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The Role of American Exceptionalist Thought in the US War on Terrorism

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Master's Degree in Language and Culture.

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Dedication

I am dedicating this dissertation to my husband who has encourage me to achieve my goal,

My lovely children Med Salah, Abderahim, Kawthar and my little son Idris, may Allah

protect them.

I also want to dedicate this work to my loving mother.

Acknowledgment

Abstract

American exceptionalism has been historically referred to as the belief that the United States differs from other developed nations because of its national credo, historical evolution, or distinctive political and religious institutions. This dissertation examines the influence of American Exceptionalist thought on American foreign policy in the age of the contemporary "War on Terrorism." The philosophy of American Exceptionalism has influenced the foreign policy decisions. The Exceptionalist narrative has also contributed to shaping the post-September 11 relationship between the United States and the rest of the world. The findings of this dissertation reveal that American exceptionalism has had a significant impact on United States foreign policy,it has played a crucial role in shaping the United States' perception of itself as a global leader and the defender of freedom and democracy.

الملخص

الاستثنائية الأمريكية تم الإشارة إليها وفق المنطلق التاريخي باعتبار أن الولايات المتحدة تختلف نوعيًا عن الدول المتقدمة الأخرى بسبب عقيدتها الوطنية وتطورها التاريخي أو مؤسساتها السياسية والدينية المميزة. وعادة ما يتم التعبير عن هذ الاختلاف في الأوساط الأمريكية كتفوق قاطع، والذي يرتبط عادة ببعض الأدلة المزعومة أو المبررات أو التفسيرات التي قد تتفاوت اختلافًا كبيرًا تبعًا للفترة التاريخية والسياق السياسي. ومع ذلك، يمكن أيضًا استخدام المصطلح بمعنى سلبي من قبل نقاد السياسات الأمريكية للإشارة إلى الحرب على الإرهاب. تستكشف هذه الأطروحة تأثير التفكير الاستثنائي الأمريكي على السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية في عصر الحرب العالمية الراهنة "حرب الإرهاب". فلقد أثرت فلسفة الاستثنائية الأمريكية على تخطيط قرارات السياسة الخارجية. وقد ساهمت السردية الاستثنائية أيضًا في تشكيل العلاقة بين الولايات المتحدة وبقية العالم بعد 11 سبتمبر. تكشف نتائج هذه الأطروحة أن الاستثنائية الأمريكية قد أثرت بشكل كبير على السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية، خاصة بعد أحداث 11 سبتمبر. فقد أثرت السردية الاستثنائية، التي تؤكد الصفات الفريدة والمسؤوليات للولايات المتحدة، على قرارات السياسة المتعلقة بحرب الإرهاب. وقد لعبت دورًا حاسمًا في تشكيل تصور الولايات المتحدة لنفسها كزعيم عالمي ومدافع عن الحرية والديمقراطية.

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

CNN	Cable News Network
CRS	Congressional Research Service
EU	European Union
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NLA	National Liberation Army
OHS	Office of Homeland Security
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
U.S.	United States
U.S.S.	United States Ship
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
SSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMDs	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Introduction

The concept of American exceptionalism has long played a significant role in shaping the United States' self-perception, policies, and global engagement. It is a belief deeply rooted in the nation's history and values, asserting that the United States possesses a unique destiny and moral responsibility in the world. In the context of the US War on Terrorism, the influence of American exceptionalism on the nation's actions and strategies becomes particularly relevant to examine.

The War on Terrorism, sparked by the tragic events of September 11, 2001, has had far-reaching implications for American foreign policy and national security. In the aftermath of September11, the United States confronted a new and amorphous enemy, international terrorism, which challenged traditional notions of warfare and required unconventional strategies. Within this complex landscape, the lens of American exceptionalism has shaped the nation's response to terrorism and influenced its approach to combating this perceived threat.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the influence of American exceptionalism thought on the US War on Terrorism. By examining the ways in which Exceptionalist ideas have shaped policy decisions, military interventions, and the perception of adversaries, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities and ramifications of exceptionalism in the realm of counterterrorism. The findings of this study can inform policymakers, scholars, and the general public about the impact of exceptionalism on national security strategies, international relations, and the global perception of American power. Moreover, by highlighting the benefits and drawbacks associated with the application of Exceptionalist principles in counterterrorism efforts, this study can contribute to more informed decision-making, critical analysis of policy approaches,

and the promotion of a nuanced understanding of the role of exceptionalism in contemporary global challenges.

This research aims to explore the role of American exceptionalism thought on the US War on Terrorism. By examining the ways in which Exceptionalist ideas have influenced policy decisions, military interventions, and the perception of adversaries, a comprehensive understanding of the impact of exceptionalism on the war effort can be attained. Additionally, this research seeks to analyze the potential implications, benefits, and drawbacks associated with the application of Exceptionalist principles in counterterrorism operations.

The research questions for this study are designed to explore the role of American exceptionalism thought on the US War on Terrorism. These questions aim to investigate the influence of exceptionalist ideas on policy decisions, military interventions, and the perception of adversaries, while also examining the potential implications and consequences of exceptionalism in counterterrorism efforts. There are many questions to answer with this research such as: How has American exceptionalism influenced the development of counterterrorism strategies and policies in the post-9/11 era? In what ways has exceptionalist rhetoric shaped the perception of adversaries and the justification for military interventions in the War on Terrorism? What are the benefits and drawbacks associated with the application of exceptionalist principles in counterterrorism operations? How has the belief in American exceptionalism influenced the global perception of US power and interventionism in the context of the War on Terrorism? By addressing these research questions, a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between American exceptionalism and the US War on Terrorism can be achieved.

To accomplish theobjectives of the research, a multidimensional approach will be employedboth descriptive and analytical methods. The research will draw upon historical

analysis, policy documents, scholarly literature, and primary sources to provide a comprehensive and nuanced examination of the topic. By examining the ideological underpinnings of American exceptionalism and its manifestation in the War on Terrorism, this study aims to shed light on the ways in which exceptionalist thought has influenced the strategies, rhetoric, and outcomes of the US counterterrorism efforts.

This dissertation is divided into three main chapters. Each chapter discusses quite different issues in relation to the current topic.The first chapter is a theoretical one under the title of "the Beginningof American Exceptionalism" Thischapter delves into the origins of American exceptionalism, providing a comprehensive exploration of the historical roots and intellectual foundations that shaped this concept. This chapter acts as a theoretical framework, laying the groundwork for understanding the subsequent analysis of American exceptionalism in the context of the US War on Terrorism. By examining the early colonial period and the influence of ideas such as divine providence and chosenness, it establishes a historical context from which exceptionalist thought emerged. It delves into key philosophical, political, and religious influences, providing a solid foundation for understanding the development and evolution of American exceptionalism.

The second chapter is entitled "American Exceptionalism Before The 21stCentury"focuses on the changing dynamics of American exceptionalism in the post-Cold War era. It investigates how the end of the Cold War and the United States' emergence as the sole superpower led to shifts in exceptionalist thinking. This chapter explores how American exceptionalism adapted to new global realities and analyses the re-evaluation of international interventions, the rise of neo-conservatism, and the assertion of American hegemony. By examining these transformations, it sheds light on the changing nature of American exceptionalism and its impact on US foreign policy before the turn of the century.

The pivotal part of this paper is the third and the last chapter because it tackles the research paper's case study; "The Use of American Exceptionalism in the War Against Terrorism", the focus turns to the profound impact of the September11 attacks on American exceptionalism. This chapter delves into how the tragic events of September 11, 2001, reshaped the understanding and application of exceptionalist principles. The September11 attacks prompted a heightened sense of vulnerability and a shift in perception, where adversaries were often labeled as evil and terrorists. This chapter explores how the United States' response to September11, including the War on Terrorism, was shaped by exceptionalist rhetoric and the belief that the promotion of democracy was crucial for national security. By analyzing the influence of the September11 attacks on American exceptionalism, it provides insights into how exceptionalist ideas evolved in the face of new global security challenges.

the research is concluded with a brief conclusion in which the whole work was summarized in few linesas mentioned previously, the paper discusses a significant topic; which is The Role of American Exceptionalist Thought in The US War OnTerrorism. It provides valuable insight into the consequences of American exceptionalism in the context of global security challenges.

Chapter one:

The Beginning of American Exceptionalism

In this chapter, we embark on an exploration of the beginnings of American exceptionalism, examining its origins and the significant factors that contributed to its development. Our investigation focuses on three key concepts that played influential roles in shaping this phenomenon: givenness, the American orthodoxy of consensus and continuity in history, and the invaluable lessons derived from the Cold War Consensus School. By delving into the interplay between these concepts, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the early foundations of American exceptionalism and their enduring impact on the nation's identity and trajectory.

The concept of givenness provides a lens through which can be used to examine the emergence of American exceptionalism. It entails the acceptance of constructed realities as truth, often perpetuated by media, popular culture, and societal norms. By analyzing the influence of givenness in the early stages of American exceptionalism, we can uncover the narratives and perceptions that shaped the nation's self-perception and its perception of its place in the world.

The American orthodoxy of consensus and continuity in history emerged as a prevailing belief during the mid-20th century. This perspective emphasized a shared agreement on fundamental values and a continuous progression towards liberty and democracy throughout American history. By exploring the concept of consensus and continuity, it is possible to gain insights into the intellectual frameworks that contributed to the development and propagation of American exceptionalism.

The Cold War Consensus School, shaped by the historical context of the Cold War era, offers valuable lessons that inform our understanding of American exceptionalism. Scholars

associated with this school of thought examined the shared beliefs and values that united Americans during the Cold War period. Their insights shed light on the ways in which the perceived threat of communism and the struggle for global influence influenced the construction and reinforcement of American exceptionalist narratives.

1.1 The Intellectual Roots of American Exceptionalism

The term"American Exceptionalism" reportedly coined by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1831, has traditionally referred to the idea that the United States is fundamentally distinct from other industrialized nations due to its unique origins, national values, historical development, and distinctive political and religious institutions (Craiutu and Jennings 399).Various publications have explored this concept, including "*Is America Different?" A New Look at American Exceptionalism*" edited by Byron E. Shafer in 1991, "*America the Unusual*" by John W. Kingdon in 1999, and "*American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*" by Seymour M. Lipset in 1996.

The idea of America as exceptional dates back to colonial times and is rooted in the belief of Puritan settlers that North America was a promised land where a New Canaan could be built as a model for the rest of the world. John Winthrop, a Puritan leader and first governor of Massachusetts Bay colony, expressed this belief in a lay sermon aboard the Arbella in 1630, declaring that the settlers would be a "City upon a Hill" whose work would serve as a beacon for the betterment of humankind. This notion of exceptionalism is based on the belief that Americans are uniquely blessed by God to pursue His work on Earth (Calabresi1335).

