

Us Foreign Policy on Transitional Justice

Since the 1990s, the field of transitional justice has exploded with international support for the establishment of trials, truth commissions, and other measures aimed at helping societies address massive human rights violations. The United States' role has been particularly significant, providing extensive funding, political support, and technical assistance to such measures. Surprisingly, however, scant attention has been paid to analyzing the country's approach to transitional justice. In this book, Bird offers the first systematic and cross-cutting account of US foreign policy on transitional justice. She examines the development of US foreign policy on the field from World War I to the present, with an in-depth examination of US involvement in measures in Cambodia, Liberia, and Colombia. She supports her findings with nearly 200 interviews with key US and foreign government officials, staff of transitional justice measures, and country experts. By "opening the black box" of US foreign policy, Bird shows how diverse interests and the constantly evolving priorities of presidential administrations, Congress, the State Department, and other agencies shape US involvement in transitional justice. Despite bureaucratic battles, Bird argues that US foreign policy on transitional justice is surprisingly consistent and characterized by an approach that is value-driven, strategic, and retributive. She demonstrates how this approach has influenced the field as a whole, including the type of transitional justice measures selected, their design, and how they are implemented.

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Annie R. Bird

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