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Are US Foreign Policy Tools Effective in Improving Human Rights Conditions?

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Abstract

This is the first empirical study to evaluate, in combination, the relative impact of the US's four major foreign policy tools (i.e., military intervention, military assistance, economic sanctions, and economic assistance) on human rights conditions abroad. This study presents a Hegemonic Intervention Hypothesis, which cautions against US action to promote human rights, and a Coercion Hypothesis, which assesses punitive actions as likely to be more harmful than acts of assistance. Relying on a dataset of 144 countries for the years 1975–2005, this study finds that, contrary to Washington's stated desire to promote human rights, all forms of US foreign policy intervention are either neutral in effect or linked to increases in the level of state repression.

Human Rights in the New Millennium

International politics and foreign policy in the new millennium have witnessed a greater degree of human rights consciousness. Even the longstanding norm of sovereignty is evolving towards one of a more 'contingent' nature due to multiple factors, among which high-profile interventions intended to promote human rights play a key role.[1] Concerns about human rights are manifested particularly in the official US Department of State website.[2] Furthermore, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour claims that 'the United States uses a wide range of tools to advance a freedom agenda, including bilateral diplomacy, multilateral engagement, foreign assistance, reporting and public outreach, and

1 See Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, 'Why Does the U.S. Intervene Abroad?', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 60, No. 5 (2016), pp. 899–926; Jennifer Ramos, *Changing Norms through Actions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

2 http://www.state.gov/j/drl/hr/index.htm.

economic sanctions'.[3] Both US presidents elected after the turn of the millennium made pronouncements on human rights and good governance as drivers of US actions. The first, George W. Bush, introduced the Millennium Challenges Compact, which linked aid levels to responsible government. The second, Barack Obama, initiated the US Global Policy, which emphasized the role of aid in responsible government and poverty reduction.

But what is the reality behind such declarations? What does the empirical record say about the impact of US foreign policy tools on human rights around the globe? This empirical study looks into the impact of the leading power, the US, on human rights violations abroad.[4] Is it a help or a hindrance? To answer this question, the focus will be on a range of military and economic actions. Both threats and punishments, on the one hand, and promises and rewards, on the other, will be considered as US foreign policy tools. In doing so, this study offers a first cut at accounting for the determinants of human rights abroad in the context of the widest range of major foreign policy tools so far included in a single study: military intervention, military assistance, economic sanctions, and economic assistance.[5] The effects of these four tools will be assessed and compared in the same model specification.[6] This study hence also purports to obtain a comprehensive sense of the role played by the US as a system leader in the salient foreign policy area of human rights protection. Therefore, it also seeks the greater engagement of foreign policy analysis with the human rights field.

3 http://www.state.gov/j/drl/.

4 In other words, the main focus of this study is on the external role played specifically by the US, as opposed to domestic politics, with respect to human rights protection, see Jeffrey Pickering and Mark Peceny, 'Forging Democracy at Gunpoint', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (2006), pp. 539–59; Benjamin Fordham, 'Power or Plenty?', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (2008), pp. 737–58; Brandon Prins, 'Interventions/Uses of Force Short of War', in Robert Denemark, ed., *The International Studies Encyclopedia* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 4646–69.

5 Regarding military assistance, see Wayne Sandholtz, 'The War on Terror, U.S. Military Assistance, and Human Rights', 2013, unpublished manuscript; on economic assistance, see Douglas Van Belle, Jean-Sébastien Rioux, and David Potter, *Media, Bureaucracies, and Foreign Aid* (New York: Palgrave, 2004); on economic and military assistance, see Rhonda Callaway and Elizabeth Matthews, *Strategic US Foreign Assistance* (New York: Ashgate, 2008). The main focus of this study is on implementation of the four foreign policy tools that are designed to improve human rights conditions, which involves some sort of unilateral action by the US directed toward the abusers. Accordingly, other tools, such as bilateral diplomacy, are not considered in this study because they often require states to develop diplomatic relations in a way that eschews coercion.

6 This study starts with the premise that each of the four US foreign policy tools exerts an independent effect on human rights conditions. For example, in an effort to improve North Korea's human rights violations, the US has imposed economic sanctions, but not (as yet) initiated a military campaign. On some occasions the US does employ a mixed toolkit that consists of carrots and sticks (e.g., contemporary Syria). These occasions raise the question of whether (i) the four foreign policy tools interact with one another; and (ii) one form of intervention can override the impact of the other? These possibilities are assessed in the empirical section, especially in footnote 74.

In focusing on the effects emanating from a wide range of foreign policy actions, this study constitutes a step forward with regard to large-scale data analyses. Indeed, the central conclusion of literature on the subject is that US actions reflect the intent to protect human rights, but only if strategic interests are not affected, and not always even then.[7]

Evidence Regarding US Actions and Human Rights Abroad

This section is organized around the economic and military tools of foreign policy that the US uses.[8] Threats and punishments, along with promises and rewards, are considered in each instance. Other measures, such as bilateral diplomacy and multilateral engagement, are beyond the scope of the review because it is concerned with direct statements or actions by the US government rather than negotiations of one kind or another. As will become apparent, the tools of foreign policy tend to be assessed in isolation from each other in existing research designs.

Military Intervention

To begin, consider the outcomes of six cases of US military deployments from the administrations of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, characterized as humanitarian interventions. Results are mixed—encouraging in some cases (Northern Iraq, Haiti, and Bosnia), at least in the short-term, but not in others (Somalia and Kosovo).[9] Thus the degree of success appears to be a function of specific circumstances on the ground and tactics pursued by the US, either alone or in conjunction with others.

Pickering and Peceny focus on the impact on democracy in target states of interventions from the US, UK, France, and the UN.[10] Although not precisely on the topic of human rights, their theorizing and results regarding intervention are sufficiently important to be included in this review. The study investigates whether US interventions are different from those of other liberal powers vis-à-vis promotion of democracy via force. A time series cross-sectional data analysis is implemented for the period 1946–1996. 'The strong statistical relationship between hostile US military intervention and political liberalization and democratization', observe Pickering and Peceny,[11] 'seems to be the result of three cases of

7 Clair Apodaca and Michael Stohl, 'United States Human Rights Policy and Foreign Assistance', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (1999), pp. 185–98; Shannon Blanton, 'Foreign Policy in Transition?' *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (2005), pp. 647–67; Douglas Gibler and Steven Miller, 'Comparing the Foreign Aid Policies of Presidents Bush and Obama', *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (2012), pp. 1202–17; Sam Bell, K. Chad Clay, and Carla Martinez Machain, 'The Effect of US Troop Deployments on Human Rights', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, published online April 1, 2016.

8 The review goes beyond a focus on human rights alone to include the more extensive literature on the results obtained by the US when implementing economic and military tactics in pursuit of its goals.

9 Robert DiPrizio, 'U.S. Intervention Policy After the Cold War', in William Meyer, ed., *Security, Economics, and Morality in American Foreign Policy* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), pp. 116–48. For a dissenting view on Haiti, which emphasizes long-term impact, see Derek Leebaert, *Magic and Mayhem* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), p. 233.

10 Pickering and Peceny, 'Forging Democracy at Gunpoint', pp. 539–59.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 555.

democracy promotion in the Caribbean basin'. Thus evidence of a special character to US military intervention is somewhat limited.

