

“How have influential female figures shaped the evolution of U.S. foreign policy and contributed to the advancement of women in diplomacy from the twentieth to the early twenty-first century?”

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Women have helped shape U.S. foreign policy for many years, but their contributions are often left out of traditional narratives, overshadowed by celebrated male figures. Since the end of the Second World War, several important female leaders have played key roles in how the U.S. interacts with the rest of the world. These women have also helped open doors for future female leaders to participate in diplomacy. This paper will examine the contributions of influential figures—Eleanor Roosevelt, Madeleine Albright, and Hillary Clinton—to highlight the pivotal role that women have played in the evolution of U.S. foreign policy and the advancement of women in diplomacy during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, more widely known as Eleanor Roosevelt, was important in shaping human rights advocacy and women's roles in U.S. diplomacy. Born on October 11, 1884, in New York City, she married Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1905. Mrs. Roosevelt became First Lady when her husband was elected president in 1933, and would go on to be the longest-serving First Lady in U.S. history.¹ As first lady, Roosevelt used her position and popularity to politically back causes important to her.

Roosevelt strongly believed in human rights, equality, peace, and internationalism, and her diplomatic style mirrored these beliefs. Roosevelt's advocacy for human rights began as early as 1921. At a women's peace initiative that year, she met women's suffrage activist Carrie Chapman Catt, connecting Roosevelt with a variety of social feminists and organisations, which inspired her to later act as a voice between nongovernmental organisations and traditional government.²

¹ "Eleanor Roosevelt," White House Historical Association.

² Raffaella Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations: 'Diplomacy from Below' and the Search for a New Transatlantic Dialogue." *European Journal of American Studies* 12, no. 1 (2017): 4. <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.11920>.

Throughout the 1930s, Roosevelt became a staunch advocate for U.S. membership in the World Court.³ In 1935, she intensified her support and publicly lobbied for the country to join the World Court by participating in a national radio address before the Senate was set to vote.⁴ While she did not hold an official political position at this time, this move showed her attempt to sway the opinion of the public and policymakers.

During the Second World War, Roosevelt pushed her husband support European Jewish people and stand against anti-Semitic consuls from the U.S..⁵ After Kristallnacht in 1938, Roosevelt decided to stand publicly for a push against anti-Semitism and ask for the United States to play a firm role in refugee protection.⁶ In 1939, she lobbied for the Jewish Refugee Bill, which would have allowed twenty thousand European Jewish children to be cared for by Quaker families in the United States.⁷ While she did attempt to push her husband to support the bill, he eventually voted against it in the face of strain coming from anti-Semitic critics.⁸

While this interaction did not turn out the way that Roosevelt wished it to, it allowed her to emphasise the hardships faced by the Jewish population in Europe and bolster the conversation on anti-semitism and the American public opinion after the war.⁹ In an attempt to go further to the epicentre of state power, Roosevelt applied direct pressure to the State Department to act in a more humane way.¹⁰ Her internationalist views made her an ally to High Commissioner for Refugees at the League of Nations, James McDonald, who recruited her to

³ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 4.

⁴ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 4.

⁵ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 5.

⁶ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 4.

⁷ Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences: Women and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy, 1917-1994*, (Rutgers University Press 1995), 102.

⁸ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 102.

⁹ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 102.

¹⁰ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 5.

lobby the White House as well as the State Department to ease American visa restrictions for European refugees.¹¹

Eleanor's attempts to ensure safety for Europe's Jewish people did not end there; after the war, she was one of the first civilians to speak with survivors of the Holocaust and try to understand their plight.¹² This involvement later inspired her to advocate for the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.¹³

On April 12, 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt's husband passed away.¹⁴ This loss left her stuck in a difficult position, not knowing what shape her political life would take.¹⁵ Her husband's successor, former Vice President Harry S. Truman, had an idea of the proper direction for Roosevelt. In 1945, Truman appointed her to the U.S. delegation at the UN.¹⁶

Despite initial hesitations, Roosevelt accepted the position at the UN as it allowed her to further the peaceful internationalist agenda that she had shared with her late husband.¹⁷ As expressed in a 1946 article, Roosevelt saw her UN service as a way to use her experience as First Lady to contribute both on a global and domestic level.¹⁸ Her goal was to foster international understanding, which was realised in her time at the UN.

