vietnam, he also attempted to deflect any direct confrontation between the great superpowers towards the political diplomatic arena where significant diplomatic triumphs were won.[57]

President Richard Nixon

54. Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, "Lyndon B, Johnson: Foreign Affairs," accessed September 1, 2016, http://millercenter,org/president/biography/lbjohnson-foreign-affairs.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Walter Hixson, *The United States and the Vietnam War: Significant Scholarly Articles*, New York City, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc, 2000.

Similar to its predecessors, the Nixon administration also advocated for a strong military presence to deter the advance of the USSR.[58] However, with the advent of the Nixon administration, the United States saw the first significant change in tactics since the beginning of the Cold War. Ultimately, Nixon's foreign policies reflected a greater relaxation and warming period in relations between the USSR and America.[59] Through a process known as détente, Nixon extended an offer to greatly increase diplomatic efforts, participating in the numerous diplomatic negotiations, meetings, and treaties such as the Strategic Arms Limitation talks in 1972, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, visiting the People's Republic of China, and the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1973, subsequently ending the United States involvement in the Vietnam War.[60] In a stark contrast to previous administrations, Nixon ultimately deviated from the traditional approach to the USSR, in his attempt to develop a third rival, China, for the USSR to compete with.[61] Instead of attempting to directly confront the USSR, Nixon's approach sought to build stronger and more positive relations with the Soviet Union, while also attempting to weaken them by diverting their attention and resources

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58. Evelyn Goh, "Nixon, Kissinger, and the "Soviet Card" in the U.S. Opening to China, 1971–1974," *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 3 (2005): 475-502, *Political Science Complete*, accessed March 1, 2016, http://dh.oxfordjournals.org/content/29/3/475.extract.

59. Keith L. Nelson, "Nixon, Breshnev, and détente," *Peace & Change* 16, no. 2 (1991): 197, *Military & Government Collection*, accessed March 1, 2016, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0130.1991.tb00159.x/abstract.

60. Nixon Foundation, "Richard Nixon's Top Domestic and Foreign Policy Achievements," accessed September 1, 2016, http://nixonfoundation,org/10-policy-achievements.php.

61. Goh, 478.

elsewhere. In this manner, diplomacy was utilized as a weapon to not only greater improve the relations with the USSR but also to provide traditional USSR allies or Soviet leaning nations with an alternative companion, forcing the USSR to concert their efforts in a diffuse diplomatic manner.

President Gerald Ford

Following the tempestuous Nixon administration, President Ford's foreign policy often reflected that of alliance mending and a shift of focus away from Asia and back toward solidifying Western European alliances.[62] Despite shifting the focus of the United States primarily back toward Western Europe, Ford still made a significant attempt and display of military strength before departing from the Asian theatre, as evidenced by the United States attack on the Cambodian navy, showing that despite being wounded, the United States would not allow itself to be a victim.[63] Understanding this context, President Ford's foreign policies truly resembled that of a president attempting to "assert America's leadership role in the world."[64]

With regard to conflict with the USSR, Ford displayed a greater concern with ensuring positive relations with United States allies than with aggression towards the

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62. Piers N. Ludlow, "The Real Years of Europe? U.S.–West European Relations during the Ford Administration," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 15, no. 3 (2013): 136-161, accessed March 1, 2016. https://muse.jhu.edu/.

63. Carin, Zissis, "Ford's Impact on Foreign Policy," *Council on Foreign Relations*, January 4, 2007, accessed September 1, 2016, http://www,cfr,org/history-and-theory-of-international-relations/fords-impact-foreign-policy/p12315.

64. "38. Gerald Ford," *PBS*, accessed October 3, 2016, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/presidents-ford/.

