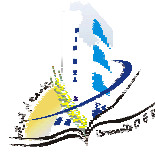


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***American political thought and its impact on
its relation with the Islamic world***

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by

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents

To my siblings

To all my family

And all my friends

Acknowledgement

First of all I would like to praise Allah who gave me the strength to finish up this work. I am indebted to my supervisor Mrs. Ghennam Fatima for her help and patience in reading and rereading the drafts of my work. Also, I owe special thank to those who helped me by providing the relevant sources for Doctor. Maammeri. F, Mr. Bouri. L, and my classmate Shibben Sara. W. I would like to express my gratitude to the librarians of the English department library in Alaarbi Ben Mhidi University. Finally, a special thank to my parents, my siblings and my friends for their emotional support.

Abstract

The U.S.A perceives Muslims as violent terrorists and fanatic fundamentalists whose basic beliefs contradict with the American ones. Also, Muslims are seen as anti Americanism and anti modernism that prefer confrontation rather than dialogue. Moreover, the American policy towards Muslim countries is based upon this misunderstanding. Though, this perception is rooted in the American history but it has strongly appeared in the post cold war era in search for a new enemy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. On this basis, the American response to the relevant Islamic issues is based on its interests and hegemonic ambitions. The American Iranian relationship is the case in point in which the US justified its policy towards Iran to preserve order in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. This dissertation studies the American policy towards the Islamic countries and Iran is the case study which reveals such a policy. This research work aims to reveal the extent to which American relations towards the Islamic countries is a result of its political thought. In order to examine the impact of the American foreign policy that is based on American ideals and interest, the American-Iranian relations is a good illustration. Such a case study uncovers the real American interests. The U.S justified its policy on the basis of preserving order in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. However, the dissertation comes to the conclusion that the real aims of the American foreign policy towards Iran are purely strategic, self interests and hegemonic ambitions.

Achronyms

ABOR: Academic Bill of Rights

ACLU: American Civil Liberties Union

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency.

CISADA: Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.

EU: European Union.

EU3: France, Britain, and Germany

FDR: Franklin D. Roosevelt

FOIA: Freedom of Information Act

GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

ICCPR: Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

IT: information technology

IIE: Institute for International Economic

IRGC: the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

MP: Member of Parliament

NBC: National Broadcasting Company.

NGOs: Nongovernmental Organizations

NSC: National Security Council

P5+1: the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, “the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China” and Germany.

SPG: Special Planning Group

UAE: United Arab Emirates

UNSCR: U.N. Security Council Resolution

USAPA: U.S.A Patriot Act

WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction

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General Conclusion

General introduction

The American political foreign policy towards the Islamic countries is affected by its political thought. My thesis draws attention to the above mentioned concern through tackling the main points of the American political thought, and how it affects its foreign policy namely with the Muslim countries. Therefore, Iran is a good illustration that shows the impact of the American political thought on its relations with the Muslim countries. Though, the U.S. policy towards Iran tends to preserve peace and democracy through preventing its weapons of mass destruction program and changing the government but the outcomes of the sanctions posed, and the American failure to achieve the aforesaid goals reveal the failure of the American policies in the region.

The U.S. officials and policy makers argue that the American policy towards the Muslim countries tends to preserve peace and order through combating terrorism and fanatic fundamentalism. Also, American aims to promote democracy via overthrowing the current governments in these countries. Yet, my thesis shows the American intention to preserve its interests in these countries as the basic characteristic of its political thought. The American ideological imperialism is a way through which the U.S. aims to spread its liberal and capital ideals and preserve its interests in the region.

The most important issue in this thesis is the impact of the American political thought on its relations with the Muslim countries; and its attempts to democratize and secure peace in the region. But this undertaken mission aims in reality to secure the American hegemony in these countries. And because Americans believe that the U.S. is manifested to civilize the weak countries, the world's superpower intervenes

according to the crises in the Muslim countries by taking the appropriate tools to continue its pretended mission. Subsequently, the questions raised in this thesis are: what is the American view towards the Muslim countries? And, how the recent American political thought which is build up on the American exceptionalism and leadership, and which looks to the other countries as a threat to its hegemony reflects American policy towards the Muslim countries?

The Islamic countries in the 1990's and the 2000's years witnessed many internal crises, which led to the intervention of the U.S. on the ground of combating terrorism, as the American missions in its so called the "war on terror", and democratization as one of the pillars of the American political thought. The American intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, after the heavy sanctions imposed on them led to the death of millions of innocent civilians and children. Such a fact reveals the American reaction that is built on its devised perceptions. So, the Islamic countries are conceived by the Americans as terrorists and anti-democratic fanatic fundamentalist countries; and the U.S. shall intervene to prevent such a threat. Then, on the basis of preventing any threat to both the American interests and humanity, accordingly, the U.S.A justified its policies against the Iranian government through on the basis of halting the Iranian threat to save the world from this "evil" country.

The primary sources used in this thesis include mainly presidential speeches. The overwhelming of the secondary sources used in this work deal with the American political thought in general to reach the intended point in this research which is the impact of the American political thought on the Muslim countries. The majority of the secondary sources treat the American supremacy that formulates its perceptions towards the Muslim countries; and how the U.S. should deal with the raised problems

in such countries. It is noticeable that almost all the scholars and thinkers have a common perception which considers the Muslim countries as a threat to the American interests. However, just few of them defend the Islamic side against the American exaggeration in such thoughts towards the Muslim countries. Therefore, the study of the American political thought and its impact on the U.S. relations with the Muslim countries requires knowing the reflection of these perceptions on these countries.

Through using the relevant sources to describe the facts and analyze its circumstances; this research aims to show the real impact of the American political thought on the Islamic countries. By choosing the case of Iran, the work tends to reveal the American intention to preserve its hegemony and superiority as the world's leader in the expense of the innocent people, and on the expense of the American pretended morals. This leads to the conclusion that the American political thought is all about ensuring the American hegemony and preserving the American interests in the strategic Muslim countries especially economically speaking because of the oil richness in these regions. Finally, to cite these sources the seventh edition of MLA format 2009 is used.

On the basis of a descriptive and analytical approach, this thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter represents the theoretical part of the thesis which attempts to shed light on the American political thought. First, the chapter presents the impact of the enlightenment philosophy on the American political thought. Then, it explains the elements of the American political thought such as freedom, liberty and equality, and simultaneously presenting the other face of the practices of these elements. The last point in the first chapter tackles the contemporary American political thought. The study of the contemporary American political thought starts from the post cold war era which witnessed the shift in the global conflict to the

ideological conflict as Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington claimed. The chapter discusses also conservatism and liberalism in the twenty and the twenty first centuries of the American political thought.

The second chapter deals with the impact of the American political thought on the American relations with the Muslim countries. And, it shows the American perceptions towards the latter, and how it deteriorated due to many events such as the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. Also, the second chapter treats two main points. The first one is the effect of terrorism on the American policy towards Muslims, and the second placed the Muslim countries in the American so called clash of civilizations.

The first point shows the effect of terrorism on the American foreign policy and the extension of this threat on the latter which extended into the American borders. While the U.S. took the appropriate tools to prevent this threat through intervention in the suspected countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, The Arab and Muslim activists accused the U.S. of the disastrous results of the American reaction against terrorism. But the American “war on terror” is a way through which the U.S.A would expand its democracy and capitalism in the target countries. Next, in the study of the Arabs and the Middle East in particular, the Western writers and activists related those groups to Islam. Then, they claimed about the confrontation and clash of Muslims with the West in general and the US as the unilateral power in particular. The clash between the U.S.A and the Islamic countries is caused by many problems among them the so called Islamic terrorism and the American Israeli friendship. However, this belief in the clash between the two civilizations is criticized mainly by Edward Said.

The last chapter clarifies more the American perception towards the Muslim countries which is reflected in its practices against these countries. To make things clearer, the Iranian case has been chosen as an illustration. This chapter aims to show the real intentions behind the American practices which are preserving its interests and spreading its hegemony throughout the region. Also, it shows that American aggressiveness towards Iran began after the fall of its ally the Shah in which it started to sanction Iran on the ground of terrorism; then, the WMD proliferation. At the end, it is necessary to mention that the scope of the study is limited between 2009 and 2012 to analyze the changes that occurred in the American policy towards Iran.

A short history of the American political thought

Introduction

The power of the U.S.A is a result of a combination of ideas and experiences which the U.S witnessed throughout its history. And because of its related history to the European continent, the US has been affected by some of its ideas and political thoughts. Hence, the American political thought as its Western counterparts was strongly affected by the enlightenment philosophy. Furthermore, the American political thought consists from various elements which along with the enlightenment ideas formulated the contemporary American thought.

I/ The impact of the enlightenment philosophy on the American political thought

The eighteenth century is often referred to as the Age of Enlightenment; this is the Age of reason that affected the U.S.A and Europe. The age witnessed the application of science into politics and freed it from the old beliefs and traditions which fruited in two political revolutions: the first in America and the second in France. This era witnessed the birth of a new political culture as a result of the new political enlightenment thought that appeared in the writings of the new European thinkers especially in France. These thinkers believe that the social and moral reforms necessitate the political reform. Many philosophers' ideas affected the American political thinkers. First, Voltaire's ideas of religious tolerance, the rule of law, a constitutional government and enjoying the civil liberties. Second, Montesquieu and his ideas of the balance of power which had a great impact in America, for him freedom could be best enacted by a balanced power between the elective legislature, the executive and the independent judiciary. Montesquieu's republic must be small and homogeneous. The other philosopher was Jean Jacques Rousseau who believed in

the role of the social convention in shaping the human character for him success can be achieved through abolishing the social and economic distinction. The American colonial revolution in 1776, 1783 was a result of the previous ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu. So, Americans sought to make the thirteen colonies a single large republic with autonomous states and federal responsibilities and regular elections (Spellman 86, 88-90).

The historian Gordon Wood has written that the period of the Revolution of 1776 was rich in a practical political thought which was made by men of affairs such as lawyers and legislators, who were fighting an imperial colonizer. However, there were many written pamphlets and essays carrying the ideas of the enlightenment. These documents called for a representative government, limiting the executive authority, the role of the judiciary and the capacity and freedom of the citizens in acting and constructing the institutions. In 1775, the MP Edmund Burke declared the American spirit of liberty as an English inheritance reflected from the English political culture. However, after the seven years war, Americans were able to create their own model of enlightenment and American government. After this war and the trouble of the Articles of the Confederation, a strong nation with a national government, sovereign people and an innovative written constitution was established. The new government supported independence and revolution through various ways as Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* in 1776. Then, the new government drafted the constitution in Philadelphia in february1787, after it ratified it to become officially adopted in 1789 (C.Schroeder 6, Spellman 93, 95).

Federalists during the ratification tried to convince the anti-federalist with the idea of the central government within the enlarged republic. They assured that a central government would not eliminate the power of the states, nor it would deviate

and become a tyrannical regime. The federalists like James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay sought to expand the size of the republic to prevent the dominance of one ideology and to secure the common good and protect the civil rights. Also, they separated religion and politics. But they faced another problem which was the colonies' preference to the sovereignty of the individual state legislatures rather than of the parliament. Fortunately, the problem had been resolved by delegating some power to the state governments and other power to the federal government. Lock argued that the right to life, liberty and property pertain to people as human beings. Thomas Paine in the American history issued the rights of man which made his political thought accessible to the American people; also he advocated a limited government and a republican model of government. The political thought of the enlightenment stressed the natural rights, law of nature and the power of reason. American thinkers and founders were affected by these ideas, for this reason from the point of natural rights; Thomas Jefferson addressed the pursuit of happiness and the limited government in the Declaration of Independence. For Adam Smith, the function of the state is to protect society and citizens, and it has no role in the natural laws (Spellman 96-102,105).

Nationalism of the nineteenth century was more chauvinistic because both imperialism and social Darwinism took place in the history of the U.S.A (Spellman 113). Imperialism is deeply rooted in the American political history of the mid-eightieth and ninetieth century. But unlike the European countries which sought raw materials and natural resources, the U.S.A sought overseas markets to sell their extra crops and products as Senator Albert J. Beveridge explained: "today we are raising more crops than we can consume. Today we are making more than we can use... therefore we must find new markets for our produce, new occupation for our capital,

new work for our labor.” (qtd. in. “The Roots of Imperialism”). But to save its interests in these new areas, the U.S.A needed to strengthen its military power, for this reason Alfred T. Mahan a military historian and an officer in the United States navy called the U.S.A to build a modern and strong fleet (L. Berney 104). And influenced by Mahan and others, the United States strengthened its military forces and by the 1900s it had the third largest navy in the world (Ibid 104). To justify its imperialistic nature, the USA used racial, cultural and national superiority as excuses. The most important and the common one in the American history is social Darwinism which is based on the survival of the fittest i.e. the stronger and the more powerful nations should rule over the weak nations, and if America wants to survive it should not be isolated and weak (the roots for imperialism 2-3) . This belief was strengthened by the American belief that Americans were destined by God to settle the frontier, and civilize the weaker races in what is known as the “Manifest Destiny” (L. Berney 104).

The American Manifest Destiny is the first face of a one coin used by the U.S.A to justify its hegemony, and the other face was used to protect its lands from any foreign intervention which is the “Monroe Doctrine”. The latter was coined by the President James Monroe in 1823 to protect the Western Hemisphere from the European intervention and keep it for its own. For this reason, the French intervention in Mexico in 1861 had been considered by the American politicians as a violation to the Monroe Doctrine. And by the end of the civil war, the USA sent 50,000 men to the Mexican border which led Napoleon III to withdraw his troops from the territory. This step can be translated as a successful step in applying the Monroe Doctrine under Lincoln and his state secretary William Seward. (Ibid 110).

Egalitarianism which had its origins in the industrial revolution continued its shaping of the nineteenth century American politics. Conservative political thinkers

were influenced by Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Spellman 114). One of the most influential conservative thinkers was the essayist and social critic "Thomas Carlyle" who is admired by the American "transcendentalists"¹ because he rejected materialism and "*laissez-faire* economics"; also he opposed the universal suffrage (Ibid 114-115). Socialist political parties had an influence in the United States, championing legislations which aimed to improve the lives of the working people. Unity also shaped the political thought of the nineteenth century. However, the twentieth century political thought was affected by other aspects in its formation such as history, language, ethnicity and culture. The emergence of new non political institutions such as the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the global environment movement influenced the political thinking mainly the international cooperation (Ibid 130-138). In the period before 1973 the West enjoyed easy access to the Middle East oil as a kind of the international cooperation, but after the Arab Israeli war 1974 and the American support to Israel, Arabs stopped oil supply to the west. Then they raised the price of the oil sold to the U.S which affected the Latter's thought towards Arabs and Muslims (Ibid 114, 138).

II/ elements and of the American political thought

American political thought consists of many elements, the first one is freedom. Through freedom and liberty, the U.S.A witnessed its great success. Liberty in the American political discourse was associated with other eighteenth century ideas such as the natural rights. This ideal has strongly appeared in the revolutionary period when Americans named themselves as the "sons of liberty". The American founding fathers also advocated strongly this ideal as a concept of the American exceptionalism. In Thomas Jefferson's words, "the God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time" (qtd. in. Foley 20). From this perspective, President Franklin D. Roosevelt

sought in 1941 to prepare America to a war to reorganize the world according to the American view and build it up on its own experience. Presented the way in which individual liberties as one of the American ideals became universal and extended throughout the world. Also, President Roosevelt said that the U.S.A was working on securing the liberties of the small nations during the cold war (qtd. in. Foley 22). George W Bush Sr also proclaimed that the attacks of the 9/11 were committed by the enemies of freedom. Liberty of the individual is a basic element in the American political thought because liberty and individualism are considered as synonyms. This idea of individualism had been taken from the philosophy of lock who believed that God gives natural rights to each person's individuality. This right is affirmed by the Bill of Rights and in the preamble of the Constitution. Also, the right to own property is one of the main natural rights which shaped the American founding father's thought in Constitution. The other important element is democracy which is derived from the founding fathers and their constitution. The American government is a "government of laws not of men" i.e. the rule of law was strongly valued as a principle in the American constitution (Foley 19-56).

