

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni
Fakulta filozofická

Bakalářská práce

2014

Kristýna Slavičková

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Bakalářská práce

**Barack Obama's presidency and its role in the
US political system
(with comparison to European political models)**

Kristýna Slavíčková

Plzeň 2014

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Studijní program Filologie

Studijní obor Cizí jazyky pro komerční praxi

Kombinace angličtina – francouzština

Bakalářská práce

**Barack Obama's presidency and its role in the
US political system
(with comparison to European political models)**

Kristýna Slavičková

Vedoucí práce:

Bc. Skyland Václav Kobylak

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Fakulta filozofická Západočeské univerzity v Plzni

Plzeň 2014

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval(a) samostatně a použil(a) jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Plzeň, duben 2014

.....

I would like to thank my supervisor, Bc. Skyland Václav Kobylak, for his continual support, helpful commentary and professional guidance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 BARACK OBAMA	2
2.1 Obama’s Childhood	2
2.2 Education.....	3
2.3 Political Career	4
2.4 First African-American President of the United States.....	4
3 IRAQ WAR.....	7
3.1 “Bush’s Invasion”	7
3.2 Course of the War (2003 – 2004).....	8
3.3 Course of the War (2005 – 2011).....	11
3.4 Iraq War During Obama’s Presidency	11
4 OSAMA BIN LADEN	15
4.1 The Most Wanted Terrorist in the World	15
4.2 Operation Neptune Spear	19
5 THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE ACT.....	24
5.1 Obamacare in General and Its History	24
5.2 Characteristic of the ACA.....	27
5.3 “Obamacare Is Socialist” and Other Obamacare Myths.....	30
5.4 Pros and Cons.....	31
6 COMPARISON OF PRESIDENTS.....	35

6.1 President of the United States of America.....	35
6.1.1 Presidential Election.....	36
6.1.2 Powers and Restrictions.....	36
6.2 President of the Czech Republic	38
6.2.1 Presidential Election.....	38
6.2.2 Powers and Restrictions.....	39
6.3 President of France.....	41
6.3.1 Presidential Election.....	41
6.3.2 Powers and Restrictions.....	42
7 QUESTIONNAIRE	45
7.1 Results	46
8 CONCLUSION	52
9 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	54
9.1 Print Sources.....	54
9.2 Internet Sources.....	55
9.3 Appendices Sources.....	61
10 ABSTRACT	63
11 RESUMÉ.....	64
12 APPENDICES.....	65

1 INTRODUCTION

Barack Obama is the first African-American president of the United States in the U.S. history. During his presidency, Obama has performed a lot of steps which strengthened his position, but also a lot of those which did him a disservice. Barack Obama focuses mainly on international issues, but he is also well-known for some reforms and new laws in domestic policy. His international approach, interest in foreign policy and pledge of a better future for not only Americans but also for people all over the world make of him one of the most popular presidents in the US history. But his presidency has also brought some negative effects on the USA and its citizens.

This bachelor thesis deals with the main events which have occurred during Obama's presidency and Obama's connection with these issues, his attitude to them and the role which he has played in them. As it was mentioned before, Barack Obama is more interested in foreign policy and international issues and that is why this thesis is targeted at three events related to these issues and one which is associated with domestic policy. The second main subject discussed in this work is a comparison of three different presidential offices which is oriented on differences between their powers and their roles in the political systems.

The present work is divided in three parts. The first part is theoretical and it deals with Barack Obama's presidency and the above mentioned events which he had to resolve. The second part is also theoretical and it is targeted at the comparison of the presidents of the United States of America, of the Czech Republic and of France. The third part consists of the evaluation of the questionnaire which contains tasks regarding Obama's presidency as well as one question concerning presidential office in general. It is focused on finding out opinions of people all over the world on these issues.

This bachelor thesis is aimed to make a summary of the most important landmarks of Obama's presidency and to ascertain how people world-widely perceive the American president and the president's role in general.

2 BARACK OBAMA

*"I trust him when he says he wants to transform politics," she says. "Just call me a Republican voting for Barack Obama." **Monica Green** (2007)¹*

*"He's kind of a blank slate, and people are projecting what they think onto him." **Nicole Schilling** (2007) (chairman of the Democratic Party in Greene County, Iowa)²*

*"Obama doesn't have much to show. No legislative triumphs that offer a glimpse into how he would lead, no defining efforts of statecraft that reveal the core of his character." **Leon Wieseltier** (2006) (Investor's Business Daily)³*

***Hillary Clinton** viewed "Obama as her biggest obstacle to the nomination, but that she believed the threat of his candidacy will diminish as voters learn how inexperienced he is in government and foreign affairs." (2007)⁴*

2.1 Obama's Childhood

Barack Obama was born in Honolulu in 1961. His parents met each other at the University of Hawaii. Barack's mother came from a small town in Kansas and his father was a tribesman of the Luo tribe of Kenya. (See Appendix 1) Barack Obama Sr. obtained a scholarship at the University of Hawaii and he arrived there as the university's first African student. When Barack was 2 years old, his father left the family for graduate study at Harvard and he came back to Kenya after his studies. Barack grew up with his mother and grandparents and when he was 6, they moved to Indonesia with his new stepfather. Thanks to his family Barack visited many interesting places and he learned a lot about different cultures. His mother always taught him about Africa and told him

¹ John K. Wilson, *Barack Obama: pokus o nemožné* (Brno: Computer Press, 2008), p. 122.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

stories about his father.⁵ This is why he has a keen sense of foreign policy and has always been attracted by international relations.

2.2 Education

After completing studies at a high school in Honolulu, Barack moved to Los Angeles, where he studied at Occidental College. During the years at the college, he spent a lot of time by discussing African-American issues in the USA and by speaking publicly about these issues. He also included the difficulties of African people in his speeches and started to think about a solution to these problems.⁶ In 1981, Barack moved to Columbia University in New York.⁷ After college, he worked in a big business in New York, but he was not satisfied there and he decided to become a community worker. Barack concluded that America had to change and he wanted to help to achieve this transformation by working with people in communities. These were people who lived in terrible living conditions and who could not make their lives better without anybody's help. Obama was persuaded that he could change the situation in the USA. He found a job in Chicago and he brought a true improvement in poverty-stricken parts of the town. After three years, Obama found out that to help people even more required education in areas such as law and politics. Therefore, he started to study at Harvard Law School and in 1991, he finished his studies successfully.⁸ Afterwards, *"Obama returned to his adopted hometown of Chicago, where he practiced civil rights law and taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago."*⁹

⁵ *Barack Obama: 44th President of the United States* (The United States of America: United States of State, 2009), p. 3.

Jane Rollason, *Barack Obama: the story of one man's journey to the White House* (London: Scholastic, 2010), p. 7-13.

⁶ Jane Rollason, *Barack Obama: the story of one man's journey to the White House* (London: Scholastic, 2010), p. 15-22.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁸ *Barack Obama: 44th President of the United States* (The United States of America: United States of State, 2009), p. 5.

Jane Rollason, *Barack Obama: the story of one man's journey to the White House* (London: Scholastic, 2010), p. 26-27.

⁹ *Barack Obama: 44th President of the United States* (The United States of America: United States of State, 2009), p. 5.

2.3 Political Career

Obama's political career started in the Illinois State Senate in 1997. He was re-elected three times.¹⁰ *"Among his legislative accomplishments over the next eight years in the state senate were campaign finance reform, tax cuts for the working poor, and improvements to the state's criminal justice system."*¹¹ In 2000, Obama announced his candidature for the U.S. Congress but he was defeated by Bobby Rush. Following that, he made his run for the U.S. Senate in 2004. It seemed to be an indisputable victory and after Obama's speech at the convention of the Democratic Party, nobody had doubts about his triumph.¹²

2.4 First African-American President of the United States

The presidential elections in 2008 were extraordinary and momentous in many ways. It was not the first time when a woman or an African-American candidate ran for the presidency. But this time, an African-American candidate competed with a woman. The woman candidate represented a rival with many supporters and with high chances to win. Hillary Clinton was a well-known and reliable candidate in presidential elections and she was very popular. In order to equalize chances and advantages, Obama camp figured out a new strategy. His campaign was spread via the Internet and took advantage of targeting states that used caucuses rather than primaries to select delegates and was focused on smaller states that traditionally voted Republican in the general election.¹³ This strategy paid off and on November 4th, 2008, Barack Obama became the 44th President of the United States of America. He was well-educated, seemed to be experienced, and identified with poorer people through his speeches, his work and his life. He brought a new era to the U.S.A. and represented hope for many.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 6.

¹² Ibid., p. 6-7.

¹³ Ibid., p. 7-8.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 8-9.

“In the beginning of 2010, the public opinion survey gave out the information that Obama’s popularity dropped below 50%. This was caused by the weak economic situation, constantly stressed by high unemployment. [...] The reason for Obama’s criticism was clear. It was a disagreement with his financial injections to boost the economy, including his health care reform. [...] It would be unfair to say that Obama’s popularity fell because he could not lead the country. First of all, it should be recognized that his administration did the maximum in order to save the country’s economy from falling into a deep crisis. [...] But on the other hand, Obama’s critics are right when they claim that despite his great oratorical skills, he did not manage to persuade the general public how important it was to invest all available public funds in the rescue of banks, industrial enterprises, and renewal of mortgages at that critical time. [...] All the negatives were counted up in November 2010 when his party - the Democrats - lost the elections in a ratio of 243:192 in favour of Republicans.”¹⁵ Not only Obama’s opponents but also people from his own ranks criticized him. He was blamed for non-performance of some of his campaign promises and for making compromises on important issues (i.e. health care reform, raising taxes on the rich, withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan).¹⁶

Nevertheless, some prominent representatives of the media sphere and some politicians stood up for Obama and advised him to get back to the policy which he pushed for the presidential election, to stand by his opinions and to listen to people who are in difficulties and need his help. Famous British writer Frederick Forsyth expressed it best. He was asked by Czech daily *Mladá fronta Dnes* (April 30th, 2011) to answer the question: ‘Isn’t Obama weaker than we expected?’¹⁷ And Forsyth answered: *“The events work against him. The elections were almost hysterical – it looked like the search for a new god. Obama is a great orator, but more important is what comes after promises. And nothing much has happened. Guantanamo is not over yet; the troops are still in*

¹⁵ Ivan Brož, *Encyklopedie amerických prezidentů*, trans. by the author of this thesis (Prague: XYZ, 2012), p. 396-397.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 397-398.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 397-399.

*Afghanistan, the economy is falling, and the health care reform is at the European level that Americans cannot afford. It seems that Democrats are losing their power. Especially, in the South of the USA, the black population experiences disappointment – they did not believe just in changes; they believed in miracles.*¹⁸

Some interesting changes occurred in the penultimate year of Obama's term of office. The most important is the capture of Osama bin Laden. This affair increased Obama's popularity. The above-mentioned deficiencies in fulfilment of his resolutions were used by the opposition during the campaign for the presidential elections in 2012. On December 17th¹⁹, 2012, presidential election took place in the USA. In this election, Obama defeated his rival, Republican candidate Mitt Romney, and defended his office for another four years. He won in a ratio of 51.06% to 47.20% of the votes.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 399.

¹⁹ "Election Dates," *Uselectionatlas.org*, accessed February 5th, 2014, <http://uselectionatlas.org/INFORMATION/INFORMATION/dates.php>.

²⁰ Ivan Brož, *Encyklopedie amerických prezidentů* (Prague: XYZ, 2012), p. 399-400.

"2012 Presidential Election Results," *The Washington Post*, accessed February 5th, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/election-map-2012/president/>.

3 IRAQ WAR

The Iraq War is the designation for a conflict which began by the invasion of Iraq by troops of different countries led by the United States on March 20th, 2003. This combat ended on December 15th, 2011, when military operations were officially discontinued in the capital of Baghdad. The troops overthrew the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein and the occupation of Iraq started. This caused unrest of the population which resulted in conflicts between the army and groups of insurgents. In addition to these conflicts, a civil war also burst out between Shiites and Sunnis.²¹ *“Shi’i or Shi’ite refers to those Muslims within the minority trend in Islam. [...] The Shi’i believe in the significance of Ali, the fourth Caliph (successor) in 656-61, as the legitimate successor to the Prophet who had died in 632.”*²² *[By contrast], Sunni, or Sunnite, refers to those Muslims in the majority trend in Islam. [...] The Sunni accepted the legitimacy of the first four Caliphs (successors to the Prophet). They would then accept as leader anyone from Muhammad’s tribe, according to the consensus of the Umma or by the ahl as-shura as representatives of the Umma.”*²³

3.1 “Bush’s Invasion”

The invasion of Iraq was an outcome of several factors. The alleged production of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) was the first one. Since the Gulf War, Iraq had not been allowed to possess WMD, but they were suspected of breaching this interdiction. The former President George W. Bush demanded an immediate termination of the production of WMD, fulfilment of command resolutions and Iraqi’s permission to make an inspection that should prove fulfilment of the resolutions. Bush threatened Iraq with an attack if they did not meet these conditions. Discussions about the future of Iraqi oil and intentions to change the political regime of Saddam Hussein were other important factors which influenced the Iraqi future. On October 11th, 2002, after Iraq refused to

²¹ “Iraq War,” *Wikipedia.org*, last modified April 13th, 2014, accessed February 1st, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_war.

²² Iain McLean and Alistair McMillan, *The concise Oxford dictionary of politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 482-483.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 518.

give permission for an inspection and to carry out the resolutions, the United States Congress adopted another resolution which authorized the use of U.S. military against Iraq. This document was later used as a legal basis for the invasion. In 2003, a new resolution was imposed on Iraq. It determined a deadline by which Iraq had to meet previous resolutions. The USA, the United Kingdom and Spain participated in this resolution and they threatened Iraq with a military attack. The resolution was rejected by France, Russia and Germany. They required a diplomatic solution. In February 2003, the USA brought important evidence and photographs which proved that Saddam Hussein actually possessed weapons of mass destruction. It also reported on contact between Hussein and al-Qaeda and financing of this terrorist group by Hussein. Much later, it was found out that the witness who provided this evidence made all of it up because he would help to establish a democratic regime in Iraq. Everything culminated in March 2003 when the U.S. announced that diplomacy has failed and gave Hussein one last chance to leave Iraq. Hussein refused and Bush said that the only chance to prevent the use of WMD is an attack on Iraq. The invasion broke out on March 20th, 2003, and it started combats for next 8 years, civil war in Iraq and disapproval of the invasion all over the world.²⁴

3.2 Course of the War (2003 – 2004)

The code-name of the attack on Iraq - Iraqi Freedom – seems to be the opposite to the severity and illegality of the attack. The invasion began by bombing of the farming area near Baghdad where Saddam Hussein was hidden reportedly. It took the troops took less than a month to occupy the capital – Baghdad – and the situation calmed down partially. Two months after the invasion, President Bush announced victory, even though fighting continued. In the end, combat was protracted for another eight years. On December 13th, 2003, the U.S. informed about the capture of Saddam Hussein. He was discovered near his hometown in underground cellars. In 2006, Hussein was on

²⁴ "Iraq War," *Wikipedia.org*, last modified April 13th, 2014, accessed February 1st, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_war.

