A CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

NATIONAL SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS OPERATION CONDOR

Thomas Plomp (6258670)

Maarten Paulusse (supervisor)

Thesis BA History (GE3V14054)

Date: 24 – 01 - 2021

Word count: 7964 words

Abstract

In the 1970s and 1980s, eight South American right-wing dictatorships cooperated in a clandestine state terror network called 'Operation Condor.' They abducted, tortured, and murdered students, journalists, and political opponents of whom it was thought or claimed to be communists. The United States played a central role in this campaign by covertly facilitating military training, financial help and communication services to the regimes in the context of the Cold War. Despite supporting these gross human rights violations, the 1970s were also a turning point for American foreign policy as human rights were considered increasingly important. This thesis elaborates on this complex relationship between national security and human rights during the Ford administration (1974 – 1977) by analysing the influence of the foreign policy decision-making process. This process has been analysed both at the level of the state, using the rational actor model (RAM), as well as at the level of key individuals using the bureaucratic politics model (BPM). In contrast to existing literature, these models have not been considered as opposites but as complementary. This approach differs fundamentally on three points from previous research: (1) the focus on the underlying process of foreign policy instead of the outcome, (2) its influence on the changing relationship between national security and human rights, and (3) by an analysis of new key actors and primary resources.

Key words: Operation Condor, Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM), Rational Actor, Bureaucratic Politics, United States, Latin America, National Security, Human Rights

Index

Introduction……………………………………………………………………………………...4

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework…………………………………………………………...7

Chapter 2: Historical Context………………………………………………………………….11

2.1 A Cold War in Latin America………………..……..…...……………………………..11

2.2 A contradictory Condor policy…..……………………...………………………………...13

Chapter 3: National Security and Human Rights as a Rational Choice.………………………………15

3.1 A conflict of interests…………………………………………………………………...15

3.2 From a passive approach to a massive impact……………………………………………16

3.3 But what to choose?..18

Chapter 4: The Politics of U.S. Condor Policy...………………………………………………………19

4.1 Perceptions, preferences, and positions that shape policy……………………………...19

4.2 It is all about impact……………………………………………………………………….21

4.3 Kissinger as game changer……………………………………………………………..22

Conclusion.…………………………………………………………..…………………………23

Bibliography……………………………………………………………………………………...25

Introduction

On September 21, 1976, the most infamous act of international terrorism to take place in Washington D.C. prior to 9/11 claimed the life of Orlando Letelier. The former Chilean ambassador to the United States was on his way to work accompanied by his American colleague Ronni and her husband Michael Moffit, when suddenly their car was lifted off the ground by a bomb. The assassination was the last of many attempts to silence Letelier because of his strong support for Salvador Allende, the first democratically elected Marxist president of Latin America. Letelier served under Allende's administration as an ambassador in 1971 and as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Interior Minister, and Defence Minister in 1973. However, that same year, he was imprisoned in the *Tierra del Fuego* after the *coup d'état* staged by general Augusto Pinochet and later went into exile in the U.S. From there, he became the leading voice of resistance against the Chilean dictator and his regime and lobbied governments around the world to condemn Pinochet. However, with Letelier's murder on Embassy Row – the hub for all foreign diplomats in the U.S. – Pinochet made it clear that anyone considering involvement in Chilean affairs should think twice.

The assassination was part of a broader South American campaign of political violence and state terror in the 1970s and 1980s, called Operation Condor. Eight right-wing dictatorships participated in this clandestine network and cooperated to remain in power by abducting, torturing, and murdering students, journalists, and political opponents, who were thought to be communists.[1] At any moment, a person could be taken from the street, transported to a clandestine detention centre – extermination camp – and never return, remaining forever one of the *Desaparecidos* (The Disappeared).[2] The regimes were able to violate the human rights of their own and neighbouring citizens on such a massive scale because their intelligence agencies exchanged information on prospective victims. On top of that, they allowed their death squads to carry out cross-border operations without prosecution. However, this was not possible without the U.S., which covertly provided military training, financial help, and communication services to the military dictatorships, also known as juntas.[3] Thus, the U.S. not only used the threat of 'subversion' to fight Cold War communism in the Western Hemisphere but also played a central role in the success of Operation Condor.

At the same time, the 1970s also marked a turning point in American foreign policy as human rights began to be considered as increasingly important. The decade commenced with the Realpolitik of President Richard Nixon and his secretary of state Henry Kissinger from 1969 to 1974. In this form of politics, promoting human rights and democracy around the world was subordinate to protecting

[1] J Patrice McSherry, 'Operation Condor: clandestine inter-American system', *Social Justice* 26, nr. 4 (78 (1999): p. 144.
[2] Daniel Feierstein, 'Political violence in Argentina and its genocidal characteristics', *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, nr. 2 (2006): p. 149 - 168.
[3] J Patrice McSherry, 'Industrial repression' and Operación Condor in Latin America', *State violence and genocide in Latin America: the Cold War years*, 2010, p. 107.

national security and fighting communism.[4] This was in sharp contrast with the administration of President Jimmy Carter from 1977 to 1981, which made human rights the cornerstone of its foreign policy.[5] Carter even proclaimed in his inaugural address that "[o]ur commitment to human rights must be absolute."[6] Although there is still no consensus among scholars whether Carter's ideas were largely confined to rhetoric and not put into practice or really contributed to human rights across the world, his view of foreign policy was undeniably diametrically opposed to that of Nixon and Kissinger.[7] Between these two extremes, President Gerald Ford held the Oval Office. His administration and the U.S. in general were not only confronted with the launch of Operation Condor in 1975 and its most violent years, involving gruesome human rights violations, but also with deciding on how to respond to it. This thesis elaborates on the complex and changing relationship between human rights and national security in American foreign policy under Ford's presidency by answering the following research question:

'How did the foreign policy decision-making process influence the relationship between national security and human rights in U.S. foreign policy towards Operation Condor during Gerald Ford's presidency (1974 – 1977)?'

While most literature on the U.S. influence on Operation Condor relates to the U.S. support for this political oppression, the decision-making process behind it remains mostly neglected.[8] However, no conflict can be fully understood without direct consideration of the decision-making processes of important actors.[9] Revealing the cognitive processes behind decisions helps to better understand outcomes in the international arena.[10] To fill this lacuna, two models from foreign policy decision-making (FPDM) are used: the rational actor model (RAM) and the bureaucratic politics model (BPM). Both help to illuminate the dynamics of foreign policy decision-making but expose different aspects. The former considers that the state, as main actor, chooses the most value-maximising policy based on

