

Introduction

Strategic US Foreign Assistance

Throughout the ages moralists have expressed horror at the way princes and sovereign states behave toward each other. Behavior which would be considered immoral by any standard can obviously be detected in all realms of life; but nowhere does the contradiction between professed ethical principles and actual behavior appear so patent and universal as in the conduct of foreign relations (Wolfers 1949, 175).

The following question was posed over 40 years ago regarding the US foreign assistance program, “why is aid so confidently proposed by policymakers and so readily supported, or at any rate tolerated, by the public?” (Banfield 1963, 2–3). The same question is relevant today, particularly given the recent US foreign aid package to Colombia, the overwhelming amount of US aid to countries in the Middle East, and the linkage between foreign aid and the war on terror. We suggest that there are two possible answers. The first, and most obvious answer is that there is a self or donor interest motivation. Needless to say, national security concerns dominate the motivation for the allocation and distribution of US foreign assistance. These national security concerns, to name just a few, come in the form of supporting and attracting allies, protecting oil interests, fighting communism, and now fighting terrorism. Foreign aid is also designed to promote democratization and human rights, an objective seemingly based on recipient interests. However, there is an inconsistency between policies based on the self-interest of the donor and policies based on human needs in the recipient state which may lead to disturbing consequences. One such consequence is the danger that self-interest may be pursued in the name of foreign aid, regardless of the impact on the recipient nation (Ruttan 1989, 1996).

This leads to our second answer, perhaps politicians and the public have no true understanding of the actual consequences to human rights of such action. The expectation is that aid designed for such lofty ideals as democracy and human rights would surely fulfill that objective. However, foreign policy objectives and decisions are made with the state’s interests in mind, that is, at the aggregate level, while human rights concerns focus on individuals within the states. Thus, it is easy, perhaps, for policy makers to ignore the realities at the individual level when formulating policy objectives that serve the state. We argue that regardless of the original intent of aid, understanding the consequences of the allocation and distribution of foreign aid is imperative given the hegemonic role of the United States in the international system. We suggest that the United States, or any other donor, has some responsibility to ensure that their gain is not at the expense of the recipient’s pain, particularly in the area of human rights. In other words, the United States must first do no harm to human rights when it comes to pursuing foreign policy objectives through the allocation

and distribution of foreign assistance.¹ The consequence of such action can have a deleterious impact on national security. While human rights were once considered a low politics issue, today they are an integral element of national security. Thus, the real or perceived abuses of human rights at the hands of the United States only lead to a further derogation of the US image abroad, the consequences of which may lead to some form of retaliation or perhaps even increased terrorist activity. In this book, we investigate the battle between these two motivations of foreign assistance: the need to defend national security interests at home and abroad on the one hand and the desire to advance human rights practices on the other, all the while understanding that no state has the responsibility to put other states' interests before its own. In doing so, we are particularly concerned about the effects of foreign aid decisions on human rights conditions in recipient states.

What is the legacy of the US foreign assistance program where human rights are concerned? Has the program actually improved human rights in recipient states? Or, as some critics charge, has the foreign aid program done more harm than good, at least to the human condition, in the pursuit of national security objectives like the war on communism and the war on terror? We address these questions from three different perspectives: the US motivation in allocating foreign aid, the consequences of US foreign aid on human rights conditions in recipient states, and ultimately the ethical responsibility of the United States regarding the consequences of such aid. Of course, this leads to a further question, that is, what is ethical when it comes to foreign policy in general and the US foreign assistance program specifically? While this discussion is provided in Chapter 1, a brief explanation is warranted here. One of the dilemmas in foreign policy is while individuals formulate policies, it is the state that is of primary interest. This leads to the debate of whether or not states can act morally, or whether morality is a characteristic or trait reserved for individuals. Rather than attempting to solve this philosophical dilemma, we argue that foreign policies can be ethical, that is, that the motivation or intent and the consequence are in alignment. If a state articulates a motive for a particular policy, such as promotion of human rights, and that policy ultimately hinders the realization of human rights, it can be considered unethical.

In considering the relationship between US foreign aid and human rights, one of the first concerns is the causal relationship between the two. Specifically, do human rights conditions influence US foreign aid allocation or do US foreign aid allocations influence human rights? The majority of the published research on the relationship between human rights and foreign policy examines human rights conditions in potential recipient states as a determinant in foreign policy decisions, particularly the allocation of US foreign aid.² The most prevalent model in the motivational or

1 Ruttan (1989, 414) makes a similar argument regarding foreign assistance in that it is the duty of the donor "to demonstrate that this assistance does no harm to the recipient." In addition, Vasquez (2005) utilizes the concept of "first do no harm" in applying ethical behavior to war and interventions.

