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A Closer Look into American Humanitarian Intervention: How Understanding Humanity Tells Who and When We Help

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Humanitarian Intervention and the United States

Once "humanitarian intervention" is spoken into existence, it is often met with a wide variety of reactions. J.L. Holzgrefe explains it well: "it is a bit like crying 'fire' in a crowded theatre: it can create a clear and present danger to everyone within earshot" (Holzgrefe 1). In a room full of philosophers, policymakers, and political scientists, it may lead to doubt and skepticism. Often, questions of whether a military intervention can be humanitarian, or simply how powerful governments select who they help, arise. For the purpose of this analysis, I will utilize the definition of intervention by Hozlgrefe. He defines humanitarian intervention as "the threat or use of force across state borders by a state (or group of states) aimed at preventing or ending widespread and grave violations of the fundamental human rights of individuals other than its own citizens" (Holzgrefe 2). By this definition, the United States has on some occasions engaged in humanitarian intervention and on the other occasions has chosen to refrain from such intervention.

The United States is selective when it comes to helping other nations in moments of crisis. With the largest funded military in the world and well-established peaceful intervention programming, such as the Economic Support Fund, Development Assistance, Food Aid, and Security Assistance (Guess 3), the United States is capable of assisting foreign nations. These resources have allowed for complete and successful interventions, where a resolution comes to fruition. But what drives the American decision-making to intervene in one area, while leaving other struggling states untouched? For instance, Yemen is enduring the worst humanitarian situation in the world, according to the United Nations. Although the United States had pledged millions in humanitarian aid for Yemen during the winter of 2019, they continued to sell billions in bombs and other weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates that brought harm to

the Yemen population. As one member put it, the "American Bombs would reach Yemeni civilians before American aid will" (*House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs* 2019). Yemen is only one of multiple examples where the United States has provided contradictory ways of security, preventing the realization of a solution. If humans are innately kind beings, and we hurt when we see another hurt, how does the United States choose when deciding which "distant other" to help? The answer lies in human nature itself.

I will focus on the United States and their motivation to aid humanitarian crises through three case studies. To realize how the United States is motivated to help, humanity's predispositions must be well-defined, alongside their established geopolitical interests. It is easy to feel empathy for loved ones or family members, but how does empathy translate with someone in a foreign country? At our core, humans seek interaction and cooperation among others. Who and how they decide to cooperate with defines the intervention strategies. If we can understand how the individual selects their in-group, these tendencies will reflect at the state level leadership. The beginning of the paper outlines the transition of the individual to the formation of the state so that we can recognize why the United States selects certain states over others. This will be demonstrated through the progression from individuals, tribes, to governing bodies.

Starting at the individual level, humans have the capacity for social empathy, but they are also balancing an inclination to violence. As Frans de Waal observes, we are a "bipolar" species. It becomes easier to suppress violence when individuals or groups feel included and respected by their government and families (Raine 1538). I will apply Elizabeth Segal's definition of social empathy, which is the ability to read and understand the feelings and actions of others with the experiences of different societal groups (Segal xii). Once the individual and tribal levels are understood, I intend to show how this relates to the United States' involvement in humanitarian

crises. Finally, I will utilize this knowledge of human nature to three cases: the Berlin Blockade, a successful intervention carried out by the United States, Rwanda, a case that was largely ignored until the United States sent troops by the end of the genocide, and Syria, an ongoing humanitarian crisis in which the United States is directly involved. I unravel the complexity of the United States' intervention behavior through the psychology of humanity.

From the Newborn to Youth Stage

Humanity has various predispositions, some being innate, and others being shaped by the environment in which they live. This development begins at birth, where individuals and society interact. Before one can comprehend the intricacy of those who govern the state and its strategies, it is necessary to highlight where our predispositions develop and evolve. Certain inclinations could explain outcomes at the state level. If this is the case, what exactly are humanity's predispositions, and how do they impact society? This section will unpack what we see as our obligations, starting as soon as one enters the world. Naturally, newborns signify the beginning of an individual's development. It is shown that babies prefer familiar kinds of people almost immediately (Bloom 104). From an early age, it is expected one will make distinctions between those who should be within your group, and those who should remain outside. Human history has largely proved that moral obligations extend to only known neighbors. As Emily Dickinson wrote, "The soul selects her own society / Then shuts the door" (Bloom 101). These inclinations speak to who we decide is in our community, and who must remain outside.

There are certain ways that humans define their in-group and out-group. For babies, how they interact with strangers seems to be a widely studied experience, and the qualities that they assign the unknown dictate who is the in-group. Evolutionarily, strangers ignite fear, anger, and distrust.

These feelings serve a protective purpose, suggesting the innate desire for cultural identification. This is evident in many facets of society, specifically through the actions of the newborn. As humans, we tend to be more comfortable with the familiar, and it has increased our chance of survival throughout much of our evolutionary history. By gravitating towards the familiar at a young age, one avoids unnecessary risks. What we are exposed to at birth impacts the perception of the outside world. An example would be that babies favor the language they have been exposed to and disapprove of foreign accents. Additionally, preferences for similar gender and race matter. In multiple studies conducted on babies, they had a positive reaction to someone of their same gender and race (Bloom 108). In terms of defining and maintaining kinship, these tendencies, even at the stage of the baby, prove the importance of in-group identity and the desire to pass down one's biological traits.

From the newborn to the adolescence phase, not all behavior is limited to biological tendencies. Many behavioral traits are fostered through socialization. In other words, we are not doomed to feel empathy or compassion only for our in-group or kin. Based upon one's upbringing, biological fate can be adjusted. Therefore, an individual who has been limited to exposure will have a narrow scope of who they consider their in-group. Rather than only feeling compassion for someone who looks or acts like yourself, environmental factors can expand an individual's moral circle, invoking connections to complete strangers. Philosopher Peter Singer speaks on the moral circle, where the perceived shared fate can alter who we wish to include within the in-group (Norenzayan 72). For instance, children who attended schools with mixed races were more likely to ignore race as a divisive factor. Children who attended racially homogenous schools were increasingly hesitant (Bloom 119). Exposure to an "other" is essential

by the adolescence stage. What this evidence points towards, as the analysis widens to governing

bodies, is that humans tend to favor those who are familiar.

A part of the process to accept certain individuals and not others is conducting moral

evaluations. Humanity is distinct from other species in our ability to "paint" moral qualities on

behavior. Since the human mind cannot observe the moral value of individuals, they learn to

make that evaluation through their own awareness. Once born, it becomes necessary to work

through the complexity of what is right or wrong. This is key to the developing mind, for it is

dependent upon paying attention to another humans' behavior: what they do and how they speak

(Boyer 17). Particularly, the difference between moral and immoral behaviors do not reside in

the behaviors themselves. Adolescents soon realize that moral value is not black and white.

Giving away your money may be criminal while fighting people may be commendable. These

are shared mental representations, and one's environment will reaffirm the observations. The

environment one is raised in can influence their behavior. Observing an adolescent's behavior

and environment can lend a hand in understanding how they will interact with their community.

Analyzing the Individual Level: Adulthood

At a young age, humans demonstrate the need to define their community and belonging. While

the developmental years are crucial to who a person becomes, how exactly do these

predispositions and experiences compound into adulthood? The answer is multifaceted. As

mentioned above, primatologist Frans de Waal explains that we are a bipolar species, capable of

"cooperation, teamwork, love, friendship, empathy, kindness, forgiveness, compromise, and

reconciliation" as well as "competition, factionalism, hostility, sadism, cruelty, intransigence,

and domination" (Raine 1530). Historically, there is debate over which side of our nature,

violence or empathy, can prevail. At the core, survival is on the minds of individuals. If individuals feel safe and respected, they will be less likely to engage in violence. Exploring each tendency, it appears that these are in constant competition with one another. Even academic scholarship does not agree which trait, or if either, prevails. However, it is important to outline our inclinations to distinguish who we help and who we hurt. This section details the manner that violence is present in humanity, applying the parasite prevalence theory, and our capacity for empathy to show how the United States deescalates conflict. It also informs why military versus humanitarian aid are prioritized.

Violence is rooted in the evolutionary need for protection against periods of instability. The rewards for aggression can be vast, increasing power, resources, offspring, and social hierarchy (Raine 1540). According to the World Health Organization, violence is, "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation" (Liddle 24). Violence is seen in both nonhuman animals and humans, and there are many similarities and differences in their methods to violence. Violence is not limited to the relations of predator and prey. It is even found among the same species. Hence, human to human violence has been studied by evolutionary psychologists to find out what provokes these actions. Through the evolutionary psychology lens, psychologist James Liddle expands upon why humanity's violence is a combination of the brain composition of information-progressing mechanisms as well as the response to adaptive problems faced by our ancestors. There is a combination of nature and nurture to know why humans are violent. Liddle does not discount human experience in the analysis.

Violence is an effective method to assert control, and this desire to control is prevalent today. In the media, horrific acts from one human to another appear to be the subject of many news stories. It seems that every day brings a new opportunity to showcase humanity's true colors. However, these violent actions are not new to the modern world. Violence among humans has occurred for hundreds of thousands of years. Archaeological findings prove violence amongst the early humans in the skeletons of the Paleolithic period (Liddle 28). Prior to the Paleolithic period, other evidence points to violence since skeletons could not be preserved. At least 400,000 years ago, there were tools crafted to inflict severe violence on other humans, such as stone axes and wooden spears (Liddle 31). What these findings illuminate is the innate, evolutionary tendency for the individual to turn to violence. Whether through human to human contact or through tools, violence is not a novel phenomenon in the human experience. There are certain circumstances where this tendency is heightened.

As individuals form tribes and eventually societies, one way of protecting status within the group is through violence. For the majority of their evolutionary history, violence was present among the small groups of humanity. People lived in these smaller scale societies where most individuals were familiar with another. With this familiarity came the need to be known for strength. Status was particularly important in terms of survival. If an individual failed to defend their status, it would have been costly, especially for men. As a result, violence has been a useful outlet to combat perceived threats (Liddle 27). Then, when society expanded, individual sensitivity to threats increased. The shift from nomadic lifestyles to permanent settlements caused individuals to confront the unfamiliar. Human engagement in warfare spiked with the abundance of resources and the advantages of conquering neighbors. It was the creation of an interconnected network, where certain groups capitalized on the other. This is especially

noteworthy for what eventually became states and their ability to share resources. Specifically, the solutions to benefit a disadvantaged state may not be in the interest of the privileged state. The turn to violence as an outlet for survival can explain why a state acts on their self-interests.

Self-interest can still be achieved through cooperation. This is also tied to the aim for survival. Liddle elaborates that the reduced possibility for cooperation between groups is accounted for by the idea of individual parasite prevalence. As commonly perceived, parasites have a negative impact on survival. Parasites have brought adaptive problems since humans try to resist infection. We have evolved to detect local parasites and avoid infection. Beyond actual parasites, this theory addresses how humanity reacts to other threats on their in-group. Within the parasite stress model, the psychological devices that assess parasite prevalence encourage behavior that manage the risk of exposure (Thornhill, Fincher, Murray & Schaller, 2010). This reaffirms the in-group versus out-group distinction. Particularly, in areas of high parasite stress, humanity tends to value decreased interaction with outgroup members. The ingroup becomes the inner circle, and values such as collectivism, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia are embraced. This lack of cooperation lends itself to a world where individuals suffer poverty, inequality, and violence for competing resources.