The concept of the errand in Massachusetts Bay, which referred to the Puritan belief that they were chosen by God to create a new, perfect society, evolved over time. By the mid-18th century, the errand included ideas such as the possession of private property, equality

before the law, and the freedom to pursue happiness, echoing the Declaration of Independence (Ceaser10). Benjamin Franklin used the concept of "providence" to describe the guiding principle of reason that controlled the operation of the world and helped establish an exemplary nation. Franklin redefined exceptionalism away from its religious origins as an errand into the wilderness, populated by the visible saints chosen by God, and towards the creation of a secular state purified of the corruption of European politics and a social structure based on inherited title. Franklin's Autobiography represents the American myth of individual self-realization in a land of opportunity, and his life embodies the impulse to create oneself anew and to take opportunities when they arise (Franklin 14).

Richard Hofstadter is considered the first Cold War Consensus theorist who advocated a classical Marxian approach to historical inquiry. In his book, "*The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It,*" he argued that the political differences in American history were not systemic conflicts but were minor policy disagreements between factions and leaders who ultimately shared a multitude of fundamental assumptions (Hofstadter 95).

Hofstadter claimed that the American political scene was marked by conflicts between special interests rather than between socio-economic classes. He believed that the intense and sometimes violent moments in American history camouflaged the fundamental nature of struggle in American politics, which often involved political conflict among elites over narrow points of divergence within their own ranks. Hofstadter's project was to offer a counter-argument to the majority of historians who, he believed, wrongly focused on minor conflicts rather than on significant consensus. He concluded that beyond temporary and local conflicts, there has been a common ground, a unity of cultural and political tradition upon which American civilization has stood (qtd in Onuf 79).

Daniel J. Boorstin, the former president of the American Studies Association, believed that the foundation of America's political genius was the unqualified simplicity of American political thought, which lacked a strong political ideology. He argued that Americans had a strong belief in the "givenness" of American ideals that were automatically defined by geography and history. Boorstin suggested that this belief was so strong that Americans tended to think of political conditions such as equality and democracy as distinctively American possessions. The article questions the potential consequences of such thinking, which could render political terminology devoid of its literal meaning and susceptible to manipulation by those who claim to defend the American way of life (qtd in McDougall 8).

When American leaders assert the unique responsibilities of the United States, they imply that it is distinct from other powers and must shoulder exceptional burdens. However, this pattern of rhetoric is not unusual; it is a well-established tradition. Most great powers have considered themselves superior to their rivals and have justified imposing their preferences on others by claiming to promote a greater good. For example, the British believed they were carrying the "white man's burden," while the French invoked "la mission civilisatrice" to justify their empire. Portugal, despite its unremarkable imperial activities, saw itself as promoting a specific "Missaocivilizadora." Even officials of the Soviet Union genuinely believed they were leading the world toward a socialist utopia, despite the cruelty of communist rule. While the United States has a better claim to virtue than Stalin's regime, it is common for all countries to value their unique qualities. Therefore, when Americans declare themselves exceptional and indispensable, they are joining a familiar tradition among great powers. Thinking one is special is the norm, not the exception (McDougall56).

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. 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 (Koh 1484).

1.1.1 The Source or "Givenness"

The givenness characteristic of American thought, as described by Daniel J. Boorstin, refers to the tutelary spirit assigned to the nation at its birth, which presides over its destiny. Boorstin celebrates this essence or givenness of America, which creates new possibilities and transforms America into a new, dynamic "land of dreams-come-true." This essence comes directly from God and possesses three central characteristics: (1) values come from the past, or the "preformation ideal," (2) values come from the landscape, and (3) the continuity of American history and politics (qtd. in Meagher 469).

The notion of "givenness" also relied on the idea that Americans tend to see their country as a unique and exceptional nation, with a destiny and purpose that sets it apart from other nations. He argued that this perspective is deeply ingrained in American culture and history, and that it contributes to a sense of continuity and coherence that is not found in other countries (Meagher 470).

Boorstinidentified three components of "Givenness". The first is the idea that our values were bestowed upon us as a gift from the past, with the earliest settlers or Founding Fathers endowing the nation with a complete political theory that would be sufficient for all future needs. The second component is the belief that our values are continually reinforced by the present, as our institutions implicitly embody the "American Way of Life" and its associated political theory. Americans tend to see political theory as being always cloaked in their distinct experience, which they feel is sufficient to understand it without explicit analysis. The third component of "givenness" is the belief in the homogeneity and continuity of American history, with the past blending seamlessly into the present and being

characterized by a series of similar events. This sense of continuity is an essential feature of the American experience, and it reinforces the belief that American values are inherently predetermined (qtd in Diggins 153).

The concept of "givenness" posits that Americans hold the belief that their nation's history is predominantly characterized by a high degree of homogeneity. It is acknowledged that this belief is a result of flawed historical analysis. However, it is argued that this perception significantly contributes to the perception of cultural continuity throughout American history. This, in turn, has given rise to a distinctive orthodox political tradition within the United States, as demonstrated by the unique political behaviors exhibited by its citizens. Historical instances such as the Alien and Sedition Acts, the Red Scare, and the McCarthy era are cited as evidence of this orthodoxy, characterized by the targeting of individuals who challenge the perceived homogeneity of American history, rather than focusing solely on specific political ideologies. While repressive actions against dissenting views are not uncommon in modern history, it is suggested that in the United States, they have been directed at those who question the prevailing narrative of American historical homogeneity (D'Amore 22).

1.1.2 The American Orthodoxy: Consensus and Continuity in History

Boorstin and Hofstadter were two prominent American historians who studied American political thought and philosophy. Both believed in the existence of a political consensus in American history, but their approaches differed. Hofstadter began his examination with the American Revolution, while Boorstin traced the consensus back to the Puritans. According to Boorstin, the Puritans developed a philosophy that was designed to fit their life in the American wilderness. They created techniques that allowed them to conquer their environment, and their thought patterns were focused on their competition with nature and the obstacles it presented. From these Puritan origins, a distinct pattern of political

thinking developed within the American polity, which became cemented into the minds of subsequent generations of Americans (qtd in Medlin 100).

Boorstin's view of American history as a continuous and homogeneous continuum of similar events, where there was no radical departure in ideology, was criticized by some historians. Some believed that it oversimplified American history and ignored the complex and sometimes contentious nature of American politics. Critics claimed that Boorstin's view did not account for the various social and political movements that challenged the American consensus throughout history. However, Boorstin's ideas also had their supporters. Some historians saw his work as an attempt to uncover the deep-seated values and beliefs that underlie American political life. They believed that Boorstin's ideas could help us understand the roots of American political thought and the enduring appeal of American political institutions (Braman).

Boorstin's view of the American political consensus as a product of the Puritan legacy had a significant impact on American historiography. His ideas challenged the prevailing view of American history as a series of radical departures and revolutions. Instead, he saw American history as a continuous and evolving process that was shaped by deep-seated values and beliefs. While Boorstin's ideas have been criticized for oversimplifying American history, they continue to be studied and debated by historians. His work remains an important contribution to our understanding of the roots of American political thought and the evolution of American political institutions (Braman).

1.1.3 Impact of "Givenness" on American Political Thought

The conclusions on the impact of "givenness" on American politics are unique, and they celebrates the American political system's simplicity rather than finding fault in it. As it is considered to be a mark of inherent "genius." the lack of "idolatry" in American politics discourages political attempts to overhaul society based upon grand visions of human nature

and human social relations. This rejection of ideological idolatry fosters a healthy pragmatism and conservative tendency in American politics (Riemer695).

The combination of a lack of political idolatry and a strong sense of historical continuity leads many Americans to consider the United States a nation of destiny, referred to as "seamlessness." This phenomenon is a positive value because it cultivates a feeling of togetherness and unity in the American polity. The unique "genius" of American politics is one of a kind and cannot be replicated in other nation-states which make America different and separate from the rest of the world, including the Western world (Kempf 63).

The analogy of the Ancient Hebrews suggests that the lack of "idolatry" in American politics represents the absence of essentialist political theories and the general acceptance of a theory-less philosophical consensus. This tendency to dismiss theoretic idols fosters a healthy pragmatism and a conservative tendency in American politics. The result of such a traditionalist consensus is that perspectives on the extremes of the political spectrum remain rather unpopular and quite unlikely to disrupt the smooth functioning of the polity(Kempf70).

This celebration of the American political system's simplicity can potentially build the foundation for a scathing critique of the American polity and the naivete of its citizens concerning their history and political relations. However, the unique "genius" of American politics are viewed as a positive attribute, not a weakness. America's history and geography make it different and separate from the rest of the world, including the Western world, and its political system cannot be replicated in other nation-states(Kammen 15).

The observations of American politics suggest that the rejection of ideological idolatry fosters a healthy pragmatism and a conservative tendency in American politics. The perceived lack of "idolatry" represents the absence of essentialist political theories and the general acceptance of a theory-less philosophical consensus. The views the unique "genius" of

American politics as a positive attribute, not a weakness, and the belief that America's history and geography make it different and separate from the rest of the world, including the Western world. However, his theory may represent a political theory in its own right, and we must make room for the possibility that the American consensus may very well be an ideology as meaningful as the various theories developed in Western Europe (Kammen40).

1.2. The Lessons Learned from the Cold War Consensus School

The Cold War Consensus School was a group of scholars who studied American political thought and its impact on the country's foreign policy during the Cold War. They believed that a transcendent consensus existed in American political thought that reached back to the country's founding and was so dominant that it practically erased all other ideological options from the public discourse in the United States. The scholars in this school employed different approaches to arrive at their findings, but they all reached similar conclusions (Holsti28).

Although the three intellectuals, Richard Hofstadter, Daniel Boorstin and Louis Hartz, used different methodologies, they all arrived at similar conclusions. Despite their initial adherence to left-wing ideology, they abandoned these roots in their later professional years and agreed on the existence of a transcendent consensus in American political thought. This consensus had been present since the beginning of the American experience and was so dominant that it effectively eliminated other ideological options from public discourse. Furthermore, the three intellectuals made similar inferences that are significant to our examination of the impact of American Exceptionalism on present-day political discourse. These inferences can be grouped into three sections (Holsti29).