Constitutionalism provides the fullest expression of a rule of law because it incorporates the principle that the government not only makes laws and is in fact the exclusive provider of laws, but it is itself subject to the law—i.e. governmental authority is attributable to, and accountable to the Constitution's rules and procedures (Ibid 98). As a consequence, the federal government operates on the understanding that it is not above the law. It is obliged to ensure that its policies and actions conform to the principles and stipulations of a sovereign constitution. In essence, governmental decisions are required both to produce and to follow law. The most important thing in the early history of the American constitution was the Anti-Federalist refusal to a

central government. Instead, Anti-Federalists supported the state government to protect themselves from the incursion of the central government to protect liberty e.g. The First Amendment prohibits Congress from making laws that would restrict the freedom of speech and of assembly. As the final element to the project of constitutional formation, the Bill of Rights has strengthened the culture of liberties and limited the actions of the federal government (Ibid 98,100).

The U.S. Constitution and the constitutions of the individual states draw upon and reveal the depth of the American tradition of higher law. The Supreme Court was criticized for its powers of adjudication which can be defined in the areas of law-making and policy formulation (Ibid 122). For example, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said that the Supreme Court in 1937 was “acting, not as a judicial body, but as a policymaking body”. And it is still facing the same criticism because judges are accused of using the rule of law and the expressions of constitutional fundamentalism to restrict democracy in the U.S.A. During its decisions in different cases it is rather making laws. However, this view is criticized by the defenders of the democratic role of the judicial review, and among their arguments is the need for the courts to intervene to protect minorities from discriminatory actions undertaken by the government (Ibid 122).

Civil disobedience has a certain importance in American political thought. Though the contradiction between the two concepts; but Martin Luther King, Jr and Henry David Thoreau believed that conflict is the first step towards justice (S. Luedtke, ed 344). The civil disobedience may be violent, or non violent which is more frequent. Lock offered Americans the right to revolt and resist if the existing regime violates peoples' lives. The Calvinist political philosophy also gave people the right to disobey the ruler who violates the covenant with God. So, American civil

disobedience is rooted in the early history of the revolution, and it represents the beginning of the revolution with the American Boston party (Ibid 345-347). Thoreau's civil disobedience implies even a small minority of the citizens. It implies also morality besides acting individually. In his theory, Thoreau turned to the Declaration of Independence rather than the Constitution, because the object of the former was liberty, and the latter's was the authority of the government (Ibid 348). Thoreau worked on introducing moral passion to politics unlike the founders who tried to avoid it and advocated a balanced machinery of government, federalists also believed in Machiavelli's view that reason will be threatened by moral righteousness (Ibid 348). This theory showed the limited importance of the government because it cannot reform the society, and the latter is the duty of individuals rather than the masses or politics. Thoreau looked at the government not as tyrannical but weak. Like Alexis De Tocqueville, he believed that democracy in America was society and not the state. However, Thoreau succeeded in introducing ethics and morals into politics; the shortcomings of his document are very noticeable such as his advice to the abolitionist states to secede from the union which would strengthen the federal government. The ideas of Thoreau continued their effect on the politics of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries with both the Quakers' ethic of the inner life, and the individualism of American Protestation. One among the most important cases of civil disobedience was the protests against the Vietnam War in the 1960s or the "second reformation" of civil disobedience which witnessed new methods as boycotts, sit-ins, marches and demonstrations among others (Ibid 344-352).

The theory of Martin Luther King, Jr. differs somehow from Thoreau's one because, unlike him, King encouraged blacks to be more involved in the government to get their rights of voting as an example (Ibid 350). Also, he recognized the

importance of political authority for civil disobedience because he preferred dialogue to achieve solutions. He believed that freedom must be taken by the oppressed because it would never be given by the oppressor for this reason he and his followers marched demanding racial integration in public institutions. The marchers were accused for violating the court's orders, but King achieved his aims in securing blacks voting rights, and their integration in the public schools and other institutions. Like Thoreau, King believed that breaking the law implies conscience but he added other reasons to do so like the unjust laws that deny the minorities from voting and having no role in legislating, and the specific laws passed to reinforce segregation (Ibid 350-353).

The other elements of the American political thought are equality, morality, progress and order. First, equality is the first evident truth in the American political culture "all men are created equal." Democracy can be an extension of the equality of individual rights. Also, in the late eighteenth century, America appeared to have an egalitarian policy. But in practice, it was far from being egalitarian. Concerning Voting, it was limited to white males with a specific age, property, and residence qualifications. Women were excluded from all political activities. The Constitution did not mention the slavery issue. The indigenous Indians were regarded as being outside the law. And indentured servants had been seen as semi-slaves who had had no right to vote. In other words, the American attitude was hierarchical, though Americans themselves found it despicable (Foley 130-133).

Second, morality in American politics depended upon changing conceptions of moral rights and wrongs. The importance of morality has been shown by James Morone who placed it at the very centre of America's historical processes (Ibid 164-165). Morality strengthened people's defense for their culture and values (Glaser 364). It is believed also that morality of the American political discourse made it

different from the other Western democracies. Morality makes the U.S.A exceptional as Seymour Martin Lipset claimed. This morality has many sources the first is liberal values that originated in the eighteenth-century of Locke's philosophy of natural rights. The other one is religion which informs the American political debates due to its Puritan origins and principles. American politicians are always oriented to use religion in their speeches and activities. Morality also is used as an excuse by the leaders to justify their external intervention, like the war in Vietnam as Teleford Taylor claimed. Also, churches are involved in many political issues such as the campaigns for civil rights in the 1960s. Presidents tend to transfer political problems into moral ones as the president John F. Kennedy did during the violence disturbances about human rights in the south in the 1960s (Foley 164-183). President Georg W. Bush Sr is always fusing national interests with moral and religious excuses as the declaration of war on terror and claiming in his speeches the morality of the American people and nation. Bush underlined the "moral purpose of the American influence". And in his war against terror as an evil, President Bush stated it clearly that "nations are either with us or against us in the war on terror" (Bush). But other founders of the American republic were atheists, and the solution to this different theology is the separation of the church and the state besides religious tolerance. As the president George Washington claimed; "reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles" (Foley 174-178).

American exceptionalism is related to another theme which is progress that is a result of the enlightenment ideas. The American idea has been written into law and crystallized into institutions, and then Americans practiced it. Through the ideas of enlightenment, the U.S.A achieved a great technological success. These ideas of mechanical progress affected the Constitution which became defined as a "mechanistic

one” in which the institutions are operated. This view was opposed by Woodrow Wilson who said that “not a machine, but a living thing” and changing the governments must be according to Darwinism rather than due to Newton’s ends (Foley 184-187).

The last element is order. The basic theme advocated by the founding fathers in the new constitution was security. And because of the disorder following the constitution formulation, as the “Shays’s Rebellion”², it was recognized that liberty must be harmonized with order through balancing between the federal government and the states rather than the total decentralization of the government which may cause insecurity and disorder (Foley 192). The sense of emergency was strongly present in the American history. It is used to preserve order but in the expense of liberty as the “sedition Acts”³ (1798) and the “*Dennis v. United States*”⁴ (1951) under the Truman administration (Ibid 196). After the attacks of September 2001 the U.S.A responded to the terroristic threat by passing the Patriot Act 2006 (C. Wong 1). The Act allows for instance the attorney general to detent those who threaten the security of the country even if they are not convicted of any crime under the *Act of 2001*, Section 236A. (a) (3) (B). Also the Afghan and other Muslim prisoners who were suspected to have relation with Al-Qaida were jailed at the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Moreover, the detainees had had no right for getting lawyer and they could stand trial by the military tribunal, and they would be liable to the death penalty (Foley 202-207). The civil libertarian organizations claimed the brutality of these measures especially over the secrecy about the Arab Muslim detainees. So, the Bush administration marginalized the civil liberties inside and outside the U.S. A, as the Executive Director of the ACLU Anthony Romero claimed in March 2002 that these actions are against the ideas of freedom, safety and democracy of the nation (Ibid 207). The presidency

power is growing according to the circumstances and the threat of disorder and insecurity facing the nation (Watts 79). Also, the death penalty has been made as an integral part of the criminal justice system. Along with China and Iran, the United States has regular recourse to the death penalty; the number of prisoners on death row grew from 688 in 1980 to over 3,700 in 2002 (Foley 208).

The period between 1815 and 1914 witnessed the birth of the new political culture which compounds the American political thought (Spellman 5). First, the U.S.A has grown as a capitalist country because of the belief that wealth is a grace from God. Also, because of the effect of the enlightenment ideas of natural rights and material progress set within a framework of legal protection. Capitalism emerged from being a descriptive term to the economy of the nation to an ideology. For “Adam Smith”, capitalism led to the economic progress which would lead to freedom and equality of the individuals (Ibid 122-125).

According to Hertz, the independence and autonomy of nations will be achieved through freeing the individual’s economy which can be achieved through capitalism (Ibid 225). For him, the huge productivity in the scientific and social knowledge was the reason for the technological development and modernization that make the USA the superpower in the twentieth century. Moreover, capitalism made the American economy and policy exceptional and different from the European model because neither elitism and aristocracy, nor the feudal systems were founded in the eighteenth century liberal America that unified the American society. What makes American politics different from the European one, for Hertz, is its consensus nature. So, the capitalist thought can be the container which contains all the pantheon of the American principles (Ibid 225-226). In the twentieth century, Fukuyama’s thesis “*the end of history*” asserted that democracy and capitalism are the means to achieve

development (Fukuyama 199-200). In the 1990s also capitalism was strongly advocated as a successful ideology for progress. So, like Fukuyama argued, the market provides more democracy because it expresses the will of the people. The U.S.A considered capitalism as a universal ideology and all the other nations must follow it (Foley 225-227).

The capitalist nature of the U.S.A in the period 1880–1920 clarifies the absence of socialism in its politics (Ibid 231). But, Karl Marx believed that capitalism in the U.S.A would lead to a socialist revolution because of the inequalities of wealth (Weinberg 173). Though a socialist party existed in the U.S.A, but it failed in its attempt to minimize the effectiveness of the strong American capitalism. Thus, there are many reasons behind this failure including the socioeconomic factors in one hand, such as the frontier which protected the American workers from being affected by the European ideas and the racial, fragmented nature of the American society which led to the absence of any idea of grouping which may threaten the workers' wages and social status (Foley 232-234). On the other hand there is the political–constitutional factor like the American tradition of popular sovereignty and individual rights and liberties (Ibid 233-235). Then, the male franchise in the early nineteenth century had satisfied Americans with their social status. This absence of socialism is what made the U.S.A different from the other industrialized countries (Ibid 235).

The U.S.A contains many socialist elements which made it comparable to the other European democracies, though its capitalistic nature. After the Second World War the U.S accepted “Keynesianism”⁵. Even the early entrepreneurs took privileges from the government of the day. The federal and state governments also financed the entrepreneurial activities through granting lands for example. Also, the federal and state governments became more involved in financing areas such as social security,

educational support and health care which means that the U.S.A is following the socialist path of the other European democracies (Foley 195). The post cold war era witnessed a new capitalism in which the system adopted the new economic and social circumstances. This change appeared clearly in the 1990s with the new technologies namely the Information Technology (IT) and the dotcom companies using the internet in its commerce because in this period, America had the strongest economy in the world (Ibid 195).

Pluralism, as another element of the American political thought which characterizes the American government and politics. It means that unity coexists with multiplicity which means federalism i.e. a union of many states working independently under a one government (Ibid 238). Democracy is recognized by pluralism in which it could only be achieved in the sovereignty of the people. For pluralism no government can be mandated by the people because the constitutional structure itself is fragmented and controlled through checks and balance (Ibid 239). In this way, pluralism tended to decentralize the government, and proposes the engagement of the interested groups in political decision-making. As pluralism became one of the characteristics of the American politics, many groups were formed to defend their shared interests, and to compete with other groups (Ibid). Moreover, some groups tried to be incorporated in the government to get a more powerful political status, though some of which were not political activists such as Blacks, women and the environmentalists. Some interest groups can have political power and affect the decision making without the need to be incorporated in larger political or organization parties. Pluralism, as Alexis de Tocqueville claimed, existed in the American politics from the early new republic. He noted that Pluralism is a distinctive American feature to defend the American's democracy and autonomy against the

central authority. James Madison also showed the importance of pluralism in "*The Federalist Papers*"⁶ as a characteristic in "the nature of men" (Ibid 238-242).

Pluralism is a sign of the freedom of the republic, but at the same time it threatened the republican liberty. The first danger is depicted in the groups working to achieve their own interests at the expense of the collective good. Also, the different groups and attitudes may cause the fragmentation of the society and the violation of democracy itself. For this reason the constitution must control such activities (Ibid 246).

The other element in the American political thought is conservatism. It was a problematic issue in the American political thought. Some thinkers denied its existence in the American politics, "Louis Hartz", for instance related the nonexistence of conservatism in the U.S.A to the past of the nations which lacked the feudal system; other thinkers related it to authoritarianism and the anti-Semitic nature of conservatism (Foley 298; James T. 460). Hartz and the political scientist "Sheldon Wolin" considered conservatism as a sort of liberalism because it aims to conserve the liberal society (Foley 298). "Russell Kirk" called conservativisms the stubborn people who resist change. But after World War II, the republic witnessed the revival of conservatism especially during the Reagan administration. However, this conservative existence was accompanied by liberalism which had a stronger influence throughout the American political history (Gottfried 25). The reason behind the triumph of liberalism over conservatism is the practicality and the reality of the politics of the former and the theoretical nature of the latter (Foley 298).

The twentieth century conservatism witnessed other problems. Demography and social mobility are considered the first two problems, in contrast to conservatism ideas which advocate harmony, order and stability (Glaser et al 343). The conservative

hostility to science and economic progress besides the technological innovations had been decreased in the twentieth century. For example, the conservative politician Congressman “Newt Gingrich” admired the new electronic technology, also he encouraged using new technological innovations in education (Foley 300-304). This sense of innovation is rooted in the American history with the puritan belief that God had created New England to be the first place where his forces will be gathered. This idea was secularized in the eighteenth century when the founders related this sense of innovation to the uniqueness of America. So, this was the reason of the birth of the new conservatism in the twentieth century political programs such as Roosevelt’s “New Deal”⁷. The new conservatism clashed with some problematic issues such as democracy and what is just in their principals for instance between libertarians and cultural traditionalists, free-market internationalists and economic nationalists. Moreover, it tends to protect the social order, family and the local community from the centralized political state as the conservative thinker “Robert Nisbet” said (Ibid 305). Since the U.S. did not experience any kind of totalitarianism as their European counterpart, and the cultural diversity of its community besides the hereditary distrust of the centralized government which is a focal point in the American conservatives creed; this made the American conservatism unique and different (Ibid 305).

