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Madeleine Albright, Gender, and Foreign Policy-Making

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Women are finally becoming major participants in the U.S. foreign policy-making establishment. I seek to understand how the arrival of women foreign policy-makers might influence the outcome of U.S. foreign policy by focusing on the activities of Madeleine Albright, the first woman to hold the position of Secretary of State. I conclude that Albright's gender did have some modest impact. Gender helped Albright gain her position, it affected the manner in which she carried out her duties, and it facilitated her working relationship with a Republican Congress. But Albright's gender seemed to have had relatively little effect on her ideology and policy recommendations.

Over the past few decades more and more women have won election to public office and obtained high-level appointive positions in government, and this trend is likely to continue well into the 21st century. The growing numbers of women serving in public office raise crucial questions about the political importance of gender. As more and more women enter the political world, it is critically important that we understand what the consequences are likely to be for both public policy and the political process.

One of the few areas of political life where women's participation has lagged somewhat is in government agencies responsible for the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. Such agencies include the Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of Commerce, Department of the Treasury and others. Nevertheless, the last ten years have seen

two women serve at the top of the foreign policy-making process. Madeleine Albright served as President Bill Clinton's Secretary of State from 1997-2001, and Condoleezza Rice, recently appointed to the same post, served as National Security Advisor to President George W. Bush for four years.

Of course, women's access to foreign policy roles has gone far beyond these two high-profile women. A rough estimate is that women represent approximately 15% of top and mid-level positions in the foreign policy bureaucracy. The Women's Foreign Policy Group, a Washington organization, examined female representation in the U.S. Department of State. The group reported that women comprised 18% of the career senior foreign service, 22% of ambassadors, and approximately 35% of top officials in the late 1990s (Levinson and Baker 1998). In 1981, 15% of the almost 4000 foreign service officers were women, whereas 32% of the 3500 foreign service officers were women in 2000. Also in 2000, there were 3 women Undersecretaries out of 6; 10 women Assistant Secretaries out of 37; 28 women Deputy Assistant Secretaries out of 98; and 35 women Ambassadors out of 157 (Leader 2001). Thus, the era of women as foreign policy-makers has finally arrived.

What does the arrival of high-level women foreign policy-makers mean for the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy? What particular problems, if any, do women officials face while operating within a primarily male field like foreign policy-making? Do women foreign policy-makers have different policy priorities than their male counterparts? Do women view the foreign policy process, the way decisions are made in the United States, differently from men? This article intends to offer some very preliminary and limited answers to

these questions by examining the activities of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright from 1997-2001.¹

WOMEN AS FOREIGN POLICY-MAKERS AND LEADERS

Through the 1980s, the influence of women on the foreign policy process in the United States was quite limited. Even those women with some influence often operated as critics outside the system. A small number of women occupied medium-level policy-making positions inside the Foreign Service of the State Department; and fewer still were appointed as ambassadors or to other important diplomatic posts. When Jeanne Kirkpatrick was appointed to serve as President Ronald Reagan's Ambassador to the United Nations in 1981, she became the highest ranking female diplomat in U.S. history. Kirkpatrick made a powerful impression with her strong defense of American positions at the United Nations; however, she was not considered a major player in the Reagan foreign policy team (Ewell 1992, 166-167). Even though she was a member of the Cabinet and the National Security Council, Kirkpatrick's main responsibility as U.N. Ambassador was policy implementation not policy formulation.

Nancy McGlen and Meredith Sarkees (1995) discuss three gender stereotypes that have limited women's involvement in foreign policy-making: (1) the view that women should focus on home and family, (2) the view that women are unsuited to the work of national security issues and diplomacy, and (3) the view that women are less knowledgeable than men about foreign affairs. They concluded a decade ago that "these cultural stereotypes culminate in widespread discrimination against women seeking jobs in government and, more particularly, foreign af-

¹ This article was completed soon after Condoleezza Rice was nominated and confirmed as the second female secretary of state. A comparison of the first two female secretaries of state would be a valuable research project.

fairs" (1995, 12). Eleanor Dulles, who worked in the State Department in the 1940s and 1950s, commented on the blatant discrimination suffered by women in that era. She observed that, "this place is a real man's world—if there ever was one. It's riddled with prejudices! If you are a woman in government service you just have to work ten times as hard—and even then it takes much skill to paddle around the various taboos. But it is fun to see how far you can get in spite of being a woman" (Hoff-Wilson 1992, 182).

There is no doubt that the situation for women in foreign affairs has improved considerably in the last two decades. In 1976, Foreign Service Officer Alison Palmer filed, with several other officers, a class action sex discrimination suit in the U.S. District Court. Another sex discrimination suit, filed in 1977 by Marguette Cooper, was merged with the Palmer case in 1978 (Jeffreys-Jones 1994). After two decades, the cases were finally decided in favor of the plaintiffs. In its final decree, the U.S. District Court ordered the State Department to mandate diversity training for all foreign service officers and their managers, eliminate sex discrimination in its personnel practices, and strengthen anti-discrimination procedures (Leader 2001). The court also mandated that an unspecified number of women who had claimed discrimination in promotions receive automatic promotions.²

In addition to these lawsuits, other factors have played important roles in enhancing opportunities for women in the State Department, including the continuing advancement of women in other parts of American society, the end of the Cold War, the expansion of foreign policy to include economic, environmental and other issues, changes within the culture of the State Depart-

² The State Department established various procedures to improve women's career prospects prior to the final court decision.

ment, and the determination of the Clinton administration to promote women to positions of prominence. Women now have more positions in the foreign policy bureaucracy than ever before. They have not quite reached parity, but they are getting close.

Because there exists a powerful stereotype that women are more pacifistic than men, the inclusion of more women in the foreign policy process has led some to suppose that non-military solutions to international problems will become more popular. Public opinion research has in fact demonstrated that there is a small, but important, gender gap on a variety of defense and foreign policy issues. Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones (1995, 10) states that an "emphasis on peace is an enduring ingredient in the gender gap that separates women in the aggregate from men in American politics." Since the 1940s, public opinion research has shown that "women have been less supportive of the use of force to maintain peace abroad and more supportive of negotiated settlements" (Conway, Steuernagel and Ahern 1997, 38). Francis Fukuyama (1998) points out that American women have always been less supportive of U.S. military actions, including World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War, by an average of 7 to 9%. Nancy McGlen and Meredith Sarkees (1993, 190) examined a number of studies on public opinion and concluded that there was an 8-9 percentage point gap between men and women on the willingness to use force in domestic and international relations. Hence, women in the public at large do seem to possess more peaceful attitudes than do males, but the size of this foreign policy gender gap is rather modest.

There is, in any case, very little evidence that women foreign policy-makers are generally more peace-oriented, or more likely to bring about a peaceful foreign policy, than are men. One theory holds that women who break into the foreign policy world of men "have to be especially tough" and that they "assume what

are thought of as masculine characteristics not just for tactical reasons but because in political terms they have become men" (Hoff-Wilson 1992, 2). Such women may become even more hawkish than their male counterparts. Perhaps, as Hoff-Wilson (1992, 186) also argues, one cannot expect gender to make much of a difference "until there is a generation of women foreign policy formulators who are feminists," and "a significant number of feminists [come to dominate] top policy-making positions."

