

**American Exceptionalism during Donald Trump Administration:
Prospects and Challenges**

By

Sadaquat Hussain

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Department of International Relations
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**



National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad

© January 2024



THESIS/DISSERTATION AND DEFENCE APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance, and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of Social Sciences for acceptance.

Thesis/ Dissertation Title: **American Exceptionalism During Donald Trump Administration: Prospects and Challenges.**

Submitted by: **Sadaquat Hussain** Registration #: **24 MPhil/IR/F21**

Master of Philosophy

International Relations

Dr. Sarwat Rauf

Research Supervisor

Signature of Supervisor

Dr. Sarwat Rauf

HOD (IR)

Signature of HOD (IR)

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Riaz Shad Malik

Dean (FSS)

Signature of Dean (FSS)

CANDIDATE DECLARATION FORM

I, Sadaquat Hussain s/o Altaf Hussain Zafar

Registration # 24 MPhil/IR/F21

Discipline International Relations

Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis: **American Exceptionalism During Donald Trump Administration : Prospects and Challenges** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of M Phil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism found in my thesis dissertation at any stage, even after the award of degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

SADAQUAT HUSSAIN

Table of Contents

THESIS/DISSERTATION AND DEFENCE APPROVAL FORM	ii
CANDIDATE DECLARATION FORM	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	viii
DEDICATION	ix
List of Abbreviations	x
ABSTRACT	xii
INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement	7
Objectives of the Study	9
Research Questions	9
Literature Review	10
Historical Roots and Evolution	11
Nature of American Exceptionalism	13
The Implications of American Exceptionalism for American National Identity and Foreign Policy	15
The Nature of Donald Trump’s Foreign Policy	19
Prospects and Challenges for American Exceptionalism	24
Criticisms of American Exceptionalism	26
Research Gap	27
Core Argument	27
Theoretical Framework	28
Research Methodology	31
Significance of Study	33
Delimitations	34
Key terms	34
Organizational structure	34
CHAPTER 1	36
1. AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE	36
1.1. Introduction	36

1.2.	Historical Background and Early Influences	38
1.2.1.	Religious and Political Roots of American Exceptionalism.....	38
1.2.2.	Manifest Destiny and the Rise of Anglo-Saxon Identity	42
1.2.3.	Abolition of Slavery and the Civil War	43
1.2.4.	Monroe Doctrine.....	44
1.3.	American Exceptionalism in the 20th Century	45
1.3.1.	The First World War and Wilsonian Influences: The birth of Liberal Internationalism	46
1.3.2.	Inter-War Isolationism	48
1.4.	The Second World War and Resurgence of Internationalism.....	50
1.5.	American Exceptionalism during the Cold War	52
1.5.1.	Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan.....	53
1.5.2.	The Spectre of Vietnam	55
1.5.3.	Ronald Reagan and the Rebirth of American Exceptionalism	58
1.6.	American Exceptionalism in the Post Cold War Period	59
1.6.1.	Bill Clinton and American Exceptionalism	60
1.7.	American Exceptionalism in the 21st Century: G.W Bush and Messianic Exceptionalism.....	62
1.7.1.	Barack Obama and American Exceptionalism	63
1.7.2.	The Advent of Donald J Trump.....	65
1.8.	American Exceptionalism: A Critical Appraisal.....	65
1.9.	Conclusion.....	69
CHAPTER 2		71
2.	THE TRUMPIAN CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM	71
2.1.	The Trumpian Understanding of American Exceptionalism	71
2.2.	America First: The Trumpian Rhetoric and American Exceptionalism	73
2.2.1.	The Historical roots of ‘America First’	74
2.2.2.	Trumpian Rhetoric on American Foreign Policy.....	75
2.3.	Key Features of Donald Trump’s Foreign Policy Doctrine	77
2.3.1.	Nationalist Populism.....	77
2.3.2.	Trump Doctrine and Jacksonianism.....	77
2.3.3.	Trumpian World View	78
2.3.4.	Rejectionist Exceptionalism.....	79

2.4.	Trumpian Doctrine and Institutional Constraints.....	80
2.5.	Trumpian Challenge to American Exceptionalism	81
2.5.1.	Trump vs. Multilateralism	81
2.5.2.	On Trade Multilateralism.....	82
2.5.3.	Abandonment of International Agreements and Treaty Commitments.....	83
2.5.4.	Leadership Role and International Institutions.....	84
2.5.5.	Trump and Alliances.....	87
2.5.6.	Inclusivity and Immigration.....	88
2.5.7.	Trump and Human Rights.....	90
2.6.	Trump's China and Palestine policies: Implications for Leadership Role	91
2.7.	Conclusion.....	93
CHAPTER 3		95
3.	EXCEPTIONALISM, IDENTITY AND FOREIGN POLICY: THE EFFECTS OF TRUMPISM.....	95
3.1.	American Exceptionalism as a National Identity: Impacts on foreign Policy	96
3.1.1.	National Identity and Foreign Policy	101
3.1.2.	Conservative and Liberal Understandings of American Exceptionalism	102
3.2.	Trumpian Understanding of American Exceptional Identity	103
3.2.1.	'Predator Identity'	105
3.2.2.	Trump the Jacksonian	106
3.2.3.	Trump's 'Illiberal' Agenda.....	107
3.2.4.	Trumpian Expediency.....	108
3.3.	Trumpism and Public Opinion	109
3.4.	Implications of Trump Foreign Policy for America's Liberal Internationalist Standing 113	
CHAPTER 4		120
4.	EXCEPTIONALISM IN POST-TRUMP AMERICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES 120	
4.1.	Perspectives on Trumpism and the fall of American Exceptionalism	120
4.1.1.	Trumpian Pick and Choose.....	123
4.1.2.	American Institutional Exceptionalism.....	124
4.1.3.	Trump's embrace of Exceptionalism	125
4.2.	How exceptional is Trumpism?.....	126

4.2.1.	Exemptionalist Exceptionalism	128
4.3.	Prospects for Exceptionalism	129
4.3.1.	Lack of Public Support for Trumpism and Policy Reversals	131
4.3.2.	The Russia Ukraine Crisis and the Rebirth of American Leadership.....	132
4.3.3.	Wealth and Power	134
4.4.	Continuity and change under President Joe Biden.....	134
4.4.1.	Continuity and Change	137
4.4.2.	Made in America.....	137
4.4.3.	On China	138
4.4.4.	Middle East and Iran.....	139
4.4.5.	Ukraine and Russia	139
4.4.6.	Continuity of Hypocrisy: The Case of Palestine.....	140
4.4.7.	Yemen and the return of Interventionism	142
4.5.	Challenges to American Exceptionalism	143
4.5.1.	The new consensus and the paradigm shift.....	144
4.5.2.	Change in public support for International Leadership	147
4.5.3.	Internal and Societal Issues.....	148
4.5.4.	The Global Wave of Nationalist Populism	150
4.5.5.	The Rise of China	151
4.5.6.	The Potential Comeback of Trump.....	152
CONCLUSION.....		155
Findings.....		155
Recommendations		161
Bibliography		163

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am thankful to God Almighty for granting me the will, wisdom and forbearance to successfully complete this humble research endeavor of mine. I'm grateful to my esteemed professors who guided me towards new avenues of knowledge and thought at NUML especially my supervisor Dr. Sarwat Rauf who has always been kind and patient to me, and generous with enlightening insights and guidance.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my family especially my parents who have always cheered me on in good and bad times, my wife who has been really supportive and tolerant during my studies, my daughter who always brings me joy in the most exacting of times and my sister who has always been a pillar of support. I am also thankful to my friends and class fellows for their moral and academic support and the good times that we had during our coursework.

Sadaquat Hussain

DEDICATION

To Donald J Trump himself, a character of many flaws but one who never fails to give us something to talk about.

List of Abbreviations

NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
LIO	Liberal International Order
FDR	Franklin Delano Roosevelt
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease of 2019
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
CNBC	Consumer News and Business Channel
MFN	Most Favored Nation
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
IMF	International Monetary Fund
WTO	World Trade Organization
G-8	Group of Eight
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization

WMD	Weapons of mass destruction
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
PAC	Political action committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
USMCA	United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency (for Palestine)
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ICJ	International Court of Justice
QUAD	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
AUKUS	Australia, United Kingdom and United States (Security pact)
BLM	Black Lives Matter
MAGA	Make America Great Again

ABSTRACT

American exceptionalism is a notion, ideology, theory and national creed that are adhered to by the American nationals and play a key role in informing their world view. This study highlights the nuances between different conceptions of American exceptionalism and its role in shaping of American foreign policy and discusses the impact of Donald Trump's ideology and actions on the liberal internationalist conception of exceptionalism before delving into the nature of exceptional foreign policy and discussing the prospects and challenges facing American exceptionalism.. American Exceptionalism stands for the idea that the United States because of its unique history, culture, religious roots and nationality formation process is exceptionally unique and morally superior to other nations. This special place is understood to be demanding of a special leadership role that the American Nation should play in order to provide others with the benefits of their supreme socioeconomic and political systems by ensuring their adoption worldwide. Donald Trump with his unique view on American exceptionalism contested the popularly held liberal exceptional view and promised change in both domestic and foreign policies. This study delves into the nature and consequences of Trumpian foreign policy in order to gauge its impact on exceptionalism and its liberal internationalist variant. The study found that American Exceptionalism plays a major role in shaping of American foreign policy and that the American foreign policy is most likely to retain its nature in the future although its liberal internationalist facet faces many endogenous as well as some exogenous challenges like the rise of China and the prevalence of global nationalist populism and Donald Trump is more of an indicator of the endogenous challenges stemming from currents within the American society, than the architect of these challenges.

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to investigate the phenomenon of American exceptionalism during the administration of Donald J. Trump and analyze the consequences of Trumpian policy actions as well as his rhetoric for exceptionalism. Donald Trump stands out for adopting a new approach towards American exceptionalism, which had hitherto been the cornerstone of American foreign policy and the internal politics complimenting it. This new approach that equated exceptionalism with material progress and power while shunning its moral aspects and gave precedence to nationalism over internationalism led to a debate on the future prospects of exceptionalism. This study is a contribution to that debate, and while analyzing the nature and consequences of Donald Trump's take on exceptionalism it aims to discuss the prospects and challenges that it is faced with.

American exceptionalism seems like a 'perfectly unexceptional concept' on a surface level; however an inquiry into its meanings often generates conflicting statements and or bewildered stares.¹ The confusion in meaning is caused by the fact that, like any other ideology that becomes part of a national identity, American exceptionalism has been defined varyingly at different points in American history by political leaders and statesmen to rationalize their political and foreign policy moves. The American public adheres to one or more of these versions depending on their political beliefs. In the most general sense American exceptionalism is the belief in American

¹ James W. Ceaser, "The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism", *American Political Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 3-28

supremacy and its qualitative difference to other nations based on its “unique origins, national credo, historical evolution, and distinctive political and religious institutions”.²

The expression itself is traced back to the French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville who declared America as being exceptional because it was a “country of immigrants and the first modern democracy”.³ American exceptionalism in fact predates the United States and has its roots in the puritan settler colony of Massachusetts Bay, the founders of which not only viewed their experiment in nation building as unique but also exemplary.⁴ Believers in American exceptionalism therefore have the conviction that the US is chosen by destiny to be emulated and admired by other nations of the world.⁵ Thus America is not just perceived as different, rather as an exceptional state that is morally superior to others and plays the role of a promoter and defender of liberty worldwide.⁶

The idea of American exceptionalism translates into two strands when it comes to defining the role of US viz-a-viz the world which is Global exceptionalism that envisions the US as an exemplar state and Messianic exceptionalism that envisions a missionary role.⁷ These two strands influence both American national identity and foreign policy. The exemplary Exceptionalist notion sees the US as being morally and materially superior to the ‘old world’ and sees isolation from the old world as a guaranteed way of maintaining this superiority, thus shining as an example for the world

² Harold Hongju Koh, “America’s Jekyll-and-Hyde Exceptionalism” in *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, ed. Michael Ignatieff, (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press,2005.) P.111-112.

³ Johannes Thimm, “American Exceptionalism – Conceptual Thoughts and Empirical Evidence”, Paper für die Tagung der Nachwuchsgruppe “Internationale Politik der DVPW 13./14. (July 2007) :03

⁴ Johannes Thimm, “American Exceptionalism – Conceptual Thoughts and Empirical Evidence”,p.03

⁵ Paul E. Peterson, “Is America Still the “Hope of Earth”?” in *American Exceptionalism in a New Era*, ed.. Thomas W. Gilligan,(Stanford California: Hoover Institution Press, 2017),P. 03.

⁶ Syed Sabir Muhammad, Muhammad Ali Baig. "Exceptionalism in US Foreign Policy: A Case Study of ISIS." *IPRI Journal XIX (i) (2019):*133.

⁷ Syed Sabir Muhammad, Muhammad Ali Baig. "Exceptionalism in US Foreign Policy:": 133.

to follow but without interacting much with it.⁸ The Missionary exceptionalism envisions the US with a mission to promote democracy and capitalism around the world by actively engaging with it.⁹

The exemplar and missionary exceptionalist identities then inform two distinct foreign policy behaviors that have shaped US conduct throughout its history. Exemplary exceptionalism leads to Isolationism and Missionary exceptionalism leads to internationalism and more recently interventionism.¹⁰ Internationalism or interventionism can also have two different forms which are multilateralism that is when the US makes decisions using international fora and adopts a collective approach, where as in unilateralism the US goes alone and disregards international opinion, institutions as well as laws at times. As an exemplar the US is ‘a city upon the hill’ that is isolationist, anti-imperial, does not engage in alliances that entangle it and is a fortress of its own¹¹ against the evils that ail the old world. As a missionary the US is internationalist, has an imperialist past especially reflected in the concept of manifest destiny and the conception of the U.S as the leader of the free world and the founder and protector of the new world order.¹²

The US foreign policy has historically been framed in exceptional terms by successive US leaders who use exceptional concepts and symbols to justify their foreign policy actions to the American public.¹³ This is because, unlike the other nations the US does not have a sense of ‘nationalism’

⁸ Hilde Eliassen Restad, *American Exceptionalism An idea that made a nation and remade the world*, (New York: Routledge, 2015):p..07-08.

⁹ Hilde Eliassen Restad, *American Exceptionalism*”P.07-08.

¹⁰ Hilde Eliassen Restad, *American Exceptionalism*”P.07-08.

¹¹ Trevor B. McCrisken, *American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US Foreign Policy Since 1974*”. (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2003). P.02.

¹² Trevor B. McCrisken, *American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam*” P.02.

¹³ Trevor B. McCrisken, *American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam:*”P.04-05

rooted in geopolitics, and instead the societal norms and values are what constitute a national sense of identity which by extension shapes the foreign policy rationale.¹⁴ Both the exemplary and missionary strands have competed for relevance in shaping the US foreign policy throughout US history resulting in periods of isolationism and internationalism.

After the Second World War, the US emerged as the paramount power in the world with the powers of the old world either destroyed in war or weakened by a costly victory. The US then embarked on the establishment of a new rule based liberal international order backed by a bi-partisan consensus and based on the values of democracy and liberal economics, values that form the core of US national identity and American exceptionalism.¹⁵ This consensus to lead the world and uphold and defend the liberal economic international order has been the hall mark of the US foreign policy since then. The US leadership gained fresh impetus as the cold war ended and as it became an 'indispensible nation' crucial for the functioning of modern globalized world and restoring order to it whenever it deemed fit.

However the increasing responsibilities of leading the world and the maintaining the system of international and multilateral institutions put a strain on the American economy especially after the resurgence of messianic exceptionalism evident from the war on terror which saw the US embark on a nation building enterprise of spreading democracy.¹⁶ Donald Trump's election was part of a worldwide nationalist populist wave that disrupted the status quo in international politics

¹⁴ Trevor B. McCrisken, "American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam" P.04-05.

¹⁵ Kori Schake, "American Dominance of the International Order" in *American Exceptionalism in a New Era*, ed. Thomas W. Gilligan, (California : Hoover Institution Press, 2107), P.103-105.

¹⁶ Andrew J. Bacevich, "The Limits Of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism", (New York: Henry Holt and Company LLC, 2009). P.8-15.

and saw the election to office of such leaders who pushed against globalization, internationalism and multilateralism, concepts that underpin the international liberal order.¹⁷

Donald Trump's election campaign and political rhetoric revolved around the slogans, 'America First' and 'Make America Great Again'. He painted a gloomy picture of the then situation of the US claiming that it had fallen from greatness due to bad policy choices of his predecessors especially in terms of foreign policy, and needed to be restored again. 'America First' was about putting American interests ahead of its international commitments as a leader of the international system. He spoke against internationalism, multilateralism, globalism and immigration during his campaign¹⁸ and held them responsible for America's woes.

He went against the post-war consensus and promised to take the US out of the nation building enterprise, focus more on American interests and 'reinvigorate Western values instead of spreading universal values' that the other states neither shared nor wanted.¹⁹ Thus the Trumpian rhetoric suggested a retreat of the America's international leadership mission²⁰ and its underpinning ideology, the liberal internationalist exceptionalism.

While in office Donald Trump kept on with his anti-liberal internationalist rhetoric and enacted many policies that showed America stepping back not only from multilateralism and international institutionalism but also liberal exceptionalism, although the Trump era foreign policy did not deliver on all of his pre-election promises. Donald Trump walked out of many international and

¹⁷ Georg Löfflmann , " America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy", *Survival*, 61:6, 2019 p.115-138

¹⁸ Georg Löfflmann "America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy"p.115-138.

¹⁹ Jason A. Edwards, "Make America Great Again: Donald Trump and Redefining the U.S. Role in the World", *Communication Quarterly*, 66:2, 2018. p 176-195

²⁰ Jason A. Edwards, "Make America Great Again" p.176-195

multilateral agreements like North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which he negotiated again on different terms, Paris Climate Accord, Trans-pacific Trade Partnership (TPP), and Human Rights Commission. He also started a trade war with China and imposed tariffs even on US allies like Canada and European countries. Trump negotiated the withdrawal from Afghanistan, thus ending the longest nation building exercise for the US. He did not leave the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as he had declared but he did get NATO allies to increase spending and pay for their own security. Trump also enacted a ban on Muslim immigrants and adopted a very tough immigration policy in general. He increased US defense spending but reduced deployments of US military abroad. Thus Donald Trump presidency challenged many notions of liberal internationalist exceptionalism including international leadership, American sense of mission, spreading of democracy and the conception of the US as a country of immigrants and a society based on ideals instead of ethnicity and race.²¹

The Trumpian rhetoric and policies, especially the rhetoric prompted a debate amongst the scholars of US foreign policy on the future prospects of American Exceptionalism especially its liberal internationalist variant. Speculations and declarations about the ending of American Exceptionalism are not a new phenomenon. American Exceptionalism was first declared to have ended by Daniel Bell in 1975 in the aftermath of Vietnam when he declared that the American century (a term used for the 20th century to that connotes American predominance during that period) ‘floundered on the shoals of Vietnam’.²² However this time around it is different because

²¹ Volker Depkat, *American Exceptionalism*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021). p XIV.

²² Trevor B. McCrisken, *American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US Foreign Policy Since 1974*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003) P.26-27.

an elected president actually dismissed it in his rhetoric and tried to roll it back with his policies with a degree of success.

What made this debate more interesting was the continuation of many patterns of Trump's foreign policy under the administration of his successor in off President Joe. Biden representing an underlying shift in U.S foreign policy leading to questions about the very nature of an exceptional foreign policy because unlike Trump, President Biden professed liberal internationalist exceptionalism for all his political life and rationalized his policies in exceptional terms.

This research aims at exploring the different shades of American Exceptionalism through a brief historical view of its evolution and impacts on US foreign policy prior to Trump and analyzing his take on American exceptionalism reflected in his rhetoric and foreign policy during his administration from 2016-2020. It also aims to find out the impact Trumpism has on American exceptionalism as a national identity and foreign policy through a study of public opinion indicated by opinion polls conducted by reputed research organizations, and tracing patterns of continuity with Biden's foreign policy in order to predict the future prospects for exceptionalism. The impact of other endogenous and exogenous factors linked to Trump and Biden era foreign policies will also be briefly touched upon in order to pin-point prospects and challenges in future.

Problem Statement

American Exceptionalism has historically played an influential part in determining the role that America chooses to play in the international politics, depending upon its most widely accepted connotation at a given time. After the Second World War the United States saw to the creation of a rule based Liberal International Order and presumed the role of an international leader in the

comity of nations. It sought to uphold ideals like democracy, liberal economics and human rights by using its power projection capabilities and economic strength to mould the world in an American image, an undertaking rooted in the missionary aspect of American Exceptionalism. This sense of mission to lead the world and mould it in a liberal democratic image assumed the form of a bi-partisan consensus and gained renewed impetus amidst the Cold War. The American victory in cold war further vindicated the liberal exceptionalist foreign policy and the global war on terror reinvigorated the sense of an 'American Mission'.

Donald Trump became the first US presidential candidate to express an open dislike for the term 'exceptionalism' in his political rhetoric and criticized the liberal internationalist nature of American international engagement as being detrimental to US national interests. Trump was combative towards some of the basic tenets of American exceptionalism including inclusivity, free trade, commitment to promote and defend democracy, promotion of human rights internationally, and the US role as an international leader of the free world that came with a lot of financial and military responsibilities.

Under Donald Trump, the US foreign policy exhibited a change in orientation as the US steered away from multilateralism, commitment to international institutions, immigration and free trade and while retreating from its role as the protector and defender of democracy and liberty worldwide. This led many to not only speculate, but declare that American Exceptionalism was all but dead under Trump and may never recover echoing similar concerns dating back to the aftermath of American defeat in Vietnam and the Watergate Scandal. However such generalized observations and predictions are often reactionary in nature and ignore the historical dimensions of exceptionalism and its multi-dimensional nature.

In this background, the question arises; what effect Donald Trump had on American exceptionalism as both a mode of foreign policy and an expression of national identity with the primary focus being on American Exceptionalism as reflected in foreign policy and whether it would survive in Post-Trump America. It also needs to be seen what an exceptional foreign policy is and whether Donald Trump foreign policy qualifies as anti-exceptional.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are;

- To examine the historical background and evolution of American exceptional as a concept and a mode of foreign policy.
- To investigate various actions of Donald Trump challenging American exceptionalism.
- To analyze the impact of Trumpian ideology on the American public conception of exceptionalism and national identity.
- To examine continuity and change in American exceptionalism during and after the Trump presidency.

Research Questions

The study is based on the following research questions;

- How has the Donald Trump presidency taken an exception to American exceptionalism in terms of rhetoric and policy?
- How has the Trump ideology manifested itself in American foreign policy and impacted public conceptions of American exceptionalism?

- What are the prospects and challenges facing American exceptionalism?

Literature Review

There is a plethora of research articles as well as books addressing the evolution and the changing fortunes of American Exceptionalism throughout the nation's history. Similarly owing to the disruptive nature of Donald Trump presidency and his novel approach towards both American Exceptionalism and foreign policy, many scholars have explored the nature and roots of Trumpian political thought as well as the impacts of his policies and rhetoric on American Exceptionalism and the future direction of American foreign policy. The nature of American Exceptionalism as a determinant of national identity and foreign policy is also well researched. The relationship between national identity and national self conception and its influence on foreign policy has seen much expounding by the Constructivist School in international relations. A burgeoning new field in international relations is comparative foreign policy that has seen the development of foreign policy typology leading to the exploration of normative factors in Exceptionalism. This has proved to be especially helpful in comparing foreign policies and understanding continuity and change in foreign policy. A number of surveys and opinion polls have been conducted by notable research institutions that give a peek into the public opinion dynamics regarding the American perceptions about the international role US should play. Many research articles and opinion pieces have been published that discuss the future of American foreign policy and American Exceptionalism, especially owing to the resurgence of Donald Trump and his political comeback. Given below is a brief account of some of the literature surveyed.

Historical Roots and Evolution

Volker Depkat in his book ‘American Exceptionalism’ has given a detailed account of the evolution of American Exceptionalism and the various changes brought about in its national understanding as a result of events in American history, for instance the American Revolution, civil war, and American rise to dominance.²³ He has also given an account of the natural factors like geography and abundance in shaping the Exceptional idea.²⁴

John D. Wilsey in his book “American Exceptionalism and Civil Religion Reassessing the History of an Idea” has given an account of the historical as well as exegetical roots of American Exceptionalism and has conceptualized American Exceptionalism as a civil religion.²⁵ He has also touched upon American expansionism, slavery and the role of religion in shaping concepts like ‘manifest destiny’.²⁶

Dennis M .Spragg in his book titled “America Ascendant: The Rise of American Exceptionalism” explains the rise of liberal internationalist Exceptionalism by exploring in detail the developments between the period from mid nineteenth century when American expansionism was at its peak to the period after Second World War.²⁷ He especially focuses on the Second World War and brings forth the democratic spirit of American Exceptionalism as a force for global good.²⁸

²³ Volker Depkat, “*American Exceptionalism*”,(London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021)

²⁴ Volker Depkat, “*American Exceptionalism*”

²⁵ John D. Wilsey, “*American Exceptionalism And Civil Religion Reassessing The History Of An Idea*”, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2015).

²⁶John D. Wilsey, ‘*American Exceptionalism And Civil Religion*’

²⁷ Dennis M .Spragg,, “*America Ascendant The Rise Of American Exceptionalism*” (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2019)

²⁸ Dennis M .Spragg, ‘*America Ascendant*’

Ian Tyrrell in his book titled “American Exceptionalism: A New History of an Old Idea” has given an account of the evolution of American exceptionalism from the times of Massachusetts Bay colony and its puritan beginnings to the era of Donald Trump.²⁹ He has discussed the impact of several events and factors on the evolutionary journey of American Exceptionalism including American revolution, race and ethnicity, the American frontier, cultural nationalism, Christianity, slavery and the movement to abolish it as well as social and political movements like women rights, socialism, imperialism and the ‘new deal’ economic liberalism.³⁰

Jay Sexton in his book titled “The Monroe Doctrine Empire and Nation In Nineteenth Century America” has explained the US rise to preponderance in the 20th century with the help of Monroe doctrine and has declared it as the product of ‘anti-colonial liberation’, ‘internal national consolidation’ and ‘imperial expansion’ and the contentious interconnection between them.³¹

Stephen Goniprow in his article titled, "American Exceptionalism: Its Beginnings, Its Decline, and the Need For Its Revival" has discussed American exceptionalism from the point of view of equal opportunities for all starting from the puritan roots to the era of American dream and to the present day.³² He stresses on the liberal economic ideals of exceptionalism and has equated exceptionalism with the provision of equal economic opportunities for all in the capitalist system, thus talking of the decline and the need for revival of American exceptionalism.³³

²⁹ Ian Tyrrell, “*American Exceptionalism A New History of an Old Idea*” (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021.)

³⁰ Ian Tyrrell, ‘*American Exceptionalism A New History*’

³¹ Jay Sexton, “*The Monroe Doctrine Empire and Nation In Nineteenth Century America*”, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012).

³² Goniprow, Stephen, "American Exceptionalism: Its Beginnings, Its Decline, and the Need for Its Revival". Trinity Papers (2011 - present) (2014). Trinity College Digital Repository, Hartford, CT. <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/trinitypapers/30>

³³ Goniprow, Stephen, "American Exceptionalism: Its Beginnings, Its Decline, and the Need For Its Revival".

Nature of American Exceptionalism

“American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword” By Seymour Martin Lipset is one of the pioneering modern works on American exceptionalism that primarily discusses the nature and evolution of American exceptionalism in trying to discover the reasons for the failure of socialism to take root in the US.³⁴ He has identified the key elements of American creed and opines that American nationalism is different from others as it is based on democratic values instead of geography or ethnicity.³⁵ He has also discussed the role of Christianity in the evolution of moral superiority and missionary sense of American exceptionalism.³⁶

Mugambi Jouet in his book titled, “Exceptional America: What Divides Americans

From The World And From Each Other” has given a provocatively unique account of American exceptionalism which he takes to mean as American uniqueness and is of the view that intense political polarization has become a defining feature of exceptionalism and that Americans are not only different from the world but huge differences exist within the society in the form of race, economic status, and political view on issues like climate, gender, abortion, gun control etc.³⁷ He opines that the key features of republican thought like anti-intellectualism, distrust of authorities, conspiracy theories and Christian fundamentalism are more predominant than anywhere else.³⁸

³⁴ Seymour Martin Lipset, ‘*American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*’ (London : W. W. Norton & Company Ltd, 1996)

³⁵ Seymour Martin Lipset, ‘*American Exceptionalism*’

³⁶ Seymour Martin Lipset, ‘*American Exceptionalism*’

³⁷ Mugambi Jouet, ‘*Exceptional America*’, (California: University of California Press, 2017), P.7.

³⁸ Mugambi Jouet, ‘*Exceptional America*’

‘American Exceptionalism and Human Rights’, which is edited by Michael Ignatieff is a collection of scholarly articles that explore the nature of American Exceptionalism, its relationship with international institutions and international law and, American Exemptionalism and the paradoxes within the Exceptional narrative especially pertaining to human rights.³⁹

Thomas M. Kane in his book “Theoretical Roots of Us Foreign Policy: Machiavelli and American Unilateralism” explores the underlying causes that can account for the unilateralist streak in the US foreign policy and attributes it to the US having dual roles as a hegemon that has to lead and act for common good as well as a great power which has to secure own interests and compete with others.⁴⁰ He also traces out the prevalence of Machiavellian thought in the US foreign policy and its underlying ideology attributing unilateralism to the Machiavellian character of US national thought that inspired the US revolutionaries.⁴¹

James W. Ceaser in his article “The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism” explores the various conceptions and understandings of Exceptionalism before addressing the nature of the ‘American Mission’ concept and is of the view that the sense of mission while having religious inputs is not entirely based on religion and in fact it is constituted by political philosophy, history as well as application of scientific theories.⁴²

Nicola Nymalm and Johannes Plagemann in their essay titled, “Comparative Exceptionalism: Universality and Particularity in Foreign Policy Discourses” have taken a comparative approach

³⁹ Michael Ignatieff ed., “*American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*”, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁴⁰ Thomas M. Kane, “*Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreign Policy Machiavelli and American Unilateralism*”, (New York: Routledge, 2006.)

⁴¹ Thomas M. Kane, “*Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreign Policy*”

⁴², James W. Ceaser, “The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism”, *American Political Thought*. (Spring 2012), Vol. 1 Issue 1.

towards exceptionalism as a foreign policy type and have established that exceptionalism is not exclusively American nor is it a threat to international peace.⁴³ They have traced similarities between different exceptionalisms including the claim to moral superiority and a belief in universal values derived from own culture, and divided exceptionalisms into four types including imperialist, internationalist, globalist and civilizational exceptionalisms.⁴⁴

K. J. Holsti, in his article “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy: Is it exceptional?” has contends that Exceptionalism is not peculiar to the US and other states especially revolutionary ones have adopted such foreign policy in the past as he goes on to compare the US with revolutionary France and the USSR.⁴⁵ Holsti has defined five characteristics of Exceptional foreign policy and introduced the concept as a distinct ‘type’ of foreign policy.⁴⁶

The Implications of American Exceptionalism for American National Identity and Foreign Policy

Siobhán McEvoy-Levy talks about a critical juncture in the history of American Exceptionalism, which was the post-Cold War period that saw the US struggling between the calls of history and the realities of its then present while crafting an international role for itself to suit the new post-Cold War reality in her book “American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War”.⁴⁷ She has explored the role of public diplomacy and rhetoric, two

⁴³ Nicola Nymalm and Johannes Plagemann, “Comparative Exceptionalism: Universality and Particularity in Foreign Policy Discourses”, *International Studies Review* (2019) 21, p.12–37.

⁴⁴ Nicola Nymalm and Johannes Plagemann, “Comparative Exceptionalism” p.12–37.

⁴⁵ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy: Is it exceptional?”, *European Journal of International Relations* 17(3), 2010, P.381–404,

⁴⁶ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy: Is it exceptional?”,

⁴⁷ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, *American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War*, (New York: Palgrave, 2001)

terms she has used interchangeably in determining the direction of foreign policy and has used the same for her analysis.⁴⁸

Trevor B. McCrisken in his book “American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US Foreign Policy Since 1974” has given an excellent account of post-Vietnam era foreign policy which not only helps in the understanding of modern Exceptionalism but also elaborates on its roots and the role it plays in shaping up US foreign policy.⁴⁹ McCrisken is of the opinion that post-Vietnam foreign policy decisions are more dependent on economic, strategic and political considerations and that although Exceptionalism plays a role in shaping them it takes the back seat if other factors do not favour a decision.⁵⁰ However McCrisken admits that there is no proof of a decision being taken first and then packaged in Exceptionalist terms pointing out the fact that Exceptionalism is indeed part of the thought process of decision makers.⁵¹

Stanley Buder in his article “American Exceptionalism and the American Dream” contends that American Exceptionalism holds a special place among national exceptional identities because it merges economic values with theology and democratic government institutions and it is based on some core values which the Americans feel, should be shared with others and exported.⁵²

Hilde Eliassen Restad, in her article ‘Old Paradigms in History Die Hard in Political Science: US Foreign Policy and American Exceptionalism’ is of the opinion that American Exceptionalism is

⁴⁸ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, “*American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy*”

⁴⁹ Trevor B. McCrisken, “*American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US Foreign Policy Since 1974*”. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003)

⁵⁰ Trevor B. McCrisken, “American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam”

⁵¹ Trevor B. McCrisken, “American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam”

⁵² Stanley Buder, “American Exceptionalism and the American Dream”, *Problemy Zarzdzania*, vol. 15, nr 2 (68), cz. 2:p.33 – 38

an important tool to understand US foreign policy if properly defined, which it is not.⁵³ she contends that Exceptionalism should be retained as the primary basis for American national identity however she rejects the dichotomies of unilateral and multilateral as well as exemplary and missionary Exceptionalist variants and terms Exceptionalism as unilateral internationalism.⁵⁴ She has expanded the same thesis to a book titled “American Exceptionalism: An idea that made a nation and remade the world”.⁵⁵

Peter Katzenstein has edited the book titled ‘The Culture of National Security’ which is collection of essays by constructivist scholars, in the introduction of which he has explained the interrelationship between national identity and state policy as well as establishing the impact both national identity and foreign policy have on each other.⁵⁶

Georg Löfflmann in his article titled, “America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy” has traced the relationship between national populism and the US foreign policy through an analysis of Donald Trump’s America First.⁵⁷ He is of the view that Donald Trump made good use of the prevailing anti-globalist sentiment among the American working class and highlighted the disconnect between elite and the masses to gain political advantage.⁵⁸

Taesuh Cha in his article titled, “The Formation of American Exceptional Identities: A three tier model of the ‘standard of civilization’ in US foreign policy” has discussed the formation of

⁵³ Hilde Eliassen Restad, “Old Paradigms in History Die Hard in Political Science: US Foreign Policy and American Exceptionalism”, *American Political Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 61-62

⁵⁴ Hilde Eliassen Restad, “Old Paradigms in History Die Hard in Political Science”

⁵⁵ Hilde Eliassen Restad, “*American Exceptionalism An idea that made a nation and remade the world*”, (New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁵⁶ Ed.Peter Katzenstein, “*The Culture of National Security*”, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996)

⁵⁷ Georg Löfflmann , “America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy, *Survival*, 61:6, 2019, p.115-138

⁵⁸ Georg Löfflmann , “America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy”p.115-138

American national identity in terms of its interaction with the European continent and the native Americans, which in his opinion has led to the distinct Jacksonian and Jeffersonian conceptions of national identity.⁵⁹

Akbar Ahmed in his book titled, “Journey into America: The Challenge of Islam” has discussed the Muslim community in the US in terms of its historical origins, assimilation, the problems it faces and its relations with other faiths and communities within the US.⁶⁰ Despite its anthropological nature the book gives very enlightening perspectives on the evolution and formation of the American identity itself and Ahmed has identified types of American identity that are all rooted in the same history but offer varying outlooks of the world and have competed for relevance leading to the polarization in terms of political views.⁶¹

Paul T. McCartney in his article titled, “How Foreign Policy Shapes American National Identity” has discussed how the international events of world politics have an impact on shaping the American peoples’ perceptions of themselves as a nation and is of the view that the foreign policy actions that the US undertakes and the rhetoric used for their rationalization has a deep impact on the public perceptions of national identity.⁶²

Peter S. Onuf in his article titled, “American Exceptionalism and National Identity” has discussed the centrality of the British roots in determining the American national identity and the discourse on exceptionalism.⁶³ He has also discussed the liberal and conservative attitudes towards

⁵⁹ Taesuh Cha, “The formation of American exceptional identities: A three-tier model of the “standard of civilization” in US foreign policy”, *European Journal of International Relations* 1–25, 2015,

⁶⁰ Akbar Ahmed, “*Journey into America*”, (Washington DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2010.)

