

American Humanitarian Intervention: Toward a Theory of Coevolution

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The goal of this study is twofold. First, it seeks to move beyond the exploration of motivations for understanding why the United States launches some humanitarian interventions and avoids others. Second, it initiates a theory building process to map the complex international and domestic environment that frames American humanitarianism. To explain the selectivity of U.S. engagement, the article establishes a typology of actors, restraints, and concerns involved in the humanitarian policy-making process. It then presents a theory of coevolution that serves as a framework for understanding the interactive and diffusive dynamics between policy makers and their broader operating environment. With illustrative case studies on Operation Provide Comfort in Iraq (1991), Operation Allied Force in Kosovo (1999), and Operation Unified Assistance in response to the Asian Tsunami (2004), this study suggests that U.S.-led humanitarian interventions are part of larger episodes of engagement that hold consequences for subsequent involvements. It finds that altruistic interventions are often blurred with self-interested power pursuits, as American humanitarianism is the product of a confluence of domestic political factors, historical milieu, and international normative advancement.

In the wake of several recent humanitarian crises and varying responses to such situations, the scholarly debate with respect to American-led humanitarian interventions has grown dramatically. During the Cold War, policy decisions were seen as driven by the strategic aims of the major powers and framed by East–West tensions. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, humanitarian intervention became an important pillar in the emerging new world order. Security scholars have struggled to understand the nature of “humanitarianism” as an interest, often with the result that they simply discount it and emphasize other possible motivations for intervention. The analytic problem has been to understand why humanitarianism is such an inconsistent policy practice as international norms and laws are often not respected and humanitarian concerns do not always produce interventions. The selectivity of humanitarian operations has been interpreted as evidence that strategic interests continue to impact the decision-making process.

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This study holds two goals. First, it seeks to move beyond the exploration of motivations to examine the selectivity of American humanitarianism. Second, it initiates a theory building process to map the complex international and domestic environments that structures American humanitarianism. We proposed a model of coevolution to serve as a framework for understanding the interactive and diffusive dynamics between policy makers and the operating environment that produces anomalies in activism. The model allows one to explain the historical trajectory of why the United States launches some humanitarian interventions and avoids others.

The article begins with an assessment of the prevailing literature on humanitarian interventions. It then presents a theory of coevolution that considers each humanitarian involvement as part of a larger episode of engagement, changing norms, and historical milieu. Furthermore, it offers a typology that serves as a guide for exploring the interactions between actors and cases. In addition, it applies the coevolution framework to the cases of Operation Provide Comfort in Iraq (1991), Operation Allied Force in Kosovo (1999), and Operation Unified Assistance in response to the Asian Tsunami (2004). Our suggestion is that American-led humanitarian interventions are not conducted as impulses and are not designed to produce identical effects. We find that the pattern of American humanitarianism is best understood as a product of changing international normative structures, the influence of historical milieu, as well as institutional and noninstitutional domestic political factors.

National Interest and Human Security

In some ways, the literature that addresses humanitarian intervention has not moved much beyond the realist/idealist debate that tends to focus on goals and policy intent. Whereas some contend that self-interest is the primary motivation for humanitarian intervention, others find that altruistic concerns, namely human rights and welfare, move states towards involvement. Robert Jackson (1994) identifies the two views as “self-regarding” and “other-regarding.” Although, there are views within both camps that reject the idea of state morality and international altruism outright, most perspectives acknowledge a “need,” “obligation,” or “responsibility” to act (Doyle 1997:chapter 11). Yet, others find that “interests are simply indeterminate” in explaining the recent trajectory of international humanitarianism (Finnemore 2003:5).

Under the realist rubric of national interest, states may intervene to bolster a state or assist an ally, block a regional hegemon or counterbalance an internal power situation when another outside power has intervened. Some cases may revolve around efforts to prevent violence from escalation and spillover whereas others may revolve around economic factors, such as protecting financial interests, promoting market stability and safeguarding industries and commodities (Roberts 1993:448). Pham (2004) highlights how the shroud of humanitarianism may serve as the ultimate veil of self interest: “the U.S. strategy of fighting tyranny as a way to neutralize its enemies is not ‘humanitarian intervention.’” Thomas Franck and Nigel Rodley point out that any norm of humanitarian intervention (including the window that was left open in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter) creates a greater potential for realpolitik, self-interested pursuits and abuse of strong states over weak states (1973:275–305).

For some, the traditional notion of sovereignty attributes to states jurisdictional exclusivity within their own borders and grants narrowly construed bases of legitimacy. For example, Art and Jervis argue, “No agency exists above the individual states with authority and power to make laws and settle disputes” (1992:2). Chayes and Chayes defend “the complete autonomy of the state to act as it chooses” (1996:60). Article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations clearly

expressed this as the signatories agreed to “respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence” of each member state. Regional agreements, such as the 1928 Convention on the Duties and Rights of States in the Events of Civil Strife, also bolster this notion. Moreover, the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) states that “No State or groups of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason what so ever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State” (OAS 1948).¹ Finally, Article 2(7) of the United Nations Charter (1945) is often referred to as supportive of sovereignty as a right: “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.” Furthermore, realist principles are embedded in the notion of sovereignty established under of Peace of Westphalia. With few exceptions, states are not to interfere in the domestic affairs of other states in the absence of a formal request.²

Yet, as the liberal perspective maintains, sovereignty is not absolute. As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan points out, the UN Charter “was issued in the name of ‘the peoples’, not the governments of the United Nations . . . The Charter protects the sovereignty of peoples. It was never meant as a license for governments to trample on human rights and human dignity. Sovereignty implies responsibility, not just power” (1998:2). Article 55 (1945:55) even commits the UN to promote “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms” and Article 56 (1945:56) pledges all members “to take joint and separate action.” This idealist notion of universality has been emphasized by Philpott (1995), who observes that in the post-Cold War, the practice of internationally sanctioned intervention in defense of universal liberal democratic principles, irrespective of the preferences of each state’s current regime, has allowed for a much more flexible definition of state sovereignty.

According to the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), individuals must be protected from mass killings, violations of their rights, and other forms of suffering. If the state does not live up to its responsibility to protect its citizens, or actively contributes to the suffering, it fails “the minimum content of good international citizenship” and others must take that responsibility on rather than allow peoples to go unprotected:

[T]he responsibility to protect its people from killing and other grave harm was the most basic and fundamental of all the responsibilities that sovereignty imposes—and if a state cannot or will not protect its people from such harm, then coercive intervention for human protection purposes, including ultimately military intervention, by others in the international community may be warranted in extreme cases. (ICISS 2001:8.2,69)

These tensions are reflected in the definitions of humanitarian intervention. Murphy assumes an international legal approach and identifies the “threat or use of force by a state, group of states, or international organization primarily for the purpose of protecting the nationals of the target state from widespread deprivations of internationally recognized human rights” (1996:11–12). Jentleson and Britton allow for a more wide variety of contexts in identifying humanitarian interventions as “providing emergency relief through military and other means to people suffering from famine or other gross and widespread human disasters” (1998:399).

¹ Despite international legal guidelines and norms, states have interfered in the politics of other states and justified their presence on humanitarian grounds for thousands of years. Examples include the U.S. incursions into Latin America and its involvement in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and Vietnam in 1967. Likewise, the Soviet Union was actively involved in domestic situations within Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

² Modelski (1964:40) points out that there are several forms of intervention that are not prohibited by international law like foreign aid and arms transfers.

Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1996:xii–xiii) finds humanitarian interventions involve both humanitarian assistance and military action. Bhikhu Parekh highlights intent and holds that humanitarian intervention “is an act wholly or primarily guided by the sentiment of humanity, compassion of fellow-feeling, and is in that sense disinterested” (1997:54). Finnemore (2003) adds that the concept has changed over the last century and has evolved from evacuation of a state’s own citizens to obligations to respond to complex humanitarian emergencies.

Yet, do countries intervene for reasons of sympathy; that is, to promote international responsibility, altruism, and human rights? Despite considerations of sovereignty and international law, many U.S. interventions were legitimated on humanitarian grounds. According to statements by the George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations, human need is the most important criteria for involvement. When faced with a humanitarian crisis in Somalia, Bush proclaimed, “a failure to respond to massive human catastrophes like Somalia would scar the soul of our nation” (quoted in Goshko 1992). Again, in a similar tone Clinton declared, “If someone comes after innocent civilians and tries to kill them en masse because of their race, their ethnic background or their religion, and it is within our power to stop, we will stop it” (quoted in Feder 1999:1).

Despite these declarations of altruism, the record does not always echo the rhetoric. Mason and Wheeler point out that “Most of the cases which can plausibly be regarded as examples of humanitarian international involve mixed motives; that is, they are cases in which humanitarian objectives and self-interest coincide, and both serve to drive policy” (1996:100). Robert Jervis (1999) explains that humanitarian involvement can include bolstering or replacing a regime with covert activity and military action to demobilize an aggressive group or government to end domestic conflicts and promote democratic processes. On the one hand, self-interest may be an antecedent for U.S. humanitarian involvement. On the other, pure human need and level of suffering may act as a mechanism pushing the United States to act in the name of humanitarianism.

Overall, the realist/liberal/idealist framework that identifies state goals and motives as causal forces does not capture many factors that can lead to or impede a humanitarian operation. Finnemore (2003) points out that both the realist and liberal/idealist perspectives fail to explain the anomalies of American humanitarianism. She finds that realism cannot account for U.S. involvement in Somalia, as it held no strategic or economic interests. At the same time, the liberal camp cannot account for the rather limited interventions of Iraq (1991) and Kosovo (1999) that did not pursue liberal agendas (i.e., democratic state building and economic interests). Finally, the idealist view cannot explain the lack of involvement in the Rwandan genocide and currently, Sudan. As Finnemore (2003:56) writes, “realism and liberalism simply are not helpful in understanding these interventions” and when they do speculate motivations of recent interventions or noninterventions, she notes that both approaches are wrong. Furthermore, she points out the reasons for intervention are not synonymous with the causes of such action. In this light, we now attempt to establish some of the causal mechanism and identify several of the intervening factors, outside of intent, that contribute to American humanitarian interventions.