---

[4] Asaf Siniver, 'Nixon, Kissinger, and US foreign policy making', *The machinery of crisis, Cambridge und New York*, 2008, p. 53.
[5] Michael Stohl, David Carleton, and Steven E Johnson, 'Human rights and US foreign assistance from Nixon to Carter', *Journal of Peace Research* 21, nr. 3 (1984): p. 215 - 226.
[6] Jimmy Carter, Inaugural Address, January 20 1977, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/january-20-1977-inaugural-address
[7] David Carleton and Michael Stohl, 'The foreign policy of human rights: Rhetoric and reality from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan', *Hum. Rts. Q.* 7 (1985): p. 205.
[8] See, for example, Thomas C Wright, *State terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and international human rights* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006); J Patrice McSherry, *Predatory states: Operation Condor and covert war in Latin America* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012); Emily R Steffan, 'The United States' Janus-Faced Approach to Operation Condor: Implications for the Southern Cone in 1976', 2008; and Cecilia Menjívar and Néstor Rodriguez, *When states kill: Latin America, the US, and technologies of terror* (University of Texas Press, 2009).
[9] Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr, *Understanding foreign policy decision making* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 5 - 10.
[10] Mintz and DeRouen Jr, p. 4 - 5.

a rational decision.[11] Here, it is used to examine state-level decisions by analysing the main policy options and their corresponding costs and benefits for the U.S. The latter model regards key decision makers as the most important actors, as they shape foreign policy to their own interests, goals and perceptions.[12] This model is used to investigate decisions at the individual level by analysing how multiple principal actors of the Ford administration perceived the alternatives, which option they preferred and why, and how interaction influenced the political game of foreign policy. These models have only been applied once before to Operation Condor by historian Amanda Hedman but she solely focused on decisions regarding national security and not how they related to human rights, while this is exactly the crux.[13] Moreover, unlike this study, Hedman's did not consider congressional influential or U.S. ambassadors from South America, whose interests and goals are particularly essential. In other words, this thesis sheds light on the choice faced by the U.S. and its key foreign policymakers between protecting national security and promoting human rights by focusing on new actors, thereby illuminating a previously unexplored aspect of Operation Condor.

First, the two aforementioned FPDM models and their organising concepts, strengths, and weaknesses are clarified in the theoretical framework. This chapter explains how these models relate to each other not only within the focused scientific debate around FPDM but also within the larger structure-agency debate of social sciences. Second, the origins of Operation Condor are explained in further detail and discussed in context of the Cold War to elucidate what Operation Condor was, how it originated, and what the American response entailed. This section is largely based on works by John Dinges, J. Patrice McSherry, and Peter Kornbluh, all of whom gained extensive knowledge on this topic by examining declassified documents relating to Operation Condor.[14] Chapters 3 and 4 analyse how the relationship between human rights and national security in U.S. foreign policy towards Operation Condor was influenced by the foreign policy decision-making process at the levels of the state and the individual, respectively. The results are based on an analysis of primary sources such as official policy documents, declassified diplomatic cables, and memoranda from multiple conversations with high officials of the regimes. Although the available sources provide enough information for this study, it should be noted that sources relating to Operation Condor are highly sensitive, and only some have been released by the U.S. government under the Freedom of Information Act.

---

[11] Graham T. Allison and Philip. Zelikow, *Essence of Decision : Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Longman, 2010), p. 24 - 25.

[12] Ibid., p. 294 - 295.

[13] Amanda Hedman, 'Operation Condor: The US involvement-A rational strategy or a political powerplay?', 2019.

[14] See, J Patrice McSherry, *Predatory states: Operation Condor and covert war in Latin America* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012); McSherry, 'Industrial repression'and Operación Condor in Latin America'; McSherry, 'Operation Condor: clandestine inter-American system'; Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability* (The New Press, 2016); and John Dinges, *The Condor years: how Pinochet and his allies brought terrorism to three continents* (The New Press, 2005).

Chapter 1: Theoretical framework

This thesis is based on assumptions, insights, and models from foreign policy decision-making (FPDM), which is part of a subfield of international relations called foreign policy analysis (FPA). This avenue of research seeks to understand the conduct and practice of peoples, states, and institutions as they engage with one another within a dynamic international system.[15] Within this school of thought, FPDM specifically focusses on how decisions of individuals, groups, and coalitions influence the actions of a state on the international stage.[16] This decision-making process generally includes four constituents: (1) identifying the decision problem, (2) searching for alternatives, (3) choosing an alternative, and (4) executing the alternative.[17] Although most scholars of FPDM endorse these stages, they disagree on whether or not foreign policy decisions are rational or non-rational, whether they are made by individuals, coalitions, states, or organisations, and whether they are influenced the most by interpersonal, domestic, or international factors.

Nevertheless, FPDM researchers are united in their focus on the *process* of decision-making in foreign policy, in contrast to most theories in international relations that study foreign policy as an *outcome* of decisions.[18] Even realism and liberalism, the two most ubiquitous positivist schools of thought in international relations, have a more parsimonious explanation, "one that sees decision-making as more determined than determining."[19] Since outcomes are most evident at the level of the state and the international system, realists and liberalists mainly focus on these two units of analysis.[20] When other scholars started paying more attention to the underlying processes of foreign policy in the 1960s, they also took this starting point. However, the rise of behaviouralism in that decade directed attention to the role of the individual actor as a third unit of analysis. Despite these differences in focus, FPDM regards both the state and the individual as decisive agents in the foreign policy decision-making process. As a result, FPDM is on the agency side of the broader scientific structure-agency debate in social sciences concerning whether behaviour in the social world is primarily determined by structural phenomena or agents.

The first and most well-known FPDM model for understanding foreign policy processes at the level of the state is the rational actor model (RAM). Although several scholars have designed, interpreted, and adapted this model, this thesis uses the most widely adopted and structured contribution, which is that of Allison and Zelikow in their book *Essence of Decision*.[21] They regard the nation state

---

[15] Chris Alden and Amnon Aran, *Foreign policy analysis: new approaches* (Taylor & Francis, 2016), p. 2 - 3.
[16] Mintz and DeRouen Jr, *Understanding foreign policy decision making,* p. 3.
[17] James A Robinson and Richard C Snyder, 'Decision-making in international politics', *International behavior: A social-psychological analysis*, 1965, p. 437.
[18] See, for example, Robinson en Snyder; Alden and Aran; and Mintz and DeRouen Jr..
[19] Steve Smith, 'Theories of foreign policy: an historical overview', *Review of International Studies* 12, nr. 1 (1986): p. 14.
[20] J David Singer, 'The level-of-analysis problem in international relations', *World Pol.* 14 (1961): p. 77.
[21] Graham T. Allison and Philip. Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Longman, 2010).

as a "unitary value-maximising actor" that makes the most rational choice within specified constraints.[22] This implies that all policymakers have the same goal, which is to increase the nation's military security, preserve the integrity of its political life, and protect the well-being of its people. They achieve this by considering various solutions with the associated costs and benefits to a specified foreign policy problem, ranking them from most to least preferred and selecting the option that benefits the state most.

Allison and Zelikow developed three organising concepts for applying the RAM to specific cases. The first concept is the **unified national actor**, which must be specified in order to clearly establish who makes the decision.[23] This actor can be *generic* (e.g. a democracy or a monarchy), *identified* (e.g. France or China), or *personified* (e.g. Stalin or Hitler). The second organising concept is the **problem**, the strategic international challenge that the state faces and has to act upon.[24] The third concept is the **action as rational choice**, which consists of four components: the objectives, the options, the consequences and the choice.[25] The objectives include national interests such as promoting trade, ensuring national security, and disseminating political values. The options cover all potential alternatives that a state can employ to reach these objectives. The consequences are the costs and benefits associated with each option. Finally, the choice involves the rational selection of the option whose consequences are closest to the objective of the state.