In one of the few studies of women foreign policy-makers, Nancy McGlen and Meredith Sarkees (2001) found little evidence of an overall gender gap between male and female policy-makers in the Departments of State and Defense. They also observed that "the appointment of Madeline Albright as Secretary of State has apparently not moved the United States toward a more pacific foreign policy" (2001, 143). They did find some gender differences after carrying out a more detailed analysis within both departments, and concluded that there was a strong tendency for women career officers in the State Department to adopt more moderate foreign policy views than their male counterparts. On the other hand, these researchers found that women political appointees in the State Department and the Defense Department, as well as women career officers at Defense, adopted more hard-line and conservative views. McGlen and Sarkees look to the different political cultures of the two departments for an explanation. For careerists, they (2001, 139) explain that "women coming into Defense may, in an attempt to fit in to an overwhelmingly male-dominated and conservative organization, overcompensate and become too conservative, while women in State might overcompensate and become more liberal." Since their data come from the 1980s, they tend to see the conservative views of women political appointees at both State and Defense

as a result of the quest for "ideological purity" in the Reagan administration.³ This important research seems to suggest that women foreign policy-makers are not very likely to bring peace-oriented attitudes with them as they enter the top levels of the foreign policy bureaucracy.

Another viewpoint is offered by Ann Miller Morin (1995). She interviewed 34 of 44 women who served as U.S. ambassadors in the period 1933-1993.⁴ Understandably, a few of these women ambassadors were ineffective; however, Morin concludes that overall these women performed to a high standard. Similarities among these pioneers included high academic achievement, love for their job, patriotism, courage, a deep work ethic, and a strong sense of self-worth. Their preferred management style was collegial not hierarchical. Interestingly, Morin (1995, 264) concludes that "most were charismatic and physically attractive." Certainly these women made remarkable accomplishments in an era when society was still generally opposed to their efforts. All of the interviewees had experienced some forms of discrimination, but few seemed to be overly concerned about it. They accepted "the fact of discrimination as a condition of the times and carried on without too much grumbling" (Morin 1995, 270). There was and still is a strong tendency for women ambassadors to be assigned to countries of limited importance (Enloe 2000). Hence, in one sense, these women faced (and still face) more problems from within their own State Department than from their host countries. As Morin (1995, 272) explains

³ It would be extremely valuable to conduct a similar survey of current men and women in both departments.

⁴ Of the 44 female ambassadors in this period, only 6 served prior to the 1960s.

One perceived disadvantage for women, the lack of respect from the host government and people, proved to be a non-issue once a woman was at the post. All American women ambassadors have been accorded the deference and respect appropriate to their position. The power of the United States ensures that the sex of the ambassador is irrelevant.

Morin argues that women ambassadors in fact have certain advantages. They are able to speak bluntly to male officials, especially in the developing nations, without offending them. And since women ambassadors are less likely to have a dominating presence, they can be accepted as a non-threatening, sympathetic presence and a source of support.

Of course, women have had major foreign policy responsibilities in other countries—as presidents and prime ministers. Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Indira Gandhi of India, Golda Meier of Israel, Violetta Chamorro of Nicaragua and Corazon Aquino of the Philippines are some of the best known female chief executives. In a broad sense, they all carried out their duties of managing their countries' respective foreign policies. Perhaps the best known female national leader is Margaret Thatcher, who served as British Prime Minister from 1979-1990. Known as the "Iron Lady," Thatcher supported a tough line against the Soviet Union in the early 1980s and prosecuted the Falklands War against Argentina. While Thatcher was a foreign policy hawk and had no feminist agenda, it is important to note that she was ahead of President Reagan in recognizing the possibilities for change in Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Thatcher's quick analysis of Gorbachev in December 1984 became famous: "I like Mr. Gorbachev; we can do business together" (Young 1989, 393). According to Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones (1994, 161), the title "Iron Lady" always referred more to Thatcher's tough demeanor in domestic politics as opposed to a warlike character. Still, there

is no denying that she took a strong conservative approach to foreign policy issues.

Golda Meier, Indira Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto also had reputations of being foreign policy hawks. On the other hand, President Vigdis Finnbogadottir of Iceland and Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway both pursued quite liberal foreign policies and were viewed as strong feminists (Jeffreys-Jones 1994, 169). Interviews with women heads of state show that "most believe that they are more committed to peace than their male counterparts" (Jaquette 1997, 35). Thus, female chief executives have presented a range of foreign policy approaches. Tom Lansford (2003, 183) concludes that "the record of female leaders is just as varied as their male counterparts and demonstrates the impracticality of using gender to differentiate between leadership styles."

FEMINISM AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Feminist theorists also provide perspectives relevant to our subject. Although feminist scholars differ on particular issues concerning foreign policy and international politics, they generally agree that both are "gendered." This means essentially that the world of international politics is controlled by men in order to serve male interests, and is interpreted by other men, consciously and unconsciously, according to male perspectives. For example, according to feminists the dominant international relations theory of realism reflects, not a universal search for power, but rather the behavior of states run by men. Feminist theorists see an international system composed of gender hierarchies which are "socially constructed and maintained through power structures that work against women's participation in foreign and national security policy-making" (Tickner 2001, 21). International relations and foreign policy have always been dominated

by men; the actions, needs, and interests of women have usually been ignored.

Most feminist theorists of international relations seek a world in which much larger numbers of women rise to the highest positions of authority, leadership and power. They disagree as to whether women should get ahead in foreign affairs by demonstrating traditional masculine virtues of toughness and aggression, or whether they should move the agenda of foreign affairs away from male preoccupations with hierarchy and domination (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 2001, 171). Another disagreement concerns the logic behind women's participation: one view believes that women should become more involved because their peaceful nature is likely to lead to less world conflict (Steans 1998); an alternative view is that women are no more peaceful than men, but that they should become more involved in international affairs as a matter of right (McGlen and Sarkees 1995, 4).

For many feminist theorists, it is not really relevant if particular women rise to the top of the foreign policy-making system. Because the entire system is "masculine," these powerful women have little choice but to act in a masculine fashion.⁵ Cynthia Enloe (2000, 6) explains that "when a woman is let in by the men who control the political elite, it usually is precisely because that woman has learned the lessons of masculinized political behavior well enough not to threaten male political privilege." Margaret Thatcher is often cited as just such a "permissible" female leader. In fact, the participation of the occasional woman in the foreign policy elite may actually strengthen the overall gendered system—by suggesting that women are now equal players in this male-created system. "Masculine" female leaders do not challenge the gender stereotypes; in fact, they help to perpetuate

⁵ This is not a view shared by all feminist theorists of international relations.

them. If traditional gender relations stay in place, more women in power do not necessarily produce a foreign policy that is "better" for women (Peterson and Runyan 1999).

Feminist scholars are much more interested in the grass-roots efforts of women activists than in the actions of women who have entered the top of the foreign policy-making world (Tickner 2001). These scholars do not pay much attention to notable women such as Golda Meier, Madeleine Albright or Condoleezza Rice.⁶ They do see the possibility, as more and more women enter the international relations professions, of transforming the current masculine-dominated system. And the growing number of women foreign policy-makers, both in the United States and abroad, represents a movement toward this possibility. Still, this new wave of female decision-makers has not yet been studied by feminist scholars.

The real hope of many feminist theorists is to transform the current masculine foreign policy-making and international system. Perhaps this is not unrealistic—Cynthia Enloe suggests that those in power are remarkably insecure and their power remarkably unstable. If feminist scholars and women activists can expose how world politics depends on artificial notions of masculinity and femininity, more of us might come to realize that "this seemingly over-whelming world system may be more fragile and open to radical change than we have been led to imagine" (Enloe 2000, 17). Peterson and Runyan (1999, 237) describe the ultimate goal of many feminist theorists:

A great deal must change before world politics is ungendered. Ungendering world politics requires a serious rethinking of what it means to be human and how we might organize ourselves in more cooperative,

⁶ It should be noted that much of the feminist literature has preceded the recent appointments of Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice.

mutually respectful ways. We would have to reject gendered dichotomies: male versus female, us versus them, culture versus nature. We would have to recognize power in its multiple forms and be willing to imagine other worlds. Overall, these changes are less a matter of top-down policy than of individually and collectively remaking human society by reconstructing our identities, beliefs, expectations, and institutions. This is the most difficult and complex of human projects, but history shows that we are capable of such revolutionary transformations.

