Dædalus

Ending Civil Wars: Constraints & Possibilities

Karl Eikenberry & Stephen D. Krasner, guest editors

with Francis Fukuyama
Tanisha M. Fazal · Stathis N. Kalyvas
Charles T. Call & Susanna P. Campbell · Lyse Doucet
Thomas Risse & Eric Stollenwerk · Clare Lockhart
Tanja A. Börzel & Sonja Grimm · Steven Heydemann
Seyoum Mesfin & Abdeta Dribssa Beyene
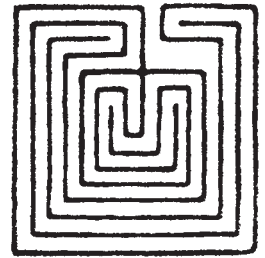Nancy E. Lindborg & J. Joseph Hewitt
Richard Gowan & Stephen John Stedman
Sumit Ganguly · Jean-Marie Guéhenno

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"Ending Civil Wars: Constraints & Possibilities"

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Inside front cover: A displaced woman carries goods as United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) peacekeepers patrol outside the premises of the UN Protection of Civilians (PoC) site in Juba on October 4, 2016. According to the UN, due to the increase of sexual violence outside the PoC, UNMISS has intensified its patrols in and around the protection sites, as well as in the wider Juba city area, sometimes arranging special escorts for women and young girls. © 2016 Albert González Farran/Getty Images.

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Winter 2018

Civil Wars & Global Disorder: Threats & Opportunities
Fall 2017

Dædalus

The labyrinth designed by Dædalus for King Minos of Crete, on a silver tetradrachma from Cnossos, Crete, c. 350–300 BC (35 mm, Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris). "Such was the work, so intricate the place, / That scarce the workman all its turns cou'd trace ; / And Dædalus was puzzled how to find / The secret ways of what himself design'd." – Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* Book 8

Dædalus was founded in 1955 and established as a quarterly in 1958. The journal's namesake was renowned in ancient Greece as an inventor, scientist, and unriddler of riddles. Its emblem, a maze seen from above, symbolizes the aspiration of its founders to "lift each of us above his cell in the labyrinth of learning in order that he may see the entire structure as if from above, where each separate part loses its comfortable separateness."

   The American Academy of Arts & Sciences, like its journal, brings together distinguished individuals from every field of human endeavor. It was chartered in 1780 as a forum "to cultivate every art and science which may tend to advance the interest, honour, dignity, and happiness of a free, independent, and virtuous people." Now in its third century, the Academy, with its more than five thousand members, continues to provide intellectual leadership to meet the critical challenges facing our world.

Introduction

Karl Eikenberry & Stephen D. Krasner

KARL EIKENBERRY, a Fellow of the American Academy since 2012, is the Oksenberg-Rohlen Fellow and Director of the U.S.-Asia Security Initiative at Stanford University's Asia-Pacific Research Center. He served as the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan and had a thirty-five-year career in the United States Army, retiring with the rank of lieutenant general. He codirects the Academy's project on Civil Wars, Violence, and International Responses.

STEPHEN D. KRASNER, a Fellow of the American Academy since 1991, is Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, the Graham H. Stuart Professor of International Relations, and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He is the author of *Power, the State, and Sovereignty: Essays on International Relations* (2009), *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (1999), and *Asymmetries in Japanese-American Trade: The Case for Specific Reciprocity* (1987). He codirects the Academy's project on Civil Wars, Violence, and International Responses.

The essays that make up this and the previous issue of *Dædalus* are the culmination of an eighteen-month American Academy of Arts and Sciences project on Civil Wars, Violence, and International Responses. Project participants have examined in depth the intellectual and policy disagreements over both the risks posed by intrastate violence and how best to treat it.

The Fall 2017 issue, "Civil Wars & Global Disorder: Threats & Opportunities," examines the nature and causative factors of civil wars in the modern era, the security risks posed by high levels of intrastate violence, and the challenges confronting external actors intervening to end the fighting and seek a political settlement. It also explains the project's aims, methodologies, and international outreach program.[1]

This issue, "Ending Civil Wars: Constraints & Possibilities," consists of two parts: "Norms & Domestic Factors" and "Policy Prescriptions." The essays in the first section consider the impediments to ending wars of internal disorder when norms such as national identity or commitment to the rule of law are not shared by contending elites, or when rebels are fighting for a transnational, divine cause and not simply the seizure of state power. The remaining essays focus on the "what to do" and offer a variety of recommendations to policy-makers. The issue concludes with the project's codirectors' own reflections informed by their colleagues' writings.

The section devoted to the impact of norms and domestic factors on the character of civil wars opens

with Francis Fukuyama's historical account of England's tumultuous history following the Norman Conquest, during which the country faced violence and civil war roughly every fifty years until the Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689 established parliamentary supremacy and brought long-lasting stability to England. Fukuyama uses the English case to illustrate that elite bargains will not necessarily result in a stable state or liberal democracy, arguing that stability after 1689 was instead predicated upon increasing respect for the rule of law, and the emergence of a strong English state and national identity. He emphasizes that these developments took shape over the course of six centuries.

What does this mean for current conflicts? Fukuyama's analysis suggests that "many contemporary conflicts will therefore continue until greater normative commitment to state, law, and democracy come about," and while U.S. assistance might help raise the visibility of certain government institutions in the short term, "the burden of sustainable institution-building necessarily will fall on the local elites themselves."[2]

In her essay, Tanisha Fazal argues for the recognition of an additional class of rebels, namely religionist rebels, for whom sovereignty comes from the divine: they do not seek international recognition or statehood by conventional means. This is important for two reasons: first, many of the common strategies employed in war and war termination are likely to be ineffective against insurgents who reject the very legitimacy of the modern state system; and second, religionist rebels often conduct war differently from other rebels given that their justification and motivation come from beyond the realm of states and shared international norms.

Fazal offers two options for conflict resolution: fighting to the end, or establishing a "hybrid system in which religionist rebels coexist alongside the Westphalian state system." Neither option is necessarily appealing. However, Fazal points out that historically these groups have "bumped up against natural limits, precisely because … the claims they make and practices they engage in during the wars they fight" cannot be sustained.[3]

Stathis Kalyvas, in his essay, decouples violent jihadism from religion and terrorism, positing that, although both are relevant characteristics of jihadi groups, it may be beneficial to view such elements first and foremost as revolutionary insurgents in civil wars. Kalyvas draws comparisons between contemporary jihadi groups and revolutionary insurgents of the past, specifically Marxist rebels of the Cold War, noting that both groups' revolutionary identities and transnational natures have common attributes. A key difference, however, is the absence of significant external state sponsorship for jihadi rebels, which Kalyvas says may well be their greatest weakness. Ultimately, he suggests that "jihadi rebels might, in the end, represent less of a threat to their opponents in civil war contexts than their older, Marxist counterparts," but cautions against blocking peaceful political mobilization for Islamists, as this may encourage the future emergence of new, violent jihadi movements.[4]

Drawing from the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, Steven Heydemann concludes the section on norms and domestic factors by examining the persistence of prewar governance practices under conditions of violent conflict. He argues that civil war might, in fact, be the continuation of governance not by different means, but by the same means. This assertion has particular policy relevance in that it "challenges understandings of civil war as marking a rupture in governance: violent conflict may disrupt prewar practices less than is often assumed." It also calls attention to the limits and shortcomings of ex-

isting frameworks intended to lessen state fragility, highlighting the link between sovereignty and governance and the "weaponization of sovereignty" for political or economic gain. Heydemann notes that viable solutions to such conflicts are difficult to find, and are "likely to require diplomatic, financial, and military strategies that create incentives for embattled regimes and insurgent challengers to end violence and accept meaningful compromises in the interest of securing their minimal requirements," often without transitional justice or accountability for perpetrators.[5]

Charles Call and Susanna Campbell begin the section on policy options by exploring the logic of prevention, explaining the underlying assumptions and associated tools. They offer three categories of preventive actions – operational, structural, and systemic – that manifest the rationale for prevention in different ways. They then examine various political, institutional, bureaucratic, and decision-making obstacles that have plagued earlier waves of conflict-prevention initiatives. The problems are significant and many: namely, the challenges faced by a state or international organization asked to take action on something that its constituency might not deem important; the lack of clear rules surrounding prevention; and the poor level of understanding about what exactly leads to an effective outside intervention. Call and Campbell reach a modest yet hopeful conclusion: "although we should not expect conflict prevention to work in many cases, the few cases in which it may prevent escalating violence justify an investment, in spite of the odds."[6]

Sumit Ganguly writes about the Sri Lankan Civil War, an example of civil war termination by means of outright military victory. The Sri Lankan case is one example of the "give war a chance" argument put forth by political scientist Edward Luttwak, who has asserted that "an unpleasant truth often overlooked is that although war is a great evil, it does have a great virtue: it can resolve political conflicts and lead to peace."[7] Though "complete and unequivocal" military victory brought an end to almost three decades of violent conflict in Sri Lanka, the country still lacks a unified national identity due to the deep ethnic and cultural divisions among the Sinhala majority and government and the Tamil minority.[8] The Sri Lankan government and some civil society representatives assert that progress is being made, but the postwar reconciliation and accountability processes are slow-going. Whether the existing peace will hold over the long term remains in question.

According to Clare Lockhart, over the course of the last two decades, the international community has largely responded to internal conflict and state breakdown with either military forces and large-scale civilian assistance (Afghanistan and Iraq), minimal involvement and calculated distance (Syria), or the misplaced hope that removing a dictator or negotiating a short-term peace deal without long-term planning and institution-building will lead to sustainable peace (Libya). Lockhart advocates an approach between these extremes, what she terms a "sovereignty strategy."[9] Such an approach is informed by the principle of helping internal actors establish or restore a core set of governance systems or institutions that can win the trust and meet the needs of their people, reduce the reliance of the country on external support, and contribute to resolving conflicts before they become violent. She argues that by carefully sequencing the establishment of key state functions over an extended time period, public trust can be gained and international obligations met.

In their essay, Thomas Risse and Eric Stollenwerk contend that the relationship between limited statehood and civil war, and therefore the importance placed on state-building efforts for preventing civil

war and violent conflict, is often overstated and misinformed. They point out that limited statehood is the global default, not the exception, and only a small portion of areas of limited statehood is affected by civil war. Weak state capacity may enable civil war, but it is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for civil conflict. External actors, Risse and Stollenwerk suggest, should seek to foster societal and political resilience in areas of limited statehood and to prevent governance breakdowns. They write: "governance-building with a focus on particular state and nonstate institutions, as well as on service provision, is likely to be not only more efficient, but also more effective."[10]

Tanja Börzel and Sonja Grimm also examine approaches to governance-building, analyzing the European Union's role in creating stable peace in the Western Balkans following the breakup of the former Republic of Yugoslavia. The expansion of the EU to include ten Central and Eastern European states has seen varying success in terms of democratization and stability; Croatia and Serbia appear to have successfully locked in these changes, while other states seem stuck in transition. Structural postconflict conditions, conflicting policy objectives, complex relationships between EU and Western Balkan governments, and the involvement of domestic third-party actors in the reform processes explain much of this variation. To enhance EU efforts to improve governance, Börzel and Grimm emphasize the importance of understanding domestic actors' interests and aligning them with the interests of external actors, as well as using governance-building instruments consistently and credibly, while acknowledging conflicting objectives.

Seyoum Mesfin, who served as Ethiopia's minister of foreign affairs for nearly twenty years, and Abdeta Beyene, who recently served as chief of staff of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission pursuant to the Agreement to Resolve the Conflict in South Sudan, explore the use of buffer zones as a strategy for responding to the security challenges posed by failed states in the Horn of Africa region. Buffer zones are neutral areas designed to prevent acts of aggression between hostile nations, and can be established jointly in a shared territory, or unilaterally through force. For example, in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia and Kenya maintain buffer zones inside Somalia to manage the threat posed by militant extremist groups such as Al Shabaab. Uganda also employs a similar strategy in South Sudan. Interstate tensions often arise, however, because buffer zones usually represent a violation of the weaker state's sovereignty by the stronger state seeking to maintain stability and order in the broader region. Buffer zones, Mesfin and Beyene persuasively argue, can be essential for both fighting terrorism and returning refugees to their places of origin in regions plagued by states incapable or unwilling to impose order.

Drawing upon her vast experience in reporting from the front lines of the most violent and consequential civil wars of our times, BBC Chief International Correspondent Lyse Doucet explores the impact of the media on the Syrian conflict policies of U.S. Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump. She provides a nuanced analysis of the so-called CNN Effect: a term that entered the lexicon nearly three decades ago and described the power of twenty-four-hour American news networks to dictate policy and which later was largely dismissed. Doucet argues that media can play an important role in thrusting issues to the top of policy-makers' agendas, but that context matters greatly and influence is often ephemeral.

Attempts by belligerent parties to manipulate the media and messaging to help achieve their war aims, of course, have been a constant in the long history of human conflict, well preceding the CNN Effect. What is truly new and novel, how-

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ever, is the emergence of social media, "real-time" fake news, and the empowerment of any individual with a connected device anywhere in the world to transmit images and information that can elicit deep emotional popular reactions and can, in turn, put pressure on policy-makers to act. Doucet explores the consequences of this still-recent phenomenon, describing how, in Syria, the "ferocious battle over 'fake news' was waged across a myriad of social media platforms." Her discussion of the rival combatants' explanation of the arresting photograph of five-year-old Omran Daqneesh, sitting alone and bloodied on an orange plastic chair in an ambulance, makes clear the complexity of the media landscape in which there are no agreed upon "facts on the ground." Doucet concludes that, in the contemporary world, multifaceted media is "a major influence, but not a major power."[11]

Nancy Lindborg and Joseph Hewitt analyze current U.S. efforts to address state fragility, a contributing factor to intrastate warfare, which, as is argued elsewhere in this volume and in the previous issue of *Dædalus*, can threaten regional and international security. Why do we struggle to implement effectively policies that transition countries away from fragility and prevent civil wars? Lindborg and Hewitt advance three main reasons: First, U.S. policy is largely crisis-driven, and thus the focus remains on the most urgent developing crises, rather than on prevention. Second, bureaucratic impediments, such as the placement of government bureaucracies into distinct security, development, and political silos, render a system without cohesive frameworks or joint plans of action. Third, the lack of a "shared consciousness," exacerbated by lack of communication and coordination among different government agencies and teams, prevents effective implementation of such policies. The authors identify this last challenge as the most im-

portant, noting: "meaningful progress will require a concerted effort to transform the business model of government, making it more proactive, adaptive, and integrated."[12]

Lindborg and Hewitt, however, find some room for optimism and make a values-based argument for positive action. They assert that, in recent years, the development community has experienced a paradigm shift that has bolstered the international community's "collective wisdom" with regard to reducing state fragility and mitigating state failure. While significant organizational and doctrinal reform is necessary to improve the U.S. government's ability to address effectively the significant challenges posed by failing and failed states, a selective approach that prioritizes areas in which external interventions can achieve decisive results is feasible.

Richard Gowan and Stephen Stedman recount what they refer to as the international regime for treating civil war, developed beginning in the late 1980s. In describing the evolution of norms and practices, they highlight: "1) a belief in the efficacy of mediation in ending intrastate conflicts; 2) investments in multinational peacekeeping operations to secure the resulting deals; 3) an overarching focus on the humanitarian obligations to minimize civilian fatalities and suffering in war zones; and 4) the ongoing controversy about the limits and principles of humanitarian intervention."[13] They assert that the international standard treatment regime's future viability depends on several factors, including U.S. leadership, relations between great powers, and the willingness of the international community to learn from the lessons of the previous twenty-five years. Gowan and Stedman convincingly argue that, though imperfect, the approach has been sufficient and adaptive in many ways, and for these reasons, is worth preserving.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno, in the final essay on policy prescriptions, addresses the Unit-

ed Nations' role in civil wars. He writes that, since the end of the Cold War, the UN has become increasingly multidimensional, adding political, military, development, and humanitarian components to its postconflict stabilization toolbox. However, twenty-six years after the end of the Cold War, it is clear that the UN must revisit its strategy for engagement in civil wars. Despite increasing interconnectedness, global government is not a realistic response, and neither is a return to fully autonomous states. Guéhenno endorses a less state-centric approach at the strategic level, and urges the UN to lower expectations, but deploy stronger capacities to strengthen the effectiveness of the blue helmets in conflict and postconflict settings at the operational level. He highlights the importance of setting the appropriate level of ambition and emphasizes the relevance of four discrete sectors: governance, security, legal frameworks, and revenue collection. Ultimately, as Guéhenno reasons, the ability to adapt to an ever-changing, complex, and multifaceted world will prove essential for the success of the UN and the maintenance of global stability.

Drawing from their colleagues' essays in this issue and in the previous issue of *Dædalus*, Stephen Krasner and Karl Eikenberry offer insights on security challenges posed by civil wars and on the implications for policy-makers. They assess the six threats that might directly impact the wealthy and more powerful polities of the world, or the nature of the postwar liberal international order: pandemic diseases, transnational terrorism, refugee flows, regional destabilization, great-power conflict, and criminality. Their conclusion is that the first two – pandemics and international terrorism – are potentially the most consequential, although neither poses the kind of existential threat presented by war among nuclear-armed states. Large-scale cross-border or internal movements of people fleeing intrastate violence

can both undermine liberal states' commitment to humanitarian norms with significant domestic political consequences, and complicate efforts to find lasting peace settlements. The continuing diffusion of global power may lead to a growing number of regional conflicts due to the unwillingness and inability of major stakeholders to facilitate mediation, enable peacekeeping operations, and provide a modicum of development assistance. At the same time, there is an increasing risk of great-power conflict stemming from proxy-war engagements or even direct confrontations in civil wars. While transnational criminality complicates efforts to end civil wars and weakens the ability of states to create a stable polity, it rarely poses a direct threat to international order and is most easily dealt with through domestic and multinational law enforcement.

Krasner and Eikenberry identify four policy considerations relevant to states and regional and international organizations, contemplating external interventions to resolve a civil war. First, external actors and local elites rarely share a common future vision. The obstacles to putting a war-torn country on the path to Denmark are many, and ambitions should be tempered accordingly; establishing adequate or good enough governance is a realistic and reasonable goal. Second, the presence of irreconcilables fighting for outcomes that transcend or reject existing and internationally accepted borders can frustrate efforts to reach negotiated settlements. The termination of conflicts involving rebels of the divine, insurgents inspired by an uncompromising transnational ideology or separatists who reject association with their opponents, often requires a bloody military victory or partition. Third, efforts by a major world or regional power to resolve a war of internal disorder can often be hopelessly undermined by an opposing state or coalition of states. Small investments by

spoilers can deny success to the intervening power.

Fourth, the ways and means available to the United States and its partners, other major powers, and the international community vary greatly in costs and appropriateness. Direct military interventions are hugely expensive and usually require protracted campaigns; thus, they are difficult to sustain domestically and lead to problematic attempts to make credible commitments. More modest approaches, including employment of tailored military forces such as special forces and combat enablers, increased reliance on security assistance programs, and provision of limited foreign aid programs, are less costly and easier to maintain, but are often akin to the application of life support. The standard international treatment regime, developed since the early 1990s, combining mediated peace agreements with UN or regional organization peacekeepers and development assistance, has proven more successful than is widely understood. However, the regime is ineffective when the protagonists do not believe they are in a hurting stalemate, when the presence of irreconcilable insurgents is significant, and when relevant regional and great powers have substantial conflicting interests.

Krasner and Eikenberry conclude that civil wars may become more prominent on the international landscape and their consequences for the security of the United States and global order are serious, but do not rival the existential threat of nuclear-armed and near peer-state competitors.

ENDNOTES

[1] Information on the civil wars project may be found at American Academy of Arts and Sciences, "Civil Wars, Violence, and International Responses: 2015 – Present," https://www.amacad.org/content/Research/researchproject.aspx?d=22262.

[2] Francis Fukuyama, "The Last English Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[3] Tanisha M. Fazal, "Religionist Rebels & the Sovereignty of the Divine," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[4] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Jihadi Rebels in Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[5] Steven Heydemann, "Civil War, Economic Governance & State Reconstruction in the Arab Middle East," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[6] Charles T. Call and Susanna P. Campbell, "Is Prevention the Answer?" *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[7] Edward N. Luttwak, "Give War a Chance," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1999, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1999-07-01/give-war-chance.

[8] Sumit Ganguly, "Ending the Sri Lankan Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[9] Clare Lockhart, "Sovereignty Strategies: Enhancing Core Governance Functions as a Post-conflict and Conflict-Prevention Measure," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[10] Thomas Risse and Eric Stollenwerk, "Limited Statehood Does Not Equal Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[11] Lyse Doucet, "Syria & the CNN Effect: What Roles Does the Media Play in Policy-Making?" *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[12] Nancy E. Lindborg and J. Joseph Hewitt, "In Defense of Ambition: Building Peaceful & Inclusive Societies in a World on Fire," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[13] Richard Gowan & Stephen John Stedman, "The International Regime for Treating Civil War, 1988 – 2017," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

The Last English Civil War

Francis Fukuyama

Abstract: This essay examines why England experienced a civil war every fifty years from the Norman Conquest up until the Glorious Revolution of 1688 – 1689, and was completely stable after that point. The reasons had to do with, first, the slow accumulation of law and respect for the law that had occurred by the seventeenth century, and second, with the emergence of a strong English state and sense of national identity by the end of the Tudor period. This suggests that normative factors are very important in creating stable settlements. Rational choice explanations for such outcomes assert that stalemated conflicts will lead parties to accept second- or third-best outcomes, but English history, as well as more recent experiences, suggests that stability requires normative change as well.

> In establishing the rule of law, the first five centuries are always the hardest.
>
> – Gordon Brown

Following the Norman Conquest in 1066, England experienced a civil war roughly every fifty years. These conflicts, often extremely bloody, continued up until the great Civil War of the 1640s. The issues underlying the latter conflict were not finally resolved until the Glorious Revolution of 1688 – 1689, bringing about a constitutional settlement that established once and for all the principle of parliamentary supremacy. The last battle to be fought on English soil was the Battle of Sedgemoor in 1685; from that moment up until the present, England itself has been peaceful and internally stable.[1]

Why was England so unstable in the nearly six centuries following the Conquest, and so stable thereafter? To answer this question, we must look at the history of those earlier civil wars, and compare their causes and resolutions with the last civil war in the seventeenth century. We can then compare this record against existing general theories of civil conflict and against specific interpretations of English history.

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA is a Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and the Mosbacher Director of the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University. He is the author of *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (2014), *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (2011), and *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy* (2006).

To anticipate the bottom line of this analysis, the durability of the 1689 settlement proceeded from two primary factors: first, the slow accumulation both of law and respect for the law on the part of English political actors; and second, the emergence of an English state and a strong sense of English national identity. These explanations depend heavily on normative changes that took place in English political consciousness during the late Middle Ages and, particularly, on innovative ideas about political sovereignty that took hold in the second half of the seventeenth century. Rational choice explanations that assume that all elites are maximizing predators, and see stability as the result of elite bargains, are insufficient to explain these outcomes.

This interpretation has important implications for our approach to the settlement of civil wars today. The rational choice interpretation suggests that settlements occur as a result of stalemated conflicts in which the warring parties recognize that their second- or third-best outcome – a negotiated political agreement – has become more appealing than continuing to struggle for their first-best choice (total victory for their side). Economists Douglass North and Barry Weingast have argued that the Glorious Revolution produced a "self-enforcing" equilibrium due to the fact that two monarchs had been removed by Parliament, forcing future monarchs to accept limits on predatory behavior.[2]

There are several contemporary examples of fragile stalemated settlements. In Cambodia, the United Nations sponsored elections and then a power-sharing arrangement including Prime Minister Hun Sen, who succeeded, as soon as he was strong enough to do so, in overturning the arrangement through a coup in 1997. In Angola, the peace accords negotiated in the early 1990s between the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

fell apart after Jonas Savimbi decided he was strong enough to resume the civil war. In Bosnia, the 1995 Dayton Accords finally brought an end to the civil war, with each side accepting what, for them, was a second-best outcome. The Bosniaks had to accept a semi-autonomous Republika Srpska, while the Serbs did not succeed in either separating or joining Serbia. While this has brought stability to the Western Balkans for more than twenty years, the Accords appear to be fraying in 2017 as the weakening of the European Union and the emboldening of Russia have increased the self-confidence of the Serbian community.

The problem with the rational choice interpretation is that several prior English civil wars had produced a similar outcome: the dethroning or effective political neutering of a king by other elites, followed by a political settlement that put the monarchy under clear constitutional constraints. Yet, unlike the results of the Glorious Revolution, none of these earlier settlements were "self-enforcing": the king immediately sought to break free of legal constraints once the balance of power shifted back in his favor. Second-best outcomes were not preferable to maximal ones if the latter seemed feasible. Two other things are needed for durable settlements: a normative belief in the intrinsic value of constitutionalism and the rule of law, and state institutions that have some degree of autonomy from the competing political factions. Paradoxically, the emergence of a constrained state required the prior evolution of a state made strong by its underlying legitimacy and capacity. Absent these factors, political settlements are likely to be nothing more than truces in prolonged competitions for power, as they were for the English over the span of many centuries. This suggests that we need to lower our expectations for the sustainability of postconflict settlements and focus more on bringing about normative change.

During the Middle Ages, the English fought an extraordinary number of civil wars, here defined as a violent conflict in which organized groups within a single society seek to gain political power and, ultimately, dominance. In the English case, these wars occasionally involved tens of thousands of combatants on both sides, and led to the deaths of equal numbers of people, especially when we include collateral civilian casualties.

In this section, I present a brief overview of English political history, together with an analysis of the common characteristics of English civil wars.[3] Many of these conflicts had a structure like the last civil war of the seventeenth century: they involved a struggle for power between a king and his "barons," that is, powerful elites who sought to limit the king's power. Several of these wars produced constitutional settlements in which the parties agreed to a formal legal specification of the rights and duties of both the crown and its subjects. Yet none of these earlier settlements, including the Magna Carta, proved enforceable over a prolonged period of time.

England's medieval history was punctuated by its conquest in 1066 by a foreign, French-speaking dynasty from Normandy led by William the Conqueror. The Norman Conquest itself was one of the causes of subsequent instability: the Norman kings had to manage territorial possessions in both England and France, which gave the French and other actors multiple opportunities for meddling in English affairs. In an age well prior to the rise of modern nationalism, this situation nonetheless produced enduring problems with legitimacy, as French lords ruled over English subjects and English kings fought for French territory with money raised in England.

The first major post-Conquest civil war occurred in the 1140s and 1150s. Henry I (1100 – 1135), William's son, died without a male heir, and a struggle ensued between his daughter Mathilda and her husband Geoffrey Plantagenet of Anjou, on the one side, and Henry's nephew Stephen of Blois, on the other. This civil war eventually led to the establishment of the Angevin Plantagenet dynasty and the coronation of Geoffrey's son as Henry II. Henry II and his son Richard I were strong authoritarian rulers who provided domestic stability.

The second civil war occurred less than a generation later in 1173, when Henry II's three oldest sons and wife took up arms against him and, in effect, sought to seize the crown from him. The rebellion was put down in about a year.

The next civil war involved King John. While he is popularly remembered as a great tyrant, he was not necessarily more cruel or tyrannical than his two Angevin predecessors.[4] However, he exacted large payments from his barons to fight an unsuccessful war to expand his French possessions, which he subsequently lost after defeat at the Battle of Bouvines. In May 1215, a group of barons took up arms; the conflict was stalemated and the two sides negotiated, producing the charter at Runnymede that came to be known as the Magna Carta.

The Magna Carta contained a large number of specific provisions to regulate behavior on both sides and embodied general principles that played an important role in the development of property rights in England. Since the time of Henry II, only subtenants enjoyed the benefits of the Common Law through the royal courts. The tenants-in-chief, however, were subject to the direct feudal jurisdiction of the king. The Magna Carta brought these elites under the jurisdiction of the Common Law, and thus constrained the king from making arbitrary exactions.[5]

The Magna Carta was thus the prototype of a constitutional settlement that laid out in formal legal terms the rights and responsibilities of the king and barons, particularly the former's right to take property. It has

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been regarded, properly, as the bedrock of English liberties, and came about as the result of a civil war in which neither side won an overwhelming victory. The specific provisions constituted second-best outcomes for both sides, who would have preferred to win a crushing victory and impose their will unilaterally.

The Magna Carta did not, however, create a "self-sustaining equilibrium"; it was more like a truce in an ongoing civil war. Less than two months after its signing, King John sought and received an annulment of its terms from Pope Innocent III, and the civil war continued until John's death in 1216. His son Henry III did not secure the kingship without further violence, culminating in the Battle of Lincoln in 1217; the Magna Carta was, for him, far from an established law.

The next civil war broke out in the 1250s. Henry III proved to be a weak king who alienated his court by bringing in a series of foreign courtiers. It was again a foreign policy debacle that triggered the uprising: Henry's failed and expensive attempt to conquer Sicily. In 1258, he was confronted, as was his father John, by his barons, who demanded that the king cease further taxation, and that he be constrained by a council of twenty-four and a parliament.[6] This charter was known as the Provisions of Oxford, and was as wide-ranging, if less well-known, than the Magna Carta. It was seen by its authors as an effort to, in effect, re-impose the latter charter on a recalcitrant king.[7]

Like his father, Henry III immediately tried to wriggle out of the constraints of the Provisions of Oxford, and overt conflict broke out six years later as Henry's brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort, launched an attack on the king at the head of a baronial coalition. He defeated Henry and his son Edward at the Battle of Lewes, and reinstated the Provisions of Oxford in a peace known as the Mise of Lewes. De Montfort

was soon thereafter defeated and executed by a resurgent Edward, who secured the kingship as Edward I. Mopping up the rebels required Edward to accede to a new charter, the Dictum of Kenilworth, which reaffirmed the Magna Carta and restored lands to Montfort's rebels.

Edward went on to become one of the greatest kings in English history; great because, as a strong and vigorous military leader, he provided stability throughout his long reign, incorporated Wales, and subdued Scotland. (This obviously was not necessarily the perspective of the Welsh or the Scots.) It was becoming something of a pattern, however, that every other king would prove weak or incompetent, and hence trigger a new civil war. Such was the case with Edward I's son Edward II. From the moment of his coronation in 1308, he was widely despised as a degenerate, and suspected of having a long-term homosexual affair with the Gascon knight Piers Gaveston. Parliament sought to impose a new set of legal restrictions on him, which he evaded; by 1321, the conflict degenerated into civil war. Edward won the war and launched a bloody retribution on his enemies, tearing up any prior constitutional understandings about the limits of his power. His reign ended when his queen, Isabella (sister of Charles IV of France), defected back to France and, together with her lover Roger Mortimer, launched an invasion of England. Edward was forced to abdicate in favor of his young son Edward III, who himself had to launch a palace coup to gain effective power from his mother and Mortimer.

Edward III was a strong king; like his grandfather, he maintained stability in England and launched what came to be known as the Hundred Years War to regain Plantagenet territories in France. The crown eventually passed to Edward's grandson Richard, who, as Richard II, would prove to be a weak king and poor military leader. In 1386,

interelite conflict returned as the Wonderful Parliament stripped him of his authority. In 1397, the king staged an internal coup that consolidated his rule and led to a period described by many as "Richard's tyranny." Opposition to his rule coalesced around Henry Bolingbroke, who, from exile on the continent, launched an invasion of England and deposed him to emerge as the first Lancastrian king, Henry IV.

Henry suffered from a crisis of legitimacy and had to fend off several violent revolts early in his rule. His son Henry V, crowned in 1413, proved to be a strong ruler, able to maintain stability in England and expand, in the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, English rule in France. The same could not be said of his son Henry VI, who gained the throne as a child on his father's untimely death in 1422. The kingdom fell into a prolonged civil war, known as the Wars of the Roses, between two branches of the Plantagenet family, the Lancasters and the Yorks, that lasted almost into the sixteenth century. Observing this protracted conflict, the Milanese ambassador Sforza de' Bettini wrote: "I wish the country and the people were plunged deep in the sea, because of their lack of stability."[8]

The nature of civil conflict in England began to shift in subtle but important ways during the Tudor dynasty, which encompassed the reigns of Henry VII (1485 – 1509), Henry VIII (1509 – 1547), Edward VI (1547 – 1553), Mary I (1553 – 1558), and Elizabeth I (1558 – 1603). The kinds of large noble uprisings that culminated in the Wars of the Roses became much less common as the English state grew in size and authority, especially during the reign of Henry VIII. With the arrival of the Reformation, political conflict increasingly centered on religion, with Henry and his son Edward VI establishing England as a Protestant country, Mary pulling it back into Catholicism, and Elizabeth reestablishing Protestantism. In addition, class conflict, which had

emerged in Wat Tyler's rebellion, became a more common source of violence. These religious and class issues were exploited by elites in their struggles over power and resources, yet it was also the case that ideas themselves were autonomous sources of conflict, with obscure matters like the doctrine of transubstantiation leading countless individuals to be tortured, beheaded, or burned at the stake. Overall, however, the Tudor century was much more stable than the three preceding it.

The great English Civil War of the 1640s began in 1641 and was fought on and off for a decade, leading to the beheading of the Stuart monarch Charles I in 1649 and the monarchy's replacement by a quasirepublican form of government under the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 did not resolve the underlying conflict, however, especially with the accession of the Catholic James II in 1685. The conflict ended when William of Orange invaded England from the Netherlands and deposed James, leading to the constitutional settlement known as the Glorious Revolution of 1688 – 1689. This entire chain of events is here referred to as the last English Civil War.

We can thus count at least nine major interelite civil wars during the period from the Norman Conquest to the Glorious Revolution. While some were brief, others like the Wars of the Roses lasted for two generations and involved many separate subordinate conflicts. In addition, there were at least three large popular uprisings: the Wat Tyler rebellion in 1381, the Pilgrimage of Grace under Henry VIII, and the uprisings under Edward VI. This list does not include dozens of individual armed conspiracies and attempted and successful coups that took place over this period. If the England of that time were a contemporary developing country, we would not regard it as particularly stable.

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We can make several broad generalizations about the causes of these conflicts. Whig historians have often argued that the broad underlying issue from at least the Magna Carta on was the effort to force despotic kings to abide by the law and to make them ultimately accountable to Parliament, and thereby to the whole English people.

While there is truth in this account, it is also clear that Whig history gravely distorts the record. In the end, virtually all the civil wars in England were triggered by a loss of legitimacy by the monarch. But that loss was not necessarily tied to tyrannical or excessively predatory behavior. The most significant common cause for the civil wars was the king's perceived weakness or incompetence, particularly in foreign policy: John's loss of Normandy, Henry III's debacle in Sicily, Edward II's travails in Scotland, Richard II's failures in Scotland and France, and Henry VI's loss of the French territories acquired under his father and great-great-grandfather. Charles I found himself with a bankrupt state and was forced to turn to extraordinary measures like demands for ship money (a tax that skirted parliamentary review). By contrast, a level of taxation that had triggered a rebellion in earlier times was grudgingly borne if the monarch put those resources to good use by expanding the realm, as in the case of Edward III's extended wars in France. In other cases, the loss of legitimacy was tied to domestic issues, such as the courtiers kept by Henry III and Edward II, or Henry VI's general incompetence.

By contrast, England experienced great stability under strong and often tyrannical kings, especially those who achieved foreign policy success: Henry II, Richard I, Edward I, and Henry V. Each imposed ruinous taxes on the realm and yet maintained their legitimacy. Henry VIII was not particularly successful overseas, but over his long reign he centralized power dramatically, extracted onerous taxes, and carried

domestic tyranny to new heights. Yet Henry VIII died peacefully in his bed, without provoking an armed backlash from other elites. The history of these conflicts was therefore not, contrary to Whig history, a struggle to achieve ever-higher levels of liberty.

The conflict of the seventeenth century bore some resemblances to previous civil wars, insofar as it pitted a monarch – alternatively Charles I and James II – against various elite opponents centered in Parliament. As in the case of the Magna Carta or the Provisions of Oxford, it led to a formal political settlement that imposed greater accountability on the king. And as in the case of the military confrontation surrounding the Magna Carta, the outcome was ambiguous: while the parliamentary side initially prevailed and managed to depose Charles I, Cromwell's Protectorate became increasingly dictatorial and unpopular. By the time of the Restoration, the two sides were disenchanted both with the idea of absolute monarchy and of republican government. The Glorious Revolution produced neither outcome, but rather a state that was constitutionally limited in its powers, under the principle of "no taxation without representation." Sovereignty was vested in the "king in Parliament," though, in practice, the Glorious Revolution maintained the principle of parliamentary supremacy and remained a durable political settlement for the next four centuries.

Critical to the durability of the 1689 settlement was the growth in the belief by all English political actors in the sanctity of constitutional government and, more broadly, that the sovereign should be "under the law." North and Weingast have suggested that the Glorious Revolution was critical to the establishment of English property rights and contract enforcement, and therefore to the economic growth and material prosperity that emerged in the next two centuries.[9]

But English property rights had been firmly established centuries earlier. The Stuarts attempted to turn back the clock on law; their failure was the product of deep normative changes in the way the law was understood.

European political development was different from other parts of the world because, of the three basic political institutions – a modern state, rule of law, and accountability – it was law that emerged first.[10] Of all European countries, England saw the most precocious development of the rule of law. But it also began to create a modern state early on, and the histories of the two were closely intertwined.

Henry II laid the basis for what would come to be known as the Common Law and a centralized English state in the twelfth century. Contrary to a line of interpretation that stretches from Edward Coke to Friedrich Hayek, the Common Law did not emerge in an evolutionary fashion out of Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman customary law.[11] Rather, "the custom of the king's court is the custom of England, and becomes the common law."[12] In regard to secure property rights, as historian Joseph Strayer has pointed out, the king would frequently take the side of the tenant against the lord in a society in which cases had been typically tried in seigneurial courts, through institutions like the assize of novel disseisin ("recent dispossession").[13] The ability to dispense impartial justice helped establish the legitimacy of Henry's kingship; it also earned the crown substantial revenue in an age before any form of centralized taxation.

In the centuries after Henry II's reforms, institutions gradually took shape. English judges and lawyers began to receive specialized training and recognized themselves as a separate profession beginning in the twelfth century, and there was steady codification of informal rules and the centralization of case law under the principle of *stare decisis* (precedent).[14] Edward I, in particular, was critical in establishing a number of major statutes, including the first Statute of Westminster (1275), the Statute of Gloucester (1278), and the Statute of Mortmain (1279).[15]

By the early seventeenth century, the role of law in English life had changed beyond recognition. As historian J. G. A. Pocock has pointed out, the first decades of that century saw the emergence of what he labels the "common law mind," which held that English law was not legislated but had existed from time immemorial.[16] The parliamentary side did not see itself innovating with respect to the law, but taking a profoundly conservative position in defense of law and tradition.

Moreover, there was a dramatic shift in the understanding of the nature of rights and liberties between the early seventeenth century and the Glorious Revolution. A medieval right or liberty was a particularistic privilege that was either customary or legally defined in feudal law as the result of a contract between parties of unequal power and social status. These were the sorts of rights defended at Runnymede: although the barons claimed to be speaking on behalf of the whole realm, they were most interested in their own privileges as a social class.

This understanding changed dramatically in the second half of the seventeenth century, in part as a result of the experience of the Civil War itself. Thomas Hobbes's treatise *Leviathan*, written in the immediate aftermath of the first phase of the Civil War, was critical to this transformation. Hobbes argued that human beings are fundamentally equal because they are equally vulnerable to violent death; the state is a social contract that protects the right to life in a way that cannot be accomplished in the state of nature. While he argues in favor of absolute monarchy, that monarchy exists only to protect the right to life. Hobbes thereby upended completely the medieval understanding of rights: they are

not inherited or contractual, but rather inhere in human beings qua human beings, and become the basis for state legitimacy.

These ideological changes were critical to understanding why the parliamentary side was willing to abide by a constitutional settlement that limited its own ability to extract rents and violate the restrictions it had agreed to in the settlement. The state was no longer seen as a form of private property that could be seized by elites for private benefit; it was sovereign, but only because it "represented" the whole community and it exercised that sovereignty as a public trust. The elites represented in Parliament, in other words, had come to recognize in principle the modern idea that private and public interests are sharply separated, and that the state only existed to serve the latter. While previous civil wars were fought to defend the diverse "rights of Englishmen," the great Civil War was fought under the banner of the "rights of man."

Parallel to the growth of law and respect for the law was the slow consolidation of a modern English state to which all citizens owed loyalty, and which was powerful enough to maintain a legitimate monopoly of force throughout the territory of England. This kind of state did not really emerge until the late Tudor period at the end of the sixteenth century.

A modern state began to consolidate under Henry VIII, and particularly during the period from 1532 – 1540 under Henry's powerful secretary Thomas Cromwell. The view that there was a "revolution in government" at this time is associated with historian Geoffrey Elton, who argued that, prior to this period, the realm was run like a large private estate;[17] after Cromwell, it became bureaucratic, national, and uniform with direct consequences for stability.[18] The specifics of the Elton thesis have been much debated, but it is clear that England participated in a process of mod-

ern state-building that was taking place all over Europe in that period.[19]

In England, the primary driver of this transformation was the English Reformation. The Catholic Church owned perhaps one-fifth of the land in England at the beginning of the sixteenth century; that land and the Church's moveable wealth were confiscated by the crown and the substantial taxes sent to Rome went to the Exchequer instead. Cromwell created a bureaucratic system for managing this wealth and shifted the system of taxation to more regular levies not linked to the revenue needs of specific wars. The king and his immediate circle of courtiers became increasingly detached from the day-to-day administration of the government, and were replaced by a Privy Council with regular membership that controlled access to the king.[20]

Just as important as these administrative changes was the creation of a distinctive English national identity as a result of the break with Rome. Medieval kings did not regard themselves as sovereign; God was sovereign, and kings shared authority with God's vicar, the Pope. Henry's Reformation made the English monarch sovereign over all aspects of his subjects' lives, both material and spiritual; the shift from Catholic ritual to Protestant worship through the promulgation of works like Thomas Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* established a distinctive English national language and culture. This was reflected as well in English foreign policy, where Tudor England became the dominant Protestant power balancing would-be Catholic hegemons in Spain and France. The normative belief in the existence of a single English community was reinforced by events like the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and by the material interests of the nobility and gentry that had profited from the sale of confiscated Church lands.

The creation of a unified sovereignty by the end of the sixteenth century then laid

the basis for the novel theories of the seventeenth century: after Hobbes, sovereignty came to mean a social contract in which absolute power was vested in the monarch only insofar as he was representative of the whole community. Kings, and particularly the early Stuart monarchs, could no longer rely on their personal wealth and had to seek money either from bankers or by cajoling the elites in Parliament to pay taxes. The various Stuart monarchs sought to return to the situation in which kings ruled rather than reigned, but found they did not have the resources to do so. After the Glorious Revolution, the monarch became an increasingly ceremonial figure attached to Parliament and a large bureaucratic machine; capturing the kingship, which had been the object of civil wars before the Tudors, was much less of an elite objective. The often incompetent Hanoverian kings of the eighteenth century did not provoke civil conflicts because their prime ministers and Parliaments were the effective rulers of a Britain that was becoming territorially consolidated.

English stability after 1689 was the by-product of several slow-moving political conditions: increasing respect for the law and constitutionalism, and the growth of a modern state that could administer the realm even if the king were weak or incompetent.

English stability was the result of an elite bargain, but it was a pact that took hold only over the course of six centuries. Beginning with the Magna Carta, such pacts were seen by elites as no more than momentary truces that could be upended the moment they felt they could get the upper hand. The stability of the settlement coming out of the Glorious Revolution, by contrast, was rooted in normative or ideational commitments by those elites to constitutionalism and legal tradition, to a clearly perceived English national identity, and to a new understanding of sovereignty that was vested in the equal rights of all citizens.

This suggests that there can be no stable democracy without a normative commitment to democracy and to the rule of law; indeed, there cannot be a stable state unless there is a shared understanding of national identity underpinning the state's legitimacy. Elite bargains will buy time and temporarily reduce conflict, but they will not necessarily result in either a stable state or liberal democracy.

Many contemporary conflicts will therefore continue until greater normative commitment to state, law, and democracy come about. Both Afghanistan traditionally and Iraq since the American invasion in 2003 have suffered from weak states and weak national identities. While U.S. assistance could help create certain visible institutions of government (such as armies and police, schools and clinics), these initiatives alone did not foster a new sense of national identity, commitment to the law, or states that could command authority throughout the territory of these countries. It is not necessarily the case that building such normative commitments will take six centuries, as in the English case, but the ability to effect such changes within the short time frame dictated by the patience of American and European taxpayers is questionable. This means that the burden of sustainable institution-building necessarily will fall on the local elites themselves, who will have to draw upon their own traditions to create legitimacy and political order.

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[1] This does not count the violent conflicts of the twentieth century in Ireland (the Easter Rebellion of 1916) or in Northern Ireland (prolonged conflict with the IRA and its offshoots); while occurring under British sovereignty, they did not take place on English soil.

[2] Douglass C. North and Barry R. Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England," *Journal of Economic History* 49 (4) (1989): 803–832.

[3] This historical account deliberately leaves aside several other major categories of violent conflict. I am not covering pre-Conquest England for simple lack of space and knowledge. In addition, I am not going to deal with the innumerable wars and rebellions connected with England's incorporation of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. For much of England's premodern history, these were regarded as foreign conflicts and belong in the domain of international relations.

[4] Ralph K. Turner, "England in 1215: An Authoritarian Angevin Dynasty Facing Multiple Threats," in *Magna Carta and the England of King John*, ed. Janet S. Loengard (Woodbridge, United Kingdom: Boydell Press, 2010).

[5] James C. Holt, *The Northerners: A Study in the Reign of King John* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961); David Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996); and Caroline Burt, *Edward I and the Governance of England, 1272–1307* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[6] F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward: The Community of the Realm in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947).

[7] R. F. Treharne, *Simon de Montfort and Baronial Reform: Thirteenth Century Essays*, ed. E. B. Fryde (London: Hambledon Press, 1986).

[8] Dan Jones, *The Wars of the Roses: The Fall of the Plantagenets and the Rise of the Tudors* (New York: Viking, 2014), 235.

[9] North and Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment."

[10] Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011); and Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014).

[11] J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957); and Friedrich A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

[12] Frederic W. Maitland and Frederick Pollock, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898), 163.

[13] Joseph R. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970); and Frederic W. Maitland and Frederick Pollock, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898), 29–79.

[14] Maitland and Pollock, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, vol. 1.

[15] Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (London: Methuen, 1988); Jones, *The Wars of the Roses*; and Dan Jones, *The Plantagenets: The Warrior Kings and Queens Who Made England* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014).

[16] Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*.

[17] Geoffrey R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953); and Geoffrey R. Elton, *England Under the Tudors* (London: Methuen, 1974).

[18] Penry Williams, "The Tudor State," *Past and Present* 25 (1) (1963): 39–58.

[19] See Joseph S. Block, "The Rise of the Tudor State," in *A Companion to Tudor Britain*, ed. Robert Tittler and Norman Jones (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004).

[20] Roger Schofield, *Taxation Under the Early Tudors, 1485–1547* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004).

Religionist Rebels
& the Sovereignty of the Divine

Tanisha M. Fazal

Abstract: Existing categorizations of rebel groups have difficulty classifying some of today's most vexing rebels – those, such as the Islamic State, that reject the Westphalian state system and depend on an almost entirely religious justification for their cause. Such rebel groups often have unlimited war aims and are unwilling to negotiate with the states whose sovereignty they challenge. In this essay, I present the new category of "religionist rebels." I show that religionist rebels have been present throughout the history of the state system, and explore the particular challenges they pose in the civil war context. Religionist rebels are often brutal in their methods and prosecute wars that are especially difficult to end. But the nature of religionist rebellion also suggests natural limits. Thus, religionist rebels do not, ultimately, present a long-term threat to the state system.

TANISHA M. FAZAL is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota. She is the author of *State Death: The Politics and Geography of Conquest, Annexation, and Occupation* (2007) and *Wars of Law: Unintended Consequences in the Regulation of Armed Conflict* (forthcoming 2018). She contributed the essay "Rebellion, War Aims & the Laws of War" to the Winter 2017 issue of *Dædalus*.

Rebellion is a defining element of civil wars, in which armed opponents challenge the sovereign authority of the state. But the set of political aims sought by rebels is as diverse as rebel groups themselves. Archetypical civil wars include the U.S. Civil War, in which the Confederacy fought to secede from the Union and create a new, independent state, and the Spanish Civil War, in which the Nationalist rebels sought to overthrow and replace the governing Republican regime. In both of these cases, the rebels not only accepted, but premised their war aims on the continuance of the international state system. Even if they may have sought to change borders or redesign the seat of government, both sets of rebels also sought to control a state.

My aim in this essay is to investigate a type of rebel group that is not new, but may seem so: what I call *religionist rebels*. Religionist rebels reject the Westphalian notion of the state: that is, a political entity that governs a clearly delimited population and territory and interacts with like units in the international system.

Religionist rebels do not seek to carve out a new, independent state that will receive international recognition and, today, the benefits of a seat at the United Nations. Nor do they seek to capture the capital for the purpose of reclaiming the reins of government from those accused of having betrayed the public's trust. For religionist rebels, sovereignty does not reside in the people or in the recognition provided by other states. Instead, sovereignty is given – or even lent – by the divine.

Understanding the particular challenges posed by religionist rebels is important for three main reasons. First, if the right to rule and represent can only emanate from the heavens, religionist rebels are likely to reject approaches from the state whose sovereignty their rebellion directly challenges, as well as from third parties whose interests may also be at stake. It will, in other words, be difficult to negotiate with a group whose members recognize a divine source of legitimacy. Second and related, classifying religionist rebels can help shed light on their war aims and, in particular, whether those war aims are limited. And third, religionist rebels may also conduct war differently from rebels with other types of war aims, because the prosecution of the war – as well as its goals – may be justified on religious grounds.

Today's headlines abound with examples of Islamic religionist rebels, such as the Islamic State and Boko Haram. But religionist rebellion is not an exclusively Islamic, or even modern, phenomenon.[1] Armed rebellions in China and Brazil in the mid- to late nineteenth century and even to some extent that of the (Christian) Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda today all fall into the category of rebel groups whose beliefs lead them to reject the modern state system in favor of a different theology of sovereignty.

These differences suggest that there is a fundamental mismatch between religionist rebels and the current state system in terms of how the sources of the right to rule translate into the commencement, conduct, and conclusion of civil war. This mismatch sets religionist rebels apart from other types of rebel groups. Secessionist rebel groups, for example, have been shown to be less likely to target civilians than other types of rebel groups, in part because they are trying to gain the favor of an international community that disapproves of civilian targeting.[2] And while existing scholarship has done less to tie war aims to the mode of war termination, there is at least some evidence suggesting that power-sharing – a popular postwar governing proposal – may be more likely to succeed in wars in which the rebels seek to replace the existing government than in those in which the rebels are divided from the government by ethnic identity.[3]

Many rebellions have a religious focus. Not all of these would be considered religionist, however. Many religious (but not religionist) rebel groups have secessionist aims, and actively seek to join the international states system. The Moro in the Philippines, for example, have a clear Muslim identity, but have often sought autonomy if not secession. Others aim to take over the central government, but maintain the state's relations with its neighbors, once again accepting the state system as it currently operates. The early part of the civil war between North and South Sudan was driven at least in part by the fear that the North was trying to impose Sharia law on the South, but at the beginning of this decades-long conflict, the rebels still sought to work within the confines of the Sudanese state by reshaping the government in Khartoum. Religionist rebels not only give prominence to religious beliefs, but also explicitly reject a notion of statehood centered on limits to sovereignty and mutual recognition.

