

**An Analysis of President Trump's Afghanistan Foreign Policy: Through the Theoretical Framework of Walter Russell Mead's Four Paradigms**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy and to determine if it fits the mold of one of the four historical foreign policy paradigms as described by Walter Russell Mead in his book, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*. Mead describes four U.S. foreign policy schools of thought, in which he titles after influential statesmen who embody the specific school's core principles. These paradigms include the Hamiltonians, who believe in a strong relationship between big business and government for foreign policy success. The Wilsonians, who encourage the spread of democratic principles abroad. The Jeffersonians, who favor the protection of domestic liberal democracy over other foreign policy endeavors. Lastly, the Jacksonians, who prioritize the physical and economic security of American citizens above all else. The primary research question in this thesis states, which of the four traditions of U.S. foreign policy identified by Walter Russell Mead helps explain President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy? President Trump's rhetoric and specific foreign policy actions were analyzed. His rhetoric was examined through his August 2017 Afghanistan Strategy speech and his specific foreign policy actions were measured through various air operation metrics, U.S. aid to Afghanistan, and U.S. troop deployment trends. Overall, this thesis gave support to my hypothesis that President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy contains various Hamiltonian and Wilsonian principles, but it has proven to be principally Jacksonian.

# **An Analysis of President Trump's Afghanistan Foreign Policy: Through the Theoretical Framework of Walter Russell Mead's Four Paradigms**

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## General Audience Abstract

The objective of this thesis was to further understand President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy through the theoretical framework of Walter Russel Mead's four historical foreign policy paradigms. Mead's four historical paradigms are useful tools to examine and understand U.S. foreign policy. Mead provides in-depth historical context, goes into great detail on core principles, and also provides a surfeit of advantages and disadvantages for each school of thought. His breakdown of U.S. foreign policy into complementary yet combative paradigms is one of the most complete explanations of U.S. foreign policy to date. The primary research question in this thesis states, which of the four traditions of U.S. foreign policy identified by Walter Russell Mead helps explain President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy? President Trump's rhetoric and specific foreign policy actions were analyzed. His rhetoric was examined through his August 2017 Afghanistan Strategy speech and his specific foreign policy actions were measured through various air operation metrics, U.S. aid to Afghanistan, and U.S. troop deployment trends. Overall, this thesis gave support to my hypothesis that President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy contains various Hamiltonian and Wilsonian principles, but it has proven to be principally Jacksonian.

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy and to determine if it fits the mold of one of the four historical foreign policy paradigms as described by Walter Russell Mead in his book, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*. Mead describes four American foreign policy schools of thought, in which he titles after influential statesmen who embody the specific school's core principles. These paradigms include the Hamiltonians, who believe in a strong relationship between big business and government for foreign policy success. The Wilsonians, who encourage the spread of democratic principles abroad. The Jeffersonians, who favor the protection of domestic liberal democracy over other foreign policy endeavors. Lastly, the Jacksonians, who prioritize the physical and economic security of American citizens above all else.

Much of the contemporary literature on the subject suggests that President Trump has adopted Jacksonian principles as his primary guide in foreign policy. Many academics and foreign policy experts, including MIT Political Scientist Barry R. Posen and Walter Russell Mead himself, make this assumption to some degree; this thesis also sets out to explore this preconceived notion. There have not been many in-depth analyses of President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy using Mead's paradigms as a theoretical framework. There have been shorter articles written that analyze specific aspects of the Trump Administration that utilize one of Mead's paradigms. However, I have not come across one that examines and cross-examines President Trump's foreign policy in the manner in which I intend to.

I aim to not only take his specific foreign policy actions as they relate to Afghanistan into consideration, but also his rhetoric. This thesis will be a comprehensive analysis of both of these different aspects in attempts to determine which paradigm his Afghanistan foreign policy can be

fitted into. This project adds value because it serves as an early attempt to understand President Trump's methodology for dealing with Afghanistan. I am constrained in what I can do because President Trump has only been in office for approximately three years so historical data is limited. However, this project has the potential to serve as the starting point for future studies that are inquiring about how President Trump dealt with Afghanistan. Additionally, this work is important because it has the potential to reveal the current state of and trajectory of U.S. operations in Afghanistan, which to many people, myself included, is not particularly clear.

***Research Question and Hypothesis:***

The primary research question formally stated, which of the four traditions of U.S. foreign policy identified by Walter Russell Mead helps explain President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy? The secondary research question states, has the Jacksonian tradition of foreign policy been the dominant paradigm for President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy? Some additional research questions that could be partially answered throughout this thesis include: Are Walter Russell Mead's models adequate to explain U.S. foreign policy? What are the shortcomings of these models? Does President Trump's rhetoric match his actions in Afghanistan? All of which will be touched upon to some degree throughout this thesis. Finally, the hypothesis that will be tested in this thesis states, President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy contains various Hamiltonian and Wilsonian principles, but it has proven to be principally Jacksonian.

***Methodology:***

I will be conducting an analytical and qualitative case study on President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy. There are a couple of important reasons as to why I have elected to

focus on the Afghanistan conflict specifically. Firstly, it stems from a matter of interest. It is the longest war in U.S. history surpassing the Vietnam War; developing a unique form of inquiry into this conflict could provide me with a deeper understanding of the overall issue. Secondly, it was a matter of convenience. Despite President Trump only being in office for a short amount of time, I was able to collect a good deal of applicable data. The combination of these two reasons is ultimately what led to my decision of choosing the Afghanistan conflict over another similar foreign policy event.

A case study is an adequate methodological approach for this thesis because my research question is descriptive, attempting to determine “what is happening or has happened?” (Yin, 2012, pg. 5). However, issues with case study research cannot be overlooked. Case studies are sometimes considered a preface for further investigation, looked at only as an “exploratory phase” to determine whether or not this idea should be further explored. Dr. Robert K. Yin explains in regards to the limitations of case studies, “However, such a traditional and sequential (if not hierarchical) view of social science methods is entirely outdated. . .all methods can cover the entire range of situations from initial exploration to the completion of full and final authoritative studies, without call on any other methods” (Yin, 2012, pg. 5-6). This thesis will have qualitative and quantitative backing, and because it is exploring “what is happening,” it will also serve as the groundwork for future studies.

I will use Walter Russell Mead’s four U.S. foreign policy traditions as the primary theoretical framework for this thesis. I will start by precisely explaining the core principles of each paradigm, so the reader has a clear understanding of the differences between them. Then I will analyze the president’s rhetoric through his August 21, 2017 Afghanistan strategy speech. Northwestern University communications scholar, David H. Zarefsky, claims that the importance

of presidential rhetoric is that “it defines political reality” (Zarefsky, 2004, pg.611). It is essentially an avenue for the president to directly and personally express his beliefs, objectives, and strategy to the people in a manner in which he sees fit. Presidential rhetorical transactions can be understood through three different dimensions. The first is primarily an empirical view, which examines the message and its impact on the audience. For example, presidential speeches may be considered an independent variable, while the audience’s opinions or attitudes could be considered the dependent variable. In the context of this thesis, public opinion is irrelevant; this more empirical analysis is not very helpful in furthering the objectives of this thesis.

The next element can be understood as the connection between the rhetor and the text. This notion explores what the rhetor was thinking and why the rhetor made various rhetorical decisions. The rhetor’s motives could be entrenched in the text itself. Various modes of analysis, such as psychoanalysis or content analysis, could be utilized in attempts to reveal these decisions or intentions. Lastly, the text itself can be understood not only as what the president is specifically saying but as a type of visual art that adds to the presidential performance or the specific image that he wants to maintain. Zarefsky uses the example of the president standing in front of a large American flag during the State of the Union address. This visual representation is just as important as his actual verbal rhetoric. The rhetorical reviewer uses a variety of analytical approaches to divulge different levels of meaning and importance in the text; it is essentially a “process of speculative reconstruction of the text” (Zarefsky, 2004, pg.609). The last two dimensions are the more applicable dimensions for this thesis. Put simply, “Rhetoric is not only an alleged cause of shifts in audience attitudes. It is also a reflection of a president’s values and world view. And it is also a work of practical art, often richly layered and multivocal, that calls for interpretation” (Zarefsky, 2004, pg.610). President Trump’s rhetoric is certainly revealing of

his world views and an interpretation is required of his theatrics to capture the entirety of his rhetorical messages.

President Trump's August 21, 2017 speech will be the only piece of rhetoric analyzed in this thesis because it is where he first laid out his administration's Afghanistan strategy in its entirety. He spelled out three fundamental conclusions about the U.S.'s objectives in Afghanistan. Then described five core strategic pillars in which the U.S. will abide by in order to find success in the conflict. Like any piece of rhetoric, this speech is "a work of practical art, often richly layered and multivocal", which requires a deeper level of analysis that cannot be obtained by simply reading the text at a surface contact (Zarefsky, 2004, pg. 610). There needs to be a greater level of engagement to obtain the full message. President Trump's conclusions and pillars described will be explained in detail, their core principles will be extracted, and then compared to the core principles of Mead's four paradigms. This will be done in attempts to determine which is the dominant paradigm being represented in this speech; at the bare minimum, I will be able to match each conclusion and pillar with one or more of Mead's paradigms. The results will be displayed in a table. After the analysis of this rhetoric, I will explain the evidence I will use to conduct my inquiry. I will analyze President Trump's specific foreign policy actions as they relate to Afghanistan through data collected from U.S. air operations, U.S. aid distribution, and U.S. troop deployment patterns. The combination of these different tools of analysis should reveal fundamental principles in his foreign policy that are identical to one or more of Mead's paradigms. Additionally, it will reveal whether or not the contemporary literature is correct in assessing that President Trump has primarily represented Jacksonian principles in his foreign policy, at least towards Afghanistan.

The first foreign policy action, U.S. air operation data, will be collected from the Bureau of Investigative Journalism which contains a comprehensive and regularly updated archive of U.S. air operations. This data was retrieved directly from the U.S. Air Force. Every month the Air Force distributes aggregated summaries of air operations in Afghanistan. The Air Force reveals this data roughly two weeks after the month ends. Close Air Support sorties (CAS), CAS sorties with at least one weapon released, which can be understood as a traditional “airstrike,” and lastly the total number of weapons released, are all metrics that will be analyzed. The data goes as far back as 2010, so trends in the Trump Administration can be compared and contrasted to trends in the Obama Administration to provide perspective. The data gives month to month aerial operation numbers and a pre-calculated percent change for each month.

The next foreign policy action measured will be U.S. aid to Afghanistan, specifically the president’s budget request for 2018, 2019, 2020, and part of 2021 fiscal years (FY). Only a portion of the data was available for FY 2021. The majority of this budget is detailed in a Congressional Research Service (CRS) report published in September 2019. The aid is further divided into various subcategories that will show how much of the total budget was requested for these different subcategories. The subcategories will be Economic Support Fund (ESF), Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR), International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE), International Military Education and Training (IMEI), Operation Freedom’s Sentinel (OFS), and lastly the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). The presidential budget request can shed some light on the priorities for the Trump Administration in Afghanistan.

U.S. troops deployed in Afghanistan will be the last metric analyzed. There are many informational discrepancies in contemporary deployed troop numbers in Afghanistan so multiple

sources will be studied in attempts to determine patterns and trends. These sources will primarily include various mainstream news sources where senior-level U.S. military officials are quoted stating the current number of U.S. troops in the region at a specific time. This will then be compared to different government sources, to include the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan (SIGAR) quarterly reports, CRS reports, and the Department of Defense budget requests, to determine accurate troop deployment numbers at various times throughout the conflict. Through these sources, I will be able to determine U.S. troop deployment trends under the Trump Administration. With the combination of these three different foreign policy actions combined with President Trump's Afghanistan Strategy speech, I will be able to determine which paradigm or paradigms have dominated President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy.

#### ***Critiques of Mead's Frameworks:***

With any theory, methodology, or argument, there are always legitimate counters that should not be ignored. Mead's four paradigms are no different and have certainly faced their fair share of criticism. For starts, one could question how these paradigms are still adequate tools of analysis in the post-9/11 world. Mead's book, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*, was published shortly before 9/11. This cataclysmic world-altering event was not even in consideration when Mead was compiling research and creating on what would become his four paradigms. One could only wonder how this book would have differed if 9/11 had happened before its publication.

Former Hoover Institution research fellow and Washington Times columnist, Arnold Beichman, states in reference to the wrench that 9/11 throws in Mead's paradigms, "But just as nuclear weapon proliferation and missile threats forced a drastic reconsideration of American defense needs and the essential implementing diplomacy late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so 9/11 has

imposed the need for a new foreign policy strategy at the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup>” (Beichman, 2001, par. 3). There were even monumental world-altering events that took place before 9/11, that seriously put into question whether Mead’s schools are still legitimate in contemporary foreign policy. Stanford Historian, David Kennedy, has a similar concern by questioning how these schools have remained so consistent over the years, by writing, “Most notably, Mead skirts the question of why they have remained -- if in fact they have -- so remarkably constant over more than two centuries of drastic alterations in technology and economic conditions, not to mention demographic transformations...” (Kennedy, 2002, par.11). When you factor in the rise and fall of many great powers and ideologies, the growth of more and more states with nuclear weapon capabilities, and the upsurge of non-state actors serving as legitimate threats to nation-states security, Beichman and Kennedy both make great points. However, Mead has published multiple articles and books that reflect that his paradigms are still adequate tools to understand U.S. foreign policy even in the post-9/11 world. His work was written with the understanding that the world is not a stagnant place. International politics are always changing, and Mead’s paradigms are broad enough to adapt to these inevitable great changes but specific enough to provide framework and context to understand them.

Another issue is how Mead divided his paradigms. He chose four. Why not six or eight? Beichman writes in concern for this, “The problem with this categorizing is that it becomes a game: if Mr. Mead can build a category around one presidency, so can I around another presidency. How would one define the Clintonian or Kennedy school of foreign policy?” (Beichman, 2001, par.8). The issue with dividing U.S. foreign policy into four broad schools is that one can realistically further subdivide the paradigms into more specific schools of thought that are quite different from one another but are still part of the same overarching paradigm. This

leads to various internal contradictions and confusion within each paradigm. Kennedy explains “Mead the splitter sees "Right Wilsonians" and "Radical Wilsonians"; southern and northern Hamiltonians; "high-flyers" and "low-flyers"; "purists" and "synthesizers." Mead the lumper joins the Hamiltonians and Wilsonians together as globalists, the Jeffersonians and Jacksonians as nationalists” (Kennedy, 2002, par.8). The grouping of such large and diverse groups under one category is understandably problematic and is a legitimate gripe of Meads paradigms.

Again, Beichman and Kennedy make good points. However, when looking at this issue further, it is a bit of a superfluous argument. It is essentially an endless rabbit hole of an argument. Of course, Mead could have broken down U.S. foreign policy into more specific paradigms. He could have broken it down to reflect every U.S. president’s foreign policy. How approachable would Mead’s paradigms be if there were 40 plus or even 20 different U.S. foreign policy paradigms? The answer is not very. This is a common gripe amongst any sort of large organization, theory, belief, or party. There is always a spectrum of views within any belief system. Within the Republican Party, there is the conservative wing, libertarian wing, moderate wing, and the list goes on; all of which classify themselves as Republicans. You can further divide Christianity into subsects as well, to include Catholics, Methodists, Lutherans, all of which are classified as Christians but with slightly differing views. Subdividing larger groups is always a possibility. The titles of Mead’s paradigms are less important than the core principles they represent. Mead could have titled each paradigm 1 through 4 and not connect them to any past U.S. president and they would still be effective tools to understand U.S. foreign policy. These are good critiques by established scholars, but I do not by any means believe they are good enough to completely dismantle the effectiveness of Mead’s paradigms.

