

# ANALYZING THE INFLUENCE OF NON-STATE ACTORS ON US-FOREIGN POLICY OUTCOMES

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## ABSTRACT

*This research examines the significant yet often disregarded influence that non-state actors hold over foreign policy outcomes within the United States. Traditional, state-centric views have often disregarded the roles of insurgent groups, terrorist organizations, multinational corporations, and NGO affiliates. The analysis after the jump seeks to bridge this academic gap by systematically surmising how such actors influence policy decisions. Here, I will use mixed approach to analyze both qualitative and quantitative data on this topic this will allow me to draw well rounded findings. Research studies with practice implications—derived from detailed case studies on the FAR in Guatemala and non-state actors in the Middle East—argue that NSAs have significant influence on U.S. foreign policy through mechanisms like violence, economic leverage, and political lobbying. These results, therefore, call for comprehensive strategies that balance addressing immediate security concerns with the underlying socio-political issues. This study boosts academic scholarship, enriching theoretical frameworks within the study of international relations, and provides practical insights for policymakers in exploring a more nuanced foreign policy.*

## KEYWORDS

*Non-state actors, international relations, FAR, Security, USA, foreign policy.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The US foreign policy has been influenced by many international agents. The focus has traditionally been on state-to-state relations, sometimes leaving out common non-state actors like rebel groups, terrorist groups, multi-national corporations, and non-governmental organizations. These non-station-state entities have increasingly asserted their presence in international politics, challenging the conventional paradigms and introducing new complexities into the formulation and execution of U.S. foreign policy.

NSAs are defined in very general terms as non-state actors, individuals or groups holding influence and which are totally or partially independent of sovereign states. These actors range from insurgent groups and terrorist organizations to multinational corporations, NGOs, and transnational advocacy networks. Generally, insurgent groups and terrorist organizations pursue goals through armed conflict and violence, frequently placing these groups in opposition to the stability and authority of the state. Multinational corporations seek to shape economic policies and international trade. NGOs and advocacy networks typically pursue humanitarian, human rights, and environmental causes. Boundaries do not contain these actors; quite in contrast to states, discretion is not bound by territory. Therefore, the very nature of their influence is widespread and far-reaching.

Non state actors play significant role in global politics. They influence policy grounds and make conflict, but they also provide humanitarian services, hence playing critical roles across the board within international relations. For example, non-state armed groups have portrayed a significant security threat that goes beyond the traditional military to the wider human security needs for populations. According to Englehart [1], these groups can threaten local governance and social stability, hence, issues that call for responses beyond traditional military means. In the same vein, Krause [2] points out that non-state violent actors often pursue both strategy and organizational targets that can effectively influence political outcomes. The operations of these actors, from violent insurgency to strategic lobbying and advocacy, therefore cut across various policy decision levels.

Much is however left to be desired as far as the literature on the influence of non-state actors on U.S. foreign policy is concerned. Despite the growing recognition of their importance, much of what has been done in the literature has remained to be concerned with state-centric perspectives, under-representing their independent and significant roles. While there have been several studies on different influences on U.S. foreign policy such as those on Page [3] and Baymen Kreps [4] among others there is no thorough analysis on how non state actors, both individual and collectively, shape U.S. foreign policy. This gap in the literature means that modern international relations, in regards to U.S. foreign policy, will not be totally understood.

This study addresses the research problem of an almost absolute dearth of comprehensive analysis on how non-state actors independently and collectively really shape U.S. foreign policy outcomes. This leads to an incomplete understanding of the intricate interactions and influences that characterize modern international relations. Therefore, this research fills this gap by systematically analyzing how non state actors influence U.S. foreign policy. It will help increase, within reason, our comprehension of the role that non-state actors are playing in contemporary geopolitics by focusing on the strategies employed by the said actors and the specific policy outcomes, their influencing factors.

Specifically, this study aims to analyze the mechanism through which non state actors influence U.S. foreign policy, identify specific incidents and case studies where these actors have impacted policy decisions and gain clear understanding of the role. To achieve these objectives, the study will address the following key questions: How do non-state actors influence U.S. foreign policy? What mechanisms and strategies do these actors use? How do the activities of non-state actors alter the outcomes of U.S. foreign policy decisions?

