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**New Direction in US Foreign Policy: The Shift from
Direct Interventionism towards Proxy Warfare.**

Case Study: U.S role in the Syrian conflict

**Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Dedication

This work is dedicated:

To our dear parents for their endless support, guidance and patience

To our highly respected supervisor for his encouragement and precious advice

To all our teachers

To all the members of our families

To our relatives and closest friends

To all those who care about us.

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Abstract

By the turn of the Century, the United States plunged into two different quagmires in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks. Promised to be quick wars, the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan turned into protracted conflicts as the fighting continued without a clear exit strategy for the United States. The election of President Obama loomed with a retrenched American foreign policy that pledged to scale back American commitments overseas and shift war responsibilities to third parties and allies. The aim of this research is to explain the shift of U.S foreign policy from outright large-scale interventions that characterized the Bush administration towards reliance on proxy non-state actors during the terms of Obama and Trump. An analytical method based on the rhetoric of rational model of foreign policy analysis has been adopted assuming that the main player in policy-making is a unitary rational decision maker. This paper claims that U.S interventionist creed is funneled by institutional mechanisms, national sentiments, schools of thought and Presidential doctrines. Moreover, it posits that the United States subsidized non-state actors through covert and overt funding, provision of weaponry and non-lethal assistance in addition to reliance on air strikes and curtailing the number of American boots on the ground. The new strategy enabled the United States to protect its overseas interests, curtail its ailing budget, substantially reduce casualties among its servicemen and offered the possibility of plausible deniability in the event of war crimes committed by its proxies. The case study of the Syrian conflict demonstrates that the United States achieved mixed results with its new direction. They ranged from the failure to overthrow the Syrian regime to a tainted success in its counterterrorism campaign. It is also believed that the new foreign policy trajectory would leave vacuums in the international stage that could be seized by emerging Russia and China.

Keywords: Direct Interventionism, Non-state actors, Proxy warfare, Syrian conflict, U.S Foreign Policy.

List of abbreviations

CBO: Congressional Budget Office.

CBS: Columbia Broadcasting System(Commercial broadcast television and radio network).

CGTF(OIR): Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve.

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency.

CIC: Commander In Chief.

CSIS: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

DoD: Department of Defense.

ERA: Explosive Reactive Armor

FSA: Free Syrian Army.

FSB: English Version of the Russian acronym (ФСБ)for Federal security Agency.

GRU: is the English version of the Russian acronym ГРУ, for Military Intelligence Agency.

H.R: House of Representatives.

IRGC(QF): Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Corps Quds Force.

ISI: Islamic State in Iraq.

ISIL: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

ISIS: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

KNC: Kurdish National Council.

MANPADS: Man Portable Air defense System.

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding.

MOC: Military Operation Center.

MOM: Müşterek Operasyon Merkezi in Turkish for Joint Operation Center.

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

NDF: National Defense Forces.

NSC: National Security Council

NSA: National Security Advisor.

NSA: National Syrian Army.

OIR: Operation Inherent Resolve.

PKK: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan for Kurdish Workers Party.

PMC: Private Military Companies.

SAA: Syrian Arab Army.

SDF: Syrian Democratic Forces.

SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

SMC: Supreme Military Council.

SOCOM: Special Operation Command.

UN: United Nations.

UK: United Kingdom.

US: United States.

VSO: Vetted Syrian Opposition.

WH: White House.

YPD: Partyia Yeketyia Demokrat for Democratic Union Party.

YPG: Yekîneyên Parastina Gel for People's Protection Units.

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1. Background of the Study

There is a general consensus among historians that the foreign policy of the United States of America adheres to the principle of continuity and change. Whereas it was deeply affected by such historical upheavals including world wars, rise of international communism, fall of the iron curtain, global economic recession, rise of new world powers, threats to national interests and war on terrorism, the U.S foreign policy continues to be one of the most controversial topics in the field of international relations. The officially stated goals of U.S foreign policy as explained in the agenda of the U.S Department of state are "to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community" (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). Though these goals continued to be at the heart of decision making, the mechanisms and strategies to achieve them differed from one administration to another.

Many pundits and analysts believe that decisions about the present US foreign policy cannot be divorced from conventional policy making models; prevailing schools of thought in U.S politics as well as former decision making policies epitomized in U.S presidential doctrines. Each of these processes continues to cast a shadow on the process of foreign policy decision making.

During the presidency of President Barack Obama (2009-2017), the United States proceeded with a disentanglement process from Iraq and Afghanistan. This was followed by expanding the strategic deployment of its special forces and drones in a new approach of war against its "enemies". Moreover, the U.S administration joined the NATO military efforts in 2011 to support Libyan insurgents in toppling the regime of Colonel Muamar Qaddafi through air strikes as well as through covert and overt logistic support with very limited

American military boots on the ground. Obama and his administration claimed that they were pursuing a new strategy to war which depended on multinational coalition rather than unilateral action, and surgical limited strikes rather than on large -scale troop deployments. The presence of U.S forces on the ground continued to take place in the form of trainers, advisors and special forces stationed in American bases in Syria and Iraq (Baldor, 2016).

Fasting forward to 2016, the oscillations that characterized the presidential elections in the United States left many pundits, political think tanks, pollsters and even simple citizens worldwide bewildered about the sweeping shifts that could unfold from the election of President Donald Trump. Being a deception ingrained in the minds of large sects of the American people who longed to celebrate America's first female president Hillary Clinton, the election of President Trump ushered, however, in an era of critical challenges to the country's supremacy and its status as a global hegemonic power. In addition to the economic recession and the continuing domestic turmoil of alleged Russian meddling in the elections, the new President will have to face the challenges of Russian expansionist quests for warm water ports, China's trade war, nuclear threats from Pyongyang strongest man as well as the tumultuous Middle East region following the Arab spring revolutions and counter-revolutions. The white house website updated the U.S foreign policy agenda stating that

President Trump is bolstering American influence by leading a coalition of strong and independent nations to promote security, prosperity, and peace both within America's borders and beyond. The promise of a better future will come in part from reasserting American sovereignty and the right of all nations to determine their own futures

(The White House, 2017).

In fact, this statement engages more persisting questions rather than providing answers about the mechanisms to be followed by the new elected President to promote security beyond U.S borders. Since his relocation to the oval office in Washington, the new President expressed his intentions to tame the country's tendency to wage large scale wars and "the desire to disentangle the United States from costly overseas conflicts" (Finer & Malley, 2019). Trump expressed this direction in the 2016 election campaign stating that "I will never send our finest into battle unless necessary, and I mean absolutely necessary, and will only do so if we have a plan for victory with a capital V". He added "The world must know that we do not go abroad in search of enemies" (Dreazen, 2017). However, much uncertainty arises about the alternative strategy which is being adopted by the United States in substitution of large-scale costly wars. The present dissertation seeks to shed light on the shift from traditional large scale warfare towards an increasing recourse to proxies and non state actors by the U.S while maintaining limited number of deployed forces on the ground. This new strategy will be explored theoretically in the first two chapters and empirically taking the Syrian civil war as a case study in the third chapter.

2. Statement of the Problem

By the end of the Second World War, both bipolarism and the fear from nuclear conflict fanned the flames of proxy wars in different countries where the interests of the two superpowers - the U.S and the Soviet Union- overlapped. However, the fall of bipolarism in 1991 and the rise of the United States as global hegemony re-opened the door for large-scale wars epitomized in the U.S invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively. The election of President Obama, however, witnessed a change in the war strategy characterized by an endeavor to curtail U.S military presence in both countries and an eccentric reluctance to large-scale intervention in the infamous Syrian stalemate. The same strategy continues to be followed by President Trump in his first term. In this regard, the

present research questions the recent shift in the American war strategy from direct intervention using large troop deployments to a new strategy based on an increasing reliance on local non state actors ;proxies or third parties to achieve its geostrategic interests.

3. Aim of the Study

This dissertation aims to shed light on the nature of modern war strategies particularly proxy warfare which was adopted by the United States during the presidency Obama and Trump. This could not go without studying the reasons that pushed the United States to be reluctant in its war strategy and whether its reliance on non state actors and proxies brought the desired outcomes planned by its policy-makers.

4. Research Questions

The objectives of the study are directed by the following questions:

- 1) Which historical philosophies funnel foreign policy decision-making in the U.S?
- 2) What are the reasons behind the shift from large scale, direct interventionism towards proxy warfare employing non state actors as core players?
- 3) What are the costs and benefits of using non-state actors by the U.S?

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Type of Research and Model of Analysis

The present dissertation is a qualitative research based on an analytical method associated with a case study which includes some numerical data converted into graphs to support the theoretical findings. For the sake of an effective analysis of subjects related to foreign policy of a given state, it is necessary to determine the rhetoric or the **model of analysis** to be followed therein including a comprehensive appreciation of the advantages and

limitations of each of the five models of analysis. Graham Allison (1971) is credited as the founder of foreign policy analysis models. In his book entitled “The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis”, Allison outlined three models of analysis: the rational actor model, the bureaucratic politics model and the organizational process model. Two additional models have been developed later: the inter-branch politics model by Qingshan Tan (1993) and the political process model by Roger Hilsman (1993) (Norwich University, 2017).

There is no shortage of examples that favor the rational actor model as the most commonly used approach of analysis and its influence on the rest of models. It is based on the assumption that the main player in policy-making is a unitary rational decision maker. According to Allison (1993:258), “The first model fixes the broader context, the larger national patterns, and the shared images”. Five questions are posed within the framework of the rational actor model that Allison (1971:259) enlisted as follows:

- 1) What is the Problem?
- 2) What are the alternatives?
- 3) What are the strategic costs and benefits associated with each alternative?
- 4) What is the observed pattern of national (governmental) values and shared axioms?
- 5) What are the pressures in the international strategic marketplace?

The choice of the rational actor model is also motivated by the limitation of scope as it reduces the intricate web of decision making processes to a single rational actor and offers the possibility to reach findings about the goals of foreign policy.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This work is composed of three chapters. The first two chapters are theoretical while the third chapter is a case study. The first chapter tackles the mechanisms and the theoretical

underpinnings of the U.S foreign policy including the major schools of thought as well as the most influential Presidential doctrines that shaped the U.S interventionist history. The second chapter focuses on the change in the American interventionist strategy highlighting the nature and dynamics of proxy warfare and the recourse to non state actors as well as the impact of this shift on the United States and the international community. The third chapter is a case study which focuses on the U.S role in the Syrian civil war and its potential engagement in proxy warfare through the backing of non state actors including some factions of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the creation of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the financing of Kurdish separatist groups like the Democratic Union Party YPD (Partiya Yeketyia Demokrat) and the Peshmerga.

CHAPTER I

Theoretical and Constitutional Underpinnings of U.S

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1. Introduction

This chapter traces back the theoretical underpinnings of U.S foreign policy and provides a concise yet broad overview of major theories that reigned from the birth of the American constitution to the presidency of American forty fifth President Donald Trump. It describes how the U.S foreign policy has evolved and shifted from one trend to another. Moreover, it sheds light on the arteries that feed into the U.S foreign policy starting with formal institutions and the mechanisms of their constitutional functioning. This will be followed by an overview of influential concepts that guided the US foreign policy-making including Manifest Destiny, American Exceptionalism, Idealism, Realism and eventually President's doctrines and how they shaped the country's foreign policy in general and security strategy in particular. All these dominant strains fueled the U.S foreign policy throughout the different periods of history and served as rationales for its actual role as a global hegemonic superpower.

2. Mechanisms of U.S Foreign Policy-making

The US Constitution divides the federal government into three branches. First, the legislative branch that makes law and is vested in a bicameral Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives. The second branch is the executive which implements and enforces law and includes the President, Vice president, Cabinet and most federal Agencies. The third is the judicial branch which interprets and evaluates law and is composed of the Supreme Court and other Federal Courts (USA Gov, 2018). The following section discusses foreign policy mechanisms within the executive and legislative branches with a focus on the prerogatives of each entity in terms of the deployment of US troops into overseas hostile situations.

2.1.The Executive Branch

2.1.1. The President

The American political system holds civilian power over the military. According to the American Constitution, the US President is the Commander In Chief (CIC) of military forces. He has the power to negotiate and sign treaties, appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States with the advice and consent of the Senate (U. S. Const. art. II, § 2, 1787). The President's power to commit the deployment of US military forces overseas is restrained by the constitution. The Congress has the exclusive constitutional prerogative to “declare war, grant letters of Marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water” (U. S. Const. art. I, § 8, 1787), whereas the CIC role of the President allows him to utilize armed forces to protect the United States against foreign attacks. Gradually, controversy arose within the American political arena about the President's power to deploy U.S. armed forces into hostile situations overseas without a declaration of war or other form of approval from the Congress. To address this concern, the War Powers Act (1973) was enacted in the aftermath of the war of Indochina allowing the US President to commit the deployment of troops for overseas operations for a maximum period of **60 days** without Congressional approval. US Presidents have constantly considered the War Powers Act as an “unconstitutional infringement upon the power of the executive branch” (The Law Library of Congress, 2007).

Many American Presidents outlined their stances and objectives of US foreign policy through presidential doctrines. Though they have significant weight in pursuing national interest, these doctrines do not have the force of law. Each of the presidential doctrines articulated a specific purpose that ranged both in terms of geographical influence and duration.

2.1.2. The Department of State

Within the Executive Branch, the Department of State is the formal U.S. foreign affairs office which develops and implements the President's foreign policy or his doctrine. However, Its role as a lead agency in the development and execution of foreign policy has always been challenged by 'competing' agencies, councils and Departments who have undeniable contributions into foreign policy. Hastedt (2004) notes the following,

Within the United States, the National Security Advisor [NSA] and the National Security Council [NSC] have often eclipsed the secretary of state and the State Department as the principal sources of policy ideas. The Defense Department has long been a competitor in military policy, and the U.S. office of trade Representative provides an alternative source of economic advice for the President (P.455).

Dobson & Marsh (2006) provide historical account over the fluctuating role of the Department of State claiming that its influence depended on the stature of the Secretary of State and the experience of the elected President. The creation of NSC and NSA by the National Security Act (1947) fostered a climate of rivalry over foreign policy between the NSC and the Department of State. This rivalry turned into a 'bitter conflict' due to President's increasing tendency to rely on National Security Agencies as principal sources instead of the Department of State. In the same vein, Mulcahy (1986) notes,

Beginning with Mc George Bundy in the Kennedy Administration, and culminating with Henry Kissinger under Presidents Nixon and Ford, the assistant to the president for national security affairs has often been the equal of the Secretary of State and, in some cases, his superior in the foreign policy process (P.280).

Despite attempts of structural reforms, the stature of NSC has increased not only in terms of the size of its staff but also in terms of its involvement in the process of foreign policy-making. Many American think tanks today call for the reviving of the ‘ailing’ Department of State by delegating more responsibility for foreign-policy advising and execution to America’s professional diplomats and put an end to the hijacking of foreign policy by the NSC (Goldfien, 2016).

2.1.3. The National Security Council (NSC)

Created by the National Security Act of 1947 passed during the Truman Administration, The National Security Council is an interdepartmental body which offers advice to the president on matters related to security and coordinates foreign and defense policy between the departments and agencies of the executive branch. Moreover, the Security Act vowed to restrict the American armed forces, created the office of Secretary of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The NSC new Statutory members and advisers presently include the President, Vice President, Secretaries of State, Defense, and Energy, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Director of National Intelligence. The white House provides a succinct note about the functions of the NSC:

The National Security Council (NSC) is the President's principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his senior national security advisors and Cabinet officials. Since its inception under President Truman, the Council's function has been to advise and assist the President on national security and foreign policies. The Council also serves as the President's principal arm for coordinating these policies among various government agencies (The white House, n.d.).

In order to oversee the entire intelligence community, the National Security Act established a Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A) under the NSC with a Director of Central Intelligence appointed by the President with the consent of the Senate. The mission of the CIA is not to make policy recommendations related to foreign affairs, yet it provides the necessary information to the Departments of State and Defense which help them formulate US policy towards foreign countries. The officially stated mission of the CIA's is “to collect, analyze, evaluate, and disseminate foreign intelligence to assist the President and senior US government policymakers in making decisions relating to national security”(CIA, 2018). However, the freedom of Information Act - including its subsequent amendments - as well as the establishment of the historical review program paved the way for the declassification of thousands of documents by the national security archive. These documents formerly classified as top secret, reveal the active involvement of the CIA in covert and clandestine operations overseas.

