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Ignoring the Learning Curve: The Failure of U.S. Foreign Interventions in Chile and Afghanistan

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Abstract:

There are several identifiable and ubiquitous reasons why U.S. democracy building interventions fail abroad. The literature has shown that the principal reason that U.S. democracy building efforts fail is that they prioritize seeking immediate stability over creating long-lasting support for liberal democratic institutions. Additionally, contributing factors are also: lack of knowledge of the political history of a nation, lack of knowledge of the complexities within the domestic politics of each nation, lack of local and grassroots inclusion in planning processes, and the use of destabilizing covert and overt operations in an attempt at immediate results, with little force put behind rebuilding efforts. This paper will discuss these failures through the case studies of the U.S. interventions in Chile and Afghanistan. These represent both ends of the spectrum of U.S. intervention, and the different methods of democracy promotion. The United States has tried to replicate its successes in Germany and Japan, in countries with very different histories and comparatively limited development. Utilizing the same methodology for all foreign interventions, dooms the democratization process before it can even begin. By neglecting to account for the specificities of each case, U.S. foreign interventions are incapable of supporting the formation of stable democracies.

Sections:

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 Globalization
 - 1.2 Liberal Democratic Peace Theory
 - 1.2.1 The Consequences of Failure
2. U.S. Ideology
 - 2.1 Successes in Germany and Japan
 - 2.2 Subsequent Failures
 - 2.2.1 Common Themes
3. Case Studies of Chile and Afghanistan
 - 3.1 Chile Overview
 - 3.1.1 Early Covert Operations
 - 3.1.2 Destabilization
 - 3.1.3 Moving Towards Authoritarianism
 - 3.2 Afghanistan Overview
 - 3.2.1 Defining Democracy
 - 3.2.2 Moving Beyond “One Size Fits All”
 - 3.2.3 Changing Methods of Implementation
4. Comparing Case Studies
 - 4.1 Analyzing Differences
5. Drawing Connections
 - 5.1 Following the “Cookie Cutter” Implementation
6. Democracy as a Lengthy Process
7. Conclusion

1. Introduction

1.1. Globalization

The continual progress of globalization implicates the inevitability that certain nations will become involved in the domestic politics of other nations. The United States particularly has a long history of performing military interventions in foreign nations, all in the name of democracy building. Since the start of the post-World War II era, the U.S. has been the primary hegemonic force on the international playing field, if not the global hegemon. In this respect, it is not surprising that the United State would pursue personal interests through the domestic politics of other nations.

The most profound example of this is the rise in democracy promotion and democratic interventions. However, these operations, both covert and overt, fail to create stable democracies in their respective nations. In his work, *Advancing Democracy Abroad*, Michael McFaul details the outcomes of every major and covert U.S. intervention. According to the data, seventy percent of these major interventions fail as attempts to foster democracy and fall to autocracy within ten years. The track record for successful covert U.S. operations is slightly higher, but still at a dismal thirty two percent.¹ The subsequent question then becomes; why do these interventions fail, and if they are so unsuccessful why do we pursue them?

Historical evidence of U.S. foreign interventions paves the way for some of these answers. The main causes of failure in these interventions and democracy building efforts is that they prioritize seeking immediate stability over creating long-lasting support for liberal democratic institutions. Additional factors that contribute to this are: lack of knowledge of the

¹ McFaul, Michael. *Advancing democracy abroad: why we should and how we can*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.

political history of target nations, lack of knowledge of the complexities within the domestic politics of each nation, lack of local and grassroots inclusion in planning processes, and the use of destabilizing covert and overt operations in an attempt at immediate results, with little force put behind rebuilding efforts. These efforts have been as a whole, unsuccessful; however, the primary reason they remain at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy is the concept behind the theory of liberal democratic peace.

1.2. Liberal Democratic Peace Theory

Democracies are widely regarded across the international system as being the most preferable method of governance, for both the citizens of these nations and the international community as a whole. In their article, "Against All Odds?: The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan," Enterline, Andrew J., and J. Michael Greig discuss the proven global benefits of democracy. They state, "... democratic regimes are found to be more prosperous, are unlikely to engage in militarized conflict with each other, exhibit significantly greater respect for human rights, and proliferate geographically through "snowballing"."² This evidence for the benefits of democracy further promote international support for democracy promotion. However, the most prominent argument for the continuation of democracy promotion is the "Liberal Democratic Peace Theory." This theory explores the idea that liberal democracies will not go to war with each other, which would entail the end of major war. While seeming to be naively optimistic, this theory has yet to be disproven. With war defined as armed conflict between two opposing nations, there have never been two liberal democracies who have gone to war. It is important to specify that this theory does not claim that liberal democracies will not

² Enterline, Andrew J., and J. Michael Greig. "Against All Odds?: The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 4 (2008): 321-347.

engage in warfare at all, only that they will not engage in conflict with each other. In his work, *Cultural Evolution: People's Motivations are Changing, and Reshaping the World*, Ronald Inglehart further explains the nuances of this theory. He states, "... disputes continue over the question of whether modern democracies' prosperity and interdependence accounts for their peacefulness, or whether there is something inherent in democracy itself that makes democracies less warlike."³ Therefore, the exact cause of the prosperous nature of liberal democracies remains unproven, but the overall result of peace between these nations is indisputable. Regardless of whether or not the root causes of this stability are inherent to democracies as a system of governance, the evidence shows that democracy promotion is a clear method for promoting global peace.

Aside from the ultimate goal of minimizing warfare, creating stable states poses other gains for the global system. In his article, "The Imperative of State Building," Francis Fukuyama states, "Weak or failed states are close to the root of many of the world's most serious problems, from poverty and AIDS to drug trafficking and terrorism."⁴ Instability at an individual state level, inevitably grows to encompass broader global regions. Therefore, it seems imperative to promote democracy in order to further stabilize global politics. This concept then provides incentive for democracy promotion, as support for liberal democracies are in the inherent best interests of every nation.

1.2.1. The Consequences of Failure

It is undisputed that promoting liberal democracies is in the best interest of the international community, and, as stated, this ideology often leads to foreign interventions. These

³ Inglehart, Ronald. *Cultural Evolution: People's Motivations are Changing, and Reshaping the World*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

⁴ Fukuyama, Francis. "The imperative of state-building." *Journal of democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004): 17-31.

interventions are also, unsurprisingly, commonly spearheaded by the United States. The results of such interventions often reflect new cases of “imposed democracies.” Enterline and Greig define this process:

... imposed democratic regimes are democratic governments installed by a foreign power in which the foreign power plays an important role in the establishment, promotion, and maintenance of the institutions of government. In this sense, the imposition of these democratic regimes represents a more significant and costly way of altering the policies of another state that involves more than merely encouraging or facilitating leadership change, but necessitates restructuring entirely the domestic political system of the target state.⁵

By definition, the process of imposing democracy implies an investment of a vast amount of time and resources by the imposing nation, usually the United States, into the target nation.

Additionally, there are different types of imposed democracies. No two nations experience the same political turmoil; therefore, no two nations will experience the same processes of democracy building. Enterline and Greig make this distinction;

Imposed democratic regimes can be installed following the defeat of a state in a war such as the familiar examples of post-World War II West Germany and Japan in which a foreign power occupies a state militarily, removes the government, and establishes entirely new democratic political institutions. Iraq and Afghanistan, of course, are similar cases in this respect. Other democratic polities can be imposed by an outside power more incrementally, through a colonial process, for example, in which the metropole establishes the democratic regime to govern a colony after independence, or via covert activity, such as support of a coup d’etat.⁶

Following this definition, both covert operations such as those in Chile during the Cold War, and overt military operation in Afghanistan would qualify as imposed democracies. However, as previously stated, many democratic interventions statistically end in failure. These failures have proven to cause long-term ramifications for the fate of democracy in these regions. There are several challenges to supporting democracy promotion in nations that have not previously developed democratic institutions. Enterline and Greig state, “... scholarship warns of potential

⁵ Enterline, Andrew J., and J. Michael Greig. "Against All Odds?: The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 4 (2008): 321-347.

