Anti-Americanism: A Regional Comparison

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**Abstract**

Anti-Americanism is not a new phenomenon, but it has received a marked increase in scholarly attention in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and subsequent US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. While an agreement exists that anti-American attitudes are present throughout the world, a disconnect remains between academic and public discourses regarding the explanations for these attitudes. Academic research largely focuses on the role of US Foreign Policy as a primary source of anti-American sentiment. On the contrary, public sources often interpret anti-American attitudes to be a result of feelings of jealousy for US freedoms, as well as a rejection of American values and standards of living. Following a review of the relevant literature, we will use comparative historical analysis to examine attitudes toward the US in a regional context, focusing on Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa. Our results show that it is the US Foreign Policy, which has often had complex and detrimental effects on the examined regions, that has caused unfavorable feelings towards the US to evolve. These findings could have a profound impact on future policy makers in their efforts to improve foreign policy and better the US image and its relations with countries throughout the globe.

**Introduction**

Acting as an imperial or hegemonic power in the international arena requires, by definition, the imposition of one society’s will. Rebellions against ancient Greek and Roman, and more recent British and French, rule attest to the fact that domination breeds resentment. All too often throughout history, countries holding positions of power have abused their influence and used their authority as a form of domination over other weaker nations.

America has tried to change that model. The hope following World War II was that the United States could establish an international order based on shared values and interests, and which would, by extension, not require the sort of overt domination characteristic of previous global powers. The US would lead by the force of its examples and ideas, and others would willingly follow, since the system was designed, in theory, to be mutually beneficial for all participating countries. On the surface, it appeared as though the US would work to exercise and demonstrates its values in such a way that other nations could structure themselves based off of the model provided by the leader in democratic ideals.

Something has gone seriously amiss, however, since American global leadership is challenged. Anti-Americanism is not a universal phenomenon, and it is in fact milder and more nuanced than many might assume, but it is also very real, and poses a significant threat to the notion of the US as a benevolent hegemon.

**Theoretical Orientation**

The academic research focuses on the role of US foreign policy in generating anti-American sentiment. Nearly every region of the world has been profoundly impacted by the United States’ aggressive and, often times, self-serving foreign policy. The United States has largely been viewed as the world’s lone hegemon since the end of World War II. This status not only comes with great power, but also immense responsibility. At a glance, the United States may appear to be a nation focused on providing a force for good in the world, but a deeper look into the United States’ actions in regards to its foreign policy proves that advancement and improvement of other nations is not always the underlying goal. Rather, the core of United States foreign policy has been to advance its own interests and power (Walt, 2005). In the years following World War II, through the Cold War, containment had been the primary goal of United States foreign policy. While part of containing the spread of communism was a result of the belief that democracy is the best possible form of government, the focus of containment arguably had more to do with limiting the Soviet Union’s power. Containing communism inhibited the Soviet Union, as well as support for the communist nation, from expanding. Although the United States is known for promoting democracy, the country has proven itself to be hypocritical. As Ryan (2004) states, “Washington decides what democracy is,” (p. 117). While the United States advocates for the spread of democracy, the nation has also been known to interfere in countries, such as Iran, Guatemala, and Venezuela, when democratic ideals begin to heavily benefit the newly democratic nations, but inhibit the United States’ self interests.

Despite the overwhelming agreement that U.S. foreign policy is the root cause of anti-American sentiments, some opinions suggest there is more to the story. Although there is a sense of anti-Americanism in most regions of the world, Katzenstein and Keohane (2007) believe that these anti-American views are too diversified to be explained by only one cause. Rather, the authors have come to the conclusion that there are two primary views in regards to anti-Americanism, the American left and the American right. The American left holds the belief that anti-Americanism is a reaction to US policy, while the American right views anti-Americanism as a bias against the United States and a general hatred for the freedoms Americans enjoy. This American right belief is one explanation that is sometimes used to explain the anti-American feelings possessed by repressed regions of the world, especially the Middle East. Although research supporting this claim is lacking, support for this claim has grown due to well known political figures using the idea that other people hate the U.S. for its freedoms as an explanation for anti-Americanism. Upon addressing the United States in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, President George W. Bush made the statement,

“Americans are asking, ‘Why do they hate us?’  They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.”

While this statement may have been used to rally the United States public against the “big, bad terrorists”, research does not back up this claim made by former President Bush. Sullivan (2007) explains that “Muslims do not hate America for what it is, but for what it does, how it does it, and to whom it does it.” President Bush was not alone in this thinking. Jerry Falwell, evangelical Southern Baptist pastor and well known televangelist, also looked to American values as a root cause for the September 11th attacks, though his views were not praising the American values he believed to be the catalyst of the terrorist attacks. According to a article by ABC News, Falwell called out groups such as pagans, abortionists, feminists, gays, lesbians, the ACLU, and People for the American Way and made the statement “I point the finger in their face and say ‘you helped this happen.’” While Falwell’s stance was quite different than President Bush, both Bush and Falwell mistakenly believe the 9/11 terrorist attacks were caused by American freedoms or values, neglecting to consider US foreign policy as even a factor in the attacks. This disconnect between academic sources and public discourses regarding anti-American continues to exist, despite the crushing research disproving the claims made by public figures that have shaped the ideas of anti-Americanism resulting from a hatred of American freedoms.

Almost every region in the world has been the victim of United States meddling at one time or another. One region, Latin America, has been said to have “been more frequently victimized by United States meddling than any other set of countries in the world,” (Baker and Cupery, 2013). The actions taken by the United States in the region have resulted in ongoing animosity and anger in Latin America. Ryan (2004) has defined three primary causes of the anti-American sentiments in Latin America including the unequal economic interactions with the United States, the reaction of the region to United States perceptions and characterizations of Central and Latin Americans, and the perception that the United States does not live up to the standards it advocates. As Sweig (2006) states, many Latin Americans believe the United States “supports democracy only when ‘our son of a (explicit)’ wins an election,” (p. 159). The overwhelming tenacity of United States power and the position of disparity that has resulted from United States’ actions in the region have created feelings of resentment. Ryan also explains that while anti-Americanism in Latin American countries is based on political and economic dependency, there is a widespread acceptance of United States culture. Ballve (2005) describes United States policy toward Latin America as alternating between “indifference and intimidation”. The United States has had no problem intervening in the region when U.S. interests were at stake, yet have often ignored Latin American countries during times in which aid was needed. As a result, new forms of anti-Americanism are taking form in Latin America. Rather than violence, the region is advocating for political resistance to U.S. influence and power (Ballve, 2005). In addition to the meddling that has occurred directly within Latin America, United States involvement and military action in Iraq has had a drastic impact on the opinions of the United States in Latin America (Ballve, 2005). Not only is U.S. foreign policy damaging relationships with regions they are directly involved in, but it is also having a negative impact on opinions of the audiences of the world watching meddling occur in other countries.