Because religionist rebels are not interested in joining the international commu-

nity as a newly independent state or in replacing the existing government's role, many recent strategies for war termination are unlikely to be effective when dealing with this type of rebellion. In this, religionist rebels may be somewhat similar to rebels whose main aim is plunder. But insofar as loot-seeking rebels are motivated by money, they can likely be paid off; the same is not true for religionist rebels. Recognizing the particular challenges that religionist rebels pose for war termination is critical to the resolution of religionist conflict.

In this essay, I first present the conventional understanding of the possible array of rebel war aims. Next, I argue for adding a new type of rebel – religionist rebels – to existing categorizations. I lay out my logic via example, and delve into a series of cases of religionist rebels both to motivate and make my argument. I then examine briefly how past religionist rebellions were terminated, and to what extent the nature of their termination was driven by the religionist war aims of the rebels. I conclude with policy implications meant to apply to today's – and future – conflicts with religionist rebels.

Scholars have classified civil wars on a number of dimensions. I focus here on the classification of civil wars according to the political aims of the rebel group. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), an invaluable resource for civil war researchers, identifies two principal "incompatibilities" between governments and rebel groups fighting civil wars. Wars over the government are defined as "concerning the type of political system, the replacement of the central government or the change of its composition."[4] Wars over territory are defined as "concerning the status of a specified territory, e.g. the change of the state in control of a certain territory (interstate conflict), secession or autonomy (intrastate conflict)."[5] An influential article that preceded a boom

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of research on civil wars distinguished "ethnic" from "nonethnic" civil wars, and described "nonethnic" civil wars as "revolutionary or other types of war."[6] In addition to wars over the control of the central government and ethnicity/territory, scholars have sometimes pointed to a third category: civil wars that are described as "resource wars," in which the rebels' primary aim is the plunder and sale of natural resources.[7]

Many important insights regarding the conduct and termination of civil war have emerged from the analysis of variation in rebel war aims.[8] A focus on the possibly distinctive behavior of groups that seek, at a minimum, autonomy and, at a maximum, a new independent state appears to be most common.[9] And wars in which rebels are motivated primarily by profit are thought, for example, to generate indiscipline and extensive civilian targeting, in contrast to conflicts in which clear political aims govern rebels' behavior.[10]

Connecting rebel political aims to the commencement, conduct, and conclusion of civil war is a sensible strategy. One problem, however, with the execution of this strategy to date has been the great deal of heterogeneity in the reference category. In other words, when we distinguish between "ethnic" and "nonethnic" or "secessionist" and "nonsecessionist," we push aside the significant variation in the "non" category. For example, another seminal article in the field identifies twenty ethnic civil wars, leaving a remainder of thirty-six nonethnic civil wars.[11] The latter category includes a diverse set of conflicts, from Marxist uprisings such as the Cuban Revolution in 1958 to the attempt by Islamists to take over Algeria in 1992 to southern secessionism in Yemen in 1994. The UCDP data code wars as being over government, territory, or both; a system that can also lead to some confusing coding decisions. For example, a conflict between the United States and Al Qaeda (part of the so-called global war on terror)

is coded as being over the type of government, presumably that of the United States.

Exploring this variation can be a risky proposition in that classification schemes can go too far. Overly detailed typologies are often too confusing to be useful. Bearing this caveat in mind, I nonetheless suggest adding at least one more type of rebel political aims: that of religionist rebels.

Before presenting specific examples of religionist rebels, I first want to clarify the claim that religionist rebellion is inconsistent with the Westphalian state system. I conceive of the Westphalian state system as one populated, at least ostensibly, by Weberian states whose governments possess (again, at least ostensibly) "a monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a given territory."[12] Limits are inherent to this definition of statehood. States control a limited amount of territory. Their right to rule is limited by two kinds of recognition, from the domestic population of the state and from the recognition of other states populating the system.

Many internationally recognized states fail to meet the Weberian ideal of statehood today. Somalia is often taken to be a prime example of this failure. The Somali government created by the constitution of 2012 certainly does not hold a monopoly on the use of force within its internationally recognized borders. But representatives of Somalia nonetheless hold a seat at the United Nations and appear to play by the rules of the international game. That Somali representatives retain these rights points to the fact that today's state system is Westphalian in a thin sense. States may interfere in each other's politics. They may even challenge each other's ownership to particular pieces of territory. But, with only a very few exceptions, they do not challenge each other's right to exist, at least because they understand that their own existence depends on the main-

tenance of the system and the sufferance of others.[13]

As a weak, even failed state, Somalia faces a series of domestic challenges. For the most part, however, these challenges are to the Somali state in particular and not to the international state system in general. Somaliland in the north seeks to create its own independent state and very much wants a seat at the UN. In the 1980s, the Somali National Movement and Somali Salvation Democratic Front sought to overthrow President Siad Barre. More recently, perhaps partly as a result of Somalia's prolonged state failure, the religionist group Al Shabaab has gained control over significant portions of Somalia, with the aim of establishing a global Islamic caliphate.

Three related characteristics distinguish religionist rebels from other types of rebel groups. First, religionist rebels are categorized by how they view the source of sovereignty, defined here as the right and fact of ruling a given population and territory. Both center-seeking and secessionist rebels seek to control a state, and view sovereignty as emanating from the people and/or recognition by other states in the international system. Rebels concerned principally with plunder may not seek sovereignty in any form, and may in fact prefer that some other party holds de jure sovereignty as long as they maintain control over resource-rich territory and access to markets through which they can sell their goods. Religionist rebels reject the notion that sovereignty is rooted in the people or in the international community, and their (ostensible) motives for any control of territory are theological rather than pecuniary.

Second, because religionist rebels rely on a divine source of sovereignty, they reject the legitimacy of other units in the world whose sovereignty claims rest on secular sources, such as popular support and/or recognition by other units in the system. If

religionist rebels do not recognize the legitimacy of other units in the system, they are unlikely to engage in formal relations with them. This restricts trade, negotiation, and diplomacy, all of which are critical to the current states system. Religionist rebels seek to be a world apart while remaking the world in their image.

Third, religionist rebels do not accept territorial limits on their sovereignty claims, unless those limits have a divine justification. As a scholar of the Holy Spirit Movement described her subject: "The goal of the war, as Lakwena explained, was less the military conquest of foreign territory than the spreading of the Word of God throughout the world.…The Holy Spirit Movement had a supra-ethnic, pan-African, and finally universal mission."[14] If the mandate from heaven is to convert and spread the word of God, there can be no inherent limit to this task.

A historical example of a religionist rebel group is the Yellow Cliffs rebels in mid-nineteenth-century China. At that time, the reach of the Chinese state did not extend to its recognized – and claimed – borders. As a result, there were a number of challenges to Peking's hold on outlying areas; many of these rebellions exhibited a strong religious cast.[15] For example, the Miao and Hui in the southwest, along with the Tungan and Xinjiang Muslims in the northwest, fought for autonomy if not independence from the Chinese state in the 1860s and 1870s.

Another challenge came from the Nien, bandits who were terrorizing China's northern countryside. Refugees from the Nien flocked to the Yellow Cliffs in the north, where they were gathered in and then ministered to by religious leader Zhang Jizhong. As time passed, supplicants arrived at the Yellow Cliffs not as refugees, but as pilgrims seeking to join Zhang's religious group.[16]

Zhang Jizhong subscribed to an alternative form of Confucianism known as the Taizhou school. The Taizhou school had been founded by Wang Gen, who had been inspired by "a dream in which he single-handedly prevented the heavens from imminent collapse and restored the sun, moon, and stars to working order."[17] Zhang's realization of this theology led him to create what was effectively a small theocracy in the Yellow Cliffs. Zhang controlled entrance to the community and provided safety from local bandits, education, food and shelter, and, of course, a system of worship. Sovereignty was effectively invested in Zhang, who took on the mantle of "high priest."[18]

At their height, the Yellow Cliffs rebels fielded eight hundred soldiers.[19] But these were primarily meant to protect the Yellow Cliffs community from bandits; they had issued no formal challenge to the government in Peking, effectively ignoring its claim to sovereignty over the Yellow Cliffs. The rebels were a group unto themselves, and only took up arms when their ability to self-govern was challenged.

The topography of the Yellow Cliffs region both protected and doomed Zhang and his followers. The cliffs created a geographical refuge, but also enabled a siege by government forces. While the residents of the Yellow Cliffs were offered the opportunity to surrender, none took advantage. All ten thousand souls – with the exception of four hundred women and children who were spared but had not surrendered – perished in the assault, committed to Zhang and his religious teachings.[20]

Similar to Zhang's disciples in the Yellow Cliffs of China, the Canudos of Northeast Brazil rejected the sovereignty of the newly formed Brazilian republic in 1896 without intending to challenge it directly. Antonio Maciel – also known as Antonio Conselheiro – led a Catholic community of twenty thousand who viewed the Republic as the "anti-Christ."[21] While the Canudos believed in the divine right of monar-

chy, they did not support the prior monarchy of Dom Pedro; they believed that a Portuguese crusader king would rise from the dead to lead them, and referred to their community as the "New Jerusalem."[22] The Canudos were organized along the lines of the Church itself. Although he did not claim the status of divine messenger or prophet, Conselheiro was treated as such by his subjects, who referred to him as the messiah.[23]

Also like the Yellow Cliffs rebels, the main political aim of the Canudos appears to have been to be left alone. The Canudos neither claimed an independent state nor directly challenged the sovereignty of the Brazilian government.[24] At the same time, they clearly rejected the rules and reign of the state. The Canudos created their own governance structures, based on Catholic teaching, which included a group of apostles to Conselheiro. The group held to a fairly austere ethos, likely driven as much by religious devotion as economic need, given that its membership was extremely poor.[25] The implicit challenge to the government lay in the combination of the rejection of local landowners' authority and the sheer size of the Canudos revolt. At its height, the Canudos community consisted of fifteen to twenty thousand people and at least four thousand soldiers, and was the second largest community in the state of Bahía.[26]

The Canudos rebellion itself occurred only in response to government action. Neighboring communities became nervous about the Canudos, accusing them of primitivism and of being "superstitious zealots."[27] Four separate government expeditions were launched against the Canudos. The first three were repelled by Conselheiro's *juaguncos*, a fighting force whose members were recruited as much for their skill as for their willingness to die for the Canudos cause.[28] The fourth and largest was successful, by starving out the Canudos, who never surrendered.[29] Govern-

ment forces ultimately killed nearly all the adult male Canudos and burned the community to the ground.

Two additional related cases – the Holy Spirit Movement Forces (HSMF) and the subsequent Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) – illustrate some of the challenges in identifying religionist rebels. There is no question that the Holy Spirit Movement, which fought the Ugandan government in the mid-1980s, was religiously motivated. The movement's founding moment is said to have occurred when a holy Christian spirit named Lakwena visited an Acholi woman, Alice Auma, in Northern Uganda. Alice Lakwena (previously Auma) then took on the mantle of prophetess, and called troops to her side in the name of God. While it is certainly the case that the religious beliefs of the HSMF led to poor tactical and operational decision-making on the battlefield and governed the war aims of the group, the HSMF accepted the confines of the state system in that it aimed to replace the central government in Kampala. Indeed, the HSMF was defeated when it launched a failed assault on the capital in 1987. By my coding, the HSMF would be considered religious, but not religionist.

Coding the Lord's Resistance Army is more complicated. Many accounts trace the lineage of the LRA to the demise of the Holy Spirit Movement Forces, suggesting the possibility of an alignment of war aims. But experts on this case suggest that the LRA's war aims are more difficult to discern than those of the HSMF. On one hand, the LRA did seem to accept the idea of the state system – or, at least, did not directly challenge it – on more than one occasion. For example, Joseph Kony, the infamous leader of the LRA, accepted aid from the government of Sudan. The LRA also negotiated directly with the Ugandan government.[30] On the other hand, the LRA appeared to reject the notion of state sovereignty on several

fronts. Kony's stated war aims in support of "the application of the Ten Commandments and the liberation of the people of Northern Uganda" do not necessarily hold the maintenance of the state system dear.[31] According to Kevin Dunn, a scholar of the conflict: "One of the more pronounced features of the conflict is Kony's limited interest in communicating with the outside world." Dunn further notes that the LRA was less interested in "seizing the reins of power" from the central government than in creating an "enclave . . . or personal fiefdom."[32] This description of the LRA bears a striking resemblance to the cases of the Yellow Cliffs rebels and the Canudos: the state system itself is deemed secondary to the desire to be left alone.

The LRA is a borderline case in coding religionist rebellion. Its war aims appear to have been somewhat fluid: it may have sought to overthrow the Ugandan government at some points and rejected the state system in its entirety at others. This rebellion appears to have petered out (at least in terms of battle deaths), but recent reports indicate an increase in child abductions that may mean that the LRA is attempting to rebuild via the use of child soldiers.[33]

Most recently, the Islamic State emerged from the wreckage of the 2003 Iraq War, initially to push the United States out of Iraq but, subsequently, to declare a caliphate on earth with no clear territorial borders. Attempts by the international community to engage with the Islamic State have been generally rebuffed, perhaps most clearly when governments have tried – unsuccessfully – to negotiate with the Islamic State to return hostages.[34] Broadly speaking, humanitarian agencies have been frustrated in attempts to reach out to groups such as the Islamic State and its cousin, Boko Haram, although there have been some limited successes, such as when the Swiss government and International Committee of the Red Cross negotiated the return of twenty-one

girls taken by Boko Haram.[35] Because religionist rebels do not subscribe to Western and Westphalian notions of sovereignty, the international community has little in the way of leverage to pressure these groups to comply with humanitarian norms.

Note that religionist rebels often provide many of the services of a state. Both the Yellow Cliffs rebels and the Canudos provided security, education, food, and shelter to their residents. Part of the Islamic State's success has been attributed to its ability to step in and provide basic services, such as garbage collection, at a time when the Syrian and Iraqi states were failing to do so (and notwithstanding the fact that the provision of these services has often been selective and used for recruitment purposes).[36] But essential to the Westphalian notion of statehood is the dual concept of international recognition of boundaries. This implies limits on sovereignty, and such limits are inconsistent with the sovereignty of the divine. It also implies living in a world with other recognized states, which is also inconsistent with the notion that there is one true path that all should follow.

Religionist rebels may also fight differently from center-seeking or secessionist groups. While all these groups fight to win, the extent to which religious belief permeates the daily life of religionist rebels can extend to the battlefield. A prime example of this phenomenon is the belief in bullet-proofing. Soldiers of the Holy Spirit Movement were forbidden to kill, relied on holy water and religious songs to protect them, and (confusingly) invoked the name of James Bond as they engaged enemy troops.[37] Another manifestation of the relationship between religionism and warfighting occurs when the belief in religious ends is used to justify brutal means. The Islamic State's governor in Aleppo drew upon Koranic scripture to endorse killing, crucifixion, and the amputation of hands and feet

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as punishment for enemies of the Islamic State, and evidence suggests that the organization has engaged in all of these practices.[38]

This is not to vilify religion: many if not most religious groups are devotedly nonviolent; see, for example, the Quakers and Jains. But religionist groups that use violence may accept few restrictions on their behavior, unless restrictions emanate from a divine source. This suggests that, in addition to identifying religionist rebels, it may also be useful to make doctrinal distinctions among them to determine which are likely to be the worst-behaved. Allegiance to the sovereignty of the divine may permit, demand, or restrict violence in different cases.

The greatest challenge posed by religionist rebels may be war termination. The historical examples described above offer limited comfort, in that many of these groups have tended to create strongholds in remote locations. While they have gained thousands of supporters, their popular appeal has been limited, and they have typically been defeated by government forces. Indeed, the likelihood of their defeat may be a function of their religionist nature; to the extent that their actions were governed by theology rather than strategy – particularly on the battlefield – they may have, in effect, been "selected out" when facing nonreligionist adversaries.[39]

A logic of internal containment may help explain the fate of groups like the Yellow Cliffs rebels and the Canudos. But from a distance of decades, these groups may appear small and weak, especially in hindsight. The Taiping Rebellion – fought in China just a few years prior to the outbreak of the Yellow Cliffs Rebellion – may therefore serve as a more compelling comparison to contemporary examples. The Taipings, also known as the God-Worshippers, fought in Eastern China from 1850 – 1864, marching on Nanking and Shanghai among other cities. The leader of the Taiping Re-

bellion, which took over twenty million lives, claimed to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ. While the Taipings certainly contrasted themselves with what they saw as a corrupt Manchu regime, they viewed their own mandate as coming from the heavens, and held that "the whole empire is the universal family of our Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great God."[40] What is more, they rejected overtures from diplomats from abroad, unless such delegations swore allegiance to "the Heavenly King, the head of the movement" as well as to the Taiping religion itself.[41] Even though it was orders of magnitude stronger than the Yellow Cliffs and Canudos rebellions, the Taiping Rebellion was ultimately (and soundly) defeated by Western-trained imperial government forces. Similarly, at this writing, the reach of the Islamic State has contracted dramatically, with significant losses in territory, population, and financing and the fall of core strongholds, such as the Syrian city of Raqqa.

Conflict resolution with religionist rebels is difficult because they eschew negotiation. Faith and divine responsibility cannot be negotiated away, and other actors are viewed as illegitimate negotiating partners if they do not subscribe to the same beliefs. This leaves two unsavory options on the table. The first option is to fight to the end, a strategy employed by the Chinese and Brazilian governments when negotiations with religionist rebels in their territory failed. Although ultimately effective, this strategy was also extremely costly, with tens of thousands of government and rebel soldiers – as well as civilians – dying in each war. The second option is to accept a hybrid system in which religionist rebels coexist alongside the Westphalian state system. Some version of this hybrid has existed since the emergence of the modern state system. This particular type of hybridity is problematic not (just) because it upsets the Westphalian apple cart, but more so because of the lack

of limits inherent to the evangelism of religionist rebels. It is not only their existence, but also their rejection of alternative justifications and systems of rule, that challenges nearby states. At the same time, however, it is precisely this lack of limits in aspiration that likely places a natural bound on the expansionist tendencies of religionist rebels. Because their attitude toward the state system undercuts third-party support for religionist rebels, they may be especially likely to turn to other, often criminal, sources of financing. The resort to criminality in turn undermines discipline within the organization as well as the credibility of its ideological appeals and governance efforts.[42] At this writing, for example, it appears that both the Islamic State and Boko Haram have begun to fall back, after bumping into limits to expansion, as well as pushback from the international community.[43] An uneasy truce may therefore be possible, albeit neither pleasant nor likely.

Religionist rebels' plans may appear to resemble the claims of past empires relying on justifications of sovereignty that invoked ideology or the divine right of monarchs.[44] But there are important differences from these historical analogs. Not only was the Soviet Union a member of the United Nations, it participated in its founding, and even argued for the admission of Soviet Socialist Republics that lacked the independence necessary to make their own foreign policy decisions. Similarly, the European monarchs of old certainly had an insatiable thirst for expansion, but also treated frequently with each other, and recognized that there were probably natural limits to the scope of their empires.

Religionist rebels are not new to international politics. And they are likely to continue to emerge and persist in one form or another. The bad news is that their aims are often without limit, their means are frequently brutal, and attempts at negotiation may be futile. The good news is that religionist rebels do appear, historically, to have bumped up against natural limits, precisely because of the claims they make and practices they engage in during the wars they fight. And while the bottom line has been an especially bloody one, as belief in the sovereignty of the divine makes religionist rebellions particularly difficult to end, the key takeaway is the necessity of distinguishing religion from religion*ism* in identifying these especially challenging rebellions.

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ENDNOTES

[1] In his contribution to this project, Hendrik Spruyt outlines various schools of Islamic legal thought and shows that some view Islamic law as compatible with the Westphalian state system, while others do not. Hendrik Spruyt, "Civil Wars as Challenges to the Modern International System," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017). For a more extensive analysis of Islamic law in this regard, see Emilia Justyna Powell, "Islamic Law States and the Peaceful Resolution of Territorial Disputes," *International Organization* 69 (4) (2015).

[2] Tanisha M. Fazal, *Wars of Law : Unintended Consequences in the Regulation of Armed Conflict* (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, forthcoming 2018), ch. 7 ; Virginia Page Fortna, "Do Terrorists Win ? Rebels' Use of Terrorism and Civil War Outcomes," *International Organization* 69 (3) (Summer 2015) ; and Hyeran Jo, *Compliant Rebels* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[3] Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie, "Institutionalizing Peace : Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management," *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (2) (2003): 328 ; and Thomas Chapman and Philip G. Roeder, "Partition as a Solution to Wars of Nationalism : The Importance of Institutions," *American Political Science Review* 101 (4) (2007). For a challenge to this

finding suggesting that ethnic conflict is not a good predictor of the success of power-sharing arrangements, see Jason Michael Quinn, T. David Mason, and Mehmet Gurses, "Sustaining the Peace : Determinants of Civil War Recurrence," *International Interactions* 33 (2) (2007).

[4] Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Universitet, "Definitions," http ://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Nicholas Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes ? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (3) (2001): 260.

[7] Michael L. Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War ? Evidence from Thirteen Cases," *International Organization* 58 (1) (Winter 2004).

[8] Analysts (including this author) who connect the political aims of rebel groups to their behavior do not necessarily assume that all members of the group are committed to the same aims. Even if motivations of individual members are heterogeneous, the assumption is instead that there is a critical mass of commitment to the stated aims of the group.

[9] Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, *Inside the Politics of Self-Determination* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2014) ; Trace Lasley and Clayton Thyne, "Secession, Legitimacy and the Use of Child Soldiers," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32 (3) (2014) ; Barbara F. Walter, *Reputation and Civil War : Why Separatist Conflicts are So Violent* (Cambridge and New York : Cambridge University Press, 2009) ; and Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence : Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2003).

[10] Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion : The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[11] James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97 (1) (2003).

[12] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans Heinrich Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York : Oxford University Press, 1946).

[13] This view lines up with Stephen Krasner's description of international legal sovereignty. Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty : Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1999), 14 – 20.

[14] Heike Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits*, trans. Mitch Cohen (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1999), 56 – 57.

[15] Elizabeth Perry and Tom Chang, "The Mystery of Yellow Cliff : A Controversial 'Rebellion' in Late Qing," *Modern China* 6 (2) (1980): 123.

[16] Ibid., 132 – 133.

[17] Ibid., 127.

[18] Ibid., 136.

[19] Ibid., 138.

[20] Ibid., 147.

[21] Lori Madden, "The Canudos War in History," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 30 (2) (1993): 6.

[22] Micheal Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts : A Statistical Encyclopedia of Casualty and Other Figures, 1494 – 2007*, 3rd ed. (Jefferson, N.C. : McFarland and Company, Inc., 2008), 351 ; and Bradford E. Burns, *A History of Brazil* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1993), 248 – 249.

[23] Robert M. Levine, "'Mud-Hut Jerusalem' : Canudos Revisited," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 68 (3) (1988): 533.

[24] Teresa A. Meade, *A Brief History of Brazil*, 2nd ed. (New York : Facts on File, 2010), 99.

[25] Robert M. Levine and Penny Roberts, *The Massacre in History* (New York : Berghahn Books, 1999), 195.

[26] Levine, "'Mud-Hut Jerusalem,'" 525, 527 ; and Burns, *A History of Brazil*, 251 – 252.

[27] Susanna Hecht, *The Scramble for the Amazon and the "Lost Paradise" of Euclides da Cunha* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2013), 10.

[28] Levine and Roberts, *The Massacre in History*, 192.

[29] Robert M. Levine, *Vale of Tears : Revisiting the Canudos Massacre in Northeastern Brazil, 1893 – 1897* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1992), 183 – 185.

[30] Sam Farmar, "Uganda Rebel Leader Breaks Silence," BBC, June 28, 2006.

[31] Kevin C. Dunn, "The Lord's Resistance Army and African International Relations," *African Security* 3 (1) (2010) : 51.

[32] Ibid., 51, 57.

[33] Rick Gladstone, "U.S. Broadens Sanctions on Joseph Kony and His Group," *The New York Times*, March 8, 2016.

[34] "Japan Grapples for Dialogue with ISIS over Hostages," CBS News, January 22, 2015 ; and Steve Almasy, "ISIS : Japanese Hostage Beheaded," CNN, February 3, 2015.

[35] Stephanie Busari, Jason Hanna, and Faith Karimi, "Boko Haram Releases 21 Chibok Girls to Nigerian Government," CNN, October 13, 2016.

[36] Yochi Dreazen, "From Electricity to Sewage, U.S. Intelligence Says the Islamic State is Fast Learning How to Run a Country," *Foreign Policy*, August 19, 2014 ; and Megan Stewart, "Why the Islamic State Is so Bad at Being a State," Political Violence @ a Glance, December 22, 2015.

[37] Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits*, 58 – 59.

[38] Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, "Specimen 7F : Statement from the Wali (Governor) of Aleppo Province : October 2013," http://www.aymennjawad.org/2015/01/archive-of -islamic-state-administrative-documents (accessed October 10, 2016). It is important to note that similarly brutal prescriptions can be found in Judeo-Christian scripture. See, for example, the Book of Samuel, in which King Saul is told to commit genocide.

[39] Jason Sharman, "War, Selection, and the State-as-Firm Analogy : A Critique of Evolutionary Theory in International Relations" (unpublished article, Griffiths University).

[40] Franz Michael, "Military Organization and Power Structure of China during the Taiping Rebellion," *Pacific Historical Review* 18 (4) (1949).

[41] Eugene P. Boardman, "Christian Influence Upon the Ideology of the Taiping Rebellion," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 10 (2) (1951).

[42] I thank Karl Eikenberry for suggesting this logic. See also Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*.

[43] Nathaniel Allen, "Charting Boko Haram's Rapid Decline," War on the Rocks, September 22, 2016.

[44] For a discussion of the possible similarities between Marxist and Islamist rebels, see Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Jihadi Rebels in Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

Jihadi Rebels in Civil War

Stathis N. Kalyvas

Abstract: In this essay, I decouple violent jihadism from both religion and terrorism and propose an alternative, nonexclusive understanding of jihadi groups as rebel groups engaged in civil wars. Arguing that jihadi groups can be profitably approached as the current species of revolutionary insurgents, I offer a comparison with an older species, the Marxist rebels of the Cold War. I point to a few significant similarities and differences between these two types of revolutionary rebels and draw some key implications, stressing the great challenges facing jihadi rebels in civil wars.

STATHIS N. KALYVAS, a Fellow of the American Academy since 2008, is the Arnold Wolfers Professor of Political Science and Director of the Program on Order, Conflict, and Violence at Yale University. He is the author of *Modern Greece: What Everyone Needs to Know* (2015) and *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (2006).

The global spread of a militant or extremist strain of political Islam, often referred to as "jihadi" Islamism, ranks as one of the most important political developments in the post–Cold War world; it carries implications for our understanding of both the politics of global security and contemporary trends in political violence.[1]

Political Islam or Islamism, terms denoting the use of Islam's religious precepts for political mobilization, takes many forms, some of which can be violent. Transnational terror is a particular form of political violence in the name of Islam that has attracted obvious attention on account of its spectacular nature. Because violent Islamists have resorted to terrorist tactics, they are often referred to and thought of exclusively as terrorists.[2] However, radical Islamists have also taken an active part in insurgencies: that is, a rebellion or civil war. The persistent confusion around these terms (terrorism, civil war, insurgency, and so on) has fed a tendency to subsume jihadi rebellions under the general umbrella of terrorism, or even to conflate the two as somehow equivalent or interchangeable. ISIS, for example, is considered a terrorist organization at the same time as it is engaged in an insurgency or civil war, in both Syria and Iraq. A parallel, though distinct, trend has been the inter-

pretation of the violence undertaken by ji-
hadi militants as uniformly "religious vi-
olence."[3] However, while insurgent jihadi
groups are clearly inspired by an ideology
rooted in religion, they also act in ways that
parallel those of nonreligious insurgent ac-
tors; their violence is often influenced by
the context in which it unfolds and the in-
fluence of religion on it can be variable rath-
er than constant.

   In this essay, I decouple violent Islamism
from both terrorism and religion. I am not
arguing that Islamists cannot engage in ter-
rorism or are not influenced by religion;
rather, I contend that too much emphasis
on terrorism and religion might conceal
two critical aspects of contemporary vio-
lent jihadism: its emergence in the context
of civil wars and its revolutionary dimen-
sion. Thus, I argue that jihadi groups can
be approached as a particular species of in-
surgent actors in civil wars: namely, revolu-
tionary insurgents. From this vantage point,
they can be fruitfully compared with anoth-
er well-known species of revolutionary ac-
tors, the Marxist rebels of the Cold War.

P lanned and launched by Al Qaeda, the
spectacular attacks against the United States
in September 2001 were a watershed in the
development and spread of a powerful con-
ceptual linkage between jihadi Islamism, on
the one hand, and transnational terrorism,
on the other.[4] Indeed, it can be argued that
the terms *Islamic* and *terror* have become as-
sociated so strongly in mainstream politi-
cal and media discourse that they have be-
come fused in the collective consciousness
of much of the Western world. However,
terrorism is only one among many streams
(or tactics) of violence deployed by various
jihadi groups to achieve concrete political
aims. Extending the term terrorism to en-
compass everything jihadi organizations
do could perhaps be politically useful, but
is very problematic from an analytical and
empirical perspective.

*Stathis N.
Kalyvas*

   When, in 2014, a jihadi group stemming
from Syria and calling itself al-Dawla al-
Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham (Islamic State
of Iraq and the Levant, or more common-
ly ISIL, ISIS, or IS) invaded Iraq and con-
quered the city of Mosul along with large
swaths of Iraqi territory, most observers
were taken aback. The fact that this group
proclaimed itself a state and sought to take
over and rule territory was seen as puzzling
by analysts used to dealing with the much
more elusive, clandestine, and nonterrito-
rially based Al Qaeda network. Their sur-
prise was justified in great part by the ra-
pidity of ISIS's territorial push, but it nev-
ertheless points to a key dimension of how
terrorism is understood: namely, its non-
territoriality. Complicating things further,
the sponsorship and/or organization of
several major terrorist attacks in Western
Europe, the United States, and elsewhere
by ISIS suggests that territorial and non-
territorial strategies can coexist within a
group's diverse and variable repertoire of
violence. Add to this mix the use of highly
mediatized and shocking forms of violence
(or "terror") in the territories ruled by ISIS
(such as the filmed beheadings of both for-
eign hostages and locals) and it is easy to
understand why terrorism has emerged as
a favorite descriptor of ISIS.

   However, the interpretation of ISIS ex-
clusively or primarily through the lens
of terrorism comes with two significant
drawbacks. First, it promotes a view of
terrorism and insurgency as either totally
overlapping ("ISIS is an insurgent group
because it is a terrorist group") or mutu-
ally exclusive ("ISIS cannot be compared
to insurgent groups because it is a ter-
rorist group"). In a way, this interpreta-
tion is both extremely expansive and ex-
tremely narrow; it reflects the manner in
which the disciplinary fields of terrorism
and civil war developed as distinct areas
of inquiry. Second, this interpretation de-
tracts from the study of ISIS and other ji-

hadi groups as insurgent (or territorial) groups and, therefore, excludes insights that can be gleaned when such groups are studied comparatively, either with each other or with non-jihadi insurgent groups.

Among the key insights of recent theorizing and research about political violence is an understanding of terrorism and insurgency as strategies that can be either complementary or independent. This perspective privileges an "actor-based" understanding of terrorism, according to which terrorist groups are seen to fully diverge from insurgent groups only when they lack the ability to occupy territory; in turn, this is the result of an extreme asymmetry of power between these groups and the state they oppose and seek to challenge. Put otherwise, when nonstate armed groups are too weak vis-à-vis the state they challenge, they may evolve into clandestine or underground organizations, lacking the ability to "liberate" and rule territory and focusing instead on the type of actions we associate with terrorism, such as bombings of soft targets and hostage-taking. Alternatively, stronger groups or those challenging more fragile states are likely to focus on the acquisition of territorial control where they can set up their own state apparatus.[5] Often, the same armed group might deploy both territorial and nonterritorial strategies simultaneously or successively; it may occupy territory where it is strong enough and act clandestinely (as a "terrorist group") where it lacks such strength, either domestically or transnationally.[6] Once we adopt this perspective, we may qualify the association between jihadism and terrorism, which becomes a variable rather than a constant.

It follows, then, that the terms *insurgency* or *rebellion*, used here interchangeably, are expressions of a particular balance of power between an opposition armed group and the state it challenges, one that allows a sustained armed confrontation centered on the acquisition of territory and the up-

holding of territorial control.[7] When this armed confrontation crosses a conventional fatality threshold, it is designated in the scholarly literature as a *civil war*.[8]

It is now possible to proceed to the central question: how do jihadi groups involved in insurgencies, rebellions, or civil wars compare with non-jihadi rebel groups? This question calls for a final clarification: what exactly is a jihadi group?

Jihadi Islamism is a type of political "activism justified with primary reference to Islam."[9] Islamism as a political movement should not be conflated with Islam as a religion. There is a clear distinction between the faith of Islam, on the one hand, and the "religionized politics of Islamism," on the other; the latter employs religious symbols for political ends and, as such, constitutes a particular, narrow interpretation of Islam.[10] Simply put, "Islam is both a religious faith and a cultural system, but not a political ideology."[11] Neither should Islamism or "political Islam" be conflated with its militant, extremist, radical, or violent versions.

Modern "militant" or "jihadi" Islamism is connected to Salafism, a religious revivalist ideology that promotes the organization of society and politics along pure religious lines and calls for a return of Islam to its roots – hence the relative popularity of the term "Islamic fundamentalism" among several Western commentators.[12] Salafism can be traced back to the writings of thinkers like Abu al-Ala Mawdudi (1903 – 1979), Hassan al-Banna (1906 – 1949), and especially Sayyid Qutb (1906 – 1966). It offers a comprehensive political alternative not just to liberal capitalism, but also to Western modernity altogether. Salafism fueled a wave of political activism that was initially harnessed by the Muslim Brotherhood, an Egyptian political movement founded in 1928 as a vanguard political party. Contemporary jihadi Islamism emerged in the context of the political turbulence

that characterized Egypt during the early 1980s, took off in Afghanistan in the midst of the resistance against the Soviet occupation, and acquired its global notoriety after the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States.[13]

Salafism is not necessarily violent and can be apolitical.[14] It should, therefore, not be conflated with violent jihadism.[15] Salafi political parties such as Al-Nour (Party of the Light) in Egypt or the Reform Front in Tunisia have adopted a radical ideology about how society must be organized following the precepts of Islamic Sharia, but have opted, at least at times, for the peaceful pursuit of their political goals and the rejection of the use of violence, very much like Western European Communist Parties often paid lip service to the idea of a violent revolution while fully partaking in democratic politics. Hence the term jihadi refers to a subset of violent Salafists.

While it is possible to broadly paint the core ideological message of jihadi groups as radical, it is also the case that the specific contours of their ideology vary considerably. After all, the content of what an ideal "Islamic order" looks like is extensive enough to allow ample room for interpretation and creativity. For example, some of the early rebel groups that articulated an Islamist message, such as Darul Islam in Indonesia or the Taliban in Afghanistan, adopted an ultraconservative interpretation of Islam heavily indebted to local traditional practices; they lacked the kind of aggressive and expansionary radical discourse that came to characterize the most recent manifestation of jihadism, exemplified by Al Qaeda and ISIS. Some groups zigzag between radical and more moderate, largely in response to their political fortunes. For example, the Egyptian al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya at some point "reverted to a strategy of struggle against the 'distant enemy' (Israel), in the hope of broadening its base of support by attracting the sympathy of nation-alists and people frustrated by the dead-end of the peace process."[16] Other groups, in contrast, accentuate their radical credentials and seek to align themselves with more powerful groups elsewhere so as to gain international exposure: various groups across the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia aligned with ISIS after its military successes in 2014, most notably the Nigerian group Boko Haram.

To explore whether and how jihadi rebel groups differ (or not) from other rebel groups, I start by singling out rebel groups with jihadi features that have been active in all major civil wars, as noted in the relevant literature. The exercise yields a list of the most important groups to date (Table 1). By this count, thirty-nine jihadi rebel groups were involved in at least eighteen civil wars. This is a substantial number, both in absolute and relative terms, suggesting that the phenomenon is widespread.

In many ways, jihadi rebel groups come across as rather undistinctive when compared with other rebel groups. Ideology is a flexible political tool even for jihadi groups, and it is common for them to tailor their ideological messages to the particular circumstances they find themselves in. Despite their utopian claims, including the creation of a caliphate and the abolition of national boundaries, they often rely on nationalist and particularistic messages tailored to win popular support. Drawing from anticolonialist discourse, they typically castigate established elites as insufficiently patriotic ("apostate" in their parlance) and paint them as ineffective and corrupt. They sometimes latch onto a secessionist agenda, especially in countries with non-Muslim majorities, and can adopt the demands of a particular segment of society, often on a sectarian basis (such as the Sunni populations of Iraq and Syria). Tactical alliances with politically disenfranchised groups, such as former Ba'ath officials in Iraq, are not uncommon either.

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Table 1 : Jihadi Groups in Major Civil Wars

Insurgent Group	Country
Hizb-i Islami-yi Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Taliban	Afghanistan
Haqqani Network	Afghanistan
Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA)	Algeria
Takfir wa'l Hijra	Algeria
Armée Islamique du Salut (AIS)	Algeria
Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO)	Algeria
AQIM	Algeria/Mali
Bosnian mujahideen	Bosnia
Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya	Egypt
Wilayat Sinai	Egypt
Egyptian Islamic Jihad	Egypt
Darul Islam	Indonesia
Jemaah Islamiya	Indonesia
Jundallah	Iran
Ansar al-Islam	Iraq
Reformation and Jihad Front (RJF)	Iraq
ISIS	Iraq/Syria
Al-Mahdi Army (Jaysh al-Mahdi)	Iraq
Ansar al-Sharia	Libya
Libya Dawn	Libya
Al-Murabitun (merger of MUJAO and Al-Mulathameen)	Mali
Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO)	Mali
Ansar Dine	Mali
Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (Boko Haram)	Nigeria
Lashkar-e-Islam	Pakistan
Jamaat-ul-Ahrar	Pakistan
Lashkar-e-Jhangyi	Pakistan
Ansaar ul-Islam	Pakistan
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan	Pakistan
Abu Sayyaf Group	Philippines
Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters	Philippines
Imarat Kavkaz (Caucasus Emirate)	Russia
Al Shabaab	Somalia
Hizbul Islam	Somalia
Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (AIAI)/Islamic Courts Union	Somalia/Ethiopia (Ogaden)
Jabhat al-Nusra li al-Sham	Syria
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (in Tajikistan : Forces of Mullo Abdullo)	Uzbekistan/Tajikistan/Kyrgyzstan
Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula	Yemen

As is the case with most rebel organizations, the creation and evolution of jihadi groups is strongly influenced by a small core of activists (a "revolutionary vanguard" in Leninist terms) who are able to set up strong organizational foundations while operating under clandestine conditions. Often, these individuals are intellectuals whose political careers span a variety of trajectories before they decide to undertake armed action. Unlike the leaders of rebel groups who are motivated primarily and purely by the capture of power for its own sake or the predation and looting of natural resources, the leaders of jihadi groups appear to be driven by strong ideological concerns. And like many other rebel organizations, jihadi groups take advantage of safe havens in neighboring countries where possible, and have benefited from their own governments' ill-designed counterinsurgent measures, which often result in indiscriminate violence against civilians.

The Egyptian group al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya provides an example of how a jihadi group can emerge and evolve. It got its start in Egyptian universities during the 1970s, growing out of student reading clubs. The permission accorded by the Egyptian government to the Muslim Brotherhood to be active on university campuses facilitated the activity of these clubs. Soon after, these students formed a group called al-Jama'a al-Diniya (The Religious Group). By the mid-1970s, this group had expanded nationally, forming a nation-wide council with a well-defined, underlying organizational structure; at the same time, it remained ideologically heterogeneous and quite decentralized. The Muslim Brotherhood tried to use the group as a recruiting ground, but was not very successful; however, out of this experience grew the idea of establishing a new Islamist group, which would end up evolving into the highly centralized al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya. This group

further consolidated during the post-Sadat assassination crackdown and the incarceration of several of its most active members, who were exposed to other Islamist factions in prison. Hardened by their prison experience and inspired by the writings of Sayyid Qutb, they internalized the core Salafist precepts and gradually moved toward sustained violent action, using a variety of tactics that included spectacular terrorist attacks, often against foreign tourists, as well as an insurgency, centered in Upper Egypt, which was eventually defeated by a violent counterinsurgency campaign.[17]

When it comes to the interpretation of jihadism as unique or exceptional, a lot rides on descriptions of gruesome acts of violence, which have acquired unprecedented prominence through the technological revolution brought by the emergence of the Internet and social media.[18] Without questioning the horror of that violence, it is still important to stress that there is nothing uniquely Islamic (or even jihadist) about such violence. Similar practices have been used by a variety of insurgent (and also incumbent) actors in civil wars. Likewise, terrorism is not exclusive to jihadi groups. In fact, the repertoire of violence varies considerably across rebel groups and among jihadi groups. Perhaps one type of violence that has characterized these groups is the widespread use of suicide missions; yet even this is hardly a jihadi exclusivity.[19]

To say that jihadi rebel groups are not exceptional across all these dimensions is not to deny the fact that they share several features that set them apart from other rebel groups. One is a geographic distinctiveness. Jihadi rebel groups operate in the Muslim world, primarily the Middle East and North Africa region as well as Central Asia, though they range as far as the Pacific Ocean, to Indonesia and the Philippines. The reason is that, unlike jihadist groups that operate clandestinely and specialize in transnational terror, rebel groups must be root-

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ed in a population that is at least, in theory, sympathetic to them. There is also temporal distinctiveness: jihadi groups have become a key actor in civil wars only following the end of the Cold War. Indeed, ISIS is neither an isolated nor a very recent phenomenon. It is, rather, the latest manifestation of the rise of jihadism in the post–Cold War world. Without minimizing the diversity of these groups and without imposing an artificial or outright false organizational unity on what is a highly varied and fractious political and social movement, it is nevertheless possible to speak of a global or transnational jihadi movement.[20]

A key feature that sets jihadi groups apart from many other rebel groups is their transnational dimension: they are part of a broader transnational social movement.[21] Transnational ties between different groups were already present in the 1980s and 1990s, but have since grown exponentially. Jihadi activists travel from country to country in search of training and a cause to fight for. The phenomenon of foreign fighters joining ISIS in Syria is but the latest testimony to this feature.[22] In this respect, it is worth pointing out that Afghanistan provided the initial trigger (the key figure was Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, from the town of Jenin in the West Bank), and that Bosnia followed. According to some estimates, as many as four thousand jihadists went to Bosnia to fight, most of them hailing from Saudi Arabia or other countries of the Arabian Peninsula.[23]

In turn, the transnational dimension of jihadi groups points to a key feature of jihadism: its revolutionary nature.[24] As such, it makes a lot of sense to think of jihadi rebel groups as parts of a global, revolutionary wave. This is precisely where an exclusive focus on matters of religion and faith can prove restrictive insofar as it might point us to less than productive comparisons. Indeed, jihadi rebel groups share many similarities with their pre-

decessor in the history of transnational revolutionary movements: namely, the Marxist rebel groups of the Cold War era. Conversely, they should be distinguished from another prominent strand of civil wars, the highly disorganized, natural-resource-driven conflicts lacking any discernible ideological agenda and taking place in "bottom billion" countries.[25]

The Marxist insurgencies of the Cold War era can be characterized as "robust insurgencies," in the sense that they were particularly well-suited to the demands of a type of asymmetric form of warfare, typically described as guerrilla warfare, in which the regime in place has a pronounced military advantage.[26] How exactly were they "robust?" In spite of considerable variation, Marxist insurgencies were characterized by common features across three dimensions: external support, beliefs, and doctrine.

First, as is well-known, the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and their allies provided extensive material assistance to Marxist rebels, training them, sending advisors, and providing financial and military support. That was not all, however. The external support enjoyed by many (but not all) Marxist insurgencies included the role of a large, transnational social movement whose extensive network of leaders, agitators, activists, and fighters met, exchanged information, trained, and often fought in each other's wars.

Second, this transnational network fed on and, in turn, propagated a set of revolutionary beliefs that were consequential in at least three ways. First, these beliefs were rooted in an understanding of the world that posited a credible alternative to liberal capitalism, and thus made possible the emergence and perpetuation of a political and social constellation of activities and organizations that was predicated on making this alternative a reality. This understanding of the world inspired millions of people

across the world and acted as a focal point for the coordination of individuals harboring it. When it came crashing down in 1989, it contributed to the end of the organizations that were associated with it. Second, these beliefs were important as sources of motivation for the crucial "first movers," those individuals willing to undertake high levels of risk in collective action processes whose outcome was uncertain and who often underwent enormous suffering for their cause. They also informed a large number of activists or "cadres" who acted, if not selflessly, at least in a self-disciplined and highly motivated manner, allowing their actions to have more far-reaching consequences than would otherwise be possible. Lastly, these beliefs pointed to armed (or violent) action as a likely way to bring about political change. The examples of Cuba or Vietnam loomed large and bespoke the real possibility of bringing about revolution through military action.

The third component of robust insurgency was its distinctive military doctrine. In its simplest formulation, "revolutionary war" was seen as the optimal political method that would translate the desire for revolutionary change into its actual implementation. It was guerrilla warfare, correctly waged, rather than nonviolent contentious action or other forms of violent activity, that would produce the desired outcome. Yet guerrilla warfare was never a simple matter of warfare. Instead, it required the effective administration of "liberated territory" and the mass mobilization and sustained indoctrination of its population. Only in this way could a weaker military force hope to prevail.

This capsule description of Marxist rebels provides a template for their comparison with jihadi rebel groups. The parallels are striking, as are some crucial differences.[27] Clearly, it is impossible to understate the power of beliefs in the case of the jihadis. These beliefs are expressed in a variety of

documents and publications, but they also take the form of a broad range of cultural practices from poetry and music to film.[28] Ideology is, in other words, central to the jihadi identity, which is not to say that other motivations do not exist alongside it, from opportunism to shady criminal activities.[29] In fact, the collapse of Marxism as the main alternative to liberal capitalism appears to have left a gaping hole in the world of alternative ideological possibilities that Islamists have effectively exploited in the Muslim world and in Muslim enclaves in the Western world. Certainly, the widespread disillusionment caused by the failure of both Arab nationalism and socialism gave a decisive push to the rise of jihadism in the Middle East, while the material and psychological frustrations of the Muslim immigrant workers' offspring in the West were later grafted onto this movement. This striking discontinuity has been particularly visible in the way Marxist-inspired groups such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization have been superseded by Islamist groups such as Hamas. Seen from this perspective, jihadism has become a kind of ideological focal point around which all kinds of discontented and/or marginalized elements – primarily "ascriptive" Muslims, but also converts to Islam – have coordinated. To use political scientist Olivier Roy's apt expression, jihadism represents the Islamization of radicalism rather than (just) the radicalization of Islam.[30]

Without a focus on revolutionary beliefs it would be hard to make sense of the ability of jihadi rebel groups to mobilize thousands of motivated cadres, the absence of which the growth of groups such as ISIS or the construction of extensive state-like apparatuses in areas controlled by jihadi insurgents would have been impossible. These "quasi-states" or "proto-states" share many features with those built by Marxist rebels: they tend to be intensely ideological, internationalist, and expansive. Their rulers de-

vote significant resources to often effective, if harsh, governance.[31] In both instances, the impact of such practices can be double-edged. On the one hand, these revolutionary state-builders are able to supply public goods to the population they rule, which makes them potentially attractive to them. On the other hand, their rule is often highly interventionist, clashes with established local norms and practices, including (or especially) religiously conservative ones, and generates considerable popular opposition and resentment. In turn, this often leads to the emergence of grassroots dissident activity that can easily be harnessed by counterinsurgents to devastating effect. This was most obviously the case in Iraq, where the rise of the so-called Iraqi Awakening – Sunni tribal militias fed by local discontent with jihadi rule – led to the defeat of Al Qaeda in Iraq, but also appeared elsewhere, such as in Bosnia.[32]

A crucial difference between jihadi and Marxists rebels when it comes to the transnational dimension they share is the absence of external state sponsorship, including superpower sponsorship, for the former. One possible analogy for ISIS would be the Chinese Communist rebels of the interwar period who, despite occasional Soviet support, had to improvise on their own, or the Maoist rebels of the Shining Path who operated in Peru in the 1980s and early 1990s. Ideologically purist, extremely violent, and ruthless (but highly personalistic and isolated), the Shining Path was nevertheless able to face off the much stronger Peruvian state and was effectively defeated only after a long and costly counterinsurgency campaign.

The absence of external state sponsorship could well turn out to be the greatest weakness of jihadi rebel groups. It is telling that their overall record in the wars in which they are involved is dismal; their peak was probably the Taliban victory against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, and even that was won only with the direct and pronounced backing of Pakistan. Likewise, ISIS's conquest of Mosul that stunned the world proved short-lived and its Syrian conquest has been all but reversed. In fact, something that stands out from the Marxist insurgent experience is that, despite many features that generally turned them into "high-quality" rebels, they were defeated much more often than they won victories. To put it differently, Che Guevara in Bolivia was a much more common occurrence than Che Guevara in Cuba.[33] There are a number of reasons why this was the case. As already pointed out, Marxist groups often alienated the local population by imposing local regimes that were too radical. Their ability to pose a credible threat against the states they fought elicited a superior counterinsurgent effort, often with considerable external support, thus leading to their defeat. This feature may explain not only the high rate of defeats experienced by Marxist groups, but also the fact that the conflicts in which they were engaged were less likely to be settled through negotiations and peacekeeping compared with other civil wars.[34] It is possible to surmise then that civil wars entailing jihadi groups are much less likely to be settled via negotiations and require the type of extensive peacekeeping operations that have become almost the norm in most civil wars.[35] In a different formulation, this comparison suggests that the military defeat of the rebels appears the most likely outcome in civil wars involving jihadi rebels.

This essay suggests that, for all the publicity surrounding them, jihadi rebels might, in the end, represent less of a threat to their opponents in civil war contexts than their older, Marxist counterparts. Indeed, on top of its lack of a powerful external sponsor, the threat posed by ISIS has mobilized a powerful international response against it. As a result, ISIS is presently on the retreat, primarily in Iraq but also in Syria. Its military defeat appears to be a matter of time.

What shall we expect if this turns out to be the case? A likely outcome is that jihadism might revert once more into a deterritorialized, clandestine network relying on transnational terrorism, a strategy that can be spectacular but tends to be much less effective at achieving tangible political goals than armed rebellion. However, as past experience suggests, the failure of many regimes in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia to respond to their citizens' expectations may, once more, create the conditions for the rise of a renewed revolutionary challenge in the form of civil war. In this context, it might make sense to reflect on the dangerous implications of blocking any avenue of peaceful political mobilization for Islamists.[36] In its combination of a strong Salafi ideological legacy, a poorly performing authoritarian regime, and the absence of peaceful options for Islamist parties, Egypt might become once more a plausible candidate for the emergence of violent jihadi activity in the near future.