"Válka v Iráku," *Wikipedia.org*, last modified April 4th, 2014, accessed February 1st, 2014, http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Válka_v_Iráku.

trial for crimes which he committed. The whole case was controlled by the newly elected Government of Iraq and Hussein was convicted and hanged.²⁵

“Late in 2003, insurgents begin targeting US-backed forces and fighting erupts between rival militias. US troops wage fierce battles against insurgents in Fallujah in April 2004. The second battle of Fallujah takes place in November 2004 and is the bloodiest of the war - at least 1,200 insurgents and 800 civilians are killed, while coalition forces lose over 100 troops, with at least 600 wounded.”²⁶ “The U.S. military used white phosphorus in the battle of Fallujah in Iraq in November 2004.”²⁷ This chemical substance is used rarely in wars and only for the purpose of lighting or marking battlefields as it is very dangerous and can endanger civilians.²⁸

As the Jerusalem states on its official website, *“white phosphorus, also known as WP, is classified as an incendiary weapon. The Geneva Convention on the use of conventional weapons defines ‘incendiary weapons’ as ‘primarily designed to set fire to objects or to cause burn injury to persons through the action of flame, heat, or combination thereof, produced by a chemical reaction of a substance delivered on the target.’ Use of white phosphorus in areas with ‘concentration of civilians’ is illegal under international law. In medical terms, white phosphorus can be exposed to soft tissue[s] in the human body when inhaled or ingested. Deep absorption of the chemical can cause heart, liver and kidney damage and, in some cases, death. Its impact on skin resembles burn[t] injuries that have a yellowish colour and a pungent odour.”²⁹*

The use of white phosphorus in the inhabited Fallujah provoked disapproval of the majority of the world and the U.S. Army had to face strict

²⁵ “Timeline: US troops in Iraq,” *BBC News*, last modified December 14th, 2011, accessed February 3rd, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-16183966>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ “Concern Over Use of White Phosphorus in U.S. - Taliban Battle,” *Fox News.com*, published May 10th, 2009, accessed February 4th, 2014, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2009/05/10/concern-over-use-white-phosphorus-in-us-taliban-battle/>.

²⁸ “White phosphorus - JMCC.org,” *Jmcc.org*, last modified April 26th, 2009, accessed February 4th, 2014, <http://www.jmcc.org/fastfactspag.aspx?name=71>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

criticisms and general disfavour.³⁰ In 2005, then-Senator Barack Obama expressed his concern with the use of this weapon in populated areas and demanded a careful investigation of this controversial attack. On December 1st, 2005, he expressed his opinion and concern in his letter to the Chief of Department of Defense in Pentagon.³¹

“I understand that while the United States is a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), it has not ratified Protocol III of that convention, which regulates the use of incendiary weapons, such as white phosphorus. As a result, the United States has not agreed to ban the use of white phosphorus against military targets. Nonetheless, any use of white phosphorus — or any other incendiary weapon which ignites on exposure to oxygen and can burn human skin down to the bone if not extinguished — in an area with a large civilian population is deeply troubling.

Initially, the Department of Defense claimed that the white phosphorus was used only for illumination purposes, but the Department later admitted that in fact it was used to target insurgents in Fallujah. I do not question the honor and integrity of our brave men and women fighting in Iraq, but I am concerned that the use of such a weapon in a highly populated location like Fallujah may undermine a critical aspect of our mission there: winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people.

Allegations that white phosphorus may have resulted in the death or injury of civilians are serious, and I ask that your office make the investigation of this issue a priority, for the people of Iraq, for our soldiers, and for the American public. [...]”³² (See Appendix 2)

From Obama’s reaction, it could be expected that, as the President of the United States, he would be more cautious and high-principled as regards the use of this weapon in wars. But the opposite is true and the U.S. Army is confronted by suspicion of use of chemical weapons in combats and Obama

³⁰ “Iraq War,” *Wikipedia.org*, last modified April 13th, 2014, accessed February 1st, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_war.

³¹ “Obama inquired about use of white phosphorus by US military in 2005,” *Current Events Inquiry*, published September 17th, 2010, accessed February 4th, 2014, <http://ceinquiry.wordpress.com/2010/09/17/obama-white-phosphorus/>.

³² *Ibid.*

faces up rigorous criticism for overlooking this problem. The conflicts in Afghanistan, Israel, Syria and other areas were not without chemical attacks. Most people expected that Obama would end these attacks and would clearly express his opinion about their use. But it did not happen.³³

3.3 Course of the War (2005 – 2011)

During 2005, the number of boxing attacks increased and in most cases targets were civilians. Also, disputes between Sunnis and Shias were more frequent and they resulted in a civil war in 2007. In May 2006, the first government was elected after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and Iraqi authorities first gained control of some provinces. Other U.S. troops were sent to Iraq in 2008 due to the increasing number of insurgent bombing attacks. In 2008, the coalition started to train Iraqis in security issues to make them able to take over full control of their country. In 2009, UK troops started to leave Iraq and they were followed by the U.S. army in 2010. The last coalition's soldiers left the country in 2011.³⁴

3.4 Iraq War During Obama's Presidency

Before Barack Obama became a senator in 2004, he expressed his opposition to the war in Iraq at an antiwar rally in 2002, where he appeared as not a very well-known politician.³⁵ *"I don't oppose all wars." [...] "What I am opposed to is a dumb war. What I am opposed to is a rash war. What I am opposed to is the cynical attempt by Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz and other armchair, weekend warriors to shove their own ideological agendas down our throats, irrespective of the costs in lives lost and hardships borne. What I am opposed to is the attempt by political hacks like Karl Rove to distract us from*

³³ Nathan Hodge, "U.S. Fighting Off White Phosphorus Allegations, Again (Updated)," *Wired.com*, published November 5th, 2009, accessed February 4th, 2014, <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/05/halt-to-afghan-airstrikes-not-too-likely-says-obama-advisor/>.

Alaa al Aswany, "Log In - The New York Times," *Nytimes.com*, published February 7th, 2009, accessed February 4th, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/08/opinion/08aswany.html?ref=whitephosphorus&_r=1&.

³⁴ "Timeline: US troops in Iraq," *BBC News*, last modified December 14th, 2011, accessed February 3rd, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-16183966>.

³⁵ Garen Thomas, *Dokážeme to*, trans. Tomáš Novotný (Pardubice: Mayday, 2008), p. 123.

*a rise in the uninsured, a rise in the poverty rate, a drop on the median income - to distract us from the corporate scandals.*³⁶

In February 2009, Obama as a newly elected president declared that all troops would return home until August 2010, except for 50,000 troops who would remain in Iraq and would assist in the training of Iraqi security forces. Services were available in Iraq until the end of 2011. In April 2009, The United Kingdom formally ended operations in Iraq and was followed by Australia in July. On September 1st, 2010, "Operation Iraqi Freedom" was renamed "Operation New Dawn". But the combat has continued in Iraq and many people lost their lives in suicide attacks. Between 2010 and 2011, the U.S. army received a loss of 19 troops and noticed a large number of civilian's deaths.³⁷

In April 2010, the U.S. and Iraqi forces killed Abu Ayyub al-Masri who was the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. During the operation, troops seized computers from which they obtained information about the connection between the killed terrorist and Osama bin Laden. In the same year, the United Nations lift the restrictions concerning the civilian nuclear program, participation in chemical and nuclear weapons treaties and control of Iraqi oil. The restrictions were imposed on Iraq during the regime of Saddam Hussein. In October 2011, President Obama declared that all U.S. troops would come home by the end of the year.³⁸

"As a candidate for President, I pledged to bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end - for the sake of our national security and to strengthen American leadership around the world. After taking office, I announced a new strategy that would end our combat mission in Iraq and remove all of our troops by the end of 2011.

As Commander-in-Chief, ensuring the success of this strategy has been one of my highest national security priorities. Last year, I announced the end to our combat mission in Iraq. And to date, we've removed more

³⁶ "Barack Obama on War&Peace," *Ontheissues.org*, accessed February 1st, 2014, http://www.ontheissues.org/celeb/barack_obama_war+_peace.htm.

³⁷ "Iraq War," *Wikipedia.org*, last modified April 13th, 2014, accessed February 1st, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_war.

³⁸ Ibid.

than 100,000 troops. Iraqis have taken full responsibility for their country's security.

A few hours ago I spoke with Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki. I reaffirmed that the United States keeps its commitments. He spoke of the determination of the Iraqi people to forge their own future. We are in full agreement about how to move forward.

So today, I can report that, as promised, the rest of our troops in Iraq will come home by the end of the year. After nearly nine years, America's war in Iraq will be over. [...]³⁹ (See Appendix 3)

The Iraq War claimed at least 101,000 lives of civilians and 4,804 lives of coalition troops and Iraqi forces. The total amount of costs is estimated to be about \$ 1.7 trillion for the U.S. government.⁴⁰ During his term of office, Obama had to face pressure and criticism from both politicians and the public. Although he promised to end the War in Iraq as soon as possible, nothing significant has happened to date. Since its beginning, this conflict has been closely monitored and Americans have perceived it as one of the most important issues. But over the years, the interest of the public gradually declined and in September 2008, only 14% of Americans considered this conflict as the main issue which the U.S. has to face. The same survey also shows that in December of the same year, the number fell to only 9%. It declined further and in March 2009, only 6% of Americans believed that the war in Iraq is the major American problem. At this time, people became more interested in questions relating to the conflict in Afghanistan, Iran's nuclear capabilities and international terrorism, and the Iraq War interested only 48% of the respondent population. In January 2009, people were asked to answer the question: "Do you think the U.S. made a mistake sending troops to Iraq?" And 56% of participating person answered YES.⁴¹

³⁹ "Remarks by the President on Ending the War in Iraq," *Whitehouse.gov*, published October 21st, 2011, accessed February 4th, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/10/21/remarks-president-ending-war-iraq>.

⁴⁰ "Iraq War," *Wikipedia.org*, last modified April 13th, 2014, accessed February 1st, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_war.

"Válka v Iráku," *Wikipedia.org*, last modified April 4th, 2014, accessed February 1st, 2014, http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Válka_v_Iráku.

⁴¹ "Obama's Visit Comes Amid Improving Views on Iraq War," *Gallup.com*, published April 7th, 2009, accessed February 26th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/video/117352/Obama-Visit-Comes-Amid-Improving-Views-Iraq-War.aspx>.

These public opinion polls show us how quickly people change their minds and how much they desire results and changes. Obama's situation was not easy and in 2010, people expressed their opinions by only 47% approval of the President's dealing with the situation in Iraq. The year before, 57% of Americans supported their leader's decisions concerning the Iraq War, but the conflict had not been over yet and they became distrustful of any conclusion.⁴² As mentioned above, Barack Obama announced the final withdrawal of the U.S. troops by the end of 2011 and this statement was accepted with 75% agreement and nationwide acceptance. Only among Republicans, there could be found opponents of this resolution.⁴³ On the 10th anniversary of the Iraq War outbreak, 53% of the U.S. inhabitants stated that they perceived sending the U.S. troops in Iraq as a mistake.⁴⁴

⁴² Jeffrey M. Jones, "On the Issues, Obama Finds Majority Approval Elusive," *Gallup.com*, published August 11th, 2010, accessed February 26th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/141836/Issues-Obama-Finds-Majority-Approval-Elusive.aspx>.

⁴³ "Three in Four Americans Back Obama on Iraq Withdrawal," *Gallup.com*, November 2nd, 2011, accessed February 26th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/150497/Three-Four-Americans-Back-Obama-Iraq-Withdrawal.aspx>.

⁴⁴ "On 10th Anniversary, 53% in U.S. See Iraq War as Mistake," *Gallup.com*, published March 18th, 2013, accessed February 26th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/161399/10th-anniversary-iraq-war-mistake.aspx>.

4 OSAMA BIN LADEN

On September 11th, 2001, approximately 3,000 of people died during the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in America. That day has gone down as one of the worst in the U.S. history. A terrorist group called al-Qaeda was suspected of committing these attacks because its members had already been responsible for one attack on the WTC and several bomb attacks on the U.S. embassies. The leader of this organization, Osama bin Laden, indirectly admitted responsibility for the assaults and the former President Bush announced the fight against terrorism. Bin Laden became the most wanted terrorist in the world, but he was able to hide himself for many years, thanks to his financial funds, and constantly continued supporting al-Qaeda's aggression. Bush's team tried to collect as much information as possible which could lead to the wanted terrorist, but unfortunately they did not make progress. Bush's policy had to be more concerned with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2008, Barrack Obama assumed the president's seat and one of his first steps was renewal of the hunt for bin Laden. Thousands of people gathered data and were getting closer by inches to the successful conclusion. In 2011, Osama bin Laden was captured and killed and thanks to this affair, Obama won voter's favour and was re-elected U.S. president.

4.1 The Most Wanted Terrorist in the World

Osama was born in Saudi Arabia as the seventeenth child of Muhammad bin Laden, a building entrepreneur. His father got rich and gave education and primarily enough money for life to all his children, even after his death. Osama grew up in wealthy circumstances and was supposed to work at the head of one of his father's companies. As a young man from a wealthy family, he had a liking for women, alcohol and nightclubs. As the time goes, he became more interested in Islam and everything changed in 1979, when Soviet troops along with the local communist government started to invade Afghanistan. The attack on Afghanistan caused a wave of indignation in the Muslim world and Islamists began to rise up against the occupation. It is necessary to remark that Islamists were supported by the United States of America, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. Osama bin Laden came to Afghanistan in 1980 and the

situation that took place here affected him for the rest of his life. He met there Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian Islamist, and started to work with him on recruiting and training fighters for Arabian resistance. Bin Laden did not get involved in combat because he was too important for his financial resources which supported the entire organization. Later he diverged more and more from the views of his friend and was attracted by the radicalism of an Egyptian doctor, Ayman az-Zawahiri. Bin Laden believed in fate and the will of God, and he regarded the Soviet occupation as a sign for all Muslims. They should rebel against the sovereignty of other unbelieving states. In 1987, Bin Laden and his followers built a fort in the mountains of Afghanistan. The fort was called al-Masada and it was close to the Soviet base. Bin Laden wanted to provoke the Soviets to attack. He did not strive to defeat the Soviets nor to survive the battle, but to demonstrate heroism which would move the entire Muslim world to action. He would like to beat all unbelievers and build a united Islamic state. Naturally, the Soviets attacked the fort, but after 22 days of siege, they gave up and withdrew. After this victory, bin Laden gained many followers and became commander of the Mujahideen who wanted to lead the fight against the infidels. In 1989, the Russian army left Afghanistan and bin Laden believed that his victory and the victory of the whole Afghanistan is God's will. He returned to Saudi Arabia and founded the organization al-Qaeda. Bin Laden's hatred for the USA was born after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqis. Osama offered his "army" of Mujahideen for stopping the Iraqis. But the proposal was rejected and the United States of America and other countries were asked for help instead of his soldiers. Bin Laden left Saudi Arabia and settled down in Afghanistan. He considered himself to be a bearer of God and he regarded America as a country that attacks the Muslim states and endeavours to establish its habits there and to promote godlessness. He was suspected of the attack on the WTC in 1993 and in 1998, he officially declared war on America. He declared jihad - holy war, but he modified it according to his own points of view and claimed that it was the duty of every Muslim to fight against the countries which were full of unbelievers and to establish a single religion all over the world. He was not

afraid to support his followers in suicide attacks and prodded them into assaulting America.⁴⁵

On September 11th, 2001, terrorist group al - Qaeda attacked the spiritual pillars of all American people. 19 assailants hijacked four airplanes and guided them to the important buildings in America. They struck the WTC and one wing of the Pentagon. The fourth plane did not reach its target because its passengers had revolted against the terrorists and it crashed in Pennsylvania. Responsibility for the attack was taken by Osama bin Laden who had stated an attack on America several times in his speeches. In those days, it was evident that he was really prepared. Since the 80's, his followers had attended aeronautical courses around the world and had been trained, both in battle and in expert knowledge which they could use in their attacks. Their other characteristic was the willingness to die because they believed that it would be real martyr's death and they would come to paradise. President Bush was determined to punish the perpetrators of this heinous crime by hook or crook and together with his team, he got down to pursue Osama bin Laden and his closest collaborators. Since 2001, bin Laden had been hiding and he often had to change the address. Practically, his entire family fled with him. The U.S. even promised to reward \$ 25 million to anyone who would bring them to the leader of al-Qaeda. But it did not pay off and it was as if bin Laden disappeared for good. Sometimes he reminded himself by some video or declaration in letters, but it was clear that the members of his organization had no direct contact with him and Osama must have been carefully hidden. The Bush's administration had not progressed with his finding and it seemed that the attack on the United States went slowly unacknowledged and the Americans would not live to see their retaliation for the thousands of casualties. In 2008, the newly elected president Barack Obama brought a new determination. During first months of his presidency, Obama informed his top associates that the capture of

⁴⁵ Mark Bowden, *Poslední akce: zabití Usámy bin Ládina*, trans. Jan Machula (Brno: CPress, 2013), p. 47-72.