However, Allison and Zelikow argued that scholars of FPDM should analyse foreign policy decisions not only at the level of the state but also from the level of individuals by using the bureaucratic politics model (BPM). Since foreign policy affects multiple bureaucracies, differences can arise between the goals of key figures that preside over these organisations.[26] Therefore, this model "sees no unitary actor but rather many actors as players … who not focus on a single strategic issue but on many diverse intra-national problems as well."[27] Thus, the idea of an overarching foreign policy master plan of a nation state is an illusion; rather, foreign policy decision are the result of many different actors with interacting interests all bargaining for the most influence to advance their own goals and agendas.[28] Moreover, the position that an individual occupies (e.g. president or ambassador) determines their interests and, thus, their stance in relation to the problem. Therefore, it is important to map out the political game using the BPM.

---

[22] Ibid., p. 17 - 18.
[23] Ibid., p. 24.
[24] Ibidem.
[25] Ibidem.
[26] Ibid., p. 257.
[27] Lawrence Freedman, 'Logic, politics and foreign policy processes: a critique of the bureaucratic politics model', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 52, nr. 3 (1976): p. 435.
[28] Alex Mintz and Amnon Sofrin, 'Decision Making Theories in Foreign Policy Analysis', in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2017, p. 4.

Allison and Zelikow developed four organising concepts for applying the BPM. First, it is important to map out **who plays** the political game and, therefore, has interests in shaping foreign policy.[29] The players are often people who hold key positions concerning action on national security issues. These can be divided hierarchically into *chiefs* (e.g. the resident or the secretary of the treasury), their *staffers*, *permanent government officials* of a certain department and *ad hoc* players (e.g. influential members of Congress and ambassadors). Second, the **factors that shape the players' perceptions, preferences, and stand on the issue at hand** must be ascertained.[30] On the one hand, the position held by a key player sets certain professional goals that he or she needs to achieve. On the other, personal goals and interests such as political beliefs, domestic political interests, and organisational interests can also play a role. These two types of factors influence what they think is at stake and their stand in relation to the problem. The last factor, which can shape the face of the problem itself, is the effect of crises, important public speeches or summits, and deadlines that demand immediate action. The third organising concept is **what determines each player's impact on the results,** as differences can arise because of bargaining advantages, individuals' skill and will in using these advantages, and how this is perceived by other players.[31] Finally, the knowledge obtained by applying the first three organising concepts helps to formulate **what the game is**.[32]

In this study, the organising concepts of both the RAM and the BPM are used to explain how the decision-making process affected the relationship between human rights and national security in U.S. foreign policy regarding Operation Condor. Thus, this thesis fits into the structure-agency debate by emphasising agency in analysing decisions of the state and key players. Although it recognises the importance of structures in foreign policy behaviour, these are simply not the subject of this study. It also fits into the smaller FPDM debate about whether the unit of analysis should be the state or the individual. However, in contrast to much of the FPDM literature, which sees the RAM and BPM as opposites, this thesis considers them complementary. Since both have advantages that are not mutually exclusive, it is useful to combine them. The RAM is valuable for analysing general and long-term trends in a state's foreign policy behaviour, whereas the BPM helps to reveal details regarding the influence of its statesmen.[33] The thesis, thus, makes a relevant theoretical contribution because it shows that future studies can use FPDM to analyse cases on both levels.

However, this does not mean these models are without limitations. A pitfall of the RAM is that it aims to explain a choice among several options but does not consider how these options are initially specified.[34] Moreover, political scientist Herbert Simon rightly argued that the rationality of states is

---

[29] Allison en Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, p. 296.
[30] Ibid., p. 298 - 300.
[31] Ibid., p. 300.
[32] Ibid., p. 300 - 304.
[33] Smith, 'Theories of foreign policy: an historical overview'.
[34] Donald A Sylvan en James F Voss, *Problem representation in foreign policy decision-making* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 3.

bound by the fact that both individuals and organisations never possess all the information needed.[35] He also emphasised that decision makers fall prey to their own biases, which makes the RAM a simplification that lacks depth. Although this justified criticism can never be completely resolved, the BPM emphasises that key players do not think rationally but are guided by their perception and professional, personal, and organisational goals. However, this model has been criticised too for being too comprehensive and, therefore, too complicated.[36] To map out the political game entirely, one would have to analyse all stakeholders and be able to interpret their perceptions without having access to all this information. While acknowledging this criticism, this thesis still makes a valuable contribution by analysing both the U.S. and the key individuals of the political game to understand the influence of the decision-making process on American foreign policy regarding Operation Condor.

[35] Herbert A Simon, 'Human nature in politics: The dialogue of psychology with political science', *American political science review* 79, nr. 2 (1985): p. 293 - 304.
[36] Robert J Art, 'Bureaucratic politics and American foreign policy: A critique', *Policy Sciences* 4, nr. 4 (1973): p. 467 - 490.

Chapter 2: Historical Context

2.1 A Cold War in Latin America

The origins of Operation Condor date back to the period just after the Second World War. On April 25, 1945, in Torgau on the Elbe, Soviets and Americans shook hands and congratulated each other on their victory over Nazi Germany. However, the defeat of their common enemy exposed their differences in the years that followed. The former allies could not agree on how to ensure security in post-war Europe and did not allow each other any influence in the rest of the world. This resulted in the ideological and geopolitical struggle that was the Cold War. Central to U.S. foreign policy during this conflict was the Truman Doctrine, a policy to thwart the spread of communism by which the U.S. economically and financially supported nations that felt threatened by the Soviet Union.[37] On March 12, 1947, then President Truman substantiated this idea in a speech by declaring that: "at the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life."[38] In his view, nations could either belong to the First World, represented by the U.S. and its NATO allies, or the Second World, which included the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries. Although these two diametrically opposed superpowers did not enter into major direct combat themselves, the worldwide polarisation that they created led to internal and regional conflicts for many other countries across the world.

One area that became a battlefield in this struggle was Latin America. This continent was particularly prone to international turmoil due to its existing domestic economic, political and social texture. First, all Latin American countries witnessed, to some extent, a wave of political liberalisation in 1945 and 1946. This allowed for more political mobilisation and participation than had been possible in previous years, which had been marked by military-backed dictatorships.[39] However, this freedom was accompanied by increasing discontent among the rapidly growing urban working class, whose wages remained low while inflation grew.[40] This resulted in the widespread expansion of union memberships, labour strikes, and, most notably, increasing prominence of communist parties. All states, except Guatemala and Argentina, responded between 1946 and 1948 with strong anti-strike legislation and repression of popular mobilisation.[41] As the political right associated labour militancy with popular political mobilisation by communist parties, they declared all communist actions illegal, revolutionary, and 'subversive', thereby regaining greater institutional and ideological control themselves. Nevertheless, this backlash did not mean the end of communism on the continent.

