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Valerie M. Hudson, Patricia Leidl. *The Hillary Doctrine: Sex and American Foreign Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. xix + 430 pp. \$29.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-16492-4.

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Commissioned by Seth Offenbach

In September of 1995, Hillary Clinton delivered what would become one of her signature speeches on women's rights before the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. Partisan critics at home criticized the first lady for attending the conference because of China's well-known human rights abuses. Other critics, domestic and international, condemned Clinton for taking on such human rights threats so forcefully. As an unelected first lady, they warned, she could worsen diplomatic tensions between the United States and China with her outspokenness. In spite of such opposition, Hillary Clinton would go to China and she would issue a forceful condemnation of the host country's human rights violations. And in that pivotal speech, Clinton delivered what became one of the most well-known phrases of her political career: "women's rights are human rights."^[1]

It seems appropriate that we take stock of Clinton's legacy to women's rights on the twentieth anniversary of her Beijing speech. Valerie M. Hudson and Patricia Leidl have done just that in their recently published book, *The Hillary Doctrine: Sex and American Foreign Policy*, published by Columbia University Press in 2015. The authors' central mission is to define the Hillary Doctrine on women's rights and to assess the doctrine's force in national security domestically and internationally. They are particularly focused on Clinton's tenure as secretary of state and in the two years since she left that post. In part, the authors of *The Hillary Doctrine* offer a hopeful vision based on Clinton's enhanced commitment to the rights of women. Yet, the authors also worry that the doctrine's mission will move farther down the US foreign policy agenda as the country and the world face what

have historically been viewed as more "hard" national security affairs" involving "war and peace" (p. 21).

Hudson and Leidl proceed through their analysis by discussing the historical evolution of the Hillary Doctrine in part 1. In part 2 they conceptualize the theories of the doctrine and apply it to the case studies of Guatemala and Saudi Arabia. In part 3 they discuss the doctrine as a policy and assess its implementation. In this part, they turn to "history, fieldwork, and policy analysis" as their primary methods of analysis (p. xiv).

What has become the Hillary Doctrine is associated with one of Clinton's stock assumptions on women and foreign policy: "the subjugation of women is a threat to the national security of the United States."^[2] Hudson and Leidl trace the doctrine's roots to the Bill Clinton administration where both the president and the first lady forged new ground in recognizing that women possess "rights deserving of protection" (p. 20). Women's rights were further advanced, the authors claim, with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 from October of 2000, which instituted the idea that "women" represented "important agents of security and peace" rather than "passive recipients of aid or justice" (p. 20). And the authors ultimately trace the doctrine through Hillary Clinton's formative years as secretary of state, ending with an assessment of the Barack Obama administration's commitment to the doctrine in both its first and second terms.

Early on, Hudson and Leidl claim that their book is about the Hillary Doctrine and "not ... about Hillary Clinton herself" (p. xiv). Their claim seems to ring hollow in parts of the book as they associate Clinton with its

development and assess her implementation of it as secretary of state. Yet, in other parts of the book, the authors' claim rings true, particularly as they attend to the doctrine's execution in Guatemala and Saudi Arabia, and to the Obama administration's commitment to the doctrine even after Clinton stepped out of her role as secretary of state. The authors are outspoken advocates of the Hillary Doctrine as "a fundament of Realpolitik" (p. 324). This doctrine is necessary, they argue, to eliminate "violence against women" and to spur the removal "of barriers to developing their strength, creativity, and voice" (p. 324). Although the authors praise Hillary Clinton as "the world's most influential and eloquent exponent" of the doctrine (p. xiii), they also critique Secretary Clinton and the Obama administration for not always staying true to the doctrine's principles. They complain, for example, that the administration pursued "quiet diplomacy" instead of the Hillary Doctrine in US relations with Saudi Arabia and China (p. 169).

The strengths of *The Hillary Doctrine* are vast as the authors ground the doctrine in history, survey the policies that promote it, grapple with thorny international crises where women's rights are suppressed, and assess the doctrine's future force in global politics. As with most

books, however, there are potential limitations. In assessing the doctrine's implementation in chapter 5, for instance, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Implementing the Hillary Doctrine," the authors turn more to anecdotal evidence that may underwhelm readers expecting a more robust empirical assessment of the doctrine's impact. The authors also at times dabble in theories that lack sufficient contextualization and application (e.g., the "just war theory"), which detracts from more than enhances their analysis (p. 302). And the authors needed to take greater care with historical details, for example, when suggesting that Laura Bush's "radio address" was "unprecedented for a first lady" (p. 37). (First ladies Lou Hoover and Eleanor Roosevelt both delivered speeches on radio.)

In spite of these issues, Hudson and Leidl's book is a must-read for scholars and students interested in the relationship between women's rights, human rights, and national security. And if we take the authors' premise seriously that women's rights are fundamental to human rights, then this book should be a must-read for *any* scholar or student interested in foreign policy. A commitment to this principle is necessary for Hillary Clinton's doctrine to live on.

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