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REVIVING KANT'S DEONTOLOGY IN US FOREIGN POLICY

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Masters of Arts

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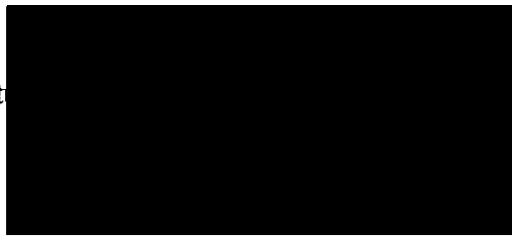
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Dedication

For those who care, these words:

“Among men there are but few who behave according to *principles* -- which is extremely good, as it can so easily happen that one errs in these principles, and then the resulting disadvantage extends all the further, the more universal the principle and the more resolute the person who has set it before himself.”

Immanuel Kant

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Abstract

This thesis explores the deontological approach of ethics in normative theory. It briefly reviews the nature and problems of the international political system to demonstrate the necessity of examining ethics as an essential element in US foreign policy. The thesis focuses on the international political thought of one of the most original German thinkers, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). By challenging conventional readings, I argue that the United States applies ethics, in particular Kant's deontology as tactics to enhance their foreign policies, providing an adequate account of their power and legitimacy.

The aim of this paper is to justify the position of the United States in foreign policy on one hand, and to expose the necessity for moral leadership in international politics on the other. In this anarchic political atmosphere, I argue that the United States has behaved reasonably, oscillating between facts and values. In a series of defensible hypotheses about the nature of ethics and morality in global politics, this thesis argues that the United States is justified in conducting whatever policy it chooses. This thesis argues that this position is characterized by personal and religious insights to encourage leaders to apply deontology in US foreign policy through promoting human rights issues.

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GLOSSARY

- A priori** – “From the former.” A logic to denote something that is known or postulated before a proof has been carried out. It is independent of experience.
- Categorical Imperative** – A moral obligation or command that is universally and unconditionally binding.
- Consequentialism** – The proper response to promote a designated value.
- Contractarianism** – The ethical theory that binds individuals to a voluntary social contract.
- Deontology** – The study of moral obligation or the science of duty.
- Deductive reasoning** – Where facts are determined by combining existing statements
- Egoism** – An ethical doctrine that purports that individual self-interest is the actual motive of all conscious action.
- Epistemology** – Refers to the study of how one acquires knowledge.
- Inference** – is the act or process of deriving a conclusion based solely on what one already knows.

- Inductive reasoning – Where facts are determined by experimenting
- Maxim – A fundamental principle or rule of conduct
- Normative theory – Value-oriented or philosophical theory that focuses on what ought to be
- Premise – is a statement presumed true within the context of the discourse for the purposes of arguing.
- Semantical – Relating to the study of meaning in language
- Synthetic – Statements in which the logical predicate is *not* ‘a part of’ the logical subject. Or, statements in which the negation *does not* lead to a logical contradiction.
- Teleology – A doctrine explaining phenomena by final causes
- Utilitarianism – A theory that the aim of action is the largest possible balance of pleasure over pain or the greatest happiness of the greatest number

Preface

The main objective for writing this thesis is to present ethics and morality as necessary tools in the examination of US foreign policies. I chose this topic because the intolerable international anarchy in this world has devaluated all measures and moralities. Despite the fact that I am extremely disgusted and frustrated with the present situation, I argue that the US foreign policies were logically and reasonably created, requiring an immediate attention to scholars for its ethical implication.

The major purpose of this thesis is to combine theory and policy to provide the reader with the bitterness of reality. I would like also to focus the reader's attention on this relationship and add to it the role of ethics in the international arena to provide an alternative to the persistent Machiavellian policies that have strengthened cleavages and hatred among individuals. Accordingly, this analysis provides the foundation for an ethical world where virtue and morality are the law.

As I see it, the present foreign policies of the United States and others, whether intentional or not, can only enhance divisions and poverty around the globe. Yet, I argue that the United States has behaved morally in the

international arena. Driven by its duty and obligation toward the world, the US seeks to liberate individuals from oppression and improve their condition, sometimes in contradiction to its interests. These moral actions are justified according to the works of Immanuel Kant and his theory of categorical imperative. I will support my arguments with examples, hoping to contribute new analyses in the study of international relations.

The importance of this thesis is that ethical policies can form the essential foundation for constructing a new world order. It also can reduce the huge gap between the global North and South. Accordingly, any future international or global society cannot be formed without taking seriously the application of universal norms and ethics.

My basic conclusion about deontological approaches to foreign policy examination is that state duties and international human rights cannot be implemented through basing foreign policy on ethics alone. Equally important, this thesis emphasizes *realpolitik* as the most effective approach to conduct foreign policy because states want to survive.

This thesis would have never materialized without the contribution of Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss who has supported my journey with the proper

instruments and equipment to launch my adventure into the land of ethics. I am indebted to her kindness and for preparing me ahead of time for this moment of glory when many of my colleagues are still suffering from the burden of choosing adequate topics for research.

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I owe special thanks to Dr. Paul Tabar who on behalf of Lebanese American University (LAU) has been providing me with the financial contribution to attain my desired studies. For without his punctilious understanding, I would not have been able to be here today.

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Introduction

This paper analyzes the deontological approach of ethics to foreign relations. It focuses on analyzing the moral duty of the United States in creating its foreign policies. This thesis is an attempt to better comprehend why certain actions are or are not performed, based on the works of the progressive international reformer,¹ Immanuel Kant. It will also question the morality of the behavior of leaders and insist on their moral duty to carry out certain policies, reflecting by that their power and their decision-making at various levels.

In this uncertain world, the necessity to make the right choice depends on certain norms and values that bind both politicians and citizens to the rule of law and order. Since I was a child, I have been fascinated by ethical questions such as the overcrowded lifeboat example.² It was extremely difficult for me to judge and answer who ought to be saved or sacrificed. Honestly, I was extremely puzzled, perplexed and unable to make the correct choice, namely when it is a matter of life or death. I started to ask myself what

¹ Lynch, Cecelia, "Kant, the Republican Peace, and Moral Guidance in International Law," *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 39, (1994), p. 39, 42.

² More than 30 persons were able to survive the crash of a ship that struck an iceberg. The lifeboat can only hold seven persons. The captain reasoned that the right thing to do is to sacrifice the weakest ones in order to save the others. To make the story short, the survivors were rescued and the captain was tried for his action.

I would have done if I were the captain of my ship. One single question remained unanswered: Would I sacrifice myself for the sake of others or not?

Since the dawn of history, individuals have struggled for their survival, oscillating between the law of the jungle and that of society, which is sometimes the same thing. Similarly, no matter what era we are living in, all states want to survive, relying on their power to achieve their ends. Moreover, at the same time, they need to enhance their economic and social development; at least this is what I have been studying all this years.

Obsessed with their security dilemma, states' freedom of choice is unfortunately limited by the actions of others.³ The simple fact remains that states behave immorally using whatever means and measures to pursue their interests. The study of morality in international relations is difficult to comprehend because "there is a misconception, usually associated with the general depreciation and moral condemnation of power politics."⁴ For this reason, we need more than ever ethical guidance that can illuminate our steps in determining foreign policy and international action. Otherwise, one blind

³ Waltz, Kenneth, *Man, The State and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 204.

⁴ Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1948), p. 249

man will guide another.⁵

Despite various international relations theories that dominate the political arena, further arguments are needed to explain states' behavior, often blurred by human greed. Since "the cure is no more complicated than the cause,"⁶ this thesis adopts a transcending theme in each chapter to analyze the use of power and force that dominate the international arena. Many may mock and criticize the deontological approach because individuals cannot live on bread alone.⁷ However, to familiarize the reader with this eclipsed moral paradigm, this thesis presents the ethical nature of international relations.

As a researcher, my main objective is to investigate the phenomenon where man is torn between his duty and his conscience. This thesis attempts to dissect the nature of ethics and power in specific foreign policies. It reviews first the available literature. It then describes the moral problem in international relations, hoping to broaden our obstinate views in order not to incorrectly apply any learned lesson.⁸

⁵ Matthew 15:14. American Bible Society *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*, (New York: American Bible Society, 1978), p. 756.

⁶ Waltz, Kenneth, *Man, The State and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 151.

⁷ Matthew 4:4. American Bible Society *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*, (New York: American Bible Society, 1978), p. 743.

⁸ Waltz, Kenneth, *Man, The State and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 222.

It is clear that an endless analysis is needed to approach properly the problem of ethics in foreign policy. Whether an answer is available or not, this thesis investigates thoroughly the various aspects of normative theory and specifically analyzes a deontological approach to foreign policy behavior. The aim of deontological theory for this thesis is to define how basic normative principles may affect states' behavior. Since "moral rules operate within the consciences of individual men,"⁹ any ethical position that is adopted by states should have certain regulations and laws by which they abide. However, I feel perplexed with the present conduct of behavior because individuals regard killing as a major crime even though, intentionally or not, they tend to let others die.¹⁰ The paper will also touch upon Human Rights issues as a direct projection of Immanuel Kant's masterpiece. For instance, the concept of Human Rights could provide an excellent example of deontological approach in foreign policy. In projecting these issues, this thesis examines international action and the implementation of Human Rights to comprehend ethical decision-making in the international arena.

In chapter one, this thesis reviews the work of historical political

⁹ Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p.266.

¹⁰ Rachels, James, *Feeding the Hungry: Killing and Starving to Death*, in *Moral Issues*, Edited by Jan Narveson, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 155.

philosophers who enriched the field of ethics with their findings. I consider their views because they represent an accumulated wisdom that has conducted the behavior of civilizations, whether forgotten or not, throughout history. I also dedicate part of this chapter to the nature of ethics in foreign policy and the consequent problem of morality in international affairs.

In chapter two, I systematically classify the main strands of normative theory, focusing on deontology. In chapter three, I present the ideas of Immanuel Kant and his philosophical approach, namely the categorical imperative which the concept of deontology was based on. The reason for this approach is to emphasize the importance of both freedom and reason as the probable solution toward a perpetual peace in international relations.

In chapter four, I attempt to apply Kant's formulation to the realm of foreign policy regarding human rights to emphasize the moral obligation of the United States. Here, I dissect in detail how a deontological approach to foreign policy regarding human rights would be using real world examples.

In the conclusion, I review and summarize the important points previously discussed and analyzed. The necessity of an (ethical) foundation for the examination of foreign policy in human rights is re-emphasized. Taking

into consideration that each individual enjoys equal rights and treatment, it really makes difference if all lives are saved all the times in our lifeboat example, instead of sacrificing others and patching up our mistakes.

In general, this thesis criticizes leaders for not bringing change when necessity requires it. It evaluates leaders for not conducting a policy “of non-zero sum situations.”¹¹ It seeks to reawaken the conscious of the American government, the undying spirit of its leaders, and the enthusiastic young generations who will carry the torch of freedom to the world. Since honesty remains the best policy, I remain faithful to my words, hoping to pass this torch to my readers.

¹¹ Rosenau, James N. “Normative Challenges in a Turbulent World,” *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 6, (1992), p. 19.

Chapter One:

The Nature of International Relations

“Graecia capta ferum victorem coepit”

(Blessed is the one who has the final victory)

·Horace·

A. Historical Review

The lifeboat dilemma provides an important clue about the nature of ethics and values in international relations such as duty, honor, order, obedience, decision-making, leadership, and justice. In this dilemma, our capacity to deal with a certain problem is limited. Yet if we cannot solve problems, we all drown together. The lifeboat example dictates that we have to fight each other to secure a place on the lifeboat, presuming that individuals will not hesitate to throw the other in such an extreme situation.

Since it is naïve to think “that there is a solution to every moral problem,”¹² it is important to determine how to act in particular circumstances. It is important to examine the nature of man to comprehend how life usually is. For this reason, this thesis reviews first few philosophers to frame an ethical approach where no solution is going to be humane or comforting.

¹² Nagel, Thomas, *Moral Questions*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 4.

Starting with Socrates (470-399 B.C.) wandered the streets of Athens, provoking people to be virtuous because he equated virtue to knowledge. As a “gadfly,” he adopted his famous process of remembering, better known as reminiscence to stir the soul of individuals. Simply, the word *soul* meant happiness in Socrates’ dictionary.¹³ By means of his Socratic method, he investigated why people acted wrongly. For him, wrong actions arose from ignorance. As a *midwife* of knowledge, it was Socrates’ duty to purify the soul, willing to accept the death sentence that was issued by Diopieithes in order that he obeys the law.¹⁴

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) represented a rational continuation of Plato.¹⁵ He theorized the concept of happiness as the ultimate end of human action with his doctrine of the mean. By adopting the process of syllogism,¹⁶ he argued logically that certain facts are true to formulate his basic principles. By determining the functions of things, he established the golden mean, which is discussed in chapter two.

Thucydides (460-400 B.C.) defined what ought to be done. In his book

¹³ Thomson, J. *Plato and Aristotle*, (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1932), p. 19.

¹⁴ Osborn, E. *Socrates and His Friends*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1956), p. 187.

¹⁵ Skirbekk, Gunnar, & Gilje, Nils, *A History of Western Thought: From Ancient Greece to the Twentieth Century*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 67.

¹⁶ The Aristotelian theory of knowledge emphasizes inductive and deductive inferences to define the fundamental forms of existence. It is a kind of logical argument in which one proposition (the conclusion) is inferred from two others (the premises) of a certain form.

The Peloponnesian War, Thucydides was the first to recognize the fear of unleashed power that drove both Sparta and Athens into unwanted war. He posed magnificently the actual dilemma of balancing security and survival. He considered nations as pawns in the hands of the great powers, an image that is not very different from the present political situation. Since “justice and honor cannot be followed without danger,”¹⁷ the Athenians can serve as an example for our modern society. Thucydides also described events in the past by showing the relationship between cause and effect.¹⁸

St. Augustine (354-430) focused on the violent nature of humans, postulating that God bestows his grace on his chosen ones. He believed that people cannot change their sinful ways because they are consumed and distracted by the pleasures of the world. For him, the *inner being* is a battleground for irrational impulses, subjected to God’s plan of salvation, irrespective of our free will.¹⁹

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) equated insecurity and organization with his theory of competition, diffidence, and glory into his Leviathan state. Arguing that people are driven by selfish considerations, he raised important

¹⁷ Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, (New York: The Modern Library, 1951), p. 334.

¹⁸ Skirbekk, Gunnar, & Gilje, Nils, *A History of Western Thought: From Ancient Greece to the Twentieth Century*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 102.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 115.

questions concerning the nature and limitations of political power. He focused on the need for a strong government to secure peace and order in an environment that is dominated by continuous conflict, known as the state of nature. In this state, fear drives individuals into a politically ordered society through a *social contract* that is imposed by physical force to ensure and secure life and health for everyone.²⁰

Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) offered a metaphysical type of ethics, attributing everything to the infinite God. He emphasized the notion of totality to understand the “big picture” of the world in which we live. As a part of the totality,²¹ individuals can interact with others to determine their identity by finding their places in the universe.²² He asserted that *the love of God* can ensure the happiness and moral life of individuals.²³

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) demanded a return to nature in his social contract. He believed that society corrupts individuals because civilization has led to “an artificial and degenerate life,”²⁴ inclining them toward aggression and self-interest. By returning to nature, individuals can

²⁰ Ibid, p. 184.

²¹ Ibid, p. 208, 209.

²² Ibid, p. 205.

²³ Schacht, Richard, *Classical Modern Philosophers: Descartes to Kant*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1987), p. 67.

²⁴ Skirbekk, Gunnar, & Gilje, Nils, *A History of Western Thought: From Ancient Greece to the Twentieth Century*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 253.

live a virtuous life. He outlined a system for institutional democracy to eliminate the egoistic behavior of society.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) conceived the world through the use of pure reason.²⁵ As synthetic *a priori* knowledge, he extended the notion of duty and universal laws that are included in his famous formulation of the categorical imperative, which I will discuss in detail in chapter three. Spinoza, Rousseau, and Kant saw that “they must demonstrate Christian moral principles philosophically.”²⁶

Karl Marx (1818-1883) exposed morality in his concept of alienation and its relation between consciousness and activity. In *The Communist Manifesto*, he explains moral doctrines in terms of class structure and struggle that are determined by the means and mode of production. His work defines as morally good the struggle of the proletariat to erect socialism from the decaying civilization of capitalism and to establish a classless society that publicly owns the means of production.

All these great thinkers immersed themselves profoundly into the world of ethics to determine the exact purpose of our existence. For them,

²⁵ Ibid, p. 222.

