'It's the Third World stupid!' Why the Third World should be the priority of the Clinton administration

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The inauguration of President Bill Clinton on 20 January 1993, coincided with a turning point in US foreign policy toward the Third World. The decline of the Cold War at the beginning of the 1990s seemingly had called into question an interventionist foreign policy built upon the twin themes of antiCommunism and containment. Most important, the primary perceived adversary of the United States—the former Soviet Union—had followed in the footsteps of other great empires throughout history, fragmenting into a host of smaller, independent, and nonCommunist countries. In short, the Clinton administration has been presented with a tremendous opportunity to transcend the reactive, Cold War mentality that rationalised a variety of US interventionist practices throughout the Third World from the 1940s to the 1980s, and instead fashion proactive policies designed to strengthen US ties with Third World countries concerned with promoting democracy, economic development, and the respect of human rights.¹

However, as demonstrated by the Bush administration’s willingness to undertake a variety of military operations, ranging from the massive movement of over 400,000 troops to Saudi Arabia as part of ‘Operation Desert Storm’, to the more limited humanitarian military engagement in Somalia known as ‘Operation Restore Hope’, the decline of the Cold War will not automatically lead to a concomitant decline in US interventionist practices. As perceptively noted by Stephen John Stedman, a ‘new interventionism’ is potentially emerging within the policymaking establishment that blends the firm support for international organisations and self-determination of peoples traditionally adhered to by Wilsonian liberals, with the realist perceptions of international threats (such as monolithic communism) perceived by Cold War liberal internationalists.² The net result, according to Stedman, may be the emergence of a new crusading, interventionist doctrine comparable in scale to that of containment during the last 40 years, in which the United States as the sole remaining superpower assumes the responsibility of compelling other governments—by force, if necessary—to adhere to a ‘new humanitarian order’.³

A problematical aspect of this new interventionism is that the end of the Cold War has reinforced two trends—one domestic and one international—that increasingly have placed more constraints on the successful application of US power in the Third World. In the domestic realm, a fragmented US political culture is no longer content, as it was during the 1950s and the 1960s, to follow

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the lead of the executive branch in support of an interventionist foreign policy.\textsuperscript{4} Similarly, growing pluralism within the international arena, as the bipolar system of the 1950s evolves toward an emerging multipolar system, has unleashed new forces not necessarily willing to follow the lead of the United States.\textsuperscript{5} The net result of these trends is that US interventionist practices may become increasingly counterproductive and costly if the Clinton administration fails to formulate policies that reflect domestic and international realities. ‘As the greatest power of the postwar era, we acquired a tendency to think that we had a responsibility to intervene and keep order, and to promote and carry out worldwide programs of development and democratisation’, cautions J William Fulbright, former US Senator (1945–74) and well-known commentator on US foreign policy. ‘Only through costly experience have we begun to realise that, more often than not, intervention has been against our own best interests—and in many if not most cases, too, it has not served a useful purpose in the countries involved.’\textsuperscript{6}

The primary purposes of this article are therefore twofold in nature. The first is to underscore why the Clinton administration, despite the repeatedly stated intention of President Clinton to focus on the US economy ‘like a laser beam’, needs to ensure that an equal amount of attention is focused on US relations with the various regions of the Third World.\textsuperscript{7} Once having established this basic premise, the second major purpose of this article is to contribute to the ongoing debate over what should constitute a proper US foreign policy in the Third World in the rapidly evolving post-Cold War international system.

\textbf{Why focus on the Third World?}

Despite campaign promises to the contrary, the Clinton administration appears to have fallen prey to the Cold War mentality of making the Soviet Union the centerpiece of US foreign policy. In what was billed as the first major foreign policy address of the new administration, Secretary of State Warren M Christopher asserted before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations on 22 March 1993, that promoting economic and political liberalisation in Russia constituted the ‘greatest strategic challenge of our time’.\textsuperscript{8} Although rightly designed to emphasise US concern with bolstering the transition to democracy in Russia, the speech nonetheless set a disconcerting tone which seemed to suggest that, similar to policies enacted during the Cold War era, the Third World was relatively unimportant, and that US policies there hinged upon the more important strategic relationship between the United States and Russia. Although willing to recognise that events in Russia and the other newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union require US attention, I argue that the Clinton administration should focus equal, if not greater, levels of attention on Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, and that an understanding of US foreign policy in the Third World has become increasingly important during the post-World War II era for the following five reasons:

(1) \textit{The Third World is an increasingly important focal point for US trade and investment.} According to the US Department of Commerce, imports from the Third World in 1988 totalled $164.2 billion (37.2\% of total US imports of
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$441.3 billion), and US exports to the Third World during this same year totalled $114.5 billion (35.7% of total US exports of $320.4 billion). Moreover, US direct private investment in the Third World during 1988 exceeded $78 billion, or 23.9% of total US private investment in the world, earning nearly $7 billion for US industry (nearly 32% of all US profits earned from overseas private investment).\(^9\) This trend was not unique to the United States, but was indicative of the Third World’s rising financial fortunes throughout the 1980s. According to a United Nations study published in 1991, for example, foreign direct investment in the Third World rose 22% annually from 1985 to 1989 (a significant increase in the 3% annual growth rate for the years 1980–84), and the five largest targets of this investment as of 1989 were Singapore, the PRC (People’s Republic of China), Brazil, Mexico, and Hong Kong.\(^10\) Although the northern industrialised countries remain the premier economic partners of the United States—indeed, the collapse of Communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has led to a dramatic rise in investment capital flowing to these regions—there can be no doubt that the Third World will become increasingly important in the economic calculations of US policymakers.

(2) The Third World is a theatre for conflict of increasing scope and intensity. As demonstrated by the outbreak of World Wars I and II, Europe was the centre of conflict in the world prior to 1950. In the second half of the 20th century, however, the growing diffusion of power within the international system ensured that the Third World became the arena for conflicts of increasing scope and intensity. As the 1980s drew to a close, a cursory overview of Third World conflict turned up wars between Cambodia and Vietnam, Iran and Iraq, and Libya and Chad; domestic uprisings in the search for national self-determination by black nationalists in South Africa, Palestinian nationalists in the Middle East, and Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka; and civil wars in Afghanistan, Angola, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and the Philippines. Although US–Soviet competition during the Cold War period was a major element behind the growing intensity of these conflicts, increasingly significant for the post-Cold War era of the 1990s is the rise of regional powers attempting to pursue strategies of regional hegemony (ie, domination), often through the use of military force.\(^11\) Among the examples of potential regional hegemonic powers include Brazil (South America), Nigeria (West Africa), South Africa (Southern Africa), India (South Asia), Vietnam (Southeast Asia), and Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia (Middle East).