⁶ Enterline, Andrew J., and J. Michael Greig. "Against All Odds?: The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 4 (2008): 321-347.

negative byproducts from newly democratized states, such as regional instability, tendencies toward aggressive foreign policies, the difficulty of grafting democratic institutions on to ethnically diverse societies, as well America's poor track record of transplanting democracy."⁷ In the process of democracy building, there are intense ramifications for getting the process wrong. For example, Enterline and Greig note that, "A prior failed imposed strong democracy reduces the future probability of strong democracy by nearly 50%. A failed imposed weak democracy sets back the future cause of strong democracy even further, reducing the probability of its emergence by 70%."⁸ Therefore, a lack of success in imposed democracy building can stunt the development of an organic democracy indefinitely. This raises the stakes immensely when considering foreign interventions for the sake of creating stable democracies. In order to determine what creates a successful imposed democracy, it is imperative to look at not only the successes of foreign interventions, but also the common themes among the failures.

2. U.S. Ideology

2.1. Successes in Germany and Japan

Commonly cited as evidence for the success of U.S. democratic interventions and state building are its early successes, primarily those in Germany and Japan post-World War II. Both of these nations could be classified as "failed states" at the end of the war. However, to compare the failed state of East Germany to that of Afghanistan is completely lacking in understanding the circumstances affecting each individual state. The United States has tried to replicate its successes in Germany and Japan, in countries with very different histories and comparatively

⁷ Enterline, Andrew J., and J. Michael Greig. "Against All Odds?: The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 4 (2008): 321-347.

⁸ Enterline, Andrew J., and J. Michael Greig. "Against All Odds?: The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 4 (2008): 321-347.

limited development. Using the same methods in all interventions, dooms the democratization process before it can even begin. By ignoring the nuances and complexities of each individual case, the U.S. is fundamentally incapable of supporting the formation of stable democracies.

There were several factors aiding the success of U.S. operations in both Germany and Japan. The first being, the complex political and economic development of these nations prior to the war. These were world powers that lost a major war, not failed states that fell to corruption or internal fragmentation. Von Hippel states in her paper, "Democracy by force: A renewed commitment to nation building": "... it is also important to note that Allied success in implementing democratic reforms was enhanced by respect for education and high literacy rates, advanced levels of industrialization, and, of course, unconditional surrender."⁹ This explores the idea that the U.S. efforts in Germany and Japan are fundamentally distinct from later interventions for a multitude of reasons. However, the most poignant being, the post-war conditions of both Germany and Japan.

2.2. Subsequent failures

The most obvious, but possibly also the most influential difference regarding U.S. interventions in Germany and Japan in comparison to the nation's later interventions, were the unconditional surrenders of Germany and Japan. These nations essentially consented to U.S. interventions in their domestic affairs by the sheer virtue of their surrender. This sharply contrasts with other U.S. interventions abroad, in nations that did not comply with U.S. actions. It is impossible to compare the outcomes of planned and accepted interventions such as those in

⁹ Von Hippel, Karin. "Democracy by force: A renewed commitment to nation building." *Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2000): 95-112.

Germany and Japan with those of covert and subversive natures and those which heavily militarized nations such as in Chile and Afghanistan.

Additionally, it is not reasonable to promote the intervention methods used in Germany and Japan as the standard that should be used across the world. This is because of the unique case studies of these nations as being post-World War II world powers. The case studies of Germany and Japan are unique in this respect primarily because it inherently means that both nations had previously constructed highly developed political and economic systems in their respective countries. The speed and success of these interventions can also be attributed to the geopolitical contexts of both nations. Being that Germany and Japan were influential nations on the global stage, it was in the best interests of other nations to aid in their redevelopment. Therefore, it wasn't just the burden of the U.S. to carry the operations, other allied nations, such as Great Britain and France helped shoulder the weight. This is especially important to factor when considering the costs associated with these interventions of development. Von Hippel states, "... in 1948, the first year of the Marshall Plan (1948-1952), aid distributed to 16 European states amounted to 13 percent of the entire U.S. budget. This total did not even include all costs incurred during the German occupation and any of the occupation costs in Japan."¹⁰ The costs, both fiscally and in physical boots on the ground, required to fully stabilize and democratize a nation were allotted to both the interventions in Germany and Japan. However, in more recent cases, the cost benefit analysis of such operations is greatly reduced.

The U.S. is now much less likely to provide the necessary resources to its interventions abroad. The primary focus of foreign interventions has shifted within U.S. politics. The ideal

¹⁰ Von Hippel, Karin. "Democracy by force: A renewed commitment to nation building." *Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2000): 95-112.

outcome has transitioned from being stabilized and supported democracy, to the fastest and least extensive methods to reach stability in whichever manner it can be achieved in the target nation.

Von Hippel describes this transitional process in her statement regarding Germany and Japan;

This would include disarmament, demobilization, and demining as integral components with the aim of reintegrating militia and soldiers into civil society, as indeed occurred in a thorough manner in Germany and Japan... There is no political will in the United States to become so extensively involved in demilitarization due to the fear of casualties, yet until control over security is reestablished, state reconstruction cannot be successfully realized.¹¹

The realization of what efforts must be made to achieve success in foreign interventions does not necessarily bring them to action. This decline in willingness for long term engagement is one of the fundamental reasons for the subsequent failures in U.S. interventions. The change in method is palpable when exploring cases such as U.S. covert operations in Chile and the heavily politicized militarization operations in Afghanistan.

2.2.1. Common Themes

One prominent theme was the transition of the mentality and methodology of U.S. interventions. Many key factors from the interventions in Germany and Japan remained. However, there was now more reluctance for integral and committed military involvement. Von Hippel draws upon this idea, "A conspicuous change has been the gradual reduction of U.S. military control over nation-building activities, with Germany and Japan representing the peak."

¹² This change signaled a decline in committed efforts to democracy promotion. The U.S. continued to further its democratic rhetoric, but became hesitant when it came to long term planning.

¹¹ Von Hippel, Karin. "Democracy by force: A renewed commitment to nation building." *Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2000): 95-112.

¹² Von Hippel, Karin. "Democracy by force: A renewed commitment to nation building." *Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2000): 95-112.

This new application of old methodologies became increasingly problematic as the U.S. entered the Cold War with the Soviet Union. In this period, democracy promotion became essential to national security objectives, not simply a matter of humanitarian affairs. However, in the struggle to gain global allies during this conflict, the target nations were those that suffered. Fukuyama describes the consequential fallout of the Cold War, “The end of the Cold War left a band of failed or weak states stretching from the Balkans through the Caucasus, the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia.”¹³ Through the quest for anti-socialist allies, the U.S. actually aided in the failure of states. In covert operations, such as those employed in Chile, the U.S. actively propped up fascist dictatorships. Stability and U.S. national security interests were prioritized over democratic institutions and values. Similarly, the beginning of state failure in Afghanistan also began in the Cold War era. This actually started with Soviet operations, that the U.S. began countering with similar covert methods. The instability caused by these surface level and short term interventions led to the eventual U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan in 2001, all in the name of promoting democracy.

3. Case Studies of Chile and Afghanistan

These operations in Chile and Afghanistan have not only have failed to bring stable democracies, but also have led to long-term political instability, human rights violations, and inherent distrust of the United States. The case studies of Chile and Afghanistan appear to be different situations, if not even unrelated cases. However, these cases represent the full range of failed tactics used by the U.S. in instances of foreign intervention. Initially, these case studies

¹³ Fukuyama, Francis. "The imperative of state-building." *Journal of democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004): 17-31.

seem to be different in nature and in resolution. However, the root causes that cause the failure of the creation of stable democracies, remain the same across this spectrum.

3.1. Chile overview

Chile represents the U.S. pattern of using covert tactics to subvert the political tactics of a country. This strategy was used abundantly in many countries across Latin America during the Cold War era. During this period, the covert tactics used in Chile were not particularly innovative or shocking in their implementation. Kornbluh states:

Nixon's bald directive on Chile was neither unparalleled nor unprecedented. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth-century history of U.S. policy of toward Latin America, presidents frequently authorized overt military efforts to remove governments deemed undesirable to U.S. economic and political interests. After the signing of the United Nations charter in 1948, which highlighted nonintervention and respect for national sovereignty, the White House made ever-greater use of the newly created Central Intelligence Agency to assert U.S. hegemonic designs.¹⁴

With conciseness in mind, this case overview solely focuses on U.S. interventions in Chile beginning with the 1970 presidential elections and ending with the initial support for Pinochet's regime.