---

[37] John Lewis Gaddis, 'Was the Truman Doctrine a Real Turning Point?', *Foreign Affairs* 52, nr. 2 (1974): p. 386 - 402.
[38] Harry S Truman, 'The truman doctrine', 1947.
[39] Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough, 'Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War: Some Reflections on the 1945-8 Conjuncture', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 20, nr. 1 (1988): p. 167 - 189.
[40] Hal Brands, *Latin America's cold war* (Harvard University Press, 2010).
[41] Bethell and Roxborough, 'Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War: Some Reflections on the 1945-8 Conjuncture'.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, communism saw a surge in popularity and even a revival in a number of Latin-American countries, prompting several right-wing dictatorships in the Southern Cone to cooperate in the form of Operation Condor. In Guatemala, for example, the social democrat Jacob Arbenz Guzmán remained in power until 1954 and tried to rectify income inequality through land reforms. Moreover, in 1959, Fidel Castro managed to turn Cuba into a communist state after a successful revolution that lasted five and a half years. In 1970, in Chile, the aforementioned Salvador Allende even became the first democratically elected socialist president in the region. The right-wing dictatorships of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and, to a lesser extent, Ecuador and Peru became increasingly concerned with these developments and officially established Operation Condor on November 26 ,1975 at the 'First Inter-American Meeting of National Intelligence' in Santiago de Chile. The dictators and their security services agreed to cooperate more closely to eliminate the communist 'subversives' once and for all. Manuel Contreras, chief of the Chilean Directorate of National Intelligence, argued that: "subversion … does not recognize borders nor countries, and its infiltration is penetrating every level of national life." [42] Consequently, they laid the foundations for a state terror network that would not only eradicate communists but also would murder other kinds of political opponents on a massive and systematic basis.

The practice of Operation Condor consisted of three different phases, which can be classified from least to most covert. Phase I involved the mutual exchange of intelligence information through a secret communications system to keep track of targeted dissidents and the storage of this information in a data bank.[43] Each of the secret services collected intelligence from sources in military branches, the police, and right-wing civilians.[44] Once the movements and whereabouts of political targets were known, Phase II came into effect. This involved the conduct of cross-border operations by multinational death squads and squadrons.[45] Their activities included various forms of offensive unconventional warfare, such as kidnapping, torturing, and making people 'disappear', a euphemism for killing people by, for example, throwing them out of an airplane alive above the ocean.[46] In this phase of concerted action and, literally as well as figuratively, boundless collaboration, Condor destroyed the leadership and infrastructure of the communist Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR) in Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Argentina.[47] However, its most clandestine operations took place in Phase III, which saw the elimination of political leaders outside Latin America. Although the goal was to prevent these political enemies from mobilising world opinion or setting up a broad opposition campaign, the murder of Orlando Letelier was counterproductive in draw attention to their cooperation.

[42] Dinges, *The Condor years: how Pinochet and his allies brought terrorism to three continents*, p. 12.
[43] Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability* (The New Press, 2016), p. 190.
[44] J Patrice McSherry, *Predatory states: Operation Condor and covert war in Latin America* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), p. 4.
[45] McSherry, p. 107.
[46] Feierstein, 'Political violence in Argentina and its genocidal characteristics', p. 166.
[47] Kornbluh, *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability.*

2.2 A contradictory Condor policy

The success of the right-wing regimes in Latin America in the years prior to Operation Condor would not have been possible without American financial and military support. First, the CIA financed rightist opposition campaigns and purchased small networks of media outlets, which facilitated the juntas' rise to power, resulting in a wave of *coups d'état.* In the months that followed, they received economic assistance and military aid, which enabled them to pay their debts.[48] In addition, the Department of Defense trained more than 70,000 Latin American army officers in the U.S., the Panama Canal Zone, and South America during the 1960s and 1970s.[49] The most notorious training operations were the School of Americas and the Southern Command School, which taught officers the most effective torture techniques. The latter even became known as the 'School of Assassins' because its graduates made extraordinary use of these methods during Operation Condor.[50] Moreover, they taught the National Security Doctrine (NSD), which made national security the yardstick by which all policies were measured. [51] Using this interpretative framework, the regimes were able to portray left-wing opposition movements, and even general progressives, as a threat to national security and to justify varying degrees of excessive violence. As a result, human rights fell victim to the danger communism posed to internal and regional security.

In addition to providing financial and military help, the U.S. also played an important role during Operation Condor by managing a secret and secure communication system from the Panama Canal Zone. This parent station was in contact with the Interior Ministries of the Condor countries, which exchanged background information about possible suspects, tracked their locations, and informed the operational teams.[52] Again, the CIA was involved, as its logistics department had created a special machine for this telex system, also known as CONDORTEL, which could encode and decode intelligence messages. This revealed, surprisingly, that Manuel Contreras, the man who hosted the official formation of Operation Condor in 1975, was a CIA asset from 1974 to 1977.[53] While no more information is available on the influence of the CIA, CONDORTEL shows that the U.S. played a critical role in the success of this state terror network.

At the same time, however, U.S. Congress passed a series of legislation during Ford's presidency that linked American military and economic support for other nations to human rights. This started with the amendment, in December 1974, of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which added section 502(b) prohibiting the U.S. government from selling military weapons or equipment or providing

---

[48] Kornbluh, p.85.

[49] Wright, *State terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and international human rights,* p. 25.

[50] Ibidem.

[51] David Pion-Berlin, "The National Security Doctrine, Military Threat Perception, and the 'Dirty War' in Argentina", *Comparative Political Studies* 21, nr. 3 (1988), p. 385.

[52] McSherry, *Predatory states: Operation Condor and covert war in Latin America.*

[53] Barbara Zanchetta, 'Between Cold War Imperatives and State-Sponsored Terrorism: The United States and "Operation Condor"', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39, nr. 12 (2016): p. 1093.

security assistance to nations that abused human rights.[54] Another important adjustment was the Hughes-Ryan Amendment, which required the president to report all covert operations of the CIA to Congress.[55] In order to retain control over the momentum of human rights in U.S. foreign policy, in 1975, the State Department appointed a number of human rights officers, at least one of whom was posted to each of the five geographic offices. However, this turned out not to be enough, resulting in of the most visible changes in U.S. government with the creation of the assistant secretary for human rights and humanitarian affairs, a position that was first held by James W. Wilson from November 29, 1976. The last important development during the Ford years was the mandating by Congress of annual human rights reports per country to continue emphasising the issue in American foreign policy.

[54] William Michael Schmidli, 'Institutionalizing Human Rights in US Foreign Policy: US-Argentine Relations, 1976–1980', *Diplomatic History* 35, nr. 2 (2011): p. 364 - 365.
[55] Harvey G Zeidenstein, 'The Reassertion of Congressional Power: New Curbs on the President', *Political Science Quarterly* 93, nr. 3 (1978): p. 398.

Chapter 3: National Security and Human Rights as a Rational Choice

This chapter analyses the decision-making process of U.S. foreign policy towards Operation Condor at the level of the state. The organising concepts of the rational actor model (RAM), outlined in Chapter 1, are used to explain the outcomes of foreign policy described in Chapter 2.

