

Madeleine Albright: The First Female US Secretary of State

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ABSTRAKT

Madeleine Albrightová je považována za první ženu s nejvyšším postavením v historii Spojených Států. Cílem této práce je analyzovat její roli při formování důležitých záležitostí zahraniční politiky a podporování občanských a politických práv, a současně přiblížit historii vývoje emancipace a práv žen, což je klíčové pro pochopení důležitosti jejího jmenování do funkce ministryně zahraničních věcí. Tato práce se zaměřuje na historický kontext postavení žen ve veřejných a politických sférách, na vliv, úspěchy a kritiku Albrightové během jejího působení, a současně zdůrazňuje její postoj k lidským a ženským právům. Tato práce přibližuje její značný vliv na zahraniční politiku, podporu rovných práv, a roli Albrightové jakožto průkopnice v oblasti tradičně dominované muži.

Klíčová slova: Madeleine Albrightová, ministryně zahraničních věcí, ženy, politika, diplomacie

ABSTRACT

Madeleine Albright is marked as the first highest-ranking woman in US history. The aim of this thesis is to analyse her role in shaping important foreign policies and promoting human and women's rights, as well as providing the background of the process of women's emancipation and rights to understand the importance of Madeleine Albright's appointment as the first female US Secretary of State. The focus is placed on the historical context of women in public and political spheres, Albright's impact, accomplishments and criticism during her tenure, while also highlighting her approach to human and women's rights. This thesis shows her significant impact on US foreign policy and advocacy for equal rights, as well as Albright's role as a barrier breaker in field dominated by men.

Keywords: Madeleine Albright, secretary of state, women, politics, diplomacy

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INTRODUCTION

Madeleine Albright made history by becoming the first woman to hold the position of US Secretary of State – a post that had been reserved for years for men only. She initiated and addressed several important foreign policy issues, and as an advocate for women's rights, she left a lasting impact on the representation of women in leadership positions. Her career reflected the complexities of being a female leader in a field heavily dominated by men, characterized by both accomplishments and challenges.

Albright's early life was anything but ordinary. She was born to two Czechoslovaks, Anna and Josef Körbel, during the period immediately preceding the beginning of the Second World War. Growing up during times of rising political tensions left her with a deep sense of historical and political dynamics, which she would recall several times later in her career. The experience was further influenced by her constant moves from place to place, attendance at multiple schools, and life through various political regimes until her arrival to the United States.

Madeleine Albright's interest in diplomacy began in her early years, leading to a political career marked by passion and determination, which would ultimately result in her appointment as US Ambassador to the United Nations, reflected by both accomplishments and controversies. After her service at the UN, the United States witnessed an unprecedented moment in its history: the appointment of the first female Secretary of State.

Madeleine Albright's appointment became an important milestone for women. The process of women shaping their role in society has been a continuous and challenging journey. Women faced many challenges and formed feminist movements, which led to milestones such as the ratification of the 19th Amendment, granting them the voting rights. Through further policies, political battles, and efforts of prominent female figures the situation began to improve. One of these figures was Madeleine Albright, whose achievement in becoming the first woman to serve as Secretary of State represented new possibilities for women in their pursue of political careers.

This thesis is structured in four chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of Albright's early life, education, and the beginnings of her political career, as well as her appointment as US Ambassador to the United Nations. The second part delivers a historical context on the development of women's rights, including the challenges faced, the formation of feminist movements, key policy initiatives, and efforts of prominent female political

figures. The third chapter focuses on Albright's service as Secretary of State, including her role in foreign policy decisions and her promotion of human and women's rights, while providing an overview of her accomplishments and challenges faced. The last part presents Albright's initiatives and works, including her continued impact after the end of her term as a Secretary of State.

The aim of this work is to examine the role of Madeleine Albright in shaping US foreign policy and promoting human and women's rights. Subsequently, the focus of this thesis is placed on the historical context to understand the process of women's emancipation and rights, in order to highlight the significance of Madeleine Albright's groundbreaking appointment as Secretary of State.

1 BIOGRAPHY

Madeleine Albright is considered to be one of the most prominent, high-ranking women in American history. In order to understand how a young girl from Czechoslovakia became the first female US Secretary of State, it is essential to look at her background first. For that reason, the next subchapters deal with Madeleine Albright's early life, education and career prior to becoming the US Secretary of State.

1.1 Early life

As the daughter of Anna and Josef Körbel, Madeleine Albright was born into a Jewish family on May 15, 1937, in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Originally, she was named Marie Jana Körbelová; however, as Madeleine Albright wrote in her autobiography, she was referred to as "Madlenka" throughout her entire childhood – a nickname from which the name Madeleine was later derived.¹

As a diplomat, Albright's father was sent to work in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. However, in 1938, he was recalled to Prague, and soon after, he was placed on former President Beneš's Endangered Persons list – a document including individuals whose lives could be in danger due to their diplomatic position. Josef Körbel understood that having ties with Beneš and being a Jew meant that he and his family had to leave Czechoslovakia. Thus, ten days after the German occupation, they fled to Belgrade. After two weeks, the Körbel family continued through Greece to London, arriving in May 1939. After the situation in London worsened due to the intensification of German bombing, they moved to Berkhamsted to live with relatives. In Berkhamsted, the family converted to Catholicism and was baptized. Eventually, they moved to multiple cities before coming to a town called Walton-on-Thames, where they stayed until the end of the war.²

After the war ended, the Körbel family returned to Prague, and Josef Körbel started to work for the Foreign Ministry. For this reason, and to distance themselves from their Jewish past, Anna and Josef Körbel decided to change the family's surname by omitting the umlaut over the letter "o", which suggested the name was of Jewish origin. As a result, the name

¹ Madeleine Albright and William Woodward, *Madam Secretary: A Memoir* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 4.

² Ann Blackman, *Seasons of Her Life: A Biography of Madeleine Albright* (New York, Scribner, 1998), 31-64.

was officially changed to Korbel in 1945.³ In the autumn of the same year, after only a few months in Prague, Josef Korbel was appointed as Czechoslovakia's ambassador to Yugoslavia, therefore, the family once again moved to Belgrade.⁴

At the age of ten, Madeleine Albright was sent by her parents to Switzerland for academic purposes, while her family stayed in Belgrade. Meanwhile, the situation regarding Communism back in Czechoslovakia worsened. Subsequently, after the Communist coup in February 1948, Madeleine was informed by her parents about her father's new role with the United Nations. Her mother, sister and brother went to London, where she joined them soon after, and all of them headed to the United States, landing in New York Harbor on the 11th of November 1948.⁵

1.2 Education and career before becoming UN Ambassador

While living in London, Madeleine Albright began her preschool education in 1942. After kindergarten, she started her primary education at the private *Kensington High School* near the family's apartment.⁶ After coming to Walton-on-Thames, Albright began attending one of the best private schools in the area – *the Ingomar School*.⁷

After the family's arrival to Belgrade due to her father's job as an ambassador, Madeleine's parents did not wish for her to be exposed to Communist propaganda in schools, and so they decided she would be privately taught by tutors and governesses.⁸ In 1947, however, she was sent to Chexbres, Switzerland, to study at a private boarding school named *Prealpina Institut pour Jeunes Filles*. After coming to London, she attended the *Lycée Français* until her and her family's leave to the United States of America.⁹

Once in America, Albright began studying at *Arrandale School* in Great Neck Village. In June 1949, when the Korbel family moved to Denver, Madeleine started attending *Morey Junior High School*, where she successfully completed her primary education. For Madeleine's secondary education, Albright's parents chose *the Kent School for girls* – one of the most prestigious private schools in Colorado. Albright was said to be an active,

³ Michael Dobbs, *Madeleine Albright: A Twentieth-Century Odyssey* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2000), 108.

⁴ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 13.

⁵ Albright *Madam Secretary*, 14-17.

⁶ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 80.

⁷ Blackman, *Seasons*, 55.

⁸ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 116.

⁹ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 14-18.

conscientious and determined student, which was apparent from her service on the chapel committee, her later appointment as a president of the student council, and the formation of the Kent School for Girls' International Relations and Welfare Committee by Madeleine, who also named herself president of this Committee.¹⁰

After Madeleine's successful graduation from Kent School in 1954, she applied to Stanford University, Wellesley College, Mount Holyoke, University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Denver. Albright was accepted at all five colleges but chose to start her higher education at Wellesley College on a full scholarship, which was her first choice from the very beginning.¹¹

Upon Madeleine Albright's arrival at Wellesley College, she instantly proved to be a determined student with the ability to speak multiple European languages. Due to her desire to become a journalist, she began to write for the *Wellesley College News*. Her writings included topics ranging from healthy food available at college, through the importance of students learning foreign languages, to a story about John. F. Kennedy, which was written by Albright once she became the news editor in 1958. Additionally, Madeleine began working as an intern at the *Denver Post*, where she would meet her soon-to-be husband, Joe Albright.¹²

In 1959, Madeleine Albright successfully graduated from Wellesley College, and on June 11th, three days after receiving her diploma, she married Joseph Medill Patterson Albright. Soon after the wedding, Albright's husband became part of the Army Reserves with a base in Missouri, where she joined him and began working for the *Rolla Daily News* – a small newspaper in Missouri. Six months later, Albright and her husband moved to Chicago, and Madeleine took a position as a researcher in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In 1961, Albright gave birth to her twin daughters – Anna and Alice. However, as a distraction from her daughter's medical issues due to their premature birth, Albright decided to return to school – to Hofstra University – to learn Russian language, while still working for *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.¹³

After the Albright family moved to Washington due to her husband's transfer, Madeleine Albright decided to take an unusual path for women at that time – to pursue her

¹⁰ Blackman, *Seasons*, 94-109.