A number of global military trends—what one scholar has called the ‘deadly convergence’—clearly demonstrate why policymakers need to focus on the evolution of conflict in the Third World.\(^12\) First, the conventional arms trade greatly expanded as Third World countries imported record numbers ($381 billion) of increasingly sophisticated weaponry between 1981 and 1988.\(^13\) A second more deadly trend was the increased proliferation of nuclear weapons technology. In addition to the five declared nuclear powers of the 1960s (Britain, France, the PRC, the Soviet Union, and the United States), four countries (Israel, India, Pakistan, and South Africa) developed de facto nuclear weapons capabilities during the 1970s and the 1980s, while several others (Argentina, Brazil, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Taiwan, and North and South Korea) launched programmes...
clearly designed to develop a nuclear weapons capability. The obvious threat posed by nuclear proliferation, enhanced even more so by the breakup of the massive Soviet nuclear arsenal among Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, was matched by a third trend: the spread of biological and chemical weapons technology. At least four countries (Iraq, Syria, North Korea, and Taiwan) are believed to have biological weapons capabilities, and approximately 24 others either have or are developing chemical weapons capabilities. Finally, the acquisition and development of sophisticated missiles and aircraft provides Third World countries with a greater capability to deliver these conventional, chemical, and nuclear weapons systems over longer distances. Indeed, as demonstrated by the 1991 Persian Gulf War against Iraq—a formerly rising regional hegemonic power embodying all four of these trends—the origins and theatre of any future world war involving the United States very likely could be in the Third World.

(3) US strategic planning is being reoriented toward the Third World. US strategic thinking in the 1980s began to question the traditional emphasis on preparing for a conventional, full-scale military conflict in Western Europe and focused more on the rise of ‘low-intensity conflict’ (LIC) in the Third World. This type of thinking obviously received a major boost in the 1990s as the fragmentation of the Soviet Union removed the greatest perceived threat to the national security of the United States. Clearly unwilling to accept the inevitable budget cuts destined to accompany the end of the Cold War, those seeking to maintain a strong defence establishment advanced the threats posed by LIC and radical Third World leaders to the forefront of a rising domestic debate. For example, a 70-page classified document which was leaked to the press in February 1992 clearly demonstrated how Pentagon planners were seeking to rationalise the continuation of existing US force structures. Among the perceived threats portrayed by the Pentagon document include: the invasion of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia by a resurgent Iraq; a North Korean invasion of South Korea; an attack on the Panama Canal by an alliance of right-wing military elements and Colombian drug lords; and, perhaps most threatening for US security planners, the emergence of a new authoritarian, expansionist superpower at the turn of the century that could threaten the national security of the United States. Even the Clinton administration’s new Director of Central Intelligence, R James Woolsey, has argued against spending cuts in the intelligence community due to the ‘bewildering array of threats’ that the US will confront in the post-Cold War era.

The net result of this shift in the policy debate at the beginning of the 1990s was the continued development of LIC doctrine and the expansion of specialised ‘projection forces’ (such as the army’s Green Berets) designed to take part in a host of military operations within the Third World. Among the categories of operations that fall under the guise of LIC doctrine include counterinsurgency (aid to an allied government to defeat a guerrilla insurgency); proinsurgency (aid designed to foster a guerrilla insurgency against a foreign government); peacetime contingency operations (such as short-term rescue missions); terrorism counteraction; antidrug operations; pacification or control of ethnic conflicts; humanitarian assistance; and military civic action. Two fundamental assump-
tions lie at the heart of this rising strategic emphasis within the US policymaking establishment: (a) Vital US interests are threatened by radical and revolutionary violence in the Third World; and (b) the United States must be prepared to use military force to protect these interests. As cogently argued by Michael T Klare, a specialist of US military intervention in the Third World, just as a growing emphasis on counterinsurgency during the 1960s led to increasing US involvement in Vietnam, so the current evolution in strategic thinking ensures that LIC will be an increasing US strategic concern of the 1990s, potentially leading to ever-increasing US involvement in regional conflicts.21

(4) Official recognition of strategic interests in the Third World provides the basis for increased US intervention. The designation of individual Third World countries or regions as ‘vital’ to US strategic interests continues to provide the basis for US intervention to safeguard these interests.22 The Carter Doctrine, for example, identified the continued flow of oil from the Persian Gulf as one of the paramount strategic interests of the United States, to be defended with US military force if necessary. This doctrine served as the basis for the 1987 Reagan administration policy of reflagging Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf, as well as US involvement in the Persian Gulf War, a conflict that led to the deployment of over 400,000 US troops and the most massive intervention abroad since the Vietnam War.

Among the other examples of perceived strategic interests that led to US intervention in the Third World throughout the post-World War II period are the critical importance of maintaining stability in the US ‘backyard’ (the Caribbean and Central America), a factor that led to the 1983 military invasion of Grenada and the promotion of the contra war against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua during the 1980s; the maintenance of a free and open Panama Canal, one of the many rationales offered for the 1989 military invasion of Panama; continued Western access to strategic minerals in Southern Africa, the basis for close US relations with the apartheid regime of South Africa from the 1940s to the 1980s (until Congress passed sanctions in 1986); and the maintenance of Western control over strategic maritime ‘choke points’, such as the Straits of Bab el Mandeb along North-eastern Africa, an interest that partially underscored US rationales for providing nearly $800 million in economic and military assistance to Somali dictator Siad Barre before his overthrow at the beginning of 1991.

(5) US intervention in the Third World has had a spill-over effect into US society. Perhaps the most important reason for focusing on US foreign policy in the Third World is to understand the spill-over effects it has had on US institutions and society. In the case of the Vietnam War, the wiretaps initiated to uncover who had leaked highly sensitive information pertaining to secret US B-52 bombing raids into Cambodia gradually mushroomed into the Watergate scandal, which drove Richard M Nixon from the presidency.23 The Iranian hostage crisis revealed the seeming impotence of the Carter administration in protecting US citizens abroad, contributing to President Carter’s ultimate defeat and the subsequent election of Ronald Reagan in the 1980 presidential elections. US intervention in Nicaragua under the Reagan administration led to the Iran-contra affair, which further strained already tense relations between the
executive branch and Congress over the proper role each should play in the foreign-policymaking process. Finally, President Bush found himself attacked by both liberals and conservatives during the 1992 election campaign for his administration’s failure during the Persian Gulf War to remove Saddam Hussein from power, as well as to protect Iraq’s Kurdish minority when they rebelled against the Iraqi regime. Most important, critics began speaking of ‘Iraq-gate’, a reference to the Bush administration’s alleged illegal use (and subsequent cover-up) of US government funds to bolster the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein (prior to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait) when the US was preoccupied with containing perceived Iranian expansionism in the Middle East. In short, US intervention in the Third World has contributed to US domestic crises of legitimacy.

What should be the basis of US foreign policy in the Third World?