First, in this study the *unified rational actor* is the U.S. under the Ford administration from August 9, 1974 to January 20, 1977. On the state continuum of *generic* to *personified*, this actor lies in between as an *identified* state. It is not generic because the selection of the U.S. provides more specific information about foreign policy goals than general interests, such as cooperating with other democracies, only. It is also not personified in terms of representing only one person because the entire administration is regarded as actor. However, the state's identity, consisting of its own political culture and history, produces certain (mis)perceptions that steer towards options and estimates on consequences.[56] As one of the two superpowers of the Cold War, its foreign policy decisions must be seen in the light of its increased mistrust of leftist governments and the will to protect its own national security.

3.1 A conflict of interests

The increased cooperation between the various dictatorships in the years prior to and during Operation Condor created a *strategic problem* for the U.S. An actor experiences such a problem when it is confronted with threats and opportunities regarding an international issue that demands action.[57] According to Ford's two assistant secretaries for inter-American affairs, William Rogers and Harry Shlaudeman, the (counter-)terror created two such major challenges to America. First, it exposed the profound ideological differences in the region, the broader implications of which, , were disturbing" for the U.S. and future trends in the hemisphere. [58] Specifically, it instigated violence by both the regimes and guerrilla organisations, thereby disrupting regional stability and threatening national security. Second, it aggravated human rights violations and resulted in 'disappearances' of opposition figures. Rogers claimed that these threats, taken together, "could well become a test case of the Department's intensions in the human rights field."[59] This was because the U.S. maintained strong bilateral relationships with the Southern Cone countries and not acting would have meant a loss of credibility.

Consequently, the U.S. had to balance a wide variety of *objectives* in the region. Apart from the need to protect its economic interests, such as selling weapons and equipment to the regimes as part of

---

[56] Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, p. 23.

[57] Ibid., p. 24.

[58] 'Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Shlaudeman) to Secretary of State Kissinger' (Washington, August 3, 1976), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 238.

[59] 'Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rogers) to Secretary of State Kissinger'(Washington, August 5, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 199.

its Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme, the most "vexing" friction was between protecting national security and promoting human rights.[60] The Interdepartmental Group for Political-Military Affairs explicated the first objective by stating that the single most important national goal was to keep the U.S. independent and free by discouraging conflict around the world or, if there was no other option, "to terminate conflict on terms advantageous of the U.S."[61] Given the extreme ideological polarisation in Latin America, the former would have been almost impossible. However, the latter was at odds with the second objective: a foreign policy that promoted and increased "respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."[62] Furthermore, security assistance programmes had to avoid identifying themselves with governments that violated international law.[63] It was for the U.S. to decide how to combine these interests in the most value-maximising way.

3.2 From a passive approach to a massive impact

The U.S. had four *options* with associated *consequences* to balance national security and human rights within a foreign policy toward authoritarian regimes. These options are outlined in a paper drafted by the Ford administration in October 1984 and have been applied to the case. The first option was to *maintain the status quo* by continuing to publicly express concern for human rights in extreme situations worldwide and trying to resolve this bilaterally through quiet diplomacy and informal channels.[64] This would entail speaking out against human rights violations in South America in general but not publicly addressing any country specifically in order to avoid trouble with the regimes. The U.S. ambassador to Uruguay, Ernest Siracusa, favoured this option because pressure on the regimes would be counterproductive whereas "quiet, understanding diplomatic representations" would guarantee national security.[65] Furthermore, this option would enable America to continue exerting influence in the region by imposing the NSD through the School of Americas without being directly involved in the operation. However, it would erode military and economic appropriations domestically and have little impact on the poor human rights situation.

Second, the U.S. could take a more *passive approach* by expressing merely general support for the idea of protecting human rights worldwide without interfering bilaterally with how other

---

[60] 'Briefing Paper on Human Rights' (Washington, undated), in: *Documents on Global Issues 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-3),* doc.no. 264.

[61] 'Study Prepared by the Interdepartmental Group for Political-Military Affairs' (Washington, undated), in: *National Security Policy 1973 - 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume XXXV*), doc.no. 103.

[62] 'Address by Secretary of State Kissinger' (Lusaka, April 27, 1976), in: *Foundations of Foreign Policy 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume XXXVIII, Part 1),* doc.no.77.

[63] 'Briefing Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance (Maw) to Secretary of State Kissinger' (Washington, April 13, 1976), in *Documents on Global Issues 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-3),* doc.no. 258.

[64] Summary of Paper on Policies on Human Rights and Authoritarian Regimes, Washington, October 1984.

[65] 'Memorandum of Conversation' (Montevideo, January 27, 1976), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 347.

governments treated their citizens.[66] This would mean not making public or private statements about the atrocities of Condor. Also, it would mean the end of the School of Americas, as its usefulness was not immediately apparent. On the one hand, it would cause minimum difficulty with the regimes, who would have a green light to do whatever they wanted, but on the other hand, and more importantly, it would belie its own objectives. Without some kind of influence, not only would the U.S. be unable to establish a dialogue to improve the human rights situation, Latin American dependence on America would also be reduced. This would give the Soviet Union free rein to spread communism in the region, as happened in Peru.[67] Finally, it would cause an outcry from human rights advocates, who could claim that the U.S. was ignoring international law.[68] Multilaterally this would have far-reaching consequences, as U.S. credibility would come into question.

The third option was to make a *selective change* by modestly modifying expressions of concern for protection of human rights worldwide.[69] This would clarify that the U.S. would not acquiesce in the oppression of human rights but would decide "what is the most practical and effective thing to do in each case."[70] This option would create a potential for contradiction that could be received well in the short term but poorly in the long run. Bilaterally, the U.S. could officially disapprove of extreme violations of human rights but still fully cooperate in the security domain. On the one hand, the U.S. could not only guarantee national security by imposing the NSD through the School of Americas but also covertly facilitate the newest technology and telecommunications systems in the Panama Canal Zone, thereby maximising its own influence. On the other hand, it could choose to publicly deprecate cases such as the 'missing 119' or Chile's banning of visits from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Working Group visits, which had sought to map out the human rights situation.[71] As a result, domestic and international criticism would be ameliorated, the atmosphere for FMS legislation improved, and national security protected.

The last option was to take a *major initiative* by speaking out against and dealing more even-handedly with violations by adversaries, neutrals or friends worldwide and bilaterally urging the speediest possible restoration of democracy and peace.[72] Shlaudeman called this option in the case of

---

[66] 'Summary of Paper on Policies on Human Rights and Authoritarian Regimes' (Washington, October 1984), in: *Documents on Global Issues 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-3)*, doc.no. 243.
[67] 'Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Shlaudeman) to Secretary of State Kissinger' (Washington, August 3, 1976), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 238.
[68] Ibid.
[69] 'Summary of Paper on Policies on Human Rights and Authoritarian Regimes' (Washington, October 1984), in: *Documents on Global Issues 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-3)*, doc.no. 243.
[70] Ibid.
[71] 'Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rogers), the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations (McCloskey), and the Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs (Vest) to Secretary of State Kissinger' (Washington, September 20, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 200.
[72] 'Summary of Paper on Policies on Human Rights and Authoritarian Regimes' (Washington, October 1984), in: *Documents on Global Issues 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-3)*, doc.no. 243.