Toward a Model of Coevolution

While the literature on humanitarian intervention has focused on sovereignty and the pursuit of the national interest, human security, and international law, as well as moral and philosophical debates, we hope to build from this research by establishing a framework that assesses patterns of U.S. humanitarian intervention beyond the objectives of policy elites. This includes determining if similar mechanisms transcend different forms of humanitarian involvement and capturing

the dynamics between domestic and international influences. To do this, we propose a model of coevolution that highlights the continual and recursive interactions of humanitarian involvement. This understanding emphasizes the importance of an interactive relationship between international and domestic factors as well as historical records and norms. With this guide, we find there is a mixture of motives for humanitarian involvement as the certainties of altruistic humanitarian intervention are often blurred with self-interested power pursuits.

The model suggests that a larger operating environment often undermines the instrumentality of policy objectives. In addition, we offer that understanding humanitarian operations as part of wider episodes of engagements will lend insight into the contradictory appearance of America's recent record of commitments. The domestic and international contexts that provide both a legal and normative framework for humanitarianism are dynamic and evolving. As Robert Jervis points out, political scientists overlook the role that history plays in influencing policy maker's outlook. Jervis writes, "No intervention is discreet and separate; instead, each instance changes the political landscape in which the actors operate" (1999:6). At the same time, studies of American humanitarianism often focus on the origins of a specific intervention rather than long-term outcomes.

What is needed is an approach that identifies the potential causal factors and relationships that lead the United States to engage in humanitarian interventions and then places those dynamics within the context of changing norms and larger international political processes. Coevolution (commonly employed within biological approaches) may help expand Jervis' emphasis on the importance of historical context in understanding interventions (Jervis 1999; James and Goetze 2001). Coevolution refers to a change in one group or actor in response to a change in another group or actor. It acknowledges reciprocal interdependence in transformation and progress (Ehrlich and Raven 1964). This view highlights how the diversity of one aspect (the classic case is plants and their "poisonous" secondary compounds) contributes to diversity in another compound (a particular butterfly species).

Episodes of International Involvement and Historical Milieu

Coevolution allows one to view American humanitarian interventions (or inactions) as part of a larger episode of involvements based on nonlinear patterns. Here, advancement is more of a dialectic that illuminates progressive policy responses.³ The policy-making community and media coverage of humanitarian crisis coevolve and a specific situation may not be independent and autonomous, but highly interactive with previous policies and experiences. This diffusion of experiences can be understood as a historical milieu where previous events shape and inform the public and policy elite consciousness. This historical milieu influences both the policy maker and the policy by functioning as the "lens" through which previous events shape and inform the public and policy elite consciousness. In their "man-milieu" analysis, Harold and Margaret Sprout (1956, 1957) observe that policy makers function in an environment shaped by constant interactions with history, culture, economics, political institutions, ideology, and an array of other factors that characterize the societal context in which decision-makers operate. They also discuss the notion of a "psycho-milieu," which is the operational environment perceived and framed by decision-makers (Sprout and Sprout

³ An alternative theoretical growth model is proposed in a response to the well-known theory of evolution proposed by Charles Darwin. Niles Eldredge and Stephen Jay Gould (1972:82-115) observed that often evolution does not occur in a continuous linear growth pattern. They found that based on observations of fossil layers, often there are long periods of stagnation, in which there is no change (equilibrium), followed by periods of abrupt and rapid "punctuated" changes.

1965:226). We argue that humanitarian interventions emerge from complex interactions among international norms and institutions and domestic policy-making processes shaped by perceptions of how policies coevolve through history.

The notion of historical milieu allows the coevolution model to highlight how the 1991 Operation Provide Comfort experience in Iraq interacts with the Somali intervention. Together, these experiences later influence policy makers and the public to decline involvement in Rwanda. Video of a dead U.S. ranger dragged through Mogadishu may have produced a tendency not to intervene in Bosnia as well as to withdraw U.S. troops from Somalia (Beschloss 1993). The popular backlash and sense of failure from lack of action in Rwanda may then have contributed to elite exuberance in Kosovo. Historical milieu enables us to build on Rosenau's conceptualization "every decision is partly a response to past outcomes" (1974:19).

This article seeks to build from the literature on interactive and evolutionary patterns. For example, Karl Deutsch (1963) conceptualized politics as cybernetic where governments respond to internal and external conditions as well as regenerative feedback loops of communication. James Rosenau (1984, 1989) described a "post international" global system characterized by expanding interdependence and fragmentation based on coherent evolving patterns of interaction, punctuated by periods of chaos. We also hope to build on David Easton's (1965) view of the national and international as part of an integrated system. His notion of an interactive and dynamic feedback loop lends to our understanding of humanitarian intervention as part of an adaptive actor model. In addition, we borrow from Graham Allison's (1971) Model II (Organizational Process) as he theorized about how organizational change, evolution, and learning produce subsequent changes in structures, routines, and decisions.

Moreover, a coevolution model expands upon the notion of "linkage politics" by examining the extent to which policy decisions that produce humanitarian interventions are shaped by internal and external tensions (Rosenau 1969; Wilkenfeld 1973). Furthermore, we hope to build from Rosenau's (1970, 1974) notion that policy decisions can be explained by placing them within a broader international and environmental context. Putnam's (1988) metaphor of "two-level games" has led to a large increase in analytical work exploring how international forces interact with domestic political institutions. Putnam's framework allows us to frame strategic political actors as capable of using international constraints to neutralize domestic opposition or use domestic political constraints to enhance their international strength. The implication is that the international environment influences and constrains policy decisions that lead to humanitarian interventions, which are diffusive and influence other policies.

We contend that U.S.-led humanitarian interventions evolve within a context of shifting domestic and international conditions that demand responsive adaptation strategies by policy makers. According to Rosenau (1970:367), "Any foreign policy behavior undertaken by the government of any national society is conceived to be adaptive when it copes with or stimulates changes in the external environment" Scholars concerned with Rosenau's conception of foreign policy adaptation have suggested that foreign policy makers are also subject to changes and constraints resulting from structural alterations, domestic actor adaptation, and feedback systems (McGowan 1974; O'Leary 1974; Thorson 1974).⁴

⁴ The works of Patrick J. McGowan, Michael K. O'Leary, and Stuart J. Thorson are in Rosenau's (1974) edited volume, *Comparing Foreign Policies: Theories, Findings, and Methods*. Specifically, McGowan (1974) maps foreign policy leadership and its responses to structural and external changes. O'Leary (1974) applies Rosenau's theory to domestic actor adaptation where several subnational actors become part of the foreign policy process. Thorson (1974) adds a cybernetic understanding of Rosenau's adaptive model, and diagrams positive and negative feedback systems that highlight "discrepancy between the intended results and the actual results of a given behavior," as well as proposing the notion of interface between inner and outer environments (1974:77).

Therefore, the essence of adaptation is its focus on the interface between domestic and international political forces managed by policy makers (Hansen 1974; Petersen 1998). Moreover, the extent of foreign policy adaptation depends on an interactive set of policy dynamics on ideational (policy maker perceptions and interpretation of the domestic environment and the global system), behavioral (policy decisions), and institutional (institutions and regimes through which policy actors issue decisions) levels (Rosenau 1992). However, as global relationships have become increasingly dynamic and complex in a dual process of integration and fragmentation, policy makers must acknowledge the interaction and interconnect-edness of broad globalizing trends with such localizing issues as nationalism, religious fundamentalism, and anti-Americanism (Rosenau 1990, 2003). Our theoretical model posits that the interface of domestic and international political actors and the coevolution of humanitarian interventions lead policy makers to develop adaptive policies and strategies in order to make policy decisions.

We hold that policy makers respond to immediate domestic pressures from public opinion, mass media, legislators and bureaucrats, and the circumspect demands of a particular case. In addition, they are sensitive to other levels of pressures including changing international normative contexts, and legal opportunities as well as unobservable entities such as historical memory and framing of past successes and failures. For example, in the 2004 Asian Tsunami case, both the White House and public opinion viewed intervention as advantageous and the post 9/11 normative and legal context supported both strategic and altruistic motives for intervention. Therefore, this framework elucidates how the policy process consists of multiple players, issues, objectives, and choices within a historical milieu and a normative context.

Humanitarian interventions are the result of dynamics at both the actor and case level of analysis. Such interactions are similar to a natural organism that reacts in response to the changing components of its immediate surroundings as well as its evolutionary response to broader systemic transformations. The Canadian red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) serves as an example from the natural world. Within the last decade, scientists have observed that the squirrel is breeding and giving birth several weeks earlier each spring in direct response to local climate change. In addition, it has changed its genetic makeup as it responds to the greater effects of global warming (Réale et al. 2003). A coevolution model suggests that the causal process is nonlinear. In many ways, coevolution addresses Rosenau's calls for a biological analogy to capture "the highest level of abstraction" and a "never-ending process whereby the officials purposely seek to adjust their society to its environment" (Rosenau 1974:4, 6).

As in the natural world, policy makers must contend with feedback processes within their domestic and international political environments. Rosenau (1990, 2003) explains the notion of a complex adaptive system, in which domestic and global political actors slowly coevolve through history and become increasingly more adaptive to one another. We suggest that the domestic and international political forces that influence U.S.-led humanitarian interventions evolve in response to changing events and adjust to broad evolutionary dynamics. As strategic interests, alliances and international organizations, public opinion, and media coverage of particular humanitarian crises evolve, the feedback loops and nonlinear dynamics that help determine interventions and noninterventions expand and intensify. However, the processes of evolution do not conform to neat and logical patterns (Rosenau 1990; Oliver and Myers 2002).