Additionally, it is important to note that currently in global affairs, Chile is regarded as having one of the most stable democracies. Therefore, the argument is not that U.S. interventions completely prevented Chile from achieving a stable democratic status or caused Chile to become a failed state. Rather, that U.S. efforts beginning in 1970 were unwarranted and destructive, with negative ramifications that affected Chile and its people for years to come. These interventions impeded such democratic development, and stunted the development that was already in motion. The interventions executed by the United States hindered Chile's progress as a nation, and

¹⁴ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

allowed for rampant and unchecked human rights abuses in the nation through the propping up of an autocratic regime.

3.1.1. Early Covert Operations

The beginning of U.S. involvement in Chile was seen through its covert operations in relation to the 1970 presidential election. In Chile, the democratically elected president, Salvador Allende, caused concern among many U.S. leaders. He proposed to implement several socialist measures in his country; and at the height of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, this raised a red flag for the United States. President Nixon's mentality surrounding the situation can best be summarized as, "We are making a *major covert effort to reduce chances* of Chile being the first American country to elect *an avowed Marxist president*. Our well concealed program embraces special economic assistance to assure stability, aid to the armed forces and police to maintain order, and political action and propaganda tied closely to Frei's campaign."¹⁵ Chile then becomes an interesting case study as it is one of the few nations to democratically elect a socialist leader, without any type of socialist revolution. It is bold to assume that a socialist president inherently means that democracy in that nation is doomed, but during the height of Cold War tensions the U.S. was especially concerned. The national security threat posed by this new socialist regime was a key motivating factor in U.S. operations in Chile.

Many politicians and scholars, including Henry Kissinger, believed undoubtedly that democracy could not survive in Chile under these conditions.¹⁶ They believed that democracy in Chile was simply too new and unstable to weather this new socialist leadership. However, not

¹⁵ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

¹⁶ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

every U.S. official shared this same ideology. Viron Vaky, Kissinger's top aide on Latin America sent him a top-secret cable stating:

"It is far from given that wisdom would call for covert action programs; the consequences could be disastrous. The cost-benefit-risk ratio is not favorable."... Vaky presented Kissinger with a SECRET/SENSITIVE memorandum summarizing a CIA position paper on Chile along with analytical comment, conclusions, and recommendations. "Military action is impossible,"... "We have no capability to motivate or instigate a coup,"... "any covert effort to stimulate a military takeover is a nonstarter." Success in blocking Allende would lead to possible "widespread violence and even insurrection," requiring an escalating U.S. involvement in Chile to prop up a substitute government; failure could strengthen and radicalize Allende's forces, and "would be this administration's Bay of Pigs."¹⁷

There was clear dissent between high profile U.S. officials, yet the perceived threat to hemispheric norms was supported over the well being of the nation of Chile.

Moreover, there was no indication that the Chilean people were “in need” of foreign intervention. Allende was winning the required votes, in a democratically sound election. As the U.S. was beginning to devise intrusive plans to intervene in another nation’s government, the atmosphere in Chile was one of contentment; “...there existed no reason, no justification, nor even a pretext for the military to move to block Allende's Popular Unity coalition from taking office. In reality, the vast majority of Chileans were at peace with the outcome of their political process. "There is now no peg for a military move," as the Station reported on September 29, "in face of the complete calm prevailing throughout the country."¹⁸ The only nation concerned with the Chilean elections was the United States. Therefore, in efforts that ultimately prioritized stability over democracy, the U.S. spearheaded covert operations that led to the ousting of Allende.

3.1.2. Destabilization

¹⁷ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

¹⁸ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

However, early U.S. efforts to undermine the popularity of Allende and his party were unsuccessful. This drove the United States to become more heavily involved in and invested with the political situation in Chile. It was no longer feasible for the U.S. to implement a quick operation, they had to completely alter the political climate of Chile. Kornbluh described the scenario as, “Rather than a small group of covert operatives trying to stimulate a military move in a short period of time, most of the U.S. government would now be involved in a long-term, expanded effort to destabilize the Chilean government- economically, politically, and militarily.”

¹⁹ This began the shift in United States interventions in Chile. The U.S. was now beyond influencing voters through propaganda and supplying funds to preferred political groups, it was now aiming for the total destabilization of Chile as a nation. This was, of course, all executed under the guise of protecting Chile’s democratic institutions. Years after “Project FUBELT” was put into action, President Ford himself argued, “... that the United States had acted to preserve Chilean democracy. “The effort that was made in this case,” he told the press, “was to help assist the preservation of opposition newspapers and electronic media and to preserve oppositional political parties.”... This was... “in the best interests of the people of Chile and certainly in our best interests.”²⁰ However, this mentality was, again, not universal across all the top U.S. officials. Many were vehemently opposed to the idea of such an intrusive operation into the electoral systems and government institutions of another nation. There was additionally a concern for the image of the United States in the international sphere if information about this

¹⁹ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

²⁰ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

operation were to be leaked. For the U.S. to intervene in Chile, would be a gross violation of the ideals that the United States claims to hold;

... the Bureau of Inter-American affairs argued that were Washington to openly violate its announced policy of “respect for the outcome of democratic elections it would- Reduce our credibility throughout the world... increase nationalism directed against us... be used by the Allende Government to consolidate its position with the Chilean people and to gain influence in the rest of the hemisphere... and move the Allende Government to seek even closer relations with the USSR than it might have initially contemplated.”²¹

It was a well known consensus among U.S. officials that if news of this operation were released to the public, the United States would face repercussions from the international community.

The U.S. continued to promote the cultivation of a “coup climate” in Chile through any means they had available. The prominent facet of their methods for anti-Allende propaganda was the publication, *El Mercurio*. While the U.S. continually denied having any involvement in the coup itself, it did admit to some of their covert operations. Regarding *El Mercurio*, “In admission that the U.S. covert operations had directly contributed to the overthrow of Allende, the CIA asserted that the propaganda effort, in which *El Mercurio* was the dominant actor, “played a significant role in setting the stage for the military coup of 11 September 1973.”²² Eventually, the creation of a “coup climate” in Chile was successful. The economy was down and other political leaders were becoming more bold. It would seem that the U.S. efforts were a success. However, the next issue the U.S. needed to tackle was preventing any type of information leak of its operations in Chile.

The fear of a leak however, soon became a reality for the United States. In an effort to further economically destabilize Chile, the U.S. partnered with several corporations, including

²¹ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

²² Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

the International Telephone and Telegraph company. While the U.S. was in the midst of denying involvement in Chile, the ITT revealed condemning evidence of U.S. involvement. Kornbluh describes these as, “The ITT records- twenty-four secret documents totaling seventy-nine pages of strategy papers, memoranda of conversations, and meeting notes- candidly charted the intrigue of covert corporate collaboration with the CIA, White House, and embassy officials to provoke economic chaos and subvert Chilean democracy in 1970 and early 1971.”²³ The response to these records was as negative as one would expect. There was little recourse that the U.S. could take in avoiding responsibility in the Chilean matter, and, as predicted, the image of the U.S. in the international sphere was diminished. After the death of Allende, “International reaction to the coup was immediate, widespread, and overwhelmingly condemnatory. Numerous governments denounced the military takeover; massive protests were held throughout Latin America.”²⁴ It was clear that a coup had been aided by a foreign entity to oust a democratically elected leader. However, unfortunately for the people of Chile, U.S. involvement in their politics did not end with Allende’s death.

3.1.3. Moving Towards Authoritarianism

After the success of the coup that effectively ended the power of Allende’s party, in methods that rejected U.S. democratic ideology; the U.S. then backed the authoritarian Augusto Pinochet, who became president of Chile in 1974. This led to numerous human rights violations in the nation and an impenetrable autocratic regime that lasted until 1990. The U.S. then continued to support Pinochet during his rule, again prioritizing the new “stability” of Chile over

²³ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

²⁴ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

the promotion of true liberal democratic values. The U.S. was hyper-aware of the atrocities being committed by the Pinochet regime, “But the new secretary of state made his position clear. The U.S. would not defend atrocities by the new regime, but "we should not support moves against them by seeming to disassociate ourselves from the Chileans." As he admonished: "I think we should understand our policy- that however unpleasant they act, this government is better for us than Allende was."²⁵ The United States, in a rejection of democratic values, openly supported a dictatorship that it helped put into power. Not only did the United States help Pinochet rise to power, but it also helped to prop up his regime. The U.S. poured an exorbitant amount of resources into Chile in order to “stabilize” the new regime and rectify the economic damage that resulted from U.S. sanctions during the Allende period. This intervention was, of course, rationalized by the U.S.:

Almost overnight, Washington reopened the spigot of bilateral and multilateral economic assistance to Santiago. In every category of direct and indirect bilateral and multilateral economic and military assistance to Chile, U.S. aid rose dramatically following the coup--marking the end of the "invisible blockade" Nixon and Kissinger had used to undermine' the Allende government. "It is quite apparent that Chile is going to need considerable aid," Assistant Secretary Kubisch declared to Congress on September 29, "and if it adopts a sensible government, I would expect that aid to be given."²⁶

However, the U.S. did not wait for a “sensible government” to emerge before dispensing aid, nor did one ever emerge while Pinochet was in power. In fact, Kornbluh notes, “Pinochet's Chile not only received far greater amounts of U.S. assistance than the Allende government; the military regime obtained remarkable preferential treatment over all other countries in Latin America.”²⁷ It became essential for the U.S. that the Chilean people accepted their new government. This lead

²⁵ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

²⁶ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

²⁷ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

to a continuation of U.S. propaganda efforts in Chile. However, the focus had now shifted from anti-Allende to pro-Pinochet.