***Research Constraints:***

There are a few research constraints that need to be identified. Firstly, I am very limited on the amount of time that I have to complete this master's thesis. This differs from a doctoral dissertation, where I would have years to sift through a profusion of different documents, conduct extensive research, and then write and defend this project. Because of this, I will only be analyzing one piece of rhetoric, in what I believe is the most applicable piece of rhetoric, President Trump's 2017 Afghanistan Strategy speech. There are certainly other important pieces of rhetoric that are excluded from this work, including President Trump's tweets, the many interviews that he has been part of, and the Trump Administration's National Security Strategy (NSS). All of which would be revealing, but given the time constraints I am under, the 2017 Afghanistan Strategy speech will be the only piece used.

The next issue stems from the executive branch's lack of transparency. Starting in April 2019, SIGAR quarterly reports, omitted various information in their reports that up until that time were regularly included in their past reporting (Thomas, 2020, pg.7). This included specific U.S. troop deployment numbers, Afghanistan security forces data, and other military operational metrics for Afghanistan. This created a challenge because I needed to find another source to supplement the information that the SIGAR reports were omitting. I delve deeper into this concern later in the thesis, but it has certainly served as a large obstacle, nonetheless.

I have studied and analyzed a sitting president throughout this thesis. This made the task more difficult than examining a historical president. The Trump Administration was actively making decisions, creating plans, and navigating through international politics, so anything imaginable could have happened. I did have aggregated historical data that would remain unchanged but if there was a polar opposite shift in his rhetoric and actions that contradicted this data, it could have posed a problem in the legitimacy and applicability of this work. If I wrote on

a past president there would be no unknowns in this regard. Lastly, potentially the largest problem, as described by Mead, “American foreign policy is complex at its core. At any given moment it is more likely to be the product of a wide and diffuse coalition rather than a single unitary vision” (Mead, 2001, pg. 95). This is an apparent issue with Mead’s paradigms that cannot be overlooked. If President Trump’s foreign policy is such a blend of the four paradigms, identifying which is the dominant paradigm being represented will become very difficult. If I conclude that President Trump’s foreign policy is an equal hybrid between all four paradigms, then the results would not be very revealing or helpful. This could also expose that Mead’s paradigms are potentially ill-equipped in understanding the Trump Presidency. However, by focusing on a specific foreign policy issue, like the Afghanistan War, and clearly defining the core principles of each paradigm, this should not be an issue.

***Thesis Structure:***

This thesis will be organized in the four following chapters which will ultimately build off of one another. The purpose of the first chapter will be to describe each of Mead’s four paradigms in detail. I will extract and explain each paradigm’s core principles while also explaining the core pieces of literature that were utilized. This chapter lays the foundation for the rest of the thesis. Chapter 2 will analyze President Trump’s rhetoric. Here I will deconstruct President Trump’s 2017 Afghanistan Strategy speech. I will analyze each of his three conclusions and five strategic pillars described in this speech, then identify which of Mead’s paradigms are represented in each. This chapter will be concluded with identifying which of Mead’s paradigms was primarily represented throughout the entirety of the speech. This will be shown through a chart linking each conclusion and pillar with one of Mead’s paradigms

Chapter 3 will be the most important section. This is where President Trump's foreign policy actions of air operations, U.S. aid, and deployed troops, will be examined, and quantifiable data presented. Based on the data, these actions will be fitted into one of Mead's paradigms, if possible. This chapter will also expose whether President Trump's Afghanistan Strategy rhetoric match his actions, or in other words, did he do what he said he was going to do. The last chapter will serve as the concluding chapter where the thesis will be summarized, ideas for further research will be presented, and concluding marks provided. This will essentially be the synthesis chapter, combining the results from the president's rhetoric and actions, to make sense of which paradigm, if any, President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy falls into.

## **Chapter 1: Walter Russell Mead's Traditions of U.S. Foreign Policy**

Walter Russell Mead makes great effort to explain the entirety of U.S. foreign policy history through four paradigms in his pre-9/11 book, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*. This influential and comprehensive book serves as the theoretical framework that has guided this thesis. Mead makes the argument that U.S. foreign policy success stems from a conflicting yet complementary relationship between four historic schools of thought. These four schools were named after and guided by the founding principles of four historic American statesmen and leaders. The four schools can be logically fitted into distinct pairs based upon guiding principles. The more liberal interventionist minded paradigms in the Hamiltonian and Wilsonian traditions and the more restrained realist guided paradigms in the Jacksonian and Jeffersonian traditions. Explaining this split even further in their 2016 article titled, *Understanding the Return of the Jacksonian Tradition*, Michael Clarke and Anthony Ricketts write, “A fundamental distinction amongst the four traditions is between those who seek to perfect and protect the virtues of the Republic (Jeffersonian and Jacksonian) and those who seek to remake the world in its image (Hamiltonian and Wilsonian)” (Clarke and Ricketts, 2016, pg. 17). This push and pull relationship between these four competing schools is what has kept U.S. foreign policy grounded but what has also propelled it forward in times crises. Ultimately creating a unique type of balance that has been essential to U.S. foreign policy success. However, it should be understood, throughout history, depending on international political circumstances and the current leadership at the time, one paradigm is usually more prevalent than the others.

### ***Liberal Interventionists:***

#### ***1. Hamiltonian Tradition***

The first of Mead's paradigms that will be discussed is the Hamiltonian paradigm. This school of thought is named after one of the United States' founding fathers in Alexander Hamilton. Understanding who Hamilton was can shed some light on what the Hamiltonian paradigm represents. Alexander Hamilton was the founder of the Federalist Party which served as the oppositional faction to the Anti-Federalist party in the pre-constitution ratification era. The Federalists believed in a stronger more involved federal government in comparison to the Anti-Federalists who wanted more power granted to the states.

These two parties also had diverging views on human nature. The Anti-Federalists had more faith in the power of human nature to do right, as opposed to the Federalists. As argued in perhaps the strongest Anti-Federalist document printed, *Letters from the Federal Farmer*, "The confederation was formed when great confidence was placed in the voluntary exertions of individuals, and of the respective states; and the framers of it, to guard against usurpations, so limited and checked the powers, that, in many respects they are inadequate to the exigencies of the union," ultimately explaining the confidence they had in human nature to overcome a lack of a strong federal force (Cummings and Dolbeare, 2010, pg. 131-136). On the other hand, the Federalists did not trust human nature to govern itself as the Anti-Federalists did, they believed there needed to be an overlying power to direct this concern. One of the greatest influencers for the Federalists was Thomas Hobbes. The Federalists took his view of human nature when attempting to create a lasting government. Hobbes believed that human nature at its root is evil; the state of nature without government is chaotic. Hobbes makes it clear that the state of nature is a "war of every man against every man" (Haji, 1991, pg.589). With this idea in mind, they would do everything possible to make sure that the intrinsically evil internal entity that every man possessed could be and would be kept in check.

As fellow Federalist, James Madison wrote in the *Federalist Papers*, in regards to the party's view on human nature, "But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary" (Madison 51, 2010). These fundamental Federalist views carry over to the Hamiltonian paradigm, where there is a deep respect and dependence on a strong federal force. However, the most important fact about Alexander Hamilton, as it relates to the Hamiltonian paradigm, was his monetary and economically driven objectives. He served as the U.S.'s first secretary of treasury where he established a national bank to create a financial directive, precedent, and intelligibility (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2010). Mead writes describing the primary fundamental belief of the Hamiltonians, "business is the highest form of philanthropy; commerce is the fastest road to world peace" (Mead, 2001, pg. 128). To take this notion a little further, for large scale business and trade to take place there has to be a level of international connectivity and relations amongst foreign states. These commercial objectives cannot be met with an isolationist or a timid interventionist international political mindset, as the scope for trade would be far too small.

For Hamiltonians, the importance of trade would ultimately form their views on national security. Hamiltonians believe the two oceans separating the U.S. from Europe and Asia are not great security buffers but inherent disadvantages. If the U.S. is isolated from a foreign nation's military threats, they are simultaneously isolated from trade with foreign states as well. As Mead writes, "The weakest point of the U.S. was its sea link across the Atlantic to Europe. Access to trade with the rest of the world would be a paramount American interest" (Mead, 2001, pg.102). Security has been historically viewed as a zero-sum game, where if one state becomes more secure then another state becomes less secure as a result. Commercial relations, on the other

hand, work differently. There is a realistic possibility to have a satisfied seller and buyer in commercial transactions amongst states. If one state becomes richer it does not necessarily mean that another state becomes poorer. This now richer state is more financially equipped to purchase additional goods from another state when it might have not had the means before a previous beneficial commercial transaction. As Mead writes, “The expansion of trade, and the substitution of the win-win strategy of commerce for the zero-sum game of war, would become important Hamiltonian aims in the twentieth century” (Mead, 2001, pg.103). Hamiltonians sincerely believe that commerce can create peace.

There is a list of important Hamiltonian national interests that if threatened creates a condition for Hamiltonians to react immediately and fiercely. The first interest is the concept of the freedom of the seas. This idea is that American ships should not be banned or threatened by a foreign power or piracy when operating in any open body of water. Essentially, it is the right to protect the free flow of American ships, goods, and people. In a more contemporary sense, this view can be looked at as the freedom of the skies. As Mead writes, “The United States considers interference with this rite of passage to be a direct and immediate threat to vital interests, and it reserves the right to respond with the most vigorous diplomatic measures - and, when necessary, the use of force” (Mead, 2001, pg.107).

Another national interest is the idea of securing foreign markets, so they are open to trade. This interest certainly has an imperialistic aspect to it. As Mead writes, “When the imperialistic mania was at its high, and the idea of an open door for trade began to look utopian in a world increasingly divided into quarreling empires, Hamiltonians wanted to make certain that the United States got its fair share” (Mead, 2001, pg.109). A famous example was President Millard Fillmore tasking Commodore Matthew Perry to force the isolationist state of Japan into

trade with the U.S. During the Tokugawa period. Japan's foreign policy was guided by the concept of "Sakoku," which translates to, "closing the country" (Kazui and Videen, 1982, pg.1) Starting in 1853, through a tactic of gunboat diplomacy, Perry sailed to Japan and forced them to open their markets and sign a treaty that would open their ports to U.S. commercial ships (Columbia, 2009). Hamiltonian's objectives are motivated by peace but sometimes peace is only obtained through pragmatic force, which is why Mead refers to this paradigm as the "Serpent and The Dove" (Mead, 2001, pg. 99).

The last national interest is the idea of the free flow of money amongst the world's primary trading nations. This is important because if there was not an established way to exchange different currencies easily and not a simple way for money to be moved from one country to the next, then trade would not be so advantageous (Mead, 2001, pg.110). The most important take away from this paradigm is the importance of the free flow of goods and a safe avenue for these goods to move internationally. This international connectivity that is created through commercial relations is what Hamiltonians believe will create international stability and a strong U.S. foreign policy. However, it should not be forgotten that "Although Hamiltonian trade policy has changed its methods over the centuries, the central idea that national prosperity through an appropriate trade regime is the responsibility of the federal government – has never changed" (Mead, 2001, pg. 110). A powerful and active federal force sits at the core of this paradigm.

## ***2. Wilsonian Tradition***

The next liberal interventionist strand of Mead's paradigms is the Wilsonian paradigm. Named after former U.S. President and League of Nations founder, Woodrow Wilson. The Wilsonian paradigm is the closest paradigm to the grand strategy of liberal hegemony which

guided U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. As explained by Stephen Walt in his most recent book, *The Hell of Good Intentions: America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy*, liberal hegemony is liberal because it attempts to use American supremacy to spread traditional liberal values of democratic governance, individual freedom, and a market-based economy to foreign nations. Not liberal in the traditional sense of leaning to the political left versus the political right. It is a strategy of hegemony because it views the U.S. as the only nation capable of accomplishing the spread of these values to foreign lands (Walt, 2018, pg. 14). As described by John Mearsheimer, in his book, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities*, liberal hegemony can be understood as “an ambitious strategy in which a state aims to turn as many countries as possible into liberal democracies like itself while also promoting an open international economy and building international institutions” (Mearsheimer, 2018, pg.1)

Now, Mead defines the Wilsonian paradigm as “a view that insists that the United States has the right and the duty to change the rest of the world’s behavior and that the United States can and should concern itself not only with the way other countries conduct their international affairs but with their domestic policies as well,” this definition is very similar to how Walt and Mearsheimer describe liberal hegemony (Mead, 2001, pg. 138). In regards to President Trump, in a Foreign Affairs article titled, *The Rise of Illiberal Hegemony: Trump’s Surprising Grand Strategy*, MIT Political Scientist, Barry R. Posen, claims that President Trump’s grand strategy can be titled, illiberal hegemony. As opposed to the grand strategy of liberal hegemony. Posen makes the argument that “Trump has taken much of the “liberal” out of “liberal hegemony” (Posen, 2018, pg. 20). Posen believes that President Trump still has hegemonic ambitions for the U.S. which can be seen through his willingness to maintain a dominant military and economy,

while also upholding the U.S.'s role as primary international security facilitator. However, Trump has decided to minimize the forced implementation of democracy in foreign lands and withhold from many multilateral trade agreements which is exactly where liberal and illiberal hegemony fundamentally split (Posen, 2018, pg. 20-21). Posen does not specifically say it, but his analysis of President Trump's foreign policy is fundamentally Jacksonian, which will be the next paradigm explained.

Furthermore, both the Wilsonians and Hamiltonians are interventionist minded but differ in how they choose to intervene in international politics. As the former is guided by morality and the latter is guided by economics. A contemporary example of where these two paradigms split are their perspectives on the correct way to deal with the rising competitive peer, China. Mead explains that the Wilsonians wanted to create a type of order between the two nations that was predicated on democratic principles and the protection of human rights, while Hamiltonians wanted to build a "global commercial order" (Mead, 2001, pg.139). Both of these strategies require an immense degree of intervention but fundamentally differ on how they should go about intervening.

The Wilsonian paradigm stems from historical American missionary work. It is important to understand this historical Christian underpinning as it not only explains the guiding moral principles of this paradigm but also explains their devout willingness to intervene in international affairs. Early American missionaries were not strictly confined to religious activities while abroad; they were involved in medical aid, political activism, relief work, providing essential supplies, and also learning foreign languages (Mead, 2001, pg. 139). Missionaries were so deeply entrenched and involved in foreign state's affairs, businessmen in search of new markets and arriving diplomats would reach out to them as a primary source of information in the region

(Mead, 2001, pg.143). Mead writes in regards to the path that early missionaries paved for a more global society, “apart from a handful of isolated intellectuals, no one before the missionaries ever thought that the world’s cultures and societies had or could have enough in common to make a common global society feasible or desirable” (Mead, 2001, pg.146).

Similar to the Hamiltonian tradition, the Wilsonian tradition contains a foreign policy grand strategy composed of fundamental vital interests. The first of these foundational interests claim that democracies are far superior and safer allies than tyrannies and monarchies. Wilsonians believe non-democratic states are erratic and unpredictable because public opinion is not represented, and that there is no safeguard to prevent the takeover of a military state in which democracies possess (Mead, 2001, pg. 162-163). The second tenet stems from this preconceived notion that democracies are greater than other forms of government, it is the strong belief in the spread, promotion, and protection of democracies around the globe. Mead explains the importance of the spread of global democracy, “the support of democracy abroad is not only a moral duty for the United States but a practical imperative as well” (Mead, 2001, pg. 164). These actions are not only morally sound but pragmatic and sensible from a strategic geopolitical standpoint. The last tenet can be simply understood as the prevention of war. Wilsonians strive to create an international order that prevents war and immorality in all forms. This can be seen by minimizing the production and distribution of arms and also the creation of international institutions with the intended purpose to create international cohesion like the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the World Court (Mead, 2001, pg. 166).