¹¹ Blackman, *Seasons*, 112.

¹² Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 163-166.

¹³ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 46-52.

doctorate at the Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Affairs. She was especially interested in the Russian language and the Soviet Union.¹⁴ Therefore, her academic field was political science focused on international relations, and subjects such as Development of the Soviet State or States of Eastern Europe could be found among her optional courses.¹⁵

In 1963, Albright and her family moved to New York as Joe Albright received a job offer, which meant she had to disrupt her studies at Johns Hopkins University's School. However, she decided to transfer her credits to Columbia University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and pursue her doctoral studies there. The same year, Madeleine Albright learnt she was pregnant again but suffered from a medical condition that posed a risk for her baby being born with a mental incapacity. Albright, after discovering this prognosis in an era when abortions were illegal, deepened her conviction in the importance of supporting women's rights to have a choice. Sadly, her baby was stillborn, but in spite of this personal tragedy, she gave birth to her third daughter, Katie, in 1967. It took her thirteen years to receive her doctorate, since she needed to take three leaves of absence due to her husband's job transfers and the two pregnancies. Nevertheless, Albright earned her master's degree in political science after writing her thesis on the Soviet Diplomatic Service, and eventually she received her Ph.D. after successfully defending her dissertation paper focused on the role of press during Prague Spring.¹⁶

In 1968, the Albright family moved to Washington again, where she joined the board of trustees of Beauvoir Elementary School, and became its first female chairperson, after her twin daughters had started studying there. Albright was very thorough in her function, and she was interested in diversifying the population of students, as well as enlarging the classrooms to make sure that siblings of current students are able to study at the school as well. She did successfully convince the board to take action on these matters.¹⁷

1.3 Beginnings in politics

In 1972, Maine Senator Edmund S. Muskie was running for the Democratic presidential nomination, when Madeleine Albright was asked by one of his advisers, Harry McPherson, who had known Albright for multiple years, to help him with a fundraising campaign dinner.

¹⁴ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 53-55.

¹⁵ Blackman, *Seasons*, 135.

¹⁶ Blackman, *Seasons*, 136-151.

¹⁷ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 65.

It was after this event that Madeleine Albright started working as an intern for Muskie on Capitol Hill. Her role was to monitor domestic issues such as health, aging, and others, but continuously gained more responsibilities as she managed the legislation regarding domestic policy issues.¹⁸

After the defeat of Muskie in the presidential election in 1976, the new president, Jimmy Carter, hired Zbigniew Brzezinski as his national security adviser and director of the National Security Council staff. Brzezinski, with only basic knowledge of Capitol Hill, sought help in managing his duties. As Albright's former professor at Columbia's University and due to her experience on Capitol Hill, he appointed Albright to act as National Communications Service's congressional liaison in the White House.¹⁹

Albright's appointment to the White House, however, was not welcomed, especially by the senior domestic policy advisers, who did not understand the need for NCS to have their own liaison. Nevertheless, Madeleine Albright was able to quickly form relations with other staff members at the White House and prove that her skills and abilities were valuable. During her role as NCS's congressional liaison, Albright was involved in the debate over the issue of arms sales, which was crucial to resolve in order to ease the tension between Israel and Egypt. She contributed to the resolution by gathering materials, organizing meetings, helping develop legislative strategy, and acting as a medium between the Executive Branch and Congress as well as other departments.²⁰ Furthermore, Albright advised Brzezinski with her legislative reports, informing him about how certain issues and legislation were seen by Congress, whether they supported it or not, and what strategies to use to win their support. She would even advise him on how to deal with other prominent figures. Albright also identified the need for Brzezinski to form stronger connections with Capitol Hill and therefore became his advisor regarding this matter as well.²¹ Albright stayed in the White House until the election of a new president, Ronald Reagan.

After getting officially divorced in 1983, Madeleine Albright began teaching comparative politics at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. She started as a teacher of Modern Foreign Government for undergraduates but continued by teaching courses on Foreign Policy Decision Making, United States-Soviet Relations, and

¹⁸ Blackman, *Seasons*, 158-160.

¹⁹ Blackman, *Seasons*, 168-169.

²⁰ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 258-268.

²¹ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 268-274.

Contemporary International Relations²². She became popular and was asked to participate in the university's Women in Foreign Service Program, and eventually initiated a new program – the Georgetown Leadership Seminar. Madeleine Albright also participated as a speaker in several programs, including “American Interest”, later known as “Great Decisions” – a program of debates about various foreign policy issues. However, Albright herself felt the need to improve her commentary skills, which was one of the reasons she became a weekly speaker for “Voice of America.”²³

Madeleine Albright's path to active politics began again when Geraldine Ferraro, a vice-presidential candidate of 1984, chose Albright as her tutor in foreign politics. In 1984, former Vice President Walter Mondale was running as the Democratic candidate in the presidential election. As part of his campaign, Mondale decided to do an unprecedented strategic move by choosing a woman as a candidate for vice-presidency. His choice was Geraldine Ferraro, a three-term congresswoman, who accepted the nomination during the Democratic Convention in San Francisco in July 1984. Ferraro was known for her outstanding communication skills but lacked knowledge in foreign policy. Therefore, Mondale introduced her to an expert in foreign affairs – Madeleine Albright. The issue of foreign policy was critical during this time, as the Cold War was still raging. However, despite the efforts of Albright as Ferraro's foreign policy adviser, they were not able to defeat Ferraro's opponent, a World War II veteran and former Director of the CIA, George Bush. Even though Ferraro's campaign ended in failure, both Albright and Ferraro claimed a victory of their own, with the campaign prompting women to realise their potential and ambitions to reach higher positions.²⁴

After being a part of vice-presidential campaign in 1984, Albright became a principal foreign policy adviser to presidential candidate Michael Dukakis in 1988. Albright's job was not only to tutor Dukakis in foreign policy but also to make him look credible in terms of national security, especially since his rival was then Vice President George Bush. It was during the Dukakis campaign that Albright met Bill Clinton, then the governor of Arkansas, for the first time, as he was preparing Dukakis for his debates with Bush. Despite the

²² Blackman, *Seasons*, 193.

²³ Thomas Blood, *Madam Secretary: A Biography of Madeleine Albright* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997), 63-66.

²⁴ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 298-305.

dedication and efforts of both Albright and Clinton, with the victory of George Bush, the Democrats were once again defeated.²⁵

Despite the presidential candidate's failure, Albright wrote in her book: "Although the Democrats lost again, the Dukakis campaign was another educational experience for me and a bridge to other opportunities. I was especially grateful for the new friends in my life ...".²⁶ One of the new opportunities she encountered was becoming president of the Center for National Policy – a think tank for the Democratic Party. Albright's presidency in the Center was crucial for her, as this was the first time she was known as Madeleine Albright, President of CNP, and not as someone's adviser.²⁷

1.4 Career before becoming Secretary of State – UN Ambassador

In 1992, after the victory of Bill Clinton in the presidential elections, the Democrats returned to power after twelve years of Republicans in office. Although Albright did not actively participate in Clinton's campaign due to her presidency at the Center for National Policy, Clinton admired her, and they had become companions since the first time they met during the Dukakis presidential campaign. Additionally, Clinton was encouraged to establish his cabinet so that more minorities, including women, were represented. All these factors contributed to Clinton's decision to nominate Albright for the post in the United Nations. The nomination had to be approved by the Senate, with the result of all senators voting unanimously in favour of Albright. Subsequently, Madeleine Albright officially became the UN Ambassador on February 3, 1993.²⁸

In addition to being the first refugee and foreign-born American UN Ambassador, Clinton appointed Albright as a member of the National Security Council. Albright aimed to make the United Nations more effective and believed that the future strategy for keeping the world peace was to promote international cooperation and integration, as the containment policy had expired.²⁹ Madeleine Albright was the only woman among fifteen National Security Council members, but she proved her worth – she was an outstanding and straightforward speaker, continuous of public opinion and positively regarded by media.³⁰

²⁵ Blackman, *Seasons*, 212-220.

²⁶ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 105.

²⁷ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 339.

²⁸ Blackman, *Seasons*, 227-232.

²⁹ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 350-351.

³⁰ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 353.

Even before becoming the Secretary of State, Albright made a significant mark in American history during her term at the United Nations. Among the numerous activities and issues she addressed, Madeleine Albright played a significant role as the UN Ambassador in the Somalia Conflict and the Bosnian Civil War, which are further discussed in the following subchapters, demonstrating both her success and failure.

