

Aid Strings Attached—Disaster Burden Relieved:  
An Ethical Analysis of Conditionally Providing Foreign Natural Disaster Aid In Order To  
Increase Climate Change Resilience

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, I explore the ethical intricacies involved in the United States providing foreign disaster aid with the condition that a portion be used to build resilience to climate change. Objections to providing conditional aid and the ability to implement it are addressed. Responses to these objections form an argument in support of conditional aid and its benefits to the global community through cooperative resilience building. Finally, I recommend conditional aid as a tool for building strong and independent countries in a changing climate.

## **Preface**

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## Introduction

At this moment in our tightly connected global community, the United States possesses the unique power, not to rule and dominate, but to set an ethical example that could drive the global environmental agenda and undoubtedly influence humanity's path through a changing climate. After the devastation of a natural disaster, an opportunity exists for lasting recovery by funding and coordinating both emergency aid and resilience assistance to lessen the effects of future disasters. As a world leader in foreign relief, the United States is ethically obligated to provide disaster aid that stipulates a portion of the assistance go toward increasing resilience to climate change because such a condition promotes efficient use of aid resources and provides the greatest good for the greatest number of people. This ethical obligation to impose a condition of resilience building not only fulfills the United States' responsibility to the global community but also to its own citizens by promoting global cooperation and future peace.

My interest in global cooperation in our changing climate and foreign aid stems from my education in environmental policy and my personal concern for the future of planet Earth and its citizens. U.S. domestic and foreign environmental policy decisions often fail to comprehensively address the urgent need for action. Given the United States' significant contribution to greenhouse gasses, this lack of a comprehensive approach is especially disturbing. Consequently, the U.S. holds an ethical obligation to meet the needs of citizens affected by its own pollution. This ethical obligation also rises from the responsibility to address externalities borne out of its unique political position and extensive capacity to provide aid. Meeting this responsibility to the global community offers justice for those affected by climate change. Giving aid resources provides the tools necessary for adapting to climate change. I hypothesize that a

resilience-building condition for existing natural disaster aid would most effectively address the effects of climate change and fulfill this ethical obligation.

This paper operates under the strongly supported assumption that anthropogenic climate change will exacerbate natural disasters (Georgeson et al., 2016). I will utilize the general format of an applied ethical analysis by supplying a relevant background. Then I will present robust objections that challenge the hypothesis that the U.S. should conditionally provide natural disaster aid designed to increase resilience to climate change. These objections will present the strongest possible argument against conditional aid. After the objections are presented in detail, I will respond to each separately. In addressing all objections, the strongest supporting arguments will be presented and maintained by ethical analysis, predicted efficacy, and relevant real-world events. Each supporting argument's shortcomings and inadequacies will be confronted, and a final recommendation will act as an initial guide for future policy discussions and decisions.

## **Background**

As humanity develops its influence on the climate, warmer temperatures and higher sea levels exacerbate natural disasters that disproportionately affect poorer nations because of their weak resilience to such disasters (Georgeson et al., 2016). U.S. natural disaster aid addresses the immediate needs of the recipient nation; dealing with effectual vulnerabilities retroactively and without the proactive foresight to build resilient infrastructure that will mitigate destruction from future disasters. In contrast, aid designed to build resilience to recurrent disasters occurs proactively and often independently from the disaster itself. Efficiently combining these currently discrete forms of aid offers an opportunity to improve the lives of the vulnerable.

## ***USAID***

Created by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) “works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential” (“Who We Are”, 2015). The twofold purpose of aid as stated on USAID’s website is: furthering U.S. interests and improving the lives of developing countries’ citizens (2015). Note that the stated order of purposes as listed on the website is meant to highlight the importance of foreign aid to U.S. citizens.

For the 2016 fiscal year, the U.S. government plans to allocate \$37.9 billion for foreign aid. Of that funding, USAID and the Department of State can use a total of \$33.68 billion of that funding allocation for broad categories including health, peace and security, humanitarian assistance, economic development, and the environment. Of that \$33.68 billion, total humanitarian assistance funding consists of \$5.58 billion while environmental funding for resource sustainability consists of only \$1.03 billion (“Foreignassistance.gov”, 2016). For disaster response, USAID addresses urgent needs with \$3.3 billion, but only assists in building resilience to recurring disasters with \$352.2 million (“Budget U.S. Agency for International Development”, 2016). In addition, resilience aid is in its infancy: USAID began focusing on resilience in 2011 as compared to humanitarian aid which has grown in importance ever since Europe’s assisted recovery after World War II. These vague categories and their respective budgets highlight the clear focus on humanitarian aid. The almost purposeful vagueness of these categories masks foreign aid’s true destination and this difficulty will be addressed later in this section and expounded upon in the arguments of the paper.

USAID’s policy guide on building resilience to recurrent crises acknowledges the importance of a coordinated approach across humanitarian and developmental teams. With a

relatively small budget, USAID achieved this coordinated approach to resiliency efforts by convening the Global Resilience Partnership in cooperation with The Rockefeller Foundation and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The Partnership aims to help nations manage disasters by coordinating developmental and humanitarian projects with the goals of saving more lives and decreasing the frequency of needed aid (“Resilience”, 2015).

