**America's "Trump" Card in the Middle East: Foreign Relations and Controlled Interventionism**

Author: Devavrat Dave from Heritage Hall High School, OK

Recently, Donald became a name associated with politics and the United States’ presidency rather than simply a name associated with a cartoon duck. While he remains a controversial candidate, Donald Trump takes a pragmatic view of the world rather than engaging in ideological blather. His bold stance is one of the many reasons he is predicted to win the Republican nomination and the 2016 election. His views regarding the Middle East in particular are emblematic of this realistic approach to politics and international relations.

In the 21st century, one of the greatest issues has become dealing with the chaos in the Middle East. For example, the recent nuclear deal with Iran was a controversial issue often coated in complex rhetoric difficult for a common person to follow. However, Donald Trump’s appeal lies in his ability to simplify seemingly complex issues such that they make sense to the average citizen. He aptly argues that permitting development of nuclear weapons in Iran is bad, especially because a radical terrorist regime could acquire them, causing securitization even amongst allies and potential future catastrophe.⁠1 The nuclear deal, while seemingly benevolent, is simply a catastrophe waiting to unfold. Trump articulates that Iran should not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons in the first place, which vastly decreases the probability of radical regimes acquiring nuclear weapons.

Even from a historical standpoint, Trump has been a genius when it comes to the Middle East. When it came to the Iraq War, contrary to popular belief, Trump actually avidly advocated not going to war.⁠2 However, he held his beliefs for practical reasons, whereas many others simply engaged in pointless arguing that Trump has come to criticize. He argued, in 2004, that the Iraq War would destabilize the Middle East. Trump was correct; even now America is spending millions in aid to resolve a problem that it created.

Perhaps Trump’s expertise when it comes to the Middle East can even be applied to the question of terrorism and radical regimes such as ISIS. Trump occupies a smart middle ground in this matter. Many Republicans simply advocate huge expansion into the Middle East to “squash” the terrorists with the might of the US military. This is problematic for a litany of reasons. First, mass military expansion simply allows for the lives of more soldiers to be lost. Additionally, the cost of mass military intervention amounts to trillions of dollars which the United States simply cannot afford considering the current deficit. Finally, this large scale intervention simply legitimizes the recruiting message of many terrorist groups, which paint the United States as a large military machine seeking complete destruction of the Middle East. Mass intervention allows that message to be given some validity, furthering the terrorist cause. Conversely, many of those leaning far to the left on the political spectrum believe that the United States should be passive, only offering humanitarian aid. However, this is problematic for many of the same reasons. Aid in Iraq is still continuing to this day, and in total has cost the United States more than $1.7 trillion.⁠3 Additionally, passivity simply allows for the terrorist regimes to continue their expansion without being challenged. Trump’s stance is one of controlled interventionism, wherein he would only send a limited number of combat troops if advised to do so by ALL of his military advisors.⁠4 This resolves the problem of both cost and protecting American soldiers, because his military advisors would most likely only come to a consensus when they were sure that the soldiers would be safe, and even then, the number sent would be limited. Trump also says that the United States should no longer give aid money to areas directly controlled by terrorist regimes. This assists people living in controlled regions to finally realize that the terrorist cause lacks legitimacy, and revolt against it rather than being drawn towards it.

Ultimately, Trump represents the best of both worlds when it comes to foreign relations. His ability to compromise but also stand firm in certain areas is one not found in many other candidates’ ideas for foreign policy. He could be America’s solution to the catastrophic problems within the Middle East, representing both a better present and better future, due in part to his ability to communicate complex ideas effectively to the common American citizen.

1 "Donald Trump on War & Peace." On the Issues: Every Political Leader On Every Issue. August 8, 2015. Accessed October 25, 2015.

2 "Donald Trump in Sunday Political Talk Show Interviews During 2015" On the Issues: Every Political Leader On Every Issue. August 8, 2015. Accessed October 25, 2015.

3 Trotta, Daniel. "Iraq War Costs U.S. More than $2 Trillion: Study." Reuters. March 14, 2013. Accessed October 25, 2015.

4 "Donald Trump on War & Peace." On the Issues: Every Political Leader On Every Issue. August 8, 2015. Accessed October 25, 2015.