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed new changes. The conservative thinker “Russell Kirk” called to make individualism and community compatible (Ibid 301). But individualism is related to conservatism’s mistrusted industrialization and big business, which was questioned by the historian “Christopher Lasch” who argued that the tradition of conservatism is more compatible with the populist tradition (Ibid 334-335). The twentieth century conservatism was divided between the libertarian followers of freedom that follow “John Stuart Mill” who

claimed the restriction of liberty and the traditionalist champions of virtue who advocated the primacy of individual liberty (Ibid 303-307). Under this division, lies another division between economic conservatism which encourages economic growth and cultural conservatives that emphasizes values. The last conflict occurred between “paleo-conservatives”⁸, and the neo-conservatives (Ibid 308-318). The latter was attacked of being liberalism taking just the name “conservatism” because it advocates modernism. But in general, conservatism has changed according to the changes of the time and the threats posed on the national ideals. Moreover, its aim remained the same which “Walter Lippmann” called “the good society.” In general, though the place of conservatism in the American politics, liberalism is more appropriate to the American practical society (Ibid 318).

Besides conservatism, liberalism was the main American political thought and overwhelming ideology of the nineteenth century in the West (Spellman 5), but the latter also is a point of disagreement. Importantly, liberalism is the most powerful path in the American political thought (Ibid 263). The liberal principals of the limited government, freedom, constitutionalism and the protection of property continued to shape the American politics even after the nineteenth century (Von Mises 20, 30, 52). Liberalism in the USA is a result of both Puritanism and republicanism. In both Jeffersonian and Jacksonian eras, liberalism was shaped by the agrarian nature (Foley 266-270). But the state intervention under the name of the industrial interests disturbed Jefferson’s natural balance of society. Despite, hegemony of liberalism culture, it had been modified with the reform movements such as the progressive era in which the laissez fair economics were transformed into reformist social liberalism (Ibid 263-274).

In the twentieth century, the American political parties classified themselves under the realms of conservatism or liberalism. In their opposition to Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society"⁹, the Republicans categorized themselves as conservatives (Ibid 269). FDR introduced the term liberalism to set up his political agenda in a persuasive manner to the American public (Ibid 277). But American liberalism changed from the Jefferson's and Jackson's American dream of equality and individualism to the new America which seeks the economic power and world power especially in the "progressive era"¹⁰. Liberal progressives had a positive idea towards the federal government which led to the advancement of the welfare state, and the federal system of social security (Ibid 272-280). Social liberalism under Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal witnessed a great success for his successful industrial and social changes, this besides the Great Society policy which sought to develop welfare liberalism. Though liberalism was strongly criticized in the 1970s, but it reached its peak with John Rawls's "Theory of Justice" to guarantee equal liberties (Ibid 285).

III/ The Contemporary American political thought

The contemporary American political thought has appeared clearly after the Cold War. Thus, the political thought of the American post cold war era has a strong the faith in the universality of democratic constitutionalism. Francis Fukuyama wrote about the end of the ideological conflict in which he asserted that all the nations over the world would follow the Western democratic politics, market economics, and social consensus based on competitive individualism (Spellman 154). The twenty century also witnessed the emergence of the U.S.A as a monopoly super power in its leading of the war on the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait. The American success in this mission led

them to think of the possibility to move the local cultures into its sphere of thinking (Ibid 154).

The beginning of the twentieth century in the U.S.A was characterized by optimism and confidence on one hand, and the anti-Western Islamic religious fundamentalism besides the global economic crises in the other hand. The hegemony of the US did not last for a long time because America gained a universal sympathy and a support from the Western countries in its war on terrorism and to put an end to Taliban regime in Afghanistan. But this support declined after the war on Iraq in 2003 because after the war no weapons of mass destruction were found, and they could not prove the existence of any relation between Saddam Husain's government and Taliban (Ibid 155). The American thought in this era was built upon the "with us or against us" attitude. The latter was rejected because the skeptics rose with the American failure to justify its occupation to Iraq. Moreover, the American economy had declined as a result of its intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan. The debate over human nature and the appropriate method to achieve peace and prosperity had been raised again because of the unbalanced situation between the civic virtue which became an obstacle and the private interest due to the opportunities given to money managers and at the same time risking people's interests (Ibid 156).

The American politics of the twenty first century faced serious problems as the Richard Nixon's attempts to change the country's policy through a military coup (Haliwell 2). Besides, other problems caused by the American presidents like the "Iran-Contra scandal"¹¹ which led to the collapse of Nixon's administration in 1986 and it was accompanied by the doubts of his position in the future. Whoever, he remained seen by the Americans as one of the most successful and admirable figures in the twentieth century American presidents and leaders. Moreover, the nostalgia for

Reagan's achievement in the early twenty first century proved that America shifted to the right and this was reinforced by the election of George W. Bush in 2004. But the latter's invasion to Iraq in 2003, and his slow reaction to the "Katrina disaster"¹² caused the failure of the republicans in the election of 2006 (Spellman 3-22). But his administration remained admired for its acceptance of Reagan's doctrine of free markets, low taxes and patriotic populism. After all these crises, the U.S.A remained united and peaceful, and continued in its consensus policy. (Ibid 22)

Both administrations of Reagan and Bush had some similarities. First, like Reagan, Bush relates or rather subordinates hard right dogma to practical politics. Also, both of them failed to dismantle social popular programs like Medicare. However, Bush's presidency is unique because he was the first president whose administration was a multicultural one. He was the first president who appointed in his administration a homosexual man, the first black Secretary of State (Colin Powell), the first black National Security Advisor (Condoleezza Rice), the first Hispanic Attorney General (Alberto Gonzalez), and more women and members of minority groups (Sandbrook 23). This ideological shift means the old prejudice no long exists; moreover, he promised to give twelve million illegal immigrants the status which reflects the pragmatic nature of Bush. The 1950's and the 1960s witnessed the collapse of economic and political liberalism (Ibid 23). Though there was no definition to liberalism in the U.S.A, but the liberals of this era like Harry Truman and Edward Kennedy were united to protect and extend the New Deal state (Ibid 24). They vaguely believed in Keynesianism because they wanted economic progress without the need to redistribute the wealth. They were united also in their commitment to defeat communism (Ibid 24).

The causes of the fall of liberals were clearly stated in the 1970's and 1980's. Some historians blamed the experience of the Vietnam War and the Black Urban Unrest (Ibid 24). But, the old liberals run out of the old ideas of the Fair Deal. Moreover, their underlined painless program had brought down with the economic crises of the 1970s such as the decline of heavy industries, rising world commodity prices and mainly the vast increases in the cost of Middle Eastern oil. Also, what made their situation worse was the social and economic corruption which accompanied Nixon's era. By the fall of liberalism, conservatism appeared in the political scene. Though the liberal attacks on conservatism; but the latter was the powerful existing political dogma in the 1970s and 1980s. Also, it gained a large popularity in this era. Though the liberals tried to resolve the economic problems of the 1970s, but the conservative's agenda was more successful in doing so, for instance they cut taxes and they applied asceticism policy to squeeze inflation which would minimize the miseries of the citizens (Ibid 24-25).

The victories of the republicans in 1988, 2000 and 2004 presidential elections were won upon social and cultural issues such as "urban crimes and the homosexual marriage". This success also is a result of the conservative openness and adaptation to the changes of the social and the cultural values of the modern world. But this adaptation was totally refused with the liberals in Ronald Reagan's and George H. W. Bush's eras. The first republican president who embraced conservatism was Richard Nixon; however, he was accused by governing from the center though his campaigning was from the right. His conservative ideas and pragmatism made him a successful president, whose administration successfully dealt with the federal deficit, and preserved the welfare state (Ibid 26).

Bill Clinton was an ideal president because of his centrist policy which caused the absence of the ideological conflict. His presidency was accompanied by the publication of Fukuyama's book *The End of History and the Last Man* in which he asserted that the fall of the soviet socialism meant the dominance of the American political liberalism (Ibid 27). The election of 2000 which was ended by the victory of the republican George W. Bush Sr was characterized not by the clash of ideologies as Bush claimed but rather by the time-honored battle for the centre ground (Ibid 27). The elections from 1996 to 2004 were regional in which each candidate had a large popularity as well as votes in a given territory for instance, in the three successive election the democrats are more popular in the urban northeast, California, and the industrial states of the Midwest, while the republicans' majority voters are found in the South, the Mountain states and the rural Midwest (Ibid 27). Moreover, there was not a total victory for one party over the other, for example, in the election of 1996, the republicans picked up 47 % of the total ballots cast and 159 electoral votes (Ibid 28). The elections of 2000 and 2004 also witnessed close similarities. The attacks of September 2001 had a little if no effect on the elections of 2004. In the same year, a survey had been made by *Los Angeles Times* in which they had found that only 29 % of the voters considered terrorism among the causes of their choice to their candidate, and just 16 per cent named the war in Iraq. The dominant issue in the choice of the candidates was more ethical. But the most notable thing is the division of the state into two parties the red (Republican) and blue (Democratic). (Ibid 27-29).

The eras of both Clinton and Bush were characterized also by the "war of cultures" which was strengthened by the publication of the sociologist "James Davison Hunter," *Culture Wars: the Struggle to Define America* (1992). His thesis stated that politics is dominated by other issues such as abortion, censorship, gun control, gender,

sexuality and the relationship between church and state. The division in the 1990s for Hunter was between Progressivism and Orthodoxy in which the former tended to be more tolerant but their decisions concerning some issues external authority like abortion were not flexible. (Ibid 21-33).

The American global leadership emerged in the post cold world era with the collapse of the soviet communism. However, the American leadership in the early 1990s was selective; President George H. W. Bush related the American intervention with the benefits which it may gain (Dumbrell 36). President Bill Clinton also relates the American intervention with its economic or security interests, besides the conditions of the clearness of the objectives, and the acceptability of the risks or as it is said Clinton sought “hegemony on the cheap”, but he clearly announced the American global leadership “America stands alone as the world’s indispensable nation” (qtd. In. Dumbrell 37), and nations must acknowledge the American indispensability. This global leadership led the U.S.A to focus more on the military side due to the threat which it face from the other civilizations especially the danger of terrorism (Ibid 37).

The leadership under George Bush Jr became more unilateral and militarized. He presented himself as a new nationalist; however, his foreign policy team embraced neo-conservatism which sought to promote democracy and gave more priority to the military side which is associated with the American exceptionalism (Ibid 29). Neo-conservatism also tends to preserve the American interests through its democratic realism such as access to Middle Eastern oil. American politics had been well defined after the attacks of September 2001 in which it was a combination of the new nationalism accompanied by the American interests and the neoconservative type of global leadership (Ibid 39). Bush’s policy is a combination of the Wilsonian

interdependence between ideals and interests, and Clinton's view that relates international peace with the international democracy. However, this leadership has been strongly questioned after the events of September 2001 and the American intervention in Iraq (Ibid 39).

The American leadership at home and in the international sphere was shaped in a "heroic" model (Ibid 41). This model which appeared after the cold war has been misused sometimes or excessively used as the "imperial presidency" of Richard Nixon 1969–1974 and the failure in the Vietnam War (Ibid 41). The aftermath of the cold war resulted in the nuclear proliferation which enhanced the executive power. Media also played a great role in the power gained by the executive. Nixon and Reagan were the heroic presidents of this era which witnessed a great power granted to both the federal and states authority. Even Clinton's presidency was characterized by his leadership though some power was granted to congress, but the important foreign and security policy-making were the duties of the executive. The 1994 Republican Contract with America with the right of veto also gave the executive more power in rejecting some decisions and bills, though it tended to give more leadership to Congress, but power lied in the executive side (Ibid 41).

President George W. Bush wanted to restore the executive authority and his attempts were easily achieved after the 9/11 attacks. For example a huge power related to national security has been given to the executive via the Patriot Act of 2006 (M. Finan 285). The war on terror, also, was the cause to give more power to the executive. Presidential authority was strengthened by the doctrine of pre-emption through which Bush was allowed to order any military intervention to prevent the immediate "preemptive" or the predictable threat "preventive" as the war on Iraq (Dumbrell 45). The presidential power extended to the right to detain and to

interrogate the combatants. However, this supremacy of the executive was challenged by the judiciary in *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* (2004) case in which Justice Sandra O'Connor called for the right of the detainees for legal appeals (Ibid 45).

The event of September 2001 presented an image about the American policy after the attacks. The 9/11 does not represent a turning point in the American foreign policy but rather it represents the ideology of the time (Ryan 50). The event has been interpreted as an opposition to the American power and leadership; moreover, there was a prediction that the Pentagon will be the next target of the attacks because it represents the American power and hegemony (Ibid 50). This event led to the revival of the two famous theses; the first is Fukuyama's "*The End of History*" which claimed that the western liberal democracy is the powerful existing ideology which all the nations should move towards it (Ibid 50). And the second, is Huntington's thesis that represents the end of the clash of ideologies with the end of the cold war, and the beginning of the clash of civilizations especially between the Western civilization and the Islamic and the Confucian one (Huntington 22-49). These civilizations besides the power of Europe threaten the American position as unilateral power. (Ryan 50).

The modern political thought is more realistic. Kissinger preferred "intelligent tough-mindedness" rather than "The tender-minded" that took the U.S. into Vietnam (Dumbrell 42). The 11 September did not change the U.S.A foreign policy, but it helped to address old policies. For instance, Kissinger's and Nixon's focus on interests rather than morals was reversed by Jimmy Carter's administration in 1976, Clinton's and Bush's eras because they returned to the tender-minded policy. The American free market globalization reflected Fukuyama's thesis of *Last Men and the End of History*, but for Clinton this is not sufficient because it undermined the strength of the military power, which gives no sense to it as a strong country without an imperialistic

role (Ibid 56). As “Irving Kristol” claimed the 11 September led to the revival of some ideologies as Huntington’s thesis *the clash of civilizations* in which he asserted that hatred is innate in human beings, and people need enemies (Ibid 57). The American exceptionalism and the lack of checks and balance on the executive facilitate its interventionist policy especially in Iraq and Afghanistan (Ibid 42-48, 60).

American liberalism in the twenty first century can be described in three variations which are pragmatism, and polemical liberalism (Mattson 65). First, the pragmatic liberalism in the contemporary political discourse which appeared as an alternative to neo-conservatism has been strengthened by the event of the 9/11. However, some liberals understand the policy making as the “art of possible” instead of being absolutely pragmatists (ibid 66-68). The revival of liberalism in the twenty first century is a result of the emergence of terrorism which is considered as totalitarianism. The Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration, “Robert Reich” saw American liberalism as a “positive optimism” i.e. loving what is American without hating what is not American (Ibid 69-76). Second, Rawlsian liberalism, in which “John Rawl’s”¹³ political thought is built upon protecting the individual’s liberty from the excessive authority and using the state to ensure this liberty (Ibid 76).

Conservatism in the contemporary American politics took another shape that is neo-conservatism which originated in the 1960s, but it took another shape in the twenty first century (Ibid-84). The first turn of this thought is called the postmodern conservatism which appeared as a result of the cultural war. Postmodernism questioned the universality of the Western truth claims, so, it distrusted the enlightenment values. This new thought helped in the emergence of a new group in the right wing intellectual known as “the theocons”. The thinkers of the latter group speak from their faith perception. They allow the civil disobedience against the corrupted

judiciary under the name of religion (Ibid 84). Concerning the 9/11 events, they called for a “Christian America” to battle “militant Islam” i.e. conservatism lends to cultural fragmentation as Ann Coulter and Michael Savage claimed (Ibid 84).