Despite good intentions, aid often fails to reach affected individuals as exemplified in recovery attempts after the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti. In his paper, Jake Johnston writes that foreign assistance appears to disappear into a black box because there is little information available to the public regarding how private entities spend their allotted contracts or grants and on what. Even determining how much was spent on the ground in Haiti proves near impossible. USAID reports only annual obligations and expenditures. Disclosing the amount of money spent on any individual project is deemed proprietary information, and USAID even asks contractors not to disclose their budget breakdowns (Johnston and Main, 2013). This foreign aid black box presents a dangerous opportunity for private exploitation of disaster funds called disaster capitalism, which is addressed in my objection to providing any aid.

Additional evidence from Haiti also demonstrates a focus on modern development rather than communally beneficial resilient-building projects. Examples include building an \$18 million soccer stadium on a site where people were already living as well as spending \$260 on an industrial park used for cheap labor that failed to employ those directly affected by the earthquake (Gandhi, 2015). While many Haitians continue to live in tarp tents without sanitation or running water, disaster capitalists find new avenues to develop for their benefit and not the benefit of the vulnerable.



## ***Economic Inequality***

Economic inequality places poor individuals in harm's way more frequently because their lack of economic resources means they frequently live in higher risk areas, are less insured, and lack access to alternative food supplies. These vulnerabilities make recovery after a disaster difficult and sometimes financially ruinous. Deaths per capita due to a disaster are four times higher in low-income countries than in high- or middle-income countries. However, large disasters occur less often in high-income countries due mostly to geographical location. Independent of disaster size, fatalities will decrease by 0.4 percent for every one percent increase in income (Strömberg, 2007).

## ***Existing Ethical Adaptations to Climate Change***

The three common existing solutions for adapting to climate change use the following frameworks to justify their means: developmental, pollutionist, and humanist. The first two follow established practices while the humanist view requires changing our conception of the changing climate and humanity's place within it. I will argue later that the developmental and pollutionist frameworks present an unhealthy business-as-usual approach, while the humanist framework supports a policy of conditional aid.

### ***Developmental***

Developmental adaptations buffer development at risk from climate change in order to protect the advancement of human capabilities (Thompson and Bendik-Keymer, 2012). In the developmental framework, humanitarian aid functions as short-term relief to temporary disasters. This type of aid provides remedial shelter and health resources, that allow the affected society to repair its infrastructure and resume development.

A nation can make relief developmental by increasing the local capacity for relief work, but that planning takes time. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) contends that in instances where relief is planned and implemented in isolation from the local population, the assisted country will develop long-term dependencies that decrease resilience and increase vulnerabilities. In responding to a natural disaster, "speed is the imperative, not long-term development concerns such as community participation, institution-building or sustainability" (Duffield, 1996). The need for speed clashes fundamentally with any planning for development and resilience building.

As an objective, developed nations want to create order out of disorder by promoting development in an undeveloped nation via a framework that creates conditions for a free market, and that free market then enables advantageous trade, which leads to inherent prosperity (Curtis, 2001). This dogmatic belief in developmentalism gradually homogenizes the global economy into a capitalist market by providing developed countries with new exploitable trading partners.

### *Pollutionist*

In the pollutionist framework of adaptation, reducing vulnerabilities to climate change necessitates an increase in pollution levels in order to build protective resilience. This pragmatic view acknowledges the difficulties associated with decreasing the use of fossil fuels and recognizes that time is essential in order to advance reliable and renewable sources of energy needed to drive resilience building. Therefore, the urgent need to decrease vulnerabilities justifies polluting more (Thompson and Bendik-Keymer, 2012). Utilizing the pollutionist framework by itself raises ethical objections in the interest of future generations, as it will certainly exacerbate climate change.

## *Humanist*

The humanist view of adaptation includes diverse and comprehensive solutions, which I will use to support conditional aid. It calls upon humanity to rethink how we fit into the changing global context. We need to adjust our concept of humanity's ideals, responsibilities, values, and the scale of our institutions. To accomplish this, humanity needs to rethink our place in a changing climate, the tools we use to address climate change, and what is the best response to climate change (Thompson and Bendik-Keymer, 2012). Instead of using established capitalist business practices, humanity must reexamine its behavior and find novel ways to build resilience to climate change without polluting more or following the same consumptive path of development and consumption.

Each member of the global community must now view its place in the world within the context of a quickly changing climate. This context requires new adaptations yet to be imagined or efficiently implemented. To accomplish finding successful new solutions, the U.S. needs to re-analyze the tools and techniques it uses to assist others, and any improvements should be made for the primary purpose of combating the effects of climate change.

## ***Disaster Assistance and Resilience Defined***

In disaster assistance, USAID helps those in life-threatening crises survive by rapidly deploying a response team to assess the most urgent needs and coordinate a quick response ("Disaster Assistance" 2015). USAID defines resilience as "...the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth" ("Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis" 2012).

For the purposes of this paper, I will define disaster assistance as foreign aid that addresses immediate needs and vulnerabilities without purposefully decreasing those vulnerabilities in anticipation of future events. Although actual disaster assistance may achieve more than just immediate responses, narrowly defining it as solely immediate aid simplifies the contrast with long-term resilience building and hones the analytical argument for coordinating disaster assistance and resilience building for the purposes of this paper.

Any resilience building must fundamentally decrease citizen vulnerability to natural disasters. Proper resilience is viewed from the perspective of the citizen and for the purposes of this paper, not the government or economy. This distinction holds both donor and recipient nations accountable for the well being of the affected citizenry.