Michael Pohly and Chálid Durán, *Usáma bin Ládín a mezinárodní terorismus*, trans. Jiří Strážnický and Blanka Uhlířová (Brno: Nakladatelství Jota, s.r.o., 2001), p. 27-32.

Yossef Bodansky, *Bin Ládín: muž, který vyhlásil válku Americe*, trans. Tereza Horáková, Zdeněk Fučík and Hana Ondráčková (Červený Kostelec: Pavel Mervart, 2002), p. 1-25.

bin Laden would be their priority, and they would debate news every month. Several years of work of thousands of people bore fruit. It was not only the work of Obama's people, but also merit of Bush's and Clinton's people who saved up a lot of important evidence. Older documents included recurrent name - Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti. It was just a code name but by questioning other members of al-Qaeda, agents found out that he was one of the closest Osama's collaborators and they gained other information which could lead them to bin Laden. There was also a great chance that al-Kuwaiti was spending a lot of time with his leader and perhaps even he lived with him in the same house. At the moment, when al-Kuwaiti's home was discovered, it was clear that the Americans were closer to catching the culprit from September 11th, 2001, than any time before.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Mark Bowden, *Poslední akce: zabití Usámy bin Ládina*, trans. Jan Machula (Brno: CPress, 2013), p. 47-108, p. 161-196.

Michael Pohly and Chálid Durán, *Usáma bin Ládín a mezinárodní terorismus*, trans. Jiří Strážnická and Blanka Uhlířová (Brno: Nakladatelství Jota, s.r.o., 2001), p. 57-58, p. 74.

4.2 Operation Neptune Spear

In 2010, Barack Obama was facing low popularity. During his presidency, he tried to fulfil the promises of his campaign but for most of the people, his activity was simply disappointing. The chances for his re-election were dying and the President knew it well. In the same year, National Security Advisor came to him and told him that they might have found a clue which could lead them to Osama bin Laden. That day, a long race got under way, the race which ended by bin Laden's capture and Obama's regaining of voters.⁴⁷

On May 26th, 2009, four months after his election, Obama familiarized the National Security Advisor, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Director of the National Counterterrorism Centre and the head of the White House with his request for focusing on bin Laden's capture and made from it the number one priority. Until then, thousands of analysts, agents and other employees had paid attention to Osama, but it seemed that they were not closer to catch him. Every month, President demanded a report on the investigation's progress. Thanks to the intelligence services, Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti was tracked down. The intelligence services use software which enables them to associate seemingly unrelated data, so they are able to gain more information and to see the connection. During interrogation of bin Laden's closest representatives, investigators received information which led them to believe that al-Kuwaiti must have been one of the closest collaborators of Osama bin Laden. He also seemed to be his the former courier who delivered bin Laden's video and reports to his followers. During the search for this Osama's intimate, agencies encountered a strange compound in Abbottabad in the territory of Pakistan. The huge complex with a three-storey house was located on the edge of the suburb and next to the local wealthy houses it looked like a fort because it was surrounded by a wall of about five meters of height. Furthermore, the agency found out that al-Kuwaiti (real name Ibrahim Saeed Ahmed) lived in the house along with his brother and their families. Both of the brothers used a bogus name. The President ordered closer monitoring of the house and the CIA learned that a third family lived there. Its members did not leave the house,

⁴⁷ Mark Bowden, *Poslední akce: zabití Usámy bin Ládina*, trans. Jan Machula (Brno: CPress, 2013), p. 47-108, p. 73-74.

nor walked at the premises. The head of this family was a tall man who was regularly walking around the garden, but he was always hidden under a canopy. The CIA got only low-quality images of the man and they named him “walker”. The photos did not provide the evidence for the identification of bin Laden, but the people who were working on this case for a long time were sure that it was him. The approximate height of the walker, his posture and style of walking was a proof of it. Unfortunately, this was not enough and Obama did not believe very much that it was bin Laden and he ordered further investigation.⁴⁸

Further investigation brought more evidence that the third family could be really the bin Laden’s one and Obama began to discuss the plan of potential attack on bin Laden. He had three options. The first possibility was an aerial bombardment of the whole compound. This variant seemed to be the easiest one because no American soldiers would lose their life. But in this case, it would be necessary to use a huge amount of explosives for to be sure that Osama is dead and even that would not eliminate the possibility that he could survive in underground bunkers. Another disadvantage of this attack was the probability of killing other persons in the building and in the neighbouring houses. The second option was a direct assault on the “walker” during his regular walks through a bullet from an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). This method would require a great precision and the main negative aspect was the fact that the bullet had never been used before. And the moment when it was fired, it would be impossible to change its orientation. It could really complicate situation because the target always moved from place to place. However, it would not hurt other people and after the attack, there would not be a significant destruction left after it had been fired. American soldiers would not be threatened and confrontation with the Pakistani army would be annulled. But if the bullet hit the “walker”, no one would find out that he was really bin Laden. If the shot missed, the walker would disappear and may be, the U.S. would not be able to find him again. Everything would depend only on one shot. The last option was the use of ground troops from the SEAL unit. These men were highly experienced in this type of interventions, but they would risk their lives. They could be revealed and the Pakistani army could attack them. It would make the whole situation more

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 73-108, p. 161-196.

complicated. Likewise, the helicopters which would transport them could break down and the commando would fail. But it was the only way how America could get an indisputable proof that bin Laden lived there and was caught. Obama charged his operatives to prepare all three variants and took a decision at the end of April 2011. During the training, aerial bombardment was excluded and the President was choosing between Team six from the SEAL unit and the UAV.⁴⁹

Since bin Laden's triumph, 10 years had passed and he was still hiding and was cut off from his terrorist group. His loneliness appeared in his letters, but he was still trying to encourage his adherents in the attacks on America and other countries. He was concerned by his followers who in the name of al-Qaeda killed a large number of Muslims. The Muslim world began to turn its back on his organization. He tried to encourage his supporters to abandon attacks which endangered Muslims and to focus on big assaults. But he knew that they did not have enough money for it. His warriors led other jihad than him. At the same time, the Arab spring also burst out. It began in 2010 in Tunisia and spread across the Arab world. People were protesting against poor living conditions, unemployment, governments and authoritarian regimes. The Arab Spring switched from protests to a civil war. Bin Laden was surprised by the Arab spring and he knew that it was not al-Qaeda who contributed to it, but people themselves. The Arab states were changing as he had wished, but these changes were different from his visions. Osama also incited his followers to assault Obama and it seemed that he did not think about any possibility that he could be in danger.⁵⁰

When Barack Obama was deciding which option would be used, he had to consider the risks and potential impacts. Above all, he had to decide whether he would take the risk of disruption of the relations with Pakistan. The U.S army imported supplies and weapons into Afghanistan through Pakistani territory. It was clear that the leaders of Pakistan would be angry when they found out what had happened. In the case that they failed, the consequences would be even worse. If he disturbed Pakistan's independence, he would have to face to

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 173, p. 196-228.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 197-204.

criticisms of the whole world. He worried mostly about the low probability that the “walker” was really bin Laden. Some analysts estimated the verisimilitude at 40%, others at 10% or 95%. Obama said that it was fifty-fifty. Teams did not succeed in finding any clear evidence of the presence of al-Qaeda’s leader in the house. And so Obama had to decide without any clear proof. Of course, he knew that if the action was successful and the “walker” was bin Laden, it would have an incredible impact on terrorism in the world, but also on his carrier. Otherwise, the consequences would be catastrophic, especially for him. Obama also said that the main reason for the attack on Abbottabad was the fact that America could finally respond to the assault of September 11th, 2001. On April 29th, 2001, the President decided to send the commando to Abbottabad.⁵¹

On May 1st, 2011, helicopters of the US Navy Seals were flying from Afghanistan to Osama Bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, in Pakistan. One of the helicopters had problems, but the attack could continue and the team of 25 Seals had to break through at least three walls to reach the main building. As they were proceeding through the compound, one person fired on them. During the occupation of the house, three men and a woman were killed by the US Navy Seals. There were no US victims. On the third floor US commandos found Osama Bin Laden with his wife Ammal. She was shot in the leg. Bin Laden, who was unarmed, was shot and killed. Computers, documents, flash discs, hard discs and other evidence were taken from the compound, along with Bin Laden’s body. The US team left the place after destroying the damaged aircraft and the binding rest of women and children.⁵² (See Appendix 4)

According to official reports, Barrack Obama and other officials saw photos of bin Laden’s corpse and there are also results of DNA known which should be 100% identical with samples of bin Laden’s family. Same day, shortly before midnight, Obama announced on television that they had got Osama bin Laden. This statement provoked nationwide delight and celebrations across America.⁵³ *“Tonight, I can report to the American people and to the world that*

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 218-228.

⁵² “Bin Laden’s death: How it happened,” *BBC News*, published September 10th, 2012, accessed March 2nd, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-13257330>.

⁵³ Mark Bowden, *Poslední akce: zabití Usámy bin Ládina*, trans. Jan Machula (Brno: CPress, 2013), p. 254-260.

*the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda, and a terrorist who's responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women, and children. [...]*⁵⁴ (See Appendix 5)

After the announcement of this report, speculations and even criticisms about Osama's death have started to emerge. People have criticized America for the fact that his killing was lawful or that he is still alive.⁵⁵ Obama has refused to release the photos of dead Osama because he claimed: "*We don't trot out this stuff as trophies.*"⁵⁶ Another reason was the fact that the photo of the dead leader of al-Qaeda could cause displeasure in Muslim countries and it could lead to the potential attacks of revenge. America was also criticized for the way they buried the body of Osama bin Laden. His body was interred into the sea after previous agreement with Saudi Arabia - native country of the deceased. Bin Laden was given a traditional Muslim burial and America defends this move. They wanted to prevent Osama's grave from becoming a pilgrimage place. Whether America hides some facts or not, it is certain that the capture of bin Laden ensured Obama another four years in the office.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Macon Phillips, "Osama Bin Laden Dead|The White House," *Whitehouse.gov*, published May 2nd, 2011, accessed March 2nd, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-dead>.

⁵⁵ "Q&A: Bin Laden," *BBC News*, published May 5th, 2011, accessed March 2nd, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13269925>.

⁵⁶ "No release of Bin Laden photos," *BBC News*, published May 5th, 2011, accessed March 2nd, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-13287977>.

⁵⁷ Mark Bowden, *Poslední akce: zabití Usámy bin Ládina*, trans. Jan Machula (Brno: CPress, 2013), p. 284-285.

5 THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE ACT

In 2009, Bush was leaving the president's office as one of the least popular presidents of the United States and he bequeathed a national debt of \$ 11.87 trillion to his successor. During his presidency, the national debt increased by more than half (original debt was \$ 5.77 trillion). Bush invested money primarily in strengthening security after the terrorist attacks of September 2001 and in the wars, in Afghanistan and Iraq. Barack Obama acceded to this office, where he had to be confronted by both the high demands of his electors who expected from him unprecedented success and a burdened economy. For the economy's support, Obama introduced many programs, although his policy was more focused on international relations and foreign issues. During his presidency, he noticed high support of American citizens, especially in actions related to foreign policy. Regarding his solution to domestic issues, Americans were much less convinced of the correctness of his decisions. His health care reform contended with public refusal and strong criticism. In 2009, 44% of U.S. population agreed with Obama's health care policy and in 2011, it was only 40%. But these negative receptions roused him to struggle more to push it through. Obama's reform is approved by certain parts of the population and reprobated by others. Whether it is a positive act or not, it is estimated to be the most significant step of domestic policy which Obama has carried out.⁵⁸

5.1 ObamaCare in General and Its History

During his presidential campaign, Obama pledged to introduce new medical reform which would provide every American health insurance and the right to health care and medical treatment. The Patient Protection and Affordable Act, nicknamed ObamaCare, or ACA has become the

⁵⁸ Tomáš Volf, "Který americký prezident nejvíce přispěl k obrovskému dluhu? Nejrychleji rostl za Bushe," *Byznys.iHned.cz*, published July 27th, 2011, last modified September 2nd, 2011, accessed March 9th, 2014, <http://byznys.iHned.cz/c1-52409660-ktery-americky-prezident-nejvice-prispel-k-obrovskemu-dluhu-nejrychleji-rostl-za-bushe>.

Jeffrey M. Jones, "Obama Still Fares Better on Foreign Than on Domestic Issues," *Gallup.com*, published April 1st, 2011, accessed March 9th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/146930/Obama-Fares-Better-Foreign-Domestic-Issues.aspx>.

implementation of his promises. After the big fight, the ACA was signed into law on March 23rd, 2010, and one of the changes which it brings is that every American have to have health insurance by 2014, obtain an exemption or pay a fee for every month without insurance. The introduction of the new reform has been plagued by difficulties and many states have not fully accepted it yet. Thanks to the new health care reform, the federal deficit should be lowered by \$ 210 billion over the period covering 2012–2021⁵⁹, although its introduction still faces criticism and no-confidence. The bright ACA's feature is the fact that since its approval, millions of Americans have benefited from having free access to preventive services and medical treatment which they previously could not afford.⁶⁰

Both Republicans and Democrats had been spending decades by trying to reach a health care reform but they were not successful. Almost every U.S. President proposed reform of the health care system but never succeeded. Democratic Presidents had tried it for 75 years, until Barack Obama reached it. After his election on July 14th, 2009, Democrats introduced a draft reworking the health care system. Discussions about the proposal took place during the summer and in September Obama delivered a speech for opponents of the reform. He pointed out how important this reform was and it seemed that it worked. Afterwards on November 7th, the U.S. House sanctioned the proposition and in December, it was approved by the Senate. In January 2010, the situation of Democrats became more complicated because Republicans won the by-election to the Senate. Republican candidate Scott Brown defeated the Democrat candidate because of his campaign based on the rejection of Obama's health care reform. In these elections, Democrats lost their majority in the Senate and it was difficult for them to push through the reform. On March 9th, Democratic Representative Nancy Pelosi declared that it would be necessary to modify the proposal so that it could be approved by the House.

⁵⁹ "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act," *Wikipedia.org*, last modified April 11th, 2014, accessed March 9th, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patient_Protection_and_Affordable_Care_Act.

⁶⁰ "Obamacare Bill: Obama Health Care Bill," *Obamacarefacts.com*, accessed March 9th, 2014, <http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacarebill.php>.

Ibid., chapter: "ObamaCare Facts: Facts on the Affordable Care Act".

The next day, Tea Party groups gathered in Washington in order to protest against the reform. On March 21st, after relevant adjustments of the draft, it was accepted in the House and subsequently, in the Senate. On March 23rd, 2010, President Obama signed ObamaCare into law and the Supreme Court upheld it on June 28th, 2012. Since March 2010, Republicans have repeatedly tried to contest the law and repeal it, however unsuccessfully. Republicans have failed to reach an abolition of the law, although most of the public would welcome it even today. This year, public opinion polls show that most Americans still do not agree with ObamaCare.⁶¹ Specifically, it is not approved by 51% of US citizens.⁶² Besides the pressure of Republicans, the ACA had to face another obstacle. In October 2013, Republicans and Democrats did not manage to agree on a budget agreement and it led to a government shutdown. Republicans refused to increase the debt ceiling and vice versa, Democrats supported it because they needed enough finances for the new health care reform. After some days, Republicans and Democrats were able to reach a compromise which was approved by the Senate and the House subsequently and signed by the President. Their disagreements caused the aforementioned shutdown, which greatly harmed the U.S. economy and cost America approximately \$ 24 billion.⁶³

⁶¹ "A short history of the Affordable Care Act - Obamacare drama," *Affordablehealthca.com*, accessed March 9th, 2014, <http://affordablehealthca.com/history-affordable-care-act/>.

