

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States promotes itself as the world's primary proponent of human rights. According to the U.S. Department of State, the protection of fundamental human rights was a cornerstone in the establishment of the United States over 200 years ago¹. Since then, the central goal of U.S. foreign and national policy has been to promote human rights, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United State claims that the existence of human rights helps secure the peace, deter aggression, promote the rule of law, combat crime and corruption, strengthen democracy, and prevent humanitarian crisis. However, there is much concern about discrepancies between this utopian claim and actions taken. This scrutiny not only comes from international communities, but also from its own citizens. Therefore, in order to shed some light into what the U.S. has done over the past several decades, this research will explore U.S. hypocrisy in more detail. The overall structure of this research is as followed.

A. Objective of Study

1. To study the role of the United States as the premier promoter of universal human rights.
2. To analyze why claims of the United States as the champion protector of human rights has been challenged by individuals, NGO's, and other nations.
3. To analyze the rationales behind that inconsistency between what the United States claims to do and what it has done.
4. To predict the future role of the United States as a human rights promoter, and what's need to be achieved to regain credibility as a champion of human rights.

¹ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Human Rights," *Democracy and Global Affairs*, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/>.

B. Research Questions

1. Whether or not the United States' claim as a champion of human rights has been considered as false and exaggerated?
2. What are the rationales behind that inconsistency between the claim of the United States and its actual actions?
3. What could be the prospect future of U.S.'s commitment to human rights?
4. How the U.S. can regain credibility as a champion of human rights?

C. Hypothesis

According to a lot of international criticism and evidence revealed about the United States violation of human rights, I would like to prove that, *“the United States claim as a premier promoter and champion in protecting human rights is exaggerated and unsuccessful since its actual actions toward individuals and other states contradicted this claim.”*

In addition, *“the rationale behind U.S. violations is to fulfill their own priority of economic, political, and strategic interests; which, in the age of globalization, have become more important factors than truly promoting human rights ideology.”*

D. Scope of Study

It is well known that human rights violations occur in many countries like China, Myanmar or North Korea; however, these countries make no claims to be the leading champion of democracy. The United States is the focus of this research because it claims to be the primary promoter of human rights and democracy, and for three other reasons. First, the U.S. is the most powerful nation that tries to democratize the whole world. Second, if the U.S. claims to be the beacon for human rights and claims to be setting an example for other nations to follow, it must be

subjected to detailed analysis and criticism. Finally, the United States has a notorious record of violating human rights in the U.S. soil and abroad.²

E. Research Methodology

This research is going to adopt a qualitative mean of research which is a method used to gather and analyze data in order to answer the research questions. This can be made through the historical and documentary research which mostly retrieved from books, articles, online journals, and websites.

F. Theoretical Framework

In order to guide the analysis and answer to the research questions, the liberal internationalism and realism approaches will be applied as the theoretical frameworks. In fact, they are a combination of conflict approaches of the United States where U.S. is always rhetorically announce itself as a liberal internationalist (promoter of universal human rights), and act like a realist (where the ultimate goal of the promotion of universal human rights is not for the sake of altruism, but rather for the sake of other national interests).

Liberal Internationalism

Liberal internationalism is a foreign policy doctrine that liberal states should intervene in other sovereign states in order to pursue liberal objective. Such intervention includes military intervention and humanitarian aid.³ Even this liberal internationalist view is contrasted to isolationist, realist, or non-interventionist foreign

² Xinhua News, "U.S. Human Rights Violations Exposed," *China Daily.Com.CN*, March 13, 2008, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-03/13/content_6533121.htm.

³ In the case of liberal internationalism, some heretics come in two schools: democratic hegemonists and liberal imperialists. The democratic hegemonists advocate the global hegemony of a "concert of democracies." Liberal imperialists argue that the United States and its European allies have a duty to invade, and if necessary govern, disordered societies in the interests of human rights and justice. (As Michael Lind noted in *The Nation* article on July 2, 2007)

policy doctrines, which oppose such intervention⁴; however, we cannot deny that historical record of the United States' foreign policy is a mix of many of those doctrines.

