

Obama's Legacy of Unfinished Businesses: Coercive Rhetoric and the Defiance of American Exceptionalism

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Abstract

The article explores the legacy of Obama's foreign policy based on the administration's engagement towards the defined 'core' foreign policy regions, aimed to renew the contemporary American identity. It argues how Obama's rhetoric in Asia-Pacific to rebalance the region has resulted to the adoption of an assertive and belligerent stance of China, with suspicions aimed at possible US coerciveness to undermine China's regional order and ambitions especially in the South China Sea. It further argues of Obama's failure to fully embrace the concept of American Exceptionalism in handling the contemporary power dynamics and anarchy of the Middle East, defying traditional US missionary policies with foreign policy elements of inconsistencies, cautiousness, and skepticism. Finally the article concludes of Obama's legacy with the continual regional disorders spurred by America's retreat in the Middle East, and China's belligerent rise in Asia.

Key words: United States Foreign Policy; Foreign Policy Rhetoric; American Exceptionalism; Asia Pacific; Middle East

Introduction

It has been evident that the American public (and International community in general), have judged past US presidents based on their responses towards emerging International crises. The legacy of a president's foreign policy success or failure thus has been highly determined by individual handlings of the most pressing dynamics in the administration's presidential term. Franklin Roosevelt will forever be known as the president that reshaped the global system, establishing grounds for the institutions of Bretton Woods, and the UN system. Ronald Reagan, another popular president in the eyes of the American public, is known to have an immense role in the peaceful end of the Cold War, despite of his coercive anti-communist rhetoric.

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In the opposing end, it has been a common phenomenon to see US presidents being labeled as a failure based on specific foreign policy options that were taken into effect. Richard Nixon would forever be known as the president that caused the deaths of tens and thousands of the US military as a result of escalating the Vietnam War. Recently George W. Bush's legacy has been the deterioration of relations with the Muslim world, grounded on the decision of invading Iraq (and to a certain extent Afghanistan). The labeling and judgment of a US president based on single, or multiple foreign policy routes taken is one that is common. Approaching Obama's last years in the presidential seat, his two-term legacy would be later on determined by how he responded towards the most pressing and demanding International dynamics of the 21st century.

In a time when America's image had immensely become unpopular in the eyes of the International community, Obama's run for election gave hopes to bend history, envisioning a world of justice and stability. But since the beginning of his presidency, it was foreseeable that his task would not be of ease, considering that he inherited the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, a crumbling economy, rising terrorism threats, and continuous threats by instable regimes with possession of nuclear weaponries. Despite being aware of those obstacles, Obama proceeded through his uniqueness of rhetoric, to ambitiously apply agendas such as the closure of Guantanamo Bay, the rebuilding of relations with the Muslim countries and Russia, and an emphasis on multilateralism at the core of his foreign policy agendas.

The shift of foreign policy that was reflected through his rhetoric eventually led him to receive the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize award after only 9 months in office. The official explanation by the Nobel's committee was that Obama deserved the award as he envisioned a world that is based on values and cooperation, rather than coerciveness and military emphasis (rhetorically, not practically) (Brooks, 2013). The only downfall of his soaring rhetoric is that it establishes an overload of expectations among both Americans, and the wider International community.

U.S. Foreign Policy - Theoretical Background

Academic opinions on Obama's foreign policy have been on both opposing ends. Academics such as Indyk, Lieberthal and O'hanlon characterized US foreign policy under Obama as 'progressive pragmatist,' in which US foreign policy is instilled with values of pragmatism (a realist approach with no breakthrough moments), and progressiveness (a humble engagement by adjusting to changes in the global International order) (Indyk, Lieberthal, O'hanlon, 2012). Some academics such as Lynch characterized Obama's foreign policy adopting core liberalist values, linking it to the liberal ascendancy of his rhetoric, wars, and personnel (Lynch, 2014).

An extension of Lynch's argument is Gideon Rose's recent assumption of US foreign policy being an extension of the liberal International order which positions the US to focus on its 'core values' (International structures such as Bretton Woods, NATO, UN) and to put aside 'periphery' interests (numerous regional conflicts taking place worldwide) (Rose 2015). To evaluate of Obama's success or failure on his foreign policies, clear parameters will be needed. Stephan provides this, by stating that Obama's foreign policy have majorly been a failure based on 4 parameters, which are; (1) ability to deliver what he promised (promises on Israeli settlement to end, closure of Guantanamo Bay, Russian relations to 'reset'), (2) weaken the enemies (Jihadism), strengthen friends (EU, NATO), (3) American values still in align under the term (American exceptionalism and liberal order), and (4) pass on a world headed on a right direction (Stephans, 2015).