Firstly, the three intellectuals posited that American Exceptionalism is a powerful force in American political thought. This is due to a shared belief in the unique qualities of the

American experience and the perceived superiority of American culture and values. Secondly, they concluded that this consensus has led to a lack of ideological diversity in American politics. As a result, the spectrum of political options in the United States is narrower than in other countries, with the mainstream political discourse being largely confined to variations on a few core themes. Lastly, the three intellectuals argued that American Exceptionalism has led to a lack of critical self-reflection among Americans. This is because the belief in the inherent superiority of American culture and values has led many Americans to view their country through rose-tinted glasses, overlooking its flaws and shortcomings (Tyrrell 1053).

1.2.1 The Individualism in the American Consensus

Individualism is a defining aspect of the American political consensus where the American tradition places a particular emphasis on the defense of individual property ownership and the interests of individual citizens over the interests of the government. American political mythology celebrates the isolated, rugged individual who carves out a living through hard work and determination, and values self-reliance and personal responsibility. However, this celebration of individualism is often at odds with collective or fraternal tendencies, which are downplayed or ignored altogether in the American tradition. Thus, while individualism is a central component of American political thought, it is also a source of tension and contradiction within that tradition (Newfield).

Individualism is considred as a characteristic of the American political tradition, one of the core values of the American consensus, a central feature of American liberalism and as a fundamental principle that shapes American attitudes towards government, society. individualism is closely tied to the idea of property rights, which is one of the most important expressions of individual liberty. It is also a key factor in the development of American exceptionalism, which is rooted in the belief that America is a land of opportunity where

individuals can achieve success through their own efforts and hard work. Overall, individualism is seen as a crucial component of the American political and cultural identity, and as a key factor in shaping American political thought and policy (Berlin et al 140).

Individualism is a philosophical doctrine that holds individual liberty and autonomy as the highest value in society. It emphasizes the importance of individual self-determination, self-expression, and self-realization, and regards society as a mere aggregation of individuals. This view of individualism has been central to the American political tradition since its inception, shaping the nation's political culture and institutions in profound ways. However, this emphasis on individualism has limited the range of acceptable political ideas in America, as alternative ideologies that place greater emphasis on collective interests or social cooperation are often dismissed as "un-American" or incompatible with the nation's founding principles (Berlin et al 145).

Although there aredifferent language to describe the American consensus, but ultimately agreed on the same definition. The focus in the description, emphasizing the classical liberal tradition as the core of the American consensus. This tradition placed a high value on individual property rights and citizens' interests over government interests. Additionally, the paradoxical nature of American liberalism, which prioritized the independent individual while neglecting collective tendencies and international cooperation. Consequently, foreign policy often took on a nationalistic and isolationist perspective, with an "us versus them" mentality prevailing over more cooperative approaches (Berlin et al 200).

1.2.2 Anti-Intellectualism in the American Consensus

Anti-Intellectualism is defined as a pervasive feature of American political thought, which is characterized by a deep suspicion of abstract reasoning, a preference for practical over theoretical knowledge, a reliance on common sense, and an emphasis on practical results

over theoretical explanations. In his view, anti-intellectualism is a form of irrationality that has profound implications for the way Americans view themselves and their history, and it has contributed to the lack of a coherent intellectual tradition in American politics (Abbott 96).

There was critical of anti-intellectualism in American society. Like Hartz in his book "*The Liberal Tradition in America*"he saw it as a hindrance to the development of critical thinking and the pursuit of knowledge. In his view, anti-intellectualism led to a shallow and narrow-minded understanding of history and society. He believed that it was crucial for individuals to have access to a wide range of ideas and perspectives in order to fully comprehend the complexity of the world around them. Hartz also believed that anti-intellectualism had contributed to a homogenization of American society and a tendency to oversimplify complex issues. Overall, Hartz's stance on anti-intellectualism was that it was a detrimental force in American society that needed to be addressed (Holsti18)**.**

Boorstin's views on anti-intellectualism were somewhat different from Hartz's. He acknowledged the presence of anti-intellectualism in American society but saw it as a positive force that contributed to the country's vitality and innovation. Boorstin believed that America's emphasis on practical knowledge and skills, rather than academic or theoretical knowledge, allowed it to create a unique culture of inventiveness and creativity. He argued that America's anti-intellectualism was a reaction against the rigid class distinctions and entrenched institutions of Europe and represented a healthy skepticism of authority and tradition. Overall, Boorstin saw anti-intellectualism as a defining characteristic of American culture that should be celebrated, rather than criticized (qtd inGonzalez200)**.**

Hofstadter also identified anti-intellectualism as a defining aspect of the American consensus. He argued that American political thought tended to be pragmatic and focused on

immediate practical solutions rather than intellectual or theoretical frameworks. Hofstadter viewed this anti-intellectualism as a product of America's history as a frontier society, where practical skills and self-sufficiency were more valued than abstract thinking or education. However, unlike Hartz and Boorstin, Hofstadter did not necessarily see anti-intellectualism as a negative phenomenon. Instead, he viewed it as a unique aspect of American culture that contributed to the nation's success and vitality (qtd in Berlin et al 195).

1.2.3 The Uniqueness or the American Consensus

The American consensus is defined as the set of shared beliefs and values that form the basis of American political culture, is exceptional and cannot be exported to other nations (Neptune 940).

The unique historical conditions surrounding the American founding, such as the lack of an aristocracy and the abundance of land, made it highly unlikely that the extreme version of liberalism found in American politics could arise elsewhere. In other words, the American consensus was a product of specific historical circumstances that could not be replicated elsewhere (Gunnell 200).

The American consensus was exceptional because it was based on a unique combination of individualism, anti-intellectualism, and religious belief that could not be found in other countries. this exceptionalism was a source of strength for the United States and contributed to its success as a nation (Kammen 25).

However, in the contemporary discourse surrounding the War on Terrorism, there are contradictory statements regarding the exportability of American political thought to other nations. Some argue that American democracy is absolutely unique and cannot be replicated, while others believe that the rest of the world should be made more like the United States in order to achieve stability (Lipset100)

To conclude, American exceptionalism has been a recurring theme in American political thought, tied to the country's unique history, geography, and culture. The three perspectives of individualism, anti-intellectualism, and the American consensus have played important roles in shaping and sustaining this exceptionalism. Individualism, emphasizing the rights and freedoms of the individual over the collective, has been a key feature of American exceptionalism. Anti-intellectualism, rooted in a suspicion of intellectuals and experts, has contributed to the tendency to homogenize the American experience and to ascribe divine qualities to American historical development. The American consensus, with its emphasis on consensus-building and compromise, has also played a role in shaping American exceptionalism. Ultimately, the idea of American exceptionalism has been central to American identity, shaping how Americans view themselves and their place in the world.

The discourse of American exceptionalism has been a dominant theme in the political discourse of the United States. The idea that America is a unique and exceptional nation has been linked to the notions of individualism, anti-intellectualism, and the American consensus. This discourse has been used to justify the nation's foreign policy, including the War on Terrorism. The exceptionalist discourse surrounding the War on Terrorism has been contradictory, focusing on the absolute uniqueness of American democracy while also calling for the rest of the world to become more like the United States to achieve stability. However, this discourse needs to be examined critically to avoid the pitfalls of exceptionalism and ensure that American policies are grounded in a broader and more inclusive understanding of global politics.

Chapter two

American exceptionalism before the turn of the 21st century

In the history of the United States, the concept of American exceptionalism has served as a guiding principle, a source of national identity, and a justification for American actions on the global stage. This chapter delves into the era before the turn of the century, a time when the United States was actively involved in numerous interventions abroad, and examines the speeches of the U.S. presidents during this period. By analyzing these presidential addresses, we gain valuable insights into the rhetoric, ideologies, and narratives that shaped American exceptionalism and influenced the nation's foreign policy.

The era before the turn of the century was marked by significant shifts in global power dynamics, the emergence of new challenges, and the growing aspirations of the United States as a global superpower. From the Bosnia War to the conflicts in Haiti, Iraq, Yugoslavia and beyond, America found itself engaged in military interventions, often citing a sense of exceptionalism as a rationale for its actions. These interventions were presented as efforts to spread democracy, protect American interests, promote economic prosperity, and maintain global stability.

Presidential speeches during this era provide a unique window into the mindset of the nation's leaders and their perception of America's role in the world. Through their words, we can explore the underlying beliefs, motivations, and visions that underpinned American exceptionalism. The presidents of this period, from William McKinley to William Howard Taft, crafted speeches that sought to rally the nation, garner public support, and justify interventionist policies.

This chapter aims to critically examine the speeches delivered by these presidents, analyzing the rhetoric, themes, and narratives employed to construct and reinforce the concept of American exceptionalism. We will delve into the speeches to understand how these leaders framed American interventions, how they presented the nation's actions as necessary and morally justified, and how they navigated the challenges and controversies that arose from these interventions.

By studying these presidential speeches, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and contradictions of American exceptionalism. We will explore the tensions between ideals of freedom, democracy, and self-determination on one hand, and the realities of power, imperialism, and intervention on the other. Through this analysis, we aim to shed light on the evolving nature of American exceptionalism and its influence on U.S. foreign policy decisions during this transformative period in American history.

2.1 The impact of the cold war

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in a significant shift in the global power dynamics, leaving the United States as the sole remaining superpower. This transition was accompanied by early conflicts such as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which led to the Gulf War, and tensions in the newly independent Balkan states. These events prompted the United States to form alliances with new partners to address international challenges. President George H. W. Bush labeled this shift as a "New World Order," and it marked the first time since World War II that the United States and Russia found themselves on the same side of a conflict (Department Of State. The Office of Electronic Information).

Throughout the 1990s, the administrations of President William J. Clinton were influenced by efforts from American foreign policymakers to redefine the concept of a "threat" and to determine foreign policy objectives that would best serve the "national

interest" in the post-Cold War era. Some experts argued that the United States should prioritize the prevention of ethnic conflicts and genocides in regions like Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo. On the other hand, there were proponents of the view that U.S. foreign policy should primarily concentrate on safeguarding American economic and trade interests (Department Of State. The Office of Electronic Information).

2.2 American Exceptionalism in the Post-Cold War Era

The conclusion of the Cold War in the late 1980s presented a unique opportunity for reevaluating US foreign policy. Contrary to fears, the Cold War did not end with a nuclear confrontation between the superpowers; rather, it peacefully faded away. Several significant and unexpected changes in the international landscape contributed to this outcome. The Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan, the collapse of the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe, the reunification of Germany, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and the disintegration of the USSR marked the end of the bipolar era (Pease 53).

The interpretation given to these events played a crucial role in shaping the US understanding of the post-Cold War world. President Bush (Senior) famously proclaimed that America had "won the Cold War" with the collapse of Soviet communism. This perspective was widely shared in the US, portraying it as a triumph for the American model of national security that had evolved since 1947. However, alternative explanations for the Cold War's end received less attention. These included attributing the transformation to Mikhail Gorbachev's policies and personality, the deterioration of the Marxist-Leninist system, or the advent of globalization in the early 1980s (Engel 30).