The parasite prevalence theory operates among individuals who make up the different in and out groups. It can be applied to determine points of conflict and how they would decide to work together. An example of parasite prevalence would be an infectious disease and its effect on the frequency of warfare. For instance, the parasite-stress model can demonstrate the manner in which a global infectious disease leads to xenophobic and ethnocentric cultural norms, as the ingroup tries to protect themselves against the potential harm of the out-group. This holds true in both intrastate and interstate conflict. Specifically, intrastate conflict occurs between states, and

interstate conflict within the state. Intrastate conflict occurs as the in-group demotes the outgroup, leaving them with little support and left to isolation. Interstate conflict occurs when the out-group, generally those who suffer great poverty, are left with mortality and deprivation from the persistent disease. Resource competition ensues, and the nation has an increased chance for civil war (Letendre et al. 669). This not only informs violence, but the cultural norms of the ingroup and the out-group. Parasite prevalence is an evolutionary trait that demonstrates how we protect ourselves and how this protection can lead to division. Although parasite is in the name, the theory speaks more about human cooperation than avoiding disease. It confirms in what way individuals navigate exterior threats to the in-group.

Identifying these tendencies towards violence leaves behind a bleak fortune for humanity. Nevertheless, human nature is not destined for savagery, destruction, and self-interest. In the context of safety and respect, humanity can feel empathy and compassion for one another. It is the combination of biological and environmental factors on the developing mind that largely dictate whether individuals will turn to violence or empathy. This dilemma is exaggerated by the increased interactions that individuals moved as a society from isolated tribal bands to the interconnected modern world. Humans remain to be social beings. It is even necessary for one to feel empathy in order to have successful social interactions between humans (Miralles 3). Reaching adulthood, we have developed abilities to understand other people's states of mind, or to make sense of their behavior. The inability to know the minds of others would be an immense disadvantage for survival. This aptitude for empathy is unique because we not only apprehend each other's minds, but we can envision ourselves in the position from a first-person perspective. Empathy allows us to become full members of society (Stueber 5). Hence, we must confront our

predispositions to violence, and remain aware that we are simultaneously capable of expressing empathy.

Although empathy and compassion appear to be similar qualities, it is notable to distinguish what they mean for human expression. With these definitions clarified, we can learn the motivations of the United States involvement in another state's humanitarian crisis. It especially specifies the motivations of helping the distant other. Empathy is the ability to recognize others' states of mind, and to make sense of their behavior. Compassion, while it may contain attributes of empathy, should not be confused with empathy. It is too concerned with unfortunate situations, for we do not have compassion for people who are doing well (Segal 25). In other terms, it invokes an appeal to charitable feelings, but it is limited in this scope. There is disagreement among scholarship on whether human understanding should focus on empathy or compassion. Paul Bloom writes his book on *Against Empathy*, arguing that compassion is more rational than the emotionally loaded trait of empathy. Responding to his critique, Elizabeth Segal believes empathy is rational, and more importantly, that it is a process one learns over a lifetime. This thesis utilities Segal's definition of social empathy, which states that empathy is the ability to read and understand the feelings and actions of others with an appreciation of their history. Both scholars inform the debate, but Segal's definition of social empathy prevails for this study.

This analysis focuses on social empathy because it allows one to comprehend the experiences of different societal groups. Social empathy can be explained in a real example that occurred in the United States. Utilizing the looting that took place post-Hurricane Katrina, Segal comes to terms with the fact that if she were in the looter's shoes, she would have reacted similarly in order to survive (Segal 2). This requires the application of social empathy because one must go further than focusing on the impact of the hurricane. It mandates that an individual face the

contextual features of the crisis, where largely African American and poorer communities inhabited. Social empathy takes a deeper look into structures, desiring change for social conditions to build a better world. Even though Segal had not experienced anything similar to living through the natural disaster, she employed social empathy after considering the bigger picture. Regardless if the matter concerns your sister or a complete stranger, empathy is a powerful tool for connection. Empathy confirms that we are capable beings who can comprehend the lives of those we do not live. This capacity for social empathy continues to be vital in evaluating why aid is provided for certain humanitarian crises.

The three case studies stretch a broad range of the United States' history. Spanning multiple decades of the 20th century to the present, the studies showcase how our predispositions control which states we help or hurt. Paul Ehrlich believes that we have lost touch with this power to connect, due to many societal constraints discussed further (Ehrlich 9). To make this connection achievable, even in a world of increasing polarization and other various barriers, one must cultivate empathy. The capacity for empathy should be recognized while acknowledging our past plagued by genocide and enslavement. Empathy is contextual, making it a fluid process depending on the circumstance. As individuals, we can train ourselves to be more empathetic, whether we ourselves are sad or too tired to engage. President Obama argued that there is an "empathy deficit" where most people do not relate to a broad enough part of humanity (Ehrlich 9). This deficit is not irreversible. It begins by knowing when to take action, an action that another may need. One question begins the discussion of the following case studies: can the United States exercise social empathy selectively, and if so, can we train ourselves to be more empathetic? Transitioning from the individual to the organization of tribes, this idea of the

"empathy deficit" will be important to keep in mind, especially for the case studies of the 21st century.

Tribal Organization and the Family Unit

Before advancing to the state's decision-making, it is essential to frame how individuals join together to create organized communities. These findings detail the state's formation, through shared identities and further aggression to outsiders. The previous section spoke upon empathy and its power in building connections. Jeremy Rifkin elaborates on empathy's role in group formation. Rifkin makes it clear that this is difficult since tribal life offered little contact between tribes (Segal 45). It is not inherently wrong to be proud of your own group, for people do not wish to lose their cultural identification (Bloom 128). An individual's longing to come together and coexist has brought many advantages to humanity. Yet, the formation of tribes and families has equally many consequences. The development of an "in-group" inevitability creates an "outgroup." Margaret Mead addresses the romantic view of small-scale societies and makes note that the appeals of kinship and belonging comes with a cost. Transitioning from the tribe to modern society was a gradual process. Every new advancement towards collective organization offered an answer to the core problem that society was bound to face. It is evident to see qualities of tribal organization in governing bodies today, as well as the characteristics that have been lost. Starting with the tribal formation, this section communicates the way that tribes have shaped societies in the modern world.

The progression from the tribe to how we see society today was not instantaneous. There are four main forms of organization that are the foundation to governance and evolution of all societies across all time periods. These four include the tribal form, the institutional form, the

market form, and the network form (Ronfeldt 1). The tribal form was the first to emerge, beginning thousands of years ago. Considering its benefits, it is apparent they are still reaped today. These tribal instincts provide a sense of social identity and union which is still the basis of every society. Evolving from the hunter-gatherer lifestyle of nomadic bands, tribes became progressively settled, agrarian, and village lifestyle. It differs from chiefdoms and states due to its lack of formal hierarchies (Rondfeldt 30). Self-interest is not prioritized, for one's identity is found in their lineage. In this stage, kinship controls all decisions through thought and action, limiting the means to advance. The tribe is concerned with the well-being of one another. If selfinterest prevails, the singular tribe does not independently exist, for they are to be overpowered by the interests of one.

Kinship empowers the need for hierarchy or a central authority that dictates the community. This is the next stage of grouping labeled hierarchical institutions. The chiefdom encompasses the larger, denser, diverse populations, ruling over the larger set of villages (Rondfeldt 44). With greater complexity came increased stability, resisting the division of tribes. While the chiefdom led to the development of the state and the military, the tribal inclinations never fully left the structural framework. In fact, when societal progression fails, it historically tends to revert to tribal tendencies. The longing for "egalitarianism, mutual caring, sharing, reciprocity, collective responsibility, group solidarity, family, community, civility, and democracy" are all tribal principles (Rondfeldt 56). As society advanced, these ideals were believed less in the ways of kinship, but rather in the relation between the ruler and the ruled. With this separation from tribal life, additional values were necessary.

These additional values show the rise of the market form, enabling individuals to channel their drive for competition, selfish individualism. Taken too far, the market principles

overshadow the positive tribal impulses that promote social trust and behavior in the market system. Balance is needed in any stage of society, and tribalism never fully leaves. Rondfeldt articulates this balance in the triform model. By triform, it is meant that these societies include aspects of the tribe, institution, and market. The United States has built the most advanced triform, including tribal instincts, institutional hierarchies, market, and is now on track to create a quadriform society. Reaching the quadriform would enable policymakers, business leaders, and activists to cooperate spanning various networks. With the rise of globalization and technology, this fourth form of networks connects groups and individuals outside of one's state, which the United States has developed to reach abroad (Rondfedlt 68). Certainly, there are other states in the modern world who have begun to meet the level of the United States, such as Russia and China. However, these states are limited to adapting the market form, not necessarily the triform. From the viewpoint of the United States, they have networks of allies and relationships that span decades.

The triform and quadriform models have allowed for a globalized society, which is significant for the leader of a state to feel empathy for another state. An ability to visit and learn about the distant other was a feature unknown to tribal organizations. Therefore, densely populated living has made cross-cultural exchange possible. This still proves difficult for humanity, for a bond that resembles blood relationships was and remains an adjustment. In the past two thousand years, there has been both advancement and setbacks to cultural coexistence (Segal 46). Psychologist Steven Pinker believes that empathy, although not equally experienced in all places across the world, has developed far beyond what earlier civilizations experienced. Within the organization of city-states, the impulse for economic gain permits different groups to live together. The cosmopolitan life of the current stage forced civilization to understand their

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trading partners and various cultures (Segal 47). Pinker argues that this has led to a decline in violence, since a core cause of tribal violence was the limitations in how much they can produce. It was anticipated for a tribe, once attacked, to retaliate, creating a cycle of violence. Today's advancements support the benefits for different cultures to coexist, whether for economic gain or because of their densely populated arrangements. These are advantages of the newest stage of society.

While the latest stages of society have proven our aptitude to coexist and trade with other cultures, the human concern for others in the modern world is a complicated story. In Sebastian Junger's *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging*, Junger speaks to the experience of veterans coming home from war. The feelings of post-traumatic stress disorder, coupled with the sentiments of courage, loyalty, and selflessness, have left many soldiers to wonder why they still long for tribal life. This leads Junger to ask: why is Western life so unappealing (Junger 15)? For the first time ever, an individual can go about their entire day encountering only strangers. This had led to deep struggles with mental illness and overall standards of happiness. Whereas the triform and quadriforms of progression offer comforts and basic needs fulfilled for many, it also has made individuals feel immensely alone. A wealthy person who never had to rely on help or resources from his community is living a life that is far outside the centuries of human experience (Junger 25). There appears to be a reduced role of community in the most advanced form of society. How does this affect the United States, the wealthiest country in the world, and its capacity to help in humanitarian causes? The following section will address these concerns.

The Institutions that Contribute to Societal Formation

An individual's predispositions can reveal how a society maneuvers difficult or urgent situations. In the context of the modern world, it may be taken for granted that once disaster strikes, international aid will play a major role in the recovery. When did this become possible, and why is it now taken for granted? It is understood that humanity is both innately empathetic, compassionate, and violent, but there are many intricacies that require further examination. An individual's predispositions are not the only factor in determining the ways in which aid is given. The role that institutions, including religion, as well as the history of humanitarian aid, play will be noteworthy to develop. Although individuals can bring insightful contributions, it is not guaranteed that international aid will be provided. From the vantage point of the first tribal formations, an interconnected world is an unnatural system. A tribe may never cross paths with another who lives only a few miles away. Humanity was once in small bands, worried about their kin, and the modern world has new expectations of dependency. Today, it is anticipated that states will work together in hopes for the global common good. Proven in the novel coronavirus, when dire challenges emerge, international systems hope to work together to shuttle supplies globally. The history begins with the earthquake in Lisbon, a natural disaster that serves as a catalyst for the trend in international aid. This section highlights the history of international aid, as well as the institution of religion, and what they entail for the state's ethical responsibility.

