

The United States was founded on principles of human rights and political liberty. It is often argued, however, that to safeguard these rights and the national interest that protects them, pragmatism must prevail over principle, and morality abandoned in the name of self-preservation. This book studies the possibilities and consequences of such policy prescriptions; its purpose is to determine if and how human rights policies, or their neglect, have led to realpolitik successes for the United States. Are American interests best served when the United States pursues realpolitik pragmatism devoid of ethical considerations? Does the preservation of human rights at home require its disregard abroad? Should the United States, in its own interest, ignore human rights and support conservative, pro-American "authoritarian"¹ rulers even where popular discontent is evident? Or should the nation cut itself loose from what may later become a political albatross and attempt to encourage internal reform via sanctions and/or inducements? Is the national interest ensured when we support pro-U.S. dictators? Is it undermined when we attempt to ameliorate repressive conditions?

The National Interest

Support and expansion of human rights abroad has been an element of U.S. foreign policy since the founding of the nation. Human rights gained prominence as a central foreign policy consideration, however, during the Carter administration. Since then, a debate about the role of human rights in American foreign policy has arisen not only between moralist philosophers and advocates of realpolitik, but also among the proponents of realpolitik themselves.

Adherents of realpolitik assume states to be central actors in an anarchic and "essentially competitive" environment.² Rationality, rather than

the individual preferences of decision-makers or an assumed universal morality, guides foreign policy decisions.³ Such decisions are calculated in "terms of interest defined as power,"⁴ where power is used as an end in itself, or as a means of achieving other national interest goals.⁵ A successful policy of *realpolitik* would, therefore, be one that serves to preserve and strengthen the state.⁶

Elements that constitute the U.S. national interest may vary with different epochs and individual states. The United States, for example, may depend on resources from a particular region; it may desire basing rights in some countries, listening posts in others; it may find markets of little interest in some areas, or seek to expand trade and investment where lucrative possibilities appear to exist. National interest in terms of political or ideological orientations became a predominant factor in U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War. If a government was communist, pro-Soviet Union, or pro-China, a loss of U.S. influence was to be expected, and the future of U.S. interests was assumed to be jeopardized. In all its variations, however, the central focus of the national interest is on preserving or enhancing the physical security, economic prosperity, and strategic interests (in terms of defense and resources) of the United States; it is aimed at maintaining or enhancing the nation's power and position.

Realpolitik and Human Rights Foreign Policy

The roots of *realpolitik* can be traced to Thucydides in the fifth century B.C. His writings emphasized key elements of realist thought, including the importance of structure in the international system, the "circumscribed place of morality in foreign policy," the notion that a benign human nature cannot be assumed, and the centrality of power both in defining the national interest and in determining interstate relations.⁷ These defining concepts of *realpolitik* were further expounded upon by others, including Niccolo Machiavelli (early sixteenth century), Thomas Hobbes (seventeenth century), G. W. F. Hegel (early nineteenth century), Max Weber, Reinhold Niebuhr, and E. H. Carr in the early twentieth century, Hans Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger, John Herz, and George Kennan in the latter half of the century.

Two approaches to the conduct of U.S. human rights foreign policy, which became prominent particularly since the Carter administration, are derived from the literature of classical *realpolitik*. On one side of the debate are the neoconservatives, who have included in their numbers Jeane Kirkpatrick, Ernest Lefever, Robert W. Tucker, Joshua Muravchik, and Samuel P. Huntington. This school has advocated a view of the U.S. na-

tional interest framed by traditional Cold War perspectives; its central interest has been the maintenance and enhancement of U.S. power and strategic security and, historically, the limitation of Soviet influence. Proponents have considered the preservation of pro-American governments to be in the best interest of the United States, and the defense of friendly right-wing regimes to be a necessary foreign policy strategy. Consequently, neoconservatism has vehemently criticized, as politically naive, consideration of human rights in the making and implementation of foreign policy; it has condemned as self-defeating interventions in support of domestic reform within right-wing authoritarian regimes.