Condor, taking "the politics and ideology out of human rights." He believed this was possible through increased multilateral cooperation via the Inter-American Human Rights Commission.[73] However, the juntas would feel beleaguered and dictators would regard this as meddling with internal affairs.[74] Another consequence would be the suspension of military aid and FMS transactions, such as the sale of F-5E aircrafts and Sidewinder missiles, on the grounds that it was illegal for the regimes to use U.S. equipment against their own people.[75] Ultimately, the U.S. would be perceived by world leaders, the media, and the public as the leader of the free world but at the expense of national security interests.

3.3 But what to choose?

The U.S. had to rationally decide which one of the four policy options would deliver the most value. This was the option whose consequences corresponded with the objectives of the actor the most.[76] First, options two and four would jeopardise the main goal of ensuring and enhancing national security. Option two, the *passive approach*, would pose few problems with the regimes, but would also reduce U.S. influence in the Western Hemisphere. In the context of the Cold War, this would give the Soviet Union too much leeway to gain a foothold in South America. Option four, the *major initiative*, would do this by worsening bilateral relations with the juntas, whose support the U.S. needed to prevent regional unrest at America's border. Second, if option one, *maintaining the status quo,* was chosen, the ever-deteriorating human rights situation and its association with the U.S. would cause too much loss of international credibility. Finally, option three, *making a selective change*, would add the most value to American foreign policy regarding Condor. It enabled the government to speak out publicly against the atrocities, and thereby silencing human rights critics. At the same time, it was an opportunity to expand regional influence by increasing dependence on America, albeit in secret.

---

[73] 'Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Shlaudeman) to Secretary of State Kissinger' (Washington, August 3, 1976), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 238.

[74] 'Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rogers) to Secretary of State Kissinger'(Washington, August 5, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 199.

[75] 'Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rogers), the Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs (Vest), and the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations (McCloskey) to Secretary of State Kissinger' (Washington, March 4, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 184.

[76] Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of decision: Explaining the Cuban missile crisis,* p. 24.

Chapter 4: The Politics of U.S. Condor Policy

This chapter analyses the underlying decision-making process of U.S. foreign policy towards Operation Condor at the level of the individual. The organising concepts of the bureaucratic politics model (BPM), outlined in Chapter 1, are used to explain the outcomes of foreign policy described in Chapter 2.

The political game of U.S. foreign policy decision-making towards Operation Condor involved many actors, three of which were particularly important but also extremely different. The first of these was Henry Kissinger, part of the Ford administration and the executive branch, temporarily acting as national security advisor and full-time secretary of state. He was a *chief* who influenced both domestic and foreign policy because his position made him, among other things, the primary representative of the administration's foreign policy in Congress.[77] The second actor was Robert Hill, who served as a U.S. ambassador in four South American countries, including Argentina during the Ford years. As a diplomat, he was responsible for representing America and maintaining a good relationship with the Videla regime. Thus, he was not a *chief* like Kissinger but an *ad hoc player* whose importance in the foreign policy process was primarily international. The third major actor was Congressman Donald Fraser who represented Minnesota's fifth district from 1963 to 1979. Like Hill, he was an *ad hoc* player, being part of the wider government game.[78] As a congressional influential, however, his interests and impact lay mainly in domestic politics. Thus, these three players differed from each other, not only in terms of their hierarchical position but also in the primary context in which they could exert influence.

Perceptions, preferences, and positions that shape policy

One of the main reasons for the contradiction in U.S. foreign policy was Kissinger's view of Operation Condor. As a refugee from Nazi Germany, where he lost 13 relatives to the gas chambers, his idea of international politics was the preservation of balance and order at all costs. However, in his eyes, the Kennedy assassinations, the failure of the Vietnam War, and the Watergate scandal had damages America's self-confidence and credibility, endangering this balance.[79] These personal experiences, together with his professional goal of advancing the interests and safety of Americans, made Kissinger focus on national security in general. In this case, he linked the leftist opposition movements in Latin America to the Soviet Union, perceiving them as anti-American and a threat to American security.[80] Therefore, he preferred to support the regimes, no matter how unpleasant that seemed.[81] His view was that safety was at stake, not human rights, which he expressed with regard to Operation Condor as

---

[77] Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision,* p. 296 - 297.

[78] Ibid., p. 296.

[79] 'Memorandum of Conversation' (Location not indicated, December 17, 1974), in: *Foundations of Foreign Policy 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume XXXVIII, Part 1),* doc.no. 49.

[80] 'Transcript of the Secretary of State's Staff Meeting (Washington, October 6, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 203.

[81] 'Memorandum of Conversation' (Location not indicated, December 17, 1974), in: *Foundations of Foreign Policy 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume XXXVIII, Part 1),* doc.no. 49.

follows: "We try to take human rights issues into consideration as long as they do not interfere with our national security."[82] However, this response was largely diplomatic because he knew that in this case, national security and human rights were inextricably linked, as a result of which human rights came off worst.

Although Hill regarded Videla's *coup d'état* in March 1976 as very well executed, he became increasingly concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Argentina due to Operation Condor. In this, he was mainly guided by his moral compass rather than his own political, economic, or even family interests. As a highly conservative Republican and a member of one of South America's wealthiest families, condoning human rights violations would have been the rational choice.[83] However, witnessing the disappearances, torture, and assassinations of 'suspects' up close made a deep impression on him. As a diplomat, always soft on the relationship but firm in the message, he told the Argentinian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guzzetti:

> "We fully understand that Argentina is involved in an all-out struggle against subversion. There are, however, some norms which can never be put aside by governments dedicated to the rule of law. Human rights are one of them."[84]

This shows that Hill clearly preferred a more moderate policy than his Secretary of State Kissinger.

In domestic politics, human rights in U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America and Operation Condor, found an advocate in Fraser. A congressman whose attention was drawn to the problem because he no longer trusted the executive branch with promoting human rights across the world after the Vietnam War debacle and its disrespect for the authority of Congress.[85] An important event that, for him, confirmed this perception was the fact that the Ford administration did not immediately speak out strongly against Chile's cancellation of the U.N. working group visit.[86] Therefore, he took a stronger position during the Ford years and even asked in a direct conversation with Kissinger for more decency in U.S. foreign policy.[87] Finally, he emphasised that not just any country should receive military aid on requests, but that more emphasis should be placed on human rights issues.

[82] Ibid.
[83] Dinges, *The Condor years: how Pinochet and his allies brought terrorism to three continents,* p. 201.
[84] 'Telegram 3462 From the Embassy in Argentina to the Department of State' (Buenos Aires, May 25, 1976), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1973, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 45.
[85] Sarah B Snyder, '"A Call for US Leadership": Congressional Activism on Human Rights', *Diplomatic History* 37, nr. 2 (2013): p. 376; and Donald M Fraser, 'Freedom and foreign policy', *Foreign Policy*, nr. 26 (1977): p. 156 .
[86] 'Memorandum of Conversation (Washington, July 28, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 198.
[87] 'Memorandum of Conversation' (Location not indicated, December 17, 1974), in: *Foundations of Foreign Policy 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume XXXVIII, Part 1),* doc.no. 49.