"Interactive Obamacare Timeline," *NRCC.org*, accessed March 9th, 2014, <http://www.nrcc.org/default/sites/landingpages/timeline/index.html>.

"Barack Obama," *Wikipedia.org*, last modified March 23rd, 2014, accessed March 9th, 2014, http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama#Obamova_zdravotnick.C3.A1_reforma.

⁶² Andrew Dugan, "Majority of Americans Still Disapprove of Healthcare Law," *Gallup.com*, published February 4th, 2014, accessed March 9th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/167309/majority-americans-disapprove-healthcare-law.aspx>.

⁶³ Paul Lewis and Dan Roberts, "US government shutdown to end after Congress passes debt ceiling deal," *The Guardian*, published October 16th, 2013, accessed March 11th, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/16/senate-leaders-strike-debt-ceiling-deal-shutdown>.

Petr Zahradník, "Americký shutdown a globální hospodářský růst," *Investujeme.cz*, published October 15th, 2013, accessed March 11th, 2014, <http://www.investujeme.cz/americky-shutdown-a-globalni-hospodarsky-rust/>.

5.2 Characteristic of the ACA

Just as every new law, also ObamaCare has its pluses and minuses. Its aim is estimated to ensure health care insurance for as many people as possible and to create uniform conditions and benefits for all without exceptions. It aims to make health care available to people who had no access to it before and improve the living conditions of millions of people. Every American must buy insurance until March 2014. They can register either online on the websites, buy it via the phone, fill out the paper application or turn to insurers personally. People can retain their old insurance plans only if the insurance companies adjust the terms of contracts so that the agreements contain all the benefits of the new reform. The so-called grandfathered plans must be adapted and the insurance companies may still modify them until 2015. These are *“health plans that were in place when the health care law was signed on March 23[rd], 2010. Grandfathered plans do not need to comply with all of the rules of the law. Over time, grandfathered plans will lose that status and join new plans in complying with all the rules of the law.”*⁶⁴ Americans who cannot pay the costs of insurance can apply for assistance through Health Insurance Marketplaces. ObamaCare also improves and expands Medicaid and Medicare, programmes which should make millions of old and poor people’s lives better and give them the chance to acquire the insurance. *“Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that helps with medical costs [and is targeted at] people who have limited income and resources. Medicare is [a] federal health insurance program for people who are 65 or over, certain younger people with disabilities and people with end-stage renal disease. [...]”*⁶⁵ ACA offers several insurance plans and all of them offer a basic range of services and benefits. If you pay for higher expenses, you will pay less for some out-of-pocket health care services. Basis should be that all of these plans will provide more services and benefits to people who previously could not afford insurance. If people cannot buy insurance, they should either get an exception or sign up for programs which will provide them the subsidies.

⁶⁴ “The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) Glossary - Terms, Definitions | Health Law Facts - AARP,” *AARP.org*, accessed March 11th, 2014, <http://www.aarp.org/health/affordable-care-act/glossary/>.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

If they do not carry out one of these options, they will have to pay a fee for every month without insurance. Although it is not a crime not to have insurance and it is not mandatory to buy it, if someone is not insured, he will have to pay this fee. The obligation to pay a fee, have insurance or exemption is known as the Individual Mandate, new tax which was introduced with new health care reform.⁶⁶

As it was mentioned above, the new reform should refine health care and regulate it so that it is accessible for all Americans and all of them have the same conditions. The main objective of the reform is to ensure about 50 million of uninsured Americans insurance. The most common reasons why they are without insurance are expenses or loss of job. Most often, working poor families are those who do not have insurance available. Another large group of uninsured consists of small business owners, employees or their dependents. Together, they form half of all uninsured U.S. inhabitants. As the official Obamacare website states, *“the fact is about 60% of all personal bankruptcies in the U.S. are related to medical bills.”*⁶⁷ Another aim of the new reform is to stop insurance companies from using dishonest practices which they regularly exploit during taking out insurance or in the course of the performance of contracts. ObamaCare protects people from being dropped while sick, denial of care for pre-existing conditions or being evaluated according to their health status or gender. Sole criterions that will determine the cost of insurance should be income, family size, location, smoking status and age. So smokers could pay up to by 50% more than non-smokers. The changes do not concern only insurers, but also the majority of American citizens. Compared to the insurance companies, these modifications are rather positive, but they have also some negative aspects. Young adult Americans will be able to use their parents' insurance until 26 and 82% of them should be entitled to obtain cost assistance or could register in the Medicaid program. In companies with more than 50 employees, the employer must render all full-time employees' insurance. Otherwise, he will pay a tax. In contrast, small businesses can apply for tax

⁶⁶ “ObamaCare Facts: Facts on the Affordable Care Act,” *Obamacarefacts.com*, accessed, March 9th, 2014, <http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-facts.php>.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

credits in order to be able to provide insurance to their employees. Another group which will be affected by this change is seniors. Old people should feel more likely positive effects of the reform because thanks to the reform of Medicare, they should get better access to health services and prescription medicines. As well as seniors, women should benefit from the adjustment of health care. No more they will have to pay more than men for insurance and in return, they will gain access to better health care and some medical examination. Preventive care such as mammograms will be free for them. However, the reform should have the best impact on uninsured people and it should guarantee 15% of Americans health care at such level which they previously did not know. Most Americans would only benefit from the new law, someone will pay less, another one will pay more, somebody will obtain cost assistance and others will get place in support programs. But still there will remain group of Americans who will pay more than before. People with higher incomes belong in this group. There should hold the rule that the more you earn, the more you pay. The increased fees will affect high earners and large businesses that will pay more in order to provide enough money for insurance for low-income and uninsured people.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Ibid., chapter: "ObamaCare Facts: Affordable Care Act, Health Insurance Marketplace".

Ibid., chapter: "ObamaCare Facts: Facts on the Affordable Care Act".

Ibid., chapter: "What is ObamaCare / What is Health Care Reform?".

5.3 “ObamaCare Is Socialist” and Other ObamaCare Myths

Besides the justified criticism of the new law, there were also criticisms which were based more on imagination and inattention of their creators. The myths originated from these groundless statements and they started to be spread among the Americans and so they created a negative image of ObamaCare, which was untrue. An allegation of the Republicans gained the most of the attention because it claimed that ObamaCare is socialist. The Republican’s opinion was based on the idea that the ACA is controlled by the Government, which means that the Government distributes health care among citizens and thus controls their lives. This statement was made on the basis of the information that the ACA was inspired by European models of health care reform and so it must have been based on socialism. The Tea Party also used the claim that ObamaCare is socialist during its protestations. Although the Affordable Care Act provides health insurance to Americans, it does it through the insurance companies and plays a role of “middleman”. The Government does not nationalize insurance companies; it only distributes financial support into health supporting programmes. Another myth about the new reform which is spreading is the statement that the new law contains Death Panels. Those are panels which decide if someone will live or die. In fact, the law does not contain any mention about these panels. The ObamaCare included the provision which provided consultancy to patients, but it referred only to the consultancy of wills and end-of-life care. For their advice, doctors would be paid, but due to speculations about Death Panels it was removed from the law. Primarily, seniors were aggrieved by this modification of law because they lose the possibility to consult the above mentioned issues. According to this criticism, the seniors are those who should be mainly affected by the myth about Death Panels. In fact, the reform includes only panel which examines treatments in order to decrease the costs of them. The elderly should also be afflicted by another myth which said that they were culling. This statement is completely absurd and the opposite is the truth because old people gained many new benefits and better health care along with the new reform. Of course, it is necessary to admit that some senior programmes and benefits were cancelled, but the ObamaCare brought also a huge range of new benefits. So it is not

possible to talk about Death Panels for old people or about culling seniors which are handled by the ACA. The most unlikely statement was the assumption that along with the insurance, every American would also get a chip implanted under his skin which would control him/her. The new law mentions the implant, but only in connection with the possibility to gather collecting data, rather than to put them into people. Actually, the word CHIP is mentioned in the bill only as an abbreviation of “Children’s Health Insurance Plan” which provides financial contributions to children and their families. All of the above mentioned claims are fictitious and although the ACA has many shortcomings and there are many reasons for its criticism, these claims are not trustworthy and factual.⁶⁹

5.4 Pros and Cons

ObamaCare seems to be very useful and flawless reform which will improve lives of millions of people. But just as any new law, the ACA is not without its mistakes. Along with its introduction, wave of resistance came up and it is not still over. However, there could also be found some positive effects of the ACA. Among the bright aspects of the Affordable Care Act rank the benefits such as emergency services, hospital stays, pregnancy and baby care, prescription drugs, rehab services, preventive and wellness services and others.⁷⁰ Every insured American should get all of these benefits with every insurance plan. Also the number of uninsured Americans has decreased every year since 2010 when it was signed into law. Another useful feature of ObamaCare is that doctors and hospitals will receive financial contributions for

⁶⁹ Ibid., chapter: “ObamaCare Myths: Myths About the Affordable Care Act”.

“Lawmakers Renew Socialism, 'Let People Die' Charge,” *Huffingtonpost.com*, published March 27th, 2012, last modified March 20th, 2014, accessed March 31st, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/27/obamacare-socialism-louie-gohmert-steve-king_n_1383973.html.

Noel Sheppard, “Time’s Mark Halperin: Death Panels Are 'Built Into' ObamaCare | News-Busters,” *Newsbusters.org*, published November 26th, 2013, accessed March 31st, 2014, <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/noel-sheppard/2013/11/26/time-s-mark-halperin-death-panels-are-built-obamacare>.

Bob Cull, “Millionaire Republican Senator Says Obamacare is Socialist, Would Have Killed Him,” *AATTP.org*, published October 21st, 2013, accessed March 31st, 2014, <https://aattp.org/millionaire-republican-senator-says-obamacare-is-socialist-would-have-killed-him/>.

⁷⁰ “How Will ObamaCare Affect Me?,” *Obamacarefacts.com*, accessed March 9th, 2014, <http://obamacarefacts.com/how-will-obamacare-affect-me.php>.

the quality of their work rather than for quantity. Democrats hope that it will motivate them to better services. The question is if it is not to the detriment of patients who will receive high-quality care, but just some of them each day and the rest will have to wait for another day. It was already mentioned that many Americans should gain cost assistance to pay for insurance and lots of poor families should benefit from Medicaid.⁷¹

All Americans will definitely appreciate the fact that members of Congress will buy insurance through the marketplace as well as the rest of the population. One problematic feature of the reform, it seems, is the introduction of 21 new taxes (the main taxes include Individual Mandate and Employer Mandate which is related to businesses with more than 50 employees, as it was already mentioned). Another negative aspect is the implementation of fees which everybody will have to pay if they do not have insurance or an exemption from it. People also criticize the fact that insurance was extended to a larger number of people, but also costs of it increased as well. The new law also provides contraception available for women. This measure was met with deep disapproval by religious institutions and after its announcement, it was approved that these institutions will have the right to choose whether they will accept this part of the law or they will not. Another negative attitude was expressed by several states which first tried to undermine the validity and the accuracy of the ACA. When they did not succeed, they managed to defend their argument in court, saying that if they do not want to accept the new law, they can partially refuse it. In these states, millions of people remain without insurance and these states still have the choice of whether they will fully accept the new law or not. Regarding employees and employers, the situation is also complicated for them. Most of the employers who have to pay the Employer Mandate have decided to change the contract of employees from full-time to part-time. Of course, this step damaged employees and some dissenters of the ObamaCare claim that the ACA caused the loss of at least 650,000 jobs. The loss is estimated to be a consequence of the high number of layoffs caused by employers' miserliness. On the other hand, proponents of the ACA point out that the new law has created many new jobs in Government and in Medicare

⁷¹ "ObamaCare Facts: Facts on the Affordable Care Act," *Obamacarefacts.com*, accessed, March 9th, 2014, <http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-facts.php>.

and Medicaid programmes.⁷² Although ObamaCare should provide insurance for millions of Americans, in the United States, there still remain millions of the uninsured. Besides citizens who live in states that opt out of accepting ObamaCare and Medicaid expansion (See Appendix 6), this group is formed by illegal immigrants (about 8 million), as well as by the citizens who will not be able to use Medicaid or those who will pay a fee instead of the insurance. Also people who will not be entitled to obtain cost assistance and will be exempt from paying a fee will remain without insurance.⁷³ However, much of the public, opposition and media criticism was aimed at non-functional web pages on which people should buy new insurance plans and register in supporting programmes. In October 2013, when the new reform was set off, technical problems occurred and people could not buy new insurance, although they had already cancelled their old one. In November, thousands of insurance plans which were not in compliance with the new reform were avoided and it resulted in 3.5 million Americans without insurance. In his speeches, Obama promised that everyone who wants to keep their insurance could do it. Later this promise was found to be misguided and the President apologized for this mistake several times and made a promise that he would try to help people who have been damaged due to this wrongful statement.⁷⁴ His excuses, however, did not save him from a swift decrease of his popularity. According to public opinion poll from January 21st, 2014, only 45.8% of respondents agreed with Obama's job during his fifth year in the office. It was by 2% less than in 2013.⁷⁵ Regarding

⁷² "ObamaCare Facts: Facts on the Affordable Care Act," *Obamacarefacts.com*, accessed, March 9th, 2014, <http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-facts.php>.

Ibid., chapter: "ObamaCare: Pros and Cons of ObamaCare".

Ibid., chapter: "What is ObamaCare / What is Health Care Reform?".

"What in the world?," *BBC News*, published February 5th, 2014, accessed March 13th, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-echochambers-26058891>.

⁷³ "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act," *Wikipedia.org*, last modified April 11th, 2014, accessed March 9th, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patient_Protection_and_Affordable_Care_Act.

⁷⁴ "Debakl, omlouvají se USA kvůli "Obamacare"," *iDNES.cz*, published November 8th, 2013, accessed March 13th, 2014, http://zpravy.idnes.cz/obama-se-omluvil-za-problemy-s-reformou-zdravotnictvi-p14-/zahranicni.aspx?c=A131108_074910_zahranicni_tp.

⁷⁵ Jeffrey M. Jones, "Obama Averages 45.8% Job Approval in Year Five," *Gallup.com*, published January 21st, 2014, accessed March 13th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/166964/obama-averages-job-approval-year-five.aspx>.

ObamaCare in December 2013, 59% of uninsured Americans who visited a health insurance exchange website evaluated this experience as very negative.⁷⁶ Likewise, in February 2014, surveys showed that 32% of Americans were not familiar with the Affordable Care Act.⁷⁷ It is not very positive result in view of the fact that until March 2014, all Americans should have insurance or use another solution. This result also corresponds with the outcome of another survey from February 2014 which showed that 51% of Americans still disapprove of Healthcare reform.⁷⁸ But it is necessary to emphasize that in the period of 2013–2014, the number of uninsured in the US has significantly decreased. In America, there remains only 16.1% of the uninsured population.⁷⁹

ObamaCare could be definitely considered as a huge success because after many years, it is the first health care reform which was successfully approved. On the other hand, it has not got along without difficulties and justified criticisms. The United States face a really big challenge. America will either turn out well from this situation as a country which managed to improve the health care or as a country where politicians introduced the reform which America was not ready to handle with and which ended as a fiasco.