On November 1, 1755, Lisbon faced an 8.5 magnitude earthquake, historically the largest to hit a major European city. In addition to the devastating earthquake, the city went up in flames due to a great fire from overturned candles. To make matters worse, the ocean floor pushed tidal waves more than sixty feet high towards Lisbon. It made many aware that nature's capabilities are largely out of our control. With that being said, the ethical obligations to suffering people in

distant lands arose. This moment in time became, as political scientist Michael Barnett named it, the "Humanitarian Big Bang" (McCullough 2020). Immediately following the tragedy, monarchs from Spain, France, Britain, and Hamburg provided economic aid to Portugal. As anticipated, the countries had their own political and economic self-interests to satisfy. Even so, the response was unprecedented. Analyzing the zero-sum perspective of international relations in the 18th century, it would have been expected to see Portugal's loss as a win for surrounding states. The outcome was quite the contrary.

Rather, there was a call that the nations owe an ethical responsibility to one another. Emmerich de Vattel's *The Law of Nations*, written shortly after the earthquake, details how "one state owes to another state whatever it owes to itself, so far as that other stands in real need of its assistance, and the former can grant it without neglecting the duties it owes to itself" (McCullough 2020). Vattel is arguing that a state should be concerned about another's welfare, and they are obligated to help. The earthquake symbolized a starting point for humanitarian aid, as well as a new view of religion. Historically, supernatural explanations were mostly employed because they were widely accepted. Since the Lisbon earthquake occurred on All Saint's Day, many leaders donated their resources because it was seen as punishment for human wickedness. Others started to wonder whether science, reason, and large-scale international efforts could be enforced to reduce misery in distant lands. The religious revolution was a pivotal moment for humanitarian affairs.

The United States has a prevalent religious influence, which means this institution must be addressed. Religion has transformed the ability for cooperation and conflict. It establishes trust and a set of moral values to follow. Here, the world's most economically powerful and scientifically advanced country, is also one of the most religious (Norenzayan 2). Human

existence relied on organizing themselves in cooperative societies. Especially in the present day, strangers regularly depend on each other for mutual livelihood. It is not the possibility of future interaction that persuades strangers to want to work together. Instead, it is the reputation and threat of punishment that impacts cooperative behavior (Norenzayan 5). Religion helps individuals measure one's reputation and establish standards of morality. Prosocial religions, those with Big Gods who watch and intervene, contribute to the rise of cooperation in large groups of strangers. Believing and belonging to a cultural community influenced people to come together as a cohesive whole for a greater cause. This strengthens the bonds in large groups under the control of the state and can motivate altruistic activity.

Religion as a societal institution has created trust among people who trust in God. The idea that "watched people are nice people" removes the additional work of understanding an individual's reputation (Norenzayan 59). For instance, there is more generosity when charities raise money in public. It is this form of social monitoring that exists because of super-natural monitoring. Before modern cultural institutions, like police or courts, it was religion that dictated the actions of communities. Today, this notion has persisted. Looking to political candidates, atheism has shown to be the least likeable quality (Norenzayan 67). Although religion is not the only motivation to act altruistically, such as the expectation of mutual gain or Singer's notion of expanding your moral circle, it remains a large source of instilling cooperation. On the other hand, there is a secular application toward reassuring nice behavior: strong institutions that enforce fair competition and ensure that cheaters will be punished (Norenzayan 73). In these societies, believers and nonbelievers alike are motivated to cooperate and feel prosocial. This shows that feelings of cooperation are not necessarily instituted by religion, but religion has

played a great role in creating caring communities. With its great presence in the United States it is a worthy contribution to how American society has been organized.

Even with religion's ability to bring people together, there are religious groups within the same state that conflict. We find ourselves in an unfamiliar international system that argues cooperation among different states should be maintained, when the states themselves are often in disagreement. This international system is far removed from the tribal organization that once established group formation. It is easy to forget the current international system has asked a lot of state leaders, with the concept of international aid being fairly new. Some scholars make the claim that morality has been banished from international affairs, and particularly in the past halfcentury. Robert McElroy argues this is because there is a need to establish international affairs exclusively from all ethical and philosophical presuppositions, and the impact that realism has had on states (McElroy 3). These realist ideals, which remove the choice for moral values that conflict with national interest, have made it taboo to discuss ethics in international affairs. However, scholars like Charles Beitz, Marshall Cohen, and J.E. Hare challenge the realist notion by stating that all political action is goal-oriented, and moral principles address concerns in international affairs. They go as far to say that foreign policy is, "intrinsically a domain of moral choice" (McElroy 4).

These scholars, understood as liberal internationalists, viewed the increasing support for peaceful resolution and partnered efforts to provide humanitarian aid as evidence of true international morality (McElroy 8). Arising in the early twentieth century, they were encouraged that this growing support for international morality would be more cohesive as the twentieth century continued. After World War II and the democratization of the West, the liberal internationalists showed that international relations could now incorporate morality in their

decision-making processes (McElroy 13). Once this movement arose, the question evolved into whether or not a state was responsible to neutralize potential threats? What justified prevention and intervention implementation? Finally, what can be determined as a "good" foreign policy? All of these inquiries add to the difficulties of deciding how and when to intervene in another state's affairs. The United States is left in a novel international system that is shifting. These questions surrounding ethical responsibility will remain important in the discussion of the American involvement in foreign matters.

Governing Bodies – The United States

The societal structures that influence charitable behavior and cooperation find themselves under the control of the state. Considering these influences, the state, in this case, the United States, has structured a portion of their budget to benefit foreign aid. The funds are allocated to continually support the development of other countries, while other areas prioritize moments of emergency. Yet, for the United States, foreign aid remains one of the most controversial components of US foreign policy (Guess xi). Analyzing the five programs that U.S. foreign aid consists of: Economic Support Fund, Development Assistance, Food Aid, Security Assistance, and Multilateral Development Banks, these programs are often interrelated and have vague task delegations. The controversy lies in the U.S. foreign aid ending in largely uneven results, hoping to achieve its American values abroad (Guess 3). "American values" refers to having a world order that supports freedom as well as political, economic, and social sustainability. It is assumed that the United States must increasingly pursue its national interests in a geopolitical environment that is influenced by increasing competition with rival powers. Transitioning to the

Biden administration, there are predictions that he will not view international relations through a zero-sum prism similar to the Trump administration (McCurdy et al. 2021). With these large aims, there are restrictions to which states can receive U.S. funding and structural support.

When delegating resources, U.S. foreign policy must consider the cost and return considerations, or profitability. This complicates the ability to give for the leading decision makers, as there are economic and political restraints on feeling empathy for another. Although empathy may be a motivation to help a distant other, one cannot deny the economic influence at play. An example would be congressional preference for distributing loans over grants, despite the fact that the loans are rarely repaid in full (Guess 18). It can be argued historically that the U.S. would rather demonstrate the illusion the state will repay for their assistance than give directly through grant form. Over the last two decades, this trend has been altered. Nearly all foreign aid is provided in grant form (Lawson and Morgenstern 16). This shift deserves additional explanation. Throughout this section, the funding process of the United States will be described in order to know how these foreign state selections are made.

Humanitarian relief was the first phase of U.S. foreign aid. Beginning in 1943, and discontinued in 1947, the U.S. provided 70% of the funds to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) (Guess 19). The purpose of the UNRRA was to prevent starvation and the basic survival needs for those in the Axis-occupied countries, specifically based in Southern Europe, China, Korea, and the Philippines. This agency, which was dismantled by the creation of the United Nations, was the first time the United States formally allocated resources to humanitarian relief. The aid, further politicized by fear of supporting the communist agenda, reflects the budgetary and political concerns of today's relief funds. These concerns will shape how and when the United States is involved in the three case studies.

The United States foreign assistance is the largest component of the international affairs budget, and as of late, has focused on competing with China and Russia to address global humanitarian crises. Humanitarian concerns, to the U.S., are defined as "driving both short-term assistance in response to crisis and disaster as well as long-term development assistance aimed at reducing poverty, fighting disease and other forms of human suffering…" (Lawson and Morgenstern 4). In terms of the United States, the main focus is on short-term assistance, which works to alleviate immediate human suffering in both natural and human induced crises. The most recent fiscal year budget of 2018 shows that $8,345,840,000 was spent on humanitarian assistance (Lawson and Morgenstern 5).

This money is distributed to many outlets, the largest portion through the International Disaster Assistance. The organization has responded to crises in Syria, South Sudan, Yemen and Venezuela, while coordinating for food assistance with the Emergency Food Security Program. The additional assistance reaches programs by the State Department, funded under the Migration and Refugee Assistance and the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance accounts. From there, these accounts support organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross (Lawson and Morgenstern 8). United States' foreign aid stretches many countries and takes a variety of forms. As the case studies progress throughout the decades, organized aid is increasingly established, reinforcing the structure for foreign assistance. For instance, the situation in Syria benefits from more programs like the International Disaster Assistance than were existent at the time of the Berlin Blockade.

The sum of eight billion dollars for humanitarian aid appears to be a large and fair amount to achieve the aims of American assistance. However, reflecting on the United States' humanitarian budget and the manner in which it is allocated, its current organization is up for

debate. When accounting for the percentage of gross national income, the United States ranks low with its aid calculated to the gross national income (Lawson and Morgenstern 26). This raises many concerns, such as to what extent this great power provides aid for states with lower national incomes? Furthermore, how should this aid be presented? Is the answer to increase the budget or reorganize the allocation? These questions are all valid. There are particular techniques for providing aid that achieve diplomatic outcomes. Diplomacy is rhetorically and idealistically the way that the United States expects to achieve its short-term intervention strategies. By considering the differences between military aid and foreign aid, it appears that foreign aid is the more "peaceful" way to respond to issues of political stability around the world (Guess 18).

Military aid can be described as the United States providing countries with American military equipment and training. Of course, military aid is necessary in intervention strategies, some cases more than others. Often, as shown in the following case studies, immediate military involvement could lead to long-term intervention, with the U.S. risking their own people and resources for a cause. The distinction between military and foreign aid will be especially important in understanding the Berlin Blockade, Rwanda, and Syria. As of the 2018 fiscal year budget, $13.6 billion was allocated for military assistance, making 29% of the total US foreign aid (Lawson and Morgenstern 9). If the U.S. should increase their aid for humanitarian crises, they must decide whether it will prioritize military or foreign aid. The following case studies will prove this distinction's significance, as there are instances where military aid is useful.

Among their rich history in humanitarian intervention and its status as a global power, the United States has often been regarded as an influential player in global foreign policy. We do not hold countries like France or Germany to the same expectation as the United States because of its larger material power and resources. Predominantly, its authority over their allies, as well as

their enemies, means American intervention strategies carry immense weight in the international system. The three cases discussed point to different decades in American history, and the leadership at each moment in time had and continues to make difficult moral evaluations. Given its status and resources, the United States' leadership often considers how their intervention, or lack thereof, will impact the international system. Michael Walzer offers a rhetorical question on the duty of humanitarian intervention: "if not us, then who?" (Rosenthal and Barry 15). Comprehending the hierarchy of global powers, it is evident that the United States is qualified to aid other countries. Nevertheless, how does this ability compound with the complexity of human predispositions? In other words, human beings are operating at the governing level of the United States. When foreign or military aid is implemented, is humanity's biology to blame? With paths to both violence and compassion, there appears a moral dilemma among American leadership. These difficulties will be detailed as the case studies are explored.