A changing global context helps explain the progression of seemingly contradictory policy. Since World War II (WWII), documents, treaties, and declarations reflect a growing norm of protecting human rights. Examples include the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the recent

Millennium Development Goals. States in positions of economic and political privilege are now called on to protect innocent lives, prevent people from starving, and promote human well-being. Kegley, Raymond, and Hermann (1998) observe that since the 1970s the norm of nonintervention has been relaxed to protect human rights and promote peace. In this regard, intervention is now a means to limit violence and address the plight of noncombatants.

As a result, this trend has reversed the unwavering commitment to Cold War era sovereignty. Finnemore (2003) tracks the development of the international normative context that includes changes in sovereignty norms and human rights norms (i.e., an expansion to nonwhites, non-Christians and a growing emphasis on multilateralism). Chopra and Weiss (1992) claim that Resolution 688 and the subsequent U.S. intervention in Somalia in 1992/1993, which was an exceptional case given the absence of a central government in Mogadishu, altered the terms under which the international community can intervene. Evidence of this trend is found in the fact that the number of UN peacekeeping missions in the decade following the end of the Cold War (1988 to 1998) exceeded the number of missions over the past 40 years (Riggs and Plano 1994:114–115; Jett 2000).

In terms of normative development, humanitarian interventions serve as a “mirror of global politics as they really exist” (Pieterse 1997). Glenn Hastedt (2003:11–15) also finds new questions are being asked about U.S. obligations to other states and to the broader global community. He identifies a concern that the United States must act or appear to be a “Good Citizen” and identifies several perspectives that forward this position. This “Good Citizen” perspective argues that America has a responsibility to promote democracy, international justice and minimize suffering. However, critics claim that expanding the norm of intervention and discussions of responsibility are in fact an American Trojan Horse that enables normative justifications for selective strategic imperialism (Bellamy 2005:31–53). Regardless, within a normative and legal context, international intervention is clearly a more acceptable practice today.

Based on this literature, the coevolution model places emphasis on mechanisms rather than inputs. There are three main assumptions of the model concerning policies, actors, and normative environments. First, policy choices (actions and inactions) influence other policy actions; that is, the action sets of policy makers coevolve with each other over time (Oliver and Myers 2002). In addition, domestic policy elites are engaged in an interactive and emergent dialogue with both domestic and international actors. Finally, the policy-forming process is interactive with imperceptibles such as historical context, learning, and changing normative expectations (Sprout and Sprout 1957). Thus, policy choices, options, and strategies coevolve with external actors and expectations through time. For example, the media and its technological advances coevolve with increased normative expectations and elite rhetoric. There is an implication of policy learning impacted by historical milieu, and pressures external to the policy community (i.e., the demands of public opinion and allies). Thus, the model postulates that observers (media, public opinion, and allies) also shape policies concerning humanitarian interventions.

As applied to U.S.-led humanitarian interventions, the coevolution model acknowledges the importance of the evolving international legal and normative contexts. Even if the United States is strategic in its engagements, its actions have led to the creation of an operational environment that is more favorable for humanitarian engagements (both multilateral and unilateral). Yet, this does not preclude that a failure on Afghanistan or Darfur would not produce a popular backlash against such future involvements. At the same time, the lack of a specific American doctrine of humanitarian intervention allows national interests and political power to influence whether policy makers decide to launch such operations.

Domestic Forces

We now turn to exploring the domestic pressures that may mitigate or drive a humanitarian intervention. Wheeler and Bellamy (2001) separate causal mechanisms into three pressure areas: the first concerns public opinion and the media, the second considers legality and legitimacy, and the third involves notions of success. When exploring why the United States becomes involved in humanitarian operations, one dynamic and changing factor concerns the relationship between policy elite, public opinion, and the media. There are several views on these relationships; of those that find public opinion significant, most perceive it as part of the operating environment that leaders must maneuver. At times, it will facilitate a particular agenda and even legitimize it; other times it may present a barrier and therefore make certain policies more risky and politically expensive (Feaver 1998). In fact, Page and Shapiro (1983) establish that changes in public attitudes towards certain policies are actually followed by shifts in policy. This is particularly significant when there are far-reaching changes in public opinion.

The power of public opinion to alter U.S. foreign policy is often driven by the perception that Americans have “zero tolerance” for casualties (Mueller 1994). According to one Somali leader, “We have studied Vietnam and Lebanon and know how to get rid of Americans, by killing them so that public opinion will put an end to things.”⁵ American intolerance for casualties is particularly significant in the face of humanitarian operations where national interests are not clearly articulated. However, Burk (1999) argues that public support for humanitarian operations does not always depend on the risk of casualties and that the argument that policymakers are influenced by public concerns over casualties is rather tenuous and weak. In addition, Feaver and Gelpi find that casualty sensitivity is a myth; they conclude, “The public is defeat phobic, more than casualty phobic” (2004:97).

Public opinion does not turn on its own as the mass media are often perceived as playing a significant role in the formation of public opinion (Mueller 1973; Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987; Mueller 1994). When Americans watch refugees dying, children in pain, and communities wiped out, the argument is that the viewing public will push their leaders to actions. Moreover, with the advent of a global mass media presence in the late 1980s/early 1990s, the public is now able to access global news on a 24 hour basis.⁶ This has contributed to the phenomenon known as the “CNN effect,” in which worsening international crises attract increased attention from global media outlets. The CNN effect involves “a loss of policy control on the part of the policymakers because of the power of the media” (Livingston 1996:69). In the arena of foreign policy making, the CNN effect delineates that policy decisions are, to a great extent, formulated in response to the growing media attention to particular issues (Fachot 2001).

Former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger asserts that in the post-Cold War Era, the CNN effect has resulted in foreign policies made in response to “impulse and image,” in which “policies seem increasingly subject, especially in democracies, to the images flickering across the television screen” (Schlesinger 1993; Haass 1995). According to Stephen Livingston (1997), the CNN effect may even act as a policy agenda-setting agent, an impediment to the achievement of desired policy goals, or as an accelerant to policy decision making. As then UN Under-Secretary

⁵ “Letter from Robert Oakely to Barry Blechman discussion Ambassador Oakley’s conversation with Somalian leader Mohamed Farah Aideed,” cited in Blechman and Wittes (1999).

⁶ The best-known channel is CNN International, which was launched in 1985. CNN’s branded networks and services are now available to more than one billion people in 212 countries and territories. But BBC World TV reaches 167 million homes in nearly 200 countries and territories; Deutsche Welle-tv broadcasts in German, English and Spanish to 105 million households worldwide; and the pan-European image-based channel EuroNews, broadcasts in six European languages to over 95 million house—holds throughout Europe and the Mediterranean Basin.

for Peacekeeping Operations Kofi Annan (1994:624) once noted, “From Ethiopia onward, the role of the media took an entirely new tack. The target of reporting shifted from objectivity to sympathy, from sustaining intellectual commitment to engaging emotional involvement. . . . It sometimes seemed that the media was no longer reporting on the agenda, but setting it.” Thus, creating an environment of “edge-of-seat-diplomacy” where policy makers must respond to quell the images of people suffering (Goodman 1992; Kennan 1993; Schorr 1998).

At the same time, there is considerable disagreement about the role of the media in influencing foreign policy. One argues that the media does not play a decisive role by citing a decrease in the number of stories covered by the major networks and in the number of foreign bureaus (Rosenstiel 1994). Others claim that the media is more influential when there is considerable foreign policy uncertainty among policy makers (Gowing 1994:38; Minear, Scott, and Weiss 1996:73; Strobel 1997:219). James Burk (1999) rejects the CNN thesis and argues that experts and foreign policy leaders provide the media with its information.

While the exact nature of the media’s effect on public attitudes remains disputed, most scholars agree that the media can play a powerful role in determining public support for humanitarian operations. As Wheeler and Bellamy point out, the “CNN factor” was present in both Iraq and Somali, but it works both ways (2001:480). In these cases, the media and public opinion legitimized involvement, but later, in the Somalia case, the media served to undermine involvement. In Rwanda, the lack of pressure from any group, particularly the media, is often blamed as a decisive factor for U.S. noninvolvement.

The reality is more complex as the causal arrow does not flow directly from the media to public attitudes; rather, factors such as the policy stances of elites factor into the equation (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1999). Although news coverage may challenge policy makers, even when policy makers are working to “sell” policies to the public, such criticism tends to surface when there exists elite disagreement over the specific policy. While media coverage does not drive policy, it can undermine it, as media coverage of humanitarian crises “makes it harder to sustain a foreign policy and explain why you are doing it” (Rosenstiel 1994:14). Media coverage may lead policy makers to withdraw military forces, especially when images of American casualties are widely broadcast (Jakobsen 2000:131–143). However, when policy makers seem united on a particular course of action, critical coverage is unlikely to influence the policy direction (Hallin 1986; Bennett 1990; Natsios 1996; Mermin 1997). Mermin (1999) contends that while journalists often criticize U.S. military interventions, especially in Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf War, Somalia, and Haiti, they fail to offer significant and critical analyses of those decisions if policy makers themselves have not objected to the use of force, thereby allowing policy making elites to define the boundaries of specific foreign policy debates.

Some argue that as citizens take cues from policy makers and journalists, elite discourse can shape the formation of foreign policy attitudes (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Rahn 1993). A number of scholars have held that the advent of the 24-hour news cycle has given the public a more intense and vivid connection to international events and foreign policy makers (Stech 1994; Neuman 1996a,b). Presidents and their efforts to manipulate the media clearly shape public opinion (Bond and Fleisher 1990; Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Kingdon 1995; Kernell 1997; Baum 2004). Yet, this information is subject to media framing and the selective use of information by journalists and reporters (Fritz, Keefer, and Nyhan 2004). Therefore, the media may eschew reports of the day-to-day hardships in impoverished countries in favor of real-time coverage of human catastrophe.