Taking into account both feminist speculations and the limited empirical data we have on women and foreign policy-making, we might well conclude, with Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones (1995, 2), that "the field of women and foreign policy is full of contradictions and complexities, and for that reason is particularly intriguing." Despite the likelihood that women foreign policy-makers share a similar world view with their male counterparts, there is strong evidence that a "gender gap" does exist in the foreign policy views of the average American man and woman. Does this gap have any impact on the powerful women that are now entering the arenas of U.S. foreign policy-making? Then too, there is the long-held and powerful belief that women, at their core, are somehow more peace-oriented than men. Might this questionable surmise have an impact on female leaders, even those who have adopted masculine characteristics and adjusted to the expectations of their bureaucratic home? Feminist scholars are unconvinced that a few key high-level women can have much impact on the U.S. foreign policy process. Nevertheless, they also maintain as a fundamental premise that enough women at various levels of government have the capability of transforming the very nature of U.S. foreign policy-making and the international system. What is the proper number of women needed to make a transformational difference, and is it

smaller number of key female policy-makers to make an important, if not transformative, difference?

As more and more women enter the top levels of the U.S. foreign policy-making process, there remain a host of important questions and very few clear answers. Thus, it is relevant and important to examine the activities of the highest ranking female foreign policy-maker in U.S. history, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in order to begin the process of finding some answers. It would be surprising if we discovered shocking differences between Albright and her male predecessors. But it is quite possible that Secretary Albright displayed some subtle and nuanced differences that are worthy of our attention. Thus, we turn to a consideration of Madeleine Albright, the first woman to hold the position of Secretary of State.

WINNING OFFICE

Madeleine Korbelt Albright was born in 1937 in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Her father, a Czech diplomat and later Professor of International Relations at the University of Denver, was to have a profound influence on her worldview. Albright and her family fled Czechoslovakia with the Nazi take-over in 1939. After returning home in 1945, the Korbelt family left Czechoslovakia for the United States following the communist take-over in 1948 (Blackman 1998). The actions of the Nazi and communist regimes were to have a profound influence on the political views of both father and daughter.

Albright attended prestigious Wellesley College from 1955-59, just before the beginning of the modern women's movement. She married newspaperman Joseph Albright, heir to a major newspaper chain, and had three children by 1967. As her husband moved to various positions, she began taking graduate courses in International Relations at Johns Hopkins University and Columbia University in the 1960s. One of her most influen-

tial professors at Columbia was Zbigniew Brzezinski, who would later serve as National Security Adviser to President Jimmy Carter (Lippman 2004).

Albright entered Democratic Party politics in Washington as a campaign volunteer in the early 1970s. In 1976, she became chief legislative assistant to Senator Edmund Muskie and also received her Ph.D. from Columbia University. Two years later, she joined the Carter administration as director of Congressional Relations for the National Security Council under Brzezinski (Dobbs 2000).

From 1982 to 1993, Albright was a professor of foreign policy at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, and also served as director of the Women in Foreign Service program. Although she never received tenure, she was one of the most popular professors at Georgetown (Blood 1999). Her personal life was troubled by a 1982 divorce, and this divorce would have a profound impact on her future career.

During the Reagan and Bush years, Albright hosted dinners for leading foreign policy thinkers, and her foreign policy "salon" became a magnet for major players within the Democratic Party. Albright served as a foreign policy adviser to vice presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro during the 1984 campaign, and this appointment led to the position of chief foreign policy adviser to presidential nominee Michael Dukakis four years later (Dobbs 2000). During the presidential campaign of 1992, she became one of many informal advisers to Governor Bill Clinton. President Clinton named her U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, a position with Cabinet status, following his election. She was also a member of Clinton's National Security Council.

At the United Nations, Albright earned a reputation for blunt language and a forceful defense of American interests. She frequently appeared on television as a spokesperson for President Clinton's foreign policy, in place of the less effective Secretary

of State Warren Christopher and national security advisor Anthony Lake. She was an early and strong advocate of intervention in Bosnia, ahead of most of her colleagues in the Clinton administration. One of her most notable accomplishments at the U.N. was her maneuver to prevent U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali from serving a second term (Blood 1999). It is generally believed that her policy-making contributions were somewhat limited during her time as U.N. Ambassador.

Before the election of 1996, Secretary of State William Christopher made plans to step down from his position. The leading candidates to replace Christopher were Albright, former Assistant Secretary of State and Bosnian envoy Richard Holbrooke, Senate Minority Leader George Mitchell, and retiring Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia (Blood 1999). The first-term Clinton foreign policy team had suffered considerable criticism for policy failures in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia, and for lacking a coherent strategic vision. Key members of the foreign policy team, including Christopher, were ineffective on television. U.N. Ambassador Albright was often called upon to appear on the Sunday talk shows to fill that gap, and Clinton wanted a secretary of state who could successfully present U.S. foreign policy to the country and the world.

Outgoing White House Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta believed that Albright's communication skills were a pivotal factor in her ultimate selection. Panetta suggested that Clinton was ready to play a stronger role in framing his own foreign policy agenda during his second term, and that Albright's forceful style would make her a more effective spokesperson for the new Clinton foreign policy.⁷ Additionally, Clinton was attracted to the

⁷ Michael Dobbs, "With Albright, Clinton Accepts New U.S. Role," *Washington Post*, 8 December 1996.

politics of symbolism, and gender issues were no exception. He had entered office promising a cabinet that "looked like" America, and his first cabinet featured three women, including Albright as U.N. Ambassador. One top administration official reported "You tell him, Jesus, boss, that's never been done before, and it's a good way to get him to do it. You show him a glass ceiling, and he'll pick up a rock" (Blackman 1998, 257). Blackman (1998, 13) expands on this account by contending that Albright's selection was also affected by the fact that she "was the candidate with whom the Clintons—both Bill and Hillary—felt most comfortable. President Clinton realized that he had in her a dazzling speaker with unquestioned loyalty to the people she served, a natural politico who could handle the press while giving him credit for American foreign policy decisions and not seek acclaim herself, as Henry Kissinger had done under Richard Nixon."

President Clinton clearly admired Albright's loyalty. "She was tough and strong on the issues that I thought were important, especially on Bosnia," Clinton said. "She supported what I did on Haiti. When we had to do difficult things that didn't have a lot of popular support in the beginning, she on principle agreed with me. I could see she was willing to take risks." Clinton concluded, "I thought she would be the person most likely to connect with the American people, to bring the message of our foreign policy home" (Blackman 1998, 14).

Mobilizing behind Albright was an "old girls" network, including friends Senator Barbara Mikulski, Representative Barbara Kennelly, and Geraldine Ferraro. President Clinton, who had been reelected with a large margin among women voters, was eager to please this critical voting bloc. Shortly after the election, White House aides leaked to the press that Albright was in a "second tier" of candidates, and this remark infuriated her high-powered female friends. "That was like, kazam!" exclaimed

Senator Mikulski. "It was an insult to all of us who have worked so hard and played by the rules. And it gave us the opportunity to launch a full-court press" (Blood 1999, 24).