⁷⁶ Jeffrey M. Jones, "U.S. Uninsured Still Rate Exchange Experience Negatively," *Gallup.com*, published January 2nd, 2014, accessed March 13th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/166712/uninsured-rate-exchange-experience-negatively.aspx>.

⁷⁷ Andrew Dugan, "Americans' Familiarity With Healthcare Law Unchanged," *Gallup.com*, published February 6th, 2014, accessed March 13th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/167351/americans-familiarity-healthcare-law-unchanged.aspx>.

⁷⁸ Andrew Dugan, "Majority of Americans Still Disapprove of Healthcare Law," *Gallup.com*, published February 4th, 2014, accessed March 13th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/167309/majority-americans-disapprove-healthcare-law.aspx>.

⁷⁹ Jenna Levy, "In U.S., Uninsured Rate Shows Initial Decline in 2014," *Gallup.com*, published January 23rd, 2014, accessed March 13th, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/166982/uninsured-rate-shows-initial-decline-2014.aspx>.

6 COMPARISON OF PRESIDENTS

In most of the countries where the head of state is the president, its function is considered to be more likely representative. One of the exceptions represents the president of the United States. Most of the American presidents participated in the enforcement of laws and policies during their presidency. Their efforts have either a positive or negative reaction of the public. Whether affirmative or negative, these presidents are spoken in a different context than just as representatives of the country. In addition, as the head of one of the most powerful world powers, every American president has much more opportunities to engage in issues and conflicts which are related to the whole world. In contrast, presidents of European countries occupy rather a representative function and very often people do not hear about them in a different context than that they were elected or that they participated in visits to foreign politicians.

6.1 President of the United States of America

The US presidential oath of office, which is carried out traditionally by a new president with one hand on the Bible, reads as follows: *“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”*⁸⁰

The President of the United States is regarded as the most powerful head of state by the general public. Although his power is defined and limited by the Constitution, from time immemorial, the American president has symbolized powerful political figure. From the beginning, the idea of the highest representative of the country with limited powers and limited term of office was extraordinary and surprising. The U.S. Constitution determines besides the presidential elections and president's powers also the function of the Vice President who takes over the office of president in case of death, resignation or

⁸⁰ *An outline of American government* (The United States of America: United States Information Agency, 1990), p. 52-59.

incapacity of the president. Furthermore, the Vice President holds only one another obligation and it is the chair of the U.S. Senate.⁸¹

6.1.1 Presidential Election

The President of the U.S. is elected in direct election for 4 years and may be re-elected only once. Each presidential candidate must be a native-born American citizen, must be at least 35 years old and must be at least 14 years a resident of the USA. The candidate is nominated by political parties and the presidential election in America is unique. The president is elected by the so-called Electoral College which consists of electors - representatives of each state. The citizens of each state choose the president's electors. Each state has as many electors as it has senators in the Congress and members of the House of Representatives. The winner is the one with most of votes and he gets all the electoral votes of that state. The College is formed by 538 electors and they vote for the presidential candidate with the highest number of votes in their state. To obtain the post of president, a candidate needs a minimum of 270 votes. If any candidate does not gain enough votes, the House of Representatives elects the president (representatives of one country have together only one vote available). The newly elected president is accepted into office on January 20th and takes an oath.⁸²

6.1.2 Powers and Restrictions

The U.S. president has very extensive on one hand, but some rather limited powers on the other. His powers can be divided into those which he can perform himself and those which he performs together with the Senate or the Congress. The president alone holds the position of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and confers ranks of officers of these forces. In addition, he grants a pardon and declares amnesty in cases when someone commits an offense against the United States. He has also the right to convene a special session of the Congress, submit the bills and put forward the reports to it. The

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

president also receives envoys, appoints ambassadors and runs official negotiations with foreign countries. Moreover, he oversees observance of the laws and exercises executive power, nominates federal judges, heads of federal ministries and government agencies, and other main federal officials. Finally, the President of the U.S. has the right to veto bills. Together with the Senate, president concludes contracts and appoints envoys, judges and executive officers and along with the Congress, he passes laws. Another major power which the U.S. president has at his disposal is the opportunity to influence public opinion as the head of a political party and national leader. The president may also proclaim regulations, ordinances and decrees which are called executive orders and they are obligatory for all federal agencies. Among the most impressive and also the most terrifying power of the president is control over the codes and commands which allow the president to use U.S. nuclear weapons. Limitations of the president's powers reside in the fact that his decisions and policies are contingent on the opinion or approval of the Senate or the Congress. When nominating federal judges, ambassadors, envoys and consuls, his proposal must be approved by the Senate and as for the appointment of federal officials, the president selects only a small number of them. The right of veto can be used if the president does not agree with a bill. If two thirds do not vote against his veto, the bill does not pass. He has bigger authority in declaring war or concluding contracts, but his powers are still smaller than those of the British Prime Minister. The presidency is based on compromises and negotiations with the Congress and only because of them, he is able to push through several laws during his office. Despite certain restrictions of his power, people from all over the world very often hear in the media about the American president and some new law or reform. In comparison with the Czech or French President, it can be said that their function is really more representative.⁸³

⁸³ *An outline of American government* (The United States of America: United States Information Agency, 1990), p. 52-59.

James Q. Wilson, *Jak se vládne v USA* (Praha: Victoria Publishing, 1995), p. 168-190.

Oskar Krejčí, *Zahraniční politika USA: ideje, doktríny, strategie* (Praha: Professional Publishing, 2009), p. 330-333.

6.2 President of the Czech Republic

The Czech presidential oath of office is taken traditionally at a joint meeting of both chambers of the Parliament, where it is administered by the Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies, reads as follows: *“I swear allegiance to the Czech Republic. I swear to observe its Constitution and laws. I swear upon my honour that I shall perform my office in the interest of all the people, and to the best of my belief.”*⁸⁴

Unlike the U.S. president, the Czech President was elected indirectly by both houses of parliament and in 2013, the first Czech president was elected in a direct election. The Czech president does not exercise the position of chief executive authority or head of the parliamentary majority and can hardly enforce any laws or make a promise during electoral campaigns. Even though most people expect that he will be involved in politics and evince efforts to improve the situation in the Czech Republic, but nothing much has happened during last few presidencies. The only power which the Czech presidents like and use often is amnesty, but its declaration usually causes a negative public reaction. Despite all of the powers which the Czech president has, his office is not adjusted so that he is able to decide on big issues and carry out large changes.⁸⁵

6.2.1 Presidential Election

According to the Constitution the President of the Czech Republic is elected for five years and can be re-elected only once. The president is elected in a secret vote on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage. Candidates are proposed either by at least twenty deputies, ten senators or petition with at least 50,000 votes of citizens. Each candidate must be at least 40 years old and must have the right to vote. The president shall be the candidate who will obtain the absolute majority of votes in the first round. If it does not happen, two candidates with most of the votes qualify for the second round. If more

⁸⁴ “Presidential powers - Prague Castle,” *Hrad.cz*, accessed March 21st, 2014, <https://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/presidential-powers.shtml>.

⁸⁵ Aleš Gerloch and Jiří Hřebejk, *Ústavní systém České republiky* (Praha: Prospektrum, 1996), p. 100-107.

candidates have most of the votes, all of them qualify for the second round. In the second round, the candidate with the highest number of votes wins. In the event that more candidates have the highest number of votes, no one wins and after ten days, the new election is announced. President's term of office begins after taking an oath.⁸⁶

6.2.2 Powers and Restrictions

Just as the American one, the Czech president has some remits but also many restrictions. The President of the Czech Republic is the head of state and holds a representative function in his country and beyond. His powers are also divided into those which can be executed by himself and those which need to be countersigned by the government. Among those which the president can execute just himself belong appointment and recall of the Government, the Prime Minister and other members of the government and receive their resignation, as well as convene the sessions of the Chamber of Deputies and dissolve it. He also appoints Justices of the Constitutional Court, its Chief Justice and Assistant Chief Justices, the Chief Justice and Assistant Chief Justices of the Supreme Court, the President and the Vice-President of the Supreme Control Office and members of the Bank Board of the Czech National Bank. Just as the American president, the Czech president may temper or cancel the Czech court sentences, but in comparison with the U.S. system, these are not just the crimes against the state or high treason but every other felony or offence. The president has the right to return an adopted law to the Parliament (except for the constitutional law) and to sign laws. His other powers consist of representation of the state in foreign countries, ratification of international treaties, receiving heads of diplomatic missions, announcing election to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, appointment and promotion of generals and appointment of judges, and of course, the president is also the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. As it was mentioned above, the Czech president has the right to grant amnesty and lately this right has become very popular with former presidents (especially at the end of their

⁸⁶ "Presidential powers - Prague Castle," *Hrad.cz*, accessed March 21st, 2014, <https://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/presidential-powers.shtml>.

office). Among the benefits which the Czech President may enjoy pertain the fact that the Government is responsible for the acts which president proposes but for which he needs its signature. President's suspensive veto right (the right to return to the Parliament the law for re-discussion) and government responsibility for his decisions are the only powerful powers which he handles. It is evident that his position and opinions are derived rather from what the Government wants instead of what he charges the Government to do. His representative function is his strongest feature and it really cannot be reckoned that the Czech president, for example, will come with a proposal for a new law or new medical reform. For the Czech president, it is not typical to get involved himself in the enforcement of any law or reform and the arrangement of his powers corresponds with this statement. During pre-election campaigns, candidates do not often make big promises because they are not competent to meet them in the office. In their campaigns, if there will be found any promise, it is almost certain that it will not be fulfilled or it will not be thanks to the president's initiative.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Aleš Gerloch and Jiří Hřebejk, *Ústavní systém České republiky* (Praha: Prospektrum, 1996), p. 100-107.

"Presidential powers - Prague Castle," *Hrad.cz*, accessed March 21st, 2014, <https://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/presidential-powers.shtml>.

Karel Vodička a Ladislav Cabada, *Politický systém České republiky: historie a současnost* (Praha: Portál, 2011), p. 338-342.

6.3 President of France

The French presidential oath of office is carried out traditionally by a new president in front of the National Assembly, reads as follows: *“In the presence of God and before the French people, represented by the National Assembly, I swear to remain faithful to the Democratic Republic, one and indivisible, and to fulfill all the duties imposed on me by the Constitution.”*⁸⁸

Just as in the Czech Republic, the role of the president is rather representative in France. He is partially involved in the governance of the state, but he does not propose laws or reforms and he is not the most important leader of a political party as the U.S. president. The French president differs from other presidents because of very specific requirements for candidacy. Just as Czech presidents have taken to giving amnesty, holding referendums seems to be popular among French presidents. Its proclamation and use to pass laws is one of the major powers which the president of France has.

6.3.1 Presidential Election

The President of France was elected for seven years, but since 2000, the length of his Office has been shortened to 5 years. The president can be elected only twice as both of the above mentioned representatives of executive power. The presidential candidate must meet several criteria. Each of them must be at least 23 years old. This age limit is really low compared to those already mentioned above. They must also have French citizenship, and must acquire the support of at least 500 elected officials from departments. Each candidate must also have legal capacity and the right to vote, and he must also present his property return. The last duty is very popular among French voters. It is clear that citizens in other states would also welcome similar condition for candidates for presidential office. American and Czech presidents are elected in direct election and the French one does not differ from them in this point. Elections can take place in two rounds. In the first round, candidates must

⁸⁸ “Progress towards the Empire--Meeting of the Senate-The President's Declamation--General News,” *Query.nytimes.com*, accessed March 22nd, 2014, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F20E17FF3F5C167493C7A9178AD95F468584F9>.

obtain the absolute majority of votes to win. If not, two candidates with the highest number of votes qualify for the second round which comes after. The one who gets the highest number of votes in the second round becomes the president of France. Before the entrance into the office, the newly elected president must be sworn in.⁸⁹

6.3.2 Powers and Restrictions

The French Constitution provides the president with powers that make him one of the most powerful presidents in the world. Still, French presidents' power is limited and the French President does not act as an independent executor of executive and legislative power. The French President has much more powers at his disposal than the Czech president. His key power is the ability to dissolve the National Assembly and, in particular, the use of exceptional powers in case of a national threat. He also chairs the Committee of National Defense, signs laws, leads the government sessions, appoints and dismisses the Prime minister, and names and convenes the Constitutional Council. The ability to grant a pardon and the ratification of international treaties pertain among his other major powers. He is also the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and declares a referendum. The referendum is very important for the president to enforce certain laws. The president along with the Bishop is the head of the Principality of Andorra (state located between France and Spain; noted by the author of this thesis), thereby he completely differs himself from the American and Czech president. French President's restrictions consist in the fact that he must consult the dissolution of the National Assembly with the President and Prime Minister of both chambers of the Parliament. But he makes the decision himself.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Marion Ballet and Olivier Duhamel, *Les élections présidentielles* (Paris: Dalloz, 2011), p. 71-255.

"French Presidential Election," *NewsLab*, accessed March 22nd, 2014, <http://www.newslab.cz/en/french-presidential-election/>.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Certainly, there are many differences between the U.S., the Czech and the French presidents. However, they have many common powers and also limitations. All three presidents are elected in a direct election and they can be re-elected only once. All of them hold the post of representative of their country, but also of the Chief Commander of the Armed Forces. Each of them signs international treaties and laws, and may grant a pardon. Their functions are also identical because of the ability to reject the bill, but the way of rejection varies for particular presidents. Each of these three presidents nominates and removes many leading state representatives and officials from office. The number and specialization of these officials differ in every state. Each of the presidents is subject to certain restrictions, for example the Czech and U.S. president are more reliant on agreement and cooperation with certain bodies in order to reach a new law or reform. The American president is the only one who really enforces laws and reforms unlike to the Czech and French president who are rather executives of other remits. These two are elected for 5 years, while the U.S. president only for four years. Another difference is also in the type of direct election. In the Czech Republic and France, the citizens vote directly for their candidate, whereas in the United States, the president is elected through the College. Last but not least, it needs to be mentioned that the French president takes pride in the title of the Principality of Andorra and in other exceptional powers. Despite this privilege of the French president, the American president still remains the most powerful president of the three, although his power is very limited. The president of the United States is commonly known as one of the most powerful heads of state around the world, not only among presidents. The French President is endowed with many remits and his power is still quite high. Contrary to the Czech president who is the weakest president of the three and his power is very limited and his position remains really rather representative. The post and remits of every president depend on the type of system which is different for each state and which is valid in each of these particular states. The Americans follow the presidential system *“which gives a strong role to a President who heads the executive [power] and participates in its actual decision-making processes. [...]”*⁹¹ France uses the semi-presidential

⁹¹ David Robertson, *The penguin dictionary of politics* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 273.

system where the president is “*directly elected by the people with a large degree of power over the government, whilst the head of government is the prime minister nominated by the president but who can be dismissed by the legislature.*”⁹² And finally, the Czech Republic has a parliamentary system “*where the President is simply a ceremonial head of state or has merely the function [to appoint the] prime minister or other official[s] to head the government. [...]*”⁹³ “*There is an indirectly elected president [(the Czech Republic is an exception with the direct election)] and where the prime minister and cabinet are collectively responsible to the legislature.*”⁹⁴ Thanks to these systems, the powers of individual presidents (not only powers of those who are mentioned above) vary a lot across different continents and states. (See Appendix 7)

⁹² “Semi-presidential system - Conservapedia,” *Conservapedia.com*, last modified September 23rd, 2011, accessed March 25th, 2014, http://www.conservapedia.com/Semi-presidential_system.

⁹³ David Robertson, *The penguin dictionary of politics* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 249.

⁹⁴ “Glossary,” *Presidential Power*, accessed March 25th, 2014, http://presidential-power.com/?page_id=16.