USSR.[65] In fact, Ford attempted to build upon the détente started under the Nixon administration, entering into the 1975 Helsinki Accords, which accepted the USSR's "territorial claims in Eastern Europe while pushing for Soviet Union's recognition of human rights law."[66] Additionally, Ford ensured that he followed up Nixon's entrance into positive relations with China, by pursuing his own trip to China, while simultaneously attempting to strengthen his ties with Western Europe.[67] Although Ford did in many ways continue the Nixon administration's foreign policy approaches, his short tenure as president meant that much of his successes and failures were ultimately of little comparative significance.

President Jimmy Carter

Following the corruption of the Nixon administration and lackluster Ford Presidency, Jimmy Carter's foreign policies reflected a drastic attempt to achieve reform.[68] Not only did Carter's foreign policies attempt to achieve a massive reform, but a keystone of such reform was a promotion of human rights advanced by the United States foreign policy that advocated and endorsed human freedom worldwide. Carter's reform and promotion of human rights, however, was not just empty words. In fact, on numerous occasions, Carter's administration suspended both military and economic aid

65. Ludlow, 132.

66. Zissis. "Ford's Impact on Foreign Policy."

67. Ibid.

68. Katz, Andrew Z, "Public Opinion and the Contradictions of Jimmy Carter's Foreign Policy," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (12, 2000): 662-87, accessed March 1, 2016, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/215690817?accountid=12085.

"…to protest the human rights practices of the governments of Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Uganda" and South Korea.[69]

Furthermore, in his attempts to achieve reform, Carter extended the focus of his foreign policies upon establishing more peaceful and amenable tactics, which reflected his preference for a more passive approach.[70] To accomplish such a task, Carter's foreign policies saw a significant downsizing of the United States military and renewed reliance upon humanitarian diplomacy.[71] As part of his pursuit of humanitarian democracy, the Carter administration sought significant deals to better relations with other nations, the most notable of which being Carter's agreement with Panama, which established an agreement to return control of the Panama Canal back to Panama.[72] Similarly, another significant achievement of the Carter administration's humanitarian diplomacy occurred through the establishment of the Camp David Accords, which significantly served to decrease tensions in the Middle East.[73]

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69. Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, "Jimmy Carter: Foreign Affairs," accessed September 1, 2016, http://millercenter,org/president/biography carter-foreign-affairs.

70. Smith, Gary Scott, "Jimmy Carter: A Progressive Evangelical Foreign Policy," *Review Of Faith & International Affairs* 9, no. 4 (2011): 61-70, *Academic Search Complete*, accessed March 2, 2016, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15570274.2011.630205#aHR0cDovL3d3dy50YW5kZm9ubGluZS5jb20vZG9pL3BkZi8xMC4xMDgwLzE1NTcwMjc0LjIwMTEuNjMwMjA1P25lZWRBY2Nlc3M9dHJ1ZUBAQDA=.

71. Katz, 663.

72. Miller Center. "Jimmy Carter: Foreign Affairs."

73. Ibid.

Although Carter went to great lengths to differentiate himself from the Nixon and Ford administrations, he still adopted the previous administrations' objective to thaw diplomatic relations with China, while additionally hardening stances with the USSR. This perspective came to light on quite a few occasions under the Carter administration, where Carter cut off grain sales to the Soviet Union and ordered American Olympians to boycott the 1980 Olympic games in Moscow, due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.[74]

Despite this outward strength that Carter attempted to portray, his administration was still marked and tainted by staggering defeats, most notably when Iran revolted against the American backed Shah, and later held hostage sixty-six Americans seized during a storming of the American embassy in Teheran.[75] Although Carter responded by freezing Iranian assets, attempting to negotiate for the release of the prisoners, and ordering a failed military rescue, Iran's consistent refusal to release the hostages marred Carter's legacy and portrayed the United States as weak.[76]

In this regard, Carter's administration resulted in a largely peaceful and less assertive America, which although well intended, was taken advantage of by foreign powers on the world stage.

President Ronald Reagan

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Miller Center. "Jimmy Carter: Foreign Affairs."