The Middle East is the region of the world that has appeared to be the largest target of United States meddling in most recent times. The Middle East has been both blessed and cursed with an unimaginably valuable resource: oil. Oil has, in many ways, been the root cause for much of the detrimental intervention that the region has endured at the hands of the United States. Anti-American sentiments in the Middle East can be linked to the United States and Western European political predominance in the Middle East pursuing oilfields, as well as the United States’ overwhelming support for Israel and their overall foreign policy regarding the Middle East (Sharma, 2013). While the United States’ past willingness to use military force to protect the flow of oil has resulted in resentment and animosity, there is more to the story than oil. Israel is another important puzzle piece for it represents a “gross injustice” for Arabs (Makdisi, 2002). Both the situation involving Israel and U.S. obsession with Middle Eastern oil have been used to shape foreign policy in the region. Overall, it is the United States’ foreign policy in the Middle East that has caused bitterness to arise. More specifically, the United States’ use of American military force in the region is one of the most evident elements of anti-Americanism (Breyfogle, 2004). According to Lynch (2007), the Arab public identifies the United States as “generally hostile, aggressive, and untrustworthy” as a result of U.S. foreign policy. The war in Iraq has largely helped to shape these feelings. In June of 2003, less than thirty percent of publics in Middle Eastern countries surveyed expressed favorable opinions of the United States, including only one percent of people surveyed in Jordan or the Palestinian Authority (Gsentzkow and Shapiro, 2004). Disapproval of the United States reached far deeper in several Middle Eastern countries. Just one year after the Iraq War began, 98 percent of Egypt and 94 percent of Saudi Arabia expressed unfavorable opinions of the United States (Sweig, 2006).

In addition to the anger that has formed as a result of United States use of military force, there is also a sense of resentment in the Middle East resulting from United States’ failure to use their power to advance life in the region. According to Makdisi (2002), there is a sense of disappointment felt by many in the Middle East due to the United States continuing to play a role in maintaining a repressive Middle Eastern status quo rather than using their power as a force for democratic change and liberation in the Arab world. Countries of the Middle East largely recognize United States’ power, and as a result of recognizing this power, many perceive United States’ failures to resolve issues as being an intentional disregard of serious problems within Middle Eastern countries (Lynch, 2007). United States’ power and influence is recognized and respected throughout the world, and the fact that the super power often neglects to use its power to advance other countries has resulted in disappointment and cynicism. Although the United States preaches of sparking democratic changes in the Middle East, “America rarely lives up to its idealistic rhetoric,” (Walt, 2005).

Anti-American sentiments are not limited to Latin America and the Middle East, regions in which the United States have physically intervened countless times. Asia, especially China, also display some feelings of anti-Americanism. According to Johnston and Stockman (2007), most negative views of the U.S. are related to the United States’ overall strategy of hegemony, especially regarding its actions with Taiwan. Much of the feelings in China in regards to U.S. foreign policy come down to the belief that the United States is a “unjust and overbearing dominant state in the system,” (Johnston and Stockman, 2007). Although ongoing disagreements over Taiwan is considered to be the most important issue with the U.S., China also lists containment and the double standards demonstrated by the U.S. to be two important factors of its negative feelings towards the United States (Johnston and Stockman, 2007). Once again, it is the United States’ foreign policy, which is described as “hegemonistic, aggressive, and arrogant” (Johnston and Stockman, 2007), that is damaging its relationships with countries throughout the world. South Korea has also displayed feelings of anti-Americanism throughout the years. During the 1980s, there were several burnings of U.S. cultural and information centers as a result of the U.S. policy of containment and the poor image it left of the U.S. among the younger South Korean generation (Sweig, 2006). In the 1990s, the country felt snubbed by the U.S. after being left out of the Agreed Framework in 1994 that took place in response to the 1993 North Korean nuclear crisis, and in 2002, two U.S. soldiers accidently ran over and killed two South Korean schoolgirls which sparked protests calling for U.S. troops to leave the country (Sweig, 2006).

The United States’ history with Europe extends back all the way to the beginning of the United States’ existence. Although European countries have long been considered to be allies of the U.S., especially Great Britain, there are still anti-American feelings that exist in this region of the world. Meunir (2007) focuses on the opinions of the U.S. held by countries such as France, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain. Meunir finds that the opinions of the U.S. are fairly similar in most of these nations. Overall, feelings towards the U.S. in Europe are defined as “reasoned criticism” rather than anti-Americanism, according to Meunir. In France, many of the negative sentiments are a result of U.S. unilateral actions and overall distrust in the United States. The war in Iraq is often used as an example of U.S. unilateral behavior. France, Germany, and Russia led opposition to the war, and other European countries including Great Britain, Poland, and Spain experienced sharp declines in positive attitudes towards the United States by 2003 (Sweig, 2006). While Great Britain had been an important supporter of the U.S. post 9/11, approval rating for the United States dropped from seventy-five percent to forty-eight percent from 2002 to 2003 (Sweig, 2006). Just as attitudes of Latin American countries changed as a result of U.S. action in Iraq, the approval of the U.S. by European countries also took a severe beating. European nations are also very critical of the United States’ domestic affairs, described as “social anti-Americanism” by Meunir. This form of anti-Americanism is sparked by Europeans’ criticism of U.S.’s absence of universal health care, weak social protections, and the lack of good public education (Meunir, 2007). Although Europeans do possess some anti-American sentiments as a result of U.S. foreign policy, there is also criticism that arises from U.S. domestic affairs.

Another explanation sometimes used for anti-American feelings is the belief that other regions of the world disapprove of U.S. culture and values. Kohut and Stokes (2006) list the impact of U.S. culture as one cause of anti-Americanism and use a Gallup poll conducted in 1983 surveyed six countries (France, West Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Brazil and Mexico) to back up their claim. The poll found that four of the six countries complained of too much American influence in pop culture, and five of the six countries felt as though the U.S. had too much influence in their country’s business practices. Although this poll may display that resistance to U.S. culture did exist twenty-seven years ago, there is now overwhelming research that proves U.S. culture does not cause anti-American feelings. Makdisi (2002) states that expressions of anti-American feelings are far less related to a “blind hatred of the U.S. or American values than from a profound ambivalence about America.” Providing back up to this claim made by Makdisi is Breyfogle’s (2004) explanation that anti-Americanism is not a hatred of America itself, but of what America is understood to stand for in regards to its foreign policy. In addition, Lynch (2007) finds that U.S. policies are twice as important as American values in shaping the opinions of America in Middle Eastern nations. Generally speaking, there is vast acceptance, and even admiration, of U.S. culture, products, and technology throughout the world.