While there was disagreement over the causes of the Cold War's demise, three distinct features characterized the new international landscape. First, there were no longer any system-threatening military confrontations. The magnitude of conflicts between the US and

the USSR during the Cold War, which could have posed a global nuclear threat, became difficult to envision after 1989 (Engel 31).

Second, the US emerged as the sole superpower with no significant geopolitical or ideological competitors. The collapse of the USSR resulted in a diminished Russian state, while the EU was preoccupied with German reunification and the reconstruction of post-communist Eastern Europe. Japan experienced economic challenges, and China was undergoing a delicate transformation. This left the US in a unique position, theoretically able to operate on the global stage without the encumbrance of other major powers. In terms of inter-state relations, the relative power of the US increased significantly (Waltz 45).

Third, the post-Cold War era was marked by deepening globalization, characterized by technologically driven connections between societies, institutions, cultures, and individuals on a global scale. Globalization led to a shrinking of time and space, making the world appear smaller as issues related to the environment, economics, politics, and security intersected more deeply and frequently (Waltz 46).

However, there was little consensus on the impact of globalization on the role of the sovereign state in foreign and security policy. Three schools of thought emerged: hyper globalists believed that globalization would diminish the significance of territorial boundaries and erode the sovereign nation-state; skeptics argued that globalization had limited impact on the sovereign state; and transformationalists believed that the role of the sovereign state was undergoing a transformation in response to global pressures (Smith 205).

At the beginning of the 1990s, US foreign policy seemed to align with the views of skeptics and transformationalists. The Bush (Senior) administration appeared confident in constructing a new grand strategy in the changing global context. With the US as the largest economy and the driving force behind globalization, many Americans believed that the

country not only defeated Soviet totalitarianism but also led the process of globalization. This perspective laid the groundwork for a new world order based on Western values (Smith 206).

However, the actual outcome deviated from initial expectations. The controversial humanitarian intervention in Somalia in 1992-1993 exemplified the emerging security order. The operation, aimed at addressing a catastrophic famine, revealed several key features of the post-Cold War environment. Weak or failed states became the main source of threat and instability, often characterized by a lack of legitimate governance. Conflicts were driven by identity issues and could mobilize along ethnic, tribal, racial, and religious lines (Patman 975).

During the 1990s, there was a noticeable shift in Western parties, such as the British Labor Party, moving closer to the moderately left-of-center position of the Democratic Party in the United States. At the same time, the Democratic Party itself was moving further towards the political center under the leadership of President Bill Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council. As a result, left-wing parties in the West were becoming more centrist, aligning them with the Democrats, while the Democratic Party moved even closer to the center of the political spectrum (Patman 976).

Despite these changes, the United States remained exceptional in key indicators such as taxation, social spending levels, union membership, and economic inequality. These indicators were closely associated with the amount of political power held by the lower class in a given country. Since the distribution of power in a pluralistic political system is crucial for ensuring government accountability to a diverse range of citizens, the relatively low power of the lower class in the United States could lead to a lack of democratic responsiveness in the American political system (Patman 980).

The difficulties faced by the American working class in attaining and sustaining political power might extend to other groups outside the political mainstream. If this

speculation holds true, it suggests that American Exceptionalism has effects beyond the Cold War context of socialism and extends to the domination of elite opinion in the political discourse of the United States (Lipset and Marks 262).

To evaluate the impact of American Exceptionalism, a set of exceptional traits were identified, which he refers to as the "American Creed." This includes values such as liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, laissez-faire, and a strong religious fervor. The individualistic and messianic nature of American religious traditions deeply influences how the country addresses matters of war and peace. The moralistic framework in American thinking about foreign affairs often presents wars as struggles for moral goals, such as making the world safe for democracy or combating evil. This moralistic paradigm also affects internal conflicts in the United States, which are framed in intense moral terms rather than rational material interests ("The Creed - American Creed").

2.3 American exceptionalism and international interventions

The 1990s witnessed a series of significant interventions by the United States in various nations, reflecting its active engagement in global affairs under different banners. This period was characterized by a range of military, diplomatic, and humanitarian interventions, as the United States assumed a prominent role in shaping international events. From military operations like the Gulf War, and humanitarian interventions in places like Bosnia, the United States demonstrated a multifaceted approach to interventionism. These interventions were carried out under different banners, such as humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping, counterterrorism, or the promotion of democracy and human rights. Thus it is important to delve into the complexities and motivations behind these interventions, examining the speeches of U.S. presidents during this era to shed light on the diverse rationales employed to justify America's interventions in other nations. By exploring these interventions and the

rhetoric surrounding them, a comprehensive understanding of the United States' multifarious engagements in the 1990s will be attained.

2.3.1 1993-1995 Bosnia

In 1993, Bosnia and Herzegovina found itself embroiled in a devastating conflict marked by deep-rooted ethnic tensions and a complex web of territorial disputes. The country's multi-ethnic fabric was torn apart as Bosnian Serb forces, backed by Serbia, sought to establish ethnically homogenous territories, targeting Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats. This resulted in widespread atrocities, including ethnic cleansing, mass killings, and the siege of cities like Sarajevo. The situation in Bosnia in 1993 was characterized by intense fighting, human suffering, and the breakdown of social and political structures, pushing the country to the brink of fragmentation and escalating into one of the bloodiest conflicts in Europe since World War II. International efforts to resolve the crisis were underway, but the situation remained highly volatile, with widespread violence and humanitarian crises unfolding throughout the country (GunnarssonPopović 1).

Bill Clinton emphasizes that America's involvement in Bosnia will not revolve around engaging in a war but rather focuses on assisting the people of Bosnia in securing their own peace agreement. The mission is defined as limited and focused, under the command of an American general. By undertaking this mission, Clinton argues that the United States will have the opportunity to play a crucial role in halting the killing of innocent civilians, particularly children, and simultaneously bring stability to central Europe, a region that holds significant importance to the national interests of America. Clinton asserts that this undertaking aligns with the principles and values that America has embodied since its inception, stating that America represents more than just a physical place but an idea that has become an ideal for billions of people worldwide, with the core values of life, liberty, and the

pursuit of happiness ("CNN - Transcript of President Clinton's Speech on Bosnia - Nov. 27, 1995").

Clinton goes on to highlight America's historic commitment to its ideals. He emphasizes that America has not simply stood for these ideals but has taken action and made sacrifices to uphold them. Clinton recalls how Americans fought in two world wars to ensure that freedom triumphed over tyranny. He acknowledges that after World War I, there was a period of pulling back from global affairs, which resulted in a vacuum filled by forces of hatred. However, after World War II, America resumed its leadership role, making commitments that maintained peace, spread democracy, fostered unparalleled prosperity, and ultimately achieved victory in the Cold War. Clinton attributes the growing global aspirations for liberty, democracy, and peace to America's dedication and underscores the power of American ideas, which transcend the nation's size, wealth, and military might, making America a uniquely trusted nation in the eyes of the world ("CNN - Transcript of President Clinton's Speech on Bosnia - Nov. 27, 1995").

Bill Clinton reflects a prime example of how American exceptionalism perpetuates the belief that the United States possesses a superior morality. By asserting that America's role in Bosnia is not about engaging in war but rather about helping the people secure their own peace agreement, Clinton presents the narrative that the United States is driven by a higher moral purpose. This notion of exceptionalism reinforces the idea that American values and principles are inherently superior, and it justifies American intervention as a means of protecting the innocent and vulnerable, such as children. By claiming the higher moral ground, the United States positions itself as the arbiter of what is right and good in the world("CNN - Transcript of President Clinton's Speech on Bosnia - Nov. 27, 1995").

By framing the mission in Bosnia as a means of bringing stability to central Europe, Clinton implicitly suggests that it is America's duty to dictate and shape the political landscape of other nations. This belief in the righteousness of American influence reflects the inherent bias of American exceptionalism, as it perpetuates the idea that the United States knows what is best for other countries and assumes the role of a global moral authority (Zarefsky610).

In addition, Clinton's emphasis on America's historical commitment to its ideals serves to reinforce the narrative of American exceptionalism. By highlighting America's involvement in two world wars and its sacrifices to uphold freedom and defeat tyranny, he reinforces the notion that the United States is uniquely positioned as a force for good in the world. This reinforces the belief that American morality is superior, and it justifies American intervention and involvement in global affairs. The speech ultimately showcases how American exceptionalism not only drives the American mentality but also perpetuates the idea that American morality is the benchmark against which other nations should be measured(Zarefsky615).

2.3.2 Haiti1994-1996

In 1994, Haiti was grappling with a tumultuous political and social landscape. The country was mired in a political crisis following the overthrow of its democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, by a military coup in 1991. The subsequent years were marred by violence, human rights abuses, and economic instability under the military regime led by General Raoul Cédras. The situation in Haiti in 1994 was characterized by widespread political repression, the suppression of dissent, and the mass exodus of Haitians seeking refuge in the United States. In response to mounting international pressure and concerns over the deteriorating humanitarian situation, the United States led a multinational force to

intervene in Haiti, known as Operation Uphold Democracy. The objective was to restore democracy, reinstate Aristide, and stabilize the country. This intervention marked a critical turning point in Haiti's political trajectory, paving the way for Aristide's return and the eventual restoration of democratic governance in the years that followed (CRS Report for Congress Received through the CRS Web Order 1).

Bill Clinton delivered a speech addressing the situation in Haiti, where the dictators, led by General Raoul Cedras, maintained control over a violent regime. Clinton stated that the dictators had consistently rejected peaceful solutions proposed by the international community, breaking their agreement to relinquish power. Their actions resulted in the brutalization of the Haitian people and the destruction of the country's economy. Efforts to find a diplomatic solution had been exhausted over the course of three years, with each proposal being rejected by the dictators ("Address to the Nation on Haiti | the American Presidency Project").

The President emphasized that the United States had a responsibility to protect its interests, halt the brutal atrocities threatening thousands of Haitians, secure the borders, and preserve stability and democracy in the hemisphere. To demonstrate the seriousness of the situation, Clinton announced the activation of military reserve personnel and the deployment of two aircraft carriers, the U.S.S. Eisenhower and the U.S.S. America, to the region. He sent a clear message to the Haitian dictators, stating that their time was up and they must leave power voluntarily or face forced removal ("Address to the Nation on Haiti | the American Presidency Project").