Indeed, they did launch a full-court press. The White House was swamped with calls from congresswomen and women's groups. President Clinton was lobbied by a few members of the "old girls" network. Representative Kennelly called Vice President Gore directly, suggesting to him that Clinton's unprecedented level of support among female voters was not automatically transferable to him. Gore's office responded by releasing a statement that said that the Vice President considered Albright a serious candidate (Albright 2003, 221). Arguably, the pressure from women's groups almost backfired. Ann Blackman (1998, 265) believes that "Clinton resented the intense lobbying of the women's organizations, and contrary to the feminists' view, if anything had come close to derailing Albright as his top choice, that was it."

Another strong supporter of Ambassador Albright was first lady Hillary Clinton. Albright had begun her relationship with the First Lady on several trips, including attending the International Women's Conference in China in 1995. Many White House officials believe that Albright was personally closer to Hillary than to the President. According to one top Clinton official, Albright "touches base with Hillary all the time, advises her on international stuff, sends her memos and materials. And they both smooze about Wellesley. Madeleine's great champion for this job was Mrs. Clinton. Knowing that, there was never any doubt in my mind she would get it" (Blackman 1998, 256-7).

Albright (2003, 220) acknowledges that there has been much speculation about the First Lady's role in her appointment, and indirectly admits that Hillary Clinton did help her get the job. Thomas Blood (1999, 29) explains that "the truth was that Hillary Clinton desperately wanted to see Madeleine Albright get

the top post at State, but after years of taking more than her fair share of cheap shots, the First Lady reasoned that discretion was the better part of valor, and decided to work on Albright's behalf behind the scenes." Hillary Clinton (2003, 393) had this to say about the matter: "When Bill asked me about Madeleine, I told him there was nobody who had been more supportive of his policies and was as articulate and persuasive on the issues. I also added that her appointment would make many girls and women proud."

Despite such support, there was considerable opposition to Albright within the Clinton White House. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, Clinton adviser Vernon Jordan, and incoming Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles were among the heavy-hitters opposing her nomination (Blood 1999, 15). Besides favoring other candidates, opponents seemed to think that Albright's gender made her ineligible for the job. Albright (2003, 219) admits that "many of my supporters were convinced that the opposition from males was a kind of discrimination," while suggesting more charitably that opposition was due to "a combination of factors, including the historic male monopoly on the post, a feeling of men being more comfortable with men, and concerns I hoped were misplaced about my qualifications."

Would Madeleine Albright really have the capability of dealing with a group of mostly male foreign leaders and foreign ministers? Thomas Blood (1999, 33) highlights the issue:

Shortly before going public with the selection, the President placed a phone call to a longtime ally now serving in a diplomatic post in the Middle East. The purpose of the call was to take one last poll of an old friend on the selection of Madeleine Albright. ...By the time it was over the President was wringing his hands. His trusted friend had been blunt. Madeleine Albright was totally qualified to serve as Secretary of State, but he couldn't support her. He told the Presi-

dent that the majority of the trouble spots on the geopolitical landscape were in the third world. And most of these were Islamic nations. Their leaders would never take her seriously because she was a woman.

Clinton was genuinely puzzled by the lack of support among some of his advisors for Albright's nomination. Fortunately for Albright, the First Lady told the President exactly what he needed to hear. "Forget about what your advisors think," was her advice. "Trust your gut, Bill," she told him repeatedly (Blood 1999, 33). In the end, he did, and Madeleine Albright became his choice for the next Secretary of State.

Did Madeleine Albright become Secretary of State because she was a woman? Clearly, gender alone does not explain her nomination and confirmation; equally clear is the fact that it played a role. Albright was in the first instance qualified for the job; about that, there is no doubt. And while her relationship with Hillary Clinton, the mobilization of the "old girl's network," the Democratic Party's reliance on women voters and women's groups, and President Clinton's desire to break with tradition all combined to propel her toward the nomination, so did her performance as U.N. ambassador, and her loyalty to Clinton and reputation as a "team player." Her communication skills and knowledge of foreign policy were also important factors that contributed to her selection.

POLITICAL STYLE

In her memoirs, Albright (2003, 341) refers to Secretary of State Dean Acheson's axiom that "the first requirement of a statesman is that he be dull," and then quips that "Acheson said nothing about stateswomen, however, so I didn't feel bound by his prescription." And, in fact, the nation's new top diplomat was anything but dull. Says Albright (2003, 341): "I could have chosen to submerge the differences as much as possible and done

my best to imitate the men who preceded me. I could have shunned informal settings, dressed conservatively, and reined in my penchant for blunt speaking. But the job would not have been as enjoyable, and I would not have been able to accomplish as much as I did.”

Albright emerged after her nomination and confirmation as a kind of media superstar, in part because of the novelty of her being the first female secretary of state.⁸ On the day her nomination was announced, she was greeted as a celebrity by passengers on a commuter train bound to New York. As she moved from car to car, Albright signed autographs and received congratulations from the commuters. In the early months of her tenure, Albright received extremely favorable press coverage, including flattering profiles in *Newsweek* and *Vogue*. She was even featured in the *Mini-Page*, a Sunday supplement distributed to hundreds of newspapers, with a headline that read “First Woman Secretary of State Talks to Kids.” Inside there was a message from Albright, a word jumble featuring such terms as “treaties,” “visas,” and “cabinet,” and a connect-the-dots puzzle that challenged children to draw her hair (Albright 2003, 342).

Albright decided to use her celebrity to spark greater public interest in international affairs. She used her popularity and speaking skills to take the administration’s foreign policy message to the “average American,” and sought to redefine the job of America’s top diplomat in a way not attempted since the days of Henry Kissinger. Thomas Lippman (2004, 2) explains that “Albright loves being a celebrity,” and she grasped that “personal fame and popularity could be effective levers in negotiations with Congress and with foreign leaders.” In the post-Cold War world, a secretary of state had to look for new ways to win sup-

⁸ She was confirmed by the U.S. Senate with a 99-0 vote.

port for the president's foreign policy positions. The president she served could no longer argue that lack of support for his foreign policy agenda was necessarily jeopardizing the national security of the United States. Bill Clinton had to sell his foreign policy to the Congress and to the American people, and Madeleine Albright became his chief sales representative. Margaret Tutwiler, senior adviser to Secretary of State James Baker, explained that Albright understood "that a foreign policy initiative can only be successful with an American public that supports it and a Congress that understands it."⁹

Secretary Albright emphasized that "people are finding it harder and harder to relate to foreign policy," and that "one of my prime jobs here is to reconnect the American people to foreign policy and make it understandable."¹⁰ This is why Albright made nineteen domestic trips during her first year in office—more than any other secretary of state—trying to convince citizens that foreign policy was important in their lives. She told high school students that learning about foreign policy was "cool" and "awesome." Two months into her term, she implemented the practice of floating all of her speeches on the State Department home page on the Internet, under the menu heading "Reaching Out to Americans" (Blood 1999).

She was highly visible in the mass media. In addition to appearing on the various Sunday talk shows, Albright made appearances on CNN's "Larry King Live" and NPR's "The Diane Rehm Show." Early in 1997, she launched a full-court press to win support for the Chemical Weapons Treaty. She appeared on numerous local television programs in such places as Cincinnati, Birmingham, Memphis, San Antonio, San Diego, Seattle, and

⁹ Dobbs, Michael. 1997. "Albright Reshapes Role of Nation's Top Diplomat," *Washington Post*, 15 June, p. A-1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Denver. Thomas Lippman provided this account of these activities:

In just over an hour, Albright reached untold thousands of ordinary Americans with the clear-cut, simply worded message that the Chemical Weapons Convention is good for them and that the Senate should approve it when it votes Thursday. ...The event was more political campaign than diplomacy, and in many ways it was typical of how Albright has operated during her first three months in office. She has said repeatedly that one of her highest priorities is to convince Americans that foreign policy matters, and she is using techniques never before seen in Foggy Bottom to accomplish that.¹¹

According to at least one biographer, Albright's profile was so high that she proved successful in reaching not only American citizens, but publics throughout the world. Albright, said Thomas Blood (1999, 264), "has somehow managed to put US foreign policy on a first-name basis with the rest of the world. To thousands, perhaps millions, of people whom she will never meet, whose vision of this country is based only on what they read in papers or see on television, she symbolizes what we stand for. ...For the first time, instead of seeing a middle-aged white man in a dull suit, they see a grandmother in a flak jacket, someone whom people flock to see like a rock star."