As President Clinton seeks to balance domestic and foreign priorities, and attempts to decide which countries will receive the priority attention of his administration, he will be faced by a bewildering array of pressures to intervene in various regions of the Third World. The instruments at his disposal will range from diplomacy and foreign assistance, to more coercive tools, such as economic sanctions, covert action, paramilitary intervention, and the direct application of US military force. Building upon lessons gleaned from over 40 years of US interventionist practices in the Third World during the Cold War era, I offer six major sets of policy recommendations designed to guide US interventionist practices during the post-Cold War era. These guidelines are not intended to be steadfast rules that are applicable regardless of history or context, but rather to serve as points of debate as the Clinton administration attempts to fashion a policy consensus—the basis for an effective foreign policy in a democracy.

(1) Enhanced foreign policy consultation with Congress

One of the most significant dilemmas facing US policymakers in the post-World War II period, especially in the wake of Vietnam, is the balancing of perceived national security interests with the need for openness and public debate required by democracy in the formulation of foreign policy. Inherent in this balancing act is an ongoing conflict between the executive branch and Congress over the role that each should play in the foreign policymaking process. In the words of one observer, there exists a ‘chronic tension’ between the US democratic political system and its nondemocratic national security system.24

In the wake of perceived executive branch excesses related to US involvement in the Vietnam War, the domestic abuses of Watergate, and illegal covert activities in the Third World, Congress attempted during the 1970s to strengthen its oversight capabilities by adopting the War Powers Act and creating intelligence oversight committees. The explicit goal of these initiatives was to avoid ‘future Vietnams’ by requiring that proposed interventions be submitted to reasoned debate apart from that within the limited circle of presidents and their immediate staffs. The implicit goal was to check what was perceived to be
overly powerful elites within the national security bureaucracy—headed by an ‘imperial president’—who ‘circumvented the authority of Congress and the courts, viewed themselves as being above the law, particularly in foreign policy matters, and used secrecy and distortion to deceive Congress and the public in order to accomplish their policy objectives’.25

The White House steadfastly has resisted congressional attempts at enhanced oversight, with every president of the post-World War II period declaring the constitutional preeminence of the executive branch in the making of foreign policy.26 In the case of the Persian Gulf War, for example, the Bush administration successfully sought to present Congress with a fait accompli by moving nearly 400,000 troops to the Persian Gulf region and imposing a complete air and naval blockade on Iraq before seeking a congressional resolution authorising the use of force. Although Operation Desert Storm resulted in extremely light US casualties, the White House tendency to resist congressional attempts at oversight has often had tragic results. Refusing to recognise the constitutionality of the War Powers Act, for example, and subsequently failing to submit polity to the scrutiny of public debate, President Reagan unilaterally acted to send the US Marines to Lebanon as part of a ‘peacekeeping’ force, changing course only after their tragic deaths. The Reagan administration similarly refused to submit to congressional scrutiny its Persian Gulf policy of escorting neutral ships, which led to hostile confrontations with Iran, and the accidental shooting down of an Iranian passenger jet in 1988.

More significant is when questionable executive branch actions have impinged directly upon the democratic rights of the US population. In the case of the Nixon administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) employed wiretaps and informants to monitor, harass, and suppress political dissent against the growing war in Indochina, eventually applying these covert activities against the Democratic Party. An April 1976 Senate select committee report noted that these tactics were ‘unworthy of a democracy and occasionally reminiscent of the tactics of totalitarian regimes’.27 The Reagan administration resorted to similar tactics against the US public to further its paramilitary goals against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. These various tactics, declared illegal in a final report issued by congressional committees which had investigated the Iran-contra affair, included pressure on the US media not to print stories; lobbying tactics to manipulate US public opinion against the Sandinistas; and ‘white propaganda’ operations—the planting of false articles in the US press.28 One of the most damaging aspects of the administration’s secret war was the Iran ‘arms-for-hostages’ deal and the subsequent illegal diversion of profits from these sales to the contras in violation of the Boland Amendments. As explained by Harry Howe Ransom, a noted observer of the US intelligence community, the Iran-contra episode revealed ‘the corruptive impact of secrecy, which invites serious violations of law and moral standards’. He goes on: ‘If the United States is to serve as any kind of model for developing countries, the [US] decision making process must be repaired in order to sustain democratic ideals.’29

The question remains how to foster accountability and legitimacy within the foreign policymaking process. Noting the damaging effects of past policies, it is hard to accept the view espoused by some proponents of the national security
bureaucracy that ‘saving constitutional democracy may require partially sacrificing it.’\(^{30}\) Taking a completely different view, Morton A Halperin has convincingly argued that a successful national security policy, especially as it pertains to major episodes of military and covert intervention, requires public and congressional approval.\(^{31}\)

Halperin’s solution for restoring accountability and fostering a foreign policy partnership revolves around amending the War Powers Act in three aspects and making it inclusive of both military and covert intervention. The first amendment would delete the ‘60–90’ statute that requires the president to withdraw US forces from the combat zone within 90 days if, after 60 days, the action has not been approved by Congress. Not only has the executive branch considered the statute unconstitutional (citing it as its reason for not complying with the reporting and consultative provisions of the War Powers Act), but reformers have viewed it as unnecessarily tying the hands of the president.\(^{32}\)

A second amendment would create a ‘permanent consultative body’ comprising the majority and minority leaders of both houses of Congress, the speaker of the House, and the president pro tempore of the Senate, with whom the president would have to consult before initiating any military or covert actions. An expanded consultative body—including the individuals already mentioned as well as the chairperson and ranking minority members of the House and Senate Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Intelligence Committees—‘would join in consultation with the president and discuss . . . appropriate legislative response[s] to the situation at hand’. Finally, a third amendment would require advance congressional approval of any military or covert action save for three specific exceptions: to repel attacks against US armed forces located outside US territory; to repel direct attacks against US territory; and to rescue US citizens being held hostage in foreign countries.\(^{33}\)

Halperin has argued that these amendments ensure a balance between the war-power prerogative of Congress and the necessity for the president to be able to take ‘immediate action to defend the United States and its citizens’ when time is of the essence. Moreover, the proposed policy partnership ensures that (a) questionable or otherwise risky policy would receive a much-needed ‘second opinion’, as the ‘potential for making mistakes or abusing power increases when the number of alternative views declines’; (b) advance congressional approval would legitimise US intervention once initiated, fostering bipartisanship and a united front to both allies and adversaries; and (c) prior approval would aim in preventing ‘the backlash from Congress that inevitably follows a foreign policy failure’.\(^{34}\) In order to ensure bipartisanship in the formulation and implementation of US foreign policy, the Clinton administration needs to create a mechanism that ensures regular consultation and collaboration between the executive and legislative branches of government.

(2) Formulation of policies based on ‘regionalist’ principles

The ‘globalist’ vision, which dominated US foreign policy toward the Third World during the post-World War II period, stressed the central importance of East–West confrontation at all levels of the international system, relegating
Third World countries to the role of pawns in the greater East–West conflict. According to proponents of this viewpoint, oppressive social conditions, such as the lack of land reform or government indifference to human welfare, were not the primary causes of revolution and other forms of social conflict in Third World countries from the 1940s to the 1980s. Rather, revolution and social conflict were primarily caused by Communist aggression led by the Soviet Union.