1.4.1 Somalia Conflict

In the middle of 1992, Somalia was facing a civil war and a lack of humanitarian aid. Somalis were dying from disease and starvation, and the international help was ineffective and chaotic. The situation deteriorated into a stage in which gangs were destroying UN facilities.³¹ Further assistance from the United Nations was not possible, as they needed the support of all involved parties, and the leader of the war, Mohammed Farah Aidid, rejected UN operations in the territory. While at the end of his term, the Bush administration approved limited US involvement and American troops entered Somalia. Later, the new president Clinton supported the United Nations-sponsored program of humanitarian aid. However, the situation worsened again, resulting in deaths of American soldiers. Due to this event, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali demanded an immediate arrest of the leader, Mohammed Farah Aidid. Supported by the United Nations, which wanted to convey a message that no warlord can interfere with them, the UN offered a reward for Aidid's capture. The military operations continued, and there was information about Aidid's forces position weakening, but simultaneously, the number of civilian casualties was rising. Therefore, both the Defence Department and the Red Cross demanded the immediate withdrawal of troops from Somalia. However, the president was determined to continue the peacekeeping operations, which were set to carry on until 1995.³² This strategy proved to be flawed and ineffective, marked particularly by the tragedy of eighteen soldiers who lost their lives in an attempt to capture the warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid in Mogadishu on October 3, 1993.³³

The Somalia Conflict was not a successful start for Madeleine Albright as the UN Ambassador. Since both Albright and Clinton were advocates for so-called "assertive multilateralism", a policy which emphasizes using military forces in other countries for purposes additional to US national security, many did not understand the decision to place

³¹ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 142-146.

³² Blood, *Biography*, 133-138.

³³ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 355.

the responsibility on the UN's program called UNOSOM II, a small-scale peacekeeping operation. Additionally, Albright did not improve her position when she stated, in the name of the administration, that the UN program was only trying to restore Somalia as a functioning state. Even though this statement was only meant to support the United Nation's operations, it would serve as an indicator and a proof of an incompetent strategy later on. On the other hand, Madeleine Albright showed her concerns about the Boutros Boutros-Ghali's priority to capture Aidid, which moved the US position from being a peacemaker between the conflicting parties to having to operate under hostile conditions.³⁴

After October 3, 1993, the day of the tragedy that resulted in the deaths of eighteen American soldiers, most persons involved tried to shift the responsibility onto others. Albright, as a spokeswoman for Clinton's administration, advocated many times for the strategy implemented, and so for the public and the press she seemed to have played a significant role in the incompetent foreign policy decisions. Despite President Clinton's plan for Albright to be a part of his foreign policy team, she was not included in most of the decision-making processes concerning the Somalia Conflict. One of the reasons why she was excluded from the debates was geographical distance, as she spent most of her time at the General Assembly and UN Security Council meetings in New York. Perhaps the other significant reason was that the policy regarding Somalia had been largely formed during Clinton's campaign by his campaign consultants and not by his foreign policy advisors such as Albright.³⁵

In the few meetings which Albright attended, she repeatedly highlighted that there was a risk that the operation could quickly deviate from its primary objective. However, since the administration believed that the conflict is Defence Department's issue, Albright's warnings were mostly ignored. As a result, Madeleine Albright became a person whose role was to convey the decisions made to the public in the least damaging way, even though she was not convinced that the overall plan would be successful.³⁶

In the period following the tragedy in Mogadishu, while many prominent people involved in the decision-making processes were trying to minimize the impact on their careers, Albright understood that trying to do the same would threaten her credibility. Nevertheless, whether some believed that she should not take part in foreign-policy

³⁴ Blood, *Biography*, 134-138.

³⁵ Blood, *Biography*, 139-146.

³⁶ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 145-146.

decisions, or others knew that her impact on the Somalia conflict strategy had been minimal, Albright made sure to review and confirm every foreign-policy issue from that moment on.³⁷

1.4.2 Bosnian Civil War

In 1992, a war erupted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose population consisted of a mixture of Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims. The primary objective of the war was to remove the Muslims from the country, in other words, to commit what is now known as ethnic cleansing.³⁸

In the first years of the war, the US administration tried not to intervene in the Bosnian conflict, as they believed the war was a matter of Europe. However, it soon became clear that the European solutions were insufficient, and so US involvement began. Many strategies were discussed without a clear outcome. While some strictly opposed the use of military force and advocated for the use of sanctions on arms, Albright believed that the reduction of sanctions could give the Bosnian Muslims a chance to defend themselves, and that the use of military force was essential for pushing the warring parties to negotiation peace talks. However, this initiative by Albright was not met with the approval from US allies.³⁹

In 1995, after the massacre in Srebrenica, where approximately 7,000 Bosnian Muslims were killed and found in mass graves, NATO began with air strikes against Serb military. The NATO operation significantly weakened their position and so pressured them to negotiations. The first negotiation, with all three warring parties present, was held in Dayton, and the official peace treaty ending the Bosnian War – known as the Dayton Accord – was signed on November 21, 1995.⁴⁰

The conflict in Bosnia felt personal to Albright, as she had spent considerable time in the country while growing up. In her book, Madeleine Albright even compared the ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims to Holocaust, saying that even though the context and scale differed, and the Holocaust was not being repeated, there were similarities.⁴¹

In 1994, Albright decided to visit the country after watching the situation of the ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims, and with the thought of the Holocaust in mind, saying, “Never Again”. However, her arrival was not welcomed by the country’s population and

³⁷ Blood, *Biography*, 144.

³⁸ Blackman, *Seasons*, 231.

³⁹ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 179-182.

⁴⁰ Blood, *Biography*, 149-159.

⁴¹ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 178.

was accompanied by raging screams. Yet it was in Bosnia that she understood the true horror of the situation and became certain that the employment of the US military force was inevitable.⁴²

After the negotiations in Dayton, President Clinton, based on the recommendations of his foreign-policy advisors including Albright, decided to deploy American troops to Bosnia to supervise the peace actions and prevent further violence. Even with the opposition's criticism of this controversial decision, the President, as a Commander-in-chief, sent the US soldiers as part of the UN peacekeeping force to Bosnia.⁴³

For Albright, the Bosnian situation was not without a controversy. Madeleine Albright had been an advocate for the use of military force in the Bosnian conflict from the very beginning. However, General Colin Powell, who had played a key role in the Gulf War and who was opposed by few people, strongly disagreed with Albright. The tension between them continued for years, especially after Albright questioned the importance of having a strong military if it could not be used.⁴⁴

After the war was over, Albright also became vocal about her support of the War Crimes Tribunal regarding Bosnia, as she wanted justice for approximately half a million victims. Both bringing the peace to Bosnia and punishing the wartime criminals were viewed as a remarkable success of the administration's policy.⁴⁵ For Albright, unlike the failed strategy in Somalia, the Bosnian War resolution was one of many successful policies of Madeleine Albright as the UN Ambassador.

⁴² Blood, *Biography*, 149-150.

⁴³ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 180-183.

⁴⁴ Blackman, *Seasons*, 241-242.

⁴⁵ Blood, *Biography*, 176.

2 WOMEN IN US POLITICS – HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Among forty-seven presidencies, no woman has ever been elected the President of the United States. Only in 2008 did Hillary Clinton become the first woman ever to be nominated by major political party for the presidential election, however, first losing the nomination in preliminary election to Barack Obama and later being defeated in the 2016 presidential election of by Donald Trump. The underrepresentation of women in US politics can further be demonstrated by the fact that only in the recent past, Kamala Harris was elected the first female Vice President in 2021 and in the same year, Janet Yellen became the first woman to serve as Secretary of the Treasury.⁴⁶

Additionally, the disproportionate representation of women in office throughout the history can be seen in the total number of only three women ever serving as Secretary of State: Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and Hillary Clinton.⁴⁷ Similarly, Janet Reno, Lorreta Lynch, and Pam Bondi are the only three female Attorney Generals ever to be appointed.⁴⁸

The next subchapters are crucial for understanding the history and representation of women in US politics, while also providing the necessary background to recognize the unprecedented moment of Madeleine Albright becoming the first female US Secretary of State.

2.1 Early Challenges and Political Activities

Still in the 19th century, women were mostly viewed as having primarily the role of a wife and a mother, with no legal rights to hold public office or the right to vote. However, the situation for at least some women began to change through the Hicksite movement during the 19th century.

Even though most members of the Hicksite movement held the belief that the social role of a woman was to be a good mother and wife, they recognized that the education for

⁴⁶ Lori C. Han, and Caroline Heldman, *Women, Power, and Politics: The Fight for Gender Equality in the United States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 1, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=9464EAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁴⁷ “Former Secretaries of State”, U.S. Department of State, accessed March 28, 2025, <https://www.state.gov/former-secretaries-of-state>.