The United States knew that in order for the newfound “stability” to survive in Chile, the Chilean population needed to be in support of the new regime. Therefore, “They have tried to present the junta in the most positive light for the Chilean public and to assist foreign journalists in Chile to obtain facts about the local situation.... The project is therefore essential in enabling the Station to mold Chilean public opinion in support of the new government. (Doc 4)”²⁸ Especially amidst the human rights violations occurring in this period, it was essential that the Pinochet regime be spinned as a regime of progress. However, as Pinochet’s regime progressed, it became more and more evident that the U.S. was no longer prioritizing support for democracy in Chile. It was no secret what was occurring in Chile, “Kissinger's aides informed him- in a secret situation report attached to the classified memorandum, "Chilean Executions," alerting him to hundreds of murders by the regime during its first weeks in power.”²⁹ Yet, the United States no longer seemed concerned with “the best interests of the Chilean people,” and seemingly wanted to be able to wash its hands of any covert involvement in Chile’s institutions. This led to a proposal to further prop up Pinochet’s government:

The debate over this \$160,000 proposal at the highest levels of Kissinger's State Department reflected U.S. determination to back a brutal military regime over even minimal support for me party that had represented Washington's greatest hope for Chilean democracy since John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. Now that Allende was dead, the rationale for covert action to "preserve Chile's democratic institutions" no longer seemed important to U.S. policy makers- even as the regime that overthrew him was systematically dismantling those very institutions.³⁰

²⁸ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

²⁹ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

³⁰ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

Through support for Pinochet's regime, the United States effectively implemented a new government institution in Chile that actively contradicts the values that the United States is supposed to promote. The United States did not save democracy in Chile, it dismantled it.

The backlash against the United States' interventions in Chile was intense, both internationally and externally. President Ford was left to handle the diplomatic crisis that began under Nixon, "Ford became the first US. president to acknowledge, and defend, covert operations against a democratically elected government- operations designed to be "plausibly denied." Is it the policy of your administration to attempt to destabilize the governments of other democracies?, a reporter asked the president...³¹ There was soon a call within U.S. congress to hold hearings on the Chilean interventions. Ford opposed these and claimed that such hearings would only further tarnish the reputation of the United States. The hearings eventually came to pass and revealed the true depth of U.S. involvement:

The hearings focused on Chile as an "example of the full range of covert action," Senator Church explained in his opening remarks, which "permits the committee, the Senate, and the council' to debate and decide the merits of future use of covert action as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy." The select committee had taken "this unusual step," Senator Church noted, "because the committee believes the American people must know and be able to judge what was undertaken by their government in Chile. The nature and extent of the American role in the overthrow of a democratically elected Chilean government are matters for deep and continuing public concern," he concluded. "This record must be set straight."³²

This sentiment was echoed by other U.S. officials with knowledge about the interventions. Henry Kissinger continued to defend U.S. actions in Chile, but many soon began to dissociate from this opinion; "Kennedy condemned the "continued silence of the government of the United States which has not issued a single public expression of remorse over the military coup which toppled

³¹ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

³² Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

a democratically elected government, or over the deaths, beatings, brutality, and repression which have occurred in that land.”³³ The interventions by the United States in Chile were not even unilaterally agreed upon across U.S. institutions, so it is difficult to continue the narrative that U.S. involvement was inherently in the best interest of Chile.

It is not clear if democracy could have survived in Chile after the nation elected a socialist president. Some form of foreign intervention may have been deemed necessary down the line; but the situation was not nearly as dire as portrayed by Kissinger, nor did it warrant an entire shift of regime. There was no immediate threat to the stability of Chile, and the U.S. led efforts in this case actually halted democratic processes that were already in motion. The United States allowed the panic stirred by the Cold War to intervene in the democratic processes of another nation. Additionally, the support for Pinochet and his regime had long term ramifications that still have a lasting impact on the development of Chile. Not only did the United States aid in the imposition and propping up of an authoritarian regime, but in doing so it harmed not only Chile and the success of its institutions, but also the international image of the United States. It became clear that the United States did not have any qualms with interfering in the affairs of another nation; “Washington's embrace of the regime had not only failed to ease repression in Chile; it was costly to U.S. national interests, creating divisions with Western allies, jeopardizing Congressional cooperation on other foreign assistance programs, and damaging America's moral leadership in the Third World.”³⁴ The U.S. acted in line with safeguarding personal political interests, and the nation of Chile was worse off because of it. Additionally, the events in Chile

³³ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

³⁴ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

created a sense of distrust in U.S. foreign policy from other nations, and the populous of the U.S.; “It is one more reason why much of the youth of the country is alienated from their government and its foreign policy. Chile is just the latest example for a lot of people in this country of the United States not being true to its values.”³⁵ There were less invasive, and more effective, methods the U.S. could have utilized in order to promote democratic ideals in Chile. In its interventions in Chile, the United States turned its back on the fundamental values it is supposed to uphold, and instead aided the creation of international instability.

3.2. Afghanistan overview

The efforts of the United States in Afghanistan represent the U.S. pattern of more militarily aggressive and in depth intervention in foreign nations. This tactic was primarily used in present-day Middle East operations, especially in overt efforts to “rebuild” post-conflict states. Like in the case of Chile, U.S. interventions in Afghanistan also began during Cold War activity. However, at this time the method of intervention was primarily relegated to arming the rebel groups who were fighting the Soviet forces currently occupying Afghanistan. The United States wanted to prevent the Soviet Union from further expanding its global influence, but was not yet ready to officially commit to military action in the region. This group that received arms from the United States, the Mujahideen, later became the Taliban in Afghanistan, which soon became the only form of “government institutions” functioning in Afghanistan. The control of the Taliban in Afghanistan becomes the major separating factor between U.S. interventions in Chile and Afghanistan, because of a greater concern for national security.

³⁵ Kornbluh, P. (2013). *The Pinochet file: A declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability*. New York: The New Press.

The U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, beginning in 2001, was not initiated solely for the purpose of democracy promotion, but also to protect national security interests. This added factor of a threat to national security caused the involvement in Afghanistan to be inherently more intense and hands-on. However, a politician cannot create a government any more than an economist can create an economy. Therein lies the conflict in democracy promotion in Afghanistan. There was instability caused through the conflict with the Taliban, but no viable solutions available. The U.S. used a so-called “cookie cutter” approach to building democracy in Afghanistan. This method disregarded any national, ethnic, or historical factors that could aid or impede the success of democracy in the nation. It is impossible to simply “place” a democracy in a region where structure and stability does not currently exist. In their article, “Democracy in Afghanistan is wishful thinking,” Johnson and Mason state; “Afghan history demonstrates conclusively and beyond dispute that legitimacy of governance there is derived exclusively from Weber's first two sources: traditional (in the form of the monarchy and tribal patriarchies) and religious.”³⁶ The lack of nuance given to the specific political history of Afghanistan ultimately prevented the success of nation building there before it even began. This approach, which has been mimicked in other nations across the Middle East and beyond, only furthers instability and local support for autocracies. Additionally, the more aggressive the “implementation” of a western-style democratic system is, the less likely it is to succeed. In relation to U.S. intervention efforts, Jason Brownlee discusses:

“...in the developing world, the more modest the goals, the more successful U.S. interventions have been.” In fact, when American forces have stayed for several years as in Iraq and attempted a wholesale restructuring of society, the results have been disappointing, leading Brownlee to

³⁶ Johnson, Thomas H., and M. Chris Mason. "Democracy in Afghanistan is wishful thinking." (2009).

conclude that “more is less.” For those cases in which “U.S. troops did not stick around to arbitrate local politics or erect new governments from scratch,” history proves in fact that “less is more.”³⁷

It is infinitely more effective for foreign powers to support democratic institutions through the agency of the local powers. The process of democracy building is much more effective when implemented using grassroots movements, with the support of the citizens.