A third explanation used to explain anti-American feelings, especially in Muslim areas of the world, is that Muslims believe the U.S. intends to use its power to change the Arab identity (Lynch, 2007). In reality, eighty-seven percent of people surveyed in Muslim nations approve of democratic ideals and sixty-eight percent approve of the way democracies perform (Cole, 2006). There is, however, some research suggesting that some Middle Eastern people may be hesitant to adopt a democracy because they understand the United States’ push for democracy in Middle Eastern countries to be “merely a grossly hypocritical democratism based on a campaign to seize and occupy oil-rich Arab lands,” (Sullivan, 2007). This does not mean that people of Middle Eastern countries disapprove of democracy; rather, they feel as though the United States is pushing democracy onto their countries as a way to serve U.S. interests. According to Furia and Lucas (2008), “Arab attitudes toward the Western world vary greatly depending on the particular Western country in question, and ‘politics’ explains more of the variation than does either ‘society’ or ‘culture’”. This provides an explanation as to why anti-American feelings exist while other democratic nations that share values very similar to the U.S. are not facing the same animosity or resentment.

Although it is clear that negative opinions towards the United States exist in many areas of the world, the severity of these feelings vary, largely depending on the US’s involvement in particular regions. While the US has had interaction with every major region of the world, some good and some bad, it is clear the US’s interactions with Latin America and the Middle East have resulted in far more hostile relationships and reactions than the relationships between the US and Europe or Asia. Europe, in particular, holds feelings of disappointment towards the US rather than hostility. This is largely due to the respect and recognition European countries hold for the US as an important force for good in the world. As the US has meddled in countries, often times leaving the countries in worse condition than they were previously, feelings of disappointment and frustration have developed in many European countries. Although the US has not directly interfered with European countries, US foreign policy decisions are greatly impacting the opinions of regions such as Europe. The Iraq War is one example of how US foreign policy has negatively impacted the feelings towards the US held by European countries. According to opinion polls conducted by Pew Research, favorable opinions of the US held by European countries experienced a significant decrease in the years of the Iraq War. In 2002, only 61 percent of Germany held favorable views, slipping from 78 percent in 2000 and Great Britain’s favorable views decreased by 8 percent to 75 percent (Pew Research). Although the decline in favorable opinions of the US in countries that were not directly impacted by the war is attention worthy, they do not come close to the level of negative opinions held for the US in countries in the Middle East, or even Latin America. In 2002, just 10 percent of Pakistan and 25 percent of Jordan polled reported favorable feelings of the US. Latin American countries, who although were not directly impacted by military presence during the early 2000s but were hit hard economically as a result of the War on Terror, such as Argentina recorded only 34 percent favorable attitudes towards the US in 2002.

Despite declines in favorable opinions occurring throughout the globe, it is clear that the most severe shifts have taken place in the Middle East and Latin America. While European countries’ favorable opinions of the US have dropped at times and there now exists an overall sense of disappointment in the US, feelings of hostility and resentment towards the US do not exist in Europe as they do in the Middle East and Latin America. The prime reason for this difference boils down to the US’s constant, detrimental meddling in the countries of Latin America and the Middle East. It is for this reason that the focus of this research is on the regions of Latin America and the Middle East, which have been blatantly impacted by the US and have developed deep anti-American feelings as a result, and not on regions such as Europe which has not been directly meddled within by the US. Through a comparative historical analysis of the United States’ relations with the regions of Latin America and the Middle East, it will become evident that US foreign policy has resulted in devastating results for the countries that have fallen victim to US meddling, and this is ultimately the underlying reason for the anti-American feelings present in the Middle East and Latin America.

**Latin America**

Latin America has found itself the victim of United States’ meddling since the turn of the 19th century, beginning with the implementation of the Monroe Doctrine. Under this foreign policy, which dealt specifically with the Latin American region, the US essentially took ownership over the Western Hemisphere, making it clear to European nations that they could no longer interfere with the nations of the West. Although the implementation of this policy originally, at the surface, appeared to be in place to protect nations of the Western Hemisphere from further colonization and imperialism, this doctrine quickly turned into the foundation for decades of US interference in Latin American affairs. As stated by Sabatini (2013), the Monroe Doctrine, and the power that resulted from the policy, has fashioned a US policy towards Latin America that has allowed it to “intervene overtly or covertly at will to impose its national interests, support policy preferences and allies, and in some cases, overturn governments when US interests were threatened,” (p. 2). While most nations of this region have felt the effects of US intrusion, a spectrum of anti-American feelings exist between the Latin American nations, ranging from serious bitterness and dislike to feelings of uneasiness and distrust. The variance in .anti-American sentiments is largely a reflection of the differing degree of invasion by the US in specific countries, as well as the current condition Latin American countries currently find themselves in as a result of US foreign policy.

Argentina is one of the several Latin American countries that exhibit strong anti-American attitudes. Beginning in 1930, Argentina entered into a period of time now known as the “Infamous Decade”. During this time, the country endured immense political and electoral fraud, as well as a devastating economic crisis largely sparked by the Great Depression taking place in the US. Leading up to World War II, Argentina held relatively strong relations with Germany due to the high number of German immigrants. As a result of the relationship with Germany, it was believed, at times, that Argentina was somewhat supportive of the German cause; however, Argentina stayed neutral throughout most of the war until finally breaking relations with Germany in 1945 towards the end of World War II. During World War II, US foreign policy worked in a fashion to unite Latin America in an alliance against Germany, and Argentina’s relationship with Nazi Germany posed serious problems. As a result of Argentina’s neutrality during the war, the United States refused to extend the Lend-Lease aid, a program established to provide needed materials to the Allies from during the years of the war, to the Latin American nation, although diplomatic relations did pick back up upon Argentina’s decision to fully support the Allies in April of 1945.

In more recent times, Argentina has proved not only to be loyal to the United States, but the Latin America nation has also displayed acceptance of US political and economic ideals. Serving as an ally to the United States, Argentina sent troops to the Gulf War in 1991. Positive feelings towards the US lasted throughout the 1990s, as Argentina, like other Latin American countries, benefited from free-market reforms initiated by the US that included “privatizations and deregulatory schemes choreographed by Washington and the Washington-dominated international financial institutions,” (Ballve, 2005, p. 37). Unfortunately for Argentina, these benefits enjoyed by the country from the reforms pushed by the US came crashing down in the 2001 economic meltdown. After the September 11th terrorist attacks, the US had become so engrossed in the War on Terror that Argentina was left to deal with the downfall of the economic crash with no assistance from the US (Ballve, 2006). As a result of the abandonment felt by Argentina during the economic meltdown, as well as the foreign policy measures the US had employed in nations such as Iraq, favorable opinions of the US held by Argentina dropped to just 34 percent in 2002, and have yet to increase past 42 percent since (Pew Research Global Attitudes Project, 2014).