### ***Conditionality Defined***

Conditional aid entails a United States aid stipulation requiring a recipient country to use a portion of foreign natural disaster aid to increase climate change resilience and decrease citizen vulnerability. Refusal, although unlikely, would result in no aid provisions after a disaster. This caveat is necessary in order to establish a hardline policy that places adaptation to climate change at the forefront. To receive disaster funds, a country must agree to the resilience-building stipulation immediately following a disaster. This establishes expectations from the beginning.

### **Objections**

The following section details five objections to conditional natural disaster aid. After presented in detail, the following responses section replies to each objection.

#### ***The U.S. is Not Obligated to Provide Any Assistance***

Throughout the history of the United States, many citizens and politicians have demonstrated disdain for foreigners by disregarding their needs during times of crises. For

example, the hate speech aimed at Muslim refugees during the 2016 presidential campaign, the refusal to admit to the U.S. Jewish immigrants fleeing the Third Reich before WWII, and the hostility directed towards starving Irish emigrating from the potato famine in the 1840s. In part, the reasoning behind these xenophobic beliefs and actions stems from an interest in self-preservation and a fear that helping others involves self-sacrifice. These same beliefs that fuel the dislike for immigrating foreigners gives rise to an isolationist foreign policy with respect to freely giving aid to another country.

This isolationist's point of view is consistent with Garrett Hardin's lifeboat ethics metaphor, which states that an individual nation should conserve its limited resources for its own citizenry instead of squandering those resources on countries it cannot save. Developing countries often lack the technological capabilities required to efficiently utilize aid funds. Committing funds where effective use of those funds is an unattainable goal wastes U.S. aid resources.

According to Hardin, by helping a country overcome a disaster we allow the population to further exceed its carrying capacity setting the population up for a more pronounced disaster in the future (1974). From this perspective, providing aid to a country will spawn its development into a modern country, one that consumes significantly more resources, perpetuating its own environmental problems and the vulnerability of its citizens, as well as contributing to climate change.

Providing aid to a country enables it to exceed the environment's carrying capacity because the U.S. provides substitutes for unavailable resources. Hardin coins the imminent increase in population the "ratchet effect" because continually providing assistance to mitigate

every life-threatening disaster ratchets and worsens existing problems (1986). He believes in letting the affected population equalize to sustainable levels by not providing any assistance.

In support of the argument against providing any aid, Hardin's phenomenon of the Tragedy of the Commons demonstrates how, in an unregulated environment, development generated by aid simply allows countries to continue to pollute the common space more and more. In a borderless climate system, the tragedy lies in recognizing one's own levels of pollution, yet realizing that global pollution and its effects will happen regardless, thus making it logical to exploit the ability to freely pollute. U.S. aid essentially gives a country the ability to pollute more, which exacerbates the changing climate affecting us all. In order to restrict additional pollution, development must be closely monitored and controlled to ensure sustainability, presenting the U.S. with the additional challenge of oversight. The U.S. cannot expect countries to refrain from polluting the commons because they act rationally in preserving their self-interests by developing their economies and by utilizing the same polluting procedures used by already developed nations (1986). Providing aid will cause further exploitations in an unregulated commons and will exacerbate climate change.

Another major concern with repeatedly providing aid is that the recipient country will buttress its economic system on this aid, but those aid benefits fail to reach needy individuals. Dambisa Moyo's book, *Dead Aid*, critiques the provision of aid in Africa because it is not reducing poverty and prompting growth but creating a cycle of dependence due to corruption and market distortion ("Summary: 'Dead Aid'" 2009). The expectation of further aid is the lynchpin of this cycle.

A dependent country continuously extracts aid resources from the U.S. taxpayer while contracted, private U.S. entities continue to financially benefit from disaster capitalism. Disaster

capitalists regularly profit by using the shock doctrine; an atmosphere of panic and collective trauma caused by the disaster to make radical changes including privatization, government deregulation, and cuts to social spending (Klein, 2007). These private entities have a vested interest in the continual provision of aid in order to renew their large contracts with USAID and to continue exploiting local resources and peoples. Third world citizens must remain dependent on aid in order for profits to continue.

Detestable aid provisions after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti provide evidence of how disaster capitalists used the shock doctrine on the world's benefactors to amass nearly \$10 billion. Despite the large amount pledged to Haiti, few Haitians actually benefited because most contracts went to U.S. companies based in or near Washington D.C. There was little transparency regarding the awarded grants and contracts and as a result enormous sums of money disappeared into a black box leaving its destination and ultimate purpose unknown to the general public (Gandhi, 2015). This profiteering hinders effectively using the aid to benefit the affected population and leads to larger profits or the building ostentatious infrastructure, such as a soccer stadium, that meets 21<sup>st</sup> century appeal, but fails to meet the basic needs of the citizenry such as food, water, shelter, and sanitation. The circumstances of many Haitians who sought aid in emergency camps are actually worse off several years after the earthquake than for those who recovered with no outside assistance. Many Haitians agree that they would have been better off without any outside assistance (Gandhi, 2015).

Clearly, the decision of whether or not to provide aid should first address the many substantial objections. Isolationism claims to protect U.S. interests and resources. The ratchet effect and the Tragedy of the Commons posits ethical reasoning for allowing a disaster to ravage

unabated. Dependency and disaster capitalism provide evidence that, as currently practiced, aid is ineffective at efficiently benefiting affected citizens.