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Civil War, Economic Governance & State Reconstruction in the Arab Middle East

Steven Heydemann

Abstract: Civil wars currently underway in Libya, Syria, and Yemen demonstrate that patterns of economic governance during violent conflict exhibit significant continuity with prewar practices, raising important questions along three lines. First, violent conflict may disrupt prewar practices less than is often assumed. Second, continuity in governance highlights the limits of state fragility frameworks for postconflict reconstruction that view violent conflict as creating space for institutional reform. Third, continuity of prewar governance practices has important implications for the relationship between sovereignty, governance, and conflict resolution. Civil wars in the Middle East have not created conditions conducive to reconceptualizing sovereignty or decoupling sovereignty and governance. Rather, parties to conflict compete to capture and monopolize the benefits that flow from international recognition. Under these conditions, civil wars in the Middle East will not yield easily to negotiated solutions. Moreover, to the extent that wartime economic orders reflect deeply institutionalized norms and practices, postconflict conditions will limit possibilities for interventions defined in terms of overcoming state fragility.

STEVEN HEYDEMANN is the Janet Wright Ketcham 1953 Professor in Middle East Studies at Smith College and a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution Center for Middle East Policy. He is the author of *Authoritarianism in Syria: Institutions and Social Conflict* (1999), editor of *War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East* (2000), and coeditor of *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran* (with Reinoud Leenders, 2013).

If war is the continuation of policy by other means, then civil war can be seen as the continuation of governance, not by other means as Carl von Clausewitz remarked, but by the same means. The civil wars currently underway in Libya, Syria, and Yemen demonstrate that patterns of governance during violent conflict – the practices used by insurgent and regime forces to maintain order in their areas of control – differ less from prewar practices than might be expected. In all three of these Middle Eastern cases, the legacies of prewar governance are especially evident in how regime and insurgent forces construct wartime economic orders to advance their political agendas. For both researchers and practitioners, the persistence of prewar governance practices under conditions of violent conflict raises important questions, along three distinct but related lines.

First, it challenges understandings of civil war as marking a rupture in governance: violent conflict may disrupt prewar practices less than is often assumed. Civil wars may not, as some have argued, give rise to governance practices that differ sharply from those present during peacetime. Furthermore, evidence of continuity also calls into question the extent to which rebel or insurgent forms of governance differ from those practiced by embattled regimes. The reliance of rebels and regimes on similar modes of economic governance reduces the likelihood that insurgents will mitigate causes of violent conflict, such as corruption, predation, or exclusion, or, as some have claimed, contribute to the development of inclusive, participatory postconflict political and economic orders.[1]

Second, continuity between prewar and wartime practices, especially in the domain of economic governance, highlights the limits of state fragility frameworks intended to improve the performance of poorly governed states. Typically defined as the result of dysfunctional institutions that produce negative social, political, and economic outcomes, fragility is widely believed to increase the likelihood of violent conflict. Fragile states are especially vulnerable to internal strains that weak and flawed institutions cannot manage or mitigate.[2] Violent conflicts not only signal the breakdown of such institutions, but create possibilities for more effective, inclusive, and accountable postconflict institutions to emerge.

Fostering the development of such institutions has become a major preoccupation of development and postconflict practitioners.[3] However, the persistence of prewar norms and practices as well as the continued reliance of regimes and insurgents alike on prewar institutions during periods of violent conflict raise significant questions about the usefulness of fragility-based frameworks. William Reno has critically and helpfully assessed fragility-based frameworks, yet does so on the assumption that civil war implies state collapse.[4] Civil wars in the Middle East complicate this starting point. Conflict, in some cases at least, does far less than is argued in the literature to weaken prewar norms and practices that are viewed as causes of fragility. As international affairs scholar Ariel Ahram has noted: "those interested in state failure tend to misconstrue or ignore…the feasibility and desirability of repairing state strength."[5] Civil wars in the Middle East make clear that violent conflict can deepen the perceived utility of institutions that were intentionally structured to support authoritarian, exclusionary, and predatory systems of rule. Such conditions challenge the feasibility of approaches to postconflict reconstruction that reflect the underlying assumptions of fragility frameworks. Tanja Börzel and Sonja Grimm have pointed out that even in cases in which the European Union, a powerful external actor, intervenes to strengthen institutional effectiveness in its immediate neighborhood, efforts often fall short.[6] Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region experiences reinforce the view that we reconsider just how fragile the institutions are that generate outcomes typically associated with fragility, even in extreme cases such as Libya and Yemen, where prewar states ranked very highly on indicators of weakness.

Third, the continuity of prewar practices affects the relationship between sovereignty, governance, and conflict resolution.[7] In the Arab Middle East, where state boundaries are routinely described as artificial, violent conflict is often characterized as the result of failed nation-building or, in international studies scholar Benjamin Miller's terms, a sharp incongruence between "the division of the region into territorial states and the national aspirations and political identifications of the region's peoples."[8] Libya, Syria, and Yemen are all states in which rigid, unitary

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conceptions of sovereignty suppressed the aspirations and identifications of citizens, and played a role in launching national uprisings that evolved from protest movements into violent conflicts.

In all three cases, protracted conflict has been accompanied by proposals to redefine the terms of sovereignty, including various forms of local autonomy, federalism, decentralization, and even state partition.[9] However, civil wars in the Middle East underscore the difficulties that confront attempts to advance alternative conceptions of state sovereignty as solutions to violent conflict. These alternatives often rest on the assumption that governance and sovereignty are separable. They assume that the relationship between the two can take a variety of forms. Yet as evidenced by the determination with which warring parties in Libya, Syria, and Yemen struggle to control state institutions and state functions, governance becomes a potent measure of a regime's sovereign standing. And sovereignty itself is far too significant a resource to dilute through political frameworks that would weaken the power of a central authority to govern. In keeping with the view expressed by Hendrik Spruyt, unitary, Westphalian conceptions of sovereignty among parties to civil war in the Middle East show few signs of yielding to formulas that erode the benefits that international recognition generates for sovereigns.[10]

Thus, civil wars in the Middle East have not created conditions conducive to reconceptualizing sovereignty or decoupling sovereignty and governance. Rather, they have been accompanied by the weaponization of sovereignty, with parties to conflict competing to capture and monopolize the benefits that flow from international recognition. This process has received significant support, moreover, from the increasing influence in the international system of authoritarian actors, including Russia, China, and Iran, who forcefully advocate a rigid, unitary, centralized, and indivisible definition of sovereignty. Those who are recognized internationally as sovereign thus acquire immediate advantages that vastly increase the likelihood of their military success and weaken their incentives to compromise or, in some cases, negotiate.

Continuity between prewar and wartime practices is visible in how both recognized authorities and insurgent forces in Libya, Syria, and Yemen manage the challenges of economic governance. In all three countries, the descent into civil war has been accompanied not by the breakdown of prewar, authoritarian, criminal, and predatory economic norms and practices, but by their redeployment to serve wartime requirements. Despite claims that view violent conflict as rupturing prewar practice, such continuity is not surprising. "Conflict," as political scientist Paul Staniland has noted, "does not play out on a blank slate that actors can make and remake as they wish. Instead, the past shapes leaders' options in the present."[11]

The past casts an especially long shadow on the civil wars examined in this essay, in which the prewar economic institutions and practices of authoritarian regimes turned out to be particularly well-suited to the requirements of insurgent forces. Yet research literature on civil war as well as the prevailing practitioner frameworks for mitigating violent conflict and rebuilding war-torn societies and economies have not taken adequate account of the persistence of authoritarian norms and practices during civil war. They overlook the implications for how external actors respond to some acute forms of violent conflict and misdiagnose the conflict-resolution strategies that will be needed to end conflict and establish durable peace.

This emphasis on continuity in economic governance in Libya, Syria, and Yemen is not to suggest that economies are indiffer-

ent to conflict, or did not undergo meaningful change as violence escalated and civil war took hold. In all three cases, national markets have been destroyed by war and replaced by patchworks of fragmented, highly localized markets that are nonetheless integrated into translocal networks of trade and exchange, including trade between adversaries across conflict lines.[12] Patterns of international trade have been sharply altered by war. So have overall levels of economic productivity and output. In all three countries, manufacturing and agricultural sectors have been devastated and oil production and exports have declined sharply, while control over natural resources and predatory opportunities (smuggling, extortion, human trafficking) generate intense conflict between opposing factions.[13]

Moreover, continuity at the level of practices does not imply continuity in the composition or configuration of economic actors. What is evident, however, from the experiences of all three countries is that the economic norms and practices developed by authoritarian regimes before war persist during conflict and affect both how conflicts end and how postconflict political economies are organized. In all three cases, informal economic institutions resemble those described by Reno and Vanda Felbab-Brown: they were pervasive and personalistic, often exerting more influence over economic outcomes than formal state institutions and economic policies.[14] In all three, prewar economic norms and practices included a culture of impunity for privileged economic actors, predatory and coercive forms of resource extraction, porous boundaries between formal and informal economic activity and between licit and illicit practices, as well as dispersed, diffuse frameworks of economic authority in which state functions such as regulation and service provision were delegated to nonstate agents.[15] In all three, economic governance was organized not to ensure the provision of public goods to all citizens, but to control and allocate access to what can only be described as semipublic goods to select categories of citizens, typically on the basis of ascriptive criteria.[16] These economic norms and practices were accompanied by social norms, institutions, and political practices that further eroded the distinction between prewar and wartime conditions, including decentralization of control over the means of violence and delegation (or de facto privatization) of the authority to tax and extract resources from citizens.[17]

Evidence of continuity in economic governance has significant implications along several dimensions. It matters for how we think about the relationship between states and insurgent movements, how insurgencies are organized and sustain themselves, and the challenges that confront postconflict stabilization and reconstruction. Three such dimensions are explored in this essay.

First, such evidence calls into question a foundational assumption of research literature on rebel governance and on the political economy of civil war: that state-based forms of economic governance are distinct from those constructed by insurgents, and that conflict economies exhibit unique attributes that differentiate them from prewar conditions of economic "normalcy." According to international affairs scholars Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman,

> Recent scholarship has identified several features unique to the economies of civil war: they are *parasitic*, because they are dominated by rent-seeking and the extraction and trade of primary products, rather than by value adding economic activities; they are *illicit*, insofar as they depend heavily on black and gray markets that operate outside and at the expense of legal and formal economic activity of the state; and they are *predatory* – that is, they are based on the deliberate and systematic use of violence to acquire assets, control trade, and exploit labor.[18]

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This attempt to draw sharp distinctions between civil war economies that exhibit "unique features" and prewar economies that engage in "value adding economic activities" is difficult to sustain given how prewar political economies were organized in Syria, Libya, and Yemen. In all three, the authoritarian economic orders that existed prior to the onset of civil war – arrangements that government scholar Daniel Brumberg describes as "protection rackets" – undermine the claim that violent conflicts are the cause of predation, rent-seeking, and a disregard for the long-term requirements of economic and social development in what were previously well-governed economies.[19]

Not only do wartime economic orders in Libya, Syria, and Yemen exhibit significant continuity with prewar practices, they also display striking similarities across areas of each country held by regime or opposition forces. To be sure, there are notable differences between the wartime economic orders that have emerged in areas under the control of regimes or recognized authorities and those in rebel-held territories.[20] Not least, regimes benefit from their standing as recognized sovereign authorities, with all the advantages this confers.[21] In many important respects, however, civil war in Syria, Libya, and Yemen has amplified and expanded the economic logics and practices that were commonplace before 2011. These legacy effects flowing from the political economies of prewar authoritarian regimes highlight the extent to which wartime economic orders are influenced by and sustain prewar economic practices, none of which reflected the conditions of advanced capitalist economies, in which the rule of law functions, formal institutions of economic governance are relevant, and elements of accountability are present.

Instead, prewar Libya, Syria, and Yemen can best be defined as corrupt, predatory, and crony capitalist political economies with low accountability and transparency and weak rule of law. In all three, as in other authoritarian regimes in the MENA region, the political requirements of regime survival trumped concerns with economic and social development.[22] State elites engaged routinely in illicit practices to enrich themselves at public expense. Criminal economic networks were tightly integrated into and operated as prominent features of state-regime-business relations among civilian elites and their bureaucratic and military counterparts, who often controlled significant business interests in their own right.[23] Economic policy, anchored in long-term mistrust of the private sector by regimes, was designed to make private economic activity legible to, controllable by, and subject to the predatory intervention of state authorities.

These prewar economic practices influenced how wartime economic orders would take shape once protest movements collapsed into violent conflict. In each case, prewar systems of economic governance socialized citizens into economic norms and behaviors that supported antiregime mobilization. Over time, citizens honed economic skills, knowledge, and capacities that helped launch and sustain antiregime protests. These included how to conceal economic resources and activities from state authorities, and a reliance on clandestine, formally illicit modes of exchange organized through informal networks based on family, kin, or other ascriptive ties that are difficult for outsiders to penetrate.

From 2011 onward, informal networks facilitated clandestine strategies of popular mobilization for antiregime protests as violence escalated.[24] They also proved highly adaptive in the development of formal and informal insurgent funding networks that linked armed opposition groups in Syria to the governments and populations of Gulf Cooperation Council states. The clandestine and networked character of Syria's

prewar economy also enabled communications flows, enhanced trust among participants in the uprising, and eased bargaining and negotiations among adversaries and competitors that have mitigated the economic effects of war. Adversaries have negotiated agreements to distribute power and water supplies across conflict lines and buy and sell oil, wheat, and other essential goods – such as vegetables from Idlib to Deir al-Zour in Syria – across territory controlled by competing armed groups.[25]

After more than six years of conflict, the informal economic networks that the Assad regime cultivated through local agents, extending opportunities for private profit through tolerated illicit activities in exchange for loyalty and service as regime enforcers, had not only endured, but had also emerged as central to the dispersed strategy of control and coercion that grew stronger as the Syrian state and regime contracted. The most detailed study available of the transformation of regime-linked criminal networks into loyalist militias that acquire semiformal status, even while they benefit from significant autonomy and have enormous influence over economic and political affairs in their areas of operation, provides compelling evidence of this metamorphosis.[26] Such arrangements give the regime flexibility in deploying highly decentralized networks of local warlords to enforce its authority and extract resources from local populations.[27]

As in any conflict zone, these conditions produced opportunities for profit alongside the vast destruction the war has wrought. These have emerged, in part, through competition between the regime and opposition for access to scarce commodities, including wheat and oil. According to accounts of officials, the regime has been able to outbid the opposition. In doing so, it has created incentives for new networks of mediators to emerge who broker the transfer of goods across conflict lines.[28]

Economic opportunities have also arisen in the trafficking of the vast quantities of goods looted from the homes of those displaced by war, and by exploiting prewar illicit trading networks to meet the needs that conflict has created.[29] Researchers at the London School of Economics, for example, have identified a vibrant market in automobiles that sprang up in Deraa in Southern Syria near the Jordanian border – an area known before the war for its extensive smuggling networks.[30] In the north of the country, Syrian-Turkish trade is believed to have returned to prewar levels, through both formal trade channels and extensive informal, illicit trade networks that have thrived despite the militarization of the border and its periodic closure by Turkey.[31] The Syrian-Lebanese border zone has provided similar opportunities for trade, smuggling, refugee flows, and support operations for insurgent armed groups, exploiting well-established (and often regime-supported) illicit trading networks.

Similar evidence of continuity, linkages between state and nonstate actors, the blending of legal and criminal activities, and the utility of prewar economic practices during episodes of violent conflict are all evident in the resurgence of human trafficking networks in Libya. Along a key transit route into Southern Europe, loyalist tribal networks closely linked to the Gaddafi regime were implicated in the rise of human trafficking that Libya experienced in the 2000s. In 2008, the Libyan government agreed to clamp down on trafficking in exchange for financial assistance from the Berlusconi government in Italy. A leading European think tank described the trafficking activity during this period as "a criminal activity conducted by specific organisations in connection with the formal state institutions."[32] When the Gaddafi regime was overthrown in 2011, human trafficking surged once again. Yet in the regime's absence, illicit trafficking became more high-

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ly decentralized, with multiple competing smuggling networks – linked to warring factions in Libya's civil war – battling for control over key routes.[33] As Gaddafi's loyalists lost their privileged access to a broad range of predatory activities, nearly all parties to the Libyan conflict engaged in racketeering, the "protection" of trade, and other forms of extortion to generate the revenue needed to sustain their participation in conflict.

Yemen also exhibits persistent patterns of predatory and illicit practices by state and nonstate actors that have proven to be highly functional in sustaining violent conflict. As in Syria and Libya, such practices are widespread, including within the recognized government led by President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. They involve combinations of cooperation and competition among actors across conflict lines, linkages between state and nonstate actors, blending of licit and illicit activities, and the mobilization of cross-cutting economic networks that emerged during prewar periods and complicate efforts to map specific activities by tribe, region, or sect. For example, classified U.S. diplomatic cables released by Wikileaks include an assessment from May 2005 from the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a noting direct participation by a powerful Yemeni general, Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar – who defected from the government of then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh in early 2011 and was appointed deputy commander of Yemen's Armed Forces in January 2016 under President Hadi – in a vast smuggling enterprise.[34] Mohsen's illicit but sanctioned activities extended across the country, were supported and sustained by several units of the armed forces, and relied on collaboration from wide-ranging networks of actors, including tribes formally identified as regime adversaries. While notable for its scale and scope, the predatory frameworks that Mohsen exploited were widespread in prewar Yemen.

The escalation of violence in Yemen in mid-2014, following the collapse of a National Dialogue process intended to chart the country's transition to a more inclusive, participatory form of rule, amplified the role of these prewar economic practices. According to Freedom House, the "network of corruption and patronage established under Saleh remained entrenched in public institutions."[35] As violence shattered Yemen's fragile economy, with fragmented state institutions, massive levels of food insecurity, and more than two million Yemenis displaced, illicit, predatory economic practices have grown in importance. Armed factions, including Houthi forces as well as those associated with the recognized government, are deeply implicated in the smuggling of weapons, food, and pharmaceuticals, as well as human trafficking. Indeed, trafficking networks that previously moved migrants from the Horn of Africa across Yemen and into Saudi Arabia – flows that continue in the midst of conflict – have diversified and now also move Yemenis who can afford to leave to the Horn of Africa.[36]

In none of the three cases explored here has conflict led to a significant shift in prewar practices of economic governance. Instead, practices evident in all three before the most recent outbreaks of violence have persisted, providing parties to the conflict – especially those associated with internationally recognized sovereign authorities – with the means to sustain their military activities. Middle Eastern cases undermine claims that violent conflicts cause a rupture with prewar economic practices, and that they give rise to political economies that exhibit attributes that are unique in being parasitic, illicit, and predatory. Based on evidence from Syria, Libya, and Yemen, such claims are simply untenable.

The continuity of economic practices also has important implications for postconflict

reconstruction. Simply put, whether civil war ends in a negotiated settlement or military victory, local actors have few incentives to give up wartime economic orders. These economic orders took shape before the onset of conflict, helped make it possible for local actors to sustain military operations, delivered significant benefits to designated sovereigns, and created new categories of actors with a stake in their perpetuation. These factors complicate approaches to postconflict reconstruction that link the onset of civil war to state fragility, and find the remedy to fragility in the development of state institutions that possess attributes of high-quality governance, but threaten the power and wealth of leading actors. In addition, in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, as in many other predatory, authoritarian regimes, the institutional arrangements associated with state fragility are not the failed outcomes of state-building processes that sought, but fell short of achieving, inclusive, participatory, and developmentally effective forms of governance. Rather, in Libya under Muammar Gaddafi, in Syria under Hafez al-Assad and Bashar al-Assad, and in Yemen under Ali Abdullah Saleh, state-building reflected the strategic choices of incumbents who designed governance institutions to express exclusionary, repressive, and predatory preferences.

The state institutions that resulted from such processes did not lack capacity, nor were they fragile. They provided incumbents with the organizational means to construct durable, repressive-exclusionary systems of rule, appropriate resources and redistribute them through mechanisms that privileged regime loyalists, and consolidate social pacts between regimes and select categories of citizens.[37] Conflict is indeed an indicator of regime dysfunction, and the limits of the economic and political orders on which they rest. Yet if the Middle East is any example, these indicators have not been read as signals of the

need for reform, either by incumbents or by most challengers.

When the mass protests of 2011 led to armed insurgencies and civil war in these three cases, insurgent forces appropriated and adapted prewar institutions of economic governance. In their struggles for control of the state, powerful insurgent movements – including Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, the Houthi movement in Yemen, and Ahrar al-Sham, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, and the Islamic State in Syria – reproduced the authoritarian characteristics associated with state fragility: exclusion, predation, corruption, illegality, and informality. When the Assad regime relinquished authority in Northeast Syria in 2012 to the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), the PYD immediately "replicated past regime behavior, focusing on maintaining a secure hold of this strategic geographical area at the expense of effective governance."[38] Thus, violent conflict in Syria, Libya, and Yemen has not, as political economist Leonard Wantchekon has argued, "annihilated the authoritarian political situation that led to war," thereby creating possibilities for political and economic reconstruction along more inclusive and participatory lines.[39] Unlike cases in which wartime governance is linked to processes of democratization, in these three cases, it has tended to reproduce prewar, authoritarian norms and practices of economic governance.[40]

One example of this phenomenon from each of the cases explored in this essay should suffice to make the point. In September 2014, an assessment on Yemen published by the Atlantic Council expressed concern that key political actors were reproducing pre-uprising patterns of governance:

Instead of reshaping the political order to bring in new political voices, address corruption, and introduce responsive and accountable governance, partisan interests have largely paralyzed the transitional gov-

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ernment, perpetuating the elite-dominated politics of old Sana'a and its tribal allies.[41]

In December 2015, the International Crisis Group warned that revolution and the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime in Libya had done little to alter the political economy of natural resource management in the country:

> One aspect of the hydrocarbon dispute is a challenge to the centralised model of political and economic governance developed around oil and gas resources that was crucial to the old regime's power. But corruption that greased patronage networks was at that model's centre, and corrupt energy sector practices have increased.[42]

In the Syrian case, in which prewar state institutions were more developed and have experienced less degradation than in Yemen or Libya, we find even more robust patterns of institutional continuity and the persistence of the corrupt, predatory attributes described above, attributes mirrored in many instances in the governance institutions created by the opposition.[43] As in Libya and Yemen, conflict has narrowed, rather than expanded, opportunities for the reform of state practices.[44]

From a fragility perspective, these regime adaptations to wartime conditions have consequences that are not only counterproductive, but undermine the capacity of external actors to uphold their own standards of accountability, legality, and transparency. In 2016, for example, researchers and journalists brought to light the extent to which UN humanitarian assistance programs in Syria had become complicit in the corrupt and predatory norms that define the regime's economic governance.[45] Rather than an international institution moving a "fragile state" toward norms of good governance, its intervention instead corrupted its own operating norms and practices.

With neither regimes nor insurgents committed to economic inclusion, transparency, or accountability, postconflict processes of economic reconstruction that draw on recommendations from the state fragility literature are unlikely to succeed. Civil wars in the Middle East highlight the chasm that divides the assumptions underlying fragility-based strategies of conflict resolution from the realities of conflict dynamics. Where local actors view existing institutions as critical for their survival, where incentives to endorse processes of institutional reform are weak, where international actors themselves exhibit little commitment to good governance, fragility-based frameworks face insurmountable obstacles.

Continuity in patterns of economic governance from prewar to wartime conditions also highlights how tightly civil war has linked sovereignty and governance in the Middle East, reducing prospects for political settlements that envision a decoupling of the two. In the recent literature on sovereignty, limited statehood, and governance, researchers have identified a wide range of nonstate governance frameworks that emerge in which the domestic sovereignty of states is weak or entirely absent.[46] These frameworks are often presented as expanding opportunities for state-based, nonstate, and external actors to "share sovereignty," address deficits in the provision of public goods, and resolve violent conflicts.[47] Yet the civil wars in Libya, Syria, and Yemen have pushed in the opposite direction, narrowing opportunities for flexible conceptions of sovereignty to take hold and giving recognized authorities incentives to sustain prewar governance practices.

By any measure, these three cases reflect the attributes of limited statehood. In all three, nonstate actors have become centrally involved in critical aspects of economic governance, and recognized authorities have themselves cultivated vast semi-

autonomous, nonstate economic networks to extract revenue from war-torn and fragmented economies. Nonetheless, civil war in the Middle East has also increased the significance regimes and insurgents attach to unitary, Westphalian conceptions of sovereignty. It has reinforced the imperative of sovereignty as a weapon that can be wielded against challengers, or used to buttress the political, diplomatic, and economic resources to which a recognized authority has access. Even as the functions of economic governance diffuse and dissipate beyond the direct control of states, recognized authorities aggressively assert their economic authority and their exclusive right to undertake the economic functions that legitimate their standing as sovereign. Economic governance as an expression of sovereignty not only constrains possibilities for reallocating economic functions as part of a political settlement, it rewards recognized authorities that behave as if they possess the economic sovereignty they claim, and hold fast to rigid, centralized control over economic governance.

Thus, sovereignty is fiercely defended in Libya, Syria, and Yemen by regimes that claim the legitimacy and authority, as well as the legal protections and prerogatives, associated with international recognition. In all three cases, as in many authoritarian regimes, recognized governments invest heavily in domestic institutions that affirm their standing as sovereign, including courts and constitutions.[48] They staunchly defend their claims to sovereignty in their relations with external actors and exploit such claims to extract resources from the international system. They legitimate foreign military interventions – by both state and nonstate actors – as entitlements of sovereignty. In all three cases, moreover, internationally recognized authorities legitimate their standing in part through their capacity to perform the economic governance functions associated with Westpha-

lian sovereignty.[49] They maintain central banks, issue economic regulations, sign contracts with other states, invest in public works, take on sovereign debt, pay salaries to public-sector employees, even in areas controlled by insurgents, and insist on their prerogative to tax.

To be sure, the intensity with which recognized authorities pursue the roles and functions of statehood and governmentality bear little resemblance to the reality of fragmented, contested, and dispersed economic control in all three countries. In none of the three do recognized governments possess the domestic attributes associated with sovereignty: they lack exclusive control over territory, populations, and natural resources; they do not possess a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence; and they do not exercise legal or economic authority throughout the prewar borders of the state.[50] In all three cases, processes of economic fragmentation have been accelerated by regimes that have actively delegated sovereign functions of economic governance to a variety of nonstate and external actors. Moreover, rebel movements have adopted the economic norms and practices of the regimes they seek to displace, deepening the fragmentation of national economies.

As wartime economic orders take hold and fragmented, "translocal" markets become consolidated, the prospects for reestablishing central governments that possess the attributes of economic sovereignty are diminished. Yet this has not tempered the drive for control over formal economic governance by recognized authorities, or made them more responsive to proposals for economic decentralization. In the Yemeni case, for example, regime and insurgent actors compete for control over national financial institutions, splintering authority over the central bank and government ministries. In Libya, warring parties have struggled to assert their authority over the country's most significant economic

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institution, the National Oil Company, and to control the "oil crescent," in which oil production is concentrated. In early 2017, forces associated with General Khalifa Haftar, who opposes the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli, seized control of the region. Reflecting the dire implications of this move for Libya's recognized government, Haftar's actions provoked sharp criticism from the UN and Western governments for undermining the sovereignty of the GNA. General Haftar, meanwhile, cultivated support from Russia to enhance his own claims to sovereign authority, using the control of Libya's oil-producing areas by his forces to strengthen his bid for international recognition.

In contrast, moderate opposition forces in Syria declined to establish "national" institutions of economic governance challenging those of the Assad regime. Such a course, they argued, would only encourage external actors to seek the partition of the country – an outcome that Syria's experience of colonial rule placed beyond the scope of legitimate possibilities. Instead, highly localized wartime economic orders have emerged, with controlling militias exerting significant authority over economic activities in a given area, relying on a familiar repertoire of informal, illicit economic practices to generate revenue. The Islamic State, however, explicitly mimicked the economic forms of a modern state to bolster its claims to sovereignty as an Islamic caliphate, even while engaging in predatory and criminal practices of economic governance that resembled those of regimes and rebels alike.

Indeed, rebel-controlled local economies have proliferated in all three countries, as armed groups imposed their authority over economic activities in areas under their control and adopted combinations of coercion, criminality, and cooperation with local populations to extract the

revenues needed to sustain themselves in power and continue to wage war.

These trends hold significant implications for the relationship between governance, limited statehood, and sovereignty. On the one hand, the tenuousness of domestic sovereignty in all three of the civil wars examined here has amplified and hardened the determination of recognized authorities to defend their sovereign standing. It reinforces their refusal to contemplate alternatives to a rigid, unitary, and centralized conception of sovereignty. It also drives continuity in prewar governance practices, especially with respect to economic governance, which becomes a marker of their capacity to fulfill their responsibilities as sovereign and fend off competing claims from rivals. On the other hand, the sovereign standing of recognized authorities also empowers them to engage with impunity in a wide range of illicit, corrupt, and predatory economic practices, devolve authority over economic governance to nonstate actors, and otherwise exploit limited statehood to their own advantage.

Thus, under wartime conditions, governance, sovereignty, and limited statehood become more tightly coupled. Civil wars in the Middle East offer few prospects for strategies of conflict resolution that rest on decoupling governance and sovereignty, or on the acceptance of flexible, plural, decentralized conceptions of sovereignty. In all three of the cases, proposals have been advanced, calling for various forms of decentralization, federalism, or local autonomy within existing state borders, and for power-sharing arrangements at the national level. Yet in each of these cases, leading political actors on all sides have rejected such proposals as threats to the integrity and sovereignty of the nation, or as conspiratorial attempts by imperial powers to redraw state boundaries or partition and thus weaken Arab states. In the Syrian case, for example, the Assad regime, the opposition Syrian Na-

tional Coalition, and the opposition Higher Negotiation Committee have all rejected proposals for political arrangements that they believe would compromise the sovereignty and integrity of the Syrian state. In all three cases, sovereignty claims empower external spoilers, embolden recognized governments and insurgents to adopt hardline positions, and encourage political actors to prefer military solutions to political compromises in resolving violent conflicts.

Across the Arab Middle East, violent conflicts have wreaked unfathomable damage, bringing levels of death, destruction, and displacement not seen since World War II. Their effects will be felt for generations. For scholars, officials, and practitioners, moreover, the region's civil wars pose significant challenges. They test the limits of current practice in postconflict reconstruction. They also test the limits of key findings in the research literature on civil war. In three major respects, civil wars in the Middle East call into question assumptions that have shaped theory and practice concerning the political economy of civil wars, on one hand, and the options available for building pathways out of conflict and toward postconflict reconstruction and social repair, on the other hand. All three challenges to conventional wisdom flow from observed continuities in governance norms and practices between prewar and wartime conditions.

First, the experience of violent conflict in the Middle East suggests that civil war does not mark a rupture or breakdown of prewar practices of economic governance. Nor can we view rebel economic governance as exhibiting attributes that distinguish it from those of regimes. Rather, conflict is marked by high levels of continuity between prewar and wartime practices of economic governance, with high levels of similarity in the behavior of both regimes and insurgents.

Second, the continuity of governance practices between prewar and wartime con-

ditions weakens the claims of practitioners who embrace the notion of state fragility, view conflict as signaling the breakdown of a prewar institutional order, and link prospects for postwar reconstruction to reforms designed to endow postwar institutions with the capacities associated with idealized notions of good governance (transparency, inclusion, accountability, and participation). Civil wars in the Middle East highlight how remote and implausible such notions are as guides to feasible strategies for ending violent conflict. They also underscore the robustness of prewar institutional arrangements, and the extent to which they are seen as assets by warring parties.

Third, continuity in governance practices sheds light on the limits of efforts to treat governance and sovereignty as separable or loosely coupled under conditions of limited statehood. It calls attention to the imperative that recognized authorities face to assert and defend a rigid, unitary, and Westphalian conception of sovereignty, and the extent to which continuity in the provision of governance becomes a marker of sovereignty. Under such conditions, there is little reason to be optimistic about peace-building strategies that would require recognized authorities to compromise their claims to sovereignty.

This analysis of the implications of continuity in prewar and wartime governance practices in three civil wars currently underway in the Middle East leads to sobering conclusions. Governance practices institutionalized by authoritarian regimes prior to conflict have proven decisive in shaping important wartime behaviors of regimes and insurgents in all three cases. Degrees of continuity vary in ways yet to be explored. With respect to economic governance in particular, however, the emergence of wartime economic orders has produced similar governance strategies across conflict lines, with armed actors relying heavily on coercion, predation, criminality, the selective allo-

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cation of public goods, and the dispersion of sovereign economic functions to external and nonstate actors. Under these conditions, we should anticipate that civil wars in the Middle East will not yield easily to negotiated solutions. We should also expect that the eventual outcomes of conflict are unlikely to produce durable peace, political stability, or economic well-being for citizens. In addition, the extent to which repressive and exclusionary wartime economic orders reflect institutionalized economic norms and practices, and have empowered armed actors whose interests are served by the continuation of conflict, make these cases poor candidates for external interventions defined in terms of overcoming state fragility. They are also likely

to feature the abuse of sovereignty norms to exacerbate maximalist claims by regimes and insurgent challengers alike.

Pathways out of civil war in such cases are particularly elusive. They are likely to require diplomatic, financial, and military strategies that create incentives for embattled regimes and insurgent challengers to end violence and accept meaningful compromises in the interest of securing their minimal requirements, and these may well include the absence of transitional justice and accountability for perpetrators, as well as power-sharing arrangements that accommodate all warring parties to differing degrees. As violent conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Yemen rage on, however, such outcomes still appear stubbornly out of reach.

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Is Prevention the Answer?

Charles T. Call & Susanna P. Campbell

Abstract : Is prevention the answer to escalating violent conflict ? Conflict prevention uses carrots and sticks to deter future violence. Its power thus rests on the credibility of policy-makers' commitment to supply the carrot or stick in a timely manner. Unfortunately, there are several political and bureaucratic barriers that make this unlikely. First, it is difficult for policy-makers to sell preventive actions to their constituencies. In contrast with core security interests (like nuclear warfare), an uptick in violence in a faraway, non-strategic country provides a less convincing call for action. Second, preventive decisions are difficult to make. Decision-makers are predisposed to avoid making difficult decisions until a crisis breaks out and they are forced to act. Third, preventive actions are political, not technical, requiring the use of precious political capital for uncertain outcomes whose success may be invisible (manifest in the absence of violence). Perhaps, if decision-makers are able to overcome these obstacles and make more credible commitments to conflict prevention, then conflict prevention will become a more credible solution to violent conflict.

CHARLES T. CALL is Associate Professor of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at the School of International Service at American University.

SUSANNA P. CAMPBELL is an Assistant Professor at the School of International Service at American University.

(*See endnotes for complete contributor biographies.)

Policy-makers around the world are giving renewed attention to conflict prevention. Immediately after taking office in 2017, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres identified conflict prevention as his top priority. In addition, in 2017, the World Bank and the UN released a joint report calling for improved conflict prevention and, in 2015, three major UN reviews and a quadrennial State Department review called for reinvigorated and better-resourced efforts to prevent violent conflict.[1] In 2016, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon lamented the rise of violent conflict : "We know it is far better to prevent a fire than to fight a fire after it has started – yet prevention still does not receive the political attention, commitment and resources that it deserves. . . . [It] must move up the agenda."[2] Pleas for improved international conflict prevention are not new. Policy-makers have periodically lamented the inability of the "international community" to prevent violent conflict for as long as the concept of conflict prevention has existed.[3]

Several factors help explain the recent renewed sense of urgency for conflict prevention. The frustrating and expensive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq failed to achieve stable peace despite the trillions of dollars invested, reducing confidence in the entire postconflict enterprise. The recurrence of political violence in places like South Sudan and the Central African Republic contributed to a sense that UN peacekeeping cannot meet the increasing demands placed on it. At the same time that policy-makers have become disenchanted with postconflict peace-building, peacekeeping, and state-building, the need for solutions has grown. After a period of slow decline at the end of the Cold War, the number and intensity of violent conflicts have rapidly increased since 2010. In fact, 2015 saw 101,400 battle deaths, making it the most violent year since 1945.[4] Wars in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, largely responsible for a global refugee crisis that warranted a record $23.5 billion in 2017, show the tragedy and enormous human cost of failed violence prevention.[5] One out of every 113 people on earth was forcibly displaced in 2015, both a consequence of intrastate war and a risk factor for further escalation.[6]

The latest calls for conflict prevention thus come as the frequency and price of violence seem to surge. But does conflict prevention work? What can we expect of its renewed focus? Prior calls for conflict prevention in the early 1990s and 2000s did not result in the kind of systematic and well-resourced programs envisioned by advocates. What, if anything, has changed that might lead us to expect a different outcome at this juncture?

We argue that conflict prevention faces significant obstacles in large part because it requires that states and international organizations (IOs) take actions that their constituencies may not deem important. Although conflict prevention employs traditional international relations tools –

sanctions, incentives, and socialization – it aims to do so before the cost of not taking action is clear, either for the domestic constituency or the recipient of the preventive action. Furthermore, the rules of prevention are uncertain. At what point in an escalating conflict can a potential armed actor expect preventive actions to be taken against it? When a state or international organization promises sanctions or incentives, will they actually follow through, and when? Given the lack of credibility behind conflict prevention commitments, both at the normative and policy levels, the greatest surprise seems to be that conflict prevention has worked at all.

In the 1990s, initial debates over conflict prevention centered on *what* was being prevented. Scholars reminded us that social conflict is a natural part of social life and that violent conflict can even spur positive social change. Given the increase in armed conflict over the past decade, many of these discussions have dissipated as a general consensus has emerged that conflict prevention should focus on preventing civil war and mass violence.[7] This includes actions to reduce the risk of emergent violent conflict – before, during, and after larger episodes of violence – that could escalate into more severe forms of political violence. If we can agree on what is to be prevented, the next question is how should prevention work? What, in other words, is the logic of prevention? Is there a reason we should think that conflicts can be prevented by intentional efforts? What is the underlying theory of how particular interventions can alter a hypothetical trajectory toward mass organized violence?

Like most other tools of international relations, the logic of prevention employs a mixture of carrots, sticks, and socialization. The carrots and sticks include the diplomatic, military, and economic tools that are normally at the disposal of states, interna-

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tional organizations, and nongovernmental organizations. States or international organizations aiming to prevent violence use incentives and disincentives like sanctions to influence would-be violent actors to refrain from using or encouraging violence. The effects of socialization are less overt, but have been built up and drawn on repeatedly. Resting on a weak but tangible human rights regime, they include shared norms of conduct that condemn atrocities and unjustified attacks on innocents, reinforce adherence to constitutional order, incentivize elections and other expressions of "legitimate" rule, and articulate a responsibility of states to protect their citizens and embrace some markers of equality and participation. As Francis Fukuyama has pointed out, these norms are slow to emerge and difficult to embed in international institutions.[8] However, diplomats and activists draw on these international norms, seeking to shame and induce leaders. They remind potential perpetrators of violence of appropriate roles in the international community through quiet diplomacy, international conferences, public campaigns, and advocacy efforts, backed by normative regimes that carry sanctions. They are often unable to convince prospective perpetrators that they can meet their needs without resorting to violence. However, norms can constitute the identity and calculations of potentially violent leaders in ways that can be drawn on to mitigate or prevent mass violence.

The difference between the logic of conflict prevention and the use of carrots and sticks in other international security domains is that preventing the escalation of violence is usually not within the intervener's vital national security interest. Vast security studies scholarship analyzes how states can compel and deter action by other states based on strategic interaction resting on bounded rationality. In contrast to situations in which core security interests (like nuclear warfare) are at stake, a civil war in a faraway, nonstrategic country is less consequential and may not affect global security.[9] Thus, even though states and international organizations may threaten the use of force or other sanctions to prevent violent behavior, these threats generally have much less credibility. Initial discussions of conflict prevention failed to make this distinction, assuming that states deploy the same tools that they had used to prevent interstate war to prevent intrastate war abroad. In addition, the uncertainty of potential escalating violence – as opposed to manifest civil war – makes it even less likely that states will make an initial offer of carrots or sticks

But states and international organizations have not consistently followed through with their promised sanctions or incentives in conflict prevention. As a result, the credibility of these preventive commitments is uncertain and, thus, their ability to elicit changes in behavior is questionable.

Each of the three categories of preventive actions – operational, structural, and systemic – manifest the logic of prevention in different ways.[10] *Operational prevention* is the most commonly understood form of conflict prevention and describes "measures applicable in the face of impending crisis."[11] Operational prevention usually relies on political, military, and robust economic tools to dissuade potential violent actors or physically stop them from acting violently. In the case of civil wars, operational conflict prevention usually targets government leaders and the leaders of groups that may initiate or escalate armed violence. Against nonstate leaders, conflict preventers can threaten military action, diplomatic isolation, indictments in national or international courts, targeted financial and other sanctions, and other moves aimed at undercutting their mobility or legitimacy. Against governments, they can threaten all of these sticks plus economic sanctions, military intervention, discon-

tinuation of external loans or aid or trade, and other sundry diplomatic punishment or isolation. External actors can also offer carrots for cooperation in preventing the escalation of violence. They can offer aid, trade incentives, access to markets, military training, civilian technical assistance, intelligence cooperation, public expressions of support, and diplomatic favors in areas unrelated to the potential conflict. Some of these carrots can be extended to nonstate leaders who threaten violence, including by withholding potential sticks.

Of course, incentives may be inadequate. As with international diplomacy (and human interactions generally), overtures, threats, and inducements are often insufficient to elicit the desired behavior. Generally, the first effort to dissuade leaders from opting for violence consists of "talk" – statements that encourage dialogue and discourage polarization and violence. Subsequently, external actors may threaten sticks or dangle carrots. The effectiveness of these threats or offers rests on the credibility with which they are received and on the likelihood that they will deliver the intended harm or benefit. In the most favorable circumstances for the success of diplomacy, these inducements require high credibility and a high chance of impact that reflect how important they are to the external actor, how costly or beneficial they will prove to the target, and how much they represent a shared sentiment among other external actors that can reinforce them. Trade sanctions, for instance, don't work if multiple countries increase their trade with the target country rather than helping enforce the sanctions.

In spite of the lack of credibility of many conflict prevention threats, we do see relatively benign preventive diplomacy work. Even when this diplomacy appears to be solely "talk," it is rarely devoid of potential carrots or sticks. Consider the international response to unrest in Burkina Faso in 2014,

once long-serving President Blaise Compaoré stepped down in the face of protests that threatened mass violence. When the UN Special Envoy flew into Ouagadougou with top officials of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) the day after Compaoré's departure, they collectively spoke for Burkina Faso's immediate neighbors, the broader African continent, and the global community. Their joint intervention helped to foster a dialogue that eased the crisis and prevented mass violence around the transfer of political power. Such instances of preventive diplomacy do not represent the sort of compelling deterrence postulated in traditional international relations literature, as there was no overt or credible threat of force.

Structural prevention refers to "measures to ensure that crises do not arise in the first place, or if they do, that they do not recur."[12] Structural prevention relies on the efforts of development and humanitarian actors and is grounded in the concept of structural violence.[13] How does the logic of structural prevention differ from operational prevention? The rationale of structural prevention is that external efforts can foster national government policies that incentivize inclusion and support peaceful conflict resolution, rather than exclusion and ultimately violent conflict. Rather than sticks or carrots dangled by the international community, structural prevention involves external initiatives that forge policies and programs at the national or subnational level that inhibit armed violence and encourage the equal distribution of resources among different political, ethnic, and religious groups. The assumption is that international programs and policies, including especially development assistance and trade openness, can mitigate known risk factors for civil war. Longer-term development policies can also shape norms such as inclusion, participatory governance, or

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rights-based institutions. This normative foundation can constitute the identity and calculations of potentially violent leaders.

Systemic prevention is defined as "measures to address global risk of conflict that transcend particular states."[14] Like structural prevention, systemic prevention reflects an indirect, long-term logic, but with more diffuse actors and targets. Global-level inequalities, the impact of patriarchal societies and masculinized identities, the legacy of colonialism, the arms trade, transnational criminal networks, and the regional-level militarization of society all shape the chances and nature of civil wars. The sticks and carrots of systemic prevention include regulation of harmful global trade networks of arms, people, and transnational drugs, as well as mechanisms of justice like the International Criminal Court and international aid aimed at enhanced access to a basic livelihood. The transnational human rights regime may induce armed actors to refrain from mass atrocities and warfare. Norms and institutions that reinforce peaceful resolution of disputes, especially when cohering with national traditions and processes, may also help. They may strengthen the likelihood that leaders will not turn to violence and will not expect their opponents to do so either. Of course, such system-level prevention is hard to measure and less likely to have a clear, decisive impact on leaders' decisions to turn to violence.

If uncertainty and a credibility gap undercut conflict prevention's prospects for success, those prospects are even slimmer due to organizational, bureaucratic, and political considerations. Conflict prevention received a good deal of attention in the early 1990s when UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali highlighted conflict prevention in his landmark *An Agenda for Peace* and pledged to "remove the sources of danger before violence results."[15] A second wave took place in the early 2000s,

emblematized by the call for prevention in Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*: "prevention is the core feature of our efforts to promote human security."[16] The UN responded with efforts to improve its ability to identify early warnings and mobilize early action, including the UN Interdepartmental Framework for Coordination on Early Warning and Preventive Action, which conducted monthly reviews of potential conflict areas, and the Secretary-General's Policy Committee.[17] A flurry of think tank and academic initiatives accompanied these efforts, including the seminal report of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict.[18]

These early conflict-prevention reforms yielded disappointing results, failing to achieve the hoped-for institutional investment in prevention or related improved performance. Why should we expect the current calls for prevention to elicit better results? While the numerous challenges in conflict-affected countries are well-known, there has been much less discussion of the internal political and organizational factors that make prevention especially difficult.

The internal political obstacles to prevention are significant. Policy-makers in London, Tokyo, and Washington argue that competing demands on scarce resources and the difficulty of justifying prevention make it hard to invest in prevention. As Annan's report *We the Peoples* stated, "Political leaders find it hard to sell prevention policies abroad to their public at home, because the costs are palpable and immediate, while the benefits – an undesirable or tragic future event that does not occur – are more difficult for the leaders to convey and the public to grasp."[19] It is thus no surprise that spending on crisis response is much greater, with crisis-response spending reaching one hundred times the level of prevention spending by some accounts.

In addition, the changing nature of conflict and of the international order do not bode well for international cooperation to prevent civil wars. As Bruce Jones and Stephen Stedman have described, growing tensions among the great powers have undermined the ability of the cooperative post–Cold War "treatment" for civil wars – from international mediation to peacekeeping – to work in places like Syria, Yemen, and Libya. As James Fearon has noted, the growing transnational character of nonstate actors like ISIS complicates the ability to exercise leverage on the perpetrators of violence and terrorism in civil wars. Indeed, the new roles of technology and nonstate actors generally require more actors and different incentives to avert conflict. And as Stedman and Richard Gowan have indicated, the "treatment" of peacekeeping and mediation did not include a commitment to prevention. The crisis of that treatment regime thus calls into further question that ability to forge the cogent external will necessary to make prevention work.[20]

Political considerations not only impede the ability of external actors to decide to act preventively, but they also plague the implementation of prevention policies. Prevention, by definition, requires changes to the status quo inside a country. As political scientist Barnett Rubin has written, "All prevention is political."[21] Whereas postconflict peace-building often rests on the legitimacy of a peace agreement, prevention of civil wars takes place in the absence of domestic political consensus about the functioning, if not the form, of the country's political institutions. External conflict prevention – whether it occurs pre-, post-, or during civil war – is based on the assessment that a country's political institutions are unable to prevent the escalation of violent conflict on their own and that international intervention is necessary to change the country's trajectory.

Prevention is thus a highly political act. This is true for operational prevention, but also for structural prevention, which aims to "transform the social, economic, cultural, or political sources of conflict," even if the specific way in which this should be done is hotly debated.[22] To change the status quo of a conflict-prone country, intervening organizations have to alter the way that they engage with that country. This type of alteration usually requires that top officials within intervening organizations use their precious political capital for conflict prevention, instead of using it to address conflicts that are already raging or other visible and urgent priorities. Thus, prevention requires that the intervening organizations engage with the internal politics of the conflict-prone country and that well-placed individuals within these organizations use their precious political capital to do so.

Organizational and bureaucratic challenges also plague prevention. It is difficult for decision-makers to decide to take preventive actions. Decision-makers are busy. The higher their position, the busier they are. At the same time, sensitive prevention actions usually require the buy-in of high-level decision-makers.[23] To make numerous decisions daily, high-level decision-makers tend to use heuristics, or rules of thumb, based on their past experiences.[24] These heuristics help decision-makers save cognitive energy and reduce uncertainty by enabling them to make the same types of decisions they have made in the past, reinforcing the organization's standard operating procedures and existing policies.[25] International affairs scholar Lori Gronich has argued that decision-makers avoid complexity, delaying decisions that appear to be complex and risky in favor of simple solutions to problems about which they have more limited knowledge.

Decision-makers are also likely to put off decisions, particularly complex ones, until

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they have to make them. According to political scientists Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, "deadlines force issues to the attention of incredibly busy players."[26] The tendency of decision-makers to put off decisions until the deadline and avoid complex problems hinders their ability to mandate preventive actions. Conflict prevention rarely has a clear deadline, has little guarantee of success, should be grounded in a complex and detailed analysis of the conflict context, and usually requires that the external actor alter its current approach to the context. Generating "political will" for conflict prevention thus requires altering the cognitive processes of decision-makers and convincing them that prevention is worth the risk and effort required.

Preventive policies, when adopted, are often suboptimal and poorly resourced. Multiple bureaucratic actors within a state or multilateral bureaucracy must reach an agreement, and the final decision is often a "political resultant" of this process.[27] It reflects a compromise among a highly diverse group of actors, often with limited knowledge of the actual country context, and often more concerned with their political relationships than with the particular context. In international organizations and governments alike, this decision-making process often results in relatively vague policy prescriptions that are implemented in an ad hoc fashion.[28]

Manifestation in multilateral organizations. Multilateral organizations face additional barriers to effective prevention. Like all external actors, they face obstacles to correctly analyzing the local context, designing good preventive actions, and mounting support for their adoption and implementation. Even if there is a clear need for preventive action and the types of actions required are relatively obvious, the political, decision-making, and bureaucratic barriers outlined above make preventive action both unlikely and difficult. Although these barriers are present in all IOs and states engaged in preventive action, they are manifest in different ways. When preventive policies are made in international organizations, they require a general consensus among member states and the concerned bureaucratic units.[29] At the same time, several scholars and IO staff have claimed that the staff may have more freedom to interpret and implement preventive policies precisely because they are the result of political compromise and the organizations' principals do not closely monitor how their staff implements preventive actions.[30] There are particular challenges and opportunities that preventive action poses for specific IOs, including the United Nations, regional organizations, international financial institutions, and states.

The United Nations. The United Nations made one of the earliest commitments to conflict prevention. The UN's long experience with conflict prevention offers crucial insights into its importance and viability. As discussed above, for almost twenty-five years, Security Council members, top UN officials, and major policy documents have repeatedly declared that the organization should prioritize preventive action. Nevertheless, the UN continues to allocate the majority of its resources to countries that are in the midst of or recovering from violent conflict, not those facing potential escalation. For example, the peacekeeping budget exceeded $9 billion in 2015, more than the budgets of the rest of the Secretariat and all other UN entities, and is dedicated to operations mainly in postconflict countries.