Guatemala is one of the Latin American countries that have been most severely impacted by United States’ meddling. The interaction between the two countries, especially in the 1950s, accentuates the US’ ability, as well as commitment, to act in suspicious and devious ways to protect its own self-interests. Jacabo Arbenz was elected president of Guatemala in 1950, and his time as president resulted in immense progress for the country, including improvements in workers’ and women’s rights, and most importantly, land reform. Although Arbenz was not anti-American, the president realized that in order for progress to continue to occur within Guatemala, it was necessary for him to “overturn the symbols and substance of U.S. power and challenge the purview within society of the landed oligarchs and local elites that had become America’s allies,” (Sweig, 2006, p. 8). Arbenz’s commitment to land reform, more specifically agrarian reform, quickly became a threat to the American-owned United Fruit Company, who had for many years been in control of up to forty-two percent of the arable land of Guatemala. In 1952, President Arbez ordered the Decree 900, a land reform which redistributed unused land to Guatemalans. Included in the land redistributed was unused land controlled by the United Fruit Company. The U.S. secretary of state at the time, John Foster Dulles, quickly became involved in the situation, as his brother’s law firm represented the United Fruit Company. Arbenz’s attempts to further Guatemala’s progress, and the US fear that Arbenz’s actions were leading Guatemala down in the direction towards communism, ultimately resulted in Arbenz being removed from power through the 1954 coup carried out by the US. The effects of the coup felt by Guatemala were immeasurably detrimental. Upon the removal of Arbenz, Carlos Armas came into power which resulted in years of regression in progress that had taken place under Arbenz. In the thirty years following the coup, Guatemala suffered through the hardships of a civil war, in which over 200,000 Guatemalans were killed or had disappeared, as well as repression, insurgency, and home-grown genocide (Sweig, 2006). The US’ actions in Guatemala, beginning with the take down of democratically elected Jacobo Arbenz, stifled growth and took the lives of thousands of civilians, all in an attempt to protect US interests. As Sweig (2006) states, “there is almost no political actor in Guatemala today whose mouth does not carry a bitter anti-American taste,” (p.9). Considering the damaging intrusion of the US in Guatemala, who could possibly blame them?

Another Latin American country that has had its fair share of run-ins with the United States’ invasive, self-serving foreign policy is Venezuela. In 1902, Venezuela underwent what became known as the Venezuela Crisis. During this time, Britain, Germany and Italy imposed a naval blockade on Venezuela after President Cipriano Castro refused to pay debts European citizens had suffered in the Venezuela civil war. Castro expected to be protected by the US as a part of the Monroe Doctrine from these actions by the European countries; however, the US did not step in as a result of interpreting the Monroe Doctrine as a policy purely to prevent European nations from seizing territory in Latin America. Despite the original lack of support from the US, Castro did not give into the European nations which eventually lead to the US becoming involved to help resolve the situation. The Roosevelt Corollary, which gave the US power to intervene in Latin America using military force, resulted from the Venezuela Crisis. This policy became the catalyst for an “entirely new diplomatic tenet which epitomized ‘big stick’ approach to foreign policy,” and allowed the US to essentially become the “policeman of the Western Hemisphere,” (Ricard, 2006, p. 18).

The discovery of petroleum in Venezuela in 1918 ignited further relations between Venezuela and the United States. Juan Vincente Gomez, the president of Venezuela at the time, capitalized on the discovery of petroleum by allowing concessions to foreign oil companies, making Venezuela an important resource to the US. Although the development of the oil industry allowed for the growth of an economic relationship between the US and Venezuela, it not only became clear that the power balance within the relationship was far from equal, but also that Venezuela’s oil supply would be the grounds for invasive US policy in Venezuela. In November of 1948, a military coup ended the rule of Romulo Gallegos, and Gallegos immediately pointed to the US, more specifically US oil industries, as an instigator of the coup. Although there initially did not appear to be enough evidence to support this claim, a later review of the records displays that the US did in fact influence Venezuela’s eventual move away from democracy (Aram, 1992). The success of the Venezuelan oil industry should have resulted in vast improvements in the quality of life and economic situation for the entire country, but this was far from the case. Years later, Hugo Chavez immediately voiced his frustration that despite Venezuela’s lucrative oil industry, the nation’s oil wealth had failed to spread and 80 percent of the country was living in poverty (Sweig, 2006). As Sweig (2006) discusses, a great deal of this disparity in wealth can be chalked up to the US’ tendency to create the 80/20 divide, in which US relations highly benefit the top 20 percent of a country, yet leave the other 80 in shambles.

When Hugo Chavez was elected in 1998, the leader immediately began attempts to regain control over the nation’s oil industry which included moves such as overturning the privatization of the PVDSA. The changes in the oil industry of Venezuela did not suit US interests well. In 2002, the US attempted a coup to remove Chavez from power. Not only did this coup fail after Chavez returned to power just forty-eight hours after being removed, but US standing, influence, and leverage with Venezuela decreased significantly (Sweig, 2006). The actions taken by the US against Venezuela have proven to result in long term consequences for the relationship between the US and Venezuela, as even in 2013, only 53 percent of Venezuelans polled held favorable opinions of the US (Pew Research Global Attitudes Project, 2014). The US’ treatment of Venezuela, and the negative opinions of the US that have resulted in Venezuela, again display the reoccurring theme of anti-American attitudes felt by countries that have been victims of detrimental US foreign policy.

Cuba and the United States have an especially extensive and complicated history of relations largely characterized by tension and conflict. US intrusion in Cuba’s affairs began fairly quickly upon Cuba’s birth as an independent country. In 1898, the US passed the Teller Amendment stating that although the US would not establish permanent control over Cuba, the US held the authority to intervene “for pacification thereof”, or to keep the peace, but once peace had been restored, the US would return the island to the control of the Cuban government. In 1901, the US introduced the Platt Amendment which allowed the US to “intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty.” This entitlement exhibited by the US to decide itself to have the right to intervene in sovereign nations to impose its own values and vision of government, as seen in the Teller and Platt amendments, has proved to be the cause of feelings of resentment and disapproval in Cuba, as well as other countries around the globe.

The US maintained a powerful position in Cuban affairs for the decades to follow the implementation of the Teller and Platt amendments, resulting in US control of a vast amount of the Cuban sugar industry. In general, the leaders of Cuba throughout the years prior to the Cuban Revolution were well-liked and supported by the US, for these leaders’ agendas ultimately served US interests, as well. US support for Cuban leaders came to a halt when Ramon Grau came to power as the US perceived Grau as communistic and a threat to US interests. Support for Cuban leaders reappeared upon Fulgencio Batista’s rise to power in the 1930s. Although Batista only served two terms throughout the years, he remained in power of Cuba through supporting and directing presidents to uphold his political agenda and ideas. Corruption in Cuba flourished during Batista’s time in power, but the US’ support for the dictator gave Batista the power he needed to maintain authority. In Batista’s successful attempt to take back the presidency in 1952 through a coup that removed elected Cuban president Carlos Prio Socorras from power, the US showed their support through providing economic and military aid. The US’ support for Batista’s coup is only one instance in which the US has shown support for dictators that will preserve US interests over elected officials favored by the people of the countries in which the leaders had been elected.