Understanding how U.S. foreign policy is influenced by non-state actors is an important aspect in the areas of academic scholarship and practical policymaking. Theoretically, this study will be relevant for the scope of international relations by integrating the roles played by the non-state actors within the foreign-policy analysis. This will necessarily inform a balanced perspective in the international relations discipline, moving it beyond state centric paradigms. The findings from this research will propose more effective and nuanced foreign strategies in view of the rising and metamorphic roles of non-state actors. Policymakers need to recognize the impact of non-state actors in order to develop advance strategies. This will help to address wide range of sociopolitical issues and tackle the immediate security corners.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The influence of non-state actors (NSAs) on U.S. foreign policy outcomes has been the major focus of much scholarly attention in the past few years. Many scholars have traditionally viewed the world from political and state-centric perspectives, rather than incorporating the significant roles that these NSAs play in shaping policy decisions and the dynamics of global

security. This literature review will bring out different aspects of non-state actors' influence on U.S. foreign policy: theoretical framework, empirical studies, and given case studies. The role of non-state actors in international relations and globalization has become an interesting topic in foreign policy analysis. According to Bauman and Stengel [5], non-state actors are now prominent in international politics. It demonstrates the necessity of including these actors in the studies of FP for a more complete comprehension with regard to the intricacies of global relations Baumann & Stengel [5]. A 2nd key framework creating theoretical contributions is Krause's [2] two-level regime theory of the political effectiveness of non-state violence. Krause expands that insurgencies and terrorist organizations work towards a mix of strategic objectives that benefit their broader social struggle and organizational objectives that better their standing and growth as an entity. Their dual focus provides a nuanced view on the ways in which non-state actors affect state actions and decisions [2].

A number of empirical studies have analyzed how non-state actors influence U.S. foreign policy in different yet specific ways. Page [3] offers the most thorough examination of the many sources of influence on U.S. foreign policy, of which the interests of organized groups, and the preferences of the public are but two. In a broad-scale study, he demonstrates how the powerful influence of non-state actors on policy outcomes by applying heavy datasets in this type of analysis as compared to the usual small-N focus in extant studies [3].

In particular, Dimant, Krieger, and Meierrieks [6] analyze the relationship between U.S. military aid and anti-American terrorism. Consequently, his speech was followed by research findings illustrating the greater levels of U.S. military aid result in even larger rates of terrorism, albeit directed against American interests. The study highlights the potential of the perverse effects of military assistance, where it can trigger worse reactions against pro-American ideals and further terrorism activities (Dimant, Krieger, & Meierrieks) [6].

Darwich [7] further investigates the foreign policies of armed non-state actors within the Middle East and underlines that foreign policy analysis needs to include the study of these actors. Her findings reveal that armed non-state actors tend to independently influence foreign policy decisions, most of the time through violent ways, challenging the traditional state-controlled system of foreign policy analysis [7].

The case of the Guatemalan government against the Revolutionary Armed Forces is an excellent illustration of how non-state actors can truly influence both domestic and foreign policy. The FAR was a leftist guerrilla organization that waged armed insurrection against the Guatemalan government during the late 20th century. It ran a campaign of sabotage, assassination, and direct fighting with the government forces. The very region was destabilized to a great extent, with the Guatemalan government having to change its policies both domestically and internationally, with regard to its neighbors and the United States.

Regarding the insurgency faced with the FAR, the Guatemalan government pursued increased military aid and training from the United States. This was part of the wider American strategy during the Cold War that was supposed to counteract communist influences in Latin America. However, the increased militarization and human rights abuses curbed by the Guatemalan government led to criticism from the wider international platform, straining U.S. relations among other countries that were mooted to have good foreign policies on humanity. This case goes on to show the complex role non-state actors play in foreign policy, explaining how insurgency activities influence the foreign policy of a major state, the U.S. in question (Dyad ID 624) [8].

