CHAPTER THREE
UNITED STATES’ POLICY OF INTERVENTION

Introduction:
American foreign policy has always included contradictory attitudes and practices with respect to intervention. Early US policy developed into the full-blown 'Monroe Doctrine' of 1823 around the notion that the New World ought to be free from intervention from the Old. In order to discourage European intervention in the Western Hemisphere, however, the United States asserted the right to intervene in the affairs of Latin American countries in a fashion that expanded significantly throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, in American foreign policy, as in that of most states, there emerged a basic ambivalence about intervention in the affairs of other states. Where as the principle of non-intervention tended to be asserted more prominently, the principle of justified intervention as a right, and even a duty, was also to be found in American foreign policy from an early date. Today we still find this ambivalence in the international system, within all blocs and groupings of states. Non-intervention is the rule, but it is frequently claimed, my state or my side ought to be allowed to make exceptions to the rule in the form of permissible or justified interventions.

The United States very early assumed the right of hegemonial intervention in the Western Hemisphere, its claims limited mainly by the modest dimensions of American power before the twentieth century. Typically, in the fashion of great powers, the United States in this century expanded its
definition of areas of vital interest to include most parts of the world, and, accordingly, has been tempted to intervene in the affairs of states far from the shores of the Western Hemisphere.

Since the Second World War, however, the term 'Communist' has been used to justify US intervention against a variety of regimes with widely differing ideologies and relationships with the Soviet Union, including Arevalo's Guatemala, Mossadeq's Iran, Goulart's Brazil, Sukarno's Indonesia, Caamano's Dominican revolutionary junta, as well as insurgent movements in Latin America, Africa, and South-East Asia.

Indeed, from the 'Truman Doctrine' on, the suppression of insurgent movements has remained a principal goal of US foreign policy. It has been the prime target of the US foreign-assistance program, most of the funds for which have gone for civic-action teams, pacificatin programs, support for local police, and, above all, military aid to the local army 1.

In other words, US policy is to support governments that promise to revolutionize their societies from above, although, as the continued support of military dictators and reactionary regimes demonstrates, this is scarcely a requirement. US officials, some as advisers to local police, others as Green Berets attached to local armies, assisted governments to put down insurgent movements in Guatemala, Thailand, and elsewhere in

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Latin America and Africa.

Counter-insurgency continues to be the major preoccupation of US military planners. Consequently, during the postwar period, on the average of once every eighteen months, US military forces or covert paramilitary forces have intervened in strength in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to prevent an insurgent group from seizing power or to subvert a revolutionary government.

In 1965 an American expeditionary force was sent to Vietnam and Marine divisions landed in the Dominican Republic to prevent insurgents from taking power. Such major commitments demanded a clearer articulation of US policy. "Revolution in any country is a matter for that country to deal with", President Johnson declared as he ordered the Marines to Santo Domingo. "It becomes a matter for hemispheric action only when the object is the establishment of communist dictatorship". The "Johnson doctrine" merely stated more explicitly and honestly an American policy that had in fact persisted since the end of the Second World War: the United States will oppose where it can or where it dares the establishment of new communist or communist-leaning governments, whether they come into being through foreign invasion, domestic revolution, or election.

3. In 1971 the United States, despite the Vietnam withdrawals, still had 803,901 soldiers in 110 countries, according to a Pentagon public affairs spokesman. As cited in Richard J. Barnet, op. cit., p.22.
Insurgent movements with radical programs, Marxist rhetoric, communist connections of any kind, or an anti-American bias are simply assumed to be the product of conspiracy by the ‘forces of international communism’.

Earlier, in March 1954 John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State, persuaded the Organization of American States (OAS) to pass a resolution declaring that “the domination or control of the political institutions of any American State by the International Communist movement, extending to the Hemisphere the political system of an extra continental power, would constitute a threat to the sovereignty and political independence of the American States.”

Communism is so blatantly an international and not an internal affair, its suppression, even by force, in an American country by one or of the other republics would not constitute an intervention in the internal affairs of the former.

The presence of a communist element---even the possibility of subsequent communist take over---justifies US intervention. As President Johnson put it at the time of the Dominican crisis, “The old distinction between civil war and international war has lost much of its meaning.”

Faced with the unprecedented phenomenon of revolutionary violence erupting in pockets scattered across three continents, US officials have attempted to squeeze it into a familiar framework with a set of ready explanations and old solutions. The framework is Great Power aggression, which, as the Second World War demonstrated, could be launched on a global scale and carried out by the subtle techniques of the Fifth Column. The tested remedy is the application of overwhelming military force. When it became clear that the costs of the counterinsurgency war in Vietnam exceeded all possible gain to the United States, the interventionist strategy was overhauled. The Johnson Doctrine was discreetely replaced by the "Nixon Doctrine".