Eventually though, what would determine Obama's foreign policy success since 2009 would be his practical actions responding to the worldwide contemporary dynamics. In numerous regions, there have not been significant shifts of foreign policy courses in comparison with previous US presidents. With Europe and NATO, the 1993 agenda to expand membership eastwards has still been on progress (invasion of Crimea is a 'periphery' interest as Ukraine is yet to become a member of NATO) (Mearsheimer, 2014). With Africa, foreign policy focus on the Sahel and Great Lakes region have been dominated with the provisions of assistances to eradicate growing radical Islamists and separatist groups, which are policies that does not differ itself significantly with previous presidencies (Walle, 2015). Similar policies are also evident with Latin America, in which the region still shows for and against US presence in the region, and the continuous efforts of US diplomatic relations restorations (Reid, 2015).

This article thus focuses on the regions in which Obama has made clear distinctive foreign policies compared to its predecessors, as the result of the contemporary dynamics in the region (later on referred as the 'core' US interests). As Secretary of Defense Panetta announced in 2012, Asia-Pacific and Middle East are the 2 key regions of American interests to secure (Turner, 2014). Ranging from the belligerence and assertiveness of China, and the rise of Islamic Radicalism in the Middle East, Obama's foreign policy responses towards those contemporary regional dynamics will eventually determine of his foreign policy success or failure. The 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS) a blueprint consisting of the US's long term plan to advance the US interests in the global arena, specifically mentions the need to maintain an International order through the advancement of rebalance in Asia Pacific, and the need to seek stability and peace in the Middle East (NSS, 2015). This was the second occasion in which Obama released a NSS, with the first published NSS having no indications of regions in which the administration was planning to focus on to establish an International order.

Obama's awareness of the recent dynamics in both regions was also met with numerous significant foreign policy shifts in those regions compared to his predecessors, marked with the adoption of rebalancing to Asia, and the continuance of war on terrorism with an emphasis on the use of drones as the primary method. Differing itself with previous academic researches on Obama's foreign policy, this article shall focus on the foreign policy in regions defined by the US as its 'core' foreign policy regions to determine the success or failure of Obama's foreign policy. In doing so, this article shall adopt a qualitative research methodology, which firstly would explain the use of coercive rhetoric in regards to China's belligerent rise in Asia-Pacific, and secondly how Obama defies American exceptionalism on his approaches in Middle East.

Asia-Pacific and the Rhetoric of Coerciveness

Territorial disputes in Asian waters have become the major flashpoints of potential conflicts in Asia. Ranging from the territorial disputes of the Senkaku Islands, to the rising tensions of the South China Sea, China seems to be the country at the center point of all those conflicts, showing no compromises when it comes to territorial disputes. Since 2009, major developments in South China Sea have not been easy for claimant states of ASEAN (especially for Vietnam and Philippines). Recent dynamics in the South China Sea disputes have proven that China acts as a double-edged sword, being a great source of economic cooperation, yet also a source of conflict provocations. The major events highlighting China's assertiveness in the region in the placement of the oil-drilling rig (HYSY 981) located just 120 miles from the shores of Vietnam (withdrawn in 2015) (Vu, Trung, 2014), and the continuous land reclamations mainly in the Spratly Islands of the South China Sea (until present time).

Defined as a 'core region' of US interests, the policies that US have engaged in the region have been a mixture of coercive rhetoric, followed by an emphasis to re-strengthen alliances in the region. Worthy to point out is the constant use of the rebalancing rhetoric ranging from the 2009 'Return to Asia' (2009 ASEAN Summit), 'US Pivot to Asia' since 2011, and the 'Strategic Rebalancing to Asia' (Wang, Yin, 2014). The messages have been clear, that with the rise of China and in the mid of numerous territorial disputes in Asia, US will be present. Specifically on the South China Sea, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's speech in the 2010 ASEAN Regional Forum meeting made it clear, how US's interest in the South China Sea would be based upon freedom of navigation (Collinson, Roberts, 2015). Also in numerous diplomatic meetings such as the recent July 2015 meeting with Vietnam's ruling communist party, US emphasized the freedom of navigation and the need for conflicting states to adhere towards existing International laws (Mason, 2015).