2 This line of research on conditionality appears primarily in academic journals. See Schoultz 1980; Stohl et al 1984; Cingranelli and Pasquarello 1985; Carleton and Stohl 1987; McCormick and Mitchell 1988, 1989; Hofrenning 1990; Poe 1990, 1991, 1992; Poe and

conditionality literature suggests a two-stage framework of US foreign assistance allocation (Cingranelli and Pasquerillo 1985). In the first stage, the gatekeeping stage, models include both recipient and non-recipient states to ascertain if human rights are a determining factor in the allocation of foreign aid. In the second stage, only recipient states are examined to ascertain the determinants in the level of aid. Examining Latin American countries, Cingranelli and Pasquarello (1985) found that human rights records were not a concern in distributing economic aid, however, once past the gatekeeping stage, states with better human rights records received greater levels of aid. As for military aid, states with poor human rights records were often eliminated at the gatekeeping stage. Once past this stage, human rights did not play a role in the level of aid.

Subsequent research has built upon this model with conflicting results (Carleton and Stohl 1987; McCormick and Mitchell 1988). Most of the disagreement occurs during the second stage when the level of aid is considered. Poe (1992) examines only economic aid and finds that during the Carter and Reagan administrations, human rights conditions affected US foreign aid allocation. Poe and Meernik (1995) find that once the decision to give aid was made, human rights records were not a consideration regarding the level of aid, while Meernik, Krueger and Poe (1998) find that, in fact, those countries with the worst human rights records received more aid. More recently Apodaca and Stohl (1999) found that human rights considerations depended upon the administration and the type of aid. Their ultimate conclusion is that human rights matter for economic aid, but not military aid and further, that human rights were not the only and not the primary consideration. Ultimately, the research on conditionality presents some conflicting results and it is clear that the United States allocates and distributes foreign assistance to countries that engage in gross human rights violations.³ Given this fact, what are the consequences or effect?

Nascent literature moves beyond elements of conditionality and seeks to examine the consequences of the allocation and distribution of US foreign assistance and subsequent human rights practices (Regan 1995; Meyer 1996, 1998; Smith et al 1999; Richards et al 2001).⁴ Our research addresses this deficiency in the understanding of the consequences of US foreign policy making and provides a complete assessment of the nature of US foreign assistance, ultimately demonstrating the disconnect between the rhetoric of foreign aid and human rights and the reality of human rights conditions in recipient states. We initially examine, in a historical and qualitative

Sirirangsi 1993, 1994; Poe et al. 1994; Blanton 1994; Poe and Meernik 1995; Apodaca and Stohl 1999.

3 In spite of legislative restrictions on the allocation and distribution of economic and military aid to countries with gross human rights violations, both have loopholes that allow disbursement to such countries under special circumstances. The Harkin Amendment (1982) to the Foreign Assistance Act (1961) addresses economic aid, while Section 502(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act (1961) outlines the human rights restrictions for military aid. A full accounting of the history of the US foreign assistance program is provided in Chapter 2.

4 In addition, there is a burgeoning literature that examines total Official Development Assistance from a variety of donor countries, not just the United States. See Alesina and Dollar 2000; Zanger 2000, 2007; Barratt 2004; Neumayer 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d; Berthelemy 2006.

manner, the motivation for the allocation and distribution of foreign assistance, specifically the way the United States situates the goal of promoting human rights in light of national security concerns. This necessitates a discussion of the debate between *realpolitik* and liberal approaches to foreign policy. Our second theme, the consequences of foreign aid, centers on a liberal view of the positive impact of economic penetration contrasted against a more disparaging assessment that is found in the critical literature within international relations. Here we offer a quantitative analysis and case studies to illustrate the impact of foreign aid on recipient states. Our last theme, and our concluding argument, is that regardless of the motivation and the impact, the consequences of such action must be known and taken into account. In other words, we argue that the United States cannot justify the ends with the means in this case. The consequences of such action will eventually erode national security as victims of US foreign policy, however good the intentions, will eventually seek alternative means of justice. We pose an important and timely question in light of today's international political climate and provide evidence that suggests that while the US bilateral foreign assistance program fulfills many foreign policy objectives, its record in improving human rights has been far less successful.

Chapter Outlines

The first chapter discusses the dilemmas in pursuing a human rights policy as part of US foreign policy. Here we define what is meant by human rights, both from a universal or international perspective, as well as what the United States means when it refers to human rights. We transition, then, to a discussion of the evolution of human rights in the context of American foreign policy and the dilemmas the state encounters in pursuit of such a policy. We close this chapter with our arguments advocating an ethical approach to the allocation and distribution of US foreign assistance.

In Chapter 2, we examine, in a historical fashion, the motivations of the US foreign assistance program. Here we discuss the economic, political, and social goals that the United States sought to accomplish, first in the rebuilding of Europe after World War II and then in the various developing regions around the world. This chapter will trace US aims through the anti-communism of the Cold War to the twenty-first century global battle against terrorism. In doing so, we highlight specific cases of aid to Egypt and Israel as part of the Middle East Peace Process.