A different view of the national interest has been argued by the neorealists,⁸ among them Richard Feinberg, Alan Tonelson, Tom Farer, William LeoGrande, Walter Lafeber, and Walter Laqueur. The goals of realpolitik for this group are also centered on the preservation and pursuit of the U.S. national interest; the means of its preservation and the meaning of the "interest" itself, however, differ considerably from those of the neoconservatives. From the neorealist perspective, the U.S. national interest, as it relates to the Third World, must rely on pragmatism rather than ideology. Until the collapse of the communist bloc, proponents argued that historical developments in the Third World required that the ideological absolutes associated with the Cold War be discarded. International relations and the U.S. interest would be better served by concentrating on particular economic and/or security concerns.

Events in the developing world, neorealists argue, have belied neoconservative expectations that U.S. power would effectively preserve unpopular authoritarian regimes and, thereby, U.S. interests. An evolutionary view of the political process is, therefore, required: the overthrow of dictatorships and the rise of new elites ought to be expected. The long-term U.S. national interest, as a result, is tied to U.S. relations with these new elites. "Dissociation" from repressive governments via diplomatic, economic, or military sanctions is urged as a means of demonstrating disapproval of repressive governments and of fostering cordial relations with future leaders.⁹

The Neoconservative Proposal

The neoconservative proposal asserts that the short- and long-term interests of the nation are best served when pro-American right-wing regimes are protected by the United States. The argument rests on assumptions that American power can influence the course of history and that, in the absence of democratic states, American economic, political, and security

interests are best preserved in the Third World by pro-American right-wing authoritarian regimes. The view is tempered by a realization that the United States has a limited capacity to influence domestic developments abroad. Ernest Lefever and Robert W. Tucker warn that the United States ought not attempt to alter the domestic practices, institutions, or ideologies of other nations; instead, it should concern itself only with their foreign policy behaviors and orientations.¹⁰ As a consequence, the United States must remain loyal to its ideological friends despite evidence of human rights abuse and/or popular discontent.

Further underlying the neoconservative view is the assumption that military, economic, and diplomatic pressures for reform will increase domestic instability and the likelihood of revolution in target states. This argument also extends to assumptions that left-wing or communist governments will ascend to power when right-wing regimes are overthrown, and that left-wing regimes will not serve the interest of the United States.

Representing the neoconservative perspective, Jeane Kirkpatrick argued strenuously against incorporating human rights considerations in the making of foreign policy. She condemned U.S. abandonment of the Shah of Iran and Somoza of Nicaragua in their final hours, and complained that a lack of consistent support for these leaders ultimately led to the rise of regimes that were more repressive and less inclined to support U.S. interests. Carter-administration policies in these cases, she asserted, created anxiety and distrust among leaders who had become dependent upon their alliance with the United States.¹¹

Protecting the national interest and ensuring "the survival of liberal democracies in the world," Kirkpatrick and other neoconservatives have argued, requires that the viability of right-wing authoritarian regimes be safeguarded. Carter's subversion of this policy was guided by "a quasi-Marxist theory of historical development," which was based on a belief that "history was on the side of our opponents," and that "U.S. power was, at best, irrelevant."¹² It was, therefore, a policy inimical to the most central requirements of the national interest.

Incorporation of human rights considerations in foreign policy calculations has been denigrated by Ernest Lefever as both arrogant in conception and inconsistent in application. Such a process, he has noted, unfairly focuses on right-wing "authoritarian" regimes, when it is more often "totalitarian" states that flagrantly violate human rights and are the most threatening to U.S. interests.¹³ A similar view was expressed by Henry Kissinger, who warned in 1977 that U.S. administrations ought to "maintain the moral distinction between aggressive totalitarianism and other governments which, with all their imperfections, are trying to resist for-

eign pressures or subversions, and which thereby help the balance of power in behalf of all peoples."¹⁴

Samuel P. Huntington has attempted to show that the principles of democracy that define the United States, impel its advocacy of democracy abroad. The correlation between U.S. democracy and democracy abroad, Huntington explains, becomes evident when one observes that "when American intervention ended, democracy ended." As a result, such "unsavory characters" as Somoza of Nicaragua were able to ascend to power. In Asia, he writes, "when President Marcos instituted his martial law regime in 1972, America's influence in Southeast Asia was clearly on the wane, and the United States held few effective levers with which to affect the course of Philippine politics." In South Korea, the United States began to lose its influence by the late 1950s as U.S. economic assistance declined. The "increasing authoritarian direction" taken by Korea's politics was thus not to be associated with dependence on the United States.¹⁵

