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## **The National Security Doctrine of the United States**

### **A Comparison of the Truman and George W. Bush Foreign Policy Doctrines**

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## Introduction

Many historians believe that after World War II, two major turning points can be identified in the history of American foreign policy. It is contended these landmarks have fundamentally altered the character of U.S. diplomacy and the meaning it attributed to national security. The first turning point historians observe is the doctrine President Harry S. Truman announced in his now famous Truman Doctrine speech in March 1947. They argue that his far-reaching discourse marked the beginning of an unprecedented commitment of the United States to contain Soviet expansionism and communist desires – an internationalist approach to world politics that was in marked contrast to the isolationist approach the U.S. advocated in the 1930's. Historian Martin Folly perfectly illustrates this viewpoint with his description of the Truman Doctrine speech as “an undisputed landmark in the history of American engagement in world affairs, which set down a clear, and as it turned out, irreversible, commitment to the idea of American intervention on the side of democracy” (89). The second turning point historians have recognized in post-war U.S. foreign policy is the doctrine President George W. Bush pursued with the National Security Strategy of September 2002, created in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. According to many historians, the military, pre-emptive qualities of this doctrine that initiated the Global War on Terror radically reshaped world politics.

Nevertheless, several historians have in contrast argued that the foreign policy doctrines of neither the Truman nor the Bush administration mark a turning point in history, and that they both possess elements of continuity within U.S. foreign policy. For example, John Lewis Gaddis proclaims that the Truman Doctrine was very much in alignment with antecedents of U.S. foreign policy for dealing with shifts in the European balance of power. Moreover, he adds that regardless of its sweeping language, the Truman administration lacked the desire or ability to police the rest of the world between 1947 and 1950. According to Gaddis, “the real commitment to contain communism everywhere originated in the events surrounding the Korean War, and not the crisis in Greece and Turkey” (386). Likewise, considering the Bush Doctrine, Melvyn Leffler (2003) has persuasively argued that “all elements of the strategy have antecedents, some of which are old, some of more recent vintage” and “notwithstanding continuities in the threads of the strategy and notwithstanding their individual attributes, the overall doctrine does not constitute a bold vision” (1046).

However, an extended comparison between the Truman and Bush doctrines has not been drawn. Contrasting the doctrines could determine whether politicians predominantly respond the same or different to threatening situations over time, despite a changed political world order. Moreover, similarities between both doctrines would illuminate an element of continuity in post-World War II U.S. foreign policy. Therefore, this thesis assesses the extent to which the Truman Doctrine and the Bush Doctrine exhibit similar elements in terms of rhetoric, motives, and practice in order to determine whether since 1945 U.S. foreign policy can be characterized by elements of continuity or elements of disjunction. One scholar has likened the new Global War on Terror to the Cold War. Since the White House has been proclaiming that the War on Terrorism will be a “long war”, Barry Buzan matched it to the Cold War as a similar sort of “zero-sum, global-scale, generational struggle against anti-liberal ideological extremists who want to rule the world” (1101). In other words, both have been depicted as a defence of the West, or western civilization, against those who would seek to destroy it. Melvyn Leffler (2003), one of the few scholars who have examined both the Truman administration and the Bush Administration, argues that the two found themselves in a rather similar situation when they were confronted with their respective perceived threats. However, he believes that the ways in which they tried to tackle the causes of their fear had different focuses: “In 1947, at the most crucial moment in the origins of the Cold War, when Truman, like Bush today, then decided that the world was divided into good and evil – the president made the crucial decision to focus on European reconstruction rather than American rearmament” (17).

Nevertheless, there is a gap in the literature that specifically compares the Truman administration to the Bush administration, and assesses to what extent they are alike. In order to make this assessment the thesis analyses both the Truman Doctrine and the Bush Doctrine extensively. This includes an evaluation of first, the international state of affairs when the Presidents took office, second, the formulated perceived threat by the Presidents, third, the foreign policy in response to the perceived threat, and fourth, an interpretation rhetoric employed by both administrations. Chapter 1 evaluates the Truman administration. Additionally, Chapter 2 discusses the Bush administration’s first term. Finally, in Chapter 3, the thesis will compare the different elements of the Truman Doctrine and the Bush Doctrine to determine whether one can find similarities or differences in the way these two President’s responded to a perceived national security emergency. To make this analysis and comparison, the thesis used secondary and primary sources in the form of national security strategy documents, declarations, and speeches. The findings suggest that neither Truman’s nor Bush’s

Doctrine formed a major foreign policy departure, and that despite some distinct elements a trend of similarity prevailed in their responses to a perceived threat from abroad to U.S. national security.

## **Chapter 1: The Foreign Policy Doctrine of the Truman Administration**

### **1.1 International State of Affairs When President Harry S. Truman Took Office**

On April 12, 1945, Harry S. Truman succeeded as the thirty-third president of the United States, upon the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. During his presidency, FDR had reinvented the concept of national security, since he was the first to see the connection between global stability and U.S. national security. He held the novel belief that the key to global stability, and thus U.S. national security, was the regulation of international affairs. As Andrew Preston has acknowledged, “the legacy of Franklin Roosevelt looms large in the history of American foreign relations” (480). In quest for a stable and sustainable post-war order, during World War II FDR responded to the declaration of war on the United States by Germany in kind.