### ***There is No Need for Conditionality***

Even if the U.S. were obligated to provide some sort of aid after a natural disaster, providing it on conditional grounds to increase climate change resilience would be unethical because the U.S. already funds both categories separately. This separation means conditionality would hold no relevance for certain disasters where immediate needs far outweigh the need to rebuild. And, if a recipient country refuses conditions, the U.S. would hold an immoral position, sacrificing citizens to uphold this single policy. The overarching objection to the conditional policy is whether the need for such a policy exists.

As noted in the Background section of this paper, the U.S. distinguishes disaster response and resilience building as two separate policies that distribute foreign aid. Disaster response meets immediate needs while resilience building ensures future security. Because of this operational separation, the U.S. government has established different funding structures and technologies for each sector. This makes communication between the two groups difficult and would require restructuring if combined (Glantz and Baudoin, 2014). The fact that the U.S. funds both disaster response and resilience building means that it meets its ethical obligation for providing aid to another country in times of need. There is no additional requirement for conditionality because, for the most part, those countries that need immediate disaster aid get it, and others that require resilience are helped in building security from environmental stressors so that those future disasters no longer require outside assistance. By reducing the need for future disaster response through funding just resilience building the U.S. achieves the goal of conditional aid in reducing citizen vulnerability.



For some catastrophic disasters affecting exceptionally vulnerable citizens, the need for an immediate life-saving response far outweighs even the consideration of building resiliency. In the case of a massive earthquake, the U.S. should focus only on the immediate devastation caused by a traumatic and rare event. Climate change cannot make the impact worse and such an intense event occurs infrequently; therefore, operating under a resilient response policy wastes resources and valuable time. Resilience to earthquakes can be achieved, but the response to an earthquake first and foremost needs to focus on releasing trapped survivors and ensuring the safety and well being of those who do survive.

The U.S. fails to ensure the safety and well being of those affected by a disaster when it refuses to provide aid because a country does not accept the resilience-building condition. Because aid provisions are an interaction between governments, the decisions of a government directly affect the aid its citizens receive. This means a faulty or stubborn government can harm innocent civilians through its policy decisions. With this line of thinking, aid should be given freely to a government thereby avoiding political conflicts.

The basis of objections to integrating disaster and resilience aid conditionally is that we already fund and structure disaster aid and resilience building separately, and that in some instances responding quickly and in full force to the disaster is of the utmost importance. Also, conditional aid could potentially harm affected citizens if their government is uncooperative. The difference in response time and the implications for loss of life give rise to the next objection.

### ***Resilience Planning Causes a Slower Response Time***

Building resilience along with responding to a natural disaster requires more time (Glantz and Baudoin, 2014). After a natural disaster, the largest ethical obligation of any response is to

address the immediate needs of the vulnerable. Hindering the response places the blame on the responding party for not doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people. A responder is liable for citizens' well being because of the expectation of assistance. It would be unethical for the U.S. to respond to a disaster without the goal of saving or assisting affected citizens. Requiring a condition to build resilience for a future disaster does not meet the goal of addressing immediate needs because time spent planning resilience building will detract from the precious time needed to save lives.

### ***This Policy is Infeasible***

Implementing conditional aid would be practically infeasible due to political and structural concerns. Corruption in political institutions and structural deficiencies or inefficiencies makes proper planning and implementation of disaster aid and resilience building an unachievable goal. If attaching conditions to disaster aid is unmanageable for these reasons, the U.S. is not obligated to follow such a policy.

The U.S. politically discriminates in its decision of whether or not to provide aid, and if the U.S. must trust a country to use a portion of aid for resilience, then any political concerns would garner more exclusionary authority. Once minor concerns about a recipient country's politics now become larger reservations because providing and implementing conditional aid requires a cooperative and highly functional government. The three types of influential political considerations for foreign aid are: concerns about the recipient nation, U.S. domestic policy, and the domestic politics of the recipient nation. Political distress can discourage aid based on the recipient nation's governmental inefficiency, corruption, and fractured political system (Drury et al., 2015). An undemocratic government that perpetuates inequality through policy decisions is less likely to promote collective efforts to limit the effects of natural disasters and aid the poor

(Strömberg, 2007). Implementing a resilience-building condition would not work when the recipient government is corrupt or dysfunctional and would result in the misuse of funds meant to help vulnerable citizens not power-hungry governments.

As an example of the validity behind political concerns, the Cold War provided money for underdeveloped economies from the two superpowers, the U.S. and Russia, despite systemic corruption within local governments of the recipient nations. Creating strategic allies was of primary importance during this unstable time, so concerns about corruption were overlooked. The U.S. and the Soviet Union provided support that created independently unsustainable governments. This instability became clear following the end of the Cold War and the reduction or elimination of aid to these nations (Helman and Ratner, 1992). Terrorist groups like the Taliban were brought to power as a result of their pro-western beliefs, but the U.S. overlooked the dangerous characteristics of the group; a mistake that should not be repeated as it led to the Afghanistan War and ubiquitous conflict and instability in the region.

The structural shortcomings of a country prevent the proper implementation of conditional aid purposed on decreasing citizen vulnerability. A recent study on adaptation strategies for different mega cities concluded that economic structure and health influence adaptation spending because wealthy cities can make the choice to divert usable funds to adaptation while those with an unhealthy economic climate cannot make this sacrifice. Based on their evidence, the authors suggest that adaptation responses protect capital assets more often than vulnerable citizens, which is consistent with the developmental framework of adaptation (Georgeson et al., 2016). Protecting capital does not meet the ethical goal of aid to assist vulnerable citizens, and many countries are likely to muddy this U.S. goal with their own priorities and structural underpinnings. Foreign investors as well as the local elite place primary

importance on protecting their investments and valuable infrastructure. This gives rise to the uncertain destination for resilience-building funds; most likely they will be used for protecting capital rather than citizens. If conditional aid cannot feasibly attain its goal, the U.S. should not adopt such a policy.