A Critique of Neoconservatism

A concern with a threat from the Left, inherent in the neoconservative debate, seems inconsistent with the school's stated interest in responding to the democratic impulses evident in the developing world. Thus, Kirkpatrick seems to have contradicted herself when she argued that "although there is no instance of revolutionary 'socialist' or communist societies being democratized," right-wing autocracies ought to be supported because, given the right economic, social, and political conditions, these regimes could evolve into democracies.¹⁶ How could such conditions have been encouraged and fostered if, from the neoconservative perspective, intervention in support of domestic reform was to have been avoided? Although written before the collapse of communism, the caveat, read in a post-Cold War world, seems even less justified; while many communist states have attempted to democratize, many authoritarian regimes have continued in attempts to maintain their power. Huntington's attempt to link American intervention with democracy abroad is also questionable. As the following chapters show, U.S. involvement in Nicaragua and the Philippines remained extensive as the Somozas of Nicaragua held power and as Marcos of the Philippines imposed martial law.

Apparent contradictions between policy prescriptions and historical evidence suggest that the neoconservative foreign policy program may be lacking in critical perspective. Scenarios which had been generated by neoconservative Cold War perceptions, for example, have not particularly

reflected reality. The fall of right-wing dictatorships has not, automatically, led to the rise of "revolutionary autocracies" (left-wing or communist regimes): Spain, Portugal, and the Philippines serve as examples. Conversely, the demise of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the transition from leftist government to moderate pro-Western regime in Nicaragua, indicate that left-wing and communist societies are as amenable to the process of democratization as are right-wing authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, while it often appears that governments that have arisen from the debris of fallen pro-American authoritarian regimes are hostile to the United States, neoconservatives fail to ask why this is so. Did past American policy in any way contribute to this hostility? Could negative perceptions of the United States have been ameliorated with earlier and more comprehensive implementation of a human rights policy? In recommending that Americans intervene on behalf of endangered friends, the neoconservative school ignores its own caveats about the limits of American power. Could the United States keep an unpopular regime in power? For how long and at what cost? Indeed, the logic that the United States can manipulate the course of history is also, in some measure, contradicted by events of past decades. The United States extended its support, despite widespread discontent, to dictatorial regimes in Ethiopia, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Iran, the Philippines, Haiti, and Nicaragua. These dictatorships nevertheless fell, often leaving in their wake prevalent sentiments of anti-Americanism. In fact, as many of these cases indicate, U.S. support of right-wing authoritarian regimes has not been able to ensure democracy and human rights abroad.

The arrogance attributed by neoconservatives to those who support human rights policies in opposition to authoritarian dictatorships, may be equally directed to the neoconservatives themselves, who would presume to prop up dictatorships despite public outcry from discontented populations. Neoconservative complaints about the inconsistencies of U.S. policies which, they say, single out right-wing regimes while neglecting the abuses of left-wing governments, are also unfounded. That a policy is rendered inconsistent by international conditions, that it is not universally applied, does not require that it be voided. The prospect that the international political system may deny the United States the power to influence the behavior of some nations should not prevent this country from acting when and where leverage can be exerted. Certainly, in relation to human rights, the claim that totalitarian regimes are more repressive than those which are authoritarian is a moot point. Human rights abuse is equally repugnant whether it comes from the Left or the Right.

For the neoconservative proposal to be shown to be correct, a number of conditions would have to be met: American interest would have to be

well-served by right-wing regimes; the United States would have to prove itself able to preserve authoritarian rulers (or their ideological successors) in the long term, despite widespread popular discontent; and, the long-term economic and/or strategic interests of the United States would have to be protected and/or enhanced where such policy is pursued. The foreign policy prescriptions of the neoconservative school will have lost some credibility if, despite U.S. support, American military, strategic, or economic interests are threatened, an unpopular right-wing authoritarian regime falls, and/or an anti-American regime assumes power.

