

The Puzzle of Humanitarian Intervention: Why the US militarily intervenes in
some failed or fragile nation states and abstains from others

By

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Title: The Puzzle of Humanitarian Intervention: Why the US militarily intervenes in some failed or fragile nation states and abstains from others?

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Humanitarian intervention by the United States has increased since the end of the Cold War. This thesis examines the cases of Somalia, Rwanda, Libya and Syria as to explore why the US chooses to offer various amounts of aid to some failed or fragile nation states and not others. Rwanda offers an example of avoiding intervention by the US, while Somalia represents the largest effort of the four cases, with Libya and Syria in between the two. This analysis will first examine the grand strategies that inform and explain the actions of US foreign policy-makers in the post-Cold-War era. It will then examine the role of four key explanatory factors: national interests, international support, public opinion, and the media influence. This thesis argues that, with respect to each of the four case studies: 1) the United States will not engage in humanitarian intervention unless its national interests are directly affected; 2) in the absence of national interests, the US cannot sustain support for extended commitments because of the human and financial costs, 3) the results of previous conflicts have the effect of preventing future interventions; and 4) democratic nation-building has become the strategic and moral standard by which the US decides to intervene in failed or fragile states. Each of these influential factors are invariably linked to one another and to an often-evolving notion of how broadly the idea of “US national interests” is to be defined by policymakers.

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the collection of Oregon State University. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request. I also affirm that the work represented in this thesis is my own work.

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To my mother and father, I thank you both for the opportunity that you have given me to succeed in life and at Oregon State University. I love you both for your sacrifices and your love.

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“... if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica – to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?” -Kofi Annan

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, the frequency of US humanitarian (military) interventions have increased from once per decade to once every two years. Without the guided strategy of containment that had been used for over forty years towards the threat of communism and the eradication of a bipolar world, the US had found itself center stage at the precise moment of a unipolar phenomenon. The idea of moving towards a multi-polar world has now transitioned to the ideology of the US providing foreign oversight to countries. US foreign policy-makers understanding this shift from post-Cold-War mentalities have debated the use of humanitarian interventions on a case by case basis rather than having a cohesive grand strategy to encompass all potential issues.

This thesis examines US humanitarian intervention in response to humanitarian crises and addresses the conundrum of why US military forces are deployed abroad in some nation states and not others for this purpose.

The working definition of humanitarian intervention this paper utilizes is: military interventions that serve the purpose of protecting the people living in a country from systematic violations of their fundamental human rights. Some applications of humanitarian intervention can pertain to the assistance in: supplying food, medication, or relief to refugees. A major reason for intervention is violent conflict; to prevent it, manage it or to reconstruct societies in post-conflict situations. However, this paper will reference humanitarian intervention as being limited to strategized military intervention that is undertaken to ensure human security in a foreign nation state or country.

This thesis aims to compare and contrast between the pretext for the humanitarian interventions in the cases of Somalia, Rwanda, Libya and Syria. These four case studies were chosen to establish and define an internationally equitable framework for illustrating the determinants of why the US chooses to engage in a precise amount of humanitarian intervention. Examining the reasons and justifications for the United States' level of humanitarian intervention in a multitude of fragile and failed nation states since the 1990's to present day will aid in developing set guidelines for the acceptable use of intervention, which in turn will help further the understanding of how US administrations should move forward in their grand strategies of confronting the troubles and conflicts of tomorrow. The limitation of this study is that other such case studies of US humanitarian interventions from the onset of the 1990's to present day will not be included. However, it serves the paper's interests in choosing these four accounts where the US has chosen to either not provide humanitarian intervention, as it did in Rwanda, to the extreme of deploying military force, as was the case in Somalia. The recent cases of Libya and Syria were chosen to provide present day relevance to the arguments of this thesis as well as examine the importance of the overlaying question. The following spectrum shows the level of intervention for each of the case studies examined in this paper.

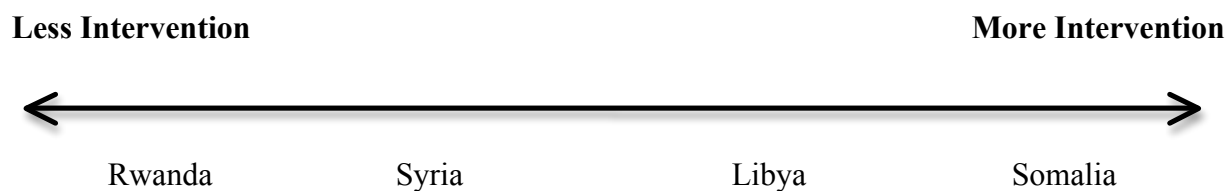


Figure 1. The spectrum of less intervention to most intervention utilized by US policy-makers from 1990's to present day

The main question that is posed for examination is: (1) Why is it that the US chooses to intervene in some nation states conflicts but not others and what are the associated consequences of the level of intervention?

After evaluation of the four case studies it is the goal of the paper to examine whether: 1) the United States will not engage in humanitarian intervention unless its national interests are directly affected; 2) in the absence of national interests, the US cannot sustain support for extended commitments because of the human and financial costs, 3) the results of previous conflicts have the effect of preventing future interventions; and 4) democratic nation-building has become the strategic and moral standard by which the US decides to intervene in failed or fragile states.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 US Foreign Policy Strategies Post Cold War

In terms of US foreign policy, the idea of a unipolar world constructed the idea that there was no longer an imminent threat to the nation after 1990. For much of the US public, foreign policies were driven out of the minds of policy makers only to be replaced by domestic issues of economic strife and social problems¹. Detracting from the old model of containment, the Clinton administration was faced with a chance to rewrite the grand strategy for future US military involvement. In a 1997 piece for *International Security*, entitled “Competing Visions for US Grand Strategy²”, Barry Posen and Andrew Ross outlined four major alternatives the Clinton Administration was investigating in terms of a “new” US grand strategy. These strategies were: (1) neo-isolationism, (2) selective engagement, (3) cooperative security, and (4) primacy.

2.1.1 Neo-Isolationist

The first strategy, (Neo) isolationism, supports the realist view of removing the United States from international politics in order to maintain its national security. With the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), triggered a shift from a bipolar to a unipolar world. As a result, the US solidified its seat as the hegemonic power of the world with no nation state having the capabilities at the time to create concern for national defense. The neo-isolationist position opts for avoiding any interference or intervention in conflict in foreign countries because it would inadvertently cause the US to be partial in conflict, (Posen and Ross, 3).

¹ Barry Posen and Andrew Ross, “Competing Visions for US Grand Strategy,” *International Security* (Winter 1996/1997), 5.

² Grand Strategy: Includes the 1) expansion of strategy beyond military means to include diplomatic, financial, economic, informational, etc. means, 2) examining internal in addition to external forces – taking into account both the various instruments of power and the internal policies necessary for their implementation (conscription, for example) and 3) including consideration of periods of peacetime in addition to wartime

Proponents of this strategy argue that the United States' security and the absence of threats meant that national defense would seldom justify intervention abroad. Critics however, argue that disengagement is unlikely to make the US more secure; in essence offering the chance for non-state actors to build oppositional influence on the global stage, (Posen and Ross, 12,15). Posen et al. (1996), elaborate that in financial terms, the policy of (neo) isolationism could have short-term benefits of saving over seventy-one hundred billion dollars per year in defense spending in 1990 as well as the preceding year. While that is a large percentage of the annual budget, the long term costs of choosing to isolate the US from the international system would have detrimental effects that surmount the funds that would have been saved.

(Neo) isolationism has not been a viable policy in post-cold war US foreign policy, especially as the United States' role in international politics continues to expand.

Charles Krauthammer, in his essay of the "Unipolar Moment", criticizes this ideology by stating that, "International stability is never a given. It is never the norm...If America wants stability, it will have to create it" (Krauthammer, 29). Essentially, this suggests that the US cannot afford to isolate itself from the rest of the world if it wishes to maintain its power or its place in the international world.

2.1.2 Selective Engagement

Selective engagement policy builds on realist ideals and is centered on concern of the potential conflicts between dominating nations. This policy arises from the belief that the US should intervene in regions of the world only if the issue will directly affect its security and prosperity. The focus then is drawn to nation states with industrial and military capabilities comparable to that of the US and preventing war from occurring between the two great nation states. Many proponents of this strategy believe that conflicts in Europe, Asia and the Middle

East are great matters to the US in foreign policy issues. With Europe and Asia containing the large superpowers, such as China and Russia, each have the greatest military and economic impact on international politics. Comparatively, the Middle East may not have the largest military or economic impact, but the political implications of the oil and strategic interests within the region plays a large role with regards to economic and military development in the US. While selective engagement offers a straight forward approach of the intervention in a nation state that causes a threat to US security or prosperity. It doesn't offer proper guidelines for how to choose between what is a necessary intervention and what is not. Furthermore, it fails to offer a proper protocol for providing humanitarian interventions.

Posen et al. (1996) highlight Robert J. Art's argument, that selective engagement is the best strategy for the twenty-first century because it is, by definition, selective in that "[...] it steers the middle course between an isolationist, unilateralist course, on the one hand, and world policeman, highly interventionist role, on the other," (Posen and Ross, 12).

For this thesis, closer analysis would show that Rwanda and Somalia posed no direct threat on the US national security or stability. Thus, had Rwanda or Somalia been an oil producing country or had other invested US interests, perhaps in the context of selective engagers, humanitarian intervention could have occurred. Under this policy, both Somalia and Rwanda would not have been provided with humanitarian intervention. This strategy fails in that it does not offer a pretext for who would have the responsibility to determine minor global problems from those that presented a legitimate threat to peace. Even worse, as (neo) isolationists would point out, selective engagers must maintain a substantial military presence, threaten war, and risk war largely for the purpose of preventing war, (Posen et al., 20).

2.1.3 Cooperative Security

The third strategy, Cooperative security, steps away from the realist framework and draws upon the ideals of liberalism, stressing the importance of international peace coupled with international cooperation. Proponents of this policy argue for collective action within the workings of international institutions; such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)³, in order to overcome the security dilemma and deter regional conflicts. Posen et al. (1996) offer the examples of the United Nations and regional institutions such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)⁴ in having important roles in deterrence of aggressive nation states and in the assistance of another institution when it becomes too weak to respond to injustices. The belief is that democratic nation states are more apt in working together cooperatively than states with less democratic politics. Looking at the case studies of Somalia and Rwanda, this strategy would require the international institutions to take notice of the issue and work congruently in restoring peace. The example of the NATO-led intervention in Libya is a closer example to cooperative security, in those efforts to deter the dictator, Muammar Qaddafi, were not exceptionally showing any progress. Therefore, NATO members worked together in supporting Libyan rebels who opposed his rule and eventually led to the overthrow of Qaddafi.