Clinton also provided background information on the situation in Haiti, highlighting the country's struggle for freedom and independence. He explained how Haiti had suffered from repression and lacked the progress in democracy seen in other nations in the hemisphere. The

President recounted how, four years prior, the Haitian people had held free and fair elections, electing President Jean-Bertrand Aristide with an overwhelming majority. However, eight months later, General Cedras orchestrated a military coup, leading to a nightmare of violence, intimidation, and humanitarian crisis. The dictators committed atrocities, including the execution of children, rape, torture, and murder. Recent reports even detailed the slaying of Haitian orphans by the regime's police thugs, as they suspected the children of harboring sympathy for President Aristide. The dire situation compelled President Clinton to take action in order to alleviate the suffering and restore stability in Haiti ("Address to the Nation on Haiti | the American Presidency Project").

In his speech addressing the situation in Haiti, President Bill Clinton emphasized the humanitarian aspect as a key reason for intervention. He highlighted the brutal atrocities committed by the dictators, including the execution of children, rape, and murder. By emphasizing the suffering of the Haitian people, Clinton sought to appeal to the moral conscience of the American public and the international community. He presented the intervention as a means to protect innocent lives, particularly children, and alleviate their suffering. By framing the intervention in humanitarian terms, Clinton aimed to evoke empathy and garner support for the actions being taken.

Additionally, President Clinton underscored the importance of democracy as a guiding principle for the intervention. He recounted the Haitian people's struggle for freedom and their democratic aspirations. Clinton highlighted the elections that had taken place in Haiti, where the majority had voted for President Aristide. The subsequent coup and the dictators' reign of terror were presented as a direct attack on democratic values. By intervening, Clinton argued that the United States was not only defending its national interests but also promoting democracy in the hemisphere. He positioned democracy as a pillar upon which the world should be built, suggesting that the United States had a duty to uphold this fundamental

principle by supporting the legitimate government and restoring democratic governance in Haiti (Adress to the Nation on Haiti/ the American Presidency Project).

President Clinton's speech also conveyed the idea that the intervention in Haiti served as an example to the entire world. By taking action to protect innocent lives and promote democracy, Clinton portrayed the United States as a beacon of moral authority and a champion of justice. He emphasized that America's ideals of liberty, democracy, and peace were universal aspirations shared by people everywhere. Clinton argued that it was not merely the size, wealth, or military might of the United States that made it a trusted nation but the power of its ideas and dedication to promoting those ideals. By intervening in Haiti, Clinton presented the United States as fulfilling its role as a global leader and exemplifying the values it sought to promote internationally (Adress to the Nation on Haiti/ the American Presidency Project).

2.3.3 Iraq1998

In 1998, Iraq was entrenched in a volatile political and security environment. Led by President Saddam Hussein, the country faced increasing international scrutiny and tensions due to suspicions of possessing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and non-compliance with United Nations resolutions. The situation in Iraq in 1998 was characterized by ongoing conflicts with international bodies, such as the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), tasked with inspecting and verifying Iraq's disarmament efforts. Fears of Iraq's WMD capabilities and the potential threat they posed to regional stability dominated the discourse, prompting the United States and the United Kingdom to launch Operation Desert Fox, a four-day military campaign aimed at degrading Iraq's military and intelligence capabilities. This marked a significant escalation of tensions between Iraq and the international community, setting the stage for subsequent events and the eventual 2003 invasion of Iraq (Glass).

In 1998, President Clinton made a statement regarding the intervention in Iraq, emphasizing the significant opportunities and potential that lay ahead for the United States. He recognized the contemporary era as a time of tremendous promise, characterized by the conclusion of superpower confrontations and the steady advancement of democracy across the globe. With each passing day, the information age dismantled the long-standing barriers, be they economic, political, or social, that had previously confined people and obstructed the free flow of freedom and prosperity. President Clinton highlighted the transformative power of this age, which gradually granted individuals the basic freedoms that Americans had long enjoyed and taken for granted ("Text of Clinton Statement on Iraq - February 17, 1998").

Clinton also stated that if Saddam Hussein fails to comply with the agreed terms and the international community fails to take action, it would send a message to him that the world lacks resolve. This would lead him to believe that he can proceed with the development of weapons of mass destruction and push for the removal of sanctions, disregarding the commitments he made. Clinton emphasized the importance of holding Saddam accountable for his actions and ensuring that the inspection process maintains its integrity and effectiveness. Failure to act would risk enabling Saddam to rebuild a dangerous arsenal with catastrophic consequences ("Text of Clinton Statement on Iraq - February 17, 1998").

This statement by Clinton exemplifies a recurring trend in how the United States portrays its adversaries. The US tends to demonize these countries, reducing their complex political systems and diverse populations to a single figurehead. In this case, Saddam Hussein becomes the embodiment of Iraq, allowing the US to frame its actions as a response to an individual rather than a nation. By depersonalizing the country and focusing solely on the actions of its leader, the US creates a simplified narrative that justifies its interventionist policies (Text of Clinton Statement on Iraq - February 17, 1998").

Furthermore, this approach reinforces the refusal of the US government to acknowledge its rivals as legitimate nations with their own sovereignty and interests. Instead, they are reduced to being mere extensions of their leaders' actions. By disregarding the complexities and diversity within these countries, the US perpetuates a simplistic narrative that serves its own interests. This portrayal allows the US to justify its interventions as necessary for global stability and security, while dismissing any genuine grievances or concerns of the targeted nation(Glass).

This situation highlights the interconnection between US exceptionalism, propaganda, and conflict. The notion of American exceptionalism, which asserts the belief in the unique and superior qualities of the United States, often relies on the use of propaganda to maintain and promote this perception. By employing propaganda techniques that simplify and distort complex realities, the US can present itself as the righteous actor while diminishing the legitimacy of its adversaries (McCartney400).

Furthermore, conflict becomes an integral part of this equation. The perpetuation of exceptionalism often necessitates the presence of conflicts or perceived threats to justify interventionist policies. By framing rivals as existential dangers or evil entities, the US can rally public support for its actions and maintain the illusion of American exceptionalism. In this sense, conflict becomes a means to reaffirm and reinforce the exceptionalist narrative, perpetuating a cycle where propaganda and conflict sustain each other (McCartney420).

2.3.4 Yugoslavia1999

In 1999, Yugoslavia was embroiled in a devastating conflict that marked the final stage of the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The situation in Yugoslavia in 1999 was marked by the Kosovo War, which erupted between the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, led by President Slobodan Milošević, and the ethnic Albanian

insurgency seeking independence for Kosovo. The conflict escalated into a full-scale humanitarian crisis, characterized by widespread violence, ethnic cleansing, and displacement of civilians. The situation drew international attention and condemnation, leading to NATO's military intervention in the form of airstrikes against Yugoslav targets. The intervention aimed to halt the atrocities, protect the civilian population, and pressure the Yugoslav government to negotiate a peaceful resolution. The events in Yugoslavia in 1999 underscored the complexities of ethnic tensions and the struggle for self-determination, leaving a lasting impact on the region and reshaping the political landscape of the Balkans (Calic 315).

In a speech delivered in 1999, President Bill Clinton stated, "We act to prevent a wider war, to defuse a powder keg at the heart of Europe, that has exploded twice before in this century with catastrophic results." He emphasized the importance of taking action to address the situation and avoid the escalation of conflict. Furthermore, Clinton emphasized the need to stand united with allies in the pursuit of peace. By acting promptly, the United States was not only upholding its core values but also protecting its own interests. In doing so, it was making significant strides in advancing the cause of peace(Transcript: Clinton Adresses Nation on Yugoslavia Strike).

The aforementioned statement by President Bill Clinton in 1999 reflects a prime example of American exceptionalism, wherein the United States assumes the role of a global peacekeeper and intervenes in other countries' affairs to safeguard not only its own interests but also what it deems morally right. This approach highlights the belief that the United States possesses a unique responsibility to uphold its values and promote peace worldwide. By actively engaging in conflict prevention and resolution, the United States demonstrates a sense of moral duty to protect nations from descending into catastrophic turmoil, particularly in regions with historical precedent for devastating conflicts (Transcript: Clinton Adresses Nation on Yugoslavia Strike).

Furthermore, this perspective underscores the notion that American exceptionalism includes the conviction that the United States has a distinct role in shaping the international order according to its own principles. By proactively defusing potentially explosive situations, such as the powder keg at the heart of Europe, the United States positions itself as a force for stability and progress. This proactive stance aligns with the notion that the United States has a duty to ensure global peace and stability, even if it entails interfering in the internal affairs of other countries to uphold its vision of what is right and just. In doing so, the United States exhibits a sense of exceptionalism, believing that it possesses the capability and responsibility to shape the world according to its own values and interests (Rust).

2.3.5 Macedonia2001

In 2001, Macedonia was facing a grave crisis that threatened to escalate into a full-blown armed conflict. The situation in Macedonia in 2001 was characterized by escalating ethnic tensions between the ethnic Albanian minority and the majority Macedonian population. The ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA) initiated an armed insurgency, seeking greater political and cultural rights for the Albanian community. The conflict quickly spread, leading to clashes between the NLA and Macedonian security forces. The violence raised concerns of a potential ethnic conflict and prompted international mediation efforts. The Ohrid Agreement, signed in August 2001, aimed to address the grievances of the Albanian community and bring an end to the hostilities. The agreement granted greater rights and representation to Albanians, paving the way for a more inclusive political system and contributing to a period of relative stability in the years that followed (Daskaloviski 10-11).

In a speech delivered by President Bush, he emphasized the importance of fostering tolerance and freedom as we enter the 21st century. He acknowledged that differences should not be a justification for violence or vulnerability a pretext for domination. From regions like

Kosovo to Kashmir, the Middle East to Northern Ireland, President Bush recognized that freedom and tolerance were fundamental issues in our world. He praised the exemplary service of the audience, stating that they have set an example for the entire world ("CNN.com - Transcript: Bush Speech to Troops in Kosovo - July 25, 2001").

President Bush expressed satisfaction with the progress being made, attributing it to the efforts of the audience and those who came before them. He noted that due to their contributions, the people of Kosovo now have access to essential resources like food, shelter, education, and medical assistance. He also commended their efforts in Macedonia, where arms trafficking has decreased, bringing hope for peace in the region. President Bush acknowledged that while the Balkans are moving closer to Europe, there is still much work to be done in achieving lasting stability and prosperity("CNN.com - Transcript: Bush Speech to Troops in Kosovo - July 25, 2001").

In another powerful speech, President Bush addressed the persistent instability in the region, acknowledging the existence of individuals and groups determined to undermine the delicate peace that currently prevails. He expressed a strong condemnation for those, particularly the sponsors of violence in Macedonia, who actively work to subvert the principles of democracy ("President Bush Speaks to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University").

