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IN SEARCH OF A MORALLY PRAGMATIC FOREIGN POLICY

The Carter Administration's Human Rights Policy

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I. Introduction

AT PRESENT, human rights are an essential issue when we analyse and evaluate US foreign policy. More importantly, human rights have served as one of the most distinctive features of the "US self-image" in foreign policy (Mertus, 2004). It seems difficult for many of us to appreciate that this is a rather recent phenomenon. Only four short decades ago human rights were a marginal aspiration within the general framework of US foreign policy (Buckley Jr., 1980).

While Congress certainly contributed to placing some human rights issues at the forefront of US foreign policy, it was the Carter Administration that "opened the way for the astonishing explosion of 'human rights' across the American political landscape" (Moyn, 2010: 154). In order to realise its ambition, the Administration internally promoted a broad debate on how to implement human rights abroad. From the outset, key decision-makers in the Administration acknowledged the potential contradictions in promoting human rights and safeguarding other elements of US national interest. Accordingly, the Carter Administration developed a comprehensive and intricate concept of human rights. The concept adopted sought to promote a moral foreign policy bounded by political pragmatism.

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FOREIGN POLICY: THE
CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S
HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

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The current paper aims to demonstrate how the Carter Administration endeavoured to develop its human rights concept. More precisely, it evokes some of the most important policy documents and interventions to reveal the intricate nature of the Administration's policy. It also seeks to show the difficulties the Carter Administration encountered in balancing human rights concerns with other, more tangible, elements of American national interest abroad.

II. The Initial Drive to Uphold Human Rights in US Foreign Policy

Despite the traditional rhetoric in US foreign policy emphasising humanitarian concerns, few Administrations actually felt compelled by any kind of human rights considerations. Even post-war references to the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lacked any precision and commitment to integrate human rights into US foreign policy-making (Forsythe, 1990). The time honoured principle of non-interference led US policy-makers to avoid, at least explicitly, meddling in others nation's internal affairs Kennan (1993). It was not until the 1970s that human rights acquired a privileged position in US foreign policy. National discontent with the American political establishment was augmented by the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and US affiliation with several repressive regimes. Echoing popular sentiment, Congress passed an assortment of legislation seeking to safeguard human rights abroad. The initial legislation was approved in 1973 as a response to the alleged police brutality in countries such as Chile and Vietnam. The banning of official US involvement in equipping and training foreign police forces in these countries was established by Amendment to Section 600 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (Salzberg, 1986). In the years that followed, the number of amendments to the foreign assistance legislation increased, as did the itemising of the detail of the type of assistance the US could supply to foreign regimes.

Particularly important was the work carried out between 1973 and 1978 by the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements¹

¹ The committee was later renamed Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations.

chaired by Congressman Donald Fraser. In 1974 the Fraser Committee adopted a report² which claimed that regardless of issues of sovereignty associated with human rights, “when a government is itself the perpetrator of the violations, the victim has no recourse but to seek redress from outside his national boundaries” (cited in Salzberg, 1986: 15). Accordingly, Human decency calls on individuals to unite because “they have both the opportunity and responsibility to help defend human rights throughout the world” (cited in Salzberg, 1986: 15). Accordingly, the report underlined the requirement for the US to adopt human rights considerations as a common standard in its foreign policy decision-making.

During its tenure, the Fraser Committee contributed to enhance US awareness to human rights issues in international affairs. For example, in 1974, after the continued difficulty in curtailing US assistance to regimes with political prisoners, the Committee introduced Section 502 to the Foreign Assistance Act which placed the onus on the President for the responsibility of justifying continued military assistance to regimes that violated human rights. The opening segment of the amendment stated:

It is the sense of Congress that except in extraordinary circumstances, the President shall substantially reduce or terminate security assistance to any government which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights, including torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; prolonged detention without charges; or other flagrant denials of the right to life, liberty, and the security of the person (...) Whenever proposing or furnishing security assistance to any government falling within the provisions of paragraph (a), the President shall advise the Congress of the extraordinary circumstances necessitating the assistance. (Committee on International Relations and Committee on Foreign Relations, 2003: 229)