On the day Truman took office, the United States and the other Allies found themselves in the decisive final phase of their mission to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany’s occupation. Truman’s first address to Congress four days later shows how the President had also become aware of the effect of globalizing forces on America’s national security. He recognized America’s safety was now highly dependent on international security when he said that “in this shrinking world, it is futile to seek safety behind geographical barriers”. Evidently, re-establishing and safeguarding international security and stability was defined as the main objective of U.S. foreign policy, following the path FDR had paved before. Truman was convinced it was America’s grave responsibility to take a leading and active role in pursuing this objective, creating an external environment favourable to its domestic prosperity. This would be in the best interest of not only the U.S. itself, but also of other nations as he proclaimed “today, the entire world is looking to America for enlightened leadership to peace and progress”. The President was convinced the U.S. had become “one of the most powerful forces for good on earth”, and should act accordingly (Truman 16 Apr. 1945).

The U.S. and the other Allies accomplished their mission soon after. On May 8 the same year, Truman announced the final and unconditional surrender of Germany in his news conference on V - E Day. Several months later, on August 14, he also announced the end of war with Japan during a press conference on V - J Day. The ending of World War II brought along the question of how to define the new political world order, or, as Dobson and Marsh have put it, “how to maintain great power consensus” (20). From the speech Truman gave

during the press conference on V - J Day, it becomes clear that the President's quest for creating a political world order beneficial to U.S. national security had been strongly enforced by the events of World War II. In his speech, he claimed "America can build for itself a future of employment and security. Together with the United Nations, it can build a world of peace rounded on justice, fair dealing, and tolerance" (Truman 26 Aug. 1945). Truman's speech reveals the determination of the U.S. to take on a dominant role in international affairs, aiming at global cooperation and regulation in its own interest. As Andrew Preston has argued too, "the war legitimated the doctrine of national security, and, in a few short years, it went from being a radical idea to conventional wisdom" (498).

### **1.2 The Truman Administration's Perceived Threat to U.S. National Security**

The events in the first half of the twentieth century had taught the United States that economic downfall would lead to political instability, providing the main grounds for a totalitarian regime to flourish. Therefore, the Truman administration strived for economic recovery in Europe based on the Western values of capitalism, aiming to prevent the rise of a new totalitarian regime. At the time, the only real considerations of power within the world order were U.S. power, Soviet power, and the danger of a revival of German power. Worried, the President observed that economic and political unrest was spreading through Western Europe. When the Soviet Union began to act unilaterally in Eastern Europe and made bids for strategic and economic gains in Turkey and Iran, Truman began to question Soviet intentions. His biggest fear, according to Dobson and Marsh, was a wave of internal uproar inspired by the Soviet Union's actions that would make Europe vulnerable to the spread of communism (20). Meanwhile, the administration recognized the unstable situation in Greece and feared that if Greece would be lost to communism, it would spread through the region and threaten the recovery of Western Europe. Illustrated by his Truman Doctrine speech from March 12, 1947, the President concluded that if he wanted to protect the national security of the United States, he had to prevent the spread of communism.

The Truman Doctrine speech leads to the assumption that the primary threat the United States perceived to its national security was the communist ideology and the world order it propagated in general. Truman expressed the totalitarian regimes imposed upon free peoples led by the communist ideology undermined the foundation of international peace. As the crisis in Greece and Turkey demonstrated, the ideology was "exploiting human want and misery, and was able to create political chaos which, until now, has made economic recovery impossible". Moreover, Truman defined the ideological clash between communism and

liberalism as a zero-sum game, when he described the current situation as a moment in world history where “nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life” and that “the choice is too often not a free one”. The President also articulated he was afraid of the so-called domino-effect by putting the importance of the situation of Greece in a wider, international context. He proclaimed that if Greece would fall under the communist rule, “confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East” (Truman 12 Mar. 1947). Thus, Truman feared the communist bloc would expand its territory, gain more power, and eventually establish international authority. More importantly, the President feared the world order envisioned by the communist ideology because he deemed it hostile to U.S. freedom and national security.

When Truman was inaugurated for his first full term as President on January 20, 1949, he did not know the character of the perceived communist threat would soon alter drastically. In his inaugural address, Truman severely criticized the “false philosophy” of communism and contrasted it to America’s and other “free nation’s” ideology of freedom and democracy. Although the President referred to a regime adhering to this “false philosophy”, it did not mention the Soviet Union explicitly (Truman 20 Jan. 1949). However, on September 23 that same year, Truman made a statement on the detection of a Soviet atomic test. From this moment onwards, the perceived threat by the United States to its national security was of a much higher extent. Now that the U.S. did not have an atomic monopoly anymore, its position as a hegemonial power was no longer unchallengeable. Simultaneously, the civil war in China that had broken out in 1927 between the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Party came to an undesirable ending for the United States. On October 1, 1949, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong, declared the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. The fall of China’s mainland to communism meant that the threat posed by the communist bloc suddenly became of a greater significance. The Truman administration’s increased fear caused by the Soviet Union’s successful atomic test and the “loss of China” resulted in a much larger perceived threat.

However, when analyzing the Truman administration’s National Security Strategy formulated in April 1950, NSC-68, it shows that the fear policymakers of the Truman administration felt was predominantly caused by the behaviour of the Soviet Union. When NSC-68 described the background of the “present world crisis”, there were only two reasons provided for the fundamental alteration of the international distribution of power. The first reason is defined as the consequences of World War II, meaning the defeat of Germany and Japan and the decline of power of the British and French Empires. However, more



importantly, the second reason was defined as the Soviet Union, and its “animation by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own” which “seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world” (4). NSC-68 described the Kremlin as being in control of the Soviet Union and the communist movement, arguably because they practiced the communist ideology in the most threatening way. By linking the Kremlin to communism, the Truman administration redefined the threat it perceived in a way that increased its immediacy and magnitude. Since the Soviet Union embodied one of the superpowers in the bipolar world order, it was envisioned as a real peril to U.S. national security. However, the likelihood of the Soviet Union attacking the United States to achieve a communist world order has proven to be less realistic than the Truman administration proclaimed. Nevertheless, the increased fear of a Soviet-initiated apocalypse caused the United States to employ urgent countering foreign policies.