Based on data from 1977 to 1986, Meernik, Poe, and Shaikh assess the impact of US military force on human rights policies abroad.[12] On the surface, their results appear encouraging: in the six years after intervention, 'moderate improvements' are detected vis-à-vis human rights. However, things immediately look different once a control group, which consists of states that did not experience military intervention, is added to the study, because the states in the latter group show a greater improvement in human rights practices within the same time frame. A multivariate model produces discouraging results with respect to US military intervention as a means towards improved human rights policies in target states: negligible impact in the immediate sense and negative when assessed later on. Based on cross-sectional, time-series data, Peksen examines the question of whether or not military intervention helps human rights.[13] He hypothesizes that pro-government (and even neutral) interventions are likely to enhance the capacity to act and, therefore, to encourage greater repression. For anti-government interventions, the implications for human rights are mixed, as the target state government can cite hostile intervention to justify human rights abuses in the name of security. Thus any benefits from military intervention may be balanced off by government retaliation, leading at best to a weak expectation of improved human rights outcomes. Peksen uses data on 145 states from 1981 to 2001 to evaluate the effects of military intervention on human rights. The results once again argue against military intervention: pro-government and neutral interventions impact negatively on physical integrity rights, while anti-government interventions result in more political imprisonments.

Military Assistance

What about US military assistance vis-à-vis human rights? Studies on this subject are difficult to locate.[14] Perhaps that property, in and of itself, is revealing. The human rights implications of military transfers would seem to be a relatively recent point of concern. Callaway and Matthews offer the most comprehensive treatment, as their data analyses associate military aid with reduced levels of security rights.[15] Colombia is a case in point; an in-depth case study from Callaway and Matthews concludes that US assistance 'is not the pacifying foreign policy tool that political rhetoric suggests'.[16] Gibb finds that, based on data since 1976, US military assistance primarily reflects strategic priorities.[17] Only in a secondary way can such resources be seen as directed towards improving human rights policies. Also quite recently, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a geographically specific and informative assessment of military equipment transfers

12 James Meernik, Steven Poe, and Erun Shaikh, 'The Use of Military Force to Promote Human Rights', in David Mason and James Meernik, eds., *Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Post-War Societies* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 160–75.

13 Dursun Peksen, 'Does Foreign Military Intervention Help Human Rights?', *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (2012), pp. 558–71.

14 Blanton focuses on a reversal of the causal arrow regarding human rights and arms transfers and does not find a connection. Blanton, 'Foreign Policy in Transition?'.

15 Callaway and Matthews, *Strategic US Foreign Assistance*, p. 101.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 138.

17 Arthur Gibb, *Arms for Reforms*, M. A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, 2010.

in the context of monitoring end-use in relation to human rights.[18] With a focus on the Persian Gulf, the GAO report concludes that 'implementation gaps' limit the effectiveness of end-use monitoring and human rights vetting in relation to military equipment. Bahrain, for example, may have used US-provided equipment to 'quell protests', and the report expresses concerns that this problem might exist in other Gulf states as well.

Most current among studies of military assistance and human rights is that of Sandholtz, which investigates the era of the 'War on Terror'.[19] Data analyses for more than 100 states reveal that the relationship between human rights performance in recipient countries and US military assistance significantly deteriorated after 9/11. The likely mechanism at work is perverse in nature. In light of the US's eagerness to recruit and obtain supporters in the War on Terror, cooperative states may have perceived military assistance from Washington as including the go-ahead to carry out even more repression.

According to one observer, US security policy after 9/11 has tended to 'exacerbate rather than attenuate the root causes of terrorism, especially in the Middle East', because it provides terrorist groups with a pretext for retaliation against US military action.[20] With regard specifically to US human rights policy, critics tend to hold sway; for example, Donnelly and Liang-Fenton see Washington as reactive and short-term in its thinking.[21] Intervention, moreover, needs to become less US-centric and more in tune with local conditions. Iraq provides, perhaps, the most dramatic support for that argument, given that it became obvious soon after the short conventional phase of the war that the leadership in Washington knew little about the country they had occupied.[22]

Economic Sanctions

With regard to economic threats and punishments, interest converges on the utility of sanctions. Yet, policy-oriented reflections on the record of sanctions turn out to be discouraging. Economic sanctions do not produce regime change, and entail certain potential and acknowledged disadvantages.[23] Suffering as a result of economic sanctions could contribute

18 *Implementation Gaps limit the Effectiveness of End-Use Monitoring and Human Rights Vetting for U.S. Military Equipment* (Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, 2011).

19 Sandholtz, 'The War on Terror, U.S. Military Assistance, and Human Rights'.

20 Mark Miller, 'U.S. Policy on Terrorism before and after September 11', in Meyer, ed., *Security, Economics, and Morality in American Foreign Policy*, p. 158.

21 Jack Donnelly and Debra Liang-Fenton, 'Introduction,' in Debra Liang-Fenton, ed., *Implementing U.S. Human Rights Policy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2004), p. 5.

22 Scott Lucas, 'Conclusion', in Bevan Sewell and Scott Lucas, eds., *Challenging US Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 289.

23 David Hendrickson, 'The Democratist Crusade', *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1994), pp. 22–23. Peksen and Drury argue that economic sanctions provide new incentives for a target government to repress opposition (measured in the Freedom House Index) in order to show determination. Dursun Peksen and Cooper Drury, 'Coercive or Corrosive', *International Interactions*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (2010), p. 246. However, Shin, Choi, and Luo find no evidence for the connection between economic sanctions and target economies. Geiguen Shin, Seung-Whan Choi, and Shali Luo, 'Do Economic Sanctions Impair Target Economies?', *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (2016), pp. 485-499.

to labour unrest, further repression and the like. Moreover, informed leaders, at various times, have expressed scepticism about sanctions. A prominent example is the opposition of President George H.W. Bush to economic sanctions against China in the aftermath of Tian'anmen Square in 1989, on the grounds of their probable ineffectiveness.[24]

Consider the US's rate of success (i.e., change in policy by a target government) from applying sanctions: 1980–1989—14%; 1990–1999—26%.[25] The figures for unilateral US implementation of economic sanctions are even lower. Longstanding cases like Cuba, Iran, and North Korea demonstrate that, whether regime change specifically or human rights in general are deemed most relevant, economic sanctions remain ineffective. Hufbauer and Oegg observe in particular that arms embargoes are 'debatable' as a means towards ending conflict.

With a focus on state repression and economic sanctions, Wood analyses annual data for 157 states from 1976 to 2001,[26] and finds that sanctions mplemented by the US are associated with higher levels of government repression. Results from Peksen and Drury, meanwhile, link economic sanctions to lower levels of government respect for physical integrity rights and higher levels of repression over comparable periods.[27] In short, it is difficult to envision economic sanctions, by the US alone or in conjunction with others, as an appropriate means towards greater respect for human rights abroad.

Economic Assistance

What about, in contrast to sanctions, economic promises and rewards? Could a switch from sticks to carrots produce a different outcome for human rights? Cingranelli and Pasquarello find a positive correlation between US economic aid to Latin America and human rights.[28] Meyer argues that economic aid to Least Developed Countries (LDS) is a causal mechanism that improves human rights conditions.[29] Richards, Gelleny, and Sacko show that, among foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, debt, and official development assistance, the first two are reliably associated with increased government respect for human rights.[30] However, Callaway and Matthews conclude that, due to its national

24 This outcome is overdetermined in the sense that Bush also did not want to provoke China into economic retaliation against the US. William Meyer, 'Foreign Policy and Human Rights', in Meyer, ed., *Security, Economics, and Morality in American Foreign Policy*, p. 265.

25 Gary Hufbauer and Barbara Oegg, 'From Blunt Weapons to Smart Bombs', *Global Dialogue*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2000), pp. 85–94.

26 Reed Wood, 'A Hand upon the Throat of the Nation', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (2008), pp. 489–513.

27 Dursun Peksen and Cooper Drury, 'Economic Sanctions and Political Repression', *Human Rights Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2009), pp. 393–411.

28 David Cingranelli and Thomas Pasquarello, 'Human Rights Practices and the Distribution of U.S. Foreign Aid to Latin American Countries', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1985), pp. 539–63.