State Versus the Individual Distinction

Before the case studies will be outlined and related to the innate tendencies of humanity, it is worth making a distinction between what will be evaluated. Specifically, the leadership at the time of each crisis signals the decisions that were made for the intervention strategy. I do not suggest that the state can be identified as a person entirely. Instead, I claim that the United States approach to humanitarian concerns could be linked to our innate predispositions. After all, the state's leaders who make these crucial decisions are human. To argue that states themselves are "actors" or "persons" is to insinuate they alone have attributes with human beings, such as rationality, identities, interests, or beliefs (Jackson 289). Many scholars of International

Relations would agree that states are not really people, only as if ones. Another way one can comprehend this is that a state operates based on the leadership in power at the time. Wendt quotes that this title is "useful fiction," for the state is a social construction of the mind, and thus cannot be anything more than the material facts that constitute them (Jackson 299). The state cannot take credit for the actions of leaders. If a state is a person, the concern is that only the state as a whole can be held responsible for "crimes against humanity" (Jackson 258).

When we examine the crises in Berlin, Rwanda, and Syria, we must keep in mind how the decisions of their leadership at the time reflect what we know about humanity. This paper values the relevant executive and what they may have relied upon to make the careful and challenging judgments. The United States had differing priorities in the time span of these crises, which will also be significant to remember. In the three case studies: Berlin Blockade, Rwanda, and Syria, humanity's tendencies can shed light on the manner in which involvement takes place in dire situations. Keeping in mind humanity's desire for violence and empathy, two extremes on a spectrum, the following studies reveal a great deal about humanity. Each case will start with background on its extraordinary conditions and then outline connections to the previous sections. They highlight the past, present, and anticipate the future of American foreign aid.

II.   Case Studies

Berlin Blockade

Ending in almost an entire destruction of Germany, the war of Adolf Hitler that began in 1939 came to an end in May 1945. This left the state in the hands of the Allied powers, those being the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union. Discussions ensued about how Germany would be rebuilt in the post-war era. At the Potsdam meeting in July 1945, the Allied powers agreed

their forces should construct Germany (Miller 1). With this, the original German administration would be dismantled, and the Soviet zone occupied the eastern third of the nation, the British and American portions divided the Western portion of the nation, and France made a portion out of the Western zones. Inside the Soviet Zone of Occupation, the Allied powers also agreed to divide the German capital of Berlin into sectors among the four powers. This decision to divide Berlin, a city inside the Soviet Occupation Zone, would be the foundation to the Berlin Crisis of 1948, where the case study truly begins.

West Berlin during the 1940's was a significant location for the United States' and democratic interests. While the war was officially over, the tensions and damage inside Berlin in particular were undeniable. As of May 1945, the Berlin population of 4.6 million was down to 2.8 million people. Bomb destruction led to sewer system malfunctions, disease, less housing space, food shortages, and a decreased medical infrastructure (Miller 3). This went on for two months without the presence of Western troops, since the Soviet Union refused their ability to enter. In the chaos of World War II coming to a close, the Allied powers had not formally agreed for Western access into Berlin by surface transportation. By the time that Soviets first entered Berlin, they spread misinformation to the Germans, hoping to convince them that they had solely saved the city from Nazi occupation. The Soviet Secretary General Joseph Stalin had a long-term goal regarding the possibilities of Berlin. By increasing their power in Berlin, they would have authority in the eastern occupation zone and could decrease the British involvement. Finally, they calculated that the United States would only last a few more years before they withdrew their troops (Hanson 42). In this seamless scenario, the Soviets could control not only Berlin but all of Germany.

The Soviet Union did not have intentions to work alongside the United States, however, the same was to be said from the American perspective. Ideally, President Truman would have wanted to reach an agreement with Stalin. These expectations that the United States and the Soviet Union would be able to work together amicably was quickly disproven. Although the original objectives were to maintain a short-term post-war presence in Europe, knowing well that Germany played a major role in stabilizing Europe, the United States needed to change their tactics. And the Soviet Union was not going to let up on their own agenda. Looking for relentless revenge for the harm inflicted by the Germans in World War II, the Soviet Union made it a goal to achieve reparations. The Potsdam agreement made it possible for those in control of their zone to seize reparations. For the Soviet controlled zones, this meant the rape or murder of women in astounding numbers and loss of 2 million industrial jobs (Miller 6). An environment of despair and destruction was fostered in these areas.

The American presence in West Berlin would remain until a Western German government could be established. As the Red Army advanced into Eastern Europe, moving the Russian-Polish border westward, Poland gained almost a quarter of Germany's most fertile land and displaced several million Germans, mostly from the Western zones (Miller 2). The Soviet dictator made the conditions of the German people unbearable. When the Soviets first entered Berlin, they spread misinformation to the Germans, hoping to convince them that they had solely saved the city from Nazi occupation. Stalin failed to realize he would need to convince the hearts and minds of the Germans to achieve his expansionist plans. By mid-1946, Stalin altered his plans from retribution to reconciliation, but the harsh Soviet occupation was irredeemable (Miller 6). This placed the United States in a desirable position to convince Germany that the Western democracy was a future worth fighting towards. Relying on the tendencies of empathy

and kindness over the desire for violence and control, the United States and Great Britain are a stark contrast from the Soviet reign. The destruction of World War II and the Soviet pillage left eastern Germany in economic ruin. There began massive anti-communist protest votes, especially in the Soviet sector of Berlin that reflected the blame for suffering on the Soviets (Miller 8).

Although the United States maintained a popular position among the Germans, the outstanding issue remained: how would American resources reach Berlin? There were predictions that the United States' forces would withdraw from Berlin to other West German cities. West Berlin was not geographically sound and surrounded by more than 380,000 Soviet troops in East Germany. This all shifted once the Soviet blockade began in 1948-1949 (Larson 180). By June 1948, the Soviet Union cut off ground and water access routes to West Berlin. In a moment of crisis, the United States vowed to stay in West Berlin and supply the population by air. Taking upon this large feat, President Truman decided to stay in West Berlin "come what may," relying solely on American airlifts (Larson 181). This was a bold move on the part of President Truman, who did not attempt to use the blockade as an opportunity for the 1948 reelection or appeal to public impressions. He simply stated that they would remain in Berlin until there was a permanent resolution, making no effort to convince his Cabinet advisers that the airlift would work or that it could be a potential for permanent resolution (Miscamble 309). It was at this time that President Truman made a decision solely out of what he believed to be right.

Despite all odds, the Berlin Blockade has now been argued as one of the most successful humanitarian relief projects to date. There are many contributing factors to the American involvement. In a moment that defined Western Europe and Western Germany, the United States under President Truman was determined to defend against the threat of communism. This

conflict demanded Americans to find unconventional ways in defending Berlin, as the traditional means were no match for the Soviet occupation. Throughout this case study, Berlin will be utilized as an example of an effective intervention, understanding why President Truman proceeded with the "strategic liability" (Larson 182). It will also untangle the complexities of the American involvement, which was motivated by the need to save humanity and a hostility towards the communist agenda.

The plan started culmination in the summer of 1948, progressively disrupting transportation and communication between the western zones and Berlin. While the United States and the British questioned Soviet authority to place restrictions on Berlin, there was also no written agreement made at the end of World War II preventing otherwise. Therefore, the Soviet blockade of Berlin officially began on June 24, 1948. Coming from the end of an extremely costly and tiring world war, American commitment to the crisis was not an easy decision. Many scholars believe if it was not for President Truman's undying will to maintain American rights in Berlin, no matter the cost, the Soviet occupation would not have been defeated (Harrington 88). The West acknowledged the severity of starving Berliners to influence German hearts and minds. As resources in Berlin dwindled, the United States decision needed to be made. President Truman took his time, balancing the concerns of both his advisors. He understood that the moral obligation to the German population did not mean the commitment to stay in Berlin as it did for his senior officer General Lucius Clay. On the other hand, there was enough food and fuel in the city to last several weeks and jumping into another war would also weigh on Berlin (Harrington 98). Those like General Clay believed that Berlin was worth another war.

In retrospect, this delay was advantageous to the United States, avoiding war and

Western humiliation. All the while, the Soviets placed pressure on the vulnerable civilians,

promising supplies in exchange for surrender. Around three months after the blockade began,

physicians from the Ministry of Health went to Berlin to examine the food and nutritional

circumstances. They reported back to the authorities, and their findings show the Berliners were

far below a healthy community. Generally speaking, Western Berliners were reliant on the airlift

for all of their necessities (Magee 622). Other than food, the airlift brought raw materials for

industry, fuel, clothing, and medical supplies. It prioritized carrying food for survival, with hopes

of fostering the foundation for successful communities. Through a Combined Airlift Task Force

(CALTF), which was under the United States Air Forces Europe, the coalition supplied Berlin.

Between June 26, 1948 to August 1, 1949, the airlift forces delivered more than 2,223,000 tons

of supplies (Brunhaver 21). All of this was done amid Soviet threats to airlifters. From the

blockade time period, there were 733 incidents involving Soviets and Allied aircrafts (Brunhaver

24).

Nevertheless, the coalition persisted against the Soviet sabotage and attacks. The Army

Transportation Corps were responsible for delivering supplies to the aircraft loading for

offloading in Berlin. Typically, under a twelve-man team, the plane would be off-loaded in six to

10 minutes (Brunhaver 25). As the air lifts circulated and established a rhythm of delivery, the

Allies, and particularly the United States, proved a peaceful resolution of conflict. This was

achieved through the use of nonlethal airpower. General Hoyt S. Vanderberg, the Chief of Staff

of the Air Force, explained it as, "the Berlin Airlift has provided the United States Air Force an

opportunity to demonstrate to the American people, whose instrument it is, and the world at

large, what it can do and what it will continue to do to the best of its ability to make air power a

true force for peace" (Brunhaver 27). The lives of Berliners, United States servicemen, the future of Germany, and the fight against the Soviet Union made President Truman remain until the job was complete. This strong adherence to the humanitarian mission, as well as a political mission, points to the United States' capability of saving thousands of lives. Despite the odds against them, President Truman and the other Allied powers came out victorious in a mission destined to fail.

There is more to be said regarding the odds against the United States to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Berlin. Through the lens of a foreign policymaker, a country should intervene in a conflict if the state has sufficient power to achieve an objective at a reasonable cost. For instance, the international political theory of realism makes the distinction between "what is desirable and what is possible" (Larson 183). From a classical realist perspective, the desire for the West to intervene in the Berlin Blockade is puzzling, as Berlin's location was vulnerable and had narrow avenues for defense. The failure of one's country to gauge whether it can achieve an objective at a reasonable cost could entail policy inconsistencies. By the time the Soviet Union created the blockade, the only feasible method to bring supplies to the inhabitants was by air. Reflecting upon the Soviet Union's failure to supply Leningrad by air during World War II, Allied military officials believed that the airlift would only be possible for a few months (Larson 183). Distinctly, this was not the case. The United States' achievement in Berlin did not follow traditional realist theory in their decision-making.

According to a psychological theory that indicates professionals like pilots, physicians, radiologists, or business executives often make decisions based on their intuitive judgment instead of analysis. By intuitive judgment, it is meant these individuals tend to decide according to what "feels right" (Larson 184). In these circumstances, where a situation can become

increasingly uncertain, individuals rely on their intuition to guide them to the best resolution. It is apparent that President Truman and the airlift pilots relied on some level to their intuition in the Berlin Blockade. This connects to the research found earlier on humanity's tendencies. When we rely on our intuition in complex circumstances, there are certain qualities that humans trust. The ability to decide what "feels right" is fostered at an early age, as discussed in the previous sections. Conducting moral evaluations makes humanity distinct in our ability to "paint" moral qualities on behavior. Since the human mind cannot observe the moral value of individuals, this skill has assisted in increasing our own awareness. Beginning at birth, it is necessary to work through what is right or wrong. What defines right and wrong depends upon the individual's environment and peers: what they do and how they speak (Boyer 17). For an American leader, their views of what is "right" and "wrong" would differ from a leader that was raised in Russia. The difficult decisions made around the airlift speaks to some level of our intuitive judgment.