Posen et al. (1996), highlight the major drawback to this policy is that it has the potential of ‘conflict fatigue’ among the relief providing states because of the possibility of continuing and the overlapping demand of a states military capabilities amongst other resources. A recent example of this is the invasion of Iraq in 2001, where President George W. Bush used the

³ United Nations Security Council (UNSC): International institution with a body of 15 members, 5 permanent members – the United States, United Kingdom, France, Peoples Republic of China and Russian Federation – and 10 (non)permanent members. The responsibility of this organization is charged with maintaining international peace and stability.

⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO): Regional intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on April 4, 1949. The organization constitutes a system of collective defense whereby its member states agree to mutual defense in response to an attack by any external party.

justification of the need to curtail the alleged impending threat of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction to push the US into an eight-year long war that the public did not fully support.

Bridging on the idea of cooperative security, Krauthammer made a point to clarify that in the coming era of the post-Cold-War, the US could no longer perceive Middle Eastern states as harmless to its interests, (Krauthammer, 30). Rather the emerging term of a nuclear weapon state was building on the belief that the resentment these nation states were feeling towards the new status quo of the west superseded any interest in building a functioning international world order. Advancement in high-tech military developments was the only way to advance themselves past mistakes made in the past by other nations and find themselves on the same footing as the US in order to challenge 'Western-imposed' order (Krauthammer, 31). Thus closely monitoring these marginally small, peripheral and backwards states were a must, as they soon could (would eventually) become threats to regional and world security, (Krauthammer, 9).

2.1.4 Primacy

Primacy, the final strategy offered by Posen et al. (1996), is a policy driven by peace and power. The supreme realist idea that is drawn to a large extent on that power ensures peace, (Posen and Ross, 32). This policy would require that the US holds onto its hegemonic power and maintain it indefinitely. Whether or not the US wanted to maintain unipolar primacy with which it emerged from post-Cold-War, reached its high point with the Bush administration of 2001, when acting as the sole authority, chose to invade Iraq on the campaign for the "War on Terror". Since then, there has been a general recognition of the risks associated with such a strategy and as the National Security Strategy pointed out; the United States "cannot hedge against every conceivable future threat."⁵ Proponents of this policy argue that US foreign policy should focus

⁵ For more information, see Clinton Administration's National Security Strategy for a New Century at <http://clinton2.nara.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/Strategy/>

on maintaining US power and preventing any other power from becoming a serious challenger to the US. Efforts made to maintain powerful military strength would illustrate to other nation states a need to band together in an effort to balance what they would view as unchecked power. Financially speaking, the need to be ahead of everyone in the race for hegemonic power would result in the implosion of the nation state pursuing it.

With this in mind, if US foreign policy-makers implemented a policy closely following that of Primacy; Somalia's and Rwanda's humanitarian issues would not be mentionable because these conflicts have no credible threat to US national security or any strategic interests. In contrast, Libya would be considered necessary under the policy of primacy because Libya exports oil to US allies and is therefore a vital interest of the US. The application of this policy to Syria is later applied in the case analysis.

Not one of these potential strategies depicts exactly what has been observed over the past two decades of humanitarian intervention on part of the US. Rather, bits and pieces from each of these strategies strewn together has been observed to uniquely fit the prioritized national interests that are selected every four to eight years by new administrations. As it is now understood, different strategies may offer similar reactions to humanitarian disasters.

The above strategies mentioned offer a foundation for understanding and explaining why the US chooses to offer or abstain from humanitarian intervention. However, this analysis requires a closer look at the factors that could have a potential influence with the decisions of policy makers in the US, namely the relationship of national interests, public opinion, international support, and the media influence with humanitarian intervention. Before proceeding into that analysis, an examination of what humanitarian intervention has come to mean to others will be critiqued and how it can be reconciled with the idea of state sovereignty.

2.2 Understanding Humanitarian Interventions and R2P

According to Ivo Daalder, humanitarian intervention is defined as “[...] the armed engagement by outside parties in a sovereign state on behalf of a local population facing an imminent or ongoing violation of their human rights.” Disagreement continues on whether there is a right of intervention, how and when it should be exercised, and under whose authority. The phrase “never again” has been a prevalent notion since the end of WWII and has come to mean, the prevention of events similar to what transpired in the Holocaust. It’s intended as an appeal to humanity, to circumvent any nation states from committing acts of genocide and otherwise heinous acts. In Andreas Krieg’s, “Motivations for Humanitarian Intervention,” chapter two, Michael Walzer proposes counteracting such acts, “[...] that ‘shock the conscience of mankind,’” (Krieg, 18).

US foreign policy makers, in congruence with the US President, are charged with deciding which humanitarian acts warrant US participation. All together, the international arena is devoid of a supreme legislative body that is empowered to compel other states to take action. However, the United Nations (UN), comes close to resembling this notion of a legislative body. Although, it cannot force its members to act or contribute. With this in mind, the political opinions of powerful states – permanent members of the UN Security Council – in the international community are left to determine which struggles are deemed “justifiable” and merit intervention. If any of the permanent members of the UN Security Council choose to ignore ongoing conflicts, as was the case in Rwanda, the results can be catastrophic. Krauthammer perpetuates this belief with the examination of the US, that is, as it came out of the Cold War as the leading superpower, its allies stood sharply behind it, because where the US does not choose to tread, the alliance does not follow and vice versa, (Krauthammer, 24).

The primary international challenge faced in the early 1990's was states facing the issue of dual responsibility of upholding national sovereignty and protecting human wellbeing.

Under the United Nations Charter, Article 2, paragraph 7 it is stated that: "Nothing... shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State..."⁶. However, this principle is without prejudice to the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VI. Chapter VII states that the UN Security Council may mandate peace enforcement only if it has determined a threat to international peace, a breach of peace or an act of aggression. Any nation using military means at any other occasion is to be deemed an aggressor and is to be repelled by collective action. Article 51, on the contrary, declares that, "nothing...shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security."⁷ It is to be noted that Article 51 says nothing about any right of self-defense of a province in a member state or an oppressed minority in a member state.

The question raised by this is whether States' have an unconditional sovereignty over their affairs or whether the international community – more precisely the US – has the right to intervene in a country for humanitarian purposes? And if so, are there certain criteria to meet before actually engaging in intervention?

⁶ For more information on United Nations Charter Article 2, please see
<<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml>>

⁷ For more information on United Nations Charter, Chapter VI, and Chapter VII, Article 51 please see
<<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml>>.

2.2.1 State Sovereignty and Intervention

The issue currently faced among the international community is the link between state sovereignty and utilization of humanitarian intervention. However, a definition of state sovereignty is lacking in this case.

In the world of politics, sovereignty is seen as an authority or the right to rule over a particular territory and the populace residing within it, (Ayoob, 82). However, to what extent a nation state can prevent an external body from intervening in its domestic affairs has been over the past decade, up to great debate.

Principally, the surmounting issues is whether the UNSC is responsible for codifying the qualifications as to when an external third party may intervene on the precepts of human rights violations, decree when those human rights violations have occurred and when & where intervention should and must take place (Ayoob, 81). Kofi Annan, the late UN Security General, in a 2012 speech in Lund, Sweden pushed forward the notion that “State Sovereignty is no longer an absolute shield which governments may hide behind to do what they please...”⁸

Samuel Barkin, G. Schneider and P. Weitsman in, “Enforcing Cooperation: Risky States and Intergovernmental Management of Conflict” argue specifically that a change has taken place and that in the new reality, if a state fails to respect its citizens’ human rights, it forfeits its claim to sovereignty, thus legitimizing international intervention⁹. By the beginning of the new century there was wide spread agreement that a normative revolution had indeed occurred. As Andrea Talentino states, “[t] he practice of intervention changed as a result and became part of conflict resolution approaches that, in extreme cases, required military force to end violence and

⁸ see Kofi Annan, Speech, (April, 2012). “Prevention, promotion and protection: Our shared responsibility,” . <http://kofiannanfoundation.org/newsroom/speeches/2012/04/prevention-promotion-and-protection-our-shared-responsibility>

⁹ Barkin, S. (1997). “Legitimate Sovereignty and Risky States.” In G. Schneider and P. Weitsman, (Eds.). *Enforcing Cooperation: Risky States and Intergovernmental Management of Conflict*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 16-36.

provide support for reconstruction programs,”(Soderland, 5) This normative revolution was confirmed by the creation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine in 2001 by the Canadian organization International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) and its adoption by the international community in 2005, (see Appendix A). R2P was created as a response to the question Kofi Annan had posed after witnessing the international community’s failure to respond to the genocide in Rwanda. Annan questioned that “if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica — to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?¹⁰” R2P seeks to answer this question with its strict set of guidelines from which nation states and the UNSC can follow. It holds that there are six criteria¹¹ that must be met in order to engage in the extraordinary measure of intervention, so as not to circumvent the right of sovereignty that nation states enjoy.

In the same mindset, Neil MacFarlane and Yuen Foong Khong vehemently emphasized, “[...] that states had the responsibility to protect their own citizens. This obligation was deemed inherent in the concept of sovereignty.”¹² When states fail to protect their citizens in the face of avoidable catastrophe, the responsibility to protect shifts to the broader society of states.

Walter Soderland, analyzes international intervention in response to state failure and has found that “[...]while the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ is a new or enhanced factor to be considered in intervention decision-making, it is as yet no more than that. Decisions to come to the rescue of people far from home continue to depend on whether doing so is important in some sense other than conscience alone,” (Soderland, 9).

¹⁰ For a full transcript of Kofi Annan’s 2000 Millennium report to the UN General Assembly, please see http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/54/2000.

¹¹ For more information, see Responsibility to Protect at <http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf>

¹² For more information and a discussion on ‘state sovereignty’ please see S. Neil MacFarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, (2006). “Human Security and the UN: A Critical History,” Indiana University Press, 177.

This is represented in present time when nation states such as Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and Russia—both permanent members of the UNSC—chose to veto draft resolutions seeking to refer Syria to the international criminal court on grounds that Syria has been engaging in acts that curtail the human rights of its citizens.

China's Premier Li Peng, at the 1992 UN summit of Council members stated: “[...]the issue of human rights falls within the sovereignty of each country. A country's human rights situation should not be judged in total disregard of its history and national conditions....China...is opposed to interference in the internal affairs of other countries using the human rights issue as an excuse¹³,”(Pease and Forythe, 113). Likewise, “[...] Fear of a new imperialism is particularly acute in parts of the world that have known colonization, where international interventions revive memories of the imperial past [...]” (Krieg, 10). The idea that the West, primarily the US, hides behind its moral national interest of democratic nation-building, as a way to inflict its ideals and beliefs on another nation state, is what drives fear and negative reaction.

Dieter Janssen summarized the current problem of Humanitarian Intervention as: “international community may intervene, but there is no mechanism that ensures that it will...”. Additionally, “there is no mechanism to ensure that early warnings within the institutions of the UN reach the Security Council and compel it to react.” This was made apparent in situations such as that of Rwanda, Srebrenica, Darfur and present day Syria; where help comes too late if not at all.