The shock of the Vietnam War has compelled changes in interventionist strategy. The official lessons of this searing national experience are embodied in the "Nixon Doctrine" around which a new foreign policy consensus seems to be forming. The Nixon Doctrine proclaims the end of the era of indiscriminate American "world responsibility". The United States will 'lower its profile' by encouraging 'indigenous' troops to fight each other with American weapons or where possible by resorting to automated war through the technology of the 'electronic battlefield'. The goal is to preserve American positions in the world through more judicious management of military power without involving the American people in an interminable, ambiguous war in which large numbers of Americans continue to get killed week after week.
Intervention and US Practice:

The legal logic employed by the United States to support its use of intervention historically has been couched in the articulation of presidential doctrines. Accordingly, these dicta have significantly shaped the US legal attitude towards the permissibility of intervention.

The foundation of US interventionist policy in the Third World rests in the Monroe Doctrine and its Roosevelt Corollary. As initially stated by President James Monroe in his message to Congress of December 2, 1823, the Monroe Doctrine proclaimed that the American continents were no longer considered by the US government to be appropriate subject for future colonization by any European powers; that the countries of Europe must not seek to extend their political systems to Western Hemisphere; that the United States would not interfere in the affairs of any current European colony on dependency in the Western Hemisphere; that the United States would remain neutral in the war between Spain and newly independent governments of South America, but not to the point of permitting a reimposition of Spanish rule; and, finally, that the United States would continue to obey the dogma of Washington's farewell address by preserving its neutrality in the affairs of Europe except when its rights were seriously jeopardized. Intended as a unilateral pronouncement of US policy in dealing with the incursion or threat of incursion by European

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powers into the Western Hemisphere, the Monroe Doctrine came to be regarded as a defense doctrine, or what one commentator dubbed the “American doctrine of self-preservation”. Moreover, the Roosevelt Corollary, articulated by President Theodore Roosevelt in his Annual Message to Congress on December 6, 1904, expanded the scope of the Doctrine by making the United States a self-appointed international policeman, providing a unilateral justification for increased intervention into the affairs of Latin American countries.

Important to realize is that neither doctrine drew its validity from any legislative pronouncement, nor from any international treaty instrument. Nor was the ambit of jurisdiction or application of either doctrine ever precisely defined by specific law or fiat. Indeed, both doctrines were applied historically on an adhoc basis, in circumstances determined by the perception of US policy makers, to explain the government's rationale for taking certain interventionist actions. In short, from the mid-nineteenth century through the early portion of the twentieth century, both doctrines were held out as pillars of US foreign policy and, accordingly, were invoked periodically to justify unilateral interventions taken in the name of defending the Americas from European intrusions. For example, in the first three decades of the twentieth century, the United States intervened militarily on some sixty occasions in several smaller Caribbean and Central

American States\textsuperscript{10}. In all these cases, little diplomatic consideration or formal concern was expressed by the United States about the international legal implications of these interventions or the critical attitude of other states.

Since World War II, the US perception of aggression (that is, legally impermissible intervention) has been couched largely in terms of evaluating and containing communist intentions, capabilities and strategies through out the Third World in general and the Western Hemisphere in particular. Communist influence upon the domestic politics or governmental structure of a state may occur by friendly or hostile means. In either circumstance, an unstable situation in the region may intimate that a state is the victim of indirect communist aggression. Such a conclusion may be viewed as threatening to the US security zone. This perception has historically produced reactions by the United States to provide military supplies to a receptive government (or political faction) in order to redress the communist threat. The temptation to engage in military intervention of one form or another has been more likely to rise as the perceived threat to US security interests escalated. Important is that many of the fundamental principles embodied in the Monroe Doctrine have continued to influence US interventionist policy in the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, the fundamental policy motive contained in the

\textsuperscript{10} John Gerassi, op. Cit., p.231.
Doctrine—intervention for self-defense—was resurrected and reactivated in post-World War II foreign policy doctrines.

The Johnson Doctrine derived from the episode in late April 1965 when the United States sent 21,000 troops to restore civil order in the Dominican Republic. The principal legal rationale for the action came to be self-defense—more accurately, anticipated national security considerations—against the perceived threat of communism being established in the Dominican Republic. The scope of the doctrine in the Western Hemisphere was expanded in 1958 by the Eisenhower Doctrine and US intervention in Lebanon to foster stability in that country. The Eisenhower Doctrine in effect authorized US military action to prevent a communist takeover of Middle Eastern countries. As a consequence, both doctrines during the 1960s came to designate US efforts to counter perceived communist threats in regions considered to be of significant foreign policy interest to the United States.\(^{11}\)

During the 1980s, the administration of President Ronald Reagan articulated its own policy dictum to reinforce and expand this central theme of stifling communist intrusion into the Americas in particular and the third World in general. Under the Reagan Doctrine, the United States indicated that it would aid and support paramilitary “freedom fighters”\(^{11}\)

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engaged in armed struggle against repressive totalitarian regimes of the left, including guerrilla movements in Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Nicaragua. Citing the legal rationale for the doctrine, President Reagan noted in his February 6, 1985 State of the Union Address:

We must stand by our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives ----- in every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua ----- to defy Soviet - supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth.