It is all about impact

The impact of Kissinger and Fraser on the foreign policy process is first of all most evident on June 8, 1976, during the sixth General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS). It was here that Kissinger really spoke out against human rights abuses for the first time by stating: "No government can ignore terrorism and survive, but it is equally true that a government that tramples on the rights of its citizens denies the purpose of its existence."[88] This change in tone, although only in words and not in reality, was the result of the expectation that the Ford administration's weak human rights policy would cost votes in the 1976 presidential election; a bargaining advantage Fraser took could benefit from. Moreover, Fraser had the skill and will to increase his impact by, on behalf of the Subcommittee on International Organizations, giving more than 150 lectures examining human rights records of various countries, including of Condor.[89] Kissinger perceived this impact as significant and he had no idea how to counter Fraser because he would then "redouble his efforts for human values."[90] However, Kissinger himself possessed and used an even greater bargaining advantage because he could speak directly to all the regimes in South America on national security and human rights issues. For example, at the same OAS meeting, he warned Pinochet in advance of his speech that he did not agree with the words. He even encouraged the countries to collaborate because they were all victims of leftist groups in his eyes.[91] The fact that Pinochet even replied with "We are behind you, you are the leader, " shows that Kissinger ultimately had the most impact on U.S. foreign policy.[92]

Furthermore, a démarche – a form of diplomatic protest – from Hill to the Videla regime shows the difference in level of impact Hill and Kissinger had on each other and the foreign policy process. Although Hill had far fewer negotiating advantages because he was an *ad hoc player* instead of a *chief* like Kissinger, his will to denounce the worsening human rights situation in Argentina was certainly persistent. On May 25, 1976, he pushed the boundaries of diplomacy by drawing up an official diplomatic warning on behalf of the U.S. without permission in which he expressed his disapproval of the junta. This was an extremely rare occurrence. When Kissinger learned that Hill had drawn a line on his own, he was furious. On June 30, 1976, he spoke to his deputy secretary on the phone: "How did this happen? …What do you guys think my policy is? … You better be careful. I … consider having him transferred." This is where Hill's impact seemed to end because Kissinger, as secretary of state, could determine the careers of his diplomats. Nevertheless, it forced Kissinger, in August 1976, to send a démarche to all the other Condor countries as well. In the end, strangely, this had no impact at all, which, according to an interview by McSherry with U.S. ambassador to Paraguay Robert White, would

[88] U.S. Department of State, "Sixth General Assembly of the Organization of American States," Santiago, June 1976 (Washington, Department of State).

[89] Julie A Mertus, *Bait and switch: Human rights and US foreign policy* (Routledge, 2008), p. 29.

[90] 'Transcript of the Secretary of State's Regional Staff Meeting' (Washington, December 3, 1974), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1979 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 177.

[91] 'Memorandum of Conversation' (Santiago, June 8, 1976), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 228.

[92] Ibid.

only have been possible if the CIA had stopped it.[93] In this way, Kissinger, once again, because of his position, proved to have more impact on policy than his opponents, who advocated more attention to human rights in U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America.

Kissinger as gamechanger

The political game of foreign policy decision-making regarding Operation Condor was one in which many individuals, each with their own interests and opportunities, could change policy. With regard to the three players discussed, Kissinger, as secretary of state, was able to exert the greatest influence because, on the one hand, he was in direct contact with the regimes and, on the other, could determine the careers of his diplomats. Driven by his personal ideas about balance and order in the world, he focused on national security. However, he was met with much opposition, both internationally from his own ambassadors, including Hill, and domestically from congressional influentials, such as Fraser. This resulted in an increasingly paradoxical and contradictory foreign policy towards Condor, in which the trade-off between national security and human rights became more and more complex. 'Fortunately', in Kissinger's words, this was all "part of the game now."[94]

[93] 2 McSherry, "The Undead Ghost of Operation Condor," 8.

[94] 'Transcript of the Secretary of State's Staff Meeting (Washington, October 6, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 203.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to answer how the process of foreign policy decision-making influenced the relationship between national security and human rights in U.S. foreign policy towards Operation Condor during Gerald Ford's presidency (1974 – 1977). In this process, one or more actors choose a policy option among various alternatives to solve an international problem. The impact of the process, however, depends on which units of analysis, actors, and models are used. In this research, the process is analysed at the level of the state with the U.S. as actor by using the rational actor model (RAM) and at the level of the individual with secretary of state Kissinger, U.S. Ambassador to Argentina Hill, and Congressman Fraser as actors by using the bureaucratic politics model (BPM).

The results of the RAM analysis indicate that the U.S. had four different policy options to adjust national security and human rights to one another in a response to Operation Condor. Ford's administration could maintain the status quo, adopt a more passive approach, make a selective change, or take a major initiative in protecting human rights. Since the RAM is based on the premise that an actor makes a rational choice and selects the most beneficial option, the findings reveal that the process steered towards making a selective change. This option was the only way to ensure that the U.S. would not lose credibility in the human rights field on the one hand, and could covertly enlarge national security on the other. In practice, this meant that human rights were only publicly supported but not in reality.

Furthermore, the findings of the BPM analysis disclose that Kissinger, Hill, and Fraser pursued different national security and human rights goals. While Hill made human rights a focal point in the American relationship with Argentina, Fraser did so in domestic politics, both from personal opinion that human rights should be more respected. Kissinger, in contrast, regarded human rights subordinate to maintaining international order. From these convictions, they explored the limits of their bargaining advantages. Where Hill officially denounced the Videla regime's human rights abuses without permission and Fraser publicly exposed the weak human rights policy of Ford just before the new presidential elections, Kissinger, because of his higher position, managed to counteract these efforts and pushed through his own view. Although this explanation differs from the RAM analysis, which sees the influence of the process in rationalisation rather than politicisation, both conclude that the process put the relationship between national security and human rights at odds and made U.S. foreign policy a contradiction.

However, there are two important points of criticism of this study and research on which it is based that revolve around the two models and the primary sources. First, as stated in Chapter 1, both models are a simplification, whereas in reality, there were more objectives and options than currently presented by the RAM and more actors with their own agendas and impact than the three that are selected for the BPM. The study would have been more complete if these had also been included in the analysis. Second, this thesis only used documents from the U.S. government as primary resources

while it remains a sensitive topic in U.S. history, making the sources less reliable. For example, it would have been valuable if Kissinger's conversations with the regimes could be confirmed on the basis of Argentine of Chilean government documents. In addition, the question remains whether all information is available today or that information is still secret or destroyed. On the one hand it is striking, for example, that hardly any information is available about Ford's role in this process while he was the chief executive, but on the other it is not surprising since a large part of the documents comes from the Ford Library.

Furthermore, this thesis ought to be seen within the broader historical context and theoretical debate. First, the changing relationship between national security and human rights was not only noticeable in U.S foreign policy but in all international politics. In 1975, thirty-five countries, including the U.S. under Ford, signed the Helsinki Accords, which were part of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. At the time, it was thought that the accord revolved around security, while ten years later it turned out that it had been especially important for human rights. Second, this research shows that multiple FPDM model can be used side by side and as complementary instead of regarding them as opposites. Without the RAM it would not have become clear what different policy options the U.S. had, while without the BPM no explanation could have been given for the influence of personal values.