As a result, the way in which Americans conceptualize and prioritize humanitarian interventions may be distorted. As Everts argues, “The frequent—and somewhat patronizing—statements of politicians and observers about a

to-be-expected-body-bag-effect on public support may turn out to be self-fulfilling prophecies . . . Thus the lack of public support may turn out to be the consequence and not the cause of government inaction and moral failure” (2000:106). This could, in part, explain the media’s inattention to suffering and repression in countries allied to the United States, for example by the Indonesian army against the East Timorese or by the U.S.-backed government in Guatemala against Mayans. It may also help to understand America’s policy of nonintervention toward Rwanda and the Darfur region of Sudan.

The likelihood that news coverage will distort and oversimplify complex humanitarian issues is quite significant. Belloni (2005) argues that it is often the case that efforts to alleviate human suffering identify the reasons for political upheaval in war-torn or devastated societies. Thus, humanitarian interventions tend to reinforce the image of irrationality that it claims to address. The downward spiral of human suffering is attributed to backward and warlike people who have always conflicted with one another (Sahnoun 1998). While the localization of the suffering keeps the rest of the world ignorant, escalation of the violence reinforces the image of the West as the epitome of reason, modernity, and tolerance (Chandler 2002). This ethnocentric interpretation has led some critics to link humanitarian interventions with implicit racist attitudes (Minear, Scott, and Weiss 1996). As is elaborated below, the whiteness of fleeing Kosovar refugees may have led to greater public sympathy and more extensive news coverage over time. In addition, images of vacationing Europeans and Americans in Phuket, Thailand or Ache, Indonesia may have produced added pressure on Western governments to intervene in the Asian Tsunami relief efforts and for citizens to donate money.

News coverage can therefore contribute to oversimplified interpretations of dynamic and evolving events. Ignatieff (1998) contends that the media defines its messages by highlighting only select aspects of the suffering. Selective coverage results in a lack of meaning and induces the viewer to identify with particular victims at certain historical moments (Minear, Scott, and Weiss 1996). Inevitably, the sympathy generated by the media will erode when a new crisis arises. According to Belloni (2005), the goal of simplified and direct messages is not necessarily about influencing the American public to think about devastation, poverty, war, or rights violations; rather it may be designed to avoid consideration of the very reasons for such suffering.

Typology of Mechanistic Forces

In terms of assessing the factors that push or pull American humanitarian interventions, we suggest there could be multiple mechanisms at work. Robert Jervis contends that we must understand both the international and domestic context of decision making. He writes, “the multiple domestic pressures on the president can neither be ignored nor encapsulated in a parsimonious theory of foreign policy” (1999:6). Although the literature makes a strong case that U.S. humanitarian interventions are conditional on strategic goals and self-interest as preconditions for involvement, many other factors may be considered causal or intervening. It is possible to divide potential causal mechanisms into several categories, domestic factors, international pressures, humanitarian concerns and mitigating factors (see Table 1).

Although this typology presents individual factors as though they are discreet entities, we seek to highlight the interactions between these factors. As Richman (1994) has pointed out, support for humanitarian interventions increase as the level of multilateralism increases. This typology allows us to begin to move beyond descriptive analysis that examines each intervention as discreet and allows for a preliminary map of the dynamics between these factors as well as historical context and changing norms and expectations.

TABLE 1. Potential Causal Factors in American Humanitarian Interventions

| <i>International Factors</i> | <i>Domestic Factors</i> | <i>Humanitarian Concerns</i> | <i>Mitigating Factors</i> |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pressures from allies | National interest | Level of human suffering | Probability of success |
| Clarity of legal case | Policy elites | Refugees | Multilateral efforts |
| Economic interdependence | Public opinion | Immediate violence | Duration of intervention |
| Pressures from international organizations | CNN factor | Normative context | Potential for American casualties |
| Geostrategic concerns | Blog factor | | Financial cost |
| | | | Historical milieu |

This expanded actor typology is conceptualized as engaging in a policy process that is dynamic and part of a larger complex system. The structure of the system is circular and interconnected with time-delayed relationships among its components. Changes in a system (i.e., the international normative context) may be as significant in determining policy outcomes as the dynamics between particular actors or within a particular case. Furthermore, past cases and their historical milieu may be influential for years and even decades. WW II continues to cast a sheen on policy makers; the legacy of WW II and the implications of preventing genocide on European soil clearly tinted the intervention in Kosovo. In addition, the historical milieus of WW II and Vietnam are competing frames for current efforts in Iraq.

Table 2 describes the potential relationships between actors A and B within a coevolutionary framework. The first interaction is neutralism and involves no reciprocal impact. Second, the interactions may be mutually supportive where both factors enhance each other. Commensality is best described where one is neutral and the other supportive. The fourth relationship is a reciprocal negative effect. Finally, predation refers to a situation where one actor is receiving benefits while the other is negatively influenced or inclined. Here, substituting A for policy elites, we may describe the type of interaction between B, public opinion and how it may influence foreign policy directives. Another example of a possible relationship here is a negative (–) interaction in which public opinion disapprovingly pulls the United

TABLE 2. Possible Relationships within a Coevolutionary Model

| | A (i.e., Policy Elite) | B (i.e., Public Opinion) | <i>Relationship</i> | <i>Example</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Neutralism | 0 | 0 | Populations of A and B are independent and do not interact. | |
| Mutualism | + | + | Both are supportive/benefit from the relationship. | Asian Tsumani (2004) Operation Unified Assistance |
| Commensalism | 0 | + | One is supportive of the relationship but the other is neutral (neither harmed nor benefited) | Iraq (1991) Operation Provide Comfort |
| Competition | – | – | Both actors have a negative effect on the relationship/policy | Rwanda (1994) |
| Predation | + | – | One actor benefits or is supportive of the policy while the other is negatively affected or obstructive. | Kosovo (1999) Operation Allied Force |

Portions adapted from Herbert (2002) http://www.bio.miami.edu/tom/bil160/bil160goods/14_coevolution.html

States away from humanitarian interactions (i.e., Kosovo and the second phase of Somalia).⁷

As will be discussed, competition may explain how the Somali experience set a context in which nonintervention may have been mutually reinforced by the Clinton administration, the public, and the media. This establishes a framework to explore the complementary or countervailing pressures that create the broader panorama of the sources of American humanitarian involvement. Therefore, to a great degree, there is considerable interaction between domestic and international factors as well as historical records. For example, it allows scholars to conceptualize public opinion as an independent, intervening or dependent variable, as it is shaped by policy makers and the media, influences calls for involvement, inaction or even withdrawal and is also shaped by policy elites.⁸

The Coevolution of American-Led Humanitarian Intervention

To examine recent patterns of humanitarian interventions, three cases provide useful illustrations of the impact of international pressures on the United States to act in the name of humanitarianism: Operation Provide Comfort in Iraq, Operation Sustain Hope, and Operation Allied Force in Kosovo, and Operation Unified Assistance in response to the 2004/2005 tsunami. The cases highlight the interactive relationships between the factors listed in the typology in Table 1. Furthermore, the cases illustrate how these dynamics influence not only the decision to intervene but also the ability to do so in future situations.

Iraq: Operation Provide Comfort

On February 15, 1991, President George H.W. Bush called on Iraqis to “take matters into their own hands and force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside” (Rubin 2004). Although previous revolts had been brutally suppressed by Saddam, including the 1988 Anfal genocide campaign that killed more than 100,000 Kurdish civilians, Iraqis rose to Bush’s challenge by launching uprisings in several Iraqi provinces (Balz 1991:A37; Chaliand 1994; Human Rights Watch 1995). The impending coalition defeat of the Iraqi army ignited a rebellion in both the Kurdish north and the Shiite south. Saddam’s military forces, however, quickly squashed the rebellion, prompting a widespread exodus of Kurds and Shiites from the country. By April 1991, almost 1 million Kurds were attempting to cross into Turkey (Dowty and Loescher, 1996:46, 64).

Once the Kurdish uprising began, fears of a disintegrating Iraq led the Bush administration to distance itself from the insurgents and spell out an initial policy of nonintervention (Smith and Goshko 1991). The official position was conveyed by National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, who stated, “we clearly would have preferred a coup. There’s no question about that.”⁹ Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney claimed, “the breakup of Iraq would probably not be in U.S. interests” (Hockstader 1991:A1). Secretary of State James Baker described the uprisings as “just one heck of a lot of turmoil . . . we do not want to see any changes in the territorial integrity of Iraq and we do not want to see other countries actively making efforts to encourage changes” (quoted in Boustany 1991:1). These comments were reinforced by Marine Major General Martin Brandtner, deputy director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who ruled out U.S. military

⁷ Although it is important to note that the Clinton administration had called for the downsizing of troops in Somalia and had set a withdrawal date before the Mogadishu incident.

⁸ Port and Van Gelder (1995:5) present interesting discussions of variables that evolve continuously and simultaneously and which at any point in time mutually determine each other’s evolution.

⁹ Scowcroft is quoted in an interview on ABC News on June 26, 1997. The source can be found in Graham-Brown (1999:19).

assistance to the rebels: "There is no move on the [part of] U.S. forces...to let any weapons slip through, or to play any role whatsoever in fomenting or assisting any side" (Boustany 1991). White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater even discounted the insurgents when he stated "It's not clear to us what the purpose or extent of the fighting is," and a senior official claimed that supporting the rebels would "make the U.S. responsible for the government that emerged in Iraq" (Devroy 1991:A1). Other Gulf War coalition states supported America's policy of nonintervention as Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis expressed concern about the "Lebanonization" of Iraq: "I am sure Saddam Hussein will go, but my worry is we will not have another friendly regime" in Baghdad (Claiborne 1991:A1).