Relating to the study on social empathy, President Truman, and the other Allied power leadership, had to look at the "bigger picture" at hand. In a time of re-election, where President Truman could have turned to violence for a quick end to the conflict, he instead found an unpopular path to empathy. As examined previously, individuals have just as much capability for violence as they do for empathy. In the example of the looting that took place post-Hurricane Katrina, Segal uses social empathy to take a deeper look into societal structures, hoping to shift social conditions to build a better world (Segal 2). The Berlin Blockade requires the application of social empathy because one must go further than focusing on how the mission is bound to fail given the lack of resources and demanding conditions for the inhabitants. Outside of the intrinsic desire to help those who were malnourished and isolated in Berlin, it requires an individual to face the greater contextual features of the crisis. For President Truman, this meant understanding

that the Berlin Blockade would determine the political fate of the West and the world, despite all the odds against him.

Furthermore, the West's refusal to use violence based on their intuition speaks to the earlier sections on individual tendencies. Reiterating the quote by Primatologist Frans de Waal, he explains that we are a bipolar species, capable of "cooperation, teamwork, love, friendship, empathy, kindness, forgiveness, compromise, and reconciliation" as well as "competition, factionalism, hostility, sadism, cruelty, intransigence, and domination" (Raine 1530). In the case of the Berlin Blockade, the United States chose empathy and teamwork over cruelty and hostility. From the time when individuals formed tribes and eventually societies, protecting status within the group could be demonstrated by exerting violence. For the majority of their evolutionary history, violence was present among the small groups of humanity. One's status was particularly important in terms of survival (Liddle 27). Defining the in-group as those who were against communism, the United States defied these historically effective tribal instincts. Between the pressures of advisors who wished for violence to resolve the conflict, such as senior officer General Lucius Clay, President Truman stayed consistent with the mission of the peaceful airlift.

Altogether, the case in Berlin is one where the United States displayed its power, authority, and strategy on the global stage. President Truman, among others, understood the necessity for those supporting democracy to conquer communism. Coming from the end of a grueling world war, the consequences of a broken Germany led the United States to avoid waiting along the sidelines. This connects to Peter Singer's moral circle, where the perceived shared fate of a community alters who we wish to include within the in-group (Norenzayan 72). For example, he

related children who attended schools with mixed races were more likely to ignore race as a divisive factor. Children who attended racially homogenous schools were increasingly hesitant (Bloom 119). Exposure to an "other" is essential by the adolescence stage, but the same applies to the United States. Since Germany and the United States would be impacted by the threat of the Soviet Union, the American intervention was of heightened importance.

Stalin made it a Soviet goal to force Germany to pay for the horrors their army had brought upon the Soviet Union. While Stalin hoped to implement two Germanys, he lost the support of his own people. Experiencing the harsh conditions of the Berlin Blockade, the German people wanted a group to side with, an ideology to believe in such dark times. The in-group for the United States, centered around the values of democracy and freedom from a Stalin-dominated world, created a cause worthy of intervention and a prospect of hope. By making a clear outgroup, those in support of communism, the United States could gather their resources and troops against a common enemy, all while recruiting Berliners to support the cause. Additionally, race plays a large role in defining the out-group. Just as Bloom's findings show, racially homogenous schools made race a more divisive factor for children. The primarily euro-centric and white representation of Berliners could have influenced why the United States wanted to help. Who they can identify as a victim is one issue, but another issue is who they can relate to. The following two cases, Rwanda and Syria, will have victims that do not represent a primarily eurocentric and white race. Along with many other factors, the weight of differing races appears to make the United States more hesitant to intervene.

The Berlin Blockade was not limited to political gain. The intervention took place through cooperation and empathy. There was much more to be decided by the blockade than the fate of Germany. The United States had eyes and ears at the site of the conflict, from their own troops to

the health professionals they sent. They were continually informed on the situation and could

adapt their tactics as needed. In the following case study, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda will be

utilized as a direct contrast to the Berlin Blockade. Without a particular geo-political interest in

Rwanda, the United States remained largely uninvolved in preventing the genocide. As we are

able to study the genocide in retrospect, the background of the conflict, what the United States

did, and what they *should* have done, will be outlined.

Rwanda

Recognized as one of the "greatest human rights disasters of our time," the Rwandan genocide

killed between 800,000 to 1 million people, the majority which were overwhelmingly from the

Tutsi ethnic group (Burkhalter 44). Though there were many contributors to the genocide, it is

commonly believed that the Clinton Administration takes the leading responsibility in permitting

the genocide's escalation. Rwanda, one of the world's poorest countries, finds itself working to

develop national and local government institutions, maintain security, and promote

reconciliation. According to the U.S. Embassy in Rwanda, the United States is now committed

"to work with our Rwandan and international friends to help Rwanda meet the needs of its

population, including increased social cohesion in a peaceful, democratic and inclusive

Rwanda…" (*U.S. Embassy in Rwanda*). While these are the written statements of today, what

was the American role in the escalation of the genocide in the mid 1990s? The statistics of the

lives lost is difficult to fathom. As the international system stood by, the Rwandan genocide

progressed to unimaginable levels. Before comprehending how the crisis in Rwanda accelerated

in the manner it did, it is crucial to provide context on what contributed to the ethnic division in

the country.

The genocide had its root causes in the "Hutu Republic' ideology. From its peak in April until June 1994, this ideology exhibited how it was founded on the hatred of the "other," which is the Tutsi (Kimonyo 2). To fully grasp this historic genocide, background will be provided for the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa groups. This will aid in explaining the measures taken by the international community, specifically the United States. Acknowledging these three groups will also substantiate the argument the United States' held the primary responsibility for the genocide's severity. This case study focuses on one of the detrimental genocides in human history and the manner that the United States responded. Themes surrounding the appeal to characterize an "other" and the ties to one's religion are evident in the American response to Rwanda.

On the surface, there was not much difference between the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. The three ethnic groups shared the same language, religious beliefs, and coexisted within the same territory (Kimonyo 9). The first inhabitants of Rwanda were the Twa, followed by the Hutu, largely from Chad and Cameroon, and finally the Tutsi, who arrived from Ethiopia in the 13th and 15th centuries. At this time, the Tutsi used force to conquer and enslave the Hutu majority and the Twa minority. When the colonial influence arrived from Belgium in the 20th century, this support was extended by the colonialists. They viewed the Tutsis as the superior race and created a hierarchy for the roles of the Hutu and Twa. The Hutu were valued as servants to the Tutsi, and the Twa as less than human. By 1919, the League of Nations granted Belgium authority over Rwanda and the Tutsi elite were granted the luxuries of the Europeans, such as advancing in their education (Kimonyo 20). With this history in mind, it is clear why tensions between the ethnic groups grew harshly by the 1990s. There were conflicts among the three groups that had not been resolved, coupled with newfound frictions.

The 20th century deepened the division among the three ethnic groups. After the 1959

rebellion, the Hutu population received reassurance in their ability to take back power. During

this time, an exodus occurred where nearly half of the Tutsi population left to nearby states

(Kuperman 95). Even with the Tutsi population leaving, the unrest continued in Rwanda. In the

years following the Hutu rebellion, there was a struggle between the Tutsi and the Hutus to

maintain power. It was found that when Tutsi refugees invaded Rwanda, the ruling Hutu would

respond by massacring the domestic Tutsi. Starting in 1973, a northwestern Tutsi officer, Juvénal

Habyarimana, led a coup that made Northwestern Hutu dominant in Rwanda's political, military,

and economic life (Kuperman 95). There was a slight period of rest, where the Tutsi were not

attacked on a large-scale. However, there were compounding factors that made living conditions

unbearable in Rwanda by the 1980s. Triggers like land shortage, soil erosion, devaluation of

currency, and a sustained population growth made food insecurity and famine common. In result,

violence and murders began to rise (Kimonyo 356).

These ethnic tensions can be explained through the tribal to chiefdom transition. Kinship

empowers the need for hierarchy or a central authority that dictates the community, and

Rwandans found kinship in three varying ethnic groups. In terms of societal progression, the

three ethnic groups portray tribal characteristics. For these three groups, there is an underlying

ambition for a chiefdom that encompasses the larger, denser, diverse populations, ruling over the

larger set of villages (Rondfeldt 44). And in Rwanda, each ethnic group believed that they had

the capability to rule and would do whatever it required to earn the position as the central power.

When achieved effectively, the chiefdom stage increases stability, resisting the division of tribes

and can develop the state and military.

At the core of the Hutu and Tutsi conflict was the battle to achieve dominant political influence over the other. However, the tribal inclinations never fully leave the structural framework, even when there is an aim for a central power among divisions. In fact, when societal progression fails, like in the case of Rwanda, there is a reversion to tribal tendencies. The tribal need for "egalitarianism, mutual caring, sharing, reciprocity, collective responsibility, group solidarity, family, community, civility, and democracy" becomes limited to the individual tribes, rather than encompassing the entire chiefdom (Rondfeldt 56). In other words, the failure to find one agreeable, central power increases dependence on one's own ethnic group. This transition from the tribe to chiefdom explains why the unresolved divisions between the three ethnic groups became even more problematic by the 1990s.

As of October 1990, the relatively constant period in Rwanda was overturned. A rebel force of Uganda-based Tutsi refugees, named the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPA), invaded Rwanda. In 1993, the rebels made headway against the Hutu-dominated Rwandan Armed Forces, and President Habyarimana agreed to share power in August (Kuperman 95). This concession was recorded in the August 1993 Arusha Accords, which ended the three-year civil war between the Hutu government and the Tutsi opposition Rwandan Patriotic Front. By this time, the peacekeepers for the group assigned by the United Nations, titled the U.N. Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), arrived. Nevertheless, the damage was already done. For months, the Rwandan president tried to modify the power-sharing provisions, and the Hutu viewed this as a surrender to the Tutsi. The Hutu political power began to slip away, and there were plans to leave the peaceful process and turn to exterminating political opponents. For instance, a moderate Hutu cabinet minister, Emmanuel Gatabazi, was murdered by government soldiers on February 12, 1994. If one was not fully in favor of the Hutu under Habyarimana's government, they were

subject to execution. All of this considered, the official date of the genocide began on April 6, 1994, the date that the President Habyarimana was killed in a plane crash. The plane crash ignited the first phase of the killings (Burkhalter 44).

In these beginning stages of the genocide, the United States intervention strategy was largely nonexistent. By the fifth and final phase of the genocide, the Clinton administration was active in deploying soldiers and visiting refugee camps. What was their reasoning to the late response, especially with the increasing warning signs? For the United States, and others in the international community, there were indications that would arguably be undeniable to turn a blind eye towards. Although the Arusha Accords established a peaceful commitment to power sharing and political reform among the ethnic groups, there were few that wished to adhere to its pledge. Those under President Habyarimana watched their power slip away, and they quickly made plans to execute political opponents (Burkhalter 44). Under the direction of the extremist Hutu political parties, they formed militia groups while publicly condemning Rwandan Tutsi and moderate Hutu political figures on the official government radio station. The Hutu radio station Radio T´el´evision Libre Milles Collines coordinated the killing, with broadcasted that spoke, "You have missed some of the enemies [in such and such a place]," it told its listeners, "Some are still alive. You must go back there and finish them off . . . The graves are not yet quite full. Who is going to do the good work and help us fill them completely?" (Holzgrefe 16). This was one of many initial warning signs that left the United States and the international community unmoved.