### ***Conditionality is Overly Paternalistic***

Throughout its history, the U.S. habitually exerts its military and economic prowess in order to preserve its interests abroad. Conditional aid utilizes U.S. economic power to build resilience purposed on decreasing the need for recurrent aid, thereby saving the U.S. money. The recipient country might not have the choice to turn down these conditions because it desperately needs the disaster aid. Placing a country in a literal do or die situation is a clear example of paternalism because conditionality restricts the freedom of the recipient country to make its own rebuilding decisions and subordinates them to the will of the U.S. for the purposes of trade and exploitation.

When viewed as a restriction of freedoms and subordination to U.S. will, conditional aid violates the recipient country's independence and communicates U.S. values and solutions as superior. In order to respect the independence of countries within the global community and maintain global order and peace, nations must be allowed to maintain their right to govern themselves independently. The assumption supporting this is premised on location populations knowing what is best for their country. Regarding predatory measures of a stronger nation, the global community has already set guidelines for respecting the sovereign right of self-governance in the U.N. Charter. It does not authorize intervention in domestic jurisdiction except in supporting Security Council resolutions that make forced conditions unavailable (Helman and Ratner, 1992). Although accepting conditional aid would technically be a

consensual choice, that decision would be made under duress, which raises the question whether there is a real choice involved. Because of extreme circumstances, a country is essentially forced to accept these conditions or else many of its citizens would suffer.

Applying paternalistic measures to a nation presents a slippery slope to a dictatorship. U.S. economic power places it in a strategic position to take advantage of any country that requires assistance. With this power comes the responsibility to skirt the line between delegating useful techniques by disseminating knowledge and dictating the formation of a global order consistent with U.S. values. Conditional aid would give the U.S. even more control over what happens to a recipient country after a disaster and should be avoided.

## **Responses**

This section presents responses that answer concerns raised in each objection above. I incorporate these responses into my argument for conditional aid and include new and beneficial ideas in the recommendations section.

### ***The U.S. is Obligated to Provide Assistance***

As a hegemonic and capable world power, the United States is a *de facto* leader and, as such, has the responsibility to exemplify strong leadership qualities such as helping less capable countries in times of need. By fulfilling this responsibility, the U.S. can maintain its unique status as a progressive leader and build strong relationships throughout the global community. In order to translate this responsibility to policy, U.S. leaders must consciously recognize the long-term importance of foreign aid for global cooperation and security. Sizeable U.S. greenhouse gas emissions also make the U.S. a responsible party in terms of an obligation to address damages from climate change (“Fossil-Fuel CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions by Nation” 2016). If the U.S. leads the charge

in helping developing countries adapt to climate change, significant progress will result from the United States' vast resources and power.

Although, as stated earlier, some U.S. citizens and politicians do exhibit xenophobia, others throughout history strongly supported foreign assistance, even believing that it ensures domestic interests through lasting security and global cooperation. Unfortunately, most U.S. citizens are unaware of foreign aid's importance even in domestic affairs. President Ronald Reagan recognized this problem when he said, "Foreign aid suffers from a lack of domestic constituency" (Kerry, 2016). U.S. leaders need to promulgate the importance of providing foreign aid and translate that into policy decisions in spite of the biased and uneducated opinions of their citizenry.

In his 2016 congressional budget justification, Secretary of State John Kerry addresses how politicians are praised for promising to cut the State Department's funding because short-term projects are more obvious with visible results. Kerry believes that the congressional leadership must recognize how long-term foreign investments will improve both U.S. security and the world as a whole (Kerry, 2016). The duality of short-term versus long-term decisions for U.S. politicians muddies any commonality for this issue in our political code of ethics. Unfortunately, as a result, humanitarian aid may fail to benefit citizens affected by politicization. A common ethical code requiring the U.S. to provide assistance ensures aid provisions to those in need.

Saving a nation from catastrophic failure affects not only neighboring countries through refugee crises, political instability, and warfare, but also the global economy. However, a common ethical code obligates a U.S. response. Secretary of State John Kerry echoed this obligation: "The time has long since passed when we could hide from the world or pretend that

what happens overseas does not affect us. In the twenty-first century, next door is everywhere” (2016). After WWII, the Marshall Plan provided \$16 billion to war ravaged and failing states in Western Europe. The U.S. effectively restored the economies of once foreign enemies Italy, Japan, and West Germany and reorganized them as allied democracies. The restored countries benefited economically and politically, and the U.S. gained powerful allies that supported international peace and trade (Helman and Ratner, 1992). This aid was given under the assumption that it would generate lasting peace and build allies. The U.S. essentially chose to condition this policy for the purpose of creating supportive partners in trade and conflict. Clearly the U.S. has an obligation to provide assistance to protect its national security from outside conflicts.

The nature of a policy demands choices with inevitable consequences for individuals. The biases of these choices can influence whether a country receives assistance and what type. Without an ethical obligation to provide conditional aid, politicization complicates the decision of how or if to respond after a disaster (Drury et al., 2015). A common ethical code for aid policy removes the ambiguity of whether or not to respond. The obligation to respond predetermines the need for a post-disaster response rendering the giving of aid less debatable and more efficient.