The goal of liberal internationalism is to achieve global structures within the international system that are inclined towards promoting a liberal world order. To that extent, global free trade, liberal economies and liberal political system are encouraged. Especially, liberal internationalists are dedicated towards encouraging democracy to emerge globally. Examples of liberal internationalist include U.S. President Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush.⁵

It has been criticized that, the Bush administration has turned its back on a longstanding American tradition of liberal internationalism in foreign affairs. But these criticisms misinterpret both the policy of George W. Bush, as well as America's liberal internationalist tradition. In reality, Bush's foreign policy since 9/11 has been heavily influenced by the traditional liberal internationalist assumption—assumptions that all along has had a troubling impact on U.S.' foreign policy behavior and red into the current situation in Iraq.⁶ The administration responded assertively to the challenge of 9/11. The goals of this policy have been not only to initiate “rogue state rollback”, but to promote a more open and democratic world order. However, the problem is not that the president is departing from a long tradition of liberal internationalism; it is that the U.S. is continuing some of the worst features of that tradition. Specifically, in Iraq, the U.S. is continuing the tradition of articulating and pursuing a set of extremely ambitious and idealistic foreign policy goals, without providing the full proportionate means to achieve the goals. That's why it always creates an outright invitation to failures on its foreign policy. Its intentions and the means used to achieve those intentions are always mismatched.

⁴ *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Liberal Internationalism,”
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_internationalism.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Goliath Business News*, “Hegemony on the Cheap: Liberal internationalism from Wilson to Bush,” quoted in *World Policy Journal* (December 22, 2003),
http://goliath.ecnext.com/com2/gi_0199-129048/Hegemony-on-the-Cheap-liberal.html.

Realism

In the ways, the United States' foreign policies also lean toward realist approach. Realism is a major approach in studying international relations. Its view of the world is defined by the number of assumptions: the international system is anarchic; the nation-states are the primary actors and inherently possess some offensive military capability of power which makes them potentially dangerous to each other; state can never be sure about the intention of other states; the main national interest is to seek power in order to guarantee its survival. That's make states are instrumentally rational and think strategically about how to survive. Morgenthau stated that, "All politics, domestic and international, reveals three basic patterns; that is, all political phenomenon can be reduced to one of three basic types. A political policy seeks either to keep power, to increase power, or to demonstrate power."⁷

Max Weber mentioned that, "interests dominate directly the action of men." Power may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the control of men over men. It could be soft power (diplomacy of persuasion) or hard power (military power). Thus, power covers all social relationships which serve that end, from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties by which one mind control another. Power covers the domination of man by man, both when it is disciplined by moral ends, and when it is that untamed and barbaric force which finds its laws in nothing but its own strength and its sole justification in its aggrandizement. Just like the United States in this case that want to control other states through the peaceful intention of universal human rights promotion, but in the same time it intervene the sovereignty of other states for the sake of the same goal or sometime even for the other personal goals.

However, when we talk about the political realism in international politics, the contesting ideas are always existed. That is between idealism (morally concerns) and realism (national interest concerns). To search for a clue to foreign policy exclusively in the motives for statesmen is both futile and deceptive. It is futile

⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, "Six Principles of Political Realism," in *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 4-15.

because motives are the most illusive of psychological data, distorted as they are, frequently beyond recognition, by the interests and emotions of actor and observer alike. History shows no exact and correlation between the quality of motives and the quality of foreign policy. We cannot conclude from the good intentions of statesmen that his foreign policy will be either morally praiseworthy or politically successful⁸, just like we cannot conclude from the good intention of the U.S. that want to promote human rights protection for the sake of altruism, that its policy will also be either morally praiseworthy or politically successful.

Whenever the appeal to moral principles provides guidance for political action in international affairs, it destroys the very moral principles it intends to realize. Universal moral principles can serve as a mere pretext for pursuit of national politics. The performance of such a function is hypocrisy and abuse and carries a negative moral connotation.⁹

⁸ Morgenthau, "Six Principles of Political Realism," 4-15.

⁹ _____, "The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy," in *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 35.