29 William Meyer, *Human Rights and International Political Economy in Third World Nations* (Westport: Praeger, 1998).

30 David Richards, Ronald Gelleny, and David Sacko, 'Money with a Mean Streak?', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (2001), pp. 219–39.

security priorities, '[America's] record in improving human rights has been far less successful'.[31] Furthermore, evidence from the Carter and Reagan Administrations suggests that even foreign aid programmes may cause harmful effects.[32] If anything, according to sample of 32 states from Latin America and Asia from the years 1977 to 1988, US aid is associated with increased repression.

Data-based research on economic assistance and human rights policies produces even more discouraging results. Based on a sample of 150 countries from 1972 to 2008, Ahmed finds that US aid is positively associated with repression, because it tends to empower governments to exert less tax effort and be less accountable to their populations.[33] Finkel, Pérez-Liñán, and Seligson focus on 165 states from 1990 to 2003 and use the Freedom House Index to identify a factor labelled 'Respect for Human Rights'.[34] With this innovative metric as the dependent variable, it turns out that assistance specifically targeted towards promotion of human rights is at best 'modest', and this connection is not satisfactory to advocates of human rights protection.

Deriving Hypotheses

Points that emerge from the preceding discussion about US foreign policy and human rights undergird the theorizing in this section:

- Whether the techniques are economic or military, the impact of US intervention is neutral at best and often harmful.
- The preceding assertion remains true whether US inducements take a positive or negative form, with sticks arguably worse than carrots.
- No policy tool works consistently to protect or promote human rights.[35] To the extent that the US hopes to promote human rights abroad, it must accept the reality that local conditions are crucial, and tend to limit potentially successful cases.

Although not offered in connection with human rights, recent reflections on the direction of US foreign policy can provide the point of departure for theorizing in response to the preceding observations which, taken as a whole, argue against the respective forms of action by the US if the goal is to promote human rights abroad.

31 Callaway and Matthews, *Strategic US Foreign Assistance*, p. 4.

32 Patrick Regan, 'U.S. Economic Aid and Political Repression', *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (1995), pp. 613–28.

33 Faisal Ahmed, 'Aiding Repression', 2013, https://editorialexpress.com/cgi-bin/conference/download.cgi?db_name=NEUDC2013&paper_id=69.

34 Steven Finkel, Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, and Mitchell Seligson, 'The Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building, 1990-2003', *World Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (2007), pp. 414–16.

35 This conclusion is in line with Hafner-Burton, which surveyed human rights protection on a cross-national basis. The assertion also works for a US-centred analysis such as the one at present. Emilie Hafner-Burton, 'A Social Science of Human Rights', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (2014), p. 276.

Consider the question, 'how much is enough?' vis-à-vis US intervention. Layne offers a critique that sees US involvement abroad as supraoptimal vis-à-vis its basic interests.[36] Moreover, the 'hyperactive' era of US foreign policy, arguably at its peak during the George W. Bush administration, goes back well beyond such soft targets for criticism as the costly involvement in Iraq over the past decade. Thus, to preserve its position as the leading state, the US should match resource allocation more directly with the likelihood that a given conflict beyond its borders possesses implications for (i) preventing a dominant Eurasian power; and (ii) securing access to vital resources in the Middle East by working against a regional hegemon there as well.[37]

What does all of this have to do with the promotion of human rights? Interesting to consider is the possibly more effective pursuit of a human rights policy within the traditional context of national interest, as articulated above via Layne.[38] Consider the case of Kosovo.[39] The US acted to stabilize a volatile region, and in doing so led The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in an effort that simultaneously counteracted a policy of extermination put in place by Serb ultra-nationalists. US-led efforts in Kosovo had the effect of discouraging Russian aggrandizement in the region. Overall, the strategy of NATO bombing over a full-scale invasion was successful from the standpoint of national interests. Liberals also saw the outcome as a victory by virtue of the humanitarian relief it brought the people of Kosovo, and at least a temporary end to human rights abuses against Kosovar Albanians.

From a US perspective, overextension will be associated with generally harmful outcomes, which include human rights. Moreover, as Yetiv puts it, inconsistency seems a likely result if the US takes the default position of reacting to developments rather than being more selective when considering the appropriate action.[40] From the viewpoint of states targeted in US's efforts to respond to all 'emergencies', harmful effects are anticipated from the leading state's supraoptimal level of activity. Perhaps O'Reilly's summation of US policy in the Persian Gulf as 'unexceptional'—that is, generally imperialistic—can be linked to not only the content but also sheer volume of action taken by Washington.[41]

Put differently, a more restrained foreign policy increases the likelihood of worldwide evolution towards enhanced human rights as a result of eliminating or lessening the 'boomerang' effect of ill-conceived interventions. As demonstrated by the research reviewed in the previous section, whether in the form of carrots or sticks, US actions are associated with neutral or negative effects with regard to human rights protection abroad. Two causal mechanisms are reviewed in turn.

36 Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006). See also John Mearsheimer, 'Pull Those Boots off The Ground', 30 December, 2008, http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2008/12/30/pull-those-boots-off-the-ground.html.

37 Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*.

38 *Ibid*.

39 Meyer, 'Foreign Policy and Human Rights', p. 271.

40 Steve Yetiv, *The Absence of Grand Strategy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 192–93.

41 Marc O'Reilly, *Unexceptional* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008).

One mechanism goes all the way back to Lasswell and the vision of a 'garrison state', into whose hands military specialists would increasingly concentrate power as a result of the perceived public need for ever-higher levels of national security.[42] By exerting pressure on admittedly odious regimes, the US unintentionally strengthens the hand of those already engaged in human rights abuses. With an ability to cite a US threat to national security or sovereignty, abusive dictators can justify higher levels of repression. Thus the approach based on sticks is unlikely to produce an outcome favouring human rights.

Efforts based on carrots are no more likely to succeed. The other causal mechanism regarding human rights concerns the effects of resource transfers, whether military or economic in nature. Economic aid and military assistance are alike in that they provide additional resources to rogue leaders already proven to disrespect human rights. As Callaway and Matthews observe, the US continues to grant 'extensive amounts of foreign aid to countries with poor human rights records in the name of national security'.[43] Intuition suggests that at least some of the resources transferred will find their way towards coercive purposes—another dimension of the garrison state.

Put all of this together and consilience is at hand. Historical, interpretive arguments about national interest point in the same direction as data-based studies of US promotion of human rights. The idea of an 'ethical foreign policy', put forward by Callaway and Matthews, serves as a point of culmination for the preceding arguments: 'On the one hand it is not useful and in fact is impractical to promote a policy that does not take into account security interests; however, a total disregard for the consequences of action taken in the name of national security is ethically reprehensible, and in practical terms does little to serve the very primary objective that the state pursues—security.'[44] The status quo, unfortunately, does not reflect the ethical foreign policy, advocated by Callaway and Matthews, which would take the consequences of foreign assistance and other actions into account. The present study, therefore, builds on Callaway and Matthews by examining whether military and economic actions by the US across the board currently entail harmful effects vis-à-vis human rights in target states.

Overall, a more limited and targeted US deployment of resources abroad seems desirable as regards both the national interest and preservation, if not promotion, of whatever level of human rights may exist in a given location. This assertion reflects certain properties of intervention. Those carrying out the intervention even if, like the United States, well-endowed with resources, may not understand the context well enough to act effectively. The aftermath of the Iraq War makes that point in a compelling way.[45] Interveners simply may not appreciate the potential unintended consequences of their actions, which can produce more human rights violations than would have been experienced otherwise. Thus the US might not abandon human rights promotion, but pursuit of that goal in a limited and targeted way is likely to produce better outcomes across the board. Consider, in that

42 Harold Lasswell, 'The Garrison State', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (1941), pp. 455–68.

43 Callaway and Matthews, *Strategic US Foreign Assistance*, p. 14.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

45 O'Reilly, *Unexceptional*.

context, the results of Scott and Steele, who look at data from 1988 to 2001 and find that carefully targeted US democracy aid is associated more closely than generic economic assistance with democratization.[46]

From the preceding analysis emerges a general hypothesis:

Hegemonic Intervention Hypothesis (HIH): Interventions abroad will have neutral or harmful effects on human rights practices.