### **1.3 The Truman Administration’s Foreign Policy in Response to the Perceived Threat**

Truman administration’s observation of a change in threat resulted in a different foreign policy doctrine. Before the successful atomic test of the Soviet Union and the fall of China, its policies focused on financial and economic assistance to countries in Europe. The administration thus acted according to the idea that economic unrest within a country would lead to political unrest and an increased appeal of communism. In March 1947, the President asked Congress to provide authority for 400 million dollars of assistance to Greece and Turkey. A short period later, in June 1947, General George Marshall visited Europe and came to the conclusion the region was so poor it would turn to communism if not assisted with money, too. Consequently, Marshall and Truman asked Congress again to provide authority for assistance to Europe and fund a 17 billion dollar European Recovery Programme that would later be called the Marshall Plan. In the first case, Congress approved immediately because it was controlled by Republicans who supported the policy of assistance to Greece and Turkey. In the second case, Congress hesitated at first, but provided authority only after Czechoslovakia turned Communist in March 1948 (Library of Congress). This demonstrates how the domino theory was an increasingly important factor when formulating U.S. foreign policy aiming to prevent the spread of communism.

From analysing Truman’s Inaugural Address on January 20, 1949, it can be assumed communism in general was still deemed the primary threat to U.S. national security. Throughout the address, the President contrasted democracy and communism in numerous ways and concluded with the announcement of a program for peace and freedom consisting of

four main points of action. These were to “continue to support the United Nations and related agencies”, “continue programs for world economic recovery”, “strengthen freedom-loving nations against the dangers of aggression”, and “embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas” (Truman 20 Jan. 1949). All the four point were obviously directed towards the containment of communism by promoting economic recovery and trade in order to diminish the chance poor countries are “lost”, and supporting nations who are against this ideology.

However, when examining the declassified document NSC-68, there is an obvious transformation observable of U.S. foreign policy and its priorities. This was predominantly caused by the turn of the Soviet Union and China towards communism and by the development of atomic weapons by the Soviet Union, as described in the section that explained the backgrounds of the “present world crisis” urging the United states to take “new and fateful decisions” (4). Yet, the most crucial aspect of the national security strategy can be found in the section which addressed U.S. intentions and capabilities. Here, the two subsidiary policies the U.S. embraced were written down, which were “attempting to develop a healthy international community” and “containing the Soviet system” (21). What is so remarkable is the further explanation of the policy of “containment”. While this type of policy is generally defined as “preventing the expansion” of a hostile country or influence, NSC-68 attributes a different meaning to it:

As for the policy of “containment”, it is one which seeks by all means short of war to (1) block further expansion of Soviet power, (2) expose the falsities of Soviet pretensions, (3) induce a retraction of the Kremlin’s control, (4) in general, to foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system that the Kremlin is brought at least to the point of modifying its behaviour to conform to generally acceptable international standards. (21)

Thus, although the main foreign policy of the United States was defined as “containment”, in reality this policy pursued a rollback of Soviet control and power. Furthermore, it is important to highlight the intention of this policy was to avoid a nuclear war, as this would lead to a disastrous situation. To achieve these goals, the document called for “a rapid build-up of political, economic, and military strength in the free world” (44-59). Thus, from analysing NSC-68 it becomes clear that the national security strategy was ultimately formulated against

the Kremlin's design and aimed at forming a successful political, economic, and military offensive against the Soviet Union instead of the communist ideology in general.

Finally, NSC-68 declared that the ideological conflict was now of global reach and that the United States would therefore act world-wide to protect free nations. The Truman administration exhibited its world-wide commitment to contain communism for the first time during the Korean War, when it decided to send American forces in a combined United Nations military effort to assist the Republic of Korea against the invasion of North Korea People's Army in June 1950. A report of the CIA on the Implementation of Soviet Objectives in Korea from November 1947 reveals that it was assumed the Soviet Union wanted to secure all of Korea as a satellite state (1). Logically, the Truman administration believed it could not afford the "loss" of another country in Asia to communism, nor allow the Soviet Union to strengthen its position. The declassified report by the National Security Council on the position of the United States with respect to Korea exposes the administration wanted to have established in Korea a government "fully representative of the free will of the Korean people" and a "sound economy and educational system as essential bases of an independent and democratic state" (1). However, when Chinese Communists entered the battle in Korea in December 1950, President Truman declared a state of national emergency. After blaming the dangerous situation in the world on the Soviet Union, Truman expressed America's determination in creating an international community characterized by freedom, peace, and justice and proclaimed it would never appease (Truman 15 Dec. 1950). After initial success, the U.N. forces were reversed by Chinese intervention and the conflict was stalemated through the final years of Truman's presidency

The international community Truman envisioned would guarantee national security for the United States, which was ultimately the goal of his administration's commitment to rollback Soviet power and control. It can be argued that the fundamental aim of the Truman administration's foreign policy was thus the same as that of preceding foreign policies created under FDR, namely creating an international community favourable to U.S. prosperity. On the other hand, the change in perceived threat to U.S. national security embodied by the Soviet Union caused the level of this commitment to be of a much higher degree than before. Nevertheless, the Truman Doctrine did not constitute a big turning point in the history of U.S. foreign policy, as its objectives were not new. John Lewis Gaddis agrees "the American commitment to oppose totalitarian threats to the balance of power in Europe goes back to at least 1940, and possibly to 1917" (387).

#### **1.4 Analysis of the Rhetoric Employed by the Truman Administration**

When studying Truman administration's language use in defining its foreign policy, there are three important elements that should be examined. These are the portrayal of the Soviet Union as the enemy, the representation of the United States as the moral good, and the description of the conflict between both parties.