Conservative thinkers doubted the liberal activities in many fields. First, they questioned the academia because they believe that it was centered up on liberal thought (Ibid 86). The conservatism activist “David Horowitz” drafted the Academic Bill of Rights (ABOR) to police the academy to not affect the students minds with a given political views (Ibid 86). Then, conservatives disliked sciences and attacked liberalism for being science worshipers. Conservatism called to teach the “intelligent design” in which materialism should be replaced by deism understanding to nature (Ibid 88-90). Moreover, they complained and attacked the liberal media especially in the 1960s when Nixon’s vice president claimed the hostility of media against Nixon’s failure in the Vietnam War. Conservative writers addressed the subjectivity of media in reporting the events. But by the mid 1990s, the MSM has been changed and conservatives dominated radio talk programs and some TV programs (Ibid 86-92).

The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) has been signed by the President Jimmy Carter in 1977 includes in the twentieth article “Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law” (“qtd. in. Haliwall 89) . However, the covenant did not give a clear definition to propaganda; but propaganda in response to the Iraqi war on Kuwait is not prohibited. Nonetheless, the U.S. did not define the Iraqi war of the 1990’s and the invasion of Iraq in 2003 propaganda because democracies are unenthusiastic to use it. It substituted it with other terms such as advertising (Ibid 98). Moreover, propaganda is used to serve the interests of the authorities of the totalitarian countries to lie to their people; but the U.S.A as a democratic country always tells the truth and it use propaganda only and forcefully in war time (Ibid 99).

The propaganda of the White House set in the “axis of evil” speech in the twenty first century by the president Bush, and before it the “Evil Empire” speech by Ronald Reagan in West Minister in 8 June 1982 (Snow 100). In this speech, Reagan aimed to campaign to the American style of democracy. Also, in the second Evil Empire speech in 1983, Reagan directed his speech against the American ideological enemy which was communism. And to spread his ideas, Reagan made use of media. He also established the Special Planning Group (SPG) which included two committees (Ibid 1001). The first was responsible to think about the responsibilities of his propaganda campaign “Project Truth”. And the second was responsible for coordinating between the foreign policy sectors and the domestic ones to promote democracy. To reinforce his propaganda, Reagan relied on CSI financing to anticommunist groups around the globe such as helping the Nicaragua project of democracy against Sandinista (Ibid 101).

Democracy has been used in the American propaganda to make it successful because it represents everything sacred. George W. Bush’s Sr foreign policy was directed by faith as he said in his war on terror in Afghanistan and tyranny in Iraq. The propaganda effort to manage the global information triumphed by using media such as CNN which helped the U.S. in the Gulf war, and the internet war with Yugoslavia (Ibid 100-101). After the attacks of 9/11, US took propaganda on terrorism under the question “Why do they hate us” (qtd. in. Snow 102). The U.S first target was Afghanistan then Iraq (Ibid 104).

Conclusion

American political thought is a result of a long history and ideas; it witnessed many changes, agreements and disagreements between the historians and the thinkers. But the shared point between them is the uniqueness of the nature of the American political thought. However, American history reveals many controversies in its basic elements of thought. Taking for instance nationalism which deviated from its essential meaning and aim to become imperialistic in nature using the “Monroe Doctrine”, and the “Manifest Destiny” to achieve its imperialistic aims that are strengthened by its embracement to social Darwinism. Also, egalitarianism and equality did not well represent the American society which prevent the blacks from voting, and classify the indigenous Indians as outlaw. The Cold War can be considered as a turning point in the American history. In this period, the conflict has been seen as an ideological one as both Fukuyama and Huntington claimed.

Though the internal political conflict between conservatives and liberals both groups agreed about the American presidency leadership. Moreover, the heroic role of the American leaders appeared with Nixon’s and Reagan’s administrations, and was revived by George Bush II. The latter’s leadership in preserving order represented in combating immoral terrorism that has been related to Muslims and Arabs. His policy towards the terrorists and the nation which is thought that it helped has clearly appeared in the American domestic and foreign policy such as the brutality against Muslim detainees in the American jails; and its foreign policy with the suspected nations such as Libya, Syria and Iran.

End notes

1. Transcendentalists: in philosophy and literature, belief in higher reality than that found in sense experience or in a higher kind of knowledge than that achieved by human reason.
2. The Shays's Rebellion: was an armed uprising that took place in central and western Massachusetts in 1786 and 1787. The rebellion was named after Daniel Shays, a veteran of the American Revolutionary War and one of the rebel leaders.
3. The Sedition Acts (1798): measures passed by Congress empowered the president at his own discretion to expel or imprison any foreigner who was adjudged to be objectionable to the administration.
4. The *Dennis v. United States* (1951): In October 1949, 11 leaders of the Communist Party of the U.S. were convicted of violating the Smith Act, popularly known as the 1940 Sedition Act. The Smith Act prohibited advocacy of the violent overthrow of the U.S. government or the organization of any group promulgating such a philosophy. In *Dennis v. United States* (1951), the Supreme Court of the United States upheld the constitutionality of the act. The Court concluded that the 'gravity of the 'evil' justified an invasion of free speech under the circumstances, despite the fact that the speech in question did not create a clear and present danger. The Court later formulated a more stringent test for suppression of political speech and the Smith Act has fallen into disuse.
5. Keynesianism: relating to the ideas of John Maynard Keynes who argued that government could deal with the problem of failing economy by spending more money on public projects like roads and schools.

6. **The Federalist Papers:** The Federalist Papers are a series of 85 articles and essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay promoting the ratification of the United States Constitution.
7. **The New Deal:** a programme began by the American president Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1930 to end the depression. Producing new economic and social measures, and made the national government more powerful.
8. **paleo-conservatives:** Paleo-conservatism (paleocon) is a term for a conservative political philosophy found primarily in the United States stressing tradition, limited government, civil society, anti-colonialism, anti-corporatism and anti-federalism, along with religious, regional, national and Western identity.
9. **Great Society:** The Great Society was a set of domestic programs in the United States announced by President Lyndon B. Johnson at Ohio University and subsequently promoted by him and fellow Democrats in Congress in the 1960s. its aim was social reform.
10. **Progressive era:** The Progressive Era was a period of social activism and political reform in the U.S. that flourished from the 1890s to the 1920s. Its main goal was purification of government and elimination of corruption.
11. **The Iran-Contra scandal:** a series of secret and illegal by U.S. government officials under President Ronald Reagan. In 1985 the National Security Council officials sold military weapons to Iran. So it would help in freeing the American hostages hold in Lebanon.
12. **Katrina disaster:** was the deadliest and most destructive Atlantic hurricane of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season. It was the costliest natural disaster, as well as one of the five deadliest hurricanes, in the history of the United States.

13. John Rawl: John Bordley Rawls (1921 –2002) was an American philosopher and a leading figure in moral and political philosophy.

The American Political Thought and the Muslim Countries

Introduction

The American-Islamic relationship came to the face after WWII and was intensified in the Cold War era. Infact, the U.S.A had no direct interference in the Islamic countries unlike its European counterparts; but its relations with the Islamic countries have been built up according to its interests and ideals. So, the American interests shaped and defined the American perceptions and foreign policy towards the Muslim countries. In this sense, it seems that American ideals, morals and values contradict with Islamic ones that thing created a conflict. This chapter, then, examines the relationship between the world's superpower and the Islamic countries.

I/ A Historical Overview about the Islamic-Western Relationship

The relationship between Islamic World and the Western Christendom was unbalanced. On one hand, considering the cultural, religious, and ideological factors, conflict shaped the relations between the two civilizations because they had been seen as a challenge to each other on the basis of religious, cultural and ideological factors. On the other, the relationship between the two civilizations may be a cooperative one if politics and interests would be the basis upon which the relations will be built. For instance, some Western powers such as France, Germany and Britain joined the Ottoman Muslims against their European opponents. Then, Britain and France allied with the Muslim and Arab countries against the Ottoman and German alliance in World War I. But the American relationship with the Muslim countries was different from the European one, because the U.S.A had no direct bloody encounter or direct rule over the Muslim countries. However, the American support for self determination in the first half of the twenties century, but it had a suspicion perception towards the

third world countries. In the late 1940s, with the American attempts to destroy communism and limit the Soviet expansionism, the USA had mistrusted the third world nationalism that was suspected to be an ally of the Soviet Union (A. Gerges 73-75).

In the 1950s and 1960s America worked on making an alliance with the Islamic countries to counterbalance the Godless communism and the secular nationalist forces. On this basis, an alliance was founded between the U.S.A and Egypt, but this alliance deteriorated due to many reasons; the most important ones were the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 and the oil embargo in 1973, besides the 1978-1979 Iranian revolution. These events led the American officials to consider Islam as a threat to Western interests. These events along with the Libyan president Mu'ammar al Qaddafi proclamation of an Islamic state and the accusation of spreading radicalism and terrorism led the American official perception to lend towards the fear of the Islamic revival (A. Gerges 4-5).

II/ Terrorism as a Threat and its Effect on the American Policy

The post cold war era witnessed a new threat in the international relations. The nature of the threat is recognized as a religious one. The religious threat in the form of terrorism is considered to be the new form of clash between Islam and the West. For this reason, such a threat needs a new military and political strategic thinking. The specificity of this new threat lies in its direct connection to Islam on one hand, and its direct threat to the U.S.A on the other. So, terrorism is seen as a direct threat to the American hegemony and democracy (Edwards 65-67).

Terrorism is a political, religious and social organized criminal behavior that tends to influence the authority. It is the result of instability, fear and lack of the

natural rights of life, freedom and property (B. Noftsinger et al 1-4). Terrorism is not a new phenomenon because terrorist actions had taken place in the early Roman civilization with the “Sicarii and Zealots organizations”¹, also the first crusades are considered as terrorism (Ibid 2_4). In recent time, Taliban in Afghanistan is considered as a terrorist organization. Terrorism can be state sponsored such as the Iranian government actions, as it is claimed, or revolutionary one like the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 (Carlton 134, Rijwan 135). But in recent time religious terrorism is the most common and dangerous menace because terrorists believe that their deeds are sacred. Terrorists use many tactics to achieve their goals. Some of these tactics are armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination, random targeting, cyber and suicide (B. Noftsinger, Jr. at al 5-16). So, any transformation in the Muslim countries politics to Islamic rule is seen by the American politicians and thinkers as a deviation towards fundamentalism. Al Khomeini’s government in which he applied terror on those who questioned his leadership, and tolerated those who aligned with his leadership is the case in this sense (Rijwan 135).

The impact of terrorism on the American policy appeared in the 1980s especially with the Reagan administration in which attacking, appeasing and sponsoring terrorism became the American duty to prevent future terrorist attacks, and saving innocent people as Reagan’s Secretary of State George Shultz claimed (qtd. In. Carlton 122). The U.S.A began passing new legislations and strengthened its defense to protect its people and interests inside its borders and abroad. Shultz saw terrorism as a new kind of warfare used by the American opponents, for this reason the U.S. must prevent any kind of terroristic actions, using military intervention besides the economic sanctions against the nations which support such actions against the U.S., and to make the world a safe place for all people to live in (qtd. In. Carlton 122-123).

However, his thinking is seen ambiguous because he did not distinguish between the nature of terrorism as a free fighting or organized and legitimate groups. This ambiguity still characterizes the American political thinking such as the War on Terror in Bush's administration 2000 and whether it really means reacting to the hostile groups against the West (Carlton 121-124).

The problems of the U.S.A in relation to terrorism differ from the 1980's to the contemporary time. On one hand, in the 1980's America did not feel threatened in its homeland. Hostage was the main problem it faced, and this led to a conflictual relation between it and some nations like Iran, Libya, Lebanon and Syria (Carlton126). After the cold war in the other hand, the U.S.A became a selected target to terroristic attacks outside its borders such as the bombing of the American embassies in Africa (Ahmed 10). More, it became targeted within its mainland as well like the February 1993 World Trade Center bombing which was the first attack that some commentators explained it as a reaction to the hostile groups against the West (Carlton 229), and as the forerunner to the imminent attacks as September 11(Sloan10). The commentators' anticipation actually happened through trial of the perpetrators who admitted that they were planning to destroy other American landmarks to force the U.S. to abandon its support to Israel. This event led some observers to warn from some Islamic terroristic organizations which tend to harm the western interests. As a result, Muslims became politically discriminated. In a survey made after the attacks on the public attitudes towards Islam more than 50% said that Muslims are anti-Americanism, also Islam topped the list of the unfavorable religions (George 79).

This attack led the U.S.A to readdress its foreign policy. It revised Clinton's policy towards Islamic countries as the first step. Moreover, Israel and Egypt sought the American help to withstand the Islamic opposition groups. After the bombing of

the federal building in April 1995 in Oklahoma City, Muslims position became worse. This led some experts and commentators to link terrorism to Arabs, Muslims, and Middle Eastern countries like the “Evangelist Franklin Graham”². But others tried to separate terrorism from Islam as a religion such as George W. Bush in a speech at the Islamic center in Washington after six days of September 11 when he said “Islam is peace...When we think of Islam, we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world. Billions of people find A New Day of Infamy comfort and solace and peace. And that’s made brothers and sisters out of every race.” However, he directly made a link between terrorism and radical Muslims. However, His speech is a means to convince people that his “war on terror” is not a war against Islam as a religion, but rather a war against those who use Islam to justify their aggressive and violent actions. As a result, much legislation passed to restrict such oppressive actions. But there was no distinction between the Islamists who participate in the political field, and those who carry violent actions which made the American policy towards Islam ambiguous (George 79).

The third most serious attack was that of September the eleventh on the twin towers which affected the American policy towards Muslims inside and outside U.S. borders. This attacks was interpreted by the U.S.A as a result of the Islamic hatred towards America especially Al-Qaida organization which is unsatisfied with the American foreign policy towards the Muslim countries (Khan 55). The situation of Muslims in the U.S.A after the attacks became terrible especially with the PATRIOT Act 2006. The U.S.APA was used to detain, investigate and deport Arabs and Muslims (Wong 200). Also, the attorney general Ashcroft issued a new policy “Freedom of Information Act” (FOIA) to restrain information, and it was protected by DOJ 207. This new policy helped to keep the sensitive USAPA information secret (Wong 206-

207). The attacks of the 9/11 gave a new direction to the American foreign policy especially with the Muslim countries especially those which are considered as the “axis of evil” (Sardar 100). The threat of terrorism has grown by the WMD proliferation in the Islamic world. This phenomenon is advocated by the Islamic radicals as a means to defend themselves against an enemy who possess WMD. Also, these radicals challenged the pro American authoritarian Muslim countries in the Middle East and elsewhere (Freedman 14, 38).

Many American journalists, policy makers, human rights advocates, secularists, scholars advocated the “war on terror” to deprive any global terrorism development. In their view, many political social and economic problems may lead to terrorism. But Muslims are largely involved in this global danger. They believe that Islam embraces anti-humanist ideologies and “apocalyptic nihilism”³ such as the suicide terrorism (S. Rudy 33-34)

The first solution sought by the west to prevent such a threat was the “creation of a distance” between the West and the Muslim countries which support terrorism. However, this solution has seen impossible because it would break the bridge built between Muslims and the West. Also, globalization made this solution impossible, because it may strengthen the threat rather than isolating it (Edwards 65-67). So, the solution was that declared by the president George W. Bush in his “war on terror” (Crockatt 11). And the effective way to prevent any new terroristic attack is a direct interference or what is known as the “Bush Doctrine” (Renshon 161) that calls to a preventive attack and occupying the lands of the countries which sponsor such terroristic actions (J. Jackson 1). One of these suspected countries is Iraq which was the American target for its preventive war (Renshon 107).