However, President Bush also highlighted the undeniable progress that has been achieved. He pointed out the encouraging democratic transformations taking place in Zagreb and Belgrade, signaling a positive shift towards more inclusive forms of governance. Additionally, he acknowledged the presence of moderate governments in Bosnia, representing a step towards greater stability and cooperation ("President Bush Speaks to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University").

President Bush further applauded the establishment of multi-ethnic police forces in Kosovo, which symbolize the commitment to fostering diversity and inclusivity in the region. He also acknowledged the end of violence in southern Serbia, reflecting a significant milestone in the pursuit of lasting peace ("President Bush Speaks to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University").

The speech delivered by President Bush exemplifies a perspective rooted in American exceptionalism, where the United States positions itself as the moral authority and teacher of the world. By condemning the actions of those deemed to be undermining democracy, such as the sponsors of violence in Macedonia, the speech reflects an implicit assertion of the United States' role as the arbiter of right and wrong on the global stage. This positioning reinforces the idea that the U.S. sees itself as a teacher, imparting its values and ideals onto other nations("President Bush Speaks to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University").

Moreover, the speech's positive remarks about nations that align with American interests, such as democratic changes in Zagreb and Belgrade, moderate governments in Bosnia, and multi-ethnic police in Kosovo, reinforce the notion of American exceptionalism. By praising these nations, President Bush places them within a hierarchical order where they are seen as fulfilling the expectations set by the United States. This further solidifies the idea of the U.S. as the teacher and judge, elevating those who conform to its ideals and values("President Bush Speaks to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University").

The connection to American exceptionalism lies in the underlying assumption that the United States represents the pinnacle of democratic governance, cooperation, and European integration. By highlighting the unprecedented moment where all governments in the region are democratic and predisposed to join Europe, the speech aligns with the belief that the United States serves as the model for other nations to emulate. This portrayal reinforces the

notion of American exceptionalism, wherein the United States sees itself as the guiding force, leading and shaping the world according to its own principles and aspirations.

The United States has positioned itself as the ultimate standard-bearer of human morals and acted as the global policeman, particularly in the post-Cold War era, can be linked to the concept of American exceptionalism. This idea stems from a belief in the unique virtues and responsibilities of the United States, which has manifested in the country's perceived duty to enforce its own ethical framework on the world stage.

Following the end of the Cold War, the United States emerged as the world's sole superpower. This newfound position of power, combined with a conviction in the superiority of American values, led to a perception that the U.S. had a moral obligation to ensure the spread and preservation of its principles worldwide. This self-appointed role as the global policeman allowed the United States to exert influence and often intervene in the affairs of other nations, often in the name of promoting democracy, human rights, and stability.

American exceptionalism played a significant role in shaping this mindset. Rooted in the belief that the United States is a unique and inherently virtuous nation, exceptionalism fostered a sense of moral superiority. This belief system justified the United States' actions as a benevolent force, even when those actions involved coercive tactics or infringed upon the sovereignty of other nations. The use of military interventions, economic sanctions, and diplomatic pressure served as tools to enforce American values and impose its preferred ethical framework on other countries.

However, it can be argued that it amounts to bullying other countries into accepting American ethics. Many of these interventions often disregard the complexities of local contexts and fail to respect the autonomy and diversity of other nations. This has led to

accusations of imperialism and the perception that the United States is imposing its own values on others, rather than fostering genuine dialogue and collaboration.

Nonetheless, the belief in American exceptionalism has persisted, shaping U.S. foreign policy decisions and the country's role as a global policeman. While the United States has undoubtedly made positive contributions in promoting human rights and democracy, the inherent tension between exceptionalism, coercion, and the respect for sovereignty continues to generate debates and challenges the legitimacy of America's role as the ultimate moral authority.

The United States' self-perception as the pinnacle of human morals and its role as the global policeman can be attributed to the concept of American exceptionalism. The post-Cold War era provided the U.S. with an opportunity to exert its influence and promote its values worldwide, often through interventions and coercion. However, this approach has faced criticism for disregarding local contexts and infringing upon the sovereignty of other nations. The tension between exceptionalism, coercion, and respect for diversity underscores the ongoing debates surrounding the legitimacy of the United States' role as the ultimate moral authority in the world.

Chapter 3

The Use of American Exceptionalism in the War Against Terrorism

The war against terrorism launched in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks marked a significant turning point in American foreign policy and domestic governance. During this period, President George W. Bush strategically employed the concept of American exceptionalism to rally support for his administration's actions and policies. By emphasizing America's unique values, principles, and commitment to freedom, Bush sought to shape public opinion, justify military interventions abroad, and expand executive authority at home. This chapter examines the utilization of American exceptionalism by George W. Bush and its implications for the pursuit of the war against terrorism, including its influence on public sentiment, policy decisions, and the balance between national security and civil liberties. By delving into the rhetoric and policy initiatives of the Bush administration, we can gain insights into the power and consequences of employing exceptionalist narratives in times of crisis.

This chapter explores the concept of American exceptionalism both prior to and following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. It delves into the historical context and prevailing narratives surrounding American exceptionalism leading up to the terrorist attacks, examining how they shaped national identity and foreign policy discourse. Additionally, the chapter examines how President George W. Bush strategically employed exceptionalist rhetoric and narratives in the aftermath of 9/11 to garner support for his administration's response to the attacks and subsequent actions. By analyzing the continuity and transformation of exceptionalism in the pre- and post-9/11 periods, this chapter aims to shed light on the role of exceptionalism in shaping public opinion, policy decisions, and the broader implications for national security and civil liberties.

3.1 Current Patterns of American Exceptionalism

The origins of consensus theory are rooted in the Cold War era, making it challenging to detach it from American Exceptionalism, which was developed to distinguish the American political system from those influenced by Marxism-Leninism after World War II. With the Cold War coming to an end, we can expect the narrative of consensus to evolve to suit the changing material conditions. The fall of the Soviet Union has raised crucial questions about American Exceptionalism, such as whether the US prevailed over the Soviets because of its superior ideals and whether the end of the Cold War would remove the impediment to the spread of American ideals globally. Furthermore, if the American ideal spread worldwide, would the US remain unique? Would a new challenge arise against American Exceptionalism, both in terms of superiority and uniqueness? (Cha 357).

It could be argued that contemporary liberals and conservatives both inherit the legacy of American Exceptionalism. The following chapter focuses on the connection between American Exceptionalism and conservative ideology in. By doing so, we can gain insight into the post-Cold War perspective on American uniqueness and understand the Bush administration's rhetorical position in foreign policy matters following the aftermath of September 11th.

1.1 American Exceptionalism Transitioning to the 21st Century

During the Cold War, the doctrine of American Exceptionalism reached its peak, but it continued to be relevant for some scholars analyzing the global changes after the fall of the Soviet Union. The belief that the United States is a unique and perhaps superior polity in world history remained intact, although the narrative of consensus did change to some extent. Scholars like Lipsct, Fukuyama, and Huntington examined American Exceptionalism from different perspectives (Lipset14).

Lipsct provided a comprehensive evaluation of the long-term benefits and drawbacks of American political thought. Huntington offered a gloomy analysis of the future of the United States and Western civilization as a whole, emphasizing American cultural superiority cautiously. Both scholars expressed concern about the messianic tendencies associated with American Exceptionalism (Lipset28).

Fukuyama, especially in the early 1990s, defended American and Western superiority unapologetically and advocated for spreading Americanism globally after the Cold War. The comparison between Fukuyama's "End of History" theory and George W. Bush's exceptionalist rhetoric becomes evident in Chapter Four. While Fukuyama does not fit the typical neoconservative mold, his confidence in American superiority and his almost evangelical zeal aligns with Bush's vision following the September 11, 2001 attacks (qtd in Luthi13).

In regard to human rights, international human rights institutions have a significant impact, and the contrasting approaches of Europe and the United States highlight this difference. Before the events of 9/11, European countries committed themselves to a robust transnational system for protecting human rights, while the United States rejected international oversight of its human rights practices. This disparity helps explain why the use of torture as a counterterrorism strategy following 9/11 faced greater opposition in Europe compared to the United States (Human Rights Watch).

Both Europe and the US claim to respect the international legal prohibition of torture and ill-treatment. However, Europe adopts a broader, less flexible, and clearer interpretation of the prohibition. It reinforces this stance with a stronger system of monitoring and enforcement, supported by regional human rights mechanisms that raise the collective standard of acceptable behavior and empower member states to exercise oversight over each other through supranational institutions (Human Rights Watch)

This shows that the United States viewed itself as exceptional from the rest of the world. While many nations in Europe accepted to be overseen in regards to the human rights violations the US demonstrated that it is better than to be overseen by others and can decide on their own what can be seen as a human rights violation and what isn't. This helps showcase the difference between American exceptionalism and the rest of the world, painting the picture of uncle Sam as the man who can do no wrong and the rest of the world as those who can't be trusted.

3.2 Bush's September 11th Response and the Notion of American Exceptionalism

Since the September 11th terrorist attacks, the United States underwent a significant shift in its approach to national security and foreign policy. Under the leadership of President George W. Bush, the country embarked on a war on terrorism that sought to combat global threats. However, the methods employed by the Bush administration in pursuing this war were deeply intertwined with the concept of American exceptionalism. This raises important questions about the ways in which Bush utilized American exceptionalism to justify and advance his policies (McCartney 405).

One method through which Bush employed American exceptionalism was through rhetorical appeals. In his speeches and public addresses, he often evoked the idea that the United States had a duty to protect its citizens and defend freedom at all costs. By framing the war on terrorism as a struggle between good and evil, Bush appealed to the nation's sense of exceptionalism, rallying support for military actions and justifying the erosion of civil liberties in the name of national security(McCartney 410).

Another method employed by Bush was the use of preemptive warfare and the promotion of democracy. Drawing on American exceptionalism, he argued that the United States had the right and obligation to preemptively strike against perceived threats to its security. This approach was exemplified in the invasion of Iraq, where the goal of spreading

democracy and overthrowing dictatorial regimes was framed as an inherent part of American exceptionalism(Murphy607).

The following sections will delve deeper into the methods utilized by President George W. Bush in employing American exceptionalism in his war on terrorism. Each heading will explore different aspects, such as the rhetorical appeals to exceptionalism, the implications of preemptive warfare and the promotion of democracy, and the critiques surrounding the utilization of American exceptionalism. By examining these specific areas, a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which Bush employed American exceptionalism as a tool in shaping and justifying his policies will be achieved (Murphy 620).