7 QUESTIONNAIRE

The main purpose of the questionnaire was to find out how people all over the world perceive Barack Obama's presidency and his election, and one of the questions was focused on the direct presidential election. The question list was created on an internet site called MojeAnketa.cz and it was used as an online public opinion poll survey. It has 7 questions all of which are of qualitative character and the respondents could opt for one of two or three possibilities. The questionnaire was anonymous and the only information that respondents input was their gender, age and location. (See Appendix 8)

The question list was sent via Internet pages and forums such as Facebook, Fanpop, etc. Most of the respondents are Obama's fans, supporters, dissenters or just people who are interested in this theme and who wanted to fill in the questionnaire. They were aged from 14 to 76. I obtained 91 questionnaires, 39 of them were from women and 52 from men. At the beginning, most of the questioned people were the young but then, elderly people started to participate. It was really surprising for me because Facebook and other forums of this type are more often visited by teenagers and young adults than by a 75-year-old pensioner. But at the end, the average age was 33.8. The respondents were from all over the world, not only from the United States (i.e. Florida, Ohio, California, South Carolina, Minnesota, Vermont, Utah, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Nevada, Washington, Texas, New York, Maine, Kentucky, Georgia, Indiana, New Mexico, Nebraska, etc.), but also from Europe (i.e. Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Turkey, Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic, etc.), from Canada and from Africa (i.e. Zimbabwe).

I expected the people to mostly evaluate Obama's presidency and the direct presidential election positively. I thought that mainly Europeans and other nations different from the Americans would be highly positive about these issues. And also that Americans would have a more likely negative attitude to it.

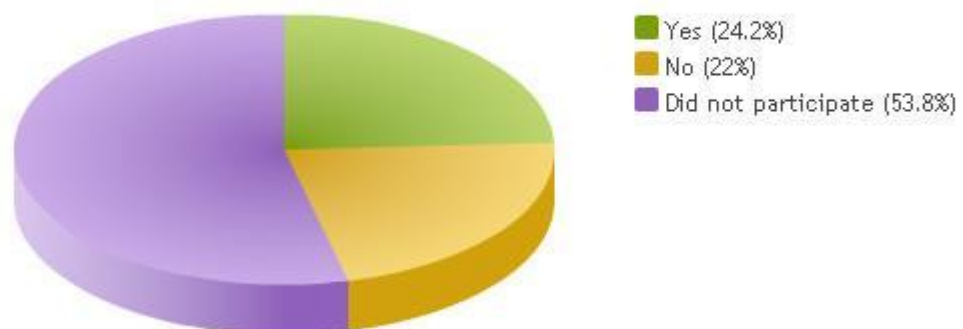
7.1 Results

Do you generally approve or disapprove of the direct election of the U.S. President (or the direct presidential election in general)?



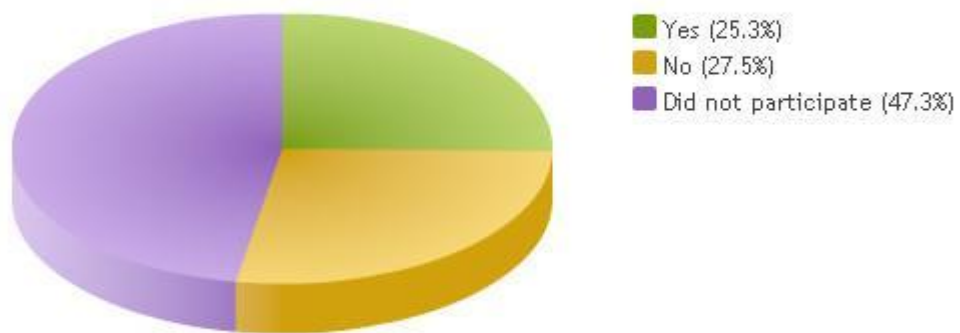
The first graph shows us that 78% of respondents generally agree with the direct presidential election. It is obvious that people prefer taking part in the selection of heads of state to sitting back. 20 persons from 91 disapprove of the direct presidential election. To be more concrete, it was 16 men and 4 women.

Did you vote for Barack Obama in the first presidential election?



The second and third question were meant for the citizens of the United States, but there was also an option for people from other continents and countries or for Americans who were not able to vote or did not want to no matter what their reason was. It was not surprising for me that more than a half of the respondents did not participate in the first presidential election in which Barack Obama won. But 42 of them took part in this election and 52.4% of them voted for Barack Obama and 47.6% vote against him. It is quite equal and it shows that people who participated in the questionnaire were from both groups surrounding Obama: from his supporters but also from his opponents.

Did you vote for Barack Obama in the second presidential election?



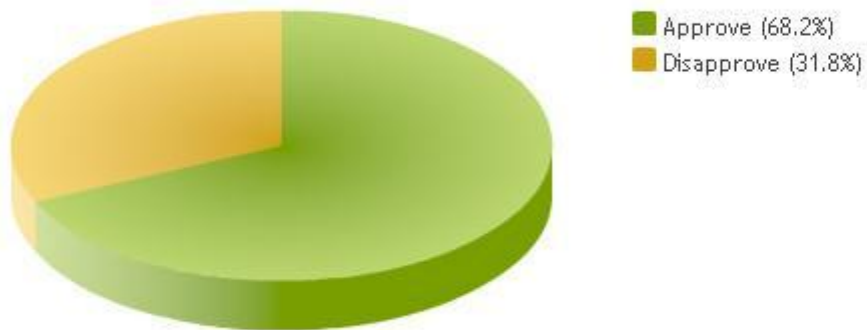
In the second presidential election in which Obama defended successfully his office, 48 respondents participated. After the steep decline of Obama's popularity, a lot of Americans voted against him. The questionnaire affirmed this statement because 52.1% of the questioned persons voted against Obama in the second presidential election. It is more than a half and it shows clearly that Obama's job in presidential office was not satisfactory for the voters.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama dealt with the Iraq War?



The question relating to the War in Iraq is one of the tasks which are difficult to appraise for most of the people. Barack Obama brought certain changes to this conflict and managed to end the war. But it took some time to end the combat and people expected a quicker settlement of the conflict. So it is not surprising that the results of the question concerning the Iraq war are drawn. 53.8% of the participants in the survey agreed with the way how Barack Obama dealt with this problem. It is more than a half but it is not a really convincing argument confirming that he was successful.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama captured Osama bin Laden?



Regarding the capture of Osama bin Laden, just as in the Gallup's polls survey, the majority of respondents approved the way how this problem was resolved. This question was answered by only 88 respondents and 68.2% of them agreed with the result of the Operation Neptune Sphere but 28 persons disapprove of it. To be more precise, 19 men and 9 women perceived the solution to this issue negatively. It could be caused by the fact that people perceive his death so cruel or that they wish to bring bin Ladin to justice and condemn him.

Do you generally approve or disapprove of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act?



The last two questions concentrated more on current issues: the Patient protection and Affordable Care Act and Obama's presidential job in general. The health care reform is still in the beginning and it is an actual problem which is being discussed every day in the USA. 57.1% of respondents approved of it and the high percentage of its opponents shows us how difficult is the position that this reform has nowadays. Nearly 43% of the questioned people disagreed with the ObamaCare. To be more concrete, it was 24 men and 15 women. Even though women gained better health care and lots of new benefits, they voted against the ObamaCare. It could also be caused by the introduction of new costs for example for smokers, which could be the reason why men also disapproved of it.

Do you generally approve or disapprove of Barack Obama's job in the presidential office?



The last question summarizes all questions concerning Obama's presidency. In general, people valued Obama's presidency positively. An affirmative reaction was expressed by 61.5% of respondents and among them, there were 56 women and only 24 men. From the survey, it stems that women approve of the President's job more than men. On the other hand, men have to be really dissatisfied with his job because 27 of them expressed their disagreement in the questionnaire.

In all questions, Barack Obama's presidency obtained a positive reaction to his job in the presidential office. But very often, the difference between the percentages of gained votes was really thin and usually it was almost fifty-fifty. Obama's job in the office is not evaluated as very successful and nearly a half of the people are dissatisfied with his work. His position is no longer strong as it was at the beginning of the first presidential period. Nowadays, people perceive his job more negatively and Obama is losing their favour.

8 CONCLUSION

The goal of the thesis was to introduce the main events which have occurred during Barack Obama's presidency and to characterize Obama's role in these issues. Another aim was to compare three different presidential offices from the point of view of their powers, their positions and also the restrictions which limit them. The topic of this work is current and so there are not many print sources which could be used or sources which could provide a sufficient amount of information about these themes. At the beginning, it seemed that I would not have enough credible sources, but as the time went I found many of them.

The last part of the thesis is a questionnaire which contains tasks on the Obama's presidency and the direct presidential election. The questionnaire was sent via the internet pages and forums and it was filled in by 91 respondents from at least 30 different countries. The answers show that the majority of people are satisfied with the direct presidential election. They are involved in the selection of their president and in some of the countries they have the right to directly decide the most important issues related to the direction of their country.

The answers show that people's enthusiasm for Obama declined deeply not only in the USA but also in other states. A big part of the people who voted for him in the first presidential election changed their minds and voted against him in the second presidential election or did not vote generally. Obama's position is valued positively, but his popularity is decreasing. The issues concerning the foreign affairs such as the Iraq war and Osama bin Laden's capture are evaluated positively by a significant group of people but still it is not the vast majority of them. In the same manner, respondents perceive the Health Care Reform which is related to the domestic policy and Obama's job in general. His steps have not persuaded the people about his suitability for such an important function as the president's office is.

This thesis could be useful and helpful for a lot of people who are interested in Barack Obama, his life and presidency and also for those who are interested in political issues, especially in presidents and their offices. People

who want to obtain an objective point of view on Obama's presidency will find this thesis an ideal voluminous guidebook.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

9.1 Print Sources

An outline of American government. The United States of America: United States Information Agency, 1990.

Ballet, Marion, and Olivier Duhamel. *Les élections présidentielles.* Paris: Dalloz, 2011.

Barack Obama: 44th President of the United States. The United States of America: United States of State, 2009.

Bodansky, Yossef. *Bin Ládín: muž, který vyhlásil válku Americe.* Translated by Tereza Horáková, Zdeněk Fučík and Hana Ondráčková. Červený Kostelec: Pavel Mervart, 2002.

Bowden, Mark. *Poslední akce: zabití Usámy bin Ládina.* Translated by Jan Machula. Brno: CPress, 2013.

Brož, Ivan. *Encyklopedie amerických prezidentů.* Prague: XYZ, 2012.

Gerloch, Aleš, and Jiří Hřebejk. *Ústavní systém České republiky.* Praha: Prospektrum, 1996.

Keegan, John. *Válka v Iráku.* Translated by Lubomír Kotačka. Praha: Beta-Dobrovský, 2006.

Krejčí, Oskar. *Zahraniční politika USA: ideje, doktríny, strategie.* Praha: Professional Publishing, 2009.

McLean, Iain, and Alistair McMillan. *The concise Oxford dictionary of politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Mišúr, Peter, and Zdeněk Svoboda. *Instituce státní moci v ČR: úplný přehled s internetovými odkazy.* Praha: Linde, 2007.

Nik Hynek, Jan Eichler and Lubomír Majerník. *Konflikt a obnova v Afghánistánu: kontext, prostředí a zájmy.* Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2012.

- Pohly, Michael, and Chálid Durán. *Usáma bin Ládín a mezinárodní terorismus*. Translated by Jiří Strážnický and Blanka Uhlířová. Brno: Nakladatelsví Jota, s.r.o., 2001.
- Robertson, David. *The penguin dictionary of politics*. London: Penguin Books, 1986.
- Rollason, Jane. *Barack Obama: the story of one man's journey to the White House*. London: Scholastic, 2010.
- Thomas, Garen. *Dokážeme to*. Translated by Tomáš Novotný. Pardubice: Mayday, 2008.
- Vodička, Karel, and Ladislav Cabada. *Politický systém České republiky: historie a současnost*. Praha: Portál, 2011.
- Wilson, James Q. *Jak se vládne v USA*. Praha: Victoria Publishing, 1995.
- Wilson, John K. *Barack Obama: pokus o nemožné*. Brno: Computer Press, 2008.
- World Book of America's Presidents*. Chicago: World Book - Scott Fetzer comp., 1988.

9.2 Internet Sources

Sources listed by title (no author given)

- “2012 Presidential Election Results.” *The Washington Post*. Accessed February 5th, 2014.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/election-map-2012/president/>.
- “A short history of the Affordable Care Act - Obamacare drama.”
Affordablehealthca.com. Accessed March 9th, 2014.
<http://affordablehealthca.com/history-affordable-care-act/>.
- “Barack Obama on War&Peace.” *Ontheissues.org*. Accessed February 1st, 2014.
http://www.ontheissues.org/celeb/barack_obama_war_+_peace.htm.

- “Barack Obama.” *Wikipedia.org*. Last modified March 23rd, 2014. Accessed March 9th, 2014.
http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama#Obamova_zdravotnick.C3.A1_reforma.
- “Bin Laden's death: How it happened.” *BBC News*. Published September 10th, 2012. Accessed March 2nd, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-13257330>.
- “Concern Over Use of White Phosphorus in U.S. - Taliban Battle.” *Fox News.com*. Published May 10th, 2009. Accessed February 4th, 2014. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2009/05/10/concern-over-use-white-phosphorus-in-us-taliban-battle/>.
- “Debakl, omlouvají se USA kvůli "Obamacare".” *iDNES.cz*. Published November 8th, 2013. Accessed March 13th, 2014.
http://zpravy.idnes.cz/obama-se-omluvil-za-problemy-s-reformou-zdravotnictvi-p14-/zahranicni.aspx?c=A131108_074910_zahranicni_tp.
- “Election Dates.” *Uselectionatlas.org*. Accessed February 5th, 2014.
<http://uselectionatlas.org/INFORMATION/INFORMATION/dates.php>.
- “French Presidential Election.” *NewsLab*. Accessed March 22nd, 2014.
<http://www.newslab.cz/en/french-presidential-election/>.
- “Glossary.” *Presidential Power*. Accessed March 25th, 2014. http://presidential-power.com/?page_id=16.
- “How Will ObamaCare Affect Me?.” *Obamacarefacts.com*. Accessed March 9th, 2014. <http://obamacarefacts.com/how-will-obamacare-affect-me.php>.
- “Interactive Obamacare Timeline.” *NRCC.org*. Accessed March 9th, 2014.
<http://www.nrcc.org/default/sites/landingpages/timeline/index.html>.
- “Iraq War.” *Wikipedia.org*. Last modified April 13th, 2014. Accessed February 1st, 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_war.
- “Lawmakers Renew Socialism, 'Let People Die' Charge.” *Huffingtonpost.com*. Published March 27th, 2012. Last modified March 20th, 2014. Accessed March 31st, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/27/obamacare-socialism-louie-gohmert-steve-king_n_1383973.html.

“No release of Bin Laden photos.” *BBC News*. Published May 5th, 2011. Accessed March 2nd, 2014.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-13287977>.

“Obama inquired about use of white phosphorus by US military in 2005.” *Current Events Inquiry*. Published September 17th, 2010. Accessed February 4th, 2014.

<http://ceinquiry.wordpress.com/2010/09/17/obama-white-phosphorus/>.

“Obama’s Visit Comes Amid Improving Views on Iraq War.” *Gallup.com*. Published April 7th, 2009. Accessed February 26th, 2014.

<http://www.gallup.com/video/117352/Obama-Visit-Comes-Amid-Improving-Views-Iraq-War.aspx>.

“Obamacare Bill: Obama Health Care Bill.” *Obamacarefacts.com*. Accessed March 9th, 2014. <http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacarebill.php>.

“ObamaCare Facts: Affordable Care Act, Health Insurance Marketplace.” *Obamacarefacts.com*. Accessed March 9th, 2014.

<http://obamacarefacts.com/>.

“ObamaCare Facts: Facts on the Affordable Care Act.” *Obamacarefacts.com*. Accessed March 9th, 2014.