⁶¹ Akbar Ahmed, “*Journey into America*”

⁶² Paul T. McCartney, “How Foreign Policy Shapes American National Identity”, *Political Science Quarterly* | Volume 134 Number 4 2019-20. P.675-709

⁶³ Peter S. Onuf, “American Exceptionalism and National Identity”, *American Political Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 77-100.

exceptionalism and has termed the clash of these views as ‘dueling exceptionalisms’ thus terming exceptionalism as having different versions that compete for primacy in the determination of national identity.⁶⁴

The Nature of Donald Trump’s Foreign Policy

Roland. E. Powaski in his book “Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump” has evaluated the foreign policies of Post-Cold war presidents and concludes that that the first four presidents from Bush Sr. to Barack Obama sought to uphold American ideals in their foreign policies although they gave precedence to economic and strategic interests.⁶⁵ He contends that the Trump era foreign policy was neither idealistic nor did it do much to help US in terms of strategic goals, instead it contributed to the weakening of the ‘liberal international order’ which is detrimental to US national interests.⁶⁶

Joseph S. Nye Jr. in his book titled, “Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump” has analyzed the foreign policies of US presidents from Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Donald Trump tracing the impact of a president’s personal moral and ethical values on his foreign policy decisions by taking into account ‘intentions, means and consequences’ of decisions.⁶⁷ He put into question Donald Trump’s personal morals by pointing out moral flaws like incessant lying for personal political gains and is of the opinion that while Trump might have played a role in

⁶⁴ Peter S. Onuf, “American Exceptionalism and National Identity’, *American Political Thought*”

⁶⁵ R.E.Powaski, “*Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*”,(Cham: Springer Nature, 2019.)

⁶⁶ R.E.Powaski, “*Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy*”

⁶⁷ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “*Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump*”, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020)

curtailing China's rise, he did so at great cost to international institutions and internationalism which are also crucial for US national interests.⁶⁸

Misha Desai, in her research paper titled "The Greatest Nation on Earth': The Different Types of American Exceptionalism Articulated in Presidential Rhetoric" has analyzed the speeches of four presidents; Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Ronald Reagan and John F. Kennedy in order to figure out different types of American Exceptionalism concluding that Messianic Exceptionalism is the most predominant among the Exceptionalist types.⁶⁹ Based on her classification Donald Trump's views can be categorized as 'Rejectionist Exceptionalism'.⁷⁰

Hilde Eliassen Restad, in her article "Whither the 'City upon a Hill'? Donald Trump, America First, and American Exceptionalism" contends that Donald Trump not only seeks to challenge the post-war liberal international order but also its underlying master narrative i-e American Exceptionalism with his America First, the underlying narrative of which is Jacksonian Nationalism.⁷¹ She contends that in a post-Trump America, restoring things to Pre-Trump times shall be very difficult.⁷²

John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, in their book "Fuel to the Fire" have expressed concern that Donald Trump's foreign policies have led to a 'new-isolationism' and Trump has brought back the days of 'fortress America' through his policies leading to the possibility where the US might lose the gains it consolidated after the Second World War in the

⁶⁸ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *"Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump"*

⁶⁹ Misha Desai, "The Greatest Nation on Earth': The Different Types of American Exceptionalism Articulated in Presidential Rhetoric" (paper, Department of History Lund University, Lund, 2014), <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=4451946&fileId=4451949>

⁷⁰ Misha Desai, "The Greatest Nation on Earth"

⁷¹ Hilde Eliassen Restad, "Whither The "City Upon A Hill"? Donald Trump, America First, And American Exceptionalism", *Texas National Security Review: Volume 3, Issue 1 (Winter 2019/2020)*, p.63-92

⁷² Hilde Eliassen Restad, "Whither The "City Upon A Hill"?" p.63-92

form of the liberal international order, which does not augur well for liberal internationalist exceptionalism.⁷³

Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, in their book “Exceptional Me” have explained how Donald Trump used American Exceptionalism to promote his political agenda by first denying it, then claiming the credit for its return and finally launching a campaign for re-election by announcing that only he can make the US great and Exceptional again.⁷⁴

James Curran in his paper for the Lowy Institute titled, “Americanism, Not Globalism”: President Trump and the American Mission” is of the view that Donald Trump has proved to be an exception in the way that he hasn’t got the same belief in the American mission as his predecessors and has been critical of them for prioritizing international engagements to progress at home.⁷⁵ He is of the view that while Donald Trump has not shown any isolationist tendencies he cannot be termed an internationalist as he is critical of international institutions, a rhetoric that will undermine public support for internationalism in the times to come.⁷⁶

Jason A. Edwards in his article titled, “Make America Great Again: Donald Trump and Redefining the U.S. Role in the World”, has analyzed Donald Trump’s rhetoric relating to the role of US in international politics and is of the opinion that he went against the consensus on ‘American

⁷³ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, “*Fuel to The Fire*”, (Washington DC: Cato Institute, 2019).

⁷⁴ Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, “*Exceptional Me*”, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021)

⁷⁵ James Curran, “Americanism Not Globalism”: President Trump and The American Mission” Lowy Institute July 2018.

⁷⁶ James Curran, “Americanism Not Globalism”: President Trump and The American Mission”

Globalism' by defining American exceptionalism in his own way.⁷⁷ This rhetoric in his view could have great implications for the US global leadership role.⁷⁸

Joseph S. Nye Jr. in his article titled, "The Rise and fall of American hegemony from Wilson to Trump" has given a historical account of the evolution of American exceptionalism from the times of Woodrow Wilson to Donald J. Trump and has divided the various US presidents into realists and liberals based on their beliefs and actions while discussing their impact on American hegemony⁷⁹ He is of the view that both Trump and Wilson share the belief in exceptionalism but Trump's conception of exceptionalism is more narrow and that Trump downplayed democracy as the bedrock of the American soft power.⁸⁰

Michael Clarke and Anthony Ricketts in their article titled, "Donald Trump and American foreign policy: The return of the Jacksonian tradition" argue that Donald Trump's foreign policy program can be best understood by taking into account its ideological affinity with the Jacksonian tradition of the US foreign policy and that Donald Trump would adopt policies focused on increasing the national power and prestige of the US as well as scaling back on international engagements that incur more costs than contribute towards national economic or strategic strength.⁸¹

Timothy J. Lynch in his book "In The Shadow Of The Cold War: American Foreign Policy from George Bush Sr. To Donald Trump" opines on the importance of the Cold War era in the

⁷⁷ Jason A. Edwards , "Make America Great Again: Donald Trump and Redefining the U.S. Role in the World", *Communication Quarterly*, 66:2, 2018,p.176-195

⁷⁸ Jason A. Edwards, "Make America Great Again" p.176-195

⁷⁹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr, "The rise and fall of American hegemony from Wilson to Trump", *International Affairs* **95**: 1 ,2019. Pp 63–80

⁸⁰ Joseph S. Nye, Jr, "The rise and fall of American hegemony"

⁸¹ Michael Clarke & Anthony Ricketts , "Donald Trump and American foreign policy: The return of the Jacksonian tradition, *Comparative Strategy*", 36:4, 2019, p. 366-379, DOI:10.1080/01495933.2017.1361210

determination of US foreign policy and is of the opinion that the Cold War era policy did not drastically change after the end of that era and finds continuity today with the presidents who have kept within the Cold War framework achieving more successes than the ones trying to change out of it.⁸² He is of the view that both Obama and Donald Trump stayed within that framework and the international politics still continues to favour American predominance viz-a-viz its contenders.⁸³

Glenn P. Hastedt in his book titled, “American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future” has given a detailed account of the US foreign policy including the factors that influence its making, the structural constraints it faces and the way it is informed by domestic opinions as well as highlighting the key themes that have been a constant in American foreign policy.⁸⁴ He has highlighted the key features of the Trump doctrine and of the opinion that Donald Trump believes more in bi-lateral transactionalism and is mostly insensitive to the long term consequences of his decisions.⁸⁵

Jon Herbert and others in their book titled, “The Ordinary Presidency of Donald J. Trump” are of the opinion that while Donald Trump grasped the attention of admirers and critics alike with his extraordinary rhetoric and style and led to many critics expressing concern about the future of American predominance, his actual policies and foreign policy actions were quite

⁸² Timothy J. Lynch, *In The Shadow Of The Cold War: American Foreign Policy from George Bush Sr. To Donald Trump*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020),

⁸³ Timothy J. Lynch, “*In The Shadow Of The Cold War*”

⁸⁴ Glenn P. Hastedt, “*American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future*”, (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020.)

⁸⁵ Glenn P. Hastedt, “*American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future*”

ordinary and can be categorized as being in line with the standard republican practice and achieving little in terms of outcomes.⁸⁶

Prospects and Challenges for American Exceptionalism

Andrew J. Bacevich in his book titled “The Limits Of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism” contends that the US is facing a crisis that threatens its global predominance as well as its material power, and this crisis is caused by the decline in economy, costly wars abroad as well as a system of government that is democratic in name but grants too much power to the president leading to imperial presidential behavior.⁸⁷

“Chaos in the Liberal Order” is a collection of essays edited by Robert Jervis and others and gives a detailed perspective on Donald Trump’s doctrine, its historical roots and what it would mean for the liberal international order as well as the American leadership of it.⁸⁸ it also discusses the rise of the ‘political right’ internationally and the challenges it poses to liberal democracy both in the US as well as in the wider world.⁸⁹

John L. Campbell in his book titled, “American Discontent: The Rise of Donald Trump And Decline of the Golden Age” has given an account of Donald Trump’s rise to power and has attributed it to deep rooted internal factors that caused a wave of discontent against the elite

⁸⁶J. Herbert et al., “*The Ordinary Presidency of Donald J. Trump*,” (Cham: Springer Nature, 2019.)

⁸⁷ Andrew J. Bacevich, “*The Limits Of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*”, (New York: Henry Holt and Company LLC, 2009).

⁸⁸ Robert Jervis et al “*Chaos In The Liberal Order*” ed. Robert Jervis, Francis J. Gavin, Joshua Rovner et al., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.)

⁸⁹ Robert Jervis et al ed. “*Chaos In The Liberal Order*”

amongst the American public which Donald Trump rode on to success.⁹⁰ He opines that owing to the decline in economic prosperity that ensued in the after the post war bulge, the American society has faced fissures ranging from political and racial polarization, discontent and abhorrence for the elite and a wave against liberal economics and globalization and that discontent saw its culmination in the form of a populist coming to power.⁹¹

Sanja Arežina in her article titled, “U.S.-China Relations under the Trump Administration” has discussed the US-China relations and criticized the lack of a strategic approach on part of the US that in her opinion is strengthening the new multi-polarity.⁹² She opines that the US approach of strategic competition towards China has greatly undermined multilateralism as well as globalization as she calls for cooperation between the two powers which will be in the larger interest of the world.⁹³

Doug Stokes in his article titled, “Trump, American hegemony and the future of the liberal international order” has expressed concerns about the future of the Liberal International Order (LIO) and is of the opinion that Trump’s predecessors have always followed the policy of upholding the liberal order, although it had its weaknesses and paradoxes and that the election of Trump presented a threat to this consensus.⁹⁴ He opines that although Trump’s opposition is mostly

⁹⁰ John L. Campbell, *American Discontent: The Rise of Donald Trump And Decline of the Golden Age*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018)

⁹¹ John L. Campbell, ‘American Discontent’

⁹² Sanja Arežina, “U.S.-China Relations Under the Trump Administration”, *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2019.

⁹³ Sanja Arežina, “U.S.-China Relations Under the Trump Administration”

⁹⁴ Doug Stokes, “Trump, American Hegemony And The Future Of The Liberal International Order”, *International Affairs* **94**: 1,2018.

rhetorical it will have a broad impact on the public opinion and it also is an indicator of the decreasing public support for the liberal order internationally as well as in the US.⁹⁵

Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili and others in their article titled, “American Institutional Exceptionalism and the Trump Presidency” are of the view that the apprehensions expressed by many scholars about the health of democracy, threats of coups and looming fascism in the aftermath of the Capitol Riots weren’t very well founded as the robustness of American institutions guarantees democratic stability in the face of populist upheavals.⁹⁶

Criticisms of American Exceptionalism

Jeffrey D. Sachs in his book “A New Foreign Policy beyond American Exceptionalism” has taken a very critical position on American Exceptionalism and stresses on the need for a new multi-polar world order not rooted in Exceptionalism.⁹⁷ He is of the view that Donald Trump’s political ideology is in fact racist cum populist version of traditional American Exceptionalism and is bound to cause problems for the US especially in economic and strategic terms.⁹⁸

Danny Haiphong in his article titled, “The Great Unmasking: American Exceptionalism in the Age of COVID-19” has made a critical appraisal of American exceptionalism in the context of the American response towards COVID-19 pandemic and has particularly pinpointed American

⁹⁵ Doug Stokes, “Trump, American Hegemony And The Future Of The Liberal International Order”

⁹⁶ Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili et. al, “American Institutional Exceptionalism and the Trump Presidency”, *The Independent Review*, v. 26, n. 1, Summer 2021, ISSN 1086–1653, 2021, pp. 97–114.

⁹⁷ Jeffrey D. Sachs, “*A New Foreign Policy Beyond American Exceptionalism*” (New York: Columbia University Press, , 2018)

⁹⁸ Jeffrey D. Sachs, “*A New Foreign Policy Beyond American Exceptionalism*”

unwillingness towards a multilateral approach towards this global crisis, praising the Chinese role instead and declaring the exceptional attitude as being imperial in nature.⁹⁹

Research Gap

Although a lot of research efforts have been extended towards the study of American Exceptionalism, its nature, various types, its role as the underlying principle of American national identity and in the determination of American foreign policy it has rarely been visualized as foreign policy type with normative characteristics that can be used to analyze foreign policies of different administrations without going into the intricacies of historical narratives and political and moral considerations or paradoxes. K.J Holsti has developed a comparative perspective on Exceptionalism and has identified characteristic features of the ‘Exceptional Type’ of foreign policy, thus pioneering the field of foreign policy typologies. This research applies Holsti’s perspective to analyze Trump era foreign policy and predict future prospects for American Exceptionalism, which has not been done before. Moreover in predicting challenges, it takes into account many recent developments going on in the world and Biden presidency’s response to those, many of those have not been discussed in scholarly works yet owing to them relative newness.

Core Argument

Donald Trump through his rhetoric and foreign policy decisions challenged the Post-war consensus on the commitment to the liberal international order leading many experts to conclude

⁹⁹ Danny Haiphong ,‘The Great Unmasking: American Exceptionalism in the Age of COVID-19’, *International Critical Thought*, 10:2, 2020, p.200-213, DOI: 10.1080/21598282.2020.1779527

his actions as being a threat to the very existence of American Exceptionalism. The liberal exceptionalism and American international leadership is facing challenges as a result of both exogenous and endogenous factors. The exogenous factors include the rise of revisionist powers like Russia and China as well as the global rise of nationalist populism, while the endogenous factors include the societal problems pertaining to racial, ethnic and economic inequality as well as the political ideologies like Trumpism. Despite these challenges, American Exceptionalism in one form or another will continue to determine both the direction of US foreign policy as well as the evolution of its national identity.

Theoretical Framework

There are several theories that explain American foreign policy and its place in the world; however ‘American Exceptionalism’ presents a unique problem in the sense that although the term is widely used to interpret and rationalize American foreign policy and widely studied as a theme it has not been very rigorously defined.¹⁰⁰ This, along with the variety of explanations and interpretations of American exceptionalism as well as the differences in points of view regarding its historical roots make the study of exceptionalism difficult.

Another point to consider here is the debate on the nature of American exceptionalism especially as reflected in the foreign policy actions of different administrations as all the successive administrations have used exceptional rhetoric to define and explain their actions. Many scholars of International Relations have also pointed out the inconsistencies between the professed values

¹⁰⁰ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy: Is it exceptional?”, *European Journal of International Relations* 17(3), 2010, P.381–404,

and the actual foreign policy decisions questioning the utility of exceptionalism as an explanatory tool, however evidence suggests that exceptionalism cannot be dismissed as mere rhetoric and actions like war on terror show that exceptionalism acts a framework in shaping the discourse on foreign policy formation and actions.¹⁰¹ Similarly the US had until the Iraq War conducted thirty four interventions with the aim of democracy promotion worldwide.¹⁰²

Kalevi Jaakko Holsti, a Canadian political scientist and International Relations expert presented an innovative point of view in this regard in his study on the exceptional nature of American foreign policy in his article titled, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy: Is it exceptional?” in 2010 by arguing that exceptionalism is not exceptionally American in nature and other states have professed similar ideas and ideals in the past and used them as a framework for the formulation of their foreign policies, by carrying out a comparative study of the US, Revolutionary France and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR); all of which had similarity in their world views in the sense that they all considered themselves as exceptional experiments in human political existence, professed a sense of moral superiority and sought to export their values to the world.¹⁰³ He treats exceptionalism as a type of foreign policy and explored the possibility of developing a typology of foreign policy in the same way as typologies of political systems, governments and parties exist.¹⁰⁴

American exceptionalism, if treated as a an example of a foreign policy type like other exceptionalisms can better explain foreign policies of various administrations that vary in terms of

¹⁰¹ Trevor Mccrisken, “*American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1974*”, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), P.193

¹⁰² K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy” p.381–404,

¹⁰³ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy” p.381–404,

¹⁰⁴ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy?” p.381–404,

rhetoric. Donald Trump era foreign policy was complicated by his use of anti-exceptional rhetoric indicated by his dismissal of the term many a times. This along with his foreign policy decisions which have been termed as threat to American exceptionalism by some and very ordinary old school republican by others makes necessary the use of normative characteristics of exceptionalism to analyze it, which are outlined by K.J Holsti.

Holsti has identified five major features of an exceptional foreign policy, which include the ‘mission to liberate others’ even if it means sacrificing the immediate national interest for the greater universal goods.¹⁰⁵ Within the US foreign policy tradition this translates to the messianic exceptionalism or the ‘American mission’. The second characteristic of an exceptional foreign policy is the belief among exceptional nations that due to the burden of great responsibilities they shoulder in order to make the world better, they should be exempt of the norms and rules that govern the relationships among the other ordinary nations.¹⁰⁶ When it comes to the US this translates to the exemptionalist notion of exceptionalism which translates into such actions as non-compliance with the international law and norms in pursuit of foreign policy objectives.

The third characteristic of an exceptional foreign policy is the understanding among the exceptional states that they exist in a world full of hostiles and face a multitude of threats resulting in the universalizing and magnification of threats perceived by these states.¹⁰⁷ In the American context this translates into the variety of threat perceptions that different administrations make constituting both internal and external threats.

¹⁰⁵ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy:” p.381–404,

¹⁰⁶ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy:” p.381–404,

¹⁰⁷ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy:” p.381–404,

The fourth characteristic of an exceptional foreign policy is the need felt by exceptional states to have external enemies against which they may seem to be defending the righteous causes which often results in the ‘concoction’ of non-existent and ‘inflation’ of minor threats.¹⁰⁸ In the US foreign policy this translates into the identification of external threats by different administrations and actions taken against them or foreign policies directed at competing with them or containing them.

The fifth characteristic identified by Holsti is the sense of innocence that prevails among the exceptional states which makes them perceive their selves as the victims of malign forces and never as the sources of international insecurity due to their moral cleanliness and superiority.¹⁰⁹ In the American sense this translates to the trend of the US claiming always to be on the right side of history and battling for the right causes. Holsti indicates that this “typology is not built on the premise that all five exist at the same time”.¹¹⁰ They are in fact variable and the influence of these characteristics may increase or decrease depending on the ‘proclivities’ of state leaders.¹¹¹ This study aims to measure Donald Trump era foreign policy against these characteristics for deciding the point, whether his foreign policy was exceptional or not which will help in understanding the future prospects and challenges that lay ahead for American exceptionalism.

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative and primarily based on secondary sources. However, some primary sources have also been used such as the interviews of leading authorities on the subject. The data

¹⁰⁸ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy:” p.381–404,

¹⁰⁹ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy:” p.381–404,

¹¹⁰ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy:” p.381–404,

¹¹¹ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy” p.381–404,

collected has been used to study the evolution of ‘American Exceptionalism’ as reflected in the US foreign policy at varying points in time during Trump presidency and as a notion in American public discourse.

The qualitative method of analysis, thematic analysis, has been used to draw conclusions. Thematic Analysis is a research approach best suited for qualitative research in social sciences that identifies and analyzes themes within a data set, which leads to conclusions based on the identified themes.

A plethora of books and journals have been consulted to get the relevant text. Several libraries were visited in search of data such as NUML, National Library, and Dr. Razi ud Din Siddiqui Memorial Library. Extensive use has also been made of research articles, essays, and opinion pieces available online. Many of the latest developments have been accessed through news channels, including BBC, Al Jazeera, PBS, VOA and Reuters, as well as newspapers like The Washington Post and The Guardian. Some primary sources, such as presidential speeches, were closely observed. Further, national security policy reports have been accessed via online National Archives, Presidential Libraries and The American Presidency Project.

A complete literature review has been conducted of the assessed data in order to gain insights on the topic, identify gaps and structure the research in theoretical and explanatory terms. While studying the historical evolution of American Exceptionalism, a rather brief archival study of the digital repositories containing the speeches of notable American presidents has also been conducted. At the later stages, in order to gain primary insights from the leading experts in the field, structured and semi structured interviews have been conducted as well with foreign as well as national scholars.

Donald Trump's political ideals and narrative will act as independent variables influencing 'American Exceptionalism' as a notion and a determinant of US foreign policy, which will act as the dependent variable. The discourse on the effects of Trumpian phenomenon will also take the form of a sequential study. The indicators that will be used to gauge Donald Trump's impact on American Exceptionalism will be his foreign policy choices which will be analyzed in order to explore continuity and change, and the impact of his rhetoric on American public opinion to discover the extent to which he has had an impact on American public mind.

Significance of Study

This study is significant because it pertains to a phenomenon that will have long-lasting impacts on both the real-world state of affairs as well as the academic discourse in International Relations. There is a broad argument among experts of International Relations that the American role in the liberal international order is slated for change, although they disagree on its future shape or its chances of survival.

Similarly, many scholars have blamed Donald Trump for the shifts in American foreign policy going as far as declaring the end of American exceptionalism. An effort has been made to look at the underlying causes of the foreign Policy shift and as it turns out Donald Trump did have a contribution towards this shift but in greater part it is the result of the emergence of external challengers or other Exceptionalists that the US preponderance has been called into question. At a time when the 2024 election is expected to see Donald Trump contest as the Republican nominee, this research gains added significance and relevance as it explore the points of continuity and change with relation to President Biden's administration indicating these patterns. Within the

geopolitical and economic realities and the prospect of another Trump presidency it has become more interesting to analyze his foreign policy in order to gain clues about the future.

Delimitations

This research seeks to discuss and analyze the political phenomenon of ‘American exceptionalism’ within the time period spanning from 2016 till date.

Key terms

American Exceptionalism, America First, Liberal International Order, National Role Conceptions, hegemony, unilateralism

Organizational structure

The research is divided into six parts. .

The first part is the **Introduction** which provides the plan for this study detailing the structure and aims while giving an overview of the study.

The first chapter titled ‘**American Exceptionalism in Historical Perspective**’ traces the evolution of American Exceptionalism both ideologically and in terms of foreign policy from Winthrop to Donald Trump.

The second chapter titled ‘**The Trumpian Challenge to American Exceptionalism**’ discusses the nature of Donald Trump’s challenge to American Exceptionalism by taking into account both his foreign policy actions and his rhetorical take on Exceptionalism.

The third chapter titled '**American Exceptionalism, National Identity and Foreign Policy: The Affects of Trumpism**' seeks to discuss American Exceptionalism as a national identity and its impact on foreign policy. It then explores Donald Trump's take on American Exceptionalism as a national identity and the impact it had on the public mind. It also discusses the impact of Donald Trump foreign policy on American liberal internationalist standing.

The fourth chapter titled '**Exceptionalism in Post-Trump America: Prospects and Challenges**' discusses the prospects and challenges facing American Exceptionalism after Trump.

The last part is the **Conclusion** which reflects on the main findings of thesis and the recommendations.

CHAPTER 1

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter aims at understanding the historical evolution of American Exceptionalism, from its earliest conception by Winthrop down to the times of Donald Trump, and how it has been invoked in response to different challenges that the US faced at various stages in its history, for rationalizing the foreign policy actions of the United States as well as shaping them. American Exceptionalism has been responsible for both keeping the US at the sidelines of international politics during the earlier period of its existence and propelling it to global leadership later on. The ensuing discussion will take into account the historical, religious and political roots of American exceptionalism and the changes that American Exceptionalism went through and how those changes impacted U.S foreign policy.

1.1. Introduction.

It has been a historical trait of nation states to think of themselves as being uniquely superior to others, mostly on the basis of their belief in their own ethnic superiority, historical achievements or a glorious past. This belief often endows them with a unique sense of being exceptional, thus Exceptionalism is not only peculiar to the United States, however American exceptionalism departs from others in two ways.¹¹² Firstly American Exceptionalism is rooted in a strong national

¹¹² Stanley Buder“American Exceptionalism and the American Dream”, *Problemy Zarzdzania*, vol. 15, nr 2 (68), cz. 2: p.33 – 38

emphasis on economic values which are conjoined with theology and national institutions stressing on a divinely ordained relationship between free economy and democracy.¹¹³ Americans believe that the values rooted in this relationship, like free economy, liberal democracy, a civic sense of responsibility and personal ethics combined with limited government and democratic institutions are the recipe for national success and progress. Secondly, American Exceptionalism is different because it stresses on the possibility and even the need for exporting these values to others and acting as a beacon for the nations of the world.¹¹⁴ This sense of exceptionalism is also different because it predates the founding of the United States and is more rooted in values of theological idealism than any other national exceptionalism.

Despite the consensus among scholars about the basic ingredients and roots of exceptionalism, it has never been a monolithic or static concept but has rather taken on a variety of meanings and connotations, so much so that the history of American Exceptionalism can be termed as the history of competition between these varying notions of what America stands for.¹¹⁵ Within the realm of foreign policy American Exceptionalism manifested the two faces of the US as a unique state. One face was the isolationist one inspired by the ‘no entangling alliances’ slogan of the founding fathers and the other has been the face of a crusading militant fighting to export American values and ‘making the world safer for democracy’.¹¹⁶ Thus this exceptional nation stood as a city upon the hill acting as a beacon for others for some part of its history and descended the hill filled with a messianic sense of mission to battle the opponents of its self judged superior values for the other

¹¹³ Stanley Buder “American Exceptionalism and the American Dream”, p.33 – 38

¹¹⁴ Stanley Buder, “American Exceptionalism and the American Dream”, p.33 – 38

¹¹⁵ Volker Depkat, “*American Exceptionalism*”, (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021). Pp xvii

¹¹⁶ Stanley Hoffmann, “American Exceptionalism: the new version” in *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, ed. Michael Ignatieff, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Pp 225-226

part. However it all began with the first settlement of European immigrants who landed on American shores, amongst whose ranks was the puritan John Winthrop.

1.2. Historical Background and Early Influences

Long before the declaration of U.S independence and the founding of modern exceptional America, Winthrop had declared that America could be a ‘different country’ and ‘a city upon the hill’.¹¹⁷ He hoped for a new opportunity, something radically different from the continent that the settlers were leaving behind, a land where these men could carve up a community based on the teachings of Puritan Christianity. The influence of Puritanism in shaping of the exceptional identity can be gauged by the views of Alexis De Tocqueville, the foremost proponent of American Exceptionalist idea, who saw the whole destiny of America in the first puritan who landed here.¹¹⁸

1.2.1. Religious and Political Roots of American Exceptionalism

Puritan creed finds its basis in the teachings of the Protestant reformer John Calvin. Calvin is famous for the amalgamation of affairs both worldly and religious in his teachings, thus providing a framework for a Christian society that embraces business and trade as a higher calling instead of abhorring them like his catholic opponents. Calvin is rightly credited for his contributions towards progress of capitalism. Three key ideas of Puritanical faith provide the theological basis of American Exceptionalism, namely the ‘covenant’, ‘typology’ and ‘millennialism’.¹¹⁹ The ‘Covenant’ is believe to be a contractual arrangement between God and Christians, according to

¹¹⁷ Goniprow, Stephen, "American Exceptionalism: Its Beginnings, Its Decline, and the Need For Its Revival". The Trinity Papers (2011 - present) (2014). Trinity College Digital Repository, Hartford, CT. <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/trinitypapers/30>

¹¹⁸ John Torpey, ‘The Problem of ‘American Exceptionalism’ Revisited’, *Journal of Classical Sociology*, Vol 9(1): 143–168 DOI: 10.1177/1468795X08098981 www.sagepublications.com

¹¹⁹ John D. Wilsey, *American Exceptionalism And Civil Religion Reassessing The History Of An Idea*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 2015). P.38

which God will bless and exalt those who walk in his ways and follow his commandments, making them his chosen people. This view has been articulated by Winthrop in his “A Model of Christian Charity”.¹²⁰ The Exceptional idea of U.S being a special nation of God’s chosen people ordained to do his work derives from the concept of covenant.

‘Typology’ incorporates the modern history with the ancient and attempts to interpret the history of ‘New England’ colony and other puritan colonies in biblical terms equating events in the two narratives by making analogies between the occurrences and symbols of Bible and the ones pertaining to the establishment of this colony.¹²¹ Whereas ‘millennialism’ is the idea that history is progressing towards the second coming and enduring reign of Jesus Christ, as interpreted by English protestants who saw the defeat of Catholic Church and triumph of Protestantism as leading towards that outcome. Believers of millennialism think of the U.S and at that time the Puritan colonies as the nations that would lay the groundwork for kingdom of Christ by spreading His Gospel and expanding Christian faith.¹²²

The political roots of Exceptionalism can also be traced to the political and religious struggles of Protestants in England. It was in England when liberalism had its first Triumph in the form of Glorious revolution and the principle of a representative government began to be practiced in its nascent form. This revolution was a victory for the Whigs who opposed absolutism. In American literature and thought the Whig political ideas mixed with protestant theology and gave rise to ‘Christian Republicanism’¹²³ which form the basis of modern Exceptionalism along with Puritan

¹²⁰ John D. Wilsey, ‘*American Exceptionalism And Civil Religion*’ P.38

¹²¹ John D. Wilsey, ‘*American Exceptionalism And Civil Religion*’ P.39-42

¹²² John D. Wilsey, ‘*American Exceptionalism And Civil Religion*’ P.39-42

¹²³ John D. Wilsey, ‘*American Exceptionalism And Civil Religion*’ P.49

Theology.¹²⁴ These were the ideals that later lead to the American Revolution and the founding of American national identity which inherited the Exceptionalist ideals with a more pronounced tinge of Republicanism.

Most of the colonial settlements and their experiments in governance were religious in nature be it Puritans, Mennonites, Quakers or others as most of them saw the American continent as an empty space free from monarchical influences of Europe.¹²⁵ However by the end of eighteenth century these experimental communities lost steam as America became more heavily populated and exceedingly less virgin, as the new immigrants to the new world were more interested in economic prospects than pleasing God.¹²⁶ These new colonists were driven more by the policies of British government, which they deemed unfair than a divine calling. However many of the founding principles and ideals which form the foundation of revolutionary struggle had roots in Christian republicanism which was the prevalent ideology among the revolutionaries.

There is a disagreement among scholars as to whether the revolution gave birth to Exceptionalist ideas or merely expressed what was already present in the minds of Americans. Seymour Martin Lipset, a prominent scholar in Exceptionalist literature considers the revolution as the event that institutionalized liberal ideas which were there in only a rudimentary form before.¹²⁷ The revolution and the struggle preceding it can indeed be termed as a turning point in the US history and arguably the advent of American National Exceptionalism itself as the colonists stopped thinking of themselves as English men fighting for their rights and started to think of themselves

¹²⁴ John D. Wilsey, *'American Exceptionalism And Civil Religion'* P.49

¹²⁵ Volker Depkat , *"American Exceptionalism"*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021). P 69-70

¹²⁶ "Volker Depkat , *"American Exceptionalism"*, Pp xvii

¹²⁷ Ian Tyrrell, *'American Exceptionalism A New History of an Old Idea'* (Chicago:The University of Chicago Press, 2021), p.47

more as a new nation, the American nation, that was up to defend the natural rights of man and more in touch with the notion of a progressive future than a religious past.¹²⁸

Thomas Paine's call for independence in his famous pamphlet 'Common Sense' was the clearest articulation of exceptionalist principles in the revolutionary era. He declared 'self government and majority rule' as 'the only political order in keeping with human nature' and termed the struggle as not on an 'American cause' but 'the cause of mankind'.¹²⁹ For Paine American independence would serve three purposes; keep the colonies united, keep America 'uncontaminated by American corruption' and lastly establish an ideal state and society based on universal principles of enlightenment.¹³⁰

Paine's call was heeded to by his countrymen most of whom shared the sentiment to varying extents and America declared independence in 1776. The ensuing struggle against the British further retrenched the political ideas of the revolutionists in public mind. The revolutionaries despite their internal rifts about the extent of limited government and federalism managed to come up with a new constitution in September 1788 to replace the articles of confederation which limited the role of a central government.¹³¹ This new constitution of the founding fathers enshrined the values of English common law, property rights, individual freedoms and Judeo-Christian values envisioning a nation unique in nature and destined to be exceptional.¹³²

¹²⁸ Volker Depkat , "*American Exceptionalism*", (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021). P 73-74

¹²⁹ Volker Depkat , "*American Exceptionalism*" P 75. "

¹³⁰ "Volker Depkat , "*American Exceptionalism*"P 75.