2.3 What determines US humanitarian intervention?

For this thesis, four key factors were chosen: (1) national interest, (2) international support, (3) public opinion, and (4) media influence to evaluate the correlation between each

¹³Excerpts Speeches by Leaders of Permanent Members of UN. Council,” New York Times, 1 Feb.1992, sec. A, 5, col. 5

factor and Humanitarian Intervention. Each of these explanatory factors is invariably linked to one another and to an often-evolving notion of how broadly the idea of “US national interests” is to be defined by policy-makers.

2.3.1 National Interests

There are two current competing beliefs of humanitarian intervention in the political realm; pragmatic realism and liberal humanitarianism. Considerations that are taken into account during the deliberating process of whether to intervene or not, follow the guiding questions: What are US interests and objectives? What are threats to those interests and/or objectives? What are the appropriate strategic responses to those threats?

Coming out of the Cold War, the US no longer had a definitive nation state to call its enemy and as a result has made it much more difficult in regards to defining a national interest.

National interests are in constant need of being defined because national interest vary from individual, to state actors to governments. “[...]the meaning of national interest can vary widely, from increasing a state’s power to a survival of a state to upholding international legitimacy [...]”¹⁴, (Krieg, 37). Morgenthau, a realist, has argued that “[...] if states pursue only their rational self-interests, without defining them too grandly, they will collide with other states only minimally [...],”¹⁵ and as long as states follow their own narrow interests the world can be a peaceful place, (Krieg, 37). However, Morgenthau points out that not all national interest can be categorized as equally important, which is dividing between vital and secondary interests. The former is directly concerned with the survival of the state, on which Morgenthau follows through on nothing short of the use of force. The latter, secondary national interests, are defined as those removed from the state’s borders not threatening the security or integrity of the nation, (Krieg,

¹⁴ see Acharya (2003, 1) for more information.

¹⁵ see Roskin (1994, 1) for more information.

39). Therefore, these peripheral interests can be compromised in case that the expected benefits are outweighed by anticipated costs. From a realist point of view, the degree of urgency of national interests will in effect determine the extent of effort a state, such as the US would be presumed to allow itself to become invested, in defending those interests. Consequently, the higher the urgency of the interests at stake, the more costs in terms of troops, time, money, equipment, resources, political prestige, or economic aid the state is willing to devote to the defense of its interests, (Krieg, 39).

2.3.2 International Support

The purpose of international support is that it serves as safety net for nation states, especially those belonging to the UNSC, for the purpose of relying on it for explanation, or for some the excuse of humanitarian intervention. It is way in which to offer both legitimacy and the overarching agreement as acting on behalf of the international community. It also assists in addressing the need for burden sharing among the international community.

2.3.3 Public Opinion

Krauthammer (2006) explains that a large portion of the American public doubts the legitimacy of a unilateral American action but accepts “quite readily actions undertaken by the ‘world community’ acting in concert...Why it should matter to Americans that their actions get a Security Council nod...is beyond me...But to many Americans it matters. It is largely for domestic reasons therefore, that American political leaders make sure to dress unilateral action in multilateral clothing,” (Krauthammer, 26).

Public opinion is driven by a nations domestic problems, for instance, when the US chose to intervene in Iraq in 2001, it had no idea of the mission creep that would arise or the recession that would hit their nation in 2008 and still continues to this day. The direct result from the Iraq

invasion was conflict fatigue, eight years is a long time for commitments to become extended, the media to portray how much defense spending is being devoted to foreign affairs, how many American lives had been lost and adding insult to injury; that the American's are now faced with a recession.

Conflict fatigue, adds to a number of issues; spending, domestic problems, etc., and has had a strong influence on when American's choose the role of non-interventionist. Yet, there is something to be said of advancing democratic principles; nation building abroad for the purposes of ensuring that the US remains peaceful, stable and secure. Current US President, Barack Obama, stated in his speech at West Point in 2014, that he believes “[...] that a world of greater freedom and tolerance is not only a moral imperative, it also keeps us safe,”¹⁶ That working with democratic nation states allows for better communication, a safer international community and one that seeks to act as a part of the collective body.

In a RAND review of a 2003 study conducted by James Dobbins and colleagues for the RAND Corporation, nation building is defined as “[...] the use of armed force in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin an enduring transition to democracy.”¹⁷ In their study they examined 7 nation states and the lessons learned of US nation building efforts, what they concluded was that many factors, such as prior democratic experience, level of economic development, and social homogeneity can influence the ease or difficulty of nation-building, however, the single most important controllable determinant seems to be the level of effort, as measured in troops, money, and time. In order to sufficiently allow for these necessary tools to be utilized, the public must be

¹⁶ See ‘Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony’ for a full transcript at <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/28/remarks-president-united-states-military-academy-commencement-ceremony>>.

¹⁷ see James Dobbins et al. RAND review at <<http://www.rand.org/pubs/periodicals/rand-review/issues/summer2003/nation1.html>>.

shown the importance of why troops, money, and time are a must and why they should ultimately care about others abroad.

2.3.4 Media Influence

Contrary to popular belief, Jon Western (2002) explained that the conception of the ‘CNN effect’ “oversimplifies the influence of the media on intervention decisions,” and Peter Jakobsen (2000) finds that it “[...] only comes into play when Western governments oppose military intervention in conflicts where massive human rights violations occur” (Jakobsen, 135,140).

However, media coverage is not without its advantages. Media generated public pressure can have the effect of compelling western governments to take initiative in mitigating humanitarian emergencies that they would have preferred to ignore. Additionally, peace negotiators and military commanders can use the media to put pressure on the warring parties, (Jakobsen, 2000). As the media continues to be the window into the world of foreign affairs for the average American, the idea of whether the media has become too biased, unreal in its depiction of conflicts, or downright lying has been called into question.

US American’s find out about wars, ethnic strife, and/or genocide from their local media outlets and internet sources around the world. How much is guided by US personnel or actually front line news remains a hotly debated topic. However, for the purpose of this paper, the factor of media serves its purpose in influencing public opinion to the extent where American’s choose to want to know more.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The methods with which this paper will rely on is an exploratory study that uses qualitative research from scholarly journals, media websites, news articles from past interventions (both previous and current); as well as polling sites to examine the reasons as to why the US chooses to intervene in another nation state for humanitarian purposes. The information accessed was limited to what was available online through Oregon State University's library database EBSCO, Google search engine and Google scholar. The vast number of papers and information that were extracted from online databases from the 1990's to present day served the purpose of this paper in understanding the history of humanitarian intervention as well as looking at the four determinants for which many scholars have pointed to in having an influence on the decision making process; of whether the US will choose to intervene or not.

This paper utilizes both exploratory studies coupled with four factors chosen to both analyze and examine whether the US will engage in humanitarian intervention or not, they are: (1) national interest, (2) international support, (3) public opinion and (4) media influence.

These four factors were chosen for the purpose of highlighting whether there is indeed a direct influence on when or if the US will choose to intervene for humanitarian purposes. Ultimately the goal of this paper is to understand the reasons for which humanitarian intervention is either taken on by the US by looking at these four factors.

The subsequent case studies will be qualitative in nature and draw on the comparisons of human rights violations in Somalia, Rwanda, Libya and Syria. The culmination of research for these case studies will be in 1) understanding the historical background in order to fully understand US initiatives, (2) analyze national interests found from within the historical context,

(3) examine the international support the US had or could have derived from seeking to intervene, (4) examine public opinion polls before, during and after conflict in order to see where US citizens lie in their support, (5) analyze newspaper coverage before, during and following the end of intervention to determine whether media had a hand in pushing the intervention, and lastly (6) a reflection of the motivations that warranted or did not warrant the US to intervene in another nation state for humanitarian purposes.

This paper concludes each case study by examining whether the US administration at the time exuded any of the four post Cold-War grand strategies and whether that has had an influence on the four factors examined. It is then purpose of this paper to examine the justifications and conclusions that can be drawn from the information provided and understand if there can be an equitable framework from which future US policy-makers may rely on in order to determine whether US intervention abroad for humanitarian purposes is warranted.

CHAPTER 4: TYING HANDS AND WASHING HANDS

The idea of tying one's hands is in reference to a political figure, in this case, the US President, to committing himself to an operation; whereas the opposite notion of washing one's hands is in reference to them choosing not to commit to a certain issue. In the following case studies it is my goal to measure how national interests, international support, public opinion, and the media can be determinants in how the US chooses to intervene in some nation states and not others.

4.1. Case Study I: Somalia

4.1.1 Historical Context

Somalia, an East African country, in the midst of the Cold War, played a pivotal part in the competition between the two world powers of the time; the US and the Soviet Union. Under then dictator Siad Barre, Somalia had engaged in an alliance with the Soviet Union, meanwhile its neighboring state Ethiopia, with the US. However, as Somalia soon engaged in war with Ethiopia, the US began assisting Somalian dictator Barre with vast sums to stabilize the Horn of Africa; which had been an American interest at the time. Soon after the threat of the Soviet regime dissipated, policymakers in the US no longer felt contributions needed to be made for geo-strategic interests¹⁸.

In the years that followed, Barre grew evermore repressive to maintain his power over Somalia, which inevitably led to his overthrow in January of 1991. Immediately following Barre's forced removal, chaos erupted between clans, the struggle for power ensued and regional warlords took over sections of Somalia. As a direct result, the Somalian people were cast into an

¹⁸ Jon Western, "Sources of Humanitarian Intervention", 2002, pp.9.

era of suffering; dying from starvation as warlords confiscated air drops made by UN officials and caught in the throes of an ethnic strife.

The UN promptly reacted by passing Resolution 751, authorizing humanitarian relief operations and established United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) to ensure food supplies were being properly distributed. In the ensuing months, President George H.W. Bush, a Republican, in his last few months in office, believing that liberal humanitarians were going to dominate the new administration, decided that if the US were going to intervene in any nation state, it would be Somalia. An important reason for the choice of intervention was that the risks and costs of troop deployment in Somalia were perceived to be less than those that would accompany the deployment of troops in Bosnia. In effect, on August 15, 1992 the US engaged in the Operation Provide Relief in order to assist in securing famine assistance in Somalia. However, the regions only grew worse and with the US unable to explain to the international community why the sole remaining superpower and leader of the new world order couldn't stop the starvations, President Bush ordered US troops on December 18, 1992 to Somalia in the new US led intervention, named Operation Restore Hope¹⁹. The issue from the start was that there were no clear strategic plans for force to be used, no exit strategy or tactics to implement for long term stability of the nations (i.e. nation building).

The main challenge both the US and the UN faced in ensuring the provision of relief supplies was by the continued rivalry between two feuding warlords; General Muhammed Farah Aidid and Ali Mahdi Mohamed. Their feud had led to open conflict in the years of November 1991 to February 1992 in which thousands of innocent Mogadishu citizens were killed.

