MORALISM IN US FOREIGN POLICY: CASE STUDIES OF US HUMAN RIGHTS FOREIGN POLICY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

21 MARCH 2011

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P51811
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ABSTRACT

United States (US) practiced a liberal democratic system, in which democracy, minorities' interest, civil liberties and civil rights are very important. The US founding fathers believed in the principles that men are created equal and naturally have the rights for life and liberties given to them by their Creator. These democratic and natural rights are also entrenched in the US constitution. Hence, this makes human rights values very important in US domestic politics. However, the US put little importance in human rights consideration in its foreign policy. During the Cold War, after the Cold War and post 9/11 era, US focuses on its national interests in defeating communism, promoting its economic interest and containing terrorism respectively. In pursuing this national interest it ignored and sometimes violated human rights. However, there are several cases where US upheld human rights in its foreign policy. For examples, US humanitarian interventions in the Bosnia War and Kosovo War in the 1990's and sanctions imposed on South Africa during the Cold War and on Burma after the Cold War and 9/11. Since human rights has always been of lesser importance compared to US national interests, the question that arises is, does US commitment of human rights in South Africa, Burma, Bosnia and Kosovo mentioned above, is really due to moral commitment? This thesis attempt to find out the reasons for US commitment of human rights in these places in order to evaluate US moral commitment on human rights in South Africa, Burma, Bosnia and Kosovo. To answer these questions this thesis used qualitative research method and data are collected from both primary and secondary sources. Interview questions are posted through email in order to get primary data. Secondary sources are from books, journal and websites. The scope of this research only covers US human rights foreign policy towards South Africa during the Cold War, the Bosnian War (1993 to 1995), the Kosovo War (1999) and Burma from 1990 to 2008. This thesis found that US human rights policy in the Kosovo War and on Burma after the Cold War and post 9/11 era, were really due to moral commitment to uphold human rights. Whereas, US upheld human rights the Bosnia War and South Africa during the apartheid years were not due to moral commitment. This research also found that, in terms of region or continent, the US does not show any bias on its human rights policy. However, in terms of time frame, the US behavior showed that during the Cold War moral commitment to upheld human rights is not important. After the Cold War, the US is more attentive towards human rights issue. Therefore the research findings may make an academic contribution and useful for people in international relations field.
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