INTERVENTION INTO THE 1990s

U.S. Foreign Policy in the Third World

Second Edition

edited by

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U.S. Intervention in Perspective

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The rise of the Cold War was a critical driving force in the spread of U.S. interventionist practices in the Third World during the post–World War II era. In sharp contrast to the relatively constrained geographical focus of the Monroe Doctrine (the Western Hemisphere) during the nineteenth century, the Cold War era was marked by a variety of presidential doctrines—beginning with the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and culminating in the Reagan Doctrine of the 1980s—declaring the self-appointed right of the United States to intervene throughout the globe. Whereas an expansionist Europe was the target of President James Monroe, various strategies of containment of the Soviet Union and communism became the cornerstone of post–World War II administrations from Presidents Harry S Truman to Ronald Reagan. Several instruments of intervention were brought to bear on this Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union. Foreign economic and military aid, for example, totaled nearly $825 billion from the 1940s to the 1980s. At the other end of the coercive spectrum, direct U.S. military intervention, after a lull in the early post-Vietnam period, witnessed a resurgence under the guise of low-intensity conflict doctrine. By the end of the 1980s, one could also point to a significant expansion of covert action led by a rejuvenated CIA, the application of a formal doctrine of paramilitary intervention to such diverse countries as Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, and Nicaragua, and the existence of over thirty cases of economic sanctions imposed against a variety of Third World regimes. In short, the Third World served as a proxy Cold War battlefield for U.S. policymakers who sought to avoid direct military confrontation with the Soviet Union.

The decline of the Cold War at the beginning of the 1990s dramatically called into question an interventionist foreign policy built upon the twin themes of anticommunism and containment. The primary perceived adversary of the United States in the Third World had followed in the footsteps of other great empires throughout history, fragmenting into a host of smaller, independent, and, most important of all, noncommunist countries. In a noteworthy example of how perceptions had dramatically changed since as recently as the mid-1980s when President Reagan spoke of the former Soviet
Union as the “evil empire,” the Bush administration announced on January 22, 1992, that it intended to seek approximately $645 million in aid for its former enemy. As demonstrated by the Bush administration’s handling of the Persian Gulf war, however, the decline of the communist threat did not necessarily mean a concomitant decline in U.S. interventionist practices in the Third World. Rather, it appears that the Bush administration’s desire to build a “new world order” in the post–Cold War era is predicated on a highly interventionist foreign policy designed to deter a variety of perceived threats within the Third World. Among these are rising ethnic conflict, Islamic fundamentalism, nuclear proliferation, chemical weapons production, and the spread of international drug cartels.

Despite this trend toward greater interventionism during both the Cold War and post–Cold War eras, two parallel trends—one domestic and one international—have placed more constraints on the successful application of U.S. power in the Third World. In the domestic realm, a fragmented political culture is no longer content, as it was during the 1950s and the 1960s, to follow the lead of the executive branch in support of an interventionist foreign policy. 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. The net result of these trends is that U.S. interventionist practices may become increasingly counterproductive and costly if policymakers fail 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 democratization,” cautions J. William Fulbright, former U.S. senator (1945–1974) and well-known commentator on U.S. foreign policy. “Only through costly experience have we begun to realize 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.”

My purpose in this chapter is to offer a set of guidelines for U.S. foreign policy in the emerging post–Cold War era that build upon both past successes and past failures. These guidelines are not intended to be steadfast rules regardless of history or context, but rather to serve as the basis for reassessing nearly fifty years of U.S. interventionist practices in the Third World. In this sense, my primary purpose in this chapter is to contribute to the ongoing debate over what should constitute a proper U.S. foreign policy, yet I recognize that there will forever be differences of opinion and interpretation among individuals of integrity. It is only by presenting these points for subsequent discussion that a policy consensus—the basis for an effective foreign policy in a democracy—can be achieved.
NATIONAL SECURITY VERSUS DEMOCRACY

