

THE COMPLEXITIES OF AMERICAN STATECRAFT

Emmanuella Mathias Danet

Department of International Relations

Baze University, Abuja, Nigeria

Abstract

American statecraft, the strategic use of diplomatic, economic, military, and cultural tools to advance national interests, has profoundly shaped global and domestic realities. However, its impact on individuals and societies is deeply complex, marked by contradictions and unintended consequences. This thesis examines the paradoxical nature of American statecraft, exploring how it simultaneously empowers and marginalizes, protects and destabilizes. Using a mixed-methods approach and case studies such as the Iraq War, the U.S. COVID-19 response, and U.S.-China trade policy, the study integrates critical realism and intersectional feminism to analyze structural forces, ideologies, and human experiences. Findings reveal that while American statecraft has achieved successes like the Marshall Plan and PEPFAR, it has also caused harm through military interventions, neoliberal policies, and systemic racism. The research proposes recommendations to align statecraft with justice and equity, including ethical audits, decolonizing aid, regulating technology, providing climate reparations, and centering marginalized voices. By prioritizing human security and dismantling structural inequalities, the U.S. can transform its statecraft into a force for global good.

Keywords: Statecraft, Hegemony, Economic power, Military Power, Force

Introduction

American statecraft, the art and practice of conducting state affairs, has been a defining force in shaping both domestic and global realities since the nation's founding. Rooted in the principles of democracy, liberty, and exceptionalism, U.S. statecraft has evolved over centuries, adapting to the shifting dynamics of geopolitics, economics, and societal change. However, its impact on individuals and communities both within the United States and abroad has been marked by profound contradictions. While American statecraft has often been framed as a force for good, promoting freedom, democracy, and human rights, its implementation has frequently resulted in unintended consequences, including inequality, displacement, and suffering. This thesis seeks to explore these complexities, examining how American statecraft influences human lives in ways that are both empowering and destructive.

The 21st century has introduced new challenges and opportunities for American statecraft. Globalization, technological advancements, and transnational issues such as climate change, pandemics, and terrorism have redefined the scope and scale of statecraft. The Biden administration's 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, for example, frames U.S. statecraft as a battle between democracy and autocracy, positioning the United States as the leader of the free world. Yet, this narrative has been criticized for oversimplifying the realities of global politics and ignoring the human costs of U.S. policies (Brands, 2021).

Domestically, initiatives like the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 highlight the intersection of statecraft with issues such as economic inequality, labor rights, and environmental justice,

revealing the dual nature of statecraft as both a tool for progress and a source of contention (White House, 2022).

This study argues that American statecraft's impact on individuals and societies is inherently paradoxical. On one hand, it has the potential to uplift communities, promote stability, and advance human rights. On the other hand, it often perpetuates inequality, exacerbates conflict, and undermines the very values it seeks to uphold. To fully understand these complexities, this thesis employs an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on historical, political, sociological, and ethical perspectives. By examining the interplay between policy decisions, geopolitical strategies, and human outcomes, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted effects of American statecraft on man.

Materials and Methods

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the complexities of American statecraft on man.

The qualitative component involves the examination of secondary sources, including government documents, policy statements, speeches by key political figures, and academic literature. Other sources include U.S. National Security Strategies from 2017, 2021, and 2022, Congressional records on legislation such as the Patriot Act and the Affordable Care Act, and declassified CIA documents on drone warfare obtained by investigative platforms like The Intercept (2021), peer-reviewed articles, books, and reports from think tanks and international organizations, with a focus on works published between 2018 and 2023 to ensure relevance to contemporary issues.

The quantitative component of the study involves the analysis of statistical data on war casualties, economic inequality, and public health outcomes.

Data Collection

Data is drawn from reputable sources such as the World Bank, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This data is used to provide empirical evidence of the human impact of American statecraft, complementing the qualitative analysis.

Case Studies

Three case studies are central to this research: the Iraq War (2003–2011), the U.S. COVID-19 response (2020–2023), and U.S.-China trade policy since the 1990s. These case studies were selected to illustrate the diverse and often contradictory effects of American statecraft on individuals and societies. The Iraq War highlights the human costs of military intervention, the COVID-19 response demonstrates the intersection of statecraft and public health, and U.S.-China trade policy reveals the economic and social consequences of globalization.