¹³¹ Dennis M .Spragg, '*America Ascendant The Rise Of American Exceptionalism*' (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), p.4

¹³² Dennis M .Spragg, '*America Ascendant*' p.4

Under George Washington and his talented Aide Alexander Hamilton American Exceptionalism continued to evolve and manifest itself in different shades of exemplar as well as missionary aspects. George Washington's decision to stay out of the British French war in 1793¹³³ highlighted the new republic's decision to stay out of European affairs. Whereas Hamilton writing in the 'Federalist Papers' proclaimed that it was the 'Manifest Destiny' of the now united colonies to become a continental nation, a great empire spreading from ocean to ocean with enough power and resources to control the whole continent and to dictate the terms of 'connection between the old and new worlds'.¹³⁴

1.2.2. Manifest Destiny and the Rise of Anglo-Saxon Identity

Manifest Destiny was the first point in the history of U.S where the exceptionalist idea of 'mission' led the U.S foreign policy.¹³⁵ This policy for territorial expansion was aimed at acquiring greater area more abundant in resources and to facilitate the immigration of Europeans¹³⁶ in order to populate the growing empire. This expansionism was portrayed as being based on right, duty and the God ordained mission to expand continentally, and gained impetus from U.S successes first in the American-Mexican war of 1846, the results of which led to a new confident phase for American Exceptionalism.¹³⁷ At the same time the Anglo-Saxon identity was on the rise and many in the U.S were becoming convinced of Anglo-Saxon superiority, owing to the successful march of Manifest Destiny.¹³⁸

¹³³ Dennis M .Spragg, 'America Ascendant' p.5

¹³⁴ Dennis M .Spragg, 'America Ascendant' p.5

¹³⁵ Ceaser, James W. "The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism", *American Political Thought*. (Spring 2012), Vol. 1 Issue 1, p. 16

¹³⁶ Ceaser, James W. "The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism", Pp.16-17.

¹³⁷ Ian Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism A New History of an Old Idea" (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), p.117

¹³⁸ Ian Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism A New History of an Old Idea" p.117-118

This Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism was however more cultural than racial, removed from the biological conception of race and more akin to a civilization versus barbarism discourse.¹³⁹ It reinvigorated a progressive interpretation of American role in the world, of spreading civilization as settlers armed with the ‘plough and rifle’ carried on the expansionist drive.¹⁴⁰ Thus Anglo-Saxon thought portrayed as constituting of liberty, rule of law, and freedom of thought that leads to innovation proved both to be an explanation and justification of westwards expansion.¹⁴¹

Referring to the annexation of Texas John L. O'Sullivan, termed it as the “fulfillment of manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by providence” in order to support the ever increasing number of immigrants.¹⁴² The increasing number of these migrants from different parts of Europe, some being of catholic faith added more cultural and religious diversity to the American national identity and American nationalism grew more civic than ethnic.¹⁴³ The defining character of American national identity was not even its being a nation of immigrants but a land of liberty and Republicanism, as Abraham Lincoln declared that for being an American one has to believe in the spirit of constitution and if they do their origins do not matter.¹⁴⁴

1.2.3. Abolition of Slavery and the Civil War

There remained, however a gross contradiction that not only questioned the U.S role as dispenser of liberty but also raised questions on the inclusiveness of its national character, that is the presence

¹³⁹ Ian Tyrrell, “*American Exceptionalism A New History of an Old Idea*” p.117-118

¹⁴⁰ Ian Tyrrell, “*American Exceptionalism A New History of an Old Idea*” p.120-121

¹⁴¹ Ian Tyrrell, “*American Exceptionalism A New History of an Old Idea*” p.120-121

¹⁴² Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, “*American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War*”, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), P.25

¹⁴³ Hilde Eliassen Restad, “Old Paradigms in History Die Hard in Political Science: US Foreign Policy and American Exceptionalism”, *American Political Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 61-62

¹⁴⁴ Hilde Eliassen Restad, “Old Paradigms in History Die Hard in Political Science” pp. 61-62

of slavery, which had continued to thrive in the Southern states despite the ban on slave importation by congress in 1804.¹⁴⁵ By 1861 the Southern states had a slave population of more than four million which they were not ready to negotiate on setting free, but the election of President Abraham Lincoln almost sealed the fate of slavery in 1860.¹⁴⁶ Slavery was ultimately abolished in 1865 by the thirteenth constitutional amendment and Lincoln freed all the slaves with emancipation order although America paid the price for correcting this historical injustice with its most destructive war i-e the Civil war between Northern and Southern States from 1861-65.¹⁴⁷ It can be said that although the Civil war was one of the most trying times for Exceptional America, it came out of the war, more stronger and yet more in line with the exceptionalist principles.

1.2.4. Monroe Doctrine

Another important milestone, without which the evolution of American Exceptionalism especially in its foreign policy context is incomplete, is the ‘Monroe Doctrine’. Articulated in a message to Congress from President James Monroe in 1823, the doctrine expressed a message to all the European powers that the American continent wasn’t open for colonization anymore and that any attempts at that would be viewed as unfriendly acts by the United States.¹⁴⁸ Monroe Doctrine was paradoxical in nature as it sought to bar further expansion of European powers into Asia but at the same time laid no such limitations on U.S itself¹⁴⁹ in fact asserting the U.S claim indirectly over the American continent. Monroe doctrine was both used as intended against foreign powers but it

¹⁴⁵ Dennis M .Spragg, “America Ascendant *The Rise Of American Exceptionalism*” (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), p.20

¹⁴⁶Dennis M .Spragg, “America Ascendant” p.23

¹⁴⁷ Dennis M .Spragg, “America Ascendant” p.23-25

¹⁴⁸ Jay Sexton, “*The Monroe Doctrine Empire and Nation In Nineteenth Century America*”, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012) , p.6-7

¹⁴⁹ Jay Sexton, ‘*The Monroe Doctrine*’ p.6-7

saw greater use as tool of internal politics and as a way of consolidating nationalism, a process which kept going on throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁰ Parties and statesmen often used it against one another and being in agreement with Monrovia thought was considered ‘politically correct’ to use a modern term.¹⁵¹

By 1890’s when the U.S had stretched from coast to coast and the ‘frontier’ was gone America went to war with Spain in 1898 and liberated their colonial possessions appropriating them for U.S itself.¹⁵² With the advent of a new century the U.S had an empire stretching beyond the American continent including Puerto Rico, Philippines, Hawaii, Cuba and Samoa.¹⁵³ The U.S also launched countless interventions in the Caribbean as well as South America, invoking Monroe doctrine most of the times leading to President Theodore Roosevelt making it an instrument of intervention in 1904.¹⁵⁴

1.3. American Exceptionalism in the 20th Century

President Theodore Roosevelt during his term from 1901 to 1909 laid a lot of groundwork for the US foreign policy in the new century. He had essentially inherited an ‘empire in the making’ with the US having acquired many overseas territories during the American Spanish war of 1898.¹⁵⁵ Roosevelt firmly believed in the missionary aspect of American Exceptionalism and increasing

¹⁵⁰ Jay Sexton, ‘*The Monroe Doctrine*’p.13

¹⁵¹ Jay Sexton, ‘*The Monroe Doctrine*’ p.13

¹⁵² Jeffrey D. Sachs, ‘*A New Foreign Policy Beyond American Exceptionalism*’ (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018,) P.31

¹⁵³ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, ‘*American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War*’, (New York: Palgrave, 2001.), P.25

¹⁵⁴ Jay Sexton, ‘*The Monroe Doctrine Empire and Nation In Nineteenth Century America*’, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), p.163

¹⁵⁵ Sidney Milkis, Theodore Roosevelt: Foreign Affairs, UVA Miller Center, <https://millercenter.org/president/roosevelt/foreign-affairs>, assessed 09-10-2023, 10:20 pm.

the international power and prestige of the U.S which is evident from his decisions like the construction of Panama Canal, his use for good offices to facilitate negotiations between Japan and Russia during the Russian-Japanese war as well as his famous ‘Corollary’ to the Monroe doctrine.¹⁵⁶

Theodore Roosevelt’s expansion of Monroe Doctrine came in 1904-1905 in his messages to Congress, in which he announced that in order to prevent European intervention in the affairs of American continent, the U.S will itself interfere in the affairs of its smaller neighbors to preempt such a scenario.¹⁵⁷ The situation arose from the blockade of Venezuela by European powers in response to a loan default. He was of the view that ‘chronic wrongdoing’ anywhere in world would require action from a ‘civilized nation’ and that a being a great free people, the Americans owed it to both themselves and the mankind to not cower in front of the evil powers¹⁵⁸. This rhetoric pretty much set the tone for US foreign policy in the next century.

1.3.1. The First World War and Wilsonian Influences: The birth of Liberal

Internationalism

The First World War can truly be termed as a watershed moment in the history of American Exceptionalism and foreign policy. It can be divided into two distinct parts from the American point of view, the era of neutrality and the era of US involvement in the war and both these phases saw the invocation of American Exceptionalism to rationalize the varied US response.¹⁵⁹ When the World War One broke out President Woodrow Wilson’s first call to his countrymen was to

¹⁵⁶ Sidney Milkis, Theodore Roosevelt: Foreign Affairs.

¹⁵⁷ Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (1905), <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/roosevelt-corollary>, assessed 09-10-2023, 10:40 pm.

¹⁵⁸Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (1905), <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/roosevelt-corollary>, assessed 09-10-2023, 10:40 pm.

¹⁵⁹Volker Depkat, “*American Exceptionalism*,” (London : Rowman & Littlefield, 2021). P 110-11

stay neutral in ‘thoughts and deeds’ through which he hoped to keep US out of the European conflict and spare the country the moral and material losses so it may eventually bring the belligerents to the table.¹⁶⁰

The war was a representation of all the ills of the old world like coercive governments, imperialism, barbarism and corruption, in the eyes of Wilson and many other Americans and they thought America would lose its moral sense of superiority if it got involved.¹⁶¹ Wilson managed to stick to his neutrality stance for a good two years and even got re-elected in 1916 for this very reason of keeping the US out of war.¹⁶² However it all changed after the Zimmerman telegram, from the German government to their ambassador in Mexico offering cooperation if Mexico started a war against the US.¹⁶³ The US had been involved in the war earlier at least commercially as American companies traded with Europe causing Germany to hit US shipping as a part of its submarine warfare campaign, however Wilson kept his posture of restraint while arming the US, as well as trying to get the warring parties to a compromise which resulted in the idea of league of nations.¹⁶⁴

America declared war on Germany on April 4, 1917 with a strong mandate backing the war declaration from both parties.¹⁶⁵ Once more the principles of American Exceptionalism were invoked to rationalize this decision. President Wilson defended the change of his neutral stance by saying that where the peace and freedom of the people of the world were involved, it was prudent

¹⁶⁰ Thomas M. Kane, ‘Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreignpolicy Machiavelli And American Unilateralism’, (New York, Routledge,2006) , P.76.

¹⁶¹Volker Depkat, “ *American Exceptionalism*,” P 111

¹⁶² Jeffrey D. Sachs, “*A New Foreign Policy Beyond American Exceptionalism*”, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), P.33

¹⁶³ Thomas M. Kane, ‘*Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreignpolicy Machiavelli and American Unilateralism*’ (New York: Routledge, 2006,), P.80.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas M. Kane, ‘*Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreignpolicy*’ “P.77-79.

¹⁶⁵ Dennis M .Spragg, ‘*America Ascendant The Rise Of American Exceptionalism*’ (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), p.50.

to let go of neutrality and act as the champions of the rights of mankind and freedom of nations in order to “make the world safe for democracy”.¹⁶⁶

Woodrow Wilson’s message to the congress was the course setter document on liberal internationalism, when it comes to U.S foreign policy stressing on American interest in spreading democracy and free economy globally.¹⁶⁷ The famous fourteen points of President Wilson regarding the post-war settlement are also evident of his liberal internationalist inclinations especially the ones concerning the establishment of League of nations, economic free trade, independence of nations and transparent diplomacy.¹⁶⁸ After the allied victory however President Wilson found his internationalist agenda to be a hard sell in Congress and could not get it to endorse the Treaty of Versailles, as his opponents kept invoking the same exceptionalist view point of American uniqueness and superiority to oppose him and the Post-war America sulked back into isolationism.¹⁶⁹

1.3.2. Inter-War Isolationism

The post-war decade was a period of economic affluence and international isolationism for the US marked by dollar diplomacy that saw America engage heavily in international commerce without entangling itself in the global politics of war and peace.¹⁷⁰ The US engagement not only involved a financial penetration but also the spread of American culture, material good and way of life

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-joint-session-congress-requesting-declaration-war-against-germany> assessed, October 9,2023 2:18 am.

¹⁶⁷ Volker Depkat , “*American Exceptionalism*”, (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).p. 112-113.

¹⁶⁸ The Text of Fourteen Points, President Woodrow Wilson, January 8, 1918, <https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/peace/fourteen-points>

¹⁶⁹ Thomas M. Kane, ‘Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreignpolicy Machiavelli and American Unilateralism’,(New York: Routledge, 2006), P.82-84.

¹⁷⁰ Volker Depkat , “*American Exceptionalism*”, (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), p 118.

leading to the ‘Americanization of Europe’¹⁷¹ On October 24,1929 stock market collapsed ushering in the era that came to be known later as ‘the great depression’ in the American history.

172

The decade of 1930’s proved to be very significant in determining the American fortunes during the 20th century. Franklin Delano Roosevelt got elected in 1932 owing to the failed policies of Herbert Hoover and the bad economic situation; he had promised to stay out of the League of Nations which garnered him the isolationist vote¹⁷³ Roosevelt set about countering the affects of the Great Depression with his economic program called the ‘New Deal’ which involved greater federal spending and the intervention of government in economy. Some scholars have termed the new deal as anti-exceptional since it was not in line with the idea of free market economy, nor was it unique as a lot of other governments adopted similar policies since the greater depression had gone global.¹⁷⁴ However the new deal enabled the US to assume the role of world leader again a few years later as US became both a bulwark of the free world and an example to be emulated in a world wrought with Fascism that arose as a reaction to economic hardships.¹⁷⁵

On the foreign policy front, initially the US stuck to its isolationist and non-confrontational approach and the US congress passed a series of ‘Neutrality Acts’ to avoid getting dragged into a war again.¹⁷⁶ However Roosevelt did believe in internationalism at some level and he often

¹⁷¹ Volker Depkat , “*American Exceptionalism*,” p 118.

¹⁷² Dennis M .Spragg, “*America Ascendant The Rise Of American Exceptionalism*” (University of Nebraska Press, 2019), p.74

¹⁷³ Thomas M. Kane, “*Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreignpolicy Machiavelli and American Unilateralism*” (New York: Routledge, 2006), P.84.

¹⁷⁴ Ian Tyrrell, “*American Exceptionalism A New History of an Old Idea*” (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 2021, p.193.

¹⁷⁵ Ian Tyrrell, “*American Exceptionalism*” p.193.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas M. Kane, “*Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreignpolicy Machiavelli and American Unilateralism*”(New York: Routledge,2006,), P.84.

combined the “Wilsonian Disposition with Theodore Roosevelt’s geopolitical nuance”¹⁷⁷. Despite sticking to the neutral stance Roosevelt gradually came to the understanding that US could not stand aloof while Europe slid towards another war. By the time World War Two erupted, the US had shifted its isolationist stance and was willing to aid the allies, based on the conviction that it was a war between democracy and totalitarianism.

1.4. The Second World War and Resurgence of Internationalism

President Roosevelt’s ‘fireside chats’ during the war period are indicative, not just of his liberal internationalist convictions but also the rise of interventionist, multilateral exceptionalism. He urged his countrymen to make America the “Arsenal of Democracy” and stand with the allies to save the civilization, so a still better civilization can be created in the future.¹⁷⁸ While elaborating on war aims of the U.S, he stated that the US was fighting to protect ‘four freedoms’ for all the people and nations of the world, which included freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear¹⁷⁹, in other words a democratic system of government and free economy, the tenets of American Exceptionalism.

Even before entering the war formally in December 1941, the US was serving well in its role as the arsenal of democracy. However US proved to be the most decisive factor in Allied victory after Pearl Harbor as the US and USSR with their sheer numbers and especially the industrial

¹⁷⁷ Alexander Florey Woolfson, ‘The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009’, thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, March 2012

¹⁷⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fireside Chat 16: On the "Arsenal of Democracy", December 29, 1940, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-29-1940-fireside-chat-16-arsenal-democracy>, assessed October 10, 2023 3.27 am.

¹⁷⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, State of Union "Four Freedoms Speech", January 6, 1941, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-29-1940-fireside-chat-16-arsenal-democracy>, assessed October 10, 2023 3.27 am.

capabilities of US turned the tide of war.¹⁸⁰ As the war ended the US emerged as the leader of a coalition that had gained victory at a great cost, Europe was in ruins and USSR had sustained great losses as well. Thus the only victor that was relatively unscathed was the US with its formidable economy and industrial base, a large and most well equipped military and an arsenal of nuclear weapons.¹⁸¹ US had everything it needed to mould the world into an image of its choice.

In the same manner as WW1, there was an internal debate in the US again on whether to stay engaged or get back to isolationism however this time both parties chose to stay on as the invested hegemon and create an international order based on international institutions and get the others to join it with a promise of rewards.¹⁸² This decision had the majority public opinion behind it as by 1945 about 71% Americans believed that in the interest of a better American the country should play an active role in world affairs.¹⁸³ President Roosevelt's vision of a new international order and the United Nations included Theodore Roosevelt's concept of the world being managed by the four policemen, US, USSR, Britain and China, however that did not come to pass as only two of these states were left in a position to act as a hegemon.¹⁸⁴

Roosevelt had cultivated USSR throughout the war and the extension of lend-lease agreement to USSR was very much indicative of his intention to keep the alliance with USSR alive in the post-

¹⁸⁰ R.D. Hooker, Jr., "The Grand Strategy of the United States", INSS Strategic Monograph, (Washington, D.C: National Defense University Press, October 2014). P.7

¹⁸¹ R.D. Hooker, Jr., "The Grand Strategy of the United States", P.7

¹⁸² Kori Schake, "American Dominance of the International Order", in '*American Exceptionalism in a New Era Rebuilding the Foundation of Freedom and Prosperity*', ed. Thomas W. Gilligan, (California: Hoover Institution Press, 2017), P.103

¹⁸³ Trevor B. McCrisken, "*American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam*". (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), P.22

¹⁸⁴ Alexander Florey Woolfson, 'The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009', thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, March 2012, P.88

war world.¹⁸⁵ The Atlantic charter that was based on the four freedoms endorsed the core American values like free trade, collective security, democracy and rights of nations and Stalin signed that in 1945 affirming his support for the US role in reconstruction of Europe.¹⁸⁶ However Stalin doubted the American strategy of unconditional surrender and feared that it would apply to the USSR as well and the happenings in the US didn't help the situation either as the narrative of America's global leadership took root in the minds of American public.¹⁸⁷

1.5. American Exceptionalism during the Cold War

Despite the successful constitution of the UN along the lines of American values and USSR's participation, fissures soon appeared between the two dominant powers due to their ideological as well as geopolitical differences. The US looked poised for global leadership where as the USSR started consolidating its new found power and dominance by installing 'client regimes' from East Germany to Poland and Hungary as well as Czechoslovakia as it looked ambitiously towards Greece and Turkey.¹⁸⁸ The remaining doubts were cleared when the Soviet foreign minister Molotov openly declared the western democracies as enemies.¹⁸⁹

The American values were under threat once again and the American Exceptionalism acquired a new meaning once again. It wasn't a question of isolationism or engagement anymore as the US did not have that option. If the American way of life and its national values had to be protected in the new world of ideological contestation it would have to be done by engagement not isolation.

¹⁸⁵ Alexander Florey Woolfson, 'The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009' P.98

¹⁸⁶ Alexander Florey Woolfson, 'The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009' P.98

¹⁸⁷ Alexander Florey Woolfson, "The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009" P.98-99

¹⁸⁸ Thomas M. Kane, 'Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreign policy Machiavelli and American Unilateralism', (New York: Routledge, 2006), P.89.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas M. Kane, "Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreign policy" P.89.

The exceptionalist thought lent a hand to the framers of Foreign policy once again and American Exceptionalism now meant the US as a nation chosen by destiny had to protect the values of liberal democracy, free economy and capitalism from the rising threat of Soviet communism, this time by going out in the world and engaging with other countries. The US had to act quickly and act it did.

1.5.1. Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan

As a response to the request for assistance by Greece and Turkey, President Truman, while trying to convince a skeptical Congress gave his famous speech of March 12, 1947 highlighting the salient features of his administration's foreign policy which came to known later as the 'Truman Doctrine'. He declared the US policy as the leader of the free world of helping the democratic nations that were under threat from coercion and foreign pressures, thus setting the tone for the future contestation between US and USSR, two super powers vying for ideological dominance in a cold war.¹⁹⁰ The Truman doctrine marked a shift in the US foreign policy and linked the US national security to international security while expanding the US grand strategy to a global level¹⁹¹, thus charting a course for American Exceptionalist behavior that would endure for a long time.

The Truman Doctrine was further cemented by another foreign policy initiative, The Foreign Assistance and Economic Cooperation acts, which collectively came to be known as the Marshall Plan.¹⁹² This plan entailed the grant of financial assistance to the states of Europe, ravaged by the

¹⁹⁰ President Harry S. Truman's address before a joint session of congress, March 12, 1947, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp, assessed October 13, 2023,3:36am

¹⁹¹ Alexander Florey Woolfson, 'The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009', thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, March 2012, P.120-121

¹⁹² Dennis M .Spragg, "*America Ascendant The Rise Of American Exceptionalism*" (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), p.293-296

Second World War, and the USSR as well as its satellite states were invited to join the plan as well but rejected terming it as an effort by US to intervene in Europe using its economic power, thus deepening the divide further.¹⁹³ The Marshall plan further expanded the idea of exceptionalism from a confrontational policy to a moral calling for the US to help those in need¹⁹⁴ building its image as the global leader and savior of nations. Both these initiatives signaled another exceptionalist approach, of going it alone as the US did while it sought to shape a new international order. The cold war dynamics of the US foreign policy had taken their full form by then.

During the cold war era the rhetoric of exceptionalism was invoked by almost all of the presidents and the U.S adhered firmly to the containment principles of the Truman doctrine while trying to avert nuclear war with the USSR. The containment policy was a success in Europe with the successful establishment of NATO and the Marshall plan however it had a rather bumpy ride in Asia¹⁹⁵ where the US had to fight two costly wars in Korea and Vietnam that not only eroded its economic resources but also its credentials as an exceptional nation and leader of the world's nations.

Korean War erupted on June 24, 1950 with the North Korean invasion of South Korea and the US intervened in line with the containment policy of Truman Doctrine¹⁹⁶ President Truman invoked American Exceptionalism once again and claimed the actions of US government as being in accordance with moral principles¹⁹⁷, and for the protection of liberty and democracy although they

¹⁹³ Dennis M .Spragg, *'America Ascendant'* p.293-296

¹⁹⁴ Dennis M .Spragg, *'America Ascendant'* p.293-296

¹⁹⁵ Henry Kissinger, *"World Order"*,(New York: Penguin Press, 2014), P.175

¹⁹⁶ Trevor Mccrisken, *"American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1974"*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) , P.24-25

¹⁹⁷ Trevor Mccrisken, *"American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam"*, P.24-25

had strategic compulsions in mind too. In case of Korean War the US secured international legitimacy for its actions as the UN committed itself to restoring the sovereignty of South Korea.¹⁹⁸

The US came out of Korea relatively better than the other sides, although it had lost the invincible image and the Asian revolutionaries had learned that the US can be forced to back down if drawn in a protracted conflict as the public support is there only for a while¹⁹⁹, a strategy that has since been used again and again.

President Kennedy proved to be another staunch Exceptionalist who had a firm belief in the exceptional values as well as the need to export them to the world. He was particularly influential in keeping American Exceptionalism alive and thriving in the public mindset. He announced his administration's policy to go to any lengths and pay any price to protect liberty and reiterated the 'city on the hill' approach with a conviction that American actions had divine blessing.²⁰⁰ The national consensus on exceptionalism and the American mission that Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy had built and upheld was soon tested by the Vietnam War and succumbed to its rigorous grind.

1.5.2. The Spectre of Vietnam

The US had been involved in Vietnam since 1954 helping the French and even Kennedy had contemplated going all in, but the true escalation came during President Johnson's administration²⁰¹ after the assassination of Kennedy. President Johnson also rationalized his

¹⁹⁸ Gregg A. Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), p.48

¹⁹⁹ Henry Kissinger, *World Order*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), P.175

²⁰⁰ Trevor McCracken, *American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1974*, (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2003) , P.24-25

²⁰¹ Henry Kissinger, *World Order*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), P.175

decision in the light of American Exceptionalist principles announcing that the US sought no territory, nor to dictate its will on the Vietnamese but to protect the liberty of Vietnamese.²⁰²

The Vietnam War proved to be the costliest war for the United States, more in terms of prestige than resources. The US lost fifty eight thousand men and suffered a loss of 155 billion dollars²⁰³ along with many intangible assets including the almost unanimous public belief in American Exceptionalism and the national consensus that had backed its foreign policy till Johnson's intervention. The US had neither the legitimacy of UN backing as it had in Korea nor did it have the public consensus to support its decisions, moreover the use of weapons like napalm and phosphorous bombs as well as other atrocities like the Mai Lai massacre of 1968 badly damaged the moralistic claims of US.²⁰⁴

The protraction of war led to a massive anti-war movement and large protest demonstrations in the US as the American public questioned the claims of their government which indicated a faltering belief in the exceptional mission amongst the American people.²⁰⁵ By the time American forces withdrew from Saigon in 1975 and the US lost its first war, the public had realized that they could not trust their leaders²⁰⁶ and that the US was not that exceptional after all, leading Daniel Bell to proclaim the end of American Exceptionalism.²⁰⁷ American Exceptionalism did not end however and was soon to re-emerge both in the spheres of foreign policy as well as public discourse.

²⁰² Trevor Mccrisken, *"American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1974"*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) P.25

²⁰³ Trevor Mccrisken, *"American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam"* P.26

²⁰⁴ Trevor Mccrisken, *"American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam"* P.26-29

²⁰⁵ Henry Kissinger, *"World Order"*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2014) P.177-178

²⁰⁶ Trevor Mccrisken, *"American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1974"*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) P.33.

²⁰⁷ Trevor Mccrisken, *"American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam"* ,P.26.

However the decade of 1970's was an era of retrenchment for the US and exceptionalism and its expression took a back seat for a while as the Nixon administration sought to further strengthen Détente with the USSR with varying expectations ranging from containment, to getting the Soviets to adopt US ideas of 'legitimate international behavior' to achieving peace (instead of victory).²⁰⁸ Exceptionalism saw its national revival under the administration of Jimmy Carter²⁰⁹ who, despite being criticized for his weak foreign policy was influential in determining the course of Reagan's booming exceptionalism.

Carter's foreign policy approach was more centered on morality and human rights, economy as well as nuclear disarmament.²¹⁰ Under Carter the US government with Congressional backing made 'Human Rights' a key agenda and determinant of its foreign relations resulting in the US withholding aid and weapons from states it considered violators of human rights ultimately leading to US interventions based on human rights issues later on under Reagan and his successors.²¹¹ Carter, although he was more oriented towards human rights and influencing the international order than the super power competition, did act at critical junctures to counter Soviet expansion as is evident from his reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan where he took the position to assist the resistance.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Alexander Florey Woolfson, 'The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009', thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, March 2012, P.152-154

²⁰⁹ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, "*American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War*", (New York: Palgrave, 2001) P. 30

²¹⁰ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, "*American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy*" P. 30

²¹¹ Catherine V. Scott, '*Neoliberalism and U.S. Foreign Policy From Carter to Trump*', (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.) P 5-7

²¹² Henry Kissinger, "*World Order*", (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), P.182

1.5.3. Ronald Reagan and the Rebirth of American Exceptionalism

American Exceptionalism had its real rebirth under President Ronald Reagan who not only adopted a foreign policy guided by exceptionalism but also restored the nation's confidence in it. Reagan got elected at a time when the nation's confidence in Exceptionalism was low owing to stagflation in economy and American foreign policy failures like the Iran hostage crisis and Soviet capture of Afghanistan, which had forced many to think that the Soviet-US rivalry was permanent and the chances of US triumph were distant.²¹³ Reagan however was an ardent believer in Exceptionalism and was able to convince the American people too. Reagan knew of American strengths and used them well as he embarked on his quest to beat the Soviet Union.

He engaged the USSR in an arms race which they could ill afford and made them see the futility of it with the sheer use of America's economic and industrial might contributing to the hastening of the fall of Soviet Union.²¹⁴ Reagan was a gifted orator and used his speeches to great effect in redeeming the public confidence in America's singularity as a supreme power and the flag bearer of what is just and moral.²¹⁵ He's especially famous for his 'city on the hill' speech portraying the US as a country which is an example for the world, strong, rich and pluralistic while being open to the world.²¹⁶ He was successful in establishing a moral distinction between US and USSR in

²¹³ Thomas M. Kane, *Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreign policy Machiavelli and American Unilateralism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), P.145

²¹⁴ Henry Kissinger, *World Order*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), P.184.

²¹⁵ Ian Tyrrell, *American Exceptionalism A New History of an Old Idea* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021,) p.222.

²¹⁶ Ronald Reagan, 'Farewell address to The Nation', January 11, 1989.
<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/farewell-address-nation>

the American mind once again painting the Soviets as embodiment of evil and openly calling on them to “tear down the wall”.²¹⁷

The wall did come down in November 1989 leading to German reunification, amidst a wave of revolutions that swept Eastern Europe starting from Poland and engulfing Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and others.²¹⁸ This wave of revolutions and the succeeding fall of USSR can be attributed to many internal and external factors, but one undeniably major contribution was from Mikhail Gorbachev and his reformist policies that ultimately led to a unipolar world.²¹⁹ President George H.W. Bush was at the helm of affairs in US then and with some hesitation decided to end the cold war. The end of cold war practically came with the Malta summit between these two leaders, where the US communicated that they no longer considered USSR a threat and offered them participation and MFN status under GATT, and in exchange the Soviets promised to help US end cold war conflicts in South America and Asia.²²⁰

1.6. American Exceptionalism in the Post Cold War Period

Following these developments Bush was soon talking about exceptionalism and constructing a ‘new world order’.²²¹ He talked of freedom, peace, democracy, free governments and free markets

²¹⁷ Annelise Anderson, “Ronald Reagan and American Exceptionalism”, in *American Exceptionalism in a New Era Rebuilding the Foundation of Freedom and Prosperity*, ed. Thomas W. Gilligan, (California: Hoover Institution Press, 2017) P.103

²¹⁸ R.E.Powaski, “Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump” , (Cham: Springer Nature, 2019.) P. 19-20

²¹⁹ R.E.Powaski, *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy* “ P. 19-20

²²⁰ R.E.Powaski, *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy* “P. 19-21.

²²¹ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, “American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War” (New York: Palgrave, 2001) P. 64.

in an exceptionalist fashion as he floated his program for a new global order.²²² He used the Wilsonian language of UN and ‘collective security’ as he organized the invasion of Iraq during the first Gulf War.²²³ Bush adhered to many of the exceptionalist ideals especially of the Wilsonian kind, despite being a realist, be it the Gulf War where he amassed a coalition of states as well as going through the UN or his signing of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change or his order to send troops into Somalia to deliver aid, which in his opinion was using power to save innocent lives’.²²⁴ To his biggest credit Bush formally ended the cold war cleaning its debris without bloodshed and ushered the US from a bipolar to a unipolar world while sticking to many of the classic American ideals. Bush’s work of creating a new world order for a unipolar world sans ideological conflict fell to William Jefferson Clinton who beat Bush in the presidential elections of 1992 opposing his exceptional foreign policy rhetoric with a domestic crisis agenda focused on economy.²²⁵

1.6.1. Bill Clinton and American Exceptionalism

Clinton inherited a foreign policy based on Bush’s internationalist rhetoric coupled with realist moderation and caution, and initially continued with it though he later charted a course based on a different view of American Exceptionalism.²²⁶ Clinton’s Exceptionalism was more geo-economic, dynamic and competitive whereas Bush had been more about geo-politics and the establishment

²²² Quoted in Alexander Florey Woolfson, ‘The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009’, thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, March 2012, P.167

²²³ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “*Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump*”, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). P.125

²²⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “*Do Morals Matter?*” P.126-129.

²²⁵ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, “American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War”, (New York: Palgrave, 2001) P. 114.

²²⁶ Thomas M. Kane, “*Theoretical Roots Of Us Foreignpolicy Machiavelli and American Unilateralism*” , (New York: Routledge,2006), P.124.

of a new international order to ensure stability in a post cold war world.²²⁷ However in both cases a select multilateralism coupled with institutionalism was featured to considerable degree.

Clinton's early expressions of his foreign policy thought show both an endorsement of the Bush era policy and his reiteration for the old call for upholding the American international leadership.²²⁸

Clinton's foreign policy doctrine also drew inspiration from Francis Fukuyama's "End of History", reflected in his 'enlargement' of democracy through international engagement policy.²²⁹ Clinton however was more concerned with the economic side of US international leadership as is evident from his policy on North American Free Trade Agreement and similar measures, pushing for which he warned against isolationism and protectionism.²³⁰ Clinton also led US efforts with IMF to help the Asian countries during the economic crisis of 1997, especially engaging with China, whom he wished along with Russia to join the liberal economic order.²³¹ On the institutional front Clinton developed NAFTA and WTO, expanded NATO and got Russia included in G-8.²³²

Clinton's Exceptionalist credentials are well evident from another foreign policy phenomenon under his administration i-e Humanitarian interventions. Starting off with the failure in Somalia followed by successes in Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo, Clinton intervened militarily in order to protect not only US interests but also avoid humanitarian crises, a purpose which he could not always achieve and was heavily criticized for at times for instance his failure to act and intervene

²²⁷ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, "American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War", (New York: Palgrave, 2001), P. 158.

²²⁸ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, "American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy" P. 120-121.

²²⁹ Timothy J. Lynch, "In The Shadow Of The Cold War American Foreign Policy from George Bush Sr. To Donald Trump", (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), P.14-15

²³⁰ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, "American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War" (New York: Palgrave, 2001), P. 125-126.

²³¹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump", (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). P.138.