2.2.The Legislative Branch

Theoretically, the American political system is constitutionally structured in a way that none of the three branches of government would become too powerful. This system of ‘checks and balances’ enables each branch to limit the powers of the other branches. In this regard, the American foreign policy is not entirely designed and executed by the executive branch. This section tackles the involvement of the legislative branch - vested in the American Congress- in shaping the US foreign policy emphasizing the tensions that have arisen between the White House and Capitol Hill in terms of war powers, treaties ratifications and oversight over foreign aids and expenditure known as “control of the purse strings”.

2.2.1.The Congress

The American Congress is composed of two chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. The three main cases where Congress can legislate on foreign policy are

through declarations of war, control of the purse, ratification of treaties and approval of presidential nominees for diplomatic and senior executive appointments. Constitutionally, the Congress has taken a leading role in foreign policy through its foreign relations committee as well as through its appropriations and oversight role. Despite the fact that war powers are defined more clearly in the hands of the Congress as explained in section 1.1.1, they are practically dominated by the President and the executive branch.

2.2.1.1. Power to Declare War:

According to the House of Representatives office of the Historian, US Congress exercised its power to declare war eleven times in the history of the USA (see Appendix A for the complete list). The most recent being the declaration of war with Rumania in 1942 during WW2. Since then, the involvement of the Congress changed from declarations of wars to resolutions authorizing the use of military force in a number of cases including the 1991 Gulf War, the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and the 2003 invasion of Iraq (H.R.Office of the Historian).

The power to send troops into hostility situations is actually in the hands of the President acting as the CIC of armed forces. Nevertheless, the President is required to consult with the Congress, report commitment of US military forces within 24 hours, and end military action within 60 days if Congress does not declare war or authorize the use of force .(The Law Library of Congress, 2007).

2.2.1.2.Power of the Purse Control:

The power over expenditure offers Congress a significant source of leverage over the executive branch including foreign policy provided that “no money shall be drawn from the treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law” (U. S. Const. art. I, § 9, 1787). Namely, Congress has the constitutional power to withhold funds and prevent the President

from pursuing a policy that it opposes or to gain leverage on other political issues. Moreover, Congress may resort to packaging strategies to evade a possible veto by the President.

Smith, Roberts, and Vander Wielen (2006) indicate that American Presidents resisted the Congressional strategy explaining that “Recent presidents have promoted the line-item veto as a means to combat Congress’s packaging strategies”(p.304). The promotion of the line-item veto was considered unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1996 which would require a two-thirds majority vote in both Houses and a ratification by the States (p.304).

However, there are several stances in different historical periods where American funds escaped from Congressional control. Dobson and Marsh (2006) refer to some extraordinary circumstances when “Presidents can shift resources between areas of policy, or camouflage things through covert operations, and their lieutenants may even divert funds illegally as in the Iran-Contras affair 1985-86” (p.9). The Reagan administration sold secretly arms to Iran in order to release American hostages detained by Lebanese Shiite militia. The profits from arm sales were then used to fund the Contras for the purpose of overthrowing the government of Nicaragua breaching the ‘Boland Amendment’ , a series of Acts passed by the Congress to restrict funding and covert assistance to the Contras by the CIA, the Department of Defense, and all other government agencies.

Along similar lines, Michael Boyle (2013) explains how the American public was defrauded by the hidden cost of the Iraq war. The war cost jumped from an initial estimation of \$50-60 billion to reach \$823.2 billion between 2003 and 2011. He adds “The most striking fact about the cost of the war in Iraq has been the extent to which it has been kept off the books of the government's ledgers and hidden from the American people. The strategy to keep these astronomic numbers veiled from the American public was based on the use of supplemental appropriations approved outside the Pentagon’s annual budget.

2.2.1.3.The Power to Ratify Treaties and Approve Presidential Nominees:

The Senate is entrusted by the Constitution to ratify treaties with foreign nations and approve presidential nominees for executive and judicial offices. The executive branch vested in the President formally starts legislative action on a treaty by submission to the Senate. A two-thirds majority vote is required for both actions. Article II, section 2 of the American Constitution stipulates that the President “shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the senators present concur”. The American history witnessed many cases of refusal by the Congress to ratify treaties or approve presidential nominees for executive appointments.

In 1989, the democrat dominated Congress refused George H. Bush’s nominee John Tower for the position of Secretary of Defense on the ground of character flaws and ties with defense contractors. In 2006, the recess appointment of John Bolton as the US Ambassador to the United Nations and the failure to confirm him by the Senate on the ground of his hard-line views on the UN and his abrasive character pushed the controversial Ambassador to announce his resignation (Dobson & Marsh, 2006).

Refusal to ratify treaties by the Congress is rare. According to the US Senate “During its first 200 years, the Senate approved more than 1,500 treaties and rejected only 21” (The Senate office of the Historian). The most notable of them was the treaty of Versailles rejected by the Congress in 1919 by a vote of 39 to 55. As a result, The United States did not join the League of Nations. In 1921, Congress approved resolutions to formally end hostilities with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian government.

3. Schools of thought in U.S Foreign Policy

3.1. American Idealism versus American Realism in Foreign Relations:

3.1.1.American Idealism:

Regarded as the first 20th Century American perspective on world politics, Idealism is often linked to the policies developed by President Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921), the advocate of moral diplomacy, world peace and neutrality. In his Independence Day address in 1914, President Wilson asked, "What are we going to do with the influence and power of this great nation? Are we going to play the old role of using that power for our aggrandizement and material benefit only?"(Hart, 2002, p. 39).

Initially, Wilsonian Idealism holds that war can be prevented by undertaking four actions. The first action consists of putting in place international law and agreements and allowing countries to disarm. Secondly, national defense is to be based on prioritizing the concept of collective security through the creation of the League of Nations. Thirdly, by establishing democracies around the world, democratically elected leaders would be responsible for preventing their countries from involvement in wars. Finally, advocate trade facilitation by reducing barriers in order to effectively promote prosperity and mutual beneficial international collaboration (Hastedt, 2004).

The optimist Idealist rationale largely built on the containment of wars through international organizations, the rule of law and collective security, was significantly challenged by the outbreak of the First World War. Woodrow Wilson reacted by issuing a proclamation of neutrality. However, as the conflict escalated, leading to an unprecedented devastation, he became increasingly persuaded that isolation was no longer a practical posture for the United States. The subsequent rejection of the Senate to approve the ratification of the treaty of Versailles and join the League of Nations lowered the already fluctuating fortunes of Idealist thinking.

The controversy about Idealist approach has raged unabated for over a century. Historian Walter Russel Mead (2001) hailed Wilsonian idealist principles which “set the tone of the 20th Century” arguing that they continue to be embraced by European powers, “France, Germany, Italy, and Britain may have sneered at Wilson, but every one of these powers today conducts its European policy along Wilsonian lines” (p.9). Conversely, Dobson and Marsh (2006) claimed that “ Idealism has been criticized for tending to elevate principles above careful calculation of national interests and achievable results and for failing to act prudently in an anarchical and dangerous international system” (p.3). Despite its fluctuating outcomes, many experts consider that Wilsonian idealism has never been dislodged from the center of American foreign policy thinking.

3.1.2.American Realism:

The aftermath of World War I and the increasing involvement of the United States in world affairs had a strong pull on the American move from idealism towards a realistic perspective which perceives world politics as a realm in which laws, international institutions and agreements could not guarantee American national interests. World politics is hence viewed as a continuous struggle for power with minor margin for universal principles.

The philosophical roots of realism go back to the writings of Machiavelli (1469–1557), and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Hastedt (2004) notes that “Machiavelli presented a pessimistic view of human nature and stressed the centrality of power as a force shaping human behavior. Hobbes wrote of the necessity for having strong governments to maintain order in an anarchic world” (p.414). Based on these conceptions, realists expressed foreign policy in terms of the state’s endeavors to safeguard national interests through maximizing security using power and involving the exploration of all possible means that could include the use of force, double standards of political conduct or even acts against democratic principles. Along the same lines, Dobson and Marsh (2006) reveal the amoral

nature of realism in terms of interstate relations, stating that “ Other states must not be judged in terms of friendship, or their domestic character, or by their stated intentions, but by their power and the maxim that today’s friend could become tomorrow’s enemy and vice versa”(p.3).

The claim that realist approach is amoral was not without backlash from the proponent of the theory. They premised that moral agency cannot be a choice in an imperfect world. They aim to protect the state because “it is imbued with intrinsic moral worth: It creates order, which is the prerequisite for moral action” (p.3). However, the critical dilemma here arises when foreign policy means conflict with the moral values of the domestic public space to such an extent that they jeopardize the integrity of society (p.3).

The ramifications of world wars and the increasing need of states to secure their quest for survival through international organizations set the stage for the emergence of Neo-realism. The new paradigm shifted the attention from “the controlling influence of human nature to the central role played by the structure of the international system” (Hastedt,2004, p.414). Neo-realists adopted a muscular foreign policy that viewed world politics with a pragmatic lens. Namely, American interests are defended aggressively but with a policy carefully disguised behind multilateral diplomacy, that is an iron grip in velvet gloves.

Walter Russell Mead's 2001 book, "Special Providence" is credited by many experts as an indispensable source of analytical scheme of US foreign policy. To assist in the rational analysis of US foreign policy, Mead dispelled the traditional belief that American foreign policy falls into one of two schools: isolationism and internationalism in favour of another polarity: Realism vs Idealism or in the words of Mead “the sinuous pragmatism of the wily serpent” versus “the humane and peaceable attributes of the dove” (p.99). Mead identified four schools of thought on US foreign policy: Hamiltonianism, Jeffersonianism, Wilsonianism and Jacksonianism.

3.2.The Hamiltonian School :Freedom of the Seas, Freedom of the Skies

The Hamiltonianist theory refers to the political ideas pioneered by the American statesman Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804). One of the founding fathers of the United States and a major author of the Federalist papers, Hamilton served as America's first Secretary of treasury. His statesmanship and economic orientations influenced the shaping of a country's foreign policy based on powerful overseas trade in addition to the freedom of the seas and eventually the freedom of the skies.

Mead (2001) points out that Hamiltonians are often confused with continental realists as both speak the same language of "balance of power" and "national interest". Hamiltonians looked at Britain as a model in international relations, although they transcended that model for many reasons. On one hand, the USA is geographically safer than Britain being isolated by two vast oceans, surrounded by relatively weak neighbours and hence less exposed to greedy European powers. This US geographical endowment represents on the other hand an impediment for trading with Europe across the Atlantic. In this regard, Mead (2001) considers that "It was an interruption of trade, rather than the loss of territory to rivals, that would most worry American foreign policy intellectuals through the first 150 years of national independence" (p.102). To secure the American paramount national interest of peaceful trade, Hamiltonians advocated the freedom of the seas in that "No sea, no ocean, no strait should be closed to American ships"(p.102).

This freedom of the seas was supplemented by the freedom of the skies in the twenty-first century. Geography continues to drive the United States reliance on a secure intercontinental transportation of goods and people than most other countries. Hamiltonians consider that any involvement with this right of passage as a direct menace to US uppermost interests, and the United States "reserves the right to respond with the most vigorous diplomatic measures and,

when necessary, the use of force”(p.102). Proponents of Hamiltonian political strand would subsequently propose world trade organizations and a globalised economy.

3.3.The Wilsonian School: The Collective Security and International Institutions

The Wilsonian school refers to the political principles associated with Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924). The 28th President of the USA (1913-1921) led the country into the first World War and was best remembered for his fourteen points speech, the creation of the League of Nations in addition to leading progressive legislations. Whereas Hamiltonians gave primacy to the freedom of seas and skies as a paramount national interest, Wilsonians advocated the spread of American ideals of democracy and capitalism along with international institutions to underpin international stability and protect human rights. According to Hastedt (2004), “Wilsonianism has its roots in 19th-century liberalism. It contains four main points: (1) a collective-security organization, (2) restraints on weapons, (3) democracy, and (4) the free flow of goods across national borders” (p.520).

In terms of political dynamics and for the sake of global governance, Wilson considered democratic states more reliable partners compared to monarchies, autocracies and despotic states. His support to democracies is based on the assumption that tyrannies are often misgoverned by a military elite which favours wars to peace or in the words of Mead (2001), “It is only civilians who benefit from peace and only democracy, say Wilsonians, ensures that the millions who seek peace can control the thousands who want war”(p.163). With America in the center of the world’s political stage, Wilsonians are heavily challenged by a realistic amoral policy that backed non democratic and repressive regimes to maintain the country’s economic and geopolitical interests.

3.4.The Jeffersonian School: a Reluctant Constitutional Foreign Policy

The Jeffersonian strand refers to the political principles associated with Thomas Jefferson (1747-1826). One of the seven towering founding fathers of the United States, the draftsman of the declaration of independence and America's third President (1801-1809), Jefferson is regarded as an eloquent proponent of isolationism and avoidance of meddling in the affairs of other nations. His famous saying "Our first and fundamental maxim should be never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. Our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs" (Bailey & Kennedy, 2009, p.273).

The Jeffersonian statesmanship is largely based on a set of pillars that range from protection of democracy, avoidance of wars, support of constitutional restrictions over the executive power, and the rejection of government secrecy. Whereas Wilsonian and Hamiltonian schools are regarded as universal in nature, the Jeffersonian school derives from "idiosyncratic elements of American culture" (Mead, 2001, p.174).

Jeffersonians exhibit stringent opposition to the involvement of the American government with corporations. It is believed that this involvement will oblige the government to back evil dictatorships in order to preserve the economic interests of American corporations that are advanced by this; a threat that could subvert the American democracy abroad and at home. Mead (2001) explains the Jeffersonians' view of a vulnerable democracy stipulating that "The Jeffersonian mind does not scan the foreign policy horizon in a search for opportunities; rather, it mostly sees threats" (p.183). The international order sought by Jeffersonians does not differ from the one of the other schools except that they oppose making any domestic concessions or changes to accommodate the country to the new order. Instead, they prefer that the rest of the world should accommodate itself to the American values.

The other bedrock of Jeffersonian thought is the avoidance of war through the options of negotiations, peaceful arbitrations and economic and political sanctions. Even with the failure of these options, Jeffersonians adopt a gradual approach to war instead of heavy military retaliation; a strategy that aims to obtain results with the minimal use of force. Expenditure on navy should be curtailed to the absolute minimum considering that the larger the navy, the more involvement of the country in far-off lands wars. Alternatively, Jeffersonians developed theories of coastal defense to divert the appropriations from vessels construction to coastal barges and forts. Mead (2001) summarizes the tone of Jeffersonian diplomacy in “Speak softly, and carry the smallest possible stick” (p.192). It is a strategy based on narrowing the country’s interests overseas to have fewer possibilities of clashes with other forces.

Jeffersonians today endeavor to curtail military costs, aim a civilian control over the military and intelligence institutions through a continuous congressional oversight. They strive for the declassification of secret documents and put more restrictions on the ability of bureaucrats to classify documents as secret. Whereas the other schools complain from congressional statutory constraints, Jeffersonians pursue a Constitutional conduct of foreign policy. They defend Congressional powers in foreign affairs and seek even to tighten them. The US joining of international organizations such as the NATO, the UN charter and the League of Nations was not without the insistence of Jeffersonians to reject any treaty that could force the United States to deploy troops abroad without congressional consent (p.192).

3.5. The Jacksonian School: The Populist World View and Folk Community

The Jacksonian school refers to the political principles associated with Andrew Jackson (1767-1845). Broadly known as the representative of the “common man”, Jackson became a national hero after defeating the British army in the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812 and served as America’s seventh President (1829-1837). The Jacksonian philosophy is

the “most deplored and least impressive” of the four schools. It is less intellectual, has little consideration to international law, adopts a pessimistic view of a peaceful world, and endorses a ruthless war doctrine in which “War is about fighting, killing, and winning with as few casualties as possible on your side. But you don't worry about casualties on the other side. That's their problem” (Mead, 2003).

The Jacksonian school is obscure and less intellectual due to its populist nature. Its anti-elitist tradition based on instincts and emotions of “the folk community” rather than a set of ideas or principles, made it difficult for foreign policy pundits to provide a bald-faced demarcation of Jacksonian creed. Mead (2001) considers that “American populism is based less on the ideas of Enlightenment than on the community values and sense of identity among the British colonizers” (p.227). In his attempt to trace the roots of Jacksonian populism, Mead cites from historian David Hackett Fischer that “what we are calling Jacksonian populism can originally be identified with a subgroup among these settlers, the so-called Scotch-Irish.....hardly and warlike people” (p.227). Provided that the values of the American folk community differ from the values of the rest of the world, Jacksonians believe that the international scene will remain fragile, hostile and chaotic and that the United States must do whatever it takes to protect its interests, including acts of subversion against foreign governments or even assassination of foreign leaders with least consideration to international law.