Prevention puts the UN, like other international organizations, in the peculiar position of intervening in its bosses' affairs. The UN is governed by 193 member states who decide on the mandates that the organization's agencies, funds, programs, and departments pursue and the resources that they receive. When the UN acts pre-

ventively, its member states and bureaucrats are intervening in the internal affairs of one or more of these member states. Because prevention aims to alter the status quo, this action is inherently invasive. According to one UN staff member: "conflict prevention is like a colonoscopy: both intrusive and embarrassing."[31]

Member states can easily prohibit the organization from taking preventive actions, either through overt protest or by calling the Secretary-General, expressing outrage, and telling the UN to back off. The Security Council must authorize any action taken without the consent of the host government, labeling it as a threat to international (not just national) peace and security and paid for out of a special, assessed budget. The Security Council has difficulty mandating a response to contexts in which thousands of people are being killed, making it highly unlikely that the Security Council will mandate substantial preventive actions in the absence of significant violence. Given that UN peacekeeping is already stretched beyond its capacity, it is difficult for the UN to justify allocating significant resources to address less urgent contexts, particularly in the face of opposition from the host government.

The decision-making and bureaucratic barriers outlined above apply to the UN in two particular ways.[32] First, the high salaries and generous benefits combined with diffuse and extremely low-level internal accountability incentivize its officials to avoid high-profile conflicts with other officials and member states' missions. For preventive policies, which will never have clear evidence of success or failure, there are even fewer incentives to enter into conflict with colleagues or member states. Second, more so than in regional organizations, the disparity in the interpretation of sovereignty between some countries (especially Western, but others as well) and others (mainly large, former colonies of the global South)

is very wide. Many states are, therefore, extremely focused on avoiding any transgression from the principle of state sovereignty that might set a precedent for intervention (including against their own government). Consequently, the UN often engages in prevention only in the unique circumstances when the host government permits it, powerful states condone it, and individual bureaucrats have the motivation and knowledge necessary to implement these political and highly nuanced actions.

Regional Organizations. Regional organizations (ROs), such as the African Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, European Union, Economic Community of West African States, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), face many of the same political, decision-making, and bureaucratic constraints as the United Nations. In fact, ROs such as the AU have made a greater commitment to noninterference in the domestic affairs of their member states than the UN, which one would assume makes conflict prevention more unlikely. Surprisingly, ROs have also embraced certain norms – such as on departures from democratic order by the Organization of American States and departures from constitutional order by the AU – that indicate an attenuation of sovereignty. Indeed, ROs have often demonstrated a greater capacity to carry out preventive action than the UN. The OSCE is credited with some visible conflict prevention successes in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The AU and ECOWAS spearheaded conflict prevention efforts in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, and Liberia.[33] These examples show that ROs can, at times, act much earlier than the UN. In the African cases above, the UN provided additional resources and support once the ROs demonstrated the value of preventive action.[34]

Regional organizations' greater facility with conflict prevention may be due to three factors. First, the potential conflicts

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are in their neighborhood. Escalating violence and displacement threaten to directly impact the RO's member states, making it much easier to mobilize support for preventive actions. At the same time, ROs may already be engaged in the potential conflict directly or through proxies, leading them to block preventive action or engage in it out of their own strategic interests. Either way, RO decision-makers may have a much better grasp of the significance of escalating violence in a neighboring country, incentivizing them to act more quickly to support or obstruct preventive action rather than letting these decisions languish in bureaucratic inertia.

Second, ROs generally enjoy greater legitimacy in their own region than does the United Nations, which, in the past decade, has been increasingly associated with a Western agenda.[35] This legitimacy translates into possible greater host-government willingness to consent to preventive actions, although the AU's precipitate decision (and then reversal) to send a preventive peacekeeping force to Burundi in 2015 belies this trend. Third, ROs have smaller decision-making bodies. Studies of regional organizations show that they may benefit from a smaller membership, which can more readily lead to decisions among member states.[36] For these reasons, it may be easier for ROs to take preventive actions than for the UN.

International financial institutions. International financial institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank, African Development Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF), also face important political and institutional obstacles to operational preventive action. The primary obstacle, however, is that they do not have a clear mandate for prevention and have historically not shaped their operations around it. IFIs are prohibited from engaging in politics, in spite of a growing acceptance in their policy documents of the political nature of economic development and the negative impact of violence on development. Whereas the UN and ROs have made strong policy commitments to conflict prevention, IFIs have not followed suit. In some cases, such as in Burundi in the late 1990s, in which a government experienced a severe crisis of governance and the main donors pressed for the IFIs to suspend or redirect their lending and grant programs accordingly, they have done so, at times via a bumpy process. But this is not the norm.

International financial institutions can, however, engage in some measure of structural prevention, although they have not framed it as such. The World Bank's research outputs on conflict in the early 2000s produced bountiful evidence of the structural risk factors for civil-war onset, opening the door for greater investment in programs aimed at reducing state fragility. These efforts occur primarily through negotiating and implementing broad development frameworks, such as the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan (PRSP). The degree to which PRSPs contain conflict-prevention policies depends both on the willingness of the host government to embrace them and the desire of the relevant World Bank officials and donors to support them. The 2017 joint World Bank/UN report *Pathways for Peace* and the *World Development Report 2011,* which made the case for investment in fragile and conflict-affected states, created space for greater World Bank policy emphasis and spending on these countries, signifying an important effort toward structural prevention. The Inter-American Development Bank similarly embarked on new investments in violence reduction and prevention that it considers core to its development goals. It is unclear, however, to which degree these policies have led to concrete changes on the ground.

International financial institutions encounter a related political and institutional obstacle in their governance boards. The

highest authorities of IFIs are the finance ministers of the main contributing countries and other countries in the respective region. The incentives facing finance ministers may favor conflict prevention based on a cost-benefit analysis, but their knowledge base and aversion to risk mitigate against a proactive engagement with violent conflict. Additionally, the bottom line for IFIs is "the bottom line": officials are predominantly economists whose calculations are finance-based, and for whom the weak evidence base for operational prevention is a hurdle. Furthermore, newer institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Brazil's National Development Bank offer alternative financing sources that make coordinated international strategies difficult. It remains to be seen whether the fact that peace is now formally part of the Sustainable Development agenda for 2030 might alter IFIs' cost-benefit analysis. Their ample resources offer a clear comparative advantage over other multilateral organizations and most states, making a strong, conflict-prevention focus potentially powerful.

Manifestation in states. States may hold the greatest potential for preventive action. Although beset by their own bureaucratic politics, they may more quickly deploy better-resourced and supported preventive actions.[37] In multilateral organizations in which powerful states have inordinate sway, such as in the World Bank, IMF, AU, or ECOWAS, these states can play a crucial role in pushing the organization toward preventive action. States, however, also face their own barriers to effective action. Domestic legislators may be more reticent to support a possible bilateral action than a multilateral one. Given other potential foreign policy priorities, prevention often falls low on the priority list, particularly when foreign policy decision-makers do not believe that escalating conflict will have a direct effect on the state's national interests.[38]

States confront an additional hurdle. Conflict prevention tends to require collective action. Many tools of prevention – sanctions, coercive diplomacy, conditionality on international aid, and political pressure – are ineffective if other influential states and IOs do not go along. Individual states may also face domestic backlash if they act alone. As a result, even if states are able to overcome some of the principal-agent problems that beset IOs, they still encounter similar principal-agent and collective-action problems because of the collaborative nature of preventive action. For these reasons, states tend to engage in conflict prevention through IOs, primarily the UN or regional organizations.

Given the long-standing and multifaceted obstacles to effective prevention, how likely is it that the latest calls for conflict prevention will end differently? The scholarly evidence of the effectiveness of operational prevention is inadequate but shows promise. Case studies seem to agree that operational prevention can help allay violence escalation particularly in cases in which military troops are deployed, such as the UN mission in Macedonia and the OSCE mission in Albania in 1997. Cross-national studies support this finding, pointing to peacekeeping's crucial role in mitigating war recurrence. Case studies also point to the particularly important role of the UN and regional organizations in operational prevention. States have shown some ability to prevent conflicts in other states, although they tend to work in partnership with multilateral actors. Although we lack systematic comparative case reviews and analysis of the conditions under which operational prevention succeeds or fails, or even consensus on a measurement of success or failure, existing scholarship shows that operational prevention does, at times, play a crucial role in preventing the escalation of violent conflict.

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In terms of structural and systemic prevention, the strong findings around the conditions that could lead to escalation may be of little direct use to policy-makers. It can tell them which conditions may lead to violence, on average, but cannot tell them the exact structural and systemic determinants of violence in a particular country, or which event is likely to trigger its escalation. The variables identified in these studies are medium- and long-term, and their connection to particular crises and conflicts is remote.

Some policy developments, however, give cause for optimism. In international organizations and states, there now exist enhanced early-warning, mediation, and peace-building support capacities. The same degree of capacity did not exist during the 1990s and 2000s, when there were also significant pushes for improved conflict prevention. For example, the U.S. intelligence community has adopted tools for analysis and forecasting of state fragility and political instability, including internal armed conflict and mass atrocities, which are fed into regular reports to senior decision-makers. Other bilateral governments have also invested in improved early-warning systems. The cadre of IO and state bilateral aid staff, not to mention external contractors, trained in conflict analysis and peace-building is steadily growing, slowly transforming the knowledge base of these institutions. Nonetheless, while there may be increased capacity to analyze conflict dynamics and design peace-building and conflict-mitigation responses, there is little knowledge about which types of interventions are effective in which contexts. In other words, while there may be better warnings, the menu of responses and our understanding of the conditions for their effectiveness are still highly inadequate.

In 2005, the United Nations created a Mediation Support Unit that deploys experts to advise mediation efforts and offer specialized technical assistance on themes such as power sharing and security reforms. The UN Secretary-General also established new UN envoys on preventing mass atrocities and regional conflict prevention. Qualitative evidence points to the effectiveness of these envoys in helping defuse crises, especially following coups. The UN, donor states, the World Bank, and the AU have created funds for quick, flexible responses to crises, including for prevention. There are also increased efforts to support community-level prevention. National governments and NGOs have created low-tech early-warning systems that network local groups and local police, often through cellphone reporting protocols, which have reportedly helped in preventing violence around anticipated flash points such as elections.[39]

Most assessments of conflict prevention have criticized these types of policy innovations because of their failure to prevent violent conflict. This maximalist notion of prevention has been an undercurrent in formal and informal assessments of its effectiveness. Yet given the numerous barriers facing conflict prevention – commitment problems, organizational disincentives, decision-making patterns, and uncertainty facing any preventive intervention – should we not adopt another metric for assessing efforts at conflict prevention? It may be wiser to identify its occasional successes rather than focus on its absolute failures. Given the scale of the challenges, the surprise is that conflict prevention sometimes succeeds, not that it fails. As with other ambitious norms – human rights, humanitarian protection, and the responsibility to protect – the fact that a norm is unachievable does not mean that it is not worthwhile. Rather than being futile, calls for more action and better organization aimed at preventing violent conflict may embolden a few policy-makers and bureaucrats to take on the risk of prevention. The more policy-makers who act preventively, the more credible the commitment that they will act

in the future. In other words, the more that preventive action occurs, the more effective it is likely to be. If we look at the sea change in thinking that led to the decriminalization of marijuana in some U.S. states in recent years, some of the key ingredients also exist with regard to conflict prevention: mounting evidence of its utility, a frustration with the inadequacy of existing policies, and entrepreneurial leadership from key political leaders. Those factors helped produce a shift in thinking that was unimaginable a few years earlier and that defied immediate political calculations. Although we should not expect conflict prevention to work in many cases, the few cases in which it may prevent escalating violence justify an investment, in spite of the odds.

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ENDNOTES

* Contributor Biographies: CHARLES T. CALL is Associate Professor of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at the School of International Service at American University. He is the author of *Rising Powers and Peacebuilding: Breaking the Mold?* (2017) and *Why Peace Fails: The Causes and Prevention of Civil War Recurrence* (2012) and the coeditor of *Building States to Build Peace* (with Vanessa Wyeth, 2008). He was senior external advisor on the joint UN/World Bank report *Pathways to Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (2017).

SUSANNA P. CAMPBELL is an Assistant Professor at the School of International Service at American University. She is the author of *Global Governance and Local Peace: Accountability and Performance in International Peacebuilding* (2018) and numerous other publications on the interaction between global governance organizations and the microdynamics of conflict and cooperation in civil wars. She has been awarded several scholarly and policy grants, including from the United States Institute of Peace, and conducted extensive fieldwork in sub-Saharan Africa and globally.

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Ending the Sri Lankan Civil War

Sumit Ganguly

Abstract: The Sri Lankan Civil War erupted in 1983 and dragged on until 2009. The origins of the conflict can be traced to Sri Lanka's colonial era and subsequent postcolonial policies that had significantly constrained the social and economic rights of the minority Tamil population. Convinced that political avenues for redressing extant grievances were unlikely to yield any meaningful results, a segment of the Tamil community turned to violence precipitating the civil war. A number of domestic, regional, and international efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict all proved to be futile. A military strategy, which involved extraordinary brutality on the part of the Sri Lankan armed forces, brought it to a close. However, few policy initiatives have been undertaken in its wake to address the underlying grievances of the Tamil citizenry that had contributed to the outbreak of the civil war in the first place.

SUMIT GANGULY, a Fellow of the American Academy since 2017, is Professor of Political Science and holds the Tagore Chair in Indian Cultures and Civilizations at Indiana University, Bloomington. He is the author of *The Oxford Short Introduction to Indian Foreign Policy* (2015), *Deadly Impasse: Indo-Pakistani Relations at the Dawn of a New Century* (2016), and *Ascending India and Its State Capacity* (with William Thompson, 2017).

The Sri Lankan Civil War vividly demonstrates the potential brutality and tenuousness of efforts to end civil wars.[1] In this case, war termination was the result of an outright military victory. But the conditions that made it possible to end the Sri Lankan Civil War may have been unique: a particular constellation of factors, at systemic, regional, and national levels, proved conducive for the pursuit of an unbridled military campaign that ended the war. At a systemic level, the major powers, including the United States and key European nations, had tired of the conflict. The two major regional powers, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and India, for differing reasons, chose to either support the Sri Lankan regime as it embarked on a massive military onslaught against the rebels or to remain aloof from the conflict. Domestically, the regime that had recently assumed power concluded that it had found an opportune moment to unleash the full might of its military against the insurgents. Consequently, it is unlikely that similar conditions will be present in other contexts.

In May 2009, after two and a half decades of sporadic violent conflict, the Sri Lankan Civil War, which

arose from the animosity between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamil populations, finally drew to a close. The end of this war was especially bloody, with charges of rampant human rights violations on the part of the two principal parties, the Sri Lankan armed forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In the final military assault that lasted from January to early May 2009, some seven thousand ethnic Tamils were killed.[2] But the total number killed in the civil war is a vigorously contested subject. The United Nations puts the death toll between eighty thousand and one hundred thousand. The Sri Lankan government, however, challenges those figures.[3] Apart from the death toll, following the termination of hostilities, as many as three hundred thousand Tamils who had fled the war zone were interned in overcrowded camps.[4]

This essay will discuss the origins of the Sri Lankan Civil War, briefly examine its international dimensions (including an abortive Indian effort to terminate the war between 1987 and 1989), discuss the third-party negotiations to conclude the conflict, and focus on the politico-military strategy that led to its end. Finally, it will argue that the mode in which the war ended may have damaged the prospects of a lasting peace.

The origins of the Tamil-Sinhala conflict can be traced back to Sri Lanka's colonial history. During the period of British colonial rule, which extended from 1815 to 1948, the minority Tamil community seized various opportunities for economic advancement. To that end, significant numbers of the community had availed themselves of a colonial education, primarily because they had limited economic opportunities in the regions in which they were located. The dominant Sinhala community, with marked exceptions, however, had distanced themselves from the British. Not surprisingly,

when independence came to Sri Lanka in 1948 (largely as a consequence of British colonial withdrawal from India in 1947), Tamils were disproportionately represented in public services, higher education, journalism, and the legal profession.[5]

The Sinhala elite, who had worked with the British from the early 1930s to bring about an eventual transfer of power, had paid little heed to the inherently ethnically plural features of the country. When universal adult franchise was extended to all Sri Lankans in 1931 under the Donoughmore Constitution, no provisions were included to guarantee minority rights. Not surprisingly, key members of both the Tamil and Muslim communities had protested the absence of clear-cut provisions for the protection of minority rights. Tamils, unhappy with the constitutional dispensation, boycotted the elections held under the aegis of this constitution. Even the subsequent Soulbury Constitution of 1947, which paved the way to independence, did not include a bill of rights. It did, however, include a clause that prohibited discrimination against any citizen on the basis of ethnicity or religion, but this constitutional provision proved to be rather tenuous. In fact, it laid the foundation for what was soon to emerge as a unitary and majoritarian state.[6]

Worse still, in the aftermath of independence, Sri Lanka's first prime minister, Don Stephen Senanayake, passed legislation that effectively disenfranchised a significant segment of the Tamil community, including the descendants of Tamils who had been brought to Sri Lanka in the nineteenth century as tea and coffee plantation laborers. The passage of this legislation gave the Sinhalese an effective two-thirds majority in Parliament, thereby ensuring their dominance.[7]

Senanayake's successor, Solomon West Ridgeway Bandaranaike, also exploited, until his death in 1952, the overrepresentation

of Tamils in both the governmental bureaucracies and the private sector to stoke resentment among the majority community. Among other matters, they argued that since Tamils were disproportionately represented in the field of higher education, they were prone to favor fellow Tamils. Ultimately, they passed the Sinhala Only Act of 1956, which effectively marginalized the Tamil community in every possible sphere, from employment to higher education.

Matters worsened over the next two decades for the Tamil population of the country. One important turning point came in 1971 when the regime of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike introduced a system of standardization in university admissions. This procedure stipulated that Sinhala students with lower scores could be granted university admissions.[8] Not surprisingly, this policy further alienated Tamil youth and contributed to their radicalization. Subsequently, in 1972, the country adopted a new constitution. Under the terms of this constitution, Buddhism was given the foremost status, denigrating other faiths. This decision contributed to a milieu of growing majoritarian sentiment and created permissive conditions for the growth of anti-Tamil commentary in public discourse.[9]

It was against this political backdrop that, in 1976, a young Tamil, Velupillai Prabhakaran, who had witnessed the anti-Tamil riots of 1958, created the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam as an alternative to the moderate and agitational politics of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).[10] The LTTE's political goals were ostensibly similar to those of the TULF: like the TULF, it had sought a separate Tamil state. However, unlike the TULF, it was prepared to wage an armed struggle to achieve that goal. In any case, after 1983, following the passage of a law that required legislators to uphold the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, the TULF's stated

goal became moot. The LTTE, however, remained unalterably committed to the creation of a separate Tamil state.[11]

Prabhakaran had apparently concluded that, after the "standardization" legislation of 1971 and the republican constitution of 1972, the rights of Tamils in the country were now under serious assault. He was hardly alone in embracing this view of minority rights. These sentiments were widely shared among Tamil youth, who Prabhakaran steadily recruited to the cause of a violent revolt against the country's political order.[12]

The Civil War is frequently divided into four distinct phases, starting in 1983 with the anti-Tamil pogrom in the capital city of Colombo. This first phase culminated with the Indian intervention in the conflict in 1987. The second phase started in 1990 and ended in 1995 with the collapse of the direct talks between the LTTE and the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga. The third phase, in turn, began in 1995 and ended with the final collapse of the cease-fire agreement in 2006. The fourth and final phase began shortly thereafter and lasted until 2009, when the LTTE was finally defeated.

Even though the origins of the Civil War are widely attributed to the anti-Tamil pogrom that had swept through the capital city of Colombo in July 1983, the catalyst for the conflict had been set in motion somewhat earlier by the killing of four policemen, in 1979, allegedly by the LTTE. Immediately thereafter, the government declared a state of emergency in the province of Jaffna and in two airports near Colombo and, a week later, Parliament passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which, though modeled on British legislation, included a number of highly controversial provisions. Among them were the authority to imprison individuals accused of involvement with terror for up to eighteen

months without a trial and virtual immunity for security forces from prosecution.

But despite the passage of this draconian legislation, matters continued to deteriorate. In mid-July 1983, Sri Lankan security forces killed Charles Anton, the head of the military wing of the LTTE.[13] Shortly thereafter, in retaliation for his killing, the LTTE ambushed a Sri Lankan military patrol in the northern Sri Lankan province of Jaffna and killed thirteen soldiers. The regime of President Junius Jayewardene chose to bring the bodies of the slain soldiers to Colombo for a mass funeral. This act no doubt inflamed Sinhala sentiments and likely created conducive conditions for a violent reprisal against the Tamil community. However, there is evidence that elements of the regime quickly became complicit in an orchestrated attack on Tamils over the course of the next few days. Reliable reports suggest that as many as two thousand Tamils were killed in the course of a week in Colombo and elsewhere. The police proved to be passive spectators, and there is some evidence that members of the armed forces even participated in the violence.[14]

In the initial days after the pogrom, instead of offering some solace to the aggrieved Tamil community, the regime of President Jayewardene focused on the resentments of the Sinhala community. To no particular surprise, in the wake of the pogrom and the governmental response, more than one hundred thousand Tamils were rendered homeless, and several hundred thousand fled the country to India over the next several years. More to the point, the incidents served as the basis of a substantial recruitment tool for the LTTE. In effect, the origins of the full-blown civil war that came to engulf the country for the next thirty odd years can be traced to the tragic events of July 1983.

The pogrom in Colombo inflamed public sentiments in India, especially among fellow Tamils in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Beyond this domestic issue, which no government in New Delhi could afford to ignore, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was also concerned about growing American influence within Sri Lanka. India was, for the most part, then at odds with the United States. It had, for reasons of both regional politics as well as its strategic dependence on the Soviet Union, refused to condemn the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.[15]

When Indian intelligence agencies reported that the United States could be seeking naval facilities in the eastern port of Trincomalee, New Delhi's anxieties worsened. Keen on asserting India's influence in the domestic politics of Sri Lanka while simultaneously addressing the concerns of Indian Tamils, Prime Minister Gandhi sent a diplomatic mission to Sri Lanka in November 1983. The individual chosen for this task, G. Parthasarathy, was a veteran Indian diplomat and the prime minister's confidante. Parthasarathy was tasked with offering a plan for the devolution of power to elected regional councils in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, where Tamils made up the majority. Various forms of opposition from across the political spectrum, but primarily from the Sinhala parties, and the lack of support from Sri Lankan President Junius Jayewardene, effectively torpedoed this Indian initiative.[16]

In 1983, President Jayewardene gave free rein to the country's armed forces to suppress Tamil militancy. The military crackdown led to significant casualties, including among the civilian population. Concerned about the possible repercussions of this military operation on the electoral politics in Tamil Nadu, Indira Gandhi conveyed her concerns about Tamil civilian casualties. Jayewardene, however, rebuffed her apprehensions. Not one to take kindly to such a response, she granted formal authorization to India's principal counterintelli-

gence and counterespionage organization, the Research and Analysis Wing, to provide training and assistance to the various Tamil militant groups.[17]

Over the next several years, the conflict expanded and, in May 1987, the Sri Lankan government launched "Operation Liberation" with the goal of evicting the LTTE from the jungles of northern Sri Lanka. The military onslaught, which was brutal and included the use of barrel bombs by the Sri Lankan air force, contributed to a large-scale flight of Tamil civilians seeking sanctuary in Tamil Nadu.[18] Faced with this exodus, the government in New Delhi embarked on a humanitarian mission and sent in a flotilla of ships with relief supplies. The Sri Lankan navy, however, intercepted these vessels before they entered Sri Lankan waters. Faced with this rebuff, India's policy-makers resorted to an airdrop of relief supplies. The very next day, after giving the government in Colombo a mere thirty-five-minute notice, five Indian Antonov An-32 aircraft accompanied by four Mirage fighters airdropped twenty-five tons of relief supplies over Jaffna.[19]

In an attempt to end the Sri Lankan Civil War, while simultaneously appeasing a significant domestic constituency in Tamil Nadu, the home of over sixty million Indian Tamils, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi – having assumed the office after the assassination of his mother – sought to broker a peace deal between the LTTE, five other smaller Tamil insurgent groups, and the regime of President Jayewardene.

Under the terms of the accord, the Sri Lankan government would, following a referendum, devolve power to the Northern and Eastern Provinces; Tamil would be accorded the status of an official language; the Sri Lankan armed forces would return to the barracks; and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) would disarm the rebel groups.[20]

To implement the accord, India sent in a contingent of troops in 1987. The vast majority of the various Tamil militant groups acceded to the disarmament requirements and turned in their weaponry within the specified seventy-two hours. What India's political leadership, not to mention its intelligence services, had failed to recognize was that the LTTE was quite unreconciled to the terms of the agreement; its members refused to disarm and quickly turned against the IPKF. As a consequence, the IPKF's mission metamorphosed from a peacekeeping to a peace-enforcement role. Initially, the force scored some notable successes against the LTTE. For example, in November 1987, after the relentless offensive "Operation Pawan," it managed to mostly crush the LTTE in the Jaffna Peninsula.[21] This, however, did not prove to be a decisive victory. The LTTE successfully regrouped and the IPKF became embroiled in the Sri Lankan Civil War as it sought to defeat the LTTE. After a loss of 1,200 personnel and unable to make much military headway against the LTTE, India withdrew its forces in 1990 at the insistence of the newly elected government of President Ranasinghe Premadasa.[22] In the waning days of the IPKF's presence in Sri Lanka, the regime started talks with the LTTE. These, however, did not amount to much and ultimately collapsed in June 1990.[23]

In the aftermath of the withdrawal of the IPKF from Sri Lanka, the war worsened considerably as neither the Tamil militants nor the Sri Lankan regime appeared interested in a political solution to the conflict. After its military imbroglio, Indian policy-makers also lost interest in seeking a resolution to the conflict and Indian willingness to provide either moral support or material assistance to the Tamils effectively dried up. To curb any efforts on the part of the Tamil Nadu government to renew ties with the LTTE, the Indian national government dismissed the state government and chose to rule the state directly from New Delhi. The LTTE's involvement

in the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during the 1991 election campaign further alienated the government in New Delhi from the Tamil cause.

Meanwhile, in Sri Lanka, the LTTE regrouped once again and ratcheted up its military campaign. In 1993, it killed President Ranasinghe Premadasa in a bomb attack. Indeed, it was not until the election of President Chandrika Kumaratunga in August 1994 that some hopes of a negotiated solution to the conflict were rekindled. In January 1995, the Kumaratunga government reached a cease-fire agreement with the LTTE. It also promised that a new set of proposals for the devolution of power would soon be offered. This effort, however, proved to be futile when, in that same year, the LTTE sank a Sri Lankan naval craft.[24]

In response, the Kumaratunga regime launched a military operation against the LTTE bastions in Jaffna in October 1995. This military action, known as "Operation Riviresa" ("rays of sunlight"), was largely a tactical success. However, it left multiple army brigades stranded on the peninsula where they could only be supplied through the sea or air. The LTTE was thus able to quickly isolate the Sri Lankan security forces and overrun them.[25]

For the next several years, war raged in the north and the east of the country. In January 1998, three LTTE suicide bombers attacked the most venerable Buddhist site, the Temple of the Tooth, which, according to devout Buddhists, is the repository of a tooth of the Lord Buddha. Retaliatory raids on Tamil temples and homes followed.[26] Over the course of the next three years, the LTTE's actions became even more brazen. Two incidents in particular are worth noting. The first was a mostly abortive suicide attack on President Chandrika Kumaratunga in December 1999, though it left her wounded and eventually led to the loss of sight in one eye.[27] The second episode proved to be costly both in terms of human life and property: an attack on the principal airport in Colombo that led to the destruction of nearly half of the fleet of the government-run Sri Lankan Airlines.[28] In the wake of these vicious attacks, the government of President Kumaratunga reached out to Norway to mediate a peace process. The Norwegians became involved in 2000 and started discussions both with her regime and the LTTE.[29]

In February 2002, for reasons that are not entirely clear, the LTTE held out the prospect of a cease-fire, which Norwegian mediators managed to broker between the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka. Under the aegis of this agreement, the road linking Jaffna to the rest of Sri Lanka was opened for the first time in twelve years, passenger flights to Jaffna were resumed, and the government lifted its ban on the LTTE. Furthermore, at least in principle, the LTTE appeared to have dropped its demand for the creation of a separate state.[30]

Altogether, Norway hosted six rounds of talks, but the process collapsed in March 2003.[31] The talks unraveled largely because the United States had proscribed the LTTE as a terrorist organization. Accordingly, it was not permitted to participate in a preparatory donors' conference in Washington, D.C. Denied this opportunity and concerned about its loss of legitimacy as an international actor, the LTTE announced their unilateral withdrawal from the negotiations in April 2003.[32] Furthermore, having previously agreed with Colombo to "explore a solution founded on the principle of internal self-determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking peoples, based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka," the LTTE now made the resumption of talks conditional on proposals for an interim, independent governance arrangement in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka.[33] Subsequent to the termination of these talks, some mediated efforts took place in 2006. However, none

of these proved to be especially fruitful. One of them, held in Geneva in February, saw more mutual recriminations rather than meaningful dialogue. Another, scheduled in Oslo in November 2006, saw the LTTE withdraw as it deemed the Sri Lankan negotiating team to be too low-ranking.[34] The fundamental problem with these negotiations was that the two sides faced an unbridgeable chasm : they had radically different goals. The Sri Lankan government, regardless of regime, wanted to preserve a unitary state, and the LTTE remained committed to the creation of a separate Tamil state. It is worth noting here that, despite the concerted Norwegian efforts to play the role of an honest broker, they ultimately failed. The "treatment regime" for civil wars clearly did not prove up to the task in the Sri Lankan context.[35]

Following the collapse of negotiations, the LTTE periodically stepped up its attacks, engaged in a series of successful and unsuccessful political assassinations (including the killing of Tamil foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar at his home in Colombo in 2005), and fought off a variety of military operations launched by the Sri Lankan regime.

But then the Sri Lankan Supreme Court ruled that President Kumaratunga's term had ended and in the new presidential election, a hard-line presidential candidate, Mahinda Rajapaksa, was elected to office. Over the course of the next few years, Rajapaksa, in conjunction with his brother, Gotabhaya, who was made the minister of defense, brought about significant changes in military organization and strategy that would ring the eventual death-knell of the LTTE. The government, upon assuming office, had spelled out a two-track "peace process" strategy. At one level, it pursued an aggressive military strategy and, at another, it offered a narrow negotiating agenda on how to best implement an effective cease-fire agreement.[36]

The fundamental difference between the Rajapaksa regime and its predecessors, however, lay in its willingness to grant carte blanche to the military to fight the LTTE to the end, regardless of the economic, human, and diplomatic costs. More specifically, it allowed the Sri Lankan military not to differentiate between the Tamil population and LTTE operatives in rebel-controlled areas. It also permitted anti-LTTE Tamil militants to carry out punitive operations at will. Furthermore, it relied on the state-controlled media to carry out a deft propaganda campaign that grossly exaggerated LTTE casualties in an attempt to bolster both public support for military operations and to boost the morale of its soldiers. Finally, the armed forces, for the first time, carried out a mixed-military strategy combining guerrilla warfare with large-scale artillery assaults supported by air raids. All of these factors created conducive conditions for the termination of the long, drawn-out civil war.[37]

How did this brutal civil war finally come to a close? In considerable part, it stemmed from three sources. At an international level, sympathy for the LTTE had receded in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the United States and global sentiment against the use of terror had welled up. Earlier, in 1996, the U.S. Department of State had designated the LTTE as a "foreign terrorist organization," and, in 2000, the United Kingdom followed suit. These decisions hindered the fund-raising efforts of the organization and hobbled transnational financial transfers.

At a regional level, despite the presence of a substantial Tamil community in India, overt support for the LTTE within the community had waned since the LTTE's involvement in the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. No national government in New Delhi had any residual sympathy for the organization.

Finally, when the regime of President Mahinda Rajapaksa chose to start the final military onslaught against the LTTE, it found significant support, especially in the form of substantial amounts of military equipment, including six F7 fighter jets, from the People's Republic of China. The PRC also provided millions of dollars' worth of other military equipment and about $1 billion in overall assistance.[38] All three factors, to varying degrees, played critical roles in ensuring the success of the military campaign against the LTTE.

The critical turning point in ending the civil war came in 2006 when the LTTE, believing that military victory was actually within its grasp, broke off the Norwegian-brokered cease-fire agreement and started what is popularly referred to as the Fourth Eelam War. It was at this point that the Sri Lankan regime made a calculated decision to annihilate the LTTE. To that end, the regime also decided to allocate as much as 3.3 percent of its GDP in 2007 to military spending (up from 2.8 percent in 2006).[39] This increase in the military budget also enabled an expansion of the armed forces from 120,000 personnel in 2005 to 300,000 in 2009.

Of course, the LTTE, despite its decision to resume fighting, had been weakened as early as 2004 with the defection of an important leader, Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, popularly known as "Colonel Karuna," along with some six thousand LTTE cadres. Because he provided significant tactical intelligence to the Sri Lankan armed forces, his defection was significant militarily. The scale of the defection also suggested to the Sri Lankan government that the popular legitimacy that the LTTE had once enjoyed was now waning.

Battlefield innovation also aided the Sri Lankan armed forces in its mission to crush the LTTE. The army used small, highly trained, mobile groups to infiltrate the LTTE's front lines. These groups attacked high-value targets, provided real-time intelligence, and disrupted the LTTE's lines of resupply and communications. They were also trained and authorized to call in precision air, artillery, and mortar attacks on LTTE units.[40] Additionally, the Sri Lankan armed forces launched operations that effectively hunted down and destroyed the LTTE's merchant navy. The deployment of high-speed coastal craft and accompanying tactics also led to the destruction of the LTTE's substantial fleet of maritime suicide vessels.[41]

Military innovation alone, however, cannot explain the battlefield success of the Sri Lankan armed forces. As a number of reputable human rights organizations and news outlets have shown, the military success must also be attributed to the sheer ruthlessness of the tactics that were employed. These tactics demonstrated a flagrant disregard for established norms and conventions governing the use of force. It involved the targeting of civilian areas where LTTE cadres may have taken refuge, the shelling of hospitals where wounded LTTE forces were being treated, and the summary executions of any number of individuals suspected of being LTTE sympathizers.[42]

The LTTE also resorted to brutal military tactics as the war drew to a close. Its leaders deliberately placed civilians in the line of fire, fully expecting the enemy to fire upon them, causing substantial casualties.[43] They hoped these civilian losses would generate international opprobrium against the government and its security forces.[44]

Though the war resulted in the evisceration of the LTTE, the underlying grievances that had precipitated the civil war largely remained unaddressed. Significantly, in the wake of the military victory there was an unbridled sense of majoritarian ethnic triumphalism. Only under significant international pressure did President Rajapaksa appoint a Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission in May 2010. The Com-

mission released an interim report in September 2011 and then a final report in November of the same year, both of which came under considerable criticism from global human rights organizations for failing to dispassionately examine allegations of rampant human rights violations during the final phases of the conflict. More to the point, critics underscored a distinct progovernment bias in the final report.[45] Its shortcomings aside, the report did have a range of practical suggestions for promoting reconciliation. Among these were the need to bring about a reconciliation with the Tamil politicians of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, the election of provincial governments, the resettling of the internally displaced, and suitable Tamil representation in the armed forces and the government.[46] These recommendations, for the most part, have yet to be implemented.

An extremely determined and single-minded military effort, facilitated by regional and international conditions, brought an end to the civil war. The military offensive of the Sri Lankan armed forces against the LTTE took place against a particular political backdrop and at a specific historical juncture; it was a moment when global tolerance for any political movement embracing terror was at its lowest ebb in years.

Globally, the United States and the European Union did little to rein in the Sri Lankan government as it embarked on the final stages of its military offensive. Regional states, such as the PRC and Pakistan, actively supported the government.[47] India, which could have exerted some restraint on the regime, chose not to do so. The military victory of the Sri Lankan armed forces over the LTTE was complete and unequivocal. Obviously, seeking the total destruction of an adversary is one possible strategy for successful civil war termination.

There is little or no question that the LTTE as a viable military force has been effective-

ly destroyed. As argued earlier, a combination of international, regional, and domestic forces all converged and facilitated the military defeat of the LTTE. The most significant of these factors, however, was the emergence of a regime in Sri Lanka prepared to brook no opposition in its goal to terminate the protracted conflict. The successful defeat of the LTTE and the concomitant end to the civil war initially generated widespread support and popular enthusiasm for the regime, especially among the Sinhala population of the country.

Despite its popularity in the aftermath of the civil war, the Rajapaksa regime suffered an unexpected defeat in 2015. The common opposition candidate, Maithripala Sirisena, received 51.3 percent of the popular vote. Rajapaksa's ethnic triumphalism had alienated both the Tamil and Muslim minorities and his grasp on the Sinhalese majority had slipped due to charges of widespread corruption and nepotism.[48]

Despite the evisceration of the LTTE and the emergence of a new regime, the perceived injustices of the Tamil community that had set in motion the social and political forces precipitating the civil war, for the most part, remain unaddressed. The new regime, to its credit, established a new Office of National Unity and Reconciliation, which primarily deals with the release of detainees and the return of civilian land that the military had occupied. The office has only been partially successful in addressing these matters. Yet the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which granted the government sweeping powers of arrest and detention, still remains in force, and many who had been incarcerated under its auspices have yet to be released.[49]

Much disaffection with the present Sri Lankan regime of Maithripala Sirisena still pervades the Tamil diaspora communities.[50] His stated willingness to address the concerns of the diaspora notwithstanding, it is far from certain that he will be able

to win the necessary domestic political support to effectively pursue such a strategy. Significant social forces and institutional barriers that remain could hobble any steps toward reconciliation. One of these, of course, is the Buddhist clergy, who remain a significant political entity in the country and have little sympathy for their Tamil compatriots.[51]

Another institutional barrier in the pathway toward reconciliation is the uniformed military. Over the course of this protracted civil war and especially during the regime of President Rajapaksa, the military became a vital political actor. The leeway it was granted contributed dramatically to the militarization of the country. Shrinking the role and the scope of the armed forces will prove to be no easy task.[52] Under current conditions, it is hard to envisage how a renewed violent Tamil opposition could again emerge. In the absence of concerted efforts to address the human and material costs of the civil war and its antecedents, Sri Lanka is likely to remain a deeply fractured nation riven with profound ethnic cleavages. The shared sense of national identity that Francis Fukuyama deems so necessary to underpin a state's legitimacy does not exist in Sri Lanka.[53] Instead, significant segments of the Tamil community remain disaffected from the Sinhala-dominated Sri Lankan state.

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Sovereignty Strategies: Enhancing Core Governance Functions as a Postconflict & Conflict-Prevention Measure

Clare Lockhart

Abstract: This essay contrasts the two extremes used to address civil wars and weak states: costly and ill-designed interventions (Approach A) or minimalist approaches in which international actors either stay away or engage only to broker a deal or depose a dictator, but fail to build institutions and consolidate peace afterward (Approach C). This essay posits an alternative, a sovereignty strategy (Approach B), which would see core functions established in a sequence carefully tailored to context and delivered through partnerships between state, market, and civic actors over a period of decades. It analyzes whether a sovereignty strategy could be both feasible and affordable as an alternative to Approach A or C, whose costs are also very real, taking into account the costs and benefits of each option.

CLARE LOCKHART is Cofounder and Director of the Institute for State Effectiveness and Senior Fellow at the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs at Yale University. She is the author of *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World* (with Ashraf Ghani, 2008) and has published numerous articles in *Foreign Policy*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Quarterly*, and *Financial Times*, among others, as well as several book chapters and essays.

Our international order rests on the assumption that sovereign states will keep the peace within their borders. When this assumption proves wrong, and states begin to break down, or begin to fall into internal conflict that they are unable or unwilling to prevent, the international community is left with difficult choices. The community of nations can let the conflict run its course, attempt to alter its course, or end it by imposed or negotiated peace. A last option is to work to address the root causes of conflict so that it can be mitigated or avoided in the first place, or a newly established peace can be sustained.

Over the past decade and a half, the international community's inclinations have swung between two extremes: either intervening with military forces and large-scale civilian assistance, as in Iraq and Afghanistan, or standing at a distance, either in the hope that the fire will burn itself out, as in Syria, or in the misplaced hope that cutting a peace or independence deal or deposing a dictator without invest-

ing the appropriate resources to build institutions and sustain peace will be sufficient, as in South Sudan and Libya. Clearly neither extreme, in these simplified terms, has worked. Making a conflict-ridden country a long-term ward of the international community, with high levels of poorly planned and implemented external assistance, is neither feasible nor desirable, and often worsens the original conflict. On the other end of the spectrum, global neglect of a conflict and its aftermath can yield costs that are as great as those of large-scale intervention, leaving a vacuum that results in regional instability and vast human misery. Neither approach has proven effective for making and sustaining peace.

Somewhere between these two poles there remains a third approach, a *sovereignty strategy*: that is, helping internal actors establish or restore a core set of governance systems or institutions, building the legitimacy of the state over time, winning the trust and meeting the needs of the people, reducing the reliance of the country on external support, and contributing to the resolution of conflicts before they become violent. This approach, here called Approach B, is distinct both from the large-scale external aid model (Approach A) that has largely prevailed since 2001 and from the minimalist approach (Approach C).[1] The sovereignty strategy approach will not be possible or appropriate in all cases, as each context is unique and what is appropriate and feasible will, of course, depend on the characteristics of the situation. But it could prove more effective and less costly than other options in the right circumstances.

This essay proposes that the execution of Approach B involves the establishment or restoration of core state functions in a carefully sequenced way over an extended period of time. The goal of the sovereignty strategy would be to establish the performance of those functions required in a particular context to meet the needs and earn the trust of its citizens as well as fulfill its international obligations. The strategy's legitimacy would accordingly be enhanced through its performance as a supplement or alternative to legitimacy through elections, which, as Jean-Marie Guéhenno argues, is an inadequate basis for stability.[2] This approach would be phased over a ten- to twenty-year period, with a small number of functions or core systems under development at any given time as the state grows toward self-reliance and the full exercise of its responsibilities to its citizens and the international community. Among the most important state functions would be the generation of state revenue, diminishing the state's dependence on external assistance over time as it assumes an increasing proportion of its own costs and builds the essential accountability systems that can reduce corruption. At the heart of this strategy is a political or diplomatic plan to guard against any political settlement becoming unduly ossified, building in phases to adjust the incentive systems and rules of the game over time, as well as reaching a broad domestic consensus on a pathway, to which external support can be aligned.

While this approach would be consistent with the arguments articulated in the many expert reviews and recommendations over the last two decades, the last fifteen years have instead been characterized by the prevalence of an externally designed and led, resource-intensive approach to intervention and so-called capacity-building.[3] This approach boils down to two elements. First, the plans (to the extent there are plans) are driven by a joint "needs assessment" prepared with very little consultation with the country's leaders or experts and often fragmented across multiple capitals and agencies. Second, while projects may be grouped under each agency into sectoral portfolios, in general, the unit of analysis, planning, management, and reporting is

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the project itself, leading to a proliferation of thousands or tens of thousands of individual projects, usually managed by a foreign aid worker.

Given that the "fiduciary risk" of budget support of the country's systems is too high, projects are managed through parallel structures in a parallel world of air-conditioned offices, SUVs, and security protection. In many cases, they are contracted out to profit-seeking firms, who give their personnel contractual incentives to expand their work, thus aligning the incentives of the project to the decline of rather than the increase in institutional quality and outcomes in the particular country or organization. This mass proliferation of projects then produces a "crisis of coordination," prompting layers of donor meetings chasing the impossible dream of building a coherent system out of microprojects. Furthermore, the salary disparity between citizens hired to work for government (whether ministry or municipal) institutions or to support the aid industry is stark, leading to a mass outflow of talent from government to the aid industry, further undermining the core functions and services of the state. Capacity-building projects have also led to a proliferation of fragmented technical assistance interventions that serve mainly to confuse, undermine, and corrode their counterparts.

This aid approach may sit alongside a political mission of the United Nations or other actors that, in some circumstances, is directed to plan an approach to build institutions or restore state authority and/ or legitimacy. But, in reality, this political mission is dwarfed by and unable to control or influence this influx of fragmented resources. The political process tends to follow a set formula of hastily organized national dialogues and elections that further entrench a political elite who are divorced from the requirement to provide services to the people, which in turn cre-

ates the conditions for tension between the political and humanitarian tracks.[4]

After a while, corruption increases, donor fatigue sets in, scandals emerge, politicians and their taxpaying publics question the results, the aid machine draws down, the services provided dwindle, the employment market contracts, and the veneer of legitimacy that was buying peace through public participation in these projects erodes, exposing an inefficient and ineffective political settlement. Many of the people who work in this set of institutional arrangements are well-meaning, hard-working, and often make significant personal sacrifices to do their work. But as a system, this approach delivers results neither to the taxpayers who fund it nor to the country's citizens they are attempting to benefit.

The damage of this approach to the administrative structures, processes, and personnel of the country concerned cannot be overstated. This "big aid" approach has sometimes been labeled state-building, but instead it leads to the deterioration of state institutions. And it has distorted the mechanism of short-term humanitarian response projects into a longer-term regime of the perpetuation of a large aid machine. This phenomenon is a tragedy in four ways. First, it is an enormous waste of taxpayer money, leading rightly to the kinds of questioning that the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction and the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction have recently brought to the attention of the American public.[5] Their work has echoes of the Senate Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, also known as the "Truman Committee," which was founded in 1941 after contract mismanagement, inefficiency, waste, and corruption were found to hamper the U.S. war effort. This scrutiny is overdue. Many of the contracts provided – whether to large beltway firms or to UN agencies – have so many layers of profit and/or overhead mar-

gin that only a small portion of the total goes anywhere near the intended project.

Second, it fails to meet the policy intentions of the policy-makers, who mistakenly think they are investing in sustaining or promoting peace. To be fair, those advocating for Approach A are well-organized, well-funded, and vocal, whereas those advocating for Approach B are much less so; it is understandable why policy-makers are so quick to adopt Approach A. As a result, peace is not sustained and the root causes are not addressed in a way that might have made a difference, leading to a gap between policy intention and implementation outcomes.[6]

Third, and worse, this large aid machine corrodes institutions in the name of building them. Poor management systems offer opportunities and incentives for corruption. As the budget – a country's primary institution for managing resources according to an agreed-upon set of rules – is bypassed, fragmented, and made irrelevant, the political elite become largely powerless to deliver results through their domestic institutions, even if they wanted to. To deliver to the public, they must proliferate projects and manipulate them outside the budget framework. This regime, in the name of avoiding the fiduciary risks of the country system, reinforces a "closed access" order. The public – and particularly the educated elite – have every incentive to work for, maintain, and expand this parallel aid system, undermining their bonds of loyalty and commitment to the state. Their career incentives now lie in promotion through their employer bureaucracies to other countries. And the thousands of projects overwhelm nascent or weak bureaucracies in the fruitless task of coordination. In the name of capacity-building, this regime is asset-stripping and fragmenting the institutions it is mandated to support. And it is no wonder that, in these circumstances, large numbers of the public of these countries lose hope and, lacking loyalty or voice, opt for exit.[7]

Finally, this type of intervention has operated under the broad claim of "development" with no meaningful attempt to distinguish between types of institution-building that have been more effective and less costly and those that have performed poorly, leading to an understandable pessimism on the part of Western policy-makers, media analysts, academics, and the public that closed access orders in conditions of endemic conflict and corruption are credible, feasible, or affordable, even if they might be desirable. And "recipient" citizens find it unbelievable that the United States, the nation that put a man on the moon, cannot seem to build a road or operate a school.

How might Approach B be pursued? What types of policies, requirements for analysis, and range of instruments might be utilized in its pursuit? First, this approach requires a strategy or policy framework that is agreed upon and endorsed by national political actors, to which external actors align their policies and instruments. It cannot be externally imposed or driven (although there are cases in which a plan has been cocreated). Tanja Börzel and Sonja Grimm argue, in the cases of postconflict states acceding to the European Union, that state-building should be understood as the dynamic interplay between external and internal actors and instruments.[8] In the EU accession cases, success is evident in cases in which the state-building instrument was applied consistently and coherently. The alignment of the Colombian government strategy with U.S. support in Plan Colombia is another vivid case of such a framework.[9] But the alignment of a country's strategy with that of a major external actor varies, such as the role of Australia in Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands, the UN and the United States in Liberia, and the UK and the UN in Sierra Leone. Alignment of the politi-

cal road map with regional actors and interests as well as the ability of leaders to build and communicate plans with the participation of the local public will be crucial.

This strategy or framework must envisage a long-term process, in which standards and milestones need to be met on an empirical basis over time. As pointed out by Guéhenno, attempts to cut a one-time deal, rather than establish a process that can be adjusted over time, have been less successful. The international community's current focus on political settlement (an end state) risks freezing arrangements, as in the Dayton Agreement; it is preferable to build processes that have flexibility to adapt over time. Further, isolated policies are unlikely to produce results unless they are part of an "overall coherent and consistent strategy"; it is the intelligent orchestration among goals that is important.[10]

Second, Approach B is focused on establishing core systems of governance, or functions of government, that are carefully sequenced over a long period of time. A more detailed exploration of which core systems, functions, or institutions are necessary in a particular context is required. My and my colleagues' own analysis of countries that have established and improved core functions shows some variation in both type and sequencing.[11] Early functions include security, law and order, budget and financial accountability systems, human capital, internal government coordination, municipal and district management, social policy programming, some regulation of market activity and management of key natural resources, a firm formation, and growth. Exact functions and their sequencing depend on each context, but security, public finance, and education all featured very early.

Core functions can be carried out across all levels of government, whether municipal, district, provincial, regional, or village, depending on the administrative boundaries and the functions required. The ques-

tion is the framework of rule sets that allocate personnel, information, funding, and decision rights to the appropriate level of government; in some cases, a radical decentralization will be appropriate. Many functions will evolve over time. For example, a public finance function in an initial postwar phase or in a context of extensive criminal co-option of government organizations may initially focus very simply on revenue collection, budget preparation and execution, procurement of large items, and payroll. It could subsequently evolve to focus on improved and longer-term programming, banking system reform, and development of instruments of trade finance.