¹⁹ Operation Restore Hope was a US led mission under the direction of UNITAF – included US and allied troops – whose key objectives were to ensure that supplies were being reached by people in need, create sufficient security so that refugees could return, eradicate famine and stop death.

From February to May 1993 it had seemed that the relief missions were proceeding well and with success. Much of the American public began to forget about Somalia, leaving the new US President, Bill Clinton, a Democrat who had inherited the Somalian civil war from his predecessor, to let go of the reins and transfer the mission over to the UN. However, it wasn't long before the UN created UNOSOM II, Operation Continued Hope²⁰ that the situation soon began to unravel. In the following months, Somalia saw the clan warlord, Aidid, attacking both international peacekeepers and other relief personnel.

On August 22, 1993 the Clinton Administration sent in a deployment of troops after the call came from UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to assist in capturing Aidid. In an effort to continue aiding this failed nation state, President Clinton sent a special operations task force called Task Force Ranger to respond to the attacks on US and UNOSOM forces. However, nothing could have prepared the US administration, or the American public for the events that transpired on October 3 and 4 of 1993. In an effort to curtail any further resistance from rebel groups US forces embarked on a mission to enter Aidid's stronghold. Unfortunately, this mission was a tragedy. Black Hawk Down²¹, as the Battle of Mogadishu came to be known, ended in the loss of 19 US soldier's lives, one prisoner of war (POW) and cameras filming one of bodies being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu with a mob of Somalis cheering on in the background. In a direct response to this failed mission, President Clinton increased armed troops to Somalia, but it was not long before Clinton experienced the backlash of public opinion and withdrew US troops immediately following the debacle. The UN soon following after.

²⁰ UNOSOM II Operation Continued Hope was passed on March 26, 1993 in the Resolution 814 which called to broaden the UN mandate to intervene in another country's affairs. The US worked tirelessly in order for the UN to take over the responsibilities of running the relief effort.

²¹ Black Hawk Down was the seventh mission undertaken by the special ops US Task Force Ranger's in order to catch warlord Aideed in his own stronghold. This mission was a tragedy in that two Black Hawk Helicopters were shot down by RPG's and resulted in the killings of 19 American soldiers.

On May 3, 1994 President Clinton signed the Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD-25), which was proposed as a comprehensive framework to allow the Clinton administration to make “disciplined and coherent choices about which peace operations to support.”²² The purpose of this directive was to limit what interventions the US should become involved with in the future. Laying out strict guidelines that must be met before the US can seek UNSC for voting.

As for Somalia, with the withdrawal of both US and UN support, the country returned to chaos and anarchy, as it remains much so to this day.

4.1.2 National Interests

In Douglas Brinkley’s foreign policy piece, “Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine”, he specifies that according to Henry Kissinger, the Clinton Administration fell into a type of ‘Band-Aid diplomacy’ when it first entered office and took on the issues of fragile and failed nation states, such as Somalia. This entailed: (1) Proposing half remedies to serious issues, (2) improvising policy, and using non-action as a form of action, (Brinkley, 113). All of these actions were allegedly for the intention of protecting US strategic interests abroad and retaining Clinton’s personal popularity at home. It was to be expected, with Clinton acting as the first post Cold-War President of the US, he would need to devise a new strategy to face the next decade with, and soon.

In respect to Somalia, there was no direct military threat to thwart by US armed forces. The failure of a nation state in a fragile region however, could have had the potential to become a liable threat if left undisturbed. Enemies of the US, such as al-Qaeda – though not a threat at the time – which possessed enough resources to involve itself in Somalia, could have filled the void had the US not intervened, which would have led to even more disastrous outcomes. However,

²² Please see White House, PDD-25 for more information on the guidelines invoked at <http://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd25.htm>.

clearly in terms of strategic interests, the US had none with Somalia. No longer did the US need the security of the Horn of Africa; separated by oceans on both sides, the issue of Somalia did not pose a vital interest or imminent threat to the US.

However, what can be said, is that this was the US' perfect opportunity to show the international world that it could handle all issues that were thrown at it. Coming out of the Cold War on top, the US in a way, had something to prove, more or less to prove its standing as the new hegemonic power.

4.1.3 International Support

The US had received pre-authorization by the UN to engage in Humanitarian Intervention, both in the assistance of food aid as well as in armed troops, as was noted with both initiatives Operation Provide Relief and Restore Hope. The UN granted the approval of Operation Restore Hope, verifying that the intervention had both international support and legitimacy²³. The UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, specifically had requested the US take the lead in Somalia. The US's ability to attract other western democracies and other UN members to share in the responsibility of helping to achieve stability for the Somalian's might be a reason as to why the Secretary General sought US assistance.

In either case it seems that the US in seeking approval of the UN gained the respect of being both justified in its actions and legitimate, because it was acting in support of the international community. States that also contributed to this mission included: Canada, France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Australia, Egypt, Pakistan, Morocco, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia. The demonstration of these nation states is evidence of the support the US gained in its action of engaging in humanitarian intervention.

²³ UN Secretary Council approved the mission on December 3, 1992 with the Resolution 794, which endorsed the US-led operation and gave it support and legitimacy.

4.1.4 Public Opinion

In December of 1992, a poll conducted by NBC News found that 74% of respondents favored the use of military personnel for protecting the relief of supplies being sent to Somalia.²⁴ Whereas, the Gallup poll taken in the same month of December 1992 indicated that 59% of respondents believed the role of the US should be limited to humanitarian relief. Louis Klarevas notes that ‘the public [were] clearly supportive of humanitarian goals but less enthusiastic about... facilitating a long-term solution.’²⁵ A poll taken again in December of 1993 by CBS News found that the US public wanted an immediate withdrawal as soon as the US recovered its prisoner of war, as 61% wanted troops withdrawn quickly and only 33% supported the continued efforts of keeping military in Somalia²⁶.

It seems that at the onset of the intervention, when the American public became aware of travesties being endured by the people of Somalia by the use of media outlets, there was a strong support for intervening with military forces. However, opinion quickly changed when the media played footage of the disastrous event on October 3rd through the 4th. The killings of American soldiers proved too much for the American public to handle.

4.1.5 Media Influence

With images flooding the screens of the American public of massive violence and starving children, broadcast media helped in getting awareness across to the US public at the issues at hand. In December of 1992, with the launch of US forces in Somalia; Walter Goodman gave this appeal to the CNN effect, stating that:

²⁴ NBC News, “Somalia.” December 15, 1992. Polling the Nations. Accessed August 26, 2014.

²⁵ For more information see Louis J. Klarevas, “The United States Peace Operation in Somalia,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 526.

²⁶ CBS News/ New York Times Poll, “Somalia.” December 7, 1993. Polling the Nations. Accessed August 26, 2014.

“It was television’s wrenching pictures from Somalia that goaded a reluctant Administration to act.... once the pictures appeared of fly-tormented faces and bloated bellies of dying babies, the effect were stunning. The natural reaction of Americana against the gun-happy druggies, who were stealing their food, became too much for Washington to resist. (1992, Dec. 8, C20)

However, under closer inspection of media tabloids before intervention, during intervention, and following it, it seems that the Media only gave attention to Somalia when intervention procedures took place by President George H.W. Bush and followed with a dramatic fall when it seemed the missions had been completed. That is, until the events of the 19 US soldiers that were killed and televised for all of the American public to see a year later.

Since the majority of the American public obtains its information on foreign policy initiatives through the media, with the use of television, newspapers, and the Internet, framing the continued Somalian engagements in a negative light altered the public’s perception of the situation. After the events of October 3rd through the 4th in 1993, public support for the operations had collapsed, alongside any positive comments from the media. It seems there would be a correlation between the media and public opinion of efforts taken on by the US.

4.1.6 Implications of Intervention

Following the disastrous events that occurred with US marines storming the Somalian coast in 1992, the international community had to grapple with the recurring challenges of modern humanitarian intervention. This entailed primarily establishing legitimacy among the international community, sharing burdens across nations, acting with proportionality and

discrimination, avoiding ‘mission creep’²⁷,’ and developing exit strategies, (Western, 57;59). As James Dobbin’s in, “The Beginners Guide to Nation Building,” pointed out that with the US’ intervention plans and short departure deadlines make more for incompatible nation building²⁸. Somalia was the first post Cold-War attempt by the US to lead a multinational effort in nation building. Military power alone proved insufficient and above all, Somalia represented a failure in command and skepticism by the American public for future interventions.

Taking everything into consideration, it would seem that in regards to the intervention of Somalia, the US had no national interest to pursue other than acting for humanitarian purposes, which can be linked to a strategy of cooperative security, as President Clinton sought and was granted international approval for the intervention. International support was definitely achieved. With regards to the beginning of the conflict, US citizens were greatly supportive of efforts to engage in humanitarian intervention, however, that was lost with the Black Hawk Down incident. Media on the other hand had no real relevance in presuming to “force” the administrations hand in intervening as news stories didn’t truly begin arriving until after President George H.W. Bush deployed peace-keeping troops in his mission of Operation Provide Relief.

4.2 Case Study II: Rwanda

4.2.1 Historical Context

In April of 1994, Rwanda had witnessed the genocide of the Tutsi population and Hutu sympathizers. This genocide was the result of conflict between these two ethnic groups. The animosity between the two groups can be traced back to when Rwanda was first settled. Those who owned the most cattle were called “Tutsi” and the rest “Hutu”. It wasn’t until European

²⁷ Mission Creep is the gradual shift in objectives during the course of a military campaign, often resulting in an unplanned long-term commitment.

²⁸ For more information on Nation Building, see James Dobbins Chapter One, “Preparing for Nation-Building.”

colonialism entered this nation state that these two terms took on a racial role. First, with German colonial rule dignifying that “Tutsi” appeared more European and thus should be given role of responsibility. Then, following World War II the Belgians gained control of Rwanda and specifically mandated that each individual carry an identification card, further perpetuating the idea of two separate ethnicities. The Tutsis at this time made up only roughly 10% of the population with the remaining estimated 90% identifying as Hutu. Belgium rule dictated that Tutsis continue in all leadership roles, which in effect angered the majority, the Hutu. The Belgians did not alter this ethnic hierarchy until Rwanda began seeking its independence.

On August 3, 1993 Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, who had run a totalitarian government preventing Tutsi participation, signed the Arusha Accords which opened up for the very first time since the reversal of leadership roles, the opportunity for Tutsi to participate in government elections. However, a year later on April 6, 1994 the Genocide was sparked when President Habyarimana’s plane was shot down with an air missile, shortly after returning from a summit in Tanzania.

What ensued over the next 100 days can be described as an attempt towards the total extermination of Tutsi and Hutu moderates; with records of mass killings from 500 thousand to one million people, mainly Tutsi. This genocide was marked with not only heinous killings with the usage of machetes, clubs, or knives, but also the use of rape and torture as a weapon.