The Arab and Muslim activists have a different view and interpretation to the American invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq under the name of war on terror. They consider it as a colonial war by the United States to invade the Muslim countries, as well as an American anti-Arab and anti-Islam actions. The Arab activists' view is illustrated by the American undermining to the elected government of Hamas in Palestine, its aggressive policies towards Iran and its blessing to the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006. Also, the Arab and Muslim activists hated the American policy that is based on the cowboy mentality of shoot first and then ask questions. The latter policy which means using force and threat is believed to be the American way in its policy towards the Muslim countries. Besides the Muslim activists, the Muslims public opinion also blamed the U.S.A for the problems in Iraq and the neighboring countries. It is also blamed for the demographic change as a result of the refugees who fled to the neighboring countries namely Syria and Jordan, and the growing sectarianism in Iraq (Nakhleh 84-90).

Terrorism as a major threat to the USA in the contemporary era has a hidden face in the American policy. American leaders used terrorism as a means to justify some policies that the American public would never accept in the absence of such justifications. Unlawful actions are taken by the American presidents in response to terrorism such as sabotage, mass deportation and assassination. Moreover, they secretly judge the suspected terrorists after being kept in solitudes for many years, more than that the detainees have a military tribunal jurisdiction (Winkler 1-2). Presidents focused on responding to terrorism to transfer the public attention from the economic and social problems to combat a new enemy. However, the presidential discourse, especially after the Iranian hostage of the sixty three Americans working in

the embassy, became related to terrorism as the main crisis which led people to turn their attention to their leaders in hope to secure the nation's safety again (Ibid 2-4).

Since 1980, Orientalism took a new direction through combining fear with the study of Islam. Between 1980 and 1990, every American intervention in the Middle East was followed by a revenge reaction from the Arabs and Muslims. For example after the American intervention in Lebanon on 29 September 1982, the American embassy was attacked by suicide bombers in Beirut in 3 April 1983. The Western anti-Arab/Muslim continued and flourished under the American hegemony and the emergence of a new American Orientalism. The American Orientalist is shaped by its religiosity, anti-racist and other ideals such as tolerance, and the American exceptionalism. Though Edward Said categorized the "war on terror" under anti-Islam/Arab racism, but the Islamic/American confrontation is really related to the America exceptionalism or Americanism. Consequently, terrorists or the so called Jihadists are believed to be fundamentalists, anti-Americanism, and anti-modernism and anti-liberal, democratic and secular American culture. So, to withstand these radical fundamentalists, the U.S.A must, as the Monroe Doctrine claimed, defend its national borders through military interventions and waging a "total war", or spreading democracy and capitalism throughout the countries which support terrorism (S. Rudy 39-43)

III/ The place of Muslims in the American Clash of Civilization

The American opposition and hatred to Islam and Muslims has historical roots. The relationship was a suspicious one. Cotton Mather and other protestant religious leaders who related Islam to Prophet Muhammad and called Muslims "Mahometan" while portraying them as "Devil". Cotton Mather also, felt proud because there are no Mahometan living in his lands (Pintac 20). Also, the Americans described Muhammad

as anarchist and linked Islam to “Armageddon”⁴. From this time Islam became an important issue in the American politics for example John Quincy Adams compared Jefferson to “the Arabian prophet”. However, Muslims had been seen as a barbarian pirates (Ibid 21).

Since the end of World War II, the American popular writers, policy makers and academics focused in their study of Islam on its relation with the United States since 1970's and the end of the Iranian revolution. To understand the Middle East and its politics, American politicians and thinkers turned to Islam. They recognized that the Middle East cannot be understood in isolation from Islam especially with the emergence of the Arab nationalism in this area. This American interest in understanding the Middle East and Islam is a result of its increasing involvement in the Middle East in the end of the World War II. The U.S.A worked on preventing the Soviet Union from controlling the Middle East because of its geo-strategic importance i.e. oil, the importance of the Suez Canal that facilitates the oil transportation. Also, this interest in this region is due to its emergence as a new powerful block after the independence of the colonized countries in the region (Jacobs 90-92). These new independencies is seen by the U.S. as a threat to its interests in the region.

Post World War II witnessed the American formulation of a new vision about the Middle East. The first image Americans had about the region is taken from the European Orientalist. Americans defined the region as a whole after World War II to be backward economically and politically, in addition to its military weakness as a result of the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 (F. Jacobs 92). Throughout their history, Arabs are seen as materialistic people and supporters of warfare (Ibid 92). Furthermore, Americans see Muslims as fatalistic since they accept their position in life without any attempt to ameliorate the conditions of their lives, because they believe that it is willed

by God. They believed that Muslims are not hard workers. Americans view the Muslims and Arabs as emotional, devious, deceitful and inflamed to violence by their charismatic leaders such as the Palestinian mufti Hajj Amin el Husseini who urged the mob against the Jews in 1930's and 1940's. The American media portrayed Hajj Husseini as "feared, killer, foxy and fanatical extremist" (qtd. in. F. Jacobs 93). The American analysts wanted to know the effect of Islam on the region. The Psychological Strategy Board stated that studying the Arab thinking requires studying the influence of Islam, the report claimed that Islam shaped all Muslims' aspects of life as well as the relations between Muslims and non Muslims. Consequently, the report warned a future confrontation between Muslims and the West (Ibid 93).

American analysts warned from a new crisis between the Middle East and the U.S.A as a result of Islam and its adherents, besides the politicization of Islam (Kaymaz 53). Harold W. Glidden wrote an article entitled "Arab World" in the American journal of Psychiatry in which he depicted all the Arabs with their rich history as conformists, hierarchical, egoistic, dishonest, and violent and like revenge. Moreover, Arabs are related to Islam and the latter is depicted as fanatical religion. The Middle East which is considered as a medieval region in the post World War II, and the US provided it with the technological and intellectual change. The American commentators feared from the emergence of an antipathy pan Islamic revolution as one of the outcomes of the Cold War because Muslims believe that the secularity and the innovations of the West are the reasons of Muslims' crises and their dominance by the non Muslims (F. Jacobs 93-96).

Muslim Brotherhood was the most prominent and powerful political force throughout the Middle East for this reason, it is predicted to raise the pan-Arab or pan-Islamic revolution (Ibid 93). Some American organizations like the National Security

Council considered Islam as a serious problem in the international affairs. The Council of Foreign Relations besides NSC worked on preventing the pan-Islamic revolution. Nevertheless, The Council on Foreign Relations Study group concluded that not all the Muslim nations are pan Islamic countries; some of them for instance did not claim Islam as the official religion of the state. Jacobs claimed that being a pan-Islamic country means the rejection of the integration in the modern interconnected world which would cause backwardness and the failure of these countries (Ibid 96). So, the latter group concluded that the threat of pan Islam countries can be reduced, but the pan Arab threat is still facing the USA and the Western countries. The U.S.A, then, found a problem in the appropriate choice in its relation with the Middle East, either to support the nationalist regimes which limit Islam like Jamal Abdennasser in Egypt, or advocating the more traditional monarchies like Saudi Arabia and Iran to promote stability and control but simultaneously rejecting modernity. But finally and by the 1960's, the U.S. chose the latter solution (Ibid 93-96)

The end of the Cold War witnessed the emergence of America as the unilateral world power and the leader of the world, but this leadership could not be achieved unless a new enemy would be found (Huntington 29). The new enemy is seen in the rise of the Islamist ideology and terrorism which challenge the U.S. hegemony. This challenge has increased from the overthrow of the Shah from Iran (Fukuyama 45-46, 64). Samuel P. Huntington represents Muslims among other civilizations as the major threat to the U.S.A leadership because they reject everything Western and modern (Huntington 38 -73). Huntington's hypothesis has been readdressed after the 9/11 attacks which confirmed the clash of civilizations (Crockatt 6). A civilization can be defined as "the neutral, scientific term indicating a certain kind of society or stage of growth which a society has reached; it is employed mainly by historians and historical

sociologists as a means of categorizing various forms of social organization” (Ibid 6-9). From this categorization of societies, George W. Bush claimed in his speeches that his “war on terror” is a civilization’s fight “the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers” (qtd. in. Crockatt 11). And those who advocated and allied with terror are the enemies of civilization. Also religion is considered by the president as one of the “unseen pillars of civilization”, however religion alongside morals are not a new phenomena in the American history (Ibid 6-11).

American foreign policy is, then, affected by its civilization consciousness, which means the identification of civilization with America which is rooted in the American manifesto “American exceptionalism” or “Americanism”; i.e. America itself constitutes a civilization in its nationalism. Many historians and politicians related America to civilization among them Max Lerner’s *America as a Civilization*. Additionally, Robert Kagan made a distinction between what is Europeanism and Americanism; the two worlds are different in core issues such as determining threats and defining challenges. The difference between them had been presented by Thomas Paine in “*Common sense*”⁵ (Crocke 11-17). George W. Bush claimed that the American civilization is distinctive and exceptional in his 2004 State of the Union Address: “America is a nation with a mission, and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs” (W. Bush). Civilization consciousness strengthened the American leadership to the world through the overseas interventions; however, this American leadership was not a direct one before the 1990’s because of the fear of confrontation with the Soviet Union and China, but after the First Gulf War, it became a direct one and was more apparent the invasion of Iraq in 2003. In Bush’s war on terror, American leadership agenda has been put to fight barbarians on behalf of civilization (Ibid 11-17).

The contemporary “civilization consciousness”⁶ identified the USA with the Western civilized world. A civilization in this context means the nations which joined the USA in its war on terror. These nations besides some Islamic nations that reject the actions of Al Qaeda joined together to make a coalition under American leadership to fight the common enemy, “terrorism”, on behalf of civilization. The National Security Strategy document of 2002 emphasizes freedom as the main aim of the American foreign policy (Ibid10-25). The civilization consciousness led the United States to categorize many Islamic Organizations in the zone of terrorism. The most prominent groups identified by the U.S.A are Hamas and Al-Qaida. First, Hamas is seen as a radical Islamist group that refused peace with Israel and acts violently against the Jews in Palestine. Second, Hezbollah in Lebanon is considered as a terroristic group that uses Jihad to defend its political and religious goals. (Ibid 25)

Finally, the most important known terroristic organization is Al Qaeda which is an international terrorist network created by Osama Ben Laden. Al Qaeda claimed Jihad against those who do not subscribe to their beliefs. Its first strategy is known as the “mid-term strategy”, in which Al Qaeda tends to dismiss the “apostates ruler”⁷ of the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East. Second, the US or “the Great Satan” is the major target of Al Qaeda in its long term strategy; for instance, the American embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1988 or the attack on the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000 besides the attacks of September 11. Other organizations in the Middle East, South Asia and Northern Africa forged a strong relation with Al Qaeda against the secular West led by the U.S.A (Winkler 63-66).

The civilization consciousness led to several complaints from different countries, and they are interpreted by the Americans as anti-Americanism. The latter emerged as a result of the application of the American power and spreading its ideals

that is represented in its civilization consciousness. The language used by Bush in his war on terror is shaped by the American cultural heritage which led to it to be heavily criticized for instance, in the search for Ben Laden and other terrorists, Bush said “We’ll smoke ’em out” (qtd. In. C. Wong 8). The events of the 11th September and before it, Clinton’s policy towards Muslims led the so called anti-Americanism or the hatred of America. Moreover, it led Muslims to distrust the American claims of an American Islamic friendship because this relation could be found if only Islam will represent merely the faith without any social, economic and political values which are known by the Islamists as the “American Islam” (C. Wong 8). The Bush administration tried to convince the world that the war on terror is not a war against Islam to make the relationship between the two civilizations better, but the passage of the Patriot Act 2001 demonstrated the opposite because this act was a response to what is said to be Islamist hatred to America (S. Rudy 1); so, they related terrorism to Islam. Anti-Americanism is a natural reaction to a nation which predicts the defense of civilization while it is working on preserving its interests like oil, and dominance in the Middle East. Moreover, the United States did not truly represent civilization because of its uncivilized policy towards the Muslim detainees in Guantanamo and Abu Gharaib prisons (Ibid 25-33). So, the USA perceives Muslims’ attitudes and actions as anti-Americanism and a threat to its homeland security which required a special policy towards them, this reaction is exemplified in the attacks on both Afghanistan and Iraq as an automatic reaction to the American homeland security (Ibid 43-44).

The American Israeli friendship and the former’s support to the latter in its war against the Palestinians that are considered as terrorists, besides the American view to the Arabs and Muslims as “the others”. And considering the Israeli as the Americans

“us,” reinforced the Islamic anti-Americanism sentiment which is defined by the U.S.A as fundamentalism (Pintak 38-39). The Israeli writer Haim Baram claimed that after the collapse of the Soviet Union the Israeli leaders among them the former president Herzog of Israel, the Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin worked hardly to convince the American and the European leaders about the danger of Islamic fundamentalism for Israel and the world as a whole (A. Gerges 83). The Prime Minister Shimon Peres was firm in his warning from the threat of Islamic fundamentalism when he said that it is “like Communism adopted the Machiavellian slogan that ends justify means, which is a license to lie, to subvert, to kill” (qtd. In. A. Gerges 83). These Israeli perceptions towards Muslims increasingly adopted by the American leaders; moreover the Israeli perceptions affected its policy towards the Islamic countries. In an interview with the members of the U.S. State Department’s Policy Planning Staff, they denied any Israeli influence on the American foreign policy towards the Muslim countries, and they emphasized the American interest as the basis of its policy; however, a senior State Department official said it clearly that they are influenced by the Israeli perceptions toward Muslims to a large extent (A. Gerges 83-84). Their views shaped the American Officials perception of Islamic fundamentalism.

More, another member of the state department related the American suspicion for Islam to the opposition from the Muslim side to peace with Israel which is an important issue in the American foreign policy (Ibid 83). President Bill Clinton referred to the militant groups who oppose the Arab Israeli peace as the “the dark forces of terror and extremism” (qtd. in. A. Georges 83). A former state department official Arthur Lowie asserted that Clinton’s policy towards Iraq and Iran is influenced by the Israeli friendship (Ibid 83-84). This tight friendship relation formulates the

American perceptions towards some Islamic organizations like Hamas which is seen as a terrorist organization because it calls for the destruction of Israel and the establishment of the Islamic Palestinian state (Winkler 64-65). So Muslims are perceived by the American leaders and thinkers as a threat to their Israeli friends. And showed their cruel intentions towards the Jews in the words of the religious right leader Jerry Fawell when he said in an interview in the CBS channel “Adolf Hitler was bad, but what the Muslims want to do to the Jews is worse.”(Mansfield 14).

The American-Islamic clash is strengthened by the media coverage which ascends the tension and strengthens the bad image of Muslims in the American minds by dehumanizing them (Pintac 47). American media represented the political opinions of the country because much of the news information relies on the government sources. The government uses ideological tools such as anti-communism and national security in media reports to fulfill the results it tends. The role of media in the Cold War was to support American national security against the Soviet Union and communism. Subsequently, in the aftermath of the Cold War the media hypothesized about the rise of new enemies which Leon Hadar calls “the green peril” in which the press focused on political Islam and Iran (Gerges 82). So, the press becomes an active participant in the American foreign policy. The American media, then, represented Muslims as bad and negative, and this affected the public opinion towards them. Media also influenced the elites’ opinions and the decision makers’ fear and prejudice. Samuel Lewis, a former director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, said that the hostile media coverage to extremist Islamic groups affected the American perception to Islam and automatically its foreign policy towards the Muslim countries. For example a day after the attack of the 9/11, George W. Bush proclaimed that the attacks are against the US as a symbol of freedom and democracy (Ibid 82-83).