The establishment of core functions does not require that they be carried out by the state or government alone. Rather, and especially in challenging contexts, functions can and should be carried out by establishing platforms for collaboration and cooperation. The World Bank's National Programs that have been implemented in many postconflict contexts are a case in point: the Kecamatan Development Project (KDP) in Indonesia, the National Solidarity Program (NSP) in Afghanistan, and the Magdalena Medio Project in Colombia are all examples of country-wide partnership programs in which the government set the rules of the game and policy framework and implemented them in a highly decentralized way through communities, the private sector, NGOs, and other civil society actors.[12] This approach is consistent with Thomas Risse and Eric Stollenwerk's call for the delivery of public goods by a range of actors in "limited statehood" contexts.[13]

Third, while the overall time period will likely last two to three decades, each three- to five-year phase will focus on a limited set of goals or core functions. This recognizes the limited availability of attention from leaders to focus on solving problems, formulating and agreeing to policies, and building necessary political consensus. And

while only a certain number of functions may be addressed in any one phase, to narrow the overall long-term goal to a limited set of functions will be insufficient. Maintaining a long-term goal of full establishment of state functionality, within the budget envelope of the country, is important for many reasons, including, from a practical perspective, that any one function is deeply dependent on and integrated with many others. For example, it is not possible to build a functioning army unless its members can also receive medical treatment, are literate, and budgeting and payroll systems are in place to pay them. And an army cannot move quickly around the country unless there are roads. It is not possible to raise revenue that is adequate to foster self-sufficiency unless the key natural resources of the country can be accessed, processed, and transported, or sufficient services are provided to convince segments of the public to pay their taxes. Moreover, in our globalized media world, citizens will simply vote with their feet if the possibility of a better life for their children and an expanding social contract are not at least in view as a long-term goal. From both a values and an interest perspective, maintaining the long-term goal of full sovereignty across a set of core functions for all states in the world is essential.

Fourth, the appropriate instruments for building and improving the operation of core functions must, of course, be in place. The literature on cases in the postcolonial era reveals a number of different approaches that leaders and managers and their external partners have used to establish and foster the necessary organizations and institutions to deliver on a particular function. These include a "champion" or visionary leader, legislative frameworks and rule books that are formulated specifically for the context or borrowed and adapted across countries, investment in education and training by the staff, "twinning" other

bureaucracy staff, and the creation of management systems that gather and review appropriate data and build incentive and promotion systems around this data. Many of these were used in the EU accession cases. In other cases, line management functions have been "bought in" via specialized firms, an approach liberally used in many Gulf Cooperation Council countries and some African countries. Technical assistance has been applied successfully in some instances, but only when very carefully designed and well-managed, with incentives built in for the individual or firm to deliver the outcome of a functioning institution. The key difference is that, while Approach A focuses on delivering projects directly, bypassing domestic institutions, Approach B focuses on building the institutions, processes, and people that can solve problems, deliver services, and manage projects themselves in a sustainable manner. In all of these cases, a long-term approach stretching across at least a decade is required as well as external staff with deep knowledge of the language, culture, and context.

Fifth, Approach B requires empowering domestic actors to make decisions, do the work, and gain the necessary education and training. Much of Approach A assumes that the people of the country concerned are largely without capability. Approach B, in contrast, assumes: first, that most people will do the right thing when incentives are appropriately aligned; second, that people have many capabilities and talents that are not usually counted or seen by outsiders; and third, that appropriate education and training can create technical competence. Two examples of this can be seen in the billions of dollars' worth of projects implemented with virtually no leakage and few outsiders through the KDP in 80,000 Indonesia villages after the fall of President Suharto, and through the NSP in 23,000 Afghan villages after the initial fall of the Taliban. These countries

started early on with an investment in a cadre of people to acquire a range of necessary skill sets, including accounting and public finance, engineering and industrial production, and medical skills, among others. Many were initially sent abroad for education and training and were then required or incentivized to return to train others, growing the skill sets within their society.

By contrast, the development fashions that drive Approach A have insisted on an allocation of the education budget to primary education at the expense of investment in secondary, tertiary, and vocational training, partly to meet the UN's Millennium Development Goals, resulting in a vast deskilling of populations and then a heavy reliance on a prohibitively expensive technical assistance model. A much cheaper approach is to design programs that the people of the country can run without this vast aid influx, and to train cadres of the country's own people to be the health care workers, doctors, and teachers without relying on parallel systems.

In Approach B, the limited substitution of a function by an external actor may be appropriate, as long as safeguards and incentives are in place for the function to be transferred from international control and delivery once certain standards are met. For example, peacekeepers may carry out the internal security function for a period of time until domestic law enforcement can take over. External actors may supervise or have dual key control over the budget until certain standards have been institutionalized, as in the case of Liberia's Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program Trust Funds.[14] But if functions are substituted, it would be rare that these can be contracted out to private companies successfully, unless very strong regulatory capacity is in place to guard against moral hazard and perverse incentives.

Finally, this approach pays great attention to cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

The major cost drivers of recent international engagements have been the thousands of projects with multiple contractual layers of subcontracting and oversight, large technical assistance efforts, and a long tail of logistical, security, and administrative support. In Approach B, this is not required. Important in this approach is what is *not* done: there will be a limited number of programs and a very limited number of projects, in contrast to the tens of thousands that are common in crisis environments.

A couple of further observations may be useful. A visionary and charismatic leader with an apparent road map in mind will make the road seem clearer. But the approach could start with actors who are less acclaimed. In these circumstances, there will need to be a clear political strategy, diplomatic framework, or road map, and the alignment of resources and incentives to create rule sets that constrain and incentivize the behaviors of those actors, and/or change their identity, interests, and positions over time. Concessions may be needed, and actors who were part of the fighting and may be spoilers may need to be brought in to reduce, avoid, and resolve conflict. But such concessions should minimize the extent to which the state is treated as the spoils of war to be divided between elites in perpetuity. There is usually considerable room to negotiate the precise terms of the agreement, particularly regarding how resources are to be governed. Agreements could require and enforce much higher standards of management and accountability in the use of resources, especially in cases in which external actors are providing a substantial part of the bill. When the political agreement is geared toward service delivery and building core functions, and resources are programmed through the budget (with tough conditions and international oversight where necessary) rather than through

parallel systems, the tension noted by Richard Gowan and Stephen Stedman between the political and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief tracks should lessen.[15]

Second, the character of the state matters. State-building – or restoring state functions – cannot be blind to the degree of effectiveness and legitimacy in how those functions are already geared toward meeting citizen need. The effectiveness would need to be measured in terms of the performance of various core institutions, as well as outcomes in meeting citizen need. This would require a further articulation of the domestic sovereignty dimensions of Stephen Krasner's definition of sovereignty to include a type of conditional sovereignty, in which a state's rights, such as access to markets and finance, would be dependent on meeting institutional benchmarks over time.[16] Such a measurement could form the basis of an understanding of a risk profile for a country, and an understanding of how risks can be reduced, increasing the confidence of both the public and the markets in order to make capital available.

There are a range of cases in which variants of a sovereignty strategy have been wholly or partially applied in a postconflict setting. South Korea, Singapore, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Jordan, and Mozambique have seen core functions transformed over a period of two to three decades. Specific core functions have been institutionalized successfully in cases such as the public finance and revenue function in Timor-Leste, which, fifteen years after conflict, placed $20 billion in its own Sovereign Wealth Fund, and the health function in Afghanistan, in which a country-wide program provided a package of health care services in an even-handed way through a partnership between the government and NGOs, funded in a common agreement by the United States, EU, and the World Bank. National programs have also been established in Indonesia, Myanmar,

Morocco, Afghanistan, and Colombia as a way to build trust rapidly after a transition, in a postconflict period, or as a preventative measure.

Adopting this approach would require attention to incentives for national political leaders, civil servants, and the country as a whole, and the fostering of a rule-of-law culture.[17] It would also require serious attention to changes in the rules, practices, and skill sets of the international actors who negotiate, authorize, and fund such activities, in order to refine and expand the toolbox available.

An approach premised on developing key state functions would require, at the outset, an accurate and nuanced diagnosis of context to understand the institutional and organizational baseline; the political dynamics including major interest groups; the dynamics and potential of the economy to provide jobs and underwrite the revenue base over time; the level of illicit and informal activity in the economy and polity; and the skills of the people of the country. As William Reno describes, there may be cases in which information asymmetries and misaligned incentives mean that implementation of this approach will be too difficult.[18]

Diplomatic actors would be required to formulate, agree on, and commit to the contours of a broader political strategy that balance the short-term compromises necessary to broker a peace with the longer-term legitimacy required for a country's leaders to sustain a peace and win public trust and confidence. This broader political strategy would require a core set of partners to coordinate and integrate with each other and the national strategy across security, political, and economic lines. It is imperative that the nature of the political process, first, appropriately diagnose the political issue at stake and craft a political approach that tackles it (whether it is control of the center, decentralization, or gover-

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nance inclusivity, legitimacy, or pluralism at the center).[19] Second, it is imperative that such political processes do not unnecessarily sacrifice governance standards, sowing the seeds for the next conflict, in the pursuit of inclusion through mistaken means, especially when that inclusion can be addressed through budgetary allocations and social policy adjustments rather than sacrificing the public treasury and public trust to privatization, warlords, and private fiefdoms. Steven Heydemann argues that patterns of government dysfunctionality and corruption that often preexist civil wars are carried forward into the conflict by the warring parties; it is important that external actors do not assume the challenge is to get back to prewar conditions.

International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other funding bodies would be required to condition their financial support and exercise leverage, contingent on meeting a limited set of standards over time. For the credibility of the conditionality regime, international actors would have to be willing to stay the course. This requires, over the longer term, operations and even periods of disengagement, if necessary (apart from a limited set of humanitarian and system support mechanisms). It could include other instruments of leverage and sanction, of which there are a wide variety available, if not in common use, including the compact mechanism, adopted by the New Deal.[20]

At the technical level, it would require the implementation of proven techniques for establishing and enhancing the performance and accountability of institutions and organizations. This would require resisting the temptation to launch the "big aid" approach in the mistaken belief that more projects and more people will lead to faster results. It would also require much greater focus on the cultural and social dynamics of the country, and a focus on the alignment of civil society, communications, and political party-building that

commonly operate in separate spheres and could be brought into a form of coordination on a broader common goal.

It would require leadership of the approach, and a mechanism for the intelligent coordination, monitoring, and management of progress and benchmarks over time. In the EU accession cases, this was provided by dedicated offices in the EU, with corresponding senior State Department leadership and a dedicated office for the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Creativity and good sense would be required in building such mechanisms; one could imagine a core group of U.S. senior officials working alongside the State and Defense Departments, a dedicated EU official, an IFI representative, and a UN envoy, who would jointly form the counterpart group for a country's sovereignty strategy.

Finally, it would require a frank examination of the extent to which such an operation would be in the interest of the actor adopting it (whether the United States, the European Union, or the UN Security Council's five permanent members).[21] Five to ten countries that fit the policy priorities of the leading country or grouping could be selected.

Many countries over the last few decades have been able to restore, recover, or establish state functions. Historians can debate why and how such recovery is enabled. Certainly, some recoveries will depend on a rare combination of people, events, and conditions that align to create an opportunity. However, two underlying factors seem to be common. First, in most countries, there exists a basis of institutional "muscle memory," including laws, practices, and trained personnel from a prewar era that provide an institutional basis for recovery. This baseline is often ignored. Second, behind many earlier eras of institution-building projects lies a set of doctrines, practices, and people. Many of these doctrines, authorities, and

capabilities already exist today, but are not necessarily in common usage or known to the current generation of policy-makers – a problem exacerbated in recent years in the U.S. context by the shift from the doctrine of DIMEFIL (diplomatic, informational, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement) and PMESII (political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure) to the perhaps more limiting 3D construct of diplomacy, development, and defense. The international community would likely discover greater leverage in crises and conflicts and therefore open up a broader range of options by returning to some of these former doctrines. Many of the people who operated them in the institution-building projects of an earlier era are still alive, and capturing their oral histories would be a worthwhile endeavor.

The particular challenges of a given context will necessarily inform whether or not such an approach will have a good chance of success, at a given point in time. Three examples of circumstances that will not allow for such an approach are when a country is in the height of conflict, when a regime is particularly entrenched in a period of rent-seeking, or when the interests between internal and external forces are misaligned. As Francis Fukuyama analyzes in his case study on England, preconditions of a culture of lawfulness and a set of rule-of-law institutions were essential before a successful elite deal could endure.[22]

But in some cases, in which there are political inflection points and the formation of new peace agreements and their terms, and in which the resources that pay for the costs of the state are provided from outside and thus strong conditionality is an option, there is a basis for consideration of this approach. In some cases, a reformist leadership will create a significant opening for this type of approach. In most cases, there also exists a technical space of operation in the bureaucracy, which, with some leadership support, can allow for the building of institutional capability. Finally, the experience of EU accession demonstrates that the incentive of EU membership with public pressure as well as international oversight to obtain certain standards acts as a powerful incentive for institution-building. The question is whether comparable incentives can be provided in areas in which EU accession is not possible.

The particular challenges of corruption and criminality must also be recognized. Where corruption and criminality are entrenched, the headwinds against reform programs will be very strong. But these are precisely the circumstances that will require the establishment of rule-of-law institutions to tackle crime and the means to manage public finance with diminishing leakage.

Often, the political settlement and the handing over of the sovereign authority of the country to a small group of actors is treated as a given and immovable constraint. This needs to be questioned. Groups are often put into positions of power from the very terms of the peace agreement, which often ossifies political actors, policies, and structures in place with little hope of change over time. The Dayton Agreement is a prime example of this. A survey of the recent history of peace agreements shows that the repertoire of peace-making and the terms of peace deals are much broader, and actually show that many peace agreements may have made short-term accommodations, but built in mechanisms to alter the political arrangements and create the space for a different destination and a different type of politics to emerge.[23] External actors often have far more leverage, particularly in limiting access to budgetary resources, than is commonly appreciated.

The question of affordability and cost-effectiveness should be considered in terms

of the relative costs and benefits of the three models in question. The costs of large-scale intervention can be seen in the form of the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the large-scale humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts in Somalia, South Sudan, and Libya. Estimates suggest that, as of August 2016, the United States has appropriated, spent, or is obligated to spend around $3.6 trillion on its involvement in conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria, as well as for homeland security (2001 to FY 2016).[24] The United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan has a budget of over $1 billion for FY 2017 alone, while concurrent peacekeeping efforts in Somalia, including the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, and the African Union Mission to Somalia, had an aggregated budget of just under $1 billion in 2017.[25] Security efforts in Libya continue to require significant support.

The costs of a very limited model (Approach C) will be small in direct outlays. However, the second- and third-order effects of neglect, disengagement, or occasional engagement may have larger costs and, at times, will have catastrophic costs in terms of the loss of human life and of the destruction of a range of forms of capital. Putting a price tag on these may be difficult, but they must be counted if a cost-benefit analysis is to be complete.

A sovereignty strategy will have some costs in direct outlays, notably in building security forces, but many attributes are low-cost or cost-neutral, because they are catalytic and leverage existing resources. Furthermore, if a sovereignty strategy is successful, it will have a high return on investment, with the benefits accruing to the investors and the broader global community many times over.[26]

The potential wealth in natural capital of the countries currently in conflict is immense; some 80 percent have a significant capacity to generate income if their assets are appropriately harnessed. Evidently, many of these resources are not being used as legitimate economic assets, but rather are being diverted through the illicit and informal economy to drive a war economy and a criminal industry, and to fuel political competition. Ensuring that a greater share enters the legitimate economy and contributes to a value-add economy rather than a rent-seeking economy to underpin job creation, and is captured as legitimate revenue, will have several self-evident benefits.

There is also abundant global capital available. Data show that government expenditures of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries have actually been following an increasing trend from 2009 to 2015. In 2009, expenditures in OECD member countries were $8.316 trillion and, in 2015, these expenditures rose to $8.576 trillion (both years measured in constant 2010 U.S. dollars).[27] Between 2009 and 2015, there were only two years in which government expenditures ticked down from the previous year: 2011 and 2013. Otherwise, since 1970, each year has seen an increase of government expenditure among OECD members.[28] The availability of private global capital looking for investments – particularly in infrastructure – runs into the trillions of dollars.[29]

Reducing the risk profile of countries through confidence-building measures as well as institutional change can release significant capital investments from both domestic savings and external investors. Colombia, Nepal – with India's investments into its "White Gold" – and Rwanda are three cases in point.[30] Some of this capital is risk-averse and only a small portion will be available to flow to the conflict-affected countries. But for many investors, there are ways to reduce and manage risk, and for some, the same set of countries are the emerging markets of the future.

There already exist a number of funds that have an international buy-in and burden-sharing construct. The World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) addresses development challenges of the world's poorest countries, providing loans at either zero or very low interest rates and stretching repayments over twenty-five to forty years. The most recent round of the IDA's replenishment, which concluded at the end of 2016, resulted in a record $75 billion commitment toward the world's poorest countries and doubled resources to address fragile and conflict-affected states, amounting to over $14 billion.[31] These resources are earmarked to help countries emerging from conflict recover, address the root causes of conflict, build institutions, and follow the road to stability and prosperity.

A series of interviews with Special and Personal Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General supervising the implementation of peace agreements between 1985 and 2005 revealed that all of them admitted that the most significant lacuna in peace implementation, and the one that contributed to a relapse of the conflict, was the lack of attention to public financial management and revenue and the regulation of economic activity. They gave the following three reasons.[32] First, the promises in a peace agreement would be empty unless they were underwritten by budgetary allocations to the country's budget. Second, an economy doesn't wait until peace and security are institutionalized, but rather an informal or criminal economy already operates every day and will undermine the politics of legitimacy unless it becomes a serious focus of policy effort. Third, if young men don't have jobs, it would fuel a relapse into conflict. The costs could often be met by the country's budget, as many have observed, which is vastly cheaper than external actors providing the same service.

With some notable exceptions, the United States, the UN, and their allies and partners are not putting their best foot forward in practice when they engage, as they will continue to do, in contexts affected by conflict. Rather, all too often, their engagements have been captured at the level of implementation by commercial interests and blunted by a lack of attention to detail. The academic and policy community has not yet had a careful retrospective to examine why some country transitions and transformations have succeeded, and others fared less well, to draw out practicable and implementable lessons. This essay points to one family of approaches that has proven less costly and more effective than either big aid or a minimalist approach. Yet these strategies have not yet been given serious, mainstream attention. If this approach were to be taken seriously, the accumulated knowledge from the last several decades could be examined and brought together, with some of the finest minds and practitioners assembled and dedicated to the task.

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ENDNOTES

[1] A fuller exposition of a sovereignty strategy and its characteristics is set out in Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[2] For a representative discussion on building legitimacy, see David Roberts, ed., *Liberal Peacebuilding and the Locus of Legitimacy* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[3] See United Nations, "Uniting Our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People," Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (New York:

United Nations, 2015); United Nations, "The Challenge of Sustaining Peace," Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (New York: United Nations, 2015); and Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Preventing Deadly Conflict: Final Report* (New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1997).

⁴ See Richard Gowan and Stephen John Stedman, "The International Regime for Treating Civil War, 1988–2017," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

⁵ There are many who have argued that the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction has, at times, been extreme in its critiques and engaged in cherry-picking the data it collects. This essay argues that the basis for such critiques do exist in reality, given the poorly planned and executed nature of much aid programming.

⁶ Ronald E. Neumann, "Implementation: A New Approach to Multinational Coordination in Afghanistan," Policy Analysis Brief (Muscatine, Iowa: The Stanley Foundation, 2008).

⁷ See Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁸ Tanja A. Börzel and Sonja Grimm, "Building Good (Enough) Governance in Postconflict Societies & Areas of Limited Statehood: The European Union & the Western Balkans," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

⁹ Council on Foreign Relations and Inter-American Dialogue, *Toward a Greater Peace and Security in Colombia: Forging a Constructive U.S. Policy* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2000).

¹⁰ Jean-Marie Guéhenno, "The United Nations & Civil Wars," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

¹¹ My colleagues and I at the Institute for State Effectiveness have undertaken a series of case studies to analyze the prioritization and sequence of core functions in building successful societies. Case study series can be found at Institute for State Effectiveness, www.effectivestates.org.

¹² Scott Guggenheim, "Crises and Contradictions: Understanding the Origins of a Community Development Project in Indonesia," Working Paper (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2015); and The World Bank, "Colombia – Magdalena Medio Regional Development Project" (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2001).

¹³ Thomas Risse and Eric Stollenwerk, "Limited Statehood Does Not Equal Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

¹⁴ Renata Dwan and Laura Bailey, "Liberia's Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP)" (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2006).

¹⁵ Gowan and Stedman, "The International Regime for Treating Civil War."

¹⁶ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

¹⁷ Roy Godson, "Guide to Developing a Culture of Lawfulness," *Trends in Organized Crime* 5 (3) (2000).

¹⁸ William Reno, "Fictional States & Atomized Public Spheres: A Non-Western Approach to Fragility," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017).

¹⁹ Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, "Writing the History of the Future: Securing Stability through Peace Agreements," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 1 (3) (2007).

²⁰ International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, "The New Deal," https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/en/new-deal/about-new-deal/.

²¹ Even the Marshall Plan, while designed as an altruistic development plan, was also conceived as a plan firmly in the U.S. national security interest. See George Kennan, "Certain Aspects of the European Recovery Problem from the United States Standpoint," Top Secret Supplement to the Report of the Planning Staff (now declassified), July 23, 1947.

²² Francis Fukuyama, "The Last English Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

23 Ghani and Lockhart, "Writing the History of the Future."

24 Neta C. Crawford, "US Budgetary Costs of Wars through 2016 : $4.79 Trillion and Counting : Summary of Costs of the US Wars in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan and Homeland Security," Costs of War Project, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Harvard University, September 2016.

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Limited Statehood Does Not Equal Civil War

Thomas Risse & Eric Stollenwerk

Abstract: Limited statehood is frequently depicted as a major cause for civil war and violent conflict. Consequently, state-building efforts are often considered to be an effective tool for the prevention of civil war and violent conflict. This essay argues, however, that this assumption is misguided in several respects. First, at present and historically, areas of limited statehood are the global default rather than the exception. Thus, efforts to eliminate limited statehood would likely be unsuccessful. Second, limited statehood does not equal civil war and violence. In fact, only a small fraction of areas of limited statehood are affected by civil war. Third, a too-narrow focus on state-building may be counterproductive, as it may foster ineffective or even predatory state institutions. Such a focus also ignores the plurality of governance actors beyond the state that are relevant for effective governance – such as service provision and rule-making – in areas of limited statehood. Therefore, external actors like international organizations and foreign powers should contribute to governance-building rather than state-building, with a focus on service provision and rule-making institutions with a broader scope than the state.

THOMAS RISSE is Professor of International Relations at the Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

ERIC STOLLENWERK is a Ph.D. candidate at the Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

(*See endnotes for complete contributor biographies.)

As Stephen Krasner and Karl Eikenberry have argued, the "standard model for development" – largely based on versions of modernization theory – claims that once countries are set on a path toward economic development, all good things will align and follow: namely, peace, prosperity, and democracy.[1] In contrast, Huntingtonians argue that weak state capacity is a root cause for civil war and for the emergence of violent nonstate actors and that building strong state institutions thus constitutes the right "path to Denmark."[2] Indeed, the literature on civil war is full of references to fragile or failed states. Fragile and failed states are usually portrayed as breeding grounds for civil wars and as stomping grounds for all kinds of violent nonstate actors, including transnational terrorists.[3] If one were to look only at Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the like, one

would easily share this view. But there are also Somaliland and Puntland – two provinces of the quintessential failed state of Somalia – which have been rather peaceful over the last two decades.[4] How can this variation be explained?

This essay takes issue with both modernization theory and the Huntingtonian approach to state-building that informed Western policies toward war-torn countries in the 1990s and early 2000s. First, we argue that, at present and historically, areas of limited statehood are the global default rather than the exception. Thus, efforts to eliminate limited statehood will likely be unsuccessful. Second, limited statehood does not equal civil war and violence. In fact, only a small fraction of areas of limited statehood are affected by civil war. Third, a too-narrow focus on state-building may be counterproductive, as it may foster ineffective or even predatory state institutions. This focus also ignores the plurality of governance actors beyond the state that are relevant for effective governance – service provision and rule-making – in areas of limited statehood. Therefore, external actors such as international organizations and foreign powers should contribute to governance-building rather than state-building, with a focus on service provision and rule-making institutions with a broader scope than the state.

Our understanding of "limited statehood" must be distinguished from the way in which notions of "fragile," "failing," or "failed" statehood are used in the literature.[5] Most typologies in both the literature and in datasets on fragile states, "states at risk," and similar categories reveal a normative orientation toward the Western state model.[6] The benchmark is usually the democratic and capitalist state, governed by the rule of law.[7] This bias toward Western, consolidated statehood is problematic for two reasons. First, it obscures the fact that most

states are neither consolidated nor failed. Rather, they are characterized by areas of limited statehood to varying degrees. Second, this bias toward Western, consolidated statehood prevents us from answering key research questions, including the one investigated here: namely, the relationship between civil war and violence, on the one hand, and degrees of statehood, on the other. If we define statehood by the absence of violence and civil war, we can no longer ask, in a meaningful way, how much statehood is necessary to keep the peace.

Therefore, we distinguish between statehood or state capacity and the provision of public goods and services, including public security. We follow Max Weber's conceptualization of statehood as an institutionalized structure with the ability to rule authoritatively (*Herrschaftsverband*) and to control the means of violence.[8] While no state governs hierarchically all the time, consolidated states possess the ability to authoritatively make, implement, and enforce central decisions for a collectivity. In other words, consolidated states command "domestic sovereignty": "the formal organization of political authority within the state and the ability of public authorities to exercise effective control within the borders of their own polity."[9] This understanding allows us to distinguish between statehood as an institutional structure of authority and the services it provides. The latter is an empirical and not a definitional question. The fact that a state has a monopoly over the legitimate use of force does not necessarily mean that it will provide security for all of its citizens. Nazi Germany was a consolidated state with a monopoly over the means of violence, but it did not provide public security for Jews, homosexuals, and other members of the population.

We can now more precisely define the meaning of limited statehood. *Limited statehood* concerns those areas of a country in which the central authorities (govern-

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ments) lack the ability to implement and enforce rules and decisions and/or in which the legitimate monopoly over the means of violence is lacking. The ability to enforce rules or to control the means of violence can be differentiated along two dimensions: 1) territorial, that is, parts of a country's territorial space; and 2) sectoral, that is, with regard to specific policy areas. It follows that the opposite of limited statehood is not unlimited but *consolidated statehood*: namely, those areas of a country where the state enjoys a monopoly over the means of violence and/or the ability to make and enforce central decisions. Furthermore, statehood is not a dichotomous variable. Rather, different degrees of statehood limitations exist, spanning the spectrum from a complete lack of statehood to consolidated statehood, with various nuanced levels of statehood in between.

Only a small percentage of states in the contemporary international system can be characterized as displaying consolidated statehood, that is, possessing full and effective domestic sovereignty. On the other end of the spectrum are fragile, failing, or failed states, which are states that have more or less lost their monopoly on the use of force and/or do not possess effective capacities to enforce decisions (such as Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Afghanistan). The vast majority of states in the past and in the contemporary international system, however, display "areas of limited statehood" to varying degrees: in parts of the territory or in some policy areas, the central government lacks the capacity to implement decisions and/or its monopoly over the means of violence is challenged.[10] Areas of limited statehood are the default condition both historically and in the contemporary international system. Territorial examples of areas of limited statehood include the Amazon region in Brazil, Northeast Kenya, and parts of Southern Italy. Policy exam-

ples include legislation that is never implemented for issues such as the environment, schooling, and social security in many developing countries or the inability to collect (income) taxes in more developed countries, such as Greece.

Almost all states, including states with very significant areas of limited statehood, possess international legal sovereignty. Somalia, the quintessential failed state for more than twenty-five years, is still internationally recognized, even though its "government" has no control over the territory in any meaningful sense. As Krasner and Eikenberry have pointed out, effective governance is no longer a precondition for international recognition.[11] Otherwise, South Sudan would never have become an independent and internationally recognized state. Many countries also possess "Westphalian/Vattelian" sovereignty: external actors do not interfere with their domestic authority structures, feeble as they may be. What is lacking in all countries, with the exception of the small group of nations with consolidated statehood, are degrees of domestic sovereignty.[12]

Yet, areas of limited statehood are neither ungoverned nor ungovernable spaces. There are almost always some "governors" or groups of governors: state and nonstate actors as well as local, national, and external/"international" actors who provide rule structures and/or collective goods.[13] There is strong empirical evidence in areas of limited statehood that a broad variety of external and/or nonstate actors is key to goods and service provision and governance as a whole.[14] Actors such as multinational companies provide health care, private security companies play an important role for security provision, and transnational public-private partnerships deliver food and water.[15] There is substantial variation in the extent to which areas of limited statehood are well-governed. And there is no linear relationship between degrees of state-

hood and the provision of collective goods and services.[16] This also holds true for the presence or absence of civil war and/or organized violence.

State capacity has recently received increased attention as a key factor in the empirical analysis of civil war.[17] In many cases, the explicit or implicit assumption is that more statehood will equal more governance and less civil war.[18] However, many open questions and challenges remain for empirical studies of the link between state capacity and civil war.[19] While civil wars may take place in areas of limited statehood, equating such areas with civil war is wrong and misleading for policy initiatives. Thus, a more nuanced approach promises a clearer picture. A common and analytically straightforward definition of statehood has so far been mostly absent from the study of the effects of state capacity on civil war. This has resulted not only in the use of a large number of different indicators to capture state capacity empirically, but also in a lack of robustness and comparability of empirical findings.[20] While some statehood definitions and measurements include elements of democracy or economic development, others are connected to better provision of goods and services.[21] In light of the historical and contemporary prevalence of areas of limited statehood, however, the assumption that the state is the sole and effective provider of goods and services capable of preventing or stopping civil war is erroneous. This confusion concerning the conceptualization of statehood in many studies of civil war results in unclear findings, such that we cannot know whether it is ultimately statehood, democracy, the provision of governance, or other factors that effectively prevent or put an end to civil war.

Areas of limited statehood do not equal civil war. While areas of limited statehood are more likely to witness civil wars in their territory when compared with areas of consolidated statehood, not all areas of limited statehood are affected by civil war. In 2007, about 85 percent of countries worldwide displayed some degree of limited statehood.[22] However, the Correlates of War Project counts only eighteen intrastate wars between 2001 and 2007, spread out across twelve countries. All of these wars occurred or are still occurring in states displaying significant degrees of limited statehood. Nevertheless, in 2007, the countries suffering from these conflicts comprised only 10 percent of all areas of limited statehood.[23] Limited state capacity as such does not correlate highly with the presence of civil wars, even though it may be an enabling condition for organized violence by nonstate actors.

Moreover, in areas of limited statehood, the state itself is often more of a source of insecurity than security.[24] Thus, strengthening state capacity may not only be insufficient in preventing or ending civil wars, but may in fact have unintended consequences. If the state acquires stronger capacities but uses them in a predatory way – not to protect but to harm its citizens – state-building initiatives are counterproductive. As cases such as Mexico, South Africa, Iraq under Nouri al-Maliki, or the Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte illustrate, the state and, in particular, the police forces in areas of limited statehood have regularly used their capacities to violently oppress and discriminate against parts of the population, thereby increasing insecurity for these discriminated against individuals.[25]

Thus, analyzing areas of limited statehood, instead of using concepts such as fragile or failed states, allows for an unpacking of the state and for the focus to be set on subnational variations of state capacity and civil war, thus overcoming methodological nationalism. Studies on the state capacity–civil war nexus have thus far largely focused on the national level of analysis.[26] However, occurrences of civil war not only vary be-

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tween but within countries; only some parts of countries are normally affected by violent conflict, while others are not.[27] For example, Chad – a country that is often ranked among those with the lowest level of state capacity on a global scale – displays significant statehood limitations throughout its territory.[28] During the civil war from 2005 to 2010, only some of the twenty-three regions of Chad were affected by the conflict. In 2005, for instance, nine out of the twenty-three Chadian regions (39 percent) were affected by armed conflict.[29] Figure 1 illustrates that the proportion of the country affected by fighting from 2005 to 2015 varied over time, but never covered the entire Chadian territory. A peak was reached in 2007 with almost 60 percent of Chadian regions suffering from the civil war, while 2012 and 2013 marked the lowest episodes with less than 15 percent of all regions involved in violent conflict.

These and other data allow for two conclusions. First, as political scientist Siri Aas Rustad and colleagues have argued, civil wars, violent incidents, and related activities are often spread out within countries but do not necessarily cover the entire territory.[30] Therefore, subnational analyses must supplement analyses of civil war at the national level. Second, even in countries with rather low levels of statehood throughout the entire territory, such as Chad, not all regions will be affected by violent activities, such as armed conflict.

At the same time, not only do civil war dynamics vary subnationally, but state capacity does, too. Nigeria exemplifies this point: while the level of statehood in the northern Nigerian state of Yobe is very low, state capacity in the southern Nigerian state of Ogun is comparatively stronger.[31] In other words, both state capacity and civil war, as well as incidents of violence, vary subnationally, and there is little reason to assume that lower state capacity leads to more civil war, even though civil wars re-

quire some degree of limited statehood. Research has only just begun to grasp the complex relationship between degrees of statehood and transnational as well as intrastate violence. A focus on the subnational level has already demonstrated that equating limited statehood with civil war is wrong. We need many more fine-tuned analyses on the subnational level to understand the scope conditions under which areas of limited statehood are likely to become regions of civil war.

The available evidence suggests that limited state capacity may be an enabling condition for civil war, but it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient one. As a result, it is very unlikely that strengthening the institutional capacity of central state authorities in areas of limited statehood will prevent civil wars. State-building policies as external strategies to prevent civil war or to rebuild countries after violent conflicts from the outside are not only likely to fail, but will also not address the root causes of civil war.[32] Moreover, strengthening the institutional capacities of autocratic and/or corrupt elites may actually increase the likelihood of organized state and nonstate violence, rather than reduce it.[33]

So what can be done to prevent areas of limited statehood from becoming breeding grounds for civil war and violent nonstate actors, including transnational terrorist groups, particularly from the perspective of external actors? We claim that governance breakdowns and the failure to deliver public goods and services provide the missing link between areas of limited statehood and violence. We thus suggest a concentration on *governance-building* instead of state-building.[34] We define *governance* as the "various institutionalized modes of social coordination to produce and implement collectively binding rules or to provide collective goods."[35] Accordingly, we understand governance-building as intentional

Figure 1
Percentage of Chadian Regions Affected by Fighting, 2005 – 2015
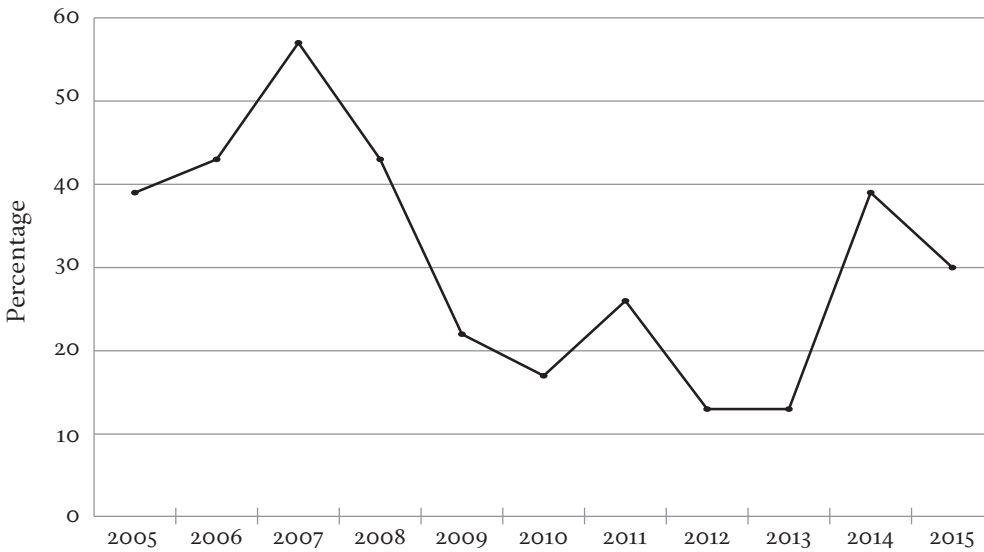
Source : Authors' illustration based on Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, "ACLED Version 6 (1997 – 2015)," http ://www.acleddata.com/data/version-6-data-1997-2015/.

activities that strengthen effective state and nonstate governance institutions and foster service delivery. This also explicitly includes the possibility of focusing on nonstate governance structures instead of state institutions, if strengthening state capacity may result in repressive and authoritarian state structures.

There is ample evidence that the provision of collective goods – such as food, health services, basic education, and basic infrastructure – in areas of limited statehood does not necessarily require a functioning state.[36] There are various mechanisms to induce nonstate actors to provide governance services.[37] For example, the "shadow of anarchy" – the absence of political order – often incentivizes private companies to engage in governance and the provision of services.[38] The same holds true for mass mobilization against companies in the global North in an effort to induce them to comply with human rights and social standards in the global South, even in the absence of a functioning state.

Contributing to the establishment of governance institutions and to the provision of collective goods in areas of limited statehood is less complex and less resource-intensive than full-scale state-building. What is required, though – and this applies to external actors as well – is social acceptance or legitimacy among the local population, that is, a "license to govern." Related to this is the challenge of identifying who the relevant local and national actors are that external actors should or should not speak to and cooperate with in order to gain legitimacy. Effectiveness and legitimacy appear to go together in some sort of a virtuous circle of governance.[39] If external actors are considered illegitimate intruders by

local elites and/or local populations, they cannot contribute to governance, no matter how hard they try. In some cases, external actors receive the "license to govern" through delegated authority.[40]

In addition, the design of governance institutions for the provision of collective goods in the absence of a functioning state needs to be "fit for purpose," as not only the rational design literature reminds us. Simple tasks (such as child immunization) require relatively simple structures, while complex tasks (such as combating HIV/AIDS) require repeated interventions and a coordination of efforts among many actors.[41] Moreover, governance institutions must be flexible enough to adjust to changes in conditions on the ground.

In any event, providing collective goods and services in areas of limited statehood and, thus, securing the livelihood of the population appears to be a viable strategy in the prevention of violence and civil war. But what about rule-making and securing fair treatment, as well as some degree of the rule of law in the absence of a functioning state? This is the more daunting task, since populations in areas of limited statehood are often exposed to severe human rights abuses and have rarely experienced fair treatment by state institutions.

Here, we need to turn to another functional equivalent for state capacity in areas of limited statehood: namely, social trust.[42] Personalized social trust contributes to the effective provision of governance in the absence of functioning state institutions in at least four ways. First, personalized trust enables actors to solve local collective action problems.[43] Economist Elinor Ostrom demonstrated through experimental designs that local communities in which members trust one another are likely to produce common-pool resources, without having to refer to strong institutions that employ monitoring and sanctioning mecha-

nisms.[44] Personalized trust thus enhances the action capacity of local communities. For instance, the study by political scientist Esther Thomas on conflicts between multinational mining companies and neighboring communities in Tanzania and Guinea demonstrates that local communities with high levels of trust have a higher capacity to engage with companies to manage conflicts.[45] Another example are nonstate security forces that are independent from national security forces and have been built up by local communities, such as the Kurdish security forces in Iraq.

Second, local trust enhances the legitimacy of governance actors. Communities whose members trust each other are more likely to put leaders in charge and to convey authority rules to people whom they also trust.[46] Trust generates legitimacy, thereby inducing voluntary compliance with costly decisions in the absence of formal institutions with sanctioning and enforcement capacities. Trust within Somali indigenous communities has provided them with the capacity to act in the fight against HIV/AIDS and to accept foreign assistance as legitimate in the provinces of Somaliland and Puntland, despite the complete absence of central state authorities.[47]

Third, trust among community members holds authorities accountable to the community. Areas of limited statehood are often populated by traditional communities with their own standards of what is considered to be in the public interest, even when state actors may not reflect and uphold such standards overall. Political scientist Lily Tsai has shown that state representatives embedded in inclusive societal institutions at the local level are more likely to strive for public goods provisions than those who are not embedded in inclusive societal institutions or who find themselves in areas with no such institutions.[48] Likewise, political scientists Jana Hönke and Tanja Börzel find that local communi-

ties in sub-Saharan Africa that exhibit high levels of trust restrain the powers of local state representatives and customary authorities.[49] This "shadow of the community" holds state representatives accountable in the absence of formal institutions through which citizens might voice their claims.

Fourth, mutual respect and shared norms tend to exhibit strong monitoring and sanctioning capacities, which serve to ensure compliance with costly rules. The quest for social approval and the threat of social exclusion from the community both serve as a powerful incentive for compliance with the rules and for the provision of public goods. One should not underestimate the sanctioning potential of these informal institutions, ranging from social ostracism to physical punishment.[50]

In short, social trust in local communities provides powerful capacities for collective action and for resilience in areas of limited statehood. Yet, what can external actors do to foster such trust, particularly in ethnically divided societies? Here, we return to service provision. It has been shown through various studies that the experience of fair and transparent (state) institutions is likely to foster generalized social trust.[51] In other words, governance institutions established by external actors and providing social services in areas of limited statehood are likely to generate social trust if they ensure equal and fair treatment.

This essay makes three main arguments concerning the limited statehood–civil war nexus. First, areas of limited statehood are the default condition on a global scale and are likely to remain so in the foreseeable future. Limited statehood is here to stay, and politicians as well as scientists are compelled to take this condition into account when working to prevent and end civil wars. Second, the nexus between limited statehood and civil war is weaker and more complicated than is often assumed. While limited state capacity may enable civil war, it is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition. Third, large-scale state-building efforts have so far failed to prevent or end civil wars and have not turned areas of limited statehood into consolidated states. What is necessary, instead, is to foster societal and political resilience in areas of limited statehood and to prevent governance breakdowns. Thus, governance-building with a focus on particular state and nonstate institutions, as well as on service provision, is likely to be not only more efficient, but also more effective.

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ENDNOTES

* Contributor Biographies: THOMAS RISSE is Professor of International Relations at the Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. He has been Coordinator of the Collaborative Research Center "Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood," funded by the German Research Foundation. He is the author of *Domestic Politics and Norm Diffusion in International Relations: Ideas Do Not Float Freely* (2016) and *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres* (2010) and coeditor of *The Oxford Handbook of Governance and Limited Statehood* (2018) and *The Persistent Power of Human Rights* (2013).

ERIC STOLLENWERK is a Ph.D. candidate at the Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. He has been Research Associate and Managing Director of the Collaborative Research Center "Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood." His research is forthcoming in *The Oxford Handbook of Governance and Limited Statehood* (2018) and has been published in the *Annual Review of Political Science* and *Terrorism and Political Violence*.

1 See Karl Eikenberry and Stephen D. Krasner, "Introduction," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017); Karl Eikenberry and Stephen D. Krasner, "Introduction," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018); and Dankwart A. Rustow, "Modernization and Comparative Politics," *Comparative Politics* 1 (1) (1968): 37 – 51.

2 Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968). For a contemporary example, see Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014); and Clare Lockhart, "Sovereignty Strategies: Enhancing Core Governance Functions as a Postconflict & Conflict-Prevention Measure," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

3 See, for example, Robert I. Rotberg, *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2003); Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004); and Stewart Patrick, "Civil Wars & Transnational Threats: Mapping the Terrain, Assessing the Links," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017).

4 See also Seyoum Mesfin and Abdeta Dribssa Beyene, "The Practicalities of Living with Failed States," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

5 The following represents a condensed version of Stephen D. Krasner and Thomas Risse, "External Actors, State-Building, and Service Provision in Areas of Limited Statehood: Introduction," *Governance* 27 (4) (2014): 545 – 567. See also Thomas Risse, "Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood: Introduction and Overview," in *Governance without a State? Policies and Politics in Areas of Limited Statehood*, ed. Thomas Risse (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 3 – 9.

6 See, for example, Francis Fukuyama, *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004); Rotberg, *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*; and Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail*.

7 Stephan Leibfried and Michael Zürn, eds., *Transformations of the State?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

8 Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1980).

9 Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 4.

10 Eric Stollenwerk, "Measuring Governance and Limited Statehood," in *The Oxford Handbook of Governance and Limited Statehood*, ed. Thomas Risse, Tanja Börzel, and Anke Draude (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). Fukuyama has noted that national identity and acceptance of rule-of-law norms need a long time to emerge. This further underlines our argument that limited statehood is unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future. See Francis Fukuyama, "The Last English Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018). See also Mesfin and Beyene, "The Practicalities of Living with Failed States," which discusses buffer zones as examples for areas of limited statehood.

11 Karl Eikenberry and Stephen D. Krasner, "Introduction," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018). See also Hendrik Spruyt, "Civil Wars as Challenges to the Modern International System," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017).

12 On these distinctions, see Krasner, *Sovereignty.*

13 For this term, see Deborah Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan K. Sell, "Who Governs the Globe?" in *Who Governs the Globe?* ed. Deborah Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan K. Sell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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[19] See, for example, Hendrix, "Measuring State Capacity."

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[22] A total of 139 countries have been included in this analysis. To analyze the degree of statehood, we used the International Country Risk Guide's Bureaucracy Quality indicator. This indicator not only captures the administrative capacity component of our statehood definition, but has also been recommended by past research as one of the few relevant and reliable indicators for understanding civil war. See Hendrix, "Measuring State Capacity." The indicator is scaled from 1 to 4 with higher values signaling higher bureaucratic quality. All countries with a score lower than 4 were evaluated as displaying significant areas of limited statehood. The indicator is released on a monthly basis. To increase robustness, we calculated the mean score for every country using the January, June, and December ratings to reach a reliable annual average. The monopoly of force component of our statehood definition has been left out of the empirical analysis, since there are enormous challenges to clearly distinguishing between empirical measurements of civil war and the monopoly of force with the available data. Therefore, to avoid problems of endogeneity, this approach was considered the more viable option. See Stollenwerk, "Measuring Governance and Limited Statehood."

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Building Good (Enough) Governance in Postconflict Societies & Areas of Limited Statehood: The European Union & the Western Balkans

Tanja A. Börzel & Sonja Grimm

Abstract: In this essay, we assess how the European Union supports the development of postconflict Western Balkan societies toward stable peace, economic prosperity, and consolidated democracy, moving them along the path to Denmark. Our analysis reveals that the EU has contributed to effective and democratic governance in its southeastern neighborhood. At the same time, its effectiveness as an external good governance–builder varies. Structural postconflict conditions that are not conducive to democratization, conflicting policy objectives, the dynamic interplay between the EU and Western Balkan governments, and the involvement of domestic third-party actors in the reform process explain this variation. To make EU good governance–building more effective, we recommend acknowledging conflicting objectives and using governance-building instruments consistently and credibly to reconceptualize external good governance–building as a dynamic process between external and domestic actors and to take domestic actors and their preferences seriously.

TANJA A. BÖRZEL is Professor of Political Science and Chair for European Integration at the Otto Suhr Institute for Political Science at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

SONJA GRIMM is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Konstanz, Germany.

*(*See endnotes for complete contributor biographies.)*

Since the end of the Cold War, the European Union has sought to foster peace, stability, and prosperity in post-Communist countries by exporting its norms and principles of good governance to promote the democratic quality and effectiveness of government institutions. We understand good governance as the legitimate and effective rule over a fixed territory by a government that is selected through regular, fair, and free elections. The so-called Eastern enlargement of the EU, when ten Central and Eastern European states joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, is considered one of the most successful attempts at external good governance–building. Not surprisingly, the EU drew on its enlargement approach in seeking to stabilize the Western Balkans that continued to

be riddled with ethnic violence and lingering conflicts after the military fighting had subsided.[1] In 2000, the EU offered a membership perspective to all countries in the region that would meet the so-called Copenhagen Criteria for effective and democratic governance. Next to membership conditionality, the EU employed a comprehensive toolbox of different instruments, including diplomacy, financial assistance (development and democracy assistance), and state- and peace-building supervision, to promote postconflict stabilization and democratization.[2] But how effective an external governance-builder has the EU been in a region where general conditions have not been conducive to postconflict democratization and where statehood has remained limited and contested? This essay focuses on how the EU can effectively support the development of postconflict societies toward stable peace, economic prosperity, and consolidated democracy, moving them along the path to Denmark.

Drawing on both the analysis of macroquantitative data and case study research, we assess the EU's attempts at building good governance in the Western Balkans. In our perspective, the Western Balkans correspond to the limited opportunity model identified by Karl Eikenberry and Stephen Krasner in the introduction to the Fall 2017 issue of *Dædalus*. At the same time, the seven postconflict societies – Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia – have been most likely cases for external good governance–building. Their domestic elites are not exclusively rent-seeking, but have some material interests and normative considerations that resonate with the EU's development and good-governance goals and instruments; otherwise, these actors would not seek EU membership and the EU would not have offered a membership option to the governments of these countries.

The Western Balkans is a region that has been confronted with secessionist movements, unsettled borders, ethnic tensions, deficient state capacity, and strong clientelistic networks that provide serious challenges for internal and external attempts at democratic state-building, even in more consolidated states such as Croatia and Serbia. After the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, statehood in the Yugoslav successor states was weak, and governance structures were either severely damaged or ineffective. The Wars reinforced cleavages between the ethnic communities living in the territory, not least since externally and internally displaced persons had the right to return. Unemployment rose quickly after the end of the fighting. Internal and external security had to be guaranteed by third-party actors while demobilizing, demilitarizing, and reintegrating former fighters.

Considering the challenging starting conditions, the Western Balkans have made substantial progress in good governance–building since the EU recognized them as potential candidates for membership. Starting at a much lower level of governance effectiveness and democracy than the Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, respectively, they have caught up since the turn of the millennium. Yet a closer look reveals a more nuanced picture, particularly with regard to democratization. While Croatia and Serbia seem to have locked in their democratic changes, the others appear to be more or less stuck in transition. With regard to governance effectiveness, in contrast, all Western Balkan countries show a modest but steady improvement.

These findings suggest that the EU has been effective in building good governance in the Western Balkans, albeit not to the same extent for all countries. The EU's success is often attributed to membership conditionality, which provides a powerful incentive for incumbent elites to engage in

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costly governance reforms.[3] However, its effects vary considerably: the EU has not always applied conditionality consequently and credibly, nor has the EU necessarily coordinated its conditionality with the efforts of other relevant donors on the ground. Moreover, conditionality is combined with other instruments. When studying the effects of these instruments, the findings are mixed, too. Similar to conditionality, EU democracy assistance has a significant positive effect on postconflict democratization in some cases, whereas the more general picture indicates a much weaker causal relationship.

We conclude this essay with a discussion of why different instruments vary in their effectiveness to build good governance in the Western Balkans. We argue that it is crucial to consider the interplay between the EU and Western Balkan governments. Success and failure of external good governance–building cannot be fully explained by constraints on the side of the EU, on the one hand, or the domestic postconflict conditions that are not conducive to democratization and state-building, on the other. Additionally, three factors need to be taken into account: 1) possible conflicts of preferences between the EU and domestic political actors; 2) the dynamics of the external-domestic interplay; and 3) domestic constraints, such as national third parties, that may tie the hands of relevant domestic political actors in Western Balkan governments to act in a way that is conducive to postconflict stabilization and democratization.