Due to this amendment, military aid to repressive regimes was restricted unless the President could prove “extraordinary circumstances”. In addition, a further amendment was introduced by the Committee in 1975 to restrict economic assistance to governments

² The report was titled *Human Rights in a World Community: A Call for US Leadership*.

accountable for gross violation of human rights. More specifically, Section 116 of the Foreign Assistance Act established that economic assistance could only be provided if the “Administrator primarily responsible for administering part I of this Act to submit in writing information demonstrating that such assistance will directly benefit the needy people in such country, together with a de-tailed explanation of the assistance to be provided (including the dollar amounts of such assistance) and an explanation of how such assistance will directly benefit the needy people in such country” (Committee on International Relations and Committee on Foreign Relations, 2003: 59).

Other areas of foreign aid were also constrained by human rights concerns. One such example was the adoption of the concept of “gross violations” by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the Export-Import Bank in order to oblige foreign regimes to guarantee basic human rights for their citizens (Salzberg, 1986). Also, the International Financial Institutions Act (Sections 701 and 703) established goals and standards for human rights which would serve to guide US participation and voting in the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the African Development Fund (Salzberg, 1986).

However, the legislation mentioned thus far involved a coercive approach to human rights. In other words, it sanctioned the interruption or cessation of aid to regimes that violated basic human rights (with the exceptions already mentioned). Accordingly, the Fraser Committee introduced Section 116(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act in 1977. This legislation allowed the President to provide financial assistance to programs and activities which promoted civil and political rights in countries that qualified for aid³. The bulk of this aid was directed towards programs supporting nongovernmental organisations and which carried out activities such as teaching, visits, information, legal services, research, and workshops in the US and abroad (Salzberg, 1986).

The Nixon and Ford Administrations tried to circumvent many of these legislative initiatives on many occasions. For instance, in 1975, Kissinger refused to reveal the individual country reports arguing

³ At that time, the budget allocated was \$ 750,000 US dollars.

that all states violate human rights and that singling out individual countries could be detrimental to American interests (Merritt, 1986). Also, military and financial aid continued to be provided to controversial regimes such as Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Philippines, and South Korea. In order to try to make decision-makers comply with human rights issues the Fraser Committee organised over 150 hearings, interviewing over 500 witnesses throughout the five years of Fraser's chairmanship. In addition, specific country legislation was adopted in order to ban or limit military and economic aid to certain regimes. More significantly, in 1976 Congress overrode a presidential veto to endorse human rights policy into the International Security and Arms Export Control Act making legislation linking human rights and security assistance a legal obligation (rather than the non-binding situation previously observed).

III. The Carter administration's search for a morally pragmatic foreign policy

The Carter Administration came to office devoted to promote human rights at home and abroad. However, while Carter's personal experience may have contributed initially to some excessive idealism^[4], a careful assessment of the Carter Administration's public statements and official documents attests to the contrary. In fact, the Administration developed a complex and comprehensive conceptualisation of human rights and its infusion into US foreign policy and was well aware of its limits and potential inconsistencies and contradictions (Schmitz and Walker, 2004).

Human rights were a central concern for Carter right since his presidential campaign. In fact, values were a central theme of Carter's campaign (Kaufman, 1993; Moore, 1984). Carter was very critical of past Administrations' foreign policy conduct, especially pertaining that to human rights. Accordingly, he placed an emphasis on human rights as one of the ways by which the US could improve its global

⁴ In his memoirs, Carter (1982, p. 44) admits that he initially did "not fully grasp all the ramifications of our policy".

image and standing (Moore, 1984). In his second presidential debate with Ford, Carter (1976) censured the previous Administrations for ignoring human rights and therefore deteriorating America's position in the world. He called for the US to claim once more its place as "a beacon for nations who search for peace and who search for freedom, who search for individual liberty, who search for basic human rights" (Carter, 1976).