²⁶ Donagan, Alan, *The Theory of Morality*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 8.

ethics was an important field that needs to be explored further; for me, ethics needs to be particularly explored as it relates to foreign policy. The obvious reason for this is that I feel daily the necessity to answer the questions about what is right or what ought to be done in this contradictory political world. Simply, the world has become “a jungle, not a garden of Eden.”²⁷

B. Ethics in foreign policy

Usually, when we talk about ethics in foreign policy we try to describe whether a certain action is defined as *right* or *wrong*; in other words, deciding whether an act is good or bad. In the lifeboat example, the captain of the ship has to decide who deserves to live or die. At some point, he has to question his conscience and his ethical principles in order to justify his actions. As for the captain, so it is with the present analysis, we need to explain three kinds of thinking that deal with morality.

The first, descriptive empirical inquiry, interprets human nature by establishing a general theory about morality. It does not make any judgments about what focuses is right or wrong. The second, normative theory, is one of

²⁷ Fotion, Nicholas, *Reactions to War: Pacifism, Realism, and Just War Theory*, in “*Ethics in International Affairs*,” Edited by Andrew Valls, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2000), p. 18.

the main focuses of this thesis. The third is analytical or meta-ethical thinking. It considers the essence of ethics, morality, and the origin of things. It deals with logical, epistemological, and semantic questions, such as: what is the meaning of being good? What is the nature of morality? What is the distinction between morality and virtue?

In this thesis, I am concerned with the second type of thinking, that is, normative theory to discuss in detail how governments act or do not act ethically, and how they justify their positions. Within this theory, I am particularly interested in a deontology of foreign policy. I believe that foreign policy must be examined constantly to ensure a moral government.

Since I was a kid, I still remember the harsh reality of a famous western movie.²⁸ Its main theme has affected deeply my perceptions about life. Governments often carry out the death penalty on the guilty without being punished. Some states also consider killing permissible in some instances, while it is forbidden in others. For instance, a soldier can kill in wartime, and at the same time, he can be blessed by the pope or Ayatollah Khomeini. All

²⁸ In the western movie, *Billy the Kid*, a man is considered a hero if he kills a hundred, but he will be hanged if he kills one. The same principle is applied for those who steal millions of dollars. The original quotation is "Kill a man, one is a murderer; kill a million, a conqueror; kill them all, a God." Available on line at: <http://www.bartleby.com/6677/47273.html>; Retrieved on January 19, 2007.

these events have made me reflect about the role of ethics in politics.

The role of ethics in foreign policy is extremely important because ethical considerations can act to legitimize the authority of states, justify their objectives, and provide a framework for judging political action. The major aim of using ethics to analyze politics is to define the nature, methods, and duties of governments because it is our principle to accord "with the nature, the needs, the interests, and the limitations of our country."²⁹ Still, many political thinkers have included other factors such as knowledge, power, social class, and religious themes to justify their political objectives.

According to Realist thought, the very nature of international relations dictates that political actors, weak and strong, struggle for power, regardless of their capabilities and abilities. Yet it is also true that the world has witnessed several attempts to bring peace and justice to this world, as was the case with the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. However, the only language that international relations use is interest when it is a matter of survival. Then, how are politics to be reconciled with morality?

Whether we like it or not, "war has been the ultimate indicator of

²⁹ Kennan, George F. "On American Principles," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 2, (March/April, 1995), p. 116.

national military strength.”³⁰ In fact, it often determines “the winner and loser”³¹ in the international arena. However, this fact does not deny the existence of morality in international relations because “moral principles have their place in the heart of the individual and in the shaping of his own conduct, whether as a citizen or as a government official.”³²

Taking as a starting point, a Realist understanding of the international system, each country is separated by historical, linguistic, cultural, and structural differences. Each has its cultural and social diversity. Each promotes its own interests. Each has its own morality and views to advance its policies. But, it is obvious that there is no universal moral code that is binding to all members because a constant struggle for power dominates the political arena. In this political jungle, the strong exert their influence over the weak whether to maintain and increase their power, or to improve their position in the international system. Power can be used for good or evil, as I will discuss later in detail. It is important to protect and defend values and beliefs because “the rights of the member states must be vindicated, for it is only by virtue of

³⁰ Nye, Joseph S. Jr. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 1990), p. 78.

³¹ Neack, Laura, Hey, Jeanne A.K., & Haney, Patrick J. *Foreign Analysis: Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), p. 35.

³² Kennan, George, “*Realities of American Foreign Policy*,” (New York: Norton, 1966), p. 48.

those rights that there is a society at all.”³³

Yet, if power is considered to be the only factor in international relations, then there is no need to discuss the role of ethics in foreign policy. Other factors, namely deontology should be included in this complex political formula as well as to be used to explain decision-making in foreign policy.

The harsh fact is that there is lot of confusion about what constitutes morality in international relations because “there is no escape from the evil of power,” thanks in large part to the Realist school that dominates the international arena. To start, it is safe to consider all politics as a contest between the status quo and the coalition with varying degrees of intensity.³⁴ In this political system, leaders adopt various policies to suit their goals and needs. They seek to increase, maintain or demonstrate their power on the expense of others because they are unable to predict the motives of their neighbors, resorting to a policy of bluff.³⁵

Without feeling bound to any moral obligations, states consider the political survival of the state as their primary goal while the political rights of

³³ Walzer, Michael, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, (New York: Basic Books, 1992), p. 58, 59.

³⁴ Lebow, Richard Ned, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests and Orders*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 225.

³⁵ Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 58.

individuals as irrelevant.³⁶ They establish a hierarchy of objectives and a priority of goals that dictates a political necessity and a certain way of life. On the other hand, morality provides the inspiration, motivation, and vision to enlighten the implementation or examination of foreign policies. For without laws and norms, the political system can lead to national suicide.³⁷

C. The Moral Problem in International Relations

What I am terming the “moral problem in international relations” deals with moral judgments, codes, arguments, experiences, consciousness, and opinions regarding a certain foreign policy action. However, before discussing this problem, this thesis has to clarify the role of morality in the formulation of foreign policy. With a review of past efforts in discerning the role of morality in this political arena, it is extremely difficult to define what morality is.

The continuous struggle for survival delimits the behavior of states, forcing them to at least sometimes pursue unwanted paths. States sometimes pursue evil methods to achieve their desired goals. The strong dominate the arena, whereas the weak bandwagon. Due to this unappeasable and violent

³⁶ Cromartie, Michael, Editor, *Might and Right after the Cold War: Can Foreign Policy Be Moral?* (Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1993), p. 45.

³⁷ Morgenthau, Hans, The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions, *American Political Science Review*, Vol.44, (1950), p. 854.

conflict of values, there is no place for morality in foreign policies.

However, states are not always in a state of war. Going back to the example of the Athenians and the Melians, both of them had the choice not to go to war. They had a choice to cooperate. In fact, with the growing era of interdependence, the only question is whether the US will strive to maintain its international primacy, being much more powerful than other nations.³⁸

Accordingly, the major moral problem in international relations is that the international environment *per se* does not leave much choice for moral behavior by states. The harsh reality is that “envy, the lust for power, greed, and the malignant inclinations bound up with these, besiege [the individual’s] nature.”³⁹ This same idea is reinforced by several philosophers whose work laid the basic foundations for explaining the selfish and immoral action of individuals.

Another major problem is the absence of a binding legal framework among states. For individuals, their national law constrains illegal actions in society, whereas in the international system, states can and too often do behave immorally where such constraints are absent or are eclipsed by the desire for

³⁸ Jervis, Robert, “International Primacy: Is the Game Worth the Candle?” *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4, (Spring, 1993), p. 52.

³⁹ Kant, Immanuel, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 85.

survival and the pursuit of interests, as noted by Machiavelli and others.

Furthermore, the international system favors the “law of the jungle” because force remains the final arbiter in international relations.⁴⁰ If leaders have to choose between survival and justice, they will surely choose the first option. This is true because the state undergirds the system – the state has to survive first before anything else. This also results in a hierarchy of priorities for moral behavior. “For where the very safety of the country depends upon the resolution to be taken, no considerations of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, nor of glory or shame, should be allowed to prevail.”⁴¹

In fact, there are several obvious reasons why ethical behavior is not permitted. While the golden rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you emphasizes the diversified structure of moral language that stresses universality and impartiality.⁴² It is easier to moralize than to act morally. How then do we approach the moral problem in international relations if you cannot afford to turn the other cheek?

The methodology this thesis employs is a theoretical analysis of

⁴⁰ Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics*, (London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), p. 186.

⁴¹ Machiavelli, Niccolo, *Discourses*, (New York: Modern Library, 1950), Part 3, p.528.

⁴² Nye, Joseph S. Jr. *Power in the Global Information Age*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 115.

morality in the examination of US foreign policy. Based on Kant's deontological approach, it identifies the hierarchy of values and objectives to determine the worth of individuals. This approach will allow me to reconsider the moral dilemmas in foreign policy, the role and duty of actors, and the importance of goodwill in daily political life, irrespective of the anarchic nature of the international system. By this, I hope to highlight some patterns and draw conclusions about how this hierarchy may or may not be changed.

My overall strategy resembles Kant's Categorical Imperative. By this, I mean that I have used the critical method to better understand the role of ethics in foreign policy. By critical method, I imply that critical knowledge is always in a dynamic motion to induce some change in the meanings and practices of the governed international system. The objective is to elucidate both the possible intentions and courses of action by combining both theory and practice.⁴³ Through dialogue, this thesis encourages the rational behavior in the examination of foreign policy to reach an international consensus on Kant's deontology, hoping to explicate the actions, motives, and intentions of the US.

Through using the critical method, I will be able to describe the

⁴³ Comstock, Donald E. *A Method for Critical Research*, in *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, Edited by Martin, Michael & McIntyre, Lee C (London: MIT Press, 1994), p. 628.

behavior of the United States in conducting its foreign policy. Use of the critical method will allow evaluation of the American values in the international arena, transforming my analysis into “a science of *praxis* in which action serves as both the source and the validation of its theories.”⁴⁴ Similarly, I am better able to criticize principles to establish *a priori* judgments.

Consequently, I have classified and characterized the main ethical normative theories to determine the foundations of a deontological approach to foreign policy, particularly decision-making. Kant describes morality in accordance with reason. I also include other aspects and variables such as religion that are used to justify our actions. The result is an attempt at a comprehensive account of the role of ethics in foreign policy. This strategy allows me to compare the various normative approaches in international relation. It also highlights why certain actions have occurred, particularly when power and interest are the driving force behind American foreign policy.

Taking into consideration the limited articles and books on this subject, it was difficult for me to develop my views. I have labored to figure out how to balance various phenomena and theories about the international system that I have been studying for so long, with my own experience, intuition, and even

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 625.

theological assumptions. Nevertheless, before I embark on analyzing the morality of foreign policy of the United States from a deontological point of view, I find it necessary to dissect the main ethical normative theories in international relations because “the best intentions in the world will not be counted very heavily on the day of judgment.”⁴⁵ By so doing, I hope to clarify and delimit the framework of my discussion.

⁴⁵ Hoffmann, Stanley, “The Hell of Good Intentions,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 29, (Winter, 1977-1978), p. 3.

Chapter Two:

Normative Theory

“Non est ad astra mollis e terris via.”

(There is no easy way from earth to the stars.)

-Seneca-

Normative theory is the main branch of the philosophical study of ethics. It is concerned with classifying actions as right or wrong. In sum, it describes, analyzes, and evaluates philosophical theories. Since normative theories have been overshadowed by other perspectives of international relations such as Realism, Liberalism, and Marxism, the need to examine this approach is unavoidable in the present study. The continued existence of wars dictates the necessity of a moral framework by which leaders conduct their foreign policies.

In the political realm, states are preoccupied with survival and increasing their share of power. It is not surprising that realism and marxism would eventually dominate political thought. On the other hand, liberalism emphasizes individual liberty in a *laissez-faire* government. It also implies commitment to free market principles without government intervention.

However, if a person investigates carefully these mentioned theories, he/she will be amazed to notice that these three theories share some similar views.

Normative theory deals with what should be done, whereas empirical theory explains what is. No matter if it was Machiavelli, Morgenthau, or Carr; each thinker has had to consider the relationship between facts and values to build his/her grand theory. It is therefore important to clearly define normative theory because it treats values and value preferences of what the world *ought* to be.⁴⁶ Normative theorists attempt to draw a common objective for all moral actions. Unlike empirical theory, there is no need for empirical tests to determine either the truthfulness or the falseness of normative theory. Consequently, my task is not to discuss the rightness of various philosophical variations of ethics. Rather, I intend to give the reader a glimpse of the dominant views that constitute normative theory, particularly on Immanuel Kant's deontology in order to examine how this approach may be implemented in foreign policy. In general, three main schools dominate this field under normative theory: Consequentialism, Deontology, and Teleology.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Viotti, Paul & Kauppi, Mark, *International Relations Theory*, (Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon, 1999), p. 397.

⁴⁷ See Figure 1 on p. 57.

A. Consequentialism

Consequentialism argues that the morality of an action is dependent on the outcome of the action to initiate and induce change. It evaluates the available choices on the basis of results or consequences, always choosing the lesser of two evils as long as individuals can remain alive.⁴⁸ This theory yields the conclusion that individuals have a duty to produce the best outcome.⁴⁹

Consequentialism is when an individual is forced to break any moral law for the common interest of the community.⁵⁰ It focuses on the effects of moral and ethical arguments. If the net outcome is good, an act is considered moral. For example, killing a child is permissible if so doing can save a million of other lives.⁵¹ Any action is justified if the consequences are good.⁵² No means are completely forbidden. It is the complete opposite of deontology.

A variety of theories falls within the category of Consequentialist theory; however, the present discussion is limited to two of these paradigms: utilitarianism and egoism.

⁴⁸ Donagan, Alan, *The Theory of Morality*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 183.

⁴⁹ Kamm, F. M. *Morality, Morality*, Volume 1: *Death and Whom to Save from It*, (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 76.

⁵⁰ Donagan, Alan, *The Theory of Morality*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 173.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 234.

⁵² Nye, Joseph S. Jr. *Power in the Global Information Age*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 120.

1. Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is “the most influential of several ethical theories that measure the worth of actions by their ends and consequences.”⁵³ It predicts the consequences of a certain actions when the general good of societies is promoted. Since the theory is focused on *utility*, anything that hinders the general good is considered useless. A utilitarian has to choose the greatest benefit to humanity over other beneficial and evil options. Actions are considered moral “if and only if their consequences involve greater happiness.”⁵⁴ Whatever the good or evil choices are, we can measure them in an almost quantitative or even mathematical way.

The most prominent feature of utilitarianism is the relationship between pleasure and pain. Since welfare can be assessed in various ways, there are many species of utilitarianism. Usually, the question is whether individual justifiable acts can maximize the welfare of society.⁵⁵ However, philosophers agree in general that there are two types of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

⁵³ Beauchamp, Tom L. *Philosophical Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982), p. 73.

⁵⁴ Donagan, Alan, *The Theory of Morality*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 192.

⁵⁵ Williams, Bernard, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 75.

a. Act utilitarianism

Act utilitarianism calculates all the actions all the time.⁵⁶ It is also referred to as direct utilitarianism because it evaluates acts solely in terms of consequences or results. Since the individual does not take into consideration personal feelings or laws, *utility* is maximized or minimized according to exempting conditions.⁵⁷ Philosophers like Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), the father of the utilitarians, and his disciple John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) held that liberty is the utility of individuals as responsible beings.⁵⁸

b. Rule utilitarianism

Rule utilitarianism is more humane. It is also known as indirect utilitarianism. It is concerned with the notion of fairness and justice even if it may minimize the goodness of an action. It provides a framework for actions according to the situation because the law will determine the greatest utility. Here, the person abides by the rule of law to achieve the greatest results. Since it is very useful to have rules, these rules are maintained according to their utility. One of the greatest proponents of rule utilitarianism is David Hume.

⁵⁶ Frankena, William K. *Ethics*, (London: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1963), p. 32.

⁵⁷ Donagan, Alan, *The Theory of Morality*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 195.

⁵⁸ Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty*, (London: Dent & Sons, 1944), p.74.

2. Egoism

Egoism is an extreme type of ethics in normative theory.⁵⁹ It considers what ought to happen in accordance with interests. This does not imply that the individual should always be selfish; rather, egoism promotes actions over the long run that will be advantageous to the individual.⁶⁰ It means that he/she should act and adopt both the best policy and means depending on whether it is to his/her advantage.⁶¹

Like Epicurus, the individual tends to mix the idea of good with happiness in some instances. In other, he/she has his own set of regulations and laws that he/she acts upon, always seeking his own welfare and setting up his/her own standard. In fact, it is a determination to promote interests even beyond what is morally permissible.⁶² It promotes the greatest possible balance of good over evil.⁶³ This view was also held by several philosophers, in particular Nietzsche and Gramsci. However, this thesis is concerned with deontological theories, as theories of duty.

⁵⁹ Frankena, William K. *Ethics*, (London: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1963), p. 16.

⁶⁰ Baier, Kurt, *Egoism*, in *A Companion to Ethics*, Edited by Peter Singer, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 197.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 203.