This globalist logic assumed that ‘radical’ regimes (for example, Nicaragua under the Sandinistas), could successfully export revolution to other areas of the Third World, and conjured up visions of ‘falling dominoes’ once a radical regime had established itself in any given region. In the case of Central America and the Caribbean, for example, the revolutionary government of Fidel Castro was described as facilitating the creation in 1979 of a Communist ‘beachhead’ (the Sandinista government in Nicaragua) in Central America. This development, unless vigorously countered by Washington, was perceived as leading to the downfall of US allies in neighbouring countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Costa Rica) and their replacement with Communist regimes.

One manifestation of the acceptance of domino theory at the highest levels of the US policymaking establishment was that Washington assumed the right to overthrow even democratically elected Third World regimes that were perceived as being led by radical nationalist or leftist leaders. Documented examples of countries where such regimes were targeted for destabilisation include Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), British Guiana (1953–1964), Indonesia (1957), Ecuador (1960–1963), Brazil (1964), the Dominican Republic (1965), Costa Rica (mid-1950s), and Chile (1970–1973). The case study of US intervention in Iran during 1953 in which the CIA overturned the democratically elected government headed by Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq is especially instructive in that US involvement ultimately contributed to long-term results that were quite sobering: The CIA-installed leader, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, was ultimately overthrown 25 years later in a revolution that gave rise to the extremely anti-US Islamic fundamentalist regime headed by the Ayatollah Khomeini. ‘Many Iranian nationalists never forgave the shah for using the support of the United States to create a royal dictatorship’, explains Eric Hooglund, a noted specialist of US foreign policy toward Iran. ‘The failure of the shah to achieve popular legitimacy and the widespread perception that he was subservient to the United States were important factors in the revolutionary turmoil of 1978–1979.’

The refurbishing of globalism for the post-Cold War era is underscored by the rising (and mistaken) perception within the policymaking establishment that Islamic fundamentalism is a threat to US interests throughout the various regions of the Third World, particularly in the Middle East, North Africa, and the non-European republics of the former Soviet Union. Many officials note that the decline of the Soviet Union and Communism have created a power vacuum in these three regions that could easily be filled by ‘radical’ forms of Islamic fundamentalism, particularly the ‘shia’ variant espoused by Iran. For example, the Sudanese military regime of General Omar Hassan al-Bashir earned the strong denunciations of both the Bush and the Clinton administrations due to
Bashir’s strict enforcement of shari’a (Islamic law) and, most important, his apparent decision to allow for the creation of Iranian-sponsored bases that CIA analysts claim are designed to train Islamic militants for ‘terrorist’ actions throughout Africa. ‘By January 1992, US officials were telling reporters that the Sudan might become a base for exporting Islamic revolution across Africa’, explains Raymond W Copson, a researcher for the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division of the Congressional Research Service, ‘although some nongovernment specialists doubted that troubled Sudan would prove very useful to the fundamentalist cause over the long term’.

In a sense, the anti-Communist logic of containment of the Soviet Union during the Cold War era may be in the process of being replaced by an anti-Islamic variant focused specifically on the variety of fundamentalist regimes in the Middle East and North Africa.

Although it is important to recognise, as the globalists do, the contributing role that external powers can play in a particular conflict, a ‘regionalist’ perspective should constitute the core of the Clinton administration’s foreign policy initiatives in the Third World. According to the regionalist perspective, local issues and concerns, not adherence to the ideology of some foreign power, are the primary reasons for conflict and revolution in the Third World. Specifically, regionalists argue that one must deemphasise the external dimension of conflict in favour of its internal economic, cultural, and political roots. In this fashion, the conflict becomes legitimate in its own right and lends itself to resolution based on internal reform. This is not to say, however, that external powers—whether a Communist Soviet Union of the 1980s, a non-Communist Russia of the 1990s, or radical Third World powers, such as Libya, Iran, or the Sudan—cannot exacerbate or profit from revolutionary upheaval within a given Third World country. Rather, this evidence underscores the misplaced emphasis on these external powers as the causes for regional turmoil, once the social, economic, and political conditions for revolution are ripe.

The administrations of Presidents John F Kennedy and Jimmy Carter were somewhat representative of this regionalist emphasis. Both deviated from the dominant Cold War viewpoint that revolutions were caused primarily by external Communist aggression by centering on the internal causes of upheaval and the need for structural reform to alleviate them. Despite these reformist interludes, both administrations’ attempts at resolving the internal conditions that breed insurgency failed because, like their predecessors, Kennedy and Carter still favoured excluding leftist groups from political participation. As aptly explained by specialists of US foreign policy toward Central America, genuine structural reform, and hence any defusing of a guerrilla threat, remains ‘highly unlikely as long as the left is automatically to be excluded from political participation’.

The case study of El Salvador is especially instructive. A reform-minded junta took power there in October 1979, aspiring to initiate reformist changes that had the potential of alleviating the country’s growing guerrilla insurgency. The junta accepted leaders from the centrist opposition and was willing to carry out a dialogue with the radical left with the idea of including them in a future reconciliation government, but they were soon stymied by rightist elements within the military. Although politically willing to move against the rightist elements (a group whose power had to be broken before genuine reform could
take place), the junta hesitated for lack of support from the Carter administration. Despite its advocacy of social reform, Washington ‘ balked at the October junta’s willingness to bring the popular organisations into the government and to seek an accord with the guerrillas’, inevitably leading to a continuing stalemate in the guerrilla war.\^45 When successor governments in the 1980s attempted to initiate agrarian reform—one of the key problems fueling the conflict—the net result was failure: a still powerful right resisted, and the left, still disenfranchised politically, responded with increasing guerrilla attacks. Although favouring social reform, Carter’s reliance on the Cold War precept of limiting leftist participation mitigated its potential benefits. This trend was exacerbated by the Reagan administration’s overwhelming commitment to a military, as opposed to a negotiated, settlement of the conflict.

One case during the Cold War era stood out as the exception to the traditional US reflex to limit leftist participation: the transition from white minority to black majority rule in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), even though this ensured a regime dominated by the Marxist Patriotic Front (PF). The case is significant for three reasons: (a) A more ideological approach would have eschewed supporting the PF because of its obvious Communist links and outspoken preference of its leaders for Marxism; (b) the United States recognised the legitimacy of the guerrilla struggle and that its resolution depended on internal political and economic reforms; and (c) the United States recognised the positive role to be played by the radical left in the reform equation. Despite the Marxist rhetoric of Zimbabwe’s Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, he clearly has followed a pragmatic policy of socioeconomic reform and maintenance of ties with the West—underscoring that ideology should not be the yardstick by which the United States determines enemies or allies in the Third World. Most important, US willingness to involve the left in meaningful political participation where it previously had been denied a role demonstrated that such participation could be the key to alleviating long-term guerrilla insurgency.