From its very beginnings, the European Union has been a "community of values" of Western European democracies. The preamble to the Single European Act obliges the member states to "promote democracy" internally and to "display the principles of democracy and compliance with the law and with human rights" external-

ly to contribute to international peace.[4] When the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 created the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the EU committed itself to "develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."[5] EU enlargement policy became the most comprehensive foreign policy framework for such external good governance–building. In 1993, the Copenhagen European Council formally accepted the possibility of membership of all associated Central and Eastern European countries, provided that they became functioning democracies with market economies capable of applying the EU body of law. To encourage good-governance reforms, the EU predominantly relied on positive conditionality, rewarding compliance with human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and the fight against corruption with the opening of accession negotiations and, ultimately, membership. Accession conditionality was complemented with financial and technical assistance to help candidate countries comply with EU conditions.[6]

The EU approach to the Western Balkans is very similar in its goals and instruments to its Eastern-enlargement framework. Since the violent dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) between 1991 and 1995, the EU's declared policy objectives in the Western Balkans have combined three different goals: first, security goals, following its desire for peace, security, and stable borders in its direct neighborhood; second, economic goals reflecting its interest in enhanced economic integration; and third, political goals, such as democratization, human rights protection, and the guarantee of the rule of law in accordance with its criteria for membership.[7]

To achieve these three goals, the EU, in the beginning, focused foremost on disaster relief and humanitarian aid, with the immediate aim to reduce the suffering of civilian victims of the Balkans Wars

and to cope with millions of internally displaced persons and refugees migrating to EU member states. In reaction to the Kosovo conflict in 1998–1999, the EU started to more intensely promote postconflict stabilization, state-building, and democratization in the countries emerging from the SFRY and Albania. In 2000, the EU created the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, a framework for conflict prevention and the promotion of inter-regional cooperation and development within the Western Balkans. The Stability Pact represented an integrated framework to assist these countries in achieving objectives set out in three sections : 1) democratization and human rights ; 2) economic reconstruction, cooperation, and development issues ; and 3) security issues. With this framework, the EU recognized its "responsibility to [both] contribute to the resolution…of the immediate instability and, in the longer term, to the general stabilization and development of the region," motivated by the region's geographic proximity to the EU as well as by the prospect of mutual benefits through regional stabilization.[8] The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe represents the beginning of the EU's political commitment to the region, setting the stage for the Western Balkan countries' potential membership in the EU.

The Stability Pact was accompanied by the more institutionalized Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) for Southeastern Europe, which was adopted at the 2000 Zagreb summit by the European Council in a joint effort with the heads of state and governments of the Western Balkans. The process offered "higher incentives to the countries concerned" and required "compliance with more demanding conditions, both political and economic as well as increased emphasis on the need for regional cooperation."[9] In addition to the promotion of democracy, administrative structures, and the rule of law, economic development and re-

gional cooperation played a major role in the SAP.[10]

To animate the SAP and to support postconflict stabilization and democratization in the Western Balkans, the EU combined different instruments: namely, 1) diplomacy, 2) financial assistance, 3) accession (or membership) conditionality, and 4) state- and peace-building supervision. *Diplomacy* is part of all cooperation agreements and represents a constant in all forms of interaction between the EU and domestic actors in the Western Balkans.[11] With *financial assistance*, the EU seeks to support the building of democratic institutions and governance capacity. Since 1991, the EU has channeled financial assistance through a variety of programs and fiscal instruments. In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the SFRY in 1991–1992, safeguarding the survival of the population was clearly the EU's priority in the Western Balkans. The EU provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief through the Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Commission (ECHO), later called the European Commission on Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG Humanitarian Aid). Additionally, between 1992 and 2006, the Western Balkans benefited from the Poland and Hungary : Assistance for Restructuring their Economies (PHARE) program.[12] With the dissolution of the SFRY, the successor countries and Albania gradually became eligible for PHARE. After the Zagreb summit in 2000, ECHO and PHARE were replaced by the single framework program : Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stability in the Balkans (CARDS). Between 2000 and 2006, most of the EU's financial and technical assistance was channeled through CARDS and implemented by the European Agency for Reconstruction. Finally, in 2007, CARDS was incorporated into the Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), enabling candidate and potential candidate countries "to introduce the necessary polit-

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ical, economic and institutional reforms to bring them into line with EU standards."[13] All Western Balkan countries currently receive funding through the IPA since, by 2016, all have been granted either candidate (Albania, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia) or potential candidate status (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244). Croatia received IPA funds until it became an EU member in 2013.

In addition to programs specifically developed for the Western Balkans, the EU has also funded the promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in the region since 2000 through the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (European Initiative), renamed the European Instrument of Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in 2007.[14] EIDHR funding is independent of intergovernmental bilateral cooperation agreements and enables complementary bottom-up democracy promotion. It targets third parties such as civil society organizations and nonprofit organizations, but also parliamentary bodies and international organizations whose activities or projects match European Council goals for promoting democracy and human rights.[15]

Accession (or membership) conditionality is based on incentives rewarding progress in complying with EU conditions and punishing the lack thereof. Political conditionality seeks to change the behavior of actors in relation to democratic development and the protection of human rights and civil liberties. Likewise, EU accession or membership conditionality as a subtype of political conditionality attempts to incentivize actors in (potential) candidate countries to pursue socioeconomic liberalization, support democratic institution-building, and strengthen governance capacity therein. Since the adoption of the SAP, the EU has linked postconflict recovery in the Western Balkans with the pro-

cess of EU integration. Incentives include visa liberalization, technical assistance and financial support for structural development and democratic institution-building, access to the European Single Market, and, ultimately, full EU membership.

State- and peace-building supervision is the (temporary) takeover of decision-making and the implementation of policies by an external actor. It includes international peace- and state-building missions with a mandate to monitor or supervise democratization in postwar societies.[16] The EU rarely engages in such highly intrusive and cost-intensive endeavors. In the Western Balkans, however, there are two examples of such an EU engagement: First, between 2002 and 2011, the High Representative/EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina assumed the power and authority to oversee the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the approximation of the territory to the EU. Our second example is the takeover of responsibility for the economic reconstruction pillar under the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, as well as the subsequent European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo that has overseen capacity-building in the rule-of-law sector since Kosovo's independence in 2008.

EU support for the Western Balkans has significantly changed over the last two decades with regard to both the purpose and the use of these four instruments. First, the EU's programs have become increasingly more specific with regard to the sectors and components for which support has been given. Second, EU priorities have gradually shifted from short-term disaster relief to long-term socioeconomic development, capacity-building, and democratization. Peace and stability have been the primary goals, complemented by economic liberalization and political reforms intended to further democracy. Third, consider-

ing the recipients of EU diplomacy, finan-
cial assistance, and conditionality, the EU
relies to a much greater extent on coopera-
tion with state actors than with nonstate ac-
tors. As a result, EU support is foremost top-
down, oriented toward the establishment
of functioning political institutions and an
effective state administration. This strategy
has not been balanced by an equally weight-
ed bottom-up approach that would foster a
vivid political community and an indepen-
dent civil society.[17] Fourth, the EU has been
reluctant to engage in highly intrusive su-
pervision and interim administration mis-
sions. Its engagement in Bosnia and Herze-
govina and in Kosovo can be seen as the ex-
ception rather than the rule.

How successful has the EU been as an
external democracy promoter and gover-
nance-builder in the Western Balkans? To
assess the effectiveness of the EU's four in-
struments for building good governance,
we focus on stable and effective statehood
and the quality of democracy.[18] In doing
this, it is important to consider the start-
ing conditions that the EU found in the
postconflict Western Balkans. In gener-
al, conditions conducive to democrati-
zation are absent in the aftermath of vio-
lent conflict. As political scientist Virginia
Page Fortna has put it: "the atrocities of
civil war are fundamentally antithetical"
to democratic norms.[19] More specifically,
recent warfare, challenged statehood, and
ongoing ethnic tensions within the coun-
tries, in combination with destroyed in-
frastructure, the massive displacement of
peoples, rising levels of poverty and unem-
ployment, high levels of corruption and
criminality, and a weak civil society, rep-
resent difficult context conditions for suc-
cessful democracy promotion.[20] In a post-
conflict society, fear and mistrust are prev-
alent, and soldiers and civilians are likely to
be traumatized by the recent experiences
of violence, atrocity, and destruction.[21]

Therefore, good governance–building
in the Western Balkans has required sub-
stantial efforts to overcome the causes and
consequences of violent conflict, build up
functioning state institutions, enhance so-
cioeconomic development, create socie-
tal trust, and sow the seeds of democracy.
Additionally, statehood (understood as
the control over the monopoly of the use
of force and the capacity to set and enforce
rules) is as limited and contested as the ex-
istence of a nation (understood as a com-
munity of equal citizens sharing a common
national identity).[22]

In Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegov-
ina, international and domestic sover-
eignty is externally constrained and eth-
nically contested, borders are unsettled,
and constitutional issues are unresolved.
Moreover, the accommodation of seces-
sionists by power-sharing arrangements
weakens the power of central government;
the Serbs in Kosovo and Bosnia and Her-
zegovina having no interest in strong state
institutions exacerbates this weakness. Al-
bania, Macedonia, and Montenegro suf-
fer (more) from limited statehood due to
a lack of resources (staff, expertise, funds)
as well as institutionally entrenched struc-
tures of corruption and clientelism.[23]

Despite rather unfavorable conditions,
the Western Balkans has experienced prog-
ress in effective and democratic gover-
nance-building; compared with other post-
conflict countries in the world, the West-
ern Balkan countries are relatively well-off.
Ever since the Balkan Wars, the risk of vio-
lent conflict has been considerably reduced,
governance capacities have improved, and
all countries have exhibited progress with
democratization, albeit slow and with set-
backs. Approximation to the EU has had a
conflict-moderating effect. Since the ear-
ly 1990s, the only postconflict country in
the world that has become a liberal consti-
tutional democracy is Croatia, which was
awarded with becoming the EU's twenty-

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Sonja
Grimm*

eighth member state in 2013. Serbia has made sufficient progress to open accession negotiations in 2014. Albania, FYR Macedonia, and Montenegro, in contrast, have become stuck and even show some signs of democratic backsliding. Most worrisome are Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, whose highly contested statehood has prevented any improvements in good governance in recent years.[24]

How do we account for this variation? To deal with the challenges in the postconflict Western Balkans, the EU has employed the four previously mentioned instruments. Tracing their effects is not an easy task: the instruments are not used in a mutually exclusive way, but are often combined, sometimes strategically, sometimes by trial and error. From our qualitative and quantitative empirical research, we deduce the following effects.

Dialogue and negotiations as means of diplomacy between the EU and domestic actors in the Western Balkans are constantly taking place at all stages of the drafting and implementation of reform. The EU is formally excluded from participation only at the stage of policy-adoption in national parliaments. Furthermore, diplomacy is never used as a governance-building instrument in isolation, but always precedes or accompanies the use of the other instruments. Nevertheless, empirical evidence shows that the postconflict Western Balkan countries receiving EU support would not have drafted or implemented the majority of reforms without diplomatic exchange.[25] Financial assistance in the form of development and democracy assistance has a positive but small effect on democratization in the Western Balkans.[26]

The findings on accession conditionality are more mixed. The accession aspirations of (potential) candidate countries combined with the high degree of leverage the EU has due to asymmetrical interdependence renders conditionality effec-

tive.[27] Cross-conditionality with other regional organizations such as NATO and the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) increases external leverage on national governments to build good governance.[28] At the same time, conflicts between the different members of the EU over accession weaken the EU's leverage in the Western Balkan region. Together with the EU's enlargement fatigue, this reduces the credibility of accession conditionality.[29] Finally, conflicts over national identity significantly limit the effectiveness of external actors' efforts to promote democracy and strengthen the governance capacity of Western Balkan states.[30] Not surprisingly, overall compliance with EU demands for domestic reform tends to be "fake and partial."[31] However, Serbia's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) shows that accession conditionality still induces target governments to cooperate with EU requirements – when the conditions are exerted credibly and in a timely fashion. Serbian compliance resulted from the considerable pressure exerted jointly by the U.S. government and the EU Commission. Moreover, smaller and more attainable incentives, such as the promise of aid and cooperation agreements, were decisive to promote cooperation with the ICTY.[32]

The effects of the EU's engagement in international peace-building missions with a mandate to democratize are likewise mixed and contested. Particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, immediate postconflict stabilization would not have been possible without the legislative, executive, and judicative contributions of external actors such as the United Nations, the OSCE, NATO, and other international and regional organizations including the EU. In both countries, the EU became more important over time, replacing conflict resolution through liberal postconflict state-building with good governance – building through

an EU approximation approach. However, this dual agenda also bears problems. While seeking to build a functioning democratic state in Kosovo that complies with EU accession criteria, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo operated under UN Resolution 1244, which requested "neutrality" on the Kosovo status question. But how do you create a functioning state without recognizing its sovereignty? As a consequence of this dilemma, the EU has managed to improve effective governance while democratic governance has lagged behind, though levels of organized crime and corruption have remained high in Kosovo and parallel Serbian institutions in Northern Kosovo continue to exist.[33] These setbacks notwithstanding, the EU succeeded in April 2013, after a lengthy negotiation process, in brokering an agreement between Serbia and Kosovo aimed at normalizing their relations. Regarding the EU's role in Bosnia, experts agree that the prospect of EU membership has not been sufficient so far to incentivize the urgently needed reform of the strictly consociational institutions, as defined in the Dayton General Framework Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina, to strengthen the level of the federal state, or to bridge the deeply entrenched cleavages that exist between Bosnia's two state entities and three ethnicities.[34] Furthermore, the double-hatted role of being a High Representative and an EU Special Representative (between 2002 and 2011) required overseeing the peace-building process and, at the same time, fulfilling the EU accession criteria – an irresolvable task for the respective incumbent.

In summary, the EU has contributed to the building of effective and democratic governance in the Western Balkans. At the same time, its effectiveness as an external governance-builder varies. Croatia and Serbia are clear success cases whereas the records of FYR Macedonia and Montenegro are mixed and those of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo are increasingly disappointing. This is partly explained by diverging interests of EU member states and a general enlargement fatigue, on the one hand, and the postconflict conditions that are not conducive to stabilization and democratization in the Western Balkans, on the other. The dual role of acting as a peacekeeper and as an EU approximation observer, as well as the problem of highly contested statehood largely explain failures in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Going beyond these explanations, there are two more factors that need to be considered. First, conflicting policy objectives that put the recipient countries in an unintended trade-off reduce the effectiveness of the EU's support; one policy goal may be impaired by the achievement of another.[35] For example, externally promoted political competition under the objective of democracy promotion during election campaigns might reduce the willingness of ethnically composed political parties to compromise, thus increasing instability in a postconflict country and undermining the objective of state-building. Or the strengthening of democratic institutions might deprive parts of the society of political or economic privileges, making them question the legitimacy of the state. If not managed well, those conflicts negatively influence transition outcomes and lead to setbacks in governance reforms.

Second, partial or fake compliance with conditions of external governance-builders is often blamed on domestic actors "unwilling" (interpreted by external actors as being "illiberal," "antidemocratic," or "antimodern") or "unable" (understood as being incapable due to resource constraints or a lack of personal knowledge) to engage in governance reforms.[36] This view neglects the constant interplay of negotiations between external and domestic actors in which both sides possess a set of in-

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struments to set, modify, and change the reform agenda. Governments and state officials of Western Balkan countries can take action independently from the EU and other external actors by playing two-level games.[37] On the first level, the external-domestic interaction between external governance-builders and domestic recipients (governments, ministries, or parliaments) unfolds. Here, conflicts over preferences, reform approaches, and reform implementation might emerge in the negotiation process. On the second level, domestic political actors have to interact and negotiate with domestic third-party actors (opposition parties, political unions, civil society actors). Here, domestic governments have to consider three issues: First, domestic third-party actors can act as veto players whose consent is necessary to draft, adopt, or implement a reform package. Second, governments and state officials have to consider the framing of reforms that might touch upon issues of national identity. Third, national governments must take the possible reform effects for the electorate into consideration, meaning they must anticipate social mobilization for or against proposed reforms. Context-insensitive reform demands might not resonate with the everyday local needs of affected citizens.

In sum, without acknowledging the strategic behavior of domestic actors and the constraints they face, and instead portraying them as "unwilling" or "unable" to reform, external governance-builders tend to neglect the rational interests of domestic political actors and the dynamics of two-level game negotiations. Domestic actors might seek to modify, adapt, change, or reject external reform demands due to preferences that diverge from external actors' inclinations or because of domestic constraints, such as the existence of domestic veto players and specific domestic conditions that do not fit the reforms demanded by external actors like the EU.

What are the policy implications of our findings? Students of state-building and democracy promotion mostly agree that effective good governance–building requires a context-sensitive approach.[38] We propose three recommendations for putting such an approach into practice:

1) Acknowledge conflicts of objectives and use governance-building instruments consistently and credibly. External governance-builders should acknowledge that all good things do not necessarily go together. This may require explicitly prioritizing short-term goals, such as using unconditional aid to ensure stability even if it may strengthen incumbent regimes reluctant to engage in democratic reforms. This will also facilitate the credible and consistent use of conditionality, which is often undermined by continuing aid despite the lack of democratic progress in the interest of stability.[39] Both solutions likewise require a closer coordination among the different regional and international organizations involved in state-building and democratization to avoid introducing further conflicting objectives (such as prioritizing security-building to comply with NATO demands versus prioritizing democracy development to comply with EU demands).

2) Reconceptualize external good governance–building as a dynamic process between external and domestic actors. Practitioners should take into account that building effective and democratic governance takes place in a dynamic environment, in which domestic actors are not mere recipients of external demands. While external actors might offer financial and technical assistance to build up institutions and to professionalize governance structures, domestic actors are in the driver's seat when it comes to the implementation and application of political and administrative reforms.[40] Without serious cooperation at eye level, external governance-building is unlikely to be effective.

3) Take domestic actors and their preferences seriously. Finally, practitioners should not mistake any domestic behavior diverging from their demands and expectations as "resistance." Domestic actors have legitimate interests that do not necessarily oppose attempts at building good governance. Rather, they may prefer other short-term, intermediate, or long-term goals, set different priorities, and tend to use other means to achieve their desired objectives.[41] Moreover, domestic actors may be constrained by relevant domestic interests of the public and other third parties. Ignoring these interests contradicts the very goal of building democratic and effective governance.

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ENDNOTES

* Contributor Biographies: TANJA A. BÖRZEL is Professor of Political Science and Chair for European Integration at the Otto Suhr Institute for Political Science at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. She is the author of *Governance under Anarchy: Effective and Legitimate in Areas of Limited Statehood* (with Thomas Risse, forthcoming) and is the coeditor of the *Oxford Handbook of Governance and Limited Statehood* (with Thomas Risse and Anke Draude, 2018).

SONJA GRIMM is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Konstanz, Germany. She has published in such journals as *European Union Politics*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, and *Democratization*.

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The Practicalities of Living with Failed States

Seyoum Mesfin & Abdeta Dribssa Beyene

Abstract: State security and survival are critical issues in the rough regional environment of the Horn of Africa. Ensuring security for a state and its population is a priority and a raison d'être for any government. The buffer zone has emerged as a key strategy for nations in the Horn of Africa to manage successfully the security challenges of the several failed states in their neighborhood. Buffer zones are established adjacent to the borders of stronger states that oversee the buffer zones' affairs directly or through proxies. This essay explores the practical aspects of power asymmetries between successful and failed states from the perspectives of two officials in successful states who deal directly with this security challenge within the constraints of current norms and practices of sovereignty. The situation in the Horn of Africa provides insights into the effects of failed states on the security of their neighbors and the challenges that failed states present to the wider international community.

SEYOUM MESFIN is Ethiopia's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. Prior to that appointment, he was the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs for nearly twenty years.

ABDETA DRIBSSA BEYENE is the Executive Director of the Centre for Dialogue, Research and Cooperation (CDRC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He previously served as Director General for African Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Failed and failing states lack the political will and the capacity to enter into, much less abide by, agreements with other states to ensure mutual security. This situation points to problems that attend the growing asymmetry not only in the capacities, but also in the divergent character of the domestic political orders in the Horn of Africa. This asymmetry, assessed from the perspectives of two officials of a nation adjacent to two failed states, challenges some of the basic tenets of an international system of states, such as government capacity to abide by agreements. These failed states fundamentally lack the capacity to fulfill obligations of sovereignty, such as monitoring and governing their territories to prevent different actors there from launching unauthorized attacks on neighbors or more generally spreading disorder across their borders. These problems remain a primary source of conflict in the Horn of Africa, and have become increasingly pressing for countries that neighbor Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, and other tumultuous and failing states.

The Horn of Africa hosts an assortment of failed and failing states. Somalia and South Sudan clearly belong to the category of totally failed states. Officials in Sudan and South Sudan have lost a significant portion of their capacities to enforce their authority in large parts of their respective territories; Eritrea's leadership frequently defies basic international norms; and Kenya's recurrent electoral violence raises doubts about whether its government can ensure domestic stability. In addition, states in the subregion face very real threats of terrorist attacks from Al Shabaab, a Somalia-based terrorist group. This regional political environment tempts governments to use armed groups as proxies to influence politics in neighboring countries. Since the 1960s, many countries have participated in tit-for-tat violence to undermine rivals, forcing some to create buffer zones along their borders.

Ethiopia, for example, engaged in this retaliatory violence in the 1980s when its government provided refuge to the Sudan People's Liberation Army as leverage against Khartoum's support for rebel groups inside Ethiopia. In this case, Ethiopia was reciprocating against Sudan and Somalia, which had similarly protected groups hostile to Ethiopia in the 1970s and 1980s. This symmetry of support for proxy-armed groups also meant that the governments routinely agreed to cease this behavior for mutual benefit. The records of these agreements from that time show that these governments possessed the political will and the capacity to abide by these agreements. While Ethiopia's government strives to abide by the principle of respect for the sovereignty of its neighbors, the practicalities of living next to failed and failing states now challenge the country's official commitment to adhere to these principles.

For Ethiopia, managing these problems in Somalia in particular involves comple-

mentary strategies: supporting islands of governance and creating buffer zones. With decades of combined experience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, we note that Ethiopia's strategy is most evident vis-à-vis the "Republic of Somaliland," and to some extent the "Puntland State of Somalia." Both provide basic levels of order and security to their populations locally. Though not diplomatically recognized, close ties to Ethiopia enable their citizens to travel on local documents and help these authorities to organize international trade relations and develop infrastructure, as well as influence developments in Mogadishu and elsewhere.

Ethiopia's support is critical to limit the extent to which other foreign governments are compelled to intervene in the internal affairs of these semiautonomous regions over matters of mutual concern. Ethiopia also assists in the establishment of other regional states in Somalia. All these efforts face challenges from Mogadishu: the strategy is *perceived* to be weakening rather than unifying Somalia because it undermines the monopoly of coercion that the political center should theoretically exercise although it currently lacks the capacity to do so. This situation creates a dilemma whereby Ethiopia is forced to infringe on the sovereign prerogatives of the de jure recognized sovereign authority of Somalia. In fact, the government of Somalia is unable to credibly guarantee to Ethiopia that these territories will not be used to threaten Ethiopia, so Ethiopia often is blamed for interference. This criticism highlights the paradox in which Ethiopia has to infringe on Somalia's sovereignty in territories that Mogadishu is unable to control in order to ensure the fulfillment of basic obligations required of a sovereign state.

A second strategy revolves around creating and maintaining buffer zones. Ethiopia and Kenya sustain buffer zones inside Somalia, effectively denying Al Shabaab

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and other extremist groups the capacity to launch attacks inside Ethiopia and Kenya. More recently, Uganda has pursued a similar strategy vis-à-vis South Sudan. Ethiopia's intensive coordination with local authorities inside South Sudan remains necessary to prevent the recurrence of the kind of attacks that occurred in April 2016 in Ethiopia's Gambella Region, where cross-boundary ethnic violence and ancillary cattle rustling and kidnapping have incited tensions among local communities and the two states.

The ways that Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda use buffer zones sheds light on how these governments manage their relations in an environment that includes states that exhibit widely varying domestic capacities and organizations of authority and regional susceptibility to involvement in proxy wars and other interference on the part of external actors. While the Horn of Africa exhibits particular features, this disjuncture in the domestic capacities to exercise de facto sovereignty has become more acute in the region as state failure in Somalia and South Sudan persists.

This strategy of the region's more-capable states is based on four core assumptions: 1) a state that establishes a buffer zone beyond its borders must have the capacity to provide and sustain order in its domestic realm and in the buffer zone; 2) the state that maintains a buffer zone requires professionalism of the state security apparatus; 3) the buffer zone's inhabitants must be able to benefit from order and development within the neighboring strong state; and 4) de jure borders remain fixed. In short, a successful buffer zone's inhabitants do not have to like this intervention, but they do have to share in the benefits of security and economic opportunities that the buffer zone provides to the stronger state.

In the Horn of Africa, state failure does not challenge the military-focused and state-centered paradigm of security in the international system.[1] This situation reflects the reality in which state and nonstate actors compete with one another. These actors and this reality of interstate conflict and competition among states with sharply asymmetrical capacities continue to be the basis for analysis.[2] The device of the buffer zone is one of the main reasons why failed states do not challenge this basic structure of the international system in the Horn of Africa, and in fact contributes to its maintenance.

Weak governance shapes interstate relations in other ways. Civil-military relations scholar Herbert Howe has identified three military strategies that African states use to address the threats to their present existence. These strategies include regional intervention forces, private security companies, and Western-sponsored assistance to state militaries. He argues that all these are likely to fail unless African states emphasize indigenous military professionalism.[3] This conventional view misses the buffer zone as a self-help mechanism to maintain regional order, though some states are better than others at mastering this technique.

A buffer zone is "a neutral zone designed to prevent acts of aggression between two hostile nations; and any area serving to mitigate or neutralize potential conflict."[4] Buffer zones can be established in a shared territory or created unilaterally through force and monitored exclusively by one state or through proxies in a nonshared area in (a) relatively weaker state(s), or on the other side of the enemy's territory that harbors a threat to the stronger state. These threats can emerge from rebel groups, religious movements, and other armed groups organized in neighboring states in territories that are outside the control of local state authorities. Conventional tools of international relations, such as pressuring a national government to fulfill the obligations of its sovereignty, do not work when a state lacks a government

with the capacity or political will to exercise even minimal control over its territory and armed forces.

Failure by states to solve these crises and conflicts, and their subsequent inability to provide protection and basic social services to the majority of their peoples, can generate popular support for various non-state armed groups as communities look beyond the state for protection. Officials in failing states often desperately seek alternative ways to retain their coercive power, which usually has the effect of creating refugee crises amidst massive violations of basic human rights and the large-scale disruptions of livelihoods.

Buffer zones play their paradoxical role while states with stronger domestic capabilities that develop their own broader dimensions of effective internal and external sovereignty, such as Ethiopia, step in to manage the effects of this extreme asymmetry of domestic control. The stronger state then violates the sovereignty of the weaker to provide the basis for the semblance of an orderly state system in the region. This hegemony can appear as domination, but to its architects, it is also the only viable alternative to manage the regional destabilizing effects of state failure and collapse. This is particularly important for states like Ethiopia, which shares a long border with Somalia, a failed state that generates violent illicit activities, cross-border insurgencies, refugee flows, and other disruptions that threaten efforts in Ethiopia to transform its domestic political economy. Disorder in the borderlands is a historical problem for state-builders, but the difference now is that stronger states no longer have the option (or are no longer inclined) to solve this problem through conquest. Instead, they have to maintain order in weak states.

This issue of buffer zones is relevant to the growing asymmetries of state capacities that appear in other regions. Algeria's gov-

ernment has to contend with the appearance of competing militias and counter-systemic movements such as violent Islamist organizations across its borders with Mali and Libya. Egypt must manage its affairs with a fragmented Libya, while Sudan has its own problems providing credible sovereign authority along Egypt's southern border, apart from the challenges of border disputes between the neighbors.

Why does a state construct and sustain an expensive buffer zone to ensure security? What are the implications of buffer zones as a mechanism for protecting sovereignty under the increasingly globalized international construct? Variation in the origins and aims of managing buffer zones points to the importance of symmetries/asymmetries of domestic capabilities of the states involved in their administration and sustainability, and the impact of their creation on international norms, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The concept of the buffer zone is at the heart of the paradox of asymmetries of domestic capabilities; it is an effort to preserve the sovereignty of the state creating it while deliberately attenuating the sovereignty of others, however dressed up such action may be by the apparent acceptance of the affected party. States that border failed states and states with limited capacity to control their own territories inevitably face a number of challenges. These include various types of security threats: refugee crises, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, cattle rustling, trafficking in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, terrorism and extremism, and the spread of communicable diseases, all of which are discussed in a series of essays in the previous issue of *Dædalus*. A failed or failing state either no longer has the necessary institutions to address such problems or is incapable of dealing with them, either immediately or in the longer term within its own territories.[5]

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William Reno, for example, has shown the "connection between terrorism and the failure of central governments in some states to control their national territory and monitor their populations."[6] Powerful states, Reno asserts, collaborate even with groups struggling for secession. These groups control their local turf and their ability to provide access to outsiders, like the more powerful state next door, and to deny refuge to terrorists or other rebel groups, which is critical in this calculation and reinforces the tenets of the U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine.

The pursuit of security through creating and maintaining buffer zones might appear to weaken international norms constructed and recognized by various regional and international organizations. The unilateral creation of buffer zones, whether to encourage the potentiality for the creation of a failed state, speed up the creation of new states, or create areas that larger and more powerful states annex, certainly may threaten stability in the longer term. In reality, however, the creation of a buffer zone does not weaken shared international norms and can succeed in contributing to the security of the intervening state, since stronger states are employing buffer zones because of practical threats against which international norms do not provide protection.

This development may mean either that the whole "failed" state can become a buffer zone, or that the unilateral creation of a buffer zone undermines the sovereignty of the targeted state to the extent that it may actually lead to failure of that state. Costs and intensity of effort, the extent and delineation of the formal and informal borders of the states involved, the relative control exerted by the actors, and factors that determine the level of impermeability of the zones to protect against attacks – the main objective of establishing buffer zones – are taken into consideration.

Buffer zones in other contexts have been constructed to deal with threats, but most were designed to manage contentious relations between states of roughly symmetrical capabilities. For example, United Nations–monitored zones between Israeli and Syrian forces in the Golan Heights and between forces in Cyprus have endured for decades. These are maintained by third parties and have a recognized place in the maintenance of order in the international system of states. The problem for Ethiopia and others who have to build their own buffer zones, however, is that there is no realistic and viable international community response to the problem of disorder in failed states and the threats that emerge from them. The U.S. and UN interventions in Somalia in the early 1990s did little to nothing to help Ethiopia with these security problems, and made clear that no superpower will lead the region to stability. The Americans could fail and then decide that it was time to go home, but Ethiopia and other countries in the region do not have this option. In subsequent years, Ethiopians, Kenyans, and others have had to deal with the proliferation of unconventional threats that comes from living next to failed states, for which they have had to devise their own responses.

Ethiopia constructs buffer zones to protect its citizens from threats coming from the adjacent areas. This absence of any real capacity of a neighboring state to fulfill basic obligations to control threats on its own territory is a big problem for other states too, such as Algeria. For now, Algeria has not established a visible buffer zone across its border with Mali, even though Mali fulfills the necessary conditions, including the existence of terrorist groups bent on destabilizing the region and the lack of capacity to control its territories and maintain a monopoly on violence in its territories in the peripheries. Algeria, however, has yet to securitize the threat, since those destabi-

lizing elements have not constituted a crit-
ical challenge to the survival of the Algeri-
an state or directly threatened the people of
Algeria. Like Ethiopia in the 1990s, Algeria
stands by as an international intervention
force attempts to restore order. But that in-
tervention force is discovering that there is
not much of a Malian state to which they
can pass off this task. Algeria has to watch
its border with Mali and accept the pros-
pect that the foreign force will leave once it
becomes frustrated with its own shortcom-
ings. Meanwhile, Algeria's engagement is
very careful and well managed. The recent
build up of a huge arms cache along the bor-
der might force policy changes, and certain-
ly the poor record of foreign-led, large-scale
state-building projects in the midst of con-
flict do not inspire much confidence. The
American failure in Iraq casts a very long
shadow over the calculations of govern-
ments that benefit peripherally from large-
scale foreign intervention but are fated to
manage the problems associated with failed
states on their borders.

The construction of buffer zones takes
place with the attention of powerful ac-
tors such as the United States, the Euro-
pean Union, and international organiza-
tions. It also attracts occasional attention
from conventional news media and from
social media. Even in failed states, inhabi-
tants commonly have access to 3G or even
4G connectivity. This means that construct-
ing buffer zones comes with the strategic
need to minimize the degrees of violence in-
volved and to pay careful attention to how
the buffer zones are viewed by local inhab-
itants. Navigating this environment plac-
es significant demands on Ethiopia's own
capabilities. Indeed, Americans and others
might have much to learn about promot-
ing order over the long term in difficult en-
vironments through patient and nuanced
techniques that have been adapted to the
specific political and social environments
of failed states.

The spread of Somalis across borders since
the collapse of an effective central gov-
ernment in Somalia in 1990 has occurred
against the backdrop of previous irredentist
ambitions of elites to build Greater Somalia
in the Horn. Cold War politics and subse-
quent government policies created animos-
ities between peoples that led – paradoxi-
cally – to one of Africa's most vicious inter-
state wars in 1977 – 1978, the Ogaden War
between Somalia and Ethiopia. As men-
tioned above, even after Somalia's defeat,
its government in the 1980s supported anti-
government rebels in Ethiopia, against a
strategy Ethiopia employed in retaliation.
Ethiopia and Somalia reached agreements
to manage these contentious relations, and
records show that both governments pos-
sessed the political will and the capacity to
abide by these agreements before their col-
lapse in 1991.

Due to the wars of the 1960s and 1970s,
the Ethiopian-Somali region remained a
backyard, and a military zone for the ad-
ministrations in Addis Ababa until the fall
of Ethiopia's Derg regime in 1991. Subse-
quent Ethiopian regimes handled the So-
mali region of Ethiopia in different ways,
but historically the region has served
the country as a buffer zone. That reality
changed in 1991 after Ethiopia institution-
alized a federal arrangement that helped
to manage its internal insurgencies, such
as those involving al-Itihaad al-Islamiya
(AIAI) and the Ogaden National Libera-
tion Front (ONLF), and began to protect its
border areas by stationing troops there.[7]
However, dealing with internal actors with
cross-border links via a troop presence at
the borders was not sustainable so long
as the insurgents had rear bases in adja-
cent territories of Somalia that were not
under the control of any central govern-
ment. Building a "big, beautiful wall" was
not an option. The border areas were sim-
ply too porous and too long, and it was dif-
ficult to control movements fully.

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Mesfin &
Abdeta
Dribssa Beyene*

Establishing a buffer zone involved a long and intensive process of learning and considerable patience. In 1995, Ethiopia took, for the first time, a unilateral measure to remove the Islamic insurgents AIAI, who still run an active insurgency along the Somali border. Ethiopia launched a second military intervention in 1998, following Eritrea's effort – in collaboration with a Baidoa-based Somali warlord and former U.S. Marine veteran of Operation Desert Storm, Hussein Aideed, and involving the Oromo Liberation Front and the ONLF – to open a second front against it. Ethiopia's biggest intervention came in 2006, when it fended off an imminent threat from the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and supported the fragile Somali Federal Government's occupation of Mogadishu. Ethiopian forces routed the ICU fighters in a series of conventional and counterinsurgency battles, forcing the ICU collapse, after which Ethiopia created and reinforced proxies to keep local threats at bay, thereby putting in place real buffer zones. The buffer zones' sizes shifted depending on the threats at hand. Ethiopia institutionalized the buffer zones and supported these areas, successfully warding off threats coming through the territories that remained relatively peaceful and unifying proxies in blocking infiltrations through the years.

Whenever Somalia's regional administrations have faced challenges from local forces or factions supported by extraregional actors undermining Ethiopia's security, immediate Ethiopian engagement has been needed to avert a crisis. Ethiopia thus contributes to an ad hoc stability inside Somalia, despite criticism from some Somali and international actors. This building-block approach stresses the maintenance of local order, which was first advocated by the United Nations but then abandoned. Ethiopia picked up this strategy amidst criticism, but since 2014, this approach has become the cornerstone of the wider international community's response for peace-building in Somalia.

The central government in Mogadishu appears to be at the forefront in the implementation of the federal arrangement in Somalia. But, there is no guarantee that this policy will continue. Reversal is a possibility; and recently the federal government has been accused of meddling in the business of local governments. The recent Gulf crisis is also affecting the relationship between the center and the periphery. In the meantime, a number of regional states have been established, and Ethiopia, through the IGAD (the Djibouti-based regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development) and the African Union, has assisted in the realization of the federal arrangement. Prior to these, Ethiopia either created proxies or supported existing ones to reinforce its buffer zone. Following the 2006 incursions, Ethiopia tried to prop up the Somali government for two years until its troops withdrew in January 2009. Following the withdrawal, Ethiopia reinforced groups that collaborated in the fight against Al Shabaab along its border.

This was not a smooth and easy endeavor. Ethiopia sometimes failed to recognize actors that could be proxies outright. When Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) formed, a religious paramilitary force created to defend clans threatened by Al Shabaab's onslaught, particularly the Ayr subclan of the Hawiye, Ethiopia simply considered it an Islamist group. When in 2007 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was requested to consider ASWJ as an actor to fill the buffer zone between Beledweyne and Galkayo in the Central Regions of Somalia, the Ministry declined and responded to the embassy in Mogadishu:

> ASWJ's engagement is a very interesting phenomenon, including the timing of the fighting between the two [with Al Shabaab]. But, of course, you have not yet gotten into what kind of animal the new group is – their

clan composition, most particularly at the leadership level; if they are close to some that are known to us, whom they might be the closest with; their source of support, both military and financial; and their background and where they have been until now. How come we failed to know about their existence until now, and if we knew how did we fail to see them as an asset for the fight against al-Shabaab?[8]

But ASWJ proved itself an important actor after killing hundreds of Al Shabaab fighters in the Central Regions in subsequent fighting. ASWJ is now a major player in this part of Somalia, fully supported by Ethiopia's security institutions as well as counterterrorism elements from the United States, and has carried out many successful operations against Al Shabaab. ASWJ has also created an administration that is contested by Galmudug State, an autonomous regional authority in Central Somalia. In order to maintain the integrity of the buffer zone, Ethiopian forces often engage Al Shabaab directly in these areas, depending on the level of threat the enemy poses.[9] Ethiopia also ensures that ASWJ and Galmudug do not engage in a fight that would create a space for Al Shabaab to manipulate. This is not always successful, since ASWJ and Galmudug, supported by the government in Mogadishu, have at times engaged militarily, forcing Ethiopia to intervene to stop the conflict. Overall, Ethiopia has established a functional collaboration, with ASWJ filling the gap in the buffer zone.

The buffer zone continues west of Galmudug to what was an autonomous regional administration created adjacent to the Puntland State of Somalia. Representing the Suleiban subclan under the name of Himam iyo Heeb, this administration merged with Galmudug in 2015. Then there is the administrative framework for the Hawaadle clan in the Hiiraan and Middle Shebelle regions, formed in October 2016 as Hirshabelle State. After joining the Afri-

can Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM), funded by the international community, Ethiopian forces are currently based in: Bay and Bakool, which together with Lower Shebelle now make up South West State, largely inhabited by the Rahanweyn clan; Central Regions State; Galmudug; the Hiran Region; the Gedo Region, the home of the Marehan clan; and in parts of the Jubaland Interim State administration. Clearly, understanding the information-intensive details of local contexts and the crosscurrents of micropolitics in the buffer zone is critical to Ethiopian efforts. As in all failed states, local politics in Somalia is especially intense because there is no central government to impose a regularized order; thus, the situation on the ground becomes even more complex.

Ethiopia's influence in Bay and Bakool, deep inside Somalia, followed the creation of the Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA) in the second half of the 1990s.[10] Managing the RRA was critical, as a proxy, to fend off threats posed by Eritrea-backed Ethiopian rebel groups, hosted by a group led by Hussein Aideed and by Al Shabaab, respectively, in 1998 and 2012. However, the buffer zone in Bay and Bakool remained unstable: the existing Somali government in Mogadishu worked to exert its influence in the area, and the politicians of the region regularly changed their survival strategies in relation to handouts coming from Mogadishu. Ethiopia's actions also affected the region, for example, by temporarily withdrawing its forces from Hudur in 2013 and from parts of Hiiraan in October 2016, influencing the local politics in the buffer zone.[11]

In the Gedo Region, Ethiopia continued to assist the Somali National Front after its defeat of AIAI in 1995 and 1996, although the leadership failed to establish a functional administration. Ethiopia provides training and logistics to the Marehan clan militia and, in collaboration with Kenya, has involved troops directly in the area de-

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pending on the threat level. Although people inside Somalia closely monitor Ethiopia's Somali-language media and developments in the Ethiopian-Somali region, which has impacted developments in Somalia, Ethiopia's government – provided a monopoly over its foreign policy by its constitution – has prevented the Somali National Regional State from having a political role in developments in Somalia for the last decade. This has helped the Ethiopian government follow a logical policy concerning the internal affairs of its neighbor without the interference of the ethnic Somalis in its own regional state.

As noted above, the final element in these concentric circles of buffer zones, a buffer zone that covers the regions of Gedo, Middle Juba, and Lower Juba, has been established along the Kenya-Somalia border. Even though this is essentially a Kenyan buffer zone, reinforced through the regional framework of IGAD and AMISOM, Ethiopia continues to ensure that no element bent on undermining its security will establish a presence in the Jubaland administration, as well as the entire Gedo Region. The Gedo Region buffer zone serves both Ethiopia and Kenya.

Kenya's buffer zone in Somalia demonstrates the difficulties that this organizationally intense strategy imposes on a less capable implementing state. Kenya created a buffer zone following its intervention in 2012 and the subsequent establishment of the Jubaland administration. Kenya did not consider the establishment of the buffer zone a critical measure since Al Shabaab had not disrupted Kenya's peace and security before 2012. But bombings in Nairobi and elsewhere forced Kenya to revise its policy. Ethiopia's intervention in 2006 not only removed the ICU from Southern Somalia, but also the threat the extremist group posed to the region. When Al Shabaab's threat to Kenya's security grew, Ethiopi-

an forces were already on the ground and forced Al Shabaab to engage with Ethiopia. In this way, Kenya got a free ride until Al Shabaab changed its tactics. Now, whenever Al Shabaab sustained heavy losses from engagement with Ethiopia or its partners, it retaliated against Kenya. Kenya's defense and intelligence institutions began competing to address the challenge. The intelligence apparatus first attempted to establish Azania State in exile, based in Nairobi, and then import it to the adjacent areas of Jubaland, creating a buffer zone that could be managed through proxies. Ethiopia expressed reservations about Azania, suspecting an invisible role from the ONLF, with long-term implications for Ethiopia's security.

The engagement of the Kenyan defense minister in reconciling the ONLF and Ethiopia diminished Ethiopia's concerns about Azania. More important, the Kenyan Defense Forces spearheaded an invasion of Somalia, and chose a different faction as a proxy, rather than Azania. Contrary to Ethiopia's approach, the Kenyan policy on Somalia is spearheaded by Kenyan Somalis, bringing into the equation all sorts of baggage. Kenyan (Somali) officials are much involved in the decision-making, whereby Kenyan (Somali) elites can manipulate the indigenous clan balances, favoring the Ogaden clans to have a visible role in Kismayu, since most Kenyan Somalis are linked to the Ogaden clan. But Kismayu is not an all-Ogaden clan territory. Marehan and some Hawiye clans close to the Marehan (especially the Ayr) continue to be involved in the politics of Lower Juba, forcing Marehans to cooperate with Al Shabaab and attack Kenyan peacekeepers, and allowing infiltrations into Kenya. The Kenyan government's weak institutions and the high-level corruption within Kenya impact its buffer zones: constitutionally, Kenya's military involvement in Somalia does not undergo serious scrutiny, and military spending is not audited. Some

fear that Kenya's military engagement has opened opportunities for grand corruption schemes, since there is no inquiry and auditing on spending. This matter emerged as an issue in the recent contested election in the country.

Sustaining buffer zones demands extraordinary effort: it is expensive, tedious, and information-intensive, as the dizzying array of local situations, sub-subclan politics, and other ever-changing elements of Somali politics referenced here suggest. Meanwhile, Mogadishu-based Somali leaders consistently miscalculate political developments in Somalia. This approach inevitably destabilizes relatively peaceful areas, as the resources available in Mogadishu create a scramble for power that disrupts the stability in otherwise relatively peaceful areas. Ethiopia would instead prefer that Mogadishu provide a government with sufficient capacity to manage Somalia's territories, whereby a simple framework of cooperation to address the problems would spare Ethiopia much trouble. Somali leaders have repeatedly embarked on political adventures to appear as national leaders, but politics in Somalia is complex, with deep divisions at both the elite level and within the society based on clan and subclan divisions; it takes a lot of effort, and resources, to unite rival interests and govern all the territories effectively from the center. Time and again since 1991, Somali leaders have tried to forge a common objective on the basis of nationalism or using the Islamic Ummah, but the result has been turmoil that threatens all of its neighbors.

Given these realities, the work of any leader in Somalia is an uphill struggle. To be considered a Somali leader in the eyes of all Somalis, those who come to power are forced to try to exaggerate indigenous nationalism, pursue irredentist foreign policy, or put forward messages of religious universalism in a way that antagonizes customary interstate relations in the Horn of Af-

rica. Rather than taking risks and telling Somalis what the reality is on the basis of rules governing interstate relations, leaders in Somalia tend to concentrate on issues that have provoked regional actors to intervene in self-defense or create buffer zones to fend off threats emanating from both within Somalia's territories or from proxies outside its borders. Somali leaders are also engaged in other activities that do not help their country. Based on Stephen Stedman's analysis of spoiler problems in peace processes,[12] political scientist Ken Menkhaus has identified Somalia's leaders as spoilers who "have successfully undermined peace accords to perpetuate armed conflict" and "acted only to undercut local efforts to improve law and order and reduce criminality," while "still others support peace-building and the reduction of crime, but block efforts to revive an effective central government."[13]

Somalia's neighbors have also failed to recognize the challenges and all too often continue to pursue aggressive and contradictory policies toward Somalia. The events of 2006 vividly demonstrate this point: The ICU fought and defeated Somalia's U.S.-supported warlords, organized under the clever banner of "the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism," and took control of Mogadishu and the surrounding areas. That much is accepted as fact. But there are conflicting views of what then unfolded. Ethiopia, for example, had no problem with ICU's defeat of the warlords in 2006, since they had created obstacles to the relocation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) from Nairobi to Mogadishu. At the outset, Ethiopia took ICU's rise to power as an opportunity, although the ICU's policies would subsequently become unacceptable and unhelpful.[14]

With the international community's failure to appreciate the looming danger, Ethiopia approached the problems of Somalia

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using a two-pronged approach, engaging with the ICU to peacefully resolve the conflicts while continuing to assist the TFG's institutions to consolidate peace. Ethiopia held eight negotiations with the ICU in various capitals, including Nairobi, Khartoum, London, Djibouti, Sana'a, and Dubai. Ethiopia could live with an Islamic government in Somalia provided that ICU leaders accepted international law governing interstate relations and that the ICU did not allow elements undermining Ethiopia's national security to operate in areas it controlled. But the ICU interpreted this as weakness, declared jihad against Ethiopia, and subsequently boasted that its forces would be praying in Addis Ababa in a month. Bent on opening a second front against Ethiopia, Eritrea's leaders also manipulated ICU leaders, pitting one against the other and causing an internal split.

The underlying challenge for Ethiopia was the possible destruction of the buffer zone it had painstakingly constructed and the security threat the ICU posed to relatively peaceful areas in Somalia. But the war with the ICU was over in a matter of days. Given the numerous allegations that have been made about Ethiopia carrying out the United States' "war on terror," it is important to note that the United States in fact strongly advised Ethiopia not to get militarily involved. U.S. officials pointed toward the difficulties in Iraq and expressed concern about another such failure in Somalia. Certainly, after Ethiopia had won the war, the United States provided critical support in the United Nations Security Council to ensure that international condemnation would not arise. And the international community was muted, proffering neither support nor condemnation. The international media, on the other hand, claimed that U.S. Special Forces were embedded with Ethiopian forces on the ground, assisting with the operation – an allegation that was far from the truth. In fact, the United States was sur-

prised by the swift conclusion of the war and was interested in learning how Ethiopia succeeded.[15] The ICU's defeat helped Ethiopia to ensure its buffer zone's sustainability. This exemplifies how states can defy advice from bigger partners on matters of their own security and respond directly to threats undermining their established buffer zones.

Failed states are destabilizing. This fact ultimately forced Ethiopia to set up buffer zones in Somalia. An asymmetry of capabilities means that the failed state can nonetheless continue war through other means via actors used as proxies. The case of the Ethiopia-Somalia buffer zones clearly illustrates how strong states may see it as imperative to fend off threats through unilateral intervention, or to carefully marshal international support in the name of peacekeeping. So long as strong states carefully manage the ungoverned spaces, without getting involved in activities that attract a huge media outcry, the international community actually supports the strategy. The Kenya-Somalia buffer zones are similar in this regard, although the Kenyan military has not fully succeeded in warding off threats. Kenya has the benefit of material support from the international community, however, which will also usually turn a blind eye to state actions taken in self-defense, even if they undermine international norms, provided that they do not threaten the interests of great powers or spark a media uproar.

Moreover, outside countries may often, if surreptitiously, encourage and pay for such actions, through a peacekeeping mission or through an arrangement that is not publicly disclosed. That is why the creation of the buffer zone does not weaken formulated international norms and succeeds in contributing to the security of the intervening state. Moreover, it is evident that the unilateral creation of buffer zones – whether

to encourage the potentiality for creating a failed state, speed up the creation of new states, or create areas ready to be annexed for inclusion in a larger and more powerful state – might threaten stability in the longer term.

In light of this, how might the international community use buffer zones to further peace and stability, building local governance structures with a capacity for fighting terrorist groups and to facilitate the return of refugees to their homeland? Buffer zones create a framework for local administrations to establish governance structures on the basis of strong local political alliances and informal clan networks with institutions governing the behaviors of key actors in the area. This interweaving of informal clan networks and institutions can create a defense mechanism that can keep groups like Al Shabaab at bay, or fight them militarily when necessary. In Somalia, a national defense force cannot address the threat of Al Shabaab; government forces have no mechanism to protect soldiers from Al Shabaab's selective revenge actions.[16] But Puntland forces have recently found success against Al Shabaab and supporters of the Islamic State because tightly knit clan institutions protect Puntland soldiers and have given guarantees that those involved in killing Al Shabaab will be protected, although the administration's failure to pay salaries affects the work of the security forces.

The international community needs a paradigm shift from a highly centralized approach to one more closely aligned with Somalia's new federal structure, and it needs to concretely support Somalia's islands of peace.[17] Using the buffer zone to expand areas of peace and security may be critical, both in terms of fighting terrorism and providing a favorable situation for returning refugees to their places of origin, once a structured administrative capacity that will defend Somalis from terrorist groups is created locally. Moreover, administrations in buffer zones might lead to better representation and enforce better elite bargaining, making the outcomes of state-building sustainable over the long term. These suggestions are tailored for Somalia; other contexts demand equally information-intensive and locally engaged strategies designed to address their particular contexts. Those of us who live next to failed states have few other options. And we might have much to teach to others who are geographically better off and perhaps a bit less patient.

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ENDNOTES

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[2] Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[3] Herbert M. Howe, *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2001).

[4] This is a definition for *buffer zone* offered by the Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary.

[5] For a further discussion on areas of limited statehood, see Thomas Risse and Eric Stollenwerk, "Limited Statehood Does Not Equal Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (Winter 2018).

[6] William Reno, "Redefining Statehood in the Global Periphery," in *Government of the Shadows: Parapolitics and Criminal Sovereignty,* ed. Eric Wilson and Tim Lindsey (London: Pluto Press, 2009).

7 The Ethiopian constitution provides for an ethnic-based federal arrangement, guaranteeing Ethiopian Somalis the right to govern themselves.