⁴⁸ Jennifer Shutt and Ariana Figueroa, “Former Florida AG Pam Bondi Gets Trump’s Latest Nod for Attorney General,” *Washington State Standard*, November 21, 2024, <https://washingtonstatestandard.com/2024/11/21/repub/former-florida-ag-pam-bondi-gets-trumps-latest-nod-for-attorney-general/>.

women was important and crucial. The idea of equal rights for women within the movement came from one of the liberal members soon after. Perhaps one of the most prominent women from the movement was Lucretia Coffin Mott, who advocated for equal rights in education and professions, and became a supporter of the abolitionist efforts. The movement's women with Mott and, after her death, Alice Paul at the forefront, eventually promoted women's rights between 1865 and 1920, when the 19th Amendment was ratified.⁴⁹

Although the political and public sphere was heavily managed by men, some women participated in the abolitionist movement to end slavery. In 1838, Angelina Grimké attracted great attention when she addressed this issue to the state legislature as the first woman in history. Since women could not vote or be in office, her actions were not well received. Despite the criticism, she and her sister Sarah joined the Female Anti-Slavery Society. Both sisters wrote multiple documents about the abolition of slavery, as well as the promotion of equal rights for women regarding education, wages, and the elimination of discrimination. Not only for them, but also for many other women, being part of the abolitionist formations was valuable, as they learnt how to organize and hold public meetings.⁵⁰

The 19th century became focused on the topics regarding women, including debates about property ownership, marital law, wages, education, working conditions, and women started to form associations or unions.

2.2 The Suffrage Movement

One of the key roles in the formation of the Suffrage movement was played by Elizabeth C. Stanton alongside Lucretia Mott. This women's movement was formed in 1840, when William L. Garrison, a supporter of slavery abolition and women's rights, stood up for women after they were voted against participating in the World Anti-Slavery Convention.⁵¹

Elizabeth C. Stanton, along with the help of Lucretia Mott, arranged a public convention for women in Seneca Falls on July 19 and 20, 1848. Inspired by the Declaration of Independence, Stanton created her own version called "the Declaration of Sentiments". The document demanded, among other matters, that women be treated equally,

⁴⁹ Robynne R. Healey and Carole D. Spencer, *Quaker Women, 1800–1920: Studies of a Changing Landscape* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2023), 21–31,

<https://books.google.cz/books?id=CzzdEAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Frost and Kathryn Cullen-DuPont, *Women's Suffrage in America: An Eyewitness History* (New York: Facts on File, 1992), 25–30,

https://archive.org/details/womenssuffragein0000fros_w9q1/page/33/mode/1up?q=organize.

⁵¹ Frost and Cullen-DuPont, *Woman's Suffrage*, 55–59.

be allowed to participate in public conversations, be able to own property, and, most importantly, be given the right to vote.⁵² Although the convention was ridiculed in most media, the “Declaration of Sentiments” became the very first step leading to the ratification of the 19th Amendment, and the official beginning of the women’s rights movement in the United States.⁵³

In 1850, the first National Women’s Rights Convention was held in Massachusetts, accompanied by the most prominent feminist protagonists, including Lucretia Mott, Angelina Grimké, and Lucy Stone. One of the later supporters was also Susan B. Anthony, whose journey to advocacy for women’s rights began through the Temperance movement. The primary objective of the Temperance movement was to reduce alcohol consumption. The problem of alcoholism was affecting many women, either through domestic violence or because the rights for custody were often granted to their addicted husbands. Thanks to the initiatives of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth C. Stanton, the New York legislature was the first to alter the Married Woman’s Property Act, ensuring women the right to own and control their own property and earnings.⁵⁴

The women’s initiatives did not stop even during the Civil War. On the contrary, soon after the conflict had begun, women formed an association called the Women’s Central Association of Relief. The association was not funded by the government, and so women had to employ their organization skills, and they successfully collected millions of dollars.⁵⁵ The Civil War once again showed, that women were capable and useful in many spheres of public life, whether as nurses and teachers, or as leaders of large associations.

A major disappointment to all women fighting for voting rights came in 1865, when the 14th Amendment was introduced to provide suffrage for African Americans, but still did not include women. However, the American Equal Rights Association was formed to establish equal rights for all people, regardless of race or gender, with Lucretia Mott functioning as the president of the organization, Elizabeth C. Stanton as the vice-president, and Susan B. Anthony acting as secretary for correspondence. Despite the efforts of the organization, neither the 14th nor the 15th Amendment included women’s right to vote, and

⁵² Elizabeth D. Katz, “Sex, Suffrage, and State Constitutional Law: Women’s Legal Right to Hold Public Office,” *Yale Journal of Law & Feminism* 33, no. 2 (2022): 136, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3896499>.

⁵³ Frost and Cullen-DuPont, *Woman’s Suffrage*, 79-81.

⁵⁴ Katz, “Sex, Suffrage, and State Constitutional Law,” 123-159.

⁵⁵ Frost and Cullen-DuPont, *Woman’s Suffrage*, 143-145.

so a new organization focusing only on women's interests was introduced as the National Woman Suffrage Association.⁵⁶

After years of unsuccessful attempts to change the voting law, Stanton presented a Declaration of Rights for Women, only to be rejected by the majority again. However, in the beginning of the 20th century, after decades of advocating for women's rights, the movements could finally see some progress. For the first time in history, all of the US states accepted at least some of the initiatives, including participation of women in public debates, equal education, and control over their own property, among others.⁵⁷

2.3 The 19th Amendment and Its Aftermath

In 1919, both the House of Representatives and the Senate passed the Federal Woman Suffrage Amendment. Finally, voting rights were ensured for women after the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.⁵⁸

The 19th Amendment not only allowed women to vote, but it also made many office positions available for them for the first time.⁵⁹ However, this was no guarantee for women to reach higher-level positions. While some viewed women as competent for political careers, others were still not convinced that the enfranchisement of women was a successful policy. Furthermore, the Amendment itself was aimed at forbidding discrimination based on gender only in terms of voting rights, not office holding. For that reason, the range of women's rights differed from state to state.⁶⁰

After the ratification of the 19th Amendment, women in numerous states were quickly able to obtain positions in office. On the other hand, other states believed these posts were still reserved to men only, and that women were not eligible for these jobs. The problem and barrier for women's involvement in politics was the ambiguous definition of the 19th

⁵⁶ Frost and Cullen-Dupont, *Women's Suffrage*, 169-177.

⁵⁷ Frost and Cullen-DuPont, *Women's Suffrage*, 212-267.

⁵⁸ "19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Women's Right to Vote (1920)," The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, last modified February 8, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/19th-amendment>.

⁵⁹ Katz, "Sex, Suffrage, and State Constitutional Law," 173.

⁶⁰ Katz, "Sex, Suffrage, and State Constitutional Law," 182.

Amendment. While some believed that the amendment ensured full political involvement for women, others argued that the law only permitted the right to vote, but not to hold office.⁶¹

The unclear interpretation of the 19th Amendment became one of the reasons for women's movements to begin advocating for improvements in women's rights covering multiple public areas. The most prominent movements were the ones focused on citizenship, economic rights and sexual autonomy. The National Women's Party was concerned with matters of citizenship, family matters, and the explicit right to hold office, which they presented in the Equal Rights Amendment. The economic branch prioritized improving employment conditions, including setting the maximal number of working hours and minimum wage. The third prominent movement stressed the importance of birth control as a necessity for women's freedom and sovereignty. Although all these three branches of feminist movements advocated for the improvement of women's rights in one way or another, they failed to come to a uniform understanding of equality, which was marked by disputes among them. They did not reach at least partial agreement until the post-World War II era.⁶²

2.4 Key Policies and Movements in Promotion of Women's Rights After the 19th Amendment

The 19th Amendment was the very first crucial step toward women's full political participation and equality. With the amendment laying the groundwork for the further extension of women's power, understanding the process of the most important policies and movements that followed the law granting voting rights is essential for recognizing the background and gradual involvement of women in politics.

The 19th Amendment's uncertain scope and failure to unambiguously interpret women's rights as citizens led to the rise of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) – a supposed solution to the conflict resulting from the law's unclear meaning. However, the ERA resulted in a division of the public into two conflicting sides, including feminist movements. One of them favoured the amendment, with the idea that men and women are supposed to be treated equally. The other side, opposing the ERA, believed that there are

⁶¹ Katz, "Sex, Suffrage, and State Constitutional Law," 186.

⁶² Nah D. Hunter, "In Search of Equality for Women: From Suffrage to Civil Rights," *Duquesne Law Review* 59, no. 1 (2021): 131-151, <https://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/facpub/2390>.

different societal expectations for each gender and, therefore, they should be treated separately in terms of the law as well.⁶³

The disputes between the opposing sides continued for decades and never fully reached a unified definition of gender equality. However, after World War II, when women had to perform the jobs that were previously reserved for men only, the conflicting sides shared one common idea – equal pay and equal employment conditions.⁶⁴ These principles were met through the 1963 Equal Pay Act, which ensured equal pay for equal work, as well as the 1964 Civil Rights Act under Title VII, which prohibited discrimination and unfair practices against women in the workplace. Additional success was also apparent through the changes to the Fourteenth Amendment, which served to protect women's reproductive rights. Although the Equal Rights Amendment has never been ratified, it strongly imposed a question of gender equality and led to several policies that improved at least some of the public life aspects for women. Additionally, it has left conversations about the ERA's ratification continue to the present day.⁶⁵

After the 1964 Civil Rights Act, efforts to strengthen women's power became more apparent through many policies concerning different aspects of their lives. The 1972 Education Amendment, placed under Title IX of Civil Rights Act, banned discrimination based on gender in any educational program or activity funded by the government, and therefore may be considered one of the most important educational laws for women.⁶⁶ The improvement of work-life balance was granted to women by the enforcement of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, which provided the right for unpaid leave for several reasons, including childbirth or caring for family members.⁶⁷ The aspect of safety and protection was improved by the introduction of The 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which changed the support for services and justice for victims of domestic

⁶³ Rebecca DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship: The Original Conflict Over the Equal Rights Amendment, 1920–1963* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 2-7, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=4oI6EAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁶⁴ Hunter, "In Search of Equality," 160-163.

