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ENG 100

Assignment #2: Research Paper

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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 can be viewed as a major improvement for the U.S. regarding equality, a female president would benefit the country immensely. Women tend to be more emotional and empathetic than men; however, this would not create a weaker government, but a more peaceful view of policy. American citizens would experience a positive 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 have never been fully represented in the United States government. A male dominated democracy has shaped the culture our modern day society experiences which causes major struggles for women. In our culture, men are still seen as superior regarding politics and business as we are still stuck in old tradition and stereotypes. In *7 Things To Know If You Think Women Are Equal To Men*, Nina Bahadur describes battles women will have to endure until becoming truly equal. She claims that more women than men are struggling financially because in 2009, given that the Great Recession was underway, 24 million women were stricken with

poverty. Bahadur explains that the problem is caused by the gender gap in business. The gender gap refers to the unequal pay women experience as they earn seventy eight cents to every dollar that a man makes which is based on a 2014 study conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor. Although there may not be equality in results, but there should be equality of opportunity in the United States and the lesser pay restricts women to fulfill their American dream. Bahadur blames the slow progression of equality on unequal representation in office because women only make up around twenty percent of the House of Representatives and twenty percent of the Senate. If a woman won the presidential election, the unfair struggles women face would be addressed and women being seen as successful as men would significantly change American culture (Bahadur). According to *The Real Impact Of a Female President? More Women In Politics*, if a country elects or a woman receives the highest position in office, participation of women in politics increases. The article claims that the amount of female legislators increases by six percent, so if the United States followed this trend, around thirty women would be elected to Congress which would increase the proportion of women compared to men from nineteen percent to twenty five percent (*The Real Impact Of a Female President? More Women In Politics*). If the United States elected a female president, women would be better represented in the government and issues such as the gender gap may be improved or taken more seriously as these define women negatively in our society.

In *Where to Invade Next*, by Michael Moore, he travels to Iceland where a woman president left girls coming of age feeling equal and as prosperous as the males. Moore interviews female elites of Iceland and learns that a political protest, created by older women of Iceland,

forced political male elites and working males to realize their importance as families and businesses struggled to maintain their everyday tasks. The women proudly describe the protest as it resulted in the necessity for equality in the country and caused the dictator to be overthrown and replaced by a female president, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. They continue to describe the greater effort made for women to be treated equally especially in Icelandic businesses. The actions included a mandate that a large company must have 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.” It was created so females in pursuit of careers that tended to be male dominated would not be intimidated or treated unfairly (Moore). Women are as capable as leadership as men, but the unequal pay displays their level of worth in business. As the United States modernizes through amendments and laws, so should the status of a woman. If the United States elected a female president like Iceland, women may be as prosperous as their male coworkers and woman will be better valued in American culture.

Where To Invade Next describes the United States’ few actions to defeat sexism and inequality for women. He talks about how President Obama’s administration allowed women to have a larger role in national security, foreign policy, and the military to promote equality. 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). They derived this plan by discovering that the high testosterone levels in men cause them to be overconfident and risky which can be a liability in politics; where as, women, compared to men, tend to have a 'we' mindset rather than a selfish one as they search for resolutions rather than victories (Moore). The military has significantly benefited from this female presence. The skepticism that restricted women's involvement in the forces was that we seemed to 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). *In The Real Impact Of A Female President? More Women In Politics*, they create the argument that women in leadership tend to not choose military force as impulsive as men as they care about humanitarian efforts and use negotiations to situate conflicts. The article refers to the Pew Research Survey where the results show that sixty nine percent of women and fifty six percent of men agreed that the treatment of minority groups in the country was an important issue. Women have been found to value equality more than men which would cause them to use more peaceful ways of handling foreign affairs because they lack the aggressiveness that can be derived from superiority. Then, military spending would go down as less tactics of force would be used, so foreign aid could be better funded to 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 elected which would allow for a more peaceful military agenda and national security, but also strengthen foreign affairs with other countries.

Although no one can be sure that the United States will follow the same statistics as other countries who have elected female presidents, the trends the U.S. faced was very similar when Eleanor Roosevelt became the First Lady. The United States has never truly had a female president, but 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. Breaking stereotypes, Roosevelt was not too emotional in her decisions as she created an emphasis of peace, but reflected her 'we' mindset and created a compromise. 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 most influential woman, and her reputation has continued to rise ever since." Eleanor Roosevelt is very similar to the successful women in other countries that hold the highest position in office as they create solutions rather than furthering aggressive actions. If the future 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 can only benefit the United States government and 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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