²³² Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Do Morals Matter?" P.142.

in Rwanda during the Rwandan genocide.²³³ Another key milestone for Clinton was the signing of Oslo-Accords between the PLO and Israel in 1993 and the subsequent developments before the assassination of Yitzhak Robin, who was close to achieving a comprehensive peace deal, which did not achieve long term peace but did cement US credentials as a mediator.²³⁴ Clinton has been criticized for not doing enough to counter terrorism during his term and his lack of considerable success against Al-Qaeda which he did not ignore but acted against when he was going through a rough patch of public criticism thus making his intentions seem suspicious.²³⁵

1.7. American Exceptionalism in the 21st Century: G.W Bush and Messianic Exceptionalism

At the turn of a new century another Bush got to the White House and a whole new epoch of global history especially in foreign policy terms followed in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Initially President Bush was in favour of countering the threat emanating from weapons of mass destruction; go tough on North Korea, but ‘showing purpose without arrogance and power without bluster’ based on strong values but stated in a humble tone.²³⁶ He did not take long to invoke exceptionalism and was soon talking about American faith in freedom and democracy and its propagation to the world as well as divine guidance and its influence on US foreign policy.²³⁷ The

²³³ R.E.Powaski, “*Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*”, (Cham: Springer Nature, 2019.) P. 60-97.

²³⁴ R.E.Powaski, “*Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy*” P. 89-90.

²³⁵ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “*Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump*”, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). P.141.

²³⁶ Alexander Florey Woolfson, ‘The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009’, thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, March 2012, P.226.

²³⁷ Misha Desai, “The Greatest Nation on Earth’: The Different Types of American Exceptionalism Articulated in Presidential Rhetoric” (paper, Department of History Lund University, Lund, 2014), <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOid=4451946&fileOid=4451949>

war on terror however, had a profound effect on the notion of American Exceptionalism as adopted by G.W. Bush. The Bush era exceptionalism was pointedly different from what his two predecessors had believed in and used as state rhetoric. The Bush era was more about Unilateralism, preventive wars, extensive use of military might to alter the world to American liking and going it alone at times with a clear disregard for international institutions.²³⁸

The strands of Exceptionalism that Bush invoked most were the messianic and global ones, using the rhetoric of divine destiny of US as the harbinger of freedom and democracy and firm belief in US military and economic power to be used to secure national security as well as global leadership.²³⁹ President Bush engaged US in two of its lengthiest and costliest wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as a part of his global war on terror, the first one gaining more legitimacy than the second as no WMDs were found in Iraq and the human rights abuses did not do good to the US image as a dispenser of freedom and human rights. Thus Bush followed the neoconservative school and pursued the spread of democracy as well as keeping the status of global hegemonic role indefinitely at both of which he had limited success.²⁴⁰

1.7.1. Barack Obama and American Exceptionalism

G.W Bush was succeeded by President Barack Obama at a critical juncture in American history, his election itself marking a milestone as he was the first President of color. Barack Obama's

²³⁸ R.E.Powaski, *“Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump”*, (Cham: Springer Nature, 2019). P. 133-150.

²³⁹ Misha Desai, “The Greatest Nation on Earth’: The Different Types of American Exceptionalism Articulated in Presidential Rhetoric” (paper, Department of History Lund University, Lund, 2014), <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=4451946&fileId=4451949>

²⁴⁰ Alexander Florey Woolfson, ‘The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009’, thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, March 2012, P.232-235.

exceptionalism can best be termed as a mix bag. He believed in multilateralism, active engagement and use of soft power although he never budged away from asserting and defending US hegemonic role as the global leader. He was more in favour of multilateralism but clearly stated that he believed in unilateral action if necessary to uphold American dominance or national security albeit with due regard for Human rights.²⁴¹ He also believed firmly in international legal order however supported the US right to use force too whenever deemed necessary.²⁴²

President Obama conceptualized US leadership role as more of catalyst and agenda setter instead of a hegemonic controller, stressing more on multilateralism.²⁴³ One of the earliest crises faced by President Obama was the global recession which he countered by using the economic might of the US in the form of a massive spending bill at home and by forming a coordinated response of international allies and partners at a global level.²⁴⁴ President Obama was also relatively more successful in the global war on terror front as managed to withdraw from Iraq, got Osama bin Laden and oversaw a surge followed by a draw down in Afghanistan.²⁴⁵ Two other foreign policy successes especially in the realm of exceptionalism were the JCPOA deal with Iran that displayed the success of U.S acting in concert with international partners for global peace and the Paris Climate Accord of 2015.²⁴⁶ Obama also carried on with the humanitarian interventions through US involvement in Libya and limited military action in Syria. The quest to retain hegemony also

²⁴¹ Miloš Hrnjaz, Milan Krstić, “Obama’s Dual Discourse on American Exceptionalism”, CIRR XXI (73) 2015, Pp.25-56.

²⁴² Miloš Hrnjaz, Milan Krstić, “Obama’s Dual Discourse on American Exceptionalism”, Pp.25-56.

²⁴³ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “*Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump*”, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). P.161.

²⁴⁴ Timothy J. Lynch, “*In The Shadow Of The Cold War American Foreign Policy from George Bush Sr. To Donald Trump*”, (New York: Cambridge University Press), 2020, P.184.

²⁴⁵ R.E.Powaski, ‘Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump’, (Cham: Springer Nature, 2019). P. 165

²⁴⁶ R.E.Powaski, “*Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*”, P. 225

saw the US adopt a more confrontational policy towards China titled the ‘Pacific Pivot’, also a brain child of President Obama.²⁴⁷

1.7.2. The Advent of Donald J Trump

The 2016 elections saw the rise of a new political phenomenon in American history with the election of Donald J. Trump, a political novice without any administrative experience and a hard line stance on various foreign policy as well as domestic issues that challenged the long established values and convictions that most presidents had held dear. Donald Trump was the reaction of American public against what they perceived to be corrupt career politicians. Trump’s world view entailed a profit loss calculus based on his business experiences leading him to oppose excessive U.S spending on foreign policy commitments, most of which emanate from the doctrine of American Exceptionalism. Therefore he set about on a populist campaign based on nationalistic slogans like ‘make America great again’ and ‘America first’.

1.8. American Exceptionalism: A Critical Appraisal

American Exceptionalism has been a controversial ideology for the most part of its history and has found its supporters and detractors both at home and abroad especially after America’s rise as a super power. Like most other national ideologies Exceptionalism has been interpreted differently at different times by different people in line with their political and social leanings causing polarization within the American society leading at times to the entrenchment of non-progressive beliefs that do not coincide with the needs of this modern era. On the foreign policy front American

²⁴⁷ Timothy J. Lynch, “*In The Shadow Of The Cold War American Foreign Policy from George Bush Sr. To Donald Trump*”, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), P.184.

Exceptionalism has shaped foreign policy choices American Exceptionalism has had both positive and negative impacts upon the world depending upon how it has been conceptualized and used. When balanced with International law, respect for international institutionalism and cultural sensitivity it has proved to be a force for good.²⁴⁸ However, the unilateral application of American Exceptionalism has often led to global resentment and unintended consequences²⁴⁹. It has also been used to rationalize foreign policy actions that have proved detrimental to the world peace resulting in outcomes that negate the very ideals which the US espouses overtly. As with other meta-narratives, American Exceptionalism is a really malleable concept that can be used to justify almost anything even slavery due to its Anglo Saxon origins.²⁵⁰

The Exceptional belief has led to a situation where ‘national chauvinism has evolved into a religion’.²⁵¹ The increased framing of political rhetoric in Exceptionalist terms although its mostly a recent phenomenon has brought forth the exceptional polarization that has always been characteristic of American society. The polarization existing between democrats and conservatives, Red and Blue states, the more traditional and modern sections of the society and exclusivist and pluralistic is very well pronounced in the US in fact more than most countries of the western world. The liberals with their interpretation of Exceptionalism are closer to the rest of the western world and other European countries in following liberal internationalism while the conservatives have increasingly tilted towards xenophobia, anti-intellectualism, Christian

²⁴⁸ Saira Nawaz Abbasi, Senior Assistant Professor of International Relations, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, Bahria University Islamabad, Interview by the Author, August 3, 2024.

²⁴⁹ Syed Aleem Gillani, Assistant Professor of International Relations, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, Bahria University Islamabad Interviewed by the Author, August 6, 2024.

²⁵⁰ Volker Depkat, Professor of British and American Studies, University of Regensburg, Germany, in discussion with the Author, August 6, 2024.

²⁵¹ Mugambi Jouet, “*Exceptional America*”,(California: University of California Press, 2017),. P.19.

fundamentalism and an anti-multilateral approach towards global politics.²⁵² Both of these groups rationalize their points of view in terms of Exceptionalism.

On the home front the conservatives who are Republicans by party affiliation push for policy decisions that are non-progressive and out of sync with the image of ‘Shining city upon the hill.’ The US has plethora of ghastly problems like racial inequality, gun violence, xenophobia, large prison population, rich-poor divide and is probably the only western country where issues like universal healthcare, abortion rights and gun regulation are still being debated. Most of these issues are rooted deeply in American history and Exceptionalism and are framed in these terms to stoke political polarization and make reforms very difficult if not impossible by the Republicans. The Democrats who are mostly professing liberal internationalism, ideals of human rights and pluralism also frame their rhetoric in Exceptional terms but have not been as successful in implementing reforms due to system constraints, the constitutional structure and socioeconomic realities.

On the foreign policy front, there is a stark difference between what is preached and what is actually practiced by the United States. American Exceptionalism has had its positive implications for the world politics starting with Woodrow Wilson’s idea of establishing the League of Nations and an international system based on mutual cooperation, although it did not materialize as envisioned. After the Second World War the US assumed international leadership and was influential in creating a new rule based international order. Under President Franklin Roosevelt and later under President Truman the US established the United Nations, the Bretton Woods system of international financial institutions and the UN agencies that had and continue to have a

²⁵² Mugambi Jouet, “*Exceptional America*”. Pp.14-31.

positive impact on the world.²⁵³ Yet this internationalism was also accompanied by the establishment of a security state²⁵⁴ and the US established the largest military machine to have ever existed in order to protect its military interests which for the period during Cold War meant containment of the USSR and were later redefined to include many other agendas like expansion of NATO, strategic competition with China and Russia as well as maintaining control over key regions of the world pertaining to energy security and access to resources. The global presence of this military machine not only deters potential aggressors but also purportedly ensures equilibrium in international politics by thwarting the possibility of large scale conflicts.²⁵⁵

The foreign policy actions of the US often steeped in Exceptional rhetoric have often been found to be a cover for the protection of vested economic interests and serve the cause of military industrial complex. The US interventions and regime change operations are an example of that. The US role in ousting of Muhammad Mosadegh of Iran, interventions in Guatemala and Honduras as well as the interventions in the Middle East are glaring examples of it. the US war on terror which had the stated aim of promoting democracy and establishing peaceful democratic governments in Iraq and Afghanistan also served to propel the region towards perpetual insecurity instead of establishing peace or eradicating terrorism. Another dismal aspect of US exceptionalist foreign policy is the inherent hypocrisy which is evident from the US inaction and even US support for its own allies when they overtly work against the values of liberalism, democracy and human

²⁵³ Jeffrey D. Sachs, *“A New Foreign Policy Beyond American Exceptionalism”* (New York: Columbia University Press, , 2018) P.36

²⁵⁴ Jeffrey D. Sachs, *“A New Foreign Policy Beyond American Exceptionalism”* , Pp. 37-37.

²⁵⁵ Dr. Farhat Konain Shujahi, Assistant Professor of International Relations, Department of International Relations NUML, Islamabad, Interviewed by the Author, August 8, 2024.

rights. The unwavering support for the Israeli genocide being perpetrated against Palestinians is a case in point.

These endless wars being waged in the name of Exceptionalism have not only caused the US trillions of dollars as they are financed by deficit spending and an ever increasing public debt that makes up 74 percent of the national GDP now but have also resulted in a loss of reputation globally.²⁵⁶ As a country steeped in the ‘mythos of salvation’ the US has run off course by many a miles and needs to go back to the internationalist position while striving for multilateral cooperation if it wants to maintain its post WW2 leadership position.

1.9. Conclusion

In nutshell American exceptionalism as a constituent notion of American national identity has deep historical, political and religious roots and has been the staple of American world view throughout its existence. The ideology evolved during American history in response to external and internal events and has over the time gained great importance in the shaping of American foreign policy. throughout history internationalist as well as isolationist foreign policies have been rationalized using exceptional rhetoric and the different conceptions have waxed and waned depending on the status of the international system, internal social circumstances and the personality of leaders. The Post World War II period saw a consensus developing around liberal internationalism and American leadership of the international system involving multilateral elements at times until Donald Trump announced a break with this consensus while opposing exceptional notions that

²⁵⁶ Jeffrey D. Sachs, “*A New Foreign Policy Beyond American Exceptionalism*” (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018) P.42.

underpinned this consensus. How did Donald Trump challenge the notion of exceptionalism shall be the topic of discussion in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE TRUMPIAN CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

This chapter aims at analyzing the Trumpian opposition to the notion of American exceptionalism through an analysis of his rhetoric and foreign policy moves. The election of President Donald Trump in 2016 marked a victory for nationalist populism over the bi-partisan liberal internationalist consensus that had been a characteristic of US foreign policy since the end of Second World War. Donald Trump's election campaign saw him expressing his opposition to the notion of American exceptionalism which gained the attention of foreign policy experts and started a debate on the nature and consequences of such rhetoric, which carried on throughout his presidency. What Donald Trump opposed was not the notion of American greatness or the desire of international predominance but rather the liberal internationalist approach that had been the mainstay of US foreign policy since the Second World War. He opposed the costly international engagements and through his rhetoric rode a wave of popular discontent against globalization which underpinned liberal internationalism. This chapter analyzes the historical roots of Donald Trump's political position and his rhetoric and then takes account of his foreign policy actions that opposed certain constituent points of the exceptionalist notion.

2.1. The Trumpian Understanding of American Exceptionalism

American exceptionalism in its modern Wilsonian conception has dominated the US foreign policy making as well as its articulation for the most part of the twentieth century and has gained

a renewed impetus after the US triumph in the Cold War. This conception of Exceptionalism is centered on spreading liberal democratic ideas, international institutionalism, laissez faire economy and most importantly the pursuit for US supremacy in order to uphold the Liberal International Order, which it so meticulously crafted after the Second World War. American Exceptionalism has been the part and parcel of presidential rhetoric on foreign and domestic policies as well as a key theme in presidential debates, where candidates of both parties from Eisenhower to Clinton and Mitt Romney invoked Exceptionalism to rationalize their foreign policy programs.²⁵⁷ Donald Trump proved to be the first exception to this long established practice by challenging the very notion of American Exceptionalism.

Back in 2015, before the announcement of his candidacy, Donald Trump was questioned about his views on American Exceptionalism while attending a PAC, and to the surprise of many he frankly told the audience that he did not like the concept and he never had, arguing that America could only be exceptional if it were winning which, to him, it was not.²⁵⁸ To Trump, the reason for the United States not having victories anymore was the level of American engagement with the world pertaining to its responsibilities as a global leader and the protector of allied democracies which had resulted in an over-stretch and led to the US becoming the ‘dumping ground of everyone else’s problems’.²⁵⁹ Trump declared in his campaign book that the idea of US ‘greatness’ and its status

²⁵⁷ Hilde EliassenRestad, “Whither The “City Upon A Hill””? Donald Trump, America First, And American Exceptionalism”, Texas National Security Review: Volume 3, Issue 1 (Winter 2019/2020): p.76-77.

²⁵⁸ Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, “*Exceptional Me*”, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021), P.1-2.

²⁵⁹ Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, ‘*Exceptional Me*’, P.1-2.

as the leader of the world had vanished, mostly due to the bad policies of preceding administrations, both Democratic and Republican.²⁶⁰

2.2. America First: The Trumpian Rhetoric and American Exceptionalism

Over the course of his campaign and even after his inauguration Donald Trump steadily attacked the institutions of liberal democracy, the swamp as he referred to lobbies having an impact on establishment, international institutions, multilateralism and globalism, while emphasizing on a ‘transactional’ view of international relations prioritizing national interests in narrow terms.²⁶¹ Shunning the language of Pax Americana Trump declared in his acceptance speech as Republican candidate that Americanism will be his credo instead of Globalism.²⁶² The rhetoric of Donald Trump as both a candidate and president featured two key slogans, which were ‘Make America Great Again’ and ‘America First’. The first one he borrowed from Ronald Reagan promising to make the US more wealthy, secure and powerful and having greater global influence.²⁶³ The second slogan was ‘America First’ coincidentally named after a historic movement in American Politics during the inter-war period that embraced some very similar views to what Donald Trump professed, both rooted in populist nationalism.²⁶⁴

When Trump was asked about his opinion on when was the last time that the US enjoyed greatness, he gave a vague reply to the affect that it was the time when US had just won a war, was the

²⁶⁰ Donald J. Trump, “*Great Again: How To Fix Our Crippled America*”, (New York: Simon and Schuster, , 2015) , p.11-12

²⁶¹ Georg Löffmann, “ America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy”, *Survival*, 61:6, 2019, p. 115-138

²⁶² James Curran, “Americanism Not Globalism”: President Trump and The American Mission” *Lowy Institute* July 2018. P.4

²⁶³ Sharifullah Dorani, “*America In Afghanistan*”, (London :Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019) , P.197

²⁶⁴ John L. Campbell, ‘*American Discontent*’, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). P.21

greatest economic power and was not being pushed around.²⁶⁵ This could refer to either the period after the First World War, when the US was emerging as the leading world economy and an actual ‘America First’ movement was on centered on nationalism and calling for isolationist policies, or the period after the Second World War which most of Trump supporters and he himself would identify with; the US in the 1950’s and 60’s.²⁶⁶ Ironically this period of greatness was when the US used its strong economy to assert military and political hegemony globally by creating a liberal economic order based on international institutions like IMF, the World Bank, General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), NATO and Marshall Plan, which in turn led to even greater economic gains,²⁶⁷ a path to ‘greatness’ that Trump argued against in his wider rhetoric.

2.2.1. The Historical roots of ‘America First’

Donald Trump tried to rebrand the ‘America First’ slogan that became the key pillar of his presidency by disassociating from the original America first movement; however, it does have a long history of being invoked in American politics starting from Wilsonians in 1916 to Pat Buchanan in the 1990’s, mostly in campaigns calling for an isolationist foreign policy stance.²⁶⁸ Trumps America First shares many of its cultural and socioeconomic aspects with the campaign of Pat Buchanan, which was nationalist and protectionist in terms of economy and called for the preservation of white Christian America amidst a perception of a cultural war.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ John L. Campbell, ‘*American Discontent*’, P.21

²⁶⁶ John L. Campbell, ‘*American Discontent*’, P.21

²⁶⁷ John L. Campbell, ‘*American Discontent*’, P.21-24

²⁶⁸ James Curran, “Americanism Not Globalism”: President Trump and The American Mission” Lowy Institute July 2018. P.11.

²⁶⁹ Hilde EliassenRestad, “Whither The “City Upon A Hill”? Donald Trump, America First, And American Exceptionalism”, Texas National Security Review: Volume 3, Issue 1 (Winter 2019/2020): p.79-80.

The way Trump's 'America First' differs from its predecessors is that it is not rooted in 'proud isolationism' as in 1930's, rather it stems from the resentment that Trump felt at the thought of US being exploited by its allies.²⁷⁰ He was less concerned about the threat to cultural values and more about the economic aspects in which he thought America was losing. Similarly the original America Firsters were of the view that the US was already on the top and destined to dominate therefore it did not need to interfere in the affairs of a problem plagued world; contrarily Donald Trump believed that the US has been left far behind and is bound to drop further down unless it gets 'tough'.²⁷¹

2.2.2. Trumpian Rhetoric on American Foreign Policy

While elaborating on his 'America First' agenda in 2016, Donald Trump highlighted the problems of over-extension, the need for burden sharing by allies, regaining the lost US prestige and the need to get out of the nation building enterprise.²⁷² He vowed to put America first by openly declaring his opposition to international institutions and multilateralism, thus reducing American hegemony to mere economic and military supremacy instead of the notion that this supremacy was coupled with the 'indispensible' global leadership role as the defender of freedom and democracy.²⁷³ He declared, "I'm not running to be President of the world. I'm running to be President of the United States"²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ James Curran, "Americanism Not Globalism": President Trump and The American Mission" Lowy Institute July 2018. P.11.

²⁷¹ Stephen Wertheim, "Trump Against Exceptionalism" in '*Chaos In The Liberal Order*' ed. Robert Jervis, Francis J. Gavin, Joshua Rovner et al., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018). P.153-154.

²⁷² Georg Löffmann (2019) America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy, *Survival*, 61:6, P.119-121.

²⁷³ Georg Löffmann, "America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy", *Survival*, 61:6, 119-121.

²⁷⁴ Donald Trump's Speech on Jobs and the Economy, September 15, 2016, TIME, <https://time.com/4495507/donald-trump-economy-speech-transcript/> Assessed January 3, 2024 1.45 am.

Donald Trump's rejection of American Exceptionalism stemmed from his belief in a competitive world and a zero-sum take on international politics. He conceptualized the state of being exceptional, not as a God ordained position as has been the traditionalist view rather as a consequence of 'winning' in the international arena thus promising to make America exceptional by clinching victories.²⁷⁵ Trump conceded the notion of equality of states by accepting that any nation can become great by winning in contrast to the Exceptionalist view that reserves the greatness exclusively for the US and showed abhorrence for spreading democracy and liberalism by questioning the presumed right of the US to lecture others.²⁷⁶

Donald Trump's foreign policy views have been categorized differently by various experts and he has been termed an isolationist, a supporter of restraint, a Jacksonian and a nationalistic populist. A closer dissection of his rhetoric and policies reveals that some of these labels are misconstrued. Donald Trump has been put in the same bracket as the advocates of a restrained US foreign policy because of his stance to limit foreign engagements; however the core ideals of Trump doctrine, if it can be termed as such are different from the proponents of 'restraint'.²⁷⁷ While the advocates of restraint want minimal military engagement coupled with free trade, liberal immigration policies and increased diplomacy, Trump stood for protectionism, unilateralism and restricted immigration.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Stephen Wertheim, "Trump Against Exceptionalism" in *'Chaos In The Liberal Order'* ed. Robert Jervis, Francis J. Gavin, Joshua Rovner et al., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018). P.152-153.

²⁷⁶ Stephen Wertheim, "Trump Against Exceptionalism" P.152-153.

²⁷⁷ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, *'Fuel to The Fire'*, (Washington DC: CATO Institute, 2019), p.65.

²⁷⁸ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, *'Fuel to The Fire'*, p.65.

2.3. Key Features of Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Doctrine

Similarly Trump's refusal to engage with the world, especially in the classical US leadership role, his weariness of alliances, insistence on a nationalist economic agenda and his calls for the US to get out of the nation building enterprise led some to label him an isolationist. This label that does not stick if his policy decisions like going into war against ISIS, advocating for seizing Iraq's oil and picking on weaker adversaries are taken into account and some of his rhetoric was even neo-imperialist such as a suggestion to extract the resources of Afghanistan.²⁷⁹

2.3.1. Nationalist Populism

A key feature of Donald Trump's doctrine was nationalist populism which greatly influenced his campaign as well as his foreign policy decisions.²⁸⁰ Nationalist populism characteristically pits the common populace against the ruling elite and serves the purpose of articulating the emotional response of the common class against the dysfunctional political system dominated by elite while providing scapegoats to blame for the decay in the system using strong rhetoric.²⁸¹ In Trump's case these scapegoats were globalism, international institutions, the corrupt elite and the liberal international order which in his opinion had done more harm than good for the common American whose cause he proclaimed to champion.

2.3.2. Trump Doctrine and Jacksonianism

The Trumpian foreign policy drew greatly from a past tradition in the American foreign policy called Jacksonianism named after President Andrew Jackson that stressed populist values,

²⁷⁹ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, 'Fuel to The Fire' p.66-67.

²⁸⁰ Georg Löffmann, "America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy", *Survival*, 61:6, 2019, p. 115-138

²⁸¹ Robert C. Rowland, "*The Rhetoric of Donald Trump*", (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2021), .P.30-35

individualism, honor and increasing military might.²⁸² Donald Trump's rhetoric find many concurring themes with Jacksonian tradition especially his lack of belief in the US international leadership role however Trump's conception of limited engagement does not amount to the nationalist isolationism of Jacksonianism rather it is more closer to a unilateral approach followed by many presidents before as evident from his stance on Syria and the war against ISIS.²⁸³ Trump was willing to engage if the US had to gain something from an issue and ready to pass the buck to allies if it did not, which also resonated with his views on how allies should share the burden of security they enjoy.²⁸⁴

2.3.3. Trumpian World View

The Trumpian worldview boils down to a zero-sum transactionalism, Jacksonian nationalism and militarism, notions of honor and respect, all processed within an authoritarian mind.²⁸⁵ With this world view Donald Trump proceeded to challenge the notion of American Exceptionalism in his own unique manner. True to his Jacksonian views Trump could never doubt the American greatness, however he did question it's exceptionalism many a times directing his ire at the global leadership role as well as the self perceived uniqueness and moral superiority that have often been used to rationalize the national sense of mission. Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling in their analysis of Donald Trump's 'exploitation' of American Exceptionalism have concluded that

²⁸² Michael Clarke & Anthony Ricketts , "Donald Trump and American foreign policy: The return of the Jacksonian tradition", *Comparative Strategy*, 36:4, 2017 P/366-379, DOI:10.1080/01495933.2017.1361210

²⁸³ Michael Clarke & Anthony Ricketts, " Donald Trump and American foreign policy:"

²⁸⁴ Michael Clarke & Anthony Ricketts, " Donald Trump and American foreign policy:"

²⁸⁵ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, '*Fuel to The Fire*', (Washington DC: CATO Institute, 2019), p.76-91.

amongst John Kerry, Barrack Obama, Mitt Romney and Donald Trump, the last invoked American Exceptionalism the fewest times in his campaign speeches.²⁸⁶

2.3.4. Rejectionist Exceptionalism

In the same analysis the authors divided Exceptionalist rhetoric into four different types based on different connotations of it namely, superior, leader, model and singular that indicate the exemplar, missionary, Jacksonian and internationalist conceptions of Exceptionalism.²⁸⁷ Donald Trump mostly invoked the notion of superiority and singularity, when he did invoke exceptionalism and invoked just once the exemplar notion without ever invoking the leadership notion.²⁸⁸

Thus Donald Trump's take on Exceptionalism, to use Misha Desai's term can be categorized as 'Rejectionist Exceptionalism', whose adherents accept the uniqueness of US, its culture, history and its role in the world but do not accept the notion that the US is uniquely 'unique' rather a great nation like other great nations.²⁸⁹ In nutshell Donald Trump's challenge to American Exceptionalism was mostly at the liberal international order and the US role as a global leader. While his slogan of 'make America great again' may get some to think that Donald Trump actually championed the Exceptionalist idea as American greatness and hegemony is an intrinsic part of Exceptionalism, however a closer look reveals that Trump does not believe in the moral and ideational superiority of the US thus rejecting the 'exemplar' facet of exceptionalism and by adopting 'America First' he also challenged the liberal international leadership of US which has

²⁸⁶ Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, *'Exceptional Me'*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021). P.42-43

²⁸⁷ Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, *'Exceptional Me'* P.46

²⁸⁸ Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, *'Exceptional Me'* P.46

²⁸⁹ Misha Desai, "The Greatest Nation on Earth": The Different Types of American Exceptionalism Articulated in Presidential Rhetoric" paper, Department of History Lund University, Lund, 2014, <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOID=4451946&fileOID=4451949>

been the bedrock of American sense of moral mission in the 21st century.²⁹⁰ In this way Donald Trump rejected the underlying ‘master narrative of American exceptionalism’,²⁹¹ although he did use the idea for gaining political support many a times while molding it to his own convenience.

2.4. Trumpian Doctrine and Institutional Constraints

When a president assumes office, they get in a structure-agency relationship with the prevalent status-quo forces and their ability to affect the direction of policy change is dependent on a lot of different factors including strategic opportunities, knowledge of such opportunities and the ability to act accordingly.²⁹² President Trump faced the same conundrum and that is the reason for the apparent disconnect between his rhetoric and the policy choices he made during his term regarding certain aspects of his anti-exceptionalist agenda. The American foreign policy establishment managed to persuade Trump not to withdraw from NATO, keep on with security commitments to allies and the traditional policies about war on terror however he did bring about changes in terms of trade policies, immigration, multilateral treaty commitments, and engagement with international institutions²⁹³ and made both rhetorical and policy backed attacks on the liberal international order as well as other tenets of modern exceptionalist paradigm.

Despite lacking in power of persuasion due to his ‘low popular prestige’ and poor rapport with the establishment Donald Trump by virtue of vast executive power granted by the constitution to

²⁹⁰ Hilde EliassenRestad, “Whither The “City Upon A Hill””? Donald Trump, America First, And American Exceptionalism”, Texas National Security Review: Volume 3, Issue 1 (Winter 2019/2020): p.65.

²⁹¹ Hilde EliassenRestad, “Whither The “City Upon A Hill”?” p.65.

²⁹² Toby S. James, “The effects of Donald Trump ”, Policy Studies 2021, VOL. 42, NOS. 5–6, P.755–769 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2021.1980114>

²⁹³ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, ‘*Fuel to The Fire*’, (Washington DC: CATO Institute, , 2019), p.138-140.

presidents in terms of foreign policy was able to make major changes in the US foreign policy starting with an effort to dismantle Barack Obama's multilateralism that he despised.²⁹⁴

2.5. Trmpian Challenge to American Exceptionalism

Donald Trump's challenge to American exceptionalism was mainly focused on US leadership role, multilateralism, and international institutionalism, inclusivity of US society, the traditional position on human rights and the idea of American moral uniqueness.

2.5.1. Trump vs. Multilateralism

Trump's attack on multilateralism was centered on the US withdrawal from various international agreements including Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Trans Pacific Partnership, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which he renegotiated, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Universal Postal Union, United Nations Human Rights Council, JCPOA (the Iran nuclear deal), and the United Nations Global Compact on Migration.²⁹⁵ Apart from these major withdrawals Trump administration withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty 1987 in 2019, Treaty on Open Skies 1992 in 2020, Optional Protocol of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 in 2018, and New START 2010 in 2021.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Paul R. Viotti, *American Foreign Policy and National Security*, (New York: Cambria Press, 2020). P 206.

²⁹⁵ Sanja Arežina, "U.S.-China Relations Under the Trump Administration", *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2019. P. 296.

²⁹⁶ Oona A. Hathaway, "Reengaging on Treaties and other international agreements (Part i): President Donald Trump's Rejection of International Law" *Just Security*, October 02, 2020. <https://www.justsecurity.org/72656/reengaging-on-treaties-and-other-international-agreements-part-i-president-donald-trumps-rejection-of-international-law/>

2.5.2. On Trade Multilateralism

Donald Trump started with Obama negotiated Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and withdrew the US from it on his first day in office claiming it as being detrimental to US national interests.²⁹⁷ The TPP which was envisioned to expand US trade with the pacific states and also had protections for US farmers and producers was later reinvigorated by the eleven other members creating a free-trade zone that excluded the US.²⁹⁸ Trump's abandonment of TPP led gave a boost to Chinese growing confidence and its potential for creating more Sino-centric multilateral trade institutions.²⁹⁹ Trump termed NAFTA as the 'worst deal in history' and threatened to withdraw from it.³⁰⁰ He later renegotiated it as US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) in 2018 which did not bring anything more for the US than NAFTA would have³⁰¹ while coming at the at the expense of economic benefits for, partners especially Mexico which won't elicit confidence among states looking to conclude trade agreements with the US in future.³⁰²

Donald Trump's skepticism towards trade multilateralism wasn't confined to just a revision of these trade agreements, rather he sought to renegotiate any deals that brought in a deficit for the US in his protectionist vision even if it came at the expense of pushing allies away and endangering the liberal system of international trade. In 2018 while the Chinese

²⁹⁷ Paul R. Viotti, *American Foreign Policy and National Security*, (New York: Cambria Press, 2020). P 206.

²⁹⁸ Ronald E. Powaski *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*, (Palgrave MacMillan E-Book, 2019) P. 241.

²⁹⁹ Doug Stokes, "Trump, American Hegemony And The Future Of The Liberal International Order", *International Affairs* 94: 1, Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal Institute of International Affairs (2018), P.148.

³⁰⁰ Ronald E. Powaski *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*, (Palgrave MacMillan E-Book, 2019) , P. 241.

³⁰¹ Robert D. Blackwill, "Trump's Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem", Council Special Report No. 84, April 2019, council on Foreign Relations, p.61.

³⁰² Andrew Chatzky, James McBride, and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "NAFTA and the USMCA: Weighing the Impact of North American Trade", Council On Foreign Relations, Last updated July 1, 2020 8:00 am (EST), <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/naftas-economic-impact#chapter-title-0-3>

president Xi Jin Ping hosted the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit and reiterated his support for international free trade, Donald Trump rejected the G7 communiqué calling for upholding the rule based international order, imposed tariffs on US allies and insulted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau by calling him weak and dishonest.³⁰³ Trump imposed tariffs on almost all the key allies from European Union to Canada and Japan and strong armed others like South Korea into granting more concessions to the US not only inviting the ire of allies but resulting in the impositions of tariffs on the US itself.³⁰⁴

2.5.3. Abandonment of International Agreements and Treaty Commitments

Another facet of Donald Trump's anti-multilateral foreign policy was the abandonment of major international agreements and treaty commitment that not only threatened its international leadership role but eroded the trust of other states in US commitments especially US allies. The US withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA) was one such abandonment of treaty commitments. Trump withdrew the US from JCPOA in May, 2018 and imposed even stricter sanctions on Iran while urged by Israel and against the wishes of other parties to the treaty.³⁰⁵ While Donald Trump had his worries about the deal and experts pointed out some weaknesses in it, he had no alternate course of action in mind except an attack that'd be opposed by most allies, and the conditions he wanted Iran to meet were based on unrealistic expectations.³⁰⁶ Trump's going renegade in such a blatant fashion has

³⁰³ Joseph S. Nye, Jr, "The rise and fall of American hegemony from Wilson to Trump", *International Affairs* **95**: 1 (2019) 63–80

³⁰⁴ Robert D. Blackwill, "Trump's Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem", Council Special Report No. 84, April 2019, council on Foreign Relations, p.61-65.

³⁰⁵ Ronald E. Powaski 'Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump' (Palgrave MacMillan E-Book, 2019) P. 252.

³⁰⁶ Robert D. Blackwill, "Trump's Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem", Council Special Report No. 84, April 2019, council on Foreign Relations, p.41.

led many critics to question why would North Korea or any other state in a similar position trust the US in the future if they achieve such a deal.³⁰⁷

Another more impactful abandonment of treaty commitments was the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate accord, which made the US a willing pariah on the international stage and damaged its global leadership credentials greatly.³⁰⁸ This not only made China the global leader on climate change as the treaty continued to function in the absence of the US but also strengthened the view that the US was ‘withdrawing from the world’.³⁰⁹ Despite of the legal complications that barred Trump from nullifying the agreement provisions he still withdrew with the stroke of a pen and breach of International Law would have long term affects especially when the US tries to hold others accountable for binding treaty provisions.³¹⁰ US also withdrew from the e Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration enacted by the UN to help with orderly movement of migrants as well as becoming the first country to withdraw from the Human Rights Council under Trump’s watch.³¹¹

2.5.4. Leadership Role and International Institutions

The post-war conception of American Exceptionalism is rooted in the concept of the US as a leader of a global liberal order centered on democracy, liberal economy and international institutions. All three of these pillars came under a relentless attack from the Trump administration be it his

³⁰⁷ Ronald E. Powaski ‘*Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*’,(Palgrave MacMillan E-Book, 2019 P. 253.)