Once the plane had crashed, Belgium decided to withdraw their troops from Rwanda. Violence immediately proceeded, and a United States department official reacted with, "How can we get in, if it is so bad the Belgians have to leave?" (Burkhalter 46). At this stage of the

genocide, President Clinton's rhetoric downplayed the severity of the killings on both sides. He never classified the situation in Rwanda as a calculated genocide, but a consequence of the civil war or a form of tribal slaughter. And President Clinton was not alone in this judgment. In the United States State Department, David Rawson, who represented Rwanda, reiterated the level of severity necessary to classify a conflict as a "genocide" (Burkhalter 47). Rawson explained that if the United States were to declare any and every issue to be a "genocide," it would decrease the significance of the classification. Without labeling the Rwandan conflict as a genocide, there was no real urgency to aid the state. Throughout the following weeks, the United States supported withdrawing their troops at the United Nations Security Council meetings. This left the Tutsi able to finish their agenda with minimal repercussions. Considering the United States reluctance to commit to the other human rights disasters, including the ongoing conflict in Bosnia and the unfortunate experience in Somalia, the thought of growing their presence was even more disagreeable.

With this history in mind, the United States had few interests, outside of the intrinsic value of human life in Rwanda, to intervene. Rwanda geopolitically does not have the same significance as a location like Berlin. On top of the general disapproval from the Pentagon, the Clinton administration had just passed a policy that made rigid standards for the United States support in future peacekeeping operations. In the middle of the Rwandan crisis, passed formally on May 5, 1994, the policy titled Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25) would permit United States participation if it had advanced American interests at an acceptable risk. Further, it must be a threat to international peace and security, and an adequate exit strategy would be proposed (Burkhardt 48). Unfortunately for those suffering in Rwanda, the PDD 25 would serve as an excuse to prevent American military presence. With this policy and the previous intervention

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history, there was a vote to decide whether the UNAMIR should remain in Rwanda. The United Nations vote on April 21, 1994 to reduce the UNAMIR presence signaled the third phase of the crisis.

Assessing the genocide in retrospect, the Clinton administration made decisions that deserve critical evaluation. One solution the United States could have made was to stop the Rwandan radio broadcast that contributed towards the terror and killings from April to June. Instead, the United States defaulted to the French aid. According to Burkhardt, the Rwandan crisis was treated as a "peacekeeping headache to be avoided" rather than "a human rights disaster requiring urgent response" (Burkhardt 53). Therefore, these scholars would agree that some violence, or intimidation, is necessary to regain control. As discussed previously, violence is the evolutionary response for protection against periods of instability. The rewards for aggression can be vast, increasing power, resources, offspring, and social hierarchy (Raine 1540). In this case, the United States might have used violence to the benefit of the vulnerable Rwandan people.

On the other side, there are scholars who disagree with the United States implementing violence to end the conflict. Considering the lack of information that the United States had about the genocide, these scholars believe there was not room to make a proper judgement. In fact, it is argued that the United States did not have the adequate intel to decipher the gravity of the genocide until its final stages. A few years later, Philip Gourevitch recounts the genocide in *The New Yorker*, to which President Clinton expressed shock. President Clinton writes in the margins "Is what he's saying true?" and "How did this happen?" By 1998, President Clinton delivers a "Clinton apology" to which he states that the United States and the world community should have done more to "limit what had occurred" in Rwanda (Power 2019). Alan Kuperman agrees

that the United States is disproportionality blamed for the genocide. The overwhelming consensus from the genocide was that the United States "can and should do more when the next genocide occurs, there has been little hard thinking about just what that would entail or accomplish" (Kuperman 94). He acknowledges that any intervention of any size would have saved some lives, but the idea that the United States troops could have saved even half the total victims is simply idealistic.

Furthermore, there are speculations regarding the delayed news President Clinton received about the genocide. Accounting for the various media interpretations of the conflict, it was ultimately not declared as a nationwide genocide until April 20, 1994. Beforehand, the violence was depicted as a two-sided civil war in the media, which the Clinton administration echoed. Additionally, the violence was reported to be decreasing when it was in fact accelerating. The *New York Times* cited on April 11 that "the fighting has diminished in intensity," whereas the Paris Radio France International reported, "the fighting has died down somewhat, one could say that it has all but stopped" (Kuperman 102). Finally, there was no verifiable human rights groups or observers that made note of the genocide until the end of its second week. Similar to the circumstances in the Berlin Blockade, Rwanda is a landlocked country, which would have required that all forces be airlifted. Realistically, it would have taken 33 days to airlift the entire force (Kuperman 107). Bearing in mind each of these factors, it becomes apparent why the United States may have not responded in the manner that the international community expected or favored.

Intervention comes with unintended consequences. Particularly, when the United States offers humanitarian military intervention, there is the possibility that only the weaker side of the conflict will be assisted. This could lead to both the parties rejecting compromise and continuing

the fight because they anticipate foreign aid. Was there a way that the United States could have avoided military intervention, and can this relate to our human tendencies? In Rwanda, there were clearly two distinct sides: the Hutu and the Tutsi, who became unwilling to set aside their differences. Maintaining a moderate position in either group would put you and your families' livelihood at risk. Even so, it was shown that the Hutu and Tutsi did agree on at least one matter – their religion. Ultimately both groups practiced forms of Christianity. Relating to the earlier sections in the power of religion, this societal institution helps individuals measure one's reputation and establish standards of morality. Prosocial religions, those with Big Gods who watch and intervene, contribute to the rise of cooperation in large groups of strangers (Norenzayan 5). Believing and belonging to a cultural community influences people to come together as a cohesive whole for a greater cause. If the resolution from the West could have incorporated the Hutu and Tutsi to find common ground in their religious beliefs rather than expand their differences, there may have been an earlier end or total prevention of the genocide.

Another key feature of human nature that these events illustrate is the in-group versus outgroup distinction. The circumstances in Rwanda was a case where the various ethnic groups felt threatened by the "other." There are certain ways that humans define their in-group and outgroup. Evolutionarily, strangers ignite fear, anger, and distrust. These feelings serve a protective purpose, suggesting the innate desire for cultural identification. This is evident in many facets of society, specifically through the actions of the newborn. We tend to be more comfortable with the familiar, and it has increased our chance of survival throughout much of our evolutionary history. By gravitating towards the familiar, one is preventing themselves from unnecessary risks. The division between the Hutu, Tutsi, as well as the Twa, keeps a sense of identity and protection in belonging to one group over another. With the United States as a

widely religious nation themselves, they would understand the ways in which religion could be used as an intervention policy. They were also aware of the tensions that divide one in-group from the outgroup.

It is compelling to compare one of the United States greatest intervention successes, the Berlin Blockade, with arguably its greatest failure, the intervention in Rwanda. Their comparison informs how the United States makes foreign policy decisions. In the Berlin Blockade, there was a great deal at stake for American interests. With a vested involvement in the global mission to prevent the spread of communism, the United States had to act quickly and purposefully in Berlin. Coming from the end of World War II, there was a need to avoid any chance of enduring another war. Meanwhile, the living conditions in Berlin were far from satisfactory. They had the mission to save the world from communism, as well as the moral obligation to those suffering in Berlin. The Rwandan conflict, although it was similarly landlocked, was approached in a much different manner. As Kuperman (2000) describes, Western policymakers were unable to foresee the genocide, even with the warning signs, because the act was too immoral to even consider (117). Yet, it may be that the United States was too removed from the situation to understand how the ethnic divide would inevitably lead to violence. The news sourcing to the administration and the general public was far less covered than Berlin, even in an era with increasingly advanced technology.

The ignorance of the administration or the general American public should not discount the major foreign policy failure by the Clinton administration. When two opposing sides begin to conflict, it is not unlikely that an avenue for violence will ensue. Had there been a mediating force between the two sides, the situation in the 1990s may have never intensified to this extent. Rwanda speaks to who and what causes an administration feels empathy for because there was

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not the same urgency or desire to intervene as there was in Berlin. By largely avoiding

intervention until the most critical period of the genocide, the United States made a message to

the world of which matters they care about. Even if the American foreign policy makers were not

fully informed, history tells us "it would be naïve to believe that these closely interrelated dark

sides of people can easily disappear" (Üngor 204). Mass violence is not a random occurrence, it

is a socially constructed event. When a group of individuals can channel their biological

tendencies towards destruction, the violence becomes collective. Here is a time where two ethnic

groups were left to their own devices for the struggle of national power. Without any checks on

their destruction, the results are clear in the causality statistics. It is challenging to excuse the

failure of American intervention because mass violence is not an untold story. The individual

yearning to come together and coexist among groups has been advantageous to humanity but also

has the dark outlet to devastation.

    Similar to what Margaret Mead noted, and the Rwandan genocide proves, the appeals of

kinship and belonging come with a cost. The social construction of "us" versus "them" prevented

any sort of agreement for cooperation or harmony. Transitioning from the tribe, in this case, the

Hutu or Tutsi, to a shared, modern society is a gradual process. Every new advancement towards

collective organization offered an answer to the core problem that society was bound to face.

Self-interest can still be achieved through cooperation. There is also the fear for survival among

the tribes. Relating to Liddle's explanation of parasite prevalence, this theory articulates the

reduced possibility for cooperation between groups. We have evolved to detect local parasites

and avoid infection, since they have brought adaptive problems. Within the parasite stress model,

the psychological devices that assess parasite prevalence encourage behavior that manage the

risk of exposure (Thornhill, Fincher, Murray & Schaller, 2010). The ingroup becomes the inner

circle, and values like collectivism, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia are embraced. This lack of cooperation lends itself to a world where individuals suffer poverty, inequality, and violence for competing resources. The tribal conflict in Rwanda becomes an example of the parasite model, where the Hutu and Tutsi groups were unable to cooperate, viewing each other as parasites to their in-groups.

The parasite-stress model also applies between intrastate conflict, that being between the United States and Rwanda. In the example from the Letendre et al. study, the parasite-stress model can demonstrate the manner in which a global infectious disease leads to xenophobic and ethnocentric cultural norms, as the in-group tries to protect themselves against the potential harm of the out-group. They argue that this can happen between states, by intrastate conflict, as well as within the state which is interstate conflict. Interstate conflict occurs when the out-group, generally those who suffer great poverty, are left with mortality and deprivation from the disease. Resource competition ensues, and the nation has an increased chance for civil war (Letendre et al. 669). Although the case in Rwanda is not a matter of disease, it proves how the intrastate conflict occurs as the in-group demotes the out-group, leaving them with little support and abandoned in isolation. Unlike the victims in Berlin, who represented a euro-centric base, the victims in Rwanda represent an entirely different racial and ethnic background. It could be argued that American intervention is easier to decide when the racial and ethnic background of the state and victims related. Thus, parasite prevalence is an evolutionary trait that understands how we protect ourselves and the ways this develops division.

If real intervention took place in these early stages of violence formation, Rwanda would not be rebuilding a new, hypocritical history that preaches peaceful coexistence. This multifaceted transition is not simple, where ex-prisoners are now expected to develop the country that was

taken away from them (Üngor 207). Reflecting upon the parasite model and other theories

regarding the in-group versus out-group distinction, the United States should have deescalated

tensions between the victors and the former prisoners. Instead, they chose to utilize excuses of

"American exceptionalism." In a quote by President Clinton to Rwanda, he states, "It may seem

strange to you here, especially the many of you who lost members of your family, but all over the

world there were people like me sitting in offices, day after day after day, who did not fully

appreciate the depth and the speed with which you were being engulfed by this unimaginable

terror." (Power 2019). This removes the sole responsibility from the United States, as there were

other people like himself "sitting in offices." Shown by the prolonged and necessary American

assistance in the 21st century, the path for reform in Rwanda faces many obstacles ahead. Almost

three decades after the genocide, Rwanda continues to balance the interests of the three ethnic

groups and the need for solidarity.