Obama's constant echoing of this rebalancing to Asia is also followed with recent foreign policies securing (and reassuring) its fellow allies in the region. Examples include the deployment of rotational forces in Darwin, signatory of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, active engagement on the East Asian Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum, and strengthening alliances with Philippines and Vietnam (2 major claimants of the South China Sea disputes). Despite that Obama deserves to be laud for refocusing US foreign policy to Asia, the route taken which mainly consists of harsh and coercive rhetoric to rebalance the region, and the assurance towards its alliance, are perceived as a major threat by China.

Firstly, Obama's foreign policy rhetoric towards Asia resulted to China's assertiveness. It was a mistake to position US as rebalancing the Asian region, as US never left Asia in the first place. There are a total of 32 US military bases scattered in Asia, with approximately 40,000 military personnel since 2011 (BBC, 2011). In addition to US's existing military might in the region, Obama announced in 2011 the deployment of 2,500 US marines at Darwin, the first time since the World War II that US stationed a significant amount of military force in the region. Following that, Obama's remarks to the Australian parliament in 2011 stated that, "As a pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future" (Obama, 2015). The issue at hand relates to the complex networks of military bases in the region, a manifestation of US imperialism, and the show of power relevance. A military engagement aimed to further establish an effective military capacity in the region, would lead adversaries to view the US as intentionally engaging in acts undermining regional peace as a result of the numerous power projection assets located in the region. In addition to the constant echoing of the rebalance rhetoric, matters have been easily inflamed.

The rhetoric to rebalance Asia thus acts as a confrontation to China, leading China to adopt measures that would reflect a challenge to US led order in the region. The patterns of China's assertiveness in the region have reflected this, as since Obama's term, China has been accelerating its claim and rights over those disputed waters and islands. The recent and continuous land reclamations in Spratlys Islands furthers this assumption, taking in the form of establishments and buildings of military constructions (airstrips and facilities). China is wary and aware of the rising presence of the US in the region, therefore a policy to accelerate such claims were inevitable.

But China's assertiveness goes beyond from simply caused by Obama's coercive rhetoric, as the contemporary US foreign policy's rebalancing act indicates possibilities of isolating China's dominance in the region. This is evident in the case of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), a multilateral trade agreement aimed to include the Pacific Rim states, but not China (Bitton, 2014).

China's exclusion is simple; the US rebalance also includes the need to deter China from dictating the economic processes in the region. But to contextualize the issue of the TPP, one must see beyond the economic sphere of the case, and pay close attention towards the roots of the US foreign policy to deter the rise of regional hegemony. As Mearsheimer predicted (2010), China's claims over the disputed islands in the upcoming years would be inflamed by the mere presence of US in the region. The patterns of recent US foreign policies reflect one in the same lines of the 1989 Monroe Doctrine which pushed Europe from the Western hemisphere (Mariano, 2011), and containing the Soviet Union expansion to Asia during the Cold War, which concludes to the premise of US being inherently in need to take down emerging regional hegemony from fears of possible contestation to the US global primacy in the International system. A similar pattern is now present with the US rhetoric to rebalance China's growing hegemony regionally in Asia, encompassing aspects of both military and economic.

Secondly, Obama's rebalance rhetoric in Asia established the grounds of China's suspiciousness. This relates to the deeply rooted historical tensions between China and US, filled with decades of mistrust, a condition less likely to evade in the near future. Though the US perceives the rebalance as a peaceful approach to Asia Pacific, China perceives the rhetoric of rebalance in Asia as an act of hostility and deceitfulness. The conduct of Obama's foreign policy is not one based primarily on the rebalance to China, but the act of a further intensive engagement with allies in the region, reflecting the US intention of an 'Indirect Balance of Power.' This form of balancing great powers in Asia's region is one that is less confrontational, yet evidently still coerces as the aims of such actions relate to engaging and strengthening regional alliances to control China's rise in the region. Thus US is faced with the difficulty of reassuring actors in the region that the US rebalance is not an act of US aggression in Asia.