The Sandinista dictatorship of Nicaragua, with full Cuban Soviet- bloc support, not only persecutes its people, the church and denies a free press but arms and provides bases communist terrorists attacking neighboring states. Support for freedom fighters in self-defense and totally consistent with the OAS and UN charters12.

As Marxist encroachment is presumed in globalist fashion to be instigated by the Soviets in concert with its allies (such as Cuba in southern Africa and Nicaragua in Central America), the legal edict of self-defense is perceived by Washington policymakers as applicable. In the case of US aid to the anti-Sandinista contras in Nicaragua, for example, The Reagan Administration has gone to some lengths to justify its interventionist actions on legal grounds of self-defense, noting that Soviet-led communist intrusion is real, ongoing, illegal, and threatening to regional interests

in general and US interests in particular\textsuperscript{13}.

The evolution of US foreign policy doctrines—-from the region-centric Monroe Doctrine to the seemingly worldwide edict of the Reagan Doctrine—-underscores a progression of US legal logic justifying US interventionist practices in the Third World. The common factors linking these various doctrines are several: First, each doctrine was issued unilaterally, leaving the United States as their only interpreter. Second, the United States insisted upon retaining the sole, exclusive right of interpretation for activating these doctrines for determining when they were necessary, the dimensions of that need, and where they should be applied—-as conceived in terms of US diplomatic and security interests. Third, the unilateral character of these doctrines points up the guiding concept of the "free hand". This refers to the notion that although the United States might be willing to act in concert with other states in the world, it reserves for itself the right to make the decision if, when, and under what circumstances any action would be undertaken. Finally, these doctrines explicitly have worked to fix a pervasive conviction in US foreign policy during the twentieth century—-namely, that the continued independence of states in the Third World from communist control is a diplomatic vital interest of the United States, a vital interest that the US government should be

prepared to protect with force and by military intervention if necessary.

Accordingly, these foreign policy doctrines have largely shaped the US legal attitude towards the permissibility of intervention. Yet, the legal dimension of these doctrines is grounded in notions that are drawn neither from US domestic law nor from international law. In fact, the US public’s historical view of presidential doctrines has been that they are special legal edicts bestowing upon the United States the singular right to take certain interventionist actions throughout the Third World. Such an attitude, however, much it appears appropriate for US national interests, falls short of keeping up with the international legal norm of non-intervention. These doctrines are not real tenets of international law; they are merely political instruments of self-defense, to be applied exclusively by the United States as that government alone defines and construes each case in the Third World\textsuperscript{14}.

The most important common factor underpinning these presidential doctrines is that they are all couched in international real politik rather than in consensual international law. That is, although stated in terms of legal justification of self-defense, these doctrines cannot perforce convey unilateral legal license to the United States to impinge upon the national sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence of any state in

the Third world. To argue otherwise is to suggest the right of the United States to supersede the limits of self-defense and thereby mutate these doctrines into potential instruments for legitimizing the use of U.S force throughout the Third World. The explicit view of international law clearly rejects the propriety of any such self-serving legal percepts. Yet, the lack of an overarching international enforcement mechanism (that is, reliance on voluntary adherence by individual states to international law) has ensured that states sometimes adopt legal license to interpret international law such that it serves their own interests.

The key legal facet of the Reagan Doctrine as implemented in Nicaragua, for example, centres around the rationale of US self-defense and the related need to preempt Nicaraguan – sponsored armed aggression against El Salvador. However, serious questions surface over the applicability of Article 51 of the UN Charter to justify the US interventionist role. In short, the legal notion of self-defense does not include the unilateral right of an outside power to intervene against the territory of an aggressor state. Even if it were proven that the Sandinista government was transporting significant amount of aid to rebels in El Salvador — patently illegal under international law — any responsive action by the United States nevertheless the less should neither be taken against the Sandinista government nor conducted in Nicaraguan territory. According to international law, the United States should instead limit its actions to assisting the government of El Salvador in putting down the insurgency in
its own State. Though this limitation may seem inherently unjust, providing opportunities for the instigating culprit, international law sanctions neither the notion that "might makes right" nor that "two wrongs make a right".

