A Review of Existing Survey Data Regarding American's Views on U.S. Leadership and Foreign Assistance

Conducted for InterAction

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	STUDIES REVIEWED	2
III.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	9
IV.	DETAILED FINDINGS	14
	A. Interdependency: Are We Related to the Rest of the World?	14
	B. Should We Provide Foreign Aid?	18
	C. Why Should We Be Involved?	25
	D. What Are The Most Widely Supported Kinds of Assistance?	34
	E. Regional Differentiation: Where Should Efforts Focus?	45
	F. Why Shouldn't We Be Involved?	51
	G. Who Carries Out Aid Programs Best?	64
	H. What About U.S. Leadership?	67

Appendix: Sampling Error by Percentage

B

I. Introduction

In 1986, InterAction and the Overseas Development Council commissioned a survey of U.S. public opinion that covered many key issues on economic and development assistance. Since that time, the American public has been witness to the end of the cold war era, weakened economic conditions, and most recently a new administration. Surveys conducted in the last two years indicate that opinion regarding foreign aid has changed somewhat. Americans view foreign aid with more skepticism than they have in the past and have begun to rank priorities differently.

The following report reviews public opinion survey data available on foreign aid and related issues, assesses current thinking, and tracks changes in opinion between 1986 and the present. It attempts to establish what is known from existing data regarding:

- the interdependence of nations and regions,
- Americans' views on foreign assistance programs generally,
- rationales for and against it,
- opinions of private and public efforts to provide assistance, and
- the need for leadership by the United States.

II. Studies Reviewed

In looking for existing research sources, we requested a search of public opinion data from The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, a nonprofit research library, inquired of numerous other survey organizations and interest groups, and culled our own collection of Belden & Russonello related reports.

The studies we found that contributed relative data are listed below in chronological order according to interview dates.

Survey Data Reviewed: All of the surveys reviewed are based on national, representative samples. The sampling error for each study can be calculated using the table in the appendix.

Time/CNN (Cited as Time/CNN, 1994)

Conducted for Time/CNN by Yankelovich & Partners.
Interviews were conducted April 21, 1994 by telephone.
Sample size is 600 adults.

National Survey on Population, Consumption, and the Environment (Cited as Pew GSI Survey, 1994)

Conducted for the Pew Charitable Trusts' Global Stewardship Initiative by Belden & Russonello, R/S/M, and Mellman Lazarus Lake.
Interviews were conducted February 3 through February 15, 1994 by telephone.
Sample size is 2,080 American voters.

Americans' Place in the Post Cold War World (Cited as Times Mirror, 10/93)

Conducted by the Times Mirror Center for The People and The Press.
Interviews were conducted October 21 through October 24, 1993 by telephone.

Sample size is 1,200 adults.

Americans' Place in the World: An Investigation of Attitudes of American Opinion Leaders and the American Public About International Affairs (Cited as Times Mirror, 9/93)

Conducted by the Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press.
Interviews for the public survey were conducted September 9 through September 15, 1993 by telephone.
Sample size is 2,000 adults.

ABC (Cited as ABC, 5/93)

Conducted by ABC News.
Interviews were conducted May 6, 1993 by telephone.
Sample size is 516 adults.

ABC (Cited as ABC, 3/93)

Conducted by ABC News.
Interviews were conducted March 9 through March 11, 1993 by telephone.
Sample size is 1008 adults.

A New Climate for Foreign Aid? (Cited as USAID, 1993)

Conducted for U.S. Agency for International Development Bureau of Food and Humanitarian Assistance Office of Program Planning and Evaluation by Gerald Hursh-César, Intercultural Communication, Inc.
Interviews were conducted March 9 through March 21, 1993 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,201 adults.

National Opinion Research Center (Cited as NORC, 1993)

Conducted by National Opinion Research Center.
Interviews were conducted February 5 through April 26, 1993 by telephone.

Sample size is 1,606 adults.

ABC News/Washington Post (Cited as ABC/WPost, 1993)

Conducted by ABC News/Washington Post.
Interviews were conducted February 25 through February 28, 1993 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,216 adults.

U.S. News and World Report (cited as U.S. News, 1993)

Conducted for U.S. News and World Report by Princeton Survey Research Associates.
Interviews were conducted January 12 through January 13, 1993 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,005 adults.

Americans & Foreign Aid in the Nineties - A Survey on Foreign Economic Assistance (Cited as Rockefeller, 1992)

Conducted for the Rockefeller Foundation by Belden & Russonello.
Interviews were conducted December 4 through December 8, 1992 by telephone.
Sample size is 906 adults.

UNICEF Opinion Poll (Cited as UNICEF, 1992)

Conducted for the United States Committee for UNICEF by the Louis Harris Organization.
Interviews were conducted in December, 1992 by telephone.
Sample size is 2,001 adults.

Independent Sector (Cited as Independent, 1992)

Conducted for Independent Sector by the Gallup Organization.
In-home personal interviews were conducted April 3 through May 17, 1992.

Sample size is 2,671 adults.

Gallup Poll (Cited as Gallup, 1992)

Conducted by the Gallup Organization
Interviews were conducted April 9 through April 12, 1992 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,002 adults.

Americans Talk Issues: Perceptions of Globalization, World Structures, and Security (Cited as Americans, 12/91)

Conducted by Americans Talk Issues
Interviews were conducted November 25 through December 2, 1991 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,000 adults.

Americans Talk Issues: The Emerging World Order (Cited as Americans, 6-7/91)

Conducted by American Talk Issues
Interviews were conducted June 23 through July 1, 1991 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,000 adults.

NBC News/Wall Street Journal (Cited as NBC News/Wall Street Journal, 1991)

Conducted for NBC News/Wall Street Journal by Hart-Teeter Research Companies.
Interviews were conducted June 22 through June 25, 1991 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,006 registered voters.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (Cited as Chicago Council, 1990)

Conducted for The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations by the Gallup Organization.

In-home personal interviews were conducted October 23, 1990 through November 15, 1990.
Sample size is 1,662 adults.

Time, Cable News Network (Cited as Time, Cable News Network, 1990)

Conducted for Time, Cable News Network by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman.
Interviews were conducted April 9 through April 10, 1990 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,000 adults.

Newsweek (Cited as Newsweek, 1990)

Conducted for Newsweek by Gallup Organization.
Interviews were conducted April 5 through April 6, 1990 by telephone.
Sample size is 601 adults.

NBC News/Wall Street Journal (Cited as NBC News/Wall Street Journal, 3/90)

Conducted for NBC News/Wall Street Journal by Hart-Teeter Research Companies.
Interviews were conducted March 10 through March 13, 1990 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,003 registered voters.

Harris Poll (Cited as Harris Poll, 1990)

Conducted for Harris Poll by Louis Harris and Associates.
Interviews were conducted March 8 through March 13, 1990 by telephone.
Sample size is 1,254 adults.

ABC News/Washington Post (Cited as ABC News/Washington Post, 1990)

Conducted by ABC News/Washington Post.

Interviews were conducted February 1 through February 4, 1990 by telephone. Sample size is 1,008 adults.

NBC News/Wall Street Journal (Cited as NBC News/Wall Street Journal, 1/90)

Conducted for NBC News/Wall Street Journal by Hart-Teeter Research Companies. Interviews were conducted January 13 through January 16, 1990 by telephone. Sample size is 1,510 registered voters.

Americans Talk Security (Cited as Security, 1988)

Conducted for Americans Talk Security by Market Opinion research. Interviews were conducted September 7 through September 18, 1988 by telephone. Sample size is 1,005 registered voters.

What Americans Think: Views on Development and U.S.-Third World Relations (Cited as ODC/InterAction, 1986)

Conducted for InterAction and the Overseas Development Council by Nancy Belden. Interviews were conducted by telephone April 7 through May 6, 1986 by telephone. The sample was split into two replicates each containing the same number of interviews. The total sample size is 2,427 adults.

Focus Group Data Reviewed

Focus Groups on Population, Consumption, and the Environment (Cited as Pew GSI Focus Groups, 1993)

Conducted for the Pew Charitable Trusts' Global Stewardship Initiative by Belden & Russonello, R/S/M, and Mellman Lazarus Lake.
Series of 18 focus groups were held May 19 through July 22, 1993 in 10 cities across the country.