This sense of suspiciousness caused by numerous American endeavors through the constant echoing of rebalance, followed by an ever greater presence in the region thus is transferred towards a military posture seen both in East Asia and in the South China Sea disputes. This was also the case with Russia's annexation of Crimea since 2014. The continuous expansion of NATO eastwards in Europe since Bill Clinton's term in the mid 1990s, have led Russia in a peculiar position, with only the inclusion of Georgia and Ukraine left before eventually having NATO forces in the doorsteps of Russia (Mearsheimer, 2014). The act of assertiveness thus was evident with the invasion of Georgia in 2008, and recently in Ukraine 2014, with hopes of securitizing its frontier borders. China is currently undergoing a similar (yet less coerced) situation, as extreme cautiousness and adoption of a pragmatist approach is now present, with the US's rhetoric of rebalancing to Asia.

Thirdly, Obama's foreign policy in Asia has empowered its allies to take independent actions in the South China Sea disputes. Following a Caribbean Summit in Panama April 2015, Obama stated in regards to the South China Seas that, "We think this can be solved diplomatically, but just because the Philippines or Vietnam are not as large as China, doesn't mean that they can just be elbowed aside" (O'Rourke, 2015, p.84). Obama has not denied the mere presence of both Philippines and Vietnam as the main alarmed claimant states on the present tensions, constantly echoing the need of 'US security cooperation in the region' (Spegele, Khanh, Cuneta, 2014). The case has been mostly evident with Philippines, in which US's fellow allies have perceived US's rhetoric of rebalancing to Asia as a policy of alliance reassurance. Described in 2009 along with Australia as the 'bedrock of security and stability in the region' (Turner, 2014), Philippines have in recent years enjoyed closer military ties with the US. Philippines now thus hopes for immense assistances for US to counterbalance the growing pressures by China, based not only by the original mandate of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, but also through contemporary defense agreements such as the 2014 New Security Accord (highlighting an enhanced defense cooperation between the 2 states) (Panda, 2014).

The US foreign policy of empowerment thus has resulted to states such as the Philippines to take independent actions in face of China's assertiveness in the South China Sea. Examples are the legal challenges through arbitrations submitted by Vietnam on 2014, and recently by Philippines on July 2015 (Nguyen, 2015). The problem with such individual state engagements is that this eventually deadlocks any ASEAN attempt to raise the issue of South China Sea, let alone to conclude the long aspired Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (a legally binding document to replace the non-binding Declaration of Conduct 2002). Individual state actions have led China to be more assertive in facing its neighboring claimant states, applying policies such as placing the oil drilling rig close to Vietnam shores in 2014, and making constant statements of how ASEAN is not the proper avenue to discuss the South China Sea disputes.

Obama needs to understand that foreign policies, which rhetorically confront specifically a group of states or a region, will always be seen as an act of hostility, and responded with assertiveness. This was also the case with Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush that labeled Iran, Iraq, and North Korea in his State of the Union address in 2002 as 'Axis of Evil' (Heradstveit, Matthew, 2007). Though previously the US relations with those countries have had historical tensions, the remarks provoked the 3 states to adopt a more coercive stance, as a sense of being threatened were present. Diplomatic deteriorations followed, with the claimed development of nuclear weaponries taking place with numerous threats towards the US International order.

Eventually, the legacy that Obama would pass down is an instable Asian region, with the domination of an assertive rising power in the form of China.

Obama's rhetoric of rebalancing to Asia has proven to be perceived by China as a coercive move, which undermines China's order in Asia and its regional ambitions (Emmers, 2015), and further provides false expectations and dependence for its fellow allies in the region. It would not be surprising that with such rhetoric, Asian states are expecting US to display its military might in Asia yet again, as how Bill Clinton reacted during the third Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1995-96 displaying one of the largest US military displays with the presence of numerous aircraft battle groups (Hsu, 2010). Obama's rhetoric has already caused damage, thus there is no single institution, nor global superpower that would be able to relieve China of its perception that US is forcefully containing it, and that US would interfere on regional conflicts located hundred of miles of the US mainland.

Defiance of American Exceptionalism in the Middle East

Middle East in present times now acts as a battleground of power politics and struggle, between repressive governments, Sunni-Shiite militants, and Islamic Radicals. With the collapse of various autocratic governments since the Arab uprisings ranging from Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, the world has been stunned with the growing violence and repressions that have recently escalated. Not only that, Middle East is also highlighted with traditional conflicts which have yet met any resolutions, including Israeli illegal settlements and the big question of Iran's possession of nuclear weaponry. The question that rises now is with these dynamics, how does US strategically place it responding situations of anarchy?