One of the most significant dilemmas facing U.S. policymakers in the post-World War II period, especially in the wake of Vietnam, has been the balancing of perceived national security interests with the need for openness and public debate required by democracy in the formulation of foreign policy. As noted in several chapters, inherent in this balancing act is the growing conflict between the executive branch and Congress over the role that each should play in the foreign-policy-making process. In the words of one observer, there exists a "chronic tension" between the U.S. democratic domestic political system and its nondemocratic national security system.4

In the wake of perceived executive branch excesses related to the foreign conduct of 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 national security bureaucracy elites—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."5

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.6 In the case of the Persian Gulf war, for example, the Bush administration moved nearly 400,000 troops to the Persian Gulf region and imposed a complete air and naval blockade on Iraq before seeking a congressional resolution authorizing the use of force. Seeking a congressional resolution of support only on the eve of a UN Security Council-imposed deadline for Iraq’s withdrawal from Kuwait (after which military force was justified by the UN), the Bush administration clearly sought to provide Congress with a fait accompli. Although the Bush administration’s authorization of Operation Desert Storm against Iraq in January 1991 ultimately was preceded by a congressional resolution supporting the use of force and, from the positive vantage point of domestic politics, resulted in extremely light U.S. casualties, the White House tendency to resist congressional attempts at oversight has often had tragic results. Refusing to recognize the constitutionality of the War Powers Act, for example, and subsequently failing to submit policy to the scrutiny of public debate, President Ronald Reagan unilaterally acted to send the U.S.
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 inevitably led to hostile confrontations with Iran.

More significant is when questionable executive branch actions have impinged directly upon the domestic democratic rights of the U.S. population. In the case of the administration of President Richard M. Nixon, 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.”

As discussed in Chapter 16, the Reagan administration resorted to similar illegal tactics against the U.S. public to further its paramilitary goals in Nicaragua. These various tactics, declared illegal in the Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair, included pressure on the U.S. media not to print stories; lobbying tactics to manipulate U.S. public opinion against the Sandinistas and, therefore, to achieve congressional support for the contras; and “white propaganda” operations—the planting of false articles in the U.S. press. Indeed, 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 Amendment. As Harry Howe Ransom perceptively concludes in Chapter 7, the Iran-contra episode revealed “the corruptive impact of secrecy, which invites serious violations of law and moral standards. . . . Invisible government, based upon a doctrine of ends justifying means, had become a reality.”

The question remains how to ensure accountability and legitimacy within the foreign-policy-making 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.” 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.

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 U.S. forces from the combat zone within ninety days if, after sixty 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. 10

A second amendment would create a “permanent consultative body” comprising the majority and minority leaders of both houses, 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 among themselves an appropriate legislative response to the situation at hand.” And a third amendment would require advance congressional approval of any military or covert action save for three specific exceptions: to repel attacks against U.S. armed forces located outside U.S. territory; to repel direct attacks against U.S. territory; and to rescue U.S. citizens being held hostage in foreign countries. 11

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 (1) 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”; (2) advance congressional approval would legitimize U.S. intervention once initiated, fostering bipartisanship and a united front to both allies and adversaries; and (3) prior approval would aid in preventing “the backlash from Congress that inevitably follows a foreign policy failure.” 12 In short, these reforms would contribute to relieving the “chronic tension” between justified national security concerns and the requirements of democratic society, as well as helping to resolve what Jerel A. Rosati refers to in Chapter 10 as the “crisis of leadership” of the executive branch. With policies built upon the solid foundations of congressional and public support, the president could lead with confidence, charting a consistent and coherent foreign policy in the Third World.