³⁰⁸ Michael Clarke & Anthony Ricketts (2017) Donald Trump and American foreign policy: The return of the Jacksonian tradition, *Comparative Strategy*, 36:4, 366-379, DOI:10.1080/01495933.2017.1361210

³⁰⁹ Robert D. Blackwill, “Trump’s Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem”, Council Special Report No. 84, April 2019, council on Foreign Relations, p.19

³¹⁰ Catherine Amirfar & Ashika Singh, “The Trump Administration and the “Unmaking” of International Agreements” *Harvard International Law Journal* / Vol. 59, Number 2, Summer 2018

³¹¹Thomas G Weiss, “The UN and Multilateralism under Siege in the “Age of Trump” *Global Summitry*, Volume 4, Issue 1, Summer 2018, Pages 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1093/global/guy013>

abhorrence for free trade, multilateralism or institutions. The Liberal International Order stands atop the institutions like NATO, WTO and the UN and a structure of strategic alliances which were conceptualized by post-war leaders as working under American leadership and protection. The Trump administration stayed at odds with most of these institutions while harboring revisionist ideas about long held strategic alliances.

While Trump's abhorrence for free trade is evident from his stance on multilateral trade agreements, the full scale of his assault on Liberal International order becomes clear with the administrations' policies on WTO, threats to leave the organization which the US played a major role in founding, and led for decades, and imposition of tariffs as a part of the 'trade war' strategy.³¹² Trump bypassed WTO rules and imposed tariffs on China, not waiting on its decision on a US complaint. Rejecting the WTO decisions that went against the US as an example of judicial over reach he also threatened to pull out of WTO calling it the worst trade deal of all times.³¹³ Appointments to the Appellate Body of the WTO were blocked by the US, the body that functions as the highest judicial forum on international trade, throwing the dispute resolution mechanism into a crisis of disfunctionality.³¹⁴ This represented an opportunity to China to tout itself as the upholder of international free trade and rule-based multilateral trading, a position that had historically belonged to the US.³¹⁵

³¹² Kristen Hopewell, "When the hegemon goes rogue: leadership amid the US assault on the liberal trading order", *International Affairs* 97: 4 (2021) 1025–1043

³¹³ Shalendra D. Sharma (2020) *Trump and the End of an Era? The Liberal International Order in Perspective*, *The International Spectator*, 55:3, 82-97 <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2020.1786927>

³¹⁴ Kristen Hopewell, "When the hegemon goes rogue: leadership amid the US assault on the liberal trading order", *International Affairs* 97: 4 (2021) 1025–1043

³¹⁵ Kristen Hopewell, "When the hegemon goes rogue" P.1025–1043

Donald Trump adopted a similar policy towards the UN that stood as the bedrock of the liberal international order since the end of WW2. His views in this regard are also rooted in his disdain for internationalism, multilateralism and global institutionalism, which stems from a realist worldview as he himself expressed about the inability of institutions in solving problems of a world based on nation states system, opining that nationalism is a better alternative.³¹⁶ He declared the UN as being unfriendly towards democracy, liberty and the United States itself³¹⁷ and expressed ire at costs US incurs as a part of UN's peace keeping work.³¹⁸

Apart from the Paris Climate Accord, the US withdrew from many other UN institutions and arrangements under the Donald Trump administration. The US withdrew from United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2017, although it had not been contributing towards funding since 2010 while also becoming the first country to withdraw from Human Rights Council.³¹⁹ Trump also accused the World Health Organization (WHO) of mishandling COVID19 during the pandemic, and suspended its funding which made up about one fifths of its budget while also cutting or putting a freeze on other UN initiatives including United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and peacekeeping missions.³²⁰

³¹⁶ The Guardian, "Donald Trump denounces 'globalism' in nationalist address to UN", Tue 24 Sep 2019 18.27

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/sep/24/donald-trump-un-address-denounces-globalism>

³¹⁷ Reuters, "Factbox: What Trump has said about the United Nations", September 18, 2017

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-assembly-trump-comments-factbox-idUSKCN1BS0UO>

³¹⁸ Reuters, "Factbox: What Trump has said about the United Nations",

³¹⁹Thomas G Weiss, "The UN and Multilateralism under Siege in the "Age of Trump" *Global Summitry*, Volume 4, Issue 1, Summer 2018, Pages 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1093/global/guy013>

³²⁰ Allen Hicken, Pauline Jones, And Anil Menon, "The International System after Trump and the Pandemic", *Current History*, January 2021.

The US foreign policy during the COVID19 pandemic also indicated Donald Trump's preference for going alone and exposed the inability of US to affectively play the role of global leader under Trump administration. Apart from halting funding to WHO Trump refused to be a part of the internal efforts for vaccine development, a role that was taken up by other states including China to ensure the supply of vaccines to under-developed states internationally,³²¹ while stopping the flow of medical supplies to many states including its own allies in order to shore up its own reserves.³²²

Yet another transgression against international institutions was Donald Trump's executive order authorizing legal investigation as well as prosecution and financial sanctions against ICC (International Criminal Court) prosecutors and judges³²³ over their investigation into US personnel, even before the Trump administration tried to thwart investigations into offenses in Afghanistan and Palestine.³²⁴ All of these actions reflected poorly on the role of US as a world leader as Trump chose an unexceptional position standing in line with other populist nationalists like Modi, Bolsonaro, Duterte, Netanyahu, al-Sisi, Orban and others.³²⁵

2.5.5. Trump and Alliances

A key pillar of American Exceptionalism in foreign policy is the promotion of democracy and liberalism abroad as well as support for such states that adhere to these ideals that the US is a flag

³²¹ Allen Hicken, Pauline Jones, And Anil Menon, "The International System after Trump"

³²² Danny Haiphong, 'The Great Unmasking: American Exceptionalism in the Age of COVID-19', *International Critical Thought*, 10:2, 2020, p.200-213, DOI: 10.1080/21598282.2020.1779527

³²³ Allen Hicken, Pauline Jones, And Anil Menon, "The International System after Trump and the Pandemic" *Current History*, January 2021

³²⁴ Human Rights Watch, US Sanctions On The International Criminal Court, December 14, 2020

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/14/us-sanctions-international-criminal-court>

³²⁵ ³²⁵ Thomas G Weiss, "The UN and Multilateralism under Siege in the "Age of Trump" *Global Summitry*, Volume 4, Issue 1, Summer 2018, Pages 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1093/global/guy013>

bearer of. A part of this support structure is NATO, established as a bulwark of free world against forces that threaten liberty and it incorporates most of the key US allies especially those that identify with liberal ideology. Trump termed NATO obsolete and threatened to leave while calling into question the US commitments under Article 5 about collective defense.³²⁶ He did go back on his threats owing to a number of institutional factors as well as a change in the behavior of NATO allies who increased their contributions as result of Trumps policies as well as the increasing Russian threat; however such rhetoric contributed towards shaking confidence of the allies.³²⁷ Trump's rhetoric led Angela Merkel to comment that Europe could not rely on the US for its security and had to take its fate in own hands.³²⁸ Although NATO gained in material strength instead of losing, however the Trmpian rhetoric attacked the 'psychology' of NATO, which he continued to consider a burden instead of an asset leading to a lack of trust in US security guarantees.³²⁹ The international order according to Hal Brands depends on the 'credibility of US commitments' and the weakening of US reputation for 'diplomatic reliability' can lead to irreversible damage to this order.³³⁰

2.5.6. Inclusivity and Immigration

Another key tenet of American Exceptionalism is its pluralist and inclusive character which despite being disparaged by the right wing nationalism has been a key part of exceptionalist rhetoric especially in the modern era. The American identity espoused by American Exceptionalism is not

³²⁶ Sperling, J & Webber, M 2019, 'Trump's foreign policy and NATO: exit and voice', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 511-526. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210519000123>

³²⁷ Sperling, J & Webber, M 2019, 'Trump's foreign policy and NATO: exit and voice' pp. 511-526.

³²⁸ Cited in Sperling, J & Webber, M 2019, 'Trump's foreign policy and NATO: exit and voice', pp. 511-526.

³²⁹ Robert D. Blackwill, "Trump's Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem", Council Special Report No. 84, April 2019, council on Foreign Relations, p.31.

³³⁰ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, 'Fuel to The Fire', (Washington DC: CATO Institute, 2019), p.46.

based on race, ethnicity or language, rather on the belief in American values of freedom and democracy.³³¹ This facet of American identity has been invoked many a times, most notably in the farewell address of President Ronald Reagan that has been termed as the modern ‘city upon the hill’ sermon, where he declared the US as a shining city upon the hill abound in all kind of people living in harmony and the city having its doors open to all.³³²

Donald Trump’s foreign policy and its underlying narrative are a far cry from this conception of the US as a country of migrants. One of his campaign promises was to build a wall to stop immigrants entering the US from Mexico, whom he termed as ‘rapists’ and drug-running criminals.³³³ He called for a total ‘shut down’ of Muslims entering the US³³⁴ during his campaign and as president issued the executive order for a ‘temporary ban’ on the entry of people from seven predominantly Muslim countries, which was later overruled by the American courts.³³⁵ He was especially about Muslims and Latinos whom he thought of as a threat to the American white society, warning that they would take over political power away from the Republicans.³³⁶ Trump’s racist rhetoric and policies served to exasperate existing racial tensions in American society and undermined the inclusive spirit of American Exceptionalism.

³³¹ Madsen, Deborah L, “American exceptionalism and multiculturalism : myths and realities”, *SPELL : Swiss papers in English language and literature*, 16 (2003), P.177-188.

³³² Ronald Reagan, ‘Farewell address to The Nation’, January 11, 1989.
<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/farewell-address-nation>

³³³ Mel Gurtov, “*America in Retreat Foreign Policy under Donald Trump*” (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, , 2021). P.224-226

³³⁴ Mel Gurtov, “*America in Retreat*” P.224-226

³³⁵ Richard S. Conley, ‘*Donald Trump And American Populism*’, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, , 2020) P.288-289.

³³⁶ Mel Gurtov, ‘*America in Retreat Foreign Policy under Donald Trump*’ (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021) P.224-226

2.5.7. Trump and Human Rights

Along with democracy and laissez-faire economy, Human rights have been a corner stone of American Exceptionalist foreign policy, serving as a rationalizing rhetoric for numerous foreign policy actions of Trump's predecessors. Although the human rights issues in a US context are an old issue and Donald Trump can not entirely be held responsible for the root causes, the situation at home as well as abroad did get worse under his watch as the US saw drops in Freedom House and World Justice Project rankings on human rights.³³⁷ Sarah Margon the director of Human Rights Watch points out that although many presidents before have looked the other way on human rights issues especially in order to accomplish foreign policy objectives in their dealings with dictators and strongmen, Donald Trump has been the most enthusiastic in courting autocrats leading to the world losing US as an international champion of human rights and good governance.³³⁸

Trump administration failed to act against the genocide of Muslims in Myanmar, praised President Rodrigo Duterte's strategy of using death squads to deal with drug offenders and took little notice of the arrests of political activists and human rights campaigners like Alexei Navalny and the death of noble laureate Liu Xiaobo.³³⁹ He also turned a blind eye towards the violations of human rights by Saudi Arabia in its war against Yemen, Al-Sisi's brutal crackdown on protesters and the excessive violations of Palestinian rights under Netanyahu, while declaring autocrats like Kim

³³⁷ Mel Gurtov, *'America in Retreat'* P.194-198.

³³⁸ Ronald E. Powaski *'Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump'*, (Palgrave MacMillan E-Book, 2019) P. 244-245.

³³⁹ Ronald E. Powaski *'Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy'* P. 244-245.

Jong Un and Putin as great friends.³⁴⁰ All these actions or the lack thereof dents the American image as the international protector of human rights.

2.6. Trumps China and Palestine policies: Implications for Leadership Role

Apart from the previously discussed actions that fall in a challenging pattern to Exceptionalism, Donald Trump deviated from the previous policy in other areas as well, a notable example of which is his Israel policy. He moved the US embassy to East Jerusalem, accepted illegal settlements in West-Bank as legitimate and recognized Israeli sovereignty over Golan Heights, in opposition to long held US policy since 1967 formulated in the light of a Security Council resolution 242 that condemned territorial acquisition by war and called for Israeli withdrawal.³⁴¹ Ever since 1995 when the embassy act was passed that empowers the US president to transfer the embassy any time, no president acted on it as it would damage US credibility as a leader and honest broker for peace, but Trump did, while also cutting funding to the Palestinian aid groups.³⁴² Trump brought about a ‘peace plan’ most notable for the lack of Palestinian input that was a non-starter and put in jeopardy the prospects of a ‘two state’ solution which has been a long held US position, thus challenging the traditional US role as a stabilizing international leader in the middle east.³⁴³

Donald Trump’s China policy also followed a marked shift from those of his predecessors. With Trump the era of ‘constructive engagement’ came to an end as he embarked on a trade war with

³⁴⁰ Mel Gurtov, *America in Retreat Foreign Policy under Donald Trump* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021) . P.194-198.

³⁴¹ Paul R. Viotti, *American Foreign Policy and National Security*, (New York: Cambria Press, , 2020). P 206-207.

³⁴² Rodriguez, Manny, "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the Trump Era: A Human Rights Perspective". Senior Theses, Trinity College, Hartford, CT 2020. Trinity College Digital Repository, <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/847>

³⁴³ Rodriguez, Manny, "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the Trump Era: A Human Rights Perspective".

China starting by imposing trade tariffs on Chinese exports as well as export bans, putting restrictions on Chinese investments in the U.S and going after Chinese technology companies, which triggered reciprocal responses.³⁴⁴ President Obama pursued a geo-strategic approach towards China in terms of its disputes with American allies and tried ‘soft-containment’ in terms of economy by balancing Chinese advances in economic integration with TPP, from which Donald Trump withdrew on his first day.³⁴⁵ Obama however, largely followed Mearsheimer’s view and did not view China as an inevitable adversary’.³⁴⁶ Donald Trump’s foreign policy while adopting Cold war precedents with his nuclear policy generally confined the competition to economic terms with China unlike the Presidents of Cold War era who viewed competition with USSR in ideological terms.³⁴⁷

This shift was largely inspired by the Trump’s Hobbesian worldview that imagines the world as an arena for competition, while echoing his unexceptional views that do not conceptualize U.S having an ideological superiority, rather stress on the need to excel in material terms. While such decisions led to short term economic gains they seriously undermined multilateralism and globalism that have come to be a part and parcel of liberal internationalist agenda.³⁴⁸ This will also undermine the U.S image as global leader, while creating opportunities for China to expand its clout internationally.³⁴⁹ To Georg Löfflmann, the primary impact of the nationalist populism of

³⁴⁴ Sanja Arežina, “U.S.-China Relations Under the Trump Administration Changes and Challenges”, China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies, Vol. 5, No. 3, 289–315

³⁴⁵ Timothy J. Lynch, *In The Shadow Of The Cold War*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), P.215-217.

³⁴⁶ Timothy J. Lynch, *In The Shadow Of The Cold War*, P.215-217.

³⁴⁷ Timothy J. Lynch, *In The Shadow Of The Cold War*, P.241-242.

³⁴⁸ Sanja Arežina, “U.S.-China Relations Under the Trump Administration Changes and Challenges”, China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies, Vol. 5, No. 3, 289–315

³⁴⁹ Sanja Arežina, “U.S.-China Relations Under the Trump Administration” 289–315

Trump is ideational and he has opened a door for a new approach that incorporates both public and elite views, as opposed to the dominant bi-partite consensus on liberal hegemony.³⁵⁰

Joseph S. Nye Jr. while arguing against the idea of promoting democracy through interventionism, is of the view that domination is not the same as leadership and with changing times Exceptionalism should be more about ‘power with’ others, not power over others.³⁵¹ He predicts rightly that the US's place in the world may be under more threat from populist politics at home than from the rise of other contending powers.³⁵²

Donald Trump conceptualized exceptionalism in his own way especially after his assumption of office when he started invoking it more, however his major focus was on American superiority (76% of the times), instead of the idea of singularity, uniqueness or the US role as an international leader.³⁵³

2.7. Conclusion

In a nutshell the Trumpian rhetoric and foreign policy actions challenging American exceptionalist ideas can be divided into four key spheres of deviation from the established norms. These include his economic nationalism, skepticism and distrust of international institutions, reassessment of international commitments and rejection of globalism, and his emphasis on national security and a strict immigration policy aimed at preserving what he thought to be the original American

³⁵⁰ Georg Löffmann, “ America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy”, *Survival*, 61:6, 2019, p. 115-138

³⁵¹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr, “The rise and fall of American hegemony from Wilson to Trump”, *International Affairs* **95**: 1 (2019) , p.63–80

³⁵² Joseph S. Nye, Jr, “The rise and fall of American hegemony” p.63–80

³⁵³ Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, *‘Exceptional Me’*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021). P.98-99.

culture. To Donald Trump American exceptionalism equated with American superiority, which he could later claim to have restored.

Most experts, both during and after the term of Donald Trump administration saw serious implications of his decisions on the future of American foreign policy and society. His stance and policies undermining the Liberal international order have been termed as detrimental to the American national interests as they threaten the international leadership of the US and thus put the future of democracy in jeopardy.

Truly American Exceptionalism is an idea first of all and ideas reside in the minds of people, therefore irrespective of foreign policy decisions of the elite, the greater impact on the evolution of an idea comes from the public and that shall form the basis for the next chapter which aims at discerning the impacts of Donald Trump administration on the public discourse around American Exceptionalism and American identity.

CHAPTER 3

EXCEPTIONALISM, IDENTITY AND FOREIGN POLICY: THE EFFECTS OF TRUMPISM

This chapter aims at discovering the impacts of Trumpian ideology on the popular conception of American exceptionalism. American Exceptionalism forms a large part of the American national identity and has been used to even judge the patriotism of its skeptics at times. Being an American has been associated with believing in certain political and moral principles, which are also the tenets that form the basics of the Exceptionalist idea. The way Americans identify themselves viz-a-viz the world informs the foreign policy decisions of the American state and has been playing a major decisive role in reinforcing as well as moulding the ideals of American Exceptionalism and what the United States stands for. The chapter discusses American exceptionalism as the main constituting ideology of American national identity. It then takes into account the Trumpian understanding of national identity and goes on to explore the impacts of the Trumpian view on the public conception and opinions regarding American Exceptionalism.

The belief in American exceptionalism lies at the center of American nationalism and national identity.³⁵⁴ A great majority of the Americans belonging to different schools of political thought believes in the idea that the United States being the ‘Exceptional Nation’ is superior to all other nations, although the ideas on what this superiority should lead to vary based on political

³⁵⁴ Trevor B. McCrisken, “*American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US Foreign Policy Since 1974*”. (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2003) P.1

persuasions.³⁵⁵ Exceptionalism in the American context takes the form of two distinct notions namely the ‘Exemplar’ and ‘Missionary’ facets and these facets have exhibited themselves time and again in the conduct of US foreign policy, in the form of foreign policy frameworks such as ‘isolationism’, ‘anti-imperialism’, ‘internationalism’, ‘isolationism’ and ‘leadership of the free world’.³⁵⁶ American Exceptionalism has been understood differently by different political leaders and political groups at various points in US history, thus taking the form of a political discourse. However this discourse has been at the centre of American national identity formation and can shed light on the way Americans have sought to identify their place and role in the comity of nations.³⁵⁷

3.1. American Exceptionalism as a National Identity: Impacts on foreign Policy

There is a consensus amongst the foreign policy experts that the ideas about what kind of a country America is, prevalent among the American society affect its foreign policy behavior.³⁵⁸ If treated as a subjective self-understanding instead of an objective truth American Exceptionalism can contribute meaningfully towards the understanding of US foreign policy.³⁵⁹ In an analogical way to the ‘market’ in microeconomics which assumes a structural force of its own once constituted, Exceptionalism can act as a structural constraint on the foreign policy of the US which does offer

³⁵⁵ Peter S. Onuf, ‘American Exceptionalism and National Identity’, *American Political Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 77-100. The University of Chicago Press.

³⁵⁶ Syed Sabir Muhammad, “The Elements of Exceptionalism in the United States Foreign Policy”, *Stratagem*, CSCR Islamabad, Vol.1, Issue.9, January, 2017.

³⁵⁷ Peter S. Onuf, ‘American Exceptionalism and National Identity’, *American Political Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 77-100. The University of Chicago Press.

³⁵⁸ Hilde Eliassen Restad, “*American Exceptionalism*”, (New York: Routledge, 2015) P.02.

³⁵⁹ Hilde Eliassen Restad, “*American Exceptionalism*” P.03.

a choice between its different conceptions but largely limits political leaders within its ambit by the virtue of its dominant role in the constitution of American national identity.³⁶⁰

National identity is the ‘maintenance’ and ‘reinterpretation’ of a certain pattern of “values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions” that are adhered to by members of a nation and form parts of its cultural heritage.³⁶¹ As a national identity, American Exceptionalism consists of three ideas or key beliefs which are firstly the United States is different from the old world, it has a special predestined role to play in history and it is bound to eternally keep on the rise as the greatest power.³⁶² These beliefs are all rooted in American history and have informed and reinforced most of the foreign policy decisions throughout the U.S history as it navigated its path to its present status as a predominant power from its early beginnings and strands of American policy that are overtly diagonally opposite, for instance isolationism and internationalism both drew their force from these beliefs.

The relationship between American Exceptionalism and US foreign policy especially the influence exerted by Exceptionalist ideals and their interpretation on foreign policy decisions can be best explained by the theory of Social Constructivism in international relations. Social constructivism seeks to account for identities and interests of actors and seeks to establish relationships between norms, interests and outcomes while concerning itself with the ‘origins, nature and functioning of social facts’.³⁶³ The foreign policy of any state is largely about its national identity and the way it

³⁶⁰ Syed Sabir Muhammad, *The Elements of Exceptionalism in the United States Foreign Policy*, Stratagem, CSCR Islamabad, Vol.1, Issue.9, January, 2017.

³⁶¹ Anthony D .Smith, “*Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*”. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) , P.25

³⁶² Hilde Eliassen Restad, “*American Exceptionalism*”, (New York: Routledge,,2015), P.03-07.

³⁶³ J. G. Ruggie quoted in Isa Erbas, ‘Constructivist Approach in Foreign Policy and in International Relations’, *Journal of Positive School Psychology* 2022, Vol. 6, No. 3, 5087 – 5096

conceptualizes itself, its worldview as well as the ideals that it aspires to³⁶⁴, and American Exceptionalism plays that role for the United States in almost all of its interpretations in some way.

Constructivism allows for both the ‘endogenous’ and ‘exogenous’ influences on identity, for instance Alexander Wendt’s classification of identity into role, type, corporate and collective aspects of identity that explains the process of identity formation as being both a result of both internal and external inputs.³⁶⁵ Identities are constituted by personal beliefs and participation in the formation of collective knowledge as well as norms that play both a constitutive and regulatory role.³⁶⁶ Wendt is of the opinion that a large part of state identity is constructed domestically and a ‘theory of state identity’ needs to have a large domestic component³⁶⁷ although he emphasizes more on the role of structure and endogenous factors in the determination of interests.³⁶⁸

While systemic constructivists like Alexander Wendt and Martha Finnemore, who attributed state identity construction to the role of international organizations, argue in the favour of greater systemic influences on state identity, others most notably Peter Katzenstein and Ted Hopf ascribe a greater role to domestic factors.³⁶⁹ Peter Katzenstein is of the opinion that identity serves as a link between environmental structures and interests by determining the impact they have on one

³⁶⁴ J. G. Ruggie quoted in Isa Erbas, ‘Constructivist Approach in Foreign Policy and in International Relations’, 5087 – 5096

³⁶⁵ Robert Dormer, ‘The Impact of Constructivism on International Relations Theory: A History’, *Social Sciences Review* Vol. 22, 2017
Nishinomiya, Japan, P.53.

³⁶⁶ Robert Dormer, ‘The Impact of Constructivism on International Relations Theory: A History’, P.53-54.

³⁶⁷ Alexander Wendt quoted in Isa Erbas, ‘Constructivist Approach in Foreign Policy and in International Relations’, *Journal of Positive School Psychology* 2022, Vol. 6, No. 3, 5087 – 5096

³⁶⁸ Alexander Wendt, ‘Collective Identity Formation and the International State’, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (Jun., 1994), pp. 384-396

³⁶⁹ Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, “Introduction to International Relations Theories and Approaches”, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. P.223.

another.³⁷⁰ The cultural and institutional factors in a states' domestic environment shape national identity and a change in national identity or any variation of these factors leads to a change in state policies as well.³⁷¹ State policies also reproduce or reconstruct the cultural and institutional structures that have an effect on their identities of a similar degree.³⁷² Ted Hopf's social cognitive theory also takes into account the domestic aspects of state identity and how they shape cognitive structures for the state which make possible the shaping of interests and opportunities for the state which it then pursues through policies.³⁷³

American Exceptionalism if taken as a set of beliefs contains elements of both national and state identities of the US. American Identity can be defined in terms of American Exceptionalism because it has had a persistent and powerful popular presence as a national myth throughout the history of the United States.³⁷⁴ A big majority of the US citizens see themselves as an exceptional nation and believe in the values of liberty, human dignity, democracy, freedom of enterprise and Judeo-Christian values though the latter is contested at times, a stance that has been repeatedly stated in the national objectives throughout the years especially since the start of Cold War when the US faced the biggest external ideological threat.³⁷⁵

Combined with these principles is the self conception of being a chosen people destined for greatness and spreading these values all over the world as a mission assigned by divinity through the use of US position as an international leader, as has been discussed in the previous chapters.

³⁷⁰ Ed.Peter Katzenstein, "*The Culture of National Security*", (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). P.09-15

³⁷¹ Ed.Peter Katzenstein, "*The Culture of National Security*" P.09-15

³⁷² Ed.Peter Katzenstein, "*The Culture of National Security*",P.09-15

³⁷³ Ted Hopf, "*Social Construction of International Politics*", (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), P.16

³⁷⁴ Hilde Eliassen Restad, "*American Exceptionalism*", (New York: Routledge, 2015) P.14.

³⁷⁵ David Campbell, "*Writing Security*", (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992). P. 28-32

These ideals have always been reflected in one form or the other in the US foreign policy and the proclamations of US leadership, backing up the self assumed role of the United States which it managed to shape into an international structure or system since the Second World War by founding the liberal international order.

Within the Identity taxonomy the first identity possessed by an actor before engaging with a system is the corporate identity which consists of inbuilt individual qualities of an actor that are constituted by ‘self-organizing’, ‘homeostatic’ structures within the society in case of a state actor.³⁷⁶ American Exceptionalism constitutes such an identity because its existence predates the existence of the US itself and the Exceptionalist identity has always been a part of the US identity even prior to international leadership. According to Wendt corporate identity gives rise to interests like security, ‘collective well being’, and creation of a stable identity viz-a-viz others and the desire for recognition.³⁷⁷ American Exceptionalism entails the idea of the establishment of a state based on democratic values of liberty, free economy and the spread of these values to the world by the virtue of international leadership thus it contains the same interest ideas.

The ‘Type’ identity that is integral to an actor and is determined by the intrinsic ‘traits’ in this case is also rooted in American Exceptionalism since it gives the US its type as a democracy as well as the leading nation of the free world.³⁷⁸ The role identity is dependent on the grant of legitimacy by others within a system and can be termed as exogenous in relationship to a state³⁷⁹, however it

³⁷⁶ Maja Zehfuss, “*Constructivism in International Relations*”, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) .P.44

³⁷⁷ Anna Skolimowska, ‘Identity Issue In International Relations : Constructivist Approach’, *Athenaeum*, vol. 56/2017, pp. 179–192

³⁷⁸ Anna Skolimowska, ‘Identity Issue In International Relations’ pp. 179–192

³⁷⁹ Radu Dudău ‘Identities and Interests in International Relations’. *Annals of the University of Bucharest / Political science series*, (2004), 6, 25-32. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-382069>

takes conscious effort on part of a state to strive for such a recognition of a desired role identity which is ultimately rooted in the corporate identity and type, because it's the power of practice that produces intersubjective meaning, for example the US intervention in Vietnam not only coincided with its previous identities but also reproduced the intersubjective meanings of some of them.³⁸⁰

Collective Identity, the fourth type in the identity taxonomy is the type where the boundaries of self merge with the other although retaining certain distinct aspects.³⁸¹ It is the regard for the welfare of other based on the principles of 'community' and 'solidarity' and differs from traditional alliances because it involves less reciprocity and more collaboration based on general codes of conduct.³⁸² American Exceptionalism has certain elements that are consistent with the collective identity aspect, especially the post World War 2 interpretation of Exceptionalism that saw the US rise as the leader of democracies all over the world through its initiatives in Europe that cemented the collective identity of the democratic West.

3.1.1. National Identity and Foreign Policy

Before moving on to the national identity debate and Donald Trump's position on that it is necessary to mention another dynamic of the relationship between foreign policy and identity which works in the opposite way i-e foreign policy having an impact on national identity and reshaping it. Paul T. McCartney has pointed out three ways in which the US foreign policy impacts national identity. Firstly the foreign policy actions give me form American meaning to the

³⁸⁰ Ted Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory', *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer, 1998), pp. 171-200

³⁸¹ Radu Dudău 'Identities and Interests in International Relations'. *Annals of the University of Bucharest / Political science series*, (2004), 6, 25-32. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-382069>

³⁸² Anna Skolimowska, 'Identity Issue In International Relations : Constructivist Approach', *Athenaeum*, vol. 56/2017, pp. 179-192

ideological elements that form the American national identity, for instance American Exceptionalism, freedom etc.³⁸³

Secondly, foreign policy is used to invoke certain ‘others’ in relation to ‘self’ leading to boundary formation and retrenching of national identity and in this aspect foreign policy moulds national identity while lastly identity evolves with the evolution in the meanings of ‘freedom’ as it is defined and redefined by the American administrations and the Supreme Court.³⁸⁴ Foreign is in a way tasked with the reproduction of an unstable national identity which is prone to changes in direction if an alternative course of action is taken, thus any foreign policy seeks to neutralize the challenging factors to its interpretation of national identity, which may be subject to change if left unchecked due to the discursive nature of national identity.³⁸⁵

3.1.2. Conservative and Liberal Understandings of American Exceptionalism

As a primary source of national identity American Exceptionalism performs a somewhat dual role. On one hand it has historically unified the American people in the belief that theirs is a different and better nation, while on the other hand it not only differentiates Americans from the world but also creates differences within the American nation giving rise to polarization on economic, societal and identity issues.³⁸⁶ Amongst the various dichotomies of meaning and renditions of the polysemic concept of Exceptionalism the first one is the multivalent understanding of it by the liberals and conservative Exceptionalists. The Conservative Exceptionalists are skeptical of the federal government, look back to the past, view liberal agendas with doubt and believe in the

³⁸³ Paul T. McCartney, “How Foreign Policy Shapes American National Identity”, *Political Science Quarterly* | Volume 134 Number 4 2019-20. P.675-709

³⁸⁴ Paul T. McCartney, “How Foreign Policy Shapes American National Identity”, P.675-709

³⁸⁵ David Campbell, “*Writing Security*”, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992). P. 28-32

³⁸⁶ Mugambi Jouet, “*Exceptional America*”, (California: University of California Press, 2017). P.7.

forever superiority of the US and hold ‘essentialist’³⁸⁷, nationalist and cultural if not always geopolitical isolationist views stressing on Christian values.³⁸⁸

Liberal Exceptionalism has on the other hand a cosmopolitan world view and promotes a liberal internationalist agenda believing in the end of history and aspiring for the ‘Americanization’ of the whole world culminating in global values of democracy and a world society.³⁸⁹ Contrarily the Conservatives keep stressing on the differences and the boundary defining characteristics that mark American uniqueness.³⁹⁰

3.2. Trumpian Understanding of American Exceptional Identity

Donald Trump’s position regarding national superiority, abhorrence of the political establishment and his concerns for national and cultural purity reflected in his anti-immigrant stance puts him in the Conservative camp although Trump did not cherish the Exceptionalist idea in name.

Historically two postulates have been recognized as being the chief constituents of American identity, firstly America has been termed as a nation of immigrants and secondly the American identity has been understood to be solely rooted in political principles that Gunnar Myrdal termed as the American Creed³⁹¹ and Seymour Martin Lipset has described as “liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism and *Laissez Faire*”³⁹². Huntington is of the opinion that American Identity

³⁸⁸ Peter S. Onuf, ‘American Exceptionalism and National Identity’, *American Political Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2012),. The University of Chicago Press., pp. 77-100

³⁸⁹ Peter S. Onuf, ‘American Exceptionalism and National Identity’, pp. 77-100.

³⁹⁰ Peter S. Onuf, ‘American Exceptionalism and National Identity’, pp. 77-100.

³⁹¹ Samuel P. Huntington, “*Who Are We?*” (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005). P. 37-38

³⁹² Seymour Martin Lipset, “*American Exceptionalism*”, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1996.) P.19

is not solely based on these two but it also incorporates race, ethnicity, culture, and religion at least during the early formative phases before the first two factors gained currency after the 19th century although the culture along with creed stayed on till the 1970s.³⁹³

The ethnic, religious, cultural and racial contours of American identity still hold strong within the American society and keep manifesting themselves from time to time be it the ‘America First movement’ of Robert E. Wood during the Second World War, the campaign of Patrick Buchanan during the 1990’s or the election campaign of Donald Trump. These aspects of identity also influence the interpretation of American Exceptionalism by different social groups and leaders of which Donald Trump and his supporters are an example. Donald Trump started his campaign with the ‘Make America Great Again’ slogan focusing on economy and lamenting over the economic woes of the US but he framed his rhetoric on economy even, in a nationalist way approaching xenophobia and inculcated in his political messaging an impending threat to American culture and a terrorist threat to national security emanating from immigrants most prominently Muslims.³⁹⁴

Donald Trump’s identification of threats in religious and cultural terms was in line with a nationalist conservative view point and juxtaposed American values of inclusivity, tolerance and internationalism against the economic and social well being of Americans thus challenging the liberal idealist interpretation of Exceptionalism and the ‘Shining City on the hill’ narrative as well as the American image as a ‘nation of immigrants’³⁹⁵ leading David Brook to remark that the

³⁹³ Samuel P. Huntington, “*Who Are We?*”, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), P. 37-38

³⁹⁴ John L. Campbell, ‘*American Discontent*’, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.), P.17-18

³⁹⁵ J. Herbert et al., “*The Ordinary Presidency of Donald J. Trump*,” (Cham: Springer Nature, 2019), .P.36-37.

version of ‘American story’ in Trumps’ view is not one of diversity but ‘class and ethnic conflict’.³⁹⁶

3.2.1. ‘Predator Identity’

On the issue of American society and its characteristic inclusivity Akbar Ahmad has classified the American Identity into three types’ i-e Primordial identity, Pluralist identity and Predator identity.³⁹⁷ Primordial identity is rooted in the Christian values of the early Puritan settlers embodied by John Winthrop who is considered a forerunner of the Exceptionalist idea especially the ‘City upon the hill’ idea.³⁹⁸ The second type is the Pluralist identity embodied by Roger Williams who advocated the separation of church from the state and promoted inclusiveness in his settlement and opposed slavery.³⁹⁹ The third identity is termed by Ahmad as the Predator identity embodied by Josiah Winslow and significant for its decimation of the native populations and expansionism as well as the white racial superiority beliefs.⁴⁰⁰ The Predator identity found its affective driving force in Andrew Jackson who progressed on the idea of imperial expansionism, manifest destiny and strengthened white Christian identity.⁴⁰¹ Ahmad has applied this classification to recent American Presidents of whom he termed George W. Bush as primordial, Obama as Pluralist and Donald Trump as adhering to the Predator identity characterized by ‘zero tolerance’ towards external threats to the community, demonization of the other and unwillingness for reflection.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁶ Quoted in J. Herbert et al., “The Ordinary Presidency of Donald J. Trump,”P.36.

