

**“THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AID: IS  
IT ALTRUISM OR IMPERIALISM IN  
DISGUISE FOR WEAKENED NATIONS?”**

**Outlines:**

**1) Introduction:**

**Thesis Statement:**

“The role of international aid is imperialism, rather than altruism, with the aim of influencing the politics, economies and cultures of weakened nations.”

**2) Decoding the terms “international aid”, “imperialism” and “altruism”:**

**3) The role of international aid is imperialism in disguise for weakened nations (Thesis):**

- a) Influence the political ideologies of weakened nations**
- b) Influence the domestic and foreign policies of developing nations**
- c) Dismantle the hostile regimes and support Pro-West regimes in weakened nations**

- d) Influence the economic policies of developing nations**
- e) Establish military stronghold and strategic base in aid recipient nations**
- f) Increase access to the natural resources of developing nations**
- g) Influence the cultures and impose the western values in weakened nations**

**h) Influence media and dominant narratives in the developing nations**

**4) The role of international aid is to provide altruistic support to weakened nations (Antithesis):**

**a) To avert economic meltdown in the developing nations**

**b) To execute infrastructural development projects for the weakened nations**

- c) To provide educational opportunities to the weakened nations
- d) To avoid hunger and starvation in the weakened nations

5) The role of international aid is imperialism in disguise not altruism for weakened nations:

- a) Food aid exacerbates the food insecurities of weakened nations rather than providing food security

**b) Economic aid prolongs the economic crises of weakened nations by initiating the vicious cycle of dependency**

**6) Conclusion:**











# Essay:

Former US Defense Secretary James Mattis confessed, “Modern foreign aid is not charity. It is a strategic and an investment in a stronger America abroad.” It brings home the point that the role of international aid is imperialism in disguise, rather than altruism, to influence the politics, economies and cultures of the weakened nations. To begin with, the role of international aid is to influence the political ideologies of a weakened nations. Likewise, its role is to pull the strings of weakened nations by altering their domestic and foreign policies. In some instances, its role is to dethrone the hostile regimes and support pro-west regimes in developing nations. In addition, it is used to influence the economic policies of developing nations. Besides, it is used for the purpose of establishing military stronghold and strategic bases

in the aid recipient nations. It is also used to increase access to the natural resources and influence the culture of weakened nations by imposing Western values. Moreover, it plays a role in influencing the media and narratives in the developing nations. However, the role of international aid is also perceived by some people to avert the economic crises and to execute the infrastructural development projects. Similarly, its role is perceived to provide educational opportunities and to avoid hunger and starvation in the weakened nations. In reality, the food aid exacerbates the food crises of weakened nations by undermining their local food industries. In addition, the economic aid prolongs the economic meltdown of weakened nations through dependency. Thus, the role of international aid is to pursue imperialistic agenda not altruism for weakened nations.

The terms international aid, Imperialism and altruism can be defined as follow. International

aid, also known as foreign aid, refers to the transfer of resources, including financial assistance, goods, and services, from one country or international organization to another. On the other hand, Imperialism can be defined as a doctrine, political strategy, practice, and state policy that extends power through territorial acquisition or by expanding political and economic control over other areas. While, altruism refers to an act of showing concern for the wellbeing of others even at the expense of personal disadvantage. Thus, from the above definitions, the meanings of the terms international aid, imperialism and altruism have been cleared.

The role of international aid is to influence the political ideologies of the weakened nations. The developing countries use foreign aid as a tool to instill their political ideologies in the aid recipient countries and to prevent the rival countries ideologies from gaining traction. During the cold war, US President, Harry Truman, gave Truman doctrine. Through

Truman doctrine, US provided political, economic and military assistance to the weakened nations with the aim to prevent the spread of communism. For instance, President Truman approved from congress \$400 million in military and economic assistance for Turkey and Greece to prevent the influence of communism in these countries. Hence, the role of international aid is to alter the political ideologies of weakened nations by developed nations.