Chapter 3 focuses on the concepts of human rights and US foreign assistance. We provide a discussion of the dilemmas of measuring human rights, that is, adequately capturing the concept of both security rights and subsistence rights in a quantitative measure. This section also outlines the derivation of both variables concluding with descriptive statistics for both types of rights. The elements of economic and military aid are outlined in Chapter 3 as well. Here we define and describe the various programs that constitute the US foreign assistance program. In a similar fashion as the human rights section, we provide summary statistics of both economic and military aid, closing with an analysis of the correlation between human rights and foreign aid.

Chapter 4 provides the empirical model regarding the relationship between foreign assistance and human rights including a discussion of the control variables

that have been established as important factors in the determinants of human rights. This chapter also explains the methodology employed in the study. Briefly, this study examines not only the influence of foreign aid on the level of human rights but whether the effect of foreign aid is moderated by levels of democracy and wealth. In both instances, we are interested in the relationship over time (1976–2003) and across most nations. As such, pooled cross-sectional time series analysis is the most appropriate design. Finally, the results of the empirical analysis are discussed.

Chapter 5 presents a case study on Plan Colombia. This chapter examines the US decision to grant military aid to Colombia and the subsequent impact the program has on human rights in Colombia. Proponents of the plan suggest that the only way to improve human rights and democracy in Colombia, not to mention the US domestic drug problem, is to provide the Colombian government with the necessary firepower to curb the activities of the drug cartels. Opponents of the plan argue that the influx of any additional military firepower will only serve to increase the level of human rights violations and do very little to help democratization efforts. Despite an extremely poor human rights record, the US government approved Plan Colombia and over its existence has ear-marked billions in aid to the Latin America country. Ultimately, we examine the consequences of such action and come to some conclusions regarding the responsibility the United States has for the human rights conditions in Colombia.

In Chapter 6, we analyze the relationship between the United States and Turkey. US foreign assistance to Turkey has long been tied to stabilizing the region with respect to Turkey's relationship with Greece and the island of Cyprus, and, after 11 September, to cooperation in the war on terrorism. Foreign aid to Turkey is meant to promote and strengthen democracy in a country bordering a mostly non-democratic region, the Middle East. Given Turkey's relatively poor human rights record, the stabilization of the region and war on terrorism must qualify as a circumstance that allows the executive branch the ability to override human rights legislation. This chapter examines the US-Turkey relationship in light of our foreign assistance program, with an eye to the Turkish government's desire to become a member of the EU. Specifically, we seek to understand how the aid impacts human rights and whether foreign assistance to Turkey improves the quality of life of its citizens.

The fragile relationship between Pakistan and India and their respective relationship to the United States is explored in Chapter 7. Throughout the Cold War, the two nations had varying degrees of relations with the United States, and despite questionable to atrocious human rights (and anti-democratic principles in Pakistan), both countries now receive substantial aid from the US. India receives its aid as a stabilizing factor in the region, and a growing global power, while Pakistan receives aid as an ally in the war on terror. This chapter addresses the reasons behind US assistance to Pakistan (with an eye to the impact of the relationship between India and Pakistan) that clearly have little to do with the improvement of human rights, and the consequences of that policy.

Our last chapter considers the extent of the damage to the US in pursuing a policy rhetorically designed for the improvement of human rights that actually proves to be counterproductive in that area. The implications for US foreign policy are explored

given the empirical and case study results. The combined results suggest that foreign assistance is not the optimal means to attempt to alter, that is improve, a regime's behavior regarding human rights. Suggestions that foreign aid has the potential to do otherwise are not supported by any empirical results in this study. Thus, this research comes to the general conclusion that the US foreign aid program has perpetuated and contributed to poor human rights conditions in recipient states and should not be used, rhetorically or in practice, as a tool to improve human rights. In addressing national security concerns, the United States will undoubtedly continue to utilize foreign assistance for security purposes, but it should pursue alternative paths for human rights. While the allocation of foreign assistance may serve a valuable national security tool, it often does so at the expense of citizens elsewhere.

This study reflects a major dilemma regarding US foreign policy—when and how should the United States address human rights around the globe and what is its responsibility? On the surface, allocating foreign assistance on the basis of ethical convictions suggests that the United States is interested in improving the human condition around the globe. However, national security interests often taint even this motive. At the present time, we have to conclude that the US foreign assistance program has little to do with a moral imperative to improve human rights and is simply another blunt instrument aimed at shoring up US national security. In spite of political rhetoric and even sincere intentions on the part of policymakers regarding foreign assistance policy, it appears that the US foreign assistance program has failed to live up to its human rights objectives. Can this paradigm change? We offer a few solutions in order for the US foreign assistance program to transform with the demands of the twenty-first century.