<http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-facts.php>.

“ObamaCare Myths: Myths About the Affordable Care Act.”

Obamacarefacts.com. Accessed March 9th, 2014.

<http://obamacarefacts.com/>.

“ObamaCare: Pros and Cons of ObamaCare.” *Obamacarefacts.com*. Accessed March 9th, 2014.

<http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-pros-and-cons.php>.

“On 10th Anniversary, 53% in U.S. See Iraq War as Mistake.” *Gallup.com*. Published March 18th, 2013. Accessed February 26th, 2014.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/161399/10th-anniversary-iraq-war-mistake.aspx>.

“Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.” *Wikipedia.org*. Last modified April 11th, 2014. Accessed March 9th, 2014.

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patient_Protection_and_Affordable_Care_Act
- “Presidential powers - Prague Castle.” *Hrad.cz*. Accessed March 21st, 2014.
<https://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/presidential-powers.shtml>.
- “Progress towards the Empire--Meeting of the Senate-The President's Declamation--General News.” *Query.nytimes.com*. Accessed March 22nd, 2014.
<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F20E17FF3F5C167493C7A9178AD95F468584F9>.
- “Q&A: Bin Laden.” *BBC News*. Published May 5th, 2011. Accessed March 2nd, 2014. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13269925>.
- “Remarks by the President on Ending the War in Iraq.” *Whitehouse.gov*. Published October 21st, 2011. Accessed February 4th, 2014.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/10/21/remarks-president-ending-war-iraq>.
- “Semi-presidential system - Conservapedia.” *Conservapedia.com*. Last modified September 23rd, 2011. Accessed March 25th, 2014.
http://www.conservapedia.com/Semi-presidential_system.
- “The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) Glossary - Terms, Definitions | Health Law Facts - AARP.” *AARP.org*. Accessed March 11th, 2014.
<http://www.aarp.org/health/affordable-care-act/glossary/>.
- “Three in Four Americans Back Obama on Iraq Withdrawal.” *Gallup.com*. Published November 2nd, 2011. Accessed February 26th, 2014.
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/150497/Three-Four-Americans-Back-Obama-Iraq-Withdrawal.aspx>.
- “Timeline: US troops in Iraq.” *BBC News*. Last modified December 14th, 2011. Accessed February 3rd, 2014.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-16183966>.
- “Válka v Iráku.” *Wikipedia.org*. Last modified April 4th, 2014. Accessed February 1st, 2014. http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Válka_v_Iráku.
- “What in the world?.” *BBC News*. Published February 5th, 2014. Last modified February 5th, 2014. Accessed March 13th, 2014.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-echochambers-26058891>.

“What is ObamaCare / What is Health Care Reform?.” *Obamacarefacts.com*. Accessed March 9th, 2014.

<http://obamacarefacts.com/whatis-obamacare.php>.

“White phosphorus - JMCC.org.” *Jmcc.org*. Last modified April 26th, 2009. Accessed February 4th, 2014.

<http://www.jmcc.org/fastfactspag.aspx?tname=71>.

Sources listed by author

Al Aswany, Alaa. “Log In - The New York Times.” *Nytimes.com*.

Published February 7th, 2009. Accessed February 4th, 2014.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/08/opinion/08aswany.html?ref=whitephosphorus&_r=1&.

Cull, Bob. “Millionaire Republican Senator Says Obamacare is Socialist, Would Have Killed Him.” *AATTP.org*. Published October 21st, 2013. Accessed March 31st, 2014.

<https://aattp.org/millionaire-republican-senator-says-obamacare-is-socialist-would-have-killed-him/>.

Dugan, Andrew. “Americans' Familiarity With Healthcare Law Unchanged.” *Gallup.com*. Published February 6th, 2014. Accessed March 13th, 2014.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/167351/americans-familiarity-healthcare-law-unchanged.aspx>.

Dugan, Andrew. “Majority of Americans Still Disapprove of Healthcare Law.” *Gallup.com*. Published February 4th, 2014. Accessed March 9th, 2014.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/167309/majority-americans-disapprove-healthcare-law.aspx>.

Dugan, Andrew. “Majority of Americans Still Disapprove of Healthcare Law.” *Gallup.com*. Published February 4th, 2014. Accessed March 13th, 2014.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/167309/majority-americans-disapprove-healthcare-law.aspx>.

- Hodge, Nathan. "U.S. Fighting Off White Phosphorus Allegations, Again (Updated)." *Wired.com*. Published November 5th, 2009. Accessed February 4th, 2014.
<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/05/halt-to-afghan-airstrikes-not-too-likely-says-obama-advisor/>.
- Jones, Jeffrey M. "Obama Averages 45.8% Job Approval in Year Five." *Gallup.com*. Published January 21st, 2014. Accessed March 13th, 2014.
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/166964/obama-averages-job-approval-year-five.aspx>.
- Jones, Jeffrey M. "Obama Still Fares Better on Foreign Than on Domestic Issues." *Gallup.com*. Published April 1st, 2011. Accessed March 9th, 2014.
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/146930/Obama-Fares-Better-Foreign-Domestic-Issues.aspx>.
- Jones, Jeffrey M. "U.S. Uninsured Still Rate Exchange Experience Negatively." *Gallup.com*. Published January 2nd, 2014. Accessed March 13th, 2014.
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/166712/uninsured-rate-exchange-experience-negatively.aspx>.
- Jones, Jeffrey M. "On the Issues, Obama Finds Majority Approval Elusive." *Gallup.com*. Published August 11th, 2010. Accessed February 26th, 2014.
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/141836/Issues-Obama-Finds-Majority-Approval-Elusive.aspx>.
- Levy, Jenna. "In U.S., Uninsured Rate Shows Initial Decline in 2014." *Gallup.com*. Published January 23rd, 2014. Accessed March 13th, 2014.
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/166982/uninsured-rate-shows-initial-decline-2014.aspx>.
- Lewis, Paul, and Dan Roberts. "US government shutdown to end after Congress passes debt ceiling deal." *The Guardian*. Published October 16th, 2013. Accessed March 11th, 2014.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/16/senate-leaders-strike-debt-ceiling-deal-shutdown>.

Phillips, Macon. "Osama Bin Laden Dead|The White House." *Whitehouse.gov*.
Published May 2nd, 2011. Accessed March 2nd, 2014.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-dead>.

Sheppard, Noel. "Time's Mark Halperin: Death Panels Are 'Built Into' ObamaCare | NewsBusters." *Newsbusters.org*. Published November 26th, 2013. Accessed March 31st, 2014.

<http://newsbusters.org/blogs/noel-sheppard/2013/11/26/time-s-mark-halperin-death-panels-are-built-obamacare>.

Volf, Tomáš. "Který americký prezident nejvíce přispěl k obrovskému dluhu? Nejrychleji rostl za Bushe." *Byznys.ihned.cz*. Published July 27th, 2011. Last modified September 2nd, 2011. Accessed March 9th, 2014.

<http://byznys.ihned.cz/c1-52409660-ktery-americky-prezident-nejvice-prispel-k-obrovskemu-dluhu-nejrychleji-rostl-za-bushe>.

Zahradník, Petr. "Americký shutdown a globální hospodářský růst."

Investujeme.cz. Published October 15th, 2013. Accessed March 11th, 2014.

<http://www.investujeme.cz/americky-shutdown-a-globalni-hospodarsky-rust/>.

9.3 Appendices Sources

"File: Forms of government.svg - Wikimedia Commons."

Commons.wikimedia.org. Last modified March 18th, 2014. Accessed March 25th, 2014.

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Forms_of_government.svg?uselang=en.

I.imgur.com. Accessed March 25th, 2014. <http://i.imgur.com/liLgEQT.png>.

"May 1, 2011 | The White House." *Whitehouse.gov*.

Accessed March 20th, 2014.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/photogallery/may-1-2011>.

Parentsofbarackobama.co.uk. Accessed March 25th, 2014.

http://www.parentsofbarackobama.co.uk/barackobama/amd_obama-dad.jpg.

Phillips, Macon. "Osama Bin Laden Dead|The White House." *Whitehouse.gov*.

Published May 2nd, 2011. Accessed March 2nd, 2014.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-dead>.

"Remarks by the President on Ending the War in Iraq." *Whitehouse.gov*.

Published October 21st, 2011. Accessed February 4th, 2014.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/10/21/remarks-president-ending-war-iraq>.

"Survey Barack Obama's presidency - MojeAnketa.cz." *Mojeanketa.cz*.

Published March 17th, 2014.

<http://www.mojeanketa.cz/pruzkum/225838092/>.

"The Urban Politico: Opting Out of ObamaCare's Medicaid Expansion: Protecting America's Freedom or Contempt for Obama?."

Theurbanpolitico.com. Published October 9th, 2013. Accessed March 20th, 2014.

<http://www.theurbanpolitico.com/2013/10/optiming-out-of-obamacares-medicaid.html>.

10 ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the presidency of Barack Obama and key issues in which he has been involved. The aim is to introduce these issues and events and explain which role Barack Obama played in them or how he dealt with them. The theoretical part describes briefly the life of Barack Obama until his election as the President of the United States, the Iraq war, the capture of Osama bin Laden and the Health Care Reform. It includes also a brief comparison of three different presidents in terms of their functions and powers. It addresses the President of the United States, the Czech President and the President of France. The practical part deals with the evaluation and the results of a questionnaire which included questions on Obama's presidency as well as the direct presidential election. In the conclusion, there is a summary of the obtained information and the results. The contribution of this work can be found in characteristic of individual events, extensive examination of Obama's role in these events, high-quality comparison of the presidents and also, ascertainment of public opinions on Barack Obama's presidency.

11 RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá působením Baracka Obamy ve funkci prezidenta a klíčovými záležitostmi, do kterých se během své vlády zapojil. Cílem práce je představit tyto záležitosti a události a vysvětlit, jakou roli při nich Barack Obama hrál a jak se s nimi vypořádal. Teoretická část stručně popisuje život Baracka Obamy až do jeho zvolení prezidentem Spojených států, válku v Iráku, dopadení Usámy bin Ládina a zdravotnickou reformu. Je zde také krátké porovnání tří rozdílných prezidentů z pohledu jejich funkce a pravomocí. Jedná se o prezidenta Spojených států amerických, prezidenta České republiky a prezidenta Francie. Praktická část se zabývá vyhodnocením a výsledky dotazníku, který obsahoval otázky týkající se jak Obamovy vlády, tak i přímé volby prezidenta. V závěru je uvedeno shrnutí zjištěných informací a výsledků. Přínos této práce lze nalézt v charakteristice jednotlivých událostí a v rozsáhlém zkoumání role, kterou v nich Barack Obama hrál, v kvalitním srovnání jednotlivých prezidentů a také ve zjištění, jak veřejnost vnímá Obamův výkon ve funkci prezidenta.

12 APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1: Photo of Obama's parents

12.2 Appendix 2: A letter sent by the then-Senator Barack Obama to the Department of Defense on December 1st, 2005

12.3 Appendix 3: Remarks by the President on ending the War in Iraq

12.4 Appendix 4: Photo made while watching the capture of Osama bin Laden

12.5 Appendix 5: Remarks by the President on Osama bin Laden's death

12.6 Appendix 6: The map of states which have already enacted health care reform and those which have rejected it

12.7 Appendix 7: Forms of government

12.8 Appendix 8: The questionnaire

12.1 Appendix 1

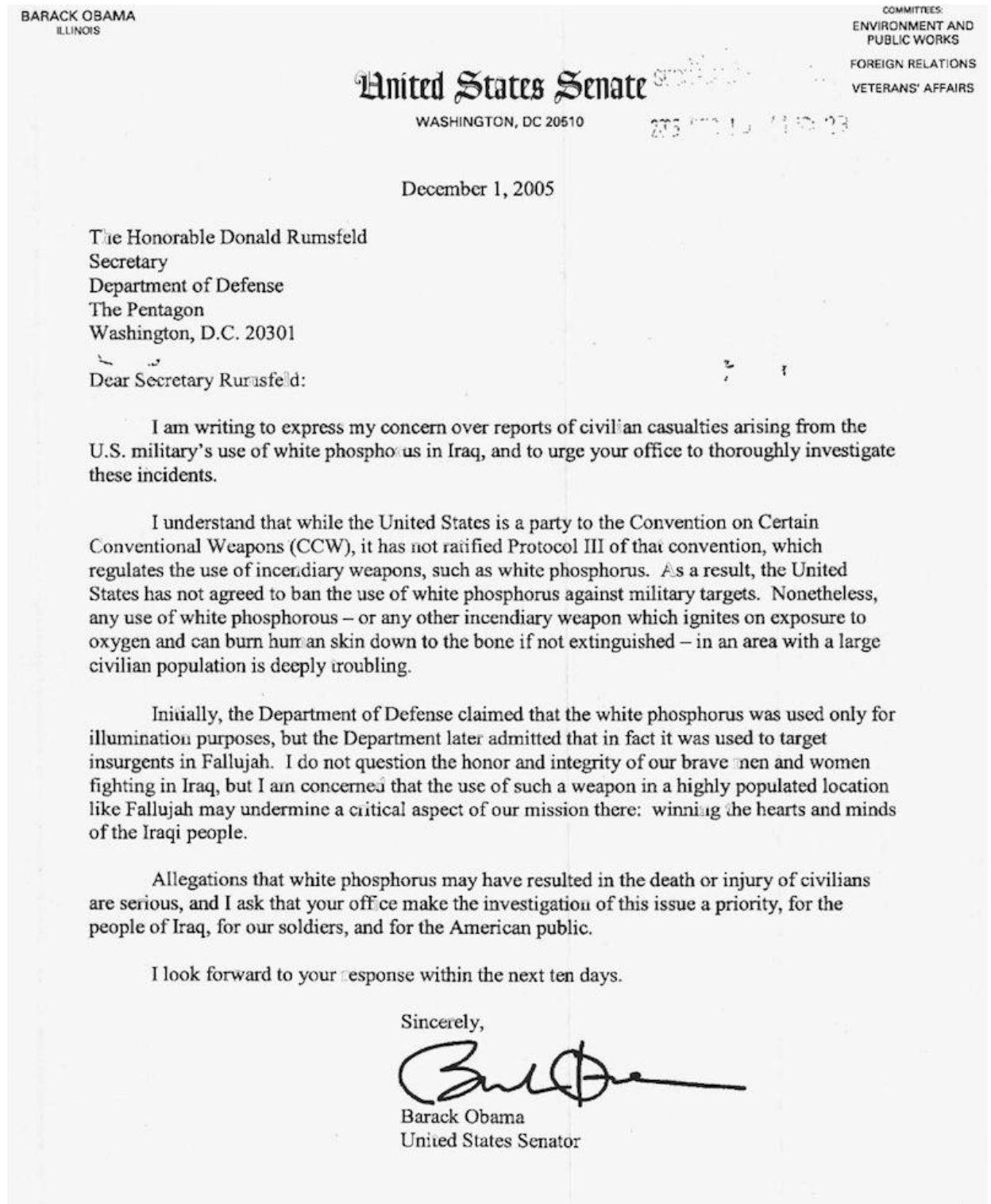
Photo of Obama's parents



Source: http://www.parentsofbarackobama.co.uk/barackobama/amd_obama-dad.jpg

12.2 Appendix 2

A letter sent by the then-Senator Barack Obama to the Department of Defense on December 1st, 2005



Source: <http://i.imgur.com/liLgEQT.png>

12.3 Appendix 3

Remarks by the President on ending the War in Iraq

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, everybody. As a candidate for President, I pledged to bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end -- for the sake of our national security and to strengthen American leadership around the world. After taking office, I announced a new strategy that would end our combat mission in Iraq and remove all of our troops by the end of 2011.