3.2.1 The Influence of Language during Moments of National Emergency

Most introductory American government textbooks cover the concept of the "bully pulpit" held by the President of the United States. These textbooks also discuss the significant power of the presidency, particularly in foreign policy and times of national crisis. Historically, citizens have relied on the President to navigate complex foreign affairs, especially concerning military engagements. Therefore, it is unsurprising that following the September 11th terrorist attacks, the words of President George W. Bush had a profound impact on the majority of Americans (Miller 8).

In a 2004 report on "strategic communication," the U.S. Defense Department emphasized the importance of presidential rhetoric in influencing public perceptions and garnering support for administration policies. While the report primarily focused on global strategic communication, it acknowledged the profound influence that the President's words have on shaping American public opinion regarding security matters ("Defense Science Board 13").

David Zarefsky, a Communications Professor at Northwestern University, pointed out that during times of crisis, the prominence of the presidency and the persuasive power of

authoritative rhetoric significantly impact the average person. Regarding the events of September 11th, Zarefsky noted that most Americans formed their interpretation of the attacks based on Bush's contextualization of the events in the days following the assault on New York and Washington (Zarefsky 610).

3.2.2 Reframing Terrorism as an Act of Warfare

Leaders have long employed the enduring strategy of the "call to arms" during times of crisis, utilizing the dynamics of power within their social contexts to mobilize the masses towards violence and sacrifice. Although this approach may initially consolidate a leader's power, it often undermines the long-term stability of their institutions within the broader power landscape(Deudney21).

Arguably the most influential rhetorical decision made by Bush was to categorize the terrorist attacks as acts of war rather than something else. While scholars like Zarefsky claim that this was an "instinctive response" rather than a deliberate calculation may be speculative, it does not diminish the significance of his observation regarding the discourse of war. Phyllis Bennis, a fellow at the Transnational Institute noted that the calls for war seemed unanimous after continuous messages from the president and high-ranking officials emphasizing that war was the only appropriate response to such a crime (Bennis 79).

The terrorist attacks carried out by nineteen individuals, none of whom were Afghan or from the countries later labeled as the Axis of Evil, could have been interpreted as a severe criminal act rather than an act of war. The accomplices of the deceased hijackers could have been investigated, pursued, and prosecuted as international criminals. Labeling the September 11th attacks as an act of war was a conscious decision made by the president and his foreign policy advisors, although it was not an obvious choice(Esch360).

As Zarefsky accurately pointed out, several essential characteristics of an active state of war were absent in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks. Most notably, the United

States was attacked by civilian terrorists rather than military personnel from a specific nation-state. Although the Taliban government in Afghanistan was eventually identified as permitting Al-Qaeda to operate within their borders, no evidence was provided to suggest their authorization or direct involvement in planning the attacks (Zarefsky 613).

Moreover, recent history challenges the assertion that the war paradigm is the most accurate framework for evaluating terrorist activities carried out by non-state actors. Timothy McVeigh, an American, considered himself at war with the United States government when he bombed the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. However, he was treated as a criminal, prosecuted in a federal court, and sentenced to death by civilian law enforcement officials, not military authorities (Federal Bureau of Investigation).

A comparable analogy can be found in the prolonged dispute over the status of captured members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in the 1970s and early 1980s. Despite considering themselves soldiers in a war against the British Empire, PIRA members held by British authorities were consistently treated as common criminals. The British government refused to grant them exceptional status and maintained that they were criminals subject to prosecution (Jackson 113).

These recent historical examples demonstrate how two powerful nations interpreted acts of violence perpetrated by non-state actors as criminal behavior rather than using war terminology. By refusing to recognize terrorists like McVeigh and the PIRA as legitimate combatants, the attacked nations denied them a certain level of legitimacy. In fact, acknowledging the perspective of these non-state actors would have effectively elevated them to a position equal to that of the nations themselves(Esch370).

By framing the September 11th attacks within the context of war, Bush was able to propose actions that would typically be deemed unacceptable if the situation were viewed as best addressed through international criminal justice procedures. The rhetoric of war allows

for a considerable increase in the level of institutional violence deemed permissible by the public(Monten112).

Furthermore, the language of war is so resolute and overpowering that it immediately overrides any suggestion of labeling the attacks as a criminal act or any other categorization that falls short of war. Those who attempt to analyze the situation through a legal lens are viewed as offering a weak response to a brutal incident. Moreover, those who seek to approach the terrorist attacks from a criminal justice perspective are criticized for trivializing a confrontation that resulted in the loss of thousands of lives(Monten 145).

3.23 Exceptionalism and the Language of Warfare

The rhetoric of war employed by President Bush following the September 11th attacks was closely intertwined with the concept of American exceptionalism. The latter refers to the belief that the United States is a unique nation with a special mission and destiny to promote freedom, democracy, and values around the world. Bush's invocation of war served to reinforce the narrative of American exceptionalism and its role in confronting global challenges (Song 250).

Firstly, by framing the response to the attacks as a war, Bush portrayed the United States as a victim of an unprecedented act of aggression, as claimed by the Change Institute for the European Commission, which emphasizes the nation's vulnerability and the need to defend its values and way of life. This narrative of victimhood, coupled with the idea of American exceptionalism, presented the country as uniquely positioned to lead the global fight against terrorism (Spiro39).

Thirdly, Djedei and Guedda inserted that the war rhetoric served to legitimize the use of force and expansive military actions. It enabled the United States to take unilateral action against perceived threats without relying heavily on international consensus or the limitations

of traditional diplomacy. This approach reflected a sense of exceptionalism that places the United States above international norms and institutions(Djedi and Djebbarij43).

Furthermore, Bush's rhetoric of war and exceptionalism fostered a sense of unity and patriotism among the American people. By positioning the nation in a state of war, he invoked a collective responsibility to support the government's actions, portraying dissent as unpatriotic and undermining the national cause. This appeal to unity and shared purpose reinforced the exceptionalist narrative of America as a beacon of freedom and strength (Christensen 36).

Additionally, the war rhetoric and exceptionalist narrative provided a justification for military interventions abroad. The notion of spreading democracy and combating tyranny became central to the Bush administration's foreign policy agenda, resulting in military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. These actions were framed as part of a broader mission to export American values, reflecting the exceptionalist belief in the United States' unique role in shaping the world (Monten 112).

Lastly, the rhetoric of war and exceptionalism contributed to a perception of American invincibility and the inevitability of victory. Bush's speeches often portrayed the conflict as a struggle that the United States was destined to win, emphasizing the nation's resolve, strength, and moral superiority. This confidence aligned with the exceptionalist narrative of America's exceptional destiny and reinforced the belief in the eventual triumph of American values and ideals (Song 247).

The rhetoric of war employed by President Bush following the September 11th attacks was deeply intertwined with the concept of American exceptionalism. By framing the response as a war, Bush reinforced the narrative of American victimhood, moral superiority, and exceptional destiny. This rhetoric justified the use of force, expanded executive powers,

and military interventions abroad, while fostering unity, patriotism, and a belief in American invincibility.

3.2.4 The Utilization of Exceptionalist Language in Bush's Speeches During the War

From the evening of September 11, 2001, George W. Bush began presenting the terrorist attacks as not just an act of war, but as the beginning of a battle between good and evil. In his address from the Oval Office, Bush stated that the attacks targeted not only individuals but also "our way of life" and the freedom that America represents. He firmly believed that America was attacked because it symbolizes freedom and opportunity, treating this assumption as an indisputable fact throughout the crisis (Murphy 612).

It is plausible that Bush was correct in perceiving the attack as directed at the United States as a nation-state. Osama bin Laden's letter to the American public, credited to him over a year later, explicitly stated that the United States was specifically targeted, and further attacks were being contemplated. However, the reasons cited in the letter were predominantly worldly grievances related to U.S. behavior, such as its policies towards Palestine, Somalia, and Iraq, as well as support for dictatorial regimes. The letter briefly criticized American culture but did not primarily focus on abstract concepts like freedom and liberty (Pressman 150).

It is important to note that the authenticity of bin Laden's letter has not been definitively established, and even if genuine, its claims cannot be verified. There is a possibility of counter-rhetoric or recruitment tactics by bin Laden, appealing to causes that would resonate with Arab streets. However, examining the mindset and motives of bin Laden independently of Bush's rhetoric provides little indication that American or Western political liberties were the primary grievances or priorities for the nineteen hijackers on September 11 (Pressman 80).

The notion that American freedoms were the primary motivation behind the September 11 attacks appears to have originated from George W. Bush or his close advisors. Despite the lack of strong evidence supporting this claim, Bush's rhetoric struck a chord with many Americans in the immediate aftermath of the attack(Pressmen140).

3.2.4.1 Enemies of Freedom

In his remarks on September 11th and subsequent speeches, Bush consistently emphasized American freedom as the primary target of the terrorists who attacked the United States. He framed the attacks as an assault on "freedom and democracy" and suggested that America was targeted because it embraced freedom. The concept of freedom was presented as an independent entity that is uniquely American. Bush's use of the term freedom was symbolic and abstract, with its operational meaning left open to interpretation by the listener (*Congress.Gov*).

The term freedom, as employed by Bush, served both as a political device and a source of moral authority. It functioned as shorthand for American values as defined by the president and was used to end arguments rather than engage in a nuanced discussion. By examining Bush's usage of freedom through the lens of American Exceptionalism, we can see that his extensive and abstract application of the term tapped into deeply held assumptions shared by many Americans. In this rhetorical sense, freedom went beyond political participation and procedural liberties found in other nations, becoming a metaphorical representation of a uniquely American way of life (Rabasa 127).

According to this perspective, individuals outside the United States may have certain aspects of freedom, such as the ability to participate in government or enjoy a range of liberties. However, true and pure freedom is believed to be exclusive to the United States. This rhetorical construct separates the material meaning of freedom from its philosophical

foundations, akin to Plato's concept of the Forms. Just as the Forms were accessible only to select philosophers in Plato's philosophy, the idea suggests that the United States possesses genuine Freedom, while other nations have only varying degrees of freedom without possessing the authentic essence of Freedom (Rabasa 128).

3.2.4.2 Good versus Evil

Like the concept of freedom, the term "evil" also became a rhetorical construct utilized by Bush in his address to the nation on September 11th. He repeatedly referred to the attacks as an embodiment of evil, using the term four times in his speech. The following day, Bush strategically combined the constructs of freedom and evil to rally support for a military response. He portrayed the enemy as hiding in the shadows, preying on innocent people, and framed the upcoming military engagement as a monumental struggle of good versus evil, with good ultimately prevailing (Esch 368).