Besides their low esteem of international law, the Jacksonian creed embraces a war doctrine that is more entrenched in classical realism though it strongly requires a clear ‘moral reason’ for fighting. In the words of President Jackson, “Peace, above all things, is to be desired, but blood must sometimes be spilled to obtain it on equable and lasting terms” (Andrew Jackson quotes). Mead (2001) argues that two kinds of enemies and two kinds of fighting are recognized by Jacksonians: “Honorable enemies fight a clean fight and are

entitled to be opposed in the same way; dishonorable enemies fight dirty wars and in that case rules don't apply" (p.252). They have a firmly held belief about the use of full force instead of limited operations as the only way to achieve the objective of imposing the American will on its enemies with minimal American casualties. The unconditional surrender of these enemies is the only reason to put an end to war. Mead reveals that during the wars of Vietnam and Korea, the Jacksonian quarters bid to use nuclear weapons against both countries emphasizing that the only reason not to use arms of mass destruction, for Jacksonians, is the fear of enemy retaliation.

4. Philosophical Backgrounds of U.S Foreign Policy

4.1. Manifest Destiny, the American Century and Expansionism

The fear of overseas involvement and the tendency to avoid European political quagmires did not stop the U.S. endeavor to expand across North America. This expansion was motivated by the rationale of Manifest destiny which many historians compared with the British empire's "White man burden". A creed that is largely based on the right and duty of the white man to civilize the wild other and to establish control over more lands stretching the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The phrase first appeared in 1845 in a partisan newspaper when John O'Sullivan, a popular columnist, wrote an article complaining about the meddling of European powers in American affairs stating that "for the avowed object of thwarting our policy and hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions" (Lind, 2006, p.67).

In addition to the religious fervor of Christian providentialism, the omnipresent belief in American superiority was at the heart of manifest destiny. Mountjoy (2009) notes that

advocates usually point to three main pillars that hold the mindset of Manifest Destiny: virtue, mission, and destiny. He explains :

First, American society and citizens were virtuous. Because of their virtue, they were justified in expanding. Second, it was the mission of Americans to extend their society. In doing this, Americans would influence the rest of the world. Finally, it was the destiny of America to undertake the task of accomplishing these things (p.14).

Regardless of the different interpretations of the concept, it is believed that the Manifest Destiny fueled American expansionism and embroiled the new born nation in wars with Mexico and Spain and fostered an American Indian policy that practically undermined the culture of the continent's original inhabitants. President McKinley (1897-1901) justified empire by appealing the manifest destiny. The colonies "must be held," the president proclaimed, "if we are to fulfill our destinies as a nation and provide the natives with the benefits of a Christian civilization which has reached its highest development under our republican institutions" (Christie, 2008, p.122).

Fasting forward to world wars era, The U.S history provides many variations on the theme of manifest destiny. First published in 1941, Henry Luce's essay entitled "The American Century" is considered by many pundits as a signpost that revealed the philosophy of American modern diplomacy. Luce hails the United States as "the sanctuary of the ideals of civilization". He believes that the turn of the United States has come now "to be the powerhouse from which the ideals spread throughout the world and do their mysterious work of lifting the life of mankind from the level of the beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels". Luce considers America as "the dynamic center of ever widening spheres of enterprise, America as the training center of skillful servants of mankind, America

as the Good Samaritan, really believing again that it is more blessed to give than to receive” (p.171).

In the face of attempts to disguise their racist rhetoric, the American paradigms of ‘Manifest destiny’ and ‘the American Century’ continue to raise their ugly heads wearing the garb of spreading democracy, liberty and human rights values. They are used to justify atrocities and a number of U.S led conflicts and expansionist wars across the globe starting from the war of Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and not ending with the U.S violation of sovereign countries’ skies through drone strikes that continue to kill innocent civilians at an appallingly regular pace in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. In his 2003 State of the Union speech and amid the mobilization for the invasion of Iraq, President Bush declared: “We go forward with confidence, because this call of history has come to the right country”. He added “America is a strong nation and honorable in the use of our strength. We exercise power without conquest, and we sacrifice for the liberty of strangers” (Transcript of the State of union, 2003).

4.2. From ‘the City upon a Hill’ to American Exceptionalism:

The American exceptionalism is another important thread that weaves the mindset of American foreign policy. A guiding sentiment that blossomed during the country’s early years of territorial expansion, the American exceptionalism is broadly defined as the sense that America presented an exceptional model of democracy and individual rights. First coined by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1831, the term alludes to the belief that America’s distinctive political institutions in addition to its commitment to individualism, liberty, equality and democracy have made the country immune from the historical forces that have led to the decay of other nations. Many historians credit the sermon delivered by the puritan John Winthrop in 1630 as the bedrock of American exceptionalism. Entitled “A Model of Christian Charity”, the sermon has become one of the sacred texts in American history.

Winthrop addressed his fellow Puritans to create a community that would be a model for others to imitate stating that " We must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us". In the American political scene, the spirit of 'city upon a hill' streamed through the rhetoric of nearly every American President.

The American exceptionalism is not a single monolithic concept, it is rather an array of a wide range of themes. In his attempt to unpack the concept, HongjuKoh (2003) quoted Margaret Mac Millan's approach to American exceptionalism. She argues that "American exceptionalism has always had two sides: the one eager to set the world to rights, the other ready to turn its back with contempt if its message should be ignored". She criticizes the influence of the concept stating that " Faith in their own exceptionalism has sometimes led to a certain obtuseness on the part of Americans, a tendency to preach at other nations rather than listen to them, a tendency as well to assume that American motives are pure where those of others are not" (p.1480). In the stage of foreign policy, the exceptionalist thinking holds that "Americans deprecate power politics and old-fashioned diplomacy, mistrust powerful standing armies and entangling peacetime commitments, make moralistic judgments about other people's domestic systems, and believe that liberal values transfer readily to foreign affairs"(Lepgold & McKeown,1995, p.369). Exceptionalist thinking represents an entrenched driving force for the American foreign policy. Despite the fact that its narrative has evolved over the time using different catch words, albeit all of them stream in the same arrogant jingoist rhetoric of an America that stands in the vanguard of history, a town on a hill chosen by providence to rescue humankind.

Many think tanks and politicians today dismiss American exceptionalism as a myth while many others back a redefinition of the concept. President Trump explicitly denounced the term considering that "when Americans tout their exceptionalism, they are insulting the world ". Unlike his predecessors who considered exceptionalism as a "permanent trait and an

intrinsic part of American identity”, Trump views it as “a conditional state” (Wertheim, 2017). In his controversial article entitled “RIP American exceptionalism”, Daniel Sargent (2018) criticizes Trump’s rejection of exceptionalism arguing that “The U.S. president has abandoned the Wilsonian compass”. Sargent sends a storm warning about the trajectory of Trump’s foreign policy. Firstly, “Should U.S. foreign policy forsake the assertion that the United States is an exceptional nation, a republic devoted to the cause of freedom, America will cease to be recognizable as America”. Secondly, “Should Donald Trump persist, deepening the amoral rut that his administration is fast defining as a new trajectory for U.S. foreign relations, the republic risks losing both the world and its soul”. By dismissing the concept of exceptionalism, it is believed that Trump is inviting the public space to view America’s place in the international arena with a realistic lens and to redefine the exceptionalist creed based on the uniqueness of America in its power rather than on the purpose of its *raison d’être*.

5. Interventionism and key Presidential Doctrines (2001-2019)

5.1. Interventionism versus Unilateralism

There is a tendency among many historians to claim that America has never been isolationist. They consider that the term is misused on the ground that there is no country with considerable overseas trade interests would ever isolate itself. Paterson (2018) suggests that instead of isolationism, “It is more appropriate to use terms such as unilateralism or neutrality to capture the sentiment that the U.S. should selectively engage with foreign partners when national interests are at stake” (p.5). It is believed that the pendulum of America’s foreign policy swung between two main directions: unilateralism (not to say isolationism) and interventionism though it could be inaccurate to adopt an equivalent Manichean-like taxonomy for the reason that the interventionist trajectory prevailed in most of the American history compared to unilateralism. The country plunged in territorial

expansion and burdensome wars since its creation until its actual status as a global hegemonic superpower indulged in a constant quest for global domination, to secure its supremacy and impose its policies using soft, hard and smart powers.

While attempts of definition surrounding presidential doctrines are broad and diverse, there are many shared features that pundits agree on. Julia Azari (2014) argues that presidential doctrines “are carefully crafted political defenses...they are reverse-engineered to address events as they arise, in ways that respond to and work with existing understandings of the nation’s security interests”. In simpler terms, presidential doctrines are not complex philosophical theories but straightforward and lucid statements of President’s strategies that stem from the country’s predefined national interests. This section provides a synopsis of major presidential doctrines that shaped American foreign policy with an emphasis on the three most recent ones starting from Bush’s doctrine of preemptive attack against perceived enemies, Obama’s security cooperation with allies, and concluding with Trump’s muscular nationalism. (see Appendix B for the complete list of presidential doctrines).

5.2.The Bush Doctrine (2001-2009): Preemptive Attack against Perceived Enemies

It was the 9/11 attacks on U.S soil that spawned the preemptive trajectory into American security policy. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld highlighted the need for a shift in U.S armed forces that necessitated “prevention, self-defense and sometimes pre-emption....to defend against terrorism and other emerging 21st century threats” by taking “the war to the enemy” (Siracusa & Aiden, 2016, p.166). The release of a new National Security Strategy of the United States in 2002 represented the formal articulation of The Bush Doctrine. The seminal document conveys the primary threats to the country’s national security from “rogue states” and “radical terrorist organizations” and their ability to possess and use weapons of mass destruction against the United States.

To overcome these unparalleled threats, the document endorses a new strategy that abandons the old concepts of deterrence in favor of a preemptive strategy based on the identification and elimination of any threat before it reaches the United States. This goes with President Bush's seminal speech at West Point graduation ceremony when he declared that "We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systemically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long" (The White House, 2002). Bush considers the old strategies of containment and deterrence unfit to face "the perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology". Heavy military retaliation would not succeed in eliminating the dangers of "shadowy terrorist with no nation or citizens to defend", adds President Bush .

5.3. The Obama's Doctrine (2009-2017): Security Cooperation with Allies and Smart Power.

The election of Barack Obama as the first African-American President ushered with a new era in U.S foreign relations and raised the hopes for a shift in America's attitude towards international law. During his electoral campaign, Obama vowed to put an end to America's exhausting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and reduce America's footprints in foreign conflict zones.

Many analysts agree that the main tenets of Obama's foreign policy doctrine emphasize negotiation, appeasement with rivals and security cooperation with allies as alternatives to confrontation and unilateralist policies adopted by his predecessor. Siracusa and Aiden (2016) argue that the invasion of Iraq and the permissiveness that characterized the war on terrorism had left the United States overstretched in a time of steep economic recession, where the need to rightsize America's substantial involvement in conflicts had become a major national security interest. This strategy " necessitated not only reducing its

physical presence but also undertaking a more restrained diplomacy, seceding back and galvanizing allies to play a greater role in looking after their own security” (p.192).

Evidently, Obama downsized the number of American boots in war zones and curtailed the flow of soldiers returning home in body bags. However, he vastly increased the role of special forces units and the use of armed drones and cyber weapons. Compared to Bush’s 2002 preemptive strategy, many pundits credit the change in Obama’s 2010 security strategy as a change in style rather than a change in substance. Siracusa and Aiden consider that “the Obama Doctrine’s greater reluctance to use large-scale force... has paradoxically led to an even greater reliance and an associated lower threshold for using force in the form of targeted killings through new technologies” (p.205). Reliance on drone attacks in Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan is a distinctive tenet of Obama’s war strategy which caused hundreds of casualties among innocent civilians. Human losses were questioned only by human rights organizations but seldom by main stream media or the American public space whereas targeted killings by drone attacks continue to be timidly questioned vis-a-vis their non-conformity with international law in terms of violating the airspace of sovereign countries and extrajudicial killing of suspects.

5.4.The Trump’s Doctrine (2017-Present): Muscular Nationalism and Resurge of Jacksonianism

The election of President Trump in 2016 generated agonizing concerns among pundits and foreign policy think tanks about the new trajectory of U.S foreign policy which many believe was at crossroads. These concerns are fairly legitimate considering the fact that the new President has never subscribed to a clear ideological school. Reinhard WolfIn (2017) argues that “ the new president lacks any clear sense of direction concerning the substantive goals of American foreign policy...He has never subscribed to a consistent ideology and has rarely committed to a doctrinaire party line” (p.99).

However, many other analysts evoke the Jacksonian influence on the President's foreign policy and believe that the new trajectory taken by Trump is clearly a withdrawal from internationalism towards a conservative populist nationalism characterized by a doubtful belief in international institutions and multilateralism. In his attempt to interpret the Trump phenomenon, Taesuh Cha (2016) argued that “ For all of its unexpected success, the Trump phenomenon is a known event in U.S. history. It can be interpreted as the latest version of the Jacksonian surge in the southern and interior western states” (p.84). This analysis is supported by Paterson (2018) who considered “Trump, like Jackson nearly 180 years earlier before him, was all about U.S. nationalism and patriotism. Both wanted to use American economic and military muscle to advance U.S. interests” (p.40). Both analyses lead to the conclusion that the Trump doctrine of Muscular nationalism adheres to the realist perspective of foreign relations.

Besides the economic meltdown, the failures in Iraq and Afghanistan coupled with the loss of the geostrategic playground in Syria in favor of Russia and Iran, represented serious threats to American supremacy and enough reasons for Trump's leitmotifs to “make America great again” and “America First”. Under Trump's doctrine, America will be less engaged in overseas entanglements, will discard multilateralism for unilateral action and adopt a protectionist approach to economy, the typical tenets of a Jacksonian foreign policy.

6. Conclusion

The four main sections of this chapter attempted to provide an understanding of how the U.S foreign policy is crafted not only from a constitutional standpoint but also from a philosophical and doctrinal lens. As the involvement of the U.S.A in foreign wars, conflicts and entanglements stream in the interventionist creed of the country, the first chapter provided a brief account of the constitutional mechanisms as well as the philosophies and

world politics theories that fed the veins of American interventionism including the prevailing schools of thought and Presidential doctrines, their security strategies included.

The first section demonstrated that the decision to declare war in the American constitution is blurred and subject to controversy among the American political class. While the declaration of war is the exclusive prerogative of the Congress, the President is the Commander in Chief (CIC) of the armed forces and his role to deploy troops into overseas hostile situations without a formal declaration of war has always been constrained by the Congress. This concern was addressed by the passage of the War Powers Act in 1973 allowing the US President to commit the deployment of troops for overseas operations for a maximum period of 60 days without Congressional approval. This Act explains the increasing reliance of American war strategy on intermittent surgical strikes, drone attacks and use of non-state actors for the achievement of its goals without the obligation of a formal declaration of war. Furthermore, the analysis of foreign policy mechanisms shows the decline of the role of the U.S Department of State in favor of the intelligence and security institutions represented by the powerful C.I.A and the N.S.C whose role shifted from advisory agencies to major contributors in shaping the President's foreign policy trajectory.

The second section, however, provided the reader with a succinct analysis of schools of thought that constructed the decision-making of American foreign policy. The emphasis was not only limited on the manichean-like polarity between American idealism and American realism but included the most recent academic taxonomy of American schools of thought : Hamiltonianism, Jeffersonianism, Wilsonianism and Jacksonianism. The four threads continue to shape the American foreign policy today.

The third section brought under light the evolution of national sentiments of Manifest Destiny, American Century and American Exceptionalism and how they became rationales for American expansionism. Largely based on Christian providentialist beliefs and arrogant

supremacist paradigms, these sentiments contributed considerably in the justification of American endeavor to wage wars across the globe.