Public outreach was not always successful. An infamous town hall meeting, held in Columbus, Ohio in early 1998, proved a minor public relations disaster. The meeting was organized for administration officials to explain U.S. policy towards Iraq, and to help build public support for a military campaign designed to

¹¹ Lippman, Thomas. 1997. "Plain-Talking Albright Campaigns for Foreign Policy," *Washington Post*, 21 April, p. A-1.

ing crisis in Kosovo. As the policies of the second-term Clinton administration produced ambiguous and contested results, the Secretary of State received more critical coverage in the media, although it should be noted that Albright remained quite popular with the American people. According to the Gallup poll, public approval of the secretary hovered between 61% and 69% from late 1998 to just before the election of 2000 (Gallup Poll 2000).

In pursuing her goal of reconnecting the American people to foreign policy, Albright did not hesitate to utilize the novelty of her position as America's first female secretary of state. According to Albright, being a woman "makes me more accessible" and helps overcome the common view of foreign policy as an "arcane science...carried on by stuffy diplomats."¹³ On her first full day as secretary of state, she did a little pirouette in front of hundreds of American diplomats. "You may have noticed that I do not look like Warren Christopher," she cracked, drawing laughter from her mostly male audience.¹⁴ Her approach to diplomacy was very personal. A small illustration of this technique came in early 1997, when she told U.S. troops in South Korea how, as a child growing up in London during World War II, she had first heard the phrase "the Yanks are coming." "That was the first time that I fell in love with American men in uniform," she joked.¹⁵

According to her aides, Albright consciously played on her femininity to win over her male colleagues. She was seen holding hands with Senator Jesse Helms, the notoriously difficult chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee. In France, the foreign minister greeted her with roses and a kiss on the

¹³ Dobbs, Michael. 1997. "Albright Reshapes Role of Nation's Top Diplomat," *Washington Post*, 15 June, p. A-1.

¹⁴ Dobbs, Michael. 1997. "Albright Approach: Upfront, Personal," *Washington Post*, 24 February, p. A-13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

diminish Iraq's capability to produce weapons of mass destruction. Albright, Defense Secretary William Cohen, and national security adviser Sandy Berger, all struggled to fend off a series of hostile questions about the administration's policy, and suffered heckling by the audience. The meeting exposed deep doubts about the policy among some in the audience and kept Albright, Cohen and Berger on the defensive much of the time. One White House official said that the event was "like watching a car crash take place before your eyes."¹² Albright (2003, 283) admits that following the Columbus event, "Ohio State" became the codeword within the administration for any hare-brained scheme of communicating their message.

By 1998, the same press that had been fawning all over Albright had turned much more negative. A number of stories were published detailing how she had failed to live up to the expectations of her first year. Albright understood that this was to be expected. Reflecting on the change, she (2003, 352) recognized that "conventional wisdom about prominent officials often had a short shelf life," and that "I knew I would get nowhere if I took the attacks personally." Thomas Lippman (2004, 6) explained that Albright found that "the currency of her word devalued by overuse and the novelty of her style diminished to some extent by its irrelevance." Her efforts to connect with the American people sometimes led to overexposure and the perception that the real foreign policy director in the Clinton administration was the national security advisor, Sandy Berger. In addition, there was less time for television interviews and visits with school-children, as Albright spent more and more time dealing with a host of international problems—including the India-Pakistan nuclear standoff, the Middle East peace process, and a develop-

¹² Balz, Dan and John Haris. 1998. "A Favored Clinton Format is turned Against His Team," *Washington Post*, 19 February, p. A-22.

hand. In Africa, she was photographed cradling a starving child, a scene almost unimaginable with any of her male predecessors.

The press paid a great deal of attention to Albright's appearance, including her striking pins or brooches.¹⁶ Soon Albright was choosing pins based on the message of the day. There were patriotic pins, military pins, and even a missile pin. Albright (2004, 343) explains that "I used a spider on those (rare) occasions when I was feeling devious, a balloon when I was up at the Capitol building to show bipartisanship, and a bee when I was looking for someone to sting."

Eventually, Albright developed her comments on the gender issue into a comfortable routine. At a luncheon for the Women's Legal Defense Fund in 1997, she told the following story:

I have decided that being a woman has several important advantages. One is makeup. If a sixty-year-old male secretary of state has had a bad day, he has two choices—to look like a tired old man, or to look like a tired old man with makeup. But with a little help, I can at least convince myself that I look as fresh as I feel right now (Lippman 2004, 31).

Despite the fears of her opponents within the Clinton administration, Secretary Albright persuasively argued that her gender was not a liability when dealing with foreign leaders. Believing otherwise reflected sexist assumptions that were not unlike the distorted way in which the U.S. media treated the novelty of a female secretary of state. After all, numerous countries had been led by female prime ministers or presidents, and there were also many instances of female foreign ministers from all over the

¹⁶ Her pins became so important that they inspired a well-known art gallery owner to invite jewelers from all over the world to create Albright-inspired pins. The result was a traveling art exhibit and book entitled *Brooching It Diplomatically: A Tribute to Madeleine K. Albright*.

world. In this connection, one of the biggest tests for Albright was her first visit to Saudi Arabia in September 1997. By all accounts, the visit went off without incident. Thomas Lippman (2004, 35) argued that Albright's arrival in Saudi Arabia "was not much different from an arrival in any other country, thus demonstrating again that the fact of Albright's femaleness was not an obstacle to job performance."

Albright also managed to balance her femininity with a "macho" side. She learned a valuable lesson from her time with the Michael Dukakis presidential campaign when the candidate ended up looking ridiculous while riding in a military tank with a strange grin. Albright told an interviewer in 1989 that "Dukakis did not have the national security credibility to deliver his message, because people did not see him as having originally crossed the threshold of machoism."¹⁷ She would not make that same mistake. So she threw out the first ball at a Baltimore Orioles game clad in an Orioles cap and jacket. She showed up on aircraft carriers surrounded by soldiers while wearing a military flak jacket. She courted the military establishment in a variety of ways, including visits to various military installations (Lippman 2004). She was frequently photographed wearing a Stetson, like a sheriff riding into town. In her tenure as U.N. Ambassador and Secretary of State, Albright was known to use stern language with both opponents and friends of the United States.

Yet, this was a "toughness" that did not spill over into harshness or exaggeration. In the view of Democratic consultant Mandy Greenwald, Albright was one of the few top female politicians who succeeded in projecting "an image of strength without being called a bitch. Think about other prominent female politicians, women like Dianne Feinstein, Christie Whitman,

¹⁷ Dobbs, Michael. 1997. "Albright Reshapes Role of Nation's Top Diplomat," *Washington Post*, 15 June, p. A-1.

Geraldine Ferraro. Sooner or later that word tends to follow them around.”¹⁸ Albright’s toughness was combined with deeply felt patriotism. While she was not the first to describe the United States as “the indispensable nation,” the phrase became closely associated with her. Her affection for her adopted country was real, and her views on American leadership were rooted in her experience as a refugee from Nazism and communism. As we will see, she often took the most hawkish positions on certain foreign policy issues, especially those dealing with the crises in former Yugoslavia.