A Context for Viewing Foreign Aid Programs: Highlights of Two Focus Groups Among Voters in Kansas City (Cited as Rockefeller Focus Groups, 1992)

Conducted for the Rockefeller Foundation by Belden & Russonello.
Two focus groups among voters in Kansas City October 5, 1992.

III. Summary of Findings

A. Interdependence: Are we related to the rest of the world?

As we near the end of this century, Americans see the interests of the countries of the world as *connected*, particularly in the areas of *economics, population, and environment.*

For example, data we examined demonstrate that Americans believe that improving the economies of other nations would have a positive effect on the U.S. economy. They also see a growing world population as impacting the global environment and their own lives negatively.

B. Should we provide foreign aid?

However, moving from a recognition that we are interdependent to a commitment to working to improve conditions elsewhere is another story.

At the present time, there is *no clear mandate* for or against foreign aid from the American public, reflecting a slight decline in support since the 1986 ODC/InterAction study. A majority, 54%, approved of our involvement in economic assistance at that time; today 47% approve according to our most recent sounding.

C. Why should we be involved?

Even though Americans are uncertain or divided on the question of foreign aid in general, they do agree there are some compelling needs and/or reasons that may justify our support in certain areas or circumstances.

- The top reasons appear to be *humanitarian*, and then *environmental* and *economic* rationales.

- In recent years, these rationales have replaced *cold war security concerns* as the top reasons to provide aid.

- In addition, Americans possess a sense of *responsibility to help* developing nations. Americans feel they have both a personal responsibility and a responsibility as a wealthy nation to help other countries.

D. What are the most widely supported kinds of assistance programs?

Coinciding with the humanitarian motivation for providing aid, the programs that are *both supported most and perceived as the most effective* assistance programs, are first and foremost

- disaster relief and feeding the hungry and poor.

In the post cold war era, as we have noted, the argument for giving aid for security reasons appears to have lost much of its appeal. But it appears that *new* or *different threats* are replacing security threats. These may be threats to the global environment, and the perceived potential effects of rapid population growth, drugs, and epidemics. Thus in addition to humanitarian efforts, Americans have also given their support to assistance that:

- protects the *environment*,

- helps prevent the spread of *AIDS*,

- deals with *drug trafficking*, and

- provides *family planning and birth control.*

E. Regional Differentiation: Where should efforts focus?

We found little information available on Americans' regional preferences for foreign aid. The most recent opinion data available on this topic are from 1990-1991. In these years, Americans favored aid to South America while slightly opposing aid to Asian countries.

In recent years, Eastern European countries have joined traditional developing nations as priorities for U.S. aid and Americans generally support aid to these countries.

F. Why shouldn't we be involved?

While there are reasons to support assistance that many Americans recognize, there are also powerful *drags on their support.* These are principally in the shape of

- *needs in the U.S.* and
- a continued perception of aid programs' *ineffectiveness.*

When looking for ways to reduce the federal deficit, eight in ten target cutting foreign aid.

Americans are more concerned with unemployment, crime, and poverty in the U.S. than with problems in Third World countries. In addition, a large number of Americans -- fully 65% -- say the U.S. cannot afford to give economic assistance to other countries.

Americans are skeptical about whether foreign aid in general has been effective in improving the lives of those in developing nations. The public's confidence is low for both government and non-government efforts.

American's blame the failure of foreign aid programs on both the inadequacies of the U.S. government and the corruption of foreign governments.

Americans tend to believe that only some of their highest priorities for what they want foreign assistance to achieve has been in fact accomplished. That is, for example, they appear to believe that humanitarian goals have been attained (feeding the hungry, etc.), but conservation of resources in developing countries has not been affected.

Also, it is very important to note that while Americans profess to believe that we bear responsibility to aid others (and we put that sentiment in the category of reasons to support aid), they respond very negatively to guilt-laced admonishments.

G. Who carries out aid programs best?

Research findings on current opinions of the best institutions for delivery of aid is mixed.

- When asked which are the most *effective, religious organizations* are chosen over the U.S. government, the United Nations and private organizations.
- When asked about *efficiency, the U.N.* is perceived as most able to reach the largest number of people at the lowest cost.

H. What about U.S. leadership?

We observe a lack of desire for the U.S. to take a leadership role in foreign assistance. In the existing data Americans' sense of urgency concerning domestic problems and the lack of saliency of international problems are now manifest in

- Americans' desire for *sharing the responsibilities of foreign aid* among a number of nations.

However, in particular areas of assistance that coincide with the most salient, Americans are somewhat more amenable to having the U.S. take a leadership role. These are principally humanitarian and environmental.

This too is an area for additional exploration, to get beyond the knee jerk responses to spending of foreign assistance -- with which we are all too familiar -- and look for ways to shape and articulate a role for leadership.

IV. Detailed Findings

A. Interdependence: Are we related to the rest of the world?

As we near the end of this century, Americans see the interests of the countries of the world as connected, particularly in the areas of economics, population, and environment.

Americans feel the world is becoming increasingly interdependent and that this will affect their lives in the future. National economies, world population, and the environment are all seen as affecting not only individual countries, but the whole world.

Americans recognize economic ties among different areas of the world becoming more important. They see global linkage among nations and that the economies of Third World and Eastern European countries affect the U.S. economy.

Americans' perception of Third World economies affecting the U.S. has grown in recent years. In the 1986 ODC/InterAction study, 74% of Americans said that Third World economies affect the U.S. economy while in 1993 83% of Americans said so. (USAID, 1993)

Americans also believe strengthening these economies will have a positive impact on the U.S. social and economic conditions, as well as a positive affect on world prosperity, peace, and democracy.

Regarding population and environment issues, Americans do see themselves connected to the world globally. In the Pew GSI poll, voters were asked about the impact of projected world population growth on the global environment and on their own quality of life. A majority believe it will have some impact on the environment and their own lives. Fifty-two percent said the growth in population will worsen their quality of life, fully 73% said it will have a negative effect on the global environment.

Economic Interdependency

(1993 -- 1986)

From what you have heard or read, would you say the economies in the Third World affect the U.S. economy a great deal, somewhat, not very much, or not at all?

	1993*	1986**
Great/Some Effect	83%	74%
Not very much/No Effect	15	23

* USAID, 1992
** ODC/InterAction, 1986

1993 USAID

In the long run, if Third World countries do become stronger economically, do you think there will be a very positive impact, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or very negative impact on...?"

	Positive	Negative
U.S. business opportunities in the Third World	80%	15
U.S. sales and exports to the Third World	73%	23
The U.S. economy	72%	22
Jobs in the United States	66%	25
U.S. national security	64%	21
You, your family, and your community	64%	17

The environment in the U.S.	54%	22

Interdependency of Nations

1993 USAID

In the long run, do you think that helping Third World countries to develop will have great positive effect, some effect, not much effect, or no effect at all on...?

	Great/Some Effect	None/Not Much Effect
Improving world prosperity	84%	14
Improving world peace	80%	18
Improving democracy in the world	76%	20

Impact of World Population Growth

1994 Pew GSI

Demographers estimate the world's population will increase by 3 billion people in the next 20 years. In your opinion is this increase in population likely to have a positive or negative impact on the global environment, or will it not have much impact one way or the other?

	Total	
Very Positive Impact	5%	
Somewhat Positive Impact	4	} 9%
Not Much Impact	15	
Somewhat Negative Impact	27	
Very Negative Impact	46	} 73%

In your opinion, is this increase (world population will increase by 3 billion people in the next 20 years) likely to improve the quality of life for you and your family, worsen it, or have no impact on your quality of life? Is that very much or somewhat?

	Total	
Improve Very Much	1%	
Improve Somewhat	4	} 5%
No Impact	39	
Worsen Somewhat	34	
Worsen Very Much	18	} 52%

B. Should We Provide Foreign Aid?

Americans' support of economic assistance had been fairly steady since the 1950's. However, in the last few years this support has slightly declined and Americans are now more divided over the issue than they have been in the past.

Most of the studies we reviewed asked respondents whether or not they support U.S. economic assistance to other countries at the outset of a survey with little or no information regarding aid preceding the question. In these instances, Americans are currently somewhat more likely to say they oppose assistance rather than support it.