In 1959, the Cuban Revolution provided not only a turn of events for Cuba, but also a drastic change in the relationship between the US and Cuba. As a result of the revolution, Fidel Castro arose as the new leader of Cuba. Ultimately, the goals of the revolutionaries were to modernize Cuba, from its economy to its political system, and bring social justice to the country’s poor who had suffered for years under Batista’s rule (Sweig, 2006). Unfortunately, Cuba was largely dependent on the US, giving the US the upper hand in relations with Cuba. President Eisenhower rejected land reform and nationalization programs drafted by Cuba and did everything in his power to make it as difficult as possible for Cuba to successfully develop a nationalist path, ultimately leading to Castro recognizing that Cuba could not advance without removing American force from Cuba (Sweig, 2006). The Cuban Revolution became an anti-American movement only as a result of the United States’ refusal to allow Cuba to flourish and evolve past its dependency on the US. Had the US decided to work with Cuba to help the country grow rather than attempt to stifle developments, the history and relations of the US and Cuba in the years to come could have been drastically different and resulted in a friendly relationship of cooperation in which both countries enjoyed equal, mutual benefits. Unfortunately, the years following the Cuban Revolution consisted of US planned and executed invasions, attempted coups, and embargos in hopes of bringing down the Castro regime from the Bay of Pigs invasion, to the Cuban Missile Crisis, to the harsh embargoes that resulted in over 100 billion dollars in damage to Cuba’s economy (Gordon, 2012). The United States’ insistent need to protect its own interests, even if that means causing severe damage and stunting the growth of other sovereign nations as seen in Cuba, has given the US the image of being bullies who have “little respect for international law and global governance,” (Gordon, 2012, p. 75). The intrusive actions taken by the US in Cuba over the years in attempts to suppress development and contain communism, ultimately forcing American ideals on Cuba, has left a poor image of the US in the Latin American nation. Resistance that had been displayed by Castro was not necessarily rejection of capitalism, but rather a reject and resistance to the US and their pushy, unilateral ways (Rieff, n.d.). A consideration and look back at the history of relations between the US and Cuba exemplifies how and why countries that have been meddled in by the US develop strong anti-American sentiments. It is purely the invasive foreign policies that the US employs to protect its national interests and inhibit development in other nations that cause the negative feelings towards the US.

While countries such as Argentina, Guatemala, Venezuela and Cuba are known to exhibit more severe feelings of anti-Americanism, other countries, including Brazil and Mexico, reveal feelings closer to distrust and uneasiness towards the US rather than blatant anti-Americanism. Relations between the US and Mexico have gone back and forth between tension and cooperation. The beginning of interaction between the neighboring nations began in 1845 with the annexation of Texas which eventually lead to the Mexican-American War. Once again, the US pushy, self-serving policies are seen in the taking over of Texas, land that originally belonged to Mexico. Mexico did not fare well in the war with the US, and as a result, Mexico lost additional land, including California and New Mexico, to their neighbors to the north. Additional land was later purchased from Mexico in the Gadsden Purchase. Overall, Mexico and the US have endured a relationship of toleration in recent history. Today, issues regarding border control and the War on Drugs have resulted in some tension; however, the US’ dependence on Mexico’s oil supply and the economic ties Mexico benefits from in its relationship with the US has served as the glue keeping the nations in cooperation with one another. Despite Mexico’s dependence on its economic ties to the US, polls of Mexico’s opinions towards to US prove that there is some apprehension towards the US. According to the Pew Research Global Attitudes Project (2014), Mexico’s favorable opinions of the US has hovered somewhere around just barely half of the surveyed participants holding a favorable opinion toward the US, with the lowest being 47 percent in 2008 and the highest 66 percent in 2013. As it will be discussed later, attitudes towards the US in recent times has not always been the result of US involvement in countries directly, but rather a reflection of how countries around the world feel about US intervention in other nations, such as Iraq.

Brazil is another Latin American nation that has grown to exhibit feelings of distrust rather than outright anti-Americanism. In 1824, the US was the first country to recognize Brazil as an independent nation. The early years of the relationship between the US and Brazil consisted of fairly limited interaction; however, these interactions increased significantly in the wake of World War II, as Brazil gave support and aid to the Allies. Brazil, like other countries of Latin America, has also faced times of intrusion by the US government, such as the speculations that the US had some level of involvement in the 1964 coup removing Joao Goulart from power. Although the history between the two countries display similar patterns of US interference as seen in other Latin American nations, a focus on more recent events that have taken place between the US and Brazil best paints the picture of the relationship now held between the countries. In the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks, Brazil immediately offered aid to the United States in the form of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, which essentially states that an attack on one nation of the Americas is an attack on all nations in the Western Hemisphere. Although Brazil was in support of this treaty, the nation did not become a part of the War on Terror. Furthermore, Brazil’s president at the time, the beloved Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, remained in strong opposition to the Iraq War.

Most recently, the US has found itself in hot water with Brazil’s current administration after the September 2013 N.S.A. spying incident. The spying by the N.S.A. was mostly directed towards current Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff, as well as Rousseff’s top aides and Brazil’s oil company, Petrobras. As a result of the US inappropriate spying actions, President Rousseff canceled her planned visit to Washington, a bold move that displayed the deep frustration and offense taken by Brazil as a result of the US’ actions. As stated by the New York Times, this move has the potential to “unravel years of Washington’s efforts recognize Brazil’s rising profile,” (Romero, 2013, par. 3). Despite the recent times of growing cooperation and respect between the United States and Latin America’s largest, most influential nation, the US displayed its true colors in its foreign policy through this display of disrespect for other countries’ sovereignty. President Rousseff’s decision to cancel her trip to Washington illustrates the feelings of distrust and uneasiness of Brazil towards the US as a result of the US’ questionable foreign policy moves.

**Middle East**

An extensive look back through the history of the relations between US and countries of Latin America demonstrate the profound impact US foreign policy has on countries’ opinions of the US. The Middle East is the region of the world that has received the most attention in regards to US foreign policy in most recent years. Similarly to the history of events in Latin America, US interactions, and interventions, in the Middle East are characterized by US meddling with the underlying goal to protect its national interests. In many instances in the Middle East, US involvement has been centered on the exploitation of the Middle East’s invaluable natural resource: oil. As discussed by Painter (2012), maintaining access to oil has been a crucial aspect of US foreign policy in the Middle East and has been a major influence in several doctrines including the Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon, and Carter Doctrines. With the underlying goal to protect US interests, including access to oil, the US has often provided support to oppressive regimes that have stunted progress in Middle Eastern countries, as will be seen in the countries to be discussed. Although the bulk of Middle Eastern opposition to the US results directly from US foreign policy, misconceptions exist that anti-Americanism present in the Middle East is caused by resistance to American values and ideals, such as US democracy, freedoms, or culture. This belief that Middle Eastern hostility towards the US has developed as a result of anything other than US foreign policy is nothing more than a misconception as there is significant research proving that Middle Eastern and Arab nations are often very accepting of democracy and the ideals valued by the US. As Cole (2006) states, negative opinions of the US held by members of the Middle East are shaped by US policies, not culture. A consideration of the history, as well as current relations, between the US and the nations of the Middle East will provide a full explanation for why such feelings towards US foreign policy exist in this region of the world.