Truman's appointment transitioned Roosevelt from a public figure alone to a formal architect of international policy, which allowed her to have a more direct role in advancing human rights and peace on the global stage, while uniting nongovernmental organisations with intragovernmental organisations and policy makers.¹⁹ Roosevelt's engagement with various

¹¹ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 4.

¹² Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 102.

¹³ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 102.

¹⁴ "Eleanor Roosevelt Biography" FDR Presidential Library & Museum, accessed 27 Apr 2025 <https://www.fdrlibrary.org/er-biography>.

¹⁵ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 1.

¹⁶ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 1.

¹⁷ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 3.

¹⁸ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 3.

¹⁹ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 5.

nongovernmental organisations to tackle human rights issues was a direct continuation of her husband's efforts, which began with his collaboration with similar organisations as early as 1939.²⁰ In this way, Roosevelt included the public in post-war efforts.

At the San Francisco Conference, which formally established the UN in 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt underscored the importance of transatlantic cooperation in addressing the early Cold War world.²¹ She believed that effectively rebuilding war-torn countries, advancing liberalism and democracy, and sustaining peace would require interdependence between nations.²² Uniquely, Roosevelt broadened the conversation of international cooperation to include the Soviets. However, by 1948, she changed her position to focus on strengthening the relationship between Great Britain and the United States as transatlantic allies, as the Soviets relied on top-down control that did not align with Roosevelt's values.²³

Roosevelt attended the first General Assembly of the UN in London in January 1946.²⁴ Before leaving for the assembly, she took the time to reach out to the various civic associations that she had connections with to gather suggestions and feedback.²⁵ Bottom-up diplomacy was a concept that Roosevelt held close, especially in conversations concerning human rights, as described in a later 1953 speech where she highlighted her belief that universal human rights began at the local level.²⁶

In London, Roosevelt was assigned to be the Chair of Committee Three.²⁷ This committee was seen as more suitable for a woman and a woman who had less experience in international politics, as it dealt with more "domestic" matters. The primary focus of Committee

²⁰ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 5.

²¹ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 13.

²² Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 13.

²³ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 10.

²⁴ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 1.

²⁵ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 8.

²⁶ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 10.

²⁷ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 102.

Three was social, humanitarian, and cultural issues.²⁸ This was quite fitting for Roosevelt, considering her background as an advocate for human rights.

Roosevelt, determined to make her mark, strategically used her position as Chair of this committee. She showed her diplomatic savvy by being placed at the centre of one of the first U.S.-Soviet conflicts of the Cold War.²⁹ It was particularly impressive as she acted as a mediator between representatives with growing Cold War tensions concerning refugees, a cause that she had proven was important to her.³⁰

Her engagement and success as Chair of Committee Three led to her nomination as Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1947.³¹ While she also played a mediating role in her new position, she was more notably a leading figure in the drafting of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.³² However, she still had to campaign to get the declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly.

At the Sorbonne in Paris on September 28, 1948, Roosevelt gave a speech that discussed the UN declaration. She helped promote the democratic values that she hoped would counter totalitarian ideologies in communist states. In this speech, titled "the Struggle for Human Rights," she stated that "the future must see the broadening of human rights throughout the world...human rights are a fundamental object of law and government in a just society"³³ As Roosevelt saw human rights as foundational to a moral society, she noted that there had been four abstentions on the declaration.

²⁸ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 102.

²⁹ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 10.

³⁰ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 102.

³¹ Baritono, "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations," 10.

³² Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 102.

³³ "The Struggle for Human Rights (1948)" Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, *George Washington University*, accessed 28 April 2025, <https://erpapers.columbian.gwu.edu/struggle-human-rights-1948>.

All four abstenting states were from the Soviet sphere; the U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia.³⁴ Roosevelt then took this opportunity to explain why these communist, authoritarian states differed in opinion from the rest of the countries that accepted the declaration. She made it very clear that “‘democracy’ [meant] one thing to the U.S.S.R and another to the U.S.A.”³⁵ This sentiment not only distanced the American-led Western Bloc from the Soviets, but also showed Roosevelt’s growth into her anti-communist belief that had developed during her time serving at the UN.