As of today, the United States still donates money and infrastructure to Rwanda after the

devastating genocide. Under the United States Agency for International Development (USAID),

created in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy to promote American generosity and humanitarian

efforts, maintains aid to Rwanda into the 21st century (*U.S. Agency for International

Development).* Early on, USAID had established a program for Rwanda. It was in the 1970s

through the 1980s that Rwanda's aid shifted from agriculture to education, expanding family

planning and addressing economic issues. At this time, USAID spent approximately $7 million

each year to support Rwanda. In the 1990s, the expansion of programs in economic development,

agriculture, and health also included democracy, humanitarian, and governance assistance. When

the genocide peaked in April of 1994, the donations halted, but were reassessed several months

later to provide emergency humanitarian aid. What is significant about Rwanda is their

involvement with the American agenda far beyond the mid-1990's genocide. It was evident that the United States had assisted the country long before its conflicts climaxed. Although it is argued that the United States failed the country in its most dire time of need, the aid improved largely after the mid 1990s for recovery purposes.

From 1998 onwards, USAID/Rwanda moved to a "transitional phase of assistance." This period, which is categorized from late 1994 to 1999, totaled $61 million of United States aid. At the turn of the century, USAID assistance from 2000 to 2003 averaged $34.7 million annually, building and reconstructing Rwandan infrastructure. The allocations have significantly risen over the last two decades, coming from $48 million in aid in 2004 to over $128 million in 2016 (*U.S. Agency for International Development*). These numbers speak to the American commitment to recover the destruction that came from one of mankind's deadliest genocides. And its assistance cannot go unnoticed. As Rwanda's largest bilateral donor, the United States has decreased the infant mortality rates, improved primary school enrollment, and reduced the poverty rates led by agriculture. Even though the Clinton administration did not act upon the crisis in a timely manner, these numbers show there was still work being done before and after the genocide to ensure stability in Rwandan. The aid is largely reflective of a diplomatic strategy, rather than solely military aid. As described in earlier sections, the benefit to foreign aid is that it is the more "peaceful" way to respond to issues of political stability around the world (Guess 18). For the United States, preferring the foreign aid moving forward is a selective choice.

While sentiment surrounding the Rwandan conflict varies significantly among scholars, it is a case that will be analyzed closely for decades to come. Accounting for the hundreds of thousands of lives lost, it is worth remembering and to deliberate future prevention strategies. In the present day, there are enduring international conflicts that are applicable to Rwandan history. For

instance, the final case study, the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, has growing concerns that have

not subsided. Beginning in 2011, the ongoing Syrian civil war has displaced millions from their

homes and killed hundreds of thousands of civilians (Gross 2017). Debated as one of the worst

humanitarian crises in history, the manner in which the United States has responded is telling of

their modern intervention strategies. Although it is not classified as a genocide, the issues in

Syria are estimated to take decades to resolve, leaving 12 million Syrians displaced from their

homes and hundreds of thousands killed (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

2020). This final case study shows the possibilities for future American intervention in an age of

heightened technology and great power rhetoric.

Syria

The United States response to the Syrian refugee crisis has been "very mixed and variable

throughout the years, as the casualty numbers kept rising steadily" (Gross 2017). Since 2011,

more than 6.6 million Syrians were forced to leave the country, while another 6.7 million were

driven from their homes but remain within the country's borders (UNCHR 20 June 2020).

Among the administrations that have handled the crisis, first being President Obama, then

President Trump, and presently President Biden, finding a strategy that balances American

interests in Syria with the necessary resources has proven difficult. After the unrest in the Arab

Spring of 2011, the pro-democracy revolt had the support from the West. Later termed as the

Arab Spring, Syria was one of many countries in the region who witnessed unrest, including

Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Algeria, Yemen, Jordan, Bahrain, and Libya. Syria particularly

stood out as a serious situation in the region once President Assad's forces used chemical

weapons on their own civilians in a suburb of Damascus. Excited by the opportunity to assert

their influence in the Middle East, President Vladimir Putin of Russia sent military support for

Assad, which turned the war in its favor.

When this attack occurred, the United States, and the international community at large, had a duty to intervene. Adhering to United Nations 2005 Responsibility to Protect doctrine, the great powers agreed to protect against, "genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity." More than this, the great powers agreed to assist one another in moments of concern, fulfilling a collective responsibility of protection (Bellamy 2020). Whether it was a combination of insensitivity regarding news about the Middle East or the last three major interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya resulting in unintended consequences and collateral damage, the United States and others in the West did not commit to the doctrine. At this time, the former United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron and President Obama avoided intervention. Rather, Russia's President Putin sent military support for President Assad. Only a few years later, the Syrian humanitarian crisis would be a real test of their duties, escalating to historical levels of casualties and refugee migration.

By March 2011, the protests demanding the resignation of Syria's Ba'ath government intensified. Soon enough, the Syrian crisis reached neighboring countries, like Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, which placed the entire region in danger (Jafarova 2014). The expansive effects of the decision to avoid intervention are clear almost a decade later, as Syria is no longer a country for safety and habituality. Syrians have no choice but to leave or suffer under the conditions of the Ba'ath government. In Turkey alone, 3.5 million Syrian refugees reside (UNCHR 20 June 2020). The potential for radicalized youth and terrorism among the Islamic State increased, but the United States had to weigh its interests with a potential long-term war. While it was always a goal for the United States' policy to remove President Assad from power, regarding him as a war criminal and an obstacle to negotiating settlement, the plans of execution were ambiguous. It was

not until the viral image of the three-year-old Syrian refugee Alan Kurdi, who was washed upon the Turkish shoreline, that President Obama had a real response to the human rights offenses.

The photo, which was published on September 3, 2015, created the first large response from the United States on the unacceptable harm taking place. Attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Turkey with his family, the only surviving member was his father. Kurdi's conditions represent one of many children suffering in this predicament. It is important to note why Kurdi and other Syrian refugees are meant to be protected. This has to do with classifications. A distinction must be made between who can be classified as a refugee versus a migrant. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees explains the term migrant as "someone who changes his or her country of usual residence, "while the term refugee is "someone who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group…unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country" (Stepanova et al. 298). Under this definition adopted at the Geneva Convention in 1951, Kurdi and other Syrian refugees are protected by neighboring states for entry. Certain powers upheld this obligation, others dismissed their responsibility to accept the Syrian refugees. With these conflicting views, a select group of states, like Turkey, carried the brunt of the refugee influx.

President Obama was aware of this, and made a statement that, "preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States" (Slovic 642). However, the relationship between the United States and Russia, the costly military loss, and an aggressive intervention that may lead to domestic terrorist attacks by the Islamic State remained on the mind of Western leadership. In reality, President Obama had taken some level of responsibility in the conflict and made calls to action amongst the

international community, stating, "Russia's intervention and airstrikes have reinforced the Assad regime and made a humanitarian catastrophe even worse. And the entire world has been horrified by images of starving Syrians – including children – reduced to near skeletons." According to President Obama, the migrant and refugee crisis would only be resolved once Syria stabilizes (Liptak 2015). With this sense of urgency, President Obama pledged it would accept at least 10,000 Syrian refugees in the year following 2015, making a direct change from its earlier policy stance. The United States stressed the distinctive and difficult fight ahead in Syria. Syria is not just in a civil war; it contains a multitude of concerns that the Obama Administration and succeeding administrations are forced to process. Therefore, the situation had to be advanced with care, and President Obama believed they should try to end the conflict with "diplomacy" (Obama 26 Feb. 2016).

In September 2016, the refugee crisis intensified, and President Obama hosted a Leader Summit on Refugees. At the summit, President Obama argued that this crisis, specifically in Syria, would require "a test of our international system where all nations ought to share in our collective responsibilities, because the vast majority of refugees are hosted by just 10 countries…" (Obama 20 Sept. 2016). As the speech continued, President Obama made calls to empathy, hoping to break the barriers of defining an "other." He argues, "this crisis is a test of our common humanity – whether we give in to suspicion and fear and build walls, or whether we see ourselves in another" (Obama 20 Sept. 2016). The idea of empathy links to President Obama's call for understanding ourselves in another. Connecting to Segal, the motivation for the United States' intervention in Syria would be driven through maintaining social empathy. As Segal wrote, social empathy is empathy that has the ability to read and comprehend the feelings and actions of others with an understanding of their history. Even if many in the United States

may not experience the conditions that Syrian refugees have endured, President Obama urges his people, and the international community, to see them as a part of our common humanity. In order to do so, he makes a call for the American people to apply social empathy to the Syrians.

As the transition of power occurred in the United States, the Obama administration's strategy persisted in some respects, and was abandoned in others. President Obama made calls to address the crisis in his rhetoric, but many policymakers are critical of the overall lack of transparency in the agenda. Particularly, President Obama was more concerned with destroying the ISIS caliphate than the actual removal of President Assad. In his last two years of his final term, the Obama administration moved away from the civil war itself, which involved training and arming local actors to work against the Assad regime, to a counterterrorism strategy that would destroy ISIS (Barron 2). Similarly, under President Trump, the demands for President Assad's exit were left to speech instead of action. As of early 2018, the break from Obama's policy would be the Trump administration's suggestion to maintain a military presence in Syria. Unlike President Obama, President Trump believed that it was significant to not withdraw at this time. Still, the intentions of occupation were conceived to be reducing the Iranian influence in Syria instead of forcing President Assad's removal (Barron 3). From the outset, the Trump administration was presumed to continue a presence in the region even after the caliphate's destruction. This all began to turn in December 2018.

It was the end of 2018 when President Trump made a surprise order to withdraw all United States troops from Syria, following a phone call with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The consequences of this turn will continue to be evident in the coming years. At the time, 2,000 United States Special Forces held together the coalition of 60,000 Syrian fighters, known as the Syrian Democratic Forces (McGurk 69). In 2019, President Trump

modified the order, leaving 200 United States troops to remain in northeastern Syria and another 200 to remain in al-Tanf, which is an isolated base in the southeast of Syria. Brett McGurk, who had assisted in leading the global response to the rising Islamic State under both administrations, argued the worst thing the United States can do is pretend its withdrawal, whether full or partial, is "merely a tactical move requiring no change in overall objectives" (McGurk 70). Though Syria is an unresolved issue, and the consequences are not fully known, McGurk fears the reduced presence will be irreversible under future administrations. This presents a barrier for the new Biden administration if they hope to change the course of Syrian foreign policy. Without the United States' military in Syria, the ultimate aims for a successful intervention cannot be realized.

It is vital to note what is at stake as the United States pursues the removal of troops from Syria. The military presence in Syria was meant to achieve an interwoven set of goals: the desire to prevent ISIS resurgence, to regulate Iran and Turkey, resolve the humanitarian crisis, and to negotiate a postwar settlement with Russia. Now, with the military removal, the two interests that can be focused on are preventing ISIS from returning and Iran from building a military presence that may attempt to threaten Israel. It was designed from the start to prevent an expensive intervention. Costly, long-term interventions were condemned by the Trump administration. On December 19, 2018, the plan took a surprising shift again. In a declaration via Twitter, President Trump announced, "we have won against ISIS" and that "our boys, our young women, our men - they're coming back, and they're coming back now" (McGurk 72). The abrupt change left United States allies and partners in shock, although the violence in Syria had decreased over the span of 2018. Had the United States preserved their forces on the ground and power over one-

third of the country, they would have attained the position to shape post-war Syria. Most importantly, for American diplomats, this power would have allowed the United

States to prioritize reaching a settlement with the only other great power in Syria: Russia.