⁶⁵ Kate Andrias, "Class, Care, and the Equal Rights Amendment," *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law* 41, no. 1 (2022): 6 -9, <https://doi.org/10.52214/cjgl.vi.9789>.

⁶⁶ Norma T. Mertz, "The Promise of Title IX: Longitudinal Study of Gender in Urban School Administration, 1972 to 2002," *Urban Education* 41, no. 6 (2006): 544, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085906292511>.

⁶⁷ Mary E. Guy and Vanessa M. Fenley, "Inch by Inch: Gender Equity Since the Civil Rights Act of 1964," *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 34, no. 1 (2014): 50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X13510379>.

violence, sexual assault, or stalking.⁶⁸ After VAWA, no significant laws were passed until The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which provided clarification of Title VII in terms of pay discrimination in 2009.⁶⁹

2.5 Prominent Women in US Politics: Their Significance and Impact

The next subchapter lists a selection of women whose unprecedented posts and groundbreaking roles were crucial for shaping the position of women in US politics, and whose appointments have had a lasting impact on women's representation in the field.

One of the very first accomplishments for women politically was the election of Jeannette Rankin to the House of Representatives in 1917. She became the first woman ever to be elected to either chamber of the US Congress. Her election was a groundbreaking event, given the fact that women did not receive the right to vote until three years later. Rankin herself participated in the promotion of the 19th Amendment, as being part of the suffrage movement.⁷⁰ As a highly educated woman, she understood the need for women to obtain a proper education. For this reason, the Jeannette Rankin Foundation was established after her death, based on her wishes, to give women from low-income backgrounds the opportunity to study.⁷¹

Hattie Caraway was another prominent woman in the US political history. She became the first female to serve in the US Senate after her senator husband's death in 1931. Although she was supposed to remain in the function only until her deceased husband's end of term, Caraway decided to run for the post again, now solely based on her own abilities.⁷² She was reported as being much more reserved than the outspoken Jeannette Rankin, but still managed to win the campaign. Her significance in promoting of women's rights is marked

⁶⁸ Angela R. Gover and Angela M. Moore, "The 1994 Violence Against Women Act: A Historic Response to Gender Violence," *Violence Against Women* 27, no. 1 (2021): 16, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220949705>.

⁶⁹ Guy and Fenley, "Inch by Inch," 50-51.

⁷⁰ Michael J. Martinez, *Congressional Pathfinders: „First“ Members of Congress and How They Shaped American History* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), 35-37.

https://books.google.cz/books?id=JbUSEAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.

⁷¹ State Department, International Information Programs, *Women of Influence*, (2006): 18, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-S20-PURL-gpo2329/pdf/GOVPUB-S20-PURL-gpo2329.pdf>.

⁷² Martinez, *Congressional Pathfinders*, 56.

by her formal support as a senator of the Equal Rights Amendment and her choice to campaign for re-election in her own right in an institution fully dominated by men.⁷³

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of former president Franklin D. Roosevelt, began to participate in politics because of her husband. However, her legacy does not only lie on her role as First Lady, but primarily on her long-term advocacy and support of human and civil rights. She was known for her continuous promotion of social justice and equal rights for both women and minorities. After her husband's death, she was appointed chairwoman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, where she played a significant role in the promotion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁷⁴ Her post at the United Nations became an inspiration for many women, encouraging them to participate in politics and look for positions in office.⁷⁵

In 1993, an unprecedented event occurred in US politics when Janet Reno was appointed the first female Attorney General by President Bill Clinton. After 150 years, Reno was the first person to hold the post for two consecutive terms. She was a highly educated woman with degree in chemistry and law, and prior to her appointment, she worked as the first female state attorney in Florida. Her legacy as Attorney General is primarily marked by her efforts to reduce crime, violence and drug abuse.⁷⁶ Subsequently, in terms of women's rights, she is remembered as an advocate for reproductive autonomy, which she viewed as a fundamental constitutional right.⁷⁷

Condoleezza Rice became especially important for women of colour, as she became the first African American female Secretary of State, serving under George Bush's presidential term.⁷⁸ She was the second woman in the position after the groundbreaking role of Madeleine Albright's appointment to the post, whose background, importance and influence will be further discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Unlike Albright, Rice did not vocally promote women's rights and rather opposed women's leadership. On the other hand,

⁷³ Tamar Shioshvili, "American Women Making Breakthrough in the Arenas of Politics and Government," *Journal in Humanities* 10, no. 1 (2021): 66, <https://doi.org/10.31578/hum.v10i1.438>.

⁷⁴ State Department, *Women of Influence*, 20.

⁷⁵ Harold I. Smith, "Eleanor Roosevelt's Remarkable Transition From the White House Into Widowhood, 1945-1946," *Illness, Crises & Loss* 28, no. 1 (2020): 64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1054137317692552>.

⁷⁶ Carl Hulse, "Janet Reno, First Woman to Serve as U.S. Attorney General, Dies at 78," *The New York Times*, November 7, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/08/us/janet-reno-dead.html>.

⁷⁷ Department of Justice, "Testimony of Janet Reno Attorney General before the Committee on Labor and Human Resources United States Senate." May 12, 1993, <https://www.justice.gov/archive/ag/speeches/1993/05-12-1993-p.pdf>.

⁷⁸ "Biographies of the Secretaries of State: Condoleezza Rice (1954-)," United States Department of State: Office of the Historians, Foreign Service Institute, accessed on March 29, 2025, <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/rice-condoleezza>.

she continuously tried to break the stereotypes about African American minorities, both during and after her term as Secretary of State.⁷⁹

Hillary Clinton is considered to be one of the most prominent female political figures in US history. Among many her successes, she is marked as the first woman ever to be nominated to presidential candidacy by a major political party. She had been a presidential candidate twice, but first losing to Barack Obama in primaries in 2008, and later to Donald Trump in 2016 presidential election. Despite her failed candidacy, Clinton was appointed by President Barack Obama as Secretary of State, where she proved her outstanding diplomatic skills.⁸⁰ Clinton has been known for her vocal advocacy of women's question, claiming that women's rights are essential for national security activities. These principles of hers became known as the "Hillary Doctrine."⁸¹

A remarkable success regarding the improvement of representation and an extension of number of women and minorities in office came in 2021, when Kamala Harris was appointed Vice President. Not only was she the first woman ever to serve in the post, but she was also the first African American and South Asian American Vice President. Furthermore, she made history by becoming the first woman representing both of these minorities as a candidate in the presidential election of 2024. She is a known advocate of the pro-choice initiative, LGBTQ+ rights, equal economic opportunities, and guaranteed access to basic hygiene needs, among others.⁸²

2.6 Challenges Faced by Women in Politics

The question of women's equal rights is an ongoing issue and a matter of many debates, discussions, and new policies. The journey of continuously addressing women's unequal treatment began before the ratification of the 19th Amendment in the 1920s and continues to present day. Although many policies have been introduced, some matters remain unresolved.

⁷⁹ Stéfanie Von Hlatky. "Women as Foreign Policy Leaders: National Security and Gender Politics in Superpower America by Sylvia Bashevkin," *International Journal* 74, no. 4 (2019): 615, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26882709>.

⁸⁰ Mary Anne Taylor and Danee Pye, "Hillary Through TIME: The (Un)Making of the First Woman President," *American Behavioral Scientist* 63, no. 7 (2019): 809-819, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217711801>.

⁸¹ Deborah G. Felder, *Trailblazing Women!: Amazing Americans Who Made History* (Canton, MI, Visible Ink Press, 2021), chap. Hillary Clinton, https://books.google.cz/books?id=AXwREAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q&f=false.

⁸² "Kamala D. Harris: Former Vice President," About, The Office of Kamala D. Harris, accessed March 29, 2025, <https://kamalaharris.com/about/>.

Whether in politics or other branches of life, women still face challenges and obstacles, which largely stem from required but non-existent policies, gaps in existing laws and stereotyping.

A significant portion of cause for underrepresentation of women in US Congress is believed to come from the media coverage of female candidates. Women tend to be associated with topics of family status, physical appearance, and lifestyle, rather than their abilities, qualifications, and policy initiatives. The media tend to portray women as being inclined to deal with issues such as abortion and education, while men being focused on economics and national security. Female candidates are also reported to receive less attention than their male rivals and are questioned about their possible influence if elected. Furthermore, the scope and choice for portrayal of women seems to be problematic. Women tend to be viewed as incompetent to deal with complex policy decisions if ascribed “feminine characteristics”. On the contrary, they are reported to often not be voted, especially by the supporters of traditional gender roles, when described as tough or competent.⁸³ In general, media continue to create barriers for women in politics by promoting stereotypes and biases, especially through assigning them to traditional social roles. It is also believed that the higher the political position they campaign for is, the more stereotypically gendered the portrayal of them is presented by the media.⁸⁴

The number of women in politics is on the rise. This claim is supported by data showing an increase of 44 % in the last decade, with 28 % of seats held by women in the US Congress in 2025 in comparison to 19.4 % in 2015.⁸⁵ However, research suggests that women still tend to be overlooked by the political parties for election candidacy to higher positions, as they are believed to be less qualified. Another potential reason for the underrepresentation of women in office is that women are more likely to stand for election once they are asked by the party, instead of doing so on their own. Women are also more likely to delay the run for office in consideration of their families or be accused of inattention to their relationships in favour of a Congress position by the public and the press. Additionally, voters often tend

⁸³ Philo C. Wasburn and Mara H. Wasburn, “Media Coverage of Women in Politics: The Curious Case of Sarah Palin,” *Media, Culture & Society* 33, no.7 (2011): 1027-1029, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443711415744>.