In the speeches held during his presidency, Truman portrayed the Soviet Union as the main enemy of the United States by excoriating its ideology, behaviour, and intentions. Declassified government publications show how policymakers berated the fundamental design of the Kremlin, too. NSC-68 revealed the administration believed the Soviet Union wanted to establish absolute power and communist authority world-wide, which, according to its ideology, would require the Soviet Union to subvert or destroy the United States as it formed the centre of power in the non-Soviet world (6). In his Inaugural Address, Truman indirectly referred to the Soviet Union as a totalitarian regime adhering to the "false philosophy" of communism, and portrayed this philosophy as morally incorrect by criticizing and rejecting the ideas on which it built. Truman even described the Soviet Union as a "slave state" (Truman 20 Jan. 1949). Furthermore, in his Address to the Nation on a State of National Emergency, he blamed the rulers of the Soviet Union for creating danger in the world, threatening the national security of America. (Truman 15 Dec. 1950). Overall, the Soviet Union, its ideology, and intentions were thus portrayed as hostile and threatening U.S. national security.

Since the very beginning of his presidency, Truman depicted the United States as a nation of moral good, living up to the highest norms and values. It is important to highlight the President always stressed that the ideals of America were written down in the Constitution. It can be argued this was a way to legitimize the fundamental purpose of the United States, and to portray it as a role-model which should be followed in its ideology by the rest of the world. Indeed, in his Truman Doctrine Speech, the President announced how the U.S. had obtained leadership in the international community, and how it was their responsibility to act according to this role and protect the ideology of the "free peoples" and "freedom-loving nations" (Truman 12 Mar. 1947). The main elements of the democratic ideology, as often repeated in speeches and government publications, were freedom, peace, justice. This is well-illustrated in Truman's inaugural address, in which he represented democracy as a morally correct ideology by praising its core values (Truman 20 Jan. 1949). The representation of the ideology of the United States as morally correct allowed the Truman

administration to legitimize the country's position as "world policeman" and display it as a role-model for other nations.

The depiction of the fundamental design of the Kremlin and the fundamental purpose of the United States were of high importance to the definition of the nature of the conflict provided by the Truman administration. As written down in NSC-68, "the implacable purpose of the slave state to eliminate the challenge of freedom has placed the two great powers at opposite poles" (7). The conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States was thus characterized by an ideological clash between communism and democracy. Moreover, there were two other important elements the Truman administration attributed to this conflict. First, the scope of the conflict was defined as global. As the world order was outlined as a polarization of power, and the Soviet Union sought world-wide authority, the assault on free institutions would be of world-wide significance. Additionally, Truman always stressed that the U.S. was striving for "world freedom" and "world peace", although in reality this was pursued to secure national safety. Second, as a result of the polarized world order, the conflict was defined as a "zero-sum game" because any loss on the democratic front would automatically be a triumph for the communist front. Hence, the United States, being the biggest representative of the democratic front, had to do everything in its power in order to avoid any losses of the "free world" to communism.

By portraying the Soviet Union as immoral and dangerous and the United States as just and defending the highest principles, the Truman administration attempted to highlight the relevance and importance of the ideological clash to global security and, moreover, to justify its actions taken against the Soviet Union.

## **Chapter 2: The Foreign Policy Doctrine of the Bush Administration**

### **2.1 International State of Affairs when George W. Bush Took Office**

When George W. Bush succeeded as the forty-third president on January 20, 2001 the international state of affairs was relatively serene. In December 1991, the dissolution of the Soviet Union was formally enacted, which officially marked the collapse of a nation that for more than forty years had been the main enemy of the United States in the Cold War. Nonetheless, the Cold War and the combat against communism had provided the U.S. with “a common cause and shared framing that underpinned U.S. leadership of the West” (Buzan 1101). Consequently, the United States was left with neither a significant threat from abroad, nor a direction for their foreign policy. Haass acknowledges Bush “did not run for the office promising fundamental policy shifts, something that would have likely proven difficult given that the federal budget was in the black, the country relatively prosperous, and the world largely at peace” (168). Likewise, Leffler (2013) proclaims “Bush administration officials generally agree that foreign policy was not a top priority when they assumed office in January 2001” (192). Resultantly, the focus of U.S. foreign policy strategy remained on democratisation, market reform, integrating the region into the global economy, and preserving U.S. economic and political predominance (Dobson and Marsh 118).

Nonetheless, the doctrine of national security survived the end of the Cold War. The idea that the domestic environment of the United States would only be safe when the external environment was secured continued to be the base for government policies. The preceding Clinton administration also acknowledged the importance of the concept, and referred to it as “full-spectrum dominance” (Buzan 499). Surprisingly, when they took office, Bush and his officials seriously underestimated the warnings of the Administration’s counterterrorism expert Dick Clarke and CIA director George Tenet, who feared an imminent attack of spectacular proportions by the Osama Bin Laden led terrorist group al-Qaeda. Hence, when on September 11, 2001, the United States was struck by terrorist attacks, president Bush and his administration were shocked and taken by surprise. For the first time since the Cold War the United States was confronted with a great perceived threat from abroad. Consequently, the doctrine of national security became of crucial importance to Bush and his administration, which extended the concept even further in his second inaugural address when he proclaimed: “The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.

America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one" (Bush 20 Jan. 2005). With these words, Bush defined America's relationship with the rest of the world for years to come.