The Middle East remains one of the most notable regions where non-state actors have dramatically influenced U.S. foreign policy. These groups include Hezbollah, Hamas, and

various insurgent factions in Iraq and Syria, which have directly affected U.S. military and diplomatic strategies in the region. These actors often operate in large transnational modes, taking advantage of local grievances and global ideological movements in the exercise of pressure on the U.S. policy.

For example, the military and political activities of Hezbollah pose a necessity for the U.S. to act in front of the complex political landscape of Lebanon, while attacks that are led by this group on Israel and involvement in the Syrian company of the civil war induce the U.S. to offer military and diplomatic aid to Israel besides the need to manage its involvement in conflicts in Syria. In a similar vein, control over the Gaza Strip and conflict with Israel in the case of Hamas also affected American aid in relation to policy and diplomacy towards Israel and Palestine.

Using different strategies such as direct attacks, propaganda, and reliance on other regional powers, these actors affect American policy. The study by Darwich points to how these groups operate as something independent from the control of states, often leading to situations wherein, on the one hand, the USA should exercise the policy of supporting its agents and, on the other hand, the need to provide the cessation of the root cause of conflict [7]. The influence of non-state actors is also emphasized to be transnational [9].

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The following methodology was adopted for this research:

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study used a mixed research design, adding both qualitative and quantitative data. This study applies the methodology of case studies to give in-depth insight into specific cases where non-state actors greatly affected U.S. foreign policy. This approach allows the ability to make an in-depth examination of the means and ways by which the actors aimed to influence MP and to analyze their broader implications on policy decisions. The following methodology was adopted

#### **3.2. Data Collection Methods**

Primary and secondary data was collected for the research.

##### **3.2.1. Primary Data**

Primary data was collected through following methods:

**Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews of policymakers, experts, and scholars in the field of international relations and foreign policy were conducted, in looking forward to firsthand accounts and insights into the influence non-state actors have on U.S. foreign policymaking.

**Surveys:** Surveys addressed a wider group of international relations specialists: diplomatic staff, military staff, and analysts. We used both Likert-scale and open-ended questionnaire to gather responses. By this approach we get quantitative data to answer the study questions and qualitative data to analyze this topic from different perspective.

##### **3.2.2. Secondary Data**

Secondary data was collected through following methods:

**Academic Journals and Books:** All the existing sources of theoretical and empirical evidence related to the role of non-state actors have been overviewed. Among them are works by Baumann and Stengel [5], Krause [2], Page [3], Dimant et al. [5], and Darwich [7].

**Government Reports and Documents:** Interpretation was done on U.S. governmental reports, congressional records, and official statements to understand policy context and official responses to non-state actors.

**Media Sources:** News articles, editorials, and media reports were analyzed to understand public discourse and real-time responses to the non-state actors activity.

## **4. DATA ANALYSIS AND TECHNIQUES**

The following data analysis techniques were employed in this research.

### **4.1. Thematic Analysis**

We applied thematic analysis to the qualitative data from interviews and surveys. This involved molding the data to identify themes, patterns and key insights about how non state actors influence U.S. foreign policy.

### **4.2. Case Study Analysis**

Detailed case studies were developed for specific instances where non-state actors had a significant impact on U.S. foreign policy. The strategies employed by such actors in developing the case studies were analyzed, as well as the policy outcomes.

### **4.3. Statistical Analysis**

Data obtained through the survey can be quantitatively analyzed using statistical methodologies in order to identify the trends and correlations of inferences made. To summarize data, descriptive statistics were employed, such as mean and median, while other inferential statistics like regression analysis tested given hypotheses about the impact of non-state actors.

## **5. FINDINGS**

The case of the Guatemalan government against the Revolutionary Armed Forces is an excellent illustration of how non-state actors can truly influence both domestic and foreign policy. The FAR was a leftist guerrilla organization that waged armed insurrection against the Guatemalan government during the late 20th century. It ran a campaign of sabotage, assassination, and direct fighting with the government forces. The very region was destabilized to a great extent, with the Guatemalan government having to change its policies both domestically and internationally, with regard to its neighbors and the United States.