THE REGIONALIST-GLOBALIST DEBATE

The most important guideline of any future foreign policy is that policymakers must discard the ill-conceived globalist notion that external forces—whether a communist Soviet Union of the 1980s, a noncommunist Russia of the 1990s, or a radical leader, such as Libya’s Muammar Qaddafi—are the chief provocateurs of conflict and instability in the Third World. As Harry Piotrowski explains in Chapter 12, one of the primary flaws of the
administration of President Truman was the failure to recognize that communist movements often acted independently of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, an oversight that contributed to the ill-founded conception of a monolithic and expansionistic communist bloc controlled by Moscow. Indeed, the Cold War era witnessed the growing polycentrism of communism in the Third World and the growth of highly nationalist leaders, such as China’s Mao Zedong and Yugoslavia’s Joseph Tito, quite independent of Moscow’s wishes. Yet official tunnel vision, seemingly only capable of viewing social change through East-West lenses, ensured a highly reactive policy constrained by the blinders of anticommunism.

In a manifestation of this tunnel vision, the United States assumed the right to overthrow even democratically elected Third World regimes that were perceived in Washington as being led by radical nationalist or leftist leaders. Documented examples of countries where such regimes were targeted for destabilization 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 studies of Iran and Guatemala are especially instructive in that U.S. intervention ultimately contributed to long-term results that were quite sobering: The CIA-installed shah of Iran was ultimately overthrown in a revolution that gave rise to the extremely anti-U.S. Islamic fundamentalist regime headed by the Ayatollah Khomeini, and Guatemala continues to suffer from a legacy of military dictatorships and guerrilla insurgencies. The crisis generated by U.S. intervention in Iran and the potential for future U.S. foreign policy crises in Guatemala suggest that perhaps the United States would have been better off (or at the least no worse off) siding with each country’s democratic, albeit leftist, regime.

Another significant outcome of U.S. success in these two initial attempts at overthrowing leftist regimes was that it gave subsequent administrations a false sense of power and ability to control the nature of other Third World regimes. As Ransom notes in Chapter 7 concerning U.S. intervention in Iran, “the political leadership in Washington drew more about the efficacy of covert action than was warranted from this example. The heady wine of success led them to believe that this was a foreign policy tool that could be applied with equal success in other problem areas of the world.” Similarly, it was the so-called Guatemala model of paramilitary intervention that led U.S. policymakers to assume wrongly that the Bay of Pigs invasion would ignite nationalist uprisings throughout Cuba and lead to the ouster of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. What policymakers of the time failed to understand was that both the Iranian and the Guatemalan regimes represented fragile democratic coalitions with powerful domestic enemies—most notably, disenchanted militaries—that were all too happy to take control in exchange for U.S. economic and military support. As discussed later, Washington was soon to learn that unstable democratic regimes are
much easier to destabilize than regimes governed by revolutionary nationalist movements.

Although it is important to recognize, as the globalists do, the contributing role that external powers can play in a particular conflict, a regionalist perspective should constitute the core of U.S. foreign policy in the Third World during the post–Cold War era. 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 de-emphasize the external dimension of conflict in favor 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.

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 and contemporaries, Kennedy and Carter still favored excluding leftist groups from political participation. As aptly noted by a distinguished group of specialists concerned with the resolution of guerrilla conflict in Central America, genuine structural reform, and hence any defusing of the guerrilla threat, remains “highly unlikely as long as the left is automatically to be excluded from political participation.”

The case of El Salvador may be 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 organizations into the government and to seek an accord with the guerrillas,” inevitably leading to a continuing stalemate in the guerrilla war. 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 favoring 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.

As noted in Chapter 1, one case during the Cold War era stood out as the exception to the traditional U.S. 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: (1) A more ideological approach would have eschewed supporting the PF because of its obvious communist links and outspoken preference of its leaders for Marxism; (2) the United States recognized the legitimacy of the guerrilla struggle and that its resolution depended on internal political and economic reforms; and (3) the United States recognized the positive role to be played by the radical left in the reform equation. Indeed, 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—underscored that ideology should not be the yardstick by which the United States determines enemies or allies in the Third World. Most important, U.S. 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 U.S. responses to left-wing 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 (i.e., legitimate, unfulfilled popular needs) and not by external forces, such as the former Soviet Union and Cuba. Although massive U.S. 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 January 16, 1992, the proper approach of the United States during the 1980s should have been to emphasize 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. 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 U.S. government at a
a negotiated, much earlier stage could have helped shorten the twelve-year conflict and avoid many of the over 75,000 largely civilian casualties that resulted.

### REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE

A historical distrust of even democratically elected leftist regimes and consistent efforts to suppress leftist insurgencies constituted part of a greater dilemma of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War era: Washington’s inability to formulate an effective policy for dealing constructively with revolutionary nationalism and social change. Especially at the height of the Cold War, U.S. policy was excessively driven by ideology: Whereas leftist insurgencies were perceived negatively and were to be suppressed, antileftist insurgencies fighting revolutionary nationalist regimes were perceived positively and were to be supported. The Reagan Doctrine, with its commitment to aiding anticomunist guerrilla insurgencies fighting pro-Soviet Third World regimes, was a manifestation of this point of view.

The primary fault with this ideological focus is that opposing ideologies do not in and of themselves preclude a mutually beneficial relationship. For example, despite conservative demands to the contrary, the Reagan administration under the guidance of Secretary of State George Shultz and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker provided extensive economic and military aid to the Marxist government of Mozambique, a policy continued under the Bush administration that ultimately led to that government’s abandonment of Marxism as the guiding principle for economic and political organization. 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 U.S. side.

Rather than emulate the example of Mozambique, the United States generally has sought a confrontational policy with revolutionary nationalist regimes, especially when they have overthrown former pro-U.S. 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 U.S. attitudes toward the revolution, primarily because of past U.S. 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 U.S. efforts to overthrow both the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions are especially instructive. As was noted in several chapters, the United States, fearful that the revolutionary leaders of both countries would become the tools of Soviet intervention in the Western Hemisphere, employed various instruments of coercion—ranging from diplomatic isolation, to the adoption of economic sanctions, 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 thirty years of confrontation with that regime has achieved little if any benefit for U.S. foreign policy. Most important, continued U.S. intervention, coupled with the very real fear of a direct U.S. invasion, provided both regimes with little recourse other than to seek a closer security relationship with the Soviet Union—the exact opposite of what Washington said it was trying to achieve. In the Cuban case, for example, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev ridiculed as “stupid” U.S. efforts to “drive Castro to the wall,” nonetheless relishing the expected results: “Castro will have to gravitate to us like iron filing to a magnet.”

The paradox of U.S. intervention against radical revolutionary regimes, according to Anthony Lake, former director of policy planning in the U.S. State Department, is that “polls have generally shown that while the [U.S.] public wants success (the defeat of these regimes), it must come at little cost to the United States (that is, involve no great losses through intervention, grain embargoes, or other actions).” Cognizant of this fact, the Reagan and Bush administrations resorted to the lower-cost strategy of paramilitary intervention. Yet, as discussed in Chapter 8, although this type of intervention exhibited the ability to disrupt severely the target country’s economic and political system, it is inadequate if the goal is to overthrow the revolutionary regime by force. Rather than folding in the face of external pressure, both Cuba and Nicaragua were able to exploit the tension to whip up popular support. Moreover, U.S. intervention allowed both revolutionary regimes to more easily silence domestic opponents, concentrate power, and blame Washington for failed domestic economic policies.

A more desirable way of dealing with radical social change in the Third World during the emerging post–Cold War era was nicely 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 traveled to Khartoum, the capital of 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 U.S. involvement in these negotiations intensified when, in the aftermath of Mengistu's departure from power on May 21, 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 Gebre-Kidan.