With the Wilsonian paradigm being fundamentally grounded in early American missionary thought and its objective of protecting and endorsing democracy abroad, it has a very moralistic and universally accepting Christian component. Wilsonians believe because the U.S.

has the means to intervene in international affairs in the face of immorality, they then have the responsibility to intervene. Similar to how early missionaries had the means to spread the word of God in foreign lands, they then had the obligation to do so. This deep religious and moral component is what differentiates it from the other three paradigms. To conclude, through a Wilsonian lens, putting in the work and taking the risks to create a safer, healthier, and a more democratic world inevitably creates a safer, healthier, and more democratic United States.

### ***Restrained Realists***

#### ***1. Jacksonian Tradition***

The Jacksonian paradigm was named after former U.S. President and national war hero Andrew Jackson. However, much of Jackson's legacy is remembered for his bold personality and harsh policies towards Native American communities. What needs to be understood about this paradigm is that it is widely misunderstood and often considered irrational and a form of cowboy diplomacy. What outsiders of this group do not recognize is that this school is not necessarily a political or intellectual crusade as the other three paradigms are understood. It is more of a devout expression of religious, social, and cultural principles that a specific population of Americans hold dearly. In a 2017 article, titled, *The Jacksonian Revolt: American Populism and the Liberal Order*, Mead argues that there is a rise in Jacksonian populism in America. Unlike his opposition, President Trump was able to capitalize on this movement and it only aided in his success in the 2016 Presidential election. Mead writes in regards to the Jacksonian and Trump relationship, "For Jacksonians—who formed the core of Trump's passionately supportive base—the United States is not a political entity created and defined by a set of intellectual propositions rooted in the Enlightenment and oriented toward the fulfillment of a universal mission. Rather, it is the nation-state of the American people, and its chief business lies at

home,” therefore President Trump’s “America first” foreign policy rhetoric sits well with the Jacksonian populace (Mead, 2017, pg. 3).

To comprehend the Jacksonian paradigm, one must start by understanding the folk community, then the Jacksonian honor code, the idea of national honor, and lastly the concept of realism. The combination of these four different Jacksonian components can shed some light on this paradigm. Jacksonians believe that the government’s most important role is to aid in the advancement of the political, moral, and economic well-being of the folk community (Mead, 2001, pg. 238). The folk community is essentially composed of middle-class Americans who have strong cultural and ethnic similarities. Historically speaking, they were a subgroup of the original settlers who were typically of Scottish or Irish descent. They tended to settle throughout the bible belt and backcountry regions of the Midwest. They were a resilient and strong group of people with a culture that was shaped by centuries of constant warfare (Mead, 2001, pg. 226-227). This group eventually evolved to make up the vast majority of contemporary conservative Republicans.

They believe that the government should use any means feasible to serve its people. However, this means cannot violate morality or overstep personal freedoms that are deeply valued by Jacksonians (Mead, 2001, pg. 238). In a sense, the government should take a limited Machiavellian approach when governing Americans. They should within reason do everything they can for the prosperity of American citizens without violating various ethical standards set by religious and cultural norms, shaped by Judeo-Christian principles (Mead, 2001, pg.238). This mindset falls in line with the famous Niccolo Machiavelli quote, “For although the act may condemn the doer, the end may justify him,” essentially meaning that the end can justify the

means, however in this circumstance only to an extent, as the act must not conflict with Jacksonian ethics (Machiavelli, 2013, pg.32).

Jacksonians adhere to a distinct honor code. Within this honor code, there are five respected values: self-reliance, equality, individualism, financial esprit, and courage (Mead, 2001, pg. 231-235). These principles are the fundamental building blocks that give this school of thought a sense of identity and unity. Self-reliance can be understood as the Jacksonian's respect for hard work and strong angst towards government handouts. Regarding the respect that comes along with hard work, Mead mentions, "Jacksonian honor must be acknowledged by the outside world. One is entitled to, and demands, the appropriate respect: recognition of rights and just claims, acknowledgment of one's personal dignity" (Mead, 2001, pg.231). This belief on self-reliance does not only guide domestic policy, but it translates directly to foreign policy as well. Jacksonians want the appropriate international respect for the United States and want that respect to come as a result of the U.S.'s accomplishments and accolades. Self-reliance can be looked at as dependence on your individual self to accomplish goals or it can be viewed as reliance on your "own people," the folk people, to succeed. This is not a complete refusal of outside assistance but there is a unique type of respect for solving problems on your own within the Jacksonian tradition. Equality can be looked at as taking care of all U.S. citizens no matter their age, race, or socioeconomic status. Jacksonians are advocates for closing the gap between the rich and the poor and creating more economic equality and growth in the middle class. They respect economic success and ultimately believe that everyone should have an equal opportunity but are accepting of the fact that not everyone will succeed to the extent of others (Mead, 2001, pg. 241).

Jacksonians cherish their freedom to live a life that is specifically unique to them and to seek success how they see fit. However, the path they choose must be fashioned by ethics and reason. They also believe that no one, especially the government, has the authority to force anyone to think or believe in a certain way (Mead, 2001, pg.234). This idea of individualism translates to foreign policy as well. Jacksonians not only despise the idea of the government forcing U.S. citizens to behave a certain way they also disdain the idea of the forced implementation of a specific way of life in foreign lands.

If governmental power is less centralized, then corruption will be minimized; this is part of the reason as to why Jacksonians disapprove of government handouts. They believe charity should be administered by the private sector to alleviate bureaucratic governmental control, “Countries, like families, should take care of their own; if everybody did that, we would be better off” (Mead, 2001, pg. 245). They have no faith in the government to properly administer charity domestically and especially aid abroad. In regards to financial spirit, Jacksonians think that having the individual freedom to invest and manage finances as one wishes will naturally lead to more effective charities than ones controlled by the government (Mead, 2001, pg. 245). They believe in taking risks, especially individual financial risks. As a free citizen, you should be able to take loans and invest as you see fit with minimal governmental interference. They embrace an audacious and entrepreneurial essence, which correlates nicely with the Jacksonian foreign policy of acting boldly, bravely, and sometimes preemptively, in times of international crisis.

The final component and most important of the Jacksonian honor code, courage. Jacksonians must always be ready to defend what is theirs and to stand up to immorality in any shape. National security is of great importance to Jacksonians. As a result, military service is greatly respected. Jacksonians are not isolationists and are not by any means warmongers either.

However, they will make massive financial and individual sacrifices if they believe that these sacrifices are in the nation's best interest, including going to war. As the government should do everything it can for the prosperity of the folk people, the folk people should do everything they can for their country. It is a mutualistic relationship of shared sacrifice between citizen and state.

Adhering to this honor code is what makes Jacksonians unique. However, there another type of honor that is indescribably important to Jacksonians and it can be understood as national honor. It is essentially devout respect and unbreakable allegiance to the U.S. This principle is taken so seriously that it has on many occasions taken the United States to war and has forbidden the United States to leave an active war, "You can deal with a bully only by standing up to him. Anything else is appeasement, which is both dishonorable and futile" (Mead, 2001, pg. 251). Within national honor there are three respected views: keeping one's commitments, the idea of total war, strengthening international reputation and image.

Staying true to one's commitments, whether they are domestic or foreign, is a principle that has given Jacksonians much international respect but has also pulled them in and kept them in, extensive international quarrels. The Jacksonians were against the United States' participation in the Vietnam War; they did not believe that there was anything for the United States to gain by getting involved. However, once involved they were against pulling out because the United States gave the South Vietnamese their word that they were committed to this war (Mead, 2001, pg. 251). A more contemporary example would be the war in Iraq. Jacksonians were not thrilled about entry into this conflict, but the U.S. gave their word to the Kurdish people that they would continue to fight ISIS alongside them, so pulling out of this complicated conflict is not an option until victory is met.

Secondly, there is the notion of total war. Jacksonians do not believe in war restricted by government constraints. “The first rule of war is that wars must be fought with all available force,” they believe if a state is to commit to the act of war it must be absolute (Mead, 2001, pg. 254). As explained by Mead in regards to the risks of not fully committing to war, “To engage in a limited war is one of the costliest political decisions an American president can make; neither Truman nor Johnson survived it” (Mead, 2001, pg.254). Lastly, maintaining and strengthening the national image is a very important value. An early historical example would be the War of 1812. The young United States was forced out of a strong sense of honor to refuse to accept any more insults and national embarrassments from the British. National honor was the driving force that led the United States to war in this specific circumstance (Mead, 2001, pg. 250). Jacksonians consider the U.S.’s international reputation as equally important as their domestic status. The belief is by maintaining their honor code during any crisis, they minimize the risk of tarnishing the United States’ international reputation and global prestige as a dominant yet ethical power. Mead describes this balancing act perfectly, “Therefore, at stake in any crisis is not simply whether we satisfy our own ideas of what is due our honor; our behavior in the crisis and the resolution we obtain must preserve our reputation, our prestige, in the world at large” (Mead, 2001, pg. 251).

The last component of the Jacksonian paradigm that should be understood is the idea of realism. Jacksonians are principally realists. Jacksonians believe that international politics are a constant battle of power and survival. By nature, it is vicious and anarchic. As a result, the United States must be ready for conflict in any form. When examining this paradigm, it must be remembered that it is not a political or intellectual crusade like the other three paradigms. It is more of a sincere expression of religious, social, and cultural principles that are taken very

seriously. Country is an extension of family and it must be protected and respected in the same manner as one would care for their family (Mead, 2001, pg.245). By viewing one's nation in this light, it makes emotion ingrained in all political decisions. This consequently leads external partners to believe that this paradigm operates dogmatically versus pragmatically. Jacksonians are extremely fixed in their convictions. Staying true to their beliefs while managing a crisis often trumps thinking externally and critically and is where the controversial nature of this school can be found.

## **2. *Jeffersonian Tradition***

The last of Mead's paradigms is the Jeffersonian paradigm. It is grounded in the ideologies of one of the founding fathers in Thomas Jefferson. This school of thought has been historically monumental in shaping American culture, identity, and foreign policy. In the creation of the Constitution, Thomas Jefferson was greatly troubled, by what he considered, an overly powerful federal government. He feared an ever-growing, all-controlling, and liberty threatening executive power. A force that resembled the British monarchy or even something close to the "imperial presidency" that we see today. This concern led to him playing a key role in the development of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, which continues to serve as a built-in defense for liberty (Onuf, 2017, par.18). Jefferson claimed allegiance to the Anti-Federalist party and later, post ratification of the Constitution, the Democratic-Republican Party. Both parties served as an oppositional voice to the Federalists (Onuf, 2017, par.3).

There are five fundamental principles that the Jeffersonian paradigm adhere by. The first is to protect and maintain the health of liberal democracy within U.S. borders. Jefferson believed in the righteousness and effectiveness of democratic capitalism. However, he believed that capitalism could not prosper unless society is well and democratic. A healthy liberal democracy

is a bedrock for a nation-state to prosper economically, militarily, and diplomatically. With this mindset, Jeffersonians hold the perspective that liberal democracy should be respected but more importantly defended at all costs. Without it, society as a whole will fail (Mead, 2001, pg.177). However, it is important to understand that Jeffersonians prioritize the protection and health of democratic liberalism at home much more so than the success of democratic liberalism abroad. They are all for thriving and prosperous liberal democracies around the globe, but their maintenance and even more so their creation, are certainly not a priority. To expand on this notion even further, the forced implementation of democratic liberalism is only not a priority, but something that should be avoided. Aggressive interventionism in diverse foreign lands resulting in failed states and domestic turmoil is a great fear for this school of thought. As described by Mead, “Building democracy in one country is enough challenge for them, and they are both skeptical about the prospects for revolutionary victories abroad and concerned about the dangers to domestic revolution that might result from excessive entanglements in foreign quarrels” (Mead, 2001, pg.181). These fears have shown themselves in contemporary U.S. foreign policy in the form of failed attempts at regime changes in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The second principle is the avoidance of war. In a letter to Tench Coxe in 1794, Jefferson claimed that war is “as much a punishment to the punisher as to the sufferer,” as wars concentrate power around the executive, cost money, and create an avenue to easily find new dangers abroad (Catanzariti, 2000, pg.66-67). Jeffersonians certainly are not pacifists but sincerely believe it is in the U.S.’s best interest to avoid international conflict when possible. The third idea greatly separates the Jeffersonian paradigm from the other three schools, it is the constitutional conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Jeffersonians have a deeply held respect for the restrictions that the U.S. Constitution places on the executive and this respect does not lessen

during times of great international conflict or national crises. The constitution should not be ignored regardless of the situation. In some circumstances, Jeffersonians even support the idea of having these restrictions strengthened (Mead, 2001, pg. 190).

The fourth principle is described by Mead as an “economy of interests” (Mead, 2001, pg.192). Essentially, U.S. vital interests should be defined as tightly as possible, it will create an environment where the chance for international conflict is minimized. As John Adams describes this view that fundamentally explains the bedrock of the Jeffersonian paradigm, “But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own” (Adams, 1821). There is an obvious isolationist component to this view. However, determining the difference between what is a true vital national interest and what is a risky endeavor, is essentially what this principle describes. The fifth principle is to operate through an economy of means. This is simply the idea of once national interests are defined as narrowly as possible, they should then be sought after as efficiently and economically sound as possible, with the taxpayer’s money in mind.

Now, birthed from these foundational Jeffersonian principles is a strategical practice that uniquely separates the Jeffersonian paradigm from the other traditions. This is the idea of a “reverse gear” in foreign policy. This concept ignores pride and greed and just simply accepts reality as is and adapts to its conditions. It is a pragmatic and rational way to deal with the unpredictable ever-changing realities of international politics. A way to understand this distinct split between the four paradigms is to consider foreign policy as a straight path. Traveling along this path you hit a wall. Having the ability to see past this wall, Wilsonians see a moral obligation to find a path around it and confront the challenges that lay on the other side. If they

have the means to get around it, they then have the obligation to get around it. It is not only in the U.S.'s best interest to get around this obstacle, but it is also in the world's best interest. When the Hamiltonians stumble upon this wall they do not view it in a positive light. They do not see it as a type of protection from potential foreign threats that may be on the other side. They view it similarly to how they perceive the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, a hindrance to trade. They only see untapped markets and beneficial economic opportunities on the other side, and they must find a way around it. The Jacksonians, on the other hand, will see this wall as a challenge. They realize all the work they have put into traveling down the path to meet this wall and must confront the national security threats that lay on the other side. They will see only one option when faced with the wall and that is to find a way to get around it but more likely than not, they will find a way to forcefully get through it. Any other option would be considered a failure and damaging to their international image.

When the Jeffersonians arrive at this wall they will only see threats, risks, and unwarranted financial expenses on the other side. Jeffersonians will weigh the pros and cons and more likely than not they will opt to turn around on the path and head back home as the risks to continue are not worth it. This mindset can be seen in the post-Vietnam War era when the U.S. retreated from this seemingly endless and costly war. As opposed to looking at this situation as an embarrassing defeat, Jeffersonians looked at this retreat in a positive light. It should be viewed as an opportunity that allowed the U.S. to reform its foreign policy into a position that is more in line with Jeffersonian principles. It was a time to transition back to a foreign policy that is guided by the constitution, a path to return power to the people and away from the executive branch, and an effort to revitalize focus on a healthy democracy at home (Mead, 2001, pg. 217). This overly prideful mindset, that refuses to adjust and retreat when circumstances call for, is a

mindset that Jeffersonians feel is ill-equipped to deal with the complexity of international politics. Through a Jeffersonian lens, this is the mindset that led and kept the U.S. in Vietnam. It is the mindset that currently holds the U.S. in the Middle East. It is the same mindset that continues to create avenues for the U.S. to enter into international conflicts that are in no way shape or form threats to its vital interests. This is the mindset that Jeffersonians fear and attempt to avoid.