The Neorealist Proposal

Neorealists share the neoconservative assumption that the United States can influence conditions abroad; however, they perceive U.S. capacity to shape history as more limited. The dichotomies represented by the neoconservative world view are replaced by a more complex vision of world affairs. Tempered by events of past decades, neorealism assumes that disaffection will eventually lead to revolution and that it is in the U.S. interest to pursue a human rights policy that would create a favorable opinion of the United States among opposition leaders. These pro-American perceptions, it is hoped, would either clear the way for close links between postrevolutionary governments and the West, or, at the least, prevent resentment and hostility from impelling new regimes into an opposing camp. The imposition of sanctions on regimes violating human rights is advocated by the neorealists as politically useful in the long term and, perhaps, even efficacious in the short term. Opposition groups would perceive such measures as supportive and thus adopt a positive view of the United States; the target regimes would likely try to retain friendly relations with the United States because of an assumed ideological bias and/or aid dependence.

The thesis proffered by the neorealists contends that if the United States encourages improvements in human rights—particularly by dissociating itself from rulers via diplomatic pressure, economic, and/or military sanctions—then the U.S. national interest will be protected in the short term and the long term. This proposal is based on a number of assumptions:

1. The United States can have a limited influence on events abroad. It cannot, however, control the course of history in which change is inevitable.
2. Right-wing rulers are too dependent ideologically or materially on the United States to abandon their relationship with Washington;

sanctions can, therefore, be imposed without significantly damaging U.S. relations with such regimes.

3. The issue of human rights is important to opposition groups in these states.

4. U.S. policy affects perceptions held by opposition groups about the United States.

5. Perceptions determine the kind of foreign policy an elite will follow.

6. Pursuit of economic opportunity and strategic security should take precedence over ideological proclivities in determining the U.S. national interest.

7. A non-aligned foreign policy in the Third World is, therefore, adequate for the preservation of the U.S. national interest.

As a consequence of the above assumptions, neorealists argue that the stronger the diplomatic, military, and/or economic relationship between the United States and a dictator, the greater the identification between the two governments as perceived by others. Such identification would create great resentment toward the United States and, therefore, increase the likelihood that U.S. interests will be endangered once a new regime is in place. A corollary to this position is that the greater the level of political, economic, and military dissociation, the greater the pro-American sentiment among the new elite.

Neoconservative criticism directed at the Carter administration's human rights policy, argued that the policy surrendered to a fatalist perspective of history antithetical to U.S. interests. Indeed, such a perspective serves as the underpinning for the human rights rationale proffered by neorealists. The neorealist view accepts that repression and injustice will ultimately lead to rebellion, regardless of external manipulation, and that it is in the U.S. interest to work with this almost inevitable process rather than against it.

In a speech about Iran, the Carter administration's deputy secretary of state, Warren Christopher, succinctly stated the case for the irrelevance of intervention:

The Iranian experience should encourage a sense of realism in our dealings with developing countries. For their internal politics are shaped almost wholly by internal forces, and very little by external pressures. A wise nation, however powerful, understands the peril it invites in confronting the will of another people. Outside powers have an effect, if any, only at the margins.¹⁷

Richard Feinberg and Alan Tonelson criticize continued U.S. support of dictators who, although friendly to the United States, have obviously

lost the support of their people. Support of such regimes only prolongs an inevitable sequence of repression, protest, and revolution, and links the United States to a doomed regime. Authoritarian rulers may come to rely on foreign assistance as the pillar of their power, rendering the pursuit of even a modicum of popular support irrelevant. Feinberg notes that loyalty inappropriately directed on the basis of ideological bias often leads U.S. intelligence agencies and policymakers to lose perspective on events and to misperceive conditions until it is too late—until moderate forces that could have been courted become radicalized and the possibility of exerting influence is lost.¹⁸ Sandra Vogelgesang, a human rights officer in the Carter State Department, has charged, for example, that the United States ignored economic and political realities in Africa during the 1960s and 1970s, thereby opening opportunities for Soviet and Cuban intervention.¹⁹

Ironically, Robert W. Tucker, a representative of the neoconservative school, points to this very logic in his argument for limited U.S. intervention:

Preoccupied with the need to maintain the status quo and finding communism in every challenge to the status quo, we are driven to equate revolutionary violence with communism. Even where this equation is valid, the question remains in each case whether a communist regime would pose a threat to American interests. In the great majority of cases, however, the equation is not valid, at least initially. Yet it may and already has increasingly become so through American insistence. By equating revolutionary violence with communism, by a policy of indiscriminate opposition to violent change in the status quo, we assume the unenviable role of counterrevolutionary power per se and either allow communist movements to seize the banner of nationalism or force non-communist revolutionaries into a communist stance.²⁰