⁸⁴ Nana Kwame Osei Fordjour and Judith McIntosh White, “Framing Madam Vice President: Global Newspaper Coverage of Kamala Harris in her First Year,” *New Research Journal* 46, no. 1 (2025): 30-32, <https://doi.org/10.1177/07395329241280282>.

⁸⁵ Anna Jackson, “Women Account for 28 % of Lawmakers in the 119th Congress – Unchanged from the Last Congress,” *Pew Research Center*, February 21, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/02/21/women-account-for-28-of-lawmakers-in-the-119th-congress-unchanged-from-the-last-congress/>.

to more strictly evaluate the competence and qualifications of women than those of men, and employ the idea of “strategic discrimination” which is based on their withdrawal of support because of supposed biases of others towards the female candidate.⁸⁶

In recent years, the public awareness of underrepresentation of women in politics was fuelled by the defeat of Hillary Clinton by Donald Trump in 2016. Simultaneously, the #MeToo Movement, alongside with 2017 Women’s March, has shaped the involvement of women in politics. The #MeToo Movement raised awareness and concerns about sexual harassment and assault, but research suggests that it also prompted women to increased involvement in politics.⁸⁷ This trend is noticeable by the number of 476 women running for seats in the House of Representatives compared to the previous record of 298. However, the number predominantly included Democratic women, while Republican female representation in the Congress declined.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Jeffrey Lazarus, Amy Steigerwalt, and Micayla Clark, “Time Spent in the House: Gender and the Political Careers of U.S. House Members,” *Politics & Gender* 19, no. 1 (2023): 100-104, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X21000428>.

⁸⁷ Jeremiah J. Castle, et al., “The Effect of the #MeToo Movement on Political Engagement and Ambition in 2018,” *Political Research Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (2020): 927-929, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912920924824>.

⁸⁸ Kira Sanbonmatsu, “Women’s Underrepresentation in the U.S. Congress,” *Daedalus* 149, no. 1 (2020): 46, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48563031>.

3 THE FIRST FEMALE US SECRETARY OF STATE

Madeleine Albright's hopes for higher office were about to become true when President Clinton was elected for his second term in 1997. It was an unprecedented moment in US history for a woman to become the Secretary of State. Albright had been very close to the First Lady, Hillary Clinton, and some argued that their friendship played a significant role in her appointment. Others were aware of the fact that President Clinton had been an advocate and supporter of women's rights and believed this may have contributed to his choice. While both of these hypotheses most likely played a role, Clinton had been thinking about her nomination since his first election, because he had always trusted her judgement and style of expressing ideas, and admired her attitude towards foreign policy.⁸⁹

The Clinton Administration and foreign policy establishment were dissatisfied with his nomination, arguing that Albright was not ready for such a big role due to her low engagement in administration meetings. Despite the opposition, President Clinton stood by his choice, and after the confirmation process with a Senate vote 99-0 in favour of her, Madeleine Albright became the first female Secretary of State in US history on January 3, 1997.⁹⁰

Ultimately, after Albright entered office, she was welcomed with support from both conservatives and liberals. As the first highest-ranking woman in US politics, the media quickly began to be interested in her. Although this may have seemed like a disadvantage, Madeleine Albright took it as an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of her predecessor and employ her talent for diplomatic skill in communicating policies to the public, knowing exactly what to say at what time, place and manner.⁹¹

Madeleine Albright's appointment and service as US Secretary of State is marked as a groundbreaking political role for women. Albright's role is associated with many diplomatic and foreign-policy accomplishments as well as controversies, criticism and challenges. The most prominent initiatives and events of this prominent figure are discussed in the following subchapters.

⁸⁹ Blackman, *Seasons*, 252-260.

⁹⁰ Thomas W. Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 5-28.

⁹¹ Dobbs, *A Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, 397.

3.1 Diplomatic Initiatives and Foreign Policy Decisions

During Madeleine Albright's post as Secretary of State, she addressed many foreign policy issues. At the beginning of her service, she and the Clinton administration set priorities focused on ensuring security, prosperity, and freedom of the United States. Albright became an advocate for emphasizing the importance of the correlation between democracy, stability, and economic growth.⁹²

Her view of the global dynamics was based on her distinction of four types of countries. These distinctions included: countries fully developed in the international system; states trying to become members of global network; those who were affected by conflicts and therefore were unable to fully participate; and countries which resisted the idea of and continuously violated the basic human rights of modern developed societies. Albright believed that this distinction was accompanied by the same number of challenges which became the framework for her work as Secretary of State. The first important thing was to deepen connections among the world leaders, which would strengthen the nation's stability and prompt a better response to new threats and global problems. Secondly, she was aware of the significance of providing help to developing countries to become full participants of the international network by navigating them to democracy. Emphasizing the importance of global trade and providing aid to regions affected by poverty and war became the third priority for Albright. Additionally, enforcing laws, policies, and military use to fight against terrorism and nuclear weapons for global security purposes presented the fourth challenge for the Secretary of State.⁹³ The following subchapters include a selection of three foreign policy issues dealt with by Albright: NATO expansion, sanctions on Iraq, and the Kosovo War.

3.1.1 NATO Expansion

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established to provide security against Soviet Union aggression and to help Western economies to be restored. Yet during the time of Clinton's presidency, with no threat from major global power, the question of the further need and use of NATO arose. However, the President, with the support of Albright, believed that NATO served as an insurance for peace and continuous support for democracy and law.

⁹² Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 252.

⁹³ Madeleine Albright, "The Testing of American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 6 (Nov. – Dec. 1998): 51-53, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20049130>.

With relatively new threats such as terrorism, nuclear weapons, and ethnic cleansing unfolding, Albright promoted the importance and enlargement of this military alliance.⁹⁴

In 1994, President Clinton announced the US support in the process of NATO enlargement. Central and Eastern European countries, after years of Communist occupation, were the first to join the alliance. While this was viewed as a logical step by many officials, including Albright, a number of political figures, especially those in the Russian government, strongly opposed the enlargement. As a result, a complicated situation of promoting democratic values while not recreating an enemy along the way emerged.⁹⁵

Negotiations with Russia were crucial for the progress of joining several European countries to NATO. Albright participated in multiple discussions with Russian leaders, particularly Foreign Minister Primakov and President Yeltsin, to negotiate the terms of the charter. Ultimately, an agreement between NATO countries and Russia was formed through the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. Among other, this consensus included assurances of cooperation between the alliance and Russia, as well as the restrictions on NATO deploying nuclear weapons to new members.⁹⁶

After the agreement with Russia, the process of selecting the individual countries to join NATO began. The number of states to join was not agreed upon until the summit in Madrid, with the ultimate choice of three, along with the establishment of an Open Door Policy as a process for considering future members. The invitation was extended to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.⁹⁷

After reaching the agreement with Russia and achieving the US-favoured outcome in Madrid, the last step for Albright and her team was to secure Senate approval for NATO enlargement. Before the Senate's consideration, the treaty had to be approved by the Foreign Relations Committee. Albright, along with others, had to provide answers and a strong case to meet three conditions: they had to deliver a list of potential future security risks for NATO, an agreement on the enlargement's costs, and provide details on the exclusion of Russian participation on NATO's decision-making. On April 30, 1998, the Senate voted in favour of

⁹⁴ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 252-253.

⁹⁵ Michael McCgwire, "NATO Expansion: A Policy Error of Historic Importance," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 1 (1998): 23-37, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20097504>.

⁹⁶ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 256-259.

⁹⁷ McCgwire, "NATO Expansion," 39-41.

NATO's expansion, making Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic an official part of the alliance.⁹⁸

3.1.2 US Sanctions on Iraq

Dictator Saddam Hussein posed a continuous threat to the US security until 2003. After the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the United States believed that the danger portrayed by Iraq would be dealt with by the UN Security Council resolutions, which requested the destruction of all weapons. Instead of capitulation, however, Iraq continued posing a threat to the United States for more than a decade to come.⁹⁹

In 1993, Iraqi operatives attempted to assassinate former President George Bush while disguised as Kuwait authorities. As this was the same year of Albright's appointment as the UN Ambassador, she became participating on the decision-making regarding the Iraqi question. The US decided to give a response to the event by bombing Hussein's headquarters. Albright contributed to this initiative by delivering a presentation at the Security Council, laying out evidence of Iraq's involvement.¹⁰⁰

Clinton's administration, including Albright, were advocates for maintaining sanctions on Iraq to make them reveal their weapons program. Additionally, the Atomic Energy Agency and the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) were employed to overview the situation in the country. They successfully deconstructed several biological and chemical warfare facilities, removed nuclear material, and established a monitoring regime. In an attempt to eliminate the inspecting groups, Saddam Hussein adopted a strategy of releasing stories of the country's civilian suffering supposedly caused by US sanctions. This prompted the US public attention and distrust towards the administration's foreign policy decisions. The situation was not improved by Albright's controversial commentary on Iraqi children's deaths on the CBS program called 60 minutes.¹⁰¹

The US was determined to continue the policy of sanctions until Hussein began to comply by meeting the obligations stemming from Security Council resolutions. In 1997, Hussein blocked the weapon inspections, but the US response was clear: the UNSCOM had to continue its work. The return of the UN Special Commission was guaranteed through the

⁹⁸ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 260-265.

