



Human Rights in American Foreign Policy: From the 1960s to the Soviet Collapse (Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights)

Joe Renouard

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International human rights issues perpetually highlight the tension between political interest and idealism. Over the last fifty years, the United States has labored to find an appropriate response to each new human rights crisis, balancing national and global interests as well as political and humanitarian impulses.

Human Rights in American Foreign Policy explores America's international human rights policies from the Vietnam War era to the end of the Cold War. Global in scope and ambitious in scale, this book examines American responses to a broad array of human rights violations: torture and political imprisonment in South America; apartheid in South Africa; state violence in China; civil wars in Central America; persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union; movements for democracy and civil liberties in East Asia and Eastern Europe; and revolutionary political transitions in Iran, Nicaragua, and the collapsing USSR.

Joe Renouard challenges the characterization of American human rights policymaking as one of inaction, hypocrisy, and double standards. Arguing that a consistent standard is impractical, he explores how policymakers and citizens have weighed the narrow pursuit of traditional national interests with the desire to promote human rights. *Human Rights in American Foreign Policy* renders coherent a series of disparate foreign policy decisions during a tumultuous time in world history. Ultimately the United States emerges as neither exceptionally compassionate nor unusually wicked. Rather, it is a nation that manages by turns to be cautiously pragmatic, boldly benevolent, and coldly self-interested.

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