In responding to Hardin’s objections to providing assistance and allowing populations to grow as stated in the ratchet effect and tragedy of the commons, Jacqueline Kasun argues that the importance of increasing human capital justifies providing aid. Kasun reasons that people solve problems, and a large population possesses more human potential and knowledge to address problems in new ways (2012). The elegant simplicity of this argument requires a belief that more humans do not beget more problems but actually possess the potential through education

and a secure environment to advance human knowledge and capabilities. In contrast, the harsh reality of Hardin's isolationist view towards aid is that it results in a loss of life, which diminishes human capital and potential.

The context of climate change, just like the context of war, necessitates utilizing unconventional measures to address unprecedented problems. Providing aid with the condition that a portion goes towards increasing resilience to climate change is an unconventional measure that addresses the novel challenges presented by climate change. Applying conditionality to disaster aid eases Hardin's concerns about the tragedy of the commons and a collapsing lifeboat by regulating resilient development for the benefit of the U.S. and by preventing an exacerbation of climate change as well as shielding it from the need to repeatedly provide disaster assistance.

### ***There is a Need for Conditionality***

Responsibility to find new ways of confronting the effects of climate change falls on the U.S. as the major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Attaching a resilience-building condition to natural disaster aid fulfills this responsibility to the rest of the global community. The conditionality of this policy is a necessary measure because resilience building decreases the need for recurrent responses and demonstrates a healthy reconceptualization of ways to strategically addressing climate change.

According to Hardin, coercive and agreed-upon regulation will prevent us from collectively "fouling our own nest" (1986). In an already affected climate, coercing recipient countries into resilience rebuilding effectively mitigates climate impacts exacerbated by U.S. pollution.

Although U.S. policy addresses the issues of disaster response and resilience building, it does so independently. Combining the two forms of aid will deal with the issue of adapting to



climate change more effectively by providing recipient nations with more resources and by utilizing U.S. aid resources more efficiently. Amalgamating the knowledge of vulnerabilities during a response with the ability to immediately address those vulnerabilities provides a resilience-building blueprint for every unique country. Separating the two and not building resilience perpetuates the need for future disaster responses and this type of adaptation will not yield the benefits from the learning exactly what needs buttressing.

As argued in the previous section, the United States should provide some sort of assistance after a natural disaster, but the utility of that aid should only be labeled as effective if it efficiently addresses all relevant needs of the recipient nation. With the goal of helping those in need, current natural disaster aid provides immediate relief, but ignores long-term needs for a more resilient infrastructure. Providing disaster aid under the condition that a portion will build resilience to climate change efficiently utilizes aid resources and addresses the future needs of the recipient nations affording a greater benefit to a greater number of future citizens.

Future needs often get overlooked when responding to a disaster; however, discounting the future, as most economist do when analyzing cost benefit, can result in a potentially more devastating disaster. Ignoring the opportunity to increase the resilience of compromised dikes, levees, or other infrastructure leaves that nation even more vulnerable as the effects of climate change intensify natural disasters. If a nation only builds back its existing infrastructure without improvements, it exposes more of its population and valuable infrastructure based on natural increases in population and development. A nation may not experience another disaster for a decade, but during that time population density increases setting the nation up for a more pronounced and devastating disaster. The Netherlands, with its well-maintained system of dikes,

is a prime example of recognizing and responding to predicted vulnerability and will be addressed in the feasibility section below.

The U.S. wastes aid resources when it repeatedly provides aid to the same country experiencing a subsequent and similar disaster. Natural disasters exploit existing vulnerabilities. Citizens are affected due to vulnerabilities associated with their location, infrastructure, and water and food supplies. Whatever the destructive avenue, natural disasters expose a country's weaknesses, and knowledge of these weaknesses presents an opportunity to build back better and stronger. By addressing vulnerabilities immediately following the disaster, the U.S. can meet immediate needs and build resilience in anticipating more intense disasters. Investing in resilience will reduce the need for repeated aid and will create resilient countries capable of surviving substantial natural disasters allowing them to prosper and grow free from the burden of recurring recovery. Providing disaster aid under the condition that a portion will lessen or cease the need for more can actually benefit the recipient country by giving it the tools for independence.

A resilience-building condition undercuts the dependency argument against providing any aid. Developmental aid comes under this harsh scrutiny. It is provided repeatedly and the recipient country often integrates it into yearly budgets, relying on its regular provision. On the other hand, disaster capitalism relies on the need to repeatedly respond to disasters so that aid contractors can continue making profits. Attaching a resilience-building condition to disaster aid ensures all parties (donor, contractor, recipient) are held accountable to the goals of meeting immediate needs and rebuilding for a changing climate. Creating a binding rule will lessen the exploitation caused by disaster capitalism. By building resilience the U.S. provides nations with the resilient infrastructure necessary to develop independently.

Some might object by questioning this policy's utility when responding to natural disasters unrelated to climate change such as an extreme earthquake. This objection focuses on the immediate disaster and overlooks the fact that resilience building need not protect from the same disaster because buildings can be rebuilt to withstand earthquakes, hurricanes, and storm surges. The widespread devastation caused by an extreme event does need a large immediate response; however, the widespread devastation also provides a clean slate to rebuild upon, and those new buildings should be rebuilt back better. Common sense dictates that rebuilding stronger is the optimal long-term solution.