It is also impossible to create an instantaneous replication of the perceived “ideal western democracy.” Johnson and Mason also state:

This historical reality poses a major problem for the US. Democracy is not a coat of paint. A feudal society in which women are still largely treated as property and literacy hovers below 10 percent in rural areas does not magically shortcut 400 years of political development and morph into a democracy in a decade. The current government of Afghanistan's claim to legitimacy is based entirely on a legal source – winning an election. Yet this has no historical basis for legitimizing Afghan rule. The winner of today's election will largely be seen as illegitimate *because* he is elected.³⁸

A system or institution that has no roots in organic development by the local power is unlikely to ever be accepted by the target nation. However, even considering the historical evidence demonstrating that the survival of a democracy in Afghanistan is unlikely, there is still room for hope. In their article "Defining success in Afghanistan- What can the United States accept," Biddle, Fotini, and F. Alexander Thier argue that democracy in Afghanistan is not impossible, but countries like the United States may need to rethink their standards for this new democracy. They state; “... it is a mistake to assume that Afghanistan is somehow ungovernable or that any sacrifice would be wasted in the pursuit of an unachievable goal. Afghanistan's own history offers ample evidence of the kind of stable, decentralized governance that could meet today's demands without abandoning the country's current constitution.”³⁹ This argument supports the

³⁷ Alemán, José. "ISSF Article Review 73 on "Domestic Opposition and the Timing of Democratic Transitions after War."" H-Diplo | ISSF. April 02, 2017. Accessed November 02, 2018. <https://issforum.org/articlereviews/73-opposition>.

³⁸ Johnson, Thomas H., and M. Chris Mason. "Democracy in Afghanistan is wishful thinking." (2009).

³⁹ Biddle, Stephen, Fotini Christia, and F. Alexander Thier. "Defining success in Afghanistan-What can the United States accept." *Foreign Aff.* 89 (2010): 48.

idea that, at present, a replica of the “ideal western democracy” is not feasible for Afghanistan. However, other forms of democracy would not only still be suitable in the eyes of the United States, but would also be more realistic in the success of their implementation.

3.2.1. Defining Democracy

As stated, the historical and regional nuances are inherently tied to the potential success of an imposed democracy in any nation. In their article "The Durability of Imposed Democracy," Enterline and Greig further analyze some of the key distinctions that determine the potential success rate of these democracies. Specifically, they focus on the differences between what caused success in Germany and Japan, and what is contributing to the failure in Afghanistan.

Enterline and Greig state:

For West Germany, a key reason for the durability of its imposed democracy is its prior democratic experience. Among imposed democracies in our sample with prior democratic experience, none fail during our period of analysis. Post-World War II Japan, however, experienced no prior democratic experience, and yet the model still forecasts a very high probability of its durability. These forecasts are driven by Japan’s very low level of ethnic divisions and comparatively high level of economic development. Each of these conditions pushes toward more durable imposed democracy. West Germany also benefits from each of these conditions, with an even higher level of economic development and limited ethnic divisions.⁴⁰

This analysis puts Afghanistan at a disadvantage on account of several factors. They highlight these as, “Neither Iraq nor Afghanistan has any prior democratic experience. Both countries have substantially more ethnic divisions than Japan and West Germany faced during their imposition process. The level of economic development in both Iraq and Afghanistan is substantially lower than either West Germany or Japan, a challenge that is particularly acute in Afghanistan which is among the poorest countries in the world.”⁴¹ These factors are all significant contributors to the

⁴⁰ Greig, J. Michael, and Andrew J. Enterline. "The Durability of Imposed Democracy." *International Interactions* 40, no. 2 (2014): 166-190.

⁴¹ Greig, J. Michael, and Andrew J. Enterline. "The Durability of Imposed Democracy." *International Interactions* 40, no. 2 (2014): 166-190.

potential failure of an imposed democracy in Afghanistan, and require further examination to determine which methods should be taken to ensure democratic success.

One of the most influential factors affecting the success of imposed democracies is a previous history of democracy in the nation. Initially, this provides a bleak forecast for the outcome in Afghanistan. However, it may be incorrect to say that Afghanistan has had no previous experience with democracy. Biddle, Fotini, and Thier examine the history of Afghanistan in this regard:

From the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War in 1880 to the coup of Mohammad Daud Khan in 1973, Afghanistan underwent a relatively stable and gradual period of state building. Although the country was an absolute monarchy until 1964, Afghanistan's emirs, on the whole, needed the acquiescence of the population in order to govern. The central government lacked the strength and resources to exercise local control or provide public goods in many parts of the country. Instead, it ruled according to a series of bargains between the state and individual communities, exchanging relative autonomy for fealty and a modicum of order.⁴²

While this system of governance is definitively not in line with western conceptions of democracy, it does prove that Afghanistan has historically been capable of stable centralized governance. In fact, this stability remained until the first major foreign intervention in Afghanistan in the twentieth century- the invasion by the Soviet Union. Biddle, Fotini, and Thier state, "The Soviet invasion in 1979 led to a fundamental breakdown of centralized authority and legitimacy, which resulted in the diffusion of political, economic, and military power across a number of ethnic and geographic groups."⁴³ Based on the history of Afghanistan as a nation, it is not feasible to expect a successful centralized democracy, but that doesn't mean that intervention efforts have been a waste. Simply put, by abandoning the dream of a centralized democracy in Afghanistan, the international community can move forward with taking steps towards creating

⁴² Biddle, Stephen, Fotini Christia, and F. Alexander Thier. "Defining success in Afghanistan-What can the United States accept." *Foreign Aff.* 89 (2010): 48.

⁴³ Biddle, Stephen, Fotini Christia, and F. Alexander Thier. "Defining success in Afghanistan-What can the United States accept." *Foreign Aff.* 89 (2010): 48.

stability in the nation. Biddle, Fotini, and Thier state, “Afghanistan could become a centralized democracy, a decentralized democracy, a regulated mix of democratic and nondemocratic territories, a partitioned collection of ministates, an anarchy, or a centralized dictatorship. The first and the last are unlikely; partition and anarchy are unacceptable. But decentralized democracy and internal mixed sovereignty are both feasible and acceptable.”⁴⁴ Afghanistan is a nation distinct from both Germany and Japan in many aspects essential to democracy building. Therefore, the bar for a stabilized government within a specific time-frame cannot be set at the same level for each of these nations.

Additionally, the economic framework of Afghanistan, as well as the diversity in the ethnic makeup of its citizenry, are factors unlikely to change any time in the near future. In response to these challenges, Biddle, Fotini, and Thier again offer their solution of working towards a less centralized form of government for Afghanistan. They state, “... the current model of Afghan governance is too radical a departure in a place where the central state has such limited legitimacy and capacity. To create a lasting peace that includes the country's main ethnic and sectarian groups- as well as elements of the insurgency- Afghanistan will require a more inclusive, flexible, and decentralized political arrangement.”⁴⁵ This is not to discourage the idea of an Afghanistan that is able to implement a “western style democracy.” However, the current evidence shows that attempting to implement such a distinct form of government in Afghanistan is destined for failure. In order to achieve stability and lay groundwork for future democratic developments, concessions must be made.

⁴⁴ Biddle, Stephen, Fotini Christia, and F. Alexander Thier. "Defining success in Afghanistan-What can the United States accept." *Foreign Aff.* 89 (2010): 48.

⁴⁵ Biddle, Stephen, Fotini Christia, and F. Alexander Thier. "Defining success in Afghanistan-What can the United States accept." *Foreign Aff.* 89 (2010): 48.