As this paper analyses the recent shift in the U.S interventionist policy from direct large-scale military interventions towards a new form of proxy-based interventionism, the fourth and last section tackled presidential doctrines of the last three American Presidents (2001-2019). The preemptive/protective war strategy initiated by Bush in 2001 was materialized by the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. The aftermath of both wars represented for many analysts a steep moral decline of American ideals of spreading democracy, human rights and liberty placing the “powerhouse of civilization” in the corner. The subsequent retrenchment policies endorsed by Obama were not without a new war strategy based on curtailing the number of American boots overseas while employing targeted killings of America’s enemies through drone attacks, Special Forces operations and reliance on U.S-subsidized non-state actors. The election of Trump in 2016 ushered with the resurgence of Jacksonian creed which is estimated to continue reliance on the same security policy but with emphasis on jingoism and populist nationalism. The following chapter will be dedicated to the U.S new war strategy which is based on proxies and non-state actors rather than large scale interventions.

CHAPTER II

Proxy Warfare

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1. Introduction

In the first chapter, the study has shown that the US foreign policy has been largely founded on two fundamental concepts: unilateralism and interventionism. The latter, in its various forms, has been the most prevailing feature of foreign policy throughout the history of the USA. One of the most prominent mechanisms used is proxy warfare. The present chapter is devoted to the critical analysis of the aforesaid phenomenon. It includes seven sections. The first section provides definitions of proxy warfare from different perspectives. The second one discusses the dynamics of this particular form of conflict. Regarding the third section, it attempts to distinguish between the direct military intervention and the proxy intervention. While the fourth section tackles the basic reasons behind waging proxy warfare, the next section attempts to assess the sources of proxy intervention in conflicts. With respect to the following section, it analyses the essential components of US proxy warfare strategy. The final section sheds light on signposts that will shape the future of US proxy warfare.

2. Definition of Proxy Warfare

The term "proxy warfare" is generally understood to mean a war that occurs when rival powers involve third parties as substitutes in their struggle against each other. Proxy warfare has been used by Brewer (2011) to refer to a conflict in which a third party is used by one party to fight its opponent without taking part in direct confrontation.

The types of entities that may be considered as proxies have been the subject of an everlasting and imprecise debate in the academic communities and policymakers. Several academics believe that only state actors may serve as proxies. By way of illustration, Deutsch (as cited in Mumford, 2013) defined proxy warfare as follows:

An international conflict between two foreign powers, fought out on the soil of a third country; disguised as a conflict over an internal issue of that country's manpower, resources and territory as a means for achieving preponderantly foreign goals and foreign strategies.(p.13)

Another evidence can be clearly seen in the definition of Bar-Siman-Tov (1984) who stated that war by proxy, in the cold war period, referred to war in which nuclear weapons states used the regional countries as a surrogate for the clashing of forces so as to avoid direct confrontation between each other.

On the contrary, other academics argued that only non-state actors may be used as proxies. In his influential work, Duner (1981) claimed that "It is impossible to demonstrate a single example of state acting as proxy for some other state" (p.359). In the same way, Hughes (2012) argued that labeling states as proxies "underestimates the degree to which a state can follow its own national interests and make strategic choices which may be in accordance with that of a more powerful ally, but which are not actually influenced by the latter " (p.13).

Other pieces of evidence highlighted that either a state or non state actor may be considered as proxies. Based on the ideas of Bar-Siman-Tov (1984), it could be argued that the key attribute of proxy warfare was not associated to where it took place or who engaged it, but it was linked to the ability to demonstrate that one actor received a request from another to fight for him. Similarly, Loveman (2002) emphasized the compatibility of interests to be the main feature of proxy intervention regardless their types of entities.

In a major advance, Mumford (2013) pointed out that proxy warfare was the employment of third parties by states to achieve their own strategic purposes. They aimed to avoid direct confrontation, increase benefits, and decrease the potential dangers.

3. The Dynamics of Proxy Warfare

Recent development in the issue of US proxy warfare has heightened the need for paying particular attention to the dynamics of this phenomenon. In other words, the center of interest has been shifted towards the interactions between the benefactor-proxy-adversary relationships.

One of the fundamental dynamics of US proxy warfare is its capacity to potentially escalating localized conflicts into large-scale wars. This escalation has to be divided between the potential for indirect proxy support to cause casualties within original borders; and the potential to escalate conflicts beyond original borders through involving another major power (Mumford, 2013). The other key dynamic of US proxy warfare is its fluid nature not only in the level of engagement, but also in the relationships between benefactor and proxy.

With regard to the level of engagement, the scope of US proxy may keep moving and evolves into direct interventions. To illustrate, the Vietnamese government had obtained a growing support from the USA during Kennedy's presidency. The number of advisers had increased from 685 to 16732 (Freedman, 2000).

The second fluid dynamic of US proxy warfare concerns the relationships between the benefactors and proxies. Their relations sometimes become worse either due to the evolution of the whole conflict or because of the inadequate performance of the proxy. However, on other occasions, the proxy realizes a great achievement and becomes more powerful. It seeks more equitable alliance in its relations with the sponsor (Mumford, 2013).

4. The Distinction between Proxy Intervention and Direct Intervention

It is necessary to clarify exactly what is meant by the term "intervention". For Regan (2002), intervention referred to "Convention-breaking military and/or economic activities in

the internal affairs of a foreign country targeted at the authority structure of the government with the aim of affecting the balance of power between the government and opposition forces" (p.10). In the same vein, Rosneau (as cited in Regan, 2002) stated that two main criteria were required to define the term intervention. They were the violation of conventions and the goal of intervention.

Based on the ideas of Aharoni (2009), military intervention was categorized into two broad types. The first category was the direct intervention and the second one was the indirect interference. According to him, the direct intervention consisted of the involvement of the intervener's regular forces in a conflict. This was in contrast to the indirect interference that involved the provision of material aid and training to irregular forces who acted on behalf of the intervener. The interference of a third party could constitute a mode of proxy warfare. Similarly, Loveman (as cited in Tafotie & Idahosa, 2016) stated that there were notable differences between the direct intervention and the proxy intervention.

At first, proxy intervention constituted to a certain degree a low risk to superpower in comparison with direct intervention. In addition, failure in intervention was relatively inconsequential as compared to failure in direct intervention. Moreover, proxy intervention allowed superpower to fulfil their national interest without being directly engaged in conflict. More importantly, it constituted a substitute for the superpower in the armed conflict.

According to Nye (as cited in Tafotie & Idahosa, 2016), "the most discernible difference between proxy wars and other forms of external power interventions is that there is no direct armed military intervention by the superpower. Proxy absorbs the majority of risk by engaging the conflict directly" (p.453).

The growing use of robotics, drones and technologies in the modern era has, however, triggered a heated debate over the form of intervention they have constituted. Springer (2013)

pointed out that nations adopted such technologies as substitute for humans in the modern battlefields because they preserved the lives of people and offered potential economic savings. Mumford (2013) argued that the absence of military personnel did not represent a basic reason to categorize the use of these technologies as a facet of proxy war. He subsequently maintained that the use of these technologies could be considered as a proxy intervention only if they were used covertly on behalf of another state or group in a conflict.

5. Motives behind Undertaking Proxy Warfare

Throughout history, war by proxy has been a common strategy for superpowers to indirectly launch a war against their adversaries. Several studies have been made to determine the motives of this phenomenon. They have revealed that the fundamental motives of the occurrence of proxy wars were the following: self-interest and power, ideological motives, obsolescence of major, risks.

First of all, self-interest and power were key reasons of waging a proxy war. Some scholars argued that "It would scarcely seem to be possible to imagine such a relationship unconnected with the exercise of power"(Duner, 1981, p. 356). Sharing a similar understanding of proxy war, Bar-Siman-Tov (1984) stated that "A controlled local war, when it is proper substitute, helps the superpower advance strategic and political interests with a lower level of risks "(p.263).

Additionally, ideological motives played an important role in explaining the contemporary armed conflicts. According to Willet (as cited in Ugarriza, 2009, p.84) "ideologies become"accelerating" or "triggering" factors of armed violence, along with the abuse of political and military power, proliferation of small arms and struggle for natural resources".

Moreover, the obsolescence of major wars constituted a crucial motive for proxy wars. The archaic nature of the traditional war has prompted the superpowers to decrease their spending on the development of strong military, thereby downsizing the size of armed forces and the quantity of weapons at their disposal.

Finally, the low risk is a fundamental motive to be engaged in a proxy war. By way of illustration, Brewer (2011) termed proxy war as "A low risk and cheap alternative to full blown war"(p.142). Likewise, Bar-Siman-Tov (1984) characterized a proxy intervention as a war in which the proxy would be exposed to a great danger.

5.1.Self- interest and Power

Interest has been the primary instigator for the creation of conflicts between states. To illustrate, Holsti (1996) asserted that "War is thus a rational if not always desirable activity, a means to known end defined in terms of state or national interests "(p.3). Another striking evidence, during the cold war, the two main rivals were highly interested in the third world so as to spread out their influence beyond their borders (David, 1986).

Interest has been clearly manifested in the relationship between the benefactor and the proxy. For instance, at the onset of intervention, a proxy war was classed as "a manifestation of the interest of the principal (A) but not of the proxy (B) "(Duner, 1981, p. 356). However, the interest of the proxy emerged later on. It consisted in maintaining the relationship because of the growing level of reliance on material support. Both the principal and the proxy had a shared desire to defeat a common opponent (Mumford, 2013).

In a study which set out to determine the motives of ninety four major wars, Lebow (2010) found that interest and power were responsible for only twenty seven per cent of the total number of wars . In other wars, they seem to be secondary to other motives. Ideology, by contrast, was an essential instigator in proxy wars.

5.2. Ideological Motives

A clear understanding of the role played by ideology in instigating proxy wars implied layering it at the highest level of the prevalent role that interest played. According to Morghentau (1967), during the cold war, the national interests of superpower prompted an ideological shadowboxing that resulted in proxy interventions. He assumed that the pervasive communism should be resisted on political as well as moral and philosophical bases because it was not morally unwelcome and philosophically hostile to the U.S but was also harmful to its national interests.

With the increasing mass of class struggle between competing superpowers, the former Soviet Union sought to export communism beyond its borders and demonstrated expansionist ambitions whereas the U.S reinforced the strength of global democracy and prevented the expansion of communism.

On one hand, Bissel (1978), claimed that the former Soviet Union felt compelled to deliver aid to its chosen proxies involved in the wars of national liberation in exchange for ideological obedience. On the other hand, an analysis of the U.S foreign policy during the cold war revealed the existence of an ideological reason preceding the occurrence of proxy wars. For instance, Doyle (1983) argued that "US cold war policy cannot be explained without reference to U.S liberalism. Liberalism creates both the hostility to communism, not just to Soviet power, and the crusading bent of policy"(p.330).

In the same way, Costigliola (2010) pointed out that foreign policymakers in the Kennedy's Administration believed that armaments and vigilance of liberal nations became more than necessity in order to put an end to the expansionist ambitions and the ideologies of totalitarian states including the Soviet Union and the Red China.

In the post cold war era, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the demise of Communism, some scholars began to think of de-ideologized world where there was no global reach ideology to compete with liberal democracy. For example, Fukuyama (1989) argued that democracy might make up the top of human ideological development. Other critics demonstrated that the idea itself of the end of ideologies epitomized an expression of an ideology. They shed the light on the export of liberal democracy. According to Willett (2001), the proliferation of liberal democracy was not a change determined by its effectiveness but it was ideologically motivated. Rival ideologies such as; Fundamentalism, Socialism, and Nationalism have recently emerged. They were associated with the movements of social transformation. They frequently resorted to armed violence.

The adoption of these arm's length tactics was the outcome not only of the desired benefits or the pervasive ideologies, but was also the result of changes in the type of warfare itself.

5.3.The "Obsolescence of Major Wars"

The invention of nuclear weapons and the ensuing needs for the superpowers to avoid direct confrontation with each other have been a principal reason for the enhancement of proxy strategies (Towle, 1981). In his influential work, Mueller (1989) assumed that the major war between the great powers could be added to the class of old-fashioned activities such as dueling and slavery. According to him, both of them disappeared from human experience and showed no sign of revival because they began to seem more disgusting, immoral and savage.

Sangha (2011) went on to say that due to the decline of major wars, non-conventional menaces to security have acquired a new lease on life resulting in more unrestrained and

irregular forms of conflicts. Thus the great powers adopted a more viable option through the resort to proxy interventions.

The shift in attitude has been strengthened during and after the cold war through the supply of armaments and military advisers to their surrogate in developing nations in order to secure their interests. By way of illustration, between 2012 and 2015, the US and Russia predominated the market of arms in the developing world. During this period, according to Theorhary (2016), the US and Russia were highly ranked among the nations in terms of the value of arms transfer agreements. The US made roughly 85.6 billion dollars of these agreements while Russia made approximately 48.6 billion dollars.

From this example, it has been shown that the competition between the two superpowers over their interests is still widespread despite the fact that the cold war has drawn to a close. These sales of weapons represented a key way that enabled states to militarily reinforce an ally by proxy. This was exemplified in the work undertaken by Sharp (2018) who stated that Israel has been the largest cumulative recipient of US foreign aid. He continued saying that Israel has received about 134.7 billion dollars from 1946 to 2018. It has also signed a new Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with the US. Under the terms of MOU, the US promised to deliver 38 billion dollars in military assistance to Israel from 2019 to 2028.

Thus, through the supply of all this military aid, the US sought to preserve its influence and the Israeli security in the region without being directly engaged in any of the wars Israel has waged. The US has bypassed the traditional way of intervention because the later has become more and more hazardous to its own troops. In that way, minimizing the risk proved to be another prime reason behind the occurrence of US proxy wars.

5.4. Risks

In his seminal work, Wyss (2016) argued that the desire to mitigate the potential risk has been one of the most powerful motivator to adopt proxy warfare. More importantly, the former president of US Edwight Eisenhower (as cited in Pfaff, 2017) declared that "proxy warfare is the cheapest insurance in the world" (p.310). According to Ugarriza (2009), the risks linked to the direct involvement in wars have been quite obvious: Heavy military casualties, increased financial costs and probable embarrassment of failure.

In a rational way, the US has opted for proxy warfare strategy. Although it might last for a long time, it has been less costly and rendered states more invulnerable to external shocks(Konyukhovskiy & Grigoriadis, 2018). In the same vein, Borghard (2014) argued that proxy groups could assist states in achieving their foreign policy purposes "on the cheap" in a manner that enabled them to plausibly deny their engagement in conflict. Thus, governments resorted to proxy alliances when the cost of direct intervention was unappealing high.

By circumventing the risk related to direct involvement, proxy wagers sought to hide themselves beyond the mask of plausible deniability in an effort to avoid international recriminations and internal reactions. Plausible deniability relied on the absence of boots on the ground. It allowed superpowers to exert their influence over foreign wars and denied responsibility for the damnable actions committed by their proxies.

6. The Sources of Proxy Intervention

Waging proxy wars necessitated the establishment of relationships between the sponsors, who provided military aid, training and funding, and their proxies who acted on their behalf in hostilities. The sponsors created and maintained these relationships so as to gain influence and further their own interests. Thus, a clear understanding of who engage

proxy wars implied meticulous analysis of the aforementioned relationships which undoubtedly resulted in two types of proxy wagers: the state actors and non-state actors.

6.1. The State Engagement

Proxy wars have been rooted in the superpowers fierce rivalries of the cold war. During this period, there have been pieces of evidence of states using other nations to combat their adversaries. To illustrate, the US adopted strategies that aimed at protecting and furnishing its allies throughout the world with arms supply, intelligence and training in an effort to expand its sphere of influence (Dandan, 2012). Likewise, Stone (2010) argued that the US strategy's aim was to contain Soviet communist expansion and shield its allies from the subversive influence of its rival. In the same way, Rosneau (2003) showed that the Kennedy Administration's foreign aid to the developing world was a part of an overall strategy intended to preserve institutions and defeat the indirect communist aggressions.

As a result of the pervasive competing ideologies and the different national interests, both superpowers felt duty-bound to intervene in the internal conflicts of states and keep them safe from the influence of opposing powers. By way of illustration, Gaddis (2010) wrote "No parts of the world were now peripheral, no means of protecting them could now be ruled out"(p.8).

Such position was adopted by the president Harry Truman Administration after the reassessment of the containment policy. It consequently increased the tendency towards proxy intervention in order to protect national interests and minimize the subsequent costs. In contrast, the Soviet Union adopted proxy war strategy in Asia and Africa since Nikita Khrushchev's commitment to support wars of national liberation. The most well-known example of this proxy relationship was the Soviet use of the Cuban substitute in the Angolan civil war in the 1970's.