8 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia responded to the embassy in Mogadishu on January 5, 2009, with options to accommodate the ASWJ to strengthen Ethiopia's buffer zone.

9 Apart from providing capacity-building support to strengthen ASWJ administrations, Ethiopia solicits support from other partners in terms of security, humanitarian assistance, and rehabilitation efforts.

10 The Digil and Merifle clans, commonly known as the Rahanweyn, are sedentary clans that live in the most fertile areas of the Bay, Bakool, and Lower Shebelle regions. These are the Somali clans most subjugated by the other aggressive pastoralist clans.

11 "Explaining Ethiopia's Curious Strategy in Somalia," Somalia Newsroom, April 1, 2013, https://somalianewsroom.com/2013/04/01/explaining-ethiopias-curious-strategy-in-somalia/.

12 Stephen John Stedman, "The Spoiler Problem in Peace Processes," *International Security* 22 (2) (1997): 5–53.

13 Ken Menkhaus, "Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building and the Politics of Coping," *International Security* 31 (3) (Winter 2006/2007): 74–106.

14 As the *chef de cabinet* of the foreign minister of Ethiopia, one of the authors had the opportunity to lead an Ethiopian delegation to the negotiations to open the first dialogue with the ICU representatives in Nairobi. The negotiations were conducted for two days without a breakthrough. Thinking that they had defeated warlords organized and supported by the U.S. government, ICU leaders were emboldened and threatened to take both political and military action against Ethiopia. Ultimately, faced with ICU threats and requests from the TFG leadership for support, Ethiopia was forced into a war of the ICU's making in December 2006.

15 Both authors traveled to the United States in April 2007 and met with the then-secretary of state and national security advisor of the Bush administration. The U.S. officials were open in their appreciation and wanted to learn what exactly happened, and they expressed the U.S. government's commitment to assisting Ethiopia going forward. See also Menkhaus, "Governance without Government in Somalia."

16 Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

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Syria & the CNN Effect: What Role Does the Media Play in Policy-Making?

Lyse Doucet

Abstract: Syria's devastating war unfolds during unprecedented flows of imagery on social media, testing in new ways the media's influence on decision-makers. Three decades ago, the concept of a "CNN Effect" was coined to explain what was seen as the power of real-time television reporting to drive responses to humanitarian crises. This essay explores the role traditional and new media played in U.S. policy-making during Syria's crisis, including two major poison gas attacks. President Obama stepped back from the targeted air strikes later launched by President Trump after grisly images emerged on social media. But Trump's limited action did not shift policy. Interviews with Obama's senior advisors underline that the media do not drive strategy, but they play a significant role. During the Syrian crisis, the media formed part of what officials describe as constant pressure from many actors to respond, which they say led to policy failures. Syria's conflict is a cautionary tale.

LYSE DOUCET is Chief International Correspondent for the BBC and a Senior Fellow of Massey College at the University of Toronto. She has been reporting on major conflicts around the world for more than thirty years. She began her career as a foreign correspondent with postings in Abidjan, Kabul, Islamabad, Tehran, Amman, and Jerusalem. She has covered major wars in the Middle East since 1994 and is a regular visitor to the region, including Syria. Her awards include an Emmy and a Peabody in 2014 for her team's reporting from Syria, an Order of the British Empire in the Queen's Honour in 2014, and the Columbia School of Journalism Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016.

The devastating conflict in Syria has again brought into sharp focus the complex relationship between the media and interventions in civil wars in response to grave humanitarian crises. Syria's destructive war, often called the greatest human disaster of the twenty-first century, unfolds at a time of unparalleled flows of imagery and information. It is testing in unprecedented ways the media's influence on decision-makers to drive them to take action to change the course of a bloody confrontation or ease immense human suffering.

One after another, year after year, veteran envoys and human rights defenders decry the failure of world powers to stop what they describe as the worst of abuses and impunity they've seen in lifetimes of working on major conflicts and humanitarian catastrophes. Journalists have also expressed their frustration and disbelief. "You would hope that by doing reports and putting them on TV and that talking about them that people would wake up, they would

see, they would feel, and maybe call for action, and the calls are being made, but the action isn't being taken," lamented NBC's Chief Foreign Correspondent Richard Engels. He spoke as a haunting image emerged of a stunned five-year-old Syrian child, Omran Daqneesh, sitting alone in an ambulance, covered in dust and blood, during some of the worst battles for the northern city of Aleppo in late 2016.[1] The photograph was widely reported, went viral on social media, and was invoked by world leaders including President Obama. But it also became a focus of intense scrutiny in a highly politicized news and information landscape. And it was one of only a handful of images that broke through what has been a nonstop, numbing flow of distressing imagery on social media emerging from Syria since protests calling for political change first erupted in March 2011.

Nearly three decades ago, the term *CNN Effect* was coined. It became snappy shorthand and an academic paradigm to explain how new, real-time reporting on U.S. television networks was driving Western responses, mainly by the military, to humanitarian crises around the world. Since then, dramatic changes in the media landscape, galvanized by technological and political change, created new concepts such as the "Al Jazeera Effect" and the "YouTube Effect."[2] Extensive scholarly research has concluded that this notion of a mighty media is a myth or hyperbole.[3] But it has also underscored that this does not mean the effect is nonexistent.

Both Presidents Donald Trump and Barack Obama faced images of major Syrian poison gas attacks in rebel-held areas that were filmed by local activists, posted on social media, and reported worldwide. Trump and Obama would seem to provide two cases to explore some of the theory and research around the concept of a CNN Effect. These two decision-makers – one who prides himself on watching a lot

of television, and another who says he deliberately does not – responded in different ways. But, in the end, it confirms that the CNN Effect, when it exists, is not decisive. President Trump's decision to launch targeted air strikes turned out to be a one-off: they did not shift overall policy on Syria nor did they significantly change the situation on the ground. But interviews with senior U.S. policy-makers – mainly from the Obama administration, which was in office for much of the Syrian crisis – underline that, while the media do not determine policy, they do play a key role. While Obama pulled back from launching air strikes in 2013, years of harrowing imagery emerging from the conflict kept Syria on the agenda. They formed part of what senior advisors described as constant pressure emanating from the media and amplified by an array of other actors to "do something." That, they maintain, led to some policy responses that Obama did not fully support and that, in the long run, failed. This included the covert program to arm and train what were regarded as moderate rebel forces to take on the Syrian military and its allies: Obama doubted it would succeed; his critics say there was never a coherent strategy.

Syria's war is arguably the first "social media war." Security risks and visa restrictions often kept many of the world's leading media, including most mainstream Western broadcasters, off the front lines. That led to a reliance on streams of information on social media provided mainly by activists. There was often valuable material, but it was hard to verify and, at times, turned out to be wrong or misleading. Battles over "truth" were also fueled by Western government funding of media operations for what it promoted as a moderate armed opposition. On the other side, Russian state propaganda pushed a narrative in support of President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Syria is also the most tangled geopolitical conflict of our time. The West, Arab states,

and Turkey have provided significant military support to an array of rebel fighters including hard-line Islamists. Russia and Iran-backed militias bolstered Syrian government forces with formidable firepower. There have been many agendas, no easy answers, and no consensus on a way out of the crisis. A spiral into appalling violence has left more than half of Syria's postwar population displaced, dead, or a refugee in the biggest human exodus in decades.

In what follows, I will illustrate the way the CNN Effect still has some purchase on policy. But this depends greatly on the wider strategic context, dominant thinking about how to respond to mass violence, and on decision-makers themselves. This essay will first briefly explore the impact of the media in the Trump and Obama administrations. Later sections will highlight some critical facets of today's news and information landscape, including observations from my own reporting from Syria at key moments of this war.

"I tell you that attack on children yesterday had a big impact on me – big impact."[4] That was how President Donald Trump described his reaction to what he had been "watching and seeing" on American cable news networks. A day earlier, distressing images began to emerge from the scene of a poison gas attack in the rebel-held Syrian village of Khan Sheikhoun. Media activists were posting the first ghastly images of stricken women and children on social media. Sixty-three hours later, Commander in Chief Donald Trump ordered an air strike, involving dozens of Tomahawk missiles, on Syria's Shayrat airfield. It marked the first time the United States had directly targeted a military asset of President Assad. Six years of disturbing images, including grisly scenes from another major chemical attack on the outskirts of Damascus in August 2013, had not pushed President Barack Obama to escalate the United States' military involvement in this way. Scholars have highlighted how decision-making on major issues "involves myriad factors, ranging from the configuration of the international system to the attributes of individual decision-makers with 'societal variables' [including the media] located somewhere in between."[5]

President Trump declared that he was launching military action "to end the slaughter and bloodshed in Syria." President Obama had earlier turned to diplomacy, brokered by Russia, to remove chemical weapons from a volatile country believed to have one of the world's largest arsenals of this deadly material. But both actions focused on this one significant threat. President Trump's team then reverted to the broad outlines of the Syria policy that emerged in the latter years of President Obama's second term: a focus on defeating the extremist Islamic State now regarded as a global threat; a move away from arming and training an increasingly marginalized moderate rebel force; and a recognition that, despite years of grinding war, President Assad wasn't about to stand down, or be toppled.

At first, the air strikes appeared as a dramatic shift. They were widely hailed across the U.S. political spectrum, aside from the President's far-right constituency, who denounced it as a betrayal of his "America First" policy. Even leading members of President Obama's team, who argued for air strikes in 2013, expressed support. So did some prominent American journalists as well as Syrian activists and Gulf Arab allies. All had been intensely critical of President Obama's reluctance to be drawn into direct military action or to provide more advanced weaponry as part of what was reported to be a $1 billion-a-year covert CIA program to arm and train mainstream rebels, which included some oversight of significant military support provided by Arab and Turkish allies.

"What Syria should teach you is that Trump is the President most vulnerable to the 'CNN effect' – because he watches so much cable news," wrote Daniel Drezner (Professor of International Politics at Tufts University) on Twitter. He reiterated his point in a second post: "Most empirical studies of the CNN Effect haven't found much evidence for it – but I guarantee you it explains Trump's actions in Syria."[6] Other reactions on social media pointed out that it should be called the "Fox Effect," in reference to the president's known viewing preferences. He was reported to have first seen the gruesome images on the Fox Television Network's morning news show "Fox and Friends."

Whatever the term, a leader in the White House now seemed to fit the decades-old notion of a CNN Effect: a president, driven by disturbing television images, orders military action in response to an atrocity. It broke, not only with his predecessor's approach, but also with his own. When President Obama contemplated military strikes in the summer of 2013, the then-business tycoon with political ambitions repeatedly posted on his Twitter: "Do not attack Syria." Now President Trump has announced that his "attitude toward Syria and Assad has changed very much." Only a week before, members of his fledgling administration made clear that trying to topple the Syrian President was not an American priority. Now there were statements that "the future of Assad is uncertain, clearly."[7]

More than any other branch of U.S. decision-making, the president's authority to deploy military force unilaterally in the national interest is seen to reflect, in part, the character of the incumbent. Aides to Hillary Clinton spoke of how, had she won the presidency, she would also have been more affected by media coverage on Syria than President Obama, who prided himself on resisting decision-making "based on emotion." She is also known to have argued for stronger U.S. military involvement when she was Secretary of State to help remove President Assad from power. A national security advisor who worked with both President Obama and President Bill Clinton reflected that the latter was also "much more reactive to press coverage, among other things."[8]

President Trump is at another extreme. Much has been written about his attention, verging on obsession, to how the media portray him. He makes no secret that he watches "plenty of television" and famously boasted when he entered the White House that he didn't need daily intelligence briefings. Anecdotal evidence points to how, after the Khan Sheikhoun poison gas attack, he "repeatedly brought up the photographs."[9] His son Eric spoke of how his sister Ivanka had also influenced her father's decision to take military action after seeing "this horrible stuff."[10] In what was being widely described as a chaotic White House, advisors ranging from neophytes to battle-hardened military generals, as well as right-wing populists, were all weighing in.

Extensive studies have highlighted how powerful images can only make a real difference in the choices of decision-makers if an avenue already exists for them to act. As strong as the impact of "seeing is believing" is, in the realm of politics and diplomacy, "believing is seeing" can be a more potent force. Journalist Marvin Kalb, who has long focused on the impact of the media, has observed: "Image in and of itself does not drive policy. . . . Image heightens existing factors."[11]

This was a president who wanted to respond, and be seen to do so. And he was presented with military options that "would be sufficient to send a signal – but not so large as to risk escalating the conflict."[12] Leading members of Trump's national security team also believed that Obama had eroded the power of U.S. deterrence by not responding with direct military action when

his own "red line" on the use of chemical weapons was crossed in 2013.[13] The United States said it was convinced by intelligence showing that "the Syrian regime conducted a chemical weapons attack, using the nerve agent sarin, against their own people." A UN investigation later reached the same conclusion. Syria and Russia still question the evidence, as does a group of British and American scholars and journalists critical of Western policy.[14]

Whatever President Trump's concern for the people of Syria, he also appeared driven to set himself apart from his predecessor's legacy. Accounts in the media said he also kept mentioning how President Obama looked "weak, just so, so weak," after the 2013 poison gas attack.[15] President Trump was also in search of success stories as he headed toward the one hundred-day marker of his embattled presidency. As security analyst Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer has pointed out in his writing on the CNN Effect and military intervention: "when a state intervenes, it is rarely disinterested."[16] From this perspective, Trump is seen as exploiting the images, rather than responding to them.

Research also shows that the media's greatest impact on policy is when they can help "determine a policy which is not determined."[17] President Trump's ideas on Syria were still inchoate. The only part that seemed clear was his emphasis on fighting extremist groups and working with Russia's President Vladimir Putin, a strongman whom he unfailingly held in high regard. While the air strikes were condemned by Russia as a "significant blow" to the relationship, their impact was short-lived.

Despite President Trump's assertion that he had changed his mind about President Assad and Syria, it became clear this was a one-off. Since April 2017, there have been repeated reports of other chemical attacks, albeit smaller in scale. In one instance, in June 2017, Washington sent a public warning of a "heavy price" if the April attack was repeated. An earlier statement by the White House Press Secretary that deadly barrel bombs, being dropped from Syrian warplanes with devastating effect, would not be tolerated went nowhere. Even more, the CIA's covert program was quietly canceled. It had become increasingly clear, even during Obama's last years, that it was failing in its ambition to arm and train an effective rebel force to fight against President Assad's military and allies. As communications scholar Babak Bahador, who studied the impact of the CNN Effect on responses to massacres in the Kosovo war, has observed: "unexpected and emotive images can rapidly open policy windows of opportunity."[18] But they can also close, just as quickly.

The air strikes on the Syrian airfield fit the pattern that has emerged from extensive empirical and analytical research into the CNN Effect. The term was coined during the 1990–1991 Gulf War when dramatic advances in technology made it possible for the United States' Cable News Network to broadcast live reports around the clock and around the world. Raw, real-time images and instant analysis flashed from front lines and briefing rooms. Suddenly, it seemed, there was a new and powerful pressure on policy-makers to respond. Heartrending images were seen to have influenced President George Bush's decision to set up a safe haven and a no-fly zone in 1991 to protect Iraqi Kurds. A year later, reports of starving Somalis played a part in persuading President Bush to send in U.S. forces. And shocking television footage of alleged war crimes in Bosnia and Kosovo were viewed as decisive factors in actions by Western militaries.

But this first "rough draft of history" was soon clarified. Journalist Nik Gowing's extensive interviews with decision-makers in the Bosnian war concluded that media pressure had not led to any major strategic shifts

by Western powers. But they did galvanize a series of more limited "tactical and cosmetic" steps. This included, for example, airlifting children out of a conflict zone or air strikes targeting artillery positions of Bosnian Serb nationalists.[19] A broader analysis of President Bush's 1991 decision to provide a safe zone for Kurds in northern Iraq by media studies scholar Piers Robinson also underscored that compelling coverage was not the only driver, and not likely the main one. U.S. concern that a flood of Iraqi Kurds into Turkey could be destabilizing for a NATO ally was also a critical consideration.[20]

Crucially, this perception of the media's emerging muscle had dovetailed with a shift in strategic thinking among Western powers. In the 1990s, this new liberal approach was known as "humanitarian intervention." Its critics viewed it as a pretext for military intervention in the name of preventing abuses while its proponents welcomed changes in the dominant discourse, which incorporated an emphasis on human rights and humanitarianism.[21] It fueled military missions in conflicts such as Northern Iraq, Somalia, and Kosovo.[22] The U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 was then launched under the banner of the "war on terror." But other concepts emerged; in Iraq and Afghanistan, they included "nation-building," which also involved a focus on elections.

Western leaders now emphasize that "those days are over." This is both a reflection of years of policy failures in the Middle East as well as a shifting world order, which has seen diminishing space for unilateral Western action. It bears noting, however, that unlike earlier civil wars in the 1990s that gave rise to the discussion of the CNN Effect, in subsequent crises including Syria, the United States was already involved militarily and was, therefore, a player in a war that was also a deepening humanitarian tragedy. The constant question in Syria

was over the scope and scale of military intervention.

During most of the Syrian crisis, President Obama was determined not to be drawn into a major military escalation in what he saw as another Middle East quagmire. Any pressure from the media was part of what he called, derisively, "the Washington Playbook."[23] He described it as "a playbook that comes out of the foreign policy establishment. And the playbook prescribes responses to different events and these responses tend to be militarized responses." For him, his response to the devastating poison gas attack in Damascus in 2013 marked the moment he dramatically broke with it.

It was a defining moment for Obama's Syria policy. His critics, including members of his own administration, saw it as a disastrous retreat when he did not reinforce, militarily, his "red line" on the use of chemical weapons. They argue that it cleared the way for Russia's major military intervention in September 2015 to bolster the flagging Syrian army and also damaged U.S. prestige in the region. But pressure on the Syria policy was not confined to this one dramatic moment. Obama's advisors speak of constant pressure throughout much of his presidency. "There was pressure on the president coming from various quarters," said Rob Malley, who served as Special Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and Gulf region. "The press, understandably, was depicting the suffering of victims of the regime, which Congress then echoed, as did a number of foreign countries and many, if not most, of his own cabinet."[24]

It was this kind of pressure on policy-making, emanating from real-time television coverage, that gave rise to the CNN Effect in the 1990s. Syria's crisis has unfolded during the proliferation of social media, which is widely picked up by mainstream media. Officials say it intensified this imme-

diacy. In the words of Ben Rhodes, Obama's Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications, it "brought some of the horrors of war closer to home than past wars."[25] Some senior advisors now say this unrelenting pressure did eventually lead Obama to pursue policies in support of Syrian rebels that he did not fully believe in and that, in the long run, failed.

Obama's address to the nation on August 31 shot around the world. To the surprise if not shock of some of his closest advisors and allies, he announced that he had decided to postpone any military action and first seek authorization from what he knew was a deeply skeptical Congress. In a speech that followed on September 10, the president invoked grisly images from the poison gas attack in the Ghouta suburb of Damascus, filmed by activists and broadcast by media worldwide, including U.S. television networks. "I'd ask every member of Congress and those of you watching at home tonight to view those videos of the attack, and then ask, what kind of world will we live in if the United States of America sees a dictator brazenly violate international law with poison gas and we choose to look the other way?"[26] But it wasn't television that alerted him; it was horrific imagery on social media that emerged within days of the attack. Rhodes recalled how "some footage made its way out of children suffering the effect of sarin gas … and that was on his mind."[27]

President Obama has often spoken of how – unlike President Trump – he didn't turn to television for his news and analysis. "I'm still not watching television, which is just a general rule that I've maintained for the last eight years," he told *The New Yorker*'s David Remnick in 2016. He argued that this "is part of how you stay focused on the task, as opposed to worrying about the noise."[28] But, like most decision-makers, Obama was acutely aware of the challenge posed by this incessant flow of infor-

mation. "If you were president fifty years ago, the tragedy in Syria might not even penetrate what the American people were thinking about on a day-to-day basis. Today, they're seeing vivid images of a child in the aftermath of a bombing."[29]

The president's aides say he was determined not to be swayed by what he saw as emotional reactions to media coverage. That resistance was said to be shared by some of his closest advisors, including his National Security Advisor Susan Rice. Others, including Secretary of State John Kerry, were described as "more sensitive and receptive" to negative press coverage.[30] "I certainly understand that the president has said he's not influenced by the media on Syria because the mainstream media has been almost uniformly critical of him," reflected Anne Patterson, former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.[31]

The president also disagreed with many key members of his own team. Senior U.S. officials, including both Secretaries of State Clinton and Kerry, had argued that targeted military interventions at specific junctures could have shifted the military and political balance, especially at junctures when President Assad's forces appeared to be at their weakest. That view was challenged by others. They assessed that whatever military action Washington and its allies would take, Russia and Iran were prepared to do even more and would set the United States on a "slippery slope." It was also becoming clear that, unlike Arab leaders forced from power during the unprecedented protests known as the "Arab Spring," President Assad was drawing strength from loyal supporters inside his country. He was determined to remain in power, whatever the cost.

There was also an acute recognition that the American public was weary and wary of war. Costly and questionable missions, particularly in Iraq, had drained support. In the month after the 2013 chemical at-

tack, most polls found clear majorities opposing U.S. missile strikes in Syria. A majority did not agree that the United States' vital interests were at stake. Gallup Polls noted that it was "among the lowest" figure of support "for any intervention Gallup has asked about in the last 20 years."[32]

But the figures stand in contrast with the polling after President Trump's air strikes in 2017. Pollsters speak of a "rally effect" when leaders take action. This was witnessed in survey results before and after President Bill Clinton launched air strikes in Serbia in 1999. The same effect was tracked before and after President Obama gave the go-ahead for U.S. participation in the NATO air campaign in Libya. But in Syria, polling shows the "bounce" for President Trump did not last long.[33]

Interviews with President Obama's advisors and prominent journalists with access to him underline that, as he weighed military options, he always asked: "how does this end?" The West had already seen the unpredictable consequences of their actions in bringing about regime change in Afghanistan, Iraq, and then Libya. President Obama took the decision in 2011 to call on President Assad to step down. Then, through the rest of his presidency, he deliberated over military and diplomatic options to achieve that on the battlefield and at the negotiating table. "The president struggled with Syria in a way I didn't see him struggle with any other issue," said Malley. The lessons of Iraq were said to be uppermost in his thinking. "The cost of not thinking through second-order consequences and the hubris of thinking that our superior military power automatically translated into superior political influence was very much on his mind," explained Malley.[34]

The results of President Trump's air strikes would only confirm his doubt that "a pinprick strike . . . would have been decisive," even in its limited objective.[35] The president's stance was backed by his top

military advisors. "So if we get more involved militarily in Syria, does that mean we should also get involved in Congo?" a senior officer at U.S. Central Command asked rhetorically.[36] Critics argued that Syria's deepening humanitarian disaster, including a massive refugee crisis, was being driven by the brutal force deployed by the Syrian military and its allies. They demanded a more forceful U.S. response. The hard-nosed assessment by many in the U.S. military was that, aside from the global threat posed by the Islamic State, others had far greater strategic interests in Syria. Russia was not only determined to protect its major airfield and naval port, but also its projection of military power, which boosted its role at the world's top tables. Iran, with its growing sway in neighboring Iraq and ties to Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, saw Syria as a crucial bridgehead. Assad's allies also resolved to prevent the West from engineering regime change in Damascus.

Senior officials, including Secretary Kerry, underscore that the president did initially back targeted air strikes in 2013. Many factors, including the media, are said to have played a part in that. This situation underlines the difficulty of disentangling the many inputs into decision-making. Often the media play an indirect role through their influence on politicians and the public, who increasingly rely on new social media platforms, rather than traditional media, for their news.[37] And Syria was often the leading foreign policy issue for U.S. allies, aid agencies, and human rights organizations.

"The facts themselves, with more than a thousand dead, were enough to justify action," said Philip Gordon, who served as the president's Special Assistant for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region at the time. But "pictures of innocents and children choking, broadcast throughout the United States, and all over the world, galvanized the feeling and created even more pressure to do something

about it."[38] Gordon provides insight into what, in the end, led the president to pull back from military action in 2013 and seek Congressional backing. "His legal advisor Kathy Ruemmler told him he had constitutional authority to act as Commander in Chief. But she also reminded him that during his election campaign his view was he should also get legislative backing." That seemed to matter to a former professor of constitutional law.

Secretary Kerry told me in an interview that the British Parliament's vote against military action in Syria, taken just the day before, also had a "profound impact."[39] Prime Minister David Cameron is said to have explained to President Obama in a telephone conversation that it came down to Iraq. In other words, a searing rebuke from politicians and the public over the way faulty intelligence was exaggerated to pave the way for the 2003 military invasion. But, in the end, Secretary Kerry concurred with the president's decision. He maintains that negotiations, brokered by Russia, to remove Syria's declared chemical weapons was an effective response, even if it is now clear that some stocks were left behind and reportedly used again.

Every senior policy-maker interviewed for this essay emphasized that, while the media did not determine policy throughout the Syrian conflict, they did play a decisive role. They kept the issue on policy-makers' desks. It's what media scholars refer to as "agenda setting" or an "accelerating effect."[40] As U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby put it: "it propelled the process of exploring options a bit faster." [41]

Others see that accelerating speed as consequential, especially in an age increasingly dominated by social media that is often picked up by more traditional media. "The precious moment between the event and the knowledge of the event during which time one can digest, reflect, and plan simply doesn't exist anymore," said Malley.[42]

It also robs policy-makers of the time needed to confirm what is often raw, unverified imagery. And, in Syria, social media was an instrument of information as well as a tool of propaganda, used by all sides.

Like other officials, Malley pointed to positive aspects of valid, real-time information, including greater transparency and accountability. Several advisors underlined that it was not an issue of blaming the media, but of understanding what they saw as a new environment confronting policy-makers. Anne Patterson noted: "The first thing people do at 5:00 a.m. is read the mainstream media because that's really what matters in Washington. By the time people get to work, they have to react to how our policy is reflected in the press."[43] The president's aides say more time was spent on Syria than any other foreign policy issue. "I can't tell you how many papers have been written on the legal implications of the responsibility to protect, does it apply to us, and under what circumstances it was relevant," Patterson recalled. "But it's all in the margins because the real issue came down to American military intervention."[44] Rhodes adds that, "in Syria, the president was under constant pressure to act. But he felt it was pressure without a full characterization of the risks involved in options like arming the rebels or establishing a no-fly zone."

That pressure, including repeated questions from Congress, foreign allies, officials, and journalists, meant officials felt they had to respond in some way. "It does drive you to need to be able to do something," admitted one of the president's senior advisors. One official cited the "fiasco of the training program" that "allowed the government to point to something and say 'we're training a moderate opposition.'" In 2012, leading members of Obama's team, including Secretary Clinton and CIA Director General David Petraeus, are known to have argued for more military support to

strengthen moderate rebels. Clinton later said the failure to build a strong rebel force "left a big vacuum, which the jihadists have now filled."[45] Obama had always expressed doubt that what he called "an opposition made up of former doctors, farmers, pharmacists, and so forth" could defeat "a well-armed state" supported by Russia and Iran-backed militias.[46] In Syria's tangled war, there are many reasons for the program's failure. But for some of Obama's advisors, it was a cautionary tale. Despite Obama's doubts, officials speaking off the record say he authorized the CIA's covert program to try to achieve a number of goals. These included helping the rebels to protect themselves and trying to curb the rise of more hard-line Islamist groups supported militarily by some Arab allies. In the long run, the program failed and was later canceled soon after Trump took office.

Other nonmilitary options were pursued, including largely futile UN-brokered negotiations between the warring sides. Secretary Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov wrangled over cease-fires and humanitarian pauses, anything to get desperately needed relief to millions of Syrians. But the president's decision not to enforce his "red line" in August 2013 had significant consequences. Kerry admitted that, without a credible threat of force, he had little leverage.[47] And furious Gulf Arab allies started funneling support to whichever rebel groups showed success on the battlefield, which strengthened hard-line Islamist groups the West did not want to support. Several officials used the same phrase to describe the U.S. military and political responses: it "ended up doing just enough to keep the war going but not enough to end it."[48]

It's a troubling assessment in a destructive war. Obama's critics say fault lies in the absence of a coherent strategy. "The media is loud and noisy, but what was needed was a clearly articulated strategy, not a reactive one," said *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius.[49] Obama's supporters say his strategy resided in trying to avoid the risk of large-scale direct military intervention.

The wide array of foreign and Syrian actors all have their own assessment of what it would take to end Syria's tragic war, and what lies behind the profound failures. Syria has paid a terrible price. It's not the focus of this essay to explore these failures in detail. But this essay will next examine aspects of media coverage including social media with its risks of misinformation, misunderstanding, and manipulation.

Scholars have, over the years, broken down the concept of a CNN Effect in an effort to better understand the fluid relationship between media, public opinion, and government policy. In Piers Robinson's Policy-Media Interaction Model, the impact of the media depends on three factors: whether there is a clear and firm policy for dealing with the crisis; if there is a consensus within the government; and the way the media frame the issue and if they take a side in the political debate. The first two have already been touched upon in this essay. The premise of the third is that, if a CNN Effect was to drive responses to humanitarian crises, the media had to frame it as a humanitarian issue. This key element was known by such phrases as "empathy framing."[50]

But recent research shows that was not how the media framed the issue in the summer of 2013. A study by the Pew Research Center showed that cable TV networks, ranging along the political spectrum from Fox News to CNN and MSNBC to Al Jazeera America, all devoted "the biggest chunk of Syria coverage to the debate over whether the U.S. should become militarily involved in the conflict." Stories with a humanitarian focus were highest on Al Jazeera America, but only amounted, in the Pew survey, to 6 percent of coverage. Other research confirms this finding.[51]

And when it came to taking sides, a detailed analysis by political scientist Walter Soderlund and colleagues of the range of commentary in three leading Western newspapers, including *The New York Times*, concluded that none of them "mounted a sustained campaign for any type of military intervention in the conflict but they all weighed the wisdom and feasibility of a variety of strategies to bring it to an end."[52] There was no consensus on what would work in what was seen as Syria's deepening quagmire.

This Washington focus, and the uncertainty over responses to a humanitarian crisis, may have been magnified by the reality that, throughout most of the Syrian crisis, there haven't been many, if any, American journalists on the ground. After early forays by Western and non-Western journalists into rebel strongholds, severe risks, including kidnappings and widely publicized executions by the Islamic State, kept them away. In Syrian government areas, visas were strictly controlled. American passport holders were largely banned for extended periods, including after the United States began targeted air strikes against IS forces. Other Western and non-Western media, including the BBC, do obtain visas. But most Western media were not allowed to stay for the kind of extended frontline reporting of earlier conflicts. "In Bosnia, we went there from the beginning and told the story of the war day in, day out," recalled CNN's Chief International Correspondent Christiane Amanpour, whose sustained coverage was widely watched. "It didn't change policy, but it made the world know what was going on and we could always hold leaders' feet to the fire with those pictures."[53]

Only one Syrian battle was cited by several U.S. officials as a case in which TV cameras on the front line made a difference: the Syrian Kurdish offensive in 2014 to seize the town of Kobani just inside the Turkish border from the Islamic State. That fight was soon bolstered by U.S. air strikes. "We ended up acting in Kobani, not because it was more important than any other, but in part because it raised more questions than anonymous villages no one was watching," said Philip Gordon.[54] Correspondents from U.S. TV networks and other media set up their cameras on the Turkish side of the border to report, day in and day out, on fighting they could see "just behind" them. "The Kurds came to Washington and asked for more money and equipment and I think the reporting played a pretty key role in that," said Anne Patterson.[55] But, as with other examples of a CNN Effect, there were strategic reasons, too. Kobani coincided with the U.S. military's search for local Syrian forces to fight the Islamic State. They already valued the role Kurdish fighters had played in Iraq.

More frontline coverage may have made a difference. But journalists would still have had to compete for attention and space on an increasingly crowded news and information landscape. Data tracking U.S. news coverage of Syria highlight that spikes only occurred when there was a strong U.S. domestic angle, such as U.S. air strikes in April 2017 or the Trump administration's travel ban in January 2017, which targeted Muslim-majority countries including Syria (See Figure 1). Unlike Afghanistan and Iraq, there was no major deployment of U.S. forces in Syria to amplify domestic interest although Special Forces have been on the ground since 2015 to assist Syrian rebel forces in the fight against the IS. It should be noted that other destructive conflicts received even less attention. Figure 2 tracks the very low incidence of reporting on South Sudan, a country described by a senior U.S. official as "a very dangerous place in which we're seeing atrocities all the time."[56]

The absence of sustained eyewitness and investigative reporting distorted coverage of Syria in a number of crucial and consequential ways. There has been some im-

Number of Mentions of Syria in the U.S. Media, 2013 – 2017
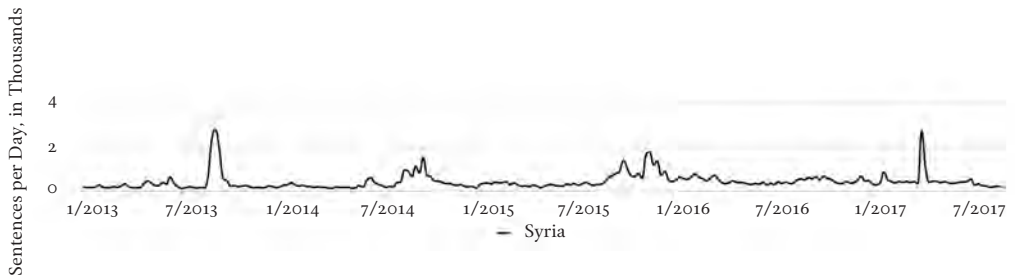
Source : Media Cloud, "Syria," query result for U.S. Top Online News from January 2013 – September 2017, https ://dashboard.mediacloud.org/#query/["Syria"]/[{"sets" :[9139487]}]/["2013-01-01"]/["2017-9-2"]/ [{"uid" :3,"name" :"Syria","color" :"e14c11"}], accessed September 3, 2017.

Figure 2
Percentage of Articles per Day Covering Syria and South Sudan in U.S. Media, 2015 – 2017
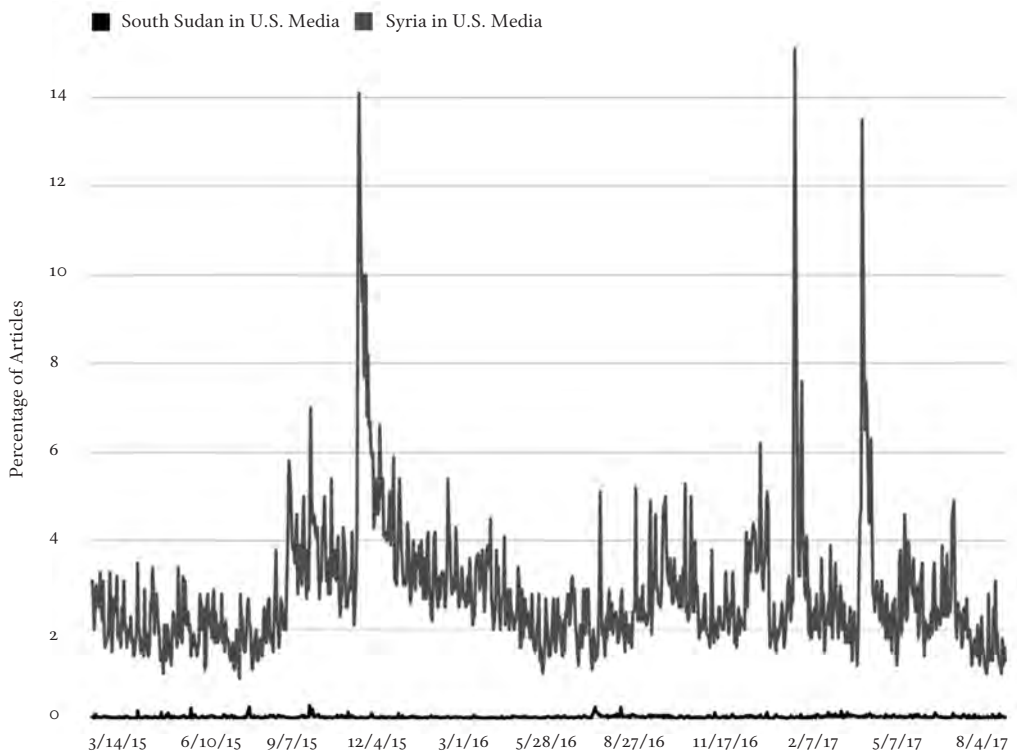
Source : Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone and Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Syria and South Sudan Coverage in U.S. Media : If You Think Syria is Neglected, Try South Sudan," accessed September 3, 2017.

pressive reporting and informed commentary across a range of media including social media sites. But activists' videos were often a main source of information from rebel strongholds. They often highlighted important issues including the horrific suffering in besieged areas. But they presented only part of a complex story. Media, including the BBC, spent considerable effort trying to check them. But they were often broadcast with a caution that they "could not be verified," or came from activists.

And media watchdogs such as the Global Forum for Media Development have raised the concern that "parallel to the military conflict there has been an intense media war being waged by different sides in the conflict."[57] There's been extensive reporting of the scope and scale of Russian state propaganda. On the other side, Western governments have provided significant funding to boost the profile of what was regarded as a "moderate armed opposition." This was also widely regarded as a means of intelligence-gathering. A report in Britain's *Guardian* newspaper, citing UK Ministry of Defence documents, detailed how contractors "effectively run a press office for opposition fighters" as part of "strategic communications."[58] Often, when I reported on the Western-backed Free Syrian Army, I would get a call from a British aide. Sometimes this exchange provided valuable clarification. Other times, it was to take issue with reports we were getting from other sources that moderate forces were losing ground on some front lines to more hardline Islamist fighters.

A ferocious battle was waged across a myriad of social media platforms over what is now labeled as "fake news." The arresting photograph of five-year-old Omran Daqneesh, sitting alone and bloodied on an orange plastic chair in an ambulance, is just one illustration. The image went viral as a poignant symbol of the human tragedy caused by the ferocious Russian and Syr-

ian bombing of the northern city of Aleppo. Secretary Kerry took a copy of the image into his negotiations with Foreign Minister Lavrov. But Russian, Chinese, and Syrian state media dismissed it as part of a Western "propaganda war." Critics accused the Syrian photographer of staging the scene. They also highlighted how he posed for a "selfie" with fighters from an armed group receiving U.S. funding, who beheaded a Syrian child earlier that year. That incident received relatively less attention in the Western press and led to accusations of double standards.[59]

Mainstream Western media, in the search for strong clear narratives in a chaotic war, often focused on the important story of Syria's major human tragedy, including the heartrending plight of children. Less clear, and less reported, was an understanding of a shifting array of rebels ranging from more moderate to Al Qaeda-linked groups. Without regular access to government areas, there was also less focus on the situation there, including the views of Syrians still supporting President Assad. In contrast, Russian media and Syrian war reporters who report regularly from government front lines highlighted an opposition they denounced as terrorists without a focus on the human cost of Russian and Syrian air strikes. Syria's story required attention to all sides of an increasingly complicated battlefield.

The battle of videos confronted policy-makers, too. Rhodes recalls it in this way: "we'd get these reports on social media but it would take us time to verify which ones were true. And then the Russians and the regime would have alternative narratives and put up their own images and information and we'd end up in a debate over the facts." Senior policy-makers, with access to the most advanced technology of our time, also struggled to make sense of a chaotic and complex war. Rhodes spoke of constant pressure in trying to "balance

responses based on visceral emotion triggered by horrific scenes versus efforts to understand who was fighting whom, who is a proxy for whom, things you can't learn just from those images."[60]

This essay has sought to explore the role media played in policy responses to the Syrian conflict. I have focused on the United States as a key actor in this crisis. But similar observations would apply to other Western powers, including Britain. It is clear that media, in their many forms, are a major influence, but not a major power. Observations from the Trump and Obama administrations underline that the media were a key part of the constant pressure on policy-makers from politicians, pundits, and the array of powerful actors involved in the Syrian crisis.

By the end of 2017, Syria's crushing war had reached a major turning point. President Assad's forces, backed by powerful allies and loyal supporters, had retaken large swathes of territory. Much of Syria now lies in ruin, its social fabric shredded. At the time of writing, Islamic State fighters are in retreat on the ground, but their brutal reach still threatens the region, and far beyond. Millions of Syrian refugees dispersed across the world fear they may never be able to go home. Few people had expected this conflict to cost so much and last so long. There are many reasons why. There are many to blame. But the failure to fully comprehend the dynamics of Syrian society, and to respond effectively, is a cautionary tale for journalists and policy-makers alike. It underlines again the pivotal role that journalism has to play in reporting and understanding the major crises of our time.

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In Defense of Ambition: Building Peaceful & Inclusive Societies in a World on Fire

Nancy E. Lindborg & J. Joseph Hewitt

Abstract: Fragility creates the conditions for violent intrastate conflict. Its consequences contribute to global disorder and mounting threats to U.S. national security. Significant impediments to effective action in fragile states persist today, even with many years of policy attention and an emerging consensus about its centrality in causing armed conflict. Policy-makers across the U.S. interagency have yet to arrive at a shared consciousness about the challenge of fragility, a shared understanding of the nature of the problem, and the types of capacities that can be comprehensively deployed to address it effectively. This essay describes recent advances in the development sector with regard to fragile states that suggest a way forward for stronger results. The steep challenges of tackling the complex causes of fragility tell us to be measured in our actions, but the experiences of recent progress and the urgency to alleviate human suffering tell us the time is right for greater ambition.

NANCY E. LINDBORG is President of the United States Institute of Peace. She is the author of *U.S. Leadership and the Challenge of State Fragility* (with William J. Burns and Michèle A. Flournoy, 2016) and has published articles in *The Hill* and *Foreign Policy*.

J. JOSEPH HEWITT is Vice President for Policy, Learning, and Strategy at the United States Institute of Peace. He is the author of *Peace and Conflict 2012* (with Jonathan Wilkenfeld and Ted R. Gurr, 2012) and has published articles in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and *Journal of Peace Research*.

In the wake of the two world wars, the world experienced significant progress: an increase in the number of democratic states, heartening advances toward eliminating global poverty, and significant decreases in violent conflict. But those positive trends have abruptly reversed in the last decade. Now, a new wave of civil wars, historic levels of migrants and refugees, global pandemics, and increases in violent extremism are fueling a sense of global disorder.

One critical cause for this increase in civil wars and violence can be traced to the challenges of fragile states. Several decades of scholarship and experience have identified the strong correlation between state fragility and higher levels of violent conflict, extreme poverty, violent extremism, and vulnerability to the predations of regional and international powers. In an increasingly interconnected world, fragility poses a greater threat to national and international security than ever before. It also presents pressing moral challenges. However, we have yet to effectively

organize either the collective resources of the U.S. government or international institutions to address this challenge.

Doing so within U.S. government institutions will require a significant shift in the way U.S. defense, diplomatic, and development capabilities operate, moving away from deeply stovepiped bureaucracies that work without a shared framework to what General Stanley McChrystal has called a "shared consciousness" that enables more cohesive joint action.[1] This means moving from vertical structures that inhibit effective action on complex, interrelated challenges to horizontal approaches that can more nimbly work to prevent the crises associated with states in which the state-society relationship has become dangerously frayed. As noted by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, in the search for effective means to prevent and end civil wars, "intelligent orchestration is the most important strategic variable, and . . . isolated policies, even well-executed ones, are unlikely to produce lasting results unless they are part of an overall coherent and consistent strategy."[2]

Promising approaches for addressing fragility have emerged from the development sector, which is grappling with how to prevent significant investments from being overturned by repeated shocks from conflict and disaster. Development is arguably undergoing a paradigm shift, moving from narrowly focused investments designed to spur economic growth and isolated, sector-based programming, to a more systemic approach of managing risk and building resilience to the effects of disaster and conflict. However, unless development, diplomatic, and defense approaches align more consistently to adopt a shared understanding of how to address fragility, development efforts alone will not be successful.

This essay explores the challenge of fragility and its prominent role in fueling "unpredictable instability" and increasing threats to regional, national, and international security; notes critical obstacles to applying these approaches more effectively; and identifies promising approaches to addressing fragility that are emerging from the development community. It concludes with both recommendations and a call to action that acknowledge that while anxiety about state fragility and its consequences may be rising, we have the opportunity to pursue new models for a positive future.

Informed by recent conflict research, many policy-makers, especially development policy-makers, agree that nearly all outbreaks of violent intrastate conflict can be traced back to the absence or breakdown of the social contract between people and their government, a condition that policy-makers often refer to as *fragility*. By enabling violent intrastate conflict and other transnational threats, the consequences of fragility pose serious challenges to U.S. national security.

The source of fragility can be an absence of state legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens, effectiveness, or both. Legitimacy is weakened wherever societal and governing institutions are not inclusive or responsive to all identity groups, including minority and marginalized populations. Legitimacy may also be undermined when weak mechanisms exist by which populations can hold governing institutions accountable for performance. Effectiveness is diminished when state-society interactions fail to produce adequate public goods to respond to citizens' needs for security, health, economic well-being, and social welfare. High levels of fragility – whether caused by illegitimacy, ineffectiveness, or both – create conditions for armed conflict and political instability.

While policy-makers use fragility as a helpful concept for framing a complicated set of problems relating to the state-society relationship, conflict researchers do not test hypotheses about the singular influence of fragility on the risks of conflict. Fragility

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refers to multiple dimensions of the state-society relationship, which would typically be represented in a regression-based model for the outbreak of violent conflict with separate independent variables. However, we think that conflict researchers have successfully made the case that fragility enables the conditions for violent conflict, based on the accumulated evidence from many conflict studies that examine the influence of different structural attributes of the state-society relationship on combined conflict risks.

As Charles Call and Susanna Campbell note, the literature from the past decade is replete with studies presenting robust evidence on the relationship between structural attributes of society and future armed conflict.[3] Many of those structural attributes are directly tied to elements of fragile state-society relationships, including variables that align with fragility in terms of low legitimacy, like the presence of factionalized zero-sum political competition, past ethnic conflict, ethnic discrimination, or weak justice systems. In other cases, there are variables that track with fragility in terms of poor effectiveness, such as high infant mortality rates, high youth unemployment rates, low GDP per capita growth rates, or high poverty rates.

But with protection from two oceans, peaceful neighbors, and overwhelming military capabilities, is the United States immune to fragility? In today's world, people, states, and economies are deeply interconnected, and threats quickly cross boundaries and easily spread over large geographic distances. Fragility has already tested U.S. national security and will continue to do so if left unaddressed.

Fragility is the common denominator running through some of the steepest security challenges the United States faces. A growing number of composite indices that directly measure state-society dysfunction have made it possible to track and rank key elements of fragility at the national and subnational levels.[4] The combined insights from these efforts have clarified the nexus between fragility and multiple challenges to U.S. national security as well as international security: the top seven states responsible for refugees and migrants rank at the top of nearly every index on fragility;[5] five of the top seven most fragile states also represent the top five sources of terrorist attacks;[6] the fifty most fragile states on earth are home to 43 percent of the world's most impoverished people, or roughly three billion people;[7] and a majority of the unprecedented sixty-five million people currently displaced by violent conflict around the globe are fleeing the forty ongoing internal conflicts worldwide.[8]

These conflicts have become increasingly internationalized, as fragile states in turmoil are more vulnerable to the predations of regional and international powers. Internationalized internal conflicts, like those unfolding in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Ukraine, were a rarity twenty-five years ago, accounting for approximately 3 percent of the world's conflicts. Today, internationalized internal conflicts account for one-third of all global conflicts, have contributed to the 500 percent increase in global battle deaths over the past ten years, and have pushed conflict deaths to a twenty-five-year high.[9] Civil war in Syria alone has taken a staggering toll on human life; estimates range from 250,000 to 470,000 lost in the conflict since 2011.

Further, these internationalized conflicts have become much harder to solve, providing proxy ground for external powers to manipulate fragile institutions, exercise their own interests, and flex their muscles, thereby raising concerns about the potential for renewed great-power conflicts playing out in highly vulnerable fragile states. These conflicts are lasting longer and costing more; various estimates of the costs of global conflict range from $9 to $13.6 trillion per year.[10]

Finally, these dynamics are playing out in a world that changes faster, is more complex, and is more inextricably connected than at any time in history. Fifteen billion devices were connected to the Internet in 2015; that is more than two devices for every person in the world and more than double the seven billion devices connected in 2011. However, this greater connectivity has cut both ways, and access is infamously being exploited by organizations like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State to spread radical and violent ideologies and recruit foreign fighters.

Fragile states often lack the capacity to extend the reach of government over the entirety of their respective territories. As a result, illicit transnational forces (such as terrorist and organized criminal groups) often hold territory in fragile states.[11] Transnational flows of illicit arms, drugs, and people are increasingly sophisticated and intertwined. And, driven out of their homes by violent conflict and poverty, historic levels of refugees and migrants have reached the shores of Europe, contributing to the political destabilization of key U.S. allies in Europe.

Faced with the threat of pandemic disease, fragile states often lack the institutional capacity to respond quickly and effectively to control the spread of new outbreaks.[12] With the experience of an outbreak of Ebola in three fragile states of West Africa in 2015 and the more recent outbreak of Zika in parts of Latin America, the specter of uncontrolled pandemics has never loomed larger. In the context of a highly interconnected world, fragility compounds the threat of the spread of pandemic disease to the United States.

In the previous issue of *Dædalus*, Stewart Patrick argues that the threats emanating from fragile or failed states typically lack the potential to pose a significant or existential threat to the United States – we do not disagree.[13] However, the many challenges emanating from fragile states do create circumstances that test U.S. national security interests. They impede the ability of the United States to attain foreign-policy objectives pertaining to the security of allies, the stability of key regions, and the promotion of a liberal international order that ultimately serves U.S. security interests. Whenever major civil wars or other types of crises erupt in fragile states, the deleterious results only steepen the ongoing uphill challenge for U.S. leadership to strengthen international security arrangements that serve to protect human rights and dignity for all global citizens.

In addition to the security challenges presented by fragility, the moral challenge also looms large. In late 2017, four of the most fragile states on any index – Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, and Northeastern Nigeria – were still teetering on the edge of famine, putting twenty million people at risk of severe malnutrition or starvation. From a moral standpoint, the human suffering engendered by dysfunctional interactions between governments and their people places a responsibility on the international community to respond. Whether fragility compounds the spread of a pandemic disease, contributes to famine, or enables the conditions for armed violence, the devastating toll on human life demands a remedy. In this respect, we wholeheartedly echo Patrick's highlighting of the moral dimension of addressing fragility. We would only emphasize that the moral challenge of fragility extends beyond the humanitarian response to crises. As these crises emerge from fragile settings not because of bad luck, but because of structural attributes, the moral imperative to address fragility extends to responding to its root causes, not just to the crises and human suffering that are often its consequence.

Given the significant threats and costs of fragility, why has effective policy for sup-

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porting country transitions out of fragility remained elusive? On paper, Republican and Democratic administrations alike have made "weak," "failed," and "fragile" states a priority in their national security strategies.[14] In the late 1990s, the Clinton administration recognized that states "unable to provide basic governance, safety and security, and opportunities for their populations" could potentially "[generate] internal conflict, mass migration, famine, epidemic diseases, environmental disasters, mass killings and aggression against neighboring states or ethnic groups – events which can threaten regional security and U.S. interests."[15] After 9/11, the Bush administration was primarily concerned about the exploitation of weak states by terrorists. And before the transfer of power to President Trump, the Obama administration's national security strategy stated: "fragile and conflict-affected states incubate and spawn infectious disease, illicit weapons and drug smugglers, and destabilizing refugee flows. Too often, failures in governance and endemic corruption hold back the potential of rising regions."[16] But the United States has not gotten measurably better at achieving its desired outcomes in these environments. In practice, fragility rarely becomes the focused area of effort, despite receiving significant attention in foundational strategic documents. Each situation is different, but there are some common reasons for this difficult reality.