The net result of U.S. involvement was a significant contribution to an orderly transfer of power in Ethiopia that largely avoided the bloodshed associated with U.S. policy disasters in Somalia and Liberia. (In both of these cases, U.S.-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.) As part of the agreement that received the personal blessing of the United States in the form of a public announcement by Cohen on May 28, 1991, the TPLF took control of Addis Ababa and began putting together a broad coalition government that largely was in place by the beginning of July. The most critical element of the U.S.-sponsored agreement was Washington’s support for a UN-supervised referendum in Eritrea—a northern territory militarily controlled by the EPLF and that had been fighting for independence since the 1960s—within a period of roughly two years to determine if the people of the territory truly desired independence. The decision to support regional self-determination through the ballot box, when officials were fully cognizant of the fact that the outcome most assuredly would be an independent Eritrea, represented a significant change in U.S. foreign policy from its almost unquestioned support from the 1950s to the 1980s for the territorial integrity of Ethiopia. Regardless of the referendum’s outcome, the Africa Bureau made it clear that further U.S. involvement and, most important, the establishment of a foreign aid relationship that went beyond humanitarian relief were dependent on the establishment of some type of representative democracy in Ethiopia.

\section{THE LEGITIMACY OF FORCE}

The problems associated with using force to overthrow revolutionary regimes in Cuba and Nicaragua, short of a direct U.S. invasion, are indicative of what
should constitute an important guideline of U.S. foreign policy during the emerging post–Cold War era: a deemphasis on the role of military force when pursuing long-term goals in the Third World. This should not be taken to the other extreme, however, to mean that the United States must adopt a strict policy of nonintervention. As Ted Galen Carpenter correctly concludes in Chapter 9, “no great power can eschew the use of military force in all circumstances.” Rather, the challenge lies in establishing those circumstances in which the use of force is both a legitimate and useful tool of intervention. A brief comparison of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and Nicaragua provides several tentative guidelines:

1. Majority support within the target country. The popular or unpopular nature of the target Third World regime is especially crucial to successful U.S. 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 atheistic 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 sympathizers among their ranks, were rejected by the majority of the population as an artificial creation of Washington.

2. Majority regional and international support. A second gauge of the legitimacy and the probable success of an interventionist policy is its level of regional and international support. In Afghanistan, the mujahedin enjoyed overwhelming regional and international support. U.S. efforts not only were supported by traditional regional allies, such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but also by communist China and revolutionary Iran. A 1987 vote in the UN General Assembly that overwhelmingly called for a Soviet withdrawal (123 voted in favor, 19 were opposed, and 11 abstained) clearly indicated the substantial level of support enjoyed by the mujahedin.21 U.S. efforts in Nicaragua, to the contrary, were opposed by the majority of nations within the region as well as within the international system, most notably U.S. allies in Europe.22 Most significant were Latin American denunciations of U.S. military efforts to overthrow the Sandinistas. Rather, the Contadora nations, led by Mexico, and the Central American nations, led by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, preferred to pursue a nonmilitary solution to reaching an accommodation with Nicaragua.

3. International law. Although international law prohibiting intervention may be ignored with relative impunity by nations pursuing self-interested policies, as Christopher C. Joyner underscores in Chapter 13, there is no denying its importance as a legitimizing factor (as to what goals and actions are acceptable within the consensual framework of law). In the case of Afghanistan, accepted precepts of international law clearly branded as illegal the Soviet invasion and occupation of that country, legitimizing aid to
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insurgents seeking to force a Soviet withdrawal. In the case of Nicaragua, however, the International Court of Justice ruled that U.S. 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 Joyner, “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.”

Although the combination of these three guidelines cannot, of course, guarantee a successful interventionist episode—indeed, success depends on a host of factors, including the goal pursued—they at least enhance the possibility for success and most certainly ensure that U.S. policies foster a legitimacy that will allow it 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, for example, it quickly becomes clear why the ultimate U.S. decision to use military force to restore the independence of Kuwait was both successful and legitimate in the eyes of most international commentators: (1) According to accepted precepts of international law, Iraq illegally invaded, occupied, and annexed Kuwait; (2) the vast majority of the Kuwaiti people desired an Iraqi withdrawal; and (3) 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 U.S. 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 idealistic 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, U.S. efforts nonetheless were based on an extremely well-crafted coalition of regional and international forces that transcended both ideological and religious lines.