Regardless of whether the foreign policy tool is economic or military, the impact of the leading state's intervention on human rights is anticipated to be neutral, if not harmful. Consider public opinion intertwined with the character of US activity abroad as a reinforcing factor. Successful US interventions are likely to be sustained and involve massive resources—and public approval for such ventures will be rare. Exceptions such as Germany and Japan after World War II come to mind, but as a general rule the public will frown upon such enormous allocations of resources as those to Afghanistan and Iraq. Instead, relatively limited, although probably unsuccessful, ventures are more likely to occur because they are above the bar for public approval.

One important qualifying point concerns intentions. The HIH does not imply that the US leadership is acting with ill intent—only that the results with respect to Washington's activities vis-à-vis human rights abuses abroad are anticipated to be disappointing. The matter of intentions carries over to the forms of US activity, which may have varying effects. It is reasonable to infer that the types of actions will have different effects:

Coercion Hypothesis (CH): Military interventions and economic sanctions will have more harmful effects than military and economic assistance on human rights practices.

This proposition follows naturally from the content of the respective actions. While all four actions are intended to cause changes in behaviour on the part of the target regime, the 'carrots' are likely to do less harm than the 'sticks'. Intuition here is that at least some positive effects could transmit to the society in question from the two varieties of carrot, while the sticks are coercive and would seem to have no immediately positive collateral effects to balance off whatever harm is done.

Research Design

In order to test the HIH and CH, this study assembles data on 144 countries during the period 1975–2005 (see Appendix A1 for a list of sample countries), so the country-year is the unit of analysis. Yet, all the countries may not have the same probability of provoking US actions. Since the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries engage in relatively low levels of human rights abuses, they are not likely to become subjects on the US foreign policy agenda, at least for that reason. Accordingly, this study tests two samples: (i) all countries; and (ii) non-OECD countries. Because the estimated results from the two samples are similar, to save space this study discusses only the former. This study does not select a particular set of events that has sometimes precipitated US military actions; as Fordham notes, 'in principle, intervention requires no triggering event. States can and do use force without provocation'.[47] The study period is determined

46 James Scott and Carie Steele, 'Sponsoring Democracy', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (2011), pp. 47–69.

47 Benjamin Fordham, 'Power or Plenty?' p. 743. Nonetheless, this study tested the potential selection bias that ensues from not all countries having the same probability of provoking

by data availability for human rights abuses and US military intervention. This research design is the first ever to combine economic and military techniques, coercive and cooperative, to assess comprehensively the impact of US actions on human rights.

To increase the credibility of the findings reported below, this study employs two standard measures of human rights violations. They are the dependent variable: the Political Terror Scale (PTS);[48] and the CIRI physical integrity rights index.[49] Note how Fariss shows that existing human rights measures such as PTS and CIRI suffer from temporal bias due to better information collection and closer scrutiny of human rights abuses.[50] While human rights abuses appear to have increased over time, the reality, as demonstrated by Fariss, is rather that researchers identify more abuses than they did in the past. As such, empirical research using existing data should account for this temporal bias. However, when we employ Fariss's latent human rights protection scores, which effectively address the temporal bias over the course of years, the results are similar to those that we report in the ensuing section. Thus, these results are only briefly discussed along with Table 1 below.[51]

The CIRI physical integrity rights index captures the level of political repression in each state by combining the instances of torture, political imprisonment, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances. The combined scores range from '0' (no respect for any of these four rights) to '8' (full respect for all of them); however, this study reverses the order of the scores for an easy interpretation of estimated coefficients, thereby '0' corresponds to the lowest repression and '8' corresponds to the highest repression. The PTS ranges from '1' (highest levels of human rights protection) to '5' (lowest levels of human rights protection). US Department of State (USDS) and Amnesty International (AI) scores produce very similar estimates and the empirical analysis reported below relies on the latter (i.e., as explained in Appendix A3) to save space.

US intervention. This study also tested a possibility of endogeneity bias, namely, that countries with human rights abuses are more likely to trigger US intervention, while US actions, particularly military intervention (e.g., the case of Iraq), can result in more abuses. Robustness tests are reported in Model 1 in Appendix A2, which (i) includes only those countries exposed to a risk of experiencing US military interventions; and (ii) assumes human rights violations and military interventions to be endogenous in instrumental variables (two-stage least squares) regression. The results are similar to those reported in the next section, so to save space they are not discussed in detail. Note also that the results are likely to be biased because the two-stage least squares regression assumed the endogenous variables are continuous when they are actually ordinal and count. There is no existing statistical software that can run a simultaneous equations model with ordinal and count variables, so this study relied on the 2SLS as an ad hoc estimation method.

48 The PTS is available online at http://politicalterrorscale.org/. See Reed Wood and Mark Gibney, 'The Political Terror Scale (PTS)', *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2010), pp. 367–400.

49 The CIRI index of physical integrity rights is available online at ciri.binghamton.edu. See David Cingranelli and David Richards, 'The Cingranelli and Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project', *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2010), pp. 401–24.

50 Christopher Fariss, 'Respect for Human Rights has improved over Time', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 108, No. 2 (2014), pp. 297–318.

51 When possible country-specific factors are also considered, the results do not deviate from those in Table 1.

The measures of PTS and CIRI apply to all available countries. But not all of the sample countries are abusers of human rights. As an additional check for robustness and as a way to mitigate the issue of selection bias, this study uses an alternative sample, restricted to countries that engage in human rights violations, which is a common practice in the literature on humanitarian military interventions.[52] However, the results are substantively similar to those presented in the next section and thus, to save space, are not reported.

US military interventions measure the annual number of US military interventions taking place within a country's borders. The US's every intervention into another country increases the value of this variable by '1' for that specific year. The data is from two sources: Pearson and Baumann and Pickering and Kisangani.[53] Based on the same criteria for data collection, the former includes data for the years 1946–1988, while the latter covers the years 1989–2005. These datasets define military interventions as 'the movement of regular troops or forces (airborne, seaborne, shelling, etc.) of one country inside another, in the context of some political issue or dispute'.[54] This definition includes full-fledged military interventions and excludes minor border encounters or shooting incidents.

Interesting to identify is the subset of cases in which promotion of human rights is an important goal for the United States. For that purpose, this study looks at humanitarian interventions that purport 'to save lives, relieve suffering, and/or distribute foodstuffs to prevent starvation'.[55] When a robustness test is conducted for US military intervention with a specific focus on humanitarian missions, the results are fairly similar to those presented in the next section, and thus due to the page limit are not reported.

US economic sanctions are based on the data collection of Hufbauer et al., which is considered the most comprehensive and sophisticated for economic sanction cases.[56] The economic sanctions variable is coded as '1' for the imposition of a US economic sanction and as '0' for the lack of such a sanction. Economic sanctions are 'the deliberate, government-inspired withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of customary trade or financial relations' between countries.[57] Shea extends this definition to coercive economic measures that 'are deliberately implemented to deter, alter, or revise a state or group's political, military, or

52 For example, Seung-Whan Choi, 'What Determines U.S. Humanitarian Intervention?', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2013), pp. 121–40.

53 Frederic Pearson and Robert Baumann, *International Military Intervention, 1946-1988* (Ann Arbor: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1993); Jeffrey Pickering and Emizet Kisangani, 'The International Military Intervention Data Set', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 46, No., 4 (2009), pp. 589–600.