6.2.The Non-state Involvement

During the recent decades, an increasing number of non state actors have emerged, have developed and have become trans-border actors with a regional influence. Therefore, a shift in international relations has been made from the dominance of state actors to the prevalence of non-state actors. In his influential work, Miller (1994) pointed out that the state centric notion of international politics was challenged and even undermined by the development of myriad kinds of non-state actors. It was also substituted with a transnational system in which relationships became more complicated. As a result, the international environment was changed by these organizations (as cited in Ataman, 2003).

According to Berti (2016), these non-state actors could be defined as follows:" Armed organizations operating outside the control of the state and willing and able to use force to achieve their objectives"(p.01).

Because of the status these organizations gained, the states established relationships with them through military and financial support. Non state actors consequently utilized these aid to further the interests of their principals on the ground (GauseIII, 2014).

Modern history has been full of pieces of evidence of non-state actors performing the roles of proxy war actors. For instance, the US provided arms and trainings to the Afghan fighters in the 1980's. Another evidence, The US delivered weapons and trained the rebels in Syria (GauseIII, 2014).

It is worth mentioning that non-state actors might change their cooperation away from their principals and became a substitute for other non-state actors (Maurer, 2016).

7. The Main Components of Proxy Warfare Strategy

There is a general consensus among international relations specialists that the basic components of a proxy warfare strategy are the following: provision of manpower, delivery of material, financial assistance and non-military support (Wyss, 2016).

7.1. The Provision of Manpower

The supply of manpower played critical roles in other forms of interventions as well as in proxy wars because of its capability to affect earnestly their outcomes. It was frequently provided by the benefactor so that the force size would be propped up on the ground via non-combatant military 'advisers' (Mumford, 2013).

In addition, the abundant employment of manpower became a way of proxy assistance in which advisers were permitted to undertake a wide range of activities. First, they trained local fighter. They also acted as a conduit for intelligence material. Moreover, they ensured the transportation, the arrival and the distribution of ammunitions. Furthermore, they provided combat advice to commanders. Finally, they coordinated operations and helped fighting without taking part in conflict (Molan, 2017).

7.2. The Delivery of Materiel

Furnishing the preferred proxy armies with military material and sophisticated combat equipment have been another major way of waging an indirect intervention. This transfer of arms and modern military technology aimed to increase the capabilities of the proxy with the desire of affecting the outcome of the conflict. According to (Bayman et al., 2001) both superpowers supplied their proxies with military material worth billions of dollars during the cold war. To illustrate, Rosneau (2003) pointed out that, by 1962, The CIA spent approximately 2 million dollars a year for the purpose of providing counter-subversive

training and equipment to foreign internal security forces. By doing so, nearly 1450 foreign personnel were trained annually.

With regard to material assistance, Bayman et al. (2001) noted that principals could supply their proxies with various kinds of weapons and equipment including: rifles, machine guns, drones, shoulder fire missiles, radars, explosives, micro lights and satellite imagery.

7.3. The Provision of Financial Assistance

Funneling financial aid through a chosen proxy to advance war aim constituted a crucial component of a light footprint brand of warfare. Some principals considered this way of waging proxy warfare to be effective and sank millions of dollars into their proxies so as to secure their international interests. The proxies, in their turn, used this financial aid to fulfill myriad purposes including: purchasing weapons, offering bribes to local officials, writing propaganda, giving money for the families of the prisoners, paying militants, employees and newsprints (Bayman et al., 2001).

Additionally, this financial support enabled allies to train new recruits that would be employed as proxies. To illustrate, according to 1962 White house report, internal security training in the following countries: Costa Rica, South Vietnam, Iran, Panama, Nicaragua, Philippines cost the US 17.58 million dollars in military aid. In terms of paramilitary aid, it was estimated that the Pentagon provided South Vietnam with 12 million dollars a year (Rosneau, 2003).

7.4. The Supply of Non-military Assistance

The essentially indirect nature of proxy war entailed its classification as a soft power way of intervention. This aforementioned concept was coined by Joseph Nye in the 1980's. It referred to the ability of a country to mold the attitudes and the preferences of another state or

group through attraction. As a result, many states opted for this strategy in order to exert their influence and emphasize the legitimacy of their ideology (Hidayat, 2017).

As an alternative, other states provided non-military assistance through spreading propaganda which was sometimes effective instruments for providing political support and fundraising. Firstly, they helped legitimize the goals. Secondly, they encouraged fundraising and the recruitments of activists. Moreover, they damaged the reputation of opposing power. Furthermore, they internationalized the armed conflict. Finally, they hamstrung the attempts to defeat the allies. Thus, non-military assistance acquired a symbolic value and a significant effect especially in the beginning of a conflict.

8. The Future of Proxy Warfare

There is clearly a shift taking place in the way wars are engaged in the modern world. It is the start of a new era in which appeals for securing national goals are accentuated. The growing recourse to this indirect strategy approach has been the result of the following reasons: a heightened perception of risks, a greater military expenditure and a greater public aversion towards traditional wars (Mumford, 2017).

Proxy warfare itself is still the subject of a perpetual change because the advent of new technologies and changes in the international system which are modifying its character.

In his seminal work, Mumford (2013) pointed out that proxy wars would proliferate because of these major changes: war on terror, rise in prominence and importance of PMC to contemporary war fighting, the increasing use of cyberspace and the rise of China.

8.1. A War on Terror Syndrome

The public aversion to American overseas engagement and the political hesitancy to the development of ground forces have made a considerable effect upon American foreign

policy since 1970. The US, however, have recourse to proxy warfare in order to maximize its interests and minimize the potential risks. For instance, after a disgraceful withdrawal from Vietnam, the US limited itself to managing an economy of force in contingency operations in Angola and Afghanistan. Both proxy wars resulted in US revival of strength in its competition with the Soviet Union before the end of the cold war (Greentree, 2016).

These indirect interventions may represent crucial indicator for how the US will reassess the approach in the future especially after its costly and unsuccessful wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Certainly, some experts have promoted the idea of waging proxy warfare against terror. To illustrate, Eland (2002) suggested that the US, through turning its war against terror, could achieve its strategic goals. He proposed that, by supporting effective local actors in states facing the threat of 'Islamism', the US would preserve its interests without being the focus of blame and criticism.

At the beginning of the twenty first century, the continuous change in the way of fighting wars and the actors involved in process paved the way for academics and policymakers to conceptualize about the nature of wars. On a theoretical level, the main characteristics of violent conflicts in the recent time would be its continuous and strategic nature but in new guises. Eland might allude to the indirect approach of interventions and the waging of proxy warfare. On a practical level, in 2012, the Pentagon announced plans for a leaner US military and a reduction in US defense budget. For example, the US President Barack Obama (as cited in Department of Defense [DoD], 2012) stated that defense spending would face a roughly 450 billion dollars budgets cuts during the next decade. He added that the size of US army and marine corps would be reduced to 10-15 per cent over the same period. He also asserted that, through developing new, low cost and small footprint approaches, the US could attain its security goals in the future.

Based on these pieces of evidence, it could be concluded that it would be quite possible for US to harness proxy warfare strategy where direct engagement would be either too costly or too risky. A further indication of the wide ranging appeal of proxy wars in the future would be the growing number of contracts granted to PMCs so as to provide security services on behalf of states.

8.2. Rise of the Importance and the Prominence of Private Military Companies

Since the declaration of war on terror and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, states have become reluctant to dispatch their troops beyond borders. Instead the PMCs have filled the vacuum and have been proliferating enormously. Based on the conclusions of American specialists, PMCs have been playing an increasingly critical role in armed conflicts in recent years. They have been offering a wide range of services including: police training, armed support, weapons procurement, war zone security needs, protection of civilian leader and intelligence services. In geographical terms, they have been operating in a considerable number of countries including: Afghanistan and Iraq. According to (Prado, 2009), it was estimated that eighty per cent of PMCs, which comprised skilled mercenaries and former militaries, were registered in US and UK. Over the past two decades, Sheerer (as cited in Yermakov, 2001) emphasized that the growing reluctance of western countries to engage in low level civil conflicts opened a market opportunity for PMCs to be employed as proxies.

Under these circumstances, PMCs would become fundamental proxy wagers in the future due to the following reasons: First, they would enable states to minimize the risk of deploying their soldiers in foreign armed conflicts. Secondly, they would protect overseas interests and ideologies. Moreover, they would provide economic benefits. In US, for instance, PMCs were employed to bypass restrictions on troop numbers and avoid the potential political cost of calling up a large number of reservists (Singer, 2001).

As a result of outsourcing, 9000 fewer US troops were deployed in Bosnia during the Bosnian crisis in the late 1990's. Since then, PMCs have developed a close working relationship with their home nation governments. By way of illustration, the western governments increased their dependence on PMCs assistance in their war against terror. The UN figures revealed that nearly 200 000 PMC contractors were operating in Iraq by 2008.

In addition to the high number of contractors, the US spending on contracts to PMCs in Iraq was estimated between 6 billion dollars and 10 billion dollars from 2003 and 2007(US Congressional Budget Office [CBO], 2008).

All in all, the increase in PMCs which coincided with the decline of national military recruitment and the restrictions of defense budget would be a significant aspect of waging a proxy warfare in the future. Another central aspect would be the resort to cyber warfare as a mode of proxy warfare.

8.3.The Increased Use of Cyberspace

Over the last couple of decades, the contemporary world has witnessed the emergence of other mechanisms which are prime to mold the future of the proxy warfare since they hide the identities of the proxy war war-wagers to a large extent. Cyber warfare is one of the most important procedures adopted by states or their proxies. For example, the Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu (as cited in Kritzer, 2002) stated that" One hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence"(p.08).

Modern society is incrementally becoming more dependent on internet. These networks, in turn, begin to be alluring targets for military planners especially when hacking them could have a detrimental effect on critical infrastructures, financial institutions and tools of national security. Considering the difficulties in identifying the sources of these cyber-

attacks, cyber warfare is becoming a perfect way for a proxy war strategy. James Lewis (as cited in Chwe, 2017) stated that " Identity is easily concealed in cyber space...sophisticated attackers are skilled not only at hiding their identity but also making it look as if someone else is responsible"(p.44).

In addition to the high degree of anonymity, cyber warfare provides plausible deniability to undertake a war by proxy. In the current century, more proxy wars are expected to be waged by proxy servers than by proxy forces. According to the (Center for Strategic and International Studies[CSIS],2019), the total of significant cyber incidents that have led to successful attacks on government agencies and high tech companies, or economic crimes with a million dollars has been estimated at 169 incidents since January 2017.

Including in these cyber-attacks were the North Korean botnets used to target companies in the media, aerospace, financial and critical infrastructure sectors in January 2019; a cyber-attack, in December 2018, by Chinese hackers, that had repeatedly stolen ship maintenance data and missile plans. Another cyber-attack, a new and more sophisticated version of Stuxnet, was designed and launched by Americans to cripple the enrichment of Uranium at the Iranian nuclear facility in Nantanz in October 2018. Moreover, over two dozen of universities in US have been the target of recent cyber-attacks conducted by Chinese hackers attempting to acquire military technology (Malofrante, 2019).

For more than decade, China has been held accountable for the majority of cyber-attacks. Its dominance has not been restricted only to cyber space, but also expanded to include economic and political aspects. As a result, it is highly probable that china will consider its options and will resort to proxy war strategy to secure its political and economic interests.

8.4.The Ascent of China as Superpower

Over the last three decades, a mixture of wonder and consternation has been produced in western countries because of the rise of china. The latter has witnessed an unprecedented growth. It has been expanding its economic, military and diplomatic activities so as to strengthen its global influence. Meanwhile, the US nursed the wounds from devastating financial crisis and disastrous legacies of its wars against Afghanistan and Iraq.

In early 1980s, Doyle (1983) warned people against the single and the greatest peril of recent international change. He stressed the fact that "warlike resolutions" would be very likely to occur when a great power start to lose its superiority. He insinuated that those "warlike resolutions" could not be nuclear or conventional in their nature, considering the degree of economic interdependence between the two superpowers. They would be more likely to resort to indirect way of confrontation. The military spending and the economic advance of china are definitely a growing concern of US. Concerning the military expenditure, the (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute [SIPRI],2018) showed that " China, the world' second largest spender, allocated an estimated 228 billion dollars to its military in 2017, an increase of 5.6 per cent compared with 2016, the lowest increase since 2010"(p.06).

Regarding the economic growth, China became the world's second largest economy due to the amazing growth experienced in the last few decades. After establishing itself world's second largest superpower, China has been adapting an expansionist strategy to secure its interests and reduce the risk of war with its rival.

In his influential article, Guthikonda (2019) has shown that china expanded and strengthened its sphere of influence beyond borders. For instance, China offered Djibouti loans so as to support the regime and enhance the port's infrastructure. In a similar vein, it set

up a relationship with Sri Lanka spending billions of dollars to improve the port infrastructure. Sri Lanka was subsequently compelled to lease Hambantota port to China for 99 years to ease the burden of foreign debt.

In his recent speech, the US Vice President Mike Pence highlighted that China used the so called "debt diplomacy "to expand its influence. According to him, by doing so china, was interfering in America's democracy through adopting a kind of "economic aggression" (Costa, 2018). However, China's adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the other nations is a tradition of its long-term foreign policy. China, with its limited national resources and its fast-growing population, is looking for other mechanisms to ensure high level of economic growth. Due to China's increasing interest and the nature of its one-party state, it could be concluded that it is adopting a proxy warfare strategy with its rival. For instance, China has recourse to the aforesaid strategy with USA which seeks to block its expansion and contain its influence in Africa.

In recent decades, globalization has transformed the world rendering broader changes to world politics, society and technology. In their seminal book, Liang and Xiangsu (1999) introduced the concept of unrestricted warfare. They argued that, due to modern technology, war would be transformed in its principles and its rules . They asserted that politics, economy and technology would be the new factors constituting future war which would go beyond boundaries. Thus, their new mode of thinking could pave the path for unlimited application of proxy warfare.

9. Conclusion

The present chapter has been an attempt to draw special attention to proxy warfare in order to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. This renewed form of warfare was defined as the employment of a third party in a conflict for the purpose of avoiding direct

intervention, extending influence, maximizing interests and reducing the risks. In recent decades, proxy warfare has become the dominant form of modern warfare. Its latest developments have been instigated by two key dynamics. The first dynamic has been its capability to escalate conflicts into outright wars within and beyond the states' borders. The second one has been its fluid nature in terms of the level of engagement and the relationships between the benefactor and the proxy. Accordingly, a distinction has been made between the aforementioned way of waging wars and the direct intervention. While the latter referred to the involvement of the interveners' standing armies, the indirect intervention concerned the supply of material assistance to irregular forces fighting on behalf of the interveners.

In an effort to determine the fundamental reasons for the undertaking of proxy warfare, this study has revealed four basic motives which are the following: self-interest, ideological motives, obsolescence of major wars and risks. Besides, it has indicated that the benefactors employed their proxies, who could be states or non-state actors, to fight in conflicts on their behalf. Regarding the basic components of proxy warfare strategy, it has been shown that they include: the provision of manpower, the delivery of material, the provision of financial assistance and the supply of non-military support. As a result of the heightened risk, the increase of military spending and the public reluctance towards conventional wars, the new ways in which proxy warfare will become a prominent feature of future conflicts are the following: war on terror, the increase use of cyber warfare, the rise of PMCs and the ascent of China. So far this chapter has focused on proxy warfare, The subsequent chapter will concentrate on US proxy warfare in Syria.

CHAPTER III

The U.S Role in the Syrian Civil War (Case Study)

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1. Introduction

The present study claims that the ongoing civil war in Syria is unfolding into a proxy war, wherein both the Syrian regime and armed opposition depend for their survival upon the support of foreign powers.

As explained in the previous chapter, proxy-based warfare offers a theoretically risk-free strategy that could accomplish foreign policy goals with minor financial impact and with far less flow of body bags returning home compared to large scale direct intervention. Today, state wars are considered by many pundits an old-fashioned strategy due to their financial burdens, ethical repercussions and above all the incertitude in being an effective approach to serve national interests. The choice of Syria as a case study aims to shed light on the main actors engaged in the conflict with a particular emphasis on the American role in subsidizing non-state actors through logistical support, air power coverage, in addition to lethal and non-lethal aids. The study exhibits figures of allocated appropriations for military operations in Syria including the train and equip program of Vetted Syrian Opposition (VSO)

The war against ISIL demonstrates that the “dying on the ground” role is assumed by the Peoples' Protection Units (YPG) and the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). Both militias are disguised in the new name of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF); a new entity formed by the U.S to circumvent the controversy that could arise with supporting a militia which is listed in the American list of terrorist organizations and would appease the rising antagonism with Turkey, the historical enemy of Kurdish separatist insurgency.