Analytical Tools

Analytical tools include Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to dissect political rhetoric, such as the use of terms like "axis of evil" or "freedom agenda," and ethnographic insights from scholars like Anand Gopal, whose fieldwork documents the experiences of Afghan civilians (Gopal, 2021). Econometric models are employed to assess correlations between U.S. sanctions and mortality rates in Iran (Askari, 2022).

Limitations

Limitations of the study include restricted access to classified documents, which may limit the transparency of certain findings, and the inherent incompleteness of quantitative data on human experiences, such as trauma from war. Despite these limitations, the study aims to provide a robust and nuanced understanding of the complexities of American statecraft on man.

Literature Review

The historical evolution of American statecraft is deeply rooted in the nation's founding principles of democracy, liberty, and exceptionalism. From its inception, the United States has sought to project its values and influence both domestically and internationally, often with profound consequences for individuals and societies. Early statecraft was characterized by a commitment to isolationism, as articulated in George Washington's Farewell Address of 1796, which warned against entangling alliances. This isolationist stance was reflected in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, which sought to insulate the Americas from European colonialism while expanding U.S. territorial dominion, often at the expense of Indigenous populations (Grandin, 2019). The 20th century marked a significant shift in American statecraft, as the United States emerged as a global superpower following World War II. The Truman Doctrine of 1947 and the Marshall Plan of 1948 exemplify this shift, as the U.S. sought to contain communism and rebuild war-torn Europe (Leffler, 1992). These initiatives institutionalized U.S. leadership on the global stage but also entrenched a "hub-and-spoke" alliance system that marginalized the voices of the Global South (Walt, 2018). The Cold War era saw the U.S. engage in a series of proxy wars, covert operations, and alliances that shaped the political landscape of numerous countries. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the Vietnam War (1955–1975) are prime examples of the complexities and risks associated with American statecraft during this period (Gaddis, 2005).

The post-Cold War era saw the United States emerge as the sole superpower, with a renewed focus on promoting democracy and free markets. However, this period also saw the rise of new challenges, such as terrorism and global economic instability. The 9/11 attacks of 2001 marked a turning point in American statecraft, leading to the War on Terror and significant shifts in U.S. foreign policy (Bacevich, 2008). The invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 were key components of the U.S. response to the 9/11 attacks, aimed at eliminating terrorist threats and promoting democracy in the Middle East. However, these interventions have also led to significant human suffering and long-term regional instability. The Iraq War, in particular, has been criticized for its lack of a clear exit strategy and the failure to find weapons of mass destruction, which were cited as a primary justification for the invasion (Ricks, 2006).

Theoretical Perspectives on American Statecraft

Scholars have approached the study of American statecraft from various theoretical perspectives, each offering unique insights into its complexities. Realism, as articulated by Hans Morgenthau in his seminal work *Politics Among Nations* (1948), emphasizes the role of power and national interest in statecraft. According to this perspective, states are primarily concerned with their survival and security, and statecraft is a means to achieve these goals. Realists argue that American statecraft, like that of other states, is driven by the pursuit of power and the balance of power in the international system. This perspective is evident in U.S. containment policies during the Cold War and its current strategic competition with China (Mearsheimer, 2018).

Liberalism, on the other hand, focuses on the role of international institutions and cooperation in shaping statecraft. Scholars like Robert Keohane (1984) argue that states can achieve their goals through cooperation and the establishment of international norms and institutions. From

this perspective, American statecraft is seen as a means to promote global stability and prosperity through multilateralism and international cooperation. The creation of institutions like the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) exemplifies this approach. However, critics argue that these institutions often serve the interests of powerful states, particularly the United States, at the expense of weaker nations (Stiglitz, 2002).

Constructivism introduces the importance of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state behavior. Scholars like Alexander Wendt (1999) argue that statecraft is not solely determined by material factors but also by the ideas and beliefs that shape state identities and interests. From this perspective, American statecraft is influenced by the values and norms that define American identity, such as democracy, human rights, and free markets. This perspective is evident in U.S. advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights abroad, which reflects evolving domestic values (Finnemore, 2023). Postcolonial critique offers a different lens through which to analyze American statecraft, emphasizing the perpetuation of colonial hierarchies and power imbalances. Scholars like Alexander Anievas (2020) argue that U.S. statecraft often reinforces global inequalities, citing examples such as sanctions on Venezuela and Cuba as forms of "neoimperialism." This perspective highlights the ethical dilemmas inherent in American statecraft, particularly its impact on marginalized communities in the Global South.