## **2.2 The Bush Administration's Perceived Threat to U.S. National Security**

As the terrorist attacks of 9/11 occurred, Bush found himself in Florida at an event to promote education. After being informed about the current situation, the President gave brief remarks on television. When Bush flew back to Washington and witnessed the horrible scenery the attacks left behind, he gave an address to the nation. In this address, the President stated "the search is underway for those behind these evil acts" and that he had directed "the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice" (Bush 11 Sep. 2001). One day later, after having met with the National Security Council, Bush declared that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were in fact an act of war, and that the United States would respond determined against the threat behind this act (Bush 12 Sep. 2001). The question which organizations or states actually embodied the perceived threat posed to U.S. national security would be answered by Bush in his numerous upcoming speeches. However, the President's definition of "national security" and what posed a threat to it would often change in significance and scope.

It can be concluded from Bush's Address before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, the administration initially determined the perceived threat as the loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as Al Qaida, currently active in the region of the Middle East. The administration declared Al Qaida had great influence in Afghanistan and supported the Taliban regime currently in control of most of the country. Moreover, Bush also proclaimed that Al Qaida and its leader, Osama Bin Laden, had close relations with other terrorist organizations in Egypt and Uzbekistan. However, the administration believed the threat posed by the terrorist organization was of a much higher significance. In his address, Bush expressed the great fears of the United States about the intentions of Al Qaida. By explaining they are practising a "fringe form of Islamic extremism" that "perverts the peaceful teachings of the Islam", Bush concluded that it was their goal to kill Christians, Jews, and Americans in the ultimate quest to remake the world and impose their radical beliefs on people everywhere (Bush 20 Sep. 2001). Thus, although the perceived threat was primarily defined as Al Qaida headquartered in Afghanistan, the Bush administration proclaimed the potential danger the terrorist organizations posed was of a global scale.

This global scope of the perceived threat was further defined in Bush's Address on the State of the Union in January 2002. In addition to terrorist organizations, the President also mentioned regimes seeking Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) as threatening the national security of the United States. Bush identified North Korea, Iran, and specifically Iraq as states constituting an "axis of evil", threatening world peace due to their possession or pursuance of WMD and their regimes that support terrorist activities. The Bush administration feared the possibility of those regimes providing WMD to terrorist organizations, of which the consequences would be catastrophic for the safety of the United States (Bush 29 Jan. 2002). The perceived threat from abroad therefore included not only the terrorist organizations posing a great danger to U.S. national security, but also regimes supporting and collaborating with these organizations. As Bush formulated it himself in his Graduation Speech at West Point, "the gravest danger to freedom lies at the perilous crossroads between radicalism and technology" (Bush 01 Jun. 2002).

Although in the meantime the threat perceived from Afghanistan had diminished as a result of measures taken against Al Qaida training camps and Taliban military installations, the Bush administration remarkably identified an increase in threat from abroad in March 2003. In an Address to the Nation on Iraq, President Bush declared Iraq's regime led by Saddam Hussein posed a new, greater threat to peace due to its recent development of WMD and its support of terrorist organizations. The President explained the focus on Iraq was because it "gathers the most serious dangers of our age in one place". He blamed Saddam Hussein for using weapons in an attempt to dominate Iraq and the Middle East, and concluded he would therefore not hesitate to use it against the United States or the world if he deemed it necessary. In addition, Bush identified a strong link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaida, saying they have close contacts and have the U.S. as a common enemy. The President also expressed his fear that if nothing is done to counter the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, the danger it poses will continue to grow (Bush 19 Mar. 2003). Hence, although in general the perceived threat to U.S. national security was formed by terrorist organizations and regimes supporting them, the Bush administration pointed towards Saddam Hussein and Iraq's regime as the biggest concern by March 2003.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 caused the Bush administration to fear another attack on the United States by terrorist organizations. Moreover, the administration feared the terrorist organizations would obtain WMD from regimes supporting the organizations and use these to increase the scope of their attack. Since the occurrence of another terrorist attack seemed so realistic, Bush proclaimed that the threat posed to U.S. national security was of immediate and



abundant quality. In effect, Bush pushed for urgent foreign policies to counter the unprecedented threat he observed from terrorist organizations and the regimes supporting them.

### **2.3 The Bush Administration's Foreign Policy in Response to the Perceived Threat**

The response of the Bush Administration to the attacks of 9/11 was of urgent and vast quality. Immediately after the attacks occurred, Bush requested from Congress Authorization to use Military Force and for Defense Authorization Legislation. Although the administration had not even clarified against whom it was willing to use these forces, Congress approved both requests. However, after having proclaimed Al Qaida was behind the attacks and condemning the Taliban regime in Afghanistan for harbouring and supporting the terrorist organization, the President announced the response of the United States to what happened on 9/11. In October 2001, Bush introduced the world to Operation Enduring Freedom, which was launched to stop the Taliban regime from providing a safe haven to Al Qaida and to stop Al Qaida's use of Afghanistan as an operational base for terrorist activities. The operation consisted of strikes against Al Qaida training camps and Taliban military installations, and thus formed a military response by the United States to the perceived threat from abroad. However, in his address to the nation announcing the operation, Bush said "this military action is a part of our campaign against terrorism" and "today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader" (Bush 07 Oct. 2001). It was here that the President declared America only stood at the beginning of a much bigger and longer war against terrorism.

The serious military and nuclear implications of this Global War on Terror were demonstrated soon after. In December 2001, Bush decided the United States would pull out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty it had signed with the former Soviet Union in 1972. To justify this action, the President says he concluded "the ABM Treaty hinders our Government's ability to develop ways to protect our people from future terrorist or rogue state missile attacks" (Bush 13 Dec. 2001). This step of the Bush administration indicated how far it was willing to go in the combat against terrorism, as it showed it considered that the war might turn nuclear, and so wanted to be prepared for this scenario. Then, in his State of the Union Address in January 2002, Bush further outlined the plan of the administration in the war on terrorism, showing its activist character: "First, we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. And second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons from threatening the

United States and the world” (Bush 29 Jan. 2002). Indeed, in the following year, the administration released several government publications in pursuance of this plan.