The last part of this case study attempts to provide an outlook for the future of the conflict and the role of the US-backed SDF in the post ISIL era where entanglements with Turkey are prospected to escalate. It is believed, however, that the American withdrawal from Syria will not take place before an enduring defeat of ISIL coupled with a political settlement

coordinated with Russia and Turkey, and finally a complete withdrawal of Iran's regular forces and its proxies from Syria.

2. The Back story of Syrian Civil War (2011-Present)

It was the city of Daraa that witnessed the onset of the first manifestations against the regime of Bashar Al Assad in March 2011. The torture of children by the regime forces because of anti-regime graffiti triggered the manifestations in the impoverished southern city. Protesters initially took the streets to call for reforms rather than regime change, inspired by Arab Spring demonstrations that had overthrown the leaders of Tunisia and Egypt. The Syrian regime faced peaceful manifestations with violence, causing several fatalities among civilians in Daraa. The anti-regime protests snowballed to other Syrian cities including the capital Damascus where they were met by lethal force. Christopher Phillips (2016) reports that "The regime deployed cynical and brutal tactics. Agents provocateurs were placed among peaceful protesters to fire at regime troops, allowing them to justify replying with lethal force" (p.2). The crackdown continued when "Thousands were arrested and tortured, while female protesters reported sexual assault by regime thugs, the shabiha" (p.2).

The regime's response, according to many analysts, had a sectarian breadth. The vast majority of the protesters belonged to the oppressed Sunni majority, while the Assad family were members of the ruling Alawite minority. Cities and neighborhoods of the Sunni majority were encircled with tanks, artillery, and helicopters with utilities and communication cut off. Thousands of innocent civilians lost their lives while others fled their home cities seeking refuge in Syria's neighboring countries: Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. Protesters retaliated by engaging the security forces with arms. Local militias were formed with thousands defecting the regime's army and by the month of September, regular clashes erupted in many locations turning the peaceful protests into a militarized rebellion and a subsequent civil war.

Both Syria's neighbors and foreign superpowers were divided into two camps. The first anti-Assad group included the United States and its European allies, Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. The pro-Assad bloc included long-standing allies of Russia and Iran. This was the first sign of international rivalry and the country's entry into the dark tunnel of proxy warfare where the geopolitical interests of foreign powers will be predominant in the conflict.

3. The Main State Actors

3.1.The Regime of Bashar Al-Assad

The Assad family is part of the predominant Alawite ruling elites which governed Syria with a totalitarian military regime under the control of the Ba'ath party since 1971. Bashar al- Assad succeeded his father Hafez al-Assad who died in office in 2000. The Alawite minority represents an estimated 12% of the population whose heartlands lie in the country's Mediterranean coastal cities of Latakia and Tartus. The Assad's military is composed of the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and its paramilitary units known as the National Defense Forces (NDF). Phillips and Valbjorn (2018) consider that "The largest group was Assad's military, the SAA, which in 2015 was estimated to retain 125,000 troops, and its reserve paramilitary force, the National Defense Forces (NDF), believed to have up to 90,000 personnel"(p.420). Other sources advanced the number of 325,000 regular troops, assisted by around 300,000 reservists. However, since the first year of the civil war, a steady stream of Syrian forces have defected, estimated by many sources to be at least 60,000 regular soldiers (Kainikara, 2018).

3.2.The Russian Federation:

Russia provided a multi-dimensional military, diplomatic and economic assistance to the Syrian regime and articulated the need for its survival from the inception of the Syrian civil war. The Russian military intervention in the Syrian civil war started in 2015 and offered a lifeline to the ailing regime forces which were on the brink of collapse. The Russian

use of Syrian airports was formalized in the treaty of August 2015 granting, as well, jurisdictional immunity to Russian servicemen operating within Syria. The First Russian strikes targeted mainstream opposition forces starting from 30 September 2015 and played a decisive role in repelling the opposition forces in Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Daraa and the Damascus neighborhoods of Eastern and Western Ghouta. Russian warplanes and battleships are stationed in the Latakia's Hmeimim air base and Tartus naval base, Syria's largest military bases.

3.3.The Islamic Republic of Iran:

Historically, Iran has always been a strategic ally of the Assad ruling family. The intervention of Iran in the Syrian conflict was essentially motivated by the strategic need to secure the transit road to its proxies in Lebanon. Iran installed ten to thirteen military bases and provided overt training and technical support in addition to covert deployment of its Revolutionary Guards' Corps Quds Force (IRGC-QF) into Syria. It is the extraterritorial unit directed by the IRGC to conduct unconventional warfare operations. According to Kainikara (2018), "The actual number of combat troops deployed by Iran varies between the hundreds to as many as 10,000" (p.40). This number does not include pro-Iranian Shiite militia from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Iraq which will be tackled in the non-state actors' section.

3.4.The United States of America:

As early as August 2011, President Obama called the Syrian president to step down. The escalation of the conflict and the increasing death toll due to the regime's chemical attacks pressurized the United States to assist the Syrian opposition. In 2013, the American Congress authorized lethal and non-lethal assistance to the Vetted Syrian Opposition (VSO) as well as the use of force in response to the regime's chemical attacks. As part of its 'train and equip' program, the United States has been covertly arming Syrian rebels until the

subsequent expansion of ISIL from Syria across the Iraqi borders shifted the American compass towards counterterrorism. In 2014, the United States inaugurated its airstrikes against ISIL targets and established the Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) to “formalize ongoing military actions against the rising threat posed by ISIS in Iraq and Syria.” (Humud, Blanchard, & Nikitin, 2019, p.1). The United States gradually augmented the number of its servicemen in Syria from 50 in 2015 to around 2,000 by the end of 2017 (p.1).

In 2017, the fall of Raqqah - ISIL’s stronghold and capital in Syria - in the hands of the Syrian Democratic Forces was hailed as a major success of America’s war strategy which funded and armed the Kurdish-based militia. The gradual collapse of the Syrian opposition’s territorial control resulted in massive territorial gains in favor of the regime and the Kurdish units. In 2019, the White House declared that few hundreds of US troops will remain in Syria as the ongoing conflict between the Kurdish units and Turkey continue to challenge the United States policy-makers in Syria (p.1).

3.5.The Republic of Turkey:

From the early beginning of the Syrian uprising, Turkey sided up with the Syrian opposition denouncing the Syrian president as a ‘butcher’ and a ‘brutal dictator’. The Turkish army crossed the Syrian borders on 24 August 2016 and launched a military operation “Euphrates Shield”, the biggest cross-border operation of Turkey since its 1974 intervention in Cyprus (Zeynep, Emel, & Murat, 2018). This was followed by the “Operation Olive Branch” on 20 January 2018 to repel Kurdish fighters from the district of Afrin. The Turkish military ground operation was not only to repulse ISIL from its border zones, but also to contain PKK influence over Northern Syria which became a magnet for what Turkey considered as terrorist organizations. Turkish operations in Syria are conducted with the participation of pro-Turkish factions of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), Turkmen militia and the

National Syrian Army (NSA). Turkish forces are also present in Northern Syria as part of the Astana agreement's observation posts within de-escalation zones. (Refer to figure 1)



Figure1: American and Turkish Positions in Northern Syria as of March 2019. Adapted from *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response* (p.12), by Humud C.E, Blanchard C.M and Niktin M.B, 2019, Congressional Research Services.

3.6.The Arab Gulf Sheikhdoms

Arab Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates did not have troops deployed into Syria although they participated in the coalition's air strikes against ISIL and employed their ample financial resources to provide aids and weaponry to the Syrian opposition groups. Despite their limited ability to shape events in Syria, Gulf states attempted to dislodge the Assad regime in order to reduce Iran's influence in the Middle East for a favorable regional balance of power. Analysts estimate that the Syrian opposition, primarily Islamist rebel groups, is largely financed by Saudis to the tune of \$US

700 million per year (Kainikara, 2018). Other analysts believe that the intra-gulf discrepancies undermined the integrity of the heterogeneous factions of Syrian rebels (Baylouny & Mullins, 2017).

4. The Main Non-state Actors

4.1. The Free Syrian Army and Islamic Sunni Insurgent Groups

The Syrian armed opposition is mainly composed of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and militant Jihadist groups. The FSA is considered as the largest secular group essentially composed of defected Syrian soldiers. It was formed on 29 July 2011 with the aim of protecting civilian protests from state violence. The FSA is considered by many analysts as a decentralized insurgent group that lacks a clear chain of command. Charles Lister (2016) provides a summary of eighty identified FSA factions that met the following four conditions: “Those (1) ‘vetted’ by the CIA; (2) those receiving assistance via the Turkey-based MOM [Müşterek Operasyon Merkezi] or Jordan-based MOC [Military Operation Center]; those (3) opposed to and actively combating the Assad regime, and (4) those consistently identifying with the FSA brand”(p.34). The FSA suffered defections towards Jihadist groups which took the lead in combating the SAA and its allies. According to Cafarella and Casagrande (2016), the estimated number of armed opposition fighters fluctuated during the years of the war between 100,000 and 150,000 fighters. The report typified the Syrian armed opposition into four ideological tiers (refer to table 1).

Table 1		
Tier	Description	Definition
Tier 1	Transnational Salafi Jihadi Groups	ISIS, al Qaeda, and foreign fighter groups connected to home countries that pursue a global caliphate
Tier 2	Syrian Salafi Jihadists	Groups that pursue the establishment of a theocracy in Syria
Tier 3	Political Islamists	Groups that desire a Sharia-based constitution but do not demand that Sharia courts form the basis of governance in a post-Assad Syrian state
Tier 4	Moderate Secularists	Groups that desire a secular post-Assad Syrian state

Note1. *Typology of the Syrian opposition. Adapted from Middle East Security Report 29 (p.9), by J.Cafarella and G.Cassagrande, 2016, Washington DC: The Institute for the Study of War.*

4.2. Multi-national, Shiite Pro-Iranian Militia

The mobilization of multinational Shiite militia by Iran to support Bashar al-Assad inflamed the sectarian character that shaped the Syrian war. The officially stated goal of Iran was the protection of the Shiite shrines. However, the Lebanese Hezbollah and a variety of Iraqi, Afghan and Pakistani Shiite militias acted as an interconnected web of Iranian proxies that played a pivotal role in achieving territorial regaining by the Syrian regime, especially in the 2016 battle for Aleppo. In his statement before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on "Defeating the Iranian Threat Network: Options for Countering Iranian Proxies", Matthew McInnis (2016) estimated the number of Shiite militia deployed to Syria between 100,000 to 120,000 fighters sorted as follows:

- Lebanese Hezbollah: between 6,000 to 8,000 fighters.
- Iraqi Badr Corps Brigades: between 10,000 and 20,000 fighters.
- Iraqi Kata'ib Hezbollah: between 1,000 to 3,000 fighters.
- Iraqi Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq: between 1,000 to 3,000 fighters.
- Afghan Fatemiyoun Brigade: 2,000 to 3,000 fighters.
- Pakistani Zainabiyoun Brigade: up to 1,000 fighters.

- Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces: 80,000 are considered to be part of Iranian supported groups.

4.3. Kurdish Insurgent Groups:

Kurds were divided between the Kurdish National Council (KNC) and the PKK-aligned Democratic Union Party (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat – PYD). With the Syrian conflict unfolding into a civil war, the PYD quickly announced its own militia, the People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel – YPG). Following the withdrawal of Assad forces in 2012, the YPG occupied the vacuum in the Kurdish zones and by 2013 it claimed to be controlling 80% of the three Kurdish regions (Phillips,2016). The victories of the YPG on the ground led to clashes with the FSA and Jihadist groups adding another layer to the already-divided Syrian opposition.

The 2014 battle of Kobani gained the PYD status, international recognition, and paved the way for the creation of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an umbrella organization that included minor Arab fighting groups largely outnumbered and dominated by the YPG Kurdish fighters. The creation of the SDF aims to validate the occupation of non- Kurdish territory pretending to be speaking for all Syrians. It also provided the necessary cover for the United States to support it taking into account that the PKK is still on the US terrorism list.

The SDF acted as America's key non-state ally and the vanguard of the war against ISIL. It received in this regard all types of lethal and non-lethal aids in addition to training of troops and air coverage during combat. President Obama emphasized that U.S. forces in Syria are not going to be in the frontline of the fight. He stated: "They're not going to be leading the fight on the ground, but they will be essential in providing the training and assisting local forces [SDF] as they continue to drive ISIL back"(Rampton, 2016). According to the American Department of Defense (2016),“ The SDF contained 45,000

fighters of which more than 13,000 were Arabs”. On March 23, the SDF announced the defeat of ISIL which lost its final stronghold in the town of Baghouz.

4.4. ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant):

The origins of ISIL go back to the Iraqi insurgency that erupted in the aftermath of US occupation of Iraq and the Sunni resentment following the brutal treatment of Sunnis by the sectarian, pro-American Shia government. ISI (Islamic State in Iraq) is a merger of Al Qaeda, other Jihadist groups as well as Saddam’s former army officers. As ISI gained territorial control inside Iraq, it started to cross the Syrian borders and gain territory inside Syria. In April 2013, the group renamed itself the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) having Mosul and Raqqa as its capitals and strongholds in Iraq and Syria respectively. ISIL did not fight only the Syrian regime but all the insurgent groups involved in the Syrian civil war, including the Al Qaeda branch in Syria which formally cut all links with ISIL.

Pundits estimate that ISIL started the Syrian war with around 7,000 fighters, however, the number increased as the group succeeded to recruit a large number of fighters that have swelled by as much as 6,300 in 2014 (Kainikara, 2016). The group was largely financed by the revenues of oil and gas fields that it captured as well as from selling precious artifact seized from Syrian and Iraqi archeological sites. Phillips (2016) posits that “ISIS produced up to 50,000 barrels per day (b/d) by mid- 2014, used for their own military purposes and also sold within Syria and to Turkish traders”(p.198). The war effort against ISIL was spearheaded by the United States through air strikes and proxy Kurdish militia on the ground. Major operations ended with the fall of the extremist group’s last stronghold in 2019. However, in the wake of ISIL's defeat, concerns arise about a possible resurgence of the group in the future, especially that the reasons that led to its emergence continue to persist.

4.5. Pro-regime ad hoc Militia and PMC Mercenaries:

While the list of Pro-Assad militias is far from being exhaustive, Shabihas are likely to be the most brutal and loyal ad hoc militia. First appeared in 1970, Shabihas are a fanatic pro-Assad militia composed of subaltern poor Alawis known for their hatred to the Sunni majority. According to Phillips (2016) “Their name deriving either from the Arabic word for ‘ghost’ or alternatively from the distinctive Mercedes S600 they frequently drove, known as Shabah” (p.54). Vicious Shabihas are known for their brutality against protesters, extra-judiciary executions and massacres against innocent civilians. Phillips emphasizes that “These groups performed a number of roles from intimidation to alleged massacres and systematic rapes in opposition strongholds. They operated with a degree of autonomy and were often privately funded by pro-regime individuals, giving the regime some plausible deniability” (p.54). The unruly nature of the militia made it difficult to estimate its size.

Private Military Companies (PMC’s) are also active in the Syrian civil war. Both America and Russia resorted to PMC’s and contractors following the public anger associated with the heavy losses suffered in the Wars of Afghanistan and Iraq. The new strategy of privatizing wars provides the alternative of not reporting casualties, which would be mandatory with regular soldiers. The largest known Russian PMC in Syria is the Wagner group. Linder (2018) emphasizes that “Russian PMCs are primarily composed of veterans and former officers of the Military Intelligence Agency (GRU) and Federal Security Agency (FSB)” (p.18). It is believed that the Wagner group is controlled by Yevgeny Prigozhin who has close ties with the Russian president Vladimir Putin (p.18). According to the Warsaw Institute (2017), the number of Russian mercenaries from the Wagner group who are deployed in Syria is more than 2,000 fighters.

5. The U.S Proxy-based War Strategy in Syria

5.1.Obama's War Policy and Trump's Options:

From the early days of the Syrian uprising, President Obama called for the Syrian President to step down. The United States began to provide non-lethal aids to Syrian rebels under emergency and contingency authorities in 2012. The same year witnessed Obama's catchphrase description of chemical attacks by the Syrian regime as a 'red line'. In 2013, President Obama requested congressional approval for the use of military force to respond to the Sarin gas attack on the suburbs of Damascus that killed 1,400. The Syrian regime accepted to cede its chemical stockpile as a result.