The American media coverage after September the 11th became characterized by its relation to Islam, culture and civilization. Hence, the crises are explained from Huntington's thesis of the clash of civilizations. After the attacks of the 9/11, the American mainstream media used Huntington's thesis to explain the event and the crises that followed it. After the attacks, the New York Times launched "A Nation Challenged" section which continued for four months (qtd. In. Gerges 81). The editors of the section looked for the causes and the consequences of September 11. Even the regular sections and the op-ed pages were written in the same manner with titles such as "Yes, this is about Islam, This is a religious war, Jihad, The one true faith, Dictates of faith, Defusing the holy bomb, Barbarians at the gates, The force of Islam, Divine inspiration, The core of Muslim rage, Dreams of holy war" (Gerges 81-82).

Media interviews with some prominent American figures also fuel the public's hatred against Muslims because of the negative views of these people. In an interview with Franklin Graham, he said that Islam is "wicked, violent and not of the same God", also he continued stating that he does not believe that Islam is a peaceful and wonderful religion- as George Bush claimed (Mansfield 139). He added in a NBC interview he said that Quran contains verses urging to kill the infidel, so the attack on the U.S.A was "by people of the Islamic faith" (qtd. In. Mansfield 140). Also, Jerry Falwell a leader of religious right declared in SBC that prophet Muhammad was a "terrorist ...violent man, a man of war" (Mansfield 139-140).

Accordingly, Thomas Friedman, the in-house Middle East expert at the New York Times wrote an article claiming that the war is a religious one i.e. a "Muslim rage" against the Western civilization (Georges 131). The New York Times after the 11/9 framed stories based on the old rivalry between Islam and Christianity for example; Andrew Sullivan published a work entitled "This is a Religion War" (Ibid

131) Similarly, Elaine Sciolino asked “Who Hates the US” (qtd. in Georges 131). Huntington called the contemporary era the “Age of Muslim wars”, and after September 11, he claimed that this war is waged against America (Ibid 131). Moreover, the Western support to the United States’ war against terror and the unenthusiastic from the Muslim countries fueled the clash of civilizations. The economic, social and political ills are the scope of discussing Islam in the New York Times considering for instance the educational shortcomings, the lack of democracy, population explosion, economic problems, unemployment, the absence of sciences, and the most important issue is the absence of the Islamic enthusiasm to the American war on terror (Ibid 132). A ten pages petition signed by sixteen important academics headed by Samuel P Huntington, Theda Skocpol, Michael Waltzer, Francis Fukuyama and Amitai Etzioni in which they declared their endorsement of the war against terrorism to defend the American values, civilization and culture (Ibid 131-133).

The stereotype of the Muslims image is strengthened by the media misrepresentation of the Muslims. The crises in the Islamic world such as the Arab oil embargo, the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran, besides some leaders and political activists like Muammar Al Qaddafi and Ayatollah Khomeini shaped the journalist representation of the Muslim societies as a whole (L. Douglass 53). This negative representation of the Muslims in the American media is carried out by other prominent figures. First, David Lands, a professor of history at Harvard University published an article entitled “Girl Power” in which he saw that the 9/11 attack was against women’s freedom in the West (Georges 134). Other journalists claimed that the attack was waged against freedom and democracy of the US which became Bush’s refrain, whereas, others called for bombing Mecca and claimed the corruption and backwardness of the Muslims’ culture (Ibid 134).

The effect of Media in shaping the image of Islam and Muslims is not new; because this Western perception toward Islam is rooted in the Orientalist discourse. Likewise, Huntington's theory is affected by the Orientalist representation of Islam as a one coherent force that has an antagonistic relation with the West (Poole 32). So, the historical origin of the prejudice against Islam and Muslims in the Western perception is the cause that led journalists and readers to share Huntington's point of view. Also, the latter's success is due to his ability to discuss the international relations without going deeply into the detailed political issues especially the Arab-Israeli conflict which fits the media, as well as the Bush administration which transferred the issue from an Arab-Israeli conflict to the scope of terrorism against the U.S.A (Abrahamian 535). The New York Times published many subjects concerning the Arabs and Muslims but it marginalized the Palestinian Intifada. Also, media helps the reader to understand the current crisis explaining the causes and the circumstances of these crises such as relating jihad to fanatic marginalized groups who seek revenge from the secular nations that they hate. However, they never mention Palestine. Journalists avoided mentioning the Palestinian issue when speaking about the Middle East; they focused their attention on the economic and the social problems, besides the lack of political participation. The New York Times, in its analysis to September 11, said that the terrorists crashed the twin trade center because their homelands are not "free market democracies" (Ibid 135).

Few mentioned Palestine in their discussion of September 11. First, a Georgia congresswoman said that the American support to Palestine has a relation with the attacks of 9/11. Even the previous British prime minister Toney Blair stressed on dealing with the Palestinian problem and to proceed the war against terrorism at the same time; but the American media ignored the problem of Palestine and focused its

attention on its war on terror (Abrahamian 135). The American media was limited in its publications, for instance some news and al-Qaida activities in Palestine and tapes are not allowed to be published or broadcasted because they are considered by the White House as an “inflammatory propaganda” (Ibid 135). Some of these unreleased tapes are Ben Laden’s declaration that the hijackers’ attack was a revenge for people killed in Palestine (Ibid 536). The Cambridge Toney Judt mentioned Palestine when he addressed Bush’s foreign policy, and as a result, he was strongly attacked and denounced as a self-hating Jew (Ibid 137). Almost all the American journalists related September 11 to totalitarian religion. So, media paralleled the American administration in claiming that the U.S.A is attacked not for what it is doing or for its policies, but rather for what it is, as the president Bush claimed, the attack is against their civilization and their belief in progress and tolerance (Ibid 538).

The negative American perception toward Muslims and the Muslim countries, and the myth of the clash between the two civilizations and the threat posed by the Islamic civilization on the American one is criticized by many thinkers. The most prominent thinker who criticized this perception, in particular Huntington’s theory is “Eduard Said” in a media lecture. Said noticed that Huntington has focused more on “hostile attention” in his theory on Islam (Said). He claimed that Huntington has an aggressive attitude towards other civilizations like Islam which he perceives as a threat on the American dominance. So, the solution is to make the American rivalries more Westernized. Said criticized Huntington’s view to Islam because of his limited vision towards Muslims whom Huntington believed that they focused all their attention to destroy and damage the U.S. (Said). In this sense, Sherkaoui explained that although Iran is an Islamic country but it sided with orthodox Christian Russia against Chechnya and Armenia against Azerbaijan 98-96. In a research of the conflicts which

took place between 1946 and 1997, Chiozza found that conflicts between groups belonging to different civilizations are less of those between the same civilizations (Sherkaoui 99).

Relating terrorism to the Muslim countries also is criticized by Eduard Said. He described it as a way to fuel the western hostility and antipathy against these countries which have a great history in its competition with the Western Christendom, and its importance for its oil (Said). Also, the Islamic antipathy to the West really exists, but this antipathy is not a result of the radical Islamic fundamentalism, but rather it is a result of at least two centuries of the Western colonization to the Muslim countries (Kaymaz 74). For the U.S.A, the Islamic world is the source of terrorism; whereas it overlooked the fact that terrorism is carried out by the American liberal empire and Israel. What is missed by the American observers is the destruction of the world as a result of American capitalism which led to the spread of hunger, poverty and the exploitation of the human and natural sources in the weak countries (Ibid 74-75).

Conclusion

The Muslim countries are described by the U.S.A as terrorist and fanatic fundamentalist ones whose basic principles clash with those of the U.S.A. Therefore, this divergence in the values formulated the American perception toward the Muslim countries. Muslims are considered as terrorists and radical fundamentalists who reject American modernity and hegemony. Also, the American prominent political and intellectual figures claimed that Islam and Muslims as the new enemy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This enemy poses a great threat to the American national security and damages its interests in the other countries. Consequently, the U.S.A must defend its national security and secure its interests via many ways such as the American Patriot Act, and waging a direct war on the so called “axis of evil” or the countries sponsoring terrorism like Iraq and Afghanistan. However, this negative image about Islam is strengthened by media which represents Islam and Muslims to the public in the image of Al Qaeda and other actions of terrorism. Yet, Edward Said and Ihsan Serif Kaymaz criticized this perception towards Muslims, and related terrorism to American capitalism and hegemonic ambitions.

End notes

1. Sicarii and Zealots organizations: the first terrorist organizations. The Sicarii were Jewish extremists who opposed the Roman occupation of Israel and other Middle Eastern nations during the first century. The Zealots also were a Jewish extremists who focused their attacks upon Romans and Greeks
2. Evangelist Franklin Graham: William Franklin Graham III (1952), known publicly as Franklin Graham, is an American Christian evangelist and missionary. He is the president of both the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) and the international Christian relief organization Samaritan's Purse.
3. apocalyptic nihilism: anti-humanist Ideologies
4. Armageddon: the last battle between good and evil before the Day of Judgment. The term is also used in a generic sense to refer to any end of the world scenario.
5. Common Sense: Common Sense is a pamphlet written by Thomas Paine. It was first published anonymously on January 10, 1776, at the beginning of the American Revolution.
6. Civilization consciousness: it is the identification of civilization with America, it expresses a sense of America's distinct identity and culture. It is the old American exceptionalism.
7. Apostates ruler: Apostasy (Greek apostasia, "insurrection") the total abandonment of Christianity by a baptized person. It is the rejection of all religions.

The Reflection of the American Perceptions towards Muslim Countries: Iran as a Case Study

Introduction

The American-Iranian relationship has shifted from a tight relation between two friendly countries mainly during the reign of the Shah in Iran, to an absolutely hostile relationship from Khomeini's presidency onwards. This antagonism which shaped the two countries' relationship is a result of successive clashes between them beginning with the seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979. The U.S. used many ways to release the hostages mainly posing sanctions on Iran. After the resolution of this problem, Iran was defined again as a threat to the U.S.A. Moreover, Bush Jr portrayed it as one of the so called "the axis of evil" claiming that it has terroristic ties and its nuclear programme as considered by the Americans. This American perception towards Iran made it a target to American sanctions till the contemporary time.

I/ The American-Iranian Political History

After the collapse of the Shah's government and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran under Ayatollah Rohollah Khomeini in February 1979, Iran became an anti-West and strongly an anti-American country (Katzman 1). Moreover, the Iranian revolution is considered as the beginning of the Islamist radicalism in the Middle East. The presidency of Jimmy Carter 2000 witnessed friendly relations with Iran under the Shah. Carter claimed that Iran which is under the Shah is the only stable country in the area, and no attempt to destabilize it will succeed because it is supported by the USA. With the destabilization and the problems that faced the Shah; the U.S. was confused whether to proceed its support to the Shah to face the opposition, or

make new relations with the latter. Brzezinski, national security advisor of Carter, favored to align with the Shah and give support to a military government. General Robert Huyser was sent to act directly with the Iranian military to stabilize the Iranian military and to support their legitimate government (Freedman 66-70). After the situation got more serious, the ambassador William Sullivan called for the amelioration of the American relation with Khomeini to avoid the loose of the American interests with Iran (Ibid 18, 70-73).

With the withdrawal of the Shah, the American interests in Iran had really spoiled. Shapour Bakhtiar as a moderate leader convinced the Shah to leave, under his rule the American-Iranian relationship deteriorated because Bakhtiar changed the Iranian foreign policy; and annihilated the oil supply to Israel and South Africa (Ibid 73-74). After Khomeini became the president of the new Islamic republic, The Iranian opposition towards America was clearly demonstrated with the seizure of the American embassy in Iran by the pro-Khomeini “radical” Iranians who responded to Khomeini’s call for attacks on the Americans (Katzman 2).

The American contact with the new Iranian leaders decreased ultimately. Also, Washington could not deal with the Iranian coup, and it had had no relation with the revolutionaries and the clerics, instead they followed Khomeini’s Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan because his government was more moderate. The latter wanted to keep good relations with America to avoid some problems such as isolation and to protract the Iranian economy. Brzezinski tried to win the Iranian alliance to remove the Soviets from the area; however, he failed because of the limited access to the “supreme authority” that hates the Americans as the assistant secretary Harold Saunders claimed (Freedman 75-76). And to remove the new government and restore the Shah’s rule, the U.S.A accused Khomeini for the persecution of the Jewish

minority and the Bahais (Ibid 76). But this American policy led to the deterioration of the relations, because the latter began decreasing its help to its old Iranian allies such as Carter's refusal of the Shah's medical treatment in the US out of fearing more seizures of the American embassy (Ibid 76-78).

The hostages were a strong weapon in the hands of the Iranians, at the same time the American side was severely weakened. But some events at that time gave the U.S.A a hope to achieve a deal with the militant group to release the hostages. The first one was the Shah's living New York to Panama. And, the Iranian censure of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that was condemned by the Americans as well (Katzman 1). Lastly, Abolhasan Bani Sadr winning of the elections and his opposition to the seizure of the embassy (Freedman 79). These events gave the U.S.A a hope to achieve a deal with the hijackers. With the failure of the diplomatic attempts, Carter proposed the military or the economic harassment to release the hostages (Ibid 81). However, the majority of the American European allies did not support sanctions against Iran. Even the secret negotiations with the Iranian foreign minister failed because of Khomeini's total refusal of any negotiations and his harsh slogan which called for the eternal fighting against America (Ibid 80, 82). For this reason Carter's administration preferred that the hostages would stay with the hijackers rather than the radical government. Finally, the U.S.A broke completely its relations with Iran on April 7, 1980 during the Reagan administration (Katzman 50). In April 16, a new plan was put by the Reagan administration and the hostages were freed. After, Iran became isolated and economically weak, but it was not ready for a deal because of the Iraqi invasion. To respond to the American military attack and to defeat Carter, Khomeini thought to hold the hostages (Ibid 79-83).

The Iranian revolution really damaged the presidency of Carter by the successive humiliations, but at the same time contributed to the success of Ronald Reagan in his election and helped him to win. On one hand, Reagan encouraged Islamism because it refused and withstood communism; he invited the Afghan mujahedeen to the White House and praised them as “the moral equivalent of the American founding fathers” (qtd. In. Sherkaoui 96). But in the other hand, Reagan threatened Iran and those who support it (Sherkaoui 97). George H W. Bush in his inaugural day in 1989 said that the Iranian American relations would be better, if Iran would help the U.S. to release the hostages from the Lebanese organization Hizbollah. However, the relationship got worse because Iran supported the countries which oppose the American sponsoring of peace in the Middle East. Moreover, George Bush described Iran as one of the “axis of evil” in 2002 besides North Korea and Iraq (Atlantic Council 9).

With the Clinton’s administration, further sanctions were imposed on Iran to isolate it. The Bush administration proceeded the sanctions on Iran to deal with the Iranian WMD programme, and changing its government. Also, the two countries engaged in diplomatic relations to deal with some governments in the region such as Afghanistan and Iraq. These diplomatic relations were built up on a given conditions posed by the U.S.A on Iran and the most important condition is the American military presence in the Persian Gulf (Katzman 50-51). Furthermore, Bush’s Vice President D. Cheney called for a military intervention in Iran to change the current regime (qtd. In. Katzman 51). Besides the military intervention, the Bush administration sought to win the support of the Iranian youth who was seen unsatisfied with the policies of their government (Ibid 51). But the diplomatic relations between the two countries ended with the Riyadh bombing in May 12, 2003 (Ibid 51). Also, the failure of the

diplomatic relations was a consequence of the American emphasizing on the Iranian government to abandon its objective that dated back to the Islamic revolution (Ibid 51). The Bush administration also used the persuasion method to urge Iran to give up its nuclear programme by offering rewards and simultaneously threatening it if it will refuse (M. Pollack et al 26). And in the second case, the US posed sanctions on Iran with the help of other countries or the “international cooperation” (Ibid 26).