⁶² Ibid, p. 197.

⁶³ Frankena, William K. *Ethics*, (London: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1963), p. 16.

B. Deontology

The term Deontology comes from the Greek words *deon* = duty or obligation plus *logos*.⁶⁴ Therefore, deontology is the science of duty, or more precisely, the study of what an individual ought to do. It can be identified as an ethics of intentions as the term also means *binding duty*.

Deontology considers the duty and the rights of others to the extent that you put yourself in other people's shoes.⁶⁵ It forms a set of permanent principles that do not change within the dynamic field of politics. Any act or rule is considered right or wrong irrespective of its consequences.⁶⁶ Unlike utilitarianism, moral decisions completely ignore the outcome of actions.

Deontology focuses on reason and intentions of actors, and is not concerned at all with consequences. This concept focuses on the goodness of policies that are determined mainly by its moral goals and intentions. Deontology can be considered as an excuse to "avoid certain actions" because an agent, to use Kant's terminology, must be free from any restraints that may

⁶⁴ The term was first used in 1817 by Jeremy Bentham's *Deontology*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983). Bentham considered deontology as a part and as a completion of utilitarian theory to bring to view the relation between interest and duty.

⁶⁵ Nagel, Thomas, *Mortal Questions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.126.

⁶⁶ Davis, Nancy Ann, *Contemporary Deontology*, in *A Companion to Ethics*, Edited by Peter Singer, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 205.

hinder his/her action.⁶⁷ It implies that an individual has the right to avoid hurting other individuals. He/she has the right not to kill or hurt others because he/she has “a duty to respect the right to life of others.”⁶⁸

Going back to the lifeboat example, many deontologists presume that each life is sacred irrespective of age, sex, or color. Simply, you do not sacrifice the life of any person, not even one, in order to save the life of others because deontology does not take into consideration the interests of others. The act of saving another is not necessarily considered good because “the goodness of the ultimate consequences does not guarantee the rightness of the actions which produced them.”⁶⁹ It is absolutely forbidden to harm anyone because killing can never be justifiable no matter what the circumstances are. On the other hand, trying to fit all people on the lifeboat would eventually lead to catastrophe, as will be discussed in chapter four.

Let us discuss a real life example. The bombing of Tokyo during World War Two is considered immoral from a deontological perspective. The use of evil means to intentionally kill innocent civilians cannot be justified by the

⁶⁷ Korsgaard, Christine M. *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 291.

⁶⁸ Vincent, R.J. *Human Rights in International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 127.

⁶⁹ Fried, C. *Right and Wrong*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 9.

good intention of ending the war.⁷⁰ For this reason, rules are drawn from instances and peculiar situations in which obligations toward the world are respected, and not otherwise.⁷¹ The nature of the action *per se* is the focus of deontology. Accordingly, the aim of deontological theory is to define the normative principles by which an individual can justify his/her moral position.

Still, deontology does not offer any standard for determining what is right or wrong; rather, it can present a method for shaping a decision regarding what ought to be done. Since deontological approaches encompasses many moral positions, we cannot generalize nor form a firm attitude because each situation is different and unique.⁷² This is an extreme type that is better known as act deontologism. The other main type is referred to as rule deontologism. It considers a number of specific rules that distinguishes what ought to be done in a certain manner at a certain situation, according to a hierarchy of values.

Often, when we talk about deontology, philosophers refer to Kant as the dominant advocate of this theory. In fact, theorists use the term Kantian to

⁷⁰ Amstutz, Mark R. *International Ethics: Concepts, Theories, and Cases in Global Politics*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 1999), p. 36.

⁷¹ Beauchamp, Tom L. *Philosophical Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982), p. 115.

⁷² Frankena, William K. *Ethics*, (London: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1963), p. 21, 22.

mean deontological, and vice versa.⁷³ In Kant's deontology, the nature and the limits of this theory can be examined. This approach is often referred to as rule-deontological theory because rules facilitate decision-making, bind individuals to certain acts,⁷⁴ and limit moral transgression against any individuals by establishing a moral code.

In general, deontologists believe that moral duties are agent-relative. What is meant by this? It means that the actions of any individual or agent depend on the actions' relationship with others. A moral agent can be defined as a rational agent who understands the nature of both inductive and deductive types of reasoning.⁷⁵ Every action that is not based on moral principles is considered done for the benefit and pleasure of the agent.

Recently, American politicians adopted deontological methods at the international level to justify their objectives,⁷⁶ irrespective of dominant utilitarians' attempts to stop them. For instance, the American government feels that its *war on terrorism* is fully justified. However, Bin-Laden and his

⁷³ Donaldson, Thomas, *Kant's Global Rationalism*, in *Traditions of International Ethics*, edited by Terry Nardin and David Mapel, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 137.

⁷⁴ Beauchamp, Tom L. *Philosophical Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982), p. 116

⁷⁵ Doore, Gary, "Contradiction in the Will," *Kantstudien*, Vol. 76, (1985), p. 145.

⁷⁶ Donaldson, Thomas, "International Deontology Defended: A Response to Russell Hardin," *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (1995), p. 147.

terrorists also feel that they are engaged in a righteous cause because they consider their acts moral. From a deontological point of view, an individual can properly assert that the events of September 11 were wrong, regardless of its consequences. He/she can take clear positions with regard to these sad events because a deontologist can distinguish between lawful and unlawful conduct. On the ground that it is inherently wrong to break laws, attack the innocent, or intervene in other people's affairs, many issues are solved. For this reason, it is extremely important to take into consideration the deontological approaches for analyzing international relations because international human rights can be considered as a preliminary prerequisite for a just and peaceful world, as will this thesis maintain in the coming chapters.

1. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Immanuel Kant is one of the prime philosophers of ethics and reason. He described morality in terms of laws and reason.⁷⁷ He was concerned with motivations and intentions because he considered duty to be more important than happiness. In fact, duty is the central concept of his philosophy. He

⁷⁷ Williams, Bernard, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 54, 55.

established his moral system, basing his argument on the necessity of doing one's duty. To Kant, an individual moral agent must be completely autonomous, guided solely by what he designated as the *categorical imperative*, which will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

Unlike the utilitarians, Kant argued that the moral status of an action is not determined by consequences. We are not morally obligated to seek the best outcome of our actions. However, we should act in accordance with our moral duty. For him, an act is genuinely moral only when it is done out of pure respect for duty. For this reason, we should treat other individuals in a manner that is consistent with human dignity.

Accordingly, how can we determine what actions are consistent with our morality? How can a politician decide what his/her ethical duties are? According to Kant, individuals have free will to choose their moral actions,⁷⁸ but they are also obligated to follow a certain moral law governed by reason.⁷⁹ This means that each individual will treat the other person as an end *per se*, not just as a means, as I will explain later in more detail. It implies that this right reason is driven by obligation to formulate a universal law towards all

⁷⁸ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 50 (448).

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 23 (412).

individuals. Otherwise, there would be no “moral principle which cannot be a principle for all.”⁸⁰ If a proposed action can be universally applicable, then an individual can justify his/her decision in a manner that is binding and absolute, allowing no exceptions. In other words, if an action cannot be universalized, then an individual should not perform this act in the first place.

Kant introduced the concept of good will, analyzed his concept, and ended up with the categorical imperative.⁸¹ He established a rational principle that could act as a framework for all other ethical decisions. The categorical imperative means an unconditional command that binds all individuals to moral action, regardless of likeness, abilities, or opportunities. It requires that all individuals be treated as having value or *worth* (to use Kant’s terminology) because they must behave in accordance to certain universalized principles or what Kant had designated them as *maxims*.⁸² The categorical imperative will be discussed at length in the next chapter, however, allow me first to examine other normative theories to emphasize the variation within each.

⁸⁰ O’Neill, Onora, *Kantian Ethics*, in *A Companion to Ethics*, Edited by Peter Singer, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 177.

⁸¹ Potter, Nelson, *The Argument of Kant’s Groundwork, Chapter 1*, in *Kant’s Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: Critical Essays*, Edited by Paul Guyer, (Lanham, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), p. 42, 43.

⁸² Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981) p. 14 (402).

2. Contractarianism

Contractarianism often referred to as Contractualism,⁸³ is concerned with the welfare of individuals or, more accurately, *enlightened interest of the self*.⁸⁴ It relies on reason to justify its behavior, even if it does not care about anything else, but include the well-being of others. The reason for this behavior is that it equates duty with maximizing good consequences.⁸⁵ It is simply a matter of what changes can be induced in society to produce welfare for the greatest number of people because other concerns and variables are present in the political arena that might affect this situation.⁸⁶

Contractarianism is the ethical theory that was derived from the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Hobbes believed that a mutual agreement exists between the state and its citizens to promote prosperity to its citizens in return for their obedience. Since “there is no *finis ultimus*, utmost aim, nor *summum bonum*, greatest good,”⁸⁷ this voluntary social contract dictates that individuals are obligated to fulfill the terms of this contract

⁸³ The term was popularized by Elizabeth Anscombe (1919-present) to describe a type of moral theory. A Graduate from Oxford, she analyzed the meaning of intentional actions and expressions to clarify ethical behavior.

⁸⁴ Edmundson, William A. *An Introduction to Rights*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 110.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 111.

⁸⁶ Williams, Bernard, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p.76, 77.

⁸⁷ Hardie, W.F.R. “The Final Good in Aristotle’s Ethics,” *Philosophy: The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy*, (October 1965), Vol.40, No. 154, p. 277.

through the performance of certain duties. The basic idea behind this contract is to legitimate the political institutions that will support the contract. By respecting the agreement, happiness and productivity based on mutual respect are guaranteed in the society. However, conflicts will jeopardize the trust between those signed parties.

Another prominent figure in Contractarianism is John Rawls (1921-2002) who is well known for his explanation of the relation between *right* and *good*. For him, the essential problem is that a moral society would eventually generate “in its members the necessary continuities and sense of purpose to maintain itself.”⁸⁸ He focuses on the idea of *procedural justice* to ensure that everyone is treated justly no matter what the consequences are.

Rawls establishes two basic principles of justice.⁸⁹ The first principle states that each individual enjoys the same equal liberties as long as the goods are distributed equally. The second emphasizes the availability of goods to everyone equally because he believes in the purity of heart to guide individuals in their graceful action. For Rawls, as for Kant, individuals are assumed to be rational where everyone is in the same situation, having an equal opportunity.

⁸⁸ Rawls, John, “The Independence of Moral Theory,” *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, Vol. 48, (1974-1975), p. 20.

⁸⁹ Rawls, John, “Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory,” *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 77, No. 9, (September 9, 1980), p. 562.

3. John Locke (1632-1704)

John Locke has had significant influence on political science, philosophy, and US President Thomas Jefferson who wrote the Declaration of the Independence. With his contribution to the doctrine of inner and outer experiences, he claimed that individuals have certain rights and duties such as liberty, life, and ownership of property because God created us with these qualities to serve his purposes.⁹⁰

The central philosophy of Locke revolves around the *individual* who lives as a free citizen and is guaranteed certain rights. He believed that all people are equal before the law,⁹¹ in “tacit and voluntary consent.”⁹² Between the extremes of pleasure and pain, Locke comprehended morality as the maximization of pleasure. Accordingly, individuals have to abide by and act morally in accordance with divine law. For him, any action can be judged right or wrong if it is in accordance with these rights. The thesis now turns to discuss the third paradigm teleology.

⁹⁰ Locke, John, “*Two Treatises of Government*,” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), book II, paragraph 6, p. 289

⁹¹ Ibid, book II, paragraph 4, p. 287.

⁹² Ibid, book II, paragraph 50, p. 320.

C. Teleology

Teleology originates from the Greek word *telos* = final end or purpose and *logos* = discourse. It is the science or doctrine that attempts to explain the universe in terms of its final causes, assuming that everything has a purpose in this universe. The meaning and value of all historical events are derived from their purposes. Aristotle is considered a pillar in this field.

Teleology is an important field of study in this thesis because it is based on empirical judgments concerning the consequences of an action. This theory is referred to as *posteriori* because it focuses on both acts and consequences. An act is considered *right* if and only if it produces *at least a balance of good over evil*.⁹³ It stresses the importance of equilibrium within the system to explain the causes that may affect the behavior of actors.

1. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

With his detailed observation skills and cataloging ability, Aristotle adopted an inductive reasoning method to classify knowledge and the ethical doctrine of the mean. He reasoned that because everything is always changing and moving, 1) there must be a cause for this and 2) the change and movement

⁹³ Frankena, William K. *Ethics*, (London: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1963), p. 13

must be caused by something for a certain purpose because everything is caused by something.

Aristotle argued that the goal of human beings is happiness. To do so, an individual has lived according to reason because he/she is “the rational animal.” By having certain functions, he/she can act properly and live happily ever after. Any individual who is unable to achieve this happiness is considered morally imperfect. The ultimate end of human action is *practical knowledge* because it has to do with the individual’s capacity to make free choices.⁹⁴

Aristotle believed that happiness is a universal desire that all people are pursuing.⁹⁵ He brilliantly culminated his scientific observation and thought with the doctrine of the mean. As a guideline for human behavior, he deduced that every moral virtue is the mean between vicious extremes. For instance, the virtue of courage is the result of cowardliness and rashness.

Furthermore, Aristotle defined moral virtue as the avoidance of extremes in behavior. By choosing what is best, virtue “is the perfected state of the human soul.”⁹⁶ Every moral action is judged separately according to its

⁹⁴ Timmons, Mark, *Moral Theory: An Introduction*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), p. 152.

⁹⁵ Beauchamp, Tom L. *Philosophical Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982), p. 155.

⁹⁶ Korsgaard, Christine, “Aristotle on Function and Virtue,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (July 1986), p. 259.

circumstances and situation. He concluded that it is difficult to live a virtuous life because it is difficult to find the mean between two extremes.

In this chapter, three major approaches to normative theory have been discussed: consequentialism, deontology, and teleology. It is extremely difficult to adopt one approach while rejecting the other two theories. Each approach has been conceived from the evolutionary conception of what constitutes moral life. With the magnificent historical experience of humankind, it is natural that various perceptions have ushered the implementation of similar values.

Mill and Bentham conceived ethics in terms of maximizing benefits and minimizing harm because they were more concerned with social welfare and social reform.⁹⁷ Similarly, Aristotle emphasized the promotion of the best life through his distinction between the means and the ends. In his categorical imperative, Kant considered both reason and goodwill in his moral formula.

Each normative theory differs substantially in their methods within each field. Each provides a worthy reflection on morality, sharing some common themes and providing insights into the future of humankind. They all seek the same end or objective, that is, the happiness of society though they

⁹⁷ Beauchamp, Tom L. *Philosophical Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982), p. 179.

define it differently. However, it is worth mentioning that while consequentialism and teleology are end-based since they emphasize happiness as an end, deontology is considered as a duty-based theory.

To summarize the main theories in normative ethics as well as to make as clear as possible my understanding of normative theory, I have drawn a triangle to emphasize the main characteristics of each philosopher's thought in relationship to the others.⁹⁸ Accordingly, the various types of normative ethics theories and political behavior vary horizontally from left to right. The more we move to the right, the more end focused the theory. Similarly, each type also varies vertically from the bottom of the triangle to the top. The more we move upward, the more focus is placed on duty over consideration of either the means or the ends of an action. This figure represents my understandings of the various strains of normative theory.

This thesis focuses on one line of normative theory, namely Kant's categorical imperative. The objective of this study is to apply Kant's deontological approach into US foreign policy. To do so, this thesis introduces first some important concepts in Kant's philosophy, hoping that it will broaden our understanding of Immanuel Kant.

⁹⁸ See Figure 2 on page 58.