The Bush administration was still faced with the devastating reality that the insurgency it initially encouraged would inevitably contribute to a civilian catastrophe (Devroy and Kamen 1991). Clinging to his initial policy of nonintervention, the president emphasized that the issue was an internal conflict: "I feel frustrated any time innocent civilians are being slaughtered. But the U.S. and these other countries with us in this coalition did not go there to settle all the internal affairs of Iraq. . . I made clear from the very beginning that it was not an objective of the coalition or the United States to overthrow Saddam Hussein" (quoted in Friedman 1991:A1). However, pressure on the United States to intervene reached a boiling point when Kurdish civilians began fleeing to Iran and Turkey. As Kurdish refugees poured into Iran, the Iranian government immediately requested UN assistance (Bulloch and Morris 1992; Chaliand 1994; Human Rights Watch 1995). The Turkish government, which was concerned with a potential Kurdish insurrection in southeastern Anatolia, closed its border to prevent Iraqi Kurds from crossing into its territory. As a result, several hundred thousand Kurds were stranded in the inhospitable snow-covered mountain passes along the Iraqi-Turkish border. UN Resolution 687 largely failed to address the plight of Iraq's civilian population. In early April, Turkey, France, and Iran, wrote letters of support for the Kurds to the Security Council, which resulted in the adoption of Resolution 688.¹⁰ The new resolution demanded that humanitarian organizations receive access to civilians in Iraq and authorized military force to guarantee access.¹¹

On April 16, President Bush officially launched Operation Provide Comfort by declaring a no-fly zone in northern Iraq at the 36th Parallel to protect coalition aircraft airdropping food and medicine to Kurdish refugees along the Turkish border and then to protect coalition ground troops (Bush 1993:379; Mandelbaum 1994). At the time, Britain, France, and the United States asserted that the zone was consistent with the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 688, although no explicit endorsement was stated.¹² Although Resolution 688 condemned "the repression of the Iraqi civilian population in many parts of Iraq, including most recently in Kurdish populated areas, the consequences of which threaten international peace and security," it did not provide specific authority for the

¹⁰ Letter of April 2, 1991, S/22435; letter of April 4, 1991, S/22442; letters of April 3-4, 1991, S/22436 and S/22447; *Keating's Record of World Events* (1991) mentions that the permanent representative of Iraq to the UN lodged with the Secretary-General a formal protest against the resolution. On April 5, 1991 NATO, accusing the Government of Iraq of "massive human rights violations", demanded that "every pressure . . . be brought to bear to bring Iraqi authorities to stop the repression without delay". Germany's Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, described Saddam's actions as "genocide" on April 5, 1991 and, on April 13, 1991, suggested a trial of Saddam Hussein for "crimes against humanity." According to reports, the Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke, also called for international action in favor of the Kurds.

¹¹ See United Nations Security Council Resolution 688. Available from <http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/596/24/IMG/NR059624.pdf?OpenElement>; United Nations Report (1991).

¹² When UN ground troops were withdrawn in mid-1991, the no-fly zone was left in place to support Kurdish control of Iraq's three Northern provinces. For more, see UN Security Council Resolution 688: Available from <http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/596/24/IMG/NR059624.pdf?OpenElement>

zone, especially given that the resolution was not passed under chapter VII and therefore did not authorize the use of military force.¹² In 1992, the United States, Britain, and France declared a second no-fly zone in southern Iraq roughly below the 32nd parallel. However, after a unilateral expansion of both zones in 1996, France ceased its air patrols by 1998. According to Christine Gray, “the U.S.A. and the U.K. prefer to avoid discussion of the difficult question of the legal basis for the establishment of the no-fly zones and to shift the debate to the right of self-defense of the U.S. and U.K. aircraft patrolling the zones” (Gray 2002:21).

Referring to Operation Provide Comfort, President Bush contended, “Some might argue that this is an intervention into the internal affairs of Iraq. But I think the humanitarian concern, the refugee concern, is so overwhelming that there will be a lot of understanding about this” (Bush 1991:379). This coincided with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the UN and Iraq, allowing the world organization to administer a civilian “humanitarian presence” throughout Iraq.¹³ Five hundred UN troops were also dispatched to protect UNHCR officials carrying out operations; however, it was doubted whether this would be sufficient to ensure the safety of the returning Kurds (Rodley 1992:31; Murphy 1996).

The influx of Kurds into Turkey threatened to exacerbate an unstable situation, especially given that Turkish security forces were preoccupied with Kurdish separatist movements in the southeast. Initially, the Turkish government closed its borders, which immediately aggravated the refugee crisis. In doing so, Turkey was in violation of its commitment to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, which requires countries to open their borders to refugees fleeing such widespread repression. Moreover, the Bush administration did not persuade Turkey, a NATO member, to fulfill its international humanitarian obligations. While Secretary of State Baker affirmed the importance of the Kurds, he reiterated that the United States would not “go down the slippery slope of being sucked into a civil war” (quoted in Rodley 1992:31; see Murphy 1996). According to Freedman and Karsh: “The logic of the longer-term response to the refugee crisis was largely dictated by Turkey. It wanted the Kurds off Turkish soil as soon as possible—but not into a separate Kurdish state” (1993:422).

In the case of Operation Provide Comfort, there is evidence that the media and a changing international context were significantly influential in the policy of humanitarian involvement in several ways. Shaw describes how coverage of the crisis was framed in order to pressure Western leaders to intervene: “The graphic portrayal of human tragedy and the victims’ belief in Western leaders was skillfully juxtaposed with the responsibility and the diplomatic evasions of those same leaders” (1996:88). Although there is a fair amount of debate regarding the actual impact of TV images, whether they have a “dramatic impact” or a “minimal impact,” footage of fleeing and starving Kurdish refugees made a difference and Bush administration officials, to a certain degree, took them into account. Besides, media interest was already quite high, especially given that journalists were already operating in Iraq during the Persian Gulf War (Hoge 1994). After all the vigorous controls during the Gulf War, television’s new, highly mobile satellite technology had overcome the power of the Bush administration to manage it.

Once the news of Saddam’s violent suppression of the U.S.-inspired rebellion was released, media outlets began focusing on the response of U.S. policy makers. For example, after meeting with leaders of aid organizations in Geneva, Secretary of State Baker was pressed by reporters if the U.S. believed it was responsible for the

¹³ Letter dated April 21, 1991 from the permanent representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, UN Doc. S/22513, April 22, 1991, which contains, as an “Annex,” letter dated April 21, 1991 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General, and as an “Enclosure,” the April 18, 1991 “Memorandum of Understanding.”

refugees' plight. Baker's response was broadcast to the world in the following context: "The answer is no. The United States certainly does not feel responsible in any way" (Hoffman 1991:B3).

The images did personally move British Prime Minister John Major (Macintyre 1991; Gowing 1994). In an example of "belt and braces" policy making, he defied diplomatic advice and persuaded the European Community and President Bush to create the safe havens in northern Iraq (Gowing 1994). Pressed by the media for a response, President Bush switched course and stated: "No one can see the pictures. . . and not be deeply moved" (quoted in Schorr 1991:23). As images of Kurds trapped on the mountains continued to pour in, pressure mounted on the United States to find a solution (Bulloch and Morris 1993). Whatever the proximate trigger, President Bush reversed his previous policy and committed U.S. troops to set up encampments in northern Iraq to ensure the safety of Kurdish refugees and coordinate relief supplies. Rarely had a humanitarian crisis received such intense coverage.

In addition, Operation Provide Comfort and the passage of UN Resolution 688 set the stage for the legal legitimacy and an emerging norm of humanitarian intervention. In this case, neither strategy nor altruism can explain the policy outcome. What we find is a commensal relationship between the administration, American allies, and the media. Here, the latter two actors pushed the Bush administration back into Iraq despite its original policy of neutrality regarding the refugee crisis. In addition, the passage of Resolution 688, in the short term, created a "safe-haven" for the Kurdish refugees. Yet, in the longer term, the resolution set an international legal precedent to consider a state's violent attack on a domestic population to be considered a threat to international order. This set the stage for the future involvements where the international community may breach a state's sovereignty for the protection of human rights.

Kosovo: Operation Sustain Hope and Allied Force

In a related case, the critical situation in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo attracted international attention when violence erupted between Serbian security forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) during the 1990s over the regional status of Kosovo within Serbia. The violence drew parallels with the civil wars in Croatia in 1991 and Bosnia in 1992, which the international community initially failed to address in an effective fashion (Powell 1992:A35; Chace 1993:A15; Betts 1994; Curtis 1994; Cigar 1995). Whereas the violence in Croatia and Bosnia, from a military perspective, was relatively contained within the boundaries of the two states, the EU, NATO, and the UN feared that the conflict in Kosovo would pose a far greater threat to regional security.

Since the withdrawal of Kosovo's autonomy in 1990, a probable solution was a negotiated form of autonomy for the province within the framework of Yugoslavia (Yoo 1999:A1). To ensure Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic adhered to the 1995 Dayton Accords, which ended the war in Bosnia, UN sanctions were partially eased. An outer sanctions regime (including the denial of access to IMF funds) was kept in place and the UN Security Council made it clear these would be lifted only if a peaceful settlement to the Kosovo crisis was found. However, the political status of Kosovo was not addressed at Dayton and Kosovar Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova's pleas for a UN peacekeeping force were largely ignored.

On March 9, 1998, in response to the swiftly deteriorating situation in Kosovo, a six-nation Contact Group, consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Russian Federation, agreed to condemn Serb reprisals and KLA attacks and called for an arms embargo (Kim 1999). Secretary of State Madeleine Albright targeted Milosevic: "President Milosevic must embrace dialogue publicly, enter it without preconditions, accept outside participation,

and take political responsibility for making it work” (quoted in House of Commons Library 1998:25). However, Russian President Boris Yeltsin continued to maintain relatively close relations with Milosevic and presented Russia as a vital player capable of acting as an important counter-weight to what it perceived as strong anti-Serbian tendencies.¹⁴ At the UN Security Council, Russia openly opposed NATO action without council authorization.¹⁵

Both the legal literature and the statements of NATO governments reveal a high level of agreement that there was justification for intervention (Falk 1999:847–857). As Antonio Cassese observes, “There is a widespread sense that [fundamental human rights] cannot and should not be trampled upon with impunity in any part of the world” (1999:26). In addition, it is significant to note the language used by then Secretary-General of NATO Javier Solana in justifying the intervention; “[t]his military action is intended to support the political aims of the international community We must halt the violence and bring an end to the humanitarian catastrophe now unfolding in Kosovo The responsibility is on our shoulders and we will fulfill it” (1999).