3.2.2. Moving Beyond “One Size Fits All”

One of the main hindrances to U.S. democracy promotion abroad is the insistent use of a “cookie cutter” approach. Matthew Hill examines this phenomenon explicitly in his article, "Exploring USAID's democracy promotion in Bosnia and Afghanistan: a ‘cookie-cutter approach’?." By comparing the process of democracy building in the radically different states of Bosnia and Afghanistan, Hill is able to critique this approach taken by the United States. He states:

In spite of the different contextual situations for USAID’s engagement, the two US presidents in Bosnia and Afghanistan supported the same sub-programme areas which strengthened the media in order for it to be more independent, introduced the mechanisms necessary for free and fair elections, supported the growth of plural politics, obtained public accountability of the government by developing its civil society, developed an independent judiciary, and developed checks and balances to deter arbitrary power by instituting accountable local and national government.⁴⁶

Initially, these methods of democracy promotion seem to be applicable to most cases of foreign interventions. However, the failure within them becomes more evident in the later stages, especially when considering the eventual outcomes. At present, Bosnia is undoubtedly a more stable nation than Afghanistan, despite the fact that U.S. approaches to both nations were almost identical. Hill states, “... the differences in sub-programme and project design indicate that the way that policies were implemented did at times differ according to conditions on the ground. However, the eventual goal did not differ. Ultimately, the US was still applying a cookie-cutter approach to democratization.”⁴⁷ Ignoring the specificities of each case study does a disservice to both the imposing nation and the target nation. By increasing the potential for a failed state, the United States is not only squandering their own nation’s resources, but also stunting the

⁴⁶ Hill, Matthew Alan. "Exploring USAID's democracy promotion in Bosnia and Afghanistan: a ‘cookie-cutter approach’?." *Democratization* 17, no. 1 (2010): 98-124.

⁴⁷ Hill, Matthew Alan. "Exploring USAID's democracy promotion in Bosnia and Afghanistan: a ‘cookie-cutter approach’?." *Democratization* 17, no. 1 (2010): 98-124.

development of other nations. However, the more specific the approach, the more resources it requires. Hill also addresses this aspect:

... a genuinely case-specific strategy will make this adaptation but will also consider the local voices in the mission design. In this case, USAID would not only have to acknowledge that the local conditions require the infrastructural development and training of technicians, journalists, distributors, and production workers but also that it tailor its support to the needs of the local community. This type of mission design listens to local voices and culture on what, where, and how the media package is to be implemented.⁴⁸

Such an approach would require more physical involvement by the United States in Afghanistan. However, this method is seldom implemented because of this strain on time and resources. In democracy building, there are no sufficient “quick fixes.” Moving forward, imposing nations need to fully commit to the full cost of democracy building abroad, before engaging with target nations.

3.2.3. Changing Methods of Implementation

So, in the continued interest of promoting democracy, how should nations like the United States work around challenges like those seen in Afghanistan? The short answer is by working from the “bottom-up.” Hill again challenges the “cookie cutter” approach in this regard:

Korten criticizes USAID’s decision-making process in its cultural development programmes. He compares this top-down process unfavourably to a bottom-up approach which designs projects and programmes through immediate and constant engagement with the community at the grassroots level. Projects by USAID can be deployed at the grassroots level within its top-down organizational framework, but responsibility for design and implementation stays with USAID and is not placed at the door of the community.⁴⁹

By not implementing community engagement as part of the democratization process, the U.S. is severely diminishing its probability of success in Afghanistan. In such an ethnically heterogeneous nation, local support is essential to bringing legitimacy to an imposed democracy.

⁴⁸ Hill, Matthew Alan. "Exploring USAID's democracy promotion in Bosnia and Afghanistan: a 'cookie-cutter approach'?" *Democratization* 17, no. 1 (2010): 98-124.

⁴⁹ Hill, Matthew Alan. "Exploring USAID's democracy promotion in Bosnia and Afghanistan: a 'cookie-cutter approach'?" *Democratization* 17, no. 1 (2010): 98-124.

This ideology closely ties into evidence from Bidder, Fotini, and Thier. They discuss the importance of local governance in Afghan society, and its successes in bringing stability to the nation. They state:

... local communities remain a fundamental source of Afghan identity and a critical base of governance and accountability. This is especially clear in the case of the local *jirga* or *shura* (community council). Traditionally, the community council was a place to solve problems and negotiate over common goods and burdens, with its more prominent members serving as liaisons to the central government. These bodies may differ in their power and representation, but they are still found today in virtually every community. This traditional and local base of legitimacy offers a potential foundation for stable governance in the future.⁵⁰

By not exploring the nuances of the cultural identity specific to Afghanistan, the United States is actively ignoring a valuable resource to aid in their mission. As stated, the acceptance of the target nation is mandatory for an imposed democracy to be accepted. Following this ideology, including the input of the local communities in this process, and collaborating with these groups through the transition will aid the success of the new democracy. Bidder, Fotini, and Thier state:

Increasing local autonomy would make it easier to win over Afghans who distrust distant Kabul and would take advantage of a preexisting base of legitimacy and identity at the local level. The responsibility for foreign policy and internal security, however, would remain with the central government, which would prevent even the more autonomous territories from hosting international terrorist groups or supporting insurrection against the state.⁵¹

Evidence has shown that organic democracies are statistically more likely to succeed than imposed democracies. Through the inclusion of the grassroots communities of the target nation in the democratic process, the imposing nation can most accurately imitate the conditions of an organic democracy.

For the United States in Afghanistan, the success of democracy building serves two purposes. Similarly to the events that prompted the U.S. to engage in Chile during the Cold War,

⁵⁰ Biddle, Stephen, Fotini Christia, and F. Alexander Thier. "Defining success in Afghanistan-What can the United States accept." *Foreign Aff.* 89 (2010): 48.

⁵¹ Biddle, Stephen, Fotini Christia, and F. Alexander Thier. "Defining success in Afghanistan-What can the United States accept." *Foreign Aff.* 89 (2010): 48.

the United States has deep national security concerns regarding Afghanistan. Bidder, Fotini, and Thier outline these concerns as, "... the United States' two main security interests in Afghanistan that justify waging a war are much narrower: one, that terrorists who wish to strike the United States and its allies not use Afghanistan as their base, and two, that insurgent groups not use Afghanistan's territory to destabilize its neighbors, especially Pakistan."⁵² Therefore, it is even more in-line with U.S. interests to consider the most effective methods to work towards success in Afghanistan. There is ample evidence to support that terrorists are more frequently fostered in hostile and unstable environments. Gaining the acceptance of the Afghan people for a central government would not only diminish the chaos within the nation, but also create a stable foundation for the nation. Bidder, Fotini, and Thier state, "By promoting local acceptance of the central government, this option would remove much of the casus belli for the insurgency. And it would preserve a central state with the power and incentive to deny the use of Afghan soil for destabilizing Pakistan or planning attacks against the United States."⁵³ The United States began engaging with Afghanistan out of fear for its national security. However, its current methods of democracy promotion in this target nation have proved unsuccessful. A disregard for examining past cases of foreign intervention have allowed the United States to repeat mistakes in regard to democracy building abroad.

In order to fully achieve their goals of democracy promotion the United States must learn from the past. The United States has ample evidence and case studies of what methods do and do not work in the case of foreign interventions, and in which scenarios to implement each method.

⁵² Biddle, Stephen, Fotini Christia, and F. Alexander Thier. "Defining success in Afghanistan-What can the United States accept." *Foreign Aff.* 89 (2010): 48.

⁵³ Biddle, Stephen, Fotini Christia, and F. Alexander Thier. "Defining success in Afghanistan-What can the United States accept." *Foreign Aff.* 89 (2010): 48.

In the case of Afghanistan this is most evident with the lack of engagement with the grassroots communities of the target nation. The U.S. has seen this through its past attempts at foreign intervention, the approval and cooperation of the target nation is essential to the success of a new democracy. Brownlee states, "Sooner or later, whether in victory (Japan) or defeat (Vietnam), U.S. presidents defer to the power of the local society."⁵⁴ The U.S. is aware of which methods work in the long-run, but these methods are generally more time consuming and labor intensive for the United States. However, this type of intervention seen in Afghanistan, lacking the knowledge of the nuances of the circumstances affecting a nation, led to the U.S. being involved in the target nation in a seventeen year long war that is still ongoing.

4. Comparing case studies

As previously stated in this paper, the case studies of Chile and Afghanistan initially appear to have few, if any, connections. It's impossible to ignore the differences that come inherently with the differing nature of each case study. However, there are similarities amongst the different approaches taken in each nation.