Obama's foreign policy in the Middle East is one based entirely opposite to Bush, at least in a rhetoric sense. In June 2009, Obama positioned himself as a reformer of relations between the US and Middle Eastern states (or the Muslim community in general), stating in his speech in Cairo that; "I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive" (Guerlain, 2014, p.51). To back up his words, Obama eventually completed the US troops withdrawal from Iraq, and withdrew from exposed frontline positions in numerous Middle Eastern conflicts, returning the security responsibilities towards its allies. But in a practical sense, how successful has this strategy been? The 6 years of Obama's administration reflects Obama's absence of a clear grand strategy and a long-term vision. He managed to finalize the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program between the P5, Iran and EU, but failed in taking any actions towards Israeli illegal settlements as he promised in his campaigns (let alone finalizing the promised closure of the Guantanamo Bay).

His policy of drone attacks since 2009 managed to severely weaken Al-Qaeda by the killings of 2,800 suspected terrorists in Yemen and Pakistan (Stern, 2015), yet he failed to take strict actions towards the captured Iraqi and Syrian territories by the Islamic State / ISIS. He proved his humanitarianism in Libya and assisted the ousting and assassination of Muammar Qaddafi, yet failed to coerce the Syrian autocratic government to step down, despite obvious violations of humanitarian law by the use of chemical weaponry.

This pattern of inconsistency, cautiousness, and skepticism towards the Middle East defies the very nature of the American exceptionalism. Exceptionalism was first used to describe America in 1830s by Alexis De Tocqueville, in which he described that America is 'exceptional' based on its governance, politics and its place in the world (Ceaser, 2012). But American exceptionalism now has grown as a major attribute of the US foreign policy historically, positioning US as a state like no other (even superior) compared to other nations, a nation with strong values of liberty, equality and justice. Not only as an exemplar, the American Exceptionalism also views US as a missionary nation, with the adoption of a dominant and assertive posture to project the ideals above domestically, and overseas (McCrisken, 2003).

The idea of American exceptionalism is one that has with history evolved being an inherent part of the US foreign policy identity, an expansion of the domestic beliefs of the US. Numerous presidents such as Ronald Reagan and Woodrow Wilson previously embraced the American exceptionalism, embracing the narrative of American greatness, and the missionary implications of such a belief. Ronald Reagan with his 'Shining City on a Hill' showed how US represents freedom, hope, and an example for others (McCrisken, 2003). This was related to his 'Reagan Doctrine,' exceeding the limits of a containment doctrine by confronting communist regimes, and assisting anti-communist campaigns in Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Americas with a missionary aim of providing freedom during the Cold War. Woodrow Wilson on the other hand perceived America as the force of moral principle to serve humanity (Tucker, 2007).

Wilson personified the American exceptionalism as he believed that the US was set apart by the values and principles of America. He envisioned a world that would be safe for democracy and a postwar International order grounded on the principles of freedom. This was eventually followed with the decision to enter the World War I in 1917, realizing the need of an International system which stands against autocratic tyrannies. Obama at first glance was no different on the rhetoric ways he responded to worldwide crises. And this was fully expected, as the unique security dynamics of the 21st century, highlighting the nexus of terrorism and autocratic regimes in the Middle East demanded a forward posture from the US.

Though a missionary policy would fit the strategic realities of the Middle East, Obama thought otherwise.