It is believed that terrorism in Iran was government sponsored, because the Iranian leaders helped in the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979. Americans, then, witnessed the first terroristic action against their unity. To justify the hijacking, the Iranian government denied the involvement of the students, who were believed that they were the hijackers in the attack; moreover, they justified their actions on the basis that the American government especially the CIA is responsible for relieving the nationalist Muhammad Mossadegh, and replaced him with the Shah (Salon 51). Also, the American government was blamed for funding the international security service, Savak, in its repressive action (Ibid 51-52). So, U.S. perceived the Iranian government as a criminal who justified its crime by “blaming the victim”. The hijackers also used media to affect the American public opinion particularly the families of the hostages, who simultaneously played a great role in forcing the government to accelerate freeing their relative hostages (Ibid 52-53).

Besides terrorism, Iran is believed to have manufactories of weapons of mass destruction. In 2003-2004, Iran appeared as a threat to the world peace because of the nuclear weapons it began to obtain and to manufacture. In 2007, the National Intelligence Estimate on Iran notified the danger of the Iranian acquisition of such weapons (M. Pollack et al 1-2). Although, the relationship between Iran and the U.S.A before 2003-2004 was a cooperative one to face Al Qaeda, but the Iranian

manufacturing of the weapons of mass destruction has severely deteriorated the relations between the two countries. To deal with the Iranian issue, the Bush administration tried to face the problem via an “international pressure” on Iran, besides proceeding working on changing the Iranian government. But by the end of Bush’s administration, his diplomatic pressure had failed. So, the U.S.A imposed political and economic pressures on Iran (Ibid 1-2, 23).

The USA imposed economic sanctions on Iran to oblige it to give up its nuclear program. To handicap the Iranian economy, the U.S.A imposed sanctions on the financial, commercial and the insurance sectors, oil. However, the aim of the sanction was not exclusively anti WMD programme, but it aimed also to change the current Iranian government, and secure human rights in the region (Kolsson i-ii). The U.S.A imposed these sanctions to push for negotiations with Tehran, without the need to wage a military war (Ibid i-ii, 1).

II/ Iran under the American Sanctions

Like any region in the third world countries, the United States has strategic interests in the Persian Gulf mainly preserving its interests from the oil sector, preventing any terrorist threat, and avoiding the emergence of any dominant hostile country in the region. Yet, these interests are jeopardized by the increase of the Iranian nuclear program threat. And to avoid this threat, the U.S.A used many political and military options to preserve its interests and to avoid the Iranian hegemony in the region (Hemmer 42-43).

It is believed that the Iranian Islamic republic is characterized by its anti-Americanism from its establishment as a result of the revolution of 1979. Also, it is accused for its supporting the terroristic and violent groups. As a result, the U.S.A posed heavy sanctions on Iran. But, before sanctioning Iran, the U.S.A raised the

question of whether to apply the unilateral or the multilateral sanctions. The first group of the American lawmakers preferred the multilateral sanctions because the unilateral one is less effective in pushing Iran to give up its nuclear program (Ilias 32). Also, the foreign countries mainly the Persian Gulf countries and the Arab ones will not obey the unilateral sanctions in the expense of their strong trade relations with Iran (Ibid 32-33). The second group advocated the unilateral sanctions, because the multilateral ones need long time. Also, it needs consensus between different states which have different interests with Iran mainly India and China (Ibid 32-33). And lastly, the two ways of sanctions were unilateral, they imposed from 1979 to 2006, and the multilateral and the international sanctions from 2006 onward. The unilateral sanction was posed by the US on Iran in a limited scope contains the American Iranian relations (Katzman 9).

The first sanction was a result of the hijacking of the American embassy. The Carter administration took some measures including the ban on importing the Iranian oil, abandoning the exportation of the American goods to Iran, and even the private business by the individuals was banned (C. Reeves 227). Though these sanctions were ended by the release of the hostages, but other sanctions were posed on January 1984 when Iran was alleged to sponsor the terroristic bombing of the American marine barracks in Beirut (“International Crisis Group” 7). In August 1986, the US banned Iran from buying the American arms. Also, in 1992 Congress passed the “Iran-Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act” which prohibited sales of weapons to Iran. This ban was due to the Iranian support to the so called terroristic organizations in the region such as Hizbollah and the jihad in Palestine, besides the aides to the Russian nuclear power project (Ibid 7). By 1995, even the third re-export of the American products to Iran was prohibited. In August 1996, the Iran- Libya Sanction Act was passed to put off

any foreign companies from investment in the Iranian sectors (Ibid 7). The sanctions were imposed during the administration of Muhammad Khatami in 1997, in his presidency, the American president Bill Clinton allowed the sale of some products such as medicines and food. But this relaxation in the sanctions was ended by the “Iranian-Russian nuclear cooperation” (Ibid 8).

Furthermore, in 2000, Congress passed the Iranian Non Proliferation Act to pose sanctions not only on Iran, but on the countries which helped Iran in its weapons of mass destruction program (Ibid 3-9). In 2005, the Bush administration put a new blacklist of the sanctions as a response to the successful negotiations and agreements between Iran and the EU-3 in which Iran agreed to suspend its uranium enrichment activities, in response the EU3 promised its cooperation with Iran in the economic sector and energy as well in the Paris Agreement on October 21, 2003. But Iran violated the latter agreement with the EU3 after the election of Ahmadinejad 2000 which led the U.S. to put extra sanctions particularly the financial ones. The major Iranian banks were blacklisted; also they were banned to deal with dollars (“International Crisis Group” 9; Katzman 9, 26).

The second kind of sanctions is known as the “coordinated multilateral sanctions”. This sanction depends on the coordination between the U.S. and other countries especially the European ones which joined the American sanctions after 2005 (“International Crisis Group”12-13). Under the multilateral approach, the Bush administration agreed to join the nuclear talk, but Iran should stop its uranium enrichment first (Katzman 27). On June 2006, the P5+1 gave Iran many offers to accept the negotiations as acceptance of incorporating Iran in the world trade organization, allowing Iran to sale some commercial aircrafts, and a partnership between Iran and the EU in the oil and energy sectors. More, it posed many other

sanctions such as the prohibition of the sales of advanced technology, and denying the Iranians who were suspected to have any ties with such activities from getting visas (Ibid 27-28). Also, U.S. must be informed by the sanctioned Iranians who traveled to other countries. However, Iran did not accept to compromise, and the U.S. imposed more sanctions to lean Iran towards compromises. Those sanctions are known as the United Nation Sanctions in which the UNSCR 1696 asked Iran to obey the consented steps of the IAEA that called Iran to suspend the enrichment of the Uranium in no more than thirty days between March 29, 2006 to April 02, 2006. And as a result of the Iranian refusal, the American Security Council passed resolution 1696 on July 31, 2006 that called the UN members states not to sell the technology related to nuclear sector to Iran (Katzman 29). Then, resolution 1737 banned the exportation of any materials or technologies related to the manufacturing of the WMD (“Iran Sanctions” 34). Moreover, Iranians who had any relations with the nuclear and missile programmes were banned from traveling to the U.S.A; and the Iranian students were prohibited from studying related branches. The sanctions extended by the UNSCR 1747 prohibited any loans and financial assistance to Iran, unless in the humanitarian cases, also it banned the Iranian weapons export because it supplied other Shiite fanatic groups in Iraq and Hizbollah in Lebanon (Katzman 29).

After these resolutions, the IAEA reported the missing of any progress from the Iranian side. Thus, further more serious sanctions were imposed on Iran. In March 3, 2008, the 1803 resolution was implemented (“Iran Sanctions” 63). It warned other countries in dealing with Iran in the financial issues, also to be careful about the Iranian goods because it may contain prohibited ones. Also, the Iranian shipments should be inspected and banning the financial services such as insurance from the Iranians who were suspected to be involved in the nuclear programme (Katzman 29).

Also, the 1803 resolution added twelve other entities to be sanctioned. As the first time, the United States' Secretary of State for Political Affairs, William Burns joined the P5+1 and chief EU negotiator Javier Solana at a meeting in Geneva on July 19, 2008 to negotiate the six weeks "freeze for freeze" agreement i.e. the P5+1 will suspend the sanctions, and Iran will suspend its uranium enrichment. Yet, Iran refused and the resolution 1835 passed imposing the previous sanctions on Iran. Furthermore, the P5+1 expressed their willingness to impose additional sanctions (Katzman 27-29; "International Crisis Group" 9).

III/ the American Iranian Relations 2009-2012

The Iranian government change would facilitate the American mission in the region and secure its interests and reduce the Iranian support to terrorism; more, the Iranian nuclear ambitions would be limited and it would restrict the Iranian interference in Iraq and Afghanistan. But this will cause more problems and tensions between the U.S. and Iran. Assuming that the US will try to change the government, Iran would use its nuclear capabilities against it (Hemmer 45). For this reason, Obama related the failure of the Bush administration in solving the Iranian WMD problem to the combination between this subject and other sophisticated issues especially government change. Also he claimed that he will give the priority to this problem (Obama). Unlike George Bush, Obama was ready to accept the current government in Iran; in a celebration of the *Nowruz* or the Iranian New Year, Obama claimed that the acceptance of the Islamic Republic of Iran is conditioned by the latter's positive intents and actions towards the United States and the "international community" (M. Polack et al 23). But the Obama's administration had to deal with the WMD problem, besides the Iranian support to terrorism and the "anti status-quo" mainly those who oppose peace between the Arabs and Israel (Ibid 24). Under the Obama

administration, many International Atomic Energy Agency reports assumed that Iran had a nuclear weapons programme. On February 21, 2011, IAEA director asserted that Iran seemed to have a nuclear weapon programme. Then, in September 6, 2010 IAEA report asserted that Iran was enriching the uranium to build new nuclear weapons (Katzman 24).

The administration of Obama agreed to integrate Iran in the world economy, if the latter will accept to compromise its nuclear programme (Ibid 51-52). Obama's secretary of state Hilary Clinton and secretary of defense Gates did not defend engagement in Iran because it may cause changes in its policy; however, others in the administration such as Dennis Ross, the adviser to secretary state Clinton, called for obliging Iran to give up its nuclear programme. Obama took further policies to engage Iran; these policies included the president's report which conveyed the willingness of his administration to engage with Iran (Ibid 51). Obama chose the engagement policy rather than isolating Iran. In his speech in Cairo on June 4, 2009, Obama claimed the helpful role of the USA in throwing Mossadegh, and his readiness to accept the Iranian peaceful acquisition of a nuclear power if it will obey the rules of the NPT ("U.S. Iranian relations" 4). During the Bush administration, the American officials attended only one time the P5+1 nuclear negotiation with Iran, for this reason Obama said on April 8, 2009 that the United states' officials will attend the P5+1 meeting with Iran. Furthermore, he gave permission to the US embassies to invite the Iranian diplomats to American Independence Day celebration (Katzman 52). On June 9, 2010, president Obama claimed that Iran refused the engagement and it chose to preserve its nuclear programme. And after the democratic uprising in the Middle East in the beginning of 2011, the U.S.A criticized the Iranian government especially when Obama did not mention the engagement of the Iranian regime in the Nowruz day on

March 20, 2011; however, he supported the pro-democracy movement in Iran (Ibid 52-53). And the government change in Iran has been predicted because of the appearance of its signs such as the “Green Revolution”¹ of 2009-2010 (Jeffrey 36-37). Yet, there are no tools available to change the government, because the U.S. has no way to carry out a coup to change the government as it did previously with Mossadegh’s government in the 1950s. Also, the U.S. leaders believe that Iranian continuity in its nuclear programme threatens the regime (Ibid 36-37).

Obama chose the engagement option to persuade Iran not to give up only its nuclear programme, but rather to give up all its problematic policies. The engagement strategy aimed to a long term change which is considered more realistic. Engagement, for its advocates, will make the Iranians feel unthreatened by the U.S. and consequently it will change its policies (Polack 43). Engagement can help to know more about the policies of the government and the ideology of its leaders. Also, it may change the government and bring the country to democracy through the interaction between the Iranians and the other countries (M. Polack 44). However, the Iranians need a long time for the engagement, and the dismantling of the sanctions also need more time. Also, suspending the sanctions would lead Iran to proceed in its nuclear program and political regime. Furthermore, it will continue its support to the so called terroristic organizations mainly Hizbollah, Hamas, Taliban, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the extremist groups which oppose peace between Palestine and Israel (Ibid 44). Political sanctions, sanctions on trade and other Iranian products and the sanctions on business and financial institutions increased significantly in 2012. The Iranian oil export witnessed a remarkable decline probably by 40%. Consequently, the oil export earnings fall as well and this led to the economic deficit and the fall of the Iranian currency by 40%. To pressure Iran to give up its nuclear program, the U.S. depended

on regional and global alliances. In December 2012, it built the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) military alliance; the states of alliance provided their air bases and naval facilities to the US to withstand any Iranian attempt to harm the U.S. interests (Jeffery 26-29).

Since the Bush administration, many programs were issued to protect human rights and the freedom of expression in Iran. The U.S. officials asserted that these programs did not attempt to withdraw the current government or establish a pro-American democracy. The American officials also asserted that Iran will be sanctioned for any human rights abuse. For this reason, many acts passed since 1996 to protect these rights. Iran Freedom Support Act 2006 is one of the legislations which tented to fund democracy promotion in Iran, but this Act contains laws which sanction the foreign countries that invest in the Iranian energy sector, also acts concerning religious freedom (the Atlantic Council 149, 153). The State Department of human right report and the State Department International Religious freedom report of 2010 about the Iranian abuses of the human rights. Some of these abused human rights included unjust execution, torture, arbitrary arrest and the arrests of women's right activities. The report also showed the harsh treatment of the protestors by the government. Also, thousands of oppositionists were detained for a long period (Katzman 18). For this reason, the American Senate expressed its support for the Iranians right to get a democratic government which can secure and respect their human rights (Ibid 18). Thus, the U.S.A sanctioned Iran on the basis of these claimed abuses. Therefore, president Obama issued an important program which is section 105 of CISADA that sanctioned the Iranian human rights' abuses, passing the executive order 13553 in which he sanctioned Ten Iranian officials for their violations of human rights among them Tehran prosecutor Abbas Dowlatabadi and Basij commander Mohammad Reza

Naqdi (Ibid 18-19). Also, Obama used the uprising in the Arab world as an excuse to urge Iranians to revolt against the government which was violating their human rights, just like other people in the region did (Lynch 7).

In fact, the American policy towards Iran was affected by the uprising in the Arab world. President Obama continued the sanction and sabotage policy, but the aforementioned uprising caused the diminishing of some Arab pro American governments such as Mubarak in Egypt and the Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri. Whereas, the war in Libya weakened the American-Iranian nuclear programme negotiations (Lynch 5). Also, the uprising led to the rise in the oil price which decreased the efficiency of the sanctions (Ibid 56-). But the positive thing in these uprisings, from the American perception, was the hope of the changing of the Iranian government as the other countries in the region. However, the American hopes evaporated with the failure of the first and the last uprising attempt in the summer of 2009. Because the U.S. is always aware of preserving its interest, it did not work on polarizing the region against Iran because this will damage its interests (Ibid 7). The fall of the pro-American governments in the region would undermine the American previous success in containing Iran because it became stronger, hence, the U.S. will challenge the Iranian government. The Obama administration asserted that the Iranian nuclear program did not develop quickly as estimated before building up on the results of the IAEA report, and the Israeli estimations that the Iranian nuclear weapon which planned to be ready in 2012 was extended to 2015 (Ibid 7-8).