Understanding these four different paradigms is the first challenge of this thesis, identifying them in the president's foreign policy is the next task. In two of Mead's more contemporary works the *Carter Syndrome* and *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy In A World At Risk*, he explains how difficult it is for a president to remain strictly within one paradigm. There are shared principles and practices amongst these different paradigms that inherently overlap one another, often making the line that distinguishes their differences ambiguous. However, more often than not, a president gravitates towards one guiding paradigm over the others. Sometimes though, that gravitation is not overly clear, "Some presidents build coalitions; others stay close to one favorite school" (Mead, 2010, pg. 60).

In Mead's 2004 book, *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy In A World At Risk*, he holds on to the theory that "Historically, American foreign policy has been shaped by debates among economic nationalists (Hamiltonians), idealistic internationalists (Wilsonians), isolationists (Jeffersonians), and populist nationalists (Jacksonians)," however, he uses this framework to examine George W. Bush's presidency (Mead, 2004, pg.84). Here Mead argues that President Bush's foreign policy was a hybrid of Jacksonianism and "Revival Wilsonianism" (Mead, 2004). Bush gravitated towards Jacksonian rhetoric to address the nation in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. He made a string of powerful statements that insinuated a

lethal and vengeful response from the American military, "I can hear you!" as he yelled towards the first responders and those citizens standing at ground zero with him, "The rest of the world hears you! And the people – and the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon." (Walsh, 2013, par.8). He matched his rhetoric with immediate military intervention. He made quick and powerful attacks against terrorist strongholds in the Middle East, overwhelming the enemy with an overwhelming amount of force. This is a verbatim Jacksonian response; justice was served, and honor restored.

However, the conflict escalated and became increasingly more complicated, especially with the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, where the sought-after Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) were not located. Jacksonians became progressively warier about U.S. presence in the region. Bush refused to leave the region and or halt military operations, as he was fighting a two-front war while simultaneously democratically reforming broken states. This is where the Wilsonian side of the Bush Administration showed its face. Mead references this clear representation of two paradigms, "Wilsonians often write checks that Jacksonians do not want to cash" (Mead, 2004, pg. 154). Jacksonians wanted nothing more than victory in the Middle East and were willing to make great sacrifices for the win. This included staying in-country, as Jacksonian's honor disallowed them to be involved in "cut and run" operations (Mead, 2010, pg. 61). However, spending billions of dollars on nation-building projects and having U.S. soldiers shot and killed while standing guard at checkpoints, was certainly not the war that Jacksonians had in mind.

In Mead's 2010 Foreign Affairs article, *The Carter Syndrome*, Mead examines President Obama's foreign policy and compares it to President Carter's. Obama and Carter shared a similar burden while in office, "In both cases, their basic Jeffersonian approach was balanced in part by

a strong attraction to idealistic Wilsonian values and their position at the head of a Democratic Party with a distinct Wilsonian streak” (Mead, 2010, pg. 63). He describes the conundrum that Obama found himself in as the “Carter Syndrome.” Both leaders were fundamentally Jeffersonians, but circumstances guided them towards Wilsonian ventures. Mead refers to this dilemma as “presidential schizophrenia” (Mead, 2010, pg. 58). As with George W. Bush, and many presidents before him, remaining loyal to strictly one paradigm has proven to be a historically difficult task. Straddling the line between two different paradigms was the story of the Obama Administration, “Neither a cold-blooded realist nor a bleeding-heart, Barack Obama has a split personality when it comes to foreign policy. So do most U.S. presidents, of course, and the ideas that inspire this one have a long history at the core of the American political tradition” (Mead, 2010, pg. 58). As clearly defined as these paradigms are there is no denying the intrinsically messy relationship that binds all four.

## **Chapter 2: President Trump's Afghanistan Strategy Speech**

The most important and only piece of rhetoric that will be analyzed in this thesis in attempts to gain an understanding of President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy is his August 2017 Afghanistan strategy speech. This speech is the first time in the Trump Administration where specific Afghanistan objectives and strategies were disclosed to the public. President Trump explains the trajectory that his administration wishes to travel and the courses of action that will be implemented to find success in this almost twenty-year conflict. This piece of rhetoric will be compared and contrasted with the three specific foreign policy actions in air operations, troop deployment trends, and U.S. aid, in attempts to determine which paradigm the Trump Administration has embodied. The 2017 Afghanistan Strategy speech will provide a verbal explanation of what the president wants to do and how he feels about the current state of Afghanistan. The three foreign policy actions will provide measurable data on what the Trump Administration has done. His rhetoric and actions are both equally important and uniquely revealing.

In his speech, President Trump highlights three core conclusions about the U.S.'s fundamental interests in Afghanistan. However, before he revealed them, he prefaced these conclusions with the following forewarning message, "I share the American people's frustration. I also share their frustration over a foreign policy that has spent too much time, energy, money, and most importantly lives, trying to rebuild countries in our own image, instead of pursuing our security interests above all other considerations" (Trump, 2017). This message is a clear indicator that this administration disapproves of the previous administration's interventionist guided strategies in Afghanistan. Broadly speaking, it reveals that President Trump intends to take a more restrained and less interventionist type approach to Afghanistan. This prelude

comment is directly in line with Jacksonian thought, which prioritizes U.S. security concerns above all other foreign policy matters.

The first conclusion that President Trump explained, “First, our nation must seek an honorable and enduring outcome worthy of the tremendous sacrifices that have been made, especially the sacrifices of lives. The men and women who serve our nation in combat deserve a plan for victory. They deserve the tools they need, and the trust they have earned, to fight and to win” (Trump, 2017). There are a few important takeaways from this conclusion. First, the mention of an “honorable” outcome is revealing. This is the president’s realization that the victory that is sought after is a victory that will be respected by not only U.S. citizens but the international community as a whole. Winning is one thing but winning honorably is much more prestigious and is fundamental to the Jacksonian paradigm. The next point that the president describes is the idea that the men and women who have fought in this war “deserve a plan for victory” (Trump, 2017). This goes back to one of the core components of the Jacksonian paradigm, the idea of national honor. More specifically, under this umbrella term of national honor, is the notion of keeping one’s commitment and finishing what you started, and that is precisely what is being described here. It would be dishonorable to those who have risked and given their lives for this cause to not finish this war. This first conclusion is heavily Jacksonian.

The second conclusion, “the consequences of a rapid exit are both predictable and unacceptable. 9/11, the worst terrorist attack in our history, was planned and directed from Afghanistan because that country was ruled by a government that gave comfort and shelter to terrorists. A hasty withdrawal would create a vacuum that terrorists, including ISIS and al Qaeda, would instantly fill, just as happened before September 11<sup>th</sup>” (Trump, 2017). This conclusion describes President Trump’s commitment to the conflict. He compares Afghanistan to Iraq,

explaining that the U.S. made a great mistake prematurely pulling troops from Iraq in 2011, which created an avenue for the resurgence of various terrorist organizations to re-establish themselves in the region. President Trump vowed to not allow Afghanistan to go down the same trajectory as Iraq. His commitment to the issue is anti-Jeffersonian. However, arguments could be made that the refusal to leave the region stems from Hamiltonian, Wilsonian, and Jacksonian reasoning.

A clearer understanding of this issue can be obtained when you take a step back and look at this conclusion from a macro-position. When you factor in the president's preamble to his three conclusions, where he clearly expresses his concern for long term nation-building endeavors, believing that his commitment to the region is based upon a Hamiltonian or Wilsonian agenda is less likely. Throughout his speech, there was almost no mention of remaining in Afghanistan until it is a functional liberal democracy or a reliable U.S. trading partner. This commitment to the region described is based upon upholding the U.S.'s international image, maintaining national honor, and keeping one's commitments, with the overall objective of obliterating U.S. national security threats, all of which are Jacksonian principles.

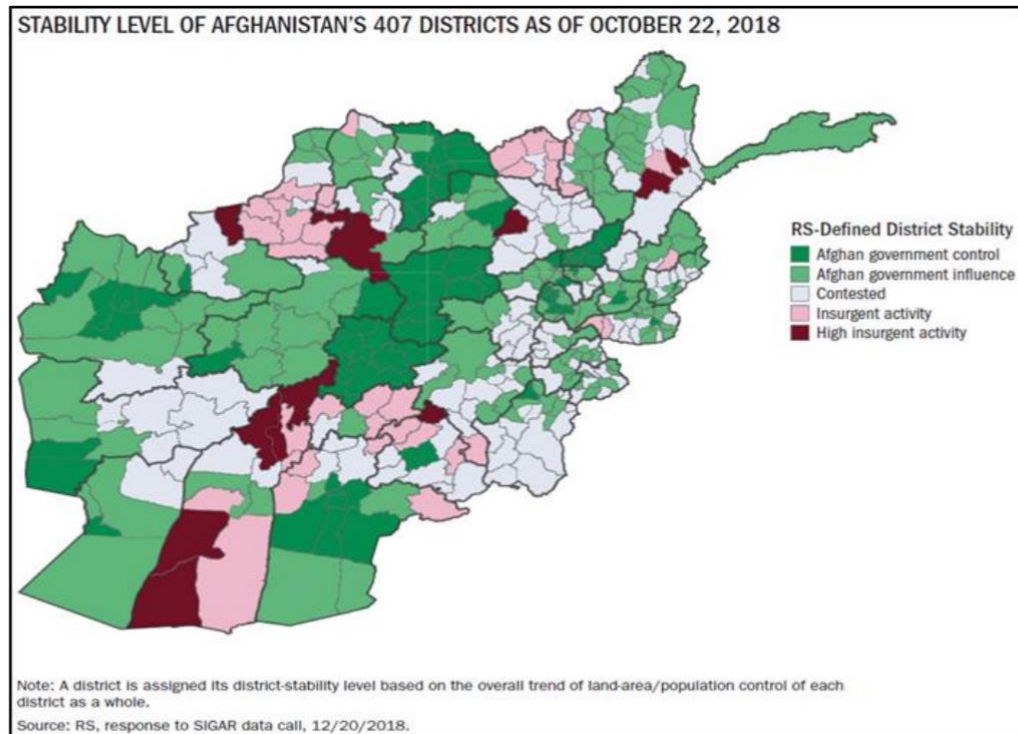
The third conclusion states, "I concluded that the security threats we face in Afghanistan and the broader region are immense. Today, 20 U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations are active in Afghanistan and Pakistan — the highest concentration in any region anywhere in the world" (Trump, 2017). This conclusion is how he perceives the current state of affairs in the region. He is not perceiving it as an untapped market for beneficial trade as a Hamiltonian would, nor a long-term nation-building project that the U.S. is morally required to embark upon as a Wilsonian would, nor as such a serious and unsolvable puzzle that the U.S. must return

home immediately like a Jeffersonian. He takes the Jacksonian approach and looks at this issue as a challenge. This is a complex and dangerous challenge that must be overcome because of the great security threats in the region that directly jeopardize U.S. vital interests. President Trump concludes by stating, “But, one way or another, these problems will be solved — I’m a problem solver — and, in the end, we will win” (Trump, 2017). These three conclusions can be understood simply as the president’s commitment to the conflict, awareness of the complexity of it, and a devotion to finding success. They are clearly anti-Jeffersonian. Sections of them could arguably represent various Hamiltonian and Wilsonian principles, but when you look at the entirety of the speech, these conclusions are convincingly Jacksonian guided.

Furthermore, President Trump continued with his speech and explained how his administration’s strategy differs from his predecessors by describing five core pillars of strategy. The first pillar is a change from a “time-based approach to one based on conditions” (Trump, 2017). The U.S. will no longer publicly announce dates of military operations, troop withdrawal timelines, troop numbers, or any operational data along those lines. This will be done for two primary reasons. The first is to protect the U.S. international image and the second is so that enemies in the region are kept in the dark and cannot plan to simply wait out the U.S. This is a Jacksonian guided tactic. Making bold public statements about when the conflict will end or when troops will leave the region is something of the past. The past two administrations claimed to have a timeline for evacuation and a clear path to victory, both of which were very wrong in their predictions. From a Jacksonian perspective, this is an embarrassment and has only hurt the U.S.’s image and reputation. Image and reputation are as equally important as victory for Jacksonians. Making audacious predictions and promises of when victory will be obtained only to come up short time and time again is something that must be avoided at all costs.

Through this Jacksonian “conditions-based” tactic the U.S. has ceased publicizing various metrics on the war in Afghanistan that were once previously accessible to the general public. According to the SIGAR quarterly report submitted to Congress in April 2019, the U.S. military is “no longer producing its district-level stability assessments of Afghan government and insurgent control and influence” (Thomas, 2020, pg.7). This once publicly available and easily accessible information revealed an approximation of the degree of Taliban control and overall influence in a specific region. Additionally, it vividly displayed this data in terms of population and territory through various charts and graphs revealing trends over time in particular districts (See Figure 1). According to SIGAR, the justification behind halting the public release of this data is that it “was of limited decision-making value to the [U.S.] Commander” (Thomas, 2020, pg.7). Whether that reasoning is true or not, this once easily accessible public data that served as a great metric to gauge the progress the U.S. was making in the region is something of the past.

## Insurgent Activity in Afghanistan by District (Figure 1)



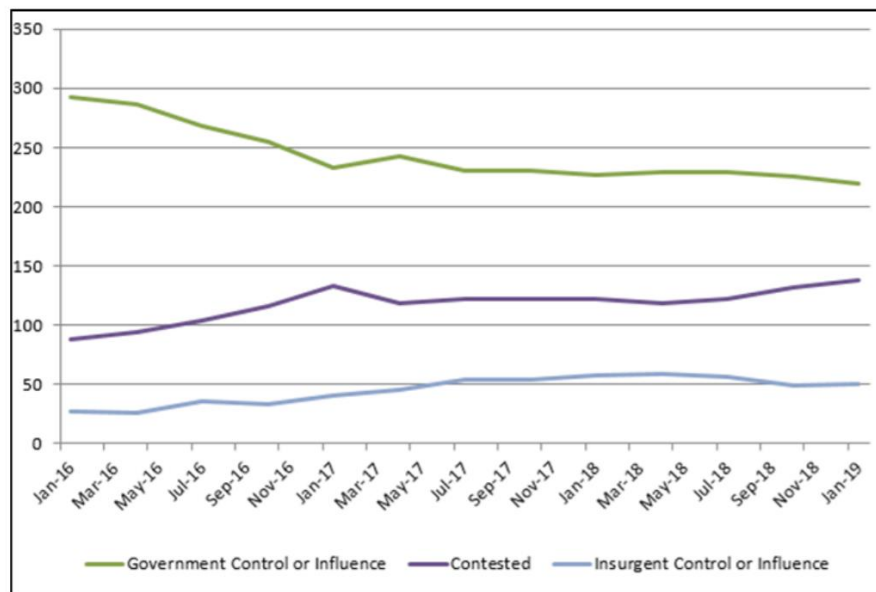
**Source:** SIGAR, January 30, 2019, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress.

What is interesting, is that on January 30, 2019, SIGAR'S last publicized report, which revealed the stability level of Afghanistan's 407 Districts as of October 22, 2018, showed a decrease in districts under government control. The districts under government influence or control decreased to 53.8%. This was the lowest it has been since SIGAR began reporting on this data in November 2015. At that point in time, 12% of the districts were influenced or controlled by insurgent groups and 34% were uncontested (Thomas, 2020, pg.7). As the graph below reveals that territory contested or controlled by insurgent groups has progressively increased in recent years (See Figure 2). This is an important point because publicly revealing data about U.S. efforts in Afghanistan only aids U.S. international image when the data published shows

unambiguously U.S. success. When this data shows regression, which it did, or even stagnation, from a Jacksonian perspective, it only corrodes U.S. reputation and should not be published.