A comparison of the 1986 ODC/InterAction study, the 1992 Rockefeller study, and the 1994 Pew GSI study reveals a slight decline in support since the mid-1980's, when a majority of the general population supported U.S. economic assistance, and a leveling off of opinion.

In the 1986 ODC/InterAction study, 54% of Americans said they favor economic assistance, and 39% said they oppose it compared to 1992 when 43% who said they favor it and 50% who said they oppose it. (Rockefeller, 1992)

In the 1994 Pew GSI survey, American voters divided on the question of whether the U.S. should or should not give economic assistance to other countries. Forty-seven percent of the voters say they favor such aid, and 44% oppose the U.S. giving economic assistance.

Comparing the various groups within the polls, we found general election voters are slightly more likely to favor economic assistance than non-voters, as are well-educated Americans and those with upper incomes.

Public Support for U.S. Aid: 1952-1994

	Percentage favoring foreign/ economic aid	Percentage opposing foreign/ economic aid
1994	47%	44%
1992 (gen pop)	43	50
1992 (reg voters)	46	49
1986	54	39
1982	50	39
1978	46	41
1974	52	38
1972	68	28
1966	53	35
1965	57	33
1963	58	30
1958	51	33
1956	71	na[1]
1952	56	na

Wording of questions posed in:

1994, 1992 and 1986: "Are you generally in favor of or opposed to U.S. giving of economic assistance to other countries?"

1982, 1978, and 1974: "On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving economic aid to other nations for purposes of economic development and technical assistance?"

1972: "Concerning the United States giving foreign assistance--would you say you are strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat against, or strongly against the United States giving assistance to underdeveloped countries?"

1966, 1965, 1963, and 1958: "In general, how do you feel about foreign aid--are you for it or against it?"

1956 and 1952: "As things are now, is it more important to send our allies economic aid, like machinery and supplies, or to send them military aid like tanks and guns?"

[1] na -- not applicable

Sources: Data for 1993 from survey by Belden & Russonello, for the Rockefeller Foundation; 1986 data from survey by Nancy Belden, for InterAction and the Overseas Development Council; data for 1982 and 1978 are from surveys by the Gallup Organization Inc.; 1974 data from survey by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.; 1972 data from survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., for the Overseas Development Council; data for 1974, 1966, 1965, 1963, and 1958 from surveys by Gallup; data for 1956 and 1952 from surveys by the National Opinion Research Center.

Economic Assistance to Other Countries

Are you generally in favor or opposed to the U.S. giving economic assistance to other countries? Is that very much (in favor/opposed) or somewhat (in favor/opposed)?

	1994* N=2080 Voters	1993** N=1201 Gen Pop	1992*** N=716 Voters	1992*** N=906 Gen pop	1986**** N=1209 Gen pop
Favor	47%	53%	47%	43%	54%
Oppose	43	39	47	50	39
Don't know/refuse/ in between	10	8	6	7	7

* Pew GSI Survey, 1994
** USAID, 1993
*** Rockefeller, 1992
**** ODC/InterAction, 1986

Support for Economic Assistance

1992 Rockefeller

Are you generally in favor or opposed to the U.S. giving economic assistance to other countries?

	Favor	Oppose
Total	43%	50
Education		
HS or less	36%	52
Some college	40%	53
College grad/+	60%	35
Income		
<$15,000	37%	52
$15,000-35,000	41%	54
$35,000-50,000	43%	49
$50,000+	52%	43

1994 GSI Pew

Are you generally in favor or opposed to the U.S. giving economic assistance to other countries?

	Favor	Oppose
Total	47%	43
Education		
HS or less	38%	51
Some college	41%	48
College grad/+	54%	35
Grad school+	59%	31
Income		
0-$19,999	39%	50
$20,000-29,999	48%	42
$30,000-49,999	45%	46
$50,000-74,999	52%	37
$75,000+	60%	31

Economic assistance to other countries is not a high priority for Americans, and most probably is not often discussed or thought about in-depth. There is some indication from the poll data that when they are focussed on it, a number of Americans modify their initial opposition to economic assistance.

Both the Rockefeller and ODC/InterAction questionnaires asked respondents both at the beginning and the end of the survey the same question on whether they supported or opposed U.S. economic assistance. The goal of asking the question twice was to determine if support for aid would increase or not, after respondents had been caused to think about aid and related issues. Indeed, the influenced answers to the second questioning are considerably more positive toward foreign aid -- moving from 50% up to 64% in favor of economic assistance in the 1992 Rockefeller study.

We observed the same phenomenon in the 1986 study, however, in that study support in both the pre and the post questioning was higher than the pre and post questioning in the 1992 data.

Support or Oppose Economic Assistance
Pre and Post Discussion
(1992--1986)

Are you generally in favor of or opposed to the U.S. giving economic assistance to other countries?

	1992*		1986**	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Favor	43%	64%	50%	78%
Oppose	50	30	41	19
Don't know/refuse/ in between	7	6	8	3

* Rockefeller, 1992
** ODC/InterAction, 1986

Similar to these findings, a 1993 study for USAID found that after some information on aid was supplied to the respondents that they tend to support economic assistance. Fifty-three percent of the general population in this study said they support U.S. giving economic assistance to developing countries while 39% oppose it. However, this is still lower than the level of support we found in the second question of the 1986 ODC/InterAction study, and unfortunately the USAID study did not provide as much information to the respondent as the ODC/InterAction study did. Therefore, it is difficult to compare the findings of this study with the others.

It appears, therefore, that while there is no clear existing mandate from the American public for foreign aid, when Americans consider some of the issues involved they move slightly in favor of economic assistance.

C. Why Should We Be Involved?

Even though Americans are uncertain or divided on the question of foreign aid in general, they do agree there are some compelling needs and/or reasons that may justify our support.

The top reasons for providing foreign aid are humanitarian followed by environmental and economic rationales. In recent years, these rationales have replaced security concerns as the top reasons to provide aid. In addition, Americans possess a sense of responsibility to help developing nations. Americans feel they have both a personal responsibility and a responsibility as a wealthy nation to help other countries.

1. Humanitarian Reasons for Supporting Aid

With the end of the cold war and a weakened U.S. economy, Americans' reasons for supporting foreign aid have begun to shift. In recent years, humanitarian and economic reasons have replaced security concerns as the top rationales for foreign aid.

We found in the 1992 Rockefeller study that when Americans think about priorities for foreign aid, humanitarian and economic concerns overshadow past concerns about international security.

When given a choice of three types of countries to receive U.S. aid, the current priorities are:

1) humanitarian (help the poorest),
2) economic (help our trading partners), and
3) security (those important to U.S. security).

The above order is in contrast to opinions in the 1986 ODC/InterAction study, when Americans gave this order of priority to the same question:

1) security,
2) humanitarian, and
3) economic.

Furthermore, Americans overwhelmingly agree (89%) with the statement, "wherever people are hungry or poor, we ought to do what we can to help them." And in the 1986 ODC/InterAction study almost four in 10 Americans volunteered humanitarian reasons as the most important reasons for favoring foreign aid.

Which Countries Should Get U.S. Aid

(1992--1986)

If you had to choose which countries should get U.S. aid, which of these would you select as the most important: Countries that are important to U.S. security; countries with the poorest economies; or countries the U.S. needs as trading partners?

Countries:	1992*	1986**
With poorest economies	44%	33%
Needed by U.S. as trading partners	27	19
Important to U.S. security	21	44

* Rockefeller, 1992
** ODC/InterAction, 1986

Humanitarian Aid

1986 ODC/InterAction

As I read some statements about economic aid for development, please tell me if you tend to agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each statement:

Wherever people are hungry or poor, we ought to do what we can to help them.

	Total	
Strongly agree	45%	
Somewhat agree	44	} 89%
Somewhat disagree	6	
Strongly disagree	4	} 10

Most Important Reason for Foreign Aid

1986 ODC/InterAction

What is the most important reason to you for favoring foreign aid? (Unaided)

	Total
Should help/they need it/alleviate poverty, hunger	38%
We might make them allies/good relations	17
Responsibility of a rich nation	15
Help countries become self-sufficient	8
Stimulate world economy/raise standard of living	6
Keep communists out	5
World peace/stability	3
Promote democracy/freedom/justice	3

2. Other Reasons for Supporting Aid

In the 1992 Rockefeller study, specific arguments for foreign aid programs were tested. Aside from humanitarian desires, environmental and economic rationales topped the list, while Americans see the promotion of democracy and other national security interests as moderately good rationales for foreign aid programs.

