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ENG 100

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### Madame President Movement

“The very best predictor of a state’s peacefulness is not its level of wealth, its level of democracy, or its ethno-religious identity, but how well it’s women are treated” (Carvell). The United States has only experienced a male president since democracy was adopted by the founding fathers. The only major difference with the forty five presidents is that the forty fifth was African American. Although this was a major improvement for the U.S. regarding equality, a female president would benefit the country immensely. American citizens would experience a drastic change in culture and the way our government handles policies and foreign affairs if a woman reached the highest level of power our political system holds.

Women, as a gender, have never been fully represented in the United States government. A strong, male dominated democracy has shaped the culture our modern day America values which causes major struggles for women. Nina Bahadur wrote the article “7 Things To Know If You Think Women Are Equal To Men” in light of National Women’s Equality Day on August 26 where she simply describes battles women will have to endure until becoming truly equal. If a woman and man have the same job, work at the same rate, and to equal effort, the woman will still earn seventy eight cents to every dollar that man makes based on a 2014 study conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor. More women than males are struggling financially in America as well. In 2009, given that the Great Recession was underway, 24 million women were stricken

with poverty. Also, women only make up around twenty percent of the House of Representatives and twenty percent of the Senate, so attempting to fix these issues of equality is difficult because of lack of representation. If a woman conquered the presidential election, culture at home would finally be altered. In Iceland, a woman president left girls coming of age feeling equal and as prosperous as the males. After a political protest created by older women of Iceland, their importance bloomed in the eyes of political elites and working males as families and businesses struggled to maintain their everyday tasks. The necessity for equality in the country caused an uproar of protests which caused the dictator to be overthrown and replaced by a female president. A greater effort was made for women to be treated equally every especially businesses. A large company must have a company that has a board of leaders composed of forty percent women, but cannot exceed sixty percent women. "Research has shown us that--and this is international research--that once you have three women in the boardroom, because one is a token and two is a majority. But once you have three, it all of a sudden changes the group dynamics, it changes how the dialogue is taken, what is discussed, and it's been well shown that that goes beyond the balance sheet when you have more women around the table." Females in pursuit of their careers to not have to be concerned with male dominated professions or sexist stigmatism. If the United States elected a female president like Iceland, the gender gap for pay may be closed and less women would be in poverty (Moore, *Where To Invade Next*). In recent international trends, if a country elects or a woman receives the highest position in office, participation of women in politics increases. In recent studies the amount of female legislators increases by six percent and around thirty would be elected to Congress which would increase the proportion of women compared to men from nineteen percent to twenty five percent. In the recent year, the United

States has struggled with the amount of mass tragedies influenced by racism including the Charlottesville attack. In other countries with female leaders, less acts of hate and human rights abuses occur which can benefit the United States towards a more equal culture (The Real Impact Of A Female President? More Women In Politics).

President Obama's administration allowed women to have a larger role in national security, foreign policy, and the military. Specifically, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of State began to adopt the idea from the proposal made by the United Nations regarding a desired increase of women in foreign policy and national security which they referred to as the UN Security Council Resolution or the Women Peace and Security Resolutions (Carvell). Compared to men, women tend to have a 'we' mindset rather than a selfish one as they search for resolutions rather than victories. The high testosterone levels in men cause them to be overconfident and risky which can be a liability in politics (Moore, *Where To Invade Next*). The military has significantly benefitted from a female presence. The skepticism that restricted women involvement in the forces was that they be too fragile and that the overall effort in fighting would decrease. However, gender has not affected the military's performance like the levels of training specific soldiers have. Women have helped the military as a network of other females are easier to reach through foreign affairs and the community operates more swiftly rather than competitively (Carvell). Although women leadership tend to not choose military force as impulsively as men. They care about humanitarian efforts and use negotiations to situate conflicts. Women have been found to value equality more than men in the United States as well through a Pew Research Survey that resulted in sixty nine percent of women and only fifty six percent of men that agreed that the treatment of minority

groups in the country was an important issue. More peaceful ways of handling foreign affairs causes military spending to go down and would allow foreign aid to be better funded which would help education and health. “As the percentage of women in parliament increases by 5%, a nation is five times less likely to use violence when faced with an international crisis” (The Real Impact Of A Female President? More Women In Politics). More women take seats in office if a female leader is put in place which would allow for a more peaceful military agenda and national security, but also strengthen foreign affairs with other countries.

Although the United States has never truly had a female president, Eleanor Roosevelt has been the closest to handle the responsibilities and create a legacy only befitting one. Eleanor Roosevelt was the wife of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and became the First Lady in 1933 to 1945. She was one of the first women who passionately expressed her beliefs on national issues and immediately gained the support of civil rights activists, youth leaders, urban planners, etc. As statistics earlier mentioned depicted, Eleanor Roosevelt was a huge advocate for international cooperation and peace after World War II. Her involvement in the United Nations delegation allowed her to influence the adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights and she continued to raise awareness of the inequalities women and minorities faced in the United States society. “At her death in 1962, she was widely recognized as the twentieth century’s more influential woman, and her reputation has continued to rise ever since.” Eleanor Roosevelt perfectly depicts and may have set the standards too high for a future female president. If the female president follows international trends, statistics, and Eleanor Roosevelt’s impact on American politics, a more peaceful United States would be carved and more efforts toward equality would be made (Ware).

In conclusion, a female president would not hurt the United States government but explore new means of peace and equality in its culture, national security, foreign affairs, and military. Women's "life experiences, perspectives, priorities and participation contribute to and often enable sustainable peace and development" (Carvell). Like Eleanor Roosevelt, a break in a masculine dominated government would allow for it to be more representative and globally humane as statistics show. The influence of a woman may close the gender gap and politics would strengthen as they reach another core group of America. It is only a matter of time that that role model steps into the executive branch and paves a way to an improved, modern United States government.

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