A crisis-driven focus. First, administrations inevitably become hostage to the latest terrible crisis and, by necessity, focus energy and resources on responding to rather than preventing crisis. The cost of this approach has become increasingly untenable, with an ever greater reliance on reactive tools, including military action, deployment of peacekeeping missions, and increasingly higher levels of humanitarian assistance. The result is a persistent focus on fragile states, but only after crisis hits, when action is more urgent and expensive, options are more limited, and problems are harder to solve. For example, the 2014 Ebola outbreak quickly spread from West Africa to the United States and resulted in Congress passing a significant package of postcrisis assistance intended to build greater, longer-term global health security in the region.[17] These are, unfortunately, the kind of investments that rarely occur until after an attention-grabbing threat has landed.

Bureaucratic impediments. Second, the vertical structures of government bureaucracies remain a significant impediment. The U.S. government is organized to divide security, development, and political action, each with its own frameworks, theories of change, and time horizons, precluding more effective joint approaches. A confusing web of authorities and areas of responsibility serve to ignite turf battles and create incentives for competition rather than collaboration.

In addition, agencies are geographically organized in inconsistent ways, making it harder to have a shared analysis. The Department of Defense (DOD) is organized regionally, the Department of State is organized to operate via government-to-government interaction, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has a hybrid approach, with both state-based and regional operations. Those differences, coupled with the different capabilities that each bring to bear in fragile environments, can lead the three D's (diplomacy, development, and defense) to analyze fragile contexts within different frameworks. The results are often cast in terms of the analyzing agency's set of capabilities, which can undermine the potential for coordinated action.

Efforts are further hampered by congressional constraints that impose budget inflexibility through earmarks and competitive congressional committee juris-

dictions. For example, in 2010, the State Department, DOD, and USAID brought a carefully crafted joint action plan for Iraq to Congress that required presentation to two different appropriations committees. The Armed Services Committee fully funded the DOD plan, while the State Department and USAID were allotted only a fraction of the necessary funding by their committee, invalidating the core assumptions and effectiveness of the plan.[18]

Lack of a shared consciousness. The most important challenge, however, is the absence of a "shared consciousness," as termed by General Stanley McChrystal, among executive branch agencies about exactly why, what, how, and when to engage collectively in fragile states. The result is that each branch essentially operates with blinders on, limiting its ability to see the larger ecosystem of the challenge.

A recent study by Stanford University, Chatham House, and the United States Institute of Peace underlined this challenge in a retrospective look at coalition efforts in Afghanistan over the past decade.[19] The study found that there were essentially three separate, simultaneous lines of effort during this period: intelligence efforts, which sought information on Al Qaeda; military units, which fought the Taliban; and development actors that helped the Afghan state and society to rebuild. However, the methods employed by the intelligence and military actors served to exacerbate corruption and undermine the trust of the people in their state, undercutting the significant investments into rebuilding the state that were meant to strengthen the confidence of the Afghan people in the first place.

This example is a stark illustration of how each effort was pursued with a different definition of the problem, with differing timelines and frameworks for actions and fundamentally different goals. Typically, the development community looks at longer-term change, while defense and diplomatic efforts address more immediate security and political problems. However, without more closely aligned goals, progress on the issues of fragility will remain limited, and, too frequently, short-term gains will result in longer-term crises.

Meaningful progress will require a concerted effort to transform the business model of government, making it more proactive, adaptive, and integrated. A new approach requires a shared consciousness among the U.S. government interagency about how best to deploy the tools of U.S. foreign policy, and the horizontal effectiveness to work with one another: diplomacy and security must be achieved locally; development and security are political concerns; and diplomacy and development cannot be separated from security and stability.

This type of cohesive framework for putting states back together after a major conflict was articulated in the Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction's 2003 report, *Play to Win*.[20] The Commission stated that the priority areas requiring substantive local, U.S., and international community effort were security, justice and reconciliation, economic and social well-being, and governance and participation, and the report enumerated specific goals and tasks for short-, medium-, and long-term transition. The Commission also cautioned that a successful approach required mutually reinforcing and coherent action across all four pillars of engagement and that success would be jeopardized if security, justice, economic, or governance issues were addressed in isolation from one another.

The Commission drew heavily upon the key lessons learned during the Balkans conflict and its aftermath. Unfortunately, by the time of its release in 2003, attention had already shifted to new imperatives imposed by the 9/11 attacks, underscoring the perennial problem of lessons lost as administrations and priorities change.

In the very recent past, three important changes have emerged within the development sector that demonstrate the potential for overcoming some of the obstacles described above. These changes signal a paradigm shift in strategy away from more traditional humanitarian and development approaches to a more integrated approach for working in fragile states. Traditional development efforts have long focused on investing in productive economic growth and advancing key objectives in health, agriculture, or education with a steady determination to steer clear of politics.

This approach was mirrored in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) announced by the UN in 2000. The MDGs comprised a fifteen-year plan for realizing eight global goals to end extreme poverty, including realizing universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal and child health, and developing a global partnership for development. Despite these ambitious objectives, the MDGs conspicuously avoided any of the challenges posed by conflict, inequity, or lack of human rights and justice. At their conclusion in 2015, poverty was increasingly concentrated in the most fragile countries.

This result did not come as a surprise to many. As early as the late 1990s, USAID sought to address the need to understand the political dynamics of development and instituted a pioneering initiative to include democracy promotion and, later, conflict analysis as part of its development agenda. USAID also released its *Fragile States Strategy* in early 2005.

Then, in 2011, the World Bank released its landmark *World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development*, calling for a different approach to help conflict-affected states emerge from cycles of conflict by investing in an integrated set of activities emphasizing citizen security, access to justice, and job creation. The report proposed an evidence-based framework that emphasized institutional legitimacy as fundamental to stability. More recent reports in 2016 and 2017 on states of fragility from the International Institute for Economics and Peace and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have advanced this work to develop further evidence for frameworks that address the challenge of fragility.[21] Finally, both the UN and World Bank have recently adopted conflict prevention as core priorities, a commitment highlighted by the release in October 2017 of *Pathways to Peace* – an unprecedented joint report that presents a comprehensive overview of global evidence pertaining to conflict prevention.[22]

These reports were key in articulating the evidence base and developing the frameworks for addressing fragility. However, in the U.S. government, real change has remained hampered by chronic underfunding and a lack of full acceptance by many humanitarian and development professionals, especially those skittish of becoming too engaged with "politics." However, three key developments have helped catalyze an accelerated shift from more traditional relief and development approaches to a greater focus on fragility.

Fragile states self-identify for the first time. First, in 2011, the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding announced the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) held in Busan, South Korea, the quadrennial gathering of international development actors to forge key agreements and chart global development progress. The New Deal – based on an agreement between self-identified fragile-state governments (the g7+), international donors, and civil society organizations and designed explicitly to create more inclusive, accountable systems of governance – called for new ways to invest financially and politically in fragile states.[23]

The New Deal's five peace-building and state-building goals build on a growing collective wisdom on the most effective ways to help fragile countries move toward greater peace: foster inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution; establish and strengthen people's security; address injustices and increase people's access to justice; generate employment and improve livelihoods; and manage revenue and build capacity for accountable and fair service delivery.[24]

Though the New Deal was not officially incorporated into the main platform of HLF-4, it was included as one of eight streams of activity, representing a significant shift in the mainstream development world. Unfortunately, support and engagement of the New Deal among G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) has been limited to development agencies. To realize its full transformative potential, support for the New Deal will have to be expanded in both donor governments and fragile states to include security, political, and development departments and be championed by civil society with more extensive community engagement.[25] The potential of the New Deal is further limited by the inability of most g7+ countries thus far to demonstrate proof of concept; instead, many member states have continued to descend into further conflict. However, it retains promise as a model for the kind of compact that could create greater coherence and effectiveness in providing a carrot-and-stick approach to those states trapped in fragility and conflict.

Sustainable development goals prioritize inclusivity and accountability. Second, as the MDGs approached their conclusion in 2015, UN member states began negotiating the Global Goals for the next fifteen years. The MDGs' track record demonstrated that the elimination of extreme poverty could not advance without tackling the messy dy-

namics of exclusion, conflict, and fragility, thus opening the door for change.

Despite initial opposition from member states reluctant to introduce politics into the development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 recognize that development investments cannot be sustained unless states and societies are inclusive, accountable, and just. Significantly, SDG Goal 16 seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. The g7+ countries were among those most active in advocating for this goal. In this way, the SDGs represent a deep shift in the collective mindset of development practitioners and has already ignited a new approach.

Refugee crises fuel rethinking of humanitarian architecture. Third, just as the Global Goals were adopted, the refugee and migrant crisis of 2015 began breaking on the shores of Europe. The protracted conflicts of Africa and Afghanistan were suddenly overlaid with new wars in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, and a renewed conflict in Iraq. As both refugees and migrants overflowed beyond the saturated frontline states, they sought refuge and a better life in Europe. As Sarah Kenyon Lischer has detailed, the global humanitarian system strained to address these multiple crises simultaneously, revealing cracks in the long-standing system of safety nets and necessarily prompting a rethinking of the business model of humanitarian assistance.[26]

In May 2015, the first-ever Global Humanitarian Summit was held in Turkey, where more than nine thousand humanitarian, development, and political participants and fifty-five heads of state from 173 countries convened to seek solutions to the human suffering created by acute violent conflict and historic displacement. Key agreements focused on breaking down the stovepipes

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between humanitarian and development activities, with a greater emphasis on understanding and addressing the drivers of violent conflict. As a result, the World Bank is opening new windows of concessionary funding for states like Jordan and Lebanon to better address the strain from the massive onslaught of refugees and to forestall them from collapsing into crises as well. The World Bank's International Development Association's IDA18 is the largest replenishment of IDA resources by donors in the organization's fifty-six-year history, and has a bold, new focus on increasing attention and investment in fragile states, acknowledging the core development challenge they represent.

The promising developments described above have helped codify the international community's collective wisdom both on what to do and, increasingly, on how to prevent fragility or mitigate state failure. At least five important principles have emerged for guiding policy and programs in fragile states: 1) invest in sustainable security that entitles civilians to justice; 2) support legitimate governments, characterized by inclusive politics, accountable institutions, and reconciliation; 3) create conditions for inclusive, equitable economic growth; 4) enable locally led change by training and equipping local partners and investing in country systems; and 5) sustain efforts over time, since change can take a generation or more to reveal itself. The way forward for supporting fragile state transitions to resilience depends on putting these principles into practice.

Many promising initiatives for addressing fragility were instituted in the Obama administration, both within USAID and across the interagency. For example, the U.S. government established and provided active support for values-based institutions that continue to provide normative support for more resilient democracies, in-

cluding the Community of Democracies, Open Government Partnership, Inter-American Democratic Charter, and SDG Goal 16. And within the U.S. government, many efforts have focused on breaking down internal stovepipes and linking early warning with early action, such as the Atrocities Prevention Board and a new Center for Resilience within USAID.

The State Department has sought to recognize the role of the private sector, faith leaders, and civil society in a world that is no longer simply the domain of diplomats. The National Security Council sought to establish a regular series of deputies' meetings to take up the issue of those fragile countries that warrant increased focus and attention. The Obama administration also negotiated critical new presidential directives to create greater interagency coherence, including Presidential Policy Directive 6 on Global Development and Presidential Policy Directive 23 on U.S. Security Sector Assistance Policy. In the first year of the Trump administration – with its national security strategy still forthcoming – it remains too early to assess how the current administration will put principles for fragile state engagement into practice.

In 2016, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Center for New American Security, and the United States Institute of Peace convened a bipartisan study group composed of former U.S. government officials and private-sector and NGO leaders specifically to capture key lessons and make recommendations to the next administration.

These recommendations offer a policy framework that takes the lessons of the last three administrations and builds on the collective wisdom of what to do based on a "four S approach": strategic, selective, systemic, and sustained. Specific recommendations are organized into three compacts: one domestic, both within the administration and within Congress; one

within the international community; and one within fragile states.

Most important, that study acknowledges that the United States cannot tackle fragility everywhere, but can apply strategic and selective criteria to determine both priority areas for action, where it is most likely to have a positive impact, as well as specific efforts for enabling more systemic action that uses all the capabilities of the U.S. government over a sustained period. Colombia is an example of how this approach can result in success: Plan Colombia combined security, diplomatic, and development investments over a sustained period spanning three administrations. This approach helped transform a failed narcostate that threatened U.S. security into a partner with a rising economy and a new peace agreement ending fifty years of conflict.

Fragility creates the conditions for violent intrastate conflict. The consequences contribute to global disorder and mounting threats to U.S. national security. This essay has described the significant impediments to effective action in fragile states, even with emerging consensus about its centrality in causing armed conflict and many years of policy attention. Although we appreciate the scope of the challenges described here, we also think that recent advances in the development sector with regard to fragile states suggest a way forward for stronger results.

A bold, aspirational vision for a future world order and a healthy dose of realism are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are mutually reinforcing. We can be realistic about America's ability and will to help shape that world order without relinquishing our commitment to peace, stability, human rights, and effective governance based on the rule of law. We can also be realistic about the ability and will of fragile states to overcome profound obstacles to economic growth and inclusive governance

without declaring such transformations impossible.

The last seventy years have brought the world unparalleled peace and security. But there are critical challenges to address in the institutions that have developed over time, both within the United States and internationally. Our challenge is to reform these institutions to more effectively meet the challenge of fragility rather than yield to the temptation to jettison their fundamental structures in search of illusory simple solutions. The experiences of recent progress in tackling the challenges of fragile states coupled with our appreciation of the steep problems ahead tell us to be both ambitious and measured in our actions as we seek to lead a community of nations into the uncertain future.

While existing institutional architecture may be poorly positioned to respond to today's complexity without significant reform, the international community has a history of delivering on ambition. Nearly seventy years ago, from the ashes of conflict, the world united to establish the Bretton Woods institutions: the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. The United States and the international community have long proven their ability to do hard things.

In that spirit, we close with a call to remain seized by the challenge to discover new ways to strengthen our understanding of and to compile evidence about fragile states. For example, more comprehensive evidence about the cost-effectiveness of long-term peace-building investments remains elusive. The policy case for expanded engagement in fragile states for the purpose of long-term conflict prevention would be strengthened considerably with compelling evidence about the relatively modest costs of prevention versus the immense costs of crisis response. The debate is not about whether peace-building investments cost less than humanitarian

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responses to crisis. Of course they do. The case that must be made is more complicated than that and depends on combining evidence about the results of foreign assistance with informed speculation about a counterfactual. For any fragile state that has received significant foreign assistance to address the sources of fragility, what evidence exists that those investments actually reduced the likelihood of a future outbreak of major armed conflict? Second, what would have been the estimated costs of the international humanitarian or military response to such an outbreak? To advance more convincing arguments about the cost-effectiveness of more coherent policies and programs that address fragility, we urge researchers to innovate and build evidence around these claims.

A recent survey of more than three hundred impact evaluations of programs designed to address state-society relations found significant gaps in the evidence base on the effectiveness of such programs.[27] For example, rigorous evidence from program interventions tend to be concentrated in a small number of countries. Evaluations of programs designed to strengthen the transparency, accountability, or inclusiveness of political institutions are particularly rare. The study's authors found that in the countries with the largest populations facing the steepest challenges of governance, very little or no evidence exists about the effectiveness of development interventions.

We argued earlier that we have two decades of evidence that fragility enables violent conflict and that the presence of citizen security, inclusive justice, and economies increase stability and peace. However, policymakers across the U.S. interagency have yet to arrive at a shared consciousness about the challenge of fragility, a shared understanding of the nature of the problem, and the types of capacities that can be comprehensively deployed to address it effectively. That remains a steep ambition, but one that can be supported and accelerated with the development of better evidence about what works in fragile contexts. With an ever-improving understanding of how diplomatic, development, and defense actors can combine to tackle fragility, that ambition can be realized.

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The International Regime for Treating Civil War, 1988 – 2017

Richard Gowan & Stephen John Stedman

Abstract : The post – Cold War international order has promoted a "standard treatment" for civil wars involving the use of mediation to end conflicts and the deployment of peacekeeping forces to implement the resulting settlements. The United Nations has played a leading role in applying this standard treatment, which enjoys broad international support. By contrast, Western efforts to promote more robust humanitarian intervention as a standard response to civil wars remains controversial. While effective in relatively permissive postconflict environments, international mediation and peacekeeping efforts have proved insufficient to resolve harder cases of civil war, such as those in South Sudan and Syria. The UN has struggled to make the standard treatment work where governments refuse to cooperate or low-level violence is endemic. Growing major-power tensions could now undermine the post – Cold War regime for the treatment of civil wars, which, for all its faults, has made a significant contribution to international order.

RICHARD GOWAN is a Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations and teaches conflict resolution at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

STEPHEN JOHN STEDMAN is a Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and Deputy Director of the Center on Democracy, Development and Rule of Law at Stanford University.

*(*See endnotes for complete contributor biographies.)*

The current international order is highly interventionist in civil wars. But this does not make the current order unique. What differentiates it from past orders is that these interventions are motivated by a belief that political agreement is a more appropriate end to civil wars than military victory. Since the late 1980s, civil wars have become a laboratory for experimentation in war termination, conflict resolution, and protection of noncombatants. Major powers, multilateral institutions, and, above all, the United Nations have acted on the assumption that civil wars are amenable to political, social, and military engineering, resulting in an international order that resolutely rejects giving war a chance.

These interventions fall into two distinct, though sometimes combined, treatments. The first is mediation and the use of peacekeepers to implement peace agreements. This approach has become so frequent and pervasive that it is uncontroversial in national capitals and in intergovernmental forums. The sec-

ond is the use of military force to protect civilians caught in war. This more radical form of intervention remains controversial and no consensus has emerged over when, where, and how it should be applied, or whether it should be applied at all.

The ascendancy of mediation as a frequent, almost automatic international response to civil wars over the last thirty years, as well as the development of institutions and technical capacity in peacemaking and peace-building, suggests that a new international regime for treating civil wars took hold in the 1990s.[1] The rise in mediation in intrastate conflicts led to a further expectation: if parties reached a political agreement to end their war, then they could expect the deployment of peacekeepers to assist and oversee the implementation of the agreement. These two norms – mediation as an expected and preferred international response to civil war and the use of peacekeepers to implement any agreement reached through mediation – form what we call the *standard treatment* for civil war.

While this regime for treating civil wars emerged and developed, more robust humanitarian intervention in civil conflicts also became frequent. But since there has been little consensus among governments over the appropriateness or utility of that approach, it has been unpredictable and deeply unsettling for international relations. Over the last decade, the infusion of humanitarian goals, especially the protection of civilians, into peacekeeping has eroded overall government commitment to and support for mediation and peacekeeping as the standard treatment of civil wars.

It is difficult to tell a coherent story about the emergence of this international regime. The sheer amount of experimentation in strategies, cases, and goals of intervention in civil war management since the early 1990s seems to be a tale of "one damn thing after another," as crises and peace processes jostle for attention.[2] Nonetheless, four

broad themes have shaped this story: 1) A belief in the efficacy of mediation in ending intrastate conflicts; 2) investments in multinational peacekeeping operations to secure the resulting deals; 3) an overarching focus on the humanitarian obligations to minimize civilian fatalities and suffering in war zones; and 4) ongoing controversy about the limits and principles of humanitarian intervention.

As Bruce Jones and Stephen John Stedman have noted, different international orders treat civil wars differently.[3] During the Cold War, the United States, former European colonial powers, and the Soviet Union (and sometimes Cuba and China) backed governments or rebels because of their perceived ideological closeness to the superpowers. Civil wars were assumed to be zero-sum competitions for power, and for the superpower patrons, the goal was to ensure that their clients would win or, at the very least, not lose. At the same time, the superpowers did want to ensure that any escalation of war stopped short of bringing them into direct military confrontation.[4]

Several implications followed from this treatment. Wars were protracted as patrons tried to make sure that their clients would not lose.[5] UN involvement in civil wars was constrained by the Security Council and via the veto powers of two permanent members: the United States and the Soviet Union. Humanitarian relief was often stymied as the great powers would seldom coalesce to demand access for aid delivery to vulnerable populations. Reflecting these factors, civil wars during the Cold War were deadlier than civil wars have been since.[6]

These Cold War conditions directly influenced how scholars viewed the possibility of mediation and negotiation in civil war. Two of the leading scholarly texts on war termination at that time, Fred Iklé's *Every War Must End* (1971) and Paul Pillar's *Negotiating Peace* (1983), focused entirely on

interstate war and only made single references to the inapplicability of their work to civil wars, which they described as non-negotiable. One of the most famous critical books of the United States in Vietnam, Leslie Gelb and Richard Betts's *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked* (1979), described American policy in Vietnam as delusional because it assumed that civil wars could be negotiated. When one of us started our doctoral thesis on mediation in civil wars in 1986, there was only one book by an American scholar that explored the possibility for mediation to succeed in intrastate conflicts: I. William Zartman's *Ripe for Resolution* (1985).

As the Cold War began to wind down in the late 1980s, policy-makers in Washington and Moscow began to view long-standing civil wars in Latin America, Africa, and Asia as a drain on resources and looked to diplomacy and mediation as a means of ending them. In Central America, regional diplomacy, with UN assistance and U.S. support, brought Nicaragua's decade-long civil war to a close in 1989. In turn, the UN began mediating El Salvador's civil war in 1990 and produced a successful agreement in 1993. The UN's historical responsibility for decolonizing Southwest Africa provided it a lead role in mediating and implementing an agreement that ended Namibia's civil war and secured its independence from South Africa in 1989. The peace process that ended Namibia's war was embedded in a larger regional and geopolitical process that wound down external intervention in Angola's long-running civil war, and delivered a mediated agreement there in 1991. The beginning of the Paris Peace talks in 1989 eventually produced a mediated settlement in 1991 to end Cambodia's civil war.

These early successes transformed international attitudes toward conflict resolution. Mediation in civil war became much more common, the deployment of peacekeepers in civil wars increased dramatically, and humanitarian intervention in civil wars became more frequent and multilateral.

Figure 1 presents mediation attempts in civil wars from 1945 to 2004, and illustrates this sea change in how international actors treat civil war. Many of these mediations concerned the same civil war; some mediations lasted years, others weeks; and almost half of the attempts were by governments, but many were carried out by the United Nations and regional organizations.

Table 1 shows the numbers and percentage of civil wars with mediation from 1945 to 1987 and from 1988 to 2015. From 1945 to 1987, mediation was attempted in seventeen of seventy civil wars, or about 24 percent. Of those mediation attempts, about 49 percent were carried out by foreign governments, with the United Nations being the second-most frequent mediator at 19 percent. Regional organizations carried out about 18 percent of the mediation attempts, with the Organization of American States being particularly active. NGOs attempted 10 percent of mediation attempts.

A quick examination of some of the cases of mediation during that period suggests that when mediation happened at all, it was largely initiated by neighboring states. Many of these efforts consisted of brief talks, some less than a week, suggesting a lack of interest, commitment, or attention to negotiation on the part of the warring parties and the mediators themselves. Many of the NGOs involved in mediation were Western church-based groups, with relatively little specialized mediation expertise.

Turning to the period of 1988 to 2015, we see fundamental shifts in how many civil wars receive mediation, but also in what it means to mediate a civil war. First, civil wars became the focus of multiple, serial mediation attempts. During the Cold War, failures of mediation were not usually followed quickly by more mediation. This changed after 1988, suggesting that, if nothing else,

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Figure 1
Civil War Mediation Initiated from 1945 – 2004
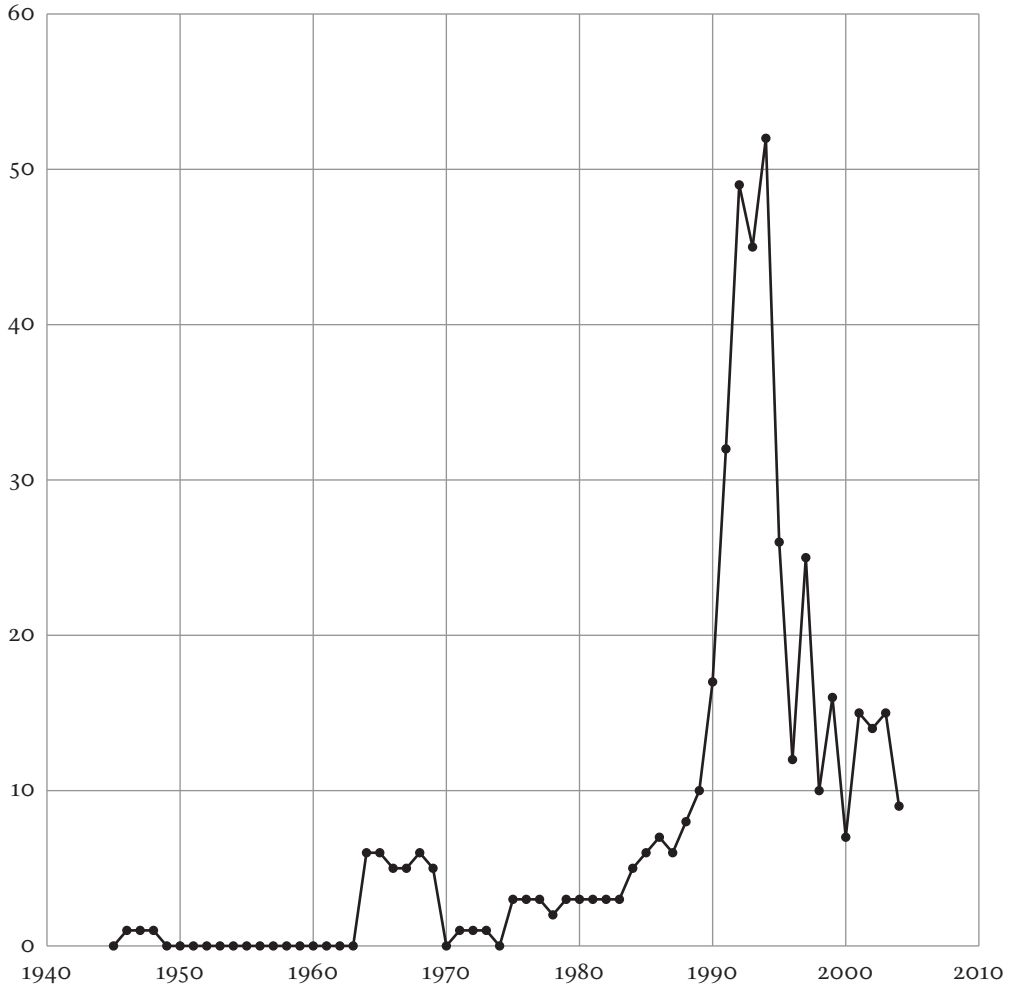
Source : The Civil War Dataset compiled in Karl DeRouen, Jacob Bercovitch, and Paulina Pospieszna, "Introducing the Civil Wars Mediation (CWM) Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (5) (2011).

Table 1
Civil Wars with at Least One Mediation Attempt : Cold War and Post – Cold War

	Number of Civil Wars	Number of Civil Wars with Mediation	Percent Mediated
1945 – 1987	70	17	24.29%
1988 – 2015	78	57	73.01%

Source : Updated and revised data set based on the Civil War Dataset compiled in Karl DeRouen, Jacob Bercovitch, and Paulina Pospieszna, "Introducing the Civil Wars Mediation (CWM) Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (5) (2011). Revised data set available upon request at sstedman@stanford.edu.

mediators were more persistent in the last thirty years. Second, the proportions of UN and NGO mediation efforts flipped: after 1988, the UN was involved in 29 percent of mediation efforts; NGOs less than 2 percent. This reflects the fewer constraints on UN freedom of diplomatic action after the end of the Cold War. On the NGO side, the reduction in the percentage of mediation efforts was not a reduction in overall mediation efforts: the numbers of mediation efforts led by NGOs declined only slightly, while those leading them were more likely to be organizations dedicated to mediation and conflict resolution, such as the Carter Center and the Swiss-based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue.

This dramatic rise in mediation in civil wars is mirrored by the dramatic rise in deployment of UN peacekeeping missions. From the founding of UN peacekeeping in the 1950s until 1988, the UN had deployed fourteen blue helmet operations. Between 1989 and 1994, they deployed fourteen more, doubling the total in four years. The rapid growth of UN missions from the early 1990s was, in part, the result of their role in backstopping peace agreements in civil wars, a task that posed a steep learning curve and has involved repeated setbacks. Nonetheless, most UN peacekeeping missions are still deployed as part of a larger political agreement framework.

The third major shift in how international actors treated civil wars involved humanitarian intervention or the use of military force to protect civilians in war. Political scientist Martha Finnemore has identified three military interventions during the Cold War that could plausibly be described as humanitarian: India's intervention in East Pakistan in 1971, Tanzania's intervention in Uganda in 1977, and Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia in 1978. Since 1989, a large number of military interventions in civil wars have been justified on humanitarian grounds, in cases ranging from So-

malia and Bosnia to Darfur and Libya. And as Finnemore has pointed out, it is not just the frequency of humanitarian intervention that has changed; the humanitarian interventions of the last thirty years have been multilateral rather than unilateral.[7]

International relations theory suggests that regimes emerge under different conditions and for different reasons. They might reflect and reinforce the interests of the great powers; they might reflect the discovery of technical knowledge that can help solve problems and provide public goods; or they might simply reflect the tendency of governments and regional organizations to mimic the strategies and approaches of other governments and international organizations.[8]

The international regime for treating civil wars emerged in ways suggestive of all these explanations, but not in a straightforward manner. UN mediation and peacekeeping in civil wars, by definition, had to have great-power support since they could have vetoed any missions during that time. Although the great powers may have had an interest in ending specific wars – El Salvador and Cambodia, for example – their interest in ending civil wars writ large was constrained by the cost of peacekeeping missions and the risks of them going wrong.

Under the presidency of George H. W. Bush, the United States urged the United Nations to take a primary role in the mediation and implementation of peace agreements in the wars that the United States wanted to end, such as those in Central America. Emboldened by its new activism and informed by its universal mandate, the UN Secretariat sought to take on even more cases, including ones peripheral to U.S. interests, such as Rwanda and Mozambique. As the leading funder of the UN and the biggest contributor to peacekeeping, the United States was wary of growing costs. Because it was more susceptible to Congressional pressure than the Bush ad-

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ministration, the Clinton administration began to heavily constrain the budgets of new peacekeeping operations. When the U.S. and UN intervention in Somalia escalated dramatically in 1993, the Clinton administration also grew cautious of the risks involved in UN deployments, fearing that U.S. forces would need to backstop UN missions under attack. The Clinton administration's Presidential Decision Directive 25, made public during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, put restrictive conditions on U.S. involvement in UN operations and on UN authorization and deployment of operations even when they did not involve U.S. personnel.[9]

At first, the standard treatment of mediation and peacekeeping certainly seemed to represent the discovery of a new approach or technology for addressing a global problem. The difficulty with this argument is that it didn't take long for failures to confound early successes. From 1989 to 1994, Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola, and Rwanda all followed a treatment of mediation, negotiated agreement, deployment of peacekeepers to monitor and oversee implementation of the agreement, and then elections. A strategy of confidence-building based on neutrality, impartiality, and consent helped to end wars in four of these six countries, but in Angola and Rwanda, the strategy was woefully unprepared and useless against spoilers who undermined the peace. In Angola in 1993, an estimated three hundred fifty thousand people died when one of the warring parties, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, returned to war rather than contest a second round of elections. In Rwanda, the United Nations withdrew peacekeepers instead of confronting *génocidaires*, who killed up to eight hundred thousand Rwandans.[10]

In truth, the intervention of peacekeepers in civil wars in the early 1990s was nonstrategic and more closely resembled

throwing a solution at multiple problems and hoping something would stick. For example, in Somalia and Bosnia, peacekeepers were deployed to assist in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to protect vulnerable populations. In the former, the United States intervened militarily to create security for humanitarian work to proceed safely. The United States and the UN found themselves in a dilemma: to invest heavily in creating a Somali state and make peace among clans, or withdraw after the famine had been stopped. The United States and UN chose to double down on state-building and quickly found itself in a shooting war with one of the Somali factions, and after a battle in Mogadishu that led to the death of eighteen American soldiers, the United States withdrew from Somalia, leaving the UN to turn to a long-term strategy of mediation.

In Bosnia, the United Nations deployed peacekeepers soon after the war erupted, but their mission was limited to the protection of the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Although the provision of humanitarian relief saved lives, the UN mission was derided for not standing up to Bosnian Serb forces, and for observing rather than stopping violence. A common assessment of the futility of the mission was that the UN was keeping civilians alive from starvation so that they could later be killed by the Bosnian Serbs. At the same time, the European Union and UN attempted to mediate a political settlement to the war, but were undercut when the United States and its newly elected president, Bill Clinton, dismissed the terms of settlement. The Clinton administration advocated a more forceful strategy for ending the war, but was unwilling to put its own soldiers on the ground.

From 1992 to 1995, the UN and NATO simultaneously attempted contradictory strategies: lightly armed peacekeepers acting under a doctrine inappropriate for the military situation found themselves hos-

tage whenever NATO chose to use force to deter or punish the Serbs; the use of force was largely untied to a diplomatic strategy for ending the war. It was only after 1995 and the genocide of Bosnians at Srebrenica that NATO took full charge and combined the use of force and mediation to produce a negotiated settlement, and then deployed sixty thousand troops to implement it.

Non-Western regional organizations also intervened in civil wars during this period. Nigeria, under the aegis of the Economic Community of West Africa, intervened early in Liberia's civil war, at a time when one faction seemed on the verge of a military victory. The intervention failed to end the fighting, but did create a military situation in which no faction could win. Realizing that their intervention would turn into a military quagmire, the Nigerians also turned to mediation among warlords to try and bring the war to a close. After more than a decade and ten failed peace agreements, a peace treaty finally stuck, and more than sixteen thousand UN peacekeepers implemented it.

By that time, the Liberian conflict had helped destabilize neighboring Sierra Leone, which, in turn, went through its own protracted cycle of military intervention, mediation, fragile peace agreements, and then, finally, a UN-mediated agreement backed by peacekeepers. In both countries, successful implementation of the agreements depended on further deployment of force: Nigeria's intervention in Liberia to depose the former warlord and elected president, Charles Taylor, and Britain's deployment of forces in Sierra Leone.

Although great powers were ambivalent about the regime and the regime itself was in desperate need of learning, the regime institutionalized itself within the United Nations with special training of mediators, the development of a mediator-support network of global experts on issues pertaining to the negotiation of civil wars, and the creation of a mediation-support office in the UN's Department of Political Affairs. Other international organizations, such as the European Union and African Union (AU), have mimicked these innovations, as have many governments. It has also been institutionalized in international civil society as organizations, such as Humanitarian Dialogue and the Carter Center, define their mandate in terms of helping warring parties make peace. Regional organizations routinely name and send special envoys to mediate wars in their regions.

The 1990s were a harsh test of the international belief that civil wars were easily amenable to outside political and military intervention.[11] From the beginning of the dramatic growth in political and military intervention in civil wars in the early 1990s, the standard treatment – mediation and peacekeepers for implementation – had its detractors. The first were the doubters who asserted that civil wars are non-negotiable and can only be ended through dominant military force. While acknowledging mediation as well-intentioned, they dismissed it as ineffective. Under the rubric of "give war a chance," doubters either advocated policies of benign neglect or support for warring factions in the hope of tilting the military balance to one side, thus hastening the end of the war.[12]

A second objection to the standard treatment came from humanitarian interventionists who decried the suffering of civil wars and demanded the use of military force to protect civilians caught in the violence. Humanitarian interventionists did not necessarily disagree with the goal of ending wars through mediation, but they were seldom patient enough for mediation to bear results. This led to several experimental treatments of civil wars involving peacekeeping in the absence of any credible political agreement – as in Somalia or Bosnia – with poor to mixed results. UN

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forces often lacked the equipment and de-sire to handle violence where there was no peace to keep. Many Western military and political leaders, scarred by the UN's early post–Cold War failures in Somalia, Bos-nia, and Rwanda, continue to distrust UN peacekeeping for these reasons. Beginning with President Clinton in 1994, the United States decided to dramatically limit its par-ticipation in UN missions and send mini-mal numbers of soldiers on blue helmet operations.

A third source of dissatisfaction came from human rights critics, who asserted that mediation and its focus on war termi-nation was feckless toward issues of justice and accountability for atrocities and war crimes. This too led to experimental treat-ments that struggle to combine mediation and its need to assure combatants that they will be secure in any future political dis-pensation, with provisions for tribunals, truth and reconciliation commissions, and courts to hold some of those same combat-ants accountable for past deeds.

Did the standard treatment for civil wars work? Or to ask a better question, under what conditions did the standard treatment work? In 2002, political scientist George Downs and Stephen Stedman examined the sixteen cases of civil wars between 1980 and 2002 in which mediation produced a peace agreement and international forces were used to implement it.[13] They concluded that the efficacy of the treatment depended on the difficulty of the case and the amount of resources available, which, in turn, was re-lated to whether the civil war affected the strategic interests of the great powers.

They scored their cases on a simple scale of difficulty based on the number of war-ring parties, the number of soldiers, the likelihood of spoilers, the presence of hos-tile neighboring states, the presence of eas-ily looted valuable commodities, the quali-ty of the peace agreement, whether the war

had collapsed the state, and whether the war had involved demands for secession. They also scored the cases on whether a great power or regional power had a vital securi-ty interest in ending the war. Their findings, while maybe not surprising, were telling. The UN treatment worked well in the easi-est cases, where there was interest of a great power or regional power that ensured ade-quate resources (El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Mozambique, and Namibia). Great-power interest could overcome the challenge of slightly more difficult cases (Cambodia). Where the cases involved high difficulty and low great-power interest, the United Nations either created a stalemate (Liberia and Sierra Leone) or failed (Soma-lia). The worst outcomes involved middling difficulty and low interest and hence low re-sources (Rwanda and Angola).

For the standard treatment to contin-ue and the international regime for treat-ing civil wars to survive, two things had to happen. First, the regime itself had to learn what worked and what did not, and to make accurate assessments and recom-mendations about the difficulties of any potential case.[14] Second, the regime, and in particular the UN Secretariat overseeing the regime, had to convince the great pow-ers and Security Council that it had a stake in making the regime succeed.

Serious reflection inside the United Na-tions about peacekeeping produced an ex-coriating report on the failure to prevent the Srebrenica genocide.[15] This warned member states against the deployment of UN peacekeepers where there was no polit-ical framework and their rules of engage-ment and doctrine were inappropriate. A second study, the 2000 Brahimi Report on peace operations, defined a framework for better-managed and more robust UN mis-sions.[16] It emphasized issues of assessing mission difficulty, appropriate resourc-ing of missions to succeed, and the need to move doctrine away from traditional

peacekeeping to deter and defeat spoilers. Both the Srebrenica and Brahimi reports can be read as straightforward assessments of the weaknesses of peacekeeping in the 1990s, but the tone and information reveal an underlying message from the UN Secretariat to the Security Council: you are implicated in the catastrophic failures of UN peacekeeping, and if you want to avoid any such failure in the future, then you need to stop setting up missions to fail.

This message seems to have hit the mark. Members of the Security Council not only launched a new generation of blue helmet missions to support mediated settlements, but also intervened militarily to reinforce these missions when they came under threat. When rebels took UN peacekeepers hostage in Sierra Leone in 2001, swift action by British special forces routed the rebels and put the peacekeeping mission on firmer footing. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), France led a similarly firm intervention by the European Union in 2003 to stop marauding rebel forces overwhelming UN troops in the east of the country.

Great-power support, including from the United States, for the regime and the standard treatment increased dramatically after September 11. The Security Council, with support from the United States, looked to UN peacekeeping as a means of preventing state collapse in war-torn states. The Council also endorsed and followed recommendations of the Brahimi Report, and authorized much greater troop numbers, more coercive mandates, and more flexibility in using coercive force in missions. From 2001 to 2007, the UN deployed missions to support a series of mediated settlements in countries including Burundi, South Sudan, and Nepal (although, in the latter case, it deliberately avoided inserting a large-scale military force).

None of these were easy missions. In cases such as the DRC and South Sudan, UN forces were asked to police long-term political reform processes, involving not only postwar elections, but also constitutional reforms and the formation of new states (as in Kosovo and East Timor). Peacekeepers often found that high-level mediation had failed to stop widespread low-level violence or significantly ease ongoing humanitarian crises. In a series of cases – most notably the DRC – militia groups overran cities and regions under the supposed protection of peacekeepers, fueling calls for the UN to take a tougher approach to putting down spoilers.

The argument that peacekeepers should be willing to use force to protect civilians "under imminent threat of physical violence" (a goal that the Security Council set for most UN forces from 1999 onwards and that the Brahimi Report strongly endorsed) became entangled with broader debates about the international responsibility to protect (R2P), posited by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty in 2001.[17] This was problematic: While most governments were willing to grant that peacekeepers might sometimes have to act robustly to defend endangered communities or sustain an established peace process, many were far less enthusiastic about the notion that protection could be an overarching moral imperative. Indeed, some of the countries most heavily involved in blue helmet operations in this period, such as India and Pakistan, were ardently skeptical about R2P. This debate over protection would contribute to growing dissensus at the UN over the limits of peacekeeping.

More practically, peace operations also had to contend with the fact that, in many of the postconflict countries on their watch, the national institutions necessary to make a peace agreement stick were broken or simply nonexistent. In the mid-2000s, the UN emphasized the need for "peace-building" and institution-building to guide and con-

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solidate the gains of mediation and peacekeeping, although there was often little realism about the timelines necessary to get state structures up and running. The UN became quite skilled at managing elections in postconflict states, but these rarely seemed to guarantee stability. Missions such as those in Liberia and the DRC dragged on far longer than expected. Nonetheless, by roughly 2007, the standard treatment of mediation and peacekeeping appeared to have proved its worth.

In the ensuing decade, the Security Council tried to apply versions of this treatment to a series of hard cases that have pushed the regime to the breaking point. The first of these was Darfur, where the UN took over "peacekeeping" duties in 2007 from the African Union on the basis of a profoundly flawed mediated settlement. Many veteran peacekeepers predicted that this would backfire, but a large-scale advocacy campaign in the United States and Europe – firmly framed in terms of R2P – pushed the Bush administration and the UN to deploy forces regardless. Although the Darfur mission was for some time the UN's largest, a mix of political, logistical, and operational constraints have rendered it unable to offer more than minimal support to advance flawed political efforts and aid operations.

The 2008 financial crisis further constrained new, large-scale UN deployments until 2013, when the organization took on peacekeeping duties in Mali after France intervened against Islamist and secessionist forces there. Again, the standard treatment has proved unequal to new challenges: radical Islamist groups, borrowing insurgent tactics from Afghanistan and Iraq, have targeted the operation, claiming nearly one hundred lives while efforts to mediate a lasting political settlement have made faltering progress. In the meantime, the UN also deployed peacekeepers to the Central African Republic, where state institutions

are so weak that real stability may be unattainable in the foreseeable future.

While the UN struggled with these cases, some of its longer-running missions have also been plunged into crises as mediated settlements have fallen apart. The worst example has been South Sudan, where the UN was poorly prepared for the country's descent into an all-out civil war in 2013. Peacekeepers in the DRC have also continued to be thrown off-balance by repeated crises in the east of the country. These cases, involving large-scale killing and displacement, have raised three recurrent questions about the UN's ability to secure and sustain political settlements.

First, uncooperative – and often corrupt and predatory – national and local leaders have frequently found ways to undermine the UN's role as a mediator and peacekeeper. In a few instances, such as Burundi in 2006, local actors succeeded in forcing the UN to pull out altogether. Using tactics such as delaying political processes and elections or simply initiating renewed violence, leaders like the DRC's Joseph Kabila and South Sudan's Salva Kiir have succeeded in limiting the UN's influence for long periods. In many cases, the Security Council and UN officials have prioritized maintaining relationships with these high-ranking spoilers, for fear of new major conflicts, rather than confronting them over their behavior. In such situations, UN forces often end up looking like enablers of continued political abuse and repression.[18]

A second recurrent source of concern for the UN has been its inability to mediate or project security in persistent local conflicts that often plague the peripheral regions of weak states. While the sort of mediation promoted by the standard treatment focuses on forging elite pacts in national capitals, and sometimes also offers a basis for more inclusive talks with amenable elements of civil society, the UN has struggled to forge political relationships with

local power brokers in cases ranging from the militia-plagued Eastern DRC and Northern Mali to gang bosses in Haiti's urban slums. For some critics, this lack of local-level peace-making capacity is the UN's primary political flaw.[19] Others see it as an adjunct to its difficulties with obstreperous leaders such as Kabila and Kiir. Wherever the balance lies, it is clear that the UN is often hamstrung by both elite-level and grassroots political challenges.

These political limitations have been compounded by a third recurrent concern: the inability and unwillingness of UN peacekeeping forces to deter or defeat spoilers, despite changes in mandate and doctrine. In cases such as the DRC, Sudan, and South Sudan, international contingents have continued to fail to protect civilians systematically. This is often due to a lack of intelligence and military resources, but, in many cases, UN units simply refuse to act or are under orders from their capitals to minimize the risks of casualties. As in Rwanda and the Balkans, spoilers have assessed the UN's vulnerabilities and harassed and targeted peacekeepers to keep them in line. In one emblematic case in 2010, a militia launched a campaign of mass rape in the area around an Indian base in the Eastern DRC to prove to the civilian population that the UN would not respond.[20] Lacking the language skills, communications equipment, and intelligence to grasp what was happening, the Indians remained duly passive.

This combination of political and operational challenges has raised doubts about the standard treatment for civil wars, and not only among the UN's longtime critics in the West. Some of the most severe criticisms have come from African governments and the African Union, which charge the UN with responding slowly and passively to crises, such as those in the DRC. AU members have shifted toward a vastly more robust if often under-resourced ap-

proach to war-fighting stabilization in Somalia, and called on the UN to imitate this method.[21] In 2013, Southern African countries inserted a "force intervention brigade" into the UN operation in the DRC to fight spoilers, and the Security Council recently authorized a similar regional force to respond to violence in South Sudan.

Within the UN itself, however, officials tend to maintain some belief in the standard treatment for civil wars and warn against more robust options. This conservative approach was captured in the 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, a blue-ribbon group of UN veterans appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to write a "new Brahimi Report."[22] This group issued a lengthy defense of "the primacy of the political" and the need to invest in mediation, while giving only half-hearted endorsement to robust efforts to protect civilians and explicitly warning that peacekeepers should not attempt to engage in counterterrorism. Yet beyond the UN, the case for the standard treatment has become increasingly difficult to sell.

The future viability of the international treatment regime depends on several factors. Much rests on the very nature of civil wars and whether today's and tomorrow's wars are less amenable to mediation and political settlement than the wars of the previous twenty-five years. While instability continues to occupy the UN and the AU in sub-Saharan Africa, the emergence of a new generation of civil wars in the Middle East and North African region poses an immense test for existing models of international intervention. Essays in this issue of *Dædalus* and in the previous volume suggest that civil wars have mutated in ways that render the standard treatment ineffective.

Questions about relations among the great powers, and their strategies for addressing civil wars, hover over the post–

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Cold War regime. One reason why the wars in Syria and Yemen have created such consternation is that they look like throwbacks to the Cold War treatment of civil wars: external military intervention and support to ensure that one's client wins or at least does not lose. But this treatment reflects the larger breakdown of relations and tension between two of the great powers: Russia and the United States.[23] In such cases, the UN and other multilateral actors have been reduced to forms of peace observation, such as the lightweight and short-lived UN monitoring mission in Syria in 2012, that also look like throwbacks to Cold War peacekeeping. The Syrian conflict in particular has also demonstrated the weakness of multilateral mediation in the face of great-power rivalry, as a series of UN envoys (Kofi Annan, Lakhdar Brahimi, and Staffan de Mistura) have acted as conduits for ineffective efforts at Russo-American diplomatic coordination. In the meantime, the humanitarian system is buckling under the weight of these crises, and international arguments over Libya and Syria have detracted from the political credibility of R2P. The fundamental premise of the post–Cold War regime for treating civil wars – that there is a basic duty of care to states affected by civil wars – is in question. One could imagine that, with an improvement in relations between the major powers, they would, as the United States and Soviet Union did in several proxy wars thirty years ago, revert to support for a mediated settlement to the wars in the Middle East. One could just as easily imagine that the rivalry between these two powers poisons their willingness to cooperate in the Security Council on applying the standard treatment of civil wars outside the Middle East. There has recently been an upsurge in diplomatic tensions at the UN between the West, China, and Russia not only over the Arab world, but also over how to handle crises in Burundi, Sudan, and South Sudan.[24]

Beijing and Moscow appear increasingly keen to place limits on the application of the standard treatment in such cases for a mix of political reasons and economic interests. If such tensions increase in the years ahead, the UN's ability to care for countries in civil war will narrow, and other organizations and coalitions are liable to fill the gap, peddling "cures" of civil wars such as peace enforcement or assisting proxy forces that may often do more harm than good.

The Trump administration's attitude toward peacekeeping, which was still emerging as we completed this essay, potentially exacerbates this challenge. The United States has called for major financial cuts to peace operations and questioned the political viability of several missions.[25] Such questions are sometimes valid, but the administration's approach to multilateral affairs seems more ideological than strategic in its outlook.

While the standard treatment for civil wars that emerged over the last quarter-century may have been imperfect, we have seen that it has at least proved adaptive, and the UN has been willing to learn from past experiments and errors. If future interveners ignore these lessons, the current regime for dealing with civil wars with its emphasis on mediation and peacekeeping may soon be a historical artifact. It will be unfortunate if a standard treatment for conflicts that has proved at last partially successful is replaced by less well-tested, and perhaps bitter, medicines.

* Contributor Biographies : RICHARD GOWAN is a Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations and teaches conflict resolution at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. He is also a Nonresident Fellow at the New York University Center on International Cooperation, where he was previously Research Director, and a columnist for *World Politics Review*.

STEPHEN JOHN STEDMAN is Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and Deputy Director of the Center on Democracy, Development and Rule of Law at Stanford University. He is the author of *Power and Responsibility : Building International Order in an Era of Transnational Threats* (with Bruce Jones and Carlos Pascual, 2009). From 2010 to 2012, he directed the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security. He served as Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2005.

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3 Bruce Jones and Stephen John Stedman, "Civil Wars & the Post–Cold War International Order," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017).

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15 United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary General Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 55/35, The Fall of Srebrenica* (A/55/305 – S/2000/809), November 15, 1999.

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17 The Security Council directed the UN force in Sierra Leone to protect civilians in imminent danger in *Resolution 1270 of 22 October 1999*, and versions of this injunction regularly appeared in Council mandates thereafter. See Ian Johnstone, "The Dilemmas of Robust Peace Operations," in *Annual Review of Peace Operations 2006*, ed. Ian Johnstone (Boulder, Colo. : Lynne Rienner, 2006), 2 – 17.

18 See William Reno, "