Domestic Implications of American Statecraft

The domestic implications of American statecraft are profound, shaping the lives of millions of individuals and communities within the United States. Economic policies, in particular, have had a significant impact on domestic populations. The New Deal (1933–1939) and the Great Society (1964–1968) were landmark initiatives aimed at addressing economic inequality and social welfare. The New Deal, introduced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, included a series of programs and reforms designed to combat the Great Depression and promote economic recovery. Programs such as Social Security and the Works Progress Administration provided a safety net for millions of Americans and reshaped the role of the federal government in the economy (Patterson, 1996).

The Great Society, introduced by President Lyndon B. Johnson, aimed to eliminate poverty and racial injustice through a series of social welfare programs and civil rights legislation. Programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and the War on Poverty had a significant impact on American society, improving access to healthcare and reducing poverty rates. However, these policies also faced criticism for their unintended consequences, such as dependency and bureaucratic inefficiency (Murray, 1984). More recently, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 has been a subject of intense debate, highlighting the complexities of statecraft in addressing healthcare needs. The ACA aimed to expand healthcare access and reduce costs through a series of reforms, including the expansion of Medicaid and the establishment of health insurance marketplaces. While the ACA has expanded healthcare access to millions of Americans, it has also faced challenges in implementation and affordability, leading to ongoing political and legal battles (Starr, 2011).

Criminal justice policies have also had a significant impact on domestic populations. The War on Drugs, initiated in the 1980s, led to mass incarceration, particularly among Black communities. By 2000, one in three Black men had been incarcerated, highlighting the racial disparities inherent in U.S. criminal justice policies (Alexander, 2020). Immigration enforcement under the Trump administration separated 5,500 families through ICE deportations, causing lasting psychological trauma (HRW, 2021).

International Implications of American Statecraft

Internationally, American statecraft has had far-reaching effects, shaping the political, economic, and social landscapes of numerous countries. Military interventions, in particular, have left a lasting legacy of instability and suffering. The Iraq War (2003–2011) is a prime example of the human costs of interventionist statecraft. The invasion of Iraq, justified on the grounds of eliminating weapons of mass destruction and promoting democracy, resulted in significant loss of life and long-term regional instability. Estimates suggest that between 280,000 and 315,000 civilians died as a result of the war, while 9.2 million people were displaced (Watson Institute, 2023). The War on Terror, launched in response to the 9/11 attacks, has also had profound implications for human rights and international relations. The invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 aimed to dismantle al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban from power. However, twenty years of U.S. occupation failed to establish stable governance, culminating in the Taliban's return to power in 2021 (BBC, 2021). The use of drone warfare and extraordinary rendition has raised significant ethical concerns, with critics arguing that these practices violate international law and undermine human rights (Aaronson, 2021).

Economic statecraft has also had significant international implications. Sanctions, for example, are a key tool of U.S. foreign policy, aimed at pressuring adversarial regimes to change their behavior. However, sanctions often have unintended consequences, disproportionately affecting civilian populations. U.S. sanctions on Iran, in place since 1979, have been linked to over 13,000 civilian deaths due to medical shortages (Askari, 2022). Trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994, have had mixed effects on global economies. While NAFTA increased trade and economic integration between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, it also decimated Mexican agriculture, displacing 2 million farmers and exacerbating economic inequality (Cypher, 2023). Soft power, the ability to influence others through cultural and ideological means, is another key aspect of American statecraft. Hollywood and Silicon Valley are powerful tools of U.S. soft power, propagating American values and lifestyles globally. However, the dominance of U.S. tech companies like Meta and Google has raised concerns about privacy, data sovereignty, and the erosion of local cultures (Zuboff, 2019).