On December 10 1948, at the third UN General Assembly in Paris, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was approved by the majority of nations despite abstentions from Soviet-aligned countries.³⁶ These votes withheld reflected Cold War tensions and significant ideological differences as described in Roosevelt’s address. Roosevelt, in her leadership role, had much influence on the declaration. Her primary concerns show up in several instances; for example, there were several clauses within the declaration that condemned a variety of types of discrimination.³⁷

Roosevelt’s influence on the declaration was particularly significant in that it was a concrete example of how she widened the human rights movement to include the concerns of women. She did this by attaching women's issues to one of the first significant attempts at global government cooperation.³⁸ She was a pioneer, and in doing so, she made human rights, and by extension, women's rights, a significant global issue and a primary issue to be addressed in U.S. foreign policy.³⁹

³⁴ “The Struggle for Human Rights (1948).”

³⁵ “The Struggle for Human Rights (1948).”

³⁶ Baritono, “Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations,” 12.

³⁷ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 103.

³⁸ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 104.

³⁹ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 104.

Eleanor Roosevelt's activities at the UN allowed her to carve a path for women to have an official position in international policymaking. In her transition from a public figure to holding an official title, she was able to prepare the American public to accept a new world order centred on international relations.⁴⁰ Her acquisition of the position at the UN and her pursuits during her time in service were a solid representation of the previous work done by women who advocated for female representation.

Roosevelt was also able to highlight the importance of internationalism during her time at the UN and as First Lady. By Mrs. Roosevelt's appointment to serve for the American delegation, she promoted her belief in international politics and cooperation that she shared with her late husband. This position was significant in the face of a changing, post-World War II world, and in response to isolationists in the States.⁴¹

Madeleine Albright was another key figure in moulding U.S. foreign policy, especially in the post-Cold War Era. Born in Prague on May 15, 1937, Madeleine Jana Korbel Albright had a personal connection to Eastern and Central Europe.⁴² As a child, her family fled Czechoslovakia following a Communist coup, and her father, Czech diplomat Josef Korbel, introduced her to the complexities of Eastern European politics from an early age.⁴³

Albright was appointed as U.S. ambassador to the UN under Bill Clinton in 1993 and held the position until 1997.⁴⁴ Following diplomatic challenges in the early 1990s concerning horrifying events in Somalia and Rwanda, Albright pushed for a refresh of foreign policy.⁴⁵ Due to these devastating foreign policy failures, a solution had to be presented. Albright insisted that

⁴⁰ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 100.

⁴¹ Jeffreys-Jones, *Changing Differences*, 7-8.

⁴² Sylvia Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders: National Security and Gender Politics in Superpower America* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 99.

⁴³ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 99-101.

⁴⁴ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 115-6.

⁴⁵ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 119.

the best course of action was for the U.S. to be more calculated when it came to creating and executing foreign policy.⁴⁶

Furthermore, Albright claimed that women's rights and safety would be critical in the new foreign policy as they were at the centre of national interests on the international stage.⁴⁷ She underscored her goals for equality by recognising the importance of both economic and political reform in states that were new to democracy.⁴⁸ These initial goals would continue to be echoed in the following years as she dealt with conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Albright's principal foreign policy difficulty during her time as ambassador was the conflict in Bosnia. Between 1992 and 1995, Bosniaks and others in the region were being ethnically cleansed by Eastern Orthodox Serbs.⁴⁹ These were offences against human rights, notably women's rights.

The Bush administration that preceded Clinton had failed to intervene in Bosnia. Bush's secretary of state, James Baker, was unable to see the value of American involvement in the region as he believed that it was an inequitable arrangement, that the U.S. would get very little out of providing their aid.⁵⁰ Albright did not share this belief.

After convincing her colleagues that the best course would be to take action, Albright decided on an approach that had two aspects; first, they would release the weapons embargo that was placed and then second, they would threaten to launch air strikes on the region.⁵¹ Albright's plan aimed to arm the Bosniaks and deter the Serbs.⁵²

⁴⁶ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 119.

⁴⁷ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 119.

⁴⁸ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 120.

⁴⁹ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 100.