Climate change presents the U.S. with the choice of helping the world build resilience or selfishly shielding itself from the effects of climate change while the rest of the world suffers from the consequences of U.S. consumption and pollution. In Hardin's lifeboat, saving others puts the savior at risk of drowning. Compulsory sharing on Earth is self-sacrificing when those with more share so much that they cannot provide for themselves (1974). This fear is irrelevant when we consider the inefficient use of aid resources with respect to increasing the inexhaustible output of human capital and knowledge. The U.S. can help other countries without harming itself by more efficiently utilizing current disaster resources to build a country's resilience and its citizens' knowledge while diminishing the need for any further assistance—a path that could prevent us from drowning in the future because every country maintains their own resilient lifeboats.

A policy that builds resilient lifeboats requires proactive thinking. Kenneth Boulding argues that we discount the needs of future generations when our policies focus more on the urgency of an issue, such as natural disaster, rather than addressing the vulnerabilities that led to the need for outside assistance. This shortsighted perspective is deemed inefficient in Boulding's

spaceman economy because the U.S. fails to efficiently utilize aid resources in a way that fully realizes the wealth of human knowledge (1966). Instead of nurturing a global community full of capable countries that can sustain themselves and withstand future disasters independently, the U.S. retains them as dependent on its support and hooked to our capitalist economy.

Some nations must receive outside support to either attain or maintain their independence. The American colonies received the support of the French during the fight for independence, which helped the U.S. build its status as a super power able to expel the Nazis from French soil. Underdeveloped nations can benefit greatly from more resilient infrastructure by relieving the large burden of struggling to recover. The insecurities associated with this disaster burden often perpetuate poverty in underdeveloped nations. With basic security from resilient infrastructure, the U.S. aids the escape from extreme poverty.

### ***Response Time is Relative***

If the United States can reform its aid policies to focus on combating climate change, then the response time to a natural disaster will gradually decrease and that time frame will represent the new normal. The U.S. still fulfills its ethical obligation because it can respond to both immediate and future needs effectively. With conditional aid, the U.S. also does the greatest good for the greatest number of people because future beneficiaries will far outnumber those whose immediate needs may be sacrificed in implementing a resilience-building plan. Once U.S. agencies attain the knowledge and skills to efficiently implement these plans by creating a database that includes countries' existing vulnerabilities and also inventing strategic procedures, the response time will gradually decrease until planning resilience-building becomes as second nature as ensuring food and medical supplies are delivered by air. Response time is relative to the problem being addressed, and citizens can never escape the short-term devastation

of a disaster but the U.S. can build their future avenues of escape or the strength of their resilience. A cooperative, multi-lateral approach involving both U.S. agencies and the recipient country will ensure aid primarily benefits the recipient country and not U.S. companies.

### ***This Policy is Feasible***

As with response time, whether or not conditional aid is feasible rests on the United States reconceptualizing its approach and then adapting the function of its aid to achieve such a policy. Once reconceptualized, political, technological, and structural concerns become obstacles to overcome in order for the U.S. to fulfill its ethical obligation to do the greatest good for the greatest number.

The humanist view of adaptation, as detailed in the background section, posits that reexamining humanity's position in and responsibility toward the environment will generate diverse and comprehensive solutions. The U.S. can utilize the new tool of conditional aid as a comprehensive solution for both the immediate and long-term needs of an affected nation. Following a standard developmental and pollutionist view of adaptation only continues the business of developing with capital in mind, through pollution, and thereby exacerbating the effects of climate change. A resilience-building condition could represent a first step in politically recognizing that businesses as usual may create partners in trade but those partners will depend on the support of the U.S. for the foreseeable future.

Political feasibility presents a difficult barrier to overcome as the U.S. cannot change the values of a recipient country; however, it can stipulate how aid provisions should be used. By reframing conditional aid as necessary, the U.S. is ethically responsible to assist these politically unpredictable nations just as it did in combating the Soviet Union. If a recipient country follows general conditional guidelines, then the policy achieves its goal of both providing immediate aid

and resilience-building aid. If the country fails to follow conditionality by building resilience, then at least the U.S. fulfilled its obligation to respond, which will still benefit the citizenry.

Responding to climate change fundamentally requires a technical response. A country's deficiencies in its technological capabilities to build resilience are not sufficient criteria to reject providing conditional aid, because climate change is a battle that needs to be fought on all possible fronts using all possible tools. If a country lacks infrastructure, that infrastructure can be built resiliently. Technological capabilities can also be passed on from the developed world just as mobile phones drastically improved developing countries' communication and bypassed the need for telephone lines.

The structural shortcomings of a country based on a combination of political and technological barriers require a local acceptance that building resilience is necessary for future economic and citizen well being. Once recognized as necessary, resilience building can take place within the community despite high initial costs. The Netherlands presents an exemplary response to a large storm surge and the resulting flood.

For the Netherlands and other countries, building resilience requires realizing the benefits of durable security for citizenry and economic capital. In 1953, a storm surge in the North Sea caused a domino-like collapse of dikes in the Netherlands resulting in 1,835 fatalities, 100,000 evacuees, and €0.7 billion in economic losses. After closely examining the vulnerabilities exposed in this disaster, the Dutch government implemented plans to prevent the devastating effects a major storm surge from ever happening again. The audacious project took about 50 years and cost €9 billion. Superficially the cost appears extreme, but the project's benefits include protecting six million people and avoiding €300 billion in damage to capital goods from an extreme and rare 1 in 10,000 year event (Vellinga and Aerts, 2013). Clearly, the Dutch

government recognized the opportunity for building resilience after such a devastating natural disaster.