Additionally, when the enemy has data showing them that their efforts have been effective it only encourages them to continue the fight. It even has the potential to give the enemy the motivation to increase efforts. Despite the reality of the situation on the ground in the region, through a Jacksonian lens, anything that does not represent the U.S. in a strong dominating position should not be publicized. Image is everything to Jacksonians. Keeping the enemy in the dark in this regard is a clear Jacksonian tactic. President Trump concludes his first strategic pillar by stating, “I will not say when we are going to attack, but attack we will,” only expressing his commitment to continuing to fight and attacking the enemy in the region (Trump, 2017). This first pillar is primarily guided by Jacksonian principles.

**Control of Districts in Afghanistan (Figure 2)**



**Source:** SIGAR Quarterly Reports.

**Notes:** The y-axis represents the number of districts, of which the U.S. government counts 407 in Afghanistan.

The next pillar explains the importance of combining all forms of U.S. power by properly utilizing military, diplomatic, and economic tactics to find victory. Essentially, Afghanistan cannot be strictly viewed as a military battle. It is far too complex of a situation. This pulls from the commercial and business-minded Hamiltonian and the moralist guided Wilsonian paradigms. Negotiating with the Taliban, building strategically important infrastructure, and providing security and financial aid to the Iraqi government are all options that need to be considered while maintaining the primary objective of U.S. victory. However, President Trump concludes his explanation of this pillar by stating, “We are a partner and a friend, but we will not dictate to the Afghan people how to live, or how to govern their own complex society. We are not nation-building again. We are killing terrorists” (Trump, 2017).

This pillar acknowledges the importance of not strictly viewing this conflict through a military lens but ensures that the audience is aware that the U.S. is only in the region to alleviate national security threats. If various Hamiltonian and Wilsonian endeavors must be embarked upon, so be it; it will only be to assist in the “killing terrorists” Jacksonian mission. This pillar represents the Jacksonian honor code of individualism. Jacksonians revere their individual freedom to live a life that is specifically unique to them. In a foreign policy sense, Jacksonians not only despise the idea of the government forcing U.S. citizens to behave a certain way they also disdain the idea of the forced implementation of a specific way of life in foreign lands. This is precisely what the president describes in this pillar. However, it should not be overlooked that this pillar has clear Hamiltonian and Wilsonian components, but the justification for these types of intervention is guided by a Jacksonian overall objective.

The next pillar is to alter the U.S.’s approach to dealing with Pakistan. President Trump states, “We can no longer be silent about Pakistan’s safe havens for terrorist organizations, the

Taliban, and other groups that pose a threat to the region and beyond. Pakistan has much to gain from partnering with our effort in Afghanistan. It has much to lose by continuing to harbor criminals and terrorists” (Trump, 2017). President Trump expresses his concern for Pakistan’s lack of transparency, explaining that they have allowed various terrorist organizations to operate within their borders despite the U.S. providing them with billions of dollars in foreign aid. He concludes by explaining that the U.S. and Pakistani partnership will not survive if great changes are not made, “It is time for Pakistan to demonstrate its commitment to civilization, order, and to peace” (Trump, 2017). In a similar light, the following strategic pillar is to expand and strengthen the U.S.’s strategic partnership with India. President Trump explains that India is the world's largest democracy and a key strategic partner in the region. However, they benefit greatly from trade with the U.S., ultimately making billions of dollars from various commercial transactions. As a result, they need to help out more in Afghanistan, especially with economic assistance and developmental projects in the region. They need to pull a proportional amount of weight.

These last two pillars veer away from the Jacksonian paradigm, especially when you factor in one of the most important principles of the Jacksonian honor code, self-reliance. As stated, Jacksonians are not isolationist but there is a deeply held respect for solving problems on your own. These last two pillars have more of a liberal lean in the sense that they are an obvious reach to improve relations with two different sovereign states to aid in this conflict. This is similar to the Wilsonian tenet of “war prevention”. Wilsonians strive to create an international order that avoids war and immorality in all forms. One of the clearest examples of this is the Wilsonian’s attempt to create stable international institutions like the League of Nations, United

Nations, and the World Court (Mead, 2001, pg. 166). This is done with the intended purpose to create international cohesion.

Additionally, there is a clear Hamiltonian component to these two pillars as well when you look at this issue economically. The U.S. has provided a great deal of foreign aid and has conducted many commercial transactions with both Pakistan and India where both states have benefited greatly. This can be looked at as a strategic investment by the U.S. This was done in hopes that Pakistan and India would pull a proportional amount of weight in Afghanistan and further aid in the fight against terrorism in the region. The president has made it clear that Pakistan and India have not been doing their part in this conflict. He views this as a poor investment as the return on investment (ROI) has not been adequate relative to the investment's cost. He explains the importance of changing these circumstances for long term success in the region. Maintaining and obtaining beneficial commercial relations and investments is what Hamiltonians strive for. Having fair and beneficial relations for the sake of peace is what Wilsonians strive for. This is essentially what President Trump has more or less described in these last two strategic pillars.

The last pillar, which is very similar to President Trump's first conclusion, is a continued emphasis on the fact that he will ensure that the military has the proper equipment and support to fight. Excessive micromanagement from Washington D.C. preventing soldiers on the ground from acting immediately will be a thing of the past. Also, past restrictions will be lifted as far as what can and cannot be done operationally. Essentially, President Trump intends to relax the military's rules of engagement in Afghanistan. He states, "When America commits its warriors to battle, we must ensure they have every weapon to apply swift, decisive, and overwhelming force" (Trump, 2017). This a very clear representation of the Jacksonian principle of "total war."

President Trump winds down his speech by describing what success will look like moving forward, “From now on, victory will have a clear definition: attacking our enemies, obliterating ISIS, crushing al Qaeda, preventing the Taliban from taking over Afghanistan, and stopping mass terror attacks against America before they emerge” (Trump, 2017). His definition is broad but almost entirely grounded in military feats and very little mention of nation-building or economic endeavors. His last pillar is Jacksonian.

President Trump refers to his Afghanistan strategy as a principled realist guide (Trump, 2017). In many aspects of his strategy, there are fundamental realist tenets. In the context of this thesis, these fundamental realist tenets are very much in line with the Jacksonian paradigm.

Mead writes in reference to the similarities between realism and Jacksonianism, “Jacksonianism provides the basis in American life for what many scholars and practitioners would consider the most sophisticated of all approaches to foreign affairs: realism” (Mead, 2001, pg. 244).

Jeffersonians are certainly realists as well; however, their beliefs are more along the lines of minimalist realism. They define U.S. interests as small as possible and wish to use a minimal amount of force to defend them. This is not what the president has preached in his Afghanistan strategy. Jacksonian realism, on the other hand, tends to, “approach foreign policy in a very different spirit--one in which honor, concern for reputation, and faith in military institutions play a much greater role” (Mead, 2001, pg. 245). This type of realism is exactly what is explained in President Trump’s Afghanistan strategy. After analyzing the Afghan strategy from top to bottom, it is certainly heavily Jacksonian.

Throughout history, almost all great foreign policy strategies have been a fusion of more than one paradigm. President Trump’s rhetoric in his Afghanistan strategy speech is no different. The clearest mention of this integration of the other paradigms is in his second pillar. Here

President Trump mentions that the combination of all forms of U.S. power will be utilized by properly employing military, diplomatic, and economic tactics. This is a realization that he cannot rely solely on cowboy diplomatic tactics and carpet-bombing his way out of this conflict. It is far too complex of a situation. There needs to be diplomatic and economic tactics to triumph in this war. President Trump continually emphasizes the idea that the U.S. is out of the nation-building business, but this pillar reveals that he is aware there needs to be a level of Hamiltonian and Wilsonian type intervention. The third and fourth pillars are another example of where President Trump veers away from his predominant Jacksonian rhetoric. He mentions that there needs to be greater pressure put on Pakistan and India to do their part in Afghanistan. As explained Jacksonians are not isolationists to the point where they refuse to establish any sort of international alliance or partnership but deeply engrained in the Jacksonian honor code is the concept of self-reliance. Jacksonians want the proper international respect and want that respect to come as a result of the U.S.'s achievements. This "do it yourself" mentality differs from what is being described in the third and fourth pillars.

As shown in the table (See Table 1), the Wilsonian paradigm has three principles represented, one principle that could go either way, and four principles not represented. The Hamiltonian paradigm has three principles represented, one principle that could go either way, and four principles not represented. The Jacksonian paradigm has five principles represented, one principle that could go either way, and two principles not represented. The Jeffersonian paradigm has no principles represented for any conclusion or strategic pillar. Based on the results, President Trump's Afghanistan strategy is primarily Jacksonian guided. However, there are certainly Wilsonian and Hamiltonian components. The question is now, how have President Trump's actions stacked up to his rhetoric in his Afghanistan strategy?

**Afghanistan Strategy Speech Table (Table 1)**

	<b>Wilsonian</b>	<b>Hamiltonian</b>	<b>Jacksonian</b>	<b>Jeffersonian</b>
<b>Principles Represented</b>	<p><b>Strategic Pillar 2:</b> Combining all forms of U.S. power by utilizing military, diplomatic, and economic tactics to find victory.</p> <p><b>Strategic Pillar 3:</b> Improving relations with a foreign state for the sake of peace and nation-building objectives.</p> <p><b>Strategic Pillar 4:</b> Improving relations with a foreign state for the sake of peace and nation-building objectives.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Pillar 2:</b> Combining all forms of U.S. power by utilizing military, diplomatic, and economic tactics to find victory.</p> <p><b>Strategic Pillar 3:</b> Investing in and improving relations with a foreign state to maintain access to a specific market.</p> <p><b>Strategic Pillar 4:</b> Investing in and improving relations with a foreign state to maintain access to a specific market.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 1:</b> An honorable outcome, staying true to one’s commitments, and moving towards a “total war” mentality.</p> <p><b>Conclusion 2:</b> Refusal to leave the region prematurely.</p> <p><b>Conclusion 3:</b> Dedication and confidence in solving the problem.</p> <p><b>Strategic Pillar 1:</b> A conditions-based approach to the war in order to protect U.S. reputation and image.</p> <p><b>Strategic Pillar 5:</b> Relaxing the rules of engagement and moving towards a “total war” mentality.</p>	
<b>Could Be Argued Either Way</b>	<p><b>Conclusion 2:</b> Willingness to remain in Afghanistan.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 2:</b> Willingness to remain in Afghanistan.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Pillar 2:</b> Will not dictate to the Afghan people how to live.</p>	
<b>Principles Not Represented</b>	<p><b>Conclusion 1 and 3</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Pillar 1 and 5</b></p>	<p><b>Conclusion 1 and 3</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Pillar 1 and 5</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Pillar 3 and 4</b></p>	<p><b>Conclusion 1, 2 and 3</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Pillar 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5</b></p>

### **Chapter 3: President Trump's Foreign Policy Actions**

#### ***Air Operations***

The first foreign policy action metric that will be measured in Afghanistan is U.S. air operations. Air operations will be broken down into CAS sorties and CAS sorties with at least one weapon released. CAS sorties will be defined by the U.S. Air Force as an “air action by fixed- and rotary-winged aircraft against hostile targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces and that require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces” (Close Air Support Fundamentals, 2019, par.1). Then CAS sorties with at least one weapon released can be understood as a traditional “airstrike” (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2020). According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, the “US Air Force does not count individual strikes, as there could be multiple missiles fired or bombs dropped on various targets during the same sortie or mission. This can lead to confusion over terms. For example, on October 11, 2015, US officials said 63 strikes hit an al Qaeda camp in Kandahar province. However, the US Air Force data for October showed only 35 CAS sorties with at least one weapon release. There are various US aircrafts in Afghanistan that could be used for CAS, including armed drones, F-16 jets, and AC-130 gunships. All can carry multiple weapons and are therefore capable of carrying out more than one strike in a single sortie” (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2020). Because there are multiple U.S. aerial assets that have the capability of carrying out more than one strike in a single sortie, total weapons released numbers will be analyzed as well.

Based on the U.S. Air Force summary data, starting in 2010, it is obvious that President Obama gradually reduced the annual CAS sorties in Afghanistan throughout his tenure (See Table 2). As 2010 shows 33,707 total CAS sorties for the year, and in 2016, his final year in

office, there were only 5,162 CAS sorties. When looking at the annual percentage, from 2010 to 2011 there was a slight 2% increase. However, after 2011 the percent change only decreases. From 2011 to 2012 there was a -17% change, from 2012 to 2013 there was a -24% change, from 2013 to 2014 there was a -40% change, from 2014 to 2015 there was a -56% change, from 2015 to 2016 there was a -11% change, and from 2016 to 2017, there was a -11% change. In 2017, President Trump’s first year in office, there were 4,603 CAS sorties total for that year, which created an -11% change from President Obama’s 2016 year. However, in 2018 President Trump increased CAS sorties to 8,196 for the year leading to a 78% change from his 2017 numbers. In 2019 there was a total of 8,773 CAS sorties for the year leading to a 7% change from his 2018 numbers.

**(Table 2)**

<i>US Air Force Air Power Summary Data - Close Air Support (CAS) Sorties</i>			
<b>ANNUAL</b>			
	<b>CAS sorties</b>	<b>Mean sorties per month</b>	<b>Percentage change</b>
<b>2010</b>	33707	2809	--
<b>2011</b>	34514	2876	2%
<b>2012</b>	28768	2397	-17%
<b>2013</b>	21785	1815	-24%
<b>2014</b>	12978	1082	-40%

<b>2015</b>	5774	481	-56%
<b>2016</b>	5162	430	-11%
<b>2017</b>	4603	384	-11%
<b>2018</b>	8196	683	78%
<b>2019</b>	8773	731	7%

(Source: Bureau of Investigative Journalism)

The narrative is similar when analyzing the U.S. Air Force’s CAS sorties with at least one weapon released (airstrike) data (See Table 3). The Obama Administration gradually reduced its airstrike numbers throughout his tenure. In 2010, there were 2,517 airstrikes conducted in Afghanistan and in 2016 there were only 615. In 2017, President Trump’s first year in office there were 1,248 airstrikes conducted in Afghanistan which is a 103% change from President Obama’s 2016 Afghanistan airstrike numbers. In 2018, there were 966 airstrikes conducted which was a -23% change from 2017. However, this number is higher than President Obama’s 2015 and 2016 airstrike numbers in Afghanistan. In 2019, there was a total of 2,434 airstrikes conducted in Afghanistan under the Trump Administration which is a 152% change from President Trump’s 2018 numbers. There had not been this many airstrikes in the region since the height of the war in 2010 and 2011, when the U.S. had committed approximately 100,000 troops to Afghanistan (Kurtzleben, 2016, par. 2).

(Table 3)

	<b>CAS sorties with at least one weapon release</b>	<b>Mean sorties per month</b>	<b>Percentage change</b>
<b>2010</b>	2517	210	--
<b>2011</b>	2678	223	6%
<b>2012</b>	1975	165	-26%
<b>2013</b>	1407	117	-29%
<b>2014</b>	1136	95	-19%
<b>2015</b>	411	34	-64%
<b>2016</b>	615	51	50%
<b>2017</b>	1248	104	103%
<b>2018</b>	966	81	-23%
<b>2019</b>	2434	203	152%

(Source: Bureau of Investigative Journalism)

President Trump had only been in office for three years at this point. With the short amount of time that he has been in office, it is important to break down his CAS sorties and airstrike data even further to gain a deeper understanding of his objectives. This can be done by analyzing these metrics by month (See Table 4). In January 2017 there were 8.5 sorties per day, February 2017 there were 9.4 sorties per day, in March 2017 there were 11.0 sorties per day, in April 2017 there were 12.6 sorties per day, in May 2017 there were 13.8 sorties per day, in June 2017 there were 12.6 sorties per day, and in July 2017, there were 12.0 sorties per day. This

comes out to an average of 11.4 sorties per day. Since his August 2017 Afghanistan strategy speech, the average CAS sorties per day has not fallen below 11.4. The average CAS sorties per day has only steadily and rapidly increased since this speech, with averages peaking in some months in the mid to high twenties.