Saving the global environment was the strongest argument for foreign aid programs, among the eight tested. Seven in 10 Americans feel that to "save the global environment by helping governments to stop destroying rain forests, re-tool polluting industries and so forth" is a "good reason" for aid. No other reason tested comes close to this level of approval.

In addition to the environment, economic interdependence is the other argument that draws support from a majority of Americans. "Helping other countries become economically stable will mean more trade and prosperity for the U.S." is viewed as a good reason to support aid by 51%.

Other arguments for foreign aid which do not draw majority support but on balance obtain more positive than negative responses include: "aid to post-communist countries to keep them peaceful and to help them become solid democracies" and helping "create new democracies and support shaky democracies."

Reasons to Invest in Foreign Aid Programs

1992 Rockefeller

Here are some reasons some people have offered for why we should invest in foreign aid programs. Please tell me whether, in your opinion, each one is a good reason, just an okay reason, or not a good reason for supporting aid programs:

	Support Score (Good minus not good)	Not Good	Okay	Good
Environmental				
We can help save the global environment by helping governments to stop destroying rain forests, retool polluting industries and so forth.	+63	70%	21	7
Economic				
Helping other countries become economically stable will mean more trade and prosperity for the U.S.	+38	51%	35	13
Security/Democracy				
It is in our best interest to provide aid to post-communist countries to keep them peaceful and to help them become solid democracies	+26	45%	32	19
Aid can help create new democracies and support shaky democracies	+21	40%	36	19
Giving aid to our allies helps keep them friendly	0	31%	36	31

3. America's Responsibility to Developing Countries

Finally, even though Americans are uncertain about foreign aid, Americans believe we can and should make a difference in the lives of Third World peoples. A majority of Americans disagree with the statement, "I feel the Third World's problems are so great that my help can't make any difference."

In addition, Americans possess a sense of responsibility to provide help to Third World countries. The underpinnings of this are a sense of personal responsibility to aid these countries and also the responsibility of the U.S. as a developed wealthy country to help them.

In the Pew GSI survey, two-thirds of American voters said that each of us has a personal responsibility to help people in other parts of the world.

In the 1986 ODC/InterAction study, 15% of Americans volunteered "responsibility of rich nation" as the most important reason to favor foreign aid.

However, it appears only marginally productive and potentially counter productive to promote foreign assistance via pushing guilt. Arguing that the U.S. contributes less than its fair share and other similar ideas fall rather flat. Trying to keep up with other industrialized nations is also an argument that lacks appeal.

Helping Third World Countries

1994 Pew GSI

Please tell me whether each statement describes you very well, somewhat, not very well, or not at all:

I feel the Third World's problems are so great that my help can't make any difference.

		Total	
Very well		13%	
Somewhat		30	}43%
Not very well	26		
Not at all		29	}55

1993 USAID

As I read some statements about U.S. assistance for developing countries, tell me if you tend to agree or disagree:

Their problems are so overwhelming that anything the U.S. does has no effect on improving conditions in developing countries.

	Total
Agree	42%
Disagree	56

Personal Responsibility To Help Improve Others' Lives

1994 Pew GSI

As I read some statements about economic aid for development, please tell me if you tend to agree strongly, or disagree with each statement:

Each of us has a personal responsibility to help improve the lives of those in developing countries.

	Total	
Strongly agree	15%	
Somewhat agree	47	}62%
Somewhat disagree	23	
Strongly disagree	12	}35

Reasons to Invest in Foreign Aid Programs: U.S. Responsibility as a Wealthy Nation

1992 Rockefeller

Here are some reasons some people have offered for why we should invest in foreign aid programs. Please tell me whether, in your opinion, each one is a good reason, just an okay reason, or not a good reason for supporting aid programs:

	Support Score (Good minus not good)	Good	Okay	Not Good
The U.S. contributes a smaller percent of its GNP to aid than do most other developed countries. We have a responsibility to contribute our fair share to help less developed nations.	+ 8	30%	42	22
We are a rich country so we should do all we can to help less fortunate people.	+ 5	34%	35	29
Since our competitor nations like Japan and Germany provide foreign aid, we need to do the same thing so they will not gain advantages in the Third World	- 4	29%	33	33

D. What Are the Most Widely Supported Kids of Assistance?

Coinciding with the humanitarian motivation for providing aid, the programs that are supported and perceived as the most effective assistance programs are:

- *disaster relief and feeding the hungry and poor*

In recent years, Americans have also come to believe aid should be provided to:

- *protect the environment,*
- *help prevent the spread of AIDS,*
- *stop drug trafficking, and*
- *provide family planning and birth control.*

1. Foreign Aid: Economic Assistance and Humanitarian Aid

Americans do not distinguish "foreign aid" from "economic assistance." However, they do distinguish between "economic assistance" and "humanitarian aid."

The American public's opinion of foreign aid does not change when the question is posed in terms of "assistance." The 1986 ODC/InterAction study asked matched separate samples of respondents either if they are in favor of "foreign aid" or if they are in favor of the U.S. giving "economic assistance" to other countries. Little difference was found. Half (50%) said they favor foreign aid and 54% said they favor economic assistance; 41% said they oppose foreign aid, and 39% said they oppose economic assistance.

On the other hand, when asked if they favor or oppose "humanitarian aid" Americans are more likely to say they favor this type of aid than they are to say they favor economic assistance. In a 1993 study when respondents were asked do they favor or oppose economic assistance, 53% said they favor economic assistance and 39% said they oppose it. However, almost three-quarters, (72%) of Americans when asked if they favor humanitarian assistance said they favor it while 23% oppose it. (USAID, 1993)

Economic Assistance Versus Foreign Aid

1986 ODC/InterAction

Are you generally in favor of or opposed to U S. giving of....

	Favor	Oppose
Foreign aid	50%	41
Economic assistance	54%	39

Economic Assistance Versus Humanitarian Aid

1993 USAID

Are you generally in favor of or opposed to U.S. giving of....

	Favor	Oppose
Humanitarian aid to developing countries	72%	23
Economic assistance to developing countries	53%	39

2. Support for Humanitarian Aid

Unlike the public's apprehension regarding economic assistance, support of humanitarian aid is strong and has continued to stay strong in recent years.

In the 1986 ODC/InterAction study, 79% of Americans said they favor foreign aid for development projects, such as health care, education, and agriculture.

In 1988, 88% of American voters approved (59% strongly) that "the U.S. should send humanitarian aid such as food, clothing, and medical supplies" as an appropriate option for U.S. involvement in conflicts in Third World countries. (Security, 1988)

In 1993, 72% of Americans favored the U.S. giving humanitarian aid to developing countries. (USAID, 1993)

U.S. Aid For Health Care, Education, and Agriculture Projects
1986 ODC/InterAction

Thinking about the issues we have discussed, can you tell me whether you tend to favor or oppose U.S. giving of foreign aid for development projects such as health care, education, and agriculture to countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America?

	Total
Favor	79%
Oppose	17

Humanitarian Aid

1988 Americans Talk Security

Turning specifically to conflicts in developing countries in Latin America, Asia, Africa, many wars in Third World countries last for years and are fought at low intensity. If key American officials believe that our interests in some Third World nation or region were seriously threatened by a conflict there, they would have a variety of options for U.S. involvement. Please tell me if you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove:

The U.S. should send humanitarian aid such as food, clothing, and medical supplies.

	Total	
Strongly approve	59%	
Somewhat approve	29 }	88%
Neither	3	
Somewhat disapprove	4	
Strongly disapprove	3 }	7

1993 USAID

Are you generally in favor of or opposed to the U.S. giving humanitarian aid to developing countries?

	Total
Favor	72%
Oppose	23

3. Prioritizing Foreign Aid

In a number of studies, respondents were asked to prioritize types of aid on a scale of one to 10 where one indicates it is a low priority and 10 indicates it is a top priority. Different items were tested in the various studies, but some similarities are apparent.

Of the different areas of aid tested, humanitarian aid again is given the highest priority in most of the studies.