In spite of this, the United States and United Kingdom led a strong effort to raise diplomatic pressures on Yugoslavia rather than become directly involved (Posen 2000). On March 31, 1998, the Security Council approved Resolution 1160, which condemned the excessive use of force by Serbian forces, called for a multilateral police force for Kosovo, and imposed a comprehensive arms embargo on Yugoslavia (UNSCR, 1998a). In response, Milosevic held a referendum in April on whether to accept international involvement, which resulted in 95% opposed to any international role (*BBC News* 1998). Strengthened by the display of domestic support, Milosevic launched a spring offensive against the KLA (Holbrooke 1999). Moreover, an increase in KLA sponsored attacks against civilians raised fears it was deliberately creating an overreaction from Serbian forces to provoke NATO action. As a result, thousands of Kosovars fled from their homes.

On September 23, 1998, diplomatic efforts between U.S. Envoy Richard Holbrooke of the Contact Group and Serbia resulted in UN Security Council Resolution 1199, which called on all sides to end hostilities (UNSCR, 1998b). Roughly 2,000 unarmed monitors from the OSCE-KVM (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe–Kosovo Verification Mission) were deployed to monitor the ceasefire and to observe the withdrawal of Serbian troops from Kosovo (UNSCR 1199). Milosevic also consented to NATO over-flights by reconnaissance planes (OSCE 1999a). The de-escalation temporarily allowed many Kosovars to go home and reduced the level of violence. According to the NATO secretary-general, Serbian forces were “using excessive and wholly disproportionate force, thereby creating a humanitarian catastrophe.”¹⁶

The renewed violence resulted in the withdrawal of the OSCE monitors on March 20. As stated by OSCE Chairman Knut Vollebaek, “I have no choice in the present situation than to withdraw the OSCE personnel” (OSCE 1999b). An OSCE inquiry reports further that “Once the OSCE-KVM [monitors] left on 20 March 1999 and in particular after the start of the NATO bombing of the FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] on 24 March, Serbian police and/or VJ [army], often accompanied by paramilitaries, went from village to village and, in the towns, from area to area threatening and expelling the Kosovo Albanian population” (OSCE

¹⁴ Russia had an added interest in ending sanctions, as Yugoslavia owed it several hundreds of millions of dollar for energy supplies (see Treisman 1999/2000). For more on Russian support for Serbia, see Levitsky and Way (2002).

¹⁵ Guicherd (1999:29) points out that both Russia’s and China’s voting statements on Resolution 1203 make it clear that “they opposed the use of force in Kosovo, whatever the scenario.”

¹⁶ This quote can be found at letter dated March 25, 1999 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, UN Doc. S/1999/338 (1999).

1999c). In addition, the absence of the monitors allowed the KLA to attack Serbian police officers, which provoked strong responses by Serbian forces.

By late 1998, a majority of Americans believed that ethnic cleansing in Kosovo created an imperative to intervene, even though this entailed violating Serbian sovereignty and would have to be conducted without formal UN authorization.¹⁷ Yet, most Americans were sensitive to the prospect of casualties. In May 1998, an *ABC/Washington Post* poll found 59% of respondents supported air strikes and a Gallup poll found 55% in favor. However, the Program on International Policy Attitudes found that only 33% favored intervening with ground troops. There was also a belief that ethnic cleansing by Serbian forces in Kosovo was a form of genocide and a growing majority believed “the U.S. has a moral obligation” to intervene in Kosovo. Gallup found 58% holding this view on March 21 and 64% on March 25. *Newsweek* also revealed that 69% of the public believed Serbia was the sole perpetrator of genocide against Kosovar Albanians civilians and that 65% believed they must stop the attacks on ethnic Albanians.¹⁸ Yet, public opinion polls indicated that only 33% supported sending in ground troops with 59% opposed (PIPA 1999:2). In the three months before the NATO intervention in Kosovo, coverage of the Kosovar conflict in the *New York Times* averaged more than 14% of the international coverage (Parenti 2000).

US military involvement as part of a larger NATO effort to stop the killing in Kosovo was the principal determining factor for most Americans. Clearly, preventing a wider war was less important; for example, 70% cited preventing the killing of noncombatant civilians as a very critical reason for military action. However, roughly only 38% perceived the conflict in Kosovo as a very serious threat to U.S. national security interests (Pew 1999b). If an intervention would be conducted without NATO approval, only a very small minority would favor proceeding (Pew 1999a).

With the possibility of refugees fleeing into Macedonia and civil war breaking out between Slavs and Albanians, the security interests of Serbia, Albania, Greece, and Bulgaria could be undermined (NATO 2000). This prompted President Clinton to claim that the situation now endangered the entire Balkan region and represented a strategic threat to NATO (Clinton 1999a, 1999b). On January 30, 1999, NATO announced it was prepared to launch air strikes against Serbian targets. Several “non-negotiable principles” were issued, including the restoration of Kosovo’s pre-1990 autonomy and the holding of democratic elections. It also demanded that both sides attend a peace conference held at the Chateau de Rambouillet near Paris. On March 18, 1999, the Albanian, American, and British delegations signed the Rambouillet Accords, while the Serbian and Russian delegations protested. The accords called for: a constitutional referendum on Kosovar autonomy to be held within three years; temporary NATO administration of Kosovo as an autonomous province within Yugoslavia; a force of 30,000 NATO troops to maintain order; an unhindered right of passage for NATO troops on Yugoslav territory, including Kosovo; immunity for NATO and its agents from Yugoslav law; and economic management of Kosovo based on a free-market doctrine.

NATO’s demands were crafted in such an extraordinary fashion that the Serbs were convinced that the NATO presence would mean the loss of sovereignty over Kosovo. If the aim of the Rambouillet negotiations were to stop human rights violations and to avoid NATO military intervention, it is plausible to ask if

¹⁷ See two key polls taken by the Pew Center for the People and the Press: Pew (1999a) “Continued Support for Kosovo, But Worries Grow,” (April 21). Available from <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=64>. Pew (1999b) “Support for NATO Air Strikes with Plenty of Buts,” (March 29). Available from <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=68>

¹⁸ These various polls can be found in a 1999 cumulative report issued by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA 1999).

circumstances did not allow for a successful outcome or if the Contact Group contributed to the this failure of the negotiations. Immediately before the negotiations, Serbian forces launched military operations to expel the KLA from operating in ethnic Albanian civilian populations. One scholar contends that the KLA may have even instigated Serbian forces in order to attract international sympathy (Kuperman 2003). In Milosevic's view, NATO military intervention would position him as a champion of Serbian unity against the KLA (Petritsch, Kaser, and Pichler 1999:325, 344). That is, Milosevic was calculating that he could not survive if he accepted NATO's demands. Milosevic may have further calculated that the Contact Group would break apart over the issue of casualties regarding a potential ground intervention.

The Albanian delegation, dominated by KLA leaders, did not have much interest in making concessions and seemed more interested in securing NATO military intervention, which would provide air support for KLA fighters (Weller 1999:179). This made the position of the international community more difficult, as the KLA's commitment to achieve independent statehood clashed with the international determination to preserve existing borders (European Council 1996; European Parliament 1998). However, it was clear that the negotiating principles put forth at Rambouillet, in addition to the mounting international pressure on Serbia to halt its attacks and threat of NATO intervention, virtually guaranteed Albanian support. The eventual decision to launch the air strikes was based, at least in part, on President Clinton's perception that Serbian-sponsored violence was to blame: "The mission of the air strikes is to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose so that the Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course; to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo; and, if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to harm the people of Kosovo" (Clinton 1999c).

Moreover, unity among the Contact Group nations was weak. Russian negotiator Boris Mayorski had been ordered by Moscow not to negotiate on the security portion of the agreement, which meant that Russia would not agree to it.¹⁹ In addition, France and the U.K. gave up on considerations about an OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) force, which would have been acceptable for Russia, agreeing instead on a NATO led operation. When it became obvious that the interests within the Contact Group would remain too diverse, the price of preserving the unity of the Contact Group became too high and the use of force more likely.

In the organization and design of Operation Allied Force, another primary concern was the possibility of significant American fatalities. This led the Clinton administration to preclude the use of ground troops and to oppose making preparations for a massive ground invasion of Serbia; however, it did not greatly limit NATO air strikes. By the time Clinton launched Operation Allied Force on March 24, 1999, when support for NATO air attacks stood at 62%, more people were concerned with casualties (66% in April compared with 55% in March) and an even greater increase in concern about the financial costs of sending troops (38% compared with 29%). The use of ground troops greatly divided Americans (47% opposed and 47% in favor of a ground assault) (Pew 1999b).

Coverage of the Kosovo conflict and subsequent intervention by NATO served as a prime example of the ability of the media (unwittingly or not) to describe the various civil wars in Yugoslavia in terms of a price of inaction versus a price of action. Coverage was framed as an oversimplified "morality play," in which the Serbs were largely portrayed as evil and the Kosovar Albanians as victims, with a

¹⁹ According to Mayorski, "... if there were active discussion on military aspects [...] I can insure you that we [the Russian Government] were not taking part in those discussions" (press briefing by the Contact Group negotiators, Rambouillet, February 18, 1999).

resulting formula that placed pressure on the U.S. to intervene and rescue the victim (Hammock and Charny 1996:115–116).²⁰ Despite their ruthlessness, the KLA appeared in U.S. headlines not as a “terrorist organization,” but as “freedom fighters” (O’Hanlon 2000:34). Snow refers to this phenomenon in which governments feel compelled to take action to relieve suffering (primarily due to media pressure) as the “do something syndrome” (1997:193). Echoing this observation, one journalist suggests that video images of a humanitarian crisis evoke an emotional outcry from the public to “do something” (Neuman 1996a, 1996b:109). In the 1990s, this syndrome became a factor in the response of the United States and Europe to Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq (where the United States, in part, reversed its position in response to media coverage), and Somalia (where the media played a central role in both the decision to intervene and then to withdraw; Shaw 1996:79–95; Livingston 1997:68–89). At the same time, the Clinton administration’s policy of nonintervention in the first years of the conflict in Bosnia–Herzegovina was made even though extensive news coverage produced distressing pictures (Talbot 1997).