The first important publication composed under the Bush Administration was the National Security Strategy of the United States of America in September 2002. The most outstanding aspect of this document was its emphasis on the American principles of liberty, justice, and democracy, and the declaration that these core beliefs would guide America’s national security strategy and government decisions. In order to make the world “safer and better”, the document set out a strategy that essentially constituted strengthening alliances and weaken terrorists in order to prevent them from threatening and attacking the United States with WMD. Furthermore, the strategy promoted democracy and free trade in the developing world and cooperation with other global powers. However, what has been most debated about the document was its pre-emptive quality, when stating the United States “will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively against terrorists” (4). Hence, the document marked a decisive point in the Bush administration’s foreign policy response to the perceived threat.

Surprisingly or not, one month later Bush requested from Congress authorization for use of military force against Iraq, as it deemed the threat posed by the country’s regime and its plausible possession of WMD so large it required immediate military action. Congress approved and the Resolution passed in October 2002. Thereupon, in December 2002, the Bush administration released its second important publication titled the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction. The document outlined a strategy constituting of three pillars, being respectively “counter-proliferation to combat WMD use”, “strengthened non-proliferation to combat WMD proliferation”, and “consequence management to respond to WMD use” (2). Consistent with the resolution and the national strategy, Bush wrote a letter to the congressional leader informing them on the commencement of military operations against Iraq. On March 19, 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom started as U.S. military forces invaded the country to “disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein’s support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people”.

The foreign policy doctrine of president Bush and the extent to which it represented something bold and new has been heavily debated by scholars (Leffler 2003; Kennedy-Pipe and Rengger 2006; Buzan 2006). Within a one and a half years after of the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration had launched two military operations in response to the perceived threat of terrorist organizations and regimes seeking WMD supporting these organizations. However, using military force to rollback an enemy is neither very new nor exceptional in the

history of American foreign policy. It was the pre-emptive and offensive quality of the Bush administration's initiated military operations that contributed an unusual element to its foreign policies. Still, analysing the Bush administration's response to the perceived threat suggests that it was predominantly in alignment with preceding foreign policies of the United States.

#### **2.4 Analysis of the Rhetoric Employed by the Bush Administration**

When studying Bush administration's language use in defining its foreign policy, there are three important elements that should be examined. These are the portrayal of terrorism as the enemy, the representation of the United States as the moral good, and the description of the conflict between both parties.

Bush held numerous speeches in which he described the enemy of the United States with sweeping rhetoric. Initially, the President defined Al Qaida as the main enemy, describing them as Muslim extremists whose goal is "remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere" (Bush 20 Sep. 2001). However, later he defined terrorism in general as the threat to international and domestic security, and regarded any regime harbouring or supporting terrorists as equally dangerous. In his State of the Union Address, Bush spoke of these regimes as "axis of evil" and enemies of freedom that hate institutions of liberty, peace, and democracy. He named North Korea, Iran, and especially Iraq as states guilty of threatening world peace. The President enforced this statement by linking their possession of WMD to terrorism and defining this combination as a threat with no precedent (Bush 29 Jan. 2002). It is especially notable in his graduation speech at West Point that Bush contrasted the immoral actions and teachings of "tyrant" enemy to those of the United States, and concluded "America has a greater objective than controlling threats and containing resentment; we will work for a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror" (Bush 01 Jun. 2002). Thus, ultimately, Bush defined anything opposing American principles and obstructing world peace as an enemy.

Since the attacks of 9/11, President Bush promoted and legitimized America's principles and leadership to the rest of the world. On that memorable day, he said the United States had been the target of terrorism because it is "the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world" (Bush 11 Sep. 2001). In all his following speeches, Bush persisted in his focus on the American values of freedom, democracy, justice, and peace. Particularly, he emphasized how these values should not only be lived up to by the United States, but by the whole international community. In this way, Bush depicted America as the leading nation in the quest for world peace. In his State of the Union Address of 2002, the President

announced America was delighted to take this position and the duties that it accompanies. He proclaimed “history has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom’s fight” (Bush 29 Jan. 2002). Furthermore, the Bush administration attempted to legitimize America’s values and position in the National Security Strategy of 2002, which “our own history is a long struggle to live up to our own ideals, but even in our worst moments, the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence were there to guide us” (3). It represented America’s principles as a kind of unquestioned truth and ultimate standard to follow, making its leading role in the war on terror seem justifiable.

The way the Bush administration portrayed the conflict between terrorism and freedom was clear immediately after the attacks occurred on 9/11. That same day, the President pronounced America and its friends would stand together in “the war on terrorism” (Bush 11 Sep. 2001). According to the administration, the attacks were more than acts of terror; they were acts of war. Moreover, this war on terrorism was attributed three main characteristics. First, Bush defined it as “a monumental struggle of good versus evil” in his remarks following a meeting with the national security team in September 2000. Second, the President thought of the conflict as a zero-sum game. When he announced the strikes against Afghanistan, Bush said that “in this conflict, there is no neutral”, implying that anyone who was not for the United States would automatically be against it. Finally, Bush labelled the war on terrorism as global and long, and compared it to the Cold War. In his speech on Iraq, he spoke “we resolved then and we are resolved today to confront every threat, from any source, that could bring sudden terror and suffering to America”. Thus, the enduring Global War on Terrorism was portrayed from the beginning as a long monumental struggle between good and evil.

Bush’s language use is noteworthy because it gives the impression that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 induced the President to construct a framework of the world that he propagated in order to justify his military operations to counter the perceived threat. He defined the world as divided between good and evil, and proclaimed the long conflict between both parties would last until good triumphed. Bush then glorified the principles of the United States and portrayed it as biggest representative of moral good and freedom, with the aim to legitimize America’s leading and activist role in the by him formulated Global War on Terrorism.