4.1 Analyzing differences

The most obvious differing factor between the case study in Chile and that of Afghanistan is the contrast between the use of covert and overt operations. In Chile, the United States intentionally worked to depose a democratically elected leader. Then, when there was outrage from the international community, the U.S. denied any involvement in the operations. The United States was able to do so because there was never any formal or overt military operations that coincided with the coup operation. Post-coup, the extent of U.S. involvement in

⁵⁴ Alemán, José. "ISSF Article Review 73 on "Domestic Opposition and the Timing of Democratic Transitions after War." H-Diplo | ISSF. April 02, 2017. Accessed November 02, 2018. <https://issforum.org/articlereviews/73-opposition>.

Chile was relegated solely to propaganda promotion of the state and economic support.

Conversely, in Afghanistan the U.S. operations were almost exclusively overt. There were instances of covert operations in the form of arms sales during the Soviet-Afghan war, which lasted until 1989. However, the primary form of intervention by the United States was prolonged military involvement. This began in 2001, when the United States formally declared to be at war with Afghanistan, and is lasting into today in the year 2018. There was never any denial of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan.

The differing nature inherent between covert and overt operations leads into the next disparity between the two case studies; the length of involvement. In Chile, the U.S. had a relatively short-term and limited involvement. It was involved in the creation of a coup-climate to aid the ousting of Allende and again later in their efforts to prop up Pinochet's regime. However, in Afghanistan the length of U.S. involvement is considerably more long-term. Due to the fact that U.S. operations in Afghanistan were more militarily focused, the length and scope of the involvement were both increased. Therefore, not only did the efforts of the U.S. in Chile have a comparatively shorter time frame than those efforts in Afghanistan, but the financial costs related to resources and manpower were also severely lessened.

Additionally, another factor contributing to the differences between interventions in Chile and those in Afghanistan are the contrasting ethnic demographics of each nation. As previously discussed, democracy building tends to be more successful in states with relatively high ethnic homogeneity. In Afghanistan, there are multitudes of different tribes and ethnic groups, which can cause social cleavages. These cleavages often present obstacles for building and maintaining stable democratic systems. Contrastingly, Chile has a relatively high rate of ethnic homogeneity

within its nation. This results in a lack of social cleavages, and allows for an easier facilitation of the democratic process. However, as stated by Greig and Enterline:

Imposed democracy need not be doomed in multiethnic societies. History is replete with durable democracies in multiethnic states such as Canada, Belgium, the United States, and India. A tradition of democracy can increase the durability of imposed democracy. Our analysis is consistent with this logic, as a host state's prior experience with democracy exerts the strongest substantive impact on imposed democracy survival relative to any other causal factor specified in our models.⁵⁵

Therefore, evidence shows that it is not impossible to create democracies in nations with high rates of ethnic heterogeneity, it is just simply a more difficult process. This citation also leads well into another substantial contrasting element between the Chile and Afghanistan case studies.

The final major separating factor in U.S. approaches in Chile and Afghanistan analyzed in this paper are the differing stages of the prior development in each target nation. The most prominent of these is the prior experience with democracy in both nations. Chile was an established and functional democracy prior to U.S. interventions. Therefore, despite its period of regression during the Pinochet regime, Chile never completely destabilized and was able to return to its status as a democratic state after a rebuilding period. On the contrary, Afghanistan has had limited experience in its history with centralized government, much less a functioning democracy. Therefore, when the U.S. attempted to instantaneously instill democratic institutions, the process was met with backlash. In addition, Chile also had a substantially more robust economy than Afghanistan. This further gave a more successful outlook for the prospects for democracy in Chile over Afghanistan. Enterline and Greig state, "Afghanistan is disadvantaged not only by the process by which democracy was imposed, but also by their demographic

⁵⁵ Greig, J. Michael, and Andrew J. Enterline. "The Durability of Imposed Democracy." *International Interactions* 40, no. 2 (2014): 166-190.

characteristics that undermine the durability of imposed democracy.”⁵⁶ These characteristics explain why democracy was already able to exist in Chile, prior to the instances of U.S. interventions. It also explains why the nation of Afghanistan had an inherently more unstable response to U.S. attempts at intervention.

5. Drawing Connections

Despite the glaring differences between the case studies of Chile and Afghanistan, there are several commonalities that remained present in U.S. approaches and interventions. The first can be seen through the lack in knowledge of the political and social history of both target nations. In Afghanistan, U.S. officials were largely unaware of the deep ethnic divides that are present in the nation, and even more so of the ramifications that this element would have regarding the democracy building process. Additionally, the U.S. did not factor in the lack of prior democratic experience in Afghanistan’s history when planning their intervention process. U.S. officials also did not account for the lack of economic resources in Afghanistan that are required for the creation and maintenance of democratic institutions. These factors all contributed to the U.S. being ill-prepared for the lengthy and taxing process that a democratic intervention in Afghanistan would require. This lack of preparedness for the reality of the democracy building process in Afghanistan caused the U.S. to fall short in its implementation, creating a weak foundation for democracy that ultimately stunted the democratic process in Afghanistan. Greig and Enterline discuss this concept:

... a similar tendency during American interventions into counterinsurgency wars. Our previous research (Enterline and Greig 2005) corroborates these incentives by imposers, showing that weakly democratic imposed regimes undermine peace, prosperity, and democracy in neighboring states. The durability of imposed democracy, in general, like indigenous democracies, is tied to the strength of democratic institutions, the degree of economic prosperity and the minimization of

⁵⁶ Enterline, Andrew J., and J. Michael Greig. "Against All Odds?: The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 4 (2008): 321-347.

ethnic cleavages (Enterline and Greig 2008). Furthermore, the failure of imposed democracy retards the subsequent reemergence of democracy.⁵⁷

The literature shows that when democratic interventions fail, they ultimately end, or at least stunt, the process of democratization in the target nation. This resulting concept is also seen in the Chile case.

Conversely from the Afghanistan case, Chile did have experience with democratic system. This would imply that it would be easier for nations to promote democracy in Chile because it would not be a new concept, and the institutions required for a functioning democracy would already be established. However, since Chile already had an organic democracy, the nation would be similarly unlikely to accept a foreign imposed government. This is especially true for a foreign imposed government with autocratic policies that the prior system did not exhibit. The democratic process was well underway in Chile, however, the United States did not support the election of Salvador Allende. This was purely for reasons of personal preference on behalf of the United States, as it believed Allende to be too much in agreement with socialist ideology. Therefore, fear for national security, heightened by events of the Cold War, prompted the United States to intervene in both Chile and Afghanistan. In Chile, a democratic process was halted, and in Afghanistan democratic institutions were poorly implemented. In both cases, this left room to foster autocracy. This is not a new phenomenon, as discussed by Enterline and Greig, "Bueno de Mesquita and Downs (2006) offer a logic for the latter set of findings, arguing that a strong preference for reliable foreign policy allies leads democratic imposers to backslide on their commitment to build democracy in target states. In turn, democratic backsliding

⁵⁷ Greig, J. Michael, and Andrew J. Enterline. "The Durability of Imposed Democracy." *International Interactions* 40, no. 2 (2014): 166-190.

encourages the emergence of authoritarian regimes.”⁵⁸ In the onset of its democratic interventions the United States was primarily concerned with its own political agenda and national security interests. This led to an upheaval of the governmental systems of the respective target nations in each case study, as well as the propping up of and support for autocracies. Therefore, U.S. desire for immediate stability trumped its original objective to create liberal democracies. Instead, in Chile it settled for stable autocracies that it could count on to remain an ally to the United States, and in Afghanistan it settled for prolonged occupation that has yielded no results.

5.1 Following the “Cookie Cutter” Implementation

Additionally, the United States continued the implementation of its traditional “cookie cutter” methods for democracy building in both Chile and Afghanistan. After the coup in Chile, the nation was in a precarious position. As a result of the coup-climate created by the United States, Chile could easily have slipped into disarray. Therefore, in order to force stability in Chile, the U.S. chose Pinochet to be its preferred candidate for the Chilean presidency. This was all despite the fact that Augusto Pinochet rapidly began to exhibit authoritarian tendencies. Therefore, the U.S. was complicit in Pinochet creating a personalized militaristic dictatorship, with the operations being executed by the Chilean military. This was done without the consent or knowledge of the vast majority of Chileans, and was not accepted. While Pinochet did bring stability to Chile, in the sense that Chile did not reach the status of a failed state, it is near impossible to argue that Chile as a nation was improved by U.S. intervention. At the very least, it certainly was not more liberal or more democratic.