The Persian Gulf war was also significant in terms of its impact on the so-called Vietnam syndrome—a clear and pervasive reluctance on the part of the U.S. public no longer automatically to accept arguments promoting U.S. military intervention (and thus U.S. casualties) in Third World lands. The dramatic levels of popular support for Operation Desert Storm seemed to indicate that the beginnings of a new interventionist consensus has emerged that shows the public increasingly is willing to perceive the United States as the guarantor of peace and stability throughout the world. Indeed, 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 U.S.-led military operation against Iraq indicated the reemergence of a trend that during the Cold War era had led to U.S. involvement in the highly costly and divisive Vietnam War. It is important to remember, however, 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 as well as strictly observed by military planners: The military intervention must be short in duration and low in the numbers of U.S. casualties. It is precisely for this reason that the Bush administration accepted the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and opted for a quick and massive buildup of forces that could assure a quick victory over the Iraqi forces. The true test of what may be an emerging interventionist consensus will occur if and when policymakers err and commit the United States to a military conflict lasting months rather than days or weeks.

Despite the successful outcome of Operation Desert Storm in restoring Kuwait’s independence, U.S. policymakers do not perceive such large-scale military operations against powerful Third World armies—dubbed “mid-intensity conflict” (MIC)—as constituting the primary role of the Defense Department during the emerging post–Cold War era. Rather, as Michael T. Klare succinctly discusses in Chapter 3, the military is instead preparing for a host of military contingencies that fall under the rubric of low-intensity conflict doctrine. Among the most controversial of these, most notably in terms of potentially embroiling U.S. military forces in an extended military engagement abroad, is the growing involvement of the U.S. military in the so-called war on drugs. Specifically, despite initial reservations over becoming involved in what many military planners consider to be police work, the Pentagon’s budget devoted to antinarcotics efforts abroad has risen from $440 million in 1989 to a projected total of approximately $1.2 billion in 1992. “With the close of the Cold War and the shrinking military budgets,” noted one observer of the changing international arena, “the war on drugs is one of the few growth areas the Pentagon has left.”

Growing U.S. military involvement in the Andean region offers an excellent example of the potential pitfalls of a militarily based solution to the war on drugs. Despite the commitment of approximately $2.2 billion in aid (including military equipment and U.S. advisers) to combat cocaine production in the Andean countries of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru (the so-called Andean Initiative), cocaine production in the region is said to have “skyrocketed” from roughly 397 tons in 1988 to 990 tons two years later. Similarly, a congressional report explained in 1990 that coca cultivation was “approaching 200,000 tons of coca leaf a year, enough to satisfy four times the annual estimated U.S. cocaine market.”
Grenada (a small island) that was invaded by the United States military, however, that the success of a trend among the highly paid mercenaries as well as the growth of this movement has been precisely the result of the buildup of forces, the true test of what the war if and when conflict lasting form in restoring such large-scale —dubbed “mid-level” of the Defense— was Michael T. Howard preparing for a of low-intensity most notably in the region of the extended military in the region, is that police abroad has risen to nearly $1.2 billion rising military area, “the war on terror.” This region offers an increased solution to the $2.2 billion in combat cocaine and Peru (the same is said to have experienced a fourfold increase in coca cultivation) was satisfactorily four times.