Though subject to continual reinterpretations, American exceptionalism will always portray the US as having a unique role to play in world history, distinct with any other nations present. Political scientists such as McCrisken even attributed American exceptionalism as the reasons behind the US's missionary policies (McCrisken, 2003), which since 1989 has intervened in 10 different occasions (under the Administrations of Bush Sr., Clinton, Bush Jr., and Obama). In justifying his military action in Libya, Obama stated that; "The United States of America is different. And as president, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action" (Obama, 2011), a true speech which represents the values of a missionary nation of US. But the eventual military response in the form of a 2011 No-fly zone raises questions of consistency, of Obama's passive humanitarianism response in Syria, or allowing Saudi Arabia to lead a military operation to eliminate the Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Syria will be the highlight of Obama's legacy of unfinished businesses in the Middle East. Evident since 2013, Bashar Al-Assad's months of allegations using chemical weapons against its own citizens was supposed to be viewed as a humanitarian crisis, similar to that of Qaddafi's aerial bombardments of its citizens (BBC, 2013). As a failure to resort to an interventionist policy in Syria, deep factions have occurred (even among the opposition). This has paved the way for an ever greater security threat to emerge since the mid of 2014, known as the Islamic State, which currently has expanded its territorial gains the size of United Kingdom. Obama's exceptionalism rhetoric in 2013 gave false expectations for the Syrian people, in which he stated that; "...we can stop children from being gassed to death, and thereby make our own children safer over the long run, I believe we should act. That's what makes America different. That's what makes us exceptional (Obama, 2013)." Therefore in a time when missionary American exceptionalism was expected by those that needed it both by the Syrian people and the Arab nations in general, Obama was only able to provide that rhetorically, not in practice, eventually defying the American exceptionalism caused by the failure to act on behalf of humanitarianism.

A point worthy to highlight also regards to Obama's counterterrorism strategy self-known as more ethical compared to the previous administration of Bush. As the nation's Commander in Chief took office, he has engaged on approximately 450 attacks in Pakistan and Yemen, causing the deaths of 2,800 suspected terrorists, but hundreds of civilians (Stern, 2015). Obama's early years in office were focused on the elimination of the remaining Al-Qaeda core in Pakistan, and the Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

Considering that in October 2014 the 349 drone strikes were under Obama's administration, the essential questions here would be on the grounds of its effectiveness, and considering it's a policy extremely embraced by Obama, what does it say about the American exceptionalism?

It is no doubt that the drone strikes under Obama's administration is one that is unique, and has redefined the strategic power balance of the West's war against terrorism. But it is one that defies the American exceptionalism, caused by immense lack of transparency, and how it opened new debates of US violations of foreign national sovereign boundaries under the context of International law. With terrorist networks such as the remnants of Al-Qaeda and the growing influence of ISIS, a proper response towards groups that have openly threaten the integrity and sovereignty of US, is both a rhetoric and practical policy of coerciveness and decisiveness. George W. Bush (2001-2009) and Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) are two perfect examples of past US presidents that responded with decisiveness after obvious and clear threats aimed towards the Capital. Bush as a response towards the 9/11 attacks, declared and at the same time built the foundations of US identity of counterterrorism, by introducing the rhetoric of 'war on terrorism' (Wolfe, 2008), followed by actions supported by both the American public and the International community, which was the eventual invasion of Afghanistan to pursue Al-Qaeda. Reagan's doctrine consisting of a harsh and confrontational rhetoric during the late years of the Cold War, were followed with a series of rolling back numerous communist regimes in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

As both Al-Qaeda and ISIS are still currently loosely active infiltrating the instable regions of the Middle East, Obama's policy of drone attacks though have proven to be able to shake the cores of Al-Qaeda. Yet it has failed to make Americans more secure with rising numbers of the terrorism networks and growing numbers of foreign fighters (including less than 200 from the US) (Byman, Shapiro, 2015) travelling to Iraq and Syria. With more terrorism cases than before, a rising sense of US people's vulnerability towards attacks and the increasing number of state failures, Obama's lack of transparency on his drones war on terror have proven to be lacking any sense of coerciveness and decisiveness, something urgently needed with the instabilities of the Middle East, and the rising power of Islamic fundamentalists.

Conclusion

United States of America possesses the capacity and inherent latitude to take action in the most demanding of situations. The election of Obama in 2009 takes those expectations to a different level, as he reflects himself as an individual who places humanitarianism at the very core of the upcoming US foreign policies.

Obama wanted to find the perfect balance of pursuing the US national interests without placing the nation at the forefront of regional tensions. But as history has shown, doing too little can be a huge historical delinquency. Humanitarianism expectations based on Obama's soaring rhetoric have yet and most likely will not be met in his remaining presidential term. It is impossible to blame Obama of the masses of regional disorders ranging from the Crimean intervention, China's belligerence of South China Sea, Bashar's brutal mass killings of his citizens, or the growing power of the Islamic State. But, as the American exceptionalism value preaches, the US is unique and different, and has the capacity to make significant changes. Therefore now in places where the US interests is at its core, Obama's legacy would consist of regional disorders, spurred by American retreat.

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