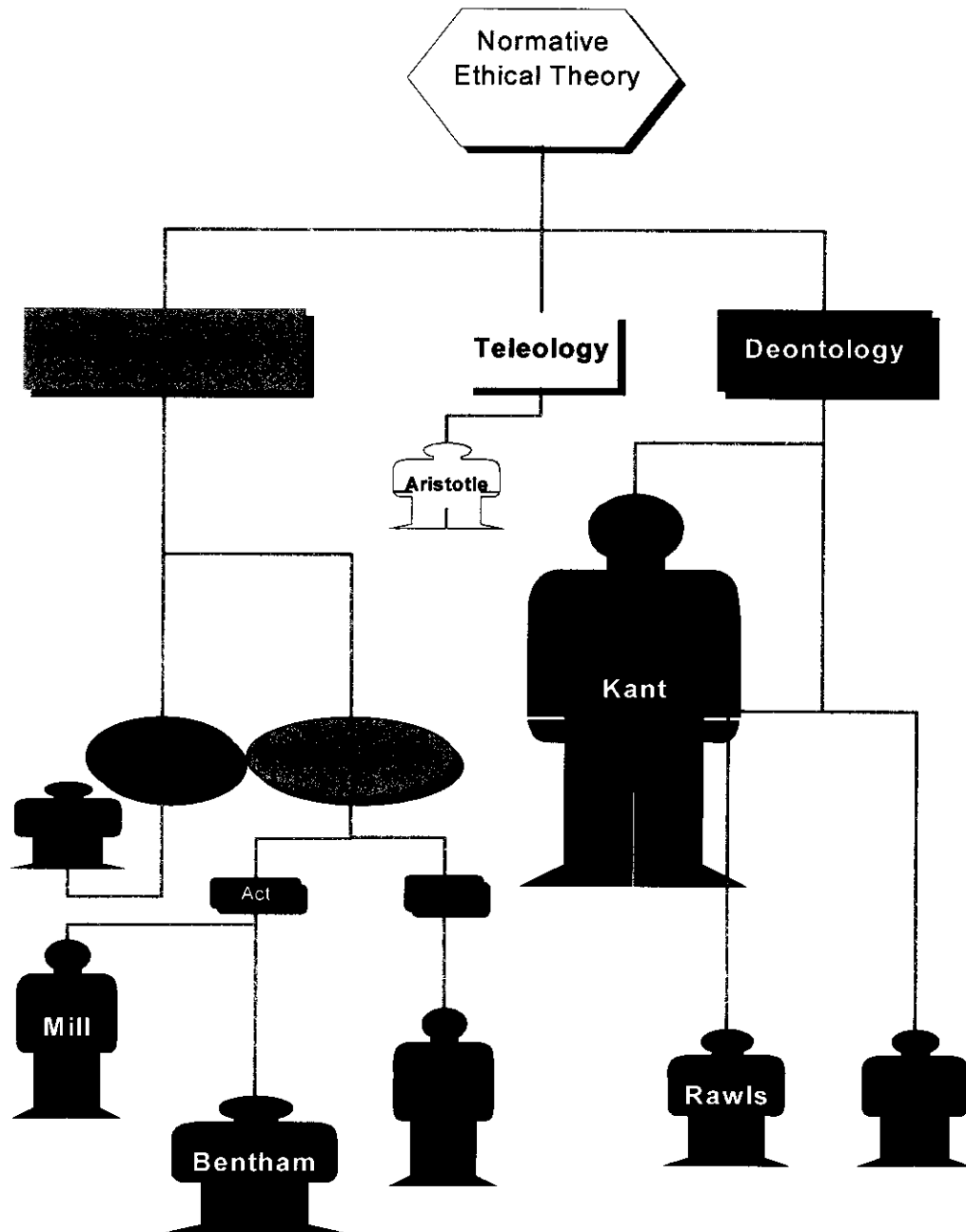


Figure 1: Normative Ethical Theories

Reference:

K = Kant
A = Aristotle
R = Rawls
L = Locke
H = Hume
B = Bentham
E = Epicurus

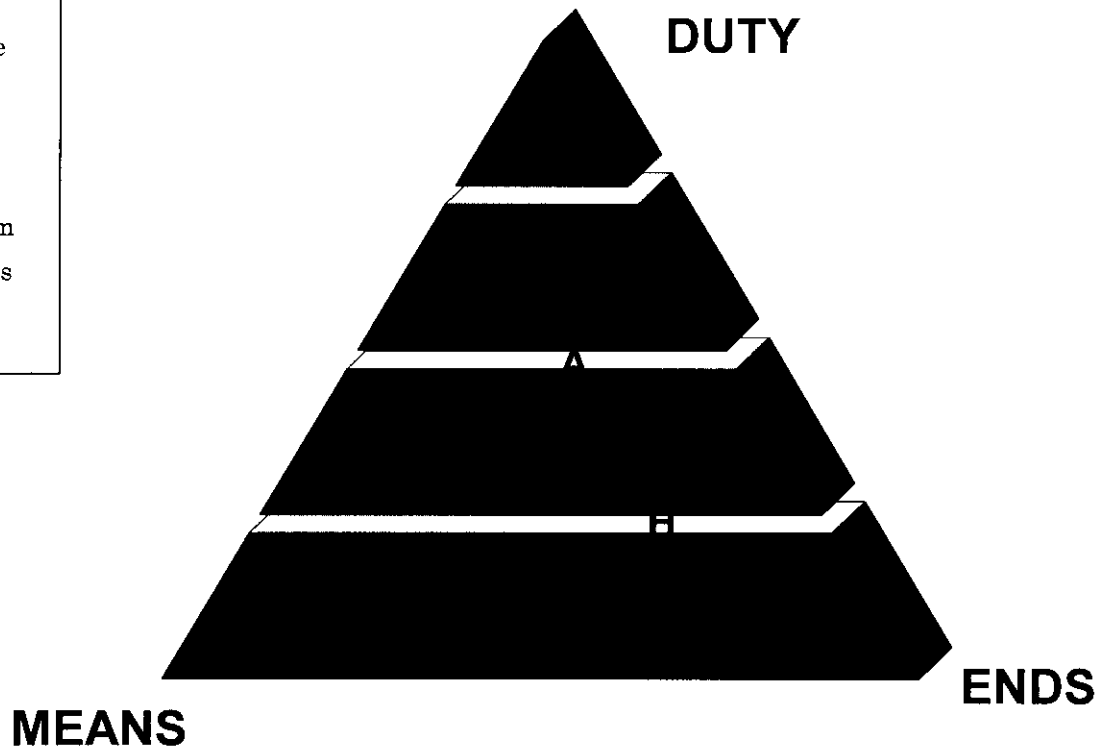


Figure 2: Normative Triangle

Chapter Three:

The Categorical Imperative

“Omne appetitum appetitur sub specie boni”

(Everything pursued is pursued as being something good)

-Plato, *Meno*

The ethical theory of Immanuel Kant is regarded as the most important development of deontological thought in philosophy. Given the breadth and complexity of Kant's work, allow me to delimit the framework of my studies before I plunge myself into his world. In this thesis, I have no intention of discussing all of Immanuel Kant's philosophical works, their various interpretations, or the consequent debates. Though Kant has always been considered difficult to understand, his philosophy has provided the human race with an easy solution to guarantee the freedom and the rights of individuals. The obvious reason for this is that Kant remains one of the most debated and complex philosophers of all, at least in my opinion. Every sentence and each word can be refuted and argued. One of the reasons for this confusion is that Kant combined the thought of three other philosophers to formulate his theory. He included St. Augustine's *good will*, Plato's *ought*, and Aristotle's

final *end*.⁹⁹ All three interact together in varying degrees to produce the desired normative theory.¹⁰⁰ Some philosophical elements of other thinkers may be included in his/her view that complicates the general picture of the philosopher. However, this thesis argues that Kant's diagnosis of the illness of the society and his vision for a better world are much easier to comprehend.

Kant considered reason as the source of morality to analyze situations where any actions can be applied to his general theory. By doing so, he differentiated between *hypothetical* and *categorical imperatives*.¹⁰¹ The hypothetical imperative was represented as the means to some other end,¹⁰² while the categorical was conceived as a measure of morality to determine goodness *in itself*. Accordingly, the objective of this thesis is to focus on one theory, that is, the categorical imperative because it describes moral goodness as the ultimate end of human conduct.

In his book *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant begins to construct his theory by observing that "*there is no possibility of thinking of anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be regarded*

⁹⁹ Riley, Patrick. "The 'Elements' of Kant's Practical Philosophy: The Groundwork after 200 Years (1785-1985), *Political Theory*, Vol. 14, No. 4, (November, 1986), pp. 552.

¹⁰⁰ See Figure 3 on page 75.

¹⁰¹ Covell, Charles, *Kant and the Law of Peace: A Study in the Philosophy of International Law and International Relations*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 22.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, p. 23.

as good without qualification, except a good will."¹⁰³ This starting point poses several questions concerning the meaning of *good will*.

By good will, Kant meant that an individual has to act out of duty for the sake of duty. When you have the right intention, an individual can respect moral laws without having any material interest in the end result of the action. It means that this good will permits the same action for others because good will is an end for everyone,¹⁰⁴ as if it were a Christian commandment to love your neighbor as yourself.¹⁰⁵

For Kant, reason was the source of morality. However, the essence of morality also can be found in moral laws.¹⁰⁶ An individual acts in accordance with his moral duty because he acts *rationally*. However, how do we know what our duties are, as Kant himself wondered? Kant's answer was that our duty is embedded in our obedience to certain principles in spite of our inclinations, self-interest, or the possible consequences of an act.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981) p. 7 (393).

¹⁰⁴ Kant, Immanuel, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), II, p. 46, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Matthew 22: 39. American Bible Society *Good News Bible: Today's English Version*, (New York: American Bible Society, 1978), p. 764.

¹⁰⁶ Covell, Charles, *Kant and the Law of Peace: A Study in the Philosophy of International Law and International Relations*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 28.

¹⁰⁷ Russo, Michael S, "Deontology and It's Discontents: A Brief Overview of Kant's Ethics," *Molloy College*, 2006. Available on line @ www.molloy.edu/academic/philosophy/SOPHIA/kant/deontology.htm; Retrieved on April 26, 2006.

I would like to put significant emphasis on the word *duty* because it is the basis of Kant's philosophy on which he formulated his theory. Unlike the Greeks and other philosophers who emphasized the goal of happiness in their arguments, Kant distinguished himself with his strong attachment to duty, supporting his attachment with examples. He called his theory the categorical imperative, that is, the supreme principle of all morality. It is also referred to it as the unconditional command of morality.

I do not intend to discuss all five formulations of this imperative because some scholars believe that in fact "these formulas are fundamentally the same."¹⁰⁸ In this thesis, I will focus mostly on the "First Formula" or the "Formula of Universal Law."¹⁰⁹ (See Appendix on p. 121) The objective of this approach is to emphasize the dignity and integrity of individuals with rights and liberty.

*"Always act in such a way that you can also will that the maxim of your action should become a universal law."*¹¹⁰ From this simple formula, Kant established all moral rules to differentiate between morally valid and invalid

¹⁰⁸ Hill, Thomas E. Jr. *Dignity and Practical Reason: In Kant's Moral Theory*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 8, 9.

¹⁰⁹ Paton, H.J. "The Aim and Structure of Kant's Grundlegung," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 31, (April, 1958), p. 113.

¹¹⁰ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p.30, (421).

principles.¹¹¹ Kant's theory focuses on duties to define correct action and not its consequences. For this reason, this thesis refers to Kant's deontology as the notion of intentions in normative theory. In other words, any ethical decision or action should be judged according to the applicability of this principle. It implies that what is good for one person is good for all. Unlike other theories, it takes into consideration the treatment of oneself and others at the same time to protect and promote their humanity.¹¹² As stated, an important condition of morality is to judge our own actions by the same universal principle because the purpose of this formula is "intended for nothing more than seeking out and establishing the supreme principle of morality."¹¹³

Kant believed that we all have the ability to determine rationally what is right or not if we act in a good will. The basic idea behind this approach is to examine the *nature* of our actions and intentions instead of their *consequences*. Any intentional action that is committed by an individual justifies the same action for others. If the action is in accordance to moral duty, then the action is *rationally* justified for all individuals. This implies that whatever decision one

¹¹¹ Bordum, Anders, "Immanuel Kant, Jurgen Habermas and the Categorical Imperative," *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, Vol. 31, No. 7, (November, 2005), p. 852.

¹¹² Timmons, Mark, *Moral Theory: An Introduction*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), p. 158.

¹¹³ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 5. (392).

makes as a rational agent is consistent with his/her moral duties. This also means that whatever action one chooses to perform is permissible as long as it is done for the sake of duty in accordance to laws.¹¹⁴

Kant believed that morally good actions are those with morally good intentions that are carried out because of a sense of *duty*.¹¹⁵ Any action stemming from *good will* is always morally better than self-interested actions; otherwise, *everyone* would lose by Kant's universal principles.¹¹⁶ In that order, the *maxim* of self-interest contradicts itself when it is made universal law.¹¹⁷

In his formula, Kant limits the *maxims* of individuals, regulating what ought to be permissible. The categorical imperative controls the desires and greed of each individual to force obedience to one moral law. Thus, it enables each individual to co-exist with the freedom of others in accordance with a universal law.¹¹⁸ It implies that any transgression can be considered as injustice because "*maxims* that cannot pass the test of universalisation are ruled out."¹¹⁹

If a contradiction between *wills* arises for reason, particularly when

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 23 (412).

¹¹⁵ Acton, H.B. *Kant's Moral Philosophy*, (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 12.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 27.

¹¹⁷ Kant, Immanuel, *The Metaphysic of Morals*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by Reiss, Hans, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 105 (453).

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 133, paragraph (C).

¹¹⁹ Acton, H.B. *Kant's Moral Philosophy*, (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 21.

self-preservation and survival issues dominate the political arena, the action resulting from such a contradiction is considered unethical and inconsistent with the universal law. According to Kant, moral laws cannot have exceptions because if contradiction arises, it “would necessarily destroy itself just as soon as it was made a universal law.”¹²⁰

To better clarify my case, let me use an example similar to one used by Kant. If I decided to make stealing my career, my intention implies that this action should be universalized. Everyone should also steal to make a living. If everyone is stealing, then there is no need for anyone to do productive work. If everyone made stealing his /her career, a certain point there would be no one to steal from because everyone would be stealing and there would be nothing left to steal.¹²¹ Consequently, Kant considers theft immoral because it cannot be applied to all individuals.

Another important argument is that any intentional action is performed according to rules, or *maxims*. By intentional, I mean that the maxim as a guide for behavior determines the type of action. The “action done

¹²⁰ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 15 (403).

¹²¹ Russo, Michael S, “Deontology and It’s Discontents: A Brief Overview of Kant’s Ethics,” *Molloy College*, 2006. Available on line @ www.molloy.edu/academic/philosophy/SOPHIA/kant/deontology.htm; Retrieved on April 26, 2006.

from duty has its *moral worth*, not in the purpose that is to be attained by it but in the maxim according to which the action is determined.”¹²² A person can discover the importance of moral principles by following this maxim. The maxim also implies that individuals should be treated with respect, as having value *per se*. Similarly, all individuals should act according to this universalized principle. It is a plan to make universal the intentions behind our actions. It is also a standard of behavior because it automatically provides us with means to make the proper decisions in order to act morally. The maxim would be a law that everyone must follow because it applies to everyone.

It is true that we can argue all day about the impossibility of everybody acting on this maxim. Furthermore, we can also argue about the various types of duties that might prohibit actions based on this maxim. I have no interest in joining this endless debate, however, because I am more inclined to investigate the use of universality, as did Kant, rather than its applicability in reality. This concept of universality provides the framework for *a priori* judgment, a judgment that is justifiable before any empirical evidence. It implies that an individual does not have to know the consequences of an action to determine its

¹²² Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 12, 13 (399).

moral value. On the other hand, a synthetic *a priori* is how to justify such judgments to see whether they can be valid or not.¹²³ This concept is very important to understand how both experience and empirical evidences are possible.¹²⁴ The logic behind this approach is that judgments have causes and the power to alter events.¹²⁵

For Kant, our ethical duty arises from the fact that we are rational beings, capable of determining universal moral laws in our intentional behavior. What Kant calls *autonomy* or self-legislation is what distinguishes us from animal behavior because “morality is the relation of actions to the autonomy of the will, i.e., to the possible legislation of universal law by means of the maxims of the will.”¹²⁶

It implies that each person has certain duties to perform and it is our responsibility to live up to the challenge of performing them. If each one fulfilled his/her part, the categorical imperative would be valid for all individuals. It is true that people’s wishes differ from person to person and from time to time, but the principle would remain valid because the moral law

¹²³ Paton, H.J. *The Categorical Imperative: A Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy*, (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1965), p. 122.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 123.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 125.

¹²⁶ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 44 (439).

“applies to everyone, everywhere and always.”¹²⁷

Kant proposes a moral law that depends on the intention of the individual, a Moral Law that is pure and *a priori*. By pure, it means that “it does not contain concepts borrowed from experience of the world,”¹²⁸ while *a priori* means that it cannot be derived from experience. The categorical imperative combines the applicability, the equal recognition, and the acknowledgment of all people to advocate a binding morality to all people.¹²⁹

If each one adopted the categorical imperative, each one would be able to perform his/her duty within society without any external interference. Consequently, Kant strongly believed in the goodness of human nature, to the extent that he felt that rational action based on the categorical imperative could turn devils into angels.

Everyone is free because everyone is acting in good will. There is no need for any supervisory agent to protect us from the danger of greed and lust for *animus dominandi* (the desire for power).¹³⁰ Freedom is the keystone of this system where new moral duties emerge to lay down the framework for right

¹²⁷ Acton, H.B. *Kant's Moral Philosophy*, (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 20.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 60.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 60, 63.