Also of concern to Americans in recent years is stopping the spread of AIDs, protecting the environment, and stopping drug trafficking.

In the Pew GSI study of American voters, these two areas won high endorsements:

- the goal of relieving human suffering (7.1 average priority) and
- protecting the environment (7.0).

In a second tier, cluster programs that promote freedoms:

- democracy,
- human rights, and
- the status of women

The 1992 Rockefeller and the 1993 USAID studies tested series of aid priorities similar to each other. Of the programs tested, the public was clearly most supportive of four:

- preventing the spread of AIDS,
- stopping production and export of cocaine and other drugs,
- family planning and birth control education, and

- disaster relief.

Americans give somewhat less importance to helping farmers buy seeds and equipment, providing health care generally, and programs aimed at encouraging the Third World to buy U.S. products.

Programs "giving people from the Third World training in the U.S." and "using aid to rent land for U.S. military bases" are of least importance of those tested.

A comparison of the Rockefeller, USAID, and the ODC/InterAction studies shows a slight decline in the priority given to disaster relief, helping farmers, and providing health care from 1986 to 1993. Education on family planning and birth control is in a relatively stronger position in recent years compared to the other items listed.

Priorities for Types of Foreign Aid
(1994 Pew GSI)

Thinking about where you would like to see the U.S. use its resources, here are some possible goals for the U.S. government assistance programs to developing countries. Using a scale where one means lowest priority and 10 means top priority, please rate these goals for U.S. government assistance overseas.

	Mean
Relieving human suffering brought about by civil war and natural disasters	7.1
Protecting the global environment	7.0
Promoting democracy	6.9
Promoting human rights	6.5
Improving the status of women	6.3
Helping countries slow their rate of population growth	5.9
Improving economic conditions in developing countries	5.8
Preventing civil wars and regional conflicts	5.7
Giving military support to governments friendly to us	5.5

Priorities for Types of Foreign Aid
(1993--1986)

On a scale where one means lowest priority and 10 means top priority, where would you place these kinds of U.S. aid to the Third World:

	1993 USAID		1992 Rock		1986 ODC	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Helping countries prevent the spread of AIDS	7.9	1	na	--	na	--
Relief for victims of disasters like floods, droughts, and earthquakes	7.4	2	7.4	3	8.3	1
Helping countries stop the production and export of cocaine and other drugs	7.1	3	8.7	1	na	--
Providing education on family planning and birth control	7.1	4	7.7	2	7.5	4
Programs helping countries lower infant death rates	7.0	5	na	--	7.3	5
Helping farmers buy seeds and basic equipment	6.7	6	6.9*	4	7.6	3
Giving countries food to feed their hungry populations	6.5	7	na	--	7.1	6
Building large projects like roads, dams, and hospitals	5.9	8	na	--	6.5	7
Helping victims of ethnic conflict & civil war	5.8	9	na	--	5.8	10
Supporting small businesses started by people in those countries	5.6	10	na	--	5.9	9
Giving people university or other training in the U.S.	5.2	11	5.8*	7	5.6	11
Using aid to rent land for U.S. military bases in those countries	4.6	12	na	--	6.0	8
Providing health care	na	--	6.6	5	7.7	2
Encouraging Third World nations to buy U.S. products	na	--	6.5	6	na	--

na Not asked in poll
* Different wording

4. When Aid Works Best

The programs Americans believe have been the most effective are the ones which provide food, health care, and education. (ODC/InterAction, 1986 and USAID, 1993)

The 1993 USAID survey asked Americans about 10 different types of American assistance efforts to the Third World and the effectiveness of each.

American aid that is considered to have been effective in the past includes programs which:

- feed the hungry and poor,
- improve people's ability to produce their own food supply,
- encourage the growth of democracy,
- strengthen Third World economies,
- increase people's level of education, and
- reduce death rates among children.

Americans are divided of their opinion of aid that:

- protects victims of ethnic conflicts and civil wars,
- conserves the Third World countries' natural resources, and
- reduces poverty.

"Reducing population growth rates in those countries," is seen as having been ineffective in the past.

Economic Aid for Health Care, Education, and Agriculture

1986 ODC/InterAction

Please tell me whether you think each of the following has generally helped or hurt people in Third World Countries in the last few years.

How about economic aid for things such as health care, education, and agriculture that the U.S. gives.

	Total
Helped	
Hurt	
Don't know	

Effect of U.S. Assistance on Third World Problems

1993 USAID

Do you think that U.S. assistance to Third World countries has had a great effect, some effect, not much effect, or no effect at all on...?

	Great/Some Effect	None/Not Much Effect
Feeding the hungry and poor	77%	23
Improving their ability to produce their own food supply	68%	28
Encouraging the growth of democracy	68%	29
Strengthening Third World economies	63%	34
Increasing people's level of education	62%	34
Reducing death rates among children	59%	38
Protects victims of ethnic conflicts and civil wars	51%	45
Conserving the Third World countries' natural resources	47%	44
Reducing poverty	45%	53
Reducing population growth rates in those countries	29%	65

E. Regional Differentiation: Where should efforts focus?

We found little information available on Americans' regional preferences for foreign aid. The most recent opinion data available on this topic are from 1990-1991. In these years, Americans favored aid to South America while slightly opposing aid to Asian countries. In recent years, Eastern European countries have joined traditional developing nations as priorities for U.S. aid and Americans generally support aid to these countries.

There is little public opinion data reflecting Americans' view of the leadership role the U.S. should assume in specific regions of the world concerning foreign aid. However, we do have some information regarding the preferred regions to which the U.S. should give aid.

Americans preferences about how U.S. aid should be allocated is unclear. Getting Americans to prioritize countries which should receive aid is difficult. Current events have a great impact on Americans' views of those countries which need aid. In the Rockefeller focus groups, for instance, both Persian Gulf problems and to a lesser extent the Eastern European developments may have combined to distract people from Africa, India, Latin America, and other areas traditionally considered neediest.

In recent years, Eastern European countries have joined the traditional Third World nations in needing U.S. foreign aid. The 1993 USAID survey found Americans support giving aid to developing countries and Eastern European countries equally. Both areas received about the same percentage of those saying they support aid to these areas.

When pushed to make a choice between developing nations, former USSR nations, and Eastern European countries, Americans slightly favor helping developing nations. However, if former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries are combined there is no difference.

In 1990 and 1991, a number of surveys asked Americans about their support for foreign aid to specific countries and regions of the world. Americans at this time did not favor the developing countries over Eastern European countries; they did favor aid to Ethiopia,

Bangladesh, and to South American countries while slightly opposing aid to Asian countries, in particular Vietnam.

When asked if they would increase, decrease, or keep aid the same to countries in Asia and South America, Americans tend to say keep the aid at the same amount or decrease it. At this time, Americans were somewhat amenable to increasing aid to South American countries combatting the drug problem. Pakistan and Turkey are countries Americans would like to see less foreign aid sent.

In the 1986 ODC/InterAction survey when asked to rank specific geographic regions, a plurality (39%) named Africa as a high priority for receiving U.S. aid for development. Next respondents gave priority to Latin America and Caribbean, Israel, Asia, and the Arab countries.

U.S. Assistance to Developing Countries and Eastern European Countries

1993 USAID

Are you generally in favor or opposed to the U.S. giving economic assistance to:

	Favor	Oppose
Developing countries	53%	39
Eastern European countries	51%	44

Prioritizing Countries for U.S. Assistance

1993 USAID

Which countries, if any, do you feel is the most important for the U.S. to give economic assistance to: the less developed countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; the countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union; or the other countries of Eastern Europe, like Hungary or Poland?