These lessons provide the basis for reassessing traditional US responses to radical guerrilla insurgencies in the emerging post-Cold War era. In the case of El Salvador, for example, the Bush administration’s support for a negotiated settlement reflected the growing recognition among policymakers (particularly those in Congress) that the guerrilla insurgency was driven by lack of social reform (ie, legitimate, unfulfilled popular needs) and not by external forces, such as the former Soviet Union and Cuba. Although massive US economic and military aid (approximately $4 billion during the 1980s) was able to prevent a short-term victory by the guerrillas, in the long run it merely strengthened those forces in the government opposed to reform and contributed to a military stalemate. As demonstrated by the peace accord signed between the Cristiani government of El Salvador and the FMLN guerrilla forces on 16 January 1992, the proper approach of the United States during the 1980s should have been to emphasise its belief in the negotiated resolution of the conflict based on the twin principles of national reconciliation and socioeconomic reform. According to the treaty, the guerrillas agreed to lay down their arms and take part in the democratic process in return for a government commitment to grant an amnesty to guerrilla combatants and to oversee a variety of socioeconomic reforms, such
as the government purchase of lands for distribution to peasants.\textsuperscript{46} Although the primary determinant of the peace process was a recognition by both the government and guerrilla leaderships that neither could militarily prevail in the conflict, a regionalist perspective on the part of the US government at a much earlier stage could have helped shorten the 12-year conflict and avoid many of the over 75,000 largely civilian casualties that resulted.

The Clinton administration should apply this regionalist logic to other examples. In Somalia, for example, policymakers must recognise that historically based clan rivalries—which were exacerbated by the ‘divide-and-rule’ policies of the Siad dictatorship—are central to explaining conflict in that country, and that diplomatic negotiations, as opposed to military force, are the key to resolving intensifying clan conflict. Similarly, the Clinton administration should recognise that the intensification of civil conflict between the various mujahedin guerrilla factions in Afghanistan is fuelled by opposing and hostile interpretations of Islam. Most importantly, policymakers should not lose sight of the fact that conflict in former Yugoslavia is driven by historically based ethnic rivalries which will not be easily silenced by external intervention. The primary theme of the regionalist approach is that local issues and concerns, not adherence to the ideology of some foreign power, are the primary reasons for conflict and revolution. As a result, the Clinton administration should focus primarily on the local level for both the causes and, ultimately, the resolution of any given conflict.

\textit{(3) Need for greater tolerance of social change}

Despite the heritage of the United States as a revolutionary nation that fought against oppression and external control, US policymakers have consistently failed to understand the growth of this phenomenon in the Third World. Although the original intent of the Monroe Doctrine, as enunciated in 1823, was to protect Central American revolutions from external influence, these revolutions, and the economic and political instability that accompanied them, were increasingly viewed by US policymakers as injurious to US interests.\textsuperscript{47} This regional antirevolutionary propensity became globalised and fused with a virulent anti-Communism as the US embarked on an ideological competition with the Soviet Union at the end of World War II. The net result was that all US administrations during the Cold War era were hostile in varying degrees to revolutionary change in the Third World.

A critical element of US opposition to revolutionary movements during the Cold War era was the mistaken assumption that revolutionary elites were extremely vulnerable to the political wishes of a dominant external power (such as the former Soviet Union) in the sense of becoming a ‘tool’ for international Communism. The \textit{Pentagon Papers}, for example, dismiss the possibility that Ho Chi Minh or Mao Zedong could be both nationalists and Communists.\textsuperscript{48} Despite the more sophisticated view of the fragmented nature of international Communism that existed in Washington in the 1980s—a result primarily of US recognition of the enduring Sino-Soviet split—US policymakers still viewed with suspicion Third World leaders seeking close relationships with the Soviet Union. This ‘tool-for-Communism’ thesis was dubious at best. Although Soviet
allies such as Cuba surely followed the Soviet lead when such a course was viewed in Cuba’s own national interests, these common interests should not have been construed as Soviet control or ability to dictate policy. History is replete with examples of former Soviet allies—including China, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Somalia, and the Sudan—that expelled the Soviets when their presence became inimical to the client states’ foreign policy interests. In Third World politics, self-interest and nationalism remain stronger than ideological affinity.

The primary fault with the ideological focus of US opposition to revolutionary movements during the Cold War era is that opposing ideologies do not in and of themselves preclude a mutually beneficial relationship. Despite far-right conservative demands to the contrary, the Reagan administration under the guidance of Secretary of State George P Shultz and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester A Crocker provided extensive economic and military aid to the Marxist government of Mozambique, a policy continued under the Bush administration that contributed to that government’s abandonment of Marxism as the guiding principle for economic and political organisation. As demonstrated by this case, policymakers should not automatically dismiss positive relations with a revolutionary regime simply because of the stated ideological goals of its leaders. Concrete actions rather than the ideological makeup of the regime, whether monarchist, socialist, Marxist, democratic, or some variant thereof, should be the basis for any future relationship. Positive steps by any given revolutionary regime should be met with equal enthusiasm on the US side.

However, rather than emulate the example of US foreign policy toward Mozambique, the United States generally has sought a confrontational policy with revolutionary nationalist regimes, especially when they have overthrown former pro-US regimes. Often the relationship between the United States and the revolutionary regime in this context is at first strained. In the case of Nicaragua, the Sandinista leadership was suspicious of US attitudes toward the revolution, primarily because of past US support for a string of Somoza dictatorships and previous intervention in Latin America, whereas the United States feared that the Sandinista regime would become ‘another Cuba’, providing forward bases for Soviet forces and attempting to expand its revolution throughout Central America by force. Yet fears should not become the basis for foreign policy; when they do, they create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The parallels between the counterproductive US efforts to overthrow both the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions are especially instructive. In both of these cases, the United States, fearful that revolutionary leaders would become the tools of Soviet intervention in the Western hemisphere, employed various instruments of coercion—ranging from diplomatic isolation to the support of paramilitary guerrillas—in an effort to derail their revolutions. In the case of Nicaragua, the primary problem with the interventionist approach was that it underestimated the popular support of the Sandinista regime and the legitimacy of the 1979 revolution. The same mistake was made with Castro’s Cuba, and over 30 years of confrontation with that regime has achieved little if any benefit for US foreign policy. Most important, continued US intervention, coupled with the very real fear of a direct US invasion, provided both regimes with strong
incentives to seek closer security relationships with the Soviet Union—the exact opposite of what Washington said it was trying to achieve.

A more desirable way of dealing with radical social change in the Third World that should be emulated by the Clinton administration was demonstrated in 1991 by Washington’s response to the revolutionary overthrow of Mengistu Haile Mariam, a self-proclaimed Marxist dictator who ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991. As guerrilla advances during the first four months of 1991 made it increasingly clear that Mengistu’s days were numbered, the United States intensified its involvement in negotiations between the Ethiopian government and the guerrilla opposition by sending a high-level delegation to the Ethiopian capital that included Irving Hicks, deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs; Robert C Frasure, a member of the NSC; and Rudy Boschwitz, a former Republican senator from Minnesota who acted as President Bush’s personal envoy. In addition to meeting with Mengistu, both Hicks and Frasure travelled to Khartoum, the capital of the Sudan, to meet with the leaders of the Tigrean People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF), the two major guerrilla armies seeking the overthrow of the Mengistu regime. The level of US involvement in these negotiations intensified when, in the aftermath of Mengistu’s departure from power on 21 May 1991, for political exile in Zimbabwe, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Cohen flew to London to mediate personally between the guerrilla factions and a rapidly collapsing Ethiopian government led by Mengistu’s vice-president, Lieutenant General Tesfaye Gebre-Kidan.