¹³⁰ Waltz, Kenneth, *Man, The State and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 34.

actions and behavior.¹³¹ Then, we can participate freely in the community because we choose the right action that can be universalized to all people.

According to Kant, human reason is capable of differentiating between right and wrong actions. Like Rousseau, Kant believed that individuals have the intellectual innocence to form true moral judgments.¹³² An act cannot be considered right for someone without taking into consideration the rights of others. Because he believed in the goodness of man, he attempted to link duty with freedom to establish a system of union among individuals. This rational freedom provides the right action because each of us has to interact with the other by promoting these moral values.

Kant's intention was to describe in detail the role of duty in our life, and to provide a framework for our freedom because we cannot act without it. He believed that duty is the same for all individuals. Any action should spring from a principle that binds all to a certain law. This law frames the conduct and behavior of individuals to act according to a certain rational principle, to apprehend truth about what should be done,¹³³ and to co-exist with the other

¹³¹ Ameriks, Karl, "Kant's Deduction of Freedom and Morality," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 19, (1981), p. 78.

¹³² Ross, David Sir, *Kant's Ethical Theory: A Commentary on the Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 36.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 38.

on the same rational principle by considering each existence as an *end*.¹³⁴ This ability to act freely dictates that humanity should be regarded “as an end in itself.”¹³⁵ But, what does it really mean to be an end in itself?

In Kant’s work, an end is defined as “what serves the will as the objective ground of its self-determination.”¹³⁶ Kant differentiates between subjective ends that are based on incentives and objective ends that depend on motives. This differentiation permits individuals to recognize humanity *as an end in itself*. It also implies that no individual has the right to exploit another because he/she cannot use this person as a means only. It is wrong to treat other people as *means*, because each should be free to choose his/her own ends. Otherwise, an individual can easily impose his/her will on the other by the use of force and even through manipulation of others, as is too often the case today.

Since human actions are considered as an “unconditioned value determined by an unconditional law.”¹³⁷ Humans are free because the moral law provides humanity with choice. These choices will inevitably become new laws because we would be acting according to our good will. Humanity can be

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 49.

¹³⁵ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 36 (429).

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 35 (427).

¹³⁷ Anderson-Gold, Sharon, *Unnecessary Evil: History and Moral Progress in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), p.19.

considered as an end in itself because “only choice can be called free.”¹³⁸

Throughout his life, Kant was searching for a magic formula that can express moral laws for all human beings. Duty plays a major role in his theory because we are obligated to perform all actions only out of respect for the moral law that tells us how we ought to think rationally about our existence. The categorical imperative becomes possible “because the idea of freedom makes me a member of an intelligible world.”¹³⁹ This is why the categorical imperative is the formula of good will. Without good will, values will contradict and dissolve themselves, as I have already explained.

It is extremely important for the arguments presented in this thesis to understand what Kant means by good will. Good will is good not because of what it produces,¹⁴⁰ but simply because of what it intends to do as a good motivation for any action. This motivation is the highest value in Kant’s philosophy.

It is the power of humanity to decide to act morally when needed. The categorical imperative allows for a system of different rational beings united by

¹³⁸ Kant, Immanuel, *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs - Merrill, 1964), p. 26.

¹³⁹ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 55. (454).

¹⁴⁰ Ross, David Sir, *Kant’s Ethical Theory: A Commentary on the Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 12.

common laws.¹⁴¹ It “defines the difference between morally valid and morally invalid principles of reasoning about action.”¹⁴² It is the framework for all the rightness of a rule or action because the categorical imperative forces the law to recognize morality by defining the obligation of each individual.¹⁴³

“What the categorical imperative bids us to do is to act for the sake of law as such; and this means that the maxim of our action (whatever else it may be) should be to obey universal law as such.”¹⁴⁴ The categorical imperative formulates the duty and obligation of individuals to obey this principle as a universal law. It is an ethical test to determine our intentional actions, hopefully before we commit them. It is regarded as a yardstick for judging whether a specific action is morally good, or not.¹⁴⁵

To sum up what Kant has done, “the primary aim of a good man is not to satisfy his own inclinations, however generous, but to obey a law which is the same for all.”¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, a morally good action will inevitably assert equality and self-respect towards all individuals because no one will feel that

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 95.

¹⁴² Bordum, Anders, “Immanuel Kant, Jurgen Habermas and the Categorical Imperative,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, Vol. 31, No. 7, p. 851.

¹⁴³ Hoffe, Otfried, *Categorical Principles of Law: A Counterpoint to Modernity*, (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), p. 31.

¹⁴⁴ Paton, H.J. *The Categorical Imperative: A Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy*, (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1965), p. 133.

¹⁴⁵ Harbour, Frances V. *Thinking About International Ethics: Moral Theory and Cases from American Foreign Policy*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1999), p. 112.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 77.

he/she enjoys a privileged position or even dare to break from these moral rules.¹⁴⁷

The importance of this approach for the purpose of this thesis is that a deontological approach to foreign policy making would focus on whether or not an individual, specifically a politician, will adopt the right attitude in formulating his/her policies. Citizens will be obliged to respect one another, though state cannot enforce moral duties on its citizens. It cannot enact laws for morality. It cannot teach freedom to its citizens. Humanity cannot find *foedus pacificum* or Pacific Peace “in a vast grave where all the horrors of violence and those responsible for them would be buried.”¹⁴⁸ Peace can be found “only in a thorough critical examination of our reason.”¹⁴⁹ The State has and should promote justice irrespective of consequences because “experience teaches us the maxim that human beings act in a violent and malevolent manner.”¹⁵⁰

From what has been said so far, it is clear that Kant’s deontology

¹⁴⁷ Ross, David Sir, *Kant’s Ethical Theory: A Commentary on the Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 45.

¹⁴⁸ Kant, Immanuel, *Perpetual Peace*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by Hans Reiss, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 105.

¹⁴⁹ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 17 (405).

¹⁵⁰ Kant, Immanuel, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 137 (44)

emphasizes the importance of duty and good will in individuals to build a better world. It rejects the trial and error approach that many previous thinkers adopted because they focused on consequences that can lead to mistakes and injury. For Kant, it is wrong to tell a lie even if it saves life.¹⁵¹ It is wrong to steal from the rich like Robin Hood in order to feed the poor. It is wrong to kill a patient even if he/she is cursed by a painful and contagious disease. A wrong is always wrong no matter what.

Kant was able to promote three main considerations. First, an action must be done in terms of duty to be considered morally right. Second, it is the principle of duty and not the purpose that determines the action. Thirdly, duty is performed because there is a necessity to respect the law. These three propositions are extremely important in our deontological analysis of the United States foreign policy because “morality cuts the knot which politics is incapable of untying,”¹⁵² as I will discuss in the next chapter.

¹⁵¹ Acton, H.B. *Kant's Moral Philosophy*, (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 64.

¹⁵² Kant, Immanuel, *Perpetual Peace*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p.58.

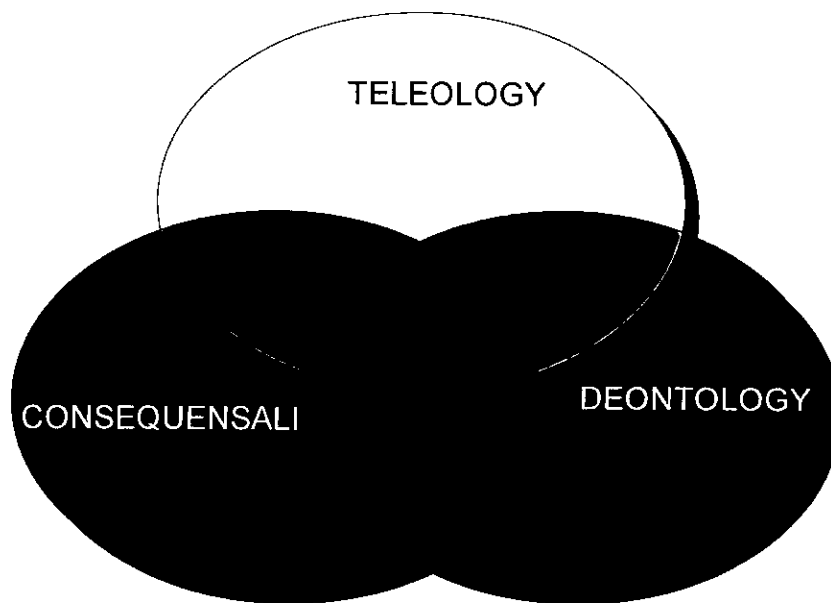


FIGURE 3: THE INTERACTION OF NORMATIVE THEORIES

Chapter Four:

Foreign Policy Application

“Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.”

(I am human being; I think nothing human alien to me)

-Cicero-

As noted throughout, the main purpose of this thesis is to present ethics, in particular Kant’s deontology, as a necessary tool in the examination of US foreign policies. To do this, this thesis attempts to isolate the complicated theories and practices of politics and simplify them.¹⁵³ By suggesting the importance of both duty and good will as indispensable elements in the understanding of the theories of international relations, this thesis outlines what an individual has “to expect and why to expect it” in the near future.¹⁵⁴

In this chapter, this thesis uses Kant’s deontology to the study of US foreign policy. Through this endeavor, this thesis reviews Kant’s categorical imperative in the examination of foreign policy. The main reason for this is to deepen understanding of the nature of this international system, hoping to deal with its complexity intellectually. If Kant’s deontology is not applicable to

¹⁵³ Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics*, (London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), p. 7, 10, 68.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 69.

US foreign policy, it is necessary to “ask whether the theory flunks completely, needs repair and restatement, or requires a narrowing of the scope of its explanatory claims.”¹⁵⁵

In fact, after reviewing Kant’s formulas and their implications on the actual practice of foreign policy thus far, one can conclude that it does not pay to pursue deontological policies all the time. The review and analysis highlights the undesirable outcomes that cannot be inferred from intentions and behaviors.

Taking into consideration the interaction of states, this thesis suggests that all nations may be in the same lifeboat situation, but one of them, in particular the United States “wields the biggest dipper.”¹⁵⁶ As it is indicated, the American government is at a crossroads regarding which policy to next adopt because “weakness invites control; strength tempts one to exercise it.”¹⁵⁷ In both cases, this thesis argues that the United States is justified to pursue or not to pursue moral goals because any abdication of moral choice is “dangerous, both to morality and to the national interest.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 210.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 27.

¹⁵⁸ Donnelly, Jack, *Realism and International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 187.

According to Kant, “a true system of politics cannot therefore take a single step without first paying tribute to morality.”¹⁵⁹ The reason behind this belief is that the pursuit or protection of human rights is morally required.¹⁶⁰ For him, each individual is morally entitled at a minimum to be treated as a human being. At times, governments promote and preserve human rights policies that may conflict with the national interest because foreign policy is the “formulation of desired outcomes which are intended (or expected) to be consequent upon decisions adopted.”¹⁶¹ For the purpose of this thesis, a moral foreign policy is one for which the motives and intentions of leaders “are virtuous, right, and consistent with their responsibilities.”¹⁶²

In Kant’s words, “what is essentially good in the action consists in the mental disposition: let the consequences be what they may.”¹⁶³ Simply, it is a matter of having the proper intention for action that determines the good will of a nation.¹⁶⁴ Accordingly, this thesis emphasizes three main points to project

¹⁵⁹ Kant, Immanuel, *Perpetual Peace*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by Hans Reiss, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 125.

¹⁶⁰ Donnelly, Jack, “Human Rights and Foreign Policy,” *World Politics*, Vol. 34, (July 1982), p. 577.

¹⁶¹ Frankel, Joseph, *National Interest*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 18.

¹⁶² Cingranelli, David Louis, *Ethics, American Foreign Policy, and the Third World*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), p. 3.

¹⁶³ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981) p. 26 (416).

¹⁶⁴ Orend, Brian, *War and International Justice: A Kantian Perspective*, (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), p. 19.

Kant's general vision from a deontological perspective. The first is duty for its own sake because it provides rational agents with worth, dignity, and status. The second is the permissibility for an agent *not* to act in a manner as to maximize overall best consequences. The third are the limitations and the constraints that are imposed on the promotion of *ends*.¹⁶⁵

As noted repeatedly, the main question of this thesis is to examine whether Kant's deontology can be applied to US foreign policy or not. This chapter seeks to demonstrate that this approach can be applied at least when international human rights are being promoted.

A. A Deontological Framework

For many liberal thinkers, America has usually extended "the hand of honest friendship, of equal freedom, and of generous reciprocity."¹⁶⁶ It is also believed by the general public that the original founders intended to build America as an ideal nation, an example of liberty and democracy, and "the home of the brave," as noted in the country's anthem. They intended to build an American order that could realize a longing dream for an "environment of

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 20.

¹⁶⁶ John Quincy Adams' Fourth of July speech to the American public in 1823. Available on line at: www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-116790786; retrieved on September 23, 2006.

equality in freedom.”¹⁶⁷ They wanted to break away from British influence in “a new world not bent on foreign dominion and conquest.”¹⁶⁸

Given that one of the assumptions of this thesis that the international system is anarchical as mentioned in chapter one, it seems extremely unworkable to adopt Kant’s deontological aspects in the examination of foreign policy. Nevertheless, this does not mean the current discussion is worthless. Rather, some deontological features are necessary to change the reality, as the Melians “injected values and ideals into a sphere of interaction where they do not belong.”¹⁶⁹ In this way, this thesis argues that human rights are the only possible area where the United States can apply Kant’s deontology.

With regard to promoting human rights around the world, “it is difficult to find countries that have done much more than the United States.”¹⁷⁰ The US government established the State Department’s Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs to promote these issues because

¹⁶⁷ Morgenthau, Hans, *The Purpose of American Politics*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 22.

¹⁶⁸ Cochran, Molly, “A Pragmatist Perspective on Ethical Foreign Policy,” in *Ethics and Foreign Policy*, Edited by Karen E. Smith & Margot Light, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 55.

¹⁶⁹ Saxonhouse, A.W. “Nature and Conversion in Thucydides’ History,” *Polity*, No. 10, (Summer, 1978), p. 463.

¹⁷⁰ Donnelly, Jack, *Universal Human Rights In Theory & Practice*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 245.

“human rights are needed not for life but for a life of dignity.”¹⁷¹ In compliance with Kant’s categorical imperative, a life of dignity requires the adoption of values and norms that induce long-term commitment to “the restoration of an entire country,”¹⁷² as Madeleine Albright once stated.

Human rights are considered the “single most magnetic political idea of the contemporary time.”¹⁷³ While it is true that human rights are a key issue in the international system, the way governments treat their people exposes the domestic policies of all states.¹⁷⁴ Increasingly, governments are less free to disregard international human rights standards.¹⁷⁵ They are bound to “provide a moral standard of national political legitimacy” because to do otherwise may constitute a challenge to the American political structure.¹⁷⁶

The importance of international human rights norms lies in conformity with Kant’s categorical imperative because they are *interdependent* and *indivisible* to the formulation of US foreign policies.¹⁷⁷ In fact, human rights

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 17.

¹⁷² Lewis, Paul, “U.N. Will Increase Troops in Somalia,” *The New York Times*, March 27, 1993, p.3.

¹⁷³ Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1989), p. 256.

¹⁷⁴ Vincent, R. J. *Human Rights and International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 152.

¹⁷⁵ Forsythe, David P. “Human Rights: Fifty Years after the Universal Declaration,” *Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 3, (September 1998), p. 510.

¹⁷⁶ Donnelly, Jack, *International Human Rights*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1993), p. 21.

¹⁷⁷ General Assembly Resolutions 32/130 and 40/114. Available on line at: www.un.org; Retrieved on March 5, 2007.

norms prescribe rules for appropriate behavior, and at the same time, define identities of liberal states.¹⁷⁸ According to Amnesty International as a United Nations Human Rights body, the impact of human rights is so influential that many leaders have been forced to step down from power, as was the case with Suharto of Indonesia in 1998.¹⁷⁹

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that was ratified on December 10, 1948, “set up a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations,” Eleanor Roosevelt proclaimed. With its thirty articles entailing diverse rights, it provides one supreme principle of morality, that is, to treat people as *ends* at all times, in all places,¹⁸⁰ founded on a contract between the state and the people. It emphasizes individual autonomy because all are equal to others. It implies that no one has the right to force anybody to do anything that goes against his/her ideas and beliefs.

In following this argument, “if the problems differ substantially, then so must the aims and instruments of policy.”¹⁸¹ Accordingly, Kant’s deontology

¹⁷⁸ Risse, Thomas, & Sikkink, Kathryn, *The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms Into Domestic Practices: Introduction*, in *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*, Edited by Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 8.

¹⁷⁹ Simons, Geoff, *Indonesia: The Long Oppression*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), p. 191, 207.

¹⁸⁰ Donnelly, Jack, *International Human Rights*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1993), p. 23.