	Total
Asia, Africa, and Latin America	41%
Soviet Union	23
Eastern Europe	17
None	8

Rating Countries for U.S. Development Aid

1986 ODC/InterAction

Assume you are in charge of aid for development to other countries. Using any number from one to 10 on a scale where one is lowest priority and 10 is top priority, please tell me how high a priority you would give each of these areas:

	Mean
African countries	6.5
Latin American and Caribbean countries	6.4
Israel	5.7
Asian countries	5.6
Arab countries	4.1

Countries Which Should Receive U.S. Aid

(1990 -- 1991)

	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Ethiopia[1]	65%	28	5
Bangladesh[1]	55%	33	9
Panama[2]	62%	30	8
Nicaragua[3]	55%	41	4
Colombia[4]	51%	47	2
Vietnam[5]	28%	64	6

1 NBC News/Wall Street Journal, 1991; "Here are some countries, and for each one please tell me if you think we should or should not help that country with economic aid."
2 NBC News/Wall Street Journal, 1990; "Do you think the United States should or should not provide substantial economic assistance to Panama to help rebuild its economy?"
3 Harris Poll, 1990; "Would you favor or oppose sending economic aid to the new non-communist government of Nicaragua to help that government raise living standards and solidify political support?"
4 ABC News/Washington Post, 1990; "Would you favor or oppose the U.S. providing financial aid to strengthen the police and judicial system in Colombia?"
5 Time, Cable News Network, 1990; "Do you favor or oppose the U.S. giving financial aid to Vietnam to help rebuild their country?"

Aid to Regions
(1990 -- 1993)

	Increase	Keep the Same	Decrease	Stop
Africa and Asia[1]	23%	41	14	
Asian/Pacific Nations[2]	9%	37	49	
South America[3]	37%	35	12	
El Salvador[4]	5%	29	27	
Philippines[4]	6%	34	25	26
South Korea[4]	2%	34	26	29
Pakistan[5]	14%	24	50	na
Turkey[5]	8%	26	52	na

1 The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1990; "In particular, do you think economic aid to the following nations foreign be increases, decreased, kept the same, or stopped altogether: Underdeveloped nations in Africa and Asia?"
2 ABC News, 3/93; "Do you think the United States' financial and technical aid to Asian and Pacific nations should be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?"
3 The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1990; "In particular, do you think economic aid to the following nations foreign be increases, decreased, kept the same, or stopped altogether: South American countries that are combatting the drug problem?"
4 The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1990; "In particular, do you think economic aid to the following nations foreign be increases, decreased, kept the same, or stopped altogether...?"

5 Newsweek, 1990; "As I read off the countries that receive the largest share of U.S. foreign aid, please tell me if you would like to see each country receive more aid, less aid, or about the same amount in the future...?"

F. Why Shouldn't We Be Involved?

A desire to focus on domestic problems and a negative perception of aid programs' effectiveness diminish Americans' support for foreign aid.

1. Home First

The survey data indicate that Americans' focus on domestic problems has dampened their feelings of responsibility to help developing countries. Americans want to solve the U.S.'s own problems of crime, poverty, unemployment, and education before turning attention abroad.

Americans' concern for domestic issues is not new but has been intensified in recent years. We found in the ODC/InterAction, Rockefeller, Pew GSI, and in focus group research that Americans are much more focused on domestic problems than with problems abroad in recent years.

Similar to the findings in the ODC/InterAction survey, in the Pew GSI, USAID, and UNICEF polls virtually all the voters concurred that they are more interested in helping people in this country than in other parts of the world.

In the Pew GSI poll, when American voters were asked to rate the seriousness of domestic issues than to rate the seriousness of foreign issues, none of the international issues tested (except for disease and hunger) were viewed as being as serious as were key domestic problems, such as crime, government spending, health care, and education.

In comparing the scores on international issues to ones on domestic issues, global issues rate in the middle range, while many of the domestic issues were judged to be more serious. That is, the average score on international issues range from 7.7 to 6.9, whereas domestic issues range from 8.8 to 6.4.

In addition in the Pew GSI focus groups, many participants voiced the opinion that the U.S. has enough of its own problems to worry about. As one Boston man stated, "We got our own problems to take care of before we should venture off into foreign lands. We have people starving here."

Helping People in U.S. Before Other Countries

As I read some statements about economic aid for development, please tell me if you tend to agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each statement:

We need to solve our own poverty problems in the U.S. before we turn attention to other countries.

	1993*	1986**
Strongly agree		60%
Somewhat agree	} 91%	24
Somewhat disagree		
Strongly disagree	} 9	4

* USAID, 1993
** ODC/InterAction, 1986

1994 Pew GSI

Please tell me whether each statement describes you very well, somewhat, not very well, or not at all:

I am more interested in helping people in the United States before people in other countries.

	Total
Very well	68%

Somewhat	24	} 92%
Not very well	5	
Not at all	2	} 7

Fighting U.S. Poverty

1992 UNICEF

Do you tend to agree or disagree that: We should pay less attention to poor countries and concentrate on fighting poverty here at home.

	Total
Agree	66%
Disagree	30
Not sure	4

Rating U.S. Problems

1994 Pew/GSI

Using a scale of one to 10 where one means something is not a problem at all, and 10 means it is a very serious problem, please tell me how big a problem you think each of the following is for the United States right now:

Crime	
Gun violence	
Government spending	8.3
Cost of health care	
Our education system	7.4
Poverty	
The economy	
Immigration	
Race relations	
Environmental threats	6.4
Overconsumption of resources	6.4

Rating International Issues

1994 Pew/GSI

Returning to the same scale where one means not at all a problem and 10 means it is a very serious problem, how big a problem do you think each of these international issues is?

Disease and hunger in other countries	7.7
Rapid population growth	
The spread of nuclear weapons	7.1
The threat of civil wars and international regional conflicts	6.9
Threats to the global environment	6.9

2. U.S. Cannot Afford Foreign Aid

Economic hard times in the U.S. appear to have taken their toll on support for foreign aid. The public's belief that "the U.S. cannot afford" to provide economic assistance to other countries is stronger in recent years than it was in 1986.

Two-thirds of Americans (65%) in the Rockefeller study said the "U.S. cannot afford" economic assistance to other countries, while about one-third said the U.S. can afford it. These percentages indicate an increase in anxiety over the cost of foreign aid from 1986, when the same question was asked in the poll for ODC/InterAction. That survey showed Americans' opinions more divided on the issue of cost, with 52% saying the U.S. cannot afford it and 45% saying the U.S. can afford it.

In addition to saying we cannot afford it, Americans feel the U.S. is already spending too much on foreign aid. In a 1993 NORC study, 70% of Americans said the U.S. is spending too much on "foreign aid" while 75% said we spend too much on "assistance to other countries." Earlier that same year almost eight in 10 Americans said they favor a cut back on foreign aid . (U.S. News, 1993)

It is important to note that while Americans profess to believe that we bear responsibility to aid others (and we put this sentiment in the category or reasons to support aid), they respond very negatively to guild-laced admonishments.

Can the U.S. Afford Foreign Aid?

(1992 -- 1986)

The United States can afford it, or the United States can not afford it: Which comes closer to your feeling about economic assistance to other countries?

	1992*	1986**
U.S. can afford	31%	45%
U.S. cannot afford	65	52

* Rockefeller, 1992
** ODC/InterAction, 1986

Spending on Foreign Aid

1993 NORC

We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much, too little, or about the right about on:

Foreign aid

		Total
Too little		5%
About right	21	
Too much		70

Assistance to other countries

		Total
Too little		3%
About right	20	
Too much		75

1993 U.S. News and World Report

As President Clinton will probably be forced to make tough choices. Would you favor or oppose each of the following choices that he might make in order to reduce the federal deficit:

Cut back on foreign aid

		Total
Favor		79%
Oppose	16	
It depends		2

3. Ineffectiveness of Aid Programs

The American public is skeptical that aid, both public and private, is helping to improve conditions in other countries. As with the primacy of domestic issues and financial concerns, the perceived ineffectiveness of aid programs dampens Americans' ardor for foreign aid.

This pessimism surrounding aid is not new. A majority (58%) of Americans surveyed by ODC/InterAction said they did not believe economic assistance had been effective in improving poor people's lives in the Third World.

The underlying reasons for the public's doubts appear to be a belief in the inability of aid programs to reach the needy and the negative perception of Third World governments widely held by the American public.

With regard to government aid, in 1992 half of the public has "little confidence" that "the money for assistance that the U.S. government sends overseas...reaches the needy people in other countries." Four in 10 have "just some confidence" in government programs, and about one in 10 have "a great deal of confidence" (Rockefeller, 1992). This lack of confidence in government-backed aid mirrors opinions expressed in 1986, when the ODC/InterAction poll asked the same question.