Apart from the debate over whether one can really stop the drugs at the “source” as long as demand within the United States remains constant or continues to grow (and thus for every drug-producing lab destroyed in a given region or country, two more crop up in another place), critics point to two major problems. First, just as U.S. support for the strengthening of Latin American militaries from the 1950s to the 1980s often contributed to the dismantling of democracy in these countries, so too can support for the militarization of the drug war potentially lead to new forms of authoritarianism in the region. Of even greater concern to critics, however, is the possibility of involving the United States in a protracted civil war within the region. For example, the United States increasingly has become involved in the Peruvian government’s counterinsurgency efforts against a growing guerrilla insurgency known as Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), all under the auspices of eradicating the coca trade that is largely controlled by the insurgents in guerrilla-held territories. The costs of U.S. involvement were clearly demonstrated in January 1992 when three U.S. citizens associated with a State Department-sponsored eradication program were killed by Shining Path guerrilla forces.

**DEMOCRACIES AND DICTATORSHIPS**

Just as ideology historically has led U.S. 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 anticommunist crusade. Examples include Fulgencio Batista of Cuba, Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti, and the Somoza family dynasty in Nicaragua. The often disregarded long-term problem with this anticommunist strategy was that the elites who became the “bastions for democracy” and, therefore, staunch U.S. allies have usually been traditional dictators who lack popular support, concern themselves primarily with personal aggrandizement, 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-U.S. rage, including the case studies of Nicaragua and...
Iran, as described in Chapters 16 and 17. This result should not be surprising, as the United States has generally been perceived by the disaffected portion of the population in such countries as both the midwife and primary prop of the hated regime. Although the United States may be able to buy stability in the short term, such successful actions as defeating the nationalists in Iran in 1953 or suppressing Sandino's forces in Nicaragua during the 1930s often bode ill for stability and U.S. interests in the long term.

Distinguished experts on Central America have formulated a set of straightforward, yet stringent, guidelines for stemming the cycle of repression and resultant anti-U.S. revolutions in that region that are similarly applicable to the entire Third World. 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 recognized 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 U.S. aid policy.” Yet, when countries show a genuine commitment to broadly shared development programs 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.

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 U.S. 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 noted only two legitimate needs for military equipment that the United States should be willing to meet: “the need for adequate forces to defend a nation against external aggression, and the need to defend democratic institutions against internal violence by a small, well-armed minority.”

The necessity for a popular basis of legitimacy (not necessarily a multiparty system) is extremely important. In instances in which this attribute is missing, U.S. military support becomes the basis for internal repression and control, again working counter to long-term U.S. interests in the Third World.

The key to this restructured foreign aid program, which inevitably would require the reduction of special relationships currently held with authoritarian governments, 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 actively should cultivate close relationships with regimes carrying out these programs, assisting financially when the need arises. In sum, a regime committed to the
x be surprising, etched portion of ary prop of the stability in theists in Iran in the 1930s often
ulated a set of le of repression larly applicable instances, which c aid should be equality or that
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mitted 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.

U.S. policymakers will inevitably find themselves confronted by a situation in which a close ally's democratic institutions and processes are subverted by a leader or faction desirous of assuming personal control and power. Richard J. Kessler, in Chapter 15, describes in detail how this occurred from 1965 to 1986 in the Philippines under the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos. In cases like this, the United States should utilize its economic and military influence (gradually curtail both types of aid, beginning with military) with the country in question to foster a return to democratic practices. Kessler notes that the United States lost several opportunities to influence policy, the most notable being when Marcos broached the possibility of declaring martial law and suspending the constitution to illegally remain in office. As Kessler concludes, strong U.S. disapproval could have forced him to reverse the decision. "It was a moment, at least from Marcos's perspective, of great vulnerability to external factors."

The most important aspect of the Philippine case study is that five U.S. administrations ignored the dismantling of Philippine democracy because of strategic concerns over continued U.S. access to bases in the country; as Kessler notes, the United States became concerned about democracy in the Philippines "only when democracy became a security issue." Even the Carter administration's human rights program, 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.\textsuperscript{31} Putting aside the debate over whether or not the United States actually requires bases in the Third World now that the Cold War has come to an end, long-term U.S. interests logically demand that the United States not turn a blind eye while democracy is destroyed in order to maintain these security interests. 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 a government potentially hostile to the United States.