Neorealists further argue that the ideological bias evident in the neoconservative perspective leads to a policy that ignores the possibility that American economic and military interests may be preserved, or even enhanced, under less-than-perfect conditions—that is, where governments are nonaligned and not particularly inclined to embrace an exclusive association with any ideological camp. Nonalignment allows governments to focus on their own national interests. Third World economic and trade concerns are likely to lead to increased dialogue with the West—conditions which, for the most part, are favorable for the preservation of U.S. interests.²¹ As a consequence, neorealists have encouraged a view of the U.S. national interest that accepts and, indeed, promotes the pursuit of nonalignment in the developing world.

Neoconservative warnings that depict Third World revolutionary regimes as strategic and economic threats to the United States are also

questioned. Tom Farer, for example, claims that technological developments have reduced the need for foreign military bases, especially for the United States. Furthermore, even the states that by neoconservative logic were expected to serve Soviet interests during the Cold War, proved less than tractable.²² Basing rights were not extended to the Soviet Union by its allies in Angola and Mozambique, while former allies, such as Egypt and Ethiopia, reversed their pro-Soviet orientations.

In the economic sphere, leftist-oriented regimes did not prove overwhelmingly loyal to the Soviet camp either. The economic strength of the United States and the West served as a magnet to developing nations that needed the technological know-how, markets, and investments that only the West could provide. Indeed, Farer notes that it has not always been easy to determine the nature of economic relationships from the political character of domestic systems. The Kuwaitis, for example, have endeavored to displace foreign ownership, while the radical Libyans have generally preferred to maintain Western companies and concessionaires. In Angola, Cuban troops helped protect American oil facilities in Cabinda,²³ while a Marxist government in Mozambique endeavored to improve relations with the United States and South Africa.

Perceptions held by neoconservatives, that American allies protect American strategic and security interests, are also in some measure contradicted by reality. U.S. allies have often proven less than cooperative in allowing basing rights or docking privileges for nuclear vessels. Until the Iraq crisis of 1990, only Oman, in the Persian Gulf, allowed American bases on its soil;²⁴ basing rights in countries allied to the United States have been, or may be, denied. Fred Ikle, undersecretary of defense during the Reagan administration, lamented in 1988 that "what's certainly disappointing is the unwillingness of several allies in both Europe and the Pacific to share the risks of common defense with us. They want to deny bases for certain contingencies or reduce the number of bases, but what they have to realize is that, if they want to enjoy the benefits, they have to share the risks."²⁵

Examples where American allies did not support American economic and political interests exist as well. In 1990, the Kingdom of Jordan not only resisted the imposition of sanctions against Iraq demanded by the United States and the United Nations, but also supplied Iraq with U.S. technology and intelligence information. Iran under the Shah was a leader of OPEC's (the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) price hawks in the 1970s. Saudi Arabia has not been consistent in preventing climbing oil prices; it refused to lend its support to the Camp David process; and, in the 1960s, it supported the Royalist camp in North Yemen against the U.S.-backed Republican forces. Brazil was among the first na-

tions to confer diplomatic recognition on Angola's MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) government; and members of the OAS (Organization of American States), friendly to the United States, refused to support a U.S. plan to prevent a Sandinista victory in Nicaragua. During the 1973 Middle East war, and when American forces attempted a rescue mission in Iran in 1980, American allies in Europe refused landing rights to the United States.

A Critique of Neorealism

As is the case for neoconservatism, questions about the neorealist argument remain unanswered. Although neorealist admonitions ostensibly ring true when recent history is taken into account, processes of political change and the international relationships that have developed as a result, may have little to do with the specific policies of outside powers. Events abroad may have depended more on historical influences, ideology, or national character than on U.S. policy.