For further research, the influence of the foreign policy decision-making process on the presence of human rights in U.S. foreign policy towards Operation Condor could be further elucidated by investigating to what extent economic interests played a role. Again, the Foreign Relations of the United States archive can be consulted because, for example, Foreign Military Sales, not only an indicator for national security but also for economic interests, were increasingly linked to human rights during the Ford years. Moreover, it would also be valuable to compare the decision-making process under Ford and Carter to shed light on how this focus on human rights developed even further.

However, this change was to no avail for Orlando Letelier, as six weeks before Carter turned human rights into a cornerstone of foreign policy, he still fell victim to this American conflict of interests.

Bibliography

Primary sources

‘Transcript of the Secretary of State’s Staff Meeting (Washington, October 6, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 203.

‘Memorandum of Conversation’ (Santiago, June 8, 1976), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 228.

‘Transcript of the Secretary of State’s Regional Staff Meeting’ (Washington, December 3, 1974), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1979 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 177.

U.S. Department of State, “Sixth General Assembly of the Organization of American States,” Santiago, June 1976 (Washington, Department of State).

‘Telegram 3462 From the Embassy in Argentina to the Department of State’ (Buenos Aires, May 25, 1976), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1973, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 45.

‘Memorandum of Conversation (Washington, July 28, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 198.

‘Memorandum of Conversation’ (Location not indicated, December 17, 1974), in: *Foundations of Foreign Policy 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume XXXVIII, Part 1),* doc.no. 49.

‘Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rogers), the Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs (Vest), and the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations (McCloskey) to Secretary of State Kissinger’ (Washington, March 4, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 184.

‘Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rogers) to Secretary of State Kissinger’(Washington, August 5, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 199.

‘Summary of Paper on Policies on Human Rights and Authoritarian Regimes’ (Washington, October 1984), in: *Documents on Global Issues 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-3)*, doc.no. 243.

‘Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rogers), the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations (McCloskey), and the Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs (Vest) to Secretary of State Kissinger’ (Washington, September 20, 1975), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 200.

‘Summary of Paper on Policies on Human Rights and Authoritarian Regimes’ (Washington, October 1984), in: *Documents on Global Issues 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-3)*, doc.no. 243.

‘Briefing Paper on Human Rights’ (Washington, undated), in: *Documents on Global Issues 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-3),* doc.no. 264.

‘Study Prepared by the Interdepartmental Group for Political-Military Affairs’ (Washington, undated), in: *National Security Policy 1973 - 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume XXXV*), doc.no. 103.

‘Address by Secretary of State Kissinger’ (Lusaka, April 27, 1976), in: *Foundations of Foreign Policy 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume XXXVIII, Part 1),* doc.no.77.

‘Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Shlaudeman) to Secretary of State Kissinger’ (Washington, August 3, 1976), in: *Documents on South America 1973 – 1976 (FRUS, 1969 – 1976, Volume E-11, Part 2),* doc.no. 238.

Secondary sources

Alden, Chris, and Amnon Aran. *Foreign policy analysis: new approaches*. Taylor & Francis, 2016.

Allison, Graham T., and Philip. Zelikow. *Essence of Decision : Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: Longman, 2010.

Art, Robert J. ‘Bureaucratic politics and American foreign policy: A critique’. *Policy Sciences* 4, nr. 4 (1973): 467–90.

Bethell, Leslie, and Ian Roxborough. ‘Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War: Some Reflections on the 1945-8 Conjuncture’. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 20, nr. 1 (1988): 167–89.

Brands, Hal. *Latin America’s cold war*. Harvard University Press, 2010.

Carleton, David, and Michael Stohl. ‘The foreign policy of human rights: Rhetoric and reality from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan’. *Hum. Rts. Q.* 7 (1985): 205.

David Singer, J. ‘The level-of-analysis problem in international relations’. *World Pol.* 14 (1961): 77.

Dinges, John. *The Condor years: how Pinochet and his allies brought terrorism to three continents*. The New Press, 2005.

Feierstein, Daniel. ‘Political violence in Argentina and its genocidal characteristics’. *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, nr. 2 (2006): 149–68.

Freedman, Lawrence. ‘Logic, politics and foreign policy processes: a critique of the bureaucratic politics model’. *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 52, nr. 3 (1976): 434–49.

Gaddis, John Lewis. ‘Was the Truman Doctrine a Real Turning Point?’ *Foreign Affairs* 52, nr. 2 (1974): 386–402.

Hedman, Amanda. ‘Operation Condor: The US involvement-A rational strategy or a political powerplay?’, 2019.

Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. The New Press, 2016.

McSherry, J Patrice. ‘Operation Condor: clandestine inter-American system’. *Social Justice* 26, nr. 4 (78 (1999): 144–74.

———. *Predatory states: Operation Condor and covert war in Latin America*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012.

McSherry, Patrice. ‘Industrial repression’and Operación Condor in Latin America’. *State violence and genocide in Latin America: the Cold War years*, 2010, 107–23.

Mertus, Julie A. *Bait and switch: Human rights and US foreign policy*. Routledge, 2008.

Mintz, Alex, and Karl DeRouen Jr. *Understanding foreign policy decision making*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Mintz, Alex, and Amnon Sofrin. ‘Decision Making Theories in Foreign Policy Analysis’. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2017.

Pion-Berlin, David. ‘The National Security Doctrine, Military Threat Perception, and the “Dirty War” in Argentina’. *Comparative Political Studies* 21, nr. 3 (1988): 382–407.

Robinson, James A, and Richard C Snyder. ‘Decision-making in international politics’. *International behavior: A social-psychological analysis*, 1965, 435–63.

Schmidli, William Michael. ‘Institutionalizing Human Rights in US Foreign Policy: US-Argentine Relations, 1976–1980’. *Diplomatic History* 35, nr. 2 (2011): 351–77.

Simon, Herbert A. ‘Human nature in politics: The dialogue of psychology with political science’. *American political science review* 79, nr. 2 (1985): 293–304.

Siniver, Asaf. ‘Nixon, Kissinger, and US foreign policy making’. *The machinery of crisis, Cambridge und New York*, 2008.

Smith, Steve. ‘Theories of foreign policy: an historical overview’. *Review of International Studies* 12, nr. 1 (1986): 13–29.

Snyder, Sarah B. ‘“A Call for US Leadership”: Congressional Activism on Human Rights’. *Diplomatic History* 37, nr. 2 (2013): 372–97.

Stohl, Michael, David Carleton, and Steven E Johnson. ‘Human rights and US foreign assistance from Nixon to Carter’. *Journal of Peace Research* 21, nr. 3 (1984): 215–26.

Sylvan, Donald A, en James F Voss. *Problem representation in foreign policy decision-making*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Truman, Harry S. ‘The truman doctrine’, 1947.

Wright, Thomas C. *State terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and international human rights*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006.

Zanchetta, Barbara. ‘Between Cold War Imperatives and State-Sponsored Terrorism: The United States and “Operation Condor”’. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39, nr. 12 (2016): 1084–1102.

Zeidenstein, Harvey G. ‘The Reassertion of Congressional Power: New Curbs on the President’. *Political Science Quarterly* 93, nr. 3 (1978): 393–409.