⁵⁰ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 100.

⁵¹ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 100.

⁵² Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 101.

To launch air strikes, if needed, European support, from U.S. partners and adversaries alike, would be essential.⁵³ However, the difficulty was that this was a post-Berlin Wall world. The U.S. was attempting to build a friendly, strong relationship with former members of the Soviet bloc, and the threat of attacking the Serbs would not fare well with their Russian allies.⁵⁴ On top of this, there were UN peacekeepers stationed in Bosnia.⁵⁵

Ultimately, it was the undeniable evidence that there was a humanitarian crisis at hand in Bosnia that helped to sway NATO and UN allies to get involved.⁵⁶ Under Albright's counsel, Clinton adopted a method to end the conflict with four main facets: first, end UN peacekeeping in Bosnia, next, arm Muslims in the region to defend themselves, third, continue air strikes, and finally, to apply pressure to encourage negotiations.⁵⁷ Albright stood firm in her belief that intervention to end the crisis would be inevitable and that the U.S. and NATO had to take more decisive military action.⁵⁸ In the Spring of 1995, forces from NATO under a UN mandate began an armed intervention – the first of its kind in the history of NATO.⁵⁹ In August 1995, Serb attacks on a Sarajevo marketplace left more than one hundred civilians killed or injured. In response to this, NATO launched Operation Deliberate Force, an air campaign targeting essential Serb infrastructure.⁶⁰

The U.S. and its allies were largely successful in Bosnia. They were able to hit critical infrastructure that weakened the Serbs and pushed them into negotiations.⁶¹ This had been a method that Albright had been endorsing since 1993, and it was one of the most significant and

⁵³ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 101.

⁵⁴ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 101.

⁵⁵ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 100-1.

⁵⁶ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 102.

⁵⁷ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 102.

⁵⁸ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 102.

⁵⁹ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 103.

⁶⁰ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 103.

⁶¹ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 103.

successful NATO operations up to 1995.⁶² Albright went a step further and urged her staff to assist the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) which acquired and assembled testimony to record the systematic attacks on women during the war in Bosnia.⁶³ Based on evidence that showed militias of Serbs committing rape against Bosniak women in the tens of thousands as well as forcibly enslaved Muslim women and girls, the tribunal was able to clarify that rape was not just a crime against humanity, but a war crime.⁶⁴

Madeleine Albright was known for being one of the few throughout her career as a female politician, but eventually she became a pioneer. During her time at the UN, only seven women served as ambassadors; however, there were 180 states with permanent representation at the organisation.⁶⁵ This trend continued when, in 1996, Bill Clinton was elected to serve a second term. At the urging of his wife,⁶⁶ a figure whose contributions will be analysed in a subsequent section of this paper, Clinton appointed Albright as the first-ever female Secretary of State in U.S. history.⁶⁷ She would go on to serve as America's top diplomat between 1997 and 2001.⁶⁸

In 1997, at Albright's confirmation hearing, she outlined her goals and methods to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She made it clear that it was essential for the U.S. to take action as leaders.⁶⁹ Albright was also quick to point out that the lawmakers, the Senate, and diplomats, such as herself, had a joint duty to cooperate in shaping the direction of the U.S. in the years to follow.⁷⁰ She viewed her appointment as a pivotal moment in American history and

⁶² Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 103.

⁶³ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 120.

⁶⁴ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 120.

⁶⁵ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 121.

⁶⁶ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 95.

⁶⁷ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 95.

⁶⁸ Brooke Davies, "Madeleine Albright: Negotiating Gender at Home and Abroad" *Negotiation Journal* 38, no. 2 (2022): 236, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12392>.

⁶⁹ Martin Walker, "Present at the Solution: Madeleine Albright's Ambitious Foreign Policy," *World Policy Journal* 14, no. 1 (1997): 2.

⁷⁰ Walker, "Present at the Solution," 3.

foreign policy, which would prove true in hindsight. The period that Albright was operating in was the post-Cold War and pre-September 11 era. Albright wished to create a time of lasting peace and international security through cooperation with Russia and Eastern Europe,⁷¹ and she could use what she learned in Bosnia in the face of conflict in Kosovo.