Reaching a settlement with Russia would be the peaceful path to resolution to the conflict in Syria. In 2018, the United States was preparing for negotiations with Russia alongside the terms of the Geneva process. The process, which had been in place since 2012, would encourage Russia to cooperate with the United Nations in peace talks regarding Syria. If this process failed, the United States had a second plan to negotiate directly with the Russians and the SDF. This would include the gradual return of state services in Syria, like schools and hospitals, under SDF controlled areas. The United States referred to this plan as "the return of the state, not the return of the regime" (McGurk 74). Furthermore, it would have credited those Syrians who fought alongside the coalition for their continued safety and reduced the risk of insurgency against the SDF and United States troops. The plan, though imperfect, was beginning to advance and appeared to be building successfully. By upending the campaign in Syria, the United States will not be able to prove they are a committed player in Syria (McGurk 80). As the United States leaves the country, the SDF will need a new resource to maintain its presence in northeastern Syria, protecting itself from Iran and Turkey.

Now entering its third United States' presidential transition since the beginning of Syrian conflict, President Biden will be forced to face the 10-year crisis that perpetuates the international system. The new administration presents the opportunity to reevaluate policy in Syria, which currently centers around isolating and sanctioning Syria. These sanctions are only impacting the middle-class, but avoids the Assad-supporting elite, only "prolonging the misery of ordinary Syrians" (Feltman 2021). At a key turning point, the United States has the ability to

change the direction of their previous policies, or completely isolate themselves from the ongoing issues. President Assad has earned a victory only in the climate "in which there is no peace." This victory is fragile, for a quarter of the prewar population has fled Syria, hundreds of thousands have passed, and the economy is in disarray (Hof 2019). President Assad has won his position of power temporarily, but only in terms of total destruction. With all of these considerations, for many Americans, removing themselves from Syria altogether would still be a preferred response.

When President Trump made the notion that "Syria is a faraway place and that countries in Syria's neighborhood should deal with the problems produced," his opinion was not entirely dismissed. In fact, it was welcomed. It advances the question, what responsibility, if any, does the United States have to help the distant other? Especially when situations like Syria, with the incomplete defeat of ISIS, the rise of Iran military presence, and the inevitable acceleration of Islamist terrorism with President Assad in power persist. It is evident that burden sharing among allies will be essential in how the conflict proceeds. Much of this burden will be focused around the American commitment to Syria moving forward (Hof 2019). Money plays an immense role in deciding what the future can look like. As previously discussed, humanitarian concerns to the United States are defined as "driving both short-term assistance in response to crisis and disaster as well as long-term development assistance aimed at reducing poverty, fighting disease and other forms of human suffering…" (Lawson and Morgenstern 4). The main focus is on the shortterm assistance, which works to alleviate immediate human suffering in both natural and human induced crises. With the crisis in Syria reaching a decade and potentially years to come, the United States has to decide whether long-term development assistance is worth the fight in Syria.

As for the Trump administration, the confidence in long-term resources has been denounced.
Another component that this crisis speaks to is who the United States helps and why.

Syrian refugees can be measured as an "other" to the United States, nevertheless, there are

moments throughout the past decade that show real American concern for those outside their

"ingroup." Particularly, the photo of Alan Kurdi during the span of the Obama administration

"turned apathy into action." One singular victim overpowered the rhetoric surrounding the

"ongoing refugee crisis" had failed to catalyze (Thomas 3779). Children have frequently played a

role in social justice and humanitarian campaigns. Typically, the photos contain saddening wide

eyes or a child's bloated belly when appealing to media coverage (Manzo 638). What makes

Kurdi unforgettable is that the United States could understand an identifiable victim. Applying

the "identifiable victim effect," it is widely believed that people are willing to disburse greater

resources to save the lives of identified victims than to save equal numbers of unidentified or

statistical victims (Jenni and Loewenstein 235). While the Syrian refugees had endured alarming

conditions for several years before Kurdi sparked a global, emotional response, it required an

identifiable victim for the United States to speak loudly against the human rights offenses.

There is a new level of unacceptable harm found in Kurdi's predicament. The issue of

unacceptable harm is central to motivate pro-change responses. Johnathan Haidt, a moral

philosopher, claims that harm is one of the five bases of what people consider to be right or

wrong (Smith et al. 694). Humanity could universally agree that Kurdi's circumstances foster

concerns of unacceptable harm. This universal response against harm was compounded by the

age of the victims. It is easy to feel compassion for children in particular, because the

iconography of children expresses key humanitarian values: humanity, neutrality, impartiality,

and solidarity (Manzo 632). Unlike the first two case studies, Berlin and Rwanda, the context of

Syria has brought about a new era of technology and viral imagery. The human rights atrocities

committed against the refugees cannot go unsee from social media and news sources. If the United States' leadership does not speak on the offenses committed, these technological platforms allow for awareness and a call for action.

The circumstances of Kurdi and the thousands of other Syrian refugees that were brought to the attention of global powers agrees with scholars like Charles Beitz, Marshall Cohen, and J.E. Hare who go as far to say that foreign policy is, "intrinsically a domain of moral choice" (McElroy 4). Beitz, Cohen, and Hare's views confront the realist notion that argues all political action is goal-oriented because moral factors have influenced and will continue to influence how the United States intervenes. If the United States removed the moral values that conflicted with their national interests, there would have been no reason to commit to agreements like the United Nations 2005 Responsibility to Protect doctrine. By the United States agreeing to assist in moments of concern, fulfilling a collective responsibility of protection (Bellamy 2020), they are prioritizing the common good over their own. Furthermore, the United States' rhetoric around the Syrian civil war mainly addressed human rights concerns. This proves an inclination to moral choice, although it varied from the administrations. Of course, Syria offers a multitude of other concerns outside of the crimes against humanity committed by its own people. The rise of terrorism and the loss of authority in the Middle East are also main motivations for the United States to remain in the conflict. However, the moral decision to help innocent refugees appears to be a major motivation for supplying the state, and it may remain so until the crisis is controlled.

The appeal to avoid intervention in Syria altogether makes the responsibility to protect increasingly demanding. Unlike the Berlin Blockade and Rwanda, it is unknown whether Syria will remain a long-term or short-term conflict. At its current stage, there has been a steady withdrawal of resources, alongside the isolating and sanctioning of Syria. This has left Syria to

largely rely on other countries, such as Russia and Iran, to place pressure on President Assad's power. Currently, there are calls to develop a framework that will allow the Syrian government to escape its economic and humanitarian crisis. A Carter Center paper released in early January 2021 outlines the United States need to address COVID-19 in Syria, the reconstruction of civilian infrastructure, and a reversible easing of American and European sanctions (Feltman 29 Jan. 2021). The road ahead in Syria is not going to be easy, with President Assad demonstrating no signs of compromise. Yet, this new plan enables cooperation in Syria by a step-by-step proposal. After years of hoping to force President Assad's departure, the United States may have to abandon these efforts in exchange for this new approach. The Biden administration has the chance to make these vital decisions in the upcoming months.

The Berlin Blockade, Rwanda, and Syria: American Interests Explained

Recall Holzgrefe's remark that uttering the phrase 'humanitarian intervention' is "a bit like crying 'fire' in a crowded theatre: it can create a clear and present danger to everyone within earshot" (Holzgrefe 1). This is because these three circumstances offer different moral implications, intervention strategies, and victim populations. Humanitarian intervention does not look the same in various generations and locations. Throughout the decades when these cases occurred, the United States' actions were applauded, criticized, and pushed to "do more." If the goal of intervention is or should be to help those undergoing human rights violations, then these case studies demonstrate what influences play a role in the leader's decision-making process. Among all these reactions, the states that were chosen for intervention likely had strong geopolitical interests of the United States, similar racial ties, a short-term strategy, and an outlet for peaceful intervention. Generally, if a strong geopolitical interest was absent, then the United

States' decision makers had to be able to empathize with victims that they viewed as part of their "in-group." Defining the in-group appeared to be increasingly difficult when racial differences and long-term strategies were present. Specifically, the delayed reaction in Rwanda was a case where the intervention required a long-term stabilization of the country. When the administration could not easily view the victims as a part of their "in-group", the requisite empathy needed was not present.

In the 21st century, it is understood that the United States and the European Union wish to focus on world order and global governance in areas such as human rights, the rule of law, nuclear nonproliferation, rather than the geopolitical question of territory and military power. To involve themselves in unnecessary matter diverts time and resources from these important questions (Mead 2014). For Berlin, there was a heavy geopolitical interest for the United States. At this time, the President Truman wanted to establish and ensure the institutionalization of a postwar international order (Lewkowicz 2018). Its location and political implications for the future of a democratic world made the decision to intervene that much easier. The objectives of the Soviet Union deepened this fight. Combining these geopolitical interests with the background of the Eurocentric victims, the United States could envision Berlin as a part of their in-group. Although the Berlin Blockade was never a simple or short-term feat, it demonstrated the United States' willingness to allocate their resources to accomplish their vision of the new world order. They implemented a mostly peaceful intervention strategy that continues to receive high praise.

When a state or community of individuals did not share the same geopolitical interests as the United States, it was less likely an American intervention strategy would be implemented. For example, Rwanda was not an area of concern for preserving a world order that profits the United

States. Without this concern, there must be a need to feel empathy for its victims. Given the absence of racial and geopolitical concern, having social empathy for Rwandans was not realized until the mid 1990's, long after significant damage had been inflicted. Lacking the connection to the victims, the United States' leadership would not involve themselves and their resources. It will remain one of the largest failures of the United States and the international system. Still, it is meaningful to review to show the factors that contributed to this extent of terror and violence. Under circumstances that would undeniably lead to violence, as two cultural groups fought for power, a mediating force was necessary. Rwanda should serve as a reminder to never allow this extent of loss and harm to escalate, remaining aware of similar warning signs.

The actions of countries like Iran and Russia in Syria show they view the United States' power as a chief obstacle in achieving their revisionist goals. They seek to reverse the "status quo" of the modern world order, and this complicates the American intervention strategy. Hesitant to create uproar between these powers, the United States approach to the crises in Syria is cautious, which is also representative of many other issues in the Middle East. Despite the horrific and known conditions of Syrian refugees and victims, aid to the country has been deficient. The viral victims such as Alan Kurdi make humanitarian crises in the modern world less likely to be overlooked. Even with this exposure, it is difficult to classify the aid under the American strategy to equate to a full humanitarian intervention. Again, this is largely due to the long-term strategy that is currently required of the United States to stabilize the state. With unsuccessful stabilization efforts and the violence coming from Syrian leadership, this state continues to reach equilibrium. Missing the racial ties and a short-term, peaceful strategy, the crisis in Syria is nowhere near resolution. Under the Biden administration, this presents an opportune time to alter to reevaluate the American strategy in Syria.

Overall, these three cases offer insight into how human tendencies can explain the American decision-making process in humanitarian crises. Analyzing the past and present cases, it is distinct that the manner the United States' forms their "in-group" reinforces who and how they are willing to protect foreign victims. Compounded with their established interests in the international system, the leadership's predispositions play a role in creating tactics. Although these three cases cannot speak on behalf of the American interests entirely, they shed light on the manner the United States approached humanitarian concerns since the end of World War II. They reveal the advantages of acknowledging human tendencies to know why powerful states, like the United States, decide to intervene. The United States holding global authority means that their aid to other states will be held to a high standard. Moving forward, the questions of whether or not the United States should intervene on geopolitical goals or purely on moral grounds can further be explored. Becoming aware of human nature's influence on American intervention strategies has the power to shape this discussion for the decades to come.

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