Ethical Dilemmas and Accountability in American Statecraft

The ethical dilemmas inherent in American statecraft are perhaps most evident in its use of military force and coercive measures. Drone warfare, for example, has become a central tool of U.S. counterterrorism strategy, allowing for targeted killings without putting American troops at risk. However, drone strikes have also resulted in significant civilian casualties. Between 2004 and 2018, CIA drone strikes in Pakistan killed between 400 and 900 civilians, including 200 children (Stanford Law School, 2020). The lack of transparency and accountability in drone operations has raised significant ethical concerns, with critics arguing that these practices violate international law and undermine human rights. The use of torture and extraordinary rendition in the War on Terror has also been a source of controversy. The Guantánamo Bay detention camp, operational since 2002, has held 779 detainees without charge, 30 of whom remain imprisoned as of 2023 (ACLU, 2023). The use of enhanced interrogation techniques, widely condemned as torture, has tarnished the U.S.'s reputation as a champion of human rights and the rule of law (Mayer, 2008).

Sanctions, another key tool of U.S. statecraft, also raise significant ethical questions. While sanctions are often justified as a means of pressuring adversarial regimes, they frequently result in humanitarian crises, disproportionately affecting civilian populations. U.S. sanctions on Syria, for example, have exacerbated the country's economic collapse, leading to widespread poverty and suffering (UNHRC, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This study is designed to provide a robust analytical lens for understanding the complexities of American statecraft and its impact on individuals and societies. It integrates critical realism and intersectional feminism, two complementary paradigms that illuminate the structural and ideological dimensions of statecraft while emphasizing the lived experiences of marginalized groups. This dual framework allows for a nuanced examination of how power operates within American statecraft, shaping both domestic and international policies in ways that often reinforce existing hierarchies of race, class, and gender.

Critical Realism: Unpacking Structural Forces

Critical realism, as articulated by Roy Bhaskar (2018), provides a philosophical foundation for analyzing the underlying structures and mechanisms that shape social phenomena. Unlike positivism, which focuses on observable events, critical realism seeks to uncover the deeper causal forces that generate these events. In the context of American statecraft, this means examining the structural forces such as capitalism, militarism, and imperialism that drive policy decisions and their human consequences. For example, the U.S. military-industrial complex, a term coined by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1961, exemplifies the structural forces underpinning American statecraft. The complex refers to the symbiotic relationship between the military, defense contractors, and political institutions, which perpetuates a cycle of militarization and war. Critical realism helps to reveal how this complex operates as a structural force, shaping policies such as the Iraq War (2003–2011) and the ongoing War on Terror. These policies are not merely responses to external threats but are deeply embedded in the economic and political interests of the military-industrial complex (Melman, 2021).

Critical realism also highlights the role of ideology in legitimizing statecraft. For instance, the doctrine of American exceptionalism the belief that the U.S. is uniquely destined to lead and spread democracy has been used to justify interventions in countries like Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. However, critical realism challenges this ideology by exposing its contradictions, such as the support for authoritarian regimes in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which undermines the stated commitment to democracy (Smith, 2020).

Intersectional Feminism: Centering Marginalized Voices

Intersectional feminism, pioneered by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) and further developed in her recent work (Crenshaw, 2023), provides a critical lens for analyzing how American statecraft intersects with systems of oppression based on race, class, gender, and other identities. Intersectionality emphasizes that these systems are not separate but interconnected, creating unique experiences of marginalization for individuals who occupy multiple oppressed identities. In the context of American statecraft, intersectional feminism reveals how policies often disproportionately harm marginalized groups. For example, U.S. sanctions on countries like Iran and Venezuela have severe gendered impacts. Women, who are often primary caregivers, bear the brunt of shortages in food, medicine, and other essentials. In Venezuela, the economic collapse exacerbated by U.S. sanctions has led to a feminization of poverty, with women comprising the majority of those living in extreme poverty (UN Women, 2022). Similarly, in Iran, sanctions have restricted access to life-saving medications, disproportionately affecting women and children (Askari, 2022).

Domestically, intersectional feminism sheds light on how statecraft reinforces racial and gender inequalities. The War on Drugs, launched in the 1980s, disproportionately targeted Black and

Latino communities, leading to mass incarceration and the destabilization of families. Black women, in particular, have been disproportionately affected, as they are more likely to be incarcerated for non-violent drug offenses and face harsher sentencing than their white counterparts (Alexander, 2020). Similarly, immigration policies under the Trump administration, such as family separations at the U.S.-Mexico border, had devastating impacts on women and children, many of whom were fleeing gender-based violence in their home countries (HRW, 2021).