³⁹⁷ Akbar Ahmed, “*Journey into America*”, (Washington DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2010), . P.47-51.

³⁹⁸ Akbar Ahmed, “*Journey into America*”, p. .47-51.

³⁹⁹ Akbar Ahmed, “*Journey into America*”, p..47-51.

⁴⁰⁰ Akbar Ahmed, “*Journey into America*”, p.47-51.

⁴⁰¹ Akbar Ahmed, “*Journey into America*”, p..67.

⁴⁰² Akbar Ahmed, “Who Reflects American Identity: Trump Or Biden?, The Friday Times January 22,2023.

3.2.2. Trump the Jacksonian

Donald Trump's position on national identity as well as his foreign policy views have been linked to Andrew Jackson and the so-termed Jacksonianism by others too most notably Hilde Eliassen Restad, who is of the view that Donald Trump has posed a challenge to the master narrative of American Exceptionalism because he does not believe in the existence of a moral mission that the US is obligated to pursue with his narrative that is more akin to realism and views the US in an anarchic setting where the traditional Christian values need protecting from outsiders while believing only in the 'greatness' part of Exceptionalism.⁴⁰³

Donald Trump has been termed as a promoter of the 'ethnic nationalism' as opposed to the traditional 'civic nationalism' that has for the most part dominated American identity landscape across time and space, and charged with working against the principal national objectives determined by the creed based civic nationalism that call for the promotion of 'civic nationalism at home and liberal values' abroad.⁴⁰⁴ Donald Trump while embracing ethnic nationalism at home had a conservative view of international politics viewing the contestation as a 'clash of civilizations'.⁴⁰⁵ Trumpism or Trump doctrine was primarily a reaction against globalism and the US engagements abroad as a result of US commitment towards liberal internationalism and can be summarized to be based on four key tenets which are the endorsement of popular resistance to Globalization, a belief in the end of liberal democratic era which is considered the root of US problems especially of an economic nature, the endorsement of nationalism worldwide which

⁴⁰³ Hilde Eliassen Restad, "Whither The "City Upon A Hill"? Donald Trump, America First, And American Exceptionalism", Texas National Security Review: Volume 3, Issue 1 (Winter 2019/2020): p.76-77.

⁴⁰⁴ Hilde Eliassen Restad , "What makes America great? Donald Trump, national identity, and U.S. foreign policy", Global Affairs, 29 Feb 2020.P.1-2

⁴⁰⁵ Hilde Eliassen Restad , " What makes America great?" .p.07.

translates into an opposition towards international institutions of a supranational nature and opposition to the US efforts to mould the world into its own image believing it to be against national interests.⁴⁰⁶ Thus Trump did not endorse the idea of US moral superiority and the idea of a mission and his belief in American greatness had a materialistic basis rather than an ideational one.⁴⁰⁷

3.2.3. Trump's 'Illiberal' Agenda

Another interesting take on Donald Trump's nativist foreign policy and Grand strategy is by Donald E. Pease who argues that Donald Trump has strived to disconnect the US democracy from its liberal roots and followed an 'Illiberal' agenda, a term coined by Fareed Zakaria to describe the populist politics of Trump that is centered around countering the liberal agenda both at home and abroad by undermining the defining features of American liberalism that protect against the tyranny of majority through strong apolitical institutions.⁴⁰⁸ On the world stage Trump sought to replicate the same by decoupling the American hegemony from its liberal contours rooted in the American Creed based on liberal democracy and while he pursued strategic hegemony he refused to spread liberal democracy abroad and never invoked the liberal ideals to justify the foreign policy actions of his administration.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁶ Hilde Eliassen Restad (2020): What makes America great?" P.7-8.

⁴⁰⁷ Hilde Eliassen Restad, "Whither The "City Upon A Hill"? Donald Trump, America First, And American Exceptionalism", Texas National Security Review: Volume 3, Issue 1 (Winter 2019/2020): p.77.

⁴⁰⁸ Donald E. Pease, "Donald Trump's Settler-Colonist State (Fantasy): A New Era of Illiberal Hegemony?" in *"Trump's America :Political Culture and National Identity"* ed. Liam Kennedy, (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh,2020). P.23-34.

⁴⁰⁹ Donald E. Pease, "Donald Trump's Settler-Colonist State (Fantasy): A New Era of Illiberal Hegemony?" P.23-34.

Donald Trump is the part of an international anti-globalist wave that saw the rise of populist politicians to power across the world that used their populist appeal to turn the tide of public opinion against globalization blaming the economic liberalism of globalized internationalism for the worsening situations of their respective economies and invoking a narrower conception of nationalism. The country he presided over is different from others however, because it was the US that structures the liberal economic international order based on its national creedal understanding that sought to mould the world into the American image of which the globalized world is the realization.⁴¹⁰ Many in the US when faced with the consequences of this sought refuge from this reality back within the national boundaries which explains the rise of Donald Trump and his ethnic nationalism and the return of the nativist identity.⁴¹¹

3.2.4. Trumpian Expediency

Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling have explained the Trumpian take on American Exceptionalism through the lens of political expediency by tracing the pattern of Trump's use of the idea to manipulate those who believe in American greatness terming it the 'Exceptional Me' strategy through which Donald Trump initially distanced himself from the exceptionalist rhetoric declaring America as being a loser on the economic front and therefore not Exceptional and in the need of being restored to greatness.⁴¹² He then deviated from the course to assert that he had restored America to its former greatness and was now needed by the people to keep it great, before the pandemic and blamed the relative decline on China's promised to 'Make America Great Again'

⁴¹⁰ Paul T. McCartney, "How Foreign Policy Shapes American National Identity", *Political Science Quarterly* | Volume 134 Number 4 2019-20. P.675-709

⁴¹¹ Paul T. McCartney, "How Foreign Policy Shapes American National Identity", p..675-709

⁴¹² Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, '*Exceptional Me*', (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021), P.1-9.

once again when he sought re-election indicating his view that he considered Exceptionalism not as something intrinsic to the US but as a status that may be lost and gained.⁴¹³

Keeping in view the above discussion on the Trumpian take on American national identity it becomes clear that Donald Trump while believing in American greatness seemed more cognizant of American material dominance instead of its ideational roots and the Exceptionalist concept of American moral superiority. The Trump foreign policy also reflects this attitude and his ethno-nationalist take on American national identity. However it is quite clear that Trumpism is certainly not a novelty in American history despite its obvious differences to and vehement opposition of the liberal Exceptionalism.

On the contrary, it is rooted in the sociopolitical thought of the past and identifies with many nationalist movements that emerged before in opposition to the dominant liberal exceptionalist narrative. Trumpism represents the white religious conservatives of rural backgrounds and urban working classes who have always had a voice against the liberals and still remain a force within the Republican Party and his foreign policy contains strains of both conservatism as well as Realism. Therefore while Trump did not usher in a new ideological revolution he certainly widened the ideological gap between Republicans and Democrats leading to further polarization within the US society along with his alienation of immigrants and non-white Americans.

3.3. Trumpism and Public Opinion

An analysis of data publicly available in the form of opinion polls conducted by leading social research organizations reveals that a majority of Americans still believe in Exceptional ideals while

⁴¹³ Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, *Exceptional Me*, P.1-9.

differing on the nature and scope of the US role in the world. Similarly, there are many Americans who might agree with Trump on some points while opposing him on others. Similarly, there is a general decrease in most trends when it comes to national pride, US role in the world, leadership status and confidence in state institutions however this trend can be attributed to a plethora of factors especially economic ones in nature especially during the 21st century.

According to a Gallup survey 65% of American believed that the US should play the leading (20%) or major (45%) role in the world affairs in 2023, which is a ratio down from 72% in 2017 and 69% during 2019 during the Trump presidency. This ratio was the highest during the war on terror at 79% in 2003.⁴¹⁴ Out of these Democrats at 75 are more in favour of US playing a major role than Republicans, 61% of whom favour it, while 10% Republicans, 9% independents and 3% Democrats favour total isolationism.⁴¹⁵ This indicates the prevalence of internationalist exceptional tendencies, however there is a gradual decline especially around the Donald Trump era and among Republicans which indicates the effects of Trumpian rhetoric. Similarly during the Donald Trump era, Republican Americans were more satisfied with the international role of US at 85% by the February of 2020 declining to just 8% by 2022 while Democrats while Democrat satisfaction improved from 19% in Feb 2020 to 58% percent by 2022 indicating deep polarization between the adherers of two parties while the aggregate satisfaction about the role that the US plays in the world stood at 37% down from 53% in 2020 during the Trump presidency indicating

⁴¹⁴ Jeffrey M. Jones, "Fewer Americans Want U.S. Taking Major Role in World Affairs", March 3, 2023. Assessed January 14, 2024, 11.03 pm, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/471350/fewer-americans-taking-major-role-world-affairs.aspx>

⁴¹⁵ Jeffrey M. Jones, "Fewer Americans Want U.S. Taking Major Role in World Affairs"

a lack of satisfaction with the discontinuation of Trump era policies especially among the Republicans.⁴¹⁶

Another Ethos of American Exceptionalism, the pride in being an American has also seen a decline since 2005. In 2023 67% Americans were extremely proud or very proud of being an American down from a high of 90% in 2004 and seeing a major drop from 80% to 75 % in 2017 during the first year of Trump's presidency, registering a steady decline since. Here too the Republicans lead the Democrats by twice as many Republicans believing in national pride as compared to Democrats.

Similarly, a poll conducted to measure US public opinion on US international role and military spending in 2019 indicated that Americans continue to favour a leading role for the United States along with increased or at least current levels of military spending.⁴¹⁷ The responses were divided into five groups with liberal internationalists leading at 27% followed by neo-conservatives at 21% and Diplomacy realists having the same figure followed by 9% populists (America Firsters) and 18% isolationist pacifists.⁴¹⁸ Republicans form the majority of Hawks who want a greater role and more military spending at 71% and 44% of liberal internationalists but almost 65% of populists who advocate less international entanglements.⁴¹⁹ This indicates that the Trumpian rhetoric about increase military spending but less international engagements was not wholeheartedly supported by Republican supporters.

⁴¹⁶ Lydia Saad, "Pre-Ukraine, Americans Not Content With U.S. Global Image", Feb 28, 2022. Assessed January 14, 2024, 11.30 PM <https://news.gallup.com/poll/390299/ukraine-americans-not-content-global-image.aspx>

⁴¹⁷ V. Lance Tarrance, "Measuring the Fault Lines in Current U.S. Foreign Policy",

⁴¹⁸ V. Lance Tarrance, "Measuring the Fault Lines in Current U.S. Foreign Policy",

⁴¹⁹ V. Lance Tarrance, "Measuring the Fault Lines in Current U.S. Foreign Policy",

Similarly 64% Americans belonging to the middle class believed in US taking a leading role in world affairs in 2021 while 68% believed Globalization to be mostly beneficial for the US and 58% agreed with Trump that bilateral trade with China was doing more harm than good for the US.⁴²⁰ In a Pew Research Survey in 2021 78% of the Americans believed that the US should play a shared leadership role at the global level while 64% amongst whom most were Republicans believed that the US should take into account allied interests and compensate with own interests if necessary and 6 in 10 Americans believed that the US is benefited by international institutions NATO, UN and WHO with 71% having favourable views of NATO, 67% of UN and 65% of WHO.⁴²¹

Another survey indicating the adherence of the majority of Americans to the ideals of liberal international order was conducted by the Chicago Council of Global Affairs in 2017, six months into the presidency of Donald Trump and it indicated that 60% of Americans favoured US alliances with European and East Asian countries while 48% with Middle Eastern countries.⁴²² 50% of the Americans thought that the international trade deals favour the US and other countries, while 34% including core supporters of Trump thought they don't.⁴²³ Just 37% Americans viewed immigration as a threat down from 43% in 2016.⁴²⁴ 62% of the Americans favoured continued US participation in the Paris Climate Accord.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁰ 'A Foreign Policy for the Middle Class—What Americans Think', 2021 Chicago Council of Foreign Affairs, Dina Smeltz et. Al, October 7, 2021, Assessed January 14, 2024, 12.30 pm.

⁴²¹ Carroll Doherty et. Al, "Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins", Pew Research Center, February 24, 2021. Assessed January 14, 2023. 11.51 pm.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/02/24/majority-of-americans-confident-in-bidens-handling-of-foreign-policy-as-term-begins/>

⁴²² Dina Smeltz et. Al "What Americans Think About America First", Chicago Council of Foreign Affairs, 2017..

⁴²³ Dina Smeltz et. Al "What Americans Think About America First"

⁴²⁴ Dina Smeltz et. Al "What Americans Think About America First"

⁴²⁵ Dina Smeltz et. Al "What Americans Think About America First"

American public opinion gauged both during and after the presidency of Donald Trump indicates that although Donald Trump managed to win the elections owing to the popular disapproval of the American wars abroad and a worsening economy, and by stoking racial and political tensions, he was not successful to a great degree in converting the American public to his ideas except for his core Republican supporters. There is a popular disaffection with the way American foreign policy is conducted and opposition to the military intervention centric foreign policy has risen over the time however it can not entirely be attributed to Donald Trump and has broader spectrum structural factors behind it including the changes in international system, the end of cold war, the worsening of the US economy and the declining public trust in American institutions.⁴²⁶ Donald Trump got the chance to blame the traditional liberal internationalist principles because of the public opposition to status quo policies however the policies that he adopted failed to create favourable resonance with the American public⁴²⁷ although it brought the disaffection of certain groups to light and stimulated the debate around the pros and cons of liberal international order and the US position within it.

3.4. Implications of Trump Foreign Policy for America's Liberal Internationalist Standing

Donald Trump foreign policy has had major implications for the American liberal internationalist standing. The Trumpian foreign policy not only deviated from the post-World War II consensus on American international leadership but it also undermined American Liberal internationalist

⁴²⁶ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, 'Fuel to The Fire', (Washington DC: CATO Institute, 2019), p.143-144.

⁴²⁷ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, '*Fuel to The Fire*', (Washington DC: CATO Institute, 2019), p.143-144.

outlook by contradicting multilateralism as well as the long held policy of strengthening and leading international institutions and stressing on human rights and democracy internationally. The American retreat from vital international issues and commitments has not only eroded its global leadership but has also provided greater space to alternative international leadership putting the future of American international leadership in jeopardy.^{428 429}

Donald Trump withdrew the US from many international agreements and reneged on the commitments made by previous administrations. Most of these agreements were multilateral or international in nature and had been touted as manifesting the success of liberal internationalism and American leadership role. Liberal internationalism relies on the proactive involvement and contributions of the powerful nations like the US to achieve global cooperation, adherence to international law and the promotion and upholding of democracy and human rights.⁴³⁰ Historically the American foreign policy while having a characteristic unilateral current which manifests itself in terms of security issues, has also had a multilateral face which has been on display especially in the economic sphere, human rights and environmental issues where the US has often rallied its allies and led them to work together. Donald Trump's approach represented a break from this multilateral facet in many ways.

Trump withdrew the US from various international agreements including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Trans Pacific Partnership, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

⁴²⁸ Saira Nawaz Abbasi, Senior Assistant Professor of International Relations, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, Bahria University, Islamabad, interviewed by the Author, August 3, 2024.

⁴²⁹ Syed Aleem Gillani, Assistant Professor of International Relations, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, Bahria University, Islamabad, interviewed by the Author, August 6, 2024.

⁴³⁰ Dr. Farhat Konain Shujahi, Assistant Professor of International Relations, Department of International Relations NUML, Islamabad, interviewed by the Author, August 8, 2024.

which he renegotiated, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Universal Postal Union, United Nations Human Rights Council, JCPOA (the Iran nuclear deal), and the United Nations Global Compact on Migration.⁴³¹ This lack of respect for agreements and commitments sparked fears about the decline of American role as a global leader and its waning international influence.⁴³²

When it comes to the economic aspect of foreign policy Donald Trump went for protectionism as opposed to the classical US stance on free trade and renegotiated many economic and trade agreements while abandoning others altogether. Donald Trump's decision to back out of the Trans Pacific Partnership led to the reinvigoration of the treaty by the other members while excluding the US⁴³³ and led to the boosting of Chinese confidence in its ability to create new Sino-centric trade arrangements.⁴³⁴

Trump's renegotiation of NAFTA as US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) in 2018 in a similar fashion reduced the gains for other partners especially Mexico while adding nothing more than NAFTA had to US gains and served to reduce confidence in other potential trade partners that would have sought a similar agreement with the US.⁴³⁵ At a juncture when the Chinese president hosted the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit and reiterated his support for international free trade, Donald Trump was busy sparring with the allies who he

⁴³¹ Sanja Arežina, "U.S.-China Relations Under the Trump Administration", *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2019. P. 296.

⁴³² Dr. Farhat Konain Shujahi, Assistant Professor of International Relations, Department of International Relations NUML, Islamabad, Interviewed by the Author, August 8, 2024.

⁴³³ Ronald E. Powaski 'Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump', (Palgrave MacMillan E-Book, 2019) P. 241.

⁴³⁴ Doug Stokes, "Trump, American Hegemony And The Future Of The Liberal International Order", *International Affairs* **94**: 1, Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal Institute of International Affairs (2018), P.148.

⁴³⁵ Andrew Chatzky, James McBride, and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "NAFTA and the USMCA: Weighing the Impact of North American Trade", Council On Foreign Relations, Last updated July 1, 2020 8:00 am (EST), <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/naftas-economic-impact#chapter-title-0-3>

thought were taking undue benefit of the US and imposing tariffs on them, from the EU to Japan and Canada while demanding further concessions from South Korea.⁴³⁶ These acts while they might have brought short-term economic benefits despite the fact that most of the allies responded with tariffs of their own, certainly do not augur well for the US leadership role and the confidence of the allies in US international leadership.

Donald Trump foreign policy also led to the US abandonment of major international agreements as well as treaty commitments, many of which the US had itself helped establish while playing a leadership role. Trump withdrew the US from JCPOA in May, 2018 and imposed even stricter sanctions on Iran while urged by Israel and against the wishes of other parties to the treaty.⁴³⁷ The US backtracking on JCPOA not only damaged its credibility as a responsible super power but also eroded the confidence of other states that might have taken such a deal in future, for instance North Korea.⁴³⁸

Similarly the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord of 2015 also damaged the liberal internationalist as well as the leadership credentials of the US while portraying China in a positive light and conceding it leadership space that fell vacant after the US withdrawal as the agreement continued to be in force and the US was seen to be withdrawing from the world.⁴³⁹ This would also deny the US the moral standing to chide other for abandoning treaty commitments in future. US also withdrew from the e Global Compact on Safe, Orderly,

⁴³⁶ Robert D. Blackwill, “Trump’s Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem”, Council Special Report No. 84, April 2019, council on Foreign Relations, p.61-65.

⁴³⁷ Ronald E. Powaski ‘*Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*’ (Palgrave MacMillan E-Book, 2019) P. 252.

⁴³⁸ Ronald E. Powaski ‘*Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*’P. 253.

⁴³⁹ Robert D. Blackwill, “Trump’s Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem”, Council Special Report No. 84, April 2019, council on Foreign Relations, p.19

and Regular Migration enacted by the UN to help with orderly movement of migrants as well as becoming the first country to withdraw from the Human Rights Council under Trump's watch.⁴⁴⁰

The post World War II conception of American Exceptionalism envisages the US as an exceptional dominant nation standing up for and upholding a rule based international order anchored to the ideals of democracy, laissez faire economy and a system of international institutions. The Donald Trump administration while opposing other tenets of this conception was especially vehement in its opposition to the workings of international institutions that it did not deem to be in accordance with its conception of US national interests. While the Trump administration undermined democracy internally it also adopted a different attitude towards the world than previous administrations. The American presidents have throughout history courted autocratic regimes and toppled democratic governments wherever it served their interests but Donald Trump proved to be especially enthusiastic in establishing closer ties to autocratic governments and expressing his admiration for strong men and dictators.⁴⁴¹ Trump administration failed to act against the genocide of Muslims in Myanmar, praised President Rodrigo Duterte's strategy of using death squads to deal with drug offenders and took little notice of the arrests of political activists and human rights campaigners like Alexei Navalny and the death of noble laureate Liu Xiaobo.⁴⁴² He also turned a blind eye towards the violations of human rights by Saudi Arabia in its war against Yemen, Al-Sisi's brutal crackdown on protesters and the excessive violations of Palestinian rights under Netanyahu, while declaring autocrats like Kim Jong Un and Putin as great friends.⁴⁴³ All these

⁴⁴⁰Thomas G Weiss, "The UN and Multilateralism under Siege in the "Age of Trump" *Global Summitry*, Volume 4, Issue 1, Summer 2018, Pages 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1093/global/guy013>

⁴⁴¹ Ronald E. Powaski 'Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump', (Palgrave MacMillan E-Book, 2019) P. 244-245.

⁴⁴² Ronald E. Powaski 'Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy' P. 244-245.

⁴⁴³ Mel Gurtov, 'America in Retreat Foreign Policy under Donald Trump' (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021) . P.194-198.

actions or the lack thereof dents the American image as the international protector of human rights and a promoter of democratic values.

The foreign policy actions of the Trump administration regarding international institutions also served to undermine these institutions as well as discrediting the US as a key proponent of international institutionalism. Donald Trump undermined the WTO by threatening to leave its framework, flouting its decisions to advance his trade war with China and blocking appointments to its appellate panel, which jeopardized the workings of its dispute resolution mechanism. All of these actions damaged the US liberal internationalist credentials and its standing as a champion of *lassiez faire* economy again conceding space to China as an international leader of free trade.⁴⁴⁴

Trump's policy *viz-a-viz* the UN also reflected his disdain for international institutionalism which has been a key tenet of liberal internationalism. He declared the UN as being unfriendly towards democracy, liberty and the United States itself⁴⁴⁵ and expressed ire at costs US incurs as a part of UN's peace keeping work.⁴⁴⁶ Under Trump's watch the US withdrew from United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Human Rights Council and cut or froze funding to the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and peacekeeping missions.⁴⁴⁷ He also issued an executive order authorizing legal investigation as well

⁴⁴⁴ Kristen Hopewell, "When the hegemon goes rogue" P.1025–1043

⁴⁴⁵ Reuters, "Factbox: What Trump has said about the United Nations", September 18, 2017
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-assembly-trump-comments-factbox-idUSKCN1BS0UO>

⁴⁴⁶ Reuters, "Factbox: What Trump has said about the United Nations",

⁴⁴⁷ Allen Hicken, Pauline Jones, And Anil Menon, "The International System after Trump and the Pandemic", *Current History*, January 2021.

as prosecution and financial sanctions against ICC (International Criminal Court) prosecutors and judges ⁴⁴⁸ over their investigation into the conduct of US personnel in Afghanistan.

All of these actions cited above were intrinsically opposed to the liberal internationalist consensus that prevailed after the Second World War and served to deteriorate American liberal internationalist standing. Donald Trump “rejected this consensus and its concomitant liberal internationalist foreign policy posture”⁴⁴⁹ Many of these actions were later reversed under the Joe Biden administration but by that time a lot of worlds’ confidence in US liberal international leadership had deteriorated. These policies facilitated the the expansion of Chinese international role and furthered Russian resurgence in the backdrop of its invasion of Ukraine.⁴⁵⁰ If Donald Trump gets re-elected the liberal consensus may once again be in jeopardy.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁸ Allen Hicken, Pauline Jones, And Anil Menon, “The International System after Trump and the Pandemic” *Current History*, January 2021

⁴⁴⁹ Hilde Eliassen Restad, Associate professor of International Studies at Oslo Nye University College, Oslo, interviewed by the Author, July 1, 2024.

⁴⁵⁰ Ghazanfar Ali Garewal, Lecturer of International Relations, Department of International Relations, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Interviewed by the Author August 5, 2024.

⁴⁵¹ Hilde Eliassen Restad, Associate professor of International Studies at Oslo Nye University College, Oslo, interviewed by the Author, July 1, 2024.

CHAPTER 4

EXCEPTIONALISM IN POST-TRUMP AMERICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

This chapter aims to discover the future prospects and challenges for American Exceptionalism. The chapter is divided into two parts, of which the first one elucidates on the prospects for American Exceptionalism and its continuation as a foreign policy type. The second chapter aims at discovering the challenges to its continuation owing to both endogenous and exogenous factors. The future of American Exceptionalism in foreign policy can be best elaborated on if its past is taken into account and the norms of exceptionalism are discovered, in other words if taken as a foreign policy ‘type’ for which the exceptional foreign policy type as described by K.J Holsti will be used. The challenges taken into account are both exogenous and endogenous in nature and have been explained as such.

4.1. Perspectives on Trumpism and the fall of American Exceptionalism

American exceptionalism with all its complexities and various interpretations has come face to face with realities of American historical experience many a times; leading to contradictions between what is preached and practiced.⁴⁵² This contradiction has a bleak past related to race relations, human rights and the treatment of American Natives as well as territorial expansionism, all of which were not in accord with liberal-internationalism, however most of these historical

⁴⁵² Trevor B. McCrisken, “*American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US Foreign Policy Since 1974*”. (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2003), P.17

events happened before the construction of liberal internationalist self-image. The two events which shook American confidence in the Exceptionalist idea during modern history were the Watergate Scandal and the American involvement in Vietnam War⁴⁵³ which not only eroded American national pride and confidence in national institutions but also laid bare the inherent contradictions between the lofty ideals professed by the US Exceptional self and the strategic decisions.

Despite these setbacks, the US with its exceptional self image continued marching on at times and straggling along at others on the missionary path of American Exceptionalism which found a renewed vigor under the Ronald Reagan's administration⁴⁵⁴ who may be termed its most prominent proponent in modern times. The fall of USSR and the emergence of the US as the sole super power gave credence to the idea of US as an 'indispensable nation' during the 1990's and the American public got used to the national self conception of US as the upholder of the new economic and political order post-Cold War which was based on the idea of global liberalization with the US having the responsibility to uphold it using all the power at its disposal resulting in a decade of interventionism.⁴⁵⁵ George W. Bush also invoked the exceptional ideals when he started his 'War on terror' in response to the 9/11 attacks declaring the US as the 'brightest beacon of freedom and opportunity' citing it as a reason for the attack⁴⁵⁶ before embarking on a quest to defend these values against global terrorism and radical Islam. Thus American exceptionalism has survived the most challenging times, as well as the unexceptional policy actions of certain administrations. It

⁴⁵³ Trevor B. McCrisken, "*American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam*" P.17

⁴⁵⁴ Trevor B. McCrisken, "*American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam*:" P.129-130.

⁴⁵⁵ Andrew Bacevich, '*The Limits Of Power The End Of American Exceptionalism*', (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009), P.1-2.

⁴⁵⁶ Trevor B. McCrisken, "*American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US Foreign Policy Since 1974*". (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2003) P.183.

has been invoked by anti-imperialists and expansionists, internationalists and isolationists and hawks and doves alike not withstanding their different conceptions of it.⁴⁵⁷

American exceptionalism has faced speculations about its doom at significant turns of American history, for instance after Vietnam. After 9/11 Francis Fukuyama predicted the end of American Exceptionalism equating it with the US unilateralism, and expressed hope that the US may finally become more like ordinary countries which faces real threats and has well defined interests instead of seeking to mould the world to its own liking.⁴⁵⁸ This however was not to be as is evident from the later decisions with respect to Iraq War where the US went against the wishes of its allies and the international community. Similarly when Donald Trump launched his presidential campaign and later won elections, many foreign policy and exceptionalism experts declared his rhetoric as a threat to American exceptionalism. Hilde Eliassen Restad opined that Donald Trump's views were a rejection of American exceptionalism and were more akin to Jacksonian Nationalism thus posing a threat to exceptionalist identity of the US.⁴⁵⁹ However as it will be seen, the Donald Trump era foreign policy had its elements of continuity in some aspects and the he did not act on all the rhetoric, a case in point being the softening of his stance on NATO. Joseph Nye in one of his articles is of the view that American exceptionalism has three camps, the liberal internationalists to which the present president Joe Biden belongs, the America Firsters who want to go back to

⁴⁵⁷ Trevor B. McCrisken, "American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam" P.183-184.

⁴⁵⁸ Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of American Exceptionalism', *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Fall 2001. Vol. 18, No.04, P.40-42.

⁴⁵⁹ Hilde EliassenRestad, "Whither The "City Upon A Hill"? Donald Trump, America First, And American Exceptionalism", *Texas National Security Review: Volume 3, Issue 1 (Winter 2019/2020)*: p.63-92.

isolationism, the camp where he places Donald Trump and the retrenchers who take the middle ground between the two.⁴⁶⁰

Taesuh Cha while elaborating on the formation of American exceptional identities is of the view that American Identity or Exceptionalism has morphed into two distinct foreign policy traditions based on national experiences with people of colour and with Europeans, ‘Jeffersonian liberal internationalism’ and ‘Jacksonian Populist Imperialism’.⁴⁶¹ These two strands differ on the conception of national identity, national interests and foreign policies but both share the exceptionalist idea of American superiority viz-a-viz others and the aspiration to mould the world in the American image.⁴⁶² Thus Trumpism is not a new phenomenon, nor is it divorced from American exceptionalism and its history as it shares its aspirations and fears with the Jacksonian tradition. Michael Rank argues in the favour of the same in his book on the historical roots of Trump’s presidential campaign and has put together a list of past politicians including Andrew Jackson himself, whom he terms the ‘log cabin Trump’ as well as others like Wendell Willkie, Huey Long and George Wallace who shared many ideas and methods with Trump all the while professing their own interpretation of American Exceptionalism.⁴⁶³

4.1.1. Trumpian Pick and Choose

Interestingly, although Donald Trump disavowed American Exceptionalism and even ridiculed it at times during his presidential campaign, he never really attacked its basic principles especially American superiority, capitalism and religious values notwithstanding the fact that he has been

⁴⁶⁰Joseph S. Nye Jr. “American Exceptionalism in 2024.” *Project Syndicate*, December 11, 2023.

⁴⁶¹ Taesuh Cha, “The formation of American exceptional identities: A three-tier model of the “standard of civilization” in US foreign policy”, *European Journal of International Relations* 1–25, 2015,p.15-16.

⁴⁶² Taesuh Cha, “The formation of American exceptional identities” , p.15-16.

⁴⁶³ Michael Rank, ‘*American History & Donald Trump*’, (Digital Edition,2016) p.18-45

declared as a threat to American democracy by many. Robert C. Rowland is of the opinion that the nationalist populist rhetoric of Donald Trump served to destroy the democratic norms in the American society in which he sowed fear, tension and conflict based on lies, exaggeration of facts and deception while shielding him from accountability especially in terms of finances.⁴⁶⁴ He also promoted conspiracy theories and constantly challenged the veracity of American media to the point of completely discrediting criticizing voices, which is never a healthy thing for a democracy.⁴⁶⁵ Such a populist style of politics complimented by radicalization and hatred leads to a political society that is extremist and persecutes the minorities as well as those criticizing the government and offers blind loyalty to the leader notwithstanding his flaws.⁴⁶⁶

4.1.2. American Institutional Exceptionalism

Murtazashvili et.al are of the opinion that the threat to American democracy is not all that grave as claimed by some, due to the fact that the US has exceptionally robust political institutions that are primed to deal with populists owing to the constraints that the founding fathers put in place which are a deterrent to hegemony of a populist majoritarian government.⁴⁶⁷ They argue that that illiberalism and majoritarianism are inherent features of a liberal democracy and are bound to happen when leaders exploit the fears and concerns of sometimes irrational voters; moreover not all the fears can be termed irrational for instance Trumps opposition to immigration had a rational Keynesian side as the job market becomes more saturated with increased migration.⁴⁶⁸ Another

⁴⁶⁴ Robert C. Rowland, *“The Rhetoric of Donald Trump nationalist populism and American democracy”*, (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2021). P.221-230.

⁴⁶⁵ Robert C. Rowland, *“The Rhetoric of Donald Trump nationalist populism and American democracy”*, P.221-230.

⁴⁶⁶ Robert C. Rowland, *“The Rhetoric of Donald Trump nationalist populism and American democracy”*, P.221-230.

⁴⁶⁷ Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili et. al, “American Institutional Exceptionalism and the Trump Presidency”, *The Independent Review*, v. 26, n. 1, Summer 2021, ISSN 1086–1653, 2021, pp. 97–114.

⁴⁶⁸ Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili et. al, “American Institutional Exceptionalism and the Trump Presidency”, pp. 97–114.

aspect that could have threatened American democracy is the increase in presidential powers but statistics show that Donald Trump relied less on presidential orders compared to many other presidents before him, as he issued 220 which pale in comparison to 1800 of Wilson and 3700 of Roosevelt and he did not use the COVID19 pandemic to assume greater power unlike Joe Biden who invoked ‘Defense Production Act’.⁴⁶⁹ Similarly Donald Trump did not use any ‘extralegal’ means to cling on to power and was successfully voted out of office after an election, disputed only by him and the violent reaction of his supporters can be categorized as a riot, not a coup.⁴⁷⁰ The most vivid indication of American institutional checks on presidential power is the fact that Donald Trump was impeached twice over misuse of power and obstruction as well as in relation to the Capitol riot.⁴⁷¹

4.1.3. Trumps embrace of Exceptionalism

Another point to observe here is that after assuming the presidency Donald Trump sensed the importance of American Exceptionalism to a certain degree, not as an ideological foundation for liberal internationalist foreign policy agenda but as a political trope for politics and his re-election bid. He started constructing the narrative that American Exceptionalism was returning as his presidency progressed due to his domestic and international policies touting the economic successes of US in line with his superiority conception of Exceptionalism, claiming the credit for return of Exceptionalism.⁴⁷² Interestingly, Trump as a part of his 2020 re-election bid placed the

⁴⁶⁹ Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili et. al, “American Institutional Exceptionalism and the Trump Presidency”, pp. 97–114.

⁴⁷⁰ Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili et. al, “American Institutional Exceptionalism and the Trump Presidency”, pp. 97–114.

⁴⁷¹ “Donald Trump impeached again - but what does it mean this time?”, Sky News, Thursday 14 January 2021 07:05, UK. <https://news.sky.com/story/donald-trump-impeached-again-but-what-does-it-mean-this-time-12186887>, assessed January 23, 2024.