After defeating Carter in 1980, the Reagan administration focused greatly on a reemergence of American strength, which had dissipated under Carter's brief term as president. In stark contrast to Carter's softer approach to the USSR, President Reagan's foreign policy adopted hard-line stances against Soviet Union in both function and rhetoric.[77] On numerous instances, Reagan actively issued warnings to the USSR, and it was of little secret who Reagan defined as morally just and righteous and who he defined as devious and reprehensible in the Cold War. Speaking on March 8, 1983, Reagan delivered his "Evil Empire" speech, which directly labeled the USSR as a morally deficient nation that the United States' very moral foundation required active resistance against.[78] In this manner, Reagan rejected the policy of détente and moved to pressure the Soviet Union, both economically and militarily.

As part of his direct challenge to the USSR, Reagan instituted a military buildup under the mentality that, "Defense is not a budget issue. You spend what you need."[79] Following under this perspective, the military budget under Reagan soared to an astronomically high $220 billion, the largest peacetime military budget in United States history.[80] As part of this increased budget, Reagan additionally sought out aggressive means through which any potential war with the Soviet Union could be fought.

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77. Terry L. Deibel, "Reagan's Mixed Legacy", *Foreign Policy*, no. 75 (Summer, 1989), accessed March 1, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1148863.

78. Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, "Ronald Reagan: Foreign Affairs," accessed September 1, 2016, http://millercenter.org/president/biography/reagan-foreign-affairs.

79. Ibid.

80. Miller Center. "Ronald Reagan: Foreign Affairs."

Eventually, this dogged determination led Reagan to assert his objective to institute the Strategic Defense Initiative, in which a shield in outer space would protect the United States from any incoming missiles. [81]

Regardless of the feasibility of such a plan, it was clear that Reagan had reframed the fight against the Soviet Union, refusing to contain Communism, but rather focus upon defeating it entirely. To do so, Reagan intended to negotiate from a position of strength and set policies that intended to speed the destruction of the USSR economically.[82] In this manner, Reagan adopted a different approach than his predecessors, as he approached the issue of the Soviet Union not simply attempting to maintain the status quo, but with the objective to win the Cold War.

Outside of the military and vehement rhetoric with which Reagan bombarded the USSR, Reagan did convey a willingness to combine this strength with a rigid but direct effort at diplomacy. On numerous occasions, Reagan met with Soviet Premier, Gorbachev, or USSR representatives, often times achieving great successes through their meetings. Whether it was their meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, the signing of the INF Treaty in December 1987, or ultimately Reagan's visit to the Soviet Union in June 1988, Reagan displayed a willingness to broach the Soviet Union in diplomatic conversation, but also to approach from a position of strength.[83]

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81. Ibid.

82. Alan P. Dobson, "The Reagan Administration, Economic Warfare, and Starting to Close Down the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 3 (2005): 531-556. *Political Science Complete*, accessed March 1, 2016, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/wol1/doi/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2005.00502.x/full.

83. Miller Center. "Ronald Reagan: Foreign Affairs."

As this tactic began to take hold and the USSR eventually faltered under the strain of their economic footrace, Reagan began to show a dynamic willingness to adapt and soften his policies towards the USSR while also attempting to improve communication between the two superpowers.[84]

President George H.W. Bush

Although unfortunately for Reagan, he never personally oversaw the final moments of the Soviet Union, his former vice-president and the president who inherited Reagan's legacy, President George H.W. Bush, was able to lead the world into its new unipolar station. Following along his predecessor's policies, President Bush, tailored his foreign policies and interactions with the Soviet Union to reflect an adaptation to a potential world without a Soviet threat.

In fact, instead of attempting to destroy the Soviet Union at its weakest point, President Bush advanced foreign policies meant to deepen relations with the USSR, while also bringing an ultimate end to hostilities. Indeed, to many, this new world beyond hostilities between the United States and the Soviet Union was akin to a "new breeze…blowing" and was a remarkable step forward in the dynamically forming new world.[85]

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84. Haas, Mark L., "The United States and the End of the Cold War: Reactions to Shifts in Soviet Power, Policies, or Domestic Politics?" *International Organization* 61, no. 1 (2007): 145–79, accessed March 1, 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4498140.

85. Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, "George H.W. Bush: Foreign Affairs," accessed September 1, 2016, http://millercenter.org/president/biography/bush-foreign-affairs.

As Bush oversaw the thaw and diminuendo of the Soviet Union, he was uniquely positioned to see significant achievements as East Germany opened its borders and the Berlin Wall was torn down.[86] Despite this positioning, Bush was careful to maintain positive relations with the Soviet Union, never risking a re-heating of the Cold War. Instead, Bush continued to meet with the Soviet Premier, Gorbachev, on numerous occasions, in both Malta and Washington D.C. In June 1990, the two men signed a broad arms reduction agreement in which the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to mutually decrease their nuclear arsenals.[87] Consequently, Bush's administration focused less upon military buildup than the previous presidents, and more upon policies meant to ease and welcome the USSR back into the community of nations.[88]

Ultimately, once the Soviet Union reached its inevitable collapse, Bush declared the beginning of a "New World Order," and it is this World Order marked with increased cooperation on a global scale that the United States established its hegemony.[89]

Presidential Foreign Policy Reflection and Lesson Examination

Although each president adopted intricate individual policies regarding their response to the USSR during the Cold War, numerous similarities persisted between the foreign policies of the Cold War presidents. Throughout the duration of the fledgling years of the Cold War, the early presidential foreign policies were often characterized by

86. Miller Center. "George H.W. Bush: Foreign Affairs."

87. Ibid.

88. Haas, 145-79.

89. Miller Center. "George H.W. Bush: Foreign Affairs."

military buildup by both superpowers with the greatest concern being maintaining the balance of power.[90] Meanwhile, the Middle years of the Cold War saw a shift in strategy, focusing more upon diplomacy, but still using the military to check the advance of the USSR.[91] The twilight of the Cold War, however, saw the greatest change, as the presidential foreign policies served to accelerate the USSR's demise and initiate warmer relations with the descending power.[92] Comprehending the variations between presidential Foreign Policies and their respective effectiveness on the USSR, numerous lessons persist which might prove useful in guiding America's response to similar circumstances today.

Lessons, Interpretation, and Conclusion

In examining and reflection upon the presidential foreign policies adopted throughout the Cold War, certain patterns swiftly became noticeable. It is an amalgamation of certain policies and perspectives with which the United States would be wise to follow, if it wishes to continue its reign as the sole global power in its unipolar international system. First and foremost, as evidenced from the example provided by former presidents, military parity must be established or maintained at least on par with other nations or at a level that significantly rises well above other significant nations. Without establishing or holding this parity, any threats or attempts at negotiations might be completely disregarded as other nation-states or actors know that they will not likely face any physical ramifications for their actions. Additionally necessary, as depicted

90. Offner, 79-81.

91. Goh, 478.

92. Haas, 175.

through the examples of the past presidents, was the notion of attempting to establish peace through mediation and diplomacy. Not only is it wise and pertinent to maintain and grow positive relations with allies, but aggressive but peaceful mediation with the challenging nations must also be sought. While mediation provides a means through which restrictions might be placed upon another nation in an attempt to stymie their growth, it also provides a path where bonds with regional rivals to competing nations can be forged, thus forcing them to stretch their resources to address additional threats. On par with the immensity of diplomacy as well as a strong military, is the fact that it is important for presidential foreign policies to possess the veneer of strong rhetoric, so other nations do not believe that they might be able to pressure and harm that nation. In ensuring that other nations do not believe that the United States is servile or weakened and lacks the willingness to follow through on their threats, the United States would benefit vastly and serve to increase the probability that the United States could fend off the challengers to their hegemony. Overall, throughout an examination of past presidential foreign policies during the Cold War, numerous lessons appear as applicable and analogous to the current status of the United State as its hegemony appears to be undergoing a significant challenge.

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