Synthesizing Critical Realism and Intersectional Feminism

The integration of critical realism and intersectional feminism provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing American statecraft. Critical realism exposes the structural forces and ideologies that drive statecraft, while intersectional feminism centers the experiences of those most affected by these policies. Together, they reveal the interplay between macro-level structures and micro-level experiences, offering a holistic understanding of statecraft's complexities. For instance, the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic can be analyzed through this dual framework. Critical realism highlights the structural failures such as underfunded public health systems and profit-driven healthcare that exacerbated the crisis. Intersectional feminism reveals how these failures disproportionately impacted marginalized groups, such as Black and Latino communities, who faced higher rates of infection and death due to systemic inequities (CDC, 2023). Similarly, the Biden administration's climate policies can be critiqued for their reliance on market-based solutions, which fail to address the root causes of environmental degradation and disproportionately harm Indigenous communities and people of color (Sachs, 2023).

Applying the Framework to Case Studies

The theoretical framework is applied to three case studies in this research: the Iraq War, the U.S. COVID-19 response, and U.S.-China trade policy. In the case of the Iraq War, critical realism reveals how the military-industrial complex and the ideology of American exceptionalism drove the invasion, while intersectional feminism highlights the gendered impacts of the war, such as the displacement of women and children and the rise in gender-based violence (Gopal, 2021). In the case of the COVID-19 response, critical realism exposes the structural inequities in the U.S. healthcare system, while intersectional feminism centers the experiences of frontline workers, many of whom were women of color, and the disproportionate impact on marginalized communities (CDC, 2023).

Finally, in the case of U.S.-China trade policy, critical realism analyzes the structural forces of globalization and neoliberalism that have driven economic policies, while intersectional feminism examines the gendered and racialized impacts of these policies, such as the exploitation of female factory workers in China and the displacement of workers in the U.S. (Cypher, 2023).

Findings and Discussion 4.1 Domestic Findings

Domestically, U.S. statecraft has yielded uneven outcomes. Healthcare reforms under the ACA reduced uninsured rates but failed to address systemic inequities, as evidenced by maternal mortality rates for Black women remaining three times higher than for white women (CDC, 2023). Labor policies favoring gig economy corporations like Uber have denied millions of workers basic benefits, exacerbating precarity (Srnicek, 2023).

Globally, U.S. climate policy exemplifies contradictions. While the U.S. has pledged 11.4 billion annually for climate finance, it has delivered only 2.8 billion, undermining its credibility as a global leader (OECD, 2023). The strategic rivalry with China, marked by tech decoupling and semiconductor bans, risks global recession and exacerbates geopolitical tensions (IMF, 2023).

Human Impact Synthesis

The human impact of American statecraft is deeply paradoxical. While initiatives like PEPFAR have saved millions of lives, military interventions and sanctions have caused immense suffering. This duality underscores the need for a more ethical and accountable approach to statecraft, one that prioritizes human security over geopolitical interests.

Conclusion

American statecraft is a double-edged sword, capable of both uplifting and devastating human lives. Its historical evolution, theoretical underpinnings, and practical implications reveal a complex interplay of power, ideology, and ethics. To realign statecraft with human security, policymakers must prioritize transparency, reparative justice, and multilateral cooperation.

Recommendations

To ensure that American statecraft adheres to ethical standards, all foreign and domestic policies should undergo mandatory human rights impact assessments (HRIAs). These assessments would evaluate the potential consequences of policies on vulnerable populations, including women, children, racial minorities, and low-income communities. For example, before imposing economic sanctions on a country like Iran or Venezuela, the U.S. government should assess how these sanctions might affect access to food, medicine, and other essentials for civilians.

Ethical audits should also be applied to domestic policies, such as criminal justice reforms and immigration enforcement. For instance, the War on Drugs disproportionately targeted Black and Latino communities, leading to mass incarceration and the destabilization of families. An ethical audit would require policymakers to consider the racial and socioeconomic impacts of such policies before implementation. This approach aligns with the principles of intersectional feminism, which emphasize the interconnected nature of systems of oppression.

Establish an independent oversight body, such as a Commission on Ethical Statecraft, to conduct HRIAs and ensure accountability. This body should include representatives from civil society, academia, and affected communities.