⁴⁷² Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling, ‘*Exceptional Me*’, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021). P.86-87.

teaching of American Exceptionalism in schools as a part of his educational goals in his ‘fighting for you’ agenda and Exceptionalism as defined by the Republican Party platform calls for US international leadership owing to the exceptional qualities that the US is blessed with.⁴⁷³

4.2. How exceptional is Trumpism?

In order to discuss the future prospects as well as challenges for American Exceptionalism in Post-Trump America there is a need to frame Exceptionalism as foreign policy type beyond the national identity rhetoric and political rationalization of presidential decisions. K.J.Holsti is of the view that Exceptionalism is not distinctly American and although it is rare, it has been professed as a national identity and practiced as a foreign policy by other states in history.⁴⁷⁴ He has developed the normative grounds for understanding the Exceptional type of foreign policy by studying the history of three states, the US, Soviet Union and Revolutionary France and identifying five factors that constitute an Exceptional foreign policy.⁴⁷⁵

Holsti is of the opinion that Exceptionalist states tend to have a liberators mindset and seek to liberate other societies who are less fortunate from the clutches of evil and exploitation, thus fulfilling a mission by putting the collective well being before their self interest as they perceive it.⁴⁷⁶ Due to the grave nature of their responsibilities and the burden of being a ‘redeemer’ nation such states feel entitled to be above the laws and norms which govern the relations between

⁴⁷³ Nicole Gaudiano, “Trump wants to teach ‘American exceptionalism,’ an idea he once disavowed”, Politico, 08/24/2020 04:40 PM EDT, assessed January 23, 2024.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/08/24/trump-teach-american-exceptionalism-401060>

⁴⁷⁴ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy: Is it exceptional?”, *European Journal of International Relations* 17(3), 2010, P.381–404,

⁴⁷⁵ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy” P.381–404,

⁴⁷⁶ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy” P.381–404,

ordinary states and are thus Exemptionalist along with being Exceptionalist.⁴⁷⁷ Exceptionalist nations view themselves as existing in a world full of hostiles and tend to ‘universalize’ threats similarly the Exceptionalist states and societies develop a need for external enemies therefore such enemies and threats are often concocted or if they actually exist are inflated to greater proportions than they really have.⁴⁷⁸ Lastly Exceptional states perceive themselves as morally clean and innocent, who do not contribute to international problems and only react to threats posed to them by the malign actors who seek to undermine the forces for good.⁴⁷⁹

If Donald Trump era foreign policy is viewed in the perspective of these Exceptional norms it becomes evident that he did not follow or believe in some of these norms, while staunchly professing and practicing others, however the existence of all five of these at the same time in all exemplar states is not a must instead they keep ‘waxing and waning’ as Holsti points out.⁴⁸⁰ In terms of the missionary character of Exceptionalism, Donald Trump was certainly not very enthusiastic about spreading democracy abroad and was averse to the idea of the United States having a higher calling⁴⁸¹ as is indicated by his National Security Strategy that not only rules out the imposition of American way of life on others but also declares that doing so is not ‘inevitable for the culmination of progress’.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁷ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy” P.381–404,

⁴⁷⁸ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy” P.381–404,

⁴⁷⁹ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy: Is it exceptional?”, *European Journal of International Relations* 17(3), 2010, P.381–404,

⁴⁸⁰ K. J. Holsti, “Exceptionalism in American foreign policy:” P.381–404,

⁴⁸¹ James Curran, “Americanism Not Globalism”: President Trump and The American Mission” *Lowy Institute* July 2018. P.11.

⁴⁸² The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, December 2017, 4, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

Donald Trump certainly felt that the U.S could flout the international law and norm at will as he did many times and as is indicated by his abhorrence for international multilateral frameworks, although the Trumpian conviction was not rooted in the belief that America should be exempt because of its moral responsibilities, instead he felt the US was powerful enough to do so. In terms of concocting and magnifying external as well as internal threats, Donald Trump adopted that policy be it the Muslim and Mexican immigrants or states like Iran. While Trump did not believe in moral sense of incense as is evident from his criticism of his predecessors he was certain that the world was out to rip US including even the allies.

Nicola Nymalm and Johannes Plagemann have conducted a similar study as Holsti and are of the opinion that Exceptionalism can be divided into four categories which are civilizational, internationalist, imperialist and globalist exceptionalisms, similarly while identifying the characteristics necessary for comparison of Exceptionalism types they have identified exemplary, missionary, Exemptionalist and non Exemptionalist characters which may be found in any exceptionalist type.⁴⁸³

4.2.1. Exemptionalist Exceptionalism

They have dubbed the Trump era exceptionalism as exemptionalist and non-missionary with isolationist elements.⁴⁸⁴ While Donald Trump's foreign policy had some aspects that might remind of isolationism, many of his actions also negate this view for instance his increase in military spending, airstrikes on Syria in response to the use of chemical weapons, the decision to delay exit from Afghanistan and increasing military presence there, arming of Ukrainian rebels, engagements

⁴⁸³ Nicola Nymalm and Johannes Plagemann, "Comparative Exceptionalism: Universality and Particularity in Foreign Policy Discourses", *International Studies Review* (2019) 21, p.12–37.

⁴⁸⁴ Nicola Nymalm and Johannes Plagemann, "Comparative Exceptionalism" p.12–37.

with China and North Korea and the survival and expansion of NATO under his watch.⁴⁸⁵ On the Exemptionalist criterion, Donald Trump easily qualifies as an exceptionalist as he withdrew the US from Paris Climate Accord and the Iran Nuclear Deal and backed away from Trans-Pacific Partnership.⁴⁸⁶ Keeping in line with the exceptional character of feeling insecure in a world full of dangers and concocting and inflating threats when they don't exist or are not significant in size Donald Trump identified Immigrants especially Muslims, 'radical Islamism' and terrorism, China as well as some of the US allies⁴⁸⁷ as threats to the social, economic and military security of the US. Lastly Trump also used the 'innocence' character of Exceptionalism when it came to dealings with the allies whom he thought were ripping the US off.⁴⁸⁸ Interestingly in terms of rhetoric at least Donald Trump when asked about his respect for Vladimir Putin despite him being a killer asked the interviewer whether America was itself so innocent.⁴⁸⁹ Donald Trump did not believe as much in the US being morally clean but he was sure about being ripped and taken advantage off in economic terms.

4.3. Prospects for Exceptionalism

Keeping in view the above discussion it is evident that American Exceptionalism did not die with the advent of Donald Trump, instead some of the exceptional aspects gained greater impetus while

⁴⁸⁵ James Curran, "Americanism Not Globalism": President Trump and The American Mission" Lowy Institute July 2018. P.11.

⁴⁸⁶ Richard Haass, "The Age of America First: Washington's Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus", Foreign Affairs, November/December 2021, Accessed January 26, 2024.

⁴⁸⁷ "Trump Says Friends, Enemies Can't Take Advantage of US on Trade", June 11, 2018 1:39 AM, VOA News, <https://www.voanews.com/a/trump-on-trade-at-g7-summit/4433232.html>

⁴⁸⁸ "G7 summit: Donald Trump lashes out at America's key allies", BBC News. June 11, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44434558>

⁴⁸⁹ Sophie Tatum, "Trump defends Putin: 'You think our country's so innocent?'", Mon February 6, 2017. <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/04/politics/donald-trump-vladimir-putin/index.html>

other waned in comparison especially the ones of a missionary kind. Donald Trump had his differences with liberal internationalism owing mostly to economic reasons but he did not oppose the idea of Exceptionalism. As per the typologies of Exceptionalism that have been devised in the nascent field of comparative exceptionalism Donald Trump certainly does not qualify as an upholder of internationalist, imperial or global exceptionalism but he also doesn't fully fit the criterion of an isolationist.

The foreign policy that Donald Trump can be termed as 'unilateral internationalism' borrowing the term from Hilde Eliassen Restad, who while researching the dichotomies of missionary and exemplary, and isolationist and international aspects of US foreign policy denied their usefulness and argued that unilateral internationalism has been the defining feature of US foreign policy, attributing this nature of foreign policy to American Exceptionalism.⁴⁹⁰ Ironically, Restad considered Trump as a threat to American Exceptionalism because in her opinion he challenged it by adopting 'America First' rooted in Jacksonianism which was considered antithetical to Exceptionalism.⁴⁹¹

However the analysis of Trumpian rhetoric and foreign policy suggests that Trump was tilted more in favour of unilateralism and believed in engaging with the world albeit in a transactional manner. When it comes to policy actions he did not even go all in for unilateralism and despite his rhetoric kept on with many of the policies of his successors like the Pacific-pivot of Obama as well as staying on in international security and financial institutions like NATO that he had bashed during his electoral campaign. What Donald Trump accomplished was the renewal and reinvigoration of

⁴⁹⁰ Hilde Eliassen Restad, *"American Exceptionalism An idea that made a nation and remade the world"*, (New York: Routledge, 2015.) P.09-11.

⁴⁹¹ Hilde Eliassen Restad, "Whither The "City Upon A Hill"? Donald Trump, America First, And American Exceptionalism", *Texas National Security Review*: Volume 3, Issue 1 (Winter 2019/2020): p.63-92.

a nationalist populist wave against liberal internationalism, multilateralism, international institutionalism and immigration.

Amidst this wave the missionary aspect of liberal democracy promotion and the inclusive elements of Exceptional identity did take a hit, but other aspects of exceptional identity have largely survived. This goes on to show the strength of entrenched values that evolve over centuries and how they stay relevant amidst sporadic bouts of national disappointment. While the core American identity and values have always showed resilience and consistency, the contestation is not essentially American Exceptionalism versus the test of times but between two kinds of Exceptionalism, the liberal internationalism or the post WW2 consensus on one hand and the America First Exceptionalism of Donald Trump and Andrew Jackson on the other hand.

4.3.1. Lack of Public Support for Trumpism and Policy Reversals

The positive prospects for American Exceptionalism in Post-Trump America (something that is not fully settled yet) are evident firstly from the lack of public support for his anti-liberal internationalism agenda, as indicated by public opinion polls as discussed in the previous chapter. Secondly Trumps defeat to the incumbent President Joe Biden in the 2020 elections also indicated the lack of majority support for his ideas. Thirdly his successor undid many of the decisions that Donald Trump took while in office which were in contrast with aspects of American Exceptionalism especially its liberal foundations. Under Joe Biden the US rejoined Paris Climate

ccord, UN Human Rights Council and WHO.⁴⁹² The ban on Muslim Immigrants was withdrawn as well and the US stopped support for Saudi Arabia's 'offensive operations' in Yemen.⁴⁹³

4.3.2. The Russia Ukraine Crisis and the Rebirth of American Leadership

The liberal internationalist aspect of American Exceptionalism and American international leadership gained fresh impetus from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Although the Russian move represented an existential threat to Ukraine, a potential ally of US in its confrontation with Russia and a vanguard for Western democracies, it brought forth an opportunity for the Biden administration to reassert the American leadership and attempt to restore the confidence of European allies in US security guarantees. The US was ready for such a move and an open conflagration between a democratic state and an autocracy was a good chance for the US to assert its support for democracy amidst a global wave of nationalist authoritarianism.⁴⁹⁴

The US had a great initial success as it rallied European allies to its cause, with whom Joe Biden had worked to restore ties with, and within the first six months up to 44 billion USD was provided to Ukraine in military aid.⁴⁹⁵ The total economic and military aid exceeded 200 billion from US and allied countries later on with more than half of it coming from the US.⁴⁹⁶ The US proved to be proactive, cooperative, and transparent in bringing together intelligence agencies in the US and UK, as well as other NATO countries, declassifying intelligence and effectively countering

⁴⁹² Alex Ward, "Progressives say Biden's foreign policy is the same as Trump's. They're wrong." Vox.com, Apr 1, 2021, 8:20am EDT. <https://www.vox.com/2021/4/1/22358140/biden-foreign-policy-same-trump>

⁴⁹³ Alex Ward, "Progressives say Biden's foreign policy is the same as Trump's. They're wrong."

⁴⁹⁴ Kerry Boyd Anderson, "Biden's foreign policy woes", Arab News.pk , December 21, 2023. Accessed January 27, 2024 1:20 AM <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/2429856>

⁴⁹⁵ Kerry Boyd Anderson, "Biden's foreign policy woes"

⁴⁹⁶ Ivo Daalder, "Biden's foreign policy headache in 2024", Politico, January 2, 2024 4:00 AM . Accessed January 27, 2024 1:38 AM <https://www.politico.eu/article/joe-biden-united-states-foreign-policy-ukraine-israel-hamas-war-taiwan/>

Russian propaganda before and during the Russian invasion of Ukraine - all the while having international law and basic morals on their side.⁴⁹⁷

President Biden being an ‘Atlantic politician’ and ‘a cold war guy’ who espoused liberal exceptionalism⁴⁹⁸ was successful to a certain degree in restoring the confidence of American allies in his administration and a Pew survey in 2023 reveals that 54% of the people mostly in nations allied to the US had confidence in president Biden’s handling of international affairs as opposed to 39% who did not.⁴⁹⁹ Similarly 61% people across 23 countries viewed the US role in the world as being conducive to international peace and stability as opposed to 38% who did not, while 49% were of the opinion that the US considered the interests of their countries along with its own as opposed to 51% who thought otherwise.⁵⁰⁰ A majority of the respondents rated US positively in terms of soft power as well, with most of them rating US products and technology more positively as compared to the societal values and living conditions in the US.⁵⁰¹ These trends indicate that the US is still viewed positively and its role as a role model to the world of a liberal democratic and economic polity is appreciated to a great degree which augurs well for exceptionalism.

The US under Joe Biden also transformed its policy on COVID from the one adopted by Donald Trump by taking a more active part in international efforts and donating of 500 million doses of

⁴⁹⁷ Hilde Eliassen Restad, Associate Professor of International Studies at Oslo Nye University College, Oslo, interview by Sadaquat Hussain, July 1, 2024.

⁴⁹⁸ Volker Depkat, Professor of American and British Studies at Regensburg University, Germany, in a discussion with the Author, August 6, 2024.

⁴⁹⁹ Richard Wike et al., “International Views of Biden and U.S. Largely Positive”, Pew Research Center, June 27, 2023. Accessed January 27, 2024, 12:10 am.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2023/06/27/international-views-of-biden-and-u-s-largely-positive/>

⁵⁰⁰ Richard Wike et al., “International Views of Biden and U.S. Largely Positive”

⁵⁰¹ Richard Wike et al., “International Views of Biden and U.S. Largely Positive”

vaccine, thus bolstering US standing as a global leader.⁵⁰² Similarly the US made some strides on climate issues as well with the Biden administration getting a spending bill passed amounting to 369 billion USD for curtailing carbon emissions.⁵⁰³

4.3.3. Wealth and Power

The positive prospects for American Exceptionalism in its liberal internationalist form originate from the material wealth and power that the US holds as well as the public opinion in the US which though it may vary of international involvement at times owing to the domestic economic situation, retains a large segment of Americans who view their country as the leader of a free world and the upholder of liberal values that are a part of the US national identity. The material wealth and power still makes the US the only potential defender of the liberal international order which is under threat from revisionist China and Russia that seek fundamental changes to it. Thus willing or not circumstances will keep pushing the US to the leadership of the Western world at least aided by forces from the inside such as national identity and liberal values, the Russia-Ukraine war being a case in point.

4.4. Continuity and change under President Joe Biden

However, despite the achievements of Joe Biden administration, the liberal internationalist aspect of American Exceptionalism still remains under strain owing to a lot of factors some which are

⁵⁰² Zeke Miller, "U.S. to buy 500 million Pfizer vaccines to share with other countries", Jun 9, 2021, PBS News, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/u-s-to-buy-500-million-pfizer-vaccines-to-share-with-other-countries>

⁵⁰³ Par Jeff Hawkins, "Impacts of the Ukraine Crisis on Biden's Foreign Policy", Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques, October 10, 2022. <https://www.iris-france.org/170529-impacts-of-the-ukraine-crisis-on-bidens-foreign-policy/>

exogenous to the US and are rooted in system level changes and developments which along with endogenous domestic economic, societal and economic constraints may create problems for multilateral liberal internationalism. Another factor to consider is the degree of continuity and change in US foreign policy from Trump administration to the incumbent administration, which although different diagonally in terms of rhetoric retained many of its contours from Trumpian times. The discussion in the next part of this chapter will center on these phenomena.

The discussion on challenges to American Exceptionalism needs a more nuanced account of factors that have been, and continue to be influential in the shaping and re-shaping of American foreign policy and international behavior while being justified and rationalized using the political rhetoric of American Exceptionalism. American Exceptionalism has various aspects and facets, the prominence and relevance of which continues to ebb and wane with the times influenced by both external and internal factors. At its core it comprises of the inherent belief that the US is unique, ‘viscerally democratic’ and morally superior country⁵⁰⁴ ‘for historical, ideological and religious reasons.’⁵⁰⁵

This belief translates into various aspects of American national identity, some of which see US as a unique experiment in world history to be emulated by others while others consider it a nation chosen by providence to do Gods work of spreading values of liberty and virtue internationally. The belief in American uniqueness, superiority, its democracy as an example and its possession of the best values has always remained a constant although Americans differ on what to do with these

⁵⁰⁴ Paul Hockenos, “US exceptionalism is dead, long live US exceptionalism”, IPS Journal, 28.01.2021. <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/foreign-and-security-policy/us-exceptionalism-is-dead-long-live-us-exceptionalism-4937/>

⁵⁰⁵ Sarah E. Mendelson, The US is leaving millions behind: Exceptionalism needs to change by 2030”, Brookings, April 10, 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-us-is-leaving-millions-behind-american-exceptionalism-needs-to-change-by-2030/>

conditions and these differences lead to changes in US foreign policy over the time. the post World War Two liberal international order and the US leadership of this order was also rooted in these ideals as is the opposition to US international involvement and leadership, led by Donald Trump and others.

The superiority belief leads to the idea of maintaining international hegemony while the belief in uniqueness leads to the flouting of rules that the US itself helped create. On these two aspects there is almost always a consensus with rare divergences. The points of difference are usually rooted in the ‘moral duty’ aspect and the costs associated with duty and whether this role of an international leader with its basis in multilateralism is indeed beneficial to, and in accordance with US national interests.

Donald Trump disputed this, but he was not alone in thinking so and represented a changing current within the American nation and their perception of self. An appraisal of Post-Trump foreign policy indicates that while he was repudiated for his political stance, the successor administration is having a hard time distancing itself from many of his policies. The discussion on challenges to American Exceptionalism in its liberal internationalist form post-Trump require a discussion on the legacy of Trump era policies and the degree to which they have withstood the new administration as well as the ways in which they influenced the Biden era policies, in other words an account of continuity and change.

4.4.1. Continuity and Change

President Joe Biden assumed the office of president claiming “America is back”.⁵⁰⁶ He signaled his support for the liberal international order, efforts against climate change, arms control and reiterated his support for alliances and multilateralism leading to hopes that his foreign policy would mark a significant change from Trump Era policies as he called for restoring American leadership of the global democratic cause.⁵⁰⁷ However in many key areas the Biden foreign policy looks a lot like Donald Trump’s.⁵⁰⁸

4.4.2. Made in America

Like Trump Joe Biden during his campaign announced his ‘Made in America’ plan and promised to stand by American workers by protecting American jobs which would mean ‘enforcement actions’ impacting trading partners, subsidies and tariffs on imports echoing Donald Trump era protectionism.⁵⁰⁹ Biden’s ‘Build back better’ industrial policy aiming at self sufficiency in industrial manufacturing had the same undertones of protecting the working middle class⁵¹⁰ irrespective of its impacts on free trade. The US did not rejoin the successor to TPP and it did not take any steps to bolster free trade with European allies, in fact Biden while doing away with tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Europe replaced them with quotas and export restrictions.⁵¹¹ Similarly Biden announced his foreign policy program dubbing it the ‘Foreign policy for middle

⁵⁰⁶ Quoted in, Richard Haass, “The Age of America First: Washington’s Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus”, Foreign Affairs, November/December 2021, Accessed January 26,2024.

⁵⁰⁷ Richard Haass, “The Age of America First: Washington’s Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus”

⁵⁰⁸ Richard Haass, “The Age of America First: Washington’s Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus”

⁵⁰⁹ Stephen Olson, “US trade policy under Biden: Will it differ from Trump?”, Hinrich Foundation, 11 August 2020. <https://www.hinrichfoundation.com/research/article/us-china/us-trade-policy-biden/>

⁵¹⁰ Stephen Olson, “US trade policy under Biden: Will it differ from Trump?”

⁵¹¹ Celia Belin et. al, “Policy Brief :Brace Yourself: How The 2024 Us Presidential Election Could Affect Europe”, May, 2023. <https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Brace-yourself-How-the-2024-US-presidential-election-could-affect-Europe.pdf>

classes' which had the stated aim of linking US international moves to peace, economic prosperity and national security at home.⁵¹² This has been described as a 'dressed up version' of Donald Trump's America First policy of putting national interests above 'international commitments'.⁵¹³

4.4.3. On China

Joe Biden has continued the Trumpian policy of countering and balancing China as well.⁵¹⁴ While trying to distance his policies and rhetoric from Trump Biden has been trying to deal with China in a stern manner, an effort often causing problems for Biden but ultimately leading to continuity of the policies albeit with the change that he professes a more non-confrontational rhetoric while trying to make the task of confronting China a multilateral effort.⁵¹⁵ His 'interim security guidance', the key document on foreign policy declared China as the most concerning rival with the capability to threaten the stability and openness of international order⁵¹⁶, framing the tussle with China in terms of a strategic competition for defending the international order. Biden has not gone as far as declaring an open trade war on China like his predecessor but he is fomenting one

⁵¹² Judah Grunstein et. al, "US Foreign Policy Under Joe Biden", World Politics Review, Sep 13, 2023. <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/biden-us-foreign-policy/>

⁵¹³ Judah Grunstein et. al, "US Foreign Policy Under Joe Biden",

⁵¹⁴ Paul Poast, "Biden's Foreign Policy Looks an Awful Lot Like Trump's", World Politics Review, August 25, 2023. <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/foreign-policy-us-biden-trump/?one-time-read-code=2325911706383890103778>

⁵¹⁵ Vivek Mishra, "From Trump to Biden, Continuity and Change in the US's China Policy", Observer Research Foundation, Aug 16, 2023. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/from-trump-to-biden-continuity-and-change-in-the-us-s-china-policy>

⁵¹⁶ Par Jeff Hawkins, "Impacts of the Ukraine Crisis on Biden's Foreign Policy", Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques, October 10, 2022. <https://www.iris-france.org/170529-impacts-of-the-ukraine-crisis-on-bidens-foreign-policy/>

with the continued policy of imposing sanctions against China and keeping the trade restrictions of Trump administration in place.⁵¹⁷

4.4.4. Middle East and Iran

Biden administration continued with the Trump era policies in the Middle East as well, not only embracing Donald Trump's Abraham Accords aimed at bringing the Arab countries closer to Israel and getting them to recognize it, but also trying to expand it⁵¹⁸ although these efforts have been marred by the ongoing war in Gaza. The policy on Iran also marks continuation and instead of reviving the multilateral Iran Deal, the Biden administration while not being as hostile as Trump has ruled out the chances of any new agreement.⁵¹⁹

4.4.5. Ukraine and Russia

The policy on Ukraine is also a continuation of the Trumpian policy of containing Russia, as is evident from the US response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the continued expansion of NATO.⁵²⁰ While some argue that what Biden did would not have happened if Trump were at the helm, the Trumpian policy of ever increasing sanctions against Russia which are still in place tell another tale⁵²¹. In fact the extent of countering Russia in Ukraine had an adverse impact on many of the other foreign policy priorities of the Biden administration that were more in line with the

⁵¹⁷ Paul Poast, "Biden's Foreign Policy Looks an Awful Lot Like Trump's", *World Politics Review*, August 25, 2023. <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/foreign-policy-us-biden-trump/?one-time-read-code=2325911706383890103778>

⁵¹⁸ Paul Poast, "Biden's Foreign Policy Looks an Awful Lot Like Trump's"

⁵¹⁹ Paul Poast, "Biden's Foreign Policy Looks an Awful Lot Like Trump's"

⁵²⁰ Ivo Daalder, "Biden's foreign policy headache in 2024", *Politico*, January 2, 2024 4:00 AM. Accessed January 27, 2024 1:38 AM <https://www.politico.eu/article/joe-biden-united-states-foreign-policy-ukraine-israel-amas-war-taiwan/>

⁵²¹ Fyodor Lukyanov, "Trump May be Leaving But Russian Sanctions Will Stay", *Carnegie Endowment For International Peace*, 20.11.2020. <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/83282>

liberal internationalist and multilateral agendas like the promotion of democracy and human rights.⁵²²

4.4.6. Continuity of Hypocrisy: The Case of Palestine

Last but not the least in the series of policy lines of continuity discussed here, is the Israel-Palestine conflict that erupted on October 7, 2023 with a devastating surprise attack on Israel by the Palestinian resistance organization Hamas⁵²³, and quickly escalated into a major urban war as Israel launched its disproportionate retaliation that is still ongoing and has resulted in the deaths of more than 25000 civilians most of whom are women and children.⁵²⁴ This event presented a test for Joe Biden administration of balancing between long term alliance commitments with the state of Israel and playing its role as a responsible global power and a protector of human rights and a rule based international order. What Biden did echoed the Trumpian policy of unilateral support for Israel as evident from Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel which violated the spirit of two-state solution that is backed by an international consensus.

The Biden administrations response was a whole heated condemnation of Hamas but silence on the Israeli atrocities and even questioning their very existence, in the beginning.⁵²⁵ While Biden later acknowledged the increasing number of civilian casualties and called on Israel to minimize

⁵²² Par Jeff Hawkins, "Impacts of the Ukraine Crisis on Biden's Foreign Policy", Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques, October 10, 2022. <https://www.iris-france.org/170529-impacts-of-the-ukraine-crisis-on-bidens-foreign-policy/>

⁵²³ "What happened in Israel? A breakdown of how Hamas attack unfolded", October 7, 2023. Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/7/what-happened-in-israel-a-breakdown-of-how-the-hamas-attack-unfolded>

⁵²⁴ 'Gaza death toll surpasses 25,000 as Israel escalates assault', Aljazeera, January 21, 2024.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/21/gaza-death-toll-surpasses-25000-as-israel-escalates-assault>

⁵²⁵ Perry Bacon Jr., "Biden's Gaza policy is the latest major U.S. foreign affairs blunder", The Washington Post, December 13, 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/12/13/biden-gaza-policy-catastrophe/>

them, his administration continues to provide billions in aid and military hardware to Israel, on a priority basis and at times bypassing the Congress.⁵²⁶ Ironically the US was blatant in its condemnation of civilian casualties during the Russian attack on Ukraine but maintained a different posture when it came to Palestine, similarly the nation claiming to be the watch dog of international human rights announced that it was not ‘conducting an assessment’ of the Israeli violations of the law of war.⁵²⁷ The role of US in assisting and enabling the Israeli perpetrated genocide against Palestinians is starkly different in moral terms from its stance on Ukraine and has left it isolated without the backing of international law and moral values.⁵²⁸ This is a ‘glaring hypocrisy’ and undermines the US claims of being the leader of free world and a liberal international order.⁵²⁹

The US stance of extreme partisanship even in the face of clearly evident Israeli misconduct has led to its international isolation indicated by the voting result of a vote on resolution supporting the right of self determination for the Palestinian people where those who voted in opposition included just the US and Israel along with two non-significant micro-states.⁵³⁰

It is true that the US has a long term alliance with Israel and has historically supported Israel in all of its war as Israel enjoys popular support within the policy circles as well as segments of the public, however there have been administrations that have reined Israel in, during its aggressive

⁵²⁶ Perry Bacon Jr., “Biden’s Gaza policy is the latest major U.S. foreign affairs blunder”

⁵²⁷ Perry Bacon Jr., “Biden’s Gaza policy is the latest major U.S. foreign affairs blunder”

⁵²⁸ Hilde Eliassen Restad, Associate Professor of International Studies at Oslo Nye University College, Oslo, interview by Sadaquat Hussain, July 1, 2024.

⁵²⁹ Hilde Eliassen Restad, Associate Professor of International Studies at Oslo Nye University College, Oslo, interview by Sadaquat Hussain, July 1, 2024

⁵³⁰ Jefery D. Sachs, “Why Biden Is a Foreign Policy Failure”, Common Dreams, January 15, 2024.
<https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/biden-foreign-policy-failure>

wars and refused to become a part of its flouting of international law for instance Dwight. D. Eisenhower pushed against the joint attack by Israel, UK and France against Egypt in 1956 and got them to give up the war using both the American influence as well as a UNGA resolution that the US put forth,⁵³¹ a reflection of how a great power works within the rule based international order using its institutions to uphold the rules. The Biden administration's conduct is a far cry from that, indicative of the deterioration of the American Exceptionalist ideal. As Israel faces genocide allegations in the ICJ, the Biden administration has asked the congress for an additional 50 billion USD in funding so that US can continue the supply of weapons to Ukraine and Israel⁵³² all the while framing the support for Israel as the defense of democracy⁵³³

4.4.7. Yemen and the return of Interventionism

The militant streak in the Biden foreign policy is not just limited to Palestine now as the war escalates and despite the calls from the US to contain the conflict, it is now itself becoming a part of the escalation with the US attacks against the Houthi rebels in Yemen who have been trying to target Israeli shipping in solidarity with Palestine.⁵³⁴ These attacks too have been packaged in the exceptionalist rhetoric of defending the freedom of the seas and the liberty of maritime commerce which is the right of all nations and hence a universal human value. Although the US could get a ceasefire if it did not use a veto and abstain even if it did not vote in favour of Palestine or condition the aid with a ceasefire or Israeli observance of international humanitarian law, it has failed to do

⁵³¹ Jefery D. Sachs, "Why Biden Is a Foreign Policy Failure"

⁵³² Jefery D. Sachs, "Why Biden Is a Foreign Policy Failure"

⁵³³ Perry Bacon Jr., "Biden's Gaza policy is the latest major U.S. foreign affairs blunder", The Washington Post, December 13, 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/12/13/biden-gaza-policy-catastrophe/>

⁵³⁴ Mohamad Bazi, "Why is Joe Biden dragging the US into another potential war?", The Guardian, January 25, 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/25/joe-biden-us-middle-east-war-houthis-gaza>

so till now.⁵³⁵ Instead President Biden remarked that although the attacks on Yemen did not seem to be working they would continue regard less.⁵³⁶

The US foreign policy behavior on Palestine under Biden checks many boxes of the exceptionalist criterion. The feeling of entitlement to stay above the international law, the policy of going alone in defense of international values as interpreted by the US itself and military interventionism to promote US interests as well as international interests as defined by the US. However what is missing is the adherence to values of liberal internationalism and disregard for international law, human rights and the regard for international institutions. Exceptionalism is alive and kicking however it is not the exceptionalism of Woodrow Wilson but one of Donald Trump, though he would surely have adopted a different policy on the provision of aid.

4.5. Challenges to American Exceptionalism

The challenges to American Exceptionalism in its liberal internationalist manifestation are manifold in the present day world. Some of these which are related to specific policies and international actions have found mention already in the discussion on Biden era foreign policy. The challenges originate both from within and outside. The key challenges originating from within the American state and society include the change in public attitudes in response to the cost of policing the world, a developing political consensus against globalization of economics and foreign policy and the inherent weaknesses of the American society in terms of inequality and human development. The exogenous challenges include the rise of competing powers such as

⁵³⁵ Mohamad Bazi, "Why is Joe Biden dragging the US into another potential war?", The Guardian, January 25, 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/25/joe-biden-us-middle-east-war-houthis-gaza>

⁵³⁶ Mohamad Bazi, "Why is Joe Biden dragging the US into another potential war?"

China and Russia that seek changes in the international order and are wary of American leadership and the global rise of populist nationalism, one of the harbingers of which was Donald Trump.

4.5.1. The new consensus and the paradigm shift

The continuation in foreign policy during the Biden era is not a one-off occurrence caused essentially by the patterns of system level challenges. Rather it is a link in the chain of continuation from the Obama era policies indicative of a ‘paradigm shift’ in the US foreign policy or the emergence of a ‘post-post-Cold War foreign policy.’⁵³⁷ The new consensus is based on the rejection of the post Cold War consensus that the US has a major stake in maintaining and bolstering of the international system and it should make hard choices like military interventions or sacrificing immediate national interests in favour of preserving the system which would be of benefit in the long run.⁵³⁸ This new consensus is not isolationist in any way as one of its central tenets is the strategic competition with China for dominance, however the politicians across the board seem to be desirous of benefitting from the international system while avoiding any labor or investment in its maintenance.⁵³⁹

Ahead of the 2024 presidential elections both the Democrats and Republicans seem to be increasingly converging on economic issues, favouring a less neo-liberal economics that is more protectionist in nature and wary of free-trade.⁵⁴⁰ Taking a cue from their Republican competitors the Democrats too are increasingly focusing on catering to the notion that Globalization has

⁵³⁷ Richard Haass, “The Age of America First: Washington’s Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus”, Foreign Affairs, November/December 2021, Accessed January 28, 2024.

⁵³⁸ Richard Haass, “The Age of America First: Washington’s Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus”,

⁵³⁹ Richard Haass, “The Age of America First: Washington’s Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus”

⁵⁴⁰ Celia Belin et. al, “Policy Brief :Brace Yourself: How The 2024 Us Presidential Election Could Affect Europe”, May, 2023. <https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Brace-yourself-How-the-2024-US-presidential-election-could-affect-Europe.pdf>

destroyed the American working class leading to increasingly isolationist policies in terms of trade that have resulted in the US market being less open to foreign competition.⁵⁴¹ This trend has been present in one form or the other for two decades and the decline in immigration since the 1990's as well as an 'obsession' with manufacturing and attaining a national manufacturing capacity in strategic terms are also part of the same wave.⁵⁴² There is a popular consensus within the Democrats too that the rise of Donald Trump can be attributed to the popular anger at globalization and *lassiez Faire* economics which has ruined the common man⁵⁴³, which accounts for the increasing continuity of anti-*lassiez faire* policies and a counter globalization rhetoric to win back popular support. This continuity runs counter to the principles of liberal internationalism and the post WW2 consensus and is accompanied by the decline in economic power that has been slipping away ever since the manufacturing belt of the US turned to the Rust belt in the late 1980s and other powers started catching up with the US in terms of economy.⁵⁴⁴

There exists a similar cross-party consensus on opposition to the 'national building efforts' and an increasing opposition to military engagements abroad.⁵⁴⁵ The Biden administration too, had been de-prioritizing the Middle East in favour of other avenues especially centered on strategic competition⁵⁴⁶ before the Gaza war. Even in the National Security Strategy of 2022 declares that

⁵⁴¹ Adam S. Posen, "The Price of Nostalgia: America's Self Defeating Economic Retreat", *Foreign Affairs*, May-June 2021. Vol.100, No.3.