The response in the Netherlands demonstrates how a major disaster can catalyze resilient-building action. Building more resilient infrastructure after a natural disaster should be seen as necessary because a climate change-generated sea level rise of 50 cm can increase the probability of flooding by a factor of 10 (Vellinga and Aerts, 2013). The Netherlands possessed the economic ability to address its vulnerabilities, but other nations require external assistance from economically strong countries like the U.S.

Developing nations often have the local capacity and knowledge to adapt to their vulnerable environment. The Shaelian people have been negotiating drought and resulting food insecurities throughout human occupation in the region. They know how to manage variable rainfall with naturally drought resistant crops, a livelihood diversification, making them less dependent on subsistence farming. These practical solutions often trump instructions given by a scientists or authority (Batterbury and Mortimore, 2013). For situations like that of the Shaelian, combining local knowledge with financial aid can provide useful resilience-building strategies that locals will know how to implement.

Looking to the local level of governance offers a more interactive and accountable form of government than at the national level. The unique position of a mayor places him or her in the same city as his or her constituency. Accountability is local and interpersonal. A mayor is more or less a citizen, whereas other national elected officials represent their constituency but only interact during election cycles. A mayor will see the devastation of a disaster first hand and can organize solutions more easily and with better precision (Raz, 2016). In order to reach vulnerable citizens, the U.S. should utilize mayors and city governments.

The Netherlands restructured how it addressed its vulnerabilities and the U.S. should follow suit and restructure disaster aid to include resilience building in order to ensure the citizen security. Climate change presents the world players with a novel situation that requires new strategies for humanity to work together and reach our maximum potential.

### ***Conditionality Can Respect Independence***

The United States does not need to lead the charge on climate change forcibly. Hardin agrees that in order for coercive regulations to work they must be mutually agreed upon by all affected parties. In applying Hardin to conditionality, our global community must agree that rebuilding resiliently after a disaster offers an effective avenue for communally adapting to climate change.

In order to lead without forcefully dictating, the U.S. should respect sovereignty while still assisting the affected nation by exemplifying conservatorship. Conservatorship equips a failed state to retain sustaining self-governance by providing consensual assistance, enabling personnel to work directly with governmental officials on the state's most desperate needs. The conditions imposed for such assistance may mean that the state might need to change the structure of its economy and political system, but this change occurs consensually. This purposed and directed assistance completed consensually can help a state maintain its sovereignty in the long run and allows the U.S. to delegate effectively (Helman and Ratner, 1992).

Benefactors commonly attach conditions to the assistance they provide. Because the money or resources belong to benefactors, they should have some say as to how that money is used. Without the assurance of destination or purpose, a benefactor is less likely to provide assistance over concerns about waste or inefficiency. For this reason, the International Monetary



Fund (IMF) often attaches conditions to the credit it awards (Helman and Ratner, 1992). The recipient country is often in desperate need of monetary assistance, yet the IMF attaches conditions as it demonstrates business as usual. This condition is justifiable because the IMF takes a risk in loaning out money. The effort used and resources spent by the U.S. justify its conditioning aid. Such a minor condition is not nefarious and is done for the benefit of all and therefore it does not disrespect a nation's independence.

The challenging context of climate change requires new policies such as conditional disaster aid. And, by recognizing this, the global community can accept this new policy just as they accept conditional loans or lines of credit. Conditionality can respect sovereignty when mutually agreed upon for the benefit of vulnerable citizens.

## **Recommendations**

First and foremost, the global community needs to reexamine our path through this changing climate and decide upon what steps we can take to avoid disastrous consequences. Reforming Hardin's lifeboat metaphor into resilient lifeboats communally interacting for the common provides a basis for a new way of thinking. In this metaphor, every nation would possess its own resilient lifeboat, built to accommodate its needs, and these lifeboats would coalesce in achieving the common goal of preserving our precious, shared Earth. For validity, this analogy requires a shift in U.S. foreign policy from self-interested to communal, from short-term to long-term, and from responsive to proactive. Providing disaster aid with a resilience-building condition provides the foundation for this shift.

Conditionality must include a multi-lateral approach that includes U.S. agencies and local governments. The past irresponsible use of aid funds by disaster capitalists requires the checks of accountability and transparency. Conditionality defines its goals simply as responding to

immediate needs and building resilience to future disasters. Making the U.S. and local governments accountable to this goal ensures that aid meets its objective based on the needs of vulnerable citizens. More transparency needs to be employed for USAID and its contractors to guarantee the destination of aid resources.

A shift towards resilience building can most importantly relieve the recurring burden of recovering from a disaster. The insecurities associated post-disaster often prevent the nation from growing its infrastructure and improving the well being of its citizens. When a disaster closes a school, the education in the country suffers. When a nation is ensured lasting education and security from disasters, human capital and the resulting knowledge will flourish. By giving these nations the security of resilience, the U.S. gains partners rather than dependents.

In a world of beneficial cooperation, conflicts will lessen, as opposed to a world of isolationism where underdeveloped countries are forced to fight for basic survival. Future cooperation between global partners can more ably combat the effects of climate change and allow humanity to reach its unknown, but hopefully its highest, potential.

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