The net result of US involvement was a significant contribution to an orderly transfer of power in Ethiopia that largely avoided the bloodshed associated with US policy disasters in Somalia and Liberia. (In both of these cases, US-supported leaders were driven from power by coalitions of guerrilla forces that, after achieving initial victories, presided over the escalation of ethnically or clan-based violence in 1991 that continues as of 1993.) Most important, rather than making ideology the guiding principle of future US-Ethiopian relations, the US State Department underscored the importance of creating some type of legitimate democracy in Ethiopia. As succinctly summarised by Cohen, ‘No democracy, no cooperation’.52

(4) Setting strict standards for the application of force

The role of force within the international system has dramatically changed since the end of World War II. First, the evolution of unwritten norms—what some authors have labelled ‘international regimes’—has advanced in the direction of increasingly constraining the circumstances under which the utilisation of force is both necessary and acceptable. For example, when the government of Nicaragua did not pay its debts in the 1930s, the United States sent in the US Marines to force payment. Yet it is extremely difficult to conceive of Washington in 1993 dispatching the US Marines should either Mexico or Brazil decide to default on its substantial loan repayments to the United States. A more important constraint is found in the evolution of the Third World itself, whereby former colonial empires have evolved into a system of independent states of
widely varying and increasing levels of power. Although the former colonial powers and the US still predominate militarily, there can be no doubt of the increasing diffusion of power within the international system as individual Third World countries acquire more sophisticated weapons systems.

The primary challenge of the Clinton administration is to assess the constraints imposed by the changing international system and establish a set of guidelines that outline those circumstances in which the use of force is both a legitimate and useful tool of intervention. A brief comparison of US paramilitary aid to guerrilla forces in Afghanistan and Nicaragua during the 1980s under the rubric of the Reagan Doctrine provides several tentative guidelines:

- **Majority support with the target country.** The popular or unpopular nature of the target Third World regime is especially crucial to successful US intervention. In Afghanistan, popular feelings were almost unanimous in desiring a Soviet withdrawal from their country, and traditional Afghani nationalism ensured a steady stream of recruits to carry out a 'jihad' (holy war) against what were perceived as 'infidel' invaders. In Nicaragua, however, the Sandinistas were ushered into power on the back of a popularly based revolutionary movement, whereas the contras, primarily because of the great number of Somoza sympathisers among their ranks, were rejected by the majority of the population as an artificial creation of Washington.

- **Majority regional and international support.** A second gauge of the legitimacy and the probability of success of an interventionist policy is its level of regional and international support. In Afghanistan, US paramilitary efforts not only were supported by traditional regional allies, such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but also by Communist China and revolutionary Iran. Moreover, a 1987 vote in the UN General Assembly indicated overwhelming international support for a Soviet withdrawal (123 voted in favour, 19 were opposed, and 11 abstained). In sharp contrast, US paramilitary intervention in Nicaragua was opposed by the majority of nations within the region and the international system. For example, the Contadora nations led by Mexico, and the Central American nations led by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, denounced US paramilitary intervention, and sought instead to promote a diplomatic dialogue with Nicaragua.

- **International law.** Although international law may be ignored with relative impunity by nations pursuing self-interested policies, there is no denying its importance as a legitimising factor, especially as to what interventionist goals and actions are acceptable within the international community. In the case of Afghanistan, accepted precepts of international law clearly branded as illegal the Soviet invasion and occupation of that country, legitimising aid to insurgents seeking to force a Soviet withdrawal. In the case of Nicaragua, the International Court of Justice ruled that US support of the contras violated international legal norms, and subsequently ordered the immediate termination of such activities—an edict the Reagan administration chose to ignore by claiming that the court had no jurisdiction to rule in the matter. ‘When seen retrospectively’, explains Christopher C Joyner, one of the most noted scholars of the relationship between international law and US interventionist practices,
‘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.’53

Although these three guidelines cannot guarantee a successful interventionist episode—indeed, success depends on a host of factors, including the goal pursued—their combination at least enhances the possibility for success and most certainly ensures that policies foster a legitimacy that will allow the Clinton administration to lead both regionally and within the international system. If we apply these three guidelines to the Bush administration’s handling of the Persian Gulf War, it quickly becomes clear why the ultimate US decision to use military force to restore the independence of Kuwait was both successful and legitimate in the eyes of many international commentators: (a) According to accepted precepts of international law, Iraq illegally invaded, occupied, and annexed Kuwait; (b) the vast majority of the Kuwaiti people desired an Iraqi withdrawal; and (c) the use of force was overwhelmingly supported both regionally and within the international system, most notably in terms of a UN Security Council resolution demanding Iraq’s unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. An important key to the success of US intervention in the Persian Gulf was the Bush administration’s willingness to act in a multilateral framework in coordination with other nations, and not according to some ideological litmus test. Although critics can rightfully question the Bush administration’s motives—the protection of oil interests as opposed to the more dubious goal of ‘restoring democracy’ in Kuwait—and its hasty resort to the use of military force rather than giving sanctions a longer time to work, US efforts nonetheless were based on an extremely well-crafted coalition of regional and international forces that transcended both ideological and religious lines.

Any discussion of US intervention abroad must also take into account what has become known as the ‘Vietnam syndrome’—a clear and pervasive reluctance on the part of the US public no longer automatically to accept arguments promoting direct US military intervention (and thus US casualties) in Third World lands. In this regard, the dramatic levels of popular support for Operation Desert Storm seemed to indicate the emergence of a new interventionist consensus in which the public increasingly is willing to perceive the United States as the guarantor of peace and stability throughout the world. In a shift that began with popular support for the 1983 invasion of Grenada (a small island state with almost no military forces in the Caribbean) that was similarly forthcoming for the 1989 military invasion of Panama (a larger country with a medium-sized military force in Central America), the massive US-led military operation against Iraq indicated the reemergence of a trend that during the Cold War era had led to US involvement in the highly costly and divisive Vietnam War. Yet it is important to remember that each of these three military operations conformed to the central dictum of the Vietnam syndrome that is still very prevalent in the popular psyche, and therefore should be strictly adhered to by the Clinton administration: military intervention must be short in duration and low in the numbers of US casualties.
(5) Adoption of a consistent policy toward allies

Just as ideology historically has led US policymakers to oppose leftist regimes blindly, so too has it led these same individuals to support right-wing dictatorships whose leaders joined the United States in its anti-Communist crusade. Examples include Fulgencio Batista of Cuba, Ferdinand E Marcos of the Philippines, the Shah of Iran, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti, and Anastasio Somoza Debayle in Nicaragua. The often disregarded long-term problem with this anti-Communist strategy was that the élites who became the ‘bastions for democracy’, and therefore staunch US allies, have usually been traditional dictators who lack popular support, concern themselves primarily with personal aggrandisement, and therefore demonstrate a general disregard for social reform or broadly shared development policies.