⁹⁹ Lippman, *New American Diplomacy*, 122-124.

¹⁰⁰ David C. Gompert, Hans Binnendijk, and Bonny Lin, "The U.S. Invasion of Iraq, 2003" in *Blunders, Blunders, and Wars: What America and China Can Learn* (New York: RAND Corporation, 2014): 162-163, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1287m9t.21>.

¹⁰¹ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 275-276.

Geneva Agreement but did not last long due to the repeated lack of cooperation from the Iraqi side. The threat of dictator Hussein continued even after Albright's end of term. The final prominent initiative concerning Iraq during Madeleine Albright's service as Secretary of State occurred in December 1998, when the foreign policy team approved of air strikes, also known as Operation Desert Fox.¹⁰²

3.1.3 The Kosovo War

After the Bosnian war, despite the Dayton Accords being signed, the tension in the former Yugoslavia was rising. The Albanian desire for independence grew continuously, but so did President Slobodan Milošević's aspiration for Serbian control over the Albanian population. At the beginning of 1998, the situation deteriorated, resulting in the killings of a number of civilians by the Serb military in Prekaz. As a response, Albanians formed the Kosovo Liberation Army, a radical group of the Albanian Muslim community. There was no global response, for reasons including the observed radicalization of the Albanian population.¹⁰³

Albright began to promote intervention in the Kosovo War but faced opposition from her colleagues. The resentment of participation lay primarily in the belief that the United States had no right to intervene in conflict that was taking place within one country's borders. However, Albright continued advocating for US and NATO involvement, stressing that the stability in Europe is crucial for US objectives, and if the Serbs were not stopped, they would present a threat to the entire continent.¹⁰⁴

Richard Holbrooke, who was a supporter of Albright's view regarding the Kosovo situation, was sent to negotiate with Milošević, stressing that NATO was ready to intervene if the attacks towards Albanians did not stop. After winning the support of France, Germany, and Italy for the involvement of NATO, Milošević signed a deal to reduce military presence. However, the Serbs continued the attacks against Albanians. After this, Albright warned about the possibility of this conflict becoming another Bosnia, which was not well received by the public.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 282-288.

¹⁰³ Lippman, *New American Diplomacy*, 249-250.

¹⁰⁴ Sylvia Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders: National Security and Gender Politics in Superpower America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/695135236/Women-as-Foreign-Policy-Leaders-National-Security-and-Gender-Politics-in-Superpower-America-Sylvia-B-Bashevkin-Z-Library>.

¹⁰⁵ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 103-104.

After the massacre in Račak, Albright pushed for a NATO peacekeeping operation. With the real threat of the alliance's involvement, the Serbs agreed to peace talks with Albanians to discuss the future of Kosovo. Despite taking part in peace negotiations, Milošević planned to push Muslims out of the region. This was the final indicator that the conflict would not be resolved without foreign military involvement. The first NATO air strikes, undermining the Serbian leader's regime, began on March 24, 1999. Later that year, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia pressed charges against the leader of the Serbian government, Slobodan Milošević. Due to Albright's strong feelings towards the Kosovo situation, the conflict became known as the "Madeleine's War".¹⁰⁶

3.2 Promotion of Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Madeleine Albright had been an advocate for human and women's rights throughout her whole life. Her considerable attempts to find a solution for the underrepresentation of women in politics began even before her career in office. As a teacher at Georgetown University, she launched a program to support female diplomats, which included the participation of many already well-established women politicians.¹⁰⁷

Perhaps the most prominent case of Madeleine Albright directly addressing women's rights was the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing. The US participation itself was a controversial issue, with both pro-life Republicans and human-rights Democratic advocates opposing the nation's active involvement. However, Albright believed that not only should the United States participate, but it should also be in a leadership position at the summit. Madeleine Albright recognized this Conference as an opportunity to issue a debate about women who were continuously excluded from the development of foreign policy and was determined to make it a decisive factor when considering which country receives an international aid. She emphasized the global undervaluation and underdevelopment of women as human resources, addressing the issue such as women's illiteracy, economic disadvantages, unequal access to political decision-making, as well as the severe criminality rate against women, child prostitution, and rape.¹⁰⁸

As a promoter of female unity, Albright tried to bring women together even within the circle of UN representatives because she believed that women's autonomy and rights were

¹⁰⁶ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 416-431.

¹⁰⁷ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 97-98.

¹⁰⁸ Blood, *Biography*, 181-184.

crucial to national interests. After recognizing that there were only seven women among the total number of 184 UN seats, she formed an internal female network which they sarcastically referred to as the G-7. It was meant to serve for mutual support, but they participated in important initiatives too. One of their successes was the appointment of female judges to the international war crime tribunal, for which they pressed due to the fact that many women had been victims of Bosnian war terror.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, they addressed the issue of sex trafficking and pushed for policy making regarding this matter.¹¹⁰

After President Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, which permitted the right for abortion, Albright further pushed for the improvement of the equal rights agenda. She proposed that the nation could not fulfil its objectives unless it began paying more attention to women's rights and needs. Albright is particularly associated with pushing for policy action regarding the investigation of organized crimes against children and women during the Bosnian Civil War, which resulted in recognizing the violence against them as both a crime against humanity and a specific war crime.¹¹¹

Throughout her career, Albright continued addressing women's discrimination and inequality in her own specific communication style in speeches or reactions to other politicians' utterances, typically by using witty and sarcastic responses. One example of this was the welcoming speech of Henry Kissinger, who introduced her to the role of Secretary of State as being part of the fraternity now. Albright made sure to provide an answer which ensured him and others that, with her in the post as the first female Secretary of State, high-ranking positions were no longer purely reserved for men.¹¹²

3.3 Accomplishments and Challenges Faced

Madeleine Albright's nomination as Secretary of State was accompanied by several obstacles of its own. There was strong opposition to her appointment from many in the administration. She was viewed by some diplomatic officials as incapable of dealing with complex issues or even as lacking intelligence. Some opposed her appointment due to their resentment of the idea of a female representative in the post.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Blackman, *Seasons*, 240-241.

¹¹⁰ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 25.

¹¹¹ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 119-120.

¹¹² "Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright," U.S. Department of State, accessed March 30, 2025, <https://1997-2001.state.gov/statements/2000/001012a.html>.

¹¹³ Blackman, *Seasons*, 263-265.

The unequal approach of media towards women in politics was felt by Albright as well. As one of only seven women among 184 UN members, she was covered by the press, with a focus on her gender, emphasizing her physical appearance.¹¹⁴ Albright also felt certain unequal treatment towards her gender when she was directed as the UN Ambassador to speak to a junior member instead of person of responsibility at the National Science Foundation.¹¹⁵

Her accomplishments may be ascribed to her original style of directly and confidently communicating foreign policies and searching for practical solutions, which put her in a position as an influential political figure. While some argued that women in higher office tend to adjust to the male way of acting, this was not the case for Albright. Even prior to her appointment as UN Ambassador and Secretary of State, she acted as a confident politician, having a flexible but, if necessary, forceful approach to foreign-policy issues, as suggested by her role in Geraldine Ferraro's campaign. Albright's attitude was known as assertive multilateralism, which referred to the initiative of the US leadership role in global diplomacy, cooperation with other nations, but also the importance of employing stronger political actions to promote peace and democracy when necessary.¹¹⁶

One of her most memorable and remarkable talks was given during her UN service known as the "Cojonés Speech". The speech was given during a press conference after two unarmed US civilian planes were shot down by a Cuban military missile launch. In response to the event, Albright stated that the attack was a cowardice, not a cojonés, as it was initially uttered by the Cuban military pilot, who used the words as a claim of success. Even the President commented that the sentence was probably the most effective statement regarding foreign policy during both of his terms. While this breach of diplomatic rules might have seemed more like a controversy, the speech instead placed her in a position of a leader able to express the attitude decisively and upfront.¹¹⁷

Her success in office was marked by the advantage of personal experience regarding Central Europe. As a European refugee, she was able to bring new perspectives concerning European issues to US foreign policymaking because she was familiar with its complex history, culture, and potential occurrence of threats. Her accomplishments also laid upon her strong diplomacy skills which she employed in numerous cases of negotiations, even with dictators such as Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milošević. Albright's approach to foreign

¹¹⁴ Blood, *Biography*, 89-90.

¹¹⁵ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 121.

¹¹⁶ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 96-98.