Moreover, an implicit justification of US intervention into Nicaraguan affairs has been the necessity to preserve for Nicaraguans their inherent democratic rights under international law to choose their own form of government. As a result of the absence of an international legal enforcement mechanism, states have developed a practice of violating Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter, often with impunity. This justification for intervention, however, presumes that the principle of self-determination (the right of individuals in a country to choose their own form of government) carries more weight than the principle of non-intervention. That the principle of self-determination out weights the principle of non-intervention is difficult to prove, particularly because UN Charter law is silent on the matter, and neither scholars nor governments have embraced such a position. As one author has noted, such a view "would introduce a new normative basis for recourse to war that would give powerful states and almost unlimited right to overthrow governments alleged to be unresponsive to the popular will or to the goal of self-preservation". When one realizes that the Reagan Administration's main

foreign policy goal in Central America was to limit the hegemonial and ideological influence of the Soviet Union – while concomitantly projecting US political values ------- it becomes quite evident that antithetical governments will disagree over the meanings of “popular” determination and “democratic” rule. The end result seems to be that spheres-of-interest politics are seriously impinging upon the ability of international law to maintain world order in general and regional order in Central America more specifically. Although this result is not new, it underscores the clear departure of the international system of the 1980s from that envisioned in the UN Charter.

Indeed, the case of Nicaragua under scores how U.S policy makers, when US doctrines clash with international legal edicts handed down by international bodies, have been able to ignore these edicts with relative impunity. On April 9, 1984, Nicaragua submitted a formal application – charging illicit intervention by Washington in Nicaraguan affairs – before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which instituted proceeding against the United States. The application alleged that US support of anti-Sandinista rebels and its mining of Nicaraguan harbors violated applicable norms of international law. On May 10, 1984, the ICJ issued an interim ruling, holding that the United States should respect the sovereign independence of Nicaragua and that it should refrain from supporting any further anti-Nicaraguan paramilitary activity. The Reagan Administration agreed with the ICJ’s decision regarding the prohibition against mining
Nicaraguan harbors and stated that such practices had been terminated in late March and would not be resumed. The administration maintained, however, that the ICJ actually lacked proper jurisdiction to render a ruling because "the United States had suspended its agreement giving the Court to right to rule concerning Central America, and that Nicaragua itself had no right to plead because it never filed the instrument of ratification required to officially accept the Court’s judgement"¹⁶. The United States, therefore, did not consider itself legally bound to the ICJ’s second ruling regarding cessation of paramilitary support for the contras.

Although the ICJ ruled that it did have proper jurisdiction over the US – Nicaragua dispute and that the Nicaragua had the legal right to plead its case, the Reagan Administration announced on January 18, 1985, that it would boycott further proceedings dealing with the subject as presented in the court. The State Department, supporting the boycott, argued that the "conflict in Central America …… is not a narrow legal dispute; it is an inherently political problem that is not appropriate for judicial resolution. The conflict will be solved only by political and diplomatic means—not through a judicial tribunal"¹⁷. Irrespective of how unenforceable the ICJ’s decision may be, it nevertheless constituted a significant statement about armed intervention and other international legal issues. In challenging the ICJ’s jurisdiction and subsequently abandoning its proceedings, the United

States called into question the sincerity of its commitment to a public international order under the rule of law.

When seen retrospectively in light of the Iranian hostage case, and the attempt at that time by the United States to uphold ICJ as a crucible of international justice, it becomes clear that by turning away from the court, the United States lost legal credibility, appeared diplomatically disingenuous, and allowed Nicaragua to gain a propaganda advantage in view of its lawful appeal to the international legal forum. By refusing to appear before the ICJ and make public evidence that could substantiate the real aggressor in Central America to be Nicaragua, the Reagan Administration effectively fostered the inescapable conclusion that it had a weak case. This generated a pervasive impression that the United States had something to hide and, accordingly, that it may have been guilty of some wrongdoing. In sum, the course of action chosen by the Reagan Administration suggested that the Central American situation was assessed predominantly in terms of strategic interest and national security implications, with scant attention to international legal considerations.

In its December 1989 invasion of Panama, the Bush Administration identified four "objectives" of the action. In addition to the two legal justifications asserted—self-defense and the protection of the Panama Canal—the Administration mentioned to other goals motivating its decision to act in Panama: the promotion of democracy in Panama and the capture of General Noriega for trial on drug trafficking charges. The

justifications asserted by the United States found scant support in the international community, which widely criticized the invasion of Panama as a violation of international law\textsuperscript{19}. By a vote of twenty to one — the sole negative vote being that of the United States\textsuperscript{20} — the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted a resolution which said that members "deeply regret" the invasion, called for the withdrawal of US forces, and supported "the right of the Panamanian people to self-determination without outside interference".

In the United Nations Security Council, a majority voted for a draft resolution declaring that the intervention violated international law, though vetoes by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France killed the resolution\textsuperscript{21}. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, 75-20, to "strongly deplore" the intervention and to demand the immediate withdrawal of United States forces from Panama\textsuperscript{22}. Clearly, the majority of States considered the action to be unlawful.

Finally, the invasion of Panama was even more unfortunate because it occurred in a period in which super power tension has eased, reducing military conflict in the developing world. For the past several decades the United States had claimed that East-West confrontation provided a political justification for its military interventions in Central America. But

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 314.
military interventionism by the United States in Central America antedated the East-West contention, and the Panama invasion demonstrated that it has outlived it.