Once in office, the Carter Administration quickly began to give form to its human rights perspective and frame it within the Administrations' broader foreign policy goals and objectives. In contrast with past Administrations, with Carter "human rights rhetoric was given unprecedented prominence in US foreign policy" (Mutua, 2007: 568). In the briefing book submitted by Brzezinski to Carter, on April 30, outlining the top ten foreign policy goals for the following four years, human rights featured prominently in countering Soviet ideological expansion and enhancing the global sensitivity to the US's adherence to international norms (Brzezinski, 1983). From the beginning, despite their agreement on the importance of the subject (Carter, 1982), the key decision-makers in the Administration were conscious of the limits of institutionalising human rights in foreign policy. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was particularly sensitive to the repercussions of pursuing a global human rights agenda. While agreeing on the need for a more moral approach to foreign policy, from the opening Vance (1983) advised Carter on the need to maintain flexibility and pragmatism in dealing with particular cases that might affect US security interests. In order to balance human rights with other issues of national interest and develop a reasoned and functional foreign policy, the Administration set up the Interagency Group on Human Rights and Foreign Assistance to develop the framework for the proper policy options.

In the meantime, Administration officials began showcasing the primary focus of the future policy. A preliminary outline of the Carter Administration's human rights policy was presented by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher (1977), to the Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance, on March 7, 1977. Though Christopher confirmed the Administration's commitment to human rights as an integral part of its foreign policy, he also recognized that policy would many times be the result of difficult trade-offs:

... conflicts in policy may arise when the security of the United States is linked to that of a country whose human rights priorities are deficient. It should be uppermost in our minds that security assistance is rendered to maintain or enhance our own security, not to strengthen the hand of a repressive regime, although we must face up to that as an undesired and unintended consequence in certain cases. (Christopher, 1983: 408)

According to Christopher, the best way to balance this situation was by carefully and systematically weighing human rights concerns against economic and security goals on a country-by-country basis. In each particular case a group of questions was developed in order to help officials decide on the best policy option, namely (Christopher, 1983: 408):

1. Will our action be useful in promoting the cause of human rights? Will it actually improve the human rights situation at hand? Or, is it likely to make it worse?
2. What will be the most effective means of expressing our views? Quiet diplomacy? A public pronouncement? Withdrawal of aid or other tangible sanctions?
3. Even when there is only a remote chance that our action will be influential, does our sense of values, our American ethic, prompt us to speak out or take action?
4. Will others support us? Can we expect the aid of national and international organizations dedicated to furthering human rights?
5. Have we steered away from the self-righteous and strident, remembering that our own record is not unblemished?
6. Finally, have we remembered national security interests and kept our sense of perspective, realizing that human rights cannot flourish in a world impoverished by economic decline or ravaged by armed conflict?

Secretary of State Vance restated this point in his Law Day ceremonies speech at the University of Georgia on May 23. At the same time as he announced that human rights were an essential part of the US's progressive values, Vance reaffirmed the limits of US power. Accordingly, Vance appealed to a realistic foreign policy which measured the real prospect of achieving US interests and objectives. Without

this contemplation “a sure formula for defeat of our goals would be a rigid, hubristic attempt to impose our values on others” (Vance, 1977: 506). Thus, echoing Christopher’s prior report to the Senate, Vance also presented a series of questions that the Government should consider before deciding on what action to take⁵.

In this period, Carter also presented his vision for human rights at Notre Dame University. Carter restated his belief that preceding administrations had shunned time-honoured US values in their dealings with other nations due to the fixation with containing the spread of soviet communism. This conduct was no longer acceptable because, according to Carter (1977), important changes were sweeping the globe and “as more people have been freed from traditional constraints, more have been determined to achieve, for the first time in their lives, social justice”. Accordingly, the US should reassert its historical optimism in the certainty that “dignity and freedom are fundamental spiritual requirements” of all individuals and peoples (Carter, 1977). While maintaining that human rights were an essential principle of US foreign policy, Carter was careful to stress that there were no “rigid moral maxims” to steer policy and that changes in human rights in many nations might be prolonged. Rather than pledge to free the world of all human rights violations, Carter was restrained in his assurance:

Throughout the world today, in free nations and in totalitarian countries as well, there is a preoccupation with the subject of human freedom, human rights. And I believe it is incumbent on us in this country to keep that discussion, that debate, that contention alive. (Carter, 1977)

Thus, the US would serve as a reverberation box for those individuals and people who lacked the basic rights. By acknowledging the limits in enforcing human rights abroad and accepting that change would be protracted, Carter simply committed the US to keep the human rights on the political agenda. Ultimately, as he later confessed, it was a question of political moralisation:

⁵ The questions put forward by Vance are in general quite similar to those presented by Christopher. However, Vance (1977) added some initial considerations on the nature of the case, i.e., “What kinds of violations or deprivations are there? What is their extent? Is there a pattern to the violations? If so, is the trend toward concern for human rights or away from it?”