U.S.-led action against Serbia was also designed to safeguard and ensure the credibility of NATO as a viable organization in post-Cold War era (Mandelbaum 1996; Haass 1994). U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair emphasized that “to walk away from Kosovo now would destroy NATO’s credibility” and noted that “on its fiftieth anniversary, NATO must prevail” (Blair 1999; Bissett 2001:39). President Clinton agreed by contending that U.S.-led military action depends “on stability in Europe and our NATO credibility” (Clinton 1999a). Besides, after having become deeply involved in 1998 in international diplomatic efforts to promote a peaceful solution, it was generally thought that NATO inaction would be a serious blow to its legitimacy. This is a case in which a relationship of mutualism existed between the administration and its European allies. At the same time, there was reluctance on the part of the American public that, at best, can be described as predation. Yet, this disinclination was addressed by the design of Operation Allied Force that committed air strikes rather than ground forces to minimize the threat of American casualties.

Operation Allied Force would be judged on whether or not NATO had the legal justification for the action. According to one scholar, NATO action could lead to the development of unilateral exceptions in justifying humanitarian interventions with military force: “this particular instance of breach of international law may gradually lead to the crystallization of a general rule of international law authorizing armed countermeasures for the exclusive purpose of putting an end to large-scale atrocities amounting to crimes against humanity and constituting a threat to the peace” (Cassese 1999:26). However, in a separate study, he suggests that while it was “premature to maintain that a customary rule has emerged,” there was a strong and widespread sense among governments that unauthorized force was morally necessary (Whitman 1994; Cassese 2000:796). While there was a sense that unauthorized force undermined the UN Charter, NATO air strikes would be interpreted by some as a “badly flawed precedent for evaluating future claims to undertake humanitarian intervention without UN authorization” (Falk 1999:856). Motivations for the intervention included maintaining strategic relations with Europe, stabilizing the Balkans, and promoting NATO viability and credibility. Like the Iraqi case above, this case is significant in building a longer-term legal and normative legacy. In this situation, the precedent was clearly set for humanitarian intervention without UN authorization.

²⁰ Conversely, by overexposing human suffering to viewers can stimulate apathy rather than concern. This phenomenon, known as “compassion fatigue,” has been examined in Moeller (1999).

The Tsunami: Operation Unified Assistance

Even more devastating, the Indian Ocean earthquake that produced a series of tsunamis on December 26, 2004 was a disaster that impacted more than a dozen countries on two continents and killed over 250,000. As governments and humanitarian organizations scrambled to offer aid and technical support, the World Bank estimated the amount at roughly \$5 billion (Block 2004: 2; Bowers and Marlantes 2004: 1; Mallaby 2005). In response to UN criticism that the United States and Europe allocated inadequate resources, by January 1, 2005, a total of \$1.8 billion had been pledged by the United States and the European Union (Grier, Bowers, and Staff 2005:1; Sanger and Hoge 2005:1).

Following the U.S. invasion of Iraq and during a time when the debate over unilateralism and multilateralism were primary issues, the global response quickly became a study in competitive donor response framed within the context of national interests (Sachs 2005). One observer described competitive donations as a “coldly calculated competition of mercy” (Kem 2005). This stemmed from UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland’s description of \$15 million in initial U.S. donations on December 27 as “stingy” (Russell 2004:6; VandeHei and Wright 2004:1; Beinart 2005:6; Conant 2005:31). The next day, President Bush and Secretary Powell expressed their mutual displeasure with the comments and increased the total aid package to \$350 million (Marlantes and Bowers 2005:1; Zakaria 2005:45).

For the Bush administration, Indonesia is important to maintaining stability in Southeast Asia. Indonesia possesses vast natural gas resources and oil reserves and is strategically located within major sea lines of communication between the Pacific and Indian Oceans (Sullivan 2004:42; Bork 2005:37; Caryl 2005:23; Windschuttle 2005). Indonesia is also the base of the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist movement, an Al-Qaeda affiliate responsible for the October 2002 bombings in Bali, the August 2003 attack on a Marriott Hotel in Jakarta’s financial district, and the September 2004 car bombing of the Australian Embassy. The United States also believes that Indonesia has the potential to be a beacon of “moderate Islam,” democracy, and growth. However, Indonesia is confronted with the challenges of transitioning away from autocratic rule, dealing with impact of a series of currency collapses and crises, ethnic and sectarian violence, Al-Qaeda terrorism, and armed rebellion in Aceh. By committing financial and military resources to Indonesia, Bush sent a message to those in the region that the United States was a friend of Islam. According to Colin Powell, “This is an investment not only in the welfare of these people; it’s an investment in our own national security” (quoted in O’Lery 2005:14).

Before the U.S. intervention, significant majorities in Muslim nations held negative views of the United States. For example, in April 2004, 63% of citizens in Turkey, 61% in Pakistan, 93% in Jordan, and 68% in Morocco held unfavorable opinions of the United States. The driving force in Muslim opinion in these select countries is the perception that the United States acts without taking into account the interests of other nations. Before the tsunami crisis, Osama bin Laden was viewed favorably by large percentages in Pakistan (65%), Jordan (55%), and Morocco (45%). Therefore, perceptions of U.S. unilateralism remained widespread and the war in Iraq undermined America’s credibility (Pew Global Attitudes Project 2004).

The American public was overwhelmingly impacted by the widespread death and destruction resulting from the Asian tsunami. In fact, Americans followed the disastrous tsunami more intently than any other major global news story over the past decade. Fifty-eight percent tracked news from south Asia very closely with the next highest international stories being the death of Princess Diana in 1997 (54%) and the opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (50%; Pew 2005).

On the whole, Americans generally ignored global accusations of a slow and tepid response by the Bush administration and largely approved of President Bush's decision to intervene with military and humanitarian resources. By the end of January, public opinion polls revealed widespread approval of Bush's response to the crisis; for example in an *ABC News/Washington Post* poll, 83% of Americans approved of Bush's response (*ABC News/Washington Post* 2004).

After the United States stepped up its aid package, hostility toward America appeared to ease, at least in the short term. In the six months following the crisis, 63% in India, 51% in Indonesia, and 53% in China revealed that the United States does take their government's interests into account at least a fair amount (Pew Global Attitudes Project 2004). With the exception of Christian opinion in Lebanon, views of the United States in other predominantly Muslim nations were more negative and have changed little. For example, in Turkey, hostility toward the Bush administration intensified with 46% holding an unfavorable view, which was up from 32% in 2003 (Pew Global Attitudes Project 2005).

In this case, American public opinion and media factors were again important. Yet, unlike coverage of the Kurds and Kosovar Albanians, some of the early visuals of areas impacted by the Tsunami crisis came from citizens. Some captured dramatic moments on their personal video cameras even as many struggled to save others. According to media critic and blogger Danny Schechter of MediaChannel.org, "This is not 'reality television'. This is reality on television."²¹ Once the major media outlets and newspaper began broadcasting, visuals and stories captured by individuals' video and digital cameras inspired citizens and their governments to dispatch aid more rapidly. Former French Minister of Health Bernard Kouchner has described the phenomena as: "Where there is no camera, there is no humanitarian intervention" (quoted in Tate 2002). The most compelling factors included dramatic television images of the devastation in both rural and urban areas, the immediate availability of still and moving images, the timing of the tsunami one day after Christmas, destruction in areas familiar to Westerners, the death, or disappearance of vacationing Westerners and the use of internet web logs to quickly spread news and information.

Although the tsunami did generate far-reaching attention, established media networks were initially hesitant in covering the story. The slow reaction in getting reporters to the most devastated regions was due in large measure to difficult logistical problems caused by the scope of the disaster as well as the timing of the tsunami, which occurred the day after Christmas. *ABC News* correspondent Bob Woodruff contended that complicating matters was the fact that the full grasp of the story had eluded many in American media: "The White House didn't understand it, journalists didn't understand it, and aid organizations didn't understand it" (quoted in Johnson 2005:1). However, CNN was able to send 75 reporters to the most affected regions, which allowed it to dominate the story in the first several days (Johnson 2005:1).

As a result, most networks relied on video and still images taken by citizens in the impacted areas provided some of the first glimpses of the disaster. Before journalists arrived, recordings from camcorders supplied firsthand accounts of the gigantic wave that swept through the region. Since then, many of those recordings have ended up on the internet in so-called "video logs" or "vlogs" and have been cited in web blogs. For example, Waveofdestruction.org hosted several home videos, photographs, and satellite images that supplied internet users with before-and-after shots of areas in the tsunami's path.²² According to Geoffrey Huntley, the internet provided a vehicle for instant access around the world: "At a media

²¹ See "SOS Tsunami: It's Time for a United Media Appeal," December 29, 2004. Available from <http://www.mediachannel.org/views/dissector/affalert304.shtml>

²² See the video images at: <http://www.waveofdestruction.org/videos/>

company, I'm sure there are channels you have to go through—copyright, legal, editorial, et cetera, blogging and vlogs are instant” (MacMillan 2005b).

When global media networks were able to routinely report on the devastation, much of the coverage was grossly disproportionate capturing the true nature of the disaster. According to Indian journalist Ashok Malik American media coverage had been insensitive to the victims: “Asia’s tsunami is open season. Why has Southeast Asia’s biggest tragedy become every American network’s ghoulish Disneyland party? Has disaster finally found its paparazzi?” (Harper 2005:4). Paul Janensch observed that a significant amount of reporting was focused on American and European tourists who had died, despite the fact that nearly all who were killed were “poor local people.” He argued that American coverage had been “[g]reat on explaining what a tsunami is. But otherwise I can see why the rest of the world thinks Americans care about death and destruction only when Americans are involved.” He also accused American outlets of committing the double standard of failing to show dead Americans: “If it’s okay to show us images of dead Indians, Sri Lankans, Thais and Indonesians killed by a giant wave, then isn’t it OK to show us images of dead Americans?” (all quotes in Janensch 2004:1).