The Bush Administration continued America's past interventionist policies in the post-Cold War era. First, a large chunk of the Bush Administration's defense budget for fiscal year 1991 was allocated for forces optimized for Third World intervention. Second, the Bush Administration had continued four wars-by-proxy against leftist Third World regimes and movements (Cambodia, Afghanistan, El Salvador and Angola), long after a Cold War rationale for fighting disappeared. Third, during the latter half of 1990 the Administration deployed a large military force to the Persian Gulf, and it used this force in early 1991, to expel Iraq from Kuwait, which Iraq had seized on August 2. By January 1991, about one-fourth of all American military personnel and two-fifths of America's ground units, were deployed.²³

Throughout the cold War, proponents of US intervention have made two principal claims: that third World interventions protect American security by preserving the global balance of power; and that interventions promote democracy, thereby promoting human rights. Both arguments were false in the past, are false now, and would remain false even if the

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Soviet Union regained its strength and returned to an aggressive foreign policy.

The national security argument for intervention rests on three main assumptions:

1. The Soviet Union seeks an empire in the Third World.
2. It could gain such an empire, either by direct intervention or by sponsoring the expansion of proxies, unless the United States intervenes to stop it.
3. Such an empire would add significantly to Soviet military strength, ultimately tipping the world power balance in the USSR's favor, thus threatening American national security.

The failure of all three assumptions creates a redundant and therefore a very strong case against intervention. Moreover, the latter two assumptions were false before the Gorbachev revolution and would remain false even if that revolution were reversed. Hence the security case for intervention was very weak before Gorbachev appeared, and would remain very weak even if the changes he instituted were swept away. In short, no national security justification exists for US commitment to Third World intervention.

During the 1980s, proponents of intervention supplemented security arguments with claims that American interventions promote democracy. This argument fails on both logical and historical grounds.
The historical record shows that past US interventions have generally failed to bolster democracy. These interventions have more often left dictatorship than democracy in their wake. Moreover, Washington has often subverted elected governments that opposed its policies, and many US supported "democratic" governments and movements were not at all democratic. Over all, this record suggests that US lacks the will and the ability to foster democracy. In short, American leaders have favored democracy only when it produced governments that supported American policies. Otherwise they have sought to subvert democracy.

The Clinton Administration initially gave good reason to think that it would act forcibly to promote human rights and democracy. Less than three weeks after the new administration took the office, Secretary of State Warren Christopher spoke of a "broader imperative" moving the President "to become actively and directly engaged in the multilateral effort to reach a just and workable solution" to conflicts in the Balkans. Something had to be done to reverse the image of a President whose backing down over Bosnia surely contributed to a successful resistance to American power in Somalia, which in turn presumably emboldened the Chinese, then the Haitians, next the North Koreans, and finally the Cubans to test American intentions.

For an intervention such as that in Haiti to be more than a political quick fix

27. Tony Smith: "In defense of Intervention ", Foreign Affairs, vol. 73, No. 6, 1994 pp. 34-46.
for the administration, however, it should be done with the intention of promoting democracy and strengthening the ability of international institution to defend human rights in different part of the world.

The advent of democracy throughout the Western Hemisphere holds the promise of bringing political and economic stability to Latin America and, in the process, to serve at once America's commercial interests, the need to control its borders, and the goal of creating a community of feeling that might one day rival that which now exists with much of Europe. In his speech of September 15, 1994, President Clinton declared his determination to restore Aristide to power:

*History has taught us that preserving democracy on our own hemisphere strengthens America's security and prosperity. Democracies here are more likely to keep the peace and to stabilize our region, and more likely to create free markets and economic opportunity and to become strong, reliable trading partners, and they are more likely to provide their own people with the opportunities that will encourage them to stay in their nations and to build their futures.*

A serious problem with making support for human rights and democracy a cornerstone of American foreign policy is that the American people generally require a clear statement of the national interest before they will support prolonged and costly interventions. And calling on the nation to rally round the flag simply for the sake of doing good for others has never persuaded many Americans to respond.
In Eastern Europe, Central America, and the Caribbean, the establishment of democratic governments holds the best promise of stability and the emergence of states feeling a community of interests with the West. A forward-looking policy in defense of human rights and democracy in these circumstances is not only morally appealing, but it is also in the security interests of the United States.

**United States’ Instruments of Intervention:**

The tools of US domination are various. Most obvious and perhaps most decisive instruments of intervention that have been employed by the United States in the pursuit of foreign policy goals are given below:

1. Economic and Military Aid.
2. Economic Sanctions.
3. Covert Intervention
4. Paramilitary Intervention
5. Direct Military Intervention.