¹⁸¹ Donnelly, Jack, “Human Rights and Foreign Policy,” *World Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 4, (July 1982), p. 591.

can help save us from the ghost of Realpolitik because it provides an alternative to the cruelty of individuals. Instead of violence and force, Kant's deontology suggests a peaceful policy because individuals are an end by itself, unlike other paradigms that adopt aggressive and empirical methods.¹⁸²

In fact, according to figure 4, any decision-making in US foreign policy that adopts a consequentialist approach, whether it is egoism or utilitarianism (as explained in chapter two), will have to apply the best means to secure its interests or choose the lesser evil simultaneously. For example, the interrogation methods at Abu Ghraib or the treatment of Al Qaeda detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, are perceived as acceptable moral behavior in order to retrieve information or confession. The use of force in this consequentialist approach is regarded as permissible, sacrificing human rights in favor of against national security to prevent "another devastating terrorist strike."¹⁸³ In the long run, however, this approach leads to aggressive policies because the agent will be willing to jeopardize his/her moral value, imposing a risk of death and destruction in order to achieve his/her end.¹⁸⁴

On the other hand, deontology provides a peaceful solution in

¹⁸² See Figure 4 on p. 112.

¹⁸³ Perry, David L. "Do Ruthless Enemies Warrant Ruthless Countermeasures? Reflections on Intelligence Interrogatives," *U.S. Army War College*, (March, 2005), p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ Dworkin, Gerald, "Nuclear Intentions," *Ethics*, Vol. 95, No. 3, (April, 1985), p.452.

accordance with Kant's vision because governmental intentions are good irrespective of consequences when they follow a universalized principle or maxim that will guarantee "equal moral worth" to each individual.¹⁸⁵ For instance, the Geneva Conventions and many international treaties on human rights prohibit any acts of violence, intimidation, or torture. Torture is defined here as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person."¹⁸⁶ These treaties forbid any inhumane treatment that will degrade the worth of any individual because "nothing can have any worth other than what the law determines."¹⁸⁷ As explained in this chapter, a peaceful policy can be reached within the scope of human rights. The reason for this belief is that human rights strengthen the relationship between the individual and the state, providing "the structural basis for a society of equal and autonomous individuals."¹⁸⁸ In other words, Kant's deontology aims at boosting human rights issues for building a new model that permits the emergence of a universal standard. Such a standard elevates the dignity and

¹⁸⁵ Howard, Roda E. & Donnelly, Jack, "Human Dignity, Human Rights, and Political Regimes," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 80, No. 3, (September 1986), p. 803.

¹⁸⁶ United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1984, and ratified by the U.S. on 21 October 1994. Available on line at: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/h_cat39.html; Retrieved on 9 June 2007.

¹⁸⁷ Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 41 (436)

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 804, 805.

status of all individuals to be in God's image.¹⁸⁹

Furthermore, teleology combines both consequentialist and deontological approaches. It implies that teleological decisions take into consideration both consequences and intentions, oscillating between empirical and idealist policies. For instance, the agent will find ways to preserve his/her status quo between "the unjust risk imposition and the end of successful deterrence."¹⁹⁰ Ultimately, this approach leads to a balanced policy because governments adapt to the present situation, endowed with bitter experience to avoid any previous mistakes in the future. For this reason, the agent seeks alliances and multilateral actions to preserve the balance of power in the system on one hand, and to promote international cooperation on the other.

In sum, each paradigm is the result of some political level of decision-making. In each, governments assume certain actions to promote their objectives and beliefs. Such political behavior provides a solid framework for the examination of US foreign policy; however, this thesis remains concerned with Kant's deontology as the sole model that will advance the awareness of the value and dignity of humankind.

¹⁸⁹ Genesis 1:26. American Bible Society "*Good News Bible: Today's English Version*," (New York: American Bible Society, 1978), p. 8.

¹⁹⁰ Dworkin, Gerald, "Nuclear Intentions," *Ethics*, Vol. 95, No. 3, (April, 1985), p.453.

According to Kant, duty (here, read as the duty to respect human rights) expresses the *pure intention* of individuals. By knowing each other's intentions, the major powers would eventually free themselves from the traditional security dilemma, adopting instead a new human rights strategy to secure their own self-preservation. Such a strategy promotes equal footing and respect in terms of international laws, instead of the dominant practice of the law of the jungle. This assumption could be realized when nations behave in good will to bring about international co-operation and respect for human freedoms.¹⁹¹

For Kant, the essential *end* of the state is to provide the necessary conditions for the establishment of normative binding principles of right and justice.¹⁹² This condition was realized with the formation of a United States Declaration of Independence and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Both symbolize nations' hope to offer more space for the examination of humanity on a global scale,¹⁹³ the latter document in particular after the atrocities that were committed against the human race. For instance, the

¹⁹¹ Covell, Charles, *Kant and the Law of Peace: A Study in the Philosophy of International Law and International Relations*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 27.

¹⁹² Ibid, p.70

¹⁹³ Booth, Ken, *Three Tyrannies, in Human Rights in Global Politics*, Edited by Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 65.

Declaration of Independence laid down the framework for the *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*, in accordance with the same principles of almost all ethical normative theories.

Enshrined mainly in the above declarations, the United States provided a normative framework to reconstruct political systems based on the work of thinkers such as Kant to preserve the natural rights of individuals, human dignity, equality and moral autonomy. Based on my extensive readings, many believe that moral principles are essential factors for determining the success or failure of any political system. This thesis takes into consideration the realist view to emphasize that “the making of foreign policy is a learning process, and any learning process modifies beliefs and behavior through the impact of new knowledge,”¹⁹⁴ as will be discussed.

Unlike many who believed that “the world is doomed to remain a jungle,”¹⁹⁵ many other thinkers like Kant have a vision of a new world that is dominated by freedom and liberty to all humankind, determined to find a way out, to coexist and live together. In fact, Kant’s deontology simplifies an already complicated picture because it takes into consideration a commitment to

¹⁹⁴ Hoffmann, Stanley, *Gulliver’s Troubles, Or the Setting of American Foreign Policy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), p. 90.

¹⁹⁵ Hoffmann, Stanley, *Duties Beyond Borders: On the Limits and Possibilities of Ethical International Politics*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1981), p. xiii.

respect other individuals and to treat them as equal in accordance to maxims or principles. For instance, Kant's deontology can provide policymakers with "internalize norms" that would eventually promote certain issues (here, read as human rights) on their agenda.¹⁹⁶ Such ethical notion will identify a set of universal behavior in accordance with Kant's vision.

Historically, several peaceful attempts such as the Congress of Vienna, the Wilsonian settlements of 1919, the Kellogg-Briand Pact in 1928, and the establishment of the United Nations after the war, attempted to eradicate the terror of war and its misery. They failed in part I argue, because "war begins in the minds and emotions of men."¹⁹⁷

Ironically, all resolutions and pacts remained ink on paper. However, the dream of mutual respect and dignity became a reality with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the extent that "a violation of rights in one place in the world is felt everywhere."¹⁹⁸ It initiated a process that has left "an extraordinary cumulative impact" on the conduct of foreign policy.¹⁹⁹ This

¹⁹⁶ Callahan, Patrick, "Taking International Ethics Seriously," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 56, No. 1, (February 1994), p. 263.

¹⁹⁷ Waltz, Kenneth, *Man, The State and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 9.

¹⁹⁸ Kant, Immanuel, *The Metaphysic of Morals*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by Hans Reiss, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 107, 108.

¹⁹⁹ Falk, Richard A. *A Half Century of Human Rights: Geopolitics and Values*, in *The Future of International Human Rights*, Edited by Burns H. Weston & Stephen P. Marks, (New York: Transnational Publishers, 1999), p. 20.

homage to the principle of human right is proof of a moral disposition by all nations to want to subdue the evil in humans.²⁰⁰ Accordingly, this thesis emphasizes the dual role of the United States in international politics, as will be discussed.

Under the guise of national security, the United States has overlooked human rights violations of friendly regimes to secure its interests in the region, as is the case in South Korea, Argentina, and the Soviet Union.²⁰¹ The US has felt that it does not need any moral justification for “its military security, the integrity of its political life and the well-being of its people.”²⁰² Whether we like it or not, what is harmful for some individuals becomes justifiable for others in international politics.²⁰³

For many, the notion of power and interests are the dominant themes in foreign policy because “evil still stalks the planet,” as former President Ronald Reagan proclaimed. In the name of the national interest, many individuals are persecuted for their belief, freedom of expression, religion, race, color, and social status. From a moral standpoint, the duty of the United States

²⁰⁰ Kant, Immanuel, *Perpetual Peace*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p.20.

²⁰¹ Donnelly, Jack, “Human Rights and Foreign Policy,” *World Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 4, (July 1982), p. 589, 594.

²⁰² Kennan, George F, “Morality and Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1985-86, p.206.

²⁰³ Van Dyke, Vernon, “Human Rights without Distinction as to Language,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1, (March 1976), p. 34.

is to liberate those innocent victims. The duty of the United States is to intervene, even militarily, to take a decisive action against leaders such as the late President Saddam Hussein or President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad because you cannot analyze the intentions and motives of politicians, namely at a time when the US is ramping up its bellicosity toward Iran.²⁰⁴

Ironically, many demonstrations and protests enflamed the emotions of nations to condemn any US military intervention in Iraq, while little protest was made regarding Saddam's atrocities against the Kurds.²⁰⁵ For instance, President Saddam Hussein and his cousin Ali Hasan al-Majid or "Chemical Ali" used chemical and biological weapons on Kurdish towns in March 1988. They bombed the town of Halabja, near the Iranian border, with poison gas, including mustard gas, and nerve agents such as Sarin, Tabun, and VX.²⁰⁶

For this reason, the United States adopts utilitarian methods because it should cultivate "the ability to discriminate among cases and to distinguish friends from opponents."²⁰⁷ It has to take into consideration other political factors to endure the pain of sacrificing its soldiers. The American government

²⁰⁴ Ratnesar, Romesh & Shannon, Elaine, "The Weight of the World," *Time Magazine*, (February 12, 2007), p. 37.

²⁰⁵ Douzinas, Costas, *The End Of Human Rights: Critical Legal Thought At The Turn Of The Century*, (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2000), p. 127.

²⁰⁶ O'Leary, Carole, "The Kurds of Iraq: Recent History, Future Prospects," *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, Vol. 6, No. 4, (December 2002), p. 2.

²⁰⁷ Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Touchstone, 1994), p. 545.

was, is, and always will be under several obligations, in particular toward its allies to pursue a moral course because the purpose of its “actions will always be to eliminate a specific threat.”²⁰⁸ Similarly, President Bush launched a campaign to promote a *New World Order*, raising a debate “whether all nondemocratic states would be judged as immoral.”²⁰⁹ Eventually, such behavior provides “the unifying conceptual framework necessary for collective (moral) action.”²¹⁰

By assuming that everyone has the right to live, it means that everyone has also equal right to access the resources of the earth in order to sustain his/her being and exercise his/her freedom. However, “as long as there is no guarantee of security, indiscriminate obligations of justice to redistribute income and resources cannot be justified.”²¹¹ Does everyone have an equal share of the earth’s resources? In addition, how can you distribute these resources in an efficient manner?²¹²

The fact is that what may be just and merciful for the United States

²⁰⁸ The National Security of the United States of America, p. 16. Available on line at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc.html>; retrieved on October 16, 2005.

²⁰⁹ Brinkoetter, Steve, “The Role for Ethics in Bush’s New World Order,” *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol.6, (1992), p. 77.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 71.

²¹¹ Doyle, Michael W. “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” Part 2, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 4, (Autumn, 1983), p. 342.

²¹² *Ibid*, p. 342.

may be unjust and harmful to other countries. This leads to contradictions. For example, it accepts the continuous deaths of soldiers and civilians, while at the same time, it forbids the use of tear gas, as is the case in Iraq. The United States applies a civilized law at home, while at the same time adopts the law of the jungle abroad. Like Napoleon Bonaparte, the United States realizes that it needs to use violence and deception to achieve its goals because “the spread of our values makes us suffer.”²¹³

Kant believed that moral laws reject completely any contradiction. Yet, the United States has adopted the double standard policy due I argue to the contradictory character of the international system, unlike Wilsonian values that desired the role of the United States to be a beacon for humankind.²¹⁴ If we apply Kant’s categorical imperative here, we can safely say that the United States can be considered completely unethical. As the saying goes: You just cannot be half-pregnant. You cannot choose between being half-moral or half-immoral from a deontological perspective. For example, Congress passed a law forbidding Iran and their collaborators from participating in any nuclear

²¹³ Prime Minister Tony Blair’s Speech at Hilton Hotel in Chicago on 22 April, 1999. The full text is available on line at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/news/speechtext.asp?2316>; retrieved on December 28, 2006.

²¹⁴ Hoffmann, Stanley, *Gulliver Unbound: America’s Imperial Temptation and the War in Iraq*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), p. 20

activity, yet the United States has not treated the North Korean nuclear test in a similar manner. This incongruity makes me wonder about the usefulness of the new law. By applying Kant's universal principle, if the United States cannot halt any North Korean nuclear activities, then it cannot condemn Iran for having them. However, it adopts a quiet diplomacy with them while it increases its pressure against the Iranians. This dual standard only indicates that the United States treats each case separately, indicating hidden intentions.

To eradicate the problem of (nuclear) war, Kant expected that the good will of nations would eventually shift the balance, and, hopefully expand gradually into a pacific union. He estimated that all nations would be willing to act in accordance with the categorical imperative.²¹⁵ To reach this global union, Kant needed a unified vision of moral purpose that was translated in his categorical imperative to universalize his message. By examining past human progress, he contended that the record revealed that an expanding rate for building a global pacific union could be realized.

When applying the categorical imperative in US foreign policy, in particular the concept of equality, at a minimum, an individual should be

²¹⁵ Dworkin, Gerald, "Nuclear Intentions," *Ethics*, Vol. 95, No. 3, (April 1985), p. 447.

granted respect and dignity.²¹⁶ This could be promoted through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. If all persons act in good will, each one would be able to respect the other. To Kant, if human's nature consists of both goodness and evil, then the consequences will be definitely disastrous. He emphasized the importance of intention in human nature for linking duty and law, shifting the balance toward the individual's goodwill in order to promote peace on earth. On the other hand, it also implies that others have equal bargaining power to determine their destiny.²¹⁷

Kant's deontology can be applied to US foreign policy when individuals can be both the *cause* and the *author* of their own destinies. He believed that nations can control and refrain themselves from destroying each other.²¹⁸ He considered that humankind is eventually evolving and improving because he expected individuals to act out of personal duty.²¹⁹ Accordingly, each individual will behave in good will to promote the welfare of society because perpetual

²¹⁶ Donnelly, Jack, "Human Rights and Human Dignity: An Analytic Critique of Non-Western Conceptions of Human Rights," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 76, No. 2, (June 1982), p. 306.

²¹⁷ Charvet, John, *The Possibility of a Cosmopolitan Ethical Order Based on the Idea of Universal Human Rights*, in *Ethics and International Relations*, Edited by Hakan Seckinelgin & Hideaki Shinoda, (London: Palgrave, 2001), p. 11.

²¹⁸ Orend, Brian, *War and International Justice: A Kantian Perspective*, (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), p. 96.

²¹⁹ Kant, Immanuel, *The Contest of Faculties*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by Hans Reiss, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 181.

peace depends on the honesty and good intentions of governments.²²⁰

Kant's deontology can be applied when nations stop twisting the arm of other countries to impose its will because any form of violence is rejected. It can be applied when it poses "limits on what one may do to people or how one may treat them."²²¹ This can be done when international norms, in particular human rights are promoted. It implies that Kant's deontology provides a guideline for nations that adopt human rights policies in order not to engage in certain types of unfair or discriminatory treatment even if those consequences are good because the main objective is "to prevent similar unfairness by others."²²² For instance, to lie, even to kill, for the state would become moral.²²³ Simply, Kant's deontology rejects any infliction of harm and violation of rights.

Kant's deontology starts with the present situation in which we are not entitled to harm other individuals. Kant's deontology poses certain limits (here, read as the categorical imperative) by what an individual would be entitled to do or not to do because our values are shown by "the forms of reasoning we use

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 102.

²²¹ Nagel, Thomas, *The View From Nowhere*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 176.

²²² Ibid, p. 177.

²²³ Forsythe, David P. *Human Rights and US Foreign Policy: Two Levels, Two Worlds in Politics and Human Rights*, Edited by David Beetham, (Oxford: The Political Studies Association, 1995), p. 114.

in deciding how to act.”²²⁴ Such reasoning will dictate that we should follow certain norms or beliefs by which we perform our acts. For instance, Al Qaeda considers the act of martyrdom as purely ethical, making the personal act global.²²⁵ For this reason, Kant’s deontology “works best if it’s buttressed by an agreement on common values.”²²⁶ It can open space for new forms of thinking because it tells us a lot about the character of an agent and his/her intention. It can show what values guide his/her decisions, and what he/she is prepared to do under certain circumstances.²²⁷ In other words, Kant’s deontology poses moral obligations that would raise the agent above the level of the beasts and revert him/her from the prodigal ways of the jungle to the principle of law.²²⁸

The absence of international law jeopardizes cooperation among nations. Relations among nations with similar social structures are often more peaceful than relations between nations with very different systems. Yet, I would argue that human rights remain the principle hope for humankind, bridging the gap between the standards of the individuals and a universal

²²⁴ Ibid, p. 452.