54 Pearson and Baumann, *International Military Intervention, 1946-1988*, p. 1.

55 Pickering and Kisangani, 'The International Military Intervention Data Set', p. 593.

56 Gary Hufbauer, Jeffrey Schott, Kimberly Elliott, and Barbara Oegg, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2008). As another robustness test, this study also uses the sanction episodes collected by Morgan, Bapat, Krustev, and Kobayashi—the Threat and Imposition of Sanctions (TIES) data. Because the results are similar to those obtained using Hufbauer et al.'s data, this study does not report them to save space. T. Clifton Morgan, Navin Bapat, Valentin Krustev and Yoshiharu Kobayashi, https://www.unc.edu/~bapat/TIES.htm, 2016.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

economic behaviour that the sanctioner deems inappropriate'.[58] Examples of economic sanctions include trade embargoes, restrictions on imports and exports, denial of foreign assistance (including loans and investments), freezing of foreign assets, and prohibition of economic transactions between multinational corporations and sanctioned countries.

US military and economic assistance is foreign assistance in millions of US dollars that is reported by the recipient country. Any country that has received from the US government cumulative military or economic assistance amounting to more than $500,000 since 1945 is required to do such reporting. This study uses constant dollar amounts in 2009 that are inflation-adjusted values. To correct the highly positive skew in the amount of dollars, the logarithm of military assistance or economic assistance is taken for estimation.[59] Data are garnered from the *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants*, informally known as the Greenbook.[60]

It is appropriate to control for other factors that might affect the magnitude of the expected relationship between US foreign policy actions and human rights conditions. From the existing record of research, five variables with a track record of performance are included into the model: violent dissent, civil war, per capita income, population size, and democracy.[61] The effects for each follow intuition from prior studies.[62] A lagged term for human rights violations is not included as a control because Gaibulloev, Sandler, and Sul demonstrate that the control variable leads to Nickell bias when the number of countries far exceeds the number of periods.[63] Yet, even when it is added to the model specification, the main findings of this study remain the same. An example is shown in Model 8 in Appendix A6, where a lagged term for human rights violations is included—a replicated analysis of Davenport and Armstrong's study, but economic sanctions still appear to backfire.[64]

Political dissent is measured by two different indicators: violent dissent (i.e., riots and guerrilla warfare) as operationalized by Bank,[65] and civil war as operationalized by the Uppsala and The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) groups.[66] Political leaders are more

58 Patrick Shea, 'US Foreign Policy and the Resurgence of Economic Sanctions', *Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 10 (2008), p. 71.

59 When per capita GDP, a percentage of GDP, or change in assistance levels is used instead of the logarithm, the results are similar to those reported in the next section.

60 See https://www.usaid.gov/data/dataset/49c01560-6cd7-4bbc-bfef-7a1991867633.

61 For robustness tests, other confounding factors such as a military control variable will be introduced at the end of empirical results. See Steven Poe and Neal Tate, 'Repression of Human Rights to Personal Integrity in the 1980s', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (1994), pp. 853–72; Christian Davenport and David Armstrong, 'Democracy and the Violation of Human Rights', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (2004), pp. 538–54.

62 For example, Christian Davenport, 'State Repression and the Tyrannical Peace', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (2007), pp. 485–504.

63 Khusrav Gaibulloev, Todd Sandler, and Donggyu Sul, 'Dynamic Panel Analysis under Cross-Sectional Dependence', *Political Analysis*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2014), pp. 258–73.

64 Davenport and Armstrong, 'Democracy and the Violation of Human Rights.'

65 Arthur Banks, 'Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive', http://www.cntsdata.com/. June 28, 2017.

66 See the official UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset v4-2008 at https://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/? id=348.

likely to use violence when under threat, so the violent dissent variable is included in the statistical model. This study also examines the possibility that, when facing an internal challenge from anti-government armed forces, leaders are more likely to use repressive measures to maintain civil order. Put differently, leaders are more likely to rely on repression when civil war appears more than probable. To account for that issue, this study relies on the Uppsala and PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset. A civil war is defined as a contested incompatibility between a government and one or more opposition groups which results in at least 25 battle deaths in a year. The civil war onset variable is coded as '1' when a new civil war occurs and also as '1' when no civil conflict occurred within the past two years.

Per capita income and population are introduced in order to consider the main tenets of modernization theories. Countries where poverty and a high population are major issues are more likely to repress citizens in hopes of reducing high levels of socio-economic stress. Per capita income is measured in thousands of 1985 US dollars as collected from Penn World Tables and World Bank data. Data on population size are gathered from World Bank figures, and are a logged term of the total population in thousands.

Democracy should provide a favourable environment for the protection and effective realization of human rights.[67] Accordingly, as the quality of democratic governance increases, human rights violations should decrease. The democracy variable is taken from the Polity dataset. Polity provides an 11 point additive score for both democracies and autocracies to capture the overall quality of democratic political institutions. Each additive score ranges from 0 to 10. Subtracting the autocracy score from the democracy score gives a composite score, ranging from '-10' (least democratic) to '+10' (most democratic).[68]

The dependent variable, state repression, is rank-ordered and ordinal, so this study employs an ordered logit model with robust standard errors, clustered on the country. When an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model is used instead, the estimated results coincide with those from ordered logit with respect to the level of significance and the coefficient sign, so in order to save space they are not reported below. Note that because the dependent variable is ordinal but not interval, taking the first difference of the ordinal measure (i.e. the change) is unsuitable for statistical estimation. To ensure that predictors precede the outcome variable, this study takes one- and five-year lagged terms for foreign policy tools.

Empirical Results

Prior to multivariate logit analysis, consider the correlation matrix for the four key variables of interest: Military interventions, military assistance, economic sanctions, and economic assistance. As shown in Appendix A4, the correlation between any two variables is not high enough to cause concern in the event they are included in the same model for estimation. In

67 See Seung-Whan Choi, *New Explorations into International Relations* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016); Seung-Whan Choi, 'The Democratic Peace through an Interaction of Domestic Institutions and Norms: Executive Constraints and Rule of Law', *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 39, No. 2 (2013), pp. 255–83; Seung-Whan Choi, 'Re-evaluating Capitalist and Democratic Peace Models', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (2011), pp. 759–69.

68 Monty Marshall and Keith Jaggers, 'POLITY IV Project', http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p4manualv2006.pdf.

Table 1. The US and Human Rights Violations

	PTS								LHRPS
Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
US military intervention$_{t-1}$	4.437***				3.906***		3.327***	2.818**	_0.443***
	(1.369)				(1.190)		(1.082)	(0.923)	(0.063)
US military assistance$_{t-1}$		1.134**			1.126**		1.015	1.091	_0.003
		(0.049)			(0.049)		(0.041)	(0.051)	(0.007)
US economic sanctions$_{t-1}$			3.978***			5.329***	5.300***	3.431***	_0.237***
			(0.879)			(1.121)	(1.136)	(0.850)	(0.041)
US economic assistance$_{t-1}$				1.304***		1.341***	1.327***	1.075	0.005
				(0.061)		(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.052)	(0.008)
Violent dissent$_{t-1}$								2.123***	_0.181***
								(0.480)	(0.016)
Civil war$_{t-1}$								3.242***	_0.241***
								(0.746)	(0.045)
Per capita income$_{t-1}$								0.864***	0.085***
								(0.028)	(0.006)
Population$_{t-1}$								1.433***	_0.168***
								(0.113)	(0.031)
Democracy$_{t-1}$								0.939***	0.048***
								(0.014)	(0.002)
Constant									1.192***
									(0.284)
Wald χ^2	23.30	8.42	39.08	32.80	30.59	95.38	107.61	231.38	1256.05
Prob > χ^2	0.001	0.004	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Log pseudolikelihood	_4504.26	_4493.54	_4439.19	_4361.76	_4475.66	_4243.74	−4230.41	−3787.97	n/a
Observations	3098	3098	3098	3098	3098	3098	3098	3098	3098

Note: Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.
PTS: Political Terror Scale, LHRPS: Latent Human Rights Protection Scores.

fact, the highest correlation turns out to be 0.45 between military assistance and economic assistance. It is important to note that 0.80 is a conventional threshold that causes concern.