The rise of citizen media, or what we have termed the “blog factor,” cannot be understated in this case. Bloggers brought voice, texture, passion, relevance, and immediacy to the devastation. Citizen coverage of the tsunami resulted in a more transparent and less-centralized media in real time characterized by individual narration and emotion. The human emotion illustrated in global network media coverage of the Kurds in Iraq and Albanians in Kosovo that was delivered by television has become the foundation for citizen media coverage of the tsunami delivered by camcorders, digital cameras, satellite phones, blogs, and v-logs (Handwerk 2005; Regan 2005:5; MacMillan 2005a).

Although cooperation in dealing with the disaster created some measure of goodwill, relationships were unlikely to purge mutual suspicions and lingering resentments. This case highlighted a growing tension between sovereignty, practical experience, changing norms, and rising expectations. Together, these three cases highlight the diverse international circumstances that may push and pull America to act in the name of humanitarianism.

Concluding Remarks

Each case illustrates two key aspects in the model of coevolution. The first concerns how the interactions between the actors (in these cases public opinion, policy elite and the media) served to mold the direction and impulses of American humanitarianism. This dynamic undermines the realist/idealist accounting that motivation drives actions. Second, the cases are not discreet sets; rather, the model allows scholars to see how each engagement sets the stage for future involvements by influencing the legal and normative contexts as well as the historical milieu. By expanding the object of analysis to include cycles of humanitarian involvement, we can factor in the notion that participation and the act of engaging in humanitarian operations itself changes the opportunities, support, legitimacy, and resources for the next humanitarian involvement. As Finnemore (2003:15) points out, “new beliefs create new policy choices, even policy imperatives for intervenors.” Put simply, we cannot understand Rwanda without consideration of Somalia; likewise, involvement in Kosovo is part of the Somalia and Rwanda legacies.

Table 3 presents a potential application of coevolution to the diverse supports for or against humanitarian intervention and maps a path to predicting the dynamics influencing a specific humanitarian decision. The value is in a synergistic understanding of control and feedback that accounts for inter-active behaviors of an agent under certain environmental and internal pressures. At the same time, the

TABLE 3. Potential Applications of Coevolution Model

| | <i>Domestic Pressures</i> | | <i>International Pressures</i> | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | <i>Media</i> | <i>Public Opinion</i> | <i>Strategic</i> | <i>Allies</i> | <i>Historical Milieu</i> | <i>Policy Outcome</i> |
| Iraq–Kurds (1991) | + | + | – | + | * | HI |
| Somalia (1992) | + | – | – | – | + | HI |
| Rwanda (1994) | – | * | – | * | – | 0 |
| Kosovo (1999) | + | – | + | + | + | HI |
| Sudan (2003–06) | * | – | – | – | – | 0 |
| Asian Tsunami (2004) | + | + | + | + | – | HI |

Key: +, in favor; –, against; *, neutral; HI, American humanitarian intervention (some of this information is taken from Blechman and Wittes 1999:25.)

categories need further development and quantification to establish more consistent criteria and patterns of interactions.

Our theoretical framework facilitates the incorporation of a dynamic and changing operational environment. For example, it allows an understanding of how UN Resolution 688 altered the international context and expanded international legal authority, while Operation Provide Comfort changed the normative context. More recently, it allows scholars to include such factors as citizen technology and the “blog factor,” which influenced the way in which people pledged their support and the news coverage of the tsunami. The large increase in the number of internet users in recent years provides an opportunity for at least partially overcoming two main constraints which have imposed finite and easily reached limits on the role of the mass media in creating and maintaining public awareness of emergencies (and of relief and development issues generally): spatial constraints (other news stories compete for limited space) and temporal constraints (after a certain variable period, high-interest news stories slip down the schedule and onto inside pages, and the space/airtime devoted to them decreases and eventually disappears). This suggests that it may be operationally useful to distinguish between creating awareness and maintaining and extending awareness; that is, providing nuanced information regarding crises and emergencies. Interestingly, both global media networks and the citizen-based blogs experienced both spatial and temporal constraints in the case of the tsunami disaster.

The media factor demonstrated how saturation coverage combined with the “morality play” was able to raise the price of inaction within the United States. However, in taking up a single conflict and devoting a large percentage of coverage time or space to it, coverage of other conflicts suffers. For example, the conflict in Kosovo, with roughly 2,000 deaths in two years before the NATO air strikes, was in comparative terms a relatively minor emergency. The war in the Congo, with 1.7 million conflict-related deaths in less than two years (occurring at the same time), continued to be a virtually uncovered humanitarian catastrophe (Boyd 2000; Massey 2000).

In returning to our initial question concerning what drives the United States to act in the name of humanitarianism, our findings are more intricate and complex than originally anticipated. We determine that there are very few examples of U.S. humanitarian involvement for purely altruistic concerns. Even in situations like the Tsunami relief efforts of 2004, strategic concerns are likely to play a role in the commitment of resources. At the same time, it is not a simple issue of motivation or goals that pushes and pulls the United States in and out of its efforts to diminish global human suffering. Nor do policy elite cues exist in a vacuum. What this research suggests is that there are cycles of intervention in which previous

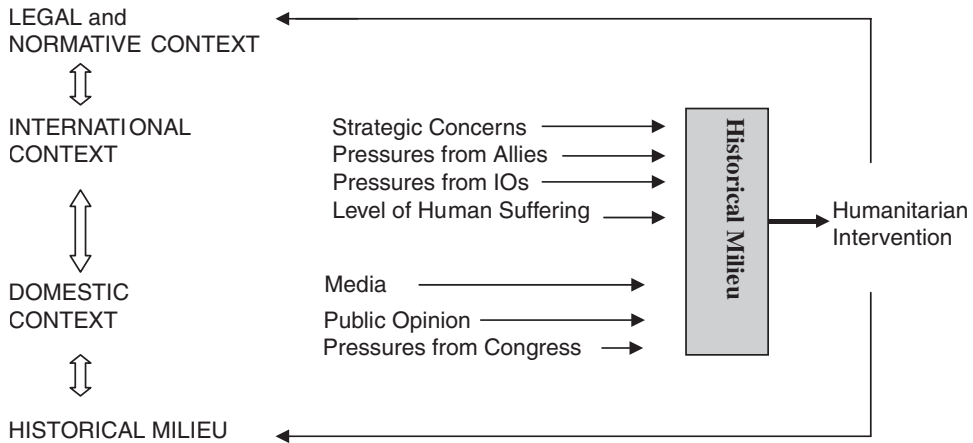


FIG. 1. Model of Coevolution and Humanitarian Intervention

experiences (be they halos or hangovers) play a significant role. Moreover, a complete picture must account for the synergy between domestic social forces, the policy elite, and the international normative context.

The policy implications are quite significant. In cases of non-intervention, the United States may not act because international support is scant and domestic public support is diffuse. In turn, news coverage may be quite sporadic and inconsistent. Absent clear demonstrations that the domestic and international contexts support intervention, the military, civilian policy makers, and legislators could be unwilling to support U.S. action. Presidents are likely to conclude that pushing for intervention can only lead to political risks.

As a result, humanitarian crises are either not conducted or are waged under distorted standards that prevent serious assessments that could provide ammunition for pro-intervention positions. Policy makers either learn to live with nonintervention or are ignored and even suppressed. Yuen Foong Khong (1992) observes that so-called “lessons of history” are often quite simplistically and wrongly applied: past policies judged as successes are likely to be repeated, while those judged as failures are often avoided without serious consideration of differences between the original case and the present problem. Power (2003) contends that American policy makers described the disastrous U.S. intervention in Somalia as the primary reason for its nonintervention in Rwanda. America’s nonintervention in Rwanda may have led it to disregard the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. An additional factor contributing to nonintervention in Darfur may also be America’s ongoing wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq. These scholars echo our understanding of historical milieu; policy makers are influenced by previous cases, but do not necessarily learn from them.

This appears consistent with Alex Bellamy’s (2005:31–53) contention that there may be several views on humanitarian involvement in a post-9/11 era. He finds optimists who accept the imperatives of national interest, yet observe of a historical convergence of *realpolitik* and *idealpolitik* concerns. This view points to Afghanistan as evidence of the emerging symbiotic nature of U.S. strategic imperatives (Byers and Chesterman 2003). A second outlook finds that with the Bush Doctrine we are witnessing the “sunset” of humanitarian engagement as the “War on Terrorism” will trump all other concerns (Weiss 2004:135). The final perspective is expressed by Ramesh Thakur (2004:1–6) who finds that the shadow of the Iraqi War will make consensus building for future humanitarian interventions more challenging and weaken the ability of states and organizations to respond to true crises.

Resolution 688 and recent dialogues about democracy and human rights have led to an operational environment (both legal and normative) that allows and expects humanitarian interventions. However, the critical factor in launching humanitarian interventions is not altruism. Instead American humanitarianism is best described as the confluence of domestic political factors and international pressures filtered through the prism of history and changing norms.

A coevolution model is not intended to replace other models of foreign policy making. Indeed, the model hopes to be inclusive of theories of international relations (i.e., realism and liberalism) and models of foreign policy making (i.e., bureaucratic, organizational, and rational choice). We acknowledge that each of these provide legitimate focus at distinct levels of analysis. A model of coevolution places these in a broader context that may encapsulate the dynamics between the actors, processes, and mechanisms explained in each individual model. Here, agency competition, strategic goals, the international environment, and noninstitutional domestic actors can be accounted for in examining why the U.S. responded as it did to the Kurdish and Shiite uprisings in Iraq, the Kosovo crisis, the Asian Tsunami situation as well as its lack of engagement in the Rwandan genocide and its withdrawal from Somalia. We merely suggest that the coevolution model adds another dimension of analysis, provides language, and a theoretical framework to capture the dynamics between mechanisms at several levels at once.

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