**1. Economic and Military Aid:**

Since World War II, the United States has provided more than US $ 200 billion in bilateral (that is, government-to-government) economic assistance. Most of this money officially has been intended to promote economic development in other nations, either by underwriting specific projects or augmenting foreign treasuries. The United States has also extended roughly US $ 120 billion in bilateral grants and loans to recognized governments (in contrast to guerrilla movements) for avowed
security purposes. The largest program is Military Assistance Grants, which provides cash to other nations to enhance their defense. Moreover, the largest share, 25 percent or more, of the nearly US $ 235 billion worth of multilateral (that is, international organization-to-government) economic assistance during the post-World War II period has come from the United States. Almost 75 percent of that money has gone through the World Bank and its two affiliates, the International Development Association and the International Finance Corporation. Other assistance has been channeled through the three regional development banks, the United Nations Development Program, and other UN agencies.

This flood of cash has thrust the United States into the affairs of virtually every other nation on earth, and, increasingly since the World War II, those nations comprising the Third World. In fact, although the United States most directly and effectively asserts its power through military force, foreign assistance has affected far more countries on a more frequent basis. However, the benefits of the US $ 375 billion (roughly US $ 870 billion in 1988 dollars) spent on foreign aid since World War II are less clear: Many developing states have been moving back-ward economically; well-subsidized US allies have been overthrown; and funds have continued to flow to nations that regularly oppose US interests abroad.

Once the United States decided to try to enforce Pax Americana in the aftermath of World War II, foreign aid became an integral part of US interventionist policies. Although military force was considered to be the ultimate guarantor of US interests, financial and technical assistance was perceived as a less expensive and less intrusive means of reshaping the global order, especially throughout the Third World, in the US image.

Over the years, foreign aid priorities have varied sharply, both in terms of recipients and types of assistance. The consistent theme underlying the program for five decades, though, has been a commitment to promoting US economic, security, and political interests, however these are defined. Foreign aid has often been presented to the US public and advertised to the world as selfless humanitarianism: in reality, nationalistic goals have always been dominant.

Throughout its history, foreign aid has been assumed to achieve its objectives. Indeed, its very name—foreign 'aid' or 'assistance'—implies that the program’s overall results are salutary. Yet, the actual benefits of foreign aid for US foreign policy are debatable. Temporary humanitarian assistance has alleviated some suffering, but aid programs like Food for Peace have often done more harm than good. Financial flows to poorer states have underwritten some good projects but have also left a string of expensive white elephants across Africa and other nations. And although these are few plausible success stories in which assistance has spurred economic growth, disastrous examples abound in which US and other
Western aid has subsidized corrupt, autocratic elites as they destroyed their economies in the pursuit of their narrow self-interests.

Foreign assistance is also viewed as a means of stabilizing Third World states that face social unrest, thereby advancing US security interests. Yet, strengthening incumbent regimes that suppress moderate opposition forces may ultimately be destabilizing US support for dictatorships in Nicaragua, Iran, Haiti, and the Philippines only seemed to make their rules more intransigent, thereby hastening their downfall. Some defense goals have been achieved through US assistance, but the programs directed at enhancing the military prowess of other nations have often been devoted to countries that can afford to defend themselves or are of dubious strategic value. Moreover, although an unending stream of foreign aid may buy political influence with other countries, Washington’s promiscuous use of assistance has ensured that most states receive funds irrespective of their actions. Most important, access bought today may very well lead to a closed door tomorrow, as revolutionary regimes turn against the United States for helping to keep a prior government in power.

Overall, foreign aid has been successful as an instrument of intervention in one sense: it has thrust the United States into the affairs of the majority of other nations around the globe. But whether the impact of that involvement has been beneficial or has achieved official US Foreign Policy goals is quite different matter.
2. Economic Sanctions:

Economic sanctions—defined here as the deliberate government-inspired withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of customary (rather than contractual) trade or financial relations between two or more countries—have enjoyed widespread application as an instrument of intervention. Such sanctions typically involve reducing or even eliminating the flow of goods and / or money between a sender country, the country imposing sanctions, and a target country.

The United States has been the dominant user of sanctions in the twentieth century. As of autumn 1988, US economic sanctions were in force against Chile, Ethiopia, South Africa, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Nicaragua, and Panama; in addition, long-standing trade embargoes were in place against Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam. The United States has taken the lead in imposing sanctions in 69 of 103 episodes occurring between 1914 and 1983 and has targeted Third World countries in 48 of these, successfully 42 percent of the time in those Third World cases. Closer examination of the record, however, reveals that the effectiveness of the US sanctions of the Third World declined substantially after 1973, even as the frequency with which sanctions were imposed greatly increased. Although approximately 50 percent of the cases involved sanctions against Latin America, almost a quarter targeted the Middle East or South Asia, with the rest centering on countries in Africa and East Asia.