Albright had been correct that an urgent response using force was necessary to solve the Bosnian conflict, and she also applied that method in Kosovo. While she was met with opposition, she was of the firm opinion that lasting stability in Europe was an essential factor in protecting and promoting American interests globally.⁷² Albright saw a bigger issue at hand, as she believed that Serb aggression in the Balkans jeopardised the rest of the continent.⁷³ Albright had a better understanding than many of her counterparts of the nature of politics in Eastern Europe due to the influence of her father, and that was precisely why she could recognise the wider danger posed by the Serbs.

The conflict in Kosovo was a long-brewing crisis. Yugoslav and Serbian politician, Slobodan Milošević, began to rise to power in the late 1980s when he took a trip to Kosovo and swore to protect Serbian interests in the area.⁷⁴ Before the 1990s had commenced, he had already begun revoking autonomy from Kosovo.⁷⁵ By 1998, Milošević ordered the Serbian military to target Kosovo, claiming it was legally part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, plunging Kosovo into a full-blown civil war.⁷⁶

Albright fought hard to convince the U.S.'s NATO allies to intervene in Kosovo in 1998. The mere threat of the use of American military might caused the Russian Minister of Foreign

⁷¹ Walker, "Present at the Solution," 3.

⁷² Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 125-7.

⁷³ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 127.

⁷⁴ Stephan Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War and the Crisis in U.S.-Russia Relations," *International History Review* 43, no. 4 (2021): 782, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2020.1848899>.

⁷⁵ Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War," 782.

⁷⁶ Kieninger, "The 1999 Kosovo War," 782.

Affairs, Igor Ivanov, to push Serbia to participate in diplomatic negotiations.⁷⁷ Despite peace talks taking place, Serbia continued their ethnic cleansing of the region. After Albright compared Kosovo to Bosnia only a few years prior at the meeting of the Principal Committee, NATO air strikes began in March of 1999.⁷⁸ These air strikes were known as Operation Allied Force, paralleling the one given to the similar offensive from 1995.

Albright's unyielding stance on intervention in Kosovo did not falter. She was closely involved in discussions surrounding the air assaults and ensured that, if needed, NATO could employ ground forces.⁷⁹ The air strikes, similar to those in Bosnia, targeted strategic infrastructure to weaken Milošević's regime.⁸⁰

By May of 1999, the ICTY had issued warrants for the arrest against President Milošević and four other leading figures in the Serbian attack on Kosovo.⁸¹ The indictment against these five alleged that they were guilty of permitting the following:

Between 1 January 1999 and late May 1999, the military forces [of Serbia]... engaged in a widespread and systematic series of offensives against many towns and villages predominantly inhabited by Albanians... [resulting in the expulsion of] hundreds of thousands... [with] surviving residents [being] sent to the borders of neighbouring countries [while many en route were abused and killed and]... specific massacres [occurred] in villages such as Racak, Bela Crkva, Velika Kruse... and Izbica.⁸²

This was the first case of a sitting head of government having international criminal charges levelled against them.⁸³ Based on these accusations, Albright's warnings about the horrific human rights abuses taking place in Kosovo were confirmed. This indictment was

⁷⁷ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 128.

⁷⁸ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 127-8.

⁷⁹ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 128.

⁸⁰ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 128.

⁸¹ "President Milosevic and Four Other Senior FRY Officials Indicted for Murder, Persecution and Deportation in Kosovo," press release, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), May 27, 1999, JL/PIU/403-E. <https://www.icty.org/en/sid/7765>.

⁸² "President Milosevic and Four Other Senior FRY Officials," ICTY, 1999.

⁸³ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 128-9.

Albright's victory, as she had spearheaded the offensive that applied enough pressure for Milošević to be charged with these crimes.