Perhaps because of the widespread news coverage of the problems with private relief efforts getting through to those in need in Somalia and other parts of the world in the fall of 1993, public confidence in private efforts has weakened since 1986. About half of Americans in 1992, compared to about one third in 1986, had little confidence that "most of the money people give to private organizations -- like CARE and Save the Children -- reaches the needy people in other countries."

Of 13 private charitable institutions tested regarding Americans' confidence in them in a 1992 Independent Sector survey, international/foreign organizations were rated the lowest.

In the 1986 ODC/InterAction study, large majorities felt "aid is frequently misused by foreign governments (88%) and that "a large part of aid is wasted by the U.S. bureaucracy" (85%).

In a 1992 UNICEF survey, eight in 10 (81%) Americans said they agreed with the statement, "a lot of aid sent to poor countries is wasted or spent on other things" while in the Rockefeller study seven in 10 agreed that "foreign aid doesn't really help the people it is supposed to help."

Voters in the Pew GSI and the Rockefeller focus groups re-articulated over and over again sentiments heard in the 1986 ODC/Interaction focus groups: they worry that foreign aid ends up in the wrong hands, and are concerned with political instability, government corruption, and distribution of funds. As a Dallas woman stated in the GSI groups, "One of the problems with foreign aid has always been that the people who should get it, never get it."

Economic Aid Helping the Poor in the Third World

1986 ODC/InterAction

As I read some statements about economic aid for development, please tell me if you tend to agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each statement:

Economic aid has not been effective in improving poor people's lives in the Third World.

	Total	
Strongly agree	22%	
Somewhat agree	36	} 58%
Somewhat disagree	25	
Strongly disagree	14	} 39

Success of Foreign Aid Reaching the Poor

Do you tend to agree or disagree that:

	Agree	Disagree
A lot of aid sent to poor countries is wasted or spent on other things*	81%	
Foreign aid doesn't really help the people it is supposed to help**	71%	

* UNICEF, 1992
** Rockefeller, 1992

Trust in Bureaucracy and Foreign Governments

1986 ODC/InterAction

As I read some statements about economic aid for development, please tell me if you tend to strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree:

Aid is frequently misused by foreign governments.

	Total	
Strongly agree	63%	
Somewhat agree	25	} 88%
Somewhat disagree	6	
Strongly disagree	3	} 9

A large part of aid is wasted by the U.S. bureaucracy.

Strongly agree	51%	
Somewhat agree	34	} 85%
Somewhat disagree	10	
Strongly disagree	2	} 12

Confidence that Government Money Reaches Needy People
(1992 -- 1986)

How about the money for assistance that the U.S. government sends overseas? Would you say you have a great deal, just some, or little confidence that it reaches the needy people in other countries?

	1992*	1986**
Great deal of confidence	9%	7%
Some confidence	39	45
Little confidence	50	46

* Rockefeller, 1992
** ODC/InterAction, 1986

Confidence that Private Money Reaches Needy People
(1992 -- 1986)

Would you say you have a great deal, just some, or little confidence that most of the money people give to private organizations like CARE and Save the Children -- reaches the needy people in other countries?

	1992*	1986**
Great deal of confidence	11%	17%
Some confidence	33	42
Little confidence	52	46

* Rockefeller, 1992
** ODC/InterAction, 1986

Confidence in Private Charitable Institutions

1992 Independent Sector

I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one -- a great deal, quite a lot, some or very little? countries?

	Great Deal	Quite A Lot	Some	Very Little
Private higher education	14%	35	34	10
Youth development and recreation	13%	35	36	12
Religious organizations	18%	30	36	15
Private education	13%	31	36	13
Health	15%	25	40	16
Environment	11%	28	41	17
Human Services	9%	28	45	14
Arts, culture, humanities	8%	26	42	17
Federated charitable appeals	7%	24	35	29
Recreation -- adult	6%	23	47	15
Public/Social benefit	7%	20	46	22
Private and community foundations	5%	23	48	17
International/foreign	4%	17	42	27

G. Who Carries Out Aid Programs Best?

Research findings on current opinions of the best institutions for delivery of aid is mixed.

- *When asked which are the most effective, religious organizations are chosen over the U.S. government, the United Nations and private organizations.*
- *When asked about efficiency, the U.N. is perceived as most able to reach the largest number of people at the lowest cost.*

Of the different types of organizations and institutions which provide aid to developing countries, religious organizations are seen as the most effective. Over a third (37%) in the UNICEF, 1992 survey said religious organizations are "the most effective and useful source of help."

The U.S. government was mentioned next with 19% saying it is the most effective. The United Nations received 14%, and private charities or aid organizations received 11%.

In 1991, opinions of the job the UN was doing to help poor countries were low. When asked to evaluate the job the UN is doing to combat international hunger and disease 59% said a poor job, and 37% said a good job.

Similarly, Americans did not think the UN is doing a good job to help poor nations become self-sufficient. Fifty-five percent said they are doing a poor job and 39% said they are doing a good job. (Americans, 1991)

However, looking to the future, Americans are supportive of the idea of the United Nations coordinating aid programs. The 1993 USAID survey found that overall Americans are more likely to believe that the United Nations would be better in effectively assisting developing countries than the U.S. government, private businesses, or charities. In addition, eight in 10 Americans support using the UN as a "vehicle for coordinating aid." (Rockefeller, 1992)

Most Effective Sources of Aid

1992 UNICEF

And which one of these do you think is the most effective and useful source of help?

	Total
Religious organizations	37%
U.S. government	19
United Nations	14
Private charities or aid organizations	11
UNICEF	8
Private companies	4

Most Efficient Agent of Foreign Assistance

1993 USAID

To reach the largest number of people in the fastest time and lowest cost, who would do the best job in assisting other countries: the United Nations, the U.S. government, private businesses, or private charities?

	Total
United Nations	47%
U.S. government	18
Private charities	16
Private businesses	15

Rating U.N.'s Job

Americans Talk Issues
December, 1991

Here are different things the United Nations does. For each one, please tell me if you think the U.N. is doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job on it.

	Excellent	Good	Not Good	Poor
Combatting international hunger and disease	6%	31	35	24
Helping poor nations become self-sufficient	5%	34	36	19

Support for the United Nations

1992 Rockefeller

As I read some statements about economic aid for development, please tell me if you tend to agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each statement:

The U.N. is a good vehicle for coordinating aid from the developed countries.

		Total
Strongly agree	45%	
Somewhat agree		37 } 82%
Somewhat disagree		10
Strongly disagree		4 } 14

H. What About U.S. Leadership?

We observe a lack of desire for the U.S. to take a leadership role in foreign assistance. In the existing data Americans' sense of urgency concerning domestic problems and the lack of saliency of international problems are now manifest in Americans' desire for sharing the responsibilities of foreign aid among a number of nations.

However, in particular areas of assistance, such as humanitarian and environmental, Americans are somewhat amenable to having the U.S. take a leadership role.

1. Multilateral efforts supported by Americans

As problems at home, particularly economic worries, plague Americans, they are less likely to want the United States to take a lead in providing aid to developing nations. Americans broadly prefer the U.S. to be a part of multilateral efforts rather than engage in independent aid programs.

The role the public would like the U.S. to play may have lessened since the 1980's. At the time of the ODC/InterAction study, a large majority (78%) of the public believed that as a world leader, the U.S. should set an example for other wealthy nations by helping poor nations.

However, in a recent Time/CNN poll this spring, 66% of Americans said they would prefer that the U.S. reduce its involvement in world politics in order to concentrate on problems at home, rather than use its leadership position to help settle international disputes.

A 1993 Times-Mirror poll shows Americans would like to withdraw from a world leadership role. Most of the public feels the United States should be no more active than any other nation in leading the world. Eight in 10 Americans in this poll voiced a desire for the U.S. to share leadership with other countries. Over half (51%) of those who chose shared leadership would like this role to be no more or less active than the other nations, while 27% want the U.S. to take the most active role.

Similarly in the 1992 Rockefeller study, nine out of 10 Americans choose aid programs co-sponsored by a number of developed countries working together over independent aid programs.

Concern for the U.S. economy is one of the reasons Americans would like the U.S. to share the leadership. A majority of Americans in a May, 1993 ABC poll stated that because the U.S. has limited resources and its own problems at home, it needs to reduce its involvement in world affairs.