In attempting to shape the post war world and its liking, the United States did not hesitate to use economic leverage to coerce, even destabilize uncooperative governments. Sanctions' efforts in the first twenty-five years after World War II focused on moderating—or failing that, overthrowing—nationalists, often left-leaning leaders in newly independent countries. In nearly half of the episodes in this period, the United States sought to destabilize governments led by such leaders. Another third of these cases involved relatively modest goals, including several aimed at settling disputes over expropriated or nationalized property (also a source of conflict in half of the destabilization efforts). Sanctions twice accompanied US military efforts and on two other occasions were used in attempts to influence military conflicts in which the United States was not directly involved.

Despite the relative success that economic sanctions have achieved on average since the end of World War II, their effectiveness has declined substantially since the early 1970s. Approximately 64 percent of the episodes involving US sanctions against the Third World between 1938 and 1972 were at least partial successes, compared to only 22 percent during the period 1973 – 1988.

The newly industrializing countries of East Asia—Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, and Taiwan—successfully adopted a strategy of export-led growth and have become important trading partners of the United States (as such, they may be subjected to sanctions for economic
rather than political reasons), with growth rates that are the envy of the world. Many of the Latin American countries, favorite targets of the past, have also successfully penetrated the US market, while diversifying their sources of supply for goods and finance.

Although the United States rightly recognized that it was in its interest to assist in the reconstruction and further development of the world economy after World War II, it does not seem to have recognized that the subsequent growth of healthy and powerful competitive economies would entail a parallel reduction in its leverage relative to other countries and, thus, in its ability to influence them. The circumstances in which US economic leverage may be effectively applied have narrowed, and success will increasingly depend on the subtlety, skill, and creativity with which it is exercised.

3. **Covert Intervention:**

Covert action is, by definition, a foreign policy instrument based upon secrecy and deception. Note the CIA's official definition "Covert action is a special activity conducted abroad in support of United States foreign policy objectives and executed so that the role of the United States government is not apparent or acknowledged publicly. Covert action is distinct from the intelligence-gathering function. Covert action often gives the United States an option between diplomatic and military action".30

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This one official paragraph captures the essence of and rationale for a policy of maintaining the ability to intervene covertly in the politics of the Third World countries. The “special activity” referred to in official document has included secret propaganda, manipulation of foreign electoral processes, overthrowing of governments, secret financial assistance, paramilitary operations, and assassination of political leaders. The secrecy required for covert action makes it difficult for an outside analyst to describe in authentic detail the past and, in particular, the recent application of this instrument. Often, only the tip of iceberg is visible. In describing such a variety of supposedly secret activities, one must, therefore, proceed by making inferences from known facts, speculating, or relying on undocumented accounts. At the same time, the pluralism of US Institutions and special interests makes secret-keeping a nearly impossible challenge for foreign policy decision-makers and secret operators. Consequently, many, if not most, of past US major covert operations have not remained secret.

The covert action option for foreign policy implementation exists along a conceptualized “scale of coercion”. It is one thing to give a little aid and comfort to US friends in strategic Third World areas. It is quite another to change a regime by the direct action of plotting to overthrow its leaders, perhaps by assassination. Indeed, the most extreme (coercive) form of covert action represents a foreign policy instrument just short of war. The four primary types of US covert action are assassination plots, coups d’etat, election intervention, and propaganda and psychological warfare.
Political assassination of a foreign leader is the most extreme form of covert action and it usually part of a greater goal to change the existing government of the target country. Documented evidence provided by Church Committee investigators brought home the reality that assassination had been regular instruments of US foreign policy. Little doubt exists, however, that the CIA was to some degree involved in a number of assassination plots, including efforts to murder Fidel Castro in Cuba, Patrice Lumumba in Congo and Colonel Abdul Kassem in Iraq. The CIA was also associated with conspirators who plotted the death of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Ngo Dinh Diem in Vietnam, and General Rene Schneider, Army Chief of Staff, in Chile.

The United States has been more successful, at least in the short-run, in staging coups d'état against foreign governments deemed inimical to US interests. The first documented example in the Post-World War II period was CIA-directed overthrow in 1953 of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq and his replacement by Shah Mohammed Reza Pahalvi. A second example of US covert intervention against a democratically elected leftist regime in the name of anti-communism in Chile. President Richard M. Nixon stressed the removal of Allende by a US - induced military coup d'état. In 1973, Allende indeed was killed during a successful military coup d'état.

Assassinations and coup d'etat were the exception in the CIA's program of covert action during the cold war years. Other forms of covert action, such as interference with the electoral processes in areas of perceived strategic importance to the United States, were more common. In addition to the Chilean case, Italy, although not a Third World country, provided the classic documented example of US intervention in the electoral process in target lands, and one that would become the blueprint for future US intervention of this type in the Third World. US secret intervention in the 1958 Italian election was, in words of its director, William Colby, "by far the CIA's largest covert political action program undertaken until then, or indeed, since" 32. Indeed, one author has described various episodes of US election intervention in countries as diverse as Brazil, British Guiana, The Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Laos, Lebanon, Nicaragua, the Philippines, and Vietnam 33.