Albright's part in Kosovo and Bosnia was essential to stop the conflicts from continuing. She represented the U.S. and their foreign policy as decisive leaders on the international stage, and this further elevated the U.S. to be seen as a forerunner, as a nation that could spread democratic and peaceful values throughout the world.⁸⁴ While painting the Clinton administration in a good light, Albright also was able to strengthen the delicate diplomatic relationship that Russia and the U.S. shared.⁸⁵ She did this by participating in diplomatic conversations with her Russian counterpart, recognising the power that Russia had over Serbia, and used this to her advantage.⁸⁶

Albright's diplomatic approach was commendable. Her foreign policy strategy was described as "tough-talking... interventionism that believes in using force... to back up a mix of strategic and moral objectives."⁸⁷ She was largely successful in coordinating NATO military operations, securing executive support, facing internal opposition, and creating a framework for uniting divided allies.⁸⁸ Not only did her commitment to the defence of human rights by use of force define the foreign policy of the Clinton administration, but Albright's success served as a model for future secretaries, including Hillary Rodham Clinton.⁸⁹

Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton, born on October 26, 1947, in Illinois, attended Yale Law School and worked as a lawyer in the 1970s before entering politics.⁹⁰ Hillary would serve as

⁸⁴ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 131.

⁸⁵ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 130.

⁸⁶ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 130.

⁸⁷ Walter Isaacson, "Madeleine's War," *TIME*, May 17, 1999, <https://time.com/archive/6735369/madeleines-war/>.

⁸⁸ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 211.

⁸⁹ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 211.

⁹⁰ "Hillary Rodham Clinton," July 15, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/1600/first-ladies/hillaryclinton>.

First Lady during her husband Bill Clinton's Presidential tenure between 1993 and 2001.⁹¹ While she made a variety of contributions during her time as First Lady, some of her most significant moments came after her service as President Obama's secretary of state between 2009 and 2013.⁹²

Like Roosevelt and Albright, Clinton was passionate about human rights, particularly women's rights. The extent to which Clinton prioritised women's rights globally was shown in the foreign policy changes made following her appointment as the U.S.'s top diplomat. Clinton launched the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, which addressed women's issues and increased female representation in the Foreign Service.⁹³ She also tied women's rights violations to potential military consequences.⁹⁴

One of Clinton's first significant foreign policy difficulties in her time as Secretary of State was the conflict in Afghanistan. The U.S. had been in Afghanistan for some years before Clinton's tenure. Following the events of September 11, 2001, the U.S. and its NATO allies entered Afghanistan to attempt to prevent terrorists from being harboured within the country and combat the Taliban.⁹⁵ Being led by individual NATO members in a rotational period, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), established by the United Nations Security Council in late 2001, was assigned to aid the Afghan government in security maintenance, initially in the Kabul region.⁹⁶ Eventually, in 2003, NATO entirely took over the command of the ISAF, and the UN allowed the scope of the ISAF's power to expand to the rest of the country.⁹⁷

⁹¹ "Hillary Rodham Clinton."

⁹² "Hillary Rodham Clinton."

⁹³ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 199.

⁹⁴ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 199-201.

⁹⁵ "NATO and Afghanistan," NATO, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8189.htm#:~:text=NATO%20Allies%20went%20into%20Afghanistan.on%20Allied%20soil%20from%20Afghanistan.

⁹⁶ "NATO and Afghanistan."

⁹⁷ "NATO and Afghanistan."

In 2009, after the Taliban began to gain momentum again, Hillary Clinton was a strong advocate for a troop surge and an increase of resources allotted to the region in response to the problem at hand.⁹⁸ In a strategic move, Clinton married her department with the Department of Defence by partnering with Secretary Robert Gates.⁹⁹ This collaboration was able to win the support of the President and other top officials in favour of the troop surge, and helped to position Clinton as one of the top advisors on foreign policy for Obama.¹⁰⁰

The second major conflict that Clinton faced was regarding Libya in 2011. The 2011 press release based on UN Security Council Resolution 1973 stated that Libya's deteriorating situation was particularly caused by violence against civilians and human rights violations committed by the four-decade-long Gaddafi regime. Furthermore, it conceded that these injustices posed a threat to international peace and security, which prompted international calls for intervention.¹⁰¹

Initially, Clinton was not in favour of intervening in the Libyan civil war.¹⁰² Slowly, as she began recognising the humanitarian concerns in the region, her view shifted. She advised the President that a response to a call for action in the form of American military engagement could prevent a possible genocide in the region and show solidarity with the Arab League.¹⁰³ These outcomes were aligned very clearly with the administration's internationalism, humanitarianism, leadership, and peace goals. Due to these aims, Clinton's change in position regarding intervention was one of the primary influences on Obama's decision to get involved.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Kevin P. Marsh and Christopher M. Jones, "Breaking Miles' Law: The Curious Case of Hillary Clinton the Hawk," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 13, no. 3 (2017): 549. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fpa.12073>.