Iraq has, in many ways, been the focal point of US foreign policy in the Middle East in most recent times as a result of the 2003 invasion commencing the Iraq War. Relations between Iraq and the US have not always consisted of tension and conflict. During the Iran-Iraq war, beginning in 1980 when Saddam Houssein launched an invasion of Iranian oil facilities, the US largely stood as an ally to Iraq, although US also at times provided aid to the Iranians. The US, in many ways, supported the war as a way to keep both Iraq and Iran focused on war efforts which, in turn, prevented threats to the “political economy of oil,” (Jones, 2012, p. 215). The US displayed their support to both Iraq and Iran by providing both sides with weapons, money, and intelligence. The US’ support for the war went so deep as to even condone Iraq’s use of chemical weapons not only on the battlefield, but also against its own citizens (Jones, 2012).

The support of the Iran-Iraq war provided by the US would, in the end, come back to haunt the Western superpower. The eight year war left Iraq in immense debt, eventually leading to the country’s invasion of Kuwait in hopes of gaining control of oil fields. In 1990, in response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait and the fear of Kuwait’s oil fields falling under the control of Saddam Houssein, the US entered the Gulf War under action known as Operation Desert Storm. As stated by Painter (2012), “maintaining access to Persian Gulf oil was the key objective of US response to Iraq’s conquest in Kuwait in 1990,” (p. 37). The actions taken by US in the Gulf War drove Iraq out of Kuwait promptly; however the destructive aerial attacks would leave Iraq in shambles and would have a lasting impact on the Persian Gulf, including thirty years of war following the Gulf War.

The years following the Gulf War leading up to the 2003 US invasion of Iraq and beginning of Iraq War were marked by human rights violations committed by Saddam Houssein, specifically against the Kurds using chemical weapons, and empty threats of intervention by the US. Although there were questions of Saddam Houssein developing a weapons of mass destruction program, multiple United Nations inspections proved no such weapons were ever developed. In 2003, President George W. Bush made the call to invade Iraq, claiming the goal of the mission was to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, though it was later discovered no such weapons were ever in existence. Study of the Iraq War years after has led many researchers to believe oil was an important consideration in the decision to go to war. As Jones (2012) states, the Iraq War was an “outgrowth of decades of strategic thinking and policy making about oil,” (p. 209). Painter (2012) is an agreement with Jones’ belief, stating that concerns in regards to the protection of oil flow from the Middle East were at the top of the list of factors contributing to the decision to go to war in Iraq. US’ history with Iraq is a prime example of how US interference in other nations can cause serious disruption, resulting in continued years of chaos largely as a consequence of US less than honorable actions attempting to preserve its own national interests in the oil industry.

The war in Iraq has damaged relations between the US and countries throughout the world. Opinion polls conducted by the Pew Research Global Attitudes Project, as well as a vast amount of additional research, prove that the Iraq War has had an overwhelmingly negative impact on countries’ attitudes regarding US foreign policy. In 2003, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, and the Palestinian territory held horrendously low percentages of favorable opinions of the US, reporting twenty-seven percent, fifteen percent, one percent, and zero percent respectively (Pew Research Global Attitudes Project, 2014). In 2004, as reported by the Pew Research Global Attitudes Project, Pakistan, thought to be an ally of the US, reported on 21 percent favorable opinions. Further research has also observed the severe impact the invasion of Iraq and the Iraq War had on opinions in Latin American countries. Ballve (2005) reports that according to the Latinobarometro poll in 2004, less than one-tenth of Argentines, Uruguayans, Mexicans, Brazillians, Bolivians and Chileans approved of U.S. actions in Iraq. Furthermore, other countries, some within the Middle East, have not been impressed with the results of US intervention in Iraq. According to Cole (2006), 61 percent of Pakistanians, 70 percent of Jordinians, and 50 percent of Moroccans believe Iraq was better off under Saddam Houssein. The Iraq War proves that US meddling does not only have a negative impact on the countries that are victims of direct intervention, but such interference is the cause of the rise of anti-Americanism in the bystanders witnessing US unilateralism.

Iran is another Middle Eastern nation that has endured an extensive history with the United States that has largely been strained by US often times shady behaviors made in effort to protect its national interests. Similarly to the beginning of US relations with Iraq, Iran’s relationship US began as a relationship as respect and cooperation. In the years leading up to the Cold War, the US developed a stable relationship with Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavia. The relationship with Pahlavia, who was largely pro-Western and worked to modernize and westernize Iran’s economic policy, was viewed as strategic alliance to protect oil interests in Iran. In 1951, however, Mohammad Mossadegh was named Prime Minister of Iran. Upon Mossadegh becoming Prime Minister, US policy makers’ feared Mossadegh’s plans to nationalize Iran’s oil industry could jeopardize US oil concessions (Painter, 2012). In response to these fears, the CIA planned and carried out the 1953 coup to remove Mossadegh from power, a move that will forever impact Iran’s feelings towards the US. As a result of the successful coup, the Shah remained in power, leading to years of brutal tyranny. The US turned a blind eye to the oppression and violence being committed in Iran by the Shah and continued to enjoy the benefits of the oil industry provided through the relationship with the Shah. In fact, it is believed that the increase in oil revenue strengthened the Shah’s oppressive, violent regime (Jones, 2012). In 1979, however, the revolution ousting the Shah altered the US’ position in Iran greatly.

Upon the removal of the Shah from power, Ayatollah Rouhollah Mousavi Khomeini rose to power through the support of the Iranians. Shortly after being removed from power, the Shah fell ill and requested medical treatment in the US. President Carter, despite opposition, allowed the Shah entrance and care, infuriating the already irate Iranians and leading into the 1979 Iran hostage crisis. In the aftermath of the crisis, the US, who had been a major economic partner to Iran, froze assets in retaliation.

