

Prosperity power and peril essay examples

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William J. Clinton Administration

Abstract

In 1993, William Jefferson Clinton became the forty-second president of the United States of America. When he came into position he promised that he will end the bad trend that the country is in and that our country will no longer be in a standstill. Instead, he will start a term of rehabilitation. In 1996, Clinton again became the President of America. He believed that by answering the economic problems of the country would be the solution to America's success. He rallied on to the problems of unemployment and concerns of health care. A lot of controversies aroused during Clinton's Administration which later on led to his impeachment.

United States of America is a powerful state that has the ability to enforce persuasiveness in all aspects regarding power and strength. Our country has a big say in the international politics thus foreign policies are established to further improve our dealing with other countries. During the Clinton Administration there were a lot of issues in the international front which Bill Clinton had to confront. In the first two years of his presidency he came face-to-face with the challenges of the foreign policy. First of which, was that of Somalia and Rwanda. In May of 1994, the Hutu ethnic group killed more than half a million Tutsi people in just a span of 100 days (Ammanpour, 2004). Genocide is a pre-meditated and methodical eradication of a group of people based on several factors (" Britannica Encyclopedia Genocide, 2010"). This has become a serious problem to foreign countries including the United States. Throughout the years our country has shown that we are a

democratic nation, that respect for human rights and freedom is the most important thing of all.

Genocide in Somalia and Rwanda continued over the next few months which killed an estimated 1 million Rwandans (mainly Tutsi). The heightened killings in Rwanda have forced Hutus to flee their country for safety. By July 1994, about 2 million Hutus were already cramped in various refugee camps in Rwanda's neighboring countries. The overcrowded refugee camps became the deathbed for many Hutus because of starvation and various diseases. Thousands of people died in these refugee camps which moved Clinton to send food and other basic supplies to the refugees. On the same month, Clinton sent 200 troops to the airport in Kigali (the nation's capital city) to distribute relief supplies. However, Clinton withdrew the troops the following month.

President Bill Clinton responded to the dying refugees but chose to be blind to the genocide that was happening in Rwanda. It is not that the Clinton Administration did not know that this is happening. In fact, there have been documents retrieved from the CIA's National Intelligence Daily discussing the said issue. The administration tried to dilute the impacts of the killings by calling them "acts of genocide". Clinton and his subordinates chose to speak of the issue in silent for fear of public opinion demanding the US Government to interfere with Rwanda's current state. Clinton clearly did not want a repetition of the debacle that happened when Clinton sent troops to Somalia in 1993 which killed 19 soldiers in the Battle of Mogadishu. Fear, being a great motivator, has forced Clinton not to act. Clinton's decision is critical

because he is then the leader of the world's most powerful nation. His words, as the US President, are powerful enough to influence other UN leaders to take part in restoring harmony between the warring factions in Rwanda. But, he chose to keep silent. Clinton might have helped save thousands of lives in Rwanda if he took the other route. Clinton was gravely criticized by analysts, historians, and the international community not only for his lack of action but also for his failure to speak more forcefully during the slaughter. However, Clinton humbly took the responsibility for his so-called failure. In his travel to Africa in 1998, he said that the Rwanda Crisis was his biggest and worst failure claiming that he blew it.

Bill Clinton was one of the vocal critics of the George Herbert Walker Bush Administration. One of the issues that Clinton was very vocal about was the deportation of the Haitian refugees in our country. When Clinton took the presidency however, he continued part of George H. W. Bush's policy eating his own words when he was criticizing the latter for the same policy. Clinton continued the policy because he feared that not taking action will encourage many Haitians to flee to the country. President Bill Clinton did not want this because it will hamper the formation of a democratic government in the country.

However, unlike his actions in the Rwanda Crisis, Clinton sent troops to Haiti in September 1994 to help restore peace despite the strong opposition of the congress. US, being a democratic country, do not want a military government to ruin democracy. But Clinton just did not want to be seen as a coward as the Rwanda Crisis was still a hot topic during this time. His actions

were completely opposite as to what he did during the Rwanda Crisis. Clinton was forcefully demanding the Haitian government to step aside and that they restore the democratic rule of the country. Before the US troops reached Haiti, a delegation led by former US President Jimmy Carter arrived in the country's capital as ordered by Clinton. The delegation urged Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras (the leader of the military coup) to step down from his position. Cedras agreed to step down and, together with his major lieutenants and top officers, left the country. Clinton's actions and his "Operation Uphold Democracy" was a success and it restored peace in the country but it may all be Clinton's way to make up for his worst mistake.

The power of the United States in the world was deliberately seen during the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Balkans). It was Clinton's first term in office and he immediately showed the world what he, as the US President, can do. Clinton even proposed the bombing of the supply lines for Serbs and has implemented the lifting of the embargo which prevented Yugoslavia to acquire more arms. Clinton pressured countries in Western Europe in 1994 to take part in the action against Bosnian Serbs. When his actions were not working, Clinton changed course and decided to go for reconciliation.

