best traditions and prove itself worthy as great nation"(1222).

American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr supported Kennan's containment policy. A prominent anti-communist, Niebuhr believed that both "individualism of bourgeois democracy and the collectivism of Marxism" promised an unrealistically "easy resolution of the tension and conflict between self-interest and the general interest" (1214). Niebuhr argued that any free and democratic society must be flexible in meeting the problems of its era and not tied too closely to its previous traditions. Niebuhr thought that society "would be destroyed if natural conflicts and contests between various vitalities were no mitigated, managed, and arbitrated"(1215).

The rise of international terrorism has sparked a fresh round of sometimes heated discussions about the appropriateness of various methods of securing the vital interests of the United States. Many of the aspects of the historical debate about American foreign policy continue today. Is expansive American military action necessary to secure the American population and allow their further development or is anything but narrow self-defense a threat to personal liberty and security? Should the promotion of American "values" be a core component of American foreign policy, or does the imposition of American morals lead to the oppression of foreign peoples and ultimately create a more dangerous security situation? A comparison of the actions and rhetoric of the current and previous presidential administrations reveals some interesting differences and similarities.

The Bush administration, in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, framed the conflict with international terrorism as a deeply ideological conflict. In an address to a joint session of Congress just after the attacks, President Bush stated that"the advance of human freedom -- the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time -- now depends on us," and that terrorism was headed "for history's unmarked grave of discarded lies." Additionally, in Bush's March, 2003 address to the nation at the start of the invasion of Iraq, he describe the administration's goals to "disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger." Much of Bush's rhetoric echoed that of earlier leaders, such as Woodrow Wilson, who described American military action as necessary to free oppressed people and secure democratic governance. Bush's actions leading up to the invasion of Iraq, however, also represented a rejection of Cold War policies, as Kennan's emphasis on containment and international appeal were dismissed in favor of a more confrontational approach.

The Obama administration has, in contrast to Bush, projected a less ideological and more pragmatic approach. In announcing his decision to send 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan, Obama made clear his view that the United States "did not ask for this fight" and that the War in Afghanistan was launched with "domestic unity and international legitimacy - and only after the Taliban refused to turn over Osama bin Laden." Obama has also made distinctions between the war in Afghanistan and the War in Iraq, a war that he had personally

opposed and believes was optional. Obama also devoted a significant part of his speech to the problems in neighboring Pakistan and the need to contain violent jihadism, describing the Afghan border region as the nexus of global terrorism.

Though President Bush and President Obama have used different rhetoric and pursued different policies, they do share some similarities. Both Bush and Obama have loudly disavowed any claim on the resources or sovereignty of Iraq and Afghanistan, attempting to quiet claims of American imperialism. Both Presidents have invested time, resources, and political capital attempting to bolster the legitimacy of successor governments in both nations. Finally, both administrations have pursued similar policies of counter terrorism, including controversial techniques such as drone attacks, within both Iraq and Afghanistan.

American foreign policy has been a subject of debate since the founding of the nation. Debates about domestic policy or individual freedom have often been more popular or received more attention, but issues pertaining to national defense and America's place in the world have also been critical. An increasingly complex and interconnected world will ensure that these debates remain a major part of the American political discourse.

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