Even if the United States were to attempt to influence or coerce improvements in human rights conditions, as suggested by the neorealists, success would not necessarily be guaranteed. A policy that punishes authoritarian regimes might prove of minimal consequence. Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Guatemala, for example, retracted requests for military assistance when, during the Carter administration, human rights considerations were incorporated into aid decisions. Efforts to ameliorate problems of civil/political repression might succeed, but only for a limited period of time and without affecting political institutions that would change long-term conditions. Indeed, where reform is instituted, the United States may find that it has defeated its own interests. Opening channels of participation, even partially, may open the floodgates of opposition and protest that could lead to unintended effects—including revolution. The protection right-wing authoritarian regimes are presumed to provide to U.S. interests, may thus be swept away and exchanged for revolution and uncertainty. In cases where U.S. policy is inadequate, or where quiet diplomacy serves as the primary strategy, pro-American sentiments will not necessarily be fostered or reinforced. Furthermore, because increased participation and freedom of speech and assembly may lead to open declarations of discontent, and possibly revolution, genuine reform will probably be resisted by the dictator as an act of self-preservation. No matter what the ideological affinities of a ruler, no matter the economic or military interests shared with the United States, leverage likely will prove of little utility when survival is at stake. The

success of a U.S. human rights policy may thus be limited by the availability of alternative partners to the target regime, or even a ruler's determination to "go it alone."

In addition, whatever its actual impact on the amelioration of abuses, a human rights policy may have little impact one way or the other on the long-term preservation of U.S. ties and interests. If aid and technology from the industrialized West are desired, any resentments toward the United States will be shelved for the sake of more pragmatic objectives. The fact that governments that have been adversaries—such as Vietnam, China, Eastern Europe, the former republics of the Soviet Union, and even Iran—now pursue economic ties with the United States, indicates the plausibility of such an assumption.²⁶ If a revolutionary leadership embraces an anti-Western ideology, no role the United States may have played will affect its foreign policy orientation—at least in the initial stages.

A U.S. human rights policy, therefore, might be desirable on moral grounds, but might be practically and politically irrelevant. The efficacy of the neorealist formula could only be confirmed under certain conditions: if the United States imposed sanctions while the targeted right-wing dictator continued to maintain relations with Washington; if U.S. interests continued to be protected; and, if once a revolution occurred, the new elite continued cordial relations with the United States—even if it adopted a nonaligned policy. (U.S. interests, in this case, would not necessarily be delineated in the same terms as they had been under the right-wing regime.)

Which Human Rights?

The term *human rights* has evolved into a widely inclusive phrase gaining its definition from documents ranging from the U.S. Bill of Rights to the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It includes freedom from torture, arbitrary arrest, and imprisonment; the right to privacy, to freedom of thought, speech, assembly, religion, press, movement, and to participation in government; the right to food, property, nationality, social security, and leisure; and the right to receive equal pay for equal work, participate in the cultural life of the community, and have equal rights in marriage.²⁷

In a 1977 address at the University of Georgia School of Law, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance outlined the Carter administration's human rights policy. The rights the administration sought to encourage included:

[The] right to be free from governmental violations of the integrity of the person. Such violations include torture; cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and arbitrary arrest or imprisonment; . . . denial of fair public trial and invasion of the home;

[The] right to the fulfillment of such vital needs as food, shelter, health care, and education;

[The] right to enjoy civil and political liberties: freedom of thought, of religion, of assembly; freedom of speech; freedom of the press; freedom of movement both within and outside one's country; freedom to take part in government.²⁸

Conceding to Third World demands, the "Vienna Declaration and Program of Action," adopted by the 1993 U.N. World Conference on Human Rights, proclaimed the "right to [economic] development to be universal" and "inalienable." "Democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms," the document stated, "are interdependent and mutually reinforcing." Nonetheless, Third World dictators, and those who would support them, often argue that civil and political liberties are secondary to economic development. But this is a view challenged by many. Nepal's former prime minister, B. P. Koirala, complained that "economic development starts from politics . . . it is insulting the dignity of people of the poor nations to present the issue as a choice between poverty and democracy."²⁹ Raymond Gastil of Freedom House testified before Congress that,

All peoples may not have the organization, knowledge, or experience to achieve or maintain fully democratic systems today, but is demeaning to imagine that they are so engrossed in materialism that they do not desire basic equality and dignity represented by institutional human rights.