Whenever I met with the leader of a government which had been accused of wronging its own people, the subject of human rights was near the top of my agenda. Almost always, the discussion was initiated by those who had been accused. They seemed eager to let me know what progress was being made in their homeland to end persecution and to redress grievances. I knew often that this was a ploy to mislead me, but even then it was possible that the seeds of reform had been planted. At least they were confronting a question they had not been forced to address before. (Carter, 1982: 150-151)

In July 1977 the final draft of the Presidential Review Memorandum on Human Rights⁶ (hereafter PRM 28) was submitted to the Administration. Taking the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as its conceptual base, PRM 28 identified three main groups of human rights (Christopher, 1977):

- 1) The right to be free from governmental violations of personal integrity, namely torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, arbitrary arrest or imprisonment, denial of fair public trial, and invasion of the home;
- 2) Economic and social rights, which imply that governments did not restrain an individuals freedom to fulfil his vital needs (e.g., food, shelter, health care, education) or fail satisfactorily to support individuals in meeting these needs;
- 3) Civil and political rights, guaranteeing freedom of thought, of religion, of assembly, of speech, of the press, as well as individuals' freedom of movement within and outside his own country and the freedom to partake in government.

The authors of PRM 28 emphasised that the Administration's human rights policy should contemplate all three groups of rights. However, the study did stress the differences implied in upholding

⁶ Presidential Review Memorandums identified topics to be researched by the NSC, defined the problem to be analyzed, set a deadline for the completion of the study, and assigned responsibility for it to one of the two NSC committees. When the committee completed the study the conclusions were sent to the President and formed the basis for a Presidential Directive.

these different groups of rights and also analysed the costs and benefits involved with each group. The study also recognised that there was no single strategy for approaching human rights. On the contrary, PRM 28 called for a case-by-case assessment. However, the study did identify an assortment of national groupings for dealing with these issues, e.g., Western Democracies, Communist States, Third World Nations, and Gross Violator of Human Rights. Each grouping had particular features that recommend certain types of policies:

NATIONAL GROUPINGS	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
Western Democracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and reinforce human rights values; • Encourage countries to support human rights objectives; • Increase symbolic support; • Increased economic assistance and cultural, educational, and scientific exchanges.
Communist States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that short-term changes will not occur; • Keep emphasising commitment to human rights; • Emphasise implementation of the Helsinki Final Act; • USSR will maintain engaged in nuclear arms negotiations regardless of US HR policy; • Use cooperation with private sector to engage USSR; • Acknowledge little leverage on PRC.
Third World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce positive human rights and democratic tendencies, particularly in countries vulnerable to internal or external threat or that face severe economic problems; • Encourage return to norms where HR tradition has been disrupted; • Discourage arbitrary use of power; • Maintain some distance of countries which violate HR; • Promote economic and social rights.
Gross Violators of Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring to bear international opinion and concerted international action; • Formal relations may be maintained.

Taking into account the issues considered in PRM 28 and other debates, Carter issued the Presidential Directive on Human Rights (hereafter PD 30), in February 1978, stating that “it shall be a major objective of US foreign policy to promote the observance of human rights throughout the world” (Carter, 1978: 1). However, just as with other formerly mentioned public statements and documents, the directive did state the need for “due consideration to the cultural, political, and historical characteristics of each nation, and to other fundamental US interests with respect to the nation in question” (Carter, 1978: 1). Accordingly, PD 30 called for a comprehensive approach to human rights, at the same time as it stipulated a pragmatic perspective in conducting US foreign policy.

IV. Implementing Policy: More Pragmatism than Morality?

The record of the Carter Administration’s performance on human rights confirms the complexities initially acknowledged by official policy-makers. Our purpose is not to carry out an exhaustive analysis of the Administration’s foreign policy throughout its four-year term, evaluating in detail all the cases involving human rights issues. Rather, we briefly and heuristically point out some of the most discernible cases in which human rights issues were in disagreement with other elements of US interest.