The least coercive tool of covert action is propaganda/psychological warfare. Since the early 1950s, the United States has maintained a dual track for propaganda overseas: an open program, implemented by the United States Information Agency (USIA), and covert activities, most often performed by the CIA. A 1977 survey in the New York Times 34 disclosed a number of details about the CIA's propaganda activities in the Third World at large. For example, at peak of such activities, the CIA "Propaganda

Assets Inventory" listed over 800 news and public information organizations and individuals that were on its payroll.

4. Paramilitary Intervention:
Paramilitary intervention is defined as US economic and military aid to an armed insurgency intent on overthrowing a government deemed inimical to US Foreign Policy interests and represents a proxy utilization of force in situations in which policymakers have decided that direct US intervention would be counterproductive. In short, use of this instrument allows US policymakers to carry a war to the territory of another nation while at the same time avoiding the most costly aspects of that war—American casualties. The agents of US paramilitary wars have included both existing guerrilla insurgencies and US-organized exile invasion forces. Usually implemented covertly under the banner of anti-communism, paramilitary intervention generally has revolved around the provision of military weaponry through CIA-contracted airlines and the organization and training of insurgents by CIA personnel in allied nations adjacent to the target country.

This foreign policy instrument was used most often, though not exclusively, during the 1950s and early 1960s and included such varied cases as Angola, Cuba, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, and Tibet. It was not until the 1980s, however, that paramilitary intervention became a comprehensive, coherent, and overt instrument of US intervention in the Third World. During its time in office, the Reagan Administration
committed the United States to supporting guerrilla insurgencies attempting to overthrow Soviet-supported regimes in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, and Nicaragua, all under the rubric of what has become known as the Reagan Doctrine. For the first time in post-World War II history, the United States publicly adopted and implemented a program that went beyond traditional containment and embraced instead the need to role back already established communist Third World regimes.\footnote{The Reagan administration did not dogmatically follow ideological criteria, as it refused to support anticomunist guerrilla insurgencies in Ethiopia and Mozambique. For an analysis of the Reagan Doctrine, see Jeane Kirkpatrick, the Reagan Doctrine and US Foreign Policy, (Washington D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 1985). See also Ted G. Carpenter, “US Aid to Anti-communist Rebels: the Reagan Doctrine and Its Pitfalls.” Cato Institute Policy Analysis, no. 74, June 24, 1986.}

An overview of this tool’s use in the post-World War II period provides that paramilitary intervention can be highly successful if the US goal is to harass or otherwise disrupt the normal political or economic proceedings of a Third World country. There is no doubt that support for UNITA has contributed to severe disruption of Angola’s economy or that support for Tibetan guerrillas delayed China’s consolidation of control over the disputed territory.

If the goal of paramilitary intervention is to overthrow the government in question, however, the results have been less positive. Only in the case of Guatemala in 1954 — a democratic government with powerful domestic enemies, most notably a disenchanted military — did the United States succeed in overthrowing a government considered inimical to US foreign policy interests through paramilitary means. In all other cases, the paramilitary option has fallen short.
5. **Direct Military Intervention:**

Direct military intervention in the affairs of Third World countries has been a crucial component of US foreign policy throughout the twentieth century. The scope of such coercion is quite significant. Cambodia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Iran, Korea, Lebanon, Libya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, and Iraq have all experienced the application of US military might at various times. Certain characteristics of military intervention have remained surprisingly constant during the century, whereas others have changed in significant ways, especially since the end of World War II.

US leaders typically employ force to prevent political instability in important client states and to install or preserve regimes considered friendly to perceived economic and security interests. It is somewhat ironic that the United States, a nation that once symbolized revolutionary republican values, now seems obsessed with maintaining "stability" in the world. Nevertheless, US actions throughout this century, and especially since the onset of the cold war rivalry with the Soviet Union, have exemplified the objectives of a conservative status quo power. In virtually every case in which Washington has resorted to military force, it has done so to prop up clients --- including several highly authoritarian ones --- or to

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36. There is an important distinction between the use of major military actions as an instrument of foreign policy and more limited applications of force for other purposes, e.g. the Mayaguez incident of 1975 and the abortive Iranian hostage rescue mission in 1980 were relatively minor military actions in which there were few underlying foreign policy objectives. Conversely, the 1983 Grenada invasion had elements of a hostage rescue—and the Reagan Adm. went to great lengths to portray it as such—but principal aim was the overthrow of a Marxist-Leninist regime.
thwart radical insurgencies. The emphasis on the sanctity of stability has always been rather selective, however. US leaders have rarely hesitated to foment coup d'etat or employ direct military action against incumbent governments deemed hostile to US interests.\(^{37}\)