It should also be remembered that many poor people want political rights because they see them as the only way to guarantee their material wants. Democratic countries . . . are less likely to divert money away from meeting fundamental needs.³⁰

Sandra Vogelgesang points to the fundamental problems created by the inextricable relationship between economic development and human rights—problems that have beset most developing nations:

Deprivation of freedom often indicates that the political system is not working well for either the rulers or the ruled. For example, peasant leaders in Central America have, for the most part, resorted to terrorism only when avenues to peaceful reform, such as the opportunity to vote in

honest national elections seem closed. Pursuit of full human rights can thus amount to a frontal assault by the disenfranchised majority against entrenched elites. To stop underlying deprivation of economic opportunity may require ending political oppression.³¹

Vogelgesang contended that the economic progress achieved by authoritarian regimes in Burma, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan did not prove superior to that of more democratic nations, such as India and Sri Lanka.³² Indeed, the 1991 United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report* indicated that "most of the world's poorest countries, including China, Zaire, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Liberia, and Kenya have little freedom." Political freedom, it noted, seems to unleash creative energies that "lead to ever higher levels of income and human progress."³³ Reflecting a similar perspective, opposition members in Kenya complained in a November 1991 open letter that "the current trends in our country show the limits of reforming economic policy in a deformed political environment."³⁴

While economic development is critical, this book focuses on the freedoms of human dignity and on the political and social liberties described in the Vance speech. It examines situations where discontent is evident and reform is demanded.³⁵ Economic rights are rights of a different category; they represent positive obligations of a state rather than the requirement to abstain from particular behaviors. While rights related to economic development may require that political freedoms be observed, they also demand financial wherewithal rarely available to developing nations. Where underdevelopment is a direct consequence of political conditions, affected groups will become politicized; respect for human dignity and political freedom will therefore be central to any struggle for human rights.

Human Rights as a Policy Choice

In his book, *United States Foreign Policy: Choices and Tradeoffs*, Miroslav Nincic notes that "the business" of U.S. foreign policy involves "confronting dilemmas which often have no optimal solution . . . it is in essence a matter of making appropriate compromises and establishing workable tradeoffs."³⁶ The policy choices are not a question of "human rights or no human rights," explains Lars Schoultz, "instead it is human rights versus national security, versus friendly relations with existing regimes, versus economic benefits to the domestic economy, versus humanitarian aid to impoverished people."³⁷ Most of the choices, however, are directly or indirectly related to the national interest.

In the post–World War II era, the issue of human rights appeared tangentially on Washington’s agenda as part of the Truman Doctrine and containment policy. The United States vowed to support the continued independence of “free peoples” throughout the world. Although the nations it initially proposed to support, Greece and Turkey, were not democratic states in 1947, the promise of support meant that they would be given the opportunity to move toward democracy.³⁸ The human rights issue was also in evidence during the 1960s, when the Alliance for Progress attempted to encourage economic development as a means of inhibiting the expansion of communism in Latin America.

Human rights waned significantly as a policy determinant during the Nixon administration. In 1971, President Nixon expressed a quintessentially neoconservative perspective on the issue:

The United States has a strong interest in maintaining cooperation with our neighbors regardless of their domestic viewpoint. We hope that governments will evolve toward constitutional procedures but it is not our mission to try to provide, except by example, the answers to such questions to other sovereign nations. We deal with governments as they are.³⁹

Henry Kissinger explained in 1975 that, “if the infringement of human rights is not so offensive that we cannot live with it, we will seek to work out what we can with the country involved in order to increase our influence. If the infringement was so offensive that we cannot live with it, we will avoid dealing with the offending country.”⁴⁰

By the mid-1970s, Congress had begun to focus on human rights and to establish laws requiring that U.S. policy take into account the human rights situations of aid recipients. The Ford administration made an effort to conform to Congressional concerns, noting that it would set a limit on the “extent to which governments engaged in the systemic repression of their citizens’ human rights could be ‘congenial partners’ with the United States.”⁴¹

President Carter paid rhetorical allegiance to the human rights issue, raising it to public prominence. His administration’s policy was fundamentally in alignment with the neorealist perspective in seeking to dissociate the United States from dictators as a means of protecting U.S. interests. The new policy “had both a moral and a national security premise,” wrote Robert Pastor, a member of Carter’s National Security Council staff.