## **Chapter 3: Comparing the Truman and Bush Administration**

### **3.1 International State of Affairs**

Self-evidently, the post-World War II and post-Cold War world order differed significantly from each other. Soon after Truman took office, World War II ended and left a bipolar world order in which the two superpowers were embodied by the United States and the Soviet Union. In contrast, when Bush took office a decade after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War, the United States remained as the only superpower in a unipolar world order. However, in the meantime, Europe had economically recovered from the Second World War and formed a strong unity, too. Another difference Bush addressed himself in his graduation speech at West Point, was that “today, the great powers are also increasingly united by common values, instead of divided by conflicting ideologies” (Bush 01 Jun. 2002). Furthermore, while the doctrine of national security was of recent development under Truman’s presidency, it was well developed when Bush succeeded as President. Nevertheless, in both scenario’s the United States played a dominant political and economic role in the international community and pursued the creation of an external environment conducive to U.S. institutions and national prosperity.

### **3.2 Perceived Threat to U.S. National Security**

Both the Truman administration and the Bush administration experienced a perceived threat from abroad they believed undermined international peace and hence U.S. national security. In the case of Truman, this threat was defined as the Kremlin-controlled Soviet Union, which most actively and aggressively practiced and preached the communist ideology. Differently, to Bush the threat was formed by the non-state based extremist Muslim terrorist organizations called Al Qaida, and the according to him numerous regimes harbouring and supporting these organizations. It can be argued that the character of these two threats is similar in nature, as they both constitute a radical belief opposing the United States and its main principles of freedom and democracy. In addition, together they can be classified under totalitarian regimes, seeking to establish world-wide authority. Furthermore, in both cases the administrations feared the possession of WMD by their enemies and the possibility of a nuclear war breaking out. On the other hand, the Bush administration defined the threat posed by terrorist organizations as of a more imminent and severe kind because they had carried out a successful attack of spectacular proportions on the United States before. Indeed, the

possibility of the Soviet Union attacking the United States has proven to be less realistic than the Truman administration declared. However, as indicated in NSC-68, the magnitude of the threat posed by the military capabilities of the Soviet Union to U.S. national security was larger than that of Al Qaida (17-20). Compared to the Soviet Union, which constituted one of the superpowers in the bipolar world order of the Cold War-era, Al Qaida was relatively small in number and territory. Nevertheless, both administrations feared the intentions and capabilities of their perceived threats to such a large degree that they deemed it of utmost importance actions were taken immediately to avoid it from gaining more support and territory.

### **3.3 Foreign Policy Response to the Perceived Threat**

To a very great extent, the foreign policies employed by the Truman and Bush administration contain elements of similarity. Both foreign policy doctrines were shaped by fear, and formulated in response to a perceived threat from abroad. Moreover, they were both based on the doctrine of national security coined by FDR, which implies Truman and Bush pursued the same objective: creating an international environment favourable to U.S. interests and prosperity by promoting the American principles of freedom and democracy. However, most importantly, NSC-68 and the National Security Strategy of 2002 showed both administrations decided to employ military force seeking to block any further expansion of their enemy's power and rollback its territorial control. Furthermore, the documents revealed a similar quest for U.S. political, economic, and especially military superiority. Finally, Truman and Bush both wanted to strengthen ties with allies and extend their sphere of influence to developing nations in order to increase U.S. power.

Despite the numerous elements of similarity found in the foreign policy doctrines of Bush and Truman, there are also a few elements of disparity present. Compared to Bush, Truman's doctrine contained a relatively strong emphasis on financial and economic assistance through the Marshall Plan and the assistance offered to Greece and Turkey. In other words, Truman used military force alternately to complement and supplement his national security strategy, while in the case of Bush it constituted the major element. Leffler (2003) confirms Truman "made the crucial decision to focus on European reconstruction rather than American rearmament" (1061). Furthermore, the military force employed by the Bush administration was of a different character than that of the Truman administration. When Truman employed military force it was always of defensive quality, meaning it was in response to a military attack by the enemy. On the other hand, the military force employed by

Bush was of offensive quality. The military operations in Afghanistan and especially Iraq that Bush launched were designed to prevent an anticipated military attack by the enemy. It is this pre-emptive character of the Bush administration's foreign policy doctrine that differentiates it from preceding administrations like Truman. Finally, there was a difference in the approach of the foreign policy doctrines towards WMD and the notion of (nuclear) war. Whereas Truman rejected a direct war with the Soviet Union as a possible option to counter the threat it posed in NSC-68 and thereby set foundations for the principle of the Cold War, Bush declared the U.S. was at a Global War on Terrorism immediately after the attacks of 9/11 occurred. Moreover, although Bush self-evidently did not desire a nuclear war, he did take the option seriously into consideration in his national security strategy, while Truman proved to avoid a nuclear war at all means.

The foreign policies of the Truman and Bush administration primarily exhibit a trend of similarity as they were founded on the same doctrine of national security. However, their strategies varied most notably in that military force was used in a different context. Bush decided to use pre-emptive military force in order to prevent another anticipated attack by terrorist organizations, while Truman used military force merely in a defensive way with the aim to prevent the communist bloc from gaining territory. Moreover, although Truman employed military force, he focused on economic and financial assistance in his pursuit to rollback the enemy. Nonetheless, neither Truman's nor Bush's approach were major foreign policy departures as they were both in alignment with preceding U.S. foreign policies. It can be argued that the pre-emptive quality of Bush's military operations merely constituted an extension of earlier foreign policies of the U.S. that likewise pursued economic, political, and military superiority by promoting its principles of freedom and democracy.