**(Table 4)**

<b>MONTHLY</b>	<b>CAS sorties</b>	<b>Sorties per day</b>	<b>Cumulative total</b>
<b>January 2015</b>	536	17.3	536
<b>February 2015</b>	456	16.3	992
<b>March 2015</b>	510	16.5	1502
<b>April 2015</b>	484	16.1	1986
<b>May 2015</b>	530	17.1	2516
<b>June 2015</b>	524	17.5	3040
<b>July 2015</b>	482	15.5	3522
<b>August 2015</b>	496	16.0	4018
<b>September 2015</b>	456	15.2	4474
<b>October 2015</b>	454	14.6	4928
<b>November 2015</b>	416	13.9	5344
<b>December 2015</b>	430	13.9	5774

<b>January 2016</b>	422	13.6	422
<b>February 2016</b>	430	14.8	852
<b>March 2016</b>	420	13.5	1272
<b>April 2016</b>	392	13.1	1664
<b>May 2016</b>	443	14.3	2107
<b>June 2016</b>	440	14.2	2547
<b>July 2016</b>	482	15.5	3029
<b>August 2016</b>	484	15.6	3513
<b>September 2016</b>	481	16.0	3994
<b>October 2016</b>	506	16.3	4500
<b>November 2016</b>	346	11.5	4846
<b>December 2016</b>	316	10.2	5162
<b>January 2017</b>	262	8.5	262
<b>February 2017</b>	262	9.4	524
<b>March 2017</b>	342	11.0	866
<b>April 2017</b>	377	12.6	1243
<b>May 2017</b>	428	13.8	1671
<b>June 2017</b>	378	12.6	2049
<b>July 2017</b>	371	12.0	2420
<b>August 2017</b>	386	12.5	2806

<b>September 2017</b>	501	16.7	3307
<b>October 2017</b>	458	14.8	3765
<b>November 2017</b>	470	15.7	4235
<b>December 2017</b>	368	11.9	4603
<b>January 2018</b>	451	14.5	451
<b>February 2018</b>	538	19.2	989
<b>March 2018</b>	496	16.0	1485
<b>April 2018</b>	753	25.1	2238
<b>May 2018</b>	726	23.4	2964
<b>June 2018</b>	685	22.8	3649
<b>July 2018</b>	749	24.2	4398
<b>August 2018</b>	649	20.9	5047
<b>September 2018</b>	772	25.7	5819
<b>October 2018</b>	765	24.7	6584
<b>November 2018</b>	707	23.6	7291
<b>December 2018</b>	905	29.2	8196
<b>January 2019</b>	670	21.6	670
<b>February 2019</b>	518	18.5	1188
<b>March 2019</b>	634	22.6	1822
<b>April 2019</b>	721	24.0	2543

<b>May 2019</b>	736	23.7	3279
<b>June 2019</b>	768	25.6	4047
<b>July 2019</b>	822	26.5	4869
<b>August 2019</b>	790	25.5	5659
<b>September 2019</b>	798	26.6	6457
<b>October 2019</b>	768	24.8	7225
<b>November 2019</b>	786	26.2	8011
<b>December 2019</b>	762	25.4	8773

(Source: Bureau of Investigative Journalism)

Now, when looking at the CAS sorties with at least one weapon released, the data is not as clear as the CAS sorties data (See Table 5). In January 2017 there was an average of 0.6 sorties per day, February 2017 had 1.9, March 2017 had 3.0, April 2017 had 4.9, May 2017 had 3.8, June 2017 had 2.7, and July 2017 there was 3.5. This turns out to be on average 2.9 sorties per day prior to the Afghanistan Strategy speech in August. There was not a clear increase after the speech as we can see in the CAS sortie data. Interestingly enough, in 2018, the CAS sorties per month with one weapon released took a slight decrease, with some months averaging less than 2.9 per day. On average there were fewer airstrikes in Afghanistan per month in 2018 than in 2017. However, starting in January 2019 is when the average sorties with one weapon released increased to well above 2.9 per day. It was a bit of a delay in comparison to the CAS sortie data, but average airstrikes per day did increase substantially.

(Table 5)

	<b>CAS sorties with a least one weapon release</b>	<b>Sorties per day</b>	<b>Cumulative total</b>
<b>January 2015</b>	22	0.7	22
<b>February 2015</b>	19	0.7	41
<b>March 2015</b>	26	0.8	67
<b>April 2015</b>	16	0.5	83
<b>May 2015</b>	21	0.7	104
<b>June 2015</b>	49	1.6	153
<b>July 2015</b>	45	1.5	198
<b>August 2015</b>	84	2.7	282
<b>September 2015</b>	46	1.5	328
<b>October 2015</b>	35	1.1	363
<b>November 2015</b>	30	1.0	393
<b>December 2015</b>	18	0.6	411
<b>January 2016</b>	51	1.6	51
<b>February 2016</b>	66	2.3	117
<b>March 2016</b>	23	0.7	140
<b>April 2016</b>	38	1.3	178
<b>May 2016</b>	42	1.4	220

<b>June 2016</b>	49	1.6	269
<b>July 2016</b>	53	1.7	322
<b>August 2016</b>	67	2.2	389
<b>September 2016</b>	79	2.6	468
<b>October 2016</b>	84	2.7	552
<b>November 2016</b>	38	1.3	590
<b>December 2016</b>	25	0.8	615
<b>January 2017</b>	18	0.6	18
<b>February 2017</b>	53	1.9	71
<b>March 2017</b>	93	3.0	164
<b>April 2017</b>	148	4.9	312
<b>May 2017</b>	119	3.8	431
<b>June 2017</b>	82	2.7	513
<b>July 2017</b>	107	3.5	620
<b>August 2017</b>	141	4.5	761
<b>September 2017</b>	80	2.7	841
<b>October 2017</b>	163	5.3	1004
<b>November 2017</b>	100	3.3	1104
<b>December 2017</b>	144	4.6	1248
<b>January 2018</b>	67	2.2	67

<b>February 2018</b>	79	2.8	146
<b>March 2018</b>	69	2.2	215
<b>April 2018</b>	65	2.2	280
<b>May 2018</b>	73	2.4	353
<b>June 2018</b>	59	2.0	412
<b>July 2018</b>	88	2.8	500
<b>August 2018</b>	79	2.5	579
<b>September 2018</b>	94	3.1	673
<b>October 2018</b>	110	3.5	783
<b>November 2018</b>	101	3.4	884
<b>December 2018</b>	82	2.6	966
<b>January 2019</b>	176	5.7	176
<b>February 2019</b>	113	4.0	289
<b>March 2019</b>	169	6.0	458
<b>April 2019</b>	201	6.7	659
<b>May 2019</b>	210	6.8	869
<b>June 2019</b>	190	6.3	1059
<b>July 2019</b>	243	7.8	1302
<b>August 2019</b>	246	7.9	1548
<b>September 2019</b>	290	9.7	1838

<b>October 2019</b>	241	7.8	2079
<b>November 2019</b>	162	5.4	2241
<b>December 2019</b>	193	6.4	2434

(Source: Bureau of Investigative Journalism)

The last metric that will be analyzed in air operations is the number of weapons released (See Table 6 and Figure 3). As stated, this is important data to analyze because the U.S. utilizes aerial assets that have the capability of carrying out more than one strike in a single sortie. CAS sorties and CAS sorties with at least one weapon released is important data to review. However, there is no clearer indicator of the president’s objectives than the actual number of weapons released in Afghanistan. Put simply, when weapons are released an operational action is taking place. Whether that is an attack on a weapons cache, critical infrastructure, or a lethal action on enemy combatants, a military engagement is transpiring, nonetheless.

In 2017, President Trump had a cumulative total of 4,361 and an average per month of 363 weapons released in Afghanistan. This cumulative total is a 226.18% change from President Obama’s 2016 cumulative total of 1,337 weapons released in Afghanistan. In 2018, there was a cumulative total of 7,362 and an average of 614 weapons released per month in Afghanistan. This equated to a 68.81% increase from the 2017 cumulative total numbers of weapons released. Lastly, in 2019, there was a cumulative total of 7,432 and an average per month of 619 weapons released in Afghanistan, resulting in a slight increase from the 2018 numbers of 0.83%. This data clearly shows an increase in weapons released in Afghanistan throughout President Trump's tenure. However, what is more interesting, is that there have been more weapons released in Afghanistan under the Trump Administration than there was during the height of the war under

the Obama Administration during the 2010-2011-time frame. During this period the U.S. was aggressively seeking out the location of 9/11 mastermind Osama Bin Laden.

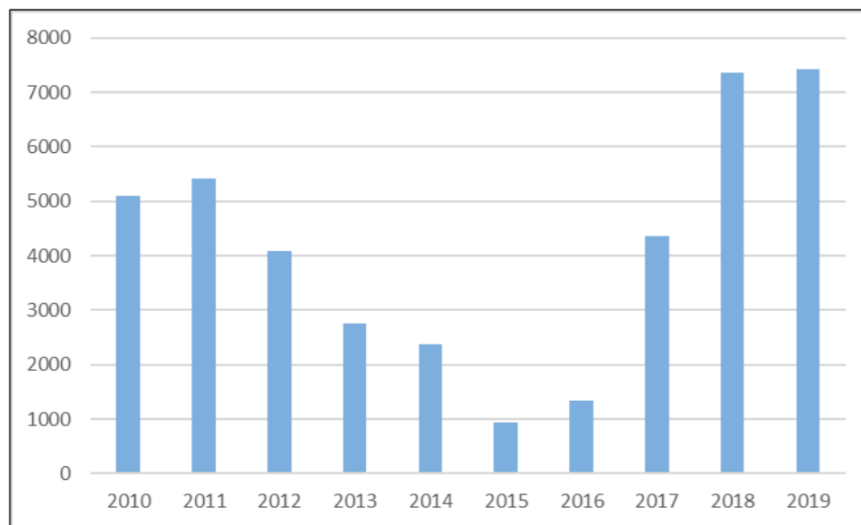
(Table 6)

*US Air Force Air Power Summary Data - Weapons Released*

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total	Year-on-year change in total weapons released	Weapons released per month	Year-on-year change in weapons released per month
2010	156	154	175	197	300	457	325	416	739	1,043	866	272	5100	-	425	-
2011	405	341	337	339	426	610	695	516	597	663	308	174	5411	6.10%	451	6.10%
2012	170	116	227	252	406	521	504	589	385	414	297	202	4083	-24.54%	340	-24.54%
2013	193	297	250	284	368	337	256	158	232	189	118	76	2758	-32.45%	230	-32.45%
2014	92	114	95	115	164	272	205	437	441	217	87	126	2365	-14.25%	197	-14.25%
2015	40	30	47	31	41	109	79	156	111	203	69	31	947	-59.96%	79	-59.96%
2016	127	115	58	62	89	94	160	108	162	205	92	65	1337	41.18%	111	41.18%
2017	54	200	203	460	328	389	350	503	414	653	352	455	4361	226.18%	363	226.18%
2018	378	469	339	562	591	572	746	715	841	769	841	539	7362	68.81%	614	68.81%
2019	463	327	673	548	635	441	613	783	948	777	519	696	7423	0.83%	619	0.83%

(Source: Bureau of Investigative Journalism)

**Number of Weapons Released (Manned and Remotely Piloted Aircraft Strike Assets) By Year (Figure 3)**



Source: Combined Forces Air Component Commander 2013-2019 Airpower Statistics.

There are two fundamental questions that that need to be answered to make sense of this data. This first, what does this data mean in the context of Meads paradigms? Secondly, how does this data stack up to President Trump’s rhetoric in his Afghanistan Strategy speech? The data is clear, there has been a significant increase in CAS sorties, airstrikes, and weapons released throughout the three years that President Trump has been in office. It is the first time that there has been an increase in this domain since the 2011 Obama Administration era.

This is an apparent escalation of force in the region. In April 2017, President Trump authorized the utilization of the largest non-nuclear bomb in the United States military arsenal on an ISIS stronghold in Afghanistan. It was officially known as the GBU 43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast but more famously recognized as the “mother of all bombs.” This was the largest conventional bomb the U.S. had ever released in a war (Cooper and Mashal, 2017, par.1) This data serves as an indicator that President Trump has taken a Jacksonian approach to the issue. This is a step towards the “total war” mentality that Jacksonians adhere to. This change also relates to President Trump’s second conclusion and last strategic pillar that explains that the armed services will be granted the tools they need to win and past restrictions on military operations will be relaxed. The media has portrayed airstrikes as morally questionable, publicizing civilian death tolls as a result. This is generally not a concern for Jacksonians. Described by historian H.W. Brands in reference to the Jacksonian mindset, despite how dark it may seem, “their aim in fighting has been American victory, not the salvation of the world” (Brands, 2001, par. 5). The increased CAS sorties, airstrikes, and weapons released sit neatly with President Trumps Afghanistan strategy speech. Also, his rhetoric clearly meets his actions.

### *U.S. Aid Distribution*

There has been a great deal of American money spent in this almost 20-year war in Afghanistan. When you combine the amount it has cost to wage the war, counternarcotic operations, training Afghani forces, economic development, various reconstruction programs, and then interest on top of all of these endeavors, the U.S. has spent well over 2 trillion dollars since the start of this war. It is estimated by 2059 that 1.4 trillion additional dollars will be spent on veterans that have fought in post-9/11 wars (Almukhtar and Nordland, 2019). There are many different ways to analyze economic data as it relates to Afghanistan. However, I believe, by analyzing President Trump's specific budget requests for Afghanistan it would serve as the best metric to gauge what the president's objectives are.

By breaking down the Trump Administration's specific budget requests for particular programs in Afghanistan, one can gain insight into the Trump Administration's financial priorities. This in return can shed some light on which of Mead's paradigms President Trump has primarily represented. As explained, I will specifically look at the president's budget requests for Afghanistan for FY 2018-2020 and part of FY 2021. From there the budget requests will be further broken down into various subcategories that will include: Economic Support Fund (ESF), Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR), International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE), International Military Education and Training (IMET), Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS), and lastly the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASF). This particularized financial aid distribution has the potential to reveal what the Trump Administration deems the primary concerns in Afghanistan.

The first category is the ESF; it is officially defined as, "economic assistance to advance U.S. political and strategic goals in countries of special importance to U.S. foreign policy"

(Brown and Gill, 2019, pg. 12). The definition is very broad, which provides leeway for how the funds can be used. In the context of the presidential budget request for Afghanistan, it can be understood as the amount of money requested specifically to aid and rebuild the Afghani economy, “ESF supports development projects that may be indistinguishable from those supported by other accounts but is also used for occasional direct budget support aid and sovereign loan guarantees” (Brown and Gill, 2019, pg.12). It is an effort to help establish a sustainable and independent Afghani economy through developmental projects, direct financial aid, loans, and any other method to help build a strong economy capable of supporting an independent sovereign state.

The ESF is the category that is most fundamentally in line with Hamiltonian and Wilsonian thought. The funds requested for this category are not going towards directly combating U.S. national security threats. They are funds going towards the reconstruction and transformation of a failed state through “direct budget support aid” and “sovereign loan guarantees”. This is exactly the type of intervention that the Hamiltonian and Wilsonian paradigms were built upon. Hamiltonians want to distribute American backed loans and help develop a country that could become a strong U.S. trading partner. This is especially true when the state happens to be in a strategically important geopolitical location like Afghanistan. Through a Wilsonian lens, this aid falls in line with the historical Wilsonian missionary mindset of helping those in need and the goal of establishing democracy in foreign lands. However, there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of funds requested by the Trump Administration for this particular category. When looking at the data, in FY 2018 the president’s budget request was \$650 million, in FY 2019 it was \$500 million, in FY 2020 the request dropped down to \$400

million, and in FY 2021 this category took a staggering reduction with only \$250 million requested. This category has become less and less important for President Trump.