¹¹⁷ Blood, *Biography*, 194-198.

policy in Europe contributed to forming a coalition to fight against undemocratic values and bring war criminals to justice through international tribunals.¹¹⁸

Madeleine Albright's political life was not filled only with success and accomplishments. In fact, number of controversies emerged around her name. She was strongly criticized for her statement on account of the death of half a million Iraqi children due to the US sanctions when she stated that the price was worth it. This utterance was viewed particularly problematic especially due to Albright's continuous advocacy for human rights.¹¹⁹

Perhaps one of the strongest criticisms arose around Albright regarding the Kosovo War, and the conflict remains one of the biggest controversies of Clinton's administration. After NATO's intervention in the territory was approved, Albright became a target of blame, because many argued that the consequences of the conflict were directly associated with failed negotiations that took place before the military employment. Some even believed that the negotiations were not supposed to serve as the peaceful resolution, but rather as a facilitation for military intervention.¹²⁰

Another of Albright's controversies was recognized when the press published an article about her Jewish ancestry. Albright claimed she did not know about her family's Jewish origin until her confirmation in 1997. However, an intense debate arose around her claim, as the public opposed the possibility that such a well-educated woman could lack the knowledge of her ancestry.¹²¹

Albright's style of negotiation and communication itself became the subject of continuous criticism and controversy. She was known for expressing her stance in steady and decisive manner, but she was not just using her words to do so. Albright also used brooches as a visual symbol to show the importance of women having place in diplomacy, especially when negotiating in the Middle East. However, the portrayal of Albright was not unified. Some described her as emotional, ascribing her the "feminine" characteristics, for example, due to her approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Others criticized Albright for her "masculine" attitude toward advocating the use of military power for peacekeeping

¹¹⁸ Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 120-121.

¹¹⁹ Dubravka Zarkov, "Women, feminism and politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 24, no. 1 (2017): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506816681124>.

¹²⁰ Aidan, Hehir, "The Impact of Analogical Reasoning on US Foreign Policy Towards Kosovo," *Journal of Peace Research* 43, no. 1 (2006): 67-68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343306059572>.

¹²¹ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 237.

purposes, which shattered the previously believed assumption that women in politics opposed the use of weapons.¹²²

After Albright's appointment, her gender became a primary focus of the media, and she was well aware of this fact. However, she was not bothered by this reality, on the contrary, Albright viewed her gender as an advantage in facilitating her connection with the public.¹²³ Her approach to gender was noticeable in the fact that she was determined to make women's issues a key aspect of US foreign policy, because she believed that societies function better when women are economically independent and participate in politics and diplomacy. Openly being a supporter of women's rights, who was determined to make it a part of foreign policy, led to support from many women and feminists. However, there was criticism from other women of Albright, as they questioned her decisions. Madeleine Albright's response to this negative commentary was summarized by her sentence: "There's a special place in hell for women who don't help each other," which she used on several occasions. This utterance became Albright's signature motto, but later in her life it became the subject of criticism when she used it during the 2016 elections to support Hillary Clinton. The aversion stemmed from the connotation that Clinton should be supported solely because of her gender and not for her political abilities.¹²⁴ Women in leadership positions were usually described as either having too much of "feminine characteristics," or trying too hard to imitate their male colleagues through a harsh approach. However, Albright reported that she did not need to engage in the style of her male predecessors while still conveying a clear message to the public. Still, some criticized Madeleine Albright for having too "tough" approach, while others expressed negative feelings toward what they saw as an inconsistent approach to foreign policy, as she favoured the "harsh" approach to issues such as the one in Bosnia, but aligned herself with Clinton's moderate approach to non-European issues.¹²⁵

¹²² Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*, 11.

¹²³ Kevin J. Lasher, "Madeleine Albright, Gender, and Foreign Policy-Making," *Journal of Political Science* 33, no. 1 (2005): 58-59, <https://digitalcommons.coastal.edu/jops/vol33/iss1/2/>.

¹²⁴ Wynne Davis, "How Madeleine Albright Made Women's Issues Central to Foreign Policy," NPR, March 25, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/25/1088757756/how-madeleine-albright-made-womens-issues-central-to-foreign-policy>.

¹²⁵ Lasher, "Madeleine Albright," 66-74.

4 POST SECRETARY OF STATE INITIATIVES AND CONTINUED IMPACT

Madeleine Albright resigned as Secretary of State on January 19, 2001. After the end of her term, she remained a promoter of democratic values, national security, and diplomacy. She established The Albright Group to promote democratic principles on the international market, helping businesses achieve their objectives. Albright also continued passing on her knowledge and experience as a teacher at Georgetown University. Furthermore, she became the president of the Truman Scholarship Foundation helping students pursue political careers.¹²⁶

She was an advocate for human and women's rights by being vocal about the importance of ending violence against women, promoting gender equality, and guaranteeing access to basic human needs. She continued addressing the issue of underrepresentation of women in politics as a member of the National Democratic Institute, an institution helping women in their run for office.¹²⁷

Throughout her career, Albright launched and participated in numerous foreign policy initiatives focusing on the global problems in the 1990s. She was crucial for the establishment, implementation, and delivery of foreign-policy decisions during President Clinton's administration, shaping the initiative for NATO expansion, the resolution of the Kosovo conflict, and the Iraqi situation, among others.¹²⁸

In 2012, she was awarded the highest civilian honour, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, by Barack Obama.¹²⁹ Her legacy continues through her writings. She wrote several books including her autobiographies capturing her early life, her service as UN Ambassador and the first female US Secretary of State. In the final years of her life, she provided an analysis of fascist movements and stressed the importance of democracy in her book "Fascism: A Warning". Her contributions to modern democracy after her service are summarized in her book "Hell and Other Destinations: A 21st-Century Memoir", where she reflects on the challenges faced by recent politics.

¹²⁶ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 512.

¹²⁷ Madeleine Albright, "Women and Security," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2014): 11-12. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45289738>.

¹²⁸ Blackman, *Seasons*, 304.

¹²⁹ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 515.

Madeleine Albright died on March 23, 2022, in Washington D.C.¹³⁰ Despite her overt criticism and controversies, she became a national symbol when she was appointed the US Secretary of State as the first highest-ranking woman in US history. Her legacy lies in her success in shattering the glass ceiling for women by inspiring and proving to them that running for office is a realistic goal, as well as her contributions to numerous global initiatives through her steady and strict style.

¹³⁰ Robert D. McFadden, „Madeleine Albright, First Woman to Serve as Secretary of State, Dies at 84,“ *The New York Times*, March 23, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/23/us/madeleine-albright-dead.html>.

CONCLUSION

Madeleine Albright's life was an example of the importance of diplomacy and strong leadership. From her young age until her death, she was determined to promote democracy, human rights and global cooperation. Albright's legacy lies in both being a competent policymaker as well as a role model breaking gender barriers and redefining the position of women in politics.

Among other prominent women like Hillary Clinton or Kamala Harris, Albright raised awareness about the underrepresentation of women in office. Despite the progress in female emancipation through the efforts of feminist movements, the ratification of 19th Amendment, and a number of Acts and Policies regarding women's rights, women still face many obstacles. The rise of women in government is reported to be occurring, however, the female representatives are still confronted with challenges of unequal attitude of press, stereotyping, and even sexual harassment.

Albright positioned herself in the field of politics as a direct communicator and creator of numerous foreign policy initiatives during President Clinton's administration – whether as the UN Ambassador in the Bosnian Civil War or the Somalia conflict, or as a Secretary of State supporting NATO enlargement, handling the controversy of NATO interference in Kosovo, or participating in the solution to the Iraqi issue. Her devotion to democratic values and diplomacy continued even after her term by addressing global issues in her writings.

Her support for women's rights was encountered in several cases, stressing the importance of engaging women to modern societies. Her advocacy for human rights pushed for the War Crime Tribunal establishment to bring those in leadership of the Bosnian massacre to justice. She saw significance in women's unity which was apparent through her establishment of female politicians' inner circle, such as the UN G-7. In Beijing, during the UN Conference on Women, she addressed the unequal treatment and disadvantages faced by women in societies.

The thesis primarily aimed to examine Madeleine Albright's role in shaping US foreign policy and promoting human and women's rights. By exploring a selection of her prominent foreign policy decisions and initiatives, such as her role in NATO expansion or the Kosovo War, it was shown that her contributions had a significant impact on US foreign policy decisions. Additionally, it was demonstrated through several examples, including her efforts

for War Crime Tribunal establishment and the involvement of women's issues to US foreign policy, that Albright was a continuous advocate of human and women's rights.

The second aim of the thesis was to provide the historical context of the process of women's emancipation and rights to help understand Madeleine Albright's groundbreaking role as Secretary of State. By presenting the background of women's rights movement, the progress of policies granting women equal rights, and the challenges faced by women in public and political spheres, the significance of the first female Secretary of State was highlighted – acting as a turning point for women in politics and becoming a symbol of breaking barriers in a field heavily dominated by men. Additionally, the data suggest that the number of women in politics is on the rise, but they remain underrepresented. Despite milestones such as Madeleine Albright's, the progress of representation of women in politics is still an issue, and therefore, may be a subject for further research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CNP	Center for National Policy
ERA	Equal Rights Amendment
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCS	National Communications Service
UN	United Nations
UNOSOM II	United Nations Operation in Somalia II
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
US	United States
VAWA	Violence Against Women Act