However, the Bosnian Serbs initiated the 2nd Markale massacre which forced Clinton to take drastic and destructive measures against them. Clinton initiated "Operation Deliberate Force". This move has started a series of airstrikes aimed at Bosnian Serbs and have been highly successful. Clinton has successfully urged, by force, the Bosnian Serbs into taking part in a peace treaty. The warring parties agreed to the Dayton Accords which left Bosnia into a single state consisting of two separate parties with one central

government. This successful action of Clinton is one of his greatest foreign achievements. Not only that, Clinton has been able to show the world how powerful and influential a nation America is.

Clinton's foreign peace policies even reached the Middle East. Clinton was deeply involved in the events in Iran, Iraq, Israel and Palestine. President Bill Clinton secretly held peace negotiations between the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzarac Rabin, and the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat. The peace talks hosted by Clinton lead to the historic Oslo Accords which declared peace between the two nations in September 1993. In the 26th of June 1993, Clinton started a cruise missile attack on Iraqi Intelligence Services (IIS) in Baghdad as a response to its attempted assassination of former president George H. W. Bush. Clinton, in his first term in office, has banned almost all the trades between Iran and businesses in the US. However, the change in leadership in Iran and Clinton's second term in office has changed his ways. Clinton has been softer to the new government and even lifted his Executive Orders that banned trades between the two nations.

One of Clinton's foreign policies is with regards to Islamic Fundamentalism. In one of Clinton's interviews, he stated that he is against any act of terrorism and that he is concerned with the militant fundamentalism which is happening in the Islamic states. However, he is welcoming all the Muslims that want to be a full member of the world community. On Al Qaeda, Clinton was never merciful. After the bombing attacks of the terrorist group on the World Trade Center in 1993 and subsequent attacks on US embassies in

Tanzania and Kenya, Clinton ordered an all-out bombing of the Al Qaeda bases throughout Afghanistan. This move by Clinton was answered by another terrorist attack 12 months before his term ends. The Clinton Administration drafted a plan to eliminate the threat from the terrorist group. However, the plan was weak. Though the proposed plan can prevent some attacks, it is not assured that it will prevent all attacks in the future. Al Qaeda can still plan and conduct attacks even with the continued strikes to its bases.

The plan was never implemented as Clinton left the office as his term ended. However, years after his last occupancy of the presidential seat, Clinton was still very active especially in his environmental efforts. Clinton established the “ Clinton Climate Initiative” in August of 2006. CCI is aimed at targeting the most pressing matter in the environment today – Climate Change. Clinton used his influences and was able to form partnership with several large organizations. In 2007, Clinton announced that CCI will help 5 large cities in the world to cut greenhouse gas emissions by implementing energy-saving improvements in their buildings (Clintonfoundation. org N. D). Bill Clinton has managed to convince 5 large banks to commit \$1 billion each to help these cities in their environmental efforts. One of his recent accomplishments was his partnership with the US Green Building Council to launch environmental efforts in the country.

Clearly, the Clinton Administration’s foreign policies and views were given heavy weights even in the current government. However, Bill Clinton was not, at first, a president that will make a great foreign policy maker. In fact,

in his 1992 campaign, Clinton said “ It’s the economy, stupid.” Clinton has made it clear that he will focus on America’s economy and towards the end of his second term, he has kept this promise. Clinton’s critics were very much eager to jump into the wagon each time a new issue arises. Critics believed that Clinton is very eager to accommodate China which at that time is fast rising. Furthermore, Clinton is said to be acting blind to the corruption and cronyism in Russia and is coward and is too slow to use force against Iraq and Yugoslavia.

Clinton was severely criticized for his failure to act in the Rwanda Crisis. Clinton’s foreign policies are not fool proof nor are they that solid. This is why they are often referred to as “ social work” by many of his critics. True, Clinton can easily be swayed by public opinion and media buzz and his fear for repeating his wrong decisions are affecting his decision making skills; Clinton is still a very good president. Though there are rooms for improvement in Clinton’s records, he still did not deserve the grave criticisms he has received from his critics. His failure in some foreign policies and in some of his decisions did not mean he is a failure as a president. The next presidents in the US might adapt his policies or make their own but it is unlikely that they can achieve better results. The aftermath of his decisions is the consequence he has to face.

America is as well-off today as it has been in the past. When Clinton took office, he has to choose between fear and respect for the US as the tool to keep America’s position in the world. Clinton has great achievements and his policies in trade enhancement, democracy, and human rights are very well received. We can thank Clinton for the long lines in US embassies all over the

world and the thousands of illegal immigrants that all want to live in the US. The attractiveness of the country is put into a different pedestal. Sure, Clinton might not be the best president that his critics are all claiming but he certainly deserves a “ plus” in his overall performance.

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