The role of international aid is to influence the domestic and foreign policies of developing nations. The weakened nations are usually in the exigent need of money to meet the needs of their people. The developed countries provide them with assistance and, in return, demand some changes in the domestic and foreign policy of weakened nations to serve the vested interests of aid donor countries.” On February 27, 2022, under duress by the U.S, Nepal's parliament approved the implementation of the Millennium Challenge Plan agreement. This

agreement included a clause that undermine its local law and infringe upon the sovereignty of Nepal; because, U.S. personnel are not subjected to Nepal legal jurisdiction after the implementation of this agreement. Moreover, US provided military and economic aid to Pakistan to help US in ousting USSR from Afghanistan during Afghan Jihad. Moreover, US provided aid to Pakistan to join the War on Terrorism in Afghanistan. Thus, foreign aid has a role in altering the domestic and foreign policies of developing nations.

The role of international aid is not only to dismantle the hostile regimes but also to support the Pro-West regimes in the weakened nations. It means, through foreign aid the developed nations are also involved in the regime change inside developing countries. The Wikileaks exposed the involvement of the West in dismantling the governments in Libya and Syria by providing aid to incite anti-government sentiments in the people. Moreover, foreign aid is

also used to support puppet regimes that will protect the interests of aid donor countries. For instance, US provided aid to support Reza Pahlavi to grab power in Iran. Without a doubt, the international aid plays a role in dismantling some regimes and help others in developing world.

The role of international aid is to influence the economic policies of developing nations. The economic aid provided by the developed countries has some strings or conditionalities attached to it. For acquiring economic aid, the weakened nations must accept those conditions and carry out certain economic reforms. For instance, the International Monetary Fund provides economic aid to weakened nations on the conditions of reforming their economic policies in line with the Washington Consensus which includes trade liberalization, privatization and free-floating rupee price etc. As noted above, international aid plays a role in tailoring the economic policies of weakened nations.



The role of international aid is to establish military stronghold and strategic bases in the weakened nations. The donor countries use aid as a bait to maintain their military presence in certain areas which in turn serve their geopolitical interests. For example, significant US aid had been directed towards Iraq, \$3.5 bn since 2014, and Afghanistan for rebuilding infrastructure and training their local security forces- on the pretext to maintain its military presence in these countries. Likewise, the developing nations provide aid to weakened nations to establish military bases in key strategic areas. For instance, US provided aid to countries, like Egypt in Middle East and Djibouti in South Africa, and in return built its military bases to increase its sphere of influence. Thus, international aid is used as a tool by developed nations to establish their military stronghold and strategic bases in weakened nations.

The foreign aid is also used by developed countries to increase access to the natural resources

of weakened nations. The foreign aid is provided to build roads and infrastructural projects, like oil refineries, in weakened nations- in return for access to the mineral resources of aid recipient countries. For instance, China has been actively involved in providing foreign aid and investment to African countries, especially Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola, in exchange for access to the natural resources such as copper, cobalt, and oil. Similarly, Russia has provided aid and investment to former Soviet republics in Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, often with strategic interests in securing access to the natural resources. In short, foreign aid has a role in getting access to the natural resources of weakened nations.

The role of international aid is to influence the culture and values of weakened nations by donor countries. The donor countries provide aid for those projects through which their culture can be promoted in the weakened nations. Arguably, the

donor countries provide aid to weakened countries to build infrastructural projects which in turn facilitate the global outreach of their food outlets. The McDonalization of the cultural and traditional food is the glaring example of the US agenda to internationalize its food culture under the guise of foreign aid to weakened nations. Moreover, US provides aid to improve the literacy rate in Weakened nations. However, through this international aid for education, US is changing the values and culture of weakened nations by promoting its western curriculum and language. Hence proved, foreign aid has a role in influencing the culture and values of weakened nations.