A further reality of the international system of the emerging post–Cold War era is that there exists a whole host 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 and military aid. As the United States cannot and should not be the guardian of all the countries of the world, it 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, however, when the international system is confronted with a regime that grossly violates accepted international standards of human rights, the United States 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 United States act in a multilateral framework in coordination with other nations and not according to some self-prescribed ideological litmus test.

The case study of the apartheid regime of South Africa clearly serves as a useful example of when sanctions should be adopted. Embracing a political system in which minority white ethnic groups composing roughly 15 percent of the population historically have denied political franchise to a largely black majority composing 73 percent 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 it became clear 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 (see Chapter 13), 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.

UNILATERALISM VERSUS MULTILATERALISM

An extremely fruitful initial 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 U.S.-brokered accords that linked South Africa’s withdrawal from Namibia and independence for that country in exchange for
y and economic recessions known ever, when the grossly violates d States should ge the nature of the business of d to adhere to the d to the use of onally accepted supported by the tions should be:e international ed States act in not according early serves as a nce a political ng roughly 15 franchise to a on (Asians and came the target he 1950s to the racially based Comprehensive in 1991 when it ersible process ups within the t the three previously thin the bounds see Chapter 13), Africa's black matic coalition

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 March 21, 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 Chester Crocker’s tireless efforts to make the U.S. 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. 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 U.S. 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 twelve-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.

The fragmentation of the Soviet Union into several independent countries has led to a debate over the evolving nature of the international system with serious implications for U.S. interventionist practices. In a celebrated article by Charles Krauthammer, for example, 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. Critics of the unilateral approach instead focus on the domestic and international constraints still faced by U.S. 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 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." “Predictably,” Carpenter concludes, “such pretensions have already provoked apprehension
and hostility among political and intellectual elites in nations as diverse as France, India, and Japan.\textsuperscript{33}

The most effective course for the United States 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 role to be played by the various organs of the UN or by regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), particularly in terms of facilitating the end of regional conflicts. Specifically, U.S. policymakers should take advantage of the consensus-building functions achievable through multilateral negotiations within the context of the UN or regional organizations. In the case of Cambodia, for example, 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. And UN peacemaking operations have dramatically expanded during the post–Cold War era (eight new operations since 1988 out of a total of twenty-one for the post–World War II era), with forces being deployed as of 1992 in seven regional hotspots: Angola, Central America and El Salvador, the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, Kuwait, Lebanon, and the Western Sahara.\textsuperscript{34} In short, 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.

\section*{LEADING WITH CONFIDENCE IN THE POST–COLD WAR ERA}

The last half century of U.S. interventionist practices in the Third World literally has guaranteed the extension of U.S. power to virtually all corners of the globe. For better or for worse, the United States rose out of the ashes of World War II to become the most powerful nation the world had ever seen. U.S. economic and military power reached its height in the decade immediately following the war, but the twin trends of the fragmentation of U.S. political culture and the rising pluralism within the international system have since seriously changed the parameters within which U.S. policies must be formulated. Yet, as Joseph S. Nye, Jr., perceptively noted, “Although the United States must adjust to a new era of multipolarity and interdependence in world politics, Americans should not underestimate U.S. strength.” Indeed, “with more than one-fifth of world military and economic product, the U.S. remains the most powerful state in the world and will very likely remain that way far into the future.”\textsuperscript{35}
For the United States to lead with confidence well into the twenty-first century requires the basic redesigning of U.S. interventionist practices, as outlined here. In the domestic realm, the president should establish a greater partnership with Congress, formulating policies built upon the strong foundations of congressional and public support. Secure in this support, the president could lead with confidence, charting a consistent and coherent foreign policy in the Third World. In the international realm, interventionist practices should attempt to build upon both a multilateral regional and international consensus, with the United States taking the lead in utilizing the forum of the UN and accepted precepts of international law in garnering support. Although adherence to the guidelines put forth in this chapter may not always guarantee the success of U.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.