The relationship between the US and Iran has remained tumultuous, characterized by multiple confrontations throughout the 1980s including the Operation Praying Mantis launched by the US and the US attack on Iran Air Flight 655 which killed hundreds of civilians. Moving into the 1990s, President Bill Clinton imposed a total embargo on Iran, ending all trade between American companies and Iran and further damaging relations. In the wake of the September 11th attacks, it appeared as though Iran and the US may have been on the road to repairing their relations through their cooperation and efforts to find al Qaeda members responsible for the attacks; however any hope of improvements in the relations disappeared as quickly as they surfaced as a result of President Bush’s 2002 “Axis of evil” speech, in which the former President named Iran, as well as Iraq and North Korea, as governments involved in terrorism and attempting to build weapons of mass destruction programs. Upon the election of President Obama, it again appeared as though relations between the US and Iran could be on the road to amends as Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad congratulated President Obama on winning the presidency. However, the ongoing conflict regarding Iranian nuclear programs and drone incidents, such as the December 2011 drone captured by Iranian forces that had been flying in Iranian sovereign airspace, has prevented relations between the US and Iran from improving. The United States’ interactions with Iran have displayed a complete disregard for another nation’s sovereignty. The history between the US and Iran is a flawless example of how US foreign policy, consisting of deliberate, self-serving interference, can become the root cause for anti-American attitudes that have surfaced around the globe.

The United States’ relationship with Saudi Arabia is a perfect illustration of the immense influence oil plays in US relations with the Middle East. Seznec (2005) describes the relationship that exists between the US and Saudi Arabia as an “exchange of oil for security,” (p. 56). Oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia in 1938. In many ways, the discovery of oil in 1938 is the event in history that influenced the US to attain a more active role in the Middle East (Makdisi, 2002). Although the US relationship began purely as a mutually beneficial economic partner, US foreign policy, specifically with Israel, has proven to be an obstacle between the US and Saudi Arabia. According to Seznec (2005), Saudi’s carry an overwhelming resentment towards the Bush administration and its support of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, specifically of the Prime Minister’s “ruthless, albeit intifada-related, occupation of Palestinian territory,” (p. 56). Saudi Arabia, however, is not the only Middle Eastern nation that greatly resents the US’ overwhelmingly one-sided support for Israel. In fact, there exists a great deal of research suggesting that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and US’ support for Israel has damaged relations with many Middle Eastern countries. Makdisi (2002), Painter (2012), Cole (2006), and Sharma (2013) all discuss the negative impact US relations have had on the countries relations, and image, in the Middle East. One specific instance in which the United States’ support for Israel was detrimental to their relationship with Middle Eastern countries, such as Saudi Arabia, was during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War during which OAPEC organized an embargo of oil shipments to the US (Painter, 2012). This embargo hit the US hard, causing oil prices to rise significantly.

To this day, the bulk of US relations with Saudi Arabia are directly linked to oil. Aramco, a major Saudi oil company, has strong American ties. In fact, after being given up by British Petroleum, the US took over and trained a vast majority of the company’s work force (Seznec, 2005). Furthermore, Saudi’s have kept a great deal of their oil income in US dollars. The money that has been generated through Saudi Arabia’s oil industry, which has largely been funded by the US, is, however, believed to be contributing to the continued power of a corrupt Saudi Arabia regime (Seznec, 2005). While the elite of Saudi Arabia are greatly benefiting from the oil revenues, the rest of the country remain has not felt the benefits of the lucrative oil industry. The US and Saudi Arabia have had extensive relations for the past 40 years, yet despite these past decades, the relationship between the two nations are not at their lowest point, and it remains a question of whether or not these relations will ever be repaired. As Seznec (2005) states, “the relations that should have been made strong from 40 years of extensive interaction have also contributed to their destruction,” (p. 58).

**Africa**

Latin America and the Middle East have endured years of US interference. The meddling by the US has not only directly damaged the nations involved with the US, but it has also resulted in feelings of anti-Americanism and resentment. Africa is an interesting region of the world to study in regards to its overall feelings towards the US. The region of Africa, which will include sub-Saharan Africa, in many ways, proves the point that countries and regions of the world exhibit feelings of anti-Americanism as a result of US’ insistent need to stick its nose in other countries’ business, often with US interests in mind.

Before discussing the current attitudes of African nations towards the US, which are astonishingly positive, it is important to give attention to times in history in which the US has pulled the same shady maneuvers in attempts to protect national interests as has been seen in the histories with countries in Latin America and the Middle East. Perhaps the most obvious instance of US interference that has resulted in immense hardships for an African country is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, specifically the incident that occurred in the 1960s with Patrice Lumumba. In May 1960, Patrice Lumumba won the DCR national election upon the nation’s discovery of its newly won independence from Belgium. After just days of Lumumba’s inauguration, his time as a democratically elected Prime Minister would be brought to an abrupt end with a US and Belgian created plan to remove Lumumba from power and go onto carry out a gruesome assassination. Upon winning independence, the DRC did not find support in Belgium or the United States, ultimately forcing Lumumba to look to the Soviet Union for support which, in turn, pushed the US to actively organize opposition to Lumumba (Isike and Abutudu, 2012). On February 11, 1961, Lumumba was brutally assassinated, and any hope of progress in the DRC ended as dictator Josef Mobutu was placed in power. To this day, the assassination of Lumumba is seen as a “classical case of neo-imperialism aimed at fostering a post-colonial dependencia between the DRC and west Europe, deliberately concocted and coldly executed by the US, Belgium and their allies,” (Isike and Abutudu, 2012, p. 128). The DRC’s ability to progress has been hindered by the actions carried out by not only the US, but European nations such as Belgium, and this inability to progress has resulted in ongoing hardships in the resource rich African country. It is widely believed that if the democratic wave of 1960 was allowed to consolidate, the DRC would have “matured by now into a more stable, prosperous and developed state,” (Isike and Abutudu, 2012, p. 128).

Despite the wrongdoings committed by the US in the region, Africa surprisingly remains relatively pro-American. According to the Pew Research Global Attitude’s Project, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and South Africa held rather favorable opinions of the United States in 2013 at 83 percent, 81 percent, 73 percent, and 72 percent respectively. When comparing these numbers to what is seen in other regions it is clear that anti-American sentiments have not spread to Africa as they have in Latin America or the Middle East. The question then is why a region that has not only been meddled in, but also largely ignored by the US in times when aid has been needed holds considerably more favorable feelings towards the super power of the world. Devra Coren Moehler, Ph.D., presented to the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives in March of 2007 regarding relations with Africa and why she found the region to hold such favorable opinions of the US. As was stated in the hearing, the US ranks at the bottom of all donor countries for official development assistance worldwide, and of the assistance given by the US to the world, sub-Saharan Africa receives only approximately 24 percent of US foreign aid. Considering sub-Saharan Africa is regarded as “developing” or “third world”, only 24 percent of total aid given by the US is fairly low. However, despite the lack of aid, Africa appears to be quite fond of the US and Dr. Moehler has several explanations for this phenomenon. The first explanation regards the media African countries are exposed to. According to Moehler, attitudes about the US depend less on how much people hear about the US and more on who they hear it from (2007). A vast majority of the television channels, radio broadcasts, and newspapers Africans have access to are state-owned; therefore, these channels are often times funded by the US or other Western donors, resulting in the countries funding the media to have control over what news African people are exposed to, thus the viewers may be restricted to a more positive portrayal of the US. In addition to the media portraying the US in a positive light, Moehler also found that many Africans believe the US “represents a place of economic and political opportunity,” (p. 10). Africans view the US truly as a land of opportunity and look to the superpower as what can result when democracy and capitalism are allowed to flourish. Not only is the American way of business and politics admired, but American culture, such as the glitz and glam of Hollywood, is also found to be intriguing and desirable to many people of Africa.