Thomas Lippman (2004, 35) draws this conclusion about Albright’s position as the first female secretary of state:

Albright chose to emphasize her gender in her public conduct—joking about makeup, holding babies, flashing her trademark jewelry—and in some of the policy issues she elected to stress, such as the plight of women refugees. This approach stems from the fact that she has never regarded her gender as a liability; on the contrary, it proved to be quite useful as she took on with zest the first major task she set for herself as secretary of state, which was to maximize her personal popularity so she could use it as a tool to forge support for the administration’s foreign policy.

Hence Albright unquestionably capitalized on aspects of her gender. Part of her popularity was based on the novelty of her being the first female secretary of state, though she also had a compelling life story and media-friendly personality. Certain media doors were open to her because of her notoriety. She was willing to use her gender to promote dialogue with the American people as well as to charm or even disarm her “opponents.” On the other hand, she balanced her feminine charm with a “macho”

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

image, using tough talk and appeals to patriotism. An interesting combination of masculine and feminine qualities and symbols came together in the person of Madeleine Albright.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

There were two powerful and related influences on Albright's view of foreign policy—her childhood experiences of fleeing Nazism and communism and the views of her father, Joseph Korbel. One leading diplomat argued that “more than anyone else in the administration, Madeleine is driven by her own biography. Time and time again she raises the sights to the moral and historic issues” (Lippman 2004, 97). She has used her life story in the service both of her public image and of the policies she advocates.

Albright's family, as noted above, fled the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1938, and the family left that nation again with the communist take-over in 1948. The experience of twice fleeing her native land has helped to mold Albright's foreign policy philosophy, and made her more disposed to an activist foreign policy than were some of her colleagues. Her main historical reference point is Munich in 1938, when the Western allies abandoned Czechoslovakia to Adolf Hitler. At her swearing in ceremony, President Clinton remarked that “she watched her world fall apart, and ever since, she has dedicated her life to spreading to the rest of the world the freedom and tolerance her family found here in America.”¹⁹ It is this basic experience and understanding of modern European history that distinguishes Albright from many American leaders. The former President of Czechoslovakia Vaclav Havel, a close friend for more than a

¹⁹ Dobbs, Michael and John Goshko. 1996. “Albright's Personal Odyssey Shaped Foreign Policy Beliefs,” *Washington Post*, 6 December, p. A-25.

decade, said that “she is aware of the meaning of symbols like Munich, symbols of division that never lead to peace and stability. She knows all about appeasement, about democracy making concessions to a dictator” (Blackman 1998, 13).

Albright’s father, Josef Korbel, had been a high-level official in the Czech foreign ministry in the years after World War II, and he had great influence on her thinking. The events informing his postwar worldview were the crude domination of once sovereign Eastern European states first by Nazi Germany and then by the Soviet Union. David Halberstam (2002, 379) states that Albright’s father was “moderately liberal on domestic issues, [while] on foreign policy he remained unbendingly anticommunist, a hawk during the Vietnam War, deeply offended by the student protests of that period.” He had high moral principles, but believed that states needed to act with a dose of hard-headed realism. Despite his experience in diplomacy, he stressed that the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was “no longer an argument among gentlemen” (Dobbs 2000, 261). The United States and other democracies needed to protect themselves by all available means.

Understanding Josef is the key to understanding Madeleine. Michael Dobbs (2000, 259) believes that “it is difficult to overstate the impact that he had on her, both consciously and unconsciously, or the extent to which she modeled herself after him. Pleasing her father was one of the great motivating forces of her life” Albright (2003, 80). describes her father as “my greatest friend and advisor.” She was the dutiful daughter, following in her father’s footsteps. Even after his death in 1977, Albright (2003, 80) remarked that, “as I sought to emulate him, I felt that he never left my side because I never completely stopped thinking about him.”

In the internal debates within the first-term Clinton administration, U.N. Ambassador Albright was usually on the side of

those who favored a more assertive role for the United States in such trouble spots as Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia. A famous story about Albright involves a confrontation with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell. In a meeting about the costs and disadvantages of an intervention in Bosnia, Albright turned to Powell and declared, "What is the use of having this wonderful military if we never use it?" In his memoirs, Powell (1996, 576) recalls that he almost had "an aneurysm" following this exchange. Albright was an early opponent of the Powell doctrine that the United States should restrict its military interventions to situations in which its vital interests are threatened, and should always insist on using overwhelming force. After numerous clashes with Albright over U.S. policy towards intervention, Powell summarized her view as "you dropped off a soldier or two here to keep the peace, and a soldier or two there to make the world better, and sooner or later you had a policy. But you would also have American soldiers strung out vulnerably all over the world with little domestic political support" (Halberstam 2002, 378).

Of all her colleagues, Albright was the person least affected by Vietnam, and this may have influenced her willingness to use force. With respect to foreign policy attitudes, she had basically skipped a generation. David Halberstam (2002, 378) explains

She was literally and figuratively a child of Munich, the Holocaust, and the post-World War II descent of the Iron Curtain, not of the Vietnam experience, and of the American military being impaled in an unpopular, unwinnable war twelve thousand miles away, and the doubts it had created among many of her contemporaries about America's use of its power. The passions of the Vietnam era, though she was just coming of age at that time, graduating from college in 1959, just a few years before Vietnam began to emerge as the dominant concern for the most politically involved people of her generation, always re-

mained distant. Instead, she was very much a product of her personal history.

In the late sixties, Albright was busy being a housewife, working on her doctorate, and remaining aloof from the turmoil of the 1960s. Her father was a hard-liner; her mentor at Columbia, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was as well; and her doctoral thesis about contemporary Soviet repression in central Europe fit easily into the anti-communist camp. Her family was intensely anti-communist and quite grateful for their place in America. As a young woman, records Halberstam (2002, 378), Albright was not "eager to criticize America or its foreign policy even during one of its most tormented periods; she was not about to disparage the strong, generous hand that had welcomed her and her family. To her, this country even in its darkest moment had been America the hospitable and the just."

In March 1998, Serbian leader Slobodan Milosovic began a bloody crackdown in the largely Albanian-inhabited province of Kosovo. As with Bosnia, Albright took a hard-line approach toward Serbia and Milosovic. Along with General Wesley Clark and special envoy Robert Gelbhard, Albright argued for the use of air strikes against the Serbs as early as spring 1998, but President Clinton resisted. For eight months, the United States did almost nothing, except watch from the sidelines as Serbian troops shelled and torched Albanian villages, killing hundreds of people and driving more than a quarter of a million ethnic Albanians from their homes.

Albright's interest in the Balkans was personal, even visceral. She reacted to events in Bosnia and Kosovo in an entirely different way from her administration colleagues, for they seemed to her a repetition of the events of her childhood. For Albright, negotiations with Milosovic were useless because he only understood force. The symbol of Munich was part of Albright's consciousness, and appeasement of Milosovic was not an option.

Secretary Albright understood that Kosovo was a repeat of Bosnia, and that the United States would sooner or later have to take military action. Halberstam (2002, 376) states that "she was absolutely certain of her beliefs about what needed to be done in Kosovo. She was convinced the villain was Slobodan Milosevic, and until he was dealt with, nothing good was going to happen."

In January 1999, Serbian troops massacred approximately 45 Kosovar civilians, and this brutal action forced the Clinton administration to take action. A new peace initiative was launched in February, and Secretary Albright tried to negotiate an end to the conflict between the Serbs and Kosovars. When the peace conference failed, it was a huge setback for Albright. Later, she told friends that it was "one of the worst experiences of her life" (Dobbs 2000, 416). As peace seemed impossible, Albright pushed hard for military action against Milosovic.