Decolonize Aid and Development Programs

U.S. foreign aid and development programs often reflect a top-down approach that prioritizes American interests over the needs of recipient countries. To decolonize these programs, the U.S. should adopt a participatory development model that empowers local communities to define their own priorities and solutions. For example, instead of imposing conditional aid that requires recipient countries to adopt specific economic policies, the U.S. should provide unrestricted funding that allows communities to address their most pressing needs, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

This approach would also involve reevaluating the role of international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which have been criticized for promoting neoliberal policies that exacerbate inequality in the Global South. The U.S. should advocate for reforms that prioritize human security over profit, such as debt relief for low-income countries and increased funding for public services. Partner with local NGOs and

community-based organizations to design and implement development programs. Ensure that at least 50% of funding is allocated to projects led by local actors.

Regulate Technology and Protect Digital Rights

The rise of Silicon Valley and the global dominance of U.S. tech companies like Meta, Google, and Amazon have raised concerns about privacy, data sovereignty, and the erosion of local cultures. To address these issues, the U.S. should implement comprehensive tech regulations that prioritize human rights over corporate profits. This includes breaking up tech monopolies, enforcing data privacy laws, and holding companies accountable for harmful practices such as algorithmic bias and the spread of misinformation.

Additionally, the U.S. should promote digital sovereignty by supporting policies that allow countries to regulate tech companies operating within their borders. This would help to counter the dominance of U.S. tech giants and ensure that local communities have control over their digital ecosystems.

Enact legislation such as the Digital Bill of Rights, which would establish clear guidelines for data privacy, algorithmic transparency, and corporate accountability. Create an international coalition to promote digital sovereignty and regulate cross-border data flows.

Climate Reparations and Just Transition Policies

As the largest historical emitter of greenhouse gases, the U.S. has a moral obligation to address the climate crisis and support vulnerable communities affected by its consequences. This includes providing climate reparations to low-income countries in the Global South, which bear the brunt of climate change despite contributing the least to its causes. The U.S. should fulfill its commitment to provide \$11.4 billion annually in climate finance, as pledged under the Paris Agreement, and ensure that this funding is used for adaptation and mitigation projects in the most affected regions.

Domestically, the U.S. should implement just transition policies that prioritize the needs of workers and communities dependent on fossil fuel industries. This includes investing in renewable energy, retraining programs, and social safety nets to ensure that no one is left behind in the transition to a green economy. Introduce a fossil fuel tax to generate revenue for climate reparations and just transition programs. Establish a Global Climate Fund to distribute resources equitably and transparently.

Reform Military and Security Policies

The U.S. military-industrial complex has driven decades of interventionist policies that have caused widespread suffering and destabilization. To address this, the U.S. should adopt a restraint-based foreign policy that prioritizes diplomacy and conflict prevention over military intervention. This includes ending support for authoritarian regimes, such as Saudi Arabia, and reducing arms sales to conflict zones. Additionally, the U.S. should reform its use of drone warfare and extrajudicial killings, which have resulted in significant civilian casualties and violated international law. All military operations should be subject to rigorous oversight and accountability mechanisms, including independent investigations into civilian harm and reparations for victims. Establish a Department of Peacebuilding to focus on conflict prevention and resolution.

Require congressional approval for all military interventions and arms sales.

Strengthen Multilateralism and Global Cooperation

In an increasingly interconnected world, the challenges facing humanity—such as climate change, pandemics, and economic inequality—require collective solutions. The U.S. should recommit to multilateralism and strengthen its engagement with international institutions like the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the World Trade Organization. This includes paying its dues in full and supporting reforms that make these institutions more inclusive and representative of Global South voices. The U.S. should also lead efforts to address global inequality by advocating for fair trade policies, debt relief, and increased funding for global public goods like vaccines and clean energy.

Appoint a Special Envoy for Global Cooperation to coordinate U.S. efforts in multilateral forums. Increase funding for international organizations and initiatives that promote global equity and sustainability.

Center Marginalized Voices in Policymaking

To ensure that American statecraft is truly inclusive, policymakers must actively center the voices of marginalized communities in decision-making processes. This includes creating advisory councils composed of representatives from racial minorities, women, LGBTQ+ communities, and other marginalized groups. These councils would provide input on policies affecting their communities and hold policymakers accountable for addressing systemic inequalities.

Establish a National Council on Equity and Inclusion to advise the president and Congress on policies related to race, gender, and socioeconomic inequality. Ensure that all federal agencies have diversity and inclusion officers to monitor and address disparities.

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