On the domestic front, the Administration overcame some important institutional barriers and pressed the Senate to ratify several international human rights conventions such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the American Convention on Human Rights, and the International Genocide Convention. Although the Administration was unsuccessful in guaranteeing their endorsement in the Senate⁷, it kept pressing key-politicians behind the scenes to adopt the conventions throughout its term in office (Glad, 2009).

⁷ During Carter’s term in office, none of these treaties were ratified by the Senate. In the following years only the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the

Internationally, the Administration was able to link human rights issues to economic and military aid. Nevertheless, the research carried out by Apodaca and Stohl (1999) reveals that economic aid was equally subject to other concerns such as economic requirements, past assistance record, and traditional national interests. Furthermore, military aid revealed an even greater sundry evaluation. The same study indicates that whereas assistance was cut to Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Uruguay, other countries which violated human rights continued to obtain aid (e.g., Indonesia and Argentina in the final year of the presidency). The underlying criteria for deciding on aid was plainly summarised by Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown, when considering third world countries threatened by the Soviets (or its surrogates):

If a government meets some reasonable criteria of legitimacy and acceptability, the United States should not stand by and see it overthrown because its internal opponents were able to receive arms from the Soviet Union, directly or indirectly, while the government itself was unable to receive them from the United States. (Brown, 1983:167)

Similar dynamics were verified in other policy areas. For example, the Administration was very outspoken on human rights abuses in the Soviet Union. However, the Carter Administration made no effort to confront the Chinese leaders on human rights issues during the process of normalisation of relations with China. In fact, PRM 28 has clearly indicated that, in relation to human rights issues, the US “will have little if any leverage or influence with the PRC [Peoples Republic of China] at this stage in its development” (Christopher, 1977: 20). The need to off-balance growing Soviet expansion and involvement in the Third World trumped any other political concerns (Westad, 1997).

The Administration’s move towards China also implied turning a blind eye towards Pol Pot’s reign of terror. More precisely, when the United Nations (UN) had to accredit a delegation to represent Cambodia,

the US sided with China and the ASEAN countries⁸ in supporting Democratic Kampuchea (DK). With the Vietnamese forces encroaching on the borders of Thailand, ASEAN requested that the US back them in their support for the DK claim to the Cambodian UN seat. While *acknowledging the brutality of the Pol Pot regime and publicly condemning them*, the US delegation voted in favour of DK, alleging that the vote was founded on “narrow technical grounds” and the “superior claim of the DK”. While the debate within the Administration attested to the inconsistency of the US position, Vance ultimately justified it on the basis of American national interest:

Days before the final vote, I had come to the conclusion that, unpleasant as it was to contemplate voting, even implicitly, for the Khmer Rouge, we could not afford the far-reaching consequences of a vote that would isolate us from all of ASEAN, Japan, China, our ANZUS treaty partners, and most of our European allies, and put us in a losing minority with Moscow, Hanoi, and Havana. (...) We made the only decision consistent with our overall national interests... (Vance, 1983: 127)

Domestic political concerns, as well as geostrategic considerations, also triumphed over human rights considerations in the Middle East on many occasions. In the case of Iran, the US simultaneously pressed the Shah to reform the political system while it pushed him to maintain the order in the midst of the uprisings (Brzezinski, 1983; Vance, 1983). The Administration’s policy towards the Iranian revolution demonstrates the contradictions resulting from attempt to balance moral issues with the more tangible considerations of US national interest (Bill, 1988). The US policy towards Iran sent out mixed signals. It appealed to the regime for greater political opportunity at the same time it approved billions of dollars of advanced weapon systems to the Shah’s government⁹. Ultimately, the Administration’s human rights policy had its consequences. While it was certainly a source of pride and

⁸ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was composed by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore.

⁹ Despite some Congressional opposition, the Carter Administration was able to approve the sale to Iran of AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) and F-16 fighters in a deal involving over 3 billion dollars.

achievement for some officials, it was also a cause for disappointment. Brzezinski confirms this irony in his memoir, stating that, in general, the Administration's policy "can be counted a success" (Brzezinski, 1983: 129). However, this sense of accomplishment was absent when assessing the Shah's fall from power. While maintaining that "Carter's efforts to make the Shah more responsive to human rights was a step in the right direction", Brzezinski (1983: 397) felt that "it came at a time when the basic problems of Iran were beginning to get out of hand and the structure of authority was beginning to crack".