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## **6. DISCUSSION**

What this shows is that the impact of non-state individuals and groups on the foreign policy of the United States varies widely and is broad. Case studies on Guatemala and the Middle East dramatize a spectrum of activity from violence and sabotage to brilliant couplings and propaganda. These skills and roles, quite unusual for non-state actors in both domestic and international realms, produce influence which, in many instances, goes in the stark competition with what we long know through traditional state actors. Thematic analysis of qualitative data also corroborates the above findings, portraying divergence in the strategies taken up by non-state actors for their aims.

The case of Guatemala shows how direct-action techniques, including, of course, a form of that technique called guerrilla warfare, were able to destabilize a sovereign state through the Revolutionary Armed Forces-or FAR, as the guerrilla army is known. These numerous activities of the FAR compelled the Guatemalan government to seek increased U.S. military assistance, hereby serving as a good example of how non-state actors might indirectly affect U.S. foreign policy by altering the very dynamics within their respective countries. These actions not only strained relations between U.S. and Guatemala but also influenced broader policy directions towards Latin America, particularly during cold war eras.

These activities of non-state actors like Hezbollah and Hamas have significantly shaped the U.S. foreign policy. The combination of military and political strategies put into action by these organizations is reshaping U.S. public policy with respect to intervention by the U.S. military, foreign aid, and other relations. The case of Hezbollah's coming into the Syrian civil war demanded a delicate response from the U.S. - balancing interests in support for Israel and broader interests in regional stability. Equally, the Hamas takeover in Gaza has caused the U.S. to literally reassess its strategies for aid and diplomacy on both Israel as well as Palestine. These examples demonstrate, hence, that significant policy change can easily be driven by non-state actors creating complex multidimensional challenges requiring sophisticated responses.

Empirical data collected via interview and survey inform strategic acumen of the non-state actor. In practice, strategies often blend traditional and modern tactics. For instance, non-state actors use social media to spread propaganda, forge alliances with non-state actors, and exploit local grievances to gain support, and among other methods. These approaches not only help non state actors achieve their objectives but also add complexity to the policy environment.

## **6.1. Policy Implications**

This research offers following policy implications:

### **6.1.1. Need for Comprehensive Strategies**

The increasing influence of non-state actors on U.S. foreign policy has laid down the need for a more comprehensive strategy in balancing immediate security concerns with fundamental underlying issues in the sociopolitical field. Policymakers must mind the root causes from which non-state actors—namely, political disenfranchisement, economic inequality, and social grievances—spring, as discussed by Johnston et. Al. (2023) [10].

### **6.1.2. Balancing Military and Non-Military Responses**

Generally, though military aid and even interventions are necessary, such measures should be balanced with nonmilitary approaches such as diplomatic engagement, economic development, and support for civil society. The unintended consequences of military aid, as in the case of antiAmerican terrorism, underscore the importance of balancing priorities.

### **6.1.3. International Cooperation**

The influence of non-state actors can only be addressed through international cooperation and collaboration. The coordination of many non-state actors therefore requires similar coordination of effort among states if their activities are to be effectively opposed and their impact on global security reduced.

## **6.2. Limitations of the Study**

The study conducted is limited in following factors:

### **6.2.1. Scope of Case Studies**

The study remains focused on pinpoint case studies, so the generalization of this study can be limited. While the selected cases are illustrative, further research is essential in examining the effects of non-state actors in other regions and contexts.

### **6.2.2. Data Availability**

The availability and reliability of data, especially from the conflict zones and the non-state actors themselves, can be a great challenge. The study employs secondary sources and qualitative data, which may be quite biased and limited.

### 6.2.3. Dynamic Nature of non-state Actors

The nature of non-state actors is such that they are very dynamic and constantly evolving, making capturing their full impact on foreign policy very difficult. Future research must continue to monitor and analyze these actors as they adapt to changing political and security landscapes.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The current study thus brings out the potent influence of non-state actors on U.S. foreign policy consequences. These actors articulate policy decisions and global security dynamics through several means, particularly including the application of violence, economic leverage, and political lobbying. The implications call for comprehensive and balanced strategies that would tackle both immediate security threats and sociopolitical problems manifesting them. Further research should be conducted in order to explore more facets in the roles of non-state actors and to understand their impact on international relations.

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