Furthermore, in September 2019, the U.S. State Department cut \$100 million in aid that was originally intended for ESF objectives in Afghanistan. The funding was aimed at a hydroelectric project that would have provided power to various cities in Kandahar and Ghazni provinces. The project is still planned to continue; however, the continuation will be without U.S. financial backing. U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, explained that the retraction of funds is directly a result of internal corruption within the Afghani government, “given the Afghan government’s inability to transparently manage U.S. government resources” (Jakes, 2019, par.2). The United States Treasury will receive the money originally intended for the large energy project.

The Trump Administration is also retracting another \$60 million that was originally planned to go towards the Afghani government’s National Procurement Authority because of concerns of internal corruption and the mismanagement of allocated funds. Going even further down this road, the U.S. will stop the funding of the Afghanistan anti-corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee in January 2020, as Pompeo stated, it is “incapable of being a partner in the international effort to build a better future for the Afghan people” (Jakes, 2019, par.19). In the context of Mead’s four paradigms, this can be understood as a clear pull towards the restrained realist paradigms. Jacksonians have no faith in the government to properly administer charity domestically but especially distribute aid abroad; the problems that can stem from this type of intervention are far and wide. This is exactly what is being represented here with the president’s sharp reduction in budget requests for the ESF category.

The next presidential budget request category is NADR. NADR is defined by funds directed towards “activities aimed at countering proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, supporting antiterrorism training and related activities, and promoting demining operations in developing nations” (Brown and Gill, 2019, pg. 14). In FY 2018 the president requested \$37 million, in FY 2019 there was no budget requested for this category, and in FY 2020 there was a budget requested of \$36.6 million. Since there are only two years of a requested budget for this category, it makes it difficult to make any concrete conclusions. However, the president’s request was essentially the same for FY 2018 and 2020 so this category is still serving some importance for this administration. This is a broad category, but it is essentially put in place to aid a foreign nation. This aid is arguably used to mitigate U.S. national security threats, but this is often done by alleviating local problems that do not have an immediate impact on U.S. national security. There is clear humanitarian assistance and regional stability component to this category, which is much more in line with the liberal interventionist paradigms more so than the restrained realist camps (Security Assistance Monitor, 2018). Not a whole lot can be gathered from this category with the data provided.

The next category is the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE). This category, “funds international counternarcotics activities; programs combatting human and wildlife trafficking; and rule of law activities, including support for judicial reform and law enforcement capacity building” (Brown and Gill, 2019, pg. 14) The budget request remained the same for all three years at \$95 million. This is a category that President Trump considers necessary to continue to fund. A huge portion of this account is providing Afghanistan with equipment and training (Security Assistance Monitor, 2017). This is similar to the NADR category in the sense that it is a category being funded that does not directly address U.S.

national security threats. This category is much more in line with the liberal interventionist paradigms. The next category, International Military, and Education Training (IMET) can be understood as, “The United States provides training and education to selected foreign military and civilian personnel on U.S. military practices and standards, including democratic values like civilian control of the military” (Brown and Gill, 2019, pg.15). This category remained the same across all three years at \$800,000. It is the lowest requested amount across all the categories. Again, this is a clear service provided to Afghanistan that does not directly impact U.S. national security threats. It falls in line with the liberal interventionist paradigm’s objectives.

The next category is OFS. OFS is the name of the successor mission to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). This operation started on January 1, 2015, and contains two primary and corresponding missions. The first mission is to continue counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan against al Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan, and other lesser-known terrorist organizations. The second mission, through a combined NATO-led operation, is to continue to advise, train, and aid the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). As explained by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of State on the importance and significance of OFS, “U.S. counterterrorism efforts remain focused on preventing Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorists planning attacks against the U.S. homeland and against U.S. interests and partners. The objective of the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) is to develop self-sustaining Afghan security forces that are capable of maintaining security under responsible Afghan civilian authorities” (StateOIG, 2019, par.7). The idea is to fight and defeat terrorists in the region and to eventually create a sustainable and effective security force in Afghanistan, capable of independently combating terrorism.

When looking at the numbers, in FY 2018 President Trump requested \$47.1 billion, in FY 2019 he requested 46.3 billion, and unfortunately, the data was not available for FY 2020. Congress does not break out the OFS numbers for the president's budget request of Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) spending except for the ASFF funds. The presidential budget request for each of the FY years for ASFF was sitting around \$5 billion per year, with a slight variation each year. In FY 2018, \$4.9 billion was requested, which was about 10.48% of the entire presidential budget requested for OFS for that FY. In FY 2019, about \$5.2 billion was requested, which comes out to 11.43% of the entire presidential budget requested for OFS for that FY. In FY 2020, \$4.8 billion was requested for ASFF. In FY 2021 the president asked for significantly less than the following three FY's by only requesting approximately \$4 billion (Clayton, 2020, pg. 11).

There are a few important observations to make on the president's OFS budget requests. Firstly, it is by far the largest allocation of money requested by the president in comparison to any of the other categories. Additionally, the president's budget request for ASFF, only a small portion of the total OFS budget, is also much larger than any of the other categories requested. Though, it only makes up between 10-12% of the entire OFS budget requested. As previously stated, the OFS budget has two primary components, counterterrorism operations and training Afghanistan security forces. Counterterrorism operations can be looked at as a Jacksonian mission. It can be understood as operations directly linked to military actions; or in other words, funds directly attributed to fighting the war and combating U.S. national security threats. On the other hand, training Afghanistan security forces is more of a Wilsonian objective. It certainly aids in combating terrorism, but it is a clear service provided to the Afghani people. To sum this up, approximately 90% of the OFS budget is used for counterterrorism operations while only

around 10-12% is used for training Afghanistan forces. The takeaway is that the great majority of the OFS budget is not being utilized for a Wilsonian type objective, it is being used to fund a Jacksonian mission of “killing terrorists.”

To conclude, ESF is the clearest representative category of the liberal interventionist traditions, more specifically the Wilsonian tradition. It aims to help rebuild and transform Afghanistan, primarily through humanitarian and economic means. President Trump has gradually requested less and less money for this category throughout his tenure, demonstrating a clear about-face from this liberal agenda. The requested budget for the NADR, INCLE, and IMET has remained fairly consistent throughout the president’s three years. These categories are very broad so unless a clear break out of what this money is specifically being used for is obtained, it is only of limited assistance to this thesis. However, what can be gathered is that the funds requested for these categories are much smaller than the ESF and OFS funds. All three of these categories combined do not even come close to the requested amount for ESF or OFS. It also should be understood that these categories are providing a service to Afghanistan more so than directly combating U.S. national security threats in the region.

Lastly, OFS is the clearest representative category of the Jacksonian mission. It is the mission aimed at directly fighting terrorism. It also is by far the largest amount of funds requested by the president. The ASFF, a small portion of the total OFS fund and can be looked at as another service provided to the Afghani people. However, it is a service much more line with combating U.S. national security threats than the other categories. The big takeaway is that the president has made it clear that ESF objectives have become less and less important to fund while the OFS mission continues to be the primary focus of funding in the region.

## U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan (Table 7)

(\$ in thousands)

	FY2018			FY2019					FY2020		
	President's Budget	Senate <sup>a</sup>	House <sup>b</sup>	Final allocation	President's Budget	Senate	House <sup>b</sup>	Final allocation	President's Budget	Senate	House
<b>Economic Support Fund</b>	650,000	500,000	-	500,000	500,000	500,000	-		400,000		
<b>Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining and Related Programs</b>	37,000	37,000	-	36,600	(not requested by country)	37,000	-		36,600		
<b>International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement</b>	95,000	160,000	-	160,000	95,000	160,000	-		95,000		
<b>International Military Education and Training</b>	800	800	-	800	800	800			800		
<b>Operation Freedom's Sentinel (through OCO)<sup>c</sup></b>	47,100,000	-	-	-	46,300,000	-	-	-	(not broken out)		
<b>Afghanistan Security Forces Fund</b>	4,937,515	4,178,815	4,937,515	4,666,815	5,199,450	4,666,815	5,199,450	4,920,000	4,803,978	4,803,978	4,503,978

- a. Draft FY2018 Defense Appropriations bill and accompanying report published Nov. 21, 2017 by the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, at <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/majority/fy2018-defense-appropriations-bill-released>.
- b. In reports accompanying its State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bills for both FY2018 and FY2019, the House Appropriations Committee stated that "The Committee understands that the staffing and programming requirements in [Afghanistan and Pakistan] will remain under continuous review and, for that reason, has not designated specific funding recommendations." Additionally, while Congress authorizes and appropriates ASFF levels, they do not otherwise allocate funding for specific operations, including Operation Freedom's Sentinel.
- c. OFS numbers from President's budget requests; Congress does not direct specific breakouts (i.e., by operation) of OCO spending, except for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund.

**Source:** Congressional Research Service

### *U.S. Troop Deployment*

The last foreign policy metric that will be analyzed is U.S. troop deployment trends in Afghanistan. The difficult aspect when analyzing deployed troop numbers is that the data can only really go three different ways, an increase, a decrease, or maintenance. Identifying this pattern is not overly insightful alone, but when combined with the president's rhetoric and the two other measurable foreign policy actions, it can be much more telling. A Jeffersonian view of deployed troops in Afghanistan would look like a complete withdrawal or at the bare minimum a gradual but certain reduction of boots on the ground in the country. When Jeffersonians factor in the amount of money spent on the conflict, the number of lives lost as a result, and how long the conflict has taken place, they would immediately propose a withdrawal, similar to the Vietnam War.

The other three paradigms as different as they are, would more likely than not share a similar view on deployed troops. However, it is important to understand that it is always circumstantial, and despite the action being the same, the justification for the action is usually different. Hamiltonians fundamentally believe that commerce can create peace. As Mead wrote, “The expansion of trade, and the substitution of the win-win strategy of commerce for the zero-sum game of war, would become important Hamiltonian aims in the twentieth century” (Mead, 2001, pg.103). Yet, Hamiltonians are not in the business of getting involved in financially costly humanitarian missions. Hamiltonian intervention is always guided by ulterior motives which are usually based upon the potential for beneficial future commercial transactions with the nation they are assisting. If a large enough U.S. force is not present in the country to develop Afghanistan, then there is the very real possibility that competitive peers like China or Russia will take the reins. Because of this risk, Hamiltonians could arguably favor the maintenance or advancement of troops in the country; essentially whatever number that would be necessary to ensure that the U.S. has ample opportunity to secure future advantageous commercial transactions. However, if the situation was viewed strictly as a humanitarian mission with no potential for U.S. economic gain, then Hamiltonians could support a reduction in U.S. troop presence.

Wilsonians would be in favor of increasing troops in country. Wilsonians view Afghanistan as a broken state in desperate need of U.S. intervention. Wilsonians believe because the U.S. has the means to intervene, they then have the responsibility to intervene. Guiding Afghanistan towards becoming a thriving democratic state is not only good for the Afghani people, but it is also good for the U.S. This, of course, can only be done through immense

intervention through economics, security, logistics, and various forms of training. This would require a sizeable presence of U.S. troops on the ground.

Lastly, a Jacksonian view would more likely than not favor an increase in deployed troops. Historically speaking, Jacksonians favor a “total war mentality”. When at war all efforts should be directed to finding success. The Afghanistan war is slightly different because it is not the only active war that the U.S. is involved in. Committing all forces and resources to this front could lead to a decrease in another conflict. According to a 2018 White House report sent to Congress that was obtained by the N.Y. Times, the U.S. is currently involved in seven different wars, not including the war on drugs which might be the largest and most fatal (Liataud, 2018, par.1). The Afghanistan war is certainly one of the largest and most important but a commitment to a “total war” would certainly take away efforts from other active wars. However, an increase in deployed troops would show the importance of winning this conflict for the Trump Administration and would be a fundamental Jacksonian play. An important note, if the war arrives to the point where Jacksonians believe that addressing U.S. national security threats are no longer the priority, they will become uncomfortable risking U.S. lives. To recap, there is the potentiality for these three different paradigms to favor an increase in troops in Afghanistan but for different reasons. Hamiltonians would only increase troops if it would be protecting U.S. access to the Afghani market, while Wilsonians would do so to continue to help establish democracy, while Jacksonians would increase boots on the ground to continue to combat U.S. national security threats. Again, these decisions are always circumstantial.

As explained, President Trump’s first pillar of his Afghanistan Strategy explains the strategical change from a time-based approach to a conditions-based approach, while simultaneously ceasing the publication of various operational data as it relates to Afghanistan.

This included personnel strength, casualty rates, attrition of Afghan forces, but more importantly, as it relates to the objectives of this thesis, deployed U.S. troop numbers (Thomas, 2020, pg.9). In April 2019, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, John Sopko stated in an interview, “What we are finding is now almost every indicia, metric for success or failure is now classified or nonexistent. Over time it’s been classified, or it’s no longer being collected,” he continued by stating that he believed that “the classification in some areas is needless” (Williams, 2019, par. 2). This is a prime example of the president’s actions meeting his rhetoric. There has been a push by members of Congress to require the executive to be more transparent with an introduction of legislation that would necessitate the secretary of defense to revoke his choice to withhold troop numbers from the public. However, the Defense and Manpower Data Center quarterly reports are still absent from various operational data for Afghanistan (Thomas, 2019, pg. 8 and 19). That being said, through a variety of different sources, I have been able to identify specific dates throughout the Trump Administration where the estimated number of boots on the ground were identified by senior-level U.S. military officials or other reliable sources. This allowed me to put together a partial timeline of deployed troop numbers throughout President Trump’s tenure, despite the administration’s deliberate attempt to hide this data.

When President Obama left office, it was estimated that around 8,400 U.S. troops remained in Afghanistan (See Figure 4). This was much smaller than his peak 2010-2011 numbers that touched approximately 100,000. In August 2017, it was determined that the 8,400 troops that the Pentagon originally estimated to be deployed in Afghanistan was not correct. The number was much closer to 11,000, depending on the day, as units regularly rotated in and out of country (Gibbons-Neff, 2017, par. 4). Between the time President Trump took office and August 2017, there were between 8,400 and 11,000 U.S. troops deployed to Afghanistan. This disparity

in numbers could be for two reasons. Firstly, the Trump Administration could have immediately deployed more troops to Afghanistan as soon as he stepped foot in office without broadcasting it, which would be in line with his rhetoric of not publicizing operational data. Secondly, the more likely of the two, the Pentagon announced that they were altering how they would count U.S. troops in Afghanistan. This new method would include service members who are part of temporary assignments or those that were working for combat support agencies, which were not accounted for previously. In August 2017, the director of the Joint Staff, Marine Lt. General, Frank McKenzie, supported this idea by explaining that the “total force” number is much closer to 11,000 than the originally thought 8,400 (Gibbons-Neff, 2017, par.4).

In September of 2017, under President Trump’s approval, General James Mattis signed orders to mobilize and deploy 3,500 additional troops to Afghanistan. This brought the total deployed troop count to around 14,000-15,000. This was the first time since 2010-2011 that troop numbers unambiguously increased in Afghanistan. In 2018, General Austin “Scott” Miller took over command of Afghanistan and there were approximately 15,000 deployed U.S. troops in country. On October 9, 2019, General Miller stated, “Unbeknownst to the public as part of our optimization. . . we reduced our authorized strength by 2,000 here,” this brought the number of deployed U.S. troops in country to around 12,000-13,000 (George, 2019, par. 2).