The sanctions affected differently the various Iranian sanctioned sectors. First, the sanctions on the Iranian nuclear programme aimed to slowdown the pace of productivity particularly in the major facility in Natanz, because almost all the components needed in its program are manufactured in its land. However, the U.S.

controlled the exportation of some relevant materials (“International Crisis Group” 20). The U.S. hindered the production of Ballistic Missiles by holding up the needed foreign materials such as aluminum, tungsten powder and oxidizer salts. The U.S. delayed the “test flying the two-stage 2,000 km range solid-fuelled Sajjil-2 missile since February 2011” (Ibid 20). However, the Iranian programme has developed, as well as it progressed after the sanctions of 2006, for example, the advance of the nuclear facility of Fordow, which enriched the Uranium to 20 percent level and the nuclear reactor of Bushehr was completed. Moreover, Iran improved its missile programme and prepared to send satellites to space in 2012 (Ibid 20-21).

Second, the Iran’s oil and gas reserves are the main target of the sanctions because they are the back-bone of the Iranian government revenue. In 1996, the U.S. and EU passed the sanction act which prohibited the foreign investments in these sectors which led to great damages in the energy sector (Ibid 19). And even the Asian and the Eastern European investors ended their investments in Iran. Furthermore, the Iranian exportation capability in the gas sector is damaged by the American sanctions; and though Iran has the second natural gas reserve in the world, but it occupies only the twenty five grades in the universal list of the natural gas exportation (Ibid 19-20). However, the high price of oil lessened in the damages on the Iranian energy sector (Ibid 20). In addition, the U.S. posed sanctions on the countries that used the Iranian central banks, and consequently many countries reduced their Iranian oil purchase. The European Union suspended the insurance of the Iranian shipments, and blacklisted its cargoes (“Time to move from tactics” 7). This highlighted the danger of the Iranian shipments which led the Iranian oil consumers such as South Korea and Japan to reduce their imports. As a result the Iranian oil exports were reduced extremely from approximately 2.5 million b/b in 2011, to less than one million in January 2013

(“International Crisis Group” 20-23). The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries stated that Iran has produced oil in February 2012 less than its product since September 2002 as a result of cutting off the Iranian oil imports by Japan and South Korea, besides the EU oil embargo (Deleon 11).

The sanctions also affected the economic and political life in Iran. They led to huge problems in the Iranian economy particularly in the second presidency term of Mahmud Ahmadinejad; it ceased inflation which rose from 12% in October 2010 to 27% percent in December 2012, brain drain especially with the rise in the unemployment to thirty six percent in October 2012. And currency devaluation, which in January and October 2012 rial loosed approximately 80% of its value against the dollar 19000 rial to the dollar. Also, Iran faced problems with the foreign banks like the Noor Islamic Bank of Dubai which hardened its relations with Iran on March 1, 2012 (Iran sanctions 42). Moreover, Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication blacklisted the sanctioned Iranian banks mainly the Central Bank of Iran in March 17, 2012 which hindered Iran from financial transactions with the foreign countries, and it harmed its ability to receive the revenues of its exported oil (Deleon 11-12). The inability of the regime to respond to these crises corroded the people’s confidence in their government. A U.S. official assumed that the negative outcomes of the sanctions will cause complaints among the Iranian population; and this will lead the government either to alter its nuclear program or to accept the risks of the popular uprising (“International Crisis Group” 24-32). The diminishing of demonstrations of 2009 and the rise of the economic crises led Iranians to blame the government of their bad situation. Yet, the Iranian citizens acknowledged the responsibility of the West in the deteriorations of their lives particularly with the lack of medicines. Also, the constituencies which heavily supported the regime faced

serious penalties; but these constituencies tried to avoid the damages as possible as they can by looking for other alternatives at least to increase the costs to the minimum (Ibid 24-32). So, the Iranian policy aimed to adopt the sanctions rather than revising and giving up its nuclear programme

Though the aim behind the sanctions was to damage the Iranian economy as a kind of punishment; but unsuspected and superfluous results of the sanctions have affected the citizens' lives, and this raised the Iranian criticism and anger from the Western policies towards their country. This social effect was addressed by the Iranian ambassador to the U.A.E Mohammad Reza Fayyaz in his claiming that the Iranian people are sanctioned and harmed by the West, and this led to a social turmoil especially by the opposition leaders and human rights activists (International Crisis Group 33). One of the negative outcomes of the sanctions was the devaluation of the Iranian rial which led the students to become incapable to carry on their studies because they became financially unable to pay for their education (Ibid 33-35). The most serious impact is found in the health sector especially with the shortage in medicines, especially the specialized ones, and the increase in its prices as a result of the fall of the rial ("Iran Sanctions" 2). Though the US treasury department and Germany allowed the American banks to supply Iran with medicines without license, but the banks did not particularly the foreign ones fearing further sanctions ("International Crisis Group" 33-36).

Despite the aforementioned negative impacts of the sanctions on Iran, the Iranian government could respond to the America sanctions. The GOA report showed the incapability of the American sanctions to attain the intended results. GOA related the failure of the sanctions on harming the Iranian economy to its strong trade relations and its role in the global energy production (Ilias 33). Since, The Peterson Institute for

International Economic (IIE) linked the failure of the sanctions to globalization which allowed the sanctioned countries to search for other countries to invest and export its goods, and to import the needed products (Ibid 33). Moreover, the Iranian government pressured Iraq to reduce and slow its exports that will cause the increase demand on oil and the rise in its price which will compensate the Iranian losses. The blockage of the Iranian oil exports will cause the obstruction of the Strait of Hormuz i.e. the blockage of 20% of the global oil trade (Jeffery 27). So, the strategic Strait Hormuz would oblige the US and its allies to suspend the sanctions. Furthermore, many countries became unwilling to implement sanctions because of its negative effects on the Iranian population (Ibid 28).

Iran was able to circumvent the sanctions through dealing with other countries instead of the U.S.A like U.A.E and other countries which do not incorporate with those that imposed sanctions against it. The other strong evidence of the ineffectiveness of the American sanctions is its incapability to change the government throughout the thirteen years of heavy sanctions. William A. Reinsch, President of National Foreign Trade Council and Co-Chairman of the U.S.A asserted the failure of the American intentions to harm the leaders of the government, and the damage deviated to the ordinary people (Ilias 33). However, there was a great uncertainty about the impact of the sanctions on the leaders and the elite (Ibid 33-34).

The U.S. officials believed that Iran's real intentions are to prevent the American influence in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, this idea is clearly demonstrated by The Annual Report on Military Power of Iran of the Pentagon which was published in April 2012 (Jeffrey 11). The report claimed that the American influence is seen by the Iranians as an obstacle to prevent its hegemony in the region. The Iranian hegemonic desire is stated directly by Ali Fadavi, the IRGC naval chief,

when he declared that the only power that can provide security to the region is Iran (Ibid 12- 13). The Iranian officials considered the U.S. as the invader which should be withstood by Iran. Even Obama's Nowruz message is interpreted by the Iranians as a new face to the same American practices as the supervisor of the world (Ibid 12-16). So the Iranian hegemonic desire is an opposition to the American principle as the leadership of the world that promotes security and peace against the "global challenges" as president Obama claimed (Ibid 14-17).

The U.S. policy towards Iran intended to preserve the security of its land and people, as well as its allies' security in the region because they are threatened by Iran's nuclear program, and its support to terrorism and the violent extremist groups. So, the US sought to put further "big" pressures on Iran to achieve its goals, because the previous measures that sought to build confidence failed. The security adviser Stephen Hadley proposes his "option two" proposal which demanded the Iranian agreement on decreasing the uranium enrichment beyond 3.5 percent, anything enriched beyond the aforementioned percentage should be shipped outside the country, and allowing the IAEA to verify if Iran has really put into practice the previous demands (Ibid 16-17). In return, the U.S. will allow the supply of fuel and "medical isotopes" for the Iranian medical researchers and it will stop sanctioning Iran and suspending the already posed ones. However, the U.S. failed again in its attempts (Ibid 17).

With the failure of the successive American diplomatic attempts to stop the Iranian nuclear proliferation and to change the government, the military option was revealed (MP. Polack 61). The advocates of the military alternative saw that this option is better than containing Iran, because the more the Iranian nuclear program get stronger, the more the threat get serious. Also, the military option does not require any

alliances and the U.S. can wage the war alone. The election of Ahmadinejad in 2005 and the continuation in the nuclear program made the military choice more reasonable. The military choice is favored and advocated by Israel, in case the U.S. refused the military option, because of the aggressive position of Ahmadinejad towards Israel (Ibid 61-63). The advocates of the military option preferred campaigns of airstrikes against the Iranian target mainly its nuclear facilities because the U.S. has already warned Iran particularly through sanctions. Also, the strikes may attack the military targets and others because of its support to terrorism. Furthermore, the military option is advocated to change the government, however in this case the U.S. sought to encourage a military coup in Iran because it has no official presence there (Ibid 74-75). The military coup will be more successful than the popular one; moreover, it is more assisted from abroad. The advocates of the military option in Iran have a common aim; the most important one is to bring down the clerical government and replace it with another government more willing to preserve the American interests in the Middle East (Ibid 76). Also, the airstrikes intend to destroy the nuclear program and the energy sector (Ibid 76).

Israel has already put its red line to the uranium enrichment which is 20% that is sufficient to make a weapon, also it insisted on the Obama administration to identify its red line (Jeffery 18). However, the American side resisted because the identification of the red line would lead to disastrous results though the red line did not cross as it happened in Korea in 1950 (Ibid 18). Many analysts asserted that even the military strikes against Iran would damage the nuclear facilities for few years and then the nuclear programme will be carried on. Also, the military strike would lead Iran to counterattack on the American facilities and interests in the region mainly on its diplomatic and military installations in Iraq and Afghanistan especially with the

Iranian military strength and capability to prevent the American strikes (Ibid 19-20). In 2012, the Pentagon's Annual Report on Military Power of Iran published a list of the short-range and medium-range missiles which targeted the American allies in the Gulf and Israel. Also, the government would throw the IAEA out of Iran and complete the nuclear program secretly (Ibid 21-). Shirin Ebadi an Iranian winner of Nobel Prize and exiled to London said that the military strike will rise the nationalistic feelings, and people will align with the government to defend their country (Ibid 21). Also, the strikes on the oil tankers in the region could lead Iran to close the Strait of Hormuz which will cause a great rise in the oil prices. Consequently, the U.S.A will be obliged to end the strikes (Ibid 21-24).

After all, the military option is not a preferable choice because of the bad effects that will damage both of Iran and America. The military strikes will destroy the Iranian infrastructure by destroying its nuclear program. Like sanctions, the military action will lead to the rise in the oil price and the global markets will be damaged. The military actions against Iran will confirm Ben Laden's declaration that the U.S. is in a war against Islam rather than against terrorism and this will affect the American war on terrorism (Hammer 43-44). Also, the war on Iraq and Afghanistan and the growing difficulties that faced the U.S. made it difficult to wage another war in the Middle East especially in Iran which is more populated and larger than Iraq (M. Polack 63-64).

Conclusion

The American policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran is a conflictual one characterized by the successive American sanctions on Iran to change its government, suspend the nuclear program and to stop its support to terrorism. Though the harshness of the American sanctions and their negative effects, Iran proceeded in its nuclear program and did not change its government and policy. The conflictual relationship between the two countries can be explained in Huntington's theory of *The Clash of Civilizations*. First, the American policies towards Iran are a result of the American perceptions of Iran as a threat to its interests and its allies in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. Second, it considered the Iranian actions against the U.S.A and its allies as an attempt to counterbalance the American presence in the region. Moreover, the U.S. interpreted the Iranian nuclear program and its developing of the WMD as an attempt to spread its hegemony in the region. Then, challenging American hegemonic ambitions. But, the American policy failed in preventing Iran from developing its nuclear program, changing the government and ending its support to terrorism. Then, the military solution prevailed. Yet, the latter alternative is not considered as a good solution, because it will harm the American interests. So, the American policy towards Iran witnesses a great failure.

End notes

1. Green Revolution: is a series of protests following the 2009 Iranian presidential election against the disputed victory of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and in support of opposition candidates Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi which occurred in major cities in Iran and around the world starting 13 June 2009.

General conclusion

The American relationship with the Muslim countries is built up on its political thought mainly the American exceptionalism, freedom, liberty and nationalism among others. But, behind these ideals lay the real American ideology that is imperialism. The latter can be well illustrated in the Monroe Doctrine and the Manifest Destiny besides the American embracement to social Darwinism. The American political thought reveals the contradictions of its elements in practice. The American society as an egalitarian one does not reflect this reality because the blacks and women had not the right to vote, also, the indigenous Indians had been seen outlaw.

American political thought witnessed a great change after the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union with the emergence of the U.S. as the unilateral superpower and the world's leader that is threatened by the other civilizations. So, building up on the American political thought before and after the Cold War, the American perceptions towards the Muslim countries can be formulated. Pointing out Nixon's, Reagan's and Bush's administrations which are characterized by the leading characters of these presidents, and their relation with the Muslim countries such as Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq., the Muslim countries are conceived as an enemy to the U.S. and as terrorists. So, the thesis attempts to show the American foreign policy towards the suspected countries such as Libya and Afghanistan; besides its brutality with the Muslims.

The work reveals the American foreign policy towards the Muslim countries on the ground of the former's perceptions towards the latter. The research work reached the conclusion that U.S. perceives the Muslim countries as terrorists and extremist fundamentalist states that pose a great threat on the American interests and

supremacy. Muslims are seen also as backward fanatic radicals who reject the American hegemony and modernity; and whose values clash with the American ones. The American thinkers and prominent writers located Islam as the American enemy that threatens the American interests. Therefore, this enemy should be combated through many ways and the most dangerous way is the military intervention under the name of preventing terrorism. Also, Media helped in the presentation of the Muslim countries as terrorists and the new enemy of the U.S., after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Lastly, this perception is criticized by some scholars mainly Edward Said and Kaymaz.

The Iranian-American relationship reflects the American foreign policy towards the Muslim countries. And because the U.S. considers Iran as one of the “axis of evil”, it heavily sanctioned it. Moreover, these sanctions tended to oblige Iran to give up its nuclear program, end its support to “terrorism” and change its government that threatens peace in the region. The thesis concludes that the real goal behind these sanctions is to preserve the American and its allies’ interests in the region as the main aim of the American foreign policy. In addition, to democratize the regime in the American manner and prevent the Iranian hegemony in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

Finally, the research work concludes that the American political thought, which is the result of the development of the American history, is characterized mainly by its chauvinistic and imperialistic nature. Also, it concludes that this political thought affects the American foreign policy which is built up on the American interests and hegemony solely. So, this American dogma also affected the American policy towards the Muslim countries in particular; especially in the post Cold War era and the emergence of the U.S. as the superpower. Furthermore, the American policy towards

the Muslim countries is the result of the former's perceptions towards the latter. The Muslim countries are seen by the U.S. as backward, terrorists and anti-Americanism (democracy and modernism). Also, they are seen as a threat to the American interests. Consequently, this led the US to pursue harsh policy towards these countries through military intervention as the case of Iraq, or through sanctions like the Iranian case. The latter case is a reflection of the impact of the American political thought on the Muslim countries, which can be understood in the clash of civilizations theory; because the U.S. perceives Iran as a threat to its hegemony and interests in the region. But the U.S. held this perception only after the collapse of the Shah, the American ally, which clarifies the problem. So, the American perception towards the Muslim countries is just a matter of either embracing the American political thought to be blessed by the U.S.; or to refute Americanism and to be in the zone of the enemies.

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