By supporting a dictator, the United States would lose the support of his nation and especially of its youth, which would identify the United

States as part of its national problem. There were risks in withdrawing support from dictators, but the administration believed that the prospect of violent revolutions would be greater in the long run if possibilities for change were precluded.⁴²

Indeed, Carter recalls in his memoirs that when he "met with the leader of a government which had been accused of wronging its own people, the subject of human rights was near the top of my agenda."⁴³ Nonetheless, even under Carter, interests other than human rights took precedence in the making of U.S. foreign policy. Secretary of State Vance testified in 1977 that U.S. policy would be determined on a country-by-country basis. "In each case," he said, "we must balance a political concern for human rights against economic and security goals."⁴⁴

A neoconservative human rights perspective again dominated U.S. policy during the Reagan administration. In a 1984 speech, Secretary of State George Shultz declared,

Human rights policy cannot mean simply dissociating or distancing ourselves from regimes whose practices we find deficient. Too much of what passes for human rights policy has taken the form of shunning those we find do not live up to internationally accepted standards. But this to me is a "cop-out"; it seems more concerned with making us feel better than with having an impact on the situation we deplore. It is really a form of isolationism.⁴⁵

The issue of human rights abroad has frequently been relegated to a secondary place on the foreign policy agenda; it has proven useful insofar as it has complemented pursuit of the national interest or, at least, did not interfere with it. This book will consider the efficacy of such an orientation to human rights in the cases it examines.

U.S. Human Rights Foreign Policy: A Realpolitik Alternative

As disciples of realpolitik, the neoconservative and neorealist schools define their arguments in terms of the state as primary actor. Nonetheless, they represent widely disparate ideological and analytical views: neither their assumptions, nor their prescriptions, nor their perspectives on outcomes agree. The cases in the following chapters test whether and when either perspective applies. In none of the cases are the prescriptions of either school adhered to strictly. The cases, nonetheless, give some indication that the hypotheses of neither school are particularly accurate in predicting events.

Failure by either school to establish the complete accuracy of its predictions indicates a need for proponents of realpolitik to reconsider their calculations about how the national interest might be achieved. Instead of relying only on the *state as actor* level of analysis, realpolitik strategies might incorporate the perspectives of the *complex interdependence* approach. This approach, for example, emphasizes the centrality of nongovernmental actors in influencing events in the international system. A foreign policy framework that would encompass both the realpolitik and the complex interdependence approaches would thus define the national interest more broadly by focusing on both state and nongovernmental actors.⁴⁶

Within such a framework, the United States could follow a consistent policy of support for moderate opposition groups within target countries. By doing so, it could establish countervailing power bases through which reform could be encouraged. In addition, if organized and trained, these groups could assume the responsibilities of government in case of the overthrow of the previous regime. A history of U.S. support for the moderates, as well as American assistance and the ideological inclinations of the moderates, would make it possible for cordial relations to be maintained.

The very parameters of the national interest as defined by the realpolitik and complex interdependence perspectives, also argues for linking the two approaches. The national interest in terms of realpolitik focuses primarily on issues of national security and power. Complex interdependence, on the other hand, argues that military power is not necessarily the central determinant affecting international relations, and that power may not always be defined in terms of military capability. Economic and ecological issue areas also play critical roles in defining the forces that shape international politics.⁴⁷

The salience of the complex interdependence assumptions for U.S. foreign policy calculations is underlined by the cases in this book. U.S. military power was not imposed in any of the three cases because its utility was deemed questionable. Military intervention would have meant nationwide bloodshed in the target states and might well have incited national, if not regional and international, resentment. These were outcomes the United States proved either unwilling or incapable of accepting.

Realpolitik calculations that include the role of nonstate actors and reassess the primacy of military power in interstate relations may thus prove useful. The assumptions underlying such an integrated approach would be derived from the neorealist school and the complex interdependence approach. These are:

1. Change is inevitable.
2. U.S. influence abroad is limited.
3. Nongovernmental actors are important in affecting international politics.
4. Differing systemic conditions may require that state interests be defined differently.
5. Power is not always defined in terms of military capacity.

The assumptions and prescriptions of the neoconservative and neorealist schools are tested in the following chapters to determine whether and where they have been successful, and if the alternative model for U.S. human rights policy might have better served U.S. interests. Chapter 2 delineates the specific questions addressed in all the cases and discusses the foreign policy instruments Washington had, or might have used in pursuing U.S. interests abroad.