²²⁵ Chandler, David, “What Does It Mean To Be Part of a Political Community? Some Thoughts on the Implications of an Unmediated Relationship between the Individual and the Global,” *European Consortium on Political Research*, Nicosia, (April, 2006), p. 7.

²²⁶ Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Touchstone, 1994), p. 77.

²²⁷ Dworkin, Gerald, “Nuclear Intentions,” *Ethics*, Vol. 95, No. 3, (April 1985), p. 455, 456.

²²⁸ Thompson, Kenneth, *Fathers of International Thought: The Legacy of Political Theory*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), p. 112.

standard.²²⁹ This bridge can alter the way we look at the world, placing more restraints on individuals to keep an eye on our moral behavior. These shared values strengthen the bonds between nations, foster the rule of law, and secure the necessary respect for human rights issues because “ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere.”²³⁰

In general, United States foreign policy reflects a belief that it is easier to deal with other nations that share the same values. It is easier to feel secure and safe when you can be sure that your friend or your enemy will not stab you in the back. Because of this, Western nations, in particular the United States are now less secretive about national security matters.²³¹ As long as “liberal states wind up all on the same side,”²³² they strongly believe that democracy is the best system of government for humankind to create “zones of peace” around the globe.²³³ Consequently, the United States has no other choice but to export these values to other nations in order to behave in “an autonomous sphere of

²²⁹ Douzinas, Costas, *The End of Human Rights: Critical Legal Thought At the Turn of the Century*, (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2000), p. 145.

²³⁰ Clinton, Bill President *New York Times* (26 January, 1994).

²³¹ Hardin, Russell & Mearsheimer, John J. “Introduction,” *Ethics*, Vol. 95, No. 3, (April, 1985), p. 422.

²³² Doyle, Michael W. “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” Part 1, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (Summer, 1983), p. 217.

²³³ Thompson, William R. “Democracy and Peace: Putting the Cart before the Horse?” *International Organization*, Vol. 50, (Winter 1996), p. 141.

action.”²³⁴ America “must try to forge the widest possible moral consensus around a global commitment to democracy.”²³⁵

What this thesis is trying to show is that various problems have altered the way we look at this world. Similarly, both methods and intentions have changed drastically since the days of Kant. By substituting the mentality of most politicians who adopt the usual Realpolitik practices with deontological ones, the world would probably be a better place. Kant believed in the development of human capacities that he laid down in his categorical imperative. To develop those capacities, human rights become necessary. Accordingly, human rights are the gate toward a universal moral community that will guarantee the rights of all individuals. For this reason, each individual has a duty to promote those rights to teach a new generation that will live in accordance to Kant’s vision.

As a result, the thesis is able to examine and evaluate US foreign policy intentions from Kant’s deontological point of view. It presents emerging human rights norms as a possible platform for incorporating Kant’s deontology in the US foreign policy. These new human rights norms have created a new standard

²³⁴ Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1948), p. 5.

²³⁵ Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Touchstone, 1994), p. 166.

for everyone.²³⁶ This standard is essential to encourage respect for human rights issues and promote true peace on earth because the United States believes “itself blessed by a unique and ultimately superior dispensation.”²³⁷

Unable to reach Kant’s moral code completely, however, the US promotes an understandable agenda at the expense of human rights issues because they “are not the only possible goal of foreign policy.”²³⁸ But I want to argue against this precisely because since each individual does not enjoy the same rights everywhere, any attention to human rights in foreign policy would be an asset to the examination of US foreign policy. “What I know is that it is our moral duty to act, whenever there is a chance of success.”²³⁹

Human rights can be applied in US foreign policy in compliance with Kant’s deontological approach because they are general claims to all individuals. Kant’s categorical imperative can strengthen the international legal system because human rights bestow individuals with equality. Respecting those rights provide *worth* and equal treatment to all because both duty and good will dictate a certain moral dictum to abide by certain rules that

²³⁶ Donnelly, Jack, “Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?” *International Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 1, (January 1998), p. 14.

²³⁷ Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Touchstone, 1994), p. 376.

²³⁸ Hoffmann, Stanley, *Duties Beyond Borders: On the Limits and Possibilities of Ethical International Politics*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1981), p. 108.

²³⁹ Hoffmann, Stanley, “In Defense of Mother Teresa: Morality in Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 2, (March-April 1996), pp. 174.

pave the way toward a perpetual peace, “the ultimate purpose of law within the bounds of pure reason.”²⁴⁰

So far, the thesis defends Kant’s deontology in the examination of US foreign policy but the seeming inability of the US to hold to a deontological approach in a consistent way is also noted. The thesis now moves to examine why this is so, particularly because the issue of human rights “should reflect the American self-image of an exceptional people who stand for freedom around the world.”²⁴¹ However, human rights issues breed confrontation because “the quest for human rights and the quest for world order are not identical.”²⁴² For this reason, the United States has held onto “the usefulness of power as a necessary ingredient” in international politics.²⁴³

B. A Critical View:

This thesis has touched on a number of issues regarding the application of Kant’s formula in one area of foreign policy, human rights. From the

²⁴⁰ Kant, Immanuel, *Introduction to the Theory of Right*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, Edited by Hans Reiss, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 123, 124 (355).

²⁴¹ Forsythe, David P. *Human Rights and US Foreign Policy: Two Levels, Two Worlds in Politics and Human Rights*, Edited by David Beetham, (Oxford: The Political Studies Association, 1995), p. 111.

²⁴² Hoffmann, Stanley, “The Hell of Good Intentions,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 29, (Winter, 1977- 1978), p. 7.

²⁴³ Hoffmann, Stanley, *Gulliver Unbound: America’s Imperial Temptation and the War in Iraq*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), p. 20.

beginning, a critical method has been adopted to deal with the application of Kant's deontology in the examination of United States foreign policy. This is a polite and academic manner to say that this Kantian approach will be attacked fiercely.²⁴⁴

I argue that each individual always aspires to live in a better world where justice and freedom reign over the conduct of international politics. However, this thesis shall try to show that this cannot be realized because the present reality describes, explains, and predicts a complete different picture. This simple reality is not a new concept to the American government – a government that is in “a constant oscillation between the temptation of the crusade and that of withdrawal.”²⁴⁵ In fact, the dominant military doctrine still is: *Si vis pacem, para bellum* (If you want peace, then prepare for war).²⁴⁶

Historically, Pericles was popular with the Athenians because his foreign policies served the interests of the community. He had to build a strong army to preserve the Athenians' superiority. Similarly, the Spartans reacted to the growing military buildup and decided to intervene in the war because they

²⁴⁴ Brown, Chris, *Universal Human Rights: A Critique*, in *Human Rights in Global Politics*, Edited by Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 104.

²⁴⁵ Hoffmann, Stanley, *Gulliver Unbound: America's Imperial Temptation and the War in Iraq*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), p. 19.

²⁴⁶ Barach, David P. & Webel, Charles, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, (London: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 292.

were driven by fear in order to eradicate Athenian injustice.²⁴⁷ Thucydides considered that the national interest is equated with power to “encourage policies of aggrandizement” in an attempt to manage,²⁴⁸ protect and expand their empire.

Since the days of President John Quincy Adams, the United States has been drawn, entangled and dragged into the affairs of other political systems, abandoning its isolationism policies. After World War Two, both Presidents Truman and Eisenhower “showed more respect for international law,”²⁴⁹ however. President Kennedy was more concerned with social justice,²⁵⁰ while Presidents Carter and Clinton supported human rights issues. Presidents Johnson, Nixon, and Ford were more inclined toward interventionist policies because of growing pressures from US corporations.²⁵¹ Both Presidents Reagan and Bush adopted more aggressive policies that changed the traditional concept of “quiet diplomacy.”²⁵² I argue that all of the above-mentioned American leaders had to abandon their progressive principles

²⁴⁷ Lebow, Richard Ned, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests and Orders*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 126.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 122.

²⁴⁹ Cingranelli, David Louis, *Ethics, American Foreign Policy, and the Third World*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 146.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 169.

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 166.

²⁵² *Ibid*, p. 230.

and their human rights policies when they perceived that nationalist goals were in danger. One can thus conclude that when their major interests are at stake, human rights policies are completely ignored, as was the case with the Nestlé Corporation scandals in Africa in 1981. The scandal started when Nestlé promoted powdered milk instead of breastfeeding. Such behavior resulted in infant mortalities due to the lack of water that is necessary to sterilized bottles to the extent that Nestlé was known as “a baby killer.”²⁵³ The Nestlé example illustrates how both private corporations and governments “are willing to use universalizing language” to sell their policies to their own publics while all the while promoting their interests that are vested in hidden intentions.²⁵⁴

Many human rights cases have been used as a new weapon to promote the interests of the US government because human rights objectives are often in conflict with other foreign policy objectives.²⁵⁵ It is foolish and dangerous in a Realist world to pursue a moral foreign policy that would leave the country more vulnerable to the power of other states.²⁵⁶ It is foolish to apply the

²⁵³ George, Susan, *Another World Is Possible If...*, (London: Verso, 2004), p. 84.

²⁵⁴ Over, William, *Human Rights in the International Public Sphere: Civic Discourse for the 21st Century*, (Stamford, Connecticut: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1999), p. xix.

²⁵⁵ Donnelly, Jack, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 246.

²⁵⁶ Donnelly, Jack, *International Human Rights*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1993), p. 33.

standards and the mentality of Mother Teresa in foreign policy.²⁵⁷

When the costs become unbearable,²⁵⁸ nations feel justified in adopting whatever means and measures to preserve their existence because the freedom of each cannot always co-exist with the freedom of everyone else.²⁵⁹ When we live in a jungle – as I argue we do – it is almost impossible to promote human rights issues. Nations are unwilling to conduct ethical policies when a gun is pointed to their head, or when their interests are at stake.

On the other hand, democracy provides the potential of international cooperation because many international issues such as international debts, nuclear proliferation and the emissions of carbon dioxide cannot be resolved without changing the moral climate, demanding more measures that are global. As democracy has invaded every country around the globe, increasing numbers of people have participated in political discourse without fear of coercion and have voted in free elections for the first time.²⁶⁰ Despite this advancement, however, force remains the dominant factor in international relations because

²⁵⁷ Mandelbaum, Michael, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1996, p.18.

²⁵⁸ Walzer, Michael, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, (New York: Basic Books, 1992), p. xvii.

²⁵⁹ Kant, Immanuel, *Introduction to the Theory of Right*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 133, paragr. C.

²⁶⁰ Held, David, *Cosmopolitan Democracy and the Global Order: A New Agenda*, in *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*, Edited by James Bohman & M. Lutz-Bachmann, (London: The MIT Press, 1997), p.236, 237.

“it makes good sense for states to selfishly pursue power.”²⁶¹ This force affects how governments determine whether their policies will aim for the good or the bad. Unfortunately, sometimes, these policies “are only an ideological cover for unjustified human rights violations.”²⁶² Regardless of criticism concerning its diplomacy, the “moral” success of the United States will always depend on its inherent honesty, openness of purpose and forthrightness.²⁶³

Accordingly, all policy decisions inevitably have a moral factor to the extent that an ethical foreign policy can influence the politics of powerful states.²⁶⁴ For instance, the Iranian Revolution demonstrated that small ethical groups, in particular the clergy who had the duty to reawaken the deprived masses within society, could overthrow a powerful ruler like Shah Mohammad Reda Pahlavi.²⁶⁵ These groups, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, dictated a new way of life and the need to build a model government. They preached to a whole generation that the West was evil to frame the political

²⁶¹ Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001), p. 22.

²⁶² *Ibid*, p. 584.

²⁶³ Kennan, George F, “Morality and Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, (Winter 1985-1986), p. 215.

²⁶⁴ Heins, Volker, “Ethical Foreign Policies: Some Issues of Comparison and Criticism,” *International Studies Association*, Honolulu, 2005.

²⁶⁵ Zakaria, Fareed, “Islam, Democracy, and Constitutional Liberalism,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119, (Spring, 2004), p. 13.

problem as the struggle of good against evil.²⁶⁶

From Vice President Richard Cheney and Attorney General John Ashcroft to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz, the events of September 11 forced American policy makers to find a way to respond ethically to the *unfathomable* and dangerous Islamic motivation that jeopardized the stability and security in the world.²⁶⁷ The United States was ready to use its military force to defend its own values – and interests – as well as the liberty and dignity of other individuals around the globe because “ethical preference is divisive, national interest unites.”²⁶⁸ America might not be the perfect system in this world; however, in the final analysis, the American civilization remains a much better option than Islamic barbarism.²⁶⁹ Then, what will be the answer?

Like Kant, the United States examines its motives and its intentions very carefully. Such behavior dictates that the US pursues double standards in its foreign policy because “behaving ethically involves being aware of, and

²⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 13

²⁶⁷ Anderson, Lisa, “Shock and Awe: Interpretations of the Events of September 11,” *World Politics*, Vol. 56, No. 2, (January, 2004), p. 306.

²⁶⁸ Toscano, Roberto, *The Ethics of Modern Diplomacy*, in *Ethics and International Affairs: Extent & Limits*, Edited by Jean-Marc Coicaud & Daniel Warner, (New York: United Nations University Press, 2001), p. 49.

²⁶⁹ Hulsman, John C. & Lieven, Anatol, “The Ethics of Realism,” *The National Interest*, Vol. 80, (Summer, 2005), p. 43.

sensitive to, the interests of others.”²⁷⁰ Knowing in advance that individuals breathe freedom “in their own time, in their own way, at their own pace,”²⁷¹ the dilemma arises when the interests of the American government is at stake because “we cannot decide what is morally good or bad until we have a moral order.”²⁷²

In this way, I argue in this thesis that the interests of humankind are a disguise to be displayed by the great humanitarian efforts to relieve suffering when such obligation toward humanitarian aid does not require any sacrifices, namely when 0.25 percent of the United States’ national income are distributed on foreign aid.²⁷³ For this reason, the United States is “strong enough to prevent the others overcoming its own.”²⁷⁴ It affords to get involved in other people’s conflicts because it owes them the right to exist and to understand their ways of thinking. It affords to inject values to root democracy in the mind and soul of future generations.

²⁷⁰ Brown, Chris, *Ethics, Interests and Foreign Policy*, in *Ethics and Foreign Policy*, Edited by Karen E. Smith & Margot Light, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 21.

²⁷¹ Hulsman, John C. & Lieven, Anatol, “The Ethics of Realism,” *The National Interest*, Vol. 80, (Summer, 2005), p. 42.

²⁷² Coker, Christopher, *The United States and the Ethics of post-modern war*, in *Ethics and Foreign Policy*, Edited by Karen E. Smith & Margot Light, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 152.

²⁷³ Doyle, Michael W. “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” Part 2, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 4, (Autumn, 1983), p. 339.

²⁷⁴ Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1948), p. 163.

Sometimes, American interests are purchased in a certain region of the world,²⁷⁵ disregarding violations of basic human rights. The United States government had no other choice but to compromise human rights issues to preserve its national interests.²⁷⁶ The simple fact that many believe that competition for power is the essence of international politics;²⁷⁷ this does not mean that a nation should not have a moral policy or behave ethically.

A nation can look at the widespread acceptance of the existence of human rights norms – though not their consistent implementation – as an acceptance of Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative in US foreign policy, this thesis emphasizes the importance of promoting human rights issues, compassion, justice, mercy, and most important, universality. The reason behind this approach is that international human rights have become a part of "the Post-Cold War calculus."²⁷⁸ Kant believed that mutual respect policies can be reached in international law because the necessity of these virtues in the study of international relations will pave the way toward his genial vision of a perpetual peace, hoping to eradicate forever the miseries of war.

²⁷⁵ Donnelly, Jack, "Human Rights and Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 4, (July 1982), p. 594.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 589, 590.

²⁷⁷ Smith, Michael Joseph, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), p. 220.

²⁷⁸ Donnelly, Jack, "Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?" *International Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 1, (January 1998), p. 20.