Table 1 presents estimated results that are displayed as proportional odds ratios[69] when the dependent variable is ordinal, as in the PTS. Models 1–4 examine the effect of each of the four different tools of US foreign policy; Models 5 and 6 compare military or economic means of hegemonic intervention; Model 7 evaluates the relative importance of the four foreign policy tools; Model 8 replicates Model 7 after including five control variables;[70] and Model 9 re-runs Model 8 after the PTS is replaced with Fariss's latent human rights protection scores in order to account for the possibility of temporal bias.[71]

Each foreign policy tool in Models 1–4 is statistically significant and offers supporting evidence for the HIH: Whether they are military or economic, US interventions abroad are likely to lead to a worsening of human rights around the world. When military interventions are pitted against military assistance in Model 5, both variables remain statistically significant and the coefficient signs are positive. This implies that any military means may exert an unfavourable effect on human rights protection. However, when the strength of the raw coefficients (i.e., log-odds) is compared upon standardization, it turns out that military assistance (0.147) is stronger in attenuating the status of human rights than military interventions (0.085).[72] When economic sanctions are compared with economic assistance in Model 6, the latter (0.371) appears to be more harmful to protection of human rights than the former (0.252). When the four foreign policy tools are compared in Model 7, the strength of the coefficients is 0.062 (military intervention), 0.020 (military assistance), 0.252 (economic sanctions), and 0.357 (economic assistance). Of the four forms of foreign policy intervention, economic assistance appears to be the most catalytic cause of state repression as regards the magnitude of the four standardized coefficients calculated from Model 7. This supports the notion that US economic assistance helps consolidate the regimes of dictators who then use the assistance to repress their own people. Given the rampant phenomenon of developmental dictatorship in countries where economic assistance

69 Ordered logistic regression is based on the proportional odds assumption. This study formally tested the assumption in two ways: a likelihood ratio test using a user-written Stata command called omodel and Brant test. Both of these tests indicate that the research design does not violate the proportional odds assumption.

70 Note that compared to the last model, the first seven models are parsimonious because they do not include control variables. Models with too many controls may be affected by statistical noise, whereas simpler models may capture the underlying causal relationship better and may show superior predictive performance. In fact, Clarke demonstrates mathematically that 'the inclusion of additional control variables may increase or decrease the bias, and we cannot know for sure which is the case in any particular situation'. Kevin Clarke, 'The Phantom Menace', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (2005), p. 341. In short, Models 1 through 7 are introduced to evaluate the direct relationship between the main predictors and the outcome variable before checking the *robustness* of the main findings to the inclusion of other control variables as in Model 8. Of course, the inclusion of control variables is a conventional practice that aims to avoid omitted variable bias.

71 Fariss, 'Respect for Human Rights Has Improved over Time'.

72 The evaluation is based on comparison of the fully 'standardized' coefficients for the logged odds.

was used for both development and dictatorship (e.g., South Korea during the Park Chung Hee period (1961–1979)), the finding is less of a surprise.

Since Models 1–7 are built without considering control variables, they may be subject to omitted variable bias. Model 8 is designed to circumvent this issue by including five controls that have been identified as key determinants of human rights violations in the literature.[73] Incorporation of the control variables fails to cause military interventions and economic sanctions to become insignificant, while military assistance and economic assistance turn out to be insignificant. It appears that the former two tools of US foreign policy are linked to worsening human rights abuses around the world, while the latter two tools have no bearing on human rights conditions once other factors are taken into account. These results support the HIH and the CH.[74]

In Model 9, we use Fariss's latent human rights protection scores to account for the possibility of temporal bias.[75] Note that because these scores record the protection, not abuse, of human rights, we expect a negative relationship between each foreign policy tool and human rights. This means that when each tool of US foreign policy is implemented, we expect human rights protection to encroach. It appears that the results in Model 9 do not deviate from those in previous models. Military interventions and economic sanctions are detrimental to the promotion of human rights abroad, while neither military nor economic assistance exerts a significant effect.

This study also obtains predicted probabilities, which are usually easier to interpret than the odds ratios. In order to examine how the probabilities of membership to each category of Human Rights Violations change, as in Model 8, this study varies one of the main predictors and holds the other variables at their means. For example, the predicted probability of being in the highest category of Human Rights Violation is 0.033 if the US does meddle in the domestic affairs of other states; 0.087 if the US intervenes in the same state once; and 0.215 if the US dispatches its armed forces twice. Hence, if the US deploys its forces multiple times, the predicted probability of worsening human rights conditions increases.

One argument about US impact might be related to short- versus long-term assessment. The empirical models in Table 1 rely on a one-year time lag. However, what if we re-ran the models to see what the estimates look like, say, five years later? Table 2 includes the models that take into account the time effect over a five-year period.[76] Since the only coefficients of interest are the four tools related to US action, five lagged variables for each

73 When three sets of multicollinearity tests (i.e., variance inflation factors, condition index, and R^2 statistics) are conducted, this study finds no severe problems and the results are reported in Appendix A5.

74 Because military interventions and economic sanctions emerge as consistent predictors, it is interesting to see their interaction effect on the status of human rights violations. Model 2 in Appendix A2 displays the results. While each of the constitutive terms still remains significant, the interaction term turns out to be insignificant. This is not surprising given that the US relies on one of the foreign policy tools most of the time. For example, Washington has imposed economic sanctions on—but refrained from military assaults against—North Korea, Iran, and Russia for human rights violations.

75 Fariss, 'Respect for Human Rights Has Improved over Time'.

76 It might be argued that even a five-year lag is not enough to pick up the effects of sanctions intended to work over a very long time frame, such as those directed against human rights violations in South Africa or Cuba. However, when lagged terms for 10 years are included,

Table 2. The Time Effect of US Foreign Policy on Human Rights Violations: Political Terror Scale

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
US military intervention$_{t-1}$	2.792***				2.709***		2.499**	2.000*
	(0.761)				(0.782)		(0.857)	(0.661)
US military intervention$_{t-2}$	2.153**				2.003*		1.775	2.425*
	(0.637)				(0.656)		(0.620)	(0.861)
US military intervention$_{t-3}$	1.869*				1.808		1.741	2.067*
	(0.583)				(0.566)		(0.633)	(0.704)
US military intervention$_{t-4}$	1.719*				1.592*		1.388	1.556
	(0.372)				(0.358)		(0.377)	(0.414)
US military intervention$_{t-5}$	1.806**				1.576*		1.335	1.742*
	(0.362)				(0.337)		(0.357)	(0.406)
US military assistance$_{t-1}$		1.002			1.008		0.942	1.000
		(0.040)			(0.038)		(0.036)	(0.050)
US military assistance$_{t-2}$		0.996			0.993		0.956	0.982
		(0.026)			(0.026)		(0.031)	(0.035)
US military assistance$_{t-3}$		1.019			1.007		1.001	0.983
		(0.028)			(0.029)		(0.032)	(0.040)
US military assistance$_{t-4}$		1.001			0.991		0.980	0.998
		(0.030)			(0.030)		(0.032)	(0.038)
US military assistance$_{t-5}$		1.119**			1.122**		1.123*	1.121*
		(0.048)			(0.048)		(0.052)	(0.059)
US economic sanctions$_{t-1}$			2.435***			3.249***	3.128***	2.423**
			(0.604)			(1.020)	(1.042)	(0.790)
US economic sanctions$_{tv-2}$			1.118			1.153	1.142	1.138
			(0.221)			(0.247)	(0.255)	(0.314)
US economic sanctions$_{t-3}$			1.482**			1.430*	1.398	1.384
			(0.217)			(0.245)	(0.282)	(0.273)