The Kosovo conflict became known as "Madeleine's War." Because Albright had for so long favored adoption of a harsh stance against Milosovic, it was clear that she was the leading force behind convincing President Clinton to take this action. The United States and NATO began an air campaign against the Serbs in an effort to convince Milosovic to pull his troops out of Kosovo, and Albright was confident of an early success. "I don't see this as a long-term operation," she told a television interviewer on the opening night of air war. "I think that this is something...that is achievable within a relatively short period of time" (Dobbs 2000, 417).

As it turned out, Albright and her team had seriously misjudged Milosovic's intentions and determination on Kosovo. The Secretary of State believed that the mere threat of bombing, or at most a few days of bombing, would probably be sufficient to force Milosevic to back down. Albright and the President came under tough criticism when the air campaign initially failed to force Milosevic to reverse course. The bombing campaign was

extended from days to weeks as the Americans and NATO relied on airpower alone to move the Serbs out of Kosovo. There was an obvious gap between Albright's harsh words and the cautious half-war that NATO was actually waging. For political reasons, such as minimalizing casualties and keeping the Europeans on board, NATO was obliged to wage war in a way that ran counter to all the military textbooks.

Although the military fight was restrained, the policy eventually prevailed. Milosevic ultimately recognized that he could not prevail, and Clinton and Albright emerged victorious. In political terms, America's victory in Kosovo was an ambivalent one because the costs of victory were huge—including the deaths of thousands of innocent people, Albanians and Serbs alike, billions of dollars in economic damage, and strained relations with Russia and China. Indeed, Michael Hirsch (1999, 45) suggests that Albright's tough position on the Balkans led her in exactly the wrong direction:

Given the limits of U.S. interests in the Balkans, it is tempting to conclude that something very like a Munich-style partition was needed here. Let's face it: Milosevic didn't have the intention or capacity to rampage, Hitler-like, through Europe. All he ever wanted was his rump Yugoslavia, where he employed Hitler-like tactics, but a negotiated settlement might have kept the lid on his ethnic cleansing campaigns. And Albright, because of her personal history, was probably the least likely person to employ such a negotiating trick.

Nevertheless, the defeat of the ethnic cleansers in Kosovo was a personal vindication for the Secretary of State. "They called this Madeleine's war," German foreign minister Joschka Fischer told Albright on the day that Serbian forces began their retreat from Kosovo, "and you won it" (Dobbs 2000, 424). Al-

bright (2003, 421) herself concluded that, despite "all the doubters, the alliance had held together, and through the creative mixing of diplomacy and force, we had won. It was a heady moment. ...I replied that it was NATO's victory, but I did wonder how those who had named it my war as a pejorative felt now. At [a] G-8 dinner...I was the subject of chivalrous and wonderfully exaggerated toasts."

An important policy area in which gender appears to have been relevant was international women's issues. Secretary Albright frequently voiced the opinion that improving women's lives in other countries should become an integral part of U.S. foreign policy. At an International Woman's Day ceremony, Albright stressed that, "advancing the status of women is not only a moral imperative, it is being actively integrated into the foreign policy of the United States. It is our mission. It is the right thing to do, and frankly it is the smart thing to do" (Lipmann 2004, 302). In her memoirs, Albright (2003, 340-1) states that she wanted to send the message:

To each State Department bureau and embassy that I cared about whether women were included in democracy-building projects, whether programs were underway to combat violence against women, whether microenterprise was being encouraged to give women access to credit, whether the special needs of women refugees were being met, and whether family planning programs were being given the priority they deserved.

Secretary Albright chaired the President's Interagency Council on Women which was responsible for coordinating the activities of various agencies such as USAID, the Justice Department, the Labor Department and others in addressing international women's issues. Albright steered modest amounts of additional monies to aid refugee women, to promote the education of girls

in developing nations, and to enable women in the poorest countries to start small businesses. A minor but perhaps telling example of this new approach is how Albright and the State Department helped to set standards for refugee camps on how far women's toilets should be located from their sleeping quarters. This policy detail was part of an effort to reduce the serious problem of violence against women at refugee sites. Similarly, Albright emphasized dealing with the growing problem of the international trafficking in women and girls. She encouraged President Clinton to issue an executive order to combat such trafficking (Lippman 2004). Regarding the importance of these efforts, Thomas Lippman (2004, 306) concludes

These are modest programs; no direct U.S. economic assistance or advice from Washington on modernizing legal codes is intended by itself to rectify inequality or end violence over a broad horizon. Much of the work that has been done has been attitudinal rather than material, such as the administration's sponsorship of activism against sex-based violence in Kenya. And some of Albright's efforts have amounted to nothing more than old-fashioned jawboning, trying to persuade people in other societies that they would be better off if women there had full social, economic, and political parity.

Since President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton were also enthusiastic proponents of bringing women's issues to the center of U.S. foreign policy, it is difficult to untangle the interaction between an administration committed to promoting women's rights at home and abroad and the individual initiatives of Secretary Albright. But her concern for the welfare of women is clear. There is no doubt that she drew much more attention to international women's issues than her predecessors had. Sym-

bolically and rhetorically, the change was actually profound; substantively, the changes were more modest.

Despite her efforts, Secretary Albright was not able to win Senate approval of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, an international treaty signed by President Carter in 1979 which had not been ratified for almost twenty years because it was viewed as unenforceable. In her last months in office, Albright made the rounds of television news programs to conduct farewell interviews. In these appearances, she rarely referred to her achievements in the arena of international women's rights. It is also quite interesting that in her memoirs of over 500 pages, only a handful of pages even address the importance of women's issues. Former Ambassador Julie Chang Bloch (2004) concluded that Albright was not able to "make women's needs and rights central to U.S. diplomacy or carry out a feminist international relations agenda."

If in fact women in general are more pacifistic than men, it is obvious that Secretary Albright was an exception. She was the early hawk, pushing for strong action against Slobodon Milosovic much sooner than any of her colleagues in the Clinton administration. The delays and modest response of the Clinton administration were not her preferred options. On the other hand, the power of the Munich analogy and her deep-rooted anticommunism were not particularly relevant outside of issues like the Balkans and NATO expansion. She favored the ambivalent and moderate Clinton policies on relations with China, on dealing with the continuing threat of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and the partial nonproliferation agreement with North Korea. With respect to these non-European issues, Madeleine Albright, the superhawk, fit in with the other pragmatists of the Clinton team. However, she did try to make women's issues a major part of U.S. foreign policy concerns, and she achieved some modest success with this effort.

COOPERATION: BIPARTISANSHIP

Given her background as a congressional aide and congressional liaison officer for the National Security Council, Albright was well aware of the need to cultivate good relations with members of Congress. Noting that the chairmen of the congressional foreign policy committees were all Republicans, Albright explained that reaching out to Congress was not only "the right thing to do, but it's also the smart thing to do."²⁰ Her efforts at bipartisanship actually extended beyond Congress. Her first trip as Secretary was to Texas, to visit former President Bush and former Secretary of State James Baker, whom she praised for having made progress in the Middle East peace process. In April 1997, she flew to Michigan to honor former President Gerald Ford at the rededication of his presidential museum, and President Ford rewarded Albright by calling her "the Tiger Woods of foreign policy" (Lippman 2004, 39).