Accordingly, a successful human rights policy necessitates more time and energy. For instance, the meeting time spend at the United Nations reveals that more than 1,338 and 2,328 meetings took place within the UN two principal human rights bodies,²⁷⁹ ECOSOC's Commission on Human Rights and the Third Committee of the General Assembly respectively during the years 1955-1985.²⁸⁰

For this reason, we need more than ever a binding moral order that will preserve self-respect and dignity to all humans. We have a right to be treated equally in accordance with Kant's deontological approach. We have a right to hope for a better world because national interest cannot always be the life and the law of the state.²⁸¹ An individual needs a strategy and a guide to action that was envisioned and justified by Kant's categorical imperative because "the notion of morals implies some sentiment common to all mankind."²⁸²

Today, the United States is at a crossroads because it "must learn to navigate between necessity and choice."²⁸³ It has to adopt utilitarian methods instead of deontological ones, calculating the costs and benefits. It has to

²⁷⁹ Doyle, Michael, "Human Rights at the United Nations 1955-85: The Question of Bias," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 3, (September 1988), p. 277, 278.

²⁸⁰ See Table 1 on p. 113.

²⁸¹ Bonanate, Luigi, *Ethics and International Politics*, translated by John Irving, (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), p. 24.

²⁸² Frankena, William K. *Ethics*, (London: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1963), p. 109.

²⁸³ Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Touchstone, 1994), p. 812.

choose the lesser evil and support Saddam Hussein instead of Ayatollah Khomeini. It has to protect its interests in the region to appease the domestic opponents. It has to safeguard the interests of those opponents in order to remain in power. Otherwise, America would find itself abandoned by the rest of the world that does not abide by any moral laws, “obliged to conduct a pure *Realpolitik*.”²⁸⁴

After the Cold War, we are facing with a new dilemma, the Moral War. With the emergence of radical Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Judaism, a new confrontation of moral values, and a new ideological war between East and West over how to live. Kant believed in the good will of individuals to create a peaceful milieu within a harmonious archipelago,²⁸⁵ otherwise, “it will be a world where humans are no longer around to complain.”²⁸⁶ Accordingly, the best way for a larger country like the United States to help the other is by its power of example,²⁸⁷ as a guide for American foreign policy.

Cursed is the person who takes no step to bring the blind back to his

²⁸⁴ Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Touchstone, 1994), p. 819.

²⁸⁵ Shapiro, Michael J. *The Events of Discourse and the Ethics of Global Hospitality*, in *Ethics and International Relations*, Edited by Hakan Seckinelgin & Hideaki Shinoda, (London: Palgrave, 2001), p. 116.

²⁸⁶ George, Susan, *Another World Is Possible If...*, (New York: Verso, 2004), p. 142.

²⁸⁷ Kennan, George F. “On American Principles,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 2, (March/April, 1995), p. 125.

path.²⁸⁸ The harsh reality is that rights come at a price, requiring the use of resources, and the devotion of time and energy.²⁸⁹ The law of the jungle dictates that we have to injure each other, even at the expenses of our moral beliefs. The harsh reality is that the closer the international system is to a jungle, the closer we are to the lifeboat example, and the less opportunity for choice we have and the more values we have to sacrifice.²⁹⁰ Unfortunately, “a political society does not live to conduct foreign policy, it would be more correct to say that it conducts foreign policy in order to live.”²⁹¹ By that, it is safe to conclude that the task of moral politics in international relations is to combine both interests and morality together.²⁹²

²⁸⁸ Selbourne, David, *The Principle of Duty: An Essay on the Foundations of the Civic Order*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), p. 253.

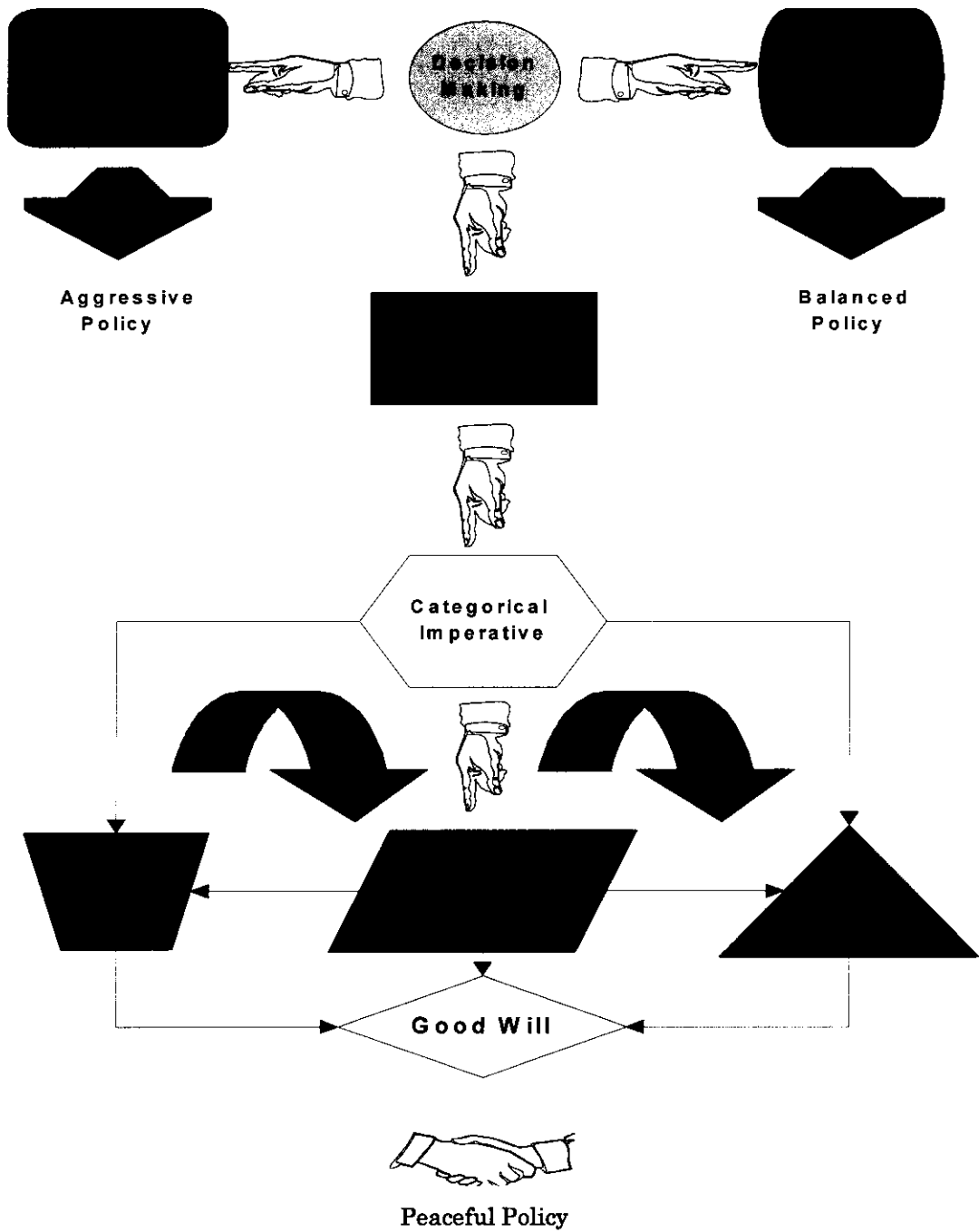
²⁸⁹ Orend, Brian, *War and International Justice: A Kantian Perspective*, (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), p. 93.

²⁹⁰ Hoffmann, Stanley, *Duties Beyond Borders: On the Limits and Possibilities of Ethical International Politics*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1981), p. 35, 36.

²⁹¹ Kennan, George F. *Realities of American Foreign Policy*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 4.

²⁹² *Ibid*, p. 41.

Figure 4: A NORMATIVE MODEL IN US FOREIGN POLICY



PERCENTAGE OF MEETINGS DEVOTED TO EACH TOPIC		
Major categories of rights discussed during 1955-85	Commission on Human Rights	Third Committee
Civil and political rights		
Racial discrimination	15.1	15.5
Other personal rights	2.5	-
Women's rights	-	5.7
Freedom of information	-	3.2
Freedom of religion	-	3.0
Legal rights	4.0	-
Civil liberties	9.9	-
Political rights	0.3	-
Torture	-	1.4
Right to marry	-	1.2
Rights of the elderly	-	0.7
Right to asylum	-	0.5
Rights of the disabled	-	0.5
Right to life	-	0.3
Cultural rights	-	0.2
Nationality/statelessness	-	0.1
Slavery	-	0.1
Other (nonracial) discrimination	-	0.2
Economic, social, and cultural rights		
Economic/social (general)	5.0	2.4
Economic rights	0.4	-
Social/cultural rights	0.1	-
Self-determination	5.7	5.9
All other topics	57.1	59.0

Table 1: Prepared by Michel Koubrssi. Source: Donnelly, Jack, "Human Rights at the United Nations 1955-85: The Question of Bias, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 3, (September 1988).

Conclusion

“Nunc scio quid sit amor.”

(Now I know what love is)

-Virgil, *Eclogues VII*-

There is no single deontological approach to dealing with the various problems of international relations. Deontologists follow their intuition to analyze and evaluate their choices according to their duties, rules, and motives. Kant’s deontology might not be the best approach, but applying it to foreign policy is something that we have to do irrespective of consequences or costs because it yields some important insights. However, as deontology does not provide any single principle to adopt when we encounter contradicting values, what rule should we follow?

Kant proposed one single moral rule, that is, the categorical imperative. This moral principle acts “as a test of policy, a restraint on policy, and/or a catalyst for policy.”²⁹³ This moral principle provides a framework for action in accordance with the international treaties on human rights. The great Seneca once said, “Measure the boundaries of our nation by the sun.” I believe he

²⁹³ Moore, Jonathan, editor, *Hard Choices: Moral Dilemmas in Humanitarian Intervention*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 1998), p. 46.

should have said instead measure the boundaries of our nation by our morality, in order to vindicate our rights.²⁹⁴

To emphasize the complexity and difficulty of choices that are faced by the United States, I return to the overcrowded lifeboat example. The US faces a similar situation where it has to make a decision whether to include countries in its calculated agenda or sacrifice others for the benefit of all because of what it perceives are its national interests.

Accordingly, the United States “will continue to behave in ways that annoy and frighten others.”²⁹⁵ In its policies, it will continue to oscillate between two extremes: survival and human rights. Sometimes, it seems that this global captain of the world is trying to buy more time, hoping that a miracle will occur to rescue his/her team from the inevitable outcome. We need a moral leader to leap the coming generation into safety, and a morally superior American foreign policy to retain and improve civilization.²⁹⁶

At least partially insulated from international pressures, the United States enjoys a certain security that permits the promotion of many ethical

²⁹⁴ Walzer, Michael, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, (New York: Basic Books, 1992), p. 58 & 59.

²⁹⁵ Waltz, Kenneth N. “America as a Model for the World? A Foreign Policy Perspective,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 4, (December 1991), p. 669.

²⁹⁶ Morgenthau, Hans, “The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol.44, (1950), p. 837.

issues on their agenda because they do not have considered to a “practical necessity,” as is the case for other nations,²⁹⁷ in order for the US to promote them. In this sense, the United States affords to promote human rights issues, as the principle of hope for humankind.²⁹⁸

In this land of opportunity, reason and logic, coupled with duty and goodwill, should become the new instruments of the state to prevail morally as the emerging kingdom on earth. In international relations, it is extremely difficult to predict future events because foreign policy is always dynamic. We can never be sure of the intentions of actors or of the outcomes of their actions. We do not need an engineer to master international politics; on the contrary, what is needed is “the wisdom and moral strength of the statesman,”²⁹⁹ coupled with stronger international laws that “set standards of international behavior.”³⁰⁰

Accordingly, when we are unable to know each other’s intentions, nations are more inclined to adopt self-preservation policies to affirm their

²⁹⁷ Callahan, Patrick, “Taking International Ethics Seriously,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 56, No. 1, (February 1994), p. 266.

²⁹⁸ Douzinas, Costas, *The End of Human Rights: Critical Legal Thought At The Turn Of The Century*, (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2000), p. 145.

²⁹⁹ Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1948), p. 172.

³⁰⁰ Tesón, Fernando R. “The Kantian Theory of International Law,” *Columbia Law Review*, Vol. 92, p. 102.

place. As a result, we can ensure that the future of humankind is secured and guarded by the blessings of freedom and liberty because “in war there is no victory, but only varying degrees of defeat.”³⁰¹ Freedom is the main ingredient in Kant’s pacific union to establish a zone of peace. Freedom remains the only factor of stability and permanence that the US is vigorously striving for, bringing Kant’s “categorical imperative down from heaven to earth.”³⁰²

While, deontological approaches might not be the best to ensure survival, many governments such as the United States include human rights policy in their agenda. As a world leader, the United States has a sincere obligation toward this “turbulent” world to eradicate the source of misery,³⁰³ secure the dignity of each individual, and provide chance for peace. America cannot withdraw from world politics. However, it also cannot abandon attempts to conduct an ethical foreign policy. If other nations do not join the American dream, the United States has to bend its values to be able to coexist with others; however, it still should not change completely.

Like Kant, America has to be patient to accumulate “partial successes,”

³⁰¹ Waltz, Kenneth, *Man, The State and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 1

³⁰² Garnett, Campbell A. “Deontology and Self-Realization,” *Ethics*, Vol. 51, No. 4, (July, 1941), p. 438.

³⁰³ Rosenau, James N. “Normative Challenges in a Turbulent World,” *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 6, (1992), p. 1.

envisioning a better future for humankind.³⁰⁴ It has to bridge both duty and goodwill with the reality of the international system. In other words, it has to combine two worlds, “the world of rational beings and the world of animals.”³⁰⁵ Subsequently, the world leaders have to reestablish “a veritable re-foundation of international relations.”³⁰⁶ This can be only achieved through the persevering efforts of a wise government that will abide by the universal declaration of human rights to present a leading example of respect, honor, and most important, love toward humankind. Ethics is an inevitable and integral component of any policy decision because “there can be no ethics without politics,”³⁰⁷ or vice-versa.

Sometimes, necessity becomes the mother of morality.³⁰⁸ Sometimes, morality “requires genuine sacrifice, and may even require self-sacrifice.”³⁰⁹ It has already obliged the United States to intervene in the affairs of other nations. It has already committed them to “a continual willingness to shed

³⁰⁴ Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Touchstone, 1994), p. 836.

³⁰⁵ Ross, David Sir, *Kant's Ethical Theory: A Commentary on the Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 85, 86.

³⁰⁶ Bonanate, Luigi, *Ethics and International Politics*, translated by John Irving, (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), p. 84.

³⁰⁷ Nagel, Thomas, *The View from Nowhere*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 188.

³⁰⁸ Hoffmann, Stanley, “The Political Ethics of International Relations,” *The Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs*, (1988), p. 17.

³⁰⁹ Frankena, William K. *Lecture Three: Why Be Moral?* In *Thinking About Morality*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980), p. 85, 86.

blood and accept casualties,” namely in Iraq.³¹⁰ In accordance to Kant’s deontological approach, the United States acts according to a principle or maxims that is “universally applicable without contradiction to all similar situations.”³¹¹ Ultimately, an individual has to choose a course of action whether it yields better consequences or better intentions. In both cases, America has “remained morally vastly superior to its rivals.”³¹² Only it can dream to “amplify a Kantian vision to an integrated view of values.”³¹³

In conclusion, this thesis intends to argue that Kant has clarified the standards by which both individuals and governments act through highlighting that Kant’s deontology can be applied when the concept of human rights is pursued. Unless governments recognize their duty toward their citizens, Kant’s deontology provides an alternative to live in a better world than the one we have now because the ultimate duty is owed to God.

Finally, this thesis has also devoted considerable attention and energy to the value of human rights issues. Similarly, it has indicated the fear of what

³¹⁰ Hulsman, John C. & Lieven, Anatol, “The Ethics of Realism,” *The National Interest*, Vol. 80, (Summer, 2005), p. 42.

³¹¹ Douzinas, Costas, *The End of Human Rights: Critical Legal Thought At the Turn of the Century*, (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2000), p. 193.

³¹² Hulsman, John C. & Lieven, Anatol, “The Ethics of Realism,” *The National Interest*, Vol. 80, (Summer, 2005), p. 39.

³¹³ Horowitz, Irving Louis, “Moral Theory and Policy Science: A New Look at the Gap between Foreign and Domestic Affairs,” *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol.6,(1992),p.92.

is going to happen in case Kant's deontological recommendations were not adopted in US foreign policy because "to be sane in a world of madmen is in itself a kind of madness."³¹⁴

³¹⁴ Waltz, Kenneth, *Man, the State and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 181.

Appendix

The Five Formulae:

- Formula I or the Formula of Universal law:

Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

- Formula II or the Formula of the Law of Nature:

Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature.

- Formula III or the Formula of the End in itself:

So act as to use humanity, both in your own person and in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never simply as a means.

- Formula IV or the Formula of Autonomy:

So act that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxim.

- Formula V or the Formula of the Kingdom of Ends:

So act as if you were always through your maxims a law-making member in a universal kingdom of ends.

Source: Paton, H. J. *The Categorical Imperative: a Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy*, (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1965), p. 129.

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