⁵⁴² Adam S. Posen, "The Price of Nostalgia: America's Self Defeating Economic Retreat",

⁵⁴³ Adam S. Posen, "The Price of Nostalgia: America's Self Defeating Economic Retreat",

⁵⁴⁴ Professor Volker Depkat, Professor of American and British Studies, Regensburg University, Germany, in discussion with the Author, August6, 2024.

⁵⁴⁵ Celia Belin et. al, "Policy Brief :Brace Yourself: How The 2024 Us Presidential Election Could Affect Europe", May, 2023. <https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Brace-yourself-How-the-2024-US-presidential-election-could-affect-Europe.pdf>

⁵⁴⁶ Celia Belin et. al, "Policy Brief :Brace Yourself: How The 2024 Us Presidential Election Could Affect Europe",

nation building and military engagements in Middle East had proved detrimental to the strategic effort of competing with China and containing of Russia.⁵⁴⁷

Another major point of continuation since the Obama era Pacific-Pivot has been the competition with China which has continued on with varying degrees of strategic intensity throughout successive administrations finding its zenith under Trump. The Biden administration has continued on with the policy strengthening the ties with Taiwan and focusing on alliances with states in the vicinity of China.⁵⁴⁸ Similarly the Biden administration kept on with the trade war policy and further strengthened tariffs against China while building on strategic alliances like the QUAD and AUKUS.⁵⁴⁹ The same trend is prominently noticeable in relations with Russia where Biden doubled on Trump's tough sanctions while ditching his pro-Putin rhetoric and increasing aid for Ukraine.⁵⁵⁰

This competition with China and containment of Russia has led to a deterioration of multilateral frameworks and the erosion of international institutions making the US foreign policy towards the third world largely transactional in nature⁵⁵¹ which is not a good omen for the multilateral internationalist order, the maintenance of which was a key objective of liberal internationalist exceptionalism.

This consensus leads to the thought, what if Donald Trump had not been elected? Would the same foreign policy actions have been taken by another president in his stead? The answer to this

⁵⁴⁷ Celia Belin et. al, "Policy Brief :Brace Yourself: How The 2024 Us Presidential Election Could Affect Europe",

⁵⁴⁸ Richard Haass, "The Age of America First: Washington's Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus", Foreign Affairs, November/December 2021, Accessed January 28,2024.

⁵⁴⁹ Richard Haass, "The Age of America First: Washington's Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus",

⁵⁵⁰ Richard Haass, "The Age of America First: Washington's Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus",

⁵⁵¹ Celia Belin et. al, "Policy Brief :Brace Yourself: How The 2024 Us Presidential Election Could Affect Europe", May, 2023. <https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Brace-yourself-How-the-2024-US-presidential-election-could-affect-Europe.pdf>

question lies in the institutional stability of the US political and executive institutions which has often led to a broader continuation of policies as the strategic goal of world dominance has always been there. Any other president would have followed the consensus on economy, the strategic competition with China as well as limiting the international engagements especially those involving troop deployment and excessive spending. However a democrat president might have approached alliances and international institutions differently.

There are many aspects of Trump foreign policy where a distinction between rhetoric and actual policy actions is clearly noticeable, for instance he did not walk out of NATO and carried on with engagement although he kept pushing the allies to ‘pay their bills’. Despite the gap between rhetoric and policy Donald Trump managed to introduce ideas that have an inherent power of their own and will serve well any future flag bearers of ‘America First’⁵⁵², which there might be many in future given the popularity of this narrative especially among Republicans. Owing to this power and popularity of his ideas Trump will count among some of the more influential presidents in recent American history.

4.5.2. Change in public support for International Leadership

This consensus like most political positions adopted by parties has its roots in the gradual change of public mind. The American public over the time has become less and less supportive of the costly foreign policy endeavor of world leadership with 52% respondents were of the view that the US should be minding its own business internationally, up from 30% in 2002.⁵⁵³ Similarly in

⁵⁵² Shadi Hamid, “Deconstructing Trump’s Foreign Policy” Brookings, Nov 5, 2018. (<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/deconstructing-trumps-foreign-policy/>) Assessed August 29, 2024, 1.29 AM.

⁵⁵³ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, ‘*Fuel to The Fire*’, (Washington DC: CATO Institute, 2019), p.141-145.

a Pew Research survey in 2016, about 70% of the respondents wanted the newly elected President to focus more on domestic issues as compared to 17% who wanted greater priority for foreign policy issues.⁵⁵⁴ These trends indicate a shift in the public opinion of later generations and their indifference to the internationalism type that emerged after the World War as the conditions which existed then and throughout cold war change so does the public opinion of latter generations.⁵⁵⁵

This does not essentially indicate support for the Trumpian brand of exceptionalism as has been discussed in the previous chapter during the discussion on public opinion polls that rejected most of the Trumpian rhetoric. On the other hand the self doubt within the American society is resurgent and it has manifested itself to the extent that even some Democrats wanted Trump to do what he wanted and which they could not do themselves.⁵⁵⁶ There is a section of American sentiment that favors MAGA because there is a realization that America is crumbling as a result of overburden from its extensive external engagements.⁵⁵⁷ The desire for change in the liberal internationalist policy of post World War consensus is evident.

4.5.3. Internal and Societal Issues

Another challenge to American Exceptionalism especially to the exemplar aspect of it emanates from the societal issues like poverty, inequality, racial discrimination. For instance while having the highest incarceration rate in the world, a large percentage of the total of 1% incarcerated are

⁵⁵⁴ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, *'Fuel to The Fire'* p.141-145.

⁵⁵⁵ John Glaser, Christopher A. Preble and A. Trevor Thrall, *'Fuel to The Fire'*, p.141-145.

⁵⁵⁶ Professor Volker Depkat Professor of American and British Studies, Regensburg University, Germany, in discussion with Author, August 6, 2024.

⁵⁵⁷ Professor Volker Depkat, Professor of American and British Studies, Regensburg University, Germany in discussion with Author, August 6, 2024.

black or Latino.⁵⁵⁸ Similarly the minorities especially the black people in US rank below some of the developing countries like Bangladesh in terms of average life expectancy in men and maternal mortality in women.⁵⁵⁹ In Washington DC, the capital of Exceptional America, almost 22% of the population has to rely on government nutrition assistance and almost 23.9% kids live below poverty line.⁵⁶⁰ The US in its true exceptional fashion is also the only state to not have ratified the convention on child rights and one of the very few to never have offered a review on SDGs (sustainable development goals) which is a way for the world to gauge national progress on human development.⁵⁶¹ These statistics while not conveying the full picture reflect on the dark underbelly of the ‘shining America’ and it’s not so exceptional problems.

The statistics on racial discrimination and exclusion represent a similar picture as human development. The George Floyd case that gained a lot of media attention and led to the ‘Black lives matter’ movement during Trump’s administration is indicative of the discriminatory treatment that the black people receive even after the ending of slavery and grant of civil rights.⁵⁶² The BLM movement not only exposed the state of racial inequality but brought racial tensions to the fore with white counter protestors confronting its protests.⁵⁶³ The state of exclusion and disenfranchisement of the blacks is evident from the fact that more than 25% of the black adults

⁵⁵⁸ Sarah E. Mendelson, The US is leaving millions behind: Exceptionalism needs to change by 2030”, Brookings, April 10, 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-us-is-leaving-millions-behind-american-exceptionalism-needs-to-change-by-2030/>

⁵⁵⁹ Sarah E. Mendelson, The US is leaving millions behind: Exceptionalism needs to change by 2030”,

⁵⁶⁰ Sarah E. Mendelson, The US is leaving millions behind: Exceptionalism needs to change by 2030”,

⁵⁶¹ Sarah E. Mendelson, The US is leaving millions behind: Exceptionalism needs to change by 2030”

⁵⁶² Editors of Britannica, “Subsequent protests: George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor”, Britannica. Updated January 28, 2024 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Black-Lives-Matter>

⁵⁶³ Editors of Britannica, “Subsequent protests: George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor”

who can vote do not have a state voting ID, the ratio in whites is about 8%.⁵⁶⁴ The racial inequality and the tensions in society caused as a result of it, make US very unexceptional and hurt its exemplar identity as a democracy and may keep doing so in the future given the absence of structural reforms.

4.5.4. The Global Wave of Nationalist Populism

Liberal internationalism and by extension its American bedrock, the liberal exceptionalism are also threatened by a global wave of nationalism which is a reaction to the economic and political impacts of globalization and has spawned nationalist populist movements all across the world, many of whom managed to gain power in their respective states. Many of these nationalist movements have their own exceptional character by virtue of which they abhor abiding by international rules devised by multilateral institutions which in their view are a constraint for national sovereignty.⁵⁶⁵ Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Viktor Orban in Hungary, the Brexiteers and Euroskeptics of the far-right Europe and the MAGA supporters of Donald Trump are all parts of this wave.⁵⁶⁶ At the same time things are not looking good for democracy worldwide and it has entered another global phase of democratic recession is in progress especially getting worse between 2015-2019 when more states left democracy than adopted it for the first time since 1974.⁵⁶⁷ With Democratic recession illiberal populist leaders like Modi, Bolsonaro, Maduro and

⁵⁶⁴ Anar Bata and Dr. Christopher Sabatini, “The Double Standards of American Democracy”, Chatham House, June 24, 2020. <https://americas.chathamhouse.org/article/double-standards-of-american-democracy/>

⁵⁶⁵ John Feffer, “How American Exceptionalism Fueled Global Authoritarian Nationalism”, The Nation, September 23, 2022. <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/american-exceptionalism-authoritarian-nationalism/>

⁵⁶⁶ John Feffer, “How American Exceptionalism Fueled Global Authoritarian Nationalism”, The Nation, September 23, 2022. <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/american-exceptionalism-authoritarian-nationalism/>

⁵⁶⁷ Larry Diamond, “A World Without American Democracy”, July 2, 2021. Foreign Affairs.

Erdogan are increasingly adopting illiberal policies that undermine democracy⁵⁶⁸ especially its western liberal form.

Russia and North Korea too have adopted exceptional tendencies and an increasing sense of cooperation between them and China presents an alliance of autocracies to oppose the West, a manifestation of which is the Ukraine war.⁵⁶⁹ The US and West or the liberal democratic alliance against authoritarianism may well try and counter their opponents in Russia and China through competition and containment but the task of defeating the nationalist populist wave backed by public support in their backyard may prove to be a largely impossible task.⁵⁷⁰

4.5.5. The Rise of China

Yet another challenge to American Exceptionalism, especially its role as the leader of a role based international order comes from the rising China which in certain strategic aspects is allied to other challengers of the US, most notably Russia and Iran. China has been taking advantage of all opportunities especially the US-Russia rivalry and the Ukraine war to work for its dream of establishing an alternative international order that is not centered on the West.⁵⁷¹ China has historically lacked in Soft power as compared to US which has a strong ideational base and has a soft power strategy centered on the export of democratic values. China has adopted a more pragmatic approach towards soft power under recent governments especially President Xi who has been framing soft power in terms of material aspirations as compared to the ideological approach

⁵⁶⁸ Larry Diamond, "A World Without American Democracy"

⁵⁶⁹ John Feffer, "How American Exceptionalism Fueled Global Authoritarian Nationalism", *The Nation*, September 23, 2022. <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/american-exceptionalism-authoritarian-nationalism/>

⁵⁷⁰ John Feffer, "How American Exceptionalism Fueled Global Authoritarian Nationalism"

⁵⁷¹ "The war in Ukraine will determine how China sees the world", *The Economist*, March 19, 2022.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2022/03/19/the-war-in-ukraine-will-determine-how-china-sees-the-world>

of the US and this strategy has been successful in Central Asia, Africa, Latin America and the global South in general through the use of infrastructure investments and education in promoting the Chinese soft power.⁵⁷² Meanwhile America's selective commitment to human rights issues raises questions about its intentions and ideological commitment to what it professes.⁵⁷³

For the foreseeable future the US foreign policy will have a hard time balancing the US role as a global hegemon that is competing with a rising super-power for world dominance and its other role as the leader of an international liberal democratic order that is committed to solving the global problems facing humanity. A foreign policy centered on strategic competition may prove inadequate to address global problems like climate change, terrorism, proliferation and global level pandemics which require cooperation between the leading states.⁵⁷⁴

Another interesting aspect to note here is that although the US has been on the decline economically and has stretched itself thin with costly military engagements abroad, American liberal exceptionalism has a hope for survival because it offers a unique set of values which have no globally accepted substitute so far that can act as an alternative, as most of the western world would prefer the America centric international system to a world dominated by Russia or China.⁵⁷⁵

4.5.6. The Potential Comeback of Trump

Last but certainly not the least is the challenge posed by the potential resurgence of Trumpism, which may undo the gains of whatsoever significance made under Biden in order to keep liberal

⁵⁷² Maria Repnikova, "The Balance of Soft Power", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2022. P. 44-51.

⁵⁷³ Maria Repnikova, "The Balance of Soft Power", P. 44-51.

⁵⁷⁴ Richard Haass, "The Age of America First: Washington's Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus", *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2021, Accessed January 28, 2024.

⁵⁷⁵ Professor Volker Depkat, Professor of American and British Studies, Regensburg University, Germany, in discussion with the Author, August 6, 2024.

internationalist exceptionalism alive. Despite facing difficulties on the legal front as he faces ‘91 felony counts in four indictments’⁵⁷⁶, Donald Trump has managed to secure convincing victories in the Iowa and New Hampshire Primaries for nomination of the Republican candidate setting a record in terms of margins and knocking out most of the competitors out of the race.⁵⁷⁷ In fact, Donald Trump’s prospects look so convincing that the Republican National Committee has considered declaring him the ‘presumptive nominee’ for contesting against Joe Biden in the 2024 presidential elections even before gaining the required numbers in primaries.⁵⁷⁸ If president Biden is re-elected he is expected to adopt a multilateral approach and working to reform international institutions to American advantage as Democrats give importance to international institutions and even when competing with China will work to keep control of international institutions in American hands⁵⁷⁹ whereas Donald Trump, despite his unpredictable nature will keep on with his transactional, bilateral deal making attitude which is bound to be detrimental for internationalist exceptionalism. Regardless of whoever amongst Trump or Biden comes to power the trends identified by Holsti that constitute an exceptional foreign policy are likely to continue although a Trump re-election may lead to an authoritarian style regime that would mean the rule of largely white minority over a diverse majority which in turn may mean the derailment of liberal internationalist consensus once again.⁵⁸⁰ The coming election will prove to be a contest between

⁵⁷⁶ Ivo Daalder, “Biden’s foreign policy headache in 2024”, Politico, January 2, 2024 4:00 AM . Accessed January 27, 2024 1:38 AM <https://www.politico.eu/article/joe-biden-united-states-foreign-policy-ukraine-israel-hamas-war-taiwan/>

⁵⁷⁷ Dave Lawler, and Erin Doherty, “Trump’s dominance in the GOP primaries is unprecedented”, Axios, Jan 24, 2024 . <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/24/trump-wins-gop-primary-iowa-new-hampshire>

⁵⁷⁸ Meg Kinnard et. al, “The Republican National Committee has pulled a resolution to consider declaring Donald Trump the party’s “presumptive 2024 nominee”, AP News, January 26, 2024. <https://apnews.com/article/rnc-trump-presumptive-nominee-haley-2024-campaign-74c529ab8d3804622276f8e197cd3a5c>

⁵⁷⁹ Celia Belin et. al, “Policy Brief :Brace Yourself: How The 2024 Us Presidential Election Could Affect Europe”, May, 2023. <https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Brace-yourself-How-the-2024-US-presidential-election-could-affect-Europe.pdf>

⁵⁸⁰ Hilde Eliassen Restad, Associate Professor of International Studies at Oslo Nye University College, Oslo, interview by Sadaquat Hussain, July 1, 2024.

the Liberal exceptionalism and the 'America First exceptionalism' with the later getting reinvigorated since Joe Biden's dropping out and getting replaced by Kamala Harris who has given hope to the liberal exceptionalism camp.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁸¹ Professor Volker Depkat, Professor of American and British Studies, Regensburg University, Germany in discussion with the Author, August 6, 2024.

CONCLUSION

American exceptionalism as an aspect of American national identity has been instrumental in shaping American attitudes towards the world and thus has had a key part in shaping the US foreign policy throughout American history. However like all other ideas that live on and evolve in public thought; American Exceptionalism also went through its evolutionary journey from being a belief held by puritan missionaries with a religious zeal to found a chosen nation away from the menace of the old world, to a become the guiding light of liberal economic internationalism and international institutionalism.

This evolutionary journey has not been following a linear course though and the American nation keeps veering off course guided by internal pulls as well as strong external currents that determine the type of exceptionalist face that the US puts on going forth in time in certain situations and receding back in others. The constant factor throughout these developments is the American belief in the uniqueness and moral as well as material superiority of the US which it always seeks to uphold.

Findings

This research aiming to analyze the prospects and challenges for American exceptionalism in the aftermath of Trump presidency has led to the following findings.

1. That American Exceptionalism evolved as an amalgamation of Calvinist economic values, liberal philosophy of government and individualism and protestant religious beliefs among the early settlers of the 'new world' predating the foundation of USA itself.

2. That American Exceptionalism evolved with time and in response to historical currents playing an important role first in the American Revolution and establishment of the US and then in its interactions with the world.
3. That the key values of American Exceptionalism include free economy, liberal democracy, a civic sense of responsibility and personal ethics combined with limited government and strong democratic institutions. The adherence to these values comes with a belief that they are the recipe of success for human progress.
4. That American nationalism is rooted more in the belief in these liberal values than ethnicity, race, geography etc unlike other nations whose sense of nationalistic identity is mostly rooted in geography, shared history, ethnicity, race or language. Along with a belief in liberal values American Exceptionalism holds that the US is a uniquely superior state in terms of morality, material strength and political ideology. This superiority makes the US a role-model for other nation states to follow and entrusts her with the responsibility to lead the world by example and spread these values so the world is molded in the American image. There's another conviction coupled with these ideas which sees the US as being immune to the laws of history by the virtue of being uniquely superior.
5. That there is a broad consensus with respect to the key values and beliefs among Americans however they differ on how to act viz-a-viz the world when it comes to playing the role of a leading light among nations. Some believe that the US should remain aloof from the world and strengthen and improve constantly so as to be a 'city upon the hill', there for others to emulate but uninvolved. Others believe in the idea of an 'American Mission' which entails the US playing an active part in world politics to spread and uphold liberal democracy and laissez-faire economy.

6. That throughout American history these two strands of American Exceptionalism have guided its foreign policy leading to periods of isolationism and internationalism, however for the most part of its existence the US has exhibited more internationalism than isolationism and even during periods of its isolation from world politics it was actively engaged on the American continents asserting its influence and expanding its territories and spheres of influence.
7. That American Exceptionalism led to the conception of liberal internationalism in the 20th century, the chief proponent of which was President Woodrow Wilson who built on America's increased international involvement under Theodore Roosevelt. Owing to internal factors the US did see a period of political withdrawal although it increasingly engaged in economic terms. The failure of League of Nations and the Second World War led to the resurgence of liberal internationalism and after the war the US founded the liberal international order centered on international institutions and international law assuming the role of a leader and upholder of this new order.
8. That American Exceptionalism saw constant invocation in the rationalization and adoptions of foreign policy decisions during the Cold war by both political parties which had historical political differences making liberal internationalism a sort of bi-partisan consensus. This consensus was followed by every successive government leading to the strengthening of the liberal international order and gained increased impetus after the US predominance at the end of Cold War.
9. That Donald Trump became the first American President to challenge the notion of American Exceptionalism overtly and claim that the US had not been very Exceptional especially recently, it had lost its characteristic greatness and that the liberal international

order was the reason of most US problems as it imposed unfair economic burden on US economy and led to the US paying for other nations' security and well-being. He opposed multilateralism and international institutions which he considered a hindrance to sovereignty and the promotion of national interests.

10. That Donald Trump opposed the Messianic aspect of American Exceptionalism through his opposition of 'nation building' and 'democracy promoting' interventions. He challenged the notion of the US as being a 'nation of immigrants' by stressing more on western Anglo-Saxon aspects of American identity and white racist connotations of its past. Trump also challenged the concept of American 'immunity' to the laws of history by declaring that the US had fallen from its position of predominance.
11. That Donald Trump, by using the rhetoric of anti-Exceptionalism instigated a debate about the future of liberal internationalist exceptionalism. Through his foreign policy actions like the withdrawal from Afghanistan, walking out of multilateral and international agreements, imposition of costs on allies, tough immigration policies and opposition to free trade arrangements Donald Trump exhibited his opposition to liberal international order and the American Exceptionalist version backing it.
12. That Donald Trump while opposing the liberal international order and its corresponding American Exceptionalist strand, did believe in American superiority, most of the American values as well as the aspiration to uphold the position of a global hegemon. Donald Trump's take on American role in the world was more realistic, transactional and nationalism oriented with more emphasis on unilateralism. Donald Trump did not advocate or practice isolationism but his version of internationalism had a more limited transactional nature

aimed at gaining competitive advantage both in strategic and economic terms while acting unilaterally.

13. That Donald Trump era foreign policy saw the continuation of certain policies of his predecessors most importantly the strategic competition and confrontation with China that Trump carried to new heights with sanctions and trade war. Similarly he carried on with the containment of Russia and the expansion of NATO notwithstanding his rhetoric or public diplomacy.
14. That Donald Trump was not the harbinger of these changes and was rather the reflection of an anti-globalist populist wave of nationalistic thought prevalent amongst certain segments of American society especially those with Republican leanings and white-working class backgrounds. He appealed to such sentiments and used them to his political advantage with his rhetoric that resonated with such segments.
15. That Donald Trump eroded the confidence of allies in US leadership, undermined multilateralism, promoted economic nationalism while pushing back against globalization and free trade and gave rise to even greater polarization within the US society along socio-political, racial, cultural and religious lines.
16. That Donald Trump adhered to Jacksonian Nationalism and embraced the ‘predator’ identity of the US, ethnic conception of American nationalism while trying to disconnect American democracy from its liberal roots and promoting an illiberal agenda. Donald Trump failed to convert a majority of Americans to his view-point except for his core Republican support base and even people who supported many of his political and economic policies did not believe in his political ideas about American identity and American role in the world.

17. That American Exceptionalism has retained two central aspects despite the shifts in policies of successive governments and the attempts at redefining it which are, a consistent belief in American superiority and constant efforts to uphold it, and the belief in American uniqueness leading to the transgressions against international law as well as multilateral institutions and a unilateralist streak at certain times. If viewed as a whole the American foreign policy behavior inspired by Exceptionalism leads to the constitution of a foreign policy type that is unique to Exceptional nations, a very exclusive club but one where the US is not alone. Trump era foreign policy also retained some aspects of Exceptional behavior especially in terms of unilateralism.
18. That the American Exceptionalism is bound to live on in one form or the other despite challenges to it because of its strong ideological roots and the unshakable belief amongst Americans in their nation's superiority and its uniqueness as well as the economic and military might of the US.
19. That the most vulnerable aspect of American Exceptionalism is liberal internationalism which is the bedrock of liberal international order and has certain multilateral aspects. The liberal internationalism is under stress due to a change in the international geopolitical and economic realities as well as the increasing push back against it within the US society and public reaction against globalization and free trade. This has resulted in a paradigm shift within the US foreign policy as is indicated by the continuation of Trump era foreign policies under President Joe. Biden.
20. That multiple exogenous and endogenous factors pose a challenge to liberal internationalist variant of American Exceptionalism. These include a developing consensus against globalization within the American society as well as the opposition to military

interventions abroad, increasing polarization in terms of political beliefs and national self-identification, relative socioeconomic decline of certain segments of American society, the rise of anti-status quo powers like Russia and China that pose a threat to US international leadership and the global wave of nationalist populism which is the very anti-thesis of multilateral liberal internationalism.

Recommendations

In the light of the above stated findings following recommendations can be made keeping in view the utility of liberal internationalism in countering the threats facing humanity as a whole like Climate Change, environmental degradation, pandemics, transnational crime and terrorism.

1. The US if it truly wants to uphold the liberal international order shall have to function within its fold whole heartedly instead of its insistence on a uniqueness that entitles it to stay above the international law and institutions or multilateral frameworks.
2. The fact that more and more states are moving away from the American conception of democracy goes on to show that systems of government create more political stability if they evolve within a society and conform to its historical and cultural realities, than if imposed from outside through the use of military power or economic sanctions.
3. The cost of international leadership has to be paid in economic terms as is evident from the American example as well as the recent Chinese incentives for developing and underdeveloped countries. Absence of the will to extend benefits of multilateral trade and aid to other nations hinders the prospects of international influence as well as the ability to control the international agenda on global issues. Therefore the US should either adopt a

more inclusive concept of international leadership or roll-back on its transactional approach that was exhibited during Trump era and even carries on now.

4. The most important way of ensuring the progress and increased influence of an ideology is practicing what one preaches. The ever increasing tendency of the US to bypass multilateral frameworks, undermine international institutions, pick and choose when it comes to the human rights agenda and exhibit double standards while dealing with friends and foes on questions of international morality, is proving to be the foremost hindrance to a rule based international order. This needs to be rectified and an even-handed approach is necessary for any rule based order to function whether liberal or not.
5. Lastly, in order to be truly exceptional the United States ought to incorporate the American values within the American society fully and strive to eliminate the huge economic gaps between the rich and poor, as well as eradicating racial, ethnic and religious discrimination. Liberal democracy cannot be prescribed as the ideal system of government and spread abroad until the US itself emerges as the epitome of human progress.

Bibliography

Interviews

Abbasi, Saira Nawaz. Senior Assistant Professor of International Relations at Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Bahria University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Depkat, Volker. Professor of British and American Studies at University of Regensburg, Regensburg, Germany.

Garewal, Ghazanfar Ali. Lecturer of International Relations at Department of International Relations, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

Gillani, Syed Aleem. Assistant Professor of International Relations at Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Bahria University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Restad, Hilde Eliassen. Associate Professor of International Studies at Oslo Nye University College, Oslo, Norway.

Shujahi, Farhat Konain. Assistant Professor of International Relations at Department of International Relations, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

Books

Ahmed, Akbar. *Journey into America: The Challenge of Islam*. Washington DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2010.

Bacevich, Andrew J. *The Limits Of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2009.

Brazinsky, Gregg A. *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Campbell, David. *Writing Security*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

- Depkat, Volker. *American Exceptionalism*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021.
- Dorani, Sharifullah. *America In Afghanistan*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.
- Gilmore, Jason, and Charles Rowling. *Exceptional Me: How Donald Trump Exploited The Discourse of American Exceptionalism*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021.
- Glaser, John, Christopher A. Preble, and A. Trevor Thrall. *Fuel to The Fire*. Washington DC: Cato Institute, 2019.
- Gurtov, Mel. *America in Retreat: Foreign Policy under Donald Trump*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021.
- Hastedt, Glenn P. *American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020.
- Herbert, J., Trevor McCrisken and Andrew Wroe. *The Ordinary Presidency of Donald J. Trump*. Cham Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2019.
- Hopf, Ted. *Social Construction of International Politics*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Ignatieff, Michael (ed.). *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Jackson, Robert, and Georg Sørensen. *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022.
- Jervis, Robert, Robert Jervis, Francis J. Gavin, Joshua Rovner, and Diane Labrosse. *Chaos in The Liberal Order*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.
- Jouet, Mugambi. *Exceptional America*. California: University of California Press, 2017.
- Kane, Thomas M. *Theoretical Roots Of US Foreign Policy: Machiavelli and American Unilateralism*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

- Katzenstein, Peter (ed.). *The Culture of National Security*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Kissinger, Henry. *World Order*. New York: Penguin Press, 2014.
- Lynch, Timothy J. *In The Shadow Of The Cold War: American Foreign Policy from George Bush Sr. To Donald Trump*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- McCrisken, Trevor B. *American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US Foreign Policy Since 1974*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- McEvoy-Levy, Siobhán. *American Exceptionalism and US Foreign Policy: Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Nye, Joseph S., Jr. *Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Powaski, R.E. *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H. W. Bush to Donald Trump*. Cham: Springer Nature, 2019.
- Restad, Hilde Eliassen. *American Exceptionalism*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Restad, Hilde Eliassen. *American Exceptionalism: An Idea That Made A Nation And Remade The World*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Sachs, Jeffrey D. *A New Foreign Policy: Beyond American Exceptionalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.
- Scott, Catherine V. *Neoliberalism and U.S. Foreign Policy: From Carter to Trump*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Sexton, Jay. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation In Nineteenth Century America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012.

Smith, Anthony D. *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Spragg, Dennis M. *America Ascendant The Rise Of American Exceptionalism*. University of Nebraska Press, 2019.

Tyrrell, Ian. *American Exceptionalism: A New History of an Old Idea*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021.

Viotti, Paul R. *American Foreign Policy and National Security*. New York: Cambria Press, 2020.

Wilsey, John D. *American Exceptionalism And Civil Religion Reassessing The History Of An Idea*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2015.

Zehfuss, Maja. *Constructivism in International Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Articles and Essays

Amirfar, Catherine, and Ashika Singh. "The Trump Administration and the 'Unmaking' of International Agreements." *Harvard International Law Journal* 59, no. 2 (Summer 2018).

Anderson, Annelise. "Ronald Reagan and American Exceptionalism." In *American Exceptionalism in a New Era Rebuilding the Foundation of Freedom and Prosperity*, edited by Thomas W. Gilligan. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2017.

Arežina, Sanja. "U.S.-China Relations Under the Trump Administration." *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies* 5, no. 3 (2019).

Buder, Stanley. "American Exceptionalism and the American Dream." *Problemy Zarządzania* 15, no. 2 (68), part 2.

- Ceaser, James W. "The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism." *American Political Thought* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2012).
- Cha, Taesuh. "The formation of American exceptional identities: A three-tier model of the 'standard of civilization' in US foreign policy." *European Journal of International Relations* 1–25, 2015.
- Clarke, Michael, and Anthony Ricketts. "Donald Trump and American foreign policy: The return of the Jacksonian tradition." *Comparative Strategy* 36:4 (2019).
- Curran, James. "Americanism Not Globalism: President Trump and The American Mission." *Lowy Institute* July 2018.
- Desai, Misha. "The Greatest Nation on Earth': The Different Types of American Exceptionalism Articulated in Presidential Rhetoric." Paper, Department of History Lund University, Lund, 2014.
- Dormer, Robert. "The Impact of Constructivism on International Relations Theory: A History." *Social Sciences Review* 22.
- Dudău, Radu. "Identities and Interests in International Relations." *Annals of the University of Bucharest / Political Science Series* (2004), 6, 25-32.
- Edwards, Jason A. "Make America Great Again: Donald Trump and Redefining the U.S. Role in the World." *Communication Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2018).
- Erbas, Isa. "Constructivist Approach in Foreign Policy and in International Relations." *Journal of Positive School Psychology* 6, no. 3 (2022).

Florey Woolfson, Alexander. "The Discourse of Exceptionalism and U.S. Grand Strategy, 1946–2009." Thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, March 2012.

Goniprow, Stephen. "American Exceptionalism: Its Beginnings, Its Decline, and the Need For Its Revival." *The Trinity Papers* (2011 - present) (2014). Trinity College Digital Repository, Hartford.

Hicken, Allen, Pauline Jones, And Anil Menon. "The International System after Trump and the Pandemic." *Current History*, January 2021.

Hoffmann, Stanley. "American Exceptionalism: The New Version." In *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, edited by Michael Ignatieff. Princeton University Press.

Holsti, K. J. "Exceptionalism in American foreign policy: Is it exceptional?" *European Journal of International Relations* 17(3), 2010.

Hopewell, Kristen. "When the Hegemon Goes Rogue: Leadership Amid the US Assault on the Liberal Trading Order." *International Affairs* 97:4 (2021).

Hopewell, Kristen. "When the hegemon goes rogue: leadership amid the US assault on the liberal trading order." *International Affairs* 97: 4 (2021).

James, Toby S. "The Effects of Donald Trump." *Policy Studies* 2021, VOL. 42, NOS. 5–6.

Koh, Harold Hongju. "America's Jekyll-and-Hyde Exceptionalism." In *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, edited by Michael Ignatieff. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Löfflmann, Georg. "America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy." *Survival* 61, no. 6 (2019).

McCartney, Paul T. "How Foreign Policy Shapes American National Identity." *Political Science Quarterly* Volume 134 Number 4 (2019-20).

Murtazashvili, Jennifer Brick, et al. "American Institutional Exceptionalism and the Trump Presidency." *The Independent Review* 26, no. 1 (Summer 2021).

Muhammad, Syed Sabir, and Muhammad Ali Baig. "Exceptionalism in US Foreign Policy: A Case Study of ISIS." *IPRI Journal* XIX (i) (2019).

Nymalm, Nicola, and Johannes Plagemann. "Comparative Exceptionalism: Universality and Particularity in Foreign Policy Discourses." *International Studies Review* (2019) 21.

Onuf, Peter S. "American Exceptionalism and National Identity." *American Political Thought* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2012).

Peterson, Paul E. "Is America Still the 'Hope of Earth'?" In *American Exceptionalism in a New Era*, edited by Thomas W. Gilligan. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2017.

Restad, Hilde Eliassen. "American Exceptionalism An idea that made a nation and remade the world." New York: Routledge, 2015.

Restad, Hilde Eliassen. "Old Paradigms in History Die Hard in Political Science: US Foreign Policy and American Exceptionalism." *American Political Thought* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2012).

Restad, Hilde Eliassen. "Whither The 'City Upon A Hill'? Donald Trump, America First, And American Exceptionalism." *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2019/2020).

- Schake, Kori. "American Dominance of the International Order." In *American Exceptionalism in a New Era*, edited by Thomas W. Gilligan. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2017.
- Sharma, Shalendra D. "Trump and the End of an Era? The Liberal International Order in Perspective." *The International Spectator* 55:3 (2020).
- Sperling, J & Webber, M. "Trump's foreign policy and NATO: exit and voice." *Review of International Studies* 45, no. 3 (2019).
- Stokes, Doug. "Trump, American Hegemony and the Future of the Liberal International Order." *International Affairs* 94:1.
- Muhammad, Syed Sabir, Muhammad Ali Baig. "Exceptionalism in US Foreign Policy: A Case Study of ISIS." *IPRI Journal* XIX (i) (2019).
- Taesuh Cha. "The formation of American exceptional identities: A three-tier model of the 'standard of civilization' in US foreign policy." *European Journal of International Relations* 1–25, 2015.
- Thimm, Johannes. "American Exceptionalism – Conceptual Thoughts and Empirical Evidence." Paper presented at the Tagung der Nachwuchsgruppe "Internationale Politik der DVPW 13./14., July 2007.
- Torpey, John. "The Problem of 'American Exceptionalism' Revisited." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 9(1).

Wendt, Alexander. "Collective Identity Formation and the International State." *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 2 (Jun., 1994).

Wertheim, Stephen. "Trump Against Exceptionalism." In *Chaos In The Liberal Order* ed. Robert Jervis, Francis J. Gavin, Joshua Rovner et al., Columbia University Press, New York, 2018.

Zehfuss, Maja. "Constructivism in International Relations." *Cambridge University Press*, New York, 2004.