The UN had deployed the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in October of 1993 to oversee the implementation of the Arusha Accords²⁹, soon after one of the commanders of UNAMIR, Romeo Dallaire, caught word of the planned mass exterminations of

²⁹ Arusha Accords: The Arusha Accords were a set of five accords (or protocols) signed in Arusha, Tanzania on August 4, 1993, by the government of Rwanda and the rebel Rebel Patriotic Front (RPF), under mediation, to end a three-year Rwandan Civil War Organized by the United States, France and the Organisation of African Unity. The Accords included other points considered necessary for lasting peace: the rule of law, repatriation of refugees both from fighting and from power sharing agreements, and the merging of government and rebel armies. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arusha_Accords>.

Tutsi. people His efforts to alert the UNSC and receive further assistance with the use of troops proved futile; with permanent members such as the US and United Kingdom reluctantly refusing to agree. It wasn't until June of 1994 that the UN finally conceded in stating that "acts of genocide may have been committed." Which led to the creation of the mission UNAMIR 2, enacted as a way to establish security and stability; as the genocide came to a halt a month after.

The same cannot be said for that of the US, who stood by during the early months of the genocide and civil war. The US did send over two thousand troops to help with the delivery of humanitarian assistance in an operation dubbed Support Hope. Most of the troops operated in Zaire, but 220 of them helped to secure the airport in the Rwandan capital of Kigali. What is pertinent about this episode is that congressional action played a hand in bringing the operation to a premature end, (Schultz).

US indecision to act cannot be blamed on a lack of knowledge even though President Clinton in his famous speech given at Kigali airport stated that "[...] all over the world, there were people like me sitting in offices, day after day, who did not fully appreciate the depth and speed with which you were engulfed by this unimaginable terror."³⁰ It would seem in the aftermath of the failed mission in Somalia, the international community was taking a step back from fully engaging in the crises occurring in Rwanda, even with all warning signs pointing to genocide. The genocide eventually ended only when the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a group of military trained Tutsi, came back from exile in Uganda to reclaim the nation state of Rwanda and end the genocide in July of 1994.

³⁰ For more information, see Samantha Power's "Bystanders to Genocide" at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2001/09/bystanders-to-genocide/304571/>.

4.2.2 National Interests

The Clinton Administration released on July 1, 1994 its National Security Strategy titled “A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement.” National Security Correspondent, Antony Lake, brought to the forefront of Clinton’s Strategy that there was a distinct line between national interests and humanitarian interests. Stating that national interests were those that, “do not affect our national survival, but [...] do affect our national well-being and the character of the world in which we live. Important national interests include, for example, regions in which we have a sizable economic stake or commitments to allies, protecting the global environment from severe harm, and crises with a potential to generate substantial and highly destabilizing refugee flows.”³¹

Furthermore, President Clinton began to focus more on the economic side of foreign policy, choosing to help promote democracy and market economies in regions of the greatest humanitarian concern. At the core of the president’s foreign policy was New World Economic Order, focusing on domestic renewal to empower US residents and in turn develop trade agreements with nation states we have not done so with before. The idea of ‘enlargement’ was about spreading democracy through the promotion of geo-economics.

As a consequence of the Black Hawk Down incident, seven months after the fact, Anthony Lake, recommended against sending any peacekeeping troops to Rwanda. Many critics held that Somalia, much like Rwanda should've been on the periphery of US foreign policy interests.

“Unwilling to risk their soldiers’ lives or to use the word “genocide,” with all of its political, legal, and moral ramifications, the United States and European powers opted against a

³¹ For more information, see Clinton, William J. (December 2000). “A National Security Strategy for a New Century”.

full-scale intervention and instead supported a UN peacekeeping force that found little peace to keep,” (Western, 5).

Taking into context the decision of non-intervention by the US, it is clear that there is no vital interest at play for the US to involve itself with another nation’s conflict. Along with the passage of the PDD-25 in January of 1994, it seems that the US was using this new resolution in order to prevent itself from experiencing another Somalia.

According to (then) National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, “I was obsessed with Haiti and Bosnia during that period, so Rwanda was . . . a ‘sideshow,’ but not even a sideshow—a no-show. The killings in Rwanda began a mere week after the last US forces had pulled out from Somalia, and the US was eager to turn its attention away from Africa,” (Daalder,18). It was fear of a repeat of the events in Somalia that began to shape US policy in the subsequent years to follow.

Inevitably this stance in the case of Rwanda was felt even in the UN when the US chose to oppose other nation states at discussing the genocide crisis happening in Rwanda. Intervention, in terms of national interests for the US was not present, had they acted, it would have been on moral justifications alone.

4.2.3 International Support

Other states had sought to intervene in the atrocious endemic that was occurring in Rwanda; however, the US was exhausting all efforts ensuring no UN nation states would choose to intervene until the point where both the Hutu and Tutsi could resolve their own conflicts. The US lobbied the UN for a total withdrawal of UN (UNAMIR) forces in Rwanda in April of 1994. This was a rare occurrence for the US to choose to block any initiatives or resolutions from occurring in the UNSC, especially when the US’ agenda is more aligned with overstepping the

authority of the UNSC than it is in seeking approval before acting in its own interests. For the case of Rwanda, there was little to none international support, because of the direct prevention by US policy-makers at the UNSC.

4.2.4 Public Opinion

In a poll conducted in July of 1994 by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA)³², found that when respondents were asked whether they would favor contributing US troops to a relatively large UN force to occupy the country and forcibly stop the killing,” 61% said they would. Later in the questionnaire: 62% said they thought genocide was indeed being committed in Rwanda, with 25% stating they didn't know, and 80% stating that if the UN concluded that genocide was indeed being committed, the US should participate in UN intervention to stop the genocide. The American public was made aware of the genocide occurring in Rwanda. However, it wasn't until after the genocide had occurred that Americans became more proactively aware of the atrocities to human life experienced in Rwanda.

4.2.5 Media Influence

The Rwandan genocide in the spring and summer of 1994 was the first major crisis to command the attention of the international community in terms of demanding a response and require an immediate response; since leaving the shores of Mogadishu, Somalia, (Soderland, 10). The media in the US clearly alerted the population to the massive ethnic purge that was occurring about a class of citizens. However, in terms of an evaluation of an international intervention response to the genocide, media seemed as much in the grip of the ‘Somalia Syndrome’ as was the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration was hard set against intervening in a nation state that posed no vital interest and the media saw no interest in pursuing

³² For more of an in-depth look, please see PIPA at <<http://worldpublicopinion.org/cgi-bin/MT/mt-search.cgi?index=220573&search=rwanda&search.x=11&search.y=15>>.

a 'media push' to change that policy. Since there was no change in US policy, it is difficult to tell whether media evaluation had any effect on decisions made to avoid taking any action in spite of the truly horrific level of organized killings in Rwanda.

4.2.6 Implications of (Non) Intervention

In the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide, President Clinton regretted his choice of policy in choosing non-intervention with Rwanda. However, a clear analysis shows that there was marginal national interest with regards to intervention and it was made even clearer with the Clinton Administrations Security Strategy. In reference to international support, while the UN and other nation states such as Belgium and France did help in the provision of first aid, for the purpose of this paper, in looking at international support of US decisions, it would seem its allies aligned their opinions much to that of the US and refused to discuss the ongoing genocide in Rwanda. Public opinion showed that the American public, while empathetic to the idea of intervention, believed it was necessary for the UN to play the main role in the responsibility of acting. The media then followed the stance on what the Clinton Administration had chosen rather than to illicit in the American public an outcry for something to be done. Rwanda is a good example of fear of past experiences which circumvent action from occurring, as well as the inaction of the US where no national interests are present.

Despite the international community's impressive record of recent humanitarian missions over the past two decades, many critics look to the campaigns of 1992–95, and talks of intervention in present day are still guided by the failures of Somalia and Rwanda, (Western and Goldstein, 53).

4.3 Case Study III: Libya

4.3.1 Historical Context

The North African nation state of Libya has had a peculiar relationship with the US. In 1986 the US engaged in the bombing of Libyan military facilities and residential areas of Tripoli and Benghazi, including Colonel Muammar Qaddafi's homes. This bombardment was in response to alleged Libyan involvement in the bombing of a Berlin nightclub frequented by US military personnel. Two years later in December of 1988, the US was dealt another blow with the Lockerbie Bombing, in which an airliner carrying US passengers was shot down over a Scottish town. It was suspected that Libyan agents were behind the attacks. It was not until over a decade later in January of 2002 that the US and Libya stated that they had entered into talks to mend their relationship after years of hostility as a consequence of this event. In 2008, an agreement was reached between both Libya and the US in committing each side to compensate victims of bombing attacks on the others' citizens.

Not three years later, the Libyan civil war of 2011 erupted. It was preceded by other Arab nation states in what became known as the Arab Spring. This uprising was fostered by citizens that were seeking a regime change in the face of human rights violations among other basic violations of human tenets. The war captured the attention of the international community on February 15, 2011 when forces of the dictator Muammar Qaddafi fired on a crowd of protestors in the city of Benghazi. The events of that day escalated into a full on rebellion throughout the nation state of Libya in an attempt to overthrow the government.

The Arab Spring had been framed by the Obama administration as "...preserving the traditions of providing leadership of democracy, human rights, and freedom" The Obama

Administration released remarks by the president on the Middle East and North Africa by stating:

“...We think it’s important to focus on trade, not just aid; on investment, not just assistance. The goal must be a model in which protectionism gives way to openness, the reigns of commerce pass from the few to the many, and the economy generates jobs for the young. America’s support for democracy will therefore be based on ensuring financial stability, promoting reform, and integrating competitive markets with each other and the global economy. And we’re going to start with Tunisia and Egypt,” (White House, Speeches and Remarks).

As President Obama stated in his address to the United Kingdom’s parliament in early 2011, “We will not relent until the people of Libya are protected and the shadow of tyranny is lifted...”³³

By February 26, 2011 the UNSC proceeded to enact the UNSC Resolution 1970 which condemned the violence on part of Qaddafi’s forces; freezing assets as well as imposing sanctions on the regime and referred the case to the International Criminal Court, (Western and Goldstein, 56). Within three weeks, Qaddafi had set his sights on the rebel city of Benghazi, and all signs had prompted the international community of a planned slaughter. In response, the Arab League and other major human rights organizations demanded that UN stop this impending bloodshed. In effect, the UNSC passed the Resolution 1973 which required an automatic halt of all hostilities and authorized NATO to enforce a no-fly zone to protect Libyan civilians. Libyan rebels, from the start, who faced long odds against Qaddafi’s forces, refused from the start, foreign boots on the ground, (Western and Goldstein, 54).

Although five members of the UN Security Council (Brazil, China, Germany, India, and Russia) had reservations, both UNSC resolutions on Libya passed with unprecedented speed and without a single dissenting vote, (Western and Goldstein, 55).