The Arab-Israeli peace process also exhibited a similar dynamic. The Administration came to office looking for a comprehensive peace agreement involving numerous international stakeholders. In the end, the Camp David Accords simply committed Israel and Egypt to peaceful relations. The most critical issues remained unresolved. For instance, after the initial demands for the recognition of the autonomy of the Palestinian people, the Administration gradually conformed to the reality on the ground and acquiesced to Israeli policies. As Brzezinski (1983: 443) has admitted, by the end of 1979, US leverage was significantly curtailed: "Thus a decision to confront Begin involved major risks not only for the stability of the region but also for the President's domestic position".

On numerous other occasions the Administration revealed similar difficulties in attaining a balanced policy. Challenges in countries such as Korea, South Africa, Indonesia, among others, tested the Administrations' resolve on safeguarding human rights. Despite obvious contradictions, the Administration kept pressing human rights abroad through numerous different diplomatic tools, e.g., specific requests, direct persuasion, public statements, legislation, aid programs, consultation, and international institutions (McGaffey, 1986; Newsom, 1986). The results marked the beginning of an era of policy of inconsistencies that has persisted up to the current Administration.

V. Conclusion

The Carter Administration has been bitterly criticised for its human rights policy. Censure has come from both sides of the political divide.

On the left, some have criticised the Administration for its inconsistency and bias in enforcing human rights. On the right, most have condemned the Administration for its naiveté in trying to balance human rights concerns with the more tangible issues of national security.

However, the Carter Administration placed human rights at the forefront of US foreign policy. More than just suggest an assortment of vague principles, the Administration endorsed a broad and comprehensive conceptualisation of human rights. In addition, the Carter Administration was responsible for creating the human rights bureau in the State Department and establishing a number of measures to include human rights concerns in the calculus of US foreign policy (Mutua, 2007). However, just like all the preceding Administrations, Carter's human rights policy revealed an invariable contradiction between the capacity to promise and achieve its purpose. As the experienced diplomat David Newsom (1986: 4) has pointed out, "Rhetoric and actions of the United States in support of individuals and in favour of freedom and democracy can raise hopes and create expectations that, in many cases, cannot be fulfilled".

In reality, all US Administrations beginning with the Carter presidency have experienced difficulties in achieving a balanced trade-off among the main components of the national interest: ideals, prosperity, and national security. As a rule, strategic and economic considerations have triumphed over other interests, particularly those of a moral persuasion. While the US has been very outspoken on human rights issues over the last three decades, this rhetoric has usually not been confirmed by its foreign policy record.

However, the Carter Administration was conscious of the difficulty involved in balancing the multiple factors influencing American interest abroad. The Administration acknowledged that "no mechanistic formula will produce an automatic answer":

In pursuing a human rights policy, we must also understand the limits of our power and wisdom. We defeat our goals either through a rigid attempt to impose our values on others or a doctrinaire plan of action. Where we are determined to act, our means range from quiet diplomacy in its many forms, through public and forceful pronouncement, to withholding of assistance. Wherever possible, we should use positive steps of encouragement

and inducement. We should give our strong support to countries working to improve the human condition, and should act in concert with other countries through international bodies. (Vance, 1983: 436)

Considering the future of international relations, Vance's words deserve careful consideration. A clear and balanced reflection will become even more crucial. The trends consolidated since the end of the Cold War will persist – i.e., rhetorical support for human rights, proactive policies, targeted legislation, International Treaties and legal authority (Dietrich, 2006). Other trends, such as using economic liberalisation and democratisation as a means of promoting human rights, will also continue. The US will face mounting challenges in the international environment and its power will encounter increasing resistance (da Vinha, 2011). Inconsistencies and contradictions will never be removed from foreign policy-making. But a more balanced approach between human rights and other aspects of the national interest should be sought after. For the US to maintain its stature in international politics, national security and economic progress cannot alienate the promotion of fundamental human rights or sanction their violation.

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