In ending her presentation to the House of Representatives, Moehler discussed how she believes the US can not only maintain a positive image in Africa, but even improve relations. Moehler emphasized the importance of increasing Africa’s access to American goods and business opportunities, as well as allow for greater cultural exchange. Moehler also stresses the need of the US to aid in providing development resources and democracy assistance to allow Africa the opportunity to establish stable systems capable of working with European powers. It is time for the US to stop focusing solely on its own national interests, as it did in the incident in the DRC in the 1960s, and aid Africa in establishing functional, stable government and economic systems that are not interfered with by Western powers. Africa is a region rich in natural resources that is fully capable of progressing into a developed region should it not be held back by the Western superpowers of the world.

**Synthesis**

It is clear through the research presented that anti-Americanism is on the rise throughout the world, especially in regions such as Latin America and the Middle East. An extensive look into the cause of anti-American sentiments clearly displays the true cause of negative feelings towards the US. The world does not hate the US for its freedoms, values, or cultures, and in general, most areas of the world continue to hold relatively favorable opinions of Americans despite the negative feelings towards the US. The cause of unfavorable feelings towards the US is clearly a direct result of United States’ foreign policy.

Through the comparative historical analysis approach in which three different regions of the world were thoroughly examined, reoccurring themes and actions have been found to have caused unfavorable opinions towards the US by the countries studied. In all three regions, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, there have been incidents in which the US has blatantly interfered within sovereign nations’ governments through coups and assassinations. From the coup of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, to the coup of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran, to the brutal assassination of Lumumba in the DRC, the US has stopped at nothing short of murder to remove powerful political figures of other nations from power when necessary to protect US’ national interests. The shady maneuvers that the US has pulled throughout the years in altering the structure and power of other countries’ governments have proven to result in less than favorable opinions of US foreign policy and cause a severe increase in anti-American sentiments throughout the world.

In addition to the violent assassinations and forceful coups executed by the US, the superpower has also been guilty of meddling in countries in ways other than coups and killings. The US has also established its voice and authority in resourceful nations of the world in less blatant ways. The shameful tactics of the United Fruit Company is one way in which the US exerted power and force over another region by taking control over the land and resources belonging to another nation. Similarly to the occupation of US in Guatemala through the United Fruit Company, nations in the Middle East have felt the same damaging presence of the US in the oil industry. Oil, being one of the most important resources to the US, has been the root cause of much of the meddling of the US in countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. The US meddling for the sake of oil has resulted in significant problems for the region, ranging from wars such as the war between Iran and Iraq that was largely supported by the US to the harsh regimes put in place by the US to stunt democratic growth and protect US’ interests. US actions that have caused an increase in anti-Americanism are not limited to coups and deliberate murders, but also include US presence and meddling in regions that have been caused significant damage to the development of nations exploited by the US.

Although Africa has also been the victim of damaging US presence and meddling at times, Africa holds far more positive views of the US compared to the other two regions examined, Latin America and the Middle East. This finding is important to the overall argument presented. Overall, it is clear that the US has exerted far more effort in interfering within the countries of Latin America and the Middle East. In fact, the US is considered to be largely inactive in Africa, especially in terms of aid; however, despite the lack of aid flowing to Africa from the US, Africa still holds significantly higher favorable opinions of the US. This could be explained by the fact that Africa is the only region where a larger percentage of its citizens believe American foreign aid has a positive rather than negative effect on the region (Moehler, 2007). Although the US has been relatively uninvolved in the region, Africans do view the aid and attention they have been given as beneficial. The same cannot be said for the regions of Latin America and the Middle East. Studying anti-Americanism in Africa, or rather lack of, makes it evident that US aid and interaction in a region *can* be beneficial and viewed favorably by the receiving region as it is in Africa. When the US interaction in a region is used ultimately to protect the US and not benefit the receiving region, it has proven to be detrimental not only to the region, but also to the region’s opinions of the United States as seen with Latin America and the Middle East; however, when the US does not impose itself on a region and allows aid to be beneficial, as is the case in Africa currently, the US has the opportunity of creating a truly positive image and living up to its potential.

**Conclusion**

Anti-Americanism is a growing phenomenon that is spreading throughout the entire globe. Though the cause of this negative sentiment towards the US has often been pinned on the belief that other countries resent the US for its values and freedoms, the research presented largely disproves this belief. It can be seen through the analysis of the relations between the US and various countries of the world that the true root cause of anti-Americanism stems back to US foreign policy; policy that has repeatedly supported selfish meddling in other nations for the sake of protecting US’ national interests. Although the bulk of the research presented has focused on regions most often victimized by US meddling, it is evident that anti-Americanism is spreading beyond the countries that have been directly impacted by US interference. Countries in Europe, for example, are also beginning to experience an increase in anti-American sentiments as a result of US foreign policy in other regions. As previously stated, the Iraq War is one example of US foreign policy that has not only resulted in disapproval for the US by the countries directly affected, namely Iraq, but has also caused a dramatic decrease in approval for the US by countries in regions such as Europe and Latin America. The United States must realize before it is too late that what it does in regards to foreign policy matters. It makes an impact not only on the countries directly involved, but also on the countries standing by as witnesses.

Despite the rise of anti-Americanism in the years following the September 11th attacks, the US continues to take actions that are further damaging its relations with the rest of the world. Perhaps one of the most controversial and noteworthy incidents in most recent times were the drone attacks taking place in Pakistan that resulted in numerous civilian deaths. This blatant disregard for another nation’s sovereignty, a nation that has believed the US to be an ally to, is more than reasonable cause for not only distrust in the US, but resentment and dislike. The NSA spying of Brazil once again does not send the message that the US is willing to play fair and display the necessary respect for other nations’ sovereignty. Should these incidents continue to occur, it is going to become increasingly difficult for the US to gain support and trust of the countries not only directly impacted by US meddling and unfavorable foreign policy, but also of the countries standing by watching the US act in unilateral ways. The United States undoubtedly carries immense power in the world, and it is time for the US to use its power responsibly and justly, for “justice and power must be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful, and whatever is powerful may be just.”

Resources

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