⁵⁸ Greig, J. Michael, and Andrew J. Enterline. "The Durability of Imposed Democracy." *International Interactions* 40, no. 2 (2014): 166-190.

Similarly, in Afghanistan case study there was also a clear mentality that a new governmental system and democratic institutions could simply be imposed on a nation. Little to no research was done by the U.S. on the social and political history of Afghanistan prior to its intervention. There was also almost no contact with Afghan citizens prior to the initial stages of the democracy building process. It is nothing more than hubris for an imposing nation to simply assume the most successful method for implementing the democracy building process in a target nation. Bumiller addresses this false notion of simplicity in his article, “We Have Met the Enemy and He Is PowerPoint.” He describes the popularized method among U.S. officials of using an obscene amount of powerpoints in an attempt to impart knowledge and plan interventions. He describes the infamous slide that claims to hold the key to U.S. success in Afghanistan:

Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the leader of American and NATO forces in Afghanistan, was shown a PowerPoint slide in Kabul last summer that was meant to portray the complexity of American military strategy, but looked more like a bowl of spaghetti. “When we understand that slide, we’ll have won the war,” General McChrystal dryly remarked, one of his advisers recalled, as the room erupted in laughter.⁵⁹

Even members of the U.S. military are aware of the lack of progress to be made by studying powerpoints created by other U.S. personnel. There is little to be gained in this aspect, much less practical application to be fostered by it. Methods such as powerpoint lectures leave little room for unexpected events and obstacles to the democratic process. Additionally, heavily structured powerpoint flow-charts inherently operate on the idea that people and nations are predictable and will act accordingly. This is an unlikely occurrence, especially when the specific nuances of the target nation are not taken into account. Bumiller also discusses this issue:

“It’s dangerous because it can create the illusion of understanding and the illusion of control,” General McMaster said in a telephone interview afterward. “Some problems in the world are not bullet-izable.” In General McMaster’s view, PowerPoint’s worst offense is not a chart like the spaghetti graphic, which was first uncovered by NBC’s Richard Engel, but rigid lists of bullet

⁵⁹ Bumiller, E. (2010, April 27). We Have Met the Enemy and He Is PowerPoint. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/27/world/27powerpoint.html>

points (in, say, a presentation on a conflict's causes) that take no account of interconnected political, economic and ethnic forces. "If you divorce war from all of that, it becomes a targeting exercise," General McMaster said.⁶⁰

It is impossible to accurately understand and react to a situation without full knowledge of all aspects surrounding the case. By separating the issue of the war itself from deeper social and political strife in Afghanistan, the United States is effectively negating any chance it had at a successful intervention. The process of democracy building is not simple or easily implemented in any case study. Ignoring the nuances of target nations that would have a direct effect on such a process only further complicates the transition. Enterline and Greig have analyzed in depth the necessity of collaboration with the target nation itself in the process of democracy building. They state:

... democratization via foreign imposition is a fragile process. This fragility is likely to be all the more case among imposed democracies because of the low level of institutional legitimacy that their foreign source engenders. To the degree to which the imposed democratic regime is considered illegitimate or as a tool of an external power, said regime will be less likely to survive. Furthermore, social cleavages, such as religious and ethnic fractionalization, undercut the survivability of imposed democratic regimes.⁶¹

Along with the conduction of diplomacy and funds allocated to democracy promotion, the U.S. has also used forced imposition as a prominent method for democracy building and promotion. This method is inherently incompatible with creating a successful atmosphere for democracy in several case studies. The evidence shows that in Chile and Afghanistan, both nations did not benefit from U.S. democracy promotion in this way. The attempted forms of government were not accepted, and autocracy was allowed to rule in Chile, while instability festers in Afghanistan.

6. Democracy as a Lengthy Process

⁶⁰ Bumiller, E. (2010, April 27). We Have Met the Enemy and He Is PowerPoint. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/27/world/27powerpoint.html>

⁶¹ Enterline, Andrew J., and J. Michael Greig. "Against All Odds?: The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 4 (2008): 321-347.

Democracy building is a lengthy process, without a clear linear trajectory. A major obstacle that frequently occurs in U.S. foreign interventions is that it doesn't accept the push and pull that naturally occurs along this transition. Sheri Berman outlines the deviations that often occur during the democratic process in her article, "The promise of the Arab Spring: In political development, no gain without pain." Berman's article focuses specifically on the Middle East and on the democratic transitions of the nations in the region after the Arab Spring. However, she analyzes the broader process of democracy building as a whole, and uses historical evidence from the emergence of European democracies. Therefore, her theory can be made applicable to the democratic transition on a global scale. Berman states:

... critics also set absurdly high benchmarks for success, ones that lack any historical perspective. They interpret post-transition violence, corruption, confusion, and incompetence as signs that particular countries (or even entire regions or religions) are not ready for democracy, as if normal democratic transitions lead smoothly and directly to stable liberal outcomes and countries that stumble along the way must have something wrong with them. In fact, stable liberal democracy usually emerges only at the end of long, often violent struggles, with many twists, turns, false starts, and detours.⁶²

Democracy is a messy process, so analyses of new democracies should treat it as such. It is not feasible to expect democracies to simply gain traction and acceptance immediately, especially those that are imposed by a foreign power. When applied to the case studies of Chile and Afghanistan, there is ample evidence to support Berman's thinking. In Chile there was a functioning democratic political system. The United States, however, viewed the election of a socialist president to be a sign of the collapse of Chilean liberal democracy. This mentality elucidates the fear that has stoked many U.S. interventions. There was no evidence of a threat to the democracy of Chile, and U.S. intervention was not necessary in that aspect. If anything, the United States should have viewed Allende's election, at worst, to be a "bump in the road" of

⁶² Berman, Sheri. "The promise of the Arab Spring: In political development, no gain without pain." *Foreign Aff.* 92 (2013): 64.

Chile's path to democracy. Certainly, not cause for a full-scale covert operation ending in a coup and an authoritarian dictatorship.

In Afghanistan, the United States has set the bar too high for what is possible, and can be expected from an emerging democracy in the nation. Afghanistan cannot be expected to make a full transition to a centralized, liberal democracy in a mere few years. The only options the United States has are; to accept the necessary duration of this transition and continue to provide time, energy, and resources into Afghanistan, or to amend the expectations and goals of its intervention and settle for initial steps that will help foster an organic democratic transition. It is expected, if not normal, for Afghanistan to be experiencing struggles and upheavals along its course to democracy. However, this does not mean that an Afghan democracy is impossible. The process simply takes time.

7. Conclusion

The question then becomes- what now? Reviewing these analyses, how can the United States best implement foreign interventions for democratic development? The evidence shows that working from a "bottom-up" method of intervention is essential. Without the support and acceptance of the local communities, an imposed democracy is unlikely to flourish. Additionally, the United States should begin to accept the limitations inherent to democracy promotion abroad. In his article, "The Imperative of State-Building," Fukuyama discusses what the "ideal" democracy would look like, based on successful European examples like Denmark. He also analyzes the profound limitations that state's have in transplanting democracies abroad.

Fukuyama states:

We know by and large... what a Denmark-like solution would be; the problem is that we do not have the political means of arriving there because there is insufficient local demand for reform. Well-meaning developed countries have tried a variety of strategies for stimulating such local demand, from loan conditionality to outright military occupation. The record, however, if we look

at it honestly, is not an impressive one, and in many cases our interventions have actually made things worse.⁶³

The process of democracy building is intense and prolonged. Most nations are not able to commit the full array of time and resources that a successful democratic intervention would require, this includes the United States. Therefore, it is critical for nations to seriously reevaluate their capabilities in foreign interventions and their capacities to intervene in the affairs of other nations. This is not to say that the U.S. should never intervene abroad on behalf of democracy. However, full-scale democratic interventions have proven largely unsuccessful, and even damaging to the international community. No nation has a perfected, or even largely successful, method for democratic interventions in the twenty first century. The United States can, and should, continue to support grassroots democratic movements in nations transitioning towards democracy. However, large-scale foreign interventions with the objective of imposing democratic governance should be an ideological goal that is left in the past.

⁶³ Fukuyama, Francis. "The imperative of state-building." *Journal of democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004): 17-31.

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