The role of international aid is to influence the media of the developing nations and to create dominant narratives. The donor countries fund media outlets and journalists to disseminate their worldview in weakened nations. For example, the USAID has funded media outlets around the world

including Afghanistan to promote democracy, human rights, and development etc. Similarly, China has funded the African media through training programs, infrastructure development program, and content sharing to promote narratives that align with China's interests and perspectives. Thus, foreign aid has a role in influencing media outlets in the developing nations.

The preceding paragraphs prove that the role of international aid is imperialism in disguise for weakened nations. Now, in the following paragraphs, the role of international aid is perceived to act as altruism for weakened nations will be proved.

The role of international aid is to avert economic meltdown in the weakened nations. Most developing nations face economic turmoil due to twin deficits, low tax base and meagre foreign direct investment. In this case, economic aid helps to prevent the country from economic crises. According to the statistics of US embassy in Pakistan, over the

past 20 years, US has provided around \$34 bn in aid to help stabilize the economy of Pakistan. Thus, foreign aid helps to prevent economic crises from emerging in the weakened nations.

The role of international aid is to execute infrastructural development projects for the weakened nations. Several multilateral organizations provide aid to the weakened nations to build a sustainable infrastructure. Asian Development Bank has provided \$220 million aid to help Pakistan build hazard-resilient Infrastructure. Hence proved, the international aid plays a significant role in upgrading the infrastructure of weakened nations.

The role of foreign aid is to provide educational opportunities to the weakened nations. Several developed countries provide financial aid in the form of scholarships and educational grants to improve the literacy rate in developing nations. For example, the Fulbright Program and the USAID-funded initiatives offer scholarships and educational

grants to students from developing nations, to study in the US, aiming to improve mutual understanding, literacy rate and educational standard of weakened nations. Hence, the role of foreign aid is to improve the literacy rate by providing the educational opportunities to the developing nations.

The role of international aid is to avoid hunger and starvation in the weakened nation. There are many countries and organizations that provide food assistance to those countries where most people cannot afford to have a square meal due to natural catastrophes, conflicts and economic crises. The USAID Emergency food Assistance Program is a glaring example of organization that provides food assistance to conflict ridden people in Yemen and South Sudan. Hence, Foreign aid also has a role in eliminating food hunger.

The preceding paragraphs prove the point that the role of international aid is perceived by some

people as altruism for weakened nations. Now in the following paragraphs their rebuttal will be given.

Food aid exacerbates the food insecurity of weakened nations rather than providing food security. Firstly, it is because food aid floods the markets of weakened nations with the imported food products. That undermine the manufacturing capability of their local food industries. As a result, weakened nations become more vulnerable to the food supply chain disruption. Hence, the provision of food aid is unsustainable in the long run as it worsen the food insecurity of developing nations.

The foreign economic aid prolongs the economic crises of weakened nations by initiating the vicious cycle of dependency. Arguably, the aid recipient countries highly rely on the economic aid rather than carrying out the economic reforms, like increasing exports, improving the tax collection base and attracting the foreign direct investment, to stabilize their dwindling economies. For instance,

Nigeria is the country which receives massive foreign economic aid from the US, yet its economy is not stable. Thus, the international economic aid does not guarantee a stable economy as it deepens the economic crises.

In a nutshell, the role of international aid is imperialism in disguise not altruism for weakened nations. Through the provision of foreign aid, affluent countries turn the weakened nations around their fingers. Similarly, the foreign aid is used as a tool to interfere in the political, economic and cultural values of the weakened nation. Nevertheless, a minority view exists that considers foreign aid as a means of altruism for weakened nations as it prevents hunger and averts economic crises. Having said that international aid does not provides a long-term stability and prosperity. Therefore, countries should avoid their overly reliance on it and carry out certain economic reforms which will lead towards economic self-sufficiency and curtail foreign



influence. As it has been rightly said that the true economic growth and prosperity emanates from inside not outside.