The capture of Raqqah in 2014 and the establishment of a 'Caliphate' by ISIL in Iraq and Syria prompted the Obama Administration to begin air strikes inside Syria, create the Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF –OIR) and launch an overt 'Train and Equip' program for vetted Syrian opposition for the following purposes:

Defending the Syrian people from attacks by the Syrian regime, facilitating the provision of essential services, and stabilizing territory controlled by the opposition; defending the United States, its friends and allies, and the Syrian people from the threats posed by terrorists in Syria; and, promoting the conditions for a negotiated settlement to end the conflict in Syria (Blanchard & Belasco, 2015, p. 2).

The dismal failure of the FSA Train and Equip program in 2015 provided a testament that the vast majority of Sunni opposition fighters consider ISIL a less urgent threat to them compared to their existential struggle against the Syrian regime. "The Train and Equip program was a debacle" according to Itani and Rosenblatt (2018). They added "The US Department of Defense committed to training several thousand Syrian fighters against ISIS.

Only a few dozen volunteers passed the vetting process, and the United States failed to commit to defending them should they come under attack by the Syrian military” (p.8).

The complexity of the Syrian civil war and the omnipresent memories of the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan cast their shadows on the American decision-making over Syria. The United States pulled back on its urgency to topple the Syrian regime in favor of a new trajectory that bids for the war against expanding ISIL as the top tier priority. This is mainly due to two reasons. Firstly, The Syrian Arab Sunni fighters found themselves misaligned with the American vision and deprived of aids. For them, the priority should be given to their existential fight with the regime as ISIL does not represent an immediate threat. Secondly, America’s dramatic change of priority is largely based on Syria’s diplomatic and military ties with Russia and China which hindered the UN Security Council’s authorization of a limited air campaign in support of the FSA and other rebel groups similar to that against Qaddafi in Libya in 2011.

The misalignment between the mainstream Syrian opposition and America’s strategic interests in Syria prompted the Obama administration to explore other alternatives. This would involve training and arming collaborative non-state actors to roll back ISIL, considering the idea of direct intervention a ‘slippery slope’ towards large scale deployment of troops, which is domestically contentious. According to a CBS news poll, 55% of Americans rejected the deployment of troops in Syria whereas 39% approved (Dutton, Pinto, Salvanto, & Backus, 2015). Although President Obama officially discarded the idea of American boots on the ground, he acknowledged the need to deploy Special Forces to advise and assist American proxies. The Obama Administration is also credited for authorizing US air and special operations support for the SDF in their battles to drive ISIL out of Syrian towns of Dabiq and Manbij. The United States provided the SDF with light weapons as well

as combat air support but restrained the provision of more substantial weaponry to maintain the bona fides with the Turkish ally (Strategic comments, 2017).

The attempts of President Trump to break with Obama's war strategy in Syria meant a direct intervention with massive deployment of troops. However, this option posits significant prospects of escalation and an open military commitment that could wane the fortunes of Trump and plunge the United States into the Syrian quagmire. Trump's sole option was to reinforce the existing Train and Equip program. Initiated by the Obama Administration, the program largely favored the SDF as America's key player in the counter ISIL campaign. Figure 2 shows that out of the 12,500 U.S trained fighters, 11,000 belonged to the SDF. The remaining 1,500 were tribal militia and local security. These numbers provided by Congressional Research Services (2019) demonstrate the shift of American war strategy in Syria from subsidizing the FSA and its endeavors to topple the Assad regime towards the SDF and counter-ISIS campaign. In both cases, however, both the FSA and the SDF acted as US proxies.

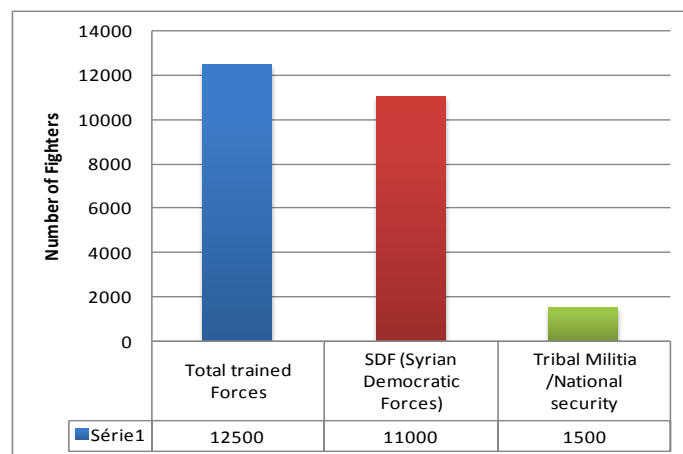


Figure2Train and Equip Program of VSO dominated by the SDF

5.2.Manpower: American Bases and Deployed Troops

American bases in Syria are located in the North East alongside the Euphrates river in Manbij, AynIssa, Khusham in addition to At-tanf remote base which is a pocket near the Jordanian borders, (refer to figure 3). The total number of deployed American troops in Syria

is 2,000 soldiers who “conduct train and equip program-related activities as well as “advise and assist” operations in support of U.S. partner forces” (Humud, Blanchard, & Nikitin, 2019, p.25).



Figure 3 Areas of Presence of American bases in Syria. Adapted from *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response* (p.12), by Humud C.E, Blanchard C.M and Nikitin M.B, 2019, Congressional Research Services.

5.3.Funds: Appropriations for Military and Support Operations

The United States has spent more than \$9.1 billion for humanitarian assistance in Syria. The American Congress has approved billions more for “security and stabilization initiatives in Syria and neighboring countries”. The Defense Department has not provided the breakdown of costs to distinguish those of military operations in Syria from the overall cost of the counter-IS campaign in Syria and Iraq (Operation Inherent Resolve, OIR), which had attained \$28.5 billion in September 2018 (Humud, Blanchard, & Nikitin, 2019).

The shift in American war policy from direct military intervention towards reliance on proxy-based warfare had a direct impact on the inflicted costs. Figure 4 shows that contingencies for the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan have cost the United States \$US 822 million and \$US 975 million respectively, whereas contingencies for the anti-ISIL war effort in Syria did not exceed the \$US 54 million. The latter represents as low as 2.57% of the cumulative contingency appropriations of American overseas operations from 2001 to 2019.

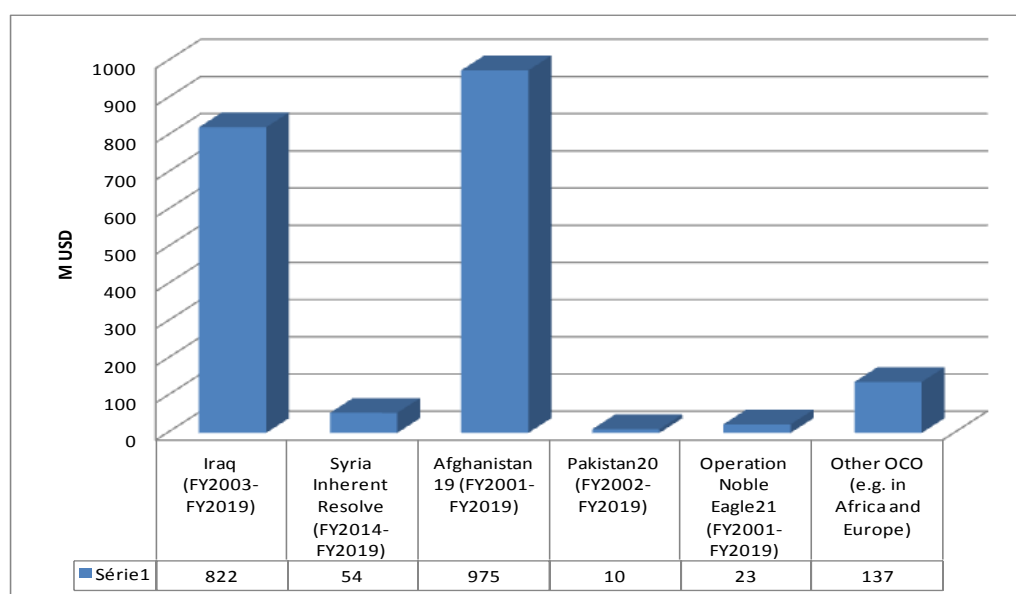


Figure 4 Cumulative Contingency Appropriations of US Overseas Operations 2001 through 2019. Adapted from *Costs of War* by Crawford, Neta C. (p.5), 2018, Watson

The Train and Equip program of the Syrian Vetted Opposition (VSO) has combined a total net of \$US 2.7 billion from 2015 to 2020, including approved transfers and special requests (p.5). Figure 5 shows that year 2015 witnessed the highest expenditure which is likely caused by the cost of mobilization of troops, weaponry, construction of camps and rehabilitation of existing facilities. Despite its vast sums, there is little evidence that the Train and Equip program would have been sufficient to tip the balance against the Assad regime.

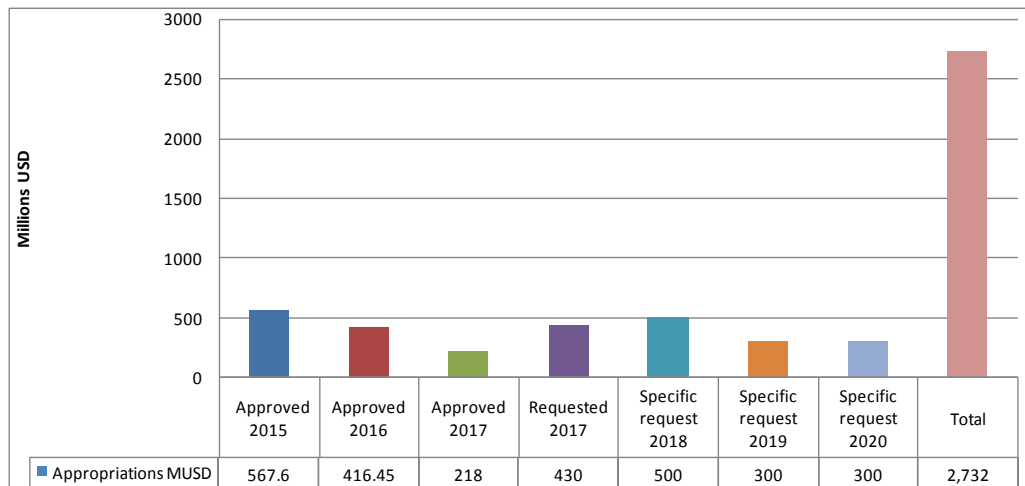


Figure 5 US Appropriations for the Train and Equip program of the VSO 2015 through 2020.

In the same vein, unclassified data provided by the US Department of Defense (2017) disaggregates the cost of the operations in Syria by service. This includes land troops, air force, navy, and Special Operations Command (SOCOM). Funds allocated for air strikes combat operations represented 61% of the expenditures whereas those allocated for land troops represented less than 20%. Refer to table 2.

Table 2

By Service	Total Cost MUSD	% of total Cost
Army (Land Troops)	2,782	19.38%
Navy	1,742	12.14%
Air Force	8,800	61.30%
SOCOM (Special Operations Command)	1,031	7.18%
	14,355	100%

Note 1. War against ISIL .Cost by Service through June 2017. Adapted from US Department of Defense 's ISIS Master report 30 June 2017.

5.4.American Lethal and Non-lethal Aids to Syrian Rebel Groups

Despite Syrian regime use of indiscriminate air power against the opposition strongholds, the United States banned the supply of anti-aircraft weapons or MANPADS (Man Portable Air Defense System) to the Syrian opposition and voiced concerns about the proliferation of this type of arms that could fall into the ‘wrong hands’ or hostile parties

which threaten the civilian aircrafts and could eventually lead to a direct confrontation with Russia. Section 9016 of the 2015 defense appropriations act (P.L. 113-235) stated that none of the funds contained in the section for the Syria Train and Equip program "shall be used for the procurement or transfer of man-portable air defense systems" (Humud, Blanchard, & Nikitin, 2017, p.25).

As for anti-tank systems, Charles Lister (2016) explains that "The U.S. appears to have begun shipping anti-tank systems designed to more effectively penetrate sophisticated armor to groups in Syria in late-2015." He adds, "The inclusion of 9K111M 'Faktoria' anti-tank guided missiles instead of 9K111 'Fagots' in late-2015 indicates a qualitative move to include systems containing tandem warheads capable of penetrating regime tanks equipped with Explosive Reactive Armor (ERA)" (p.30). Vetted FSA factions were also provided with large quantities of portable TOW anti-tank missiles through the Turkish based MOM which gave an advantage to the FSA in neutralizing the regime's armored targets compared to the other rebel groups.

Moreover, Angelovski and Marzouk (2017) reported that the Pentagon has spent \$US 2.7 billion to procure Soviet-style arms and ammunition from factories in the Balkan and Eastern Europe for the Syrian rebel groups. This program is separate from the covert CIA program to arm Syrian rebels combatting the Syrian regime, which was officially ended by President Trump in July 2017, raising controversy about U.S inclination to the pressure exerted by the Russians and a tacit recognition of Assad entrenchment following the defeat of Syrian rebels in many areas due to the Russian and Iranian interventions.

From the early years of the Syrian conflict, the United States announced its program of non-lethal aids to 'moderate Syrian rebels'. According to Title 10 of the U.S. Code which defines and outlines the role of the American military, non-lethal supplies are "Anything that is not a weapon, ammunition, or other equipment or material that is designed to inflict serious

bodily injury or death" (Keating, 2012). This could include aids such as intelligence assistance, logistical support, communication systems, generators, body armor, medical supplies and a wide range of other equipment that can be regarded as non-lethal.

Although they facilitated secret arms shipments to the FSA across the Turkish borders, the United States and its European allies have been reluctant to directly provide weapons and ammunition to Syrian rebel groups because of concerns that they might fall in the hands of jihadists affiliated to al-Qaeda. Non-lethal aids, however, have been provided to the FSA Supreme Military Council (SMC) aligned to the opposition National Coalition.

By the end of 2013, Islamist fighters from the Islamic front ousted the Western-backed FSA from the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing with Turkey and captured many of its bases. Islamic front fighters seized warehouses which contained weapons and equipment that had been brought into Syria through Turkey. The United States and its allies were deeply concerned about these events and decided to suspend all non-lethal support to the FSA in northern Syria whereas deliveries into southern Syria through Jordanian borders were not affected.

5.5.Future of Conflict: Post-ISIL Era, the Legacy, and Future of American Backed Forces

It is believed that the United States' ambivalent position and 'lead from behind' approach vis-à-vis the Syrian conflict produced mixed results that ranged from failure on one hand and a tainted success on the other. The United States has not been able to overthrow Assad from power nor reach an internationally acceptable reconciliation. It was not able to neutralize the Syrian regime forces since they are robustly backed by Russian and Iranian regular forces and their proxy militia and mercenaries.

The Syrian regime has launched at least thirty chemical attacks against the Syrian opposition since August 2013 according to a Human Rights Watch report by Sara Kayyali

(2018). The constant breach of Obama's red lines by the Syrian regime lowered the fortunes of the United States and signaled to its antagonists and rivals that the US policy in Syria is unreliable. Kainikara (2018) considers that "The Obama administration has diminished the capacity of the USA to bargain by not having credibly threatening to use force after having drawn a number of 'red lines' in the sand" (p.131).

Moreover, America's lack of potential proxy backing for the FSA besides its skepticism about the Syrian opposition in general left the latter totally unprotected and thus exposed to unbalanced encroachments by the Russian warplanes and Iranian-controlled non-state militias. This situation undermined US credibility and forced the mainstream Syrian rebel groups to seek support from Turkey after they have been forced into the province of Idlib near the Turkish borders.

The rise and expansion of ISIL played an overriding role in shifting the attention of the United States strategy from the change of regime towards counterterrorism. The administration decided that ISIL has to be exterminated as quickly as possible and with the minimum risk to the American military by subcontracting proxies and embedding American special forces with them to coordinate air strikes and drone attacks. Launched in 2014, anti-ISIS operations ended officially in 2019 with the defeat of ISIL in Baghouz, its last enclave where the last-ditch battles took place. This asymmetric war spearheaded by US-backed SDF, engendered a dramatic change in the balance of power among local actors, noticeably marginalizing mainstream Syrian opposition forces and rising the fortunes of the two main actors that made territorial gains through these military operations: the Syrian regime and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and its political wing YPD.