The core of the problem is that these dictators (whether of the right or the left) seek legitimacy in the form of external economic and military aid in the international arena rather than attempt to build a popular basis for support among their own people. When the United States has been willing to fill the role of patron by dispensing generous amounts of aid, the dictator’s need to foster popular domestic legitimacy is sorely circumscribed. Likewise, as dissent against the regime grows, the tendency is toward greater repression than reform. The negative result of backing authoritarian rulers more willing to repress than reform has been a long string of revolutions that have vented an accompanying anti-US rage, most notably in the case of the Iranian revolution in which the government of the CIA-installed shah was overthrown by forces led by the Ayatollah Khomeini.54

Experts of US foreign policy toward Central America have formulated a set of straightforward, yet stringent, guidelines for stemming the cycle of repression and resultant anti-US revolutions that the Clinton administration could apply to other regions of the Third World.55 First, apart from humanitarian assistance, which should be distributed ‘strictly on the basis of need’, economic aid should be withheld from regimes ‘determined to maintain deep social inequality or that are gross and consistent violators of internationally recognised human rights’. The authors have warned that when dealing with such regimes, the United States ‘must guard against the temptation to reward minimum changes that are no more than cosmetic efforts to influence US aid policy’. Yet when countries show a genuine commitment to broadly shared development programmes that attack the root causes of social inequality—such as land reform, literacy, and rural health care—the United States should be willing to lend a helping hand.56

The guidelines for military assistance are even more stringent. This type of aid, according to the experts, ‘should be limited to governments that enjoy some popular basis of legitimacy so that US aid will not be used for the repression of popular dissent—a more restrictive criterion than the simple absence of gross and consistent human rights violations’. In this regard, the authors note only two legitimate needs for military equipment that the United States should be willing to meet: defence of the nation against ‘external aggression’, and defence of democratic institutions against ‘internal violence by a small, well-armed minority’.55 The necessity for a popular basis of legitimacy (not necessarily a
multiparty system) is extremely important. In instances in which this attribute is missing, US military support risks becoming the basis for internal repression and control, again working counter to long-term US interests in the Third World.

The key to this restructured foreign aid programme, which inevitably requires the downgrading of ‘special relationships’ with authoritarian regimes (such as Mobutu Sese Seko’s Zaire) that are holdovers of the Cold War era, does not mean that the United States should adopt an isolationist foreign policy. Rather, it underscores the necessity of committing valuable resources only to those nations sharing an interest in promoting and maintaining societies built on popular consent and broadly shared development. In this sense, the United States should actively cultivate close relationships with regimes carrying out these programmes, assisting financially when the need arises. The primary rationale for this approach is that a regime committed to the principles of broadly shared development and respectful of the human rights of its people inevitably enhances its domestic support and represents a positive, long-term investment for the United States.

However, a tension has always existed between Washington’s often-stated preference for democracy in the Third World and perceived national security interests. For example, when during the Cold War era the ideal of democracy clashed with the national security objective of containing Communism, containment often prevailed at the expense of democracy. It is for this reason that a succession of US administrations were willing to downplay the internal shortcomings of a variety of Third World allies in favour of their strong support for US policies of antiCommunism and containment. Even the Carter administration’s human rights programme, which questioned the utility of identifying the United States with inherently unstable dictatorships, was compromised by strategic exceptions; when the pursuit of human rights clashed with perceived national security interests, especially in proven allies of strategic importance (such as Iran, the Philippines, South Korea, and Zaire), national security interests prevailed. Yet as the United States learned the hard way in Ethiopia, Iran, and Nicaragua (that is, in other nations of so-called strategic concern, past or present), ignoring the repressive nature of regimes that lack popular support is a surefire way to lose these strategic assets in the long run, as well as to foster the emergence of governments potentially hostile to the United States.

Although expectations initially were high among US policy analysts and academics that Washington could focus on the normative goal of promoting democracy and human rights in the emerging post-Cold War international system, the US response to events in Algeria in 1991 seems to indicate that containment of Islamic fundamentalism has replaced antiCommunism as at least one security objective that overrides preferences for democratisation. In sharp contrast to rising US denunciations of authoritarianism in other regions of Africa, the Bush administration, in a policy stance that apparently has been retained by the Clinton administration, remained silent when the Algerian army annulled the first multiparty elections in Algeria since independence and assumed control of the country in a military coup d’état. The reason for US silence was not a firm belief in the Algerian generals as the guarantors of
democracy, or as the protectors of the human rights of the Algerian people, but rather was due to the fact that an Islamic fundamentalist party—the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)—was on the verge of taking power through the ballot box. 60 

A further reality of the international system of the emerging post-Cold War era is that there exists a wide range of authoritarian governments of both the right and the left that systematically abuse the rights of their people, but which are not reliant upon the United States for either economic or military aid. As the United States cannot and should not be the guardian of all the countries of the world, the Clinton administration should maintain no more and no less than proper relations with these countries, withhold any type of military and economic aid, and make its abhorrence of their human rights transgressions known within the international system. In extreme cases when the international system is confronted with a regime that grossly violates accepted international standards of human rights, however, the Clinton administration should join other nations in adopting multilateral sanctions to change the nature of that regime. As the United States should not casually be in the business of dictating the structure of Third World regimes, sanctions should adhere to the same rigorous formula of legitimacy as was earlier applied to the use of military force: (1) The action should comply with internationally accepted standards of international law; (2) the sanctions should be supported by the majority of the target nation’s population; and (3) the sanctions should be supported overwhelmingly both regionally and within the international system. Again, the key to this type of policy is that the Clinton administration should act in a multilateral framework in coordination with other nations, and not according to some self-prescribed ideological litmus test.

The case study of US relations with the apartheid regime of South Africa serves as a useful example of when sanctions should be adopted. 61 Embracing a political system in which minority white ethnic groups composing roughly 15% of the population historically have denied political franchise to a largely black majority composing 73% of the population (Asians and people of mixed race make up the remainder), South Africa became the target of increasing international condemnation and isolation from the 1950s to the 1980s. In the case of the United States, condemnation of the racially based apartheid system culminated in congressional passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, legislation that was repealed in 1991 when the Bush administration determined that the white minority had initiated an irreversible process designed to enfranchise politically all ethnic and racial groups within the country. The 1986 legislation clearly corresponded with the three previously noted criteria for intervention. Not only were the sanctions within the bounds of the international legal tenet of humanitarian intervention, but they were supported by a significant portion of South Africa’s black population, as well as regionally and internationally in a diplomatic coalition that transcended ideological lines.