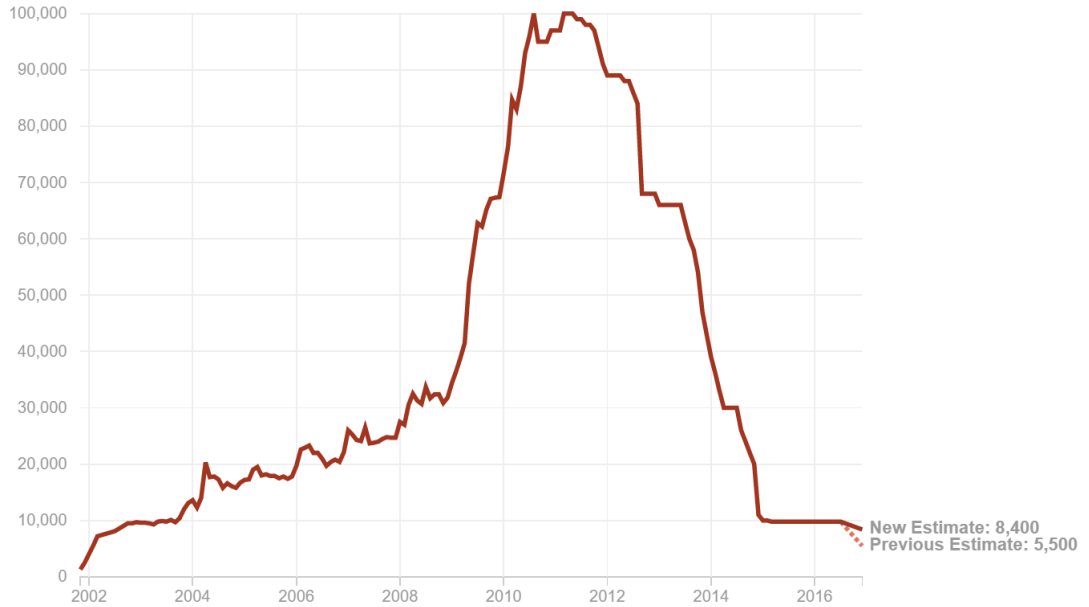
The Department of Defense’s (DOD) budget requests document compares budget requests from the past and also anticipates deployed troop numbers (See Table 8). Published in March 2019, the most recent DOD budget request, estimated that the average number of troops deployed in Afghanistan between October 2018 and September 2019 (FY 2019) was around 12,000 and between October 2019 and September 2020 (FY 2020) will be around 15,000. However, an important note, “in the FY 2019 Budget Request Overview Book, the department

announced a change from the previous accounting methodology to capture additional forces in various stages of deployment and supporting roles, which was not captured in the FY 2019 PB Request. Those accounting changes are reflected in the FY 2020 PB Request, shifting troops from in-theater support into the OFS and OIR figures. Operational decisions on the presence of U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Syria may change these figures” (Defense Budget Overview, 2019, pg. 6-3.). This is important because if this updated methodology was utilized in FY 2019, the FY 2019 and FY 2020 numbers might have been much closer. Though it should not be forgotten that these are estimates utilized for budgeting purposes and are certainly subject to error, but they do serve as an additional governmental source to track troop deployment trends.

According to the most recent Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief by CRS, as of March 2020, there are approximately 12,000-13,000 deployed U.S. troops in Afghanistan. 8,000 of these troops are tasked to the NATO-led mission of RSM which is responsible for advising, training, and assisting Afghani forces (Thomas, 2020, pg.6). This leaves around 4,000-5,000 troops for counterterrorism, humanitarian, or any other type of mission that leadership deems essential. Throughout President Trump’s three years in office, there were some increases and some decreases in deployed troops, but the most recent number is not terribly different than the estimated number he began with. The big takeaway from this section is that he did increase the amount of U.S. troops deployed to Afghanistan and the majority of U.S. troops in country are tasked to help Afghani forces. We can assess that he did not take a Jeffersonian approach of a complete troop withdrawal. His slight increase of deployed U.S. troops could be justified by any of the three other paradigms. By having the data and or context of what these troops are specifically doing in Afghanistan it could shed some light on which paradigm is being

represented. Unfortunately, that information was not available when this thesis was being written.

### U.S. Troop Deployment Numbers in Afghanistan (Figure 4)



Source: Brookings Institution, White House  
 Credit: Danielle Kurtzleben/NPR

### U.S. Force Level Assumptions in DOD OCO Budget (Table 8)

*(Average Annual Troop Strength)*

	FY 2019 PB Request	FY 2020 PB Request <sup>3</sup>
Afghanistan (OFS)	11,958	15,000
Iraq/Syria (OIR)	5,765	7,200
In-Theater Support <sup>1</sup>	59,463	46,473
In-CONUS <sup>2</sup> /Other Mobilization	16,610	19,149
<b>Total Force Levels</b>	<b>93,796</b>	<b>87,822</b>

<sup>1</sup> In-Theater support includes support for Afghanistan/Iraq/Syria, Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) HOA / NW Africa CT, and EDI (including approximately 10,500 afloat forces).

<sup>2</sup> In-CONUS = In the Continental United States

<sup>3</sup> FY 2020 includes Temporary Enabling Force (TEF) support for Afghanistan/Iraq/Syria. This is a change from FY 2019 in which the TEF support was counted as part of In-Theater Support.

(Source: Defense Budget Overview, 2019)

## Conclusion

The objective of this thesis was to further understand President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy. This inquiry was done through the theoretical framework of Walter Russell Mead's four historical U.S. foreign policy paradigms. Mead's breakdown of U.S. foreign policy into complementary yet combative paradigms is one of the most complete explanations of U.S. foreign policy to date. By matching President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy into one of Mead's paradigms, a clearer understanding of the psychological, methodological, and historical underpinning of the president's foreign policy could be obtained. The methodology I utilized was the examination of the president's rhetoric and his foreign policy actions. His rhetoric was analyzed through his 2017 Afghanistan Strategy speech and his foreign policy actions were measured through various air operation metrics, U.S. aid distribution, and U.S. troop deployment trends. Overall, this thesis gave support to my hypothesis that President Trump's Afghanistan foreign policy contains various Hamiltonian and Wilsonian principles, but it has proven to be principally Jacksonian.

Throughout history, almost all great foreign policy strategies have been a blend of more than one paradigm. President Trump's 2017 Afghanistan Strategy speech is no different. There are obvious aspects of this strategy that reach from the Wilsonian and Hamiltonian paradigms. However, these ideas are grossly overshadowed by the pure volume of Jacksonian objectives and offensive realist claims. President Trump explains the foundational belief system that has dictated his strategy, "We are not asking others to change their way of life, but to pursue common goals that allow our children to live better and safer lives. This principled realism will guide our decisions moving forward" (Trump, 2107). President Trump himself operates utilizing Jacksonian principles in his conduct, which have been publicly questioned on multiple occasions.

In an interview with former Fox News Commentator Megyn Kelly, he stated, “I view myself as a person who like everyone else is fighting for survival,” as a justification for his many defensive public statements (Beinart, 2016, par.8). He views himself as the United States, in a position of self-survival and must do everything he can for his personal security and public image. These are intrinsic realist ideologies within the Jacksonian paradigm, revealed in his Afghanistan strategy speech, but also traits that he exemplifies in his personal life.

Furthermore, in April 2016, when President Trump was on the campaign trail, he spoke at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. stating, “My foreign policy will always put the interests of the American people and American security above all else. It has to be first. Has to be” (Beckwith 2016). This clear Jacksonian stance resonated with the Jacksonian populace, only garnering him early support. There were certainly changes in his rhetoric throughout the campaign trail and his tenure, however, this fundamental “America First” ideology has been a consistent message. Three years down the road, in September 2019, during a speech to the United States General Assembly, President Trump explained, “The future doesn’t belong to globalists. The future belongs to patriots,” only staying consistent with his populist Jacksonian rhetoric (Oprysko and Kumar 2019). As described by Mead the role of the U.S. government as perceived by Jacksonians, “is to fulfill the country’s destiny by looking after the physical security and economic well-being of the American people in their national home—and to do that while interfering as little as possible with the individual freedom that makes the country unique” (Mead, 2017). A great deal of President Trump’s rhetoric as it relates to U.S. foreign policy, culture, and identity is fundamentally in line with Jacksonian thought.

For the most part, President Trump's strong Jacksonian rhetoric was supported by his actions. The air operation data is the clearest indicator of this claim. Under President Trump's tenure, there has been an increase in CAS Sorties, airstrikes, and total weapons released in Afghanistan. Mead describes what Jacksonians bring to the U.S. foreign policy table, "An observer who thinks of American foreign policy only in terms of the commercial realism of the Hamiltonians, the crusading moralism of Wilsonian transcendentalists, and the supple pacifism of the principled but slippery Jeffersonians would be at a loss to account for American ruthlessness at war (Mead, 2001, pg. 220). President Trump took the restrictive chains off the U.S. military which can be seen through the increased volume and velocity of U.S. air operations.

The presidential budget request for Afghanistan served as additional support for the Jacksonian dominance within the Trump Administration. This can be seen the clearest when looking at the OFS and ESF numbers. OFS is the clearest Jacksonian representative category. It is the mission aimed at directly fighting terrorism. This is by far the largest amount of money requested by the administration in comparison to any of the other categories as well. On the other hand, the ESF is the clearest representative category of the Wilsonian tradition. It aims to help rebuild and transform Afghanistan, primarily through humanitarian and economic means. President Trump has gradually requested less and less money for this category throughout his tenure, demonstrating a clear about-face from this liberal agenda. There is no greater indicator of the administration's priorities than where they want U.S. money to be used.

U.S. troop deployment trends were the most difficult action to measure because of the lack of data and making sense of the data that was available. There were some increases and some decreases in deployed troops, but the most recent number is not terribly different than

the estimated number that President Trump began his tenure with. The big takeaway from this section is that he did increase the amount of U.S. troops deployed to Afghanistan overall. More than half of these troops are used for training and assisting Afghani forces. This is broad, it could mean directly helping them with military operations against the Taliban or helping with basic military tactics through instructional training. Determining which paradigm is represented by this data is tough because as explained, Hamiltonians, Wilsonians, and Jacksonians could all make cases for an increase of troops in Afghanistan. Determining specifically what U.S. troops are doing in Afghanistan could shed some light on this informational gap. An increase in deployed troops to participate in counterterrorism OSF operations would be a Jacksonian move. However, apparent data to represent this claim was not available for analysis.

It must be remembered that the Jacksonian paradigm is not a political or intellectual crusade like Mead's three other paradigms. It is more of a sincere expression of religious, social, and cultural principles that are taken very seriously. As explained, country is an extension of family, and it should be guarded and respected in the same way as one would care for their family (Mead, 2001, pg.245). Jacksonians are a sincere and passionate group of people that approach issues in a way that is strictly in line with their beliefs. As Malcolm-X stated, "I would like to be remembered as sincere. In whatever I did or do. Even if I made mistakes, they were made in sincerity. If I'm wrong, I'm wrong in sincerity. I think the best thing that a person can be is sincere" (Sagan, 1997, pg. 25). This unique type of raw passion and sincerity that Malcolm-X represented is uniquely analogous to the earnest convictions of the Jacksonian people. To claim that the methods in which Jacksonians operate are pure dogmatic ignorance is up for debate, but what can be objectively agreed upon is that it is undoubtedly pure and authentic. The Jacksonian

school of thought has aided the United States in many times of crisis throughout history and continues to play a major part in contemporary U.S. foreign policy today.

Overall, I was limited in what I could do in this thesis because of the contemporary nature of this project and the Trump Administration's deliberate tactic of not publicizing various operational data as it relates to Afghanistan. However, I felt that it was still important to analyze this current issue. Problems in Mead's paradigms certainly showed their face during my inquiry as well. There are common principles and practices amongst these different paradigms that inherently overlap one another, often making the line that distinguishes their differences vague. There were sections of the Afghanistan Strategy speech that I had difficulty fitting into one specific paradigm. This was an early concern of mine. Despite this concern, the pure volume of Jacksonian principled conclusions, strategic pillars, and overall rhetoric in his Afghanistan Strategy speech made the Jacksonian dominance very obvious. This coupled with the president's Jacksonian guided actions more than made up for this issue.

The methodological approach I used to analyze the president's Afghanistan foreign policy was not perfect. There were inherent flaws that stem from the fact that I only analyzed one piece of rhetoric. Certainly, more information could be obtained from the use of other important documents. However, the president's 2017 Afghanistan Strategy speech is the most important piece of rhetoric because the president's strategy for Afghanistan is explicitly explained in detail. Also, there is a degree of subjectivity in my analysis. I am explaining the principles of each paradigm and making the judgment of whether the claims and actions made by this administration fit into one of them. Nonetheless, these principles were clearly explained, and the words that were spoken, and actions made by the president, are logically fitted into each paradigm.

Ultimately, this thesis will serve as the groundwork for additional research to build off. To better understand the implications of the conclusions drawn in this thesis, future studies could address what deployed U.S. troops in Afghanistan are specifically doing. It would be revealing to see what exactly the 8,000 U.S. troops are doing for the RSM. Also, how many troops are part of lethal counterterrorism operations or involved in more Wilsonian humanitarian type missions such as assisting in the construction of critical infrastructure? A deeper analysis of this specific component could reveal more insightful conclusions of the Trump Administration's objectives. Also, future researchers could take a deep dive into where the financial aid is specifically going in Afghanistan. Knowing what ESF projects are no longer being funded and which ones are continuing to receive aid would expose which ESF objectives are important to the administration. The same idea also applies to OSF funds. However, these studies would be dependent on when the government decides to publicize this data.

The war in Afghanistan is the longest war in U.S. history and arguably the most complicated. The complexity of this war stems from the simple question, "what does victory look like?" Does victory look like an independent democratic Afghanistan, capable of self-sustainment? Does it look like an Afghanistan completely free of U.S. occupation? Does it look like a crippled war-torn state that has suffered from years of "terrorist killing" military operations, ultimately serving as a reminder to U.S. enemies of the relentlessness and power of the U.S. military? Or any number far and in between? The answer is not simple but by understanding what the current administration has said and done about this complex situation it can shed some light on the trajectory of U.S. and Afghani relations.

Defining victory was an ongoing challenge for the Bush and Obama Administrations. However, Trump has defined it primarily in military feats in his Afghanistan Strategy speech,

“attacking our enemies, obliterating ISIS, crushing al Qaeda, preventing the Taliban from taking over Afghanistan, and stopping mass terror attacks against America before they emerge” (Trump, 2017). He made it clear in this speech that U.S. presence in Afghanistan is to alleviate national security threats, not to rebuild the country. Much of what he has done thus far has been in line with how he defines victory in Afghanistan. From the unprecedented air operation numbers, strategic funding requests, and increased deployed U.S. troops in country, support for this definition can be seen in his actions.

However, there have been talks of peace between the U.S. and the Taliban. A research question that could be used to guide further research on this issue, “Would it be possible for a U.S. and Taliban peace treaty to be in line with Jacksonian principles or would President Trump need to shift paradigms in order to establish a working treaty?” Is there a way for President Trump to establish a peace treaty that would be in line with Jacksonian honor and not damage the U.S.’s international reputation which is greatly valued by Jacksonians? This is a war of attrition. Despite the Jacksonian stubbornness that stems from their unbreakable sense of honor, there is only so long President Trump can continue with airstrikes, military dictated counter-terrorist operations, and strategic funding. There must be an exit strategy or an endgame in this conflict. A strategically pitched peace deal could have the potential to uphold what Jacksonians represent by providing an honorable and respected end to the conflict. However, as Alexander the Great, the British, and the Soviet Union have historically demonstrated, in Afghanistan, the occupier is more likely to bend before the occupied.

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