(continued)

Table .2 (continued)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
US economic sanctions$_{t-4}$			0.815			0.826	0.847	0.839
			(0.143)			(0.162)	(0.187)	(0.218)
US economic sanctions$_{t-5}$			0.992			1.082	1.092	0.923
			(0.238)			(0.278)	(0.291)	(0.239)
US economic assistance$_{t-1}$				1.134		1.128	1.150	1.040
				(0.077)		(0.080)	(0.086)	(0.069)
US economic assistance$_{t-2}$				1.035		1.070	1.088*	1.018
				(0.037)		(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.043)
US economic assistance$_{t-3}$				1.002		1.016	1.015	1.021
				(0.034)		(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.051)
US economic assistance$_{t-4}$				0.984		0.981	0.972	0.956
				(0.028)		(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.036)
US economic assistance$_{t-5}$				1.152**		1.148**	1.116*	1.059
				(0.055)		(0.058)	(0.056)	(0.055)
Violent dissent$_{t-1}$								2.179**
								(0.637)
Civil war$_{t-1}$								3.398***
								(1.037)
Per capita income$_{t-1}$								0.863***
								(0.034)
Population$_{t-1}$								1.442***
								(0.129)
Democracy$_{t-1}$								0.944***
								(0.016)
Wald χ^2	18.18	10.53	33.09	31.02	22.32	86.74	98.21	182.56
Prob > χ^2	0.003	0.062	0.001	0.001	0.014	0.001	0.001	0.001
Log pseudo likelihood	_3170.30	_3174.50	_3148.56	_3071.24	_3150.18	_2990.38	_2969.37	_2673.70
Observations	2213	2213	2213	2213	2213	2213	2213	2213

Note: Robust standard errors are in parentheses.
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

foreign policy tool are incorporated in the model specification. It turns out that none of the lagged variables shows a negative sign when it is statistically significant. For example, although Model 8 includes control variables, none of the 20 lagged predictors achieves significance with a negative sign. The overall finding of Table 2 once again confirms the HIH, which anticipates a neutral or even detrimental association of US intervention with human rights violations around the world. The results here also confirm the CH, if the focus is on the initial lag in particular: military intervention and economic sanctions maintain significance while military and economic assistance do not.

As another robustness test that assesses the effect of US actions on human rights violations, this study now turns to the physical integrity rights variable. As noted, because the human rights literature frequently employs the physical integrity rights index, the alternate variable is introduced. Table 3 shows the results that are similar to those in Table 1, as they support the HIH; US action is either neutral or associated with deteriorating the quality of human rights abroad, especially when Washington relies on either military intervention or economic sanctions. Note that neither military nor economic assistance is linked with human rights conditions when other control variables are factored into Model 8—in other words, direct support for the CH.

It becomes interesting to see whether the main findings of this study still hold up when Davenport and Armstrong's model of state repression is replicated.[77] Their data analysis for 147 countries during the period 1976–1996 employs a Prais–Winsten regression and identifies three different categories of democracy, each with a different impact on state repression. Appendix A6 replicates the results of Davenport and Armstrong's repression model (i.e., the Polity IV model in Table 2 on p. 550) after including the US's four foreign policy tools. The replicated results are consistent with those in the previous tables that confirm the HIH: US activity is neutral or even associated with human rights violations. This table offers partial support to the CH because economic sanctions maintain significance. The overall conclusion from Appendix A6 is that Washington's foreign policy tools are ineffective in promoting respect for human rights overseas.

Conclusion

Can US foreign policy interventions be expected to help improve human rights conditions in other countries? This is an important question for scholars and policy-makers in the area of foreign policy; however, the literature has not compared different tools of US foreign policy in the same empirical model. This study has extended and synthesized existing theoretical arguments and then performed empirical tests regarding the effects of four distinctive tools of US foreign policy. The ordered logit analysis has shown that both military and economic forms of intervention are likely to be hindrances to promotion of human rights abroad. Confirmed also is that whether US actions take a positive or negative form, the results abroad are indifferent or negative from a human rights point of view. All of the results support the HIH, while the more focused CH receives partial confirmation.

This study suggests two causal mechanisms for more in-depth exploration. Positive actions, such as economic and military assistance, seem to aggravate (or leave unchanged)

this study finds no evidence for long-run effects, especially after the fifth year. The results can be obtained from the authors upon request.

77 Their replication data can be found at https://quantoid.net/research.

Table 3. The US and Human Rights Violations: CIRI Physical Integrity Rights

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
US military intervention$_{t-1}$	3.352***				3.051**		2.585**	2.453*
	(1.229)				(1.064)		(0.920)	(0.967)
US military assistance$_{t-1}$		1.085*			1.079		0.961	1.039
		(0.044)			(0.044)		(0.038)	(0.056)
US economic sanctions$_{t-1}$			4.400***			6.070***	5.894***	3.491***
			(0.884)			(1.595)	(1.590)	(0.856)
US economic assistance$_{t-1}$				1.317***		1.349***	1.367***	1.084
				(0.069)		(0.060)	(0.068)	(0.056)
Violent dissent$_{t-1}$								2.373***
								(0.614)
Civil war$_{t-1}$								2.180***
								(0.467)
Per capita income$_{t-1}$								0.864***
								(0.025)
Population$_{t-1}$								1.582***
								(0.120)
Democracy$_{t-1}$								0.931***
								(0.012)
Wald χ^2	10.88	4.02	54.44	27.28	15.14	97.70	107.63	306.25
Prob > χ^2	0.001	0.045	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Log pseudo likelihood	_5482.61	_5480.44	_5405.88	_5339.10	_5471.93	_5225.56	_5218.02	_4760.81
Observations	2581	2581	2581	2581	2581	2581	2581	2581

Note: Robust standard errors are in parentheses.
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.
The CIRI scores are reversed, so high scores indicate more violations.

human rights practices. Oppressive governments are more likely, it would seem, to use foreign aid to enhance their coercive abilities rather than for purposes intended by US governments providing assistance. The other causal mechanism concerns unintended consequences from negative actions, such as economic sanctions and military intervention. Rather than forcing pernicious regimes to improve their behaviour, leaders under pressure can be expected to redouble efforts to assert control over citizens in whatever way possible. In sum, both of the preceding causal mechanisms are candidates for process tracing through extended case studies.

Results from this study point towards the need to re-evaluate, in particular, the sheer quantity of US activity around the globe. With aggregate findings in the present study that point away from success in the domain of human rights promotion, the question naturally arises as to whether it is both counter-productive and wasteful for the US to intervene so often—regardless of the intentions behind whatever Washington is doing in a given instance. The results here provide further affirmation for a US shift towards highly targeted, context-sensitive intervention such as democracy assistance, for which favourable evidence already exists.[78]

Of course, this study does not claim that a foreign policy of limited balancing, with an emphasis on national interest, is necessarily more conducive to creating a favourable environment for human rights protection. Process tracing through case studies would be a logical next step to see if the presumed ideas here about cause and effect hold up. Additional research questions abound. For example, what types of interventions specifically affect authoritarian governments and the opposition? Which types of intervention might hurt the regime's ability to oppress versus those that help the opposition? What would a target state have looked like if the US had not intervened? Measurement issues also come to mind vis-à-vis robustness of results. Human rights go beyond physical integrity as investigated here. Further work could focus on civil and political rights in addition to economic, social, and cultural rights.