By employing the concepts of freedom and evil, Bush effectively framed the terrorist attacks as the beginning of an apocalyptic conflict. This conflict was portrayed in quasi-biblical terms, pitting the forces of freedom and good against the forces of evil. In subsequent remarks, Bush continued to utilize the term evil to define not only the perpetrators of the attacks but also their supporters at all levels. He emphasized the need to punish evildoers severely, driven by the enormity of their evil(Orozco20).

The impact of this rhetoric was heightened by the context in which it was delivered, as Bush assumed the roles of both political and religious leader during a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance. He sought to align the denunciation of the terrorists as evil with the implication that divine retribution must be sought by those who remain strong and united in the face of evil.

In the days following the attacks, Bush remained consistent in his messaging, proclaiming that the events marked the beginning of a cataclysmic battle between good and evil. He portrayed retaliation as not only justifiable but also morally imperative in light of the epic nature of the conflict. This rhetoric included statements emphasizing the responsibility to rid the world of evil-doers and the accountability of those who offer safe havens to them (Orozco 38).

The dramatic dichotomy presented in Bush's rhetoric, emphasizing the struggle between good and evil, requires a romanticized and exceptional perspective on American history and the United States' role in global affairs. It overlooks the complexities and nuances of the nation's actions, particularly since it became a superpower during the Cold War. Such language encourages individuals to suspend critical thinking and accept a comfortable answer to the troubling question of why their country was targeted by foreign invaders (Håland 118).

By labeling the attackers as evildoers, the rhetorical argument enables the population to find a sense of explanation and justification for the devastating and perplexing terrorist attacks. It provides a simplified narrative in which the forces of evil are diametrically opposed to the forces of good, with evil targeting the most apparent source of goodness in the world (Håland 118).

3.2.5 Leveraging Language to Garner Backing for Alterations in Public Policy

As the days turned into weeks after the terrorist attacks, Bush consistently maintained a rhetorical stance centered around the concepts of "freedom," "good/evil," and "values." This repetition of his rhetoric seemed intended to have a significant impact on the policymaking process, as it laid the groundwork for various policy initiatives. By influencing those who were swayed by his arguments, Bush aimed to gain support for the passage of his proposals into law(GoncaKoluksuz 200).

Given the serious policy implications associated with these statements, it is worth examining Bush's words beyond merely analyzing his presidential rhetoric. Some specific

statements from his speeches include references to "evil people" waging war on America, the need to protect freedom through a "war on terror" that goes beyond al Qaeda, and the principles of freedom that define the United States as a compassionate nation (GoncaKoluksuz 212).

During his address to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, Bush placed significant emphasis on the concept of freedom and began connecting proposed policies to his rhetorical framework. He declared the need for a "war on terror" that would extend beyond al Qaeda, aiming to find, stop, and defeat every global terrorist group (GoncaKoluksuz 212).

Lost amid the applause that followed this announcement was the recognition that Bush had initiated a potentially lengthy and extensive war, likely extending beyond Afghanistan's borders and the boundaries set by the war powers granted by Congress. As Bush himself acknowledged, it remained unlikely that his ambitious goal of defeating all global terrorists would be achieved during his presidency or in the near future (Mcdevitt et al. 91).

Furthermore, Bush demanded that all nations worldwide join the struggle against terrorism or risk being labeled as supporters of terrorism themselves. His famous quote, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists," received applause, but its rational defense becomes challenging unless the audience has already been convinced of one side's complete correctness and unimpeachable goodness while seeing the other side as entirely incorrect and representing unmitigated evil ("President Declares "Freedom at War with Fear").

In addition to declaring a perpetual war against a non-state enemy, Bush used the opportunity to establish the Office of Homeland Security (OHS), a new entity within the federal bureaucracy. This move allowed Bush to exert executive authority and unilaterally grant the OHS "cabinet-level" status. He even appointed a person, Tom Ridge, to head the

operation before Congress had the chance to create the office through legislation in line with constitutional principles (Bush 1434).

While it is acceptable for the head of a nation-state to react swiftly and decisively in response to a crisis like the September 11 attacks, it is unexpected for the President to assume such absolute power without congressional authorization or presenting justifications for emergency powers. These justifications should extend beyond simplistic rhetorical allusions to the defense of "America's freedom" against evil forces("President Declares "Freedom at War with Fear").

In a speech at the FBI headquarters on September 25th, the President argued that "law enforcement" needed the necessary tools to effectively combat terrorism. These tools included granting the FBI the ability to track calls made by suspected terrorists from different phones and the authority to detain suspected terrorists being deported (*Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush* 128).

Instead of defending these proposed powers based on their merits, the President justified his request by aligning his claims with his rhetorical position since September 11th. He made statements emphasizing the evil nature of the perpetrators, their lack of representation of any legitimate political ideology, and America's commitment to hunt them down and bring them to justice. He also emphasized America as a nation built on freedom and its unwavering resolve to stand for its values(*Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush* 128).

Eventually, the requested tools mentioned by Bush were granted through the passage of the USA-PATRIOT Act. This legislation, mostly amending existing surveillance laws such as the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, was quickly passed with minimal scrutiny, reflecting the influence of exceptionalist rhetoric in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. While the specific changes brought by the USA-PATRIOT Act were often overlooked, the

title of the legislation itself reflected the impact of exceptionalist rhetoric (Financial Crimes Enforcement Network).

During the signing ceremony for the USA-PATRIOT Act, Bush emphasized the moral standing of those who might be subjected to surveillance and detention under the new legislation. He stated that the enemy recognized no moral boundaries. However, it is important to note that the actual text of the legislation did not require individuals to be "immoral evildoers" to fall under its provisions. The act expanded executive discretion, placed further limitations on presidential checks and balances, and challenged the balance between public safety and Fourth Amendment rights for both citizens and non-citizens (Financial Crimes Enforcement Network).

In conclusion, it can be argued that George Bush strategically employed American exceptionalism to pursue his goals, ranging from military engagements overseas to expanding his own authority and that of law enforcement agencies. By framing the fight against terrorism as a battle between good and evil, and by emphasizing America's unique values and commitment to freedom, Bush effectively garnered support for his policies and initiatives.

The repetitive use of rhetorical constructs such as "freedom," "good/evil," and "values" served to rally public sentiment and shape public opinion in favor of his proposed actions. The constant repetition of these ideas aimed to create a profound impact on the public policy-making process, making those influenced by Bush's arguments more likely to support the passage of his proposals into law.

Moreover, Bush's speeches and statements not only justified the use of military force abroad but also justified the expansion of executive powers and the erosion of checks and balances within the United States. By presenting the fight against terrorism as an existential battle for America's freedom, he was able to push for policies like the USA-PATRIOT Act, which granted the government increased surveillance capabilities and curtailed civil liberties.

In this way, Bush strategically harnessed American exceptionalism to advance his agenda, leveraging the belief in America's unique moral and ideological standing to justify actions that would otherwise face scrutiny. While the use of exceptionalist rhetoric may have been effective in rallying support, it also raised concerns about the concentration of power and the potential erosion of civil liberties in the name of national security.

It is important to critically evaluate the influence of exceptionalism in shaping policy decisions and to ensure that a balance is maintained between safeguarding national security and upholding the principles and rights that define American democracy.

Conclusion

the United States has maintained a deep-seated belief in its exceptionalism, viewing itself as distinct and superior to the rest of the world. This notion of exceptionalism, rooted in a sense of divine providence and givenness, has shaped American identity and influenced its policies throughout history.

Following the Cold War, American exceptionalism took on a new dimension, positioning the United States as the global policeman, intervening in numerous wars and conflicts. Subsequently, the events of 9/11 further transformed American exceptionalism, fueling a perception that those opposed to the United States were inherently evil and terrorists. This evolution has led the nation to prioritize the spread of democracy as a fundamental requirement in its pursuit of global stability and security.

The concept of American exceptionalism has deep historical roots, dating back to the nation's founding. Early American colonists believed that they had a divine mission to create a society that would serve as a shining example to the world. This sense of chosenness and the belief in a special destiny laid the groundwork for the exceptionalist mindset that persists today.

During the Cold War, American exceptionalism underwent a significant shift. The United States emerged as the leader of the free world, viewing itself as the defender of democracy against the threat of communism. This newfound global role allowed the United States to intervene in conflicts, such as the Korean War and the Vietnam War, under the guise of preserving freedom and containing communism.

However, it was after the Cold War that American exceptionalism experienced a fundamental transformation. With no major adversary to counterbalance its power, the United States emerged as the sole superpower, assuming the role of the world's policeman. Through

military interventions, such as the Gulf War and the Balkans conflicts, the United States sought to enforce its values and shape the global order according to its vision.

The tragic events of 9/11 marked a turning point in American exceptionalism. The terrorist attacks led to a heightened sense of vulnerability and a binary worldview that categorized anyone against the United States as evil and terrorist. This shift further fueled a fervent commitment to fighting terrorism and spreading democracy as a means to counteract perceived threats to American security.

Within the framework of this evolved exceptionalism, democracy became an integral component of American foreign policy. The United States saw itself as a champion of democracy and viewed the promotion of democratic governance as essential for global stability and the advancement of its own interests. This perspective drove interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other regions, with the aim of establishing democratic institutions and values.

However, American exceptionalism, particularly in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 era, has not been without criticism. Critics argue that this belief in exceptionalism can lead to a self-righteousness that disregards the sovereignty and diversity of other nations. They contend that it has at times justified unilateral actions, interventionism, and a lack of empathy for alternative perspectives.

Furthermore, the emphasis on democracy as a universal imperative has faced scrutiny. Critics argue that the imposition of democratic ideals without considering local contexts and complexities can lead to unintended consequences and exacerbate conflicts. They stress the importance of respecting cultural differences and promoting democratic values through dialogue, diplomacy, and support for local movements rather than through forceful intervention.

Despite these criticisms, American exceptionalism remains deeply ingrained in the national consciousness. It continues to shape the United States' self-perception, policies, and engagement with the world. The belief in its exceptional nature drives the nation's pursuit of global influence, the spread of democratic values, and the preservation of its perceived interests.

American exceptionalism, rooted in a belief in divine providence and givenness, has influenced the United States' self-perception and policies throughout its history. The end of the Cold War propelled the United States into the role of the world's policeman, intervening in conflicts worldwide. The events of 9/11 further transformed American exceptionalism, leading to a perception of adversaries as evil and terrorists. Democracy has become a core tenet of American exceptionalism, driving interventions and promoting democratic values globally. While American exceptionalism has faced criticism, it remains a defining aspect of the nation's identity and continues to shape its policies and engagement with the world.

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