³³For the full length speech, please go to: <http://www.hulu.com/watch/245481/the-obama-administration-obama-praises-arab-spring-across-europe> (Accessed August 31, 2014).

The US at first had played a central combat role, however, stepped back when the UN intervened and thus took on the role of support and logistics. As Qaddafi threatened to “cleanse Libya house by house” of the citizens he labeled as ‘rats’, NATO and the US worked to destroy Libya’s air defense system in less than seventy-two hours.³⁴ During the Operation Unified Protector, the US offered over two hundred and twenty missiles at a cost of 1.4 million each to support the rebels on their advance into Tripoli. By October 20, 2011, Colonel Qaddafi was ultimately captured and killed by the Libyan rebels. With the threat of slaughter curbed, NATO decided to end its mission on the October 31st, 2011. The overall mission of Operation Unified Protector was estimated to cost 1.1 billion dollars for the US effort and estimated to have saved over tens of thousands of lives, (Daalder and Stavridis, 3). These expenditures were supplementary towards the efforts of the fourteen NATO members and four additional nation states that helped in achieving this victory.

4.3.2 National Interest

When President Barack Obama, the 44th President of the US, came into office he inherited the war in Iraq, among other conflict nation states and seemed to notice that the US was in the midst of a military overstretch; weakening US power rather than strengthening it. President Obama’s guiding security strategy was made apparent in his remarks given at West Point in 2009. It was made clear that his administration would follow three objectives: 1) preserve International World Order by sustaining the American leadership and primacy on which it rests, 2) US does indeed need to sustain American global leadership, but that it also needs smarter, cheaper, and more prudent ways of exerting that leadership, particularly when the use of

³⁴ see Ivo H. Daalder and James G. Stavridis, “NATO’s Victory in Libya: The Right Way to Run an Intervention,” *Foreign Affairs* March/April (2012) for more information on this intervention.

force is involved³⁵ and 3) keeping up with the geopolitical context of a rising Asia-Pacific that is relevant to global security and economic growth in the 21st century.

In an address to the Nation on Libya on March 28, 2011, Obama stated that:

“...the United States and the world faced a choice. Qaddafi declared he would show “no mercy” to his own people. He compared them to rats, and threatened to go door to door to inflict punishment...if we waited one more day, Benghazi, a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world. It was not in our national interest to let that happen.”³⁶

Furthermore, Obama felt that America could not simply brush aside its responsibility as a leader as fellow human beings were being killed, as that would have been a betrayal of national ideology. This is best summarized by: “The United States of America is different. And as President, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action...There will be times, though, when our safety is not directly threatened, but our interests and our values are.”³⁷ The US had a national interest in intervening other than its claim by the Obama administration that it should prevent Qaddafi from overrunning those that opposed him. If Qaddafi had succeeded in his massacre of Benghazi, it would have driven thousands of refugees into neighboring countries of Tunisia and Egypt – both of whom who had experienced similar uprising months before – and would have put enormous strain on the fragile nation states recovering from the revolutions. The democratic impulses that were arising from the ashes of conflict torn countries would have been “eclipsed by the darkest form of dictatorship...”³⁸

³⁵ <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/breaking-down-obamas-grand-strategy-10719?page=2> (Accessed August 31, 2014).

³⁶ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya> (Accessed August 31, 2014)

³⁷ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya> (Accessed August 31, 2014)

³⁸ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya> (Accessed August 31, 2014).

Without a doubt, this idea of rising to the challenge in middle eastern and African countries goes hand in hand with President Barack Obama's statements at West Point in regards to the current situation of Pakistan and Afghanistan, two and half years prior to Libya. That the US core elements of its strategy begin with recognizing that "America will have to show its strength in the way we end wars and prevent conflict – not just how we wage wars..." and that "we must make clear to everyone...who lives are under the dark cloud of tyranny that America will speak out on behalf of their human rights..."³⁹ However, Obama made sure to disclose that America has no interest in fighting an endless war or taking on the role of patron; America will act only as the other nations' partner. It would seem that with the support of NATO-leading the intervention and the US being able to offer any assistance it can, that the current Administration was willing to act for the humanitarian purposes and national interests of its country without fully branding itself as the leader of the cause, as it did in Somalia. The Obama administration is moving towards a strategy of restraint, as we will see the difference in how it handles the case of Syria.

4.3.3 International Support

With the UNSC approving Resolution 1973, by a vote of 10 in favor to none against, with 5 abstentions (Brazil, China, Germany, India, Russian Federation), the Council authorized Member States, "acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, to take all necessary measures to protect civilians under threat of attack in the country, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory..."⁴⁰ Along with the regional institution, NATO, leading the reins on this operation. Nations like the

³⁹ For full transcript of President Barack Obama's 2009 speech at West Point, please see White House, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>.

⁴⁰ <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10200.doc.htm> (Accessed August 31, 2014).

United Kingdom, France, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey – all of whom have fought by the US’s sides for decades joined in on the intervention efforts. Also including Arab partners like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, who have chosen to meet their responsibilities to defend the Libyan people. The swift action by the international community took only 31 days to come up with a plan of intervention, beginning with the objectives of “securing an international mandate to protect civilians, stop an advancing army, prevent a massacre, and establish a no-fly zone with our allies and partners.”⁴¹ It would seem that much international support and legitimacy was on the side of the US in choosing to intervene on a multinational level.

4.3.4 Public Opinion

According to Gallup Polls, conducted on March 21, 2011; just days after the initial commitment of the US and other nations to join in on airstrikes against the Libyan nation to enforce UN ‘no fly zone’. The American public was asked, “Do you approve or disapprove of the current US military actions in Syria? (see Figure 2) shows that Americans approved military action against Libya 47% to 37%; finding more Americans approving.

⁴¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya> (Accessed August 31, 2014).

Next we have a question about the current military action by the United States and other countries against Libya. Do you approve or disapprove of the current U.S. military actions against Libya?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
Mar 21, 2011	47%	37%	16%

GALLUP®

Figure 2. Approval Rating for Intervention in Libya on March 21, 2011

Approval/Disapproval for U.S. Military Actions After They Began

Country/Region	Polling dates	% Approve	% Disapprove
Libya	Mar 21, 2011	47	37
Iraq	Mar 20, 2003	76	20
Afghanistan	Oct 7, 2001	90	5
Kosovo/The Balkans	Apr 30-May 2, 1999	51	45
Afghanistan and Sudan	Aug 20, 1998	66	19
Somalia	Jun 18-21, 1993	65	23
Iraq	Jan 13, 1993	83	9
Persian Gulf	Jan 16, 1991	79	15
Libya	Apr 17-18, 1986	71	21
Grenada	Oct 26-27, 1983	53	34

Note: Gallup did not ask an approve/disapprove question after the 1989 invasion of Panama

GALLUP®

Figure 3. Approval Ratings of US Armed intervention over the last three decades

Within the same data set, with the same question being asked to American's over past military engagements in other nation states, it was found that overall American support is to a lesser extent in 2011 than it had been in the past, (see Figure 3). Also, when comparing current engagements in Libya to the 1986 airstrikes against Libya, (see Figure 4)⁴² it would seem that

⁴² <http://www.gallup.com/poll/146738/Americans-Approve-Military-Action-Against-Libya.aspx> (Accessed August 31, 2014).

support is also much lower in 2011 than it was in the 1986 response to Libyan bombings of a German nightclub that killed two American soldiers.

Next we have a question about the current military action by the United States and other countries against Libya. Do you approve or disapprove of the current U.S. military actions against Libya?

	Mar 21, 2011	Jun 22, 2011
% Approve	47	39
% Disapprove	37	46
% No opinion	16	15

GALLUP

Figure 4. Comparison of Approval Ratings for US intervention in Libya from March 21, 2011 to June 22, 2011

In another USA Today/Gallup poll conducted on March 29, 2011, following the interest of the US in scaling back its participation in the NATO operation in Libya to a supporting role, rather than the leading role it started out with, President Obama has moved US policy closer to where public opinion resides on the issue. Only 10% of Americans wanted the US to play the lead role and 22% wanted the US to withdraw altogether.

The last Gallup poll mentioned was conducted on June 24, 2011, where Americans were asked the same question from the first poll. It was found that they are more likely to say they disapprove than approve of the US military action in Libya, (see Figure 3). That represents a shift from three months ago, just after the mission began, when approval exceeded disapproval.

In trying to understand this reversal of support, the Gallup Polls asked American's for the reasons of opposition to the operation by asking those who disapprove whether they disagree with the substance of the policy or with how it was executed⁴³. Of those who disapproved, 64% did so because they did not think the US should be in Libya at all. Whereas 29%

⁴³ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/148196/Americans-Shift-Negative-View-Libya-Military-Action.aspx> (Accessed August 31, 2014).

disapproved because they did not think the president obtained the necessary authorization from Congress to conduct the operation.

As the polls show, American support for the engagement in Libya was high compared to the disapproval ratings in the beginning stages of US involvement, however, three months after the ratings reversed American's were found to be less approving of how the NATO-led intervention was going forward.

4.3.5 Media Influence

The media coverage of the events on NATO-led intervention brings to mind the notion of what mainstream media has failed to report. That what mass media failed to point out was that the Libyan revolution the other uprising occurring in the rest of the Arab world, was from the outset, violent in nature. What makes the issue significant is that violence against civilians was the main rationale used for the justification of NATO's intervention into Libya, but that such rationale ignored the factors surrounding such action. This ignorance was perpetuated through mass media, which led to a very obscure public perception on the Libyan issue as a whole. Another failure on mass media is its inability to look at the historical context of the regime, which includes the question of oil in relation to NATO's intervention into Libya. It cannot be brushed aside that Libya has proven to one of the largest oil reserves in Africa and that Western nations would stand to benefit in much greater measure from a Libyan regime that was more willing to cooperate (democratic), unlike the Qaddafi Government.

The media had focused entirely on the "Situation in Libya", the "Libyan issue", and the "Conflict in Libya." However, only a small portion of the media had labeled the conflict for what it was: a civil war. In doing so, the media had not touched on the internal nature of the conflict⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ The Role of mass media in armed conflict: A Libyan case study. http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=870:the-role-of-mass-media-

The media in its coverage of the Libyan civil war has been more focused on being a proponent of US assistance in intervention, going off the call to support all the Arab nation states in their struggle for accountability or regime change.

4.3.6 Implications of Intervention

The intervention of Libya by NATO-led forces and assistance of the US proved to be a successful example in the case studies thus far examined. While yes, the intervention was successful; the current situation in Libya is far from it. It is no doubt that the International Community was quick in its response to the violence erupting in Libya, and it no wonder that the NATO/UN success in Libya occurred. However, present day Libya has struggled with its new government's ability to maintain a grip on peace and order among different factions in the state.