### **3.4 Rhetoric**

When comparing the language employed by the Truman and Bush administration, a trend of similarity prevails through the definition of the enemy, the United States itself, and the conflict provided by the both Presidents in their speeches and government publications. Notwithstanding the obvious fact that Truman and Bush faced a different enemy during their presidency, the way in which they described the enemy was very much alike. Both presidents excoriated the ideology, behaviour and intentions of their enemy and declared they were promoting totalitarian regimes whose ultimate goal is to impose their beliefs and establish their authority on a global scale. Furthermore, they defined the enemy as evil, immoral tyrants who were against the United States and its principles as in both cases America stood in the

enemy's way of achieving its ultimate goal of world domination. These findings are confirmed by Bush himself in his graduation speech at West Point, when he stated "our struggle is similar to the Cold War; now, as then, our enemies are totalitarians, holding a creed of power with no place for human dignity; now, as then, they seek to impose a joyless conformity, to control every life and all of life" (Bush 01 Jun. 2002). However, Bush exaggerated the threat posed by Al Qaida in this speech, as the possibility of the Soviet Union imposing a world-wide totalitarian regime was more realistic since its military capabilities were much greater. Then again, as Leffler (2003) proclaims, "Truman used language that exaggerated immediate threats to U.S. national security" (1058), too. Overall, both Presidents' language distorted the real threat posed by their enemies as it was influenced by fear.

When analysing how the Presidents portrayed the United States in speeches, the rhetoric used is also identical. Truman and Bush depicted America as representing the moral good by proclaiming it lives up to the highest ideals of freedom, democracy, peace, and justice. Moreover, they each referred to a different historical document of the United States – either the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence – in an attempt to justify and legitimize America's leadership in the protection of these ideals and the creation of an international community pursuing them. As they were written down in these documents for the first time, the United States would serve as a role model in living up to the principles that guided American diplomacy for so long. It is striking how equal the image created by the Presidents of the United States is, despite the period of almost half a decade between their presidencies.

Finally, the conflict definition supplied by Truman and Bush was very similar, too. Although Truman defined the conflict he faced as an ideological clash between communism and democracy, and Bush the conflict as a war between good and evil, it can be argued that because the terrorist organizations were Muslim extremists perverting the teachings of the Islam, in some sense the conflict Bush faced was also an ideological one. Furthermore, both conflicts have been staged as a long, global struggle with a zero-sum quality. Scholars have acknowledged this similar representation of the Global War on Terror and the Cold War too. To illustrate this, Buzan (2006) supports that "both have been staged as a defence of the West, or western civilization, against those who would seek to destroy it" (1101).



## Conclusion and Discussion

The thesis demonstrates that in the history of U.S. foreign policy, no major turning points can be identified. When Harry S. Truman took office in April 1945, he built his foreign policy doctrine upon the concept of national security FDR had coined before during his presidency. FDR's theory that American domestic safety was highly dependent on the regulation of the international environment guided Truman when waging the Cold War against the Soviet Union and the communist ideology it propagated. In an attempt to create an external sphere favourable to U.S. prosperity, Truman formulated a foreign policy that pursued political, economic, and military superiority with the aim to rollback the Soviet Union's power and territorial control. This strategy, which was set out in NSC-68, formed the basis for U.S. Cold War foreign policy. Leffler (2003) proclaims likewise that "U.S. Cold War policies were always designed not so much to contain Soviet power and influence as to roll them back, and to transform the Kremlin's approach to international politics" (1051).

The doctrine of national security survived the end of the Cold War and was further developed by George W. Bush after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 occurred. Bush built upon the same age-old American principles of freedom and democracy as Truman did, and enhanced the doctrine of national security by proclaiming these principles would guide U.S. foreign policy and thus the regulation of the international environment. Although Bush had a stronger focus on military power to reduce the threat posed by terrorist organizations, his doctrine was in alignment with preceding foreign policies despite the pre-emptive quality of his military operations. Leffler (2003) has pointed out that pre-emption is indeed not new in American history, but just "has a special place of importance in the thinking of Bush's defense advisors" (1053). The pre-emptive quality of Bush's military operations that is often said to constitute a bold, new element is thus merely an extension of a foreign policy that, identical to Truman's, pursued American economic, political, and military superiority by promoting its principles of freedom and democracy.

The thesis thus relates to the persistent expansive definition of national security that has guided and dominated American foreign policy since World War II, and has defined its relationship with the rest of the world. It is exactly this doctrine of national security that has caused the United States to obtain a superior and leading position in the political world order and the international security arena. Buzan has remarkably argued that Bush constructed the Global War on Terrorism in order for the U.S. to maintain and legitimize its unipolar position

in the post-Cold War world order (1101). Nevertheless, Leffler (2003) contended that “like Truman and the cold warriors who succeeded him, Bush rightly sees peril lurking in the international environment” (1061). Indeed, the contemporary world poses many different challenges to the ultimate objective of the U.S. national security doctrine. However different challenges to this objective do not necessarily call for different political practices or policies. As Kennedy Pipe and Rengger have likewise argued, the character of world politics has remained very much the same in recent history despite the common belief that 9/11 changed everything. According to Kennedy Pipe and Rengger, world politics does not seem to have been radically altered by the terrorist attacks of 9/11. They argue that “rather, the deep-seated aspects of world politics that have always been recognized as such – debates over the role of force and its character, the permanent jostling for geopolitical position, the ideological, spiritual and philosophical divisions that have always been present – seem to be more clearly seen and more omnipresent in the world after 9/11 than they perhaps were before” (552). Thus, whether soon or later a new threat to U.S. national security is identified, the American foreign policy doctrine will most plausibly continue along the same trend that it has followed since World War II.

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