According to many non-governmental organizations, the YPD committed systematic violations of human rights in its held territories, which included ethnic cleansing, forceful displacement as well as the razing of Arab villages, amounting to war crimes as stated by

Amnesty International (2015). The military defeat of ISIL brings the question of the future of 'liberated areas' to the fore, considering that they are mainly inhabited by Arab Sunni communities who would not accept the Kurdish self-administration model of governance. The Kurdish military control may not be sustained for a long period without strong military support from the United States which announced its intention to withdraw from Syria. Therefore, it is believed that the military defeat of ISIL does not mean that the self-declared Caliphate would not resurge and destabilize the region again especially that its ideological pull endures and Sunni Arab grievances due to marginalization, deprivation, and oppression continue to persist despite the American stabilization program in some areas.

President Trump's declaration of a rapid withdrawal from Syria in December 2018 took US allies and proxies by surprise and prompted concerns that the SDF would be abandoned to a Turkish assault. Trump's troops' withdrawal plan proved to be problematic not only for the SDF but also to France and the UK which would not keep their forces engaged in Syria without the presence of American troops that could deter the Turks from attacking the SDF. The White House vowed to the pressure from the local intelligence community and its European allies and decided to keep 400 troops. Moreover, Trump requested the provision of \$US300 million in the fiscal year 2020 defense budget to continue to equip and support Syrian partner forces SDF (refer to figure 5). Gonzales and Schwartz (2019) explain that "about 200 troops will remain in the Syrian town of At-tanf, near the border with Iraq. Their mission is to counter Iran and support U.S. forces in Iraq". The other 200 "will remain in northern Syria and be part of a "multinational observer force" numbering between 800 and 1,500, mostly European NATO allies". It is believed that the 400 troops will not conduct combat missions but constitute a deterrent force that will essentially protect US proxies in Syria from Turkish and regime assaults until a final settlement of the conflict is reached

6. Conclusion:

There is a general consensus that the Syrian civil war unfolded into proxy warfare with the involvement of Russia, the United States, regional powers and local non-state actors in the conflict. This case study attempted to shed light on the different players in the Syrian war, highlighting the role of the United States in terms of deployed troops, defense appropriations, lethal and non-lethal aids to Vetted Syrian Opposition and the shift of its foreign policy trajectory in Syria from overthrowing the Syrian regime to the counter-ISIL war effort, all avoiding large scale direct intervention and emphasizing the use of non-state actors, limited special forces operations and air force to achieve the objectives of both trajectories.

The study revealed that the Obama Administration was convinced that the direct military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan became quagmires in which the costs far exceeded the strategic benefits and started to withdraw American troops from both countries. Obama was determined to avoid the United States get militarily involved in the Middle East despite the crossing of his red lines by the Syrian regime through multiple uses of chemical weapons. The U.S shift from Direct interventionism towards proxy warfare in Syria is convincingly evidenced in the allocated appropriations and the limited number of US bases and troops deployed in Syria compared to Afghanistan and Iraq. It is also evidenced in the funds allocated for air strikes combat operations compared to land troops. The study shows that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and its backbone YPG militia, acted as the U.S main proxy in Syria especially in the anti-ISIL campaign following the failure of the American Train and Equip program with the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

The Obama war strategy left no further options to President Trump. His first term was characterized by continuity with the Obama's strategy in Syria. Both Obama and Trump advocated the decrease of U.S. footprints in the Middle East and the need to put an end to

America's open-ended commitments by reliance on non-state actors and shifting the economic burdens to U.S. regional allies.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The present dissertation set out to highlight the shift in US foreign policy from outright military intervention towards proxy warfare during the two last decades. This study contains three main chapters. The first chapter has provided broad insights into the shaping and the evolution of U.S foreign policy from constitutional viewpoint and from philosophical and doctrinal perspectives. This chapter shed light on the constitutional mechanisms, schools of thought and presidential doctrines that fostered the U.S interventionist trajectory in the international stage.

Regarding the constitutional mechanisms, the study has revealed that the decision to declare war was always restricted to the Congress. It has also demonstrated that, after the passage of War Power Act in 1973, the President was authorized to deploy troops into overseas hostile situations for a maximum of sixty days without Congressional consent. Besides, it has shown the US growing reliance on smart power manifested in drone attacks, surgical strikes and use of non-state actors in order to achieve its strategic goals.

In addition to the aforesaid mechanisms, the study has dealt with the different schools of thought that guided the decision-making of American foreign policy. It has concentrated on the traditional polarity of American idealism and American realism as well as the most recent typology derived from this polarity that is the schools known as Hamiltonianism, Jeffersonianism, Wilsonianism and Jacksonianism. These four threads are said to form the mighty rope of the American foreign policy. Initially, American idealism promoted the idea of the containment of wars through international organizations. However, the American realism advocated the use of different means to secure interests including the resort to the use of force. Secondly, whereas Hamiltonians gave primary importance to the freedom of seas and skies, Wilsonians fostered the spread of American ideals of democracy and maintenance

of peace. Then, Jeffersonians advocated narrowing the interests of the country to have fewer clashes with other forces. Ultimately, Jacksonians promoted the use of economic and military muscle to advance US interests.

Moreover, this study has unveiled the development of national sentiments of American Century, Manifest Destiny and American Exceptionalism as well as their impact on shaping the American foreign policy. Finally, it has tackled the Presidential doctrines of the last three American Presidents including the Bush's pre-emptive / protective war strategy; the Obama's new war strategy based on smart power or drone attacks and the use of special operation forces embedded within non-state actors; and finally the Trump's muscular nationalism which was credited as a resurgence of Jacksonianism although it constituted a continuity with Obama's war strategy based on reducing America's footprints overseas and ending its open-ended commitments in the Middle East.

The second chapter has placed focus on one of the prevailing forms of interventionism. It has brought clear understanding of proxy warfare which relied heavily on the use of a third party in order to achieve strategic outcomes. It has also uncovered the key dynamics that prompted the evolution of this phenomenon. After drawing distinction between direct intervention and proxy intervention, the study has indicated that this form of modern warfare would be waged through the provision of manpower, the delivery of material and provision of financial and non-military assistance. Moreover, it has demonstrated that the United States has resorted to wage proxy warfare in order to preserve its strategic goals including protecting overseas interests and ideologies, curtailing the ailing defense budget, circumvention of internal backlash and international recrimination as well as avoidance of heavy military casualties and decreasing perils by avoiding direct confrontation with enemies, considering that 'the die on the ground' is undertaken by U.S-backed third parties. This strategy offers the United States the possibility of plausible deniability in the event of alleged

war crimes and evades possible embarrassment of failure that could turn the public opinion against the President in office.

The third chapter has highlighted the role of United States in the Syrian stalemate and confirmed its recourse to proxy warfare by subsidizing non-state actors through its ‘Train and Equip’ program of Vetted Syrian Opposition. The program offered lethal and non-lethal aids to the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). American intervention included combat air strikes, drone attacks and the deployment of limited number of troops, embedded within the main U.S proxy, the SDF. The latter spearheaded the American war against the self-declared Caliphate of ISIL, whereas the FSA was abandoned due to its misalignment with the American objectives in Syria.

All things considered, the present dissertation has been arguing that there has been a shift in American foreign policy from direct military intervention towards proxy-based warfare in the last decade (2009-2019) . Future studies could prolifically explore this strategy further by shedding light on the shadowy side of non-state-actors’ accountability and unfolding their potential role as an internal destabilizing factor of states.

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Appendices

Declaration of War	Congress approval
Declaration of War with Great Britain , 1812	On June 17, 1812, the Senate approved by a vote of 19-13.
Declaration of War with Mexico , 1846	On May 12, 1846 the Senate approved the resolution by a vote of 40-2.
Declaration of War with Spain , 1898	On April 25, 1898, Congress approved the resolution by unanimous consent.
Declaration of War with Germany , 1917	On April 4, 1917, the Senate approved by a vote of 82-6.
Declaration of War with Austria-Hungary , 1917	On December 7, 1917, the Senate unanimously approved the resolution, 74-0.
Declaration of War with Japan , 1941	On December 8, 1941, the Senate unanimously approved the resolution, 82-0.
Declaration of War with Germany , 1941	On December 11, 1941, the Senate unanimously approved the resolution, 88-0.
Declaration of War with Italy , 1941	On December 11, 1941, the Senate unanimously approved the resolution, 90-0.
Declaration of War with Bulgaria , 1942	On June 4, 1942, the Senate unanimously approved the resolution, 73-0.
Declaration of War with Hungary , 1942	On June 4, 1942, the Senate unanimously approved the resolution, 73-0
Declaration of War with Rumania , 1942	On June 4, 1942, the Senate unanimously approved the resolution, 73-0.

President	Name of Doctrine	Description
Washington Doctrine	Avoidance of permanent alliances	Washington warned his countrymen to avoid alliances with European powers because of the frequent conflicts on the continent. The nation's first president encouraged the U.S. to remain neutral and unilateral in overseas politics, a practice that persisted for nearly 150 years.
Monroe Doctrine	Western Hemisphere Hegemony	James Monroe, the fifth President from 1817-1825, announced that European colonial powers should remain out of Western Hemisphere countries' affairs, permitting unchallenged U.S. hegemony in the region.
Truman Doctrine	Communist Containment	At start of Cold War, Truman supported nations resisting Communism with mostly economic assistance. He promised to <i>"to support free peoples who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."</i> The U.S. sent money, equipment, or military force to Iran, Turkey, Greece, and others. The Truman Doctrine eventually evolved into "communist contain-ment," the most wide-reaching foreign policy in U.S. history.
Nixon Doctrine	Security Responsibility of Allies	U.S. allies should assume primary responsibility for their own military defense. <i>"We shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threat-ened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower of their defense."</i> Example: "Vietnamization" of the war in Vietnam. U.S. provides military and economic assistance when requested.
Carter Doctrine	Protection of U.S. Strategic Interests in Persian Gulf	Protection of U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf. The United States would use military force if neces-sary to defend its national interests (specifically, petroleum) in the Persian Gulf. In response to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. <i>"An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."</i>
Reagan Doctrine	Roll back Communism	Arming anti-communist rebels in foreign countries to roll back Soviet Union communist advances. This generated extensive military assistance to Central America in particu-lar.
Clinton Doctrine	Humanitarian Intervention	Genocide as a crime against hu-manity and an obligation for other countries to act to prevent it. Prompted by Somalia operation, 1992 and Rwanda genocide, 1994. <i>"We cannot, indeed, we should not, do everything or be everywhere. But where our values and our interests are at stake, and where we can make a difference, we must be pre-pared to do so."</i>
Bush Doctrine	Preemptive attack against perceived enemies and democratic expansion.	Following terrorist attacks of 9/11, Bush declared that the U.S. would take preemptive action against terrorist nations. Subsequently used as a justification for the 2003 Iraq War. Bush used the opportunity to promote a Freedom Agenda of democratic advancement.
Obama Doctrine	Emphasis on Security Cooperation with allies.	Obama has replied that the United States would have to <i>"view our security in terms of a common security and a common prosperity with other peoples and other countries."</i> Extensive emphasis on multilateral efforts.
Trump Doctrine	Muscular Nationalism	While still under development, most foreign policy scholars agree that Trump foreign policy doctrine will consist of unilateralism, less cooperation with multilateral organizations, less reliance on alliances, less emphasis on democracy and human rights promotion, and more eco-nomic protectionism.

مع مطلع هذا القرن وتحديدا على اثر هجمات الحادي عشر من سبتمبر، دخلت الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية في مستنقعين مختلفين متوقعة خوض غمار حروب سريعة وغير مكلفة في كل من العراق وأفغانستان ، لكن غزو البلدين سرعان ما تحول إلى صراعات طويلة الأمد ميزها استمرار القتال دون وجود إستراتيجية واضحة للخروج منها. غير أن انتخاب الرئيس الأمريكي أوباما بشر بتبني سياسة خارجية أمريكية جديدة تعهدت بتقليص الالتزامات الأمريكية في الخارج وتحويل مسؤوليات الحرب إلى أطراف ثالثة وحلفاء. إن الهدف من هذا البحث هو توضيح التغير في السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة من التدخلات المباشرة الواسعة النطاق التي اتسمت بها إدارة بوش إلى الاعتماد على جهات وأطراف فاعلة من غير الدول خلال فترة كل من أوباما وترامب. يتبنى هذا البحث طريقة تحليلية تعتمد على النموذج العقلاني لتحليل السياسة الخارجية على افتراض أن الصانع الرئيسي للسياسة هو الفرد العقلاني الوحيد. إذ يؤكد هذا البحث أن عقيدة تدخل الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية في شؤون الدول تعد نتاجا لآليات دستورية ، أحاسيس وطنية ، مدارس فكرية ومذاهب رئاسية. إضافة إلى ذلك قد توصل البحث إلى إثبات دعم الولايات المتحدة إلى أطراف فاعلة وكيلة من غير الدول من خلال التمويل السري والعنفي ، التموين بالأسلحة وتقديم المساعدات الغير الفتاكة علاوة على اعتمادها على الغارات الجوية وتقليص عدد جنودها على الأرض. وقد مكنت هذه الإستراتيجية الجديدة الولايات المتحدة من حماية مصالحها الخارجية ، تقليص ميزانيتها المتعثرة ، الحد بشكل كبير من الخسائر البشرية بين جنودها وتقديم إمكانية إنكار المعقول في حالة ارتكاب جرائم حرب من قبل وكلائها. ومن خلال دراسة حالة الصراع السوري تبين أن الولايات المتحدة قد حققت نتائج متباينة جراء تبنيها لهذا التوجه الجديد تراوحت بين الفشل في الإطاحة بالنظام السوري و نجاح مشوه في حملتها لمكافحة الإرهاب. ويجدر الإشارة إلى أن هذا المسار الجديد للسياسة الخارجية الأمريكية سيتترك فراغات على الساحة الدولية يمكن أن تستغلها قوى عالمية كروسيا والصين .

الكلمات المفتاحية:

التدخل المباشر ، الأطراف والجهات الفاعلة من غير الدول ، حرب الوكالة ، الصراع السوري ، السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة

Résumé

Au tournant du siècle et pour répondre aux attentats du 11 septembre 2001, La première réaction des Etats-Unis a engendré les guerres d'Irak et d'Afghanistan. Ces invasions promises comme des guerres rapides allaient transformer les conflits en bourbiers sans stratégie claire de sortie de crise pour les États-Unis. L'élection du président Obama, qui voulait s'inscrire en rupture avec son prédécesseur, est inaugurée avec un nouveau trajectoire de la politique étrangère Américaine, qui s'engageait à réduire les empreintes Américains à l'étranger et à transférer les responsabilités de la guerre à des tiers et à des alliés. L'objectif de cette recherche est d'expliquer le changement de la politique étrangère des États-Unis de l'intervention à grande échelle qui a caractérisé l'administration Bush vers un nouveau trajectoire d'une dépendance à des acteurs non-étatiques et des guerres par procuration durant les mandats d'Obama et de Trump. Une méthode analytique basée sur la rhétorique du modèle rationnel d'analyse de la politique étrangère a été adoptée en supposant que le principal acteur dans l'élaboration des politiques est un décideur rationnel unitaire. Cette recherche a démontré que le crédo interventionniste Américain est entaché de mécanismes constitutionnels, de sentiments nationaux, d'écoles de pensée ainsi que de doctrines présidentielles. Dans ce contexte, l'étude a révélé que les États-Unis ont subventionné des acteurs non étatiques par le biais d'une couverture et d'un financement tant secret que manifeste, la fourniture d'armes et assistance non meurtrière, en plus du recours à des frappes aériennes et à la réduction du nombre de troupes Américaines dans les zones de conflits. Cette nouvelle stratégie permettait aux États-Unis de protéger ses intérêts extérieurs, de limiter son budget défaillant, de réduire considérablement le nombre de victimes parmi ses troupes et avoir la possibilité 'd'un refus crédible' en cas de crimes de guerre commis par ses mandataires non-étatiques. L'étude de cas du conflit syrien montre que les États-Unis ont obtenu des résultats mitigés avec leur nouvelle politique. Ils allaient de l'échec du renversement du régime syrien à un succès retentissant dans la campagne antiterroriste. Néanmoins, il convient de signaler que le nouveau trajectoire de la politique étrangère laisserait des vides sur la scène internationale qui pourraient être occupés par les émergentes Russie et la Chine.

Mots-clés: Acteurs non étatiques , Conflit syrien , Guerre par procuration , interventionnisme direct , politique étrangère Américaine.