Overall, the evidence suggests that the US's most commonly-used foreign policy tools end up doing more harm than good, so its direct involvement should be contemplated more carefully than ever in any given instance. In sum, the empirical results of this study remind us of an old phrase: sometimes less is more.

78 See Scott and Steele, 'Sponsoring Democracy'.

Appendix A1. A List of Sample Countries

Afghanistan	Congo	Hungary	Mauritius	Singapore
Albania	Costa Rica	India	Mexico	Slovakia
Algeria	Croatia	Indonesia	Moldova	Slovenia
Angola	Cuba	Iran	Mongolia	Somalia
Argentina	Czechoslovakia	Iraq	Morocco	South Africa
Armenia	Dem. Rep. Congo	Ireland	Mozambique	Spain
Australia	Denmark	Israel	Namibia	Sri Lanka
Austria	Djibouti	Italy	Nepal	Sudan
Azerbaijan	Dominican Rep.	Ivory Coast	Netherlands	Swaziland
Bahrain	Ecuador	Jamaica	New Zealand	Syria
Bangladesh	Egypt	Japan	Nicaragua	Taiwan
Belarus	El Salvador	Jordan	Niger	Tajikistan
Belgium	Eritrea	Kazakhstan	Nigeria	Tanzania
Benin	Estonia	Kenya	Norway	Thailand
Bolivia	Ethiopia	Korea, South	Oman	Togo
Bosnia	Fiji	Kyrgyzstan	Pakistan	Trinidad & Tobago
Botswana	Finland	Laos	Panama	Tunisia
Brazil	France	Latvia	Papua New Guinea	Turkey
Bulgaria	Gabon	Lebanon	Paraguay	Turkmenistan
Burkina Faso	Gambia	Lesotho	Peru	Uganda
Burma	Georgia	Liberia	Philippines	United Kingdom
Burundi	Ghana	Libya	Poland	Ukraine
Cambodia	Greece	Lithuania	Portugal	Uruguay
Cameroon	Guatemala	Macedonia	Romania	Uzbekistan
Canada	Guinea	Madagascar	Russia	Venezuela
Central African Rep.	Guinea Bissau	Malawi	Rwanda	Vietnam
Chad	Guyana	Malaysia	Saudi Arabia	Zambia
Chile	Haiti	Mali	Senegal	Zimbabwe
Colombia	Honduras	Mauritania	Sierra Leone	

Appendix A2. Robustness Tests for Selection Bias, Endogeneity Bias, and Interaction Effects

Variable	Two-Stage Least Squares Model 1	Interaction Term included Model 2
US military intervention$_{t-1}$	15.119**	2.946**
	(4.709)	(1.069)
US military assistance$_{t-1}$	–0.041	1.091
	(0.034)	(0.051)
US economic sanction$_{t-1}$	0.293	3.462***
	(0.184)	(0.883)
US economic assistance$_{t-1}$	0.007	1.075
	(0.028)	(0.052)
Interaction between intervention and sanction$_{t-1}$		0.775
		(0.454)
Violent dissent$_{t-1}$	0.145	2.121***
	(0.103)	(0.480)
Civil war$_{t-1}$	_0.111	3.250***
	(0.395)	(0.751)
Per capita income$_{t-1}$	_0.024	0.864***
	(0.012)	(0.029)
Population$_{t-1}$	0.254***	1.432***
	(0.047)	(0.113)
Democracy$_{t-1}$	_0.021**	0.939***
	(0.007)	(0.014)
Constant	0.343	
	(0.440)	
Wald χ^2	288.74	233.89
Prob > χ^2	0.001	0.001
Log pseudolikelihood	n/a	_3787.89
Observations	2775	3098

Note: Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

Appendix A3. PTS and CIRI

Interestingly, the PTS relies on the same source materials as the physical integrity rights measures in the CIRI index and 'in most instances use of either dataset will result in the same or similar findings' (Wood and Gibney 2010: 395). A notable feature in the two data sets comes from the differences in the coding procedures. The CIRI index reports the combined scores for human rights violations by using the US Department of State's (USDS) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* as the primary source and Amnesty International's (AI) *Annual Report* as a secondary source, while the PTS provides two different scores of human rights violations, one from the former source and the other from the latter source. Accordingly, the correlation between the two measures is high—approximately 0.79 between the USDS-based measure and the CIRI, and 0.75 between the AI-based measure and the CIRI during the time period of this study. Nonetheless, Wood

and Gibney's (2010: 394) study asserts that 'the PTS better captures the relative severity of abuse across countries'. Another difference may be that PTS measures the conditions or structures of political repression, while the CIRI focuses on the different types of repression. Because both USDS and AI scores produce virtually similar estimates, the empirical analysis reported below relies on the latter to save space.

Appendix A4. Correlation Matrix

	Military interventions	Military assistance	Economic sanctions	Economic assistance
Military interventions	1.00			
Military assistance	0.09	1.00		
Economic sanctions	0.03	−0.08	1.00	
Economic assistance	0.08	0.45	−0.06	1.00

Appendix A5. Muliticollinearity Diagnostics[1]

	R^2	Variance Inflation Factors	Square Root of VIFs
US military intervention$_{t-1}$	0.02	1.02	1.01
US military assistance$_{t-1}$	0.26	1.36	1.16
US economic sanction$_{t-1}$	0.05	1.06	1.03
US economic assistance$_{t-1}$	0.50	2.02	1.42
Violent dissent$_{t-1}$	0.15	1.17	1.08
Civil war$_{t-1}$	0.04	1.04	1.02
Per capita income$_{t-1}$	0.50	1.98	1.41
Population$_{t-1}$	0.17	1.20	1.10
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.28	1.38	1.18
Mean variance inflation factors		1.32	
	Eigenvalues	Condition Index	
1	4.08	1.00	
2	1.28	1.79	
3	1.01	2.01	
4	0.93	2.09	
5	0.88	2.15	
6	0.74	2.35	
7	0.60	2.62	
8	0.39	3.25	
9	0.08	7.01	
10	0.01	20.81	
Condition number		20.81	
Eigenvalues & condition Index computed from the scaled raw sscp with an intercept.			
Det(correlation matrix)		0.30	

[1] A general rule of thumb: A serious multicollinearity problem is suspected if R^2 is greater than 0.80, if the mean of all the variance inflation factors is considerably larger than 10, or if condition number exceeds 1000.

Appendix 6. The U.S. and Human Rights Violations: Davenport and Armstrong's (2004: 550) TSCS Regression with Panel Corrected Standard Errors, using Political Terror Scale

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
US military intervention$_{t-1}$	0.573***				0.530**		0.238	0.067
	(0.174)				(0.168)		(0.148)	(0.104)
US military assistance$_{t-1}$		0.029**			0.025*		-0.043***	-0.003
		(0.010)			(0.010)		(0.010)	(0.007)
US economic sanction$_{t-1}$			1.215***			1.247***	1.221***	0.288***
			(0.107)			(0.104)	(0.102)	(0.064)
US economic assistance$_{t-1}$				0.135***		0.140***	0.157***	0.006
				(0.015)		(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.007)
Lag repression$_{t-1}$								0.601***
								(0.046)
Democracy trichotomy$_{t-1}$								-0.209***
								(0.029)
International war$_{t-1}$								0.101
								(0.066)
Civil war$_{t-1}$								0.604***
								(0.078)
Military control$_{t-1}$								0.074*
								(0.035)
ln(Population)$_{t-1}$								0.066***
								(0.011)
ln(GNP/capita)$_{t-1}$								-0.029*
								(0.014)
Constant	2.367***	2.341***	2.257***	1.981***	2.337***	1.845***	1.846***	0.090
	(0.041)	(0.037)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.037)	(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.152)
Observations	2,331	2,331	2,331	2,331	2,331	2,331	2,331	2,331

Note: *p < .05, ** p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed tests.