(6) Greater support for multilateral diplomacy and international organisations

An extremely fruitful outcome of the end of the Cold War was the lessening of superpower tensions throughout the various regions of the Third World and the
intensification of superpower negotiations to resolve regional conflicts. An early example of what such cooperation could yield was demonstrated by the 1988 US-brokered accords that linked South Africa’s withdrawal from Namibia and independence for that country in exchange for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola—a country that served as a proxy East-West battlefield in which over 341,000 people (mostly civilians) died during the 1970s and the 1980s. In an event of historic proportions, Namibia on 21 March 1990, achieved independence under the leadership of African nationalist Sam Nujoma as one of the few multiracial, multiparty democracies on the African continent. Two important ingredients that facilitated the resolution of this long-festering regional conflict were Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Crocker’s tireless efforts to make the United States a peace broker in the negotiating process, as well as the Soviet Union’s willingness to pressure its Angolan and Cuban allies to accept a negotiated settlement.62 Both of these ingredients—which built upon the crucial willingness of regional African participants to seek a negotiated settlement—obviously were by-products of a decline in Cold War tensions beginning in the late 1980s.

The example of Namibia is not unique. Rather, it is indicative of the benefits to be derived in the emerging post-Cold War era from the peaceful pursuit of conflict resolution based on multilateral diplomacy. In addition to the peaceful settlement of disputes in southern Africa, one can point to relevant examples in other regions of the Third World: the September 1991 superpower accord prohibiting any further US and Soviet (now Russian) aid to military factions in Afghanistan; the October 1991 Cambodian peace agreement in preparation for multiparty elections in 1993; and the January 1992 treaty ending the 12-year civil war in El Salvador. As demonstrated in these and other cases, the lessening of Cold War tensions has ushered in a new international environment of compromise that can facilitate the ending of bloody conflicts through diplomatic, as opposed to military, means.

However, the decline and fragmentation of the Soviet Union has led to a debate over whether the United States should adopt a unilateral or a multilateral approach to problems as they arise within the international system. In a much-cited article by Charles Krauthammer, the decline of the Soviet Union is described as having contributed to the creation of a ‘unipolar’ international system in which the United States—the ‘unchallenged superpower’—can freely lay down the rules of world order.63 Critics of the unilateral approach instead focus on the domestic and international constraints still faced by US policymakers in the post-Cold War era. ‘Even if Krauthammer is correct that at present the international system is unipolar—and he is far too quick to dismiss the significance of other players—there is little in the history of international relations to suggest that such a phenomenon could be sustained for a significant length of time’, explains Ted Galen Carpenter, director of foreign policy analysis at the Cato Institute, in a critique of Krauthammer’s thesis. ‘Attempting to specify and execute its own definition of a new world order would seem to be precisely the kind of conduct that would accelerate the efforts of other countries to balance Washington’s power.’ Carpenter concludes ‘Predictably, such pretensions have already provoked apprehension and hostility
among political and intellectual elites in nations as diverse as France, India, and Japan.\textsuperscript{144}

The most effective course for the Clinton administration to follow in the emerging post-Cold War era is that of building a regional and international consensus for its interventionist policies in the Third World. A critical element of this approach should be the recognition of the valuable roles to be played by the United Nations and regional organisations, such as the Organisation of American States (OAS), particularly in terms of facilitating the end of regional conflicts. Specifically, US policymakers should take advantage of the consensus-building functions achievable through multilateral negotiations within the context of the UN or regional organisations. In the case of Cambodia, the UN served as an indispensable forum for securing the October 1991 peace agreement in preparation for UN-supervised elections in 1993. Similarly, approval from the UN Security Council was extremely influential in securing a truly international coalition against Iraq. These cases suggest that interventionist practices based upon international law and the creation of an international consensus not only enhance the possibility for success but also foster a legitimacy that will allow the United States to lead within the international system in an emerging post-Cold War world.

\textbf{The Clinton administration and the future of US foreign policy}

For the Clinton administration to lead with confidence during the last decade of the 20th century requires the basic redesigning of US interventionist practices, as outlined here. In addition to seeking a greater partnership with Congress in the making of foreign policy, the White House should reject the globalist principles of the Cold War era and adopt a series of regionalist-oriented guidelines for managing US involvement in Third World conflicts. Specifically, the Clinton administration needs to demonstrate greater levels of tolerance and understanding of social change than was evident during the Cold War era, and must fashion strict standards for the application of force. Equally important, the White House should devise a consistent policy for dealing with Third World allies, as well as strengthen Washington’s commitment to multilateral diplomacy, particularly within the frameworks of the United Nations and regional organisations. Although these guidelines may not always guarantee the success of the Clinton administration’s foreign policy in the Third World, they raise the possibility for success substantially and most certainly ensure the legitimacy that is necessary for leadership both regionally and within the international system.

\textbf{Notes}

\textsuperscript{1} For an overview of the variety of interventionist tools employed by the US throughout the Third World during the Cold War era, see Peter J Schraeder (ed), \textit{Intervention into the 1990s: US Foreign Policy in the Third World}, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992.

3 Ibid., p 2.
10 See Bernard Wysocki, Jr, ‘Returning to the Third World: emerging nations revive as investment hot spots, but the risks are hard to assess’, Wall Street Journal, 9 September 1991, pp R1, R2.
16 See Klare, ‘Deadly convergence’.
21 Ibid.
22 For an overview as to how alliances in particular lead to pressures for US involvement and intervention in the Third World even in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, see Carpenter, A Search for Enemies.
26 For a good overview of the debate, see Francis D Wormuth and Edwin B Firmage, To Chain the Dog of War: The War Power of Congress in History and Law, Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1986.
29 Harry Howe Ransom, ‘Covert intervention’, in Schraeder, Intervention into the 1990s, p 129.
30 Sharpe, ‘The real cause’, p 35, summarises nicely several of these views.
35 For an overview of the globalist argument, see Charles F Doran, ‘The globalist-regionalist debate’, in Schraeder, Intervention into the 1990s, pp 55–74.
36 For discussion, see Stephen Van Evera, ‘American intervention in the Third World: less would be better’,
‘IT’S THE THIRD WORLD STUPID!’


41 For an overview of the regionalist argument, see Doran, ‘The globalist-regionalist debate’, pp 55–74.


43 Ibid, p 304.

44 The discussion of El Salvador is drawn from ibid, esp. ch. 3.


54 For a general overview, see Martin Stamiland (ed), Falling Friends: The United States & Regime Change Abroad, Boulder: Westview, 1991. For an analysis of the specific case of Iran, see Gary Sick, All Fall Down: America’s Tragic Encounter With Iran, New York: Random House, 1985.

55 See Blachman, Leogrande and Sharpe, Confronting Revolution, ch. 14.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 See, for example, the case study of the US-Zairian special relationship as described in Michael G Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos? The United States and Zaire, 1960–1990, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991.