As far as the leading factors show, the US stated that it had a national interest in choosing to aid in the humanitarian efforts of NATO towards Libya; by way of securing the growing democratic fragile nation states surrounding Libya. Although questions arise from the analysis of media in proposing the notion of whether intervention was sought because Libya was a big oil exporting country. Furthermore, it's imperative to realize that the Libyan intervention had secured international support, however, in respect to American public opinion, that changed from being in accordance with US intervention to three months after the intervention, American's disagreeing with the actions taken on by the US. Perhaps it is because Americans feared the looming idea of 'mission creep' and suspected that the charge of moving from the objective of establishing a no fly zone to working on eradicating the Dictator Colonel Qaddafi was going beyond what the US signed up for.

[in-armed-conflict-a-libyan-case-study&catid=60:conflict-terrorism-discussion-papers&Itemid=265](#)> (Accessed August 31, 2014).

4.4 Case Study IV: Syria

4.4.1 Historical Context

The past relationship between the US and Syria is a strained one. Syria has been in the hands of the Assad family's regime since 1971, who have engaged in various acts of brutal suppression of dissent as well as widespread humanitarian violations. With the US invasion of Iraq in 2001 by President George W. Bush, there was a manifested list that called out Syria as being one of the many 'axis of evil' harboring terrorist activities. As a part of the events of the Arab Spring, the Syrian people took to the streets in mass protests to call for the resolution of humanitarian concerns. The Alewife minority that controls the military and intelligence entities has engaged in a brutal crackdown on these protestors, leading to a raging civil war that incorporates a myriad of splinter groups under the banners of loose coalitions of different ideologies that has claimed tens of thousands of lives and displaced millions of refugees.

Over the course of the past 3 years that conflict has continued in the region of Syria, Congress has debated intervention of Syria. President Barack Obama has vehemently been fighting for the approval since August 2013 to seek congressional authorization for a military strike against Syria over its alleged use of chemical weapons. This notion of the President seeking to request such approval and whether President Obama is creating a precedent that will curtail the efforts of future commanders in chief has been called in to question numerous times over the past two years. The Obama Administration continues to push for increased efforts in supporting Syria's neighbors--Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq.

The only known US ground action in Syria occurred on August 21, 2014, two days after US photojournalist James Foley was beheaded. The US military, conducted a covert mission to rescue its captured citizens being held captive by ISIS militants. The air and ground assault, had

the authorization of President Barack Obama, however, the results were futile. When a gunfight ensued and resulted in one US soldier being injured. The rescue mission was unsuccessful as Foley and the other captives were not in the location targeted.

The current situation of Syria, after three and a half years, continues to worsen and in effect has begun to spill over into neighboring states.

4.4.2 National Interest

Since the ensuing months of the Libyan Interventions, the Obama Administration released the “Presidential Study Directive on Mass Atrocities”⁴⁵ to put into print that preventing genocide and mass cruelties was and is a “core national security interest” of the US, as well a moral imperative. This new strategy seeks to create an ‘Atrocities Prevention Board’ which would confer and analyze policy issues of genocide and being responsible in training preventative measures and coordination between government services. This directive has the aim of efficiently offering future policy makers the policy options necessary to handle future conflicts.

In an article by Robert McMahon, in Council of Foreign Relations, McMahon depicts that two years before, in the military intervention in Libya, the Obama administration stated that: “prior congressional approval was not required because the limited military operations anticipated ‘were not a war or constitutional purposes,” Which is intriguing because with Obama announcing his plans on Syria as he did, Obama places his authority to take military action without specific congressional authorization as he did with Libya, as his ‘War Powers’ are

⁴⁵ For more information please see White House, Presidential Study Directive on Mass Atrocities, (PSD)-10 at <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/04/presidential-study-directive-mass-atrocities>>.

delineated to him through the US Constitution, but the formal approval of Congress, would provide a stronger basis for action and was “the right thing to do for our democracy⁴⁶.”

In 2014, President Barack Obama, in a speech given once again at West Point, declared that it is absolutely true that in the 21st Century American Isolationism is not an option, however, “to say we have an interest in peace and freedom beyond our borders is not to say that every problem has a military action...just because we have the biggest hammer does not mean that every problem is a nail.”⁴⁷ President Obama stresses his vision for US by stating “As president, I made the decision that we should not put American troops into the middle of this increasingly sectarian war... but that does not mean we shouldn’t help the Syrian people stand up against a dictator who bombs and starves his own people.”⁴⁸

It isn’t truly clear what the national interest is for the US in looking to intervene. However, the promotion of US democratic ideals and beliefs in fragile nation states arising from the Arab Spring and ensuring these people around the world are given the opportunity to enjoy the basic tenets of human life are ever present. With the recent military operation undertaken by the US in 2014, it does seem this organized terrorist group Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS) could have the potential of breaking down governments like Iraq, in which the US had invested much time and effort in creating a democratic and fair nation state. Yet, as it remains today, no further action has been taken on the part of the US to intervene militarily against the Assad regime other than supplying rebel troops with weaponry.

⁴⁶ For a full transcript, please see White House, ‘Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony’ (2014) at <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/28/remarks-president-united-states-military-academy-commencement-ceremony>>.

⁴⁷ For full video of President Barack Obama’s Speech in regards to Libya (2011), please see, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/03/28/president-obama-s-speech-libya>>.

⁴⁸ President Barack Obama’s Speech in regards to Libya (2011).

4.4.3 International Support

International support for the case of intervening in Syria is complicated. NATO has not expressed genuine interest in participating as it did in the intervention of Libya. Then, is the UNSC, with permanent members Peoples Republic of China and Russia opposing any intervention in Syria, yet still do support UN monitors currently deployed in the nation state⁴⁹. The vetoes issued by both these nation states in 2011 and 2012, prevented the UN from threatening the Syrian government with targeted sanctions if it continued military actions against protestors. As it stands today, there is a divided front of International support, on the side supporters of the Assad regime--proponents of state sovereignty--such as North Korea, Russia, Peoples Republic of China, Iran, Venezuela, Algeria, and Lebanon. While supporters of the rebel Syrian group are Israel, US, France, U.K., Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the Arab League.

4.4.4 Public Opinion

According to the Gallup Polls taken in 2013, the views by much of the US public, in regards to intervening in Syria are quite low, with 51% of Americans opposing, 36% in favor, and 13% with no opinion. However, over the past 20 years Americans have shown greater support for US military engagements and at the beginning of conflicts studies have shown support has traditionally been quite high. Initially, Americans were much more supportive of previous military engagements, yet after a decade of conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, stemming from (then) President George W. Bush's 'War on Terror', the effect of intervention(war fatigue) may be lingering. This is evidenced not only by Americans' relatively low level of support for US intervention in Syria, but also the approval ratings of 47% of the 2011 military action in Libya.

⁴⁹ Holly Yan, "Can UN monitors help forge peace in Syria?" CNN, May 1, 2012. (Accessed on August 30, 2014).

4.4.5 Media Influence

James Corbett and Professor Michel Chossudovsky, in their assessment of the media and framing the Syrian war, for the Centre for Research and Globalization, have perpetuated the theme that “...the most remarkable thing about the Syrian war coverage of the mainstream media is not its underlying bias—that was always to be expected—but how remarkably ineffective that coverage has been in convincing the public of the need for military intervention in the country.”⁵⁰ From the early days of the Syrian conflict, Western media, for example the network CNN relied on activist Danny Dayem, also known as “Syria Danny,” for coverage on the ground in the war-torn country, however, after Danny Dayem was exposed staging his reports, many critics have argued that the media has endeavored to report false or biased information to the events of most foreign issues. For the case of this thesis, the Syrian war has acquired significant attention, however, whether it is aimed at garnering American support for intervention has shown to be futile as, Americans have diverted from past calls for action and are moving more towards an isolationist standpoint.

4.4.6 Why the US has not intervened

The Obama Administration had been faced with the issue of whether to intervene militarily or for humanitarian means in the nation state of Syria; as it had done before in the case of Libya in 2011. It has been well over three and a half years since the civil uprising of the Arab Spring occurred in 2011 and almost four years that Syria has been caught in an on-going civil strife. The inability or rather the hesitation to act on part of the US is both a culmination of public support of US citizens to want intervention and the unwillingness of Congress to agree to act.

⁵⁰ <http://www.globalresearch.ca/media-disinformation-and-the-framing-of-the-syrian-war/5362069> (Accessed on August 31, 2014).

As Jon Western points out, “The international community’s inaction in the face of attacks on Syrian protesters...demonstrates that neither the UN nor any major power is willing or prepared to intervene when abusive leaders firmly control the state’s territory and the state’s security forces and are backed by influential allies,”(Western, 55). Unfortunately, for the case of Syria, while the impending process of conflict spillover and organizations like ISIS cause much for the US to worry about in respect to maintaining order and balance and preserving its democratic ideals, the international support it has garnered is evenly split. Without UN authorization, the US will not willingly intervene, especially with the current Obama administrations strategy of restraint. Public opinion in the US is equally disheartening, with many American’s opposing further operations of humanitarian intervention in the midst of the Arab Spring. It seems that the American people are still caught in the strains of war fatigue from the Bush Administration and are very hesitant to want the US to militarily engage in a nation whose conflicts are ever changing and worsening. The media supports this assumption, although as of late attention to the issues of Syria are slowly waning in the eyes of the American public. There still remains a bit of hope for Syria however, as the president’s deputy national security adviser, Benjamin J. Rhodes, told reporters on Martha’s Vineyard, “If you come after Americans, we’re going to come after you, wherever you are,” adding, “We’re not going to be restricted by borders.”⁵¹

As it stands today, the Syrian conflict has continued to spiral further into chaos and bloodshed. The regional implications have been severe, spilling armed conflict, fighters, refugees, and armaments into neighboring states such as Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. The biggest consequence of the conflict has been the birth of the entity known as the Islamic State of Iraq and

⁵¹ Mark Lander, “Obama Again Tips the Scales Toward Caution on Syria”, New York Times, August 29, 2014. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/30/world/middleeast/obama-again-tips-the-scales-toward-caution-on-syria.html? r=0>>

Syria (ISIS), a group that has exponentially increased its power and influence regionally into pseudo-state status. This has forced the US' hand in response to the attacks on US assets and allies in Iraq as well as the abduction/execution of journalists. The future of the region hangs precariously, with each day bringing a more pressing need and justification for international involvement so that the US isn't forced into a position of continuing to be a unilateral policeman in the region.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Through the evaluation of each of the four case studies presented in this thesis, the decisions of US foreign policy-makers to intervene for humanitarian purposes is a bit complicated. It involves understanding the presidential administration at the time and its chosen use of grand strategies. As we've seen, some administrations use a mixture of the four strategies discussed earlier in the text. Furthermore, the four key factors chosen for this thesis: (1) national interest, (2) international support, (3) public opinion, and (4) media influence all cohesively work together to influence, to certain varying degrees the choice of whether to intervene. The four case studies observed offer diverse situations and factors that make up the final outcome of US foreign policy makers. Although we have seen that the decisions to intervene are not always straightforward and concise, they have over the last two decades evolved to meet the needs of each humanitarian crisis that comes across the US agenda.