As Commander-in-Chief, ensuring the success of this strategy has been one of my highest national security priorities. Last year, I announced the end to our combat mission in Iraq. And to date, we've removed more than 100,000 troops. Iraqis have taken full responsibility for their country's security.

A few hours ago I spoke with Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki. I reaffirmed that the United States keeps its commitments. He spoke of the determination of the Iraqi people to forge their own future. We are in full agreement about how to move forward.

So today, I can report that, as promised, the rest of our troops in Iraq will come home by the end of the year. After nearly nine years, America's war in Iraq will be over.

Over the next two months, our troops in Iraq -- tens of thousands of them -- will pack up their gear and board convoys for the journey home. The last American soldier[s] will cross the border out of Iraq with their heads held high, proud of their success, and knowing that the American people stand united in our support for our troops. That is how America's military efforts in Iraq will end.

But even as we mark this important milestone, we're also moving into a new phase in the relationship between the United States and Iraq. As of January 1st, and in keeping with our Strategic Framework Agreement with Iraq, it will be a normal relationship between sovereign nations, an equal partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect.

In today's conversation, Prime Minister Maliki and I agreed that a meeting of the Higher Coordinating Committee of the Strategic Framework Agreement will convene in the coming weeks. And I invited the Prime Minister to come to the White House in December, as we plan for all the important work that we have to do together. This will be a strong and enduring partnership. With our diplomats and civilian advisors in the lead, we'll help Iraqis strengthen institutions that are just, representative and accountable. We'll build new ties of trade and of commerce, culture and education, that unleash the potential of the Iraqi people. We'll partner with an Iraq that contributes to regional security and peace, just as we insist that other nations respect Iraq's sovereignty.

As I told Prime Minister Maliki, we will continue discussions on how we might help Iraq train and equip its forces -- again, just as we offer training and assistance to countries around the world. After all, there will be some difficult

days ahead for Iraq, and the United States will continue to have an interest in an Iraq that is stable, secure and self-reliant. Just as Iraqis have persevered through war, I'm confident that they can build a future worthy of their history as a cradle of civilization.

Here at home, the coming months will be another season of homecomings. Across America, our servicemen and women will be reunited with their families. Today, I can say that our troops in Iraq will definitely be home for the holidays.

This December will be a time to reflect on all that we've been through in this war. I'll join the American people in paying tribute to the more than 1 million Americans who have served in Iraq. We'll honor our many wounded warriors and the nearly 4,500 American patriots -- and their Iraqi and coalition partners -- who gave their lives to this effort.

And finally, I would note that the end of war in Iraq reflects a larger transition. The tide of war is receding. The drawdown in Iraq allowed us to refocus our fight against al Qaeda and achieve major victories against its leadership -- including Osama bin Laden. Now, even as we remove our last troops from Iraq, we're beginning to bring our troops home from Afghanistan, where we've begun a transition to Afghan security and leadership. When I took office, roughly 180,000 troops were deployed in both these wars. And by the end of this year that number will be cut in half, and make no mistake: It will continue to go down.

Meanwhile, yesterday marked the definitive end of the Qaddafi regime in Libya. And there, too, our military played a critical role in shaping a situation on the ground in which the Libyan people can build their own future. Today, NATO is working to bring this successful mission to a close.

So to sum up, the United States is moving forward from a position of strength. The long war in Iraq will come to an end by the end of this year. The transition in Afghanistan is moving forward, and our troops are finally coming home. As they do, fewer deployments and more time training will help keep our military the very best in the world. And as we welcome home our newest veterans, we'll never stop working to give them and their families the care, the benefits and the opportunities that they have earned.

This includes enlisting our veterans in the greatest challenge that we now face as a nation -- creating opportunity and jobs in this country. Because after a decade of war, the nation that we need to build -- and the nation that we will build -- is our own; an America that sees its economic strength restored just as we've restored our leadership around the globe.

Thank you very much.

Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/10/21/remarks-president-ending-war-iraq>

12.4 Appendix 4

Photo made while watching the capture of Osama bin Laden



© The White House

Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/photogallery/may-1-2011>

12.5 Appendix 5

Remarks by the President on Osama bin Laden's death

THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. Tonight, I can report to the American people and to the world that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda, and a terrorist who's responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women, and children.

It was nearly 10 years ago that a bright September day was darkened by the worst attack on the American people in our history. The images of 9/11 are seared into our national memory -- hijacked planes cutting through a cloudless September sky; the Twin Towers collapsing to the ground; black smoke billowing up from the Pentagon; the wreckage of Flight 93 in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where the actions of heroic citizens saved even more heartbreak and destruction.

And yet we know that the worst images are those that were unseen to the world. The empty seat at the dinner table. Children who were forced to grow up without their mother or their father. Parents who would never know the feeling of their child's embrace. Nearly 3,000 citizens taken from us, leaving a gaping hole in our hearts.

On September 11, 2001, in our time of grief, the American people came together. We offered our neighbors a hand, and we offered the wounded our blood. We reaffirmed our ties to each other, and our love of community and country. On that day, no matter where we came from, what God we prayed to, or what race or ethnicity we were, we were united as one American family.

We were also united in our resolve to protect our nation and to bring those who committed this vicious attack to justice. We quickly learned that the 9/11 attacks were carried out by al Qaeda -- an organization headed by Osama bin Laden, which had openly declared war on the United States and was committed to killing innocents in our country and around the globe. And so we went to war against al Qaeda to protect our citizens, our friends, and our allies.

Over the last 10 years, thanks to the tireless and heroic work of our military and our counterterrorism professionals, we've made great strides in that effort. We've disrupted terrorist attacks and strengthened our homeland defense. In Afghanistan, we removed the Taliban government, which had given bin Laden and al Qaeda safe haven and support. And around the globe, we worked with our friends and allies to capture or kill scores of al Qaeda terrorists, including several who were a part of the 9/11 plot.

Yet Osama bin Laden avoided capture and escaped across the Afghan border into Pakistan. Meanwhile, al Qaeda continued to operate from along that border and operate through its affiliates across the world.

And so shortly after taking office, I directed Leon Panetta, the director of the CIA, to make the killing or capture of bin Laden the top priority of our war

against al Qaeda, even as we continued our broader efforts to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat his network.

Then, last August, after years of painstaking work by our intelligence community, I was briefed on a possible lead to bin Laden. It was far from certain, and it took many months to run this thread to ground. I met repeatedly with my national security team as we developed more information about the possibility that we had located bin Laden hiding within a compound deep inside of Pakistan. And finally, last week, I determined that we had enough intelligence to take action, and authorized an operation to get Osama bin Laden and bring him to justice.

Today, at my direction, the United States launched a targeted operation against that compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. A small team of Americans carried out the operation with extraordinary courage and capability. No Americans were harmed. They took care to avoid civilian casualties. After a firefight, they killed Osama bin Laden and took custody of his body.

For over two decades, bin Laden has been al Qaeda's leader and symbol, and has continued to plot attacks against our country and our friends and allies. The death of bin Laden marks the most significant achievement to date in our nation's effort to defeat al Qaeda.

Yet his death does not mark the end of our effort. There's no doubt that al Qaeda will continue to pursue attacks against us. We must - and we will -- remain vigilant at home and abroad.

As we do, we must also reaffirm that the United States is not – and never will be -- at war with Islam. I've made clear, just as President Bush did shortly after 9/11, that our war is not against Islam. Bin Laden was not a Muslim leader; he was a mass murderer of Muslims. Indeed, al Qaeda has slaughtered scores of Muslims in many countries, including our own. So his demise should be welcomed by all who believe in peace and human dignity.

Over the years, I've repeatedly made clear that we would take action within Pakistan if we knew where bin Laden was. That is what we've done. But it's important to note that our counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan helped lead us to bin Laden and the compound where he was hiding. Indeed, bin Laden had declared war against Pakistan as well, and ordered attacks against the Pakistani people.

Tonight, I called President Zardari, and my team has also spoken with their Pakistani counterparts. They agree that this is a good and historic day for both of our nations. And going forward, it is essential that Pakistan continue to join us in the fight against al Qaeda and its affiliates.

The American people did not choose this fight. It came to our shores, and started with the senseless slaughter of our citizens. After nearly 10 years of service, struggle, and sacrifice, we know well the costs of war. These efforts weigh on me every time I, as Commander-in-Chief, have to sign a letter to a

family that has lost a loved one, or look into the eyes of a service member who's been gravely wounded.

So Americans understand the costs of war. Yet as a country, we will never tolerate our security being threatened, nor stand idly by when our people have been killed. We will be relentless in defense of our citizens and our friends and allies. We will be true to the values that make us who we are. And on nights like this one, we can say to those families who have lost loved ones to al Qaeda's terror: Justice has been done.

Tonight, we give thanks to the countless intelligence and counterterrorism professionals who've worked tirelessly to achieve this outcome. The American people do not see their work, nor know their names. But tonight, they feel the satisfaction of their work and the result of their pursuit of justice.

We give thanks for the men who carried out this operation, for they exemplify the professionalism, patriotism, and unparalleled courage of those who serve our country. And they are part of a generation that has borne the heaviest share of the burden since that September day.

Finally, let me say to the families who lost loved ones on 9/11 that we have never forgotten your loss, nor wavered in our commitment to see that we do whatever it takes to prevent another attack on our shores.

And tonight, let us think back to the sense of unity that prevailed on 9/11. I know that it has, at times, frayed. Yet today's achievement is a testament to the greatness of our country and the determination of the American people.

The cause of securing our country is not complete. But tonight, we are once again reminded that America can do whatever we set our mind to. That is the story of our history, whether it's the pursuit of prosperity for our people, or the struggle for equality for all our citizens; our commitment to stand up for our values abroad, and our sacrifices to make the world a safer place.

Let us remember that we can do these things not just because of wealth or power, but because of who we are: one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Thank you. May God bless you. And may God bless the United States of America.

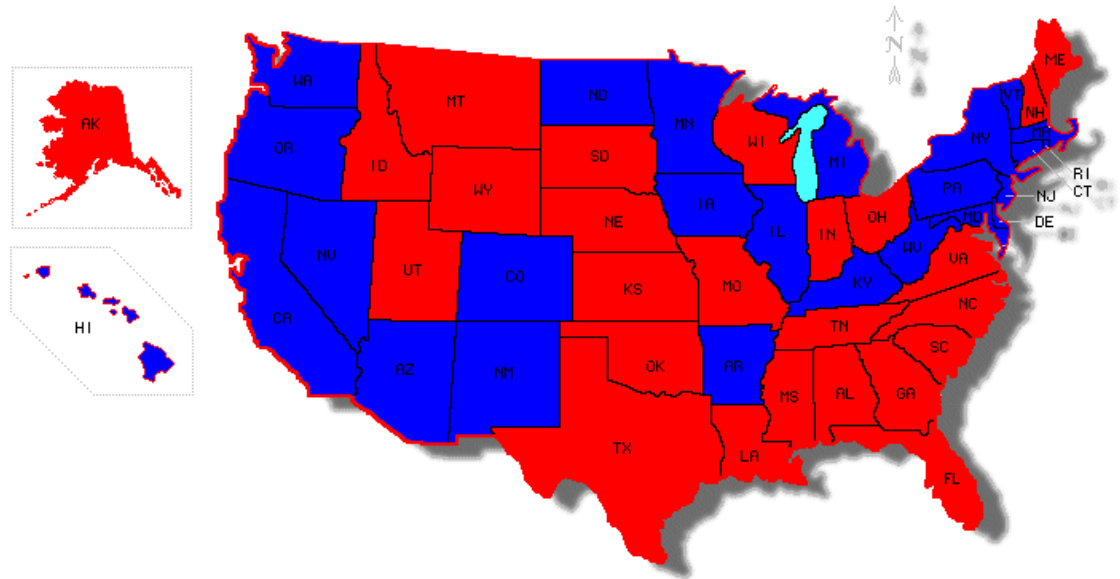
Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-dead>

12.6 Appendix 6

The map of states which have already enacted healthcare reform and those which have rejected it

Medicaid Expansion Under ObamaCare (Oct 2013)

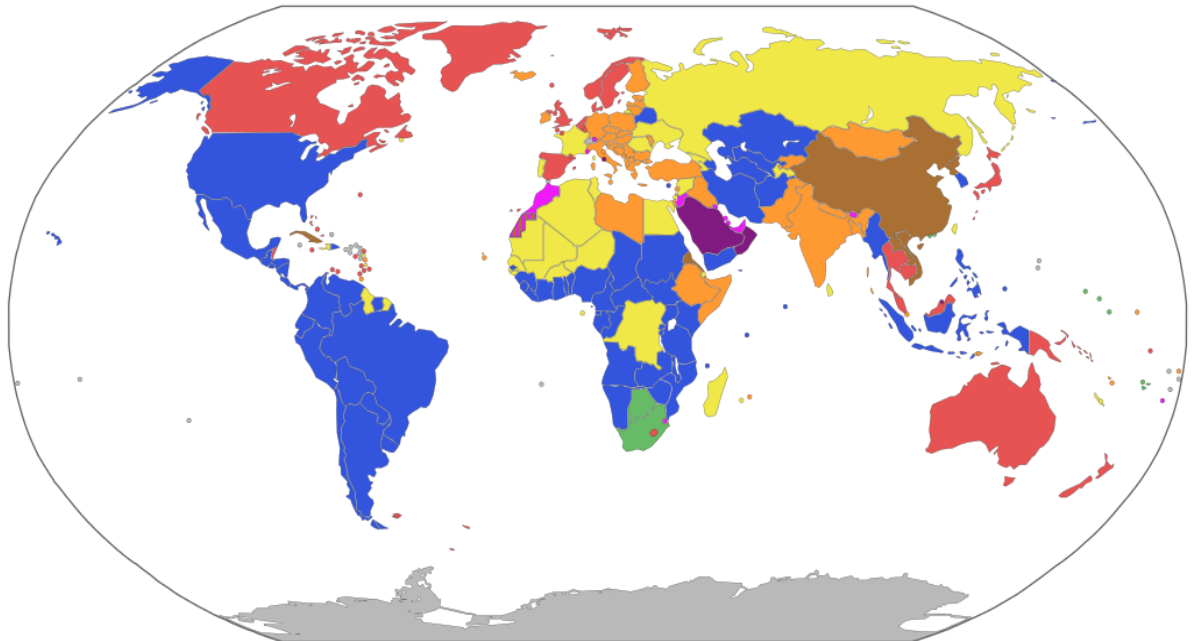
- - STATES OPTING IN
- - STATES OPTING OUT



Source: <http://www.theurbanpolitico.com/2013/10/opting-out-of-obamacares-medicaid.html>

12.7 Appendix 7

Forms of government



- Presidential republics
- Republics with an executive president dependent on a parliament
- Semi-presidential republics
- Parliamentary republics
- Parliamentary constitutional monarchies in which the monarch does not personally exercise power
- Dual system constitutional monarchies in which the monarch personally exercises power (often alongside a weak parliament)
- Absolute monarchies
- Single-party republics
- Countries in which constitutional provisions for government have been suspended
- Countries which do not fit any of the above systems

Source:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Forms_of_government.svg?uselang=en

12.8 Appendix 8

The questionnaire

1. **Do you generally approve or disapprove of the direct election of the U.S. President (or the direct presidential election in general)?**

Approve

Disapprove

2. **Did you vote for Barack Obama in the first presidential election?**

Yes

No

Did not participate

3. **Did you vote for Barack Obama in the second presidential election?**

Yes

No

Did not participate

4. **Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama dealt with the Iraq War?**

Approve

Disapprove

5. **Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama captured Osama bin Laden?**

Approve

Disapprove

6. **Do you generally approve or disapprove of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act?**

Approve

Disapprove

7. **Do you generally approve or disapprove of Barack Obama's job in the presidential office?**

Approve

Disapprove

Source: <http://www.mojeanketa.cz/pruzkum/225838092/>