Many times, Albright claimed that once she became involved in official U.S. diplomacy, she had all her partisan instincts "surgically removed." Political consultant Dick Morris explained that Albright established a trust level with conservatives enjoyed by no secretary of state since John Foster Dulles. "They see her as one of them, even though she is a Democrat," argued Morris.²¹ One of the smartest moves Albright made was to court Republican Senator Jesse Helms, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a frequent critic of President Clinton's foreign policy. Senator Helms was a fan of Albright from her days as U.N. Ambassador. At her confirmation hearing in 1993, Albright caught the attention of Senator Helms with her life story and her pledge that she would "never advocate giving up sover-

²⁰ Dobbs, Michael. 1997. "Albright Reshapes Role of Nation's Top Diplomat," *Washington Post*, 15 June, p. A-1.

²¹ *Ibid.*

eignty of the American people in an area where it is in our national interest" (Blood 1999, 86.) After the first day of hearings, Helms confided to a friend that, "Albright understands the world like a refugee, a multilingual, multicultural warrior for human rights and democratic principles" (Blood 1999, 87).

Albright won even more points with Helms and other Republicans when she maneuvered to oust U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali as her term at the U.N. was winding down. Boutros-Ghali was extremely unpopular with congressional Republicans. In fact, Albright later admitted that Boutros Ghali's "head" was worth about the \$1 billion in U.N. arrears owed by the United States.

In March 1997, Albright spoke at Wingate University, a small, private college that was the alma mater of Senator Helms. Albright and Helms arrived at the school smiling and holding hands, a flirtatious gesture that only a female secretary of state could pull off. Finding common ground with Senator Helms, Albright told the students at Wingate that she and Helms "both believe that the concept of individual liberty set out in the American Constitution remains, after more than 200 years, the world's most powerful and positive force for change." Then she added that, "we both agree that if our freedoms are to survive through the next American century, we cannot turn our backs on the world" (Blackman 1998, 298). Later that year, Albright attended a private birthday party for Helms' wife and presented the Senator with a blue T-shirt that read: "Somebody at the State Department Loves Me." Helms and Albright were also spotted dancing together at the latter's sixtieth birthday party. Albright's authentic American patriotism appealed to Helms, and they developed an understanding that their mutual respect for the underlying values of democracy allowed them to debate and disagree on particular issues.

Another reason for the unusual relationship between the two is that, unlike previous Clinton administration officials, Albright took Helms seriously. She sought compromise not confrontation. Helms' aides praised Albright for working with their boss on important issues such as the merging of foreign policy agencies into the State Department, a step opposed by Christopher. "There has been a strategic shift in thinking toward the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," said a GOP staffer. "During the first two years of the first term, they fought us on every issue, and the result was a train wreck. Albright has taken a completely different tack."²²

When Albright was experiencing serious criticism throughout 1998, her new friend Jesse Helms came to her defense. In her memoirs, Albright (2003, 353) reports on a phone call from Helms in which he defended her actions. Telling her to brush aside the tough media criticism, Helms added "I may not always agree with you, but you always tell me the truth. You give it to me straight. I can't ask for better than that." Senator Helms concluded that Albright's job was secure because any attempt to oust her would have to go through his committee. Albright (2003, 353) admitted that Helms sometimes infuriated her, but at that moment "I was very glad that we were friends."

The attention Albright gave to Congress paid political dividends in April 1997, when the Senate voted 74 to 26 to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention. The International Chemical Weapons Treaty was conceived during the Reagan administration, and was designed to call on states to cease the production and use of chemical weapons. Although the treaty had been negotiated and signed by President Bush, it had been bogged down in the Senate, largely due to opposition by key Republicans including Helms. Albright's courting of the Senator, together with

²² Dobbs, Michael. 1997. "Albright Reshapes Role of Nation's Top Diplomat," *Washington Post*, 15 June, p. A-1.

a vigilant public relations effort to win support for the treaty, finally did the trick. While Helms ultimately voted against the treaty, he aided Albright by doing nothing to block its passage.

Other successes included congressional approval of NATO expansion, a policy strongly supported by Congressional Republicans. Albright stymied congressional efforts to pull American troops out of Bosnia in the late 1990s. A major reorganization of the State Department, including the abolishment of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the United States Information Agency, was accomplished with the assistance of Senator Helms.²³ Another victory was legislation that authorized the payment of America's debt to the United Nations. While the final legislation was not signed until 1999, Albright had achieved one of the main foreign policy goals of the Clinton administration. Of note was the fact that it was Representative Chris Shays, a Republican from New Jersey, who was mostly responsible for the long delay in passing the U.N. debt bill; Senator Helms had already been on board for months (Lippman 2004, 80).

It would be misleading, of course, to suggest that Secretary Albright's relations with other senators or the entire Congress followed the Jesse Helms model. Even the mutually beneficial relationship with Helms diminished somewhat over the final two years of the Clinton administration. Albright suffered considerable defeats, such as the failure to win approval for "fast-track" trade negotiating authority, and the rejection of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Albright had to fight hard for small increases in the foreign affairs budget, and she left office with international programs still underfunded. Thomas Lippman (2004, 86) concludes that "Albright achieved mixed results in Congress. She probably did as well as anyone could have, given

²³ The responsibilities and resources for these two independent agencies were folded into the State Department.

that Congress was controlled by the opposition party and gripped by the White House sex scandal." It is fair to say that Madeleine Albright was much more successful in working with a Republican congress than was her predecessor Warren Christopher.

Did Madeleine Albright's gender affect her ability to craft a generally workable relationship with a Republican congress? Her previous legislative experience undoubtedly helped her find ways to cooperate with members on Capitol Hill, while her unabashed patriotism and reputation as a foreign policy hawk certainly did not harm her standing with Senate Republicans like Jesse Helms and John Warner. It is tempting to dismiss her cozying up to Helms and others as superficial and somewhat silly. Yet it seems clear that Madeleine Albright's gender had at least some impact on her relative successes working with the Congress on a number of important issues.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined the activities of one of the two highest ranking female foreign policy-makers in U.S. history, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. In a number of respects, gender played a role in her conduct and accomplishments, and in her perception and treatment by others. Despite her qualifications, Albright won her lofty position at least partially because of her gender. Also, there was considerable concern whether her gender somehow disqualified her from service as the nation's chief diplomat. Albright used the notoriety of her role as the first female secretary of state to considerable advantage. She utilized this notoriety to build a kind of "celebrity status," which she then used to facilitate her efforts to speak to the citizenry about the importance of foreign policy issues. Her gender helped her carry out her duties as secretary of state. Quite consciously, she often employed her gender as a "tool" to further particular policies. Finally, Albright was fairly successful in forging a cooperative

relationship with Republicans in Congress, and she was quite willing to use her gender to mollify and charm Republicans who were not disposed to support the Clinton foreign policy agenda.

Ideology is the one area where gender seems not to have played much of a role. While the evidence is ambiguous, there has certainly been much speculation that women might bring a less aggressive approach to the foreign policy process. That does not seem to be the case for Madeleine Albright. Albright often took a hard-line approach, especially on the issues of Bosnia and Kosovo. Outside of Europe, she seemed comfortable with the multilateral and ambiguous approach of the rest of the Clinton administration. On the other hand, Albright made incorporating concern for women's issues into the goals of U.S. foreign policy a priority, and she had some modest success in this regard.

The conclusion drawn here about the relevance of Albright's gender must be leavened by the understanding that it is difficult to untangle the overlapping influences and interactive effects of gender, party membership, personal temperament, and the dynamics of a particular administration. In addition, broad generalizations concerning women foreign policy-makers can hardly be drawn on the basis of a single case, and this is perhaps especially so in this instance, since many of Madeleine Albright's actions were shaped by the uniqueness of her position as the "first woman secretary of state." The beliefs and conduct, influence and styles, of top women foreign policy-makers is a topic which will require much more study, as more women come to occupy those positions. In the case of the United States, we will want to compare to Madeleine Albright those who follow in her pioneering path.

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