The idea of Humanitarian Intervention being transformed into the doctrine of R2P is a prime example of how the international community is evolving to the ever-changing foreign policy issues it is confronted with. Looking at the first case study of Somalia in 1993, the first humanitarian crisis post Cold War, it can be seen how the four factors influenced the ultimate decision to intervene. Although national interests were not precisely present, there was a moderate need for the US to show its foothold in the center of the international community, as the rising hegemony from the Cold War. Cooperative Security and Primacy were the grand strategies utilized in this intervention, as the Clinton administration sought collective action with UN to carry some of the burden and the US to prove its unipolar power to the world.

In respect to international support, public opinion approval and media influence; the levels of support were strong for the US's case to intervene. The belief by both Presidents

George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton that their goals of intervention were achievable only further doubled the commitment to intervene from one president to next. Three out of the four factors were a “yes” conclusion, which further supports the notion of why President Bush initiated the intervention and President Clinton continued on with the initiative in deploying armed troops to the ground in Somalia.

Looking now at the case study of Rwanda 1994, when asked by the UN for assistance in the UNAMIR mission, the Clinton administration, in considering the same four factors, chose not to intervene. This time, with the embarrassing aftermath of the Somalian debacle of the mission ‘Black Hawk Down’, the public did not respond well to the idea of another intervention, especially one that many envisioned would have a similar ending to that of Somalia. In the case of Rwanda, there was no national interest at play, nor had there ever been. Both international support and media influences were somewhat present, but in evaluation of this case study, it seems many other nation states followed the stance of inaction the US chose to take; due much in part to the lack of domestic popularity, and thus not much coverage was given to this 100 day massive genocide. Additionally, with the Clinton administrations presentment of the PDD-25 directive, it was able to supplement this initiative as a way to limit US decisions for cases of humanitarian crises and provide strict guidelines as to when intervention may occur. In the case of Rwanda, Selective engagement and Primacy were grand security strategies utilized here. Unfortunately for Rwanda, it did not meet the requirements of either strategy for intervention, much to cause of the “Somalian Syndrome”.

The Rwandan case offers insightful significance into reviewing when the factors of public opinion (support) and national interest are lacking; combined with negative past experiences, can in effect lead to a halt on any thoughts of intervention. However, hindsight has

shown that US failure to react to the Rwandan genocide left US President Clinton and the US public with much regret at not having acted sooner to prevent the mass genocide of 800,000 to 1,000,000 Tutsi and Moderate Hutu's.

In the third case study of Libya 2011, the current Obama administration, using the same four factors, was evaluated to determine why the US would intervene in Libya to support the uprising against Qaddafi. Here, it is evident that there was a moderately strong national interest at play for the US, namely that Libya has proven to be one of the largest oil/gas reserves in Africa, that Colonel Qaddafi had been engaging in state sponsored terrorism, and the threat of armaments and armed strife spilling over into neighboring fragile states (i.e. Egypt) proved to be potentially disastrous to US secondary interests. International support was highly prevalent, with both the UN and NATO seeking to bring down Qaddafi's regime in order to prevent the mass atrocities from occurring. Media influence proved to be strongly prevalent, however, news was marked by both the events of Libya and the recession the US was currently in the midst of. Public opinion to intervene in Libya was strong from the outset but quickly ebbed into disapproval when thoughts of 'mission creep' began to enter into the minds of US citizens. With past experience of simultaneous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan still in the minds of the US public, none were too eager to enter into yet another crisis. Libya is the first of the case studies to have had strong or moderate support for all four factors. Which can be effectively connected to the response by President Obama to intervene. However, in this case study, it is to be acknowledged that no longer is the deployment of troops 'on the ground' the tactic at play. This perhaps can be tied to the historical contexts of past experiences (i.e. Iraq and Afghanistan) and the prevention of conflict fatigue. What is most intriguing about this case study is that three months into the commitment to intervene, public opinion reversed and the US saw negative approval ratings for

intervention. Yet, President Obama and his administration continued with the mission objectives and saw it through to the end. Here, the Obama administration exerted Cooperative Security and Primacy for his grand strategies. Keeping in mind, the protection of its national interests as well as working multilaterally so as not to bear the full burden

In the last case study examined, Syria 2011, we are struck with a conundrum. The US intervened in Libya for purposes of humanitarian intervention, thus why not Syria? In this case, same as the others, the four factors were evaluated in understanding the decisions of whether the US will choose to intervene. In Syria, it supposed that yes, while there is a moderate US national interest in maintaining order and balance within the greater middle east and controlling the issue of the terrorist group ISIS—whose growth impresses the possibility of conflict spill-over into neighboring nation states like Iraq— there poses no immediate threat yet, to US vital interests or the US as a whole. International support in this case is moderate to weak, as two of the five permanent member of the UNSC refuse to invoke any extreme intervention in the case of Syria. Due to the alleged misuse of military power in the name of humanitarian intervention during the conflict in Libya, Russia and China have been vehemently opposed to intervention in Syria and have actually rendered military aid and intel to the Assad regime as a means of enabling what they see as a defense of state sovereignty. US public opinion is weak, much due in part to the past experiences of intervention, war and domestic issues. Media influence does appear to be mildly strong for the case of pushing intervention for Syria; however, more attention has been drawn to what the US President Obama will do now with lack of international support and domestic approval. Primacy and Cooperative Security seem to be prevailing themes with the Obama Administration, especially in it choosing first to seek authorization by the UNSC and also in maintaining it's power in the international community. The Syrian civil war is still an on-

going conflict and there is much work to be done in considering each of the four factors. It would seem that with only two out of the four factors receiving approval, the Obama administration will not hastily make a decision to intervene unless its national interest were to become vital rather than secondary and international support were to favor an intervention rather than inaction.

In order to better evaluate the importance of each of the four factors from each case study, they are listed below.

Nation State	National Interests	International Support	Public Opinion	Media Influence	Intervention
Somalia	No (Moderate)	Yes (Strong)	Yes (Strong)	Yes (Strong to Moderate)	Yes
Rwanda	No (Weak)	No (Moderate/Weak)	No (Weak)	No (Weak)	No
Libya	Yes (Strong/Moderate)	Yes (Strong)	Yes/No (Strong to Moderate)	Yes (Moderate)	Yes
Syria	Yes (Moderate)	No (Moderate/Weak)	No (Weak)	Yes (Strong/Moderate)	No

Table 1. Comparison of each nation state and the four factors

It appears that international support plays an influential role for the US in deciding when to intervene. However, this factor does not trump all the others, rather these findings suggest that these factors are invariably tied to one another in how the US chooses to respond to humanitarian crises. What I believe are the underlying reasons for US foreign policy-makers decisions in choosing to intervene can be supposed by these four accounts: 1) The United States will not engage in humanitarian intervention unless its national interests—vital or secondary; depending

on degree—are directly affected. As was the cases of Somalia and Libya; both national interests were highly important enough to warrant US involvement. 2) In the absence of national interests, the US cannot sustain support for extended commitments because of the human and financial costs, this can be seen in the failure to act in Rwanda, there was no national interest warranting action, as well as in the case of Syria, there is no direct threat imposed on the US and with lack of both international and public support, the US would be unable to sustain any commitment for long without backlash. 3) The results of previous conflicts have the effect of preventing future interventions; as was the case from Somalia to Rwanda, we see again in the case of Libya to Syria. Only in the latter assessment, it is more international support that is affected by this, as calls against American overstretch in the international community are brought to the forefront by nation states that grip onto their power and state sovereignty. Lastly, 4) Democratic nation building has become the strategic and moral standard by which the US decides to intervene in failed or fragile states. Taking lessons from the past of Somalia to Rwanda, the US foreign policy makers have found more support from the public as well as the international community when nation building is tied congruently with intervention, so long as it does not come off as American imperialism. Nation building has evolved into the new norm for why the US chooses to respond to interventions. Recalling US morals, beliefs and rights that are enjoyed and how those same liberties should be enjoyed by all, everywhere.

In closing, I hold that the work presented here is not, as Winston Churchill stated, “the beginning of the end”—it is more like the “end of the beginning”⁵², more research, time and future case studies will prove beneficial to the underpinnings of understanding why the US chooses to engage in humanitarian intervention in the decades to come. It is my policy

⁵² Winston Churchill Speech on November 20, 1942 in response to German troops, please see <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPMw6vuhV-4>>.

recommendation that further case studies are taken into this assessment in order to better offer an analysis of why the US chooses to intervene in some nation states and not others. However, for the purpose of moving forward in an ever-changing international community, I believe that the strategies of Primacy, Cooperative Security and Selective Engagement are a must. Not every crisis can or should be answered by the US, however, if the US is able and willing—public opinion approval moderately high—then it should do its best to answer the call as the leading hegemony of this century, as in the case for Syria.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Criteria for Military Intervention using R2P

Six criteria were identified in the ICISS for defining when a situation is appropriate for military intervention: right authority, just cause, right intention, last resort, proportional means and reasonable prospects. Below are an explanation of each and more information can be found at <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/>.

(1) Right Authority - The most appropriate body to authorize military intervention for human protection purposes is the United Nations Security Council. However, should the Council rejects a proposal or fails to take up a situation within a reasonable amount of time, alternatives are the following:

- A. The General Assembly can consider the matter during an Emergency Special Session under the "Uniting for Peace" procedure; and
- B. Regional or sub-regional organizations can act within their geographic jurisdiction, subject to their seeking subsequent authorization from the Security Council. If those mechanisms fail to discharge their responsibility to protect in conscience-shocking situations, concerned states may not rule out other means to meet the gravity and urgency of that situation.

(2) Just Cause Threshold - In order for military intervention to be warranted, serious and irreparable harm must be occurring to human beings, or imminently likely to occur. Two broad circumstances provide justification.

A. Large scale loss of life, actual or apprehended, with genocidal intent or not, which is the product either of deliberate state action, or state neglect or inability to act, or a failed state situation; or Large scale 'ethnic cleansing', actual or apprehended, whether carried out by killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape.

(3) Right Intention - The primary purpose of the intervention, whatever other motives intervening states may have, must be to halt or avert human suffering. Right intention is better assured with multilateral operations, clearly supported by regional opinion and the victims concerned.

(4) Last Resort - Military intervention can only be justified when every non-military option for the prevention or peaceful resolution of the crisis has been explored, with reasonable grounds for believing lesser measures would not have succeeded.

(5) Proportional Means - The scale, duration and intensity of the planned military intervention should be the minimum necessary to secure the defined human protection objective.

(6) Reasonable Prospects - There must be a reasonable chance of success in halting or averting the suffering which has justified the intervention, with the consequences of action not likely to be worse than the consequences of inaction.