In the face of economic hard times, the public is more likely to think the U.S. is "doing more than it should" to "fight poverty in other parts of the world." In 1992, more than four in 10 Americans believed we are doing more than we should, compared to one-third who believed so in 1986.

In addition in 1992, Americans said they believed that since the U.S. is no longer the economic leader of the world, we have less responsibility to be the leader in helping other countries.

U.S. Leadership

1993 Time/CNN

Which foreign policy should the U.S. follow?

	Total
Use its leadership position to help settle international disputes and promote democracy	29%
Reduce its involvement in world politics in order to concentrate on problems at home	66

U.S. Setting Example of Helping Poor Nations

1986 ODC/InterAction

As I read some statements about economic aid for development, please tell me if you tend to strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree:

As a world leader, the U.S. should set an example for other wealthy nations by helping poor nations.

	Total	
Strongly agree	37%	
Somewhat agree	41	} 78%
Somewhat disagree	12	
Strongly disagree	8	} 20

U.S. Leadership Role

1993 Times-Mirror

What kind of leadership role should the United States play in the world? Should it be the single world leader, play a shared leadership role, or none; If shared role, should the United states be the most active of the leading nations, or should it be no more or less active than other leading nations?

	Total
Single world leader	10%
Shared role	
Most active	
No more or less active	51
None	

Aid Programs Sponsored by Several Developed Countries

1992 Rockefeller

As I read some statements about economic aid for development, please tell me if you tend to agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each statement: It is better for aid programs to be co-sponsored by a number of developed countries working together, rather than for each to have independent aid programs.

	Total	
Strongly agree	61%	
Somewhat agree	30	} 91%
Somewhat disagree	4	
Strongly disagree	2	} 6

U.S. Role in World Affairs

May 1993 ABC

Which is closest to your view?

	Total
Because the United States is the world's strongest and richest country, it has a responsibility to take the leading role in world affairs.	
Because the U.S. has limited resources and its own problems at home, it needs to reduce its involvement in world affairs.	

1992 Rockefeller

As I read some statements about economic aid for development, please tell me if you tend to agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each statement:

The U.S. is no longer the world economic leader, so our responsibility to help the Third World should be less.

	Total
Strongly agree	25%
Somewhat agree	31
Somewhat disagree	23
Strongly disagree	18

Is U.S. Doing More Than It Should: Fighting Poverty in Other Countries

1992 -- 1986

Do you think the U.S. government is doing more than it should, about the right amount, or less than it should to fight poverty in other parts of the world?

	1992*	1986**
More than it should	46%	35%
About the right amount	33	42
Less than it should	15	18

* Rockefeller, 1992
** ODC/InterAction

2. U.S. Leader in Particular Issue Areas

Even though there is little opinion data on what America's leadership role should be in specific issue areas humanitarian relief, environment, and population issues appear to be a areas in which Americans may welcome the U.S. taking a leadership role.

Humanitarian Relief

As we saw earlier, Americans favor humanitarian aid programs much more than they do economic assistance or aid when the general term "foreign aid" is used. This difference is also apparent when Americans are asked about the leadership role the U.S. should assume. In general, Americans would like to withdraw from a world leadership position. However when it comes to providing humanitarian aid to victims of wars or natural disasters, Americans support the U.S. taking a leading role.

The support for leadership in humanitarian aid and opposition to leadership in foreign aid in general may be attributed to Americans feeling some sense of responsibility at helping developing nations, but at the same time they feel the U.S. can no longer sustain the amount of aid we have been providing, and they also fear entering a military quagmire.

For instance, despite problems with the relief services in Somalia late in 1993, the public appears to remain willing to provide humanitarian aid. Americans support sending troops to Third World countries to prevent famine and mass starvation, but not to be the policeperson if governments break down.

In a Times-Mirror Poll conducted in October 1993, a majority of Americans (56%) support dispatch of U.S. forces to Africa and Asia to prevent famine and mass starvation; but comparable majorities oppose their use to restore law and order if governments break down there (60%) or in Latin America and the Caribbean (53%).

U.S. Leadership in Humanitarian Aid

1993 ABC News/Washington Post

Specifically, please tell me if you think the United States should or should not take the leading role in each of the following area. ow about providing humanitarian aid to victims of wars or natural disasters in foreign countries.

	Total
Should take a leading role	70%
Should not take a leading role	29

U.S.'s Role in Providing Aid

October 1993 Times Mirror

Do you approve or disapprove of sending U.S. military forces to Asian or African countries in order to prevent famines and mass starvation.

	Total
Approve	56%
Disapprove	38

Do you approve or disapprove of sending U.S. military forces to Asian or African countries in order to restore law and order if the governments completely break down?

	Total
Approve	32%
Disapprove	60

Do you approve or disapprove of sending U.S. military forces to Latin American or Caribbean countries in order to restore law and order if the governments completely break down?

	Total
Approve	37%
Disapprove	53

Environment

We found one question, in a 1991 Americans Talk Issues poll, that addresses leadership in environmental protection. In this poll, sixty nine percent of those interviewed strongly agreed with the statement, "The United States should use its position to get other countries to join together to take action against world environment problems." While the number of people supporting this position is strong, this one question is not adequate to assess sentiments.

U.S. Leadership to Address Environmental Problems

Americans Talk Issues
June-July, 1991

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The United States should use its position to get other nations to join together to take action against world environmental problems.

	Total	
Strongly agree	69%	
Somewhat agree	23	} 92%
Somewhat disagree	6	
Strongly disagree	2	} 8

Population

Another area Americans appear to support U.S. involvement is slowing population growth. However, whether or not the U.S. should assume a leadership role is unclear.

The 1994 Pew GSI study explored population issues in-depth and found a small majority of American voters is receptive to efforts by the U.S. to slow growth in other countries.

Overall 53% favor and 42% oppose U.S. programs aimed at reduction of population growth.

The focus group phase of this research uncovered voices of misgivings about how appropriate it is for the U.S. to try to affect birth rates elsewhere. This survey indicates these voices are a significant minority of opinions, but not a majority. In fact, 55% say we should encourage developing countries to lower birth rates, exhibiting a willingness to intervene, while four in 10 call it inappropriate for the U.S. to try to affect birth rates in developing countries.

In addition, a 1992 Gallup poll found that a majority (54%) of Americans would support increasing economic aid to developing countries to slow their population growth.

In the Pew GSI focus groups, American voters voiced the sentiment that "Americans cannot take care of the world." While voters in these groups supported population programs they believed aid should not depend solely on the contributions of the U.S., but rather should be a multi-national effort. A number of participants offered the U.N. as a good overseer and funder of any global population programs.

Therefore, at this point, the leadership role the U.S. should play in slowing population in Third World countries is not well defined.

U.S. Sponsorship of Programs to Slow Population Growth Overseas

1994 Pew GSI

Are you in favor or opposed to the U.S. sponsoring programs overseas to help other countries slow their population growth?

	Total
Very much favor	19%
Somewhat favor	36 } 55%
Somewhat oppose	23
Very much oppose	19 } 42

U.S. Role in Encouraging Developing Countries to Lower Birth Rates

1994 Pew GSI

Do you agree more with those who say the United States should encourage developing countries to lower their birth rates, or more with those who say it is inappropriate for us to do this because it may offend other peoples' cultures?

	Total
U.S. should encourage	55%
Inappropriate	41

Increasing Aid to Help Slow Population Growth

1992 Gallup Poll

Would you favor or oppose an increase in U.S. economic aid and technical assistance to help developing countries slow their population growth?

	Total
Favor increasing aid	54%
Oppose increasing aid	39
It depends	4

APPENDIX

Sampling Error by Percentage
(at 95% confidence level)

SAMPLE SIZE	PERCENTAGES NEAR 10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
1000	1.9	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.5	1.9
800	2.1	2.8	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.2	2.8	2.1
700	2.2	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.0	2.2
600	2.4	3.2	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.2	2.4
500	2.6	3.5	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.5	2.6
400	2.9	3.9	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.5	3.9	2.9
300	3.4	4.5	5.2	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.2	4.5	3.4
200	4.2	5.5	6.4	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.4	5.5	4.2
100	5.9	7.8	9.0	9.6	9.8	9.6	9.0	7.8	5.9