⁹⁹ Marsh and Jones, "Breaking Miles' Law," 549.

¹⁰⁰ Marsh and Jones, "Breaking Miles' Law," 549.

¹⁰¹ United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1973 (2011): Adopted by the Security Council at its 6498th Meeting, on 17 March 2011," *UN Press*, <https://press.un.org/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm>.

¹⁰² Marsh and Jones, "Breaking Miles' Law," 553.

¹⁰³ Marsh and Jones, "Breaking Miles' Law," 554.

¹⁰⁴ Marsh and Jones, "Breaking Miles' Law," 553.

Expanding further on the part that Clinton played in the expansion of U.S. foreign policy concerning gender, she was able to truly bring gender to the core of foreign policy dialogue, even more so than her predecessors.¹⁰⁵ In the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, humanitarianism and gender equality increasingly became significant facets of foreign policy in the U.S..

The shift in focus from strengthening the military and weaponry towards global female advancement was largely the effect of Hillary Clinton's efforts. Clinton saw a threat to women as a security issue on both the domestic and international scales, and she acted accordingly.¹⁰⁶ Proof of this shift exists in the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally, released in 2012 by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The first sentence of the strategy declared that "under the leadership of President Obama and Secretary Clinton, the United States... put gender equality and the advancement of women and girls at the forefront of the three pillars of U.S. foreign policy—diplomacy, development, and defence."¹⁰⁷

One of Clinton's major contributions to shaping U.S. foreign policy was her overhaul of the State Department. Consistent with many other initiatives the Secretary of State undertook, she pushed for a more central emphasis on women's issues within the department. One way that she attempted to achieve this was by creating a permanent post for an Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues.¹⁰⁸ She also renamed the Office of International Women's Initiatives to the Office of Global Women's Issues, better reflecting its purpose, and moved the office to State

¹⁰⁵ Saied Reza Ameli Ranani and Zohreh Nosrat Kharazmi, "The Significance of Muslim Women in American Foreign Policy Case Study: Hillary Clinton's Prophecy for Women of Science in MENA," *Women's Studies International Forum* 61 (2017): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2016.12.006>.

¹⁰⁶ Ranani and Kharazmi, "The Significance of Muslim Women," 21-2.

¹⁰⁷ U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, *United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally*, August 2012, pg 5.

¹⁰⁸ Nicholas J. Cull, "The End of the Hillary Clinton Era in US Public Diplomacy," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 9, no. 1 (2013): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1057/pb.2013.4>.

Department Headquarters from its previous offsite location.¹⁰⁹ The changes that Clinton made created avenues for more women in the department and centralised the department's goals to align with the goals that Clinton had established from the beginning of her tenure.

The contributions of Eleanor Roosevelt, Madeleine Albright, and Hillary Clinton demonstrate the vital role women have played in shaping U.S. foreign policy and advancing the position of women in diplomacy throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Roosevelt established the United States' position in a new liberal world order by using her unique position as First Lady and later as a delegate at the UN. She also advocated for human rights and pioneered a path for women in diplomacy in the post-Second World War era, ultimately pivotal in drafting and campaigning for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Albright helped secure global dominance after the Cold War for the U.S., particularly in Bosnia and Kosovo. Shaped by her connections and understanding of European politics, Albright was a human-rights-driven pioneer in her position, allowing her to redefine America's role in the post-Cold War world. Finally, Clinton helped to modernise U.S. foreign policy by prioritising gender equality in policy making and diplomacy. She advocated for humanitarian intervention in Afghanistan and Libya, while also reshaping the State Department to bring women's issues on a global scale to the core of U.S. foreign policy. When examined together, the legacies of Roosevelt, Albright, and Clinton reflected a transformation in U.S. foreign policy that allowed women to rise to positions of power, shape objectives of American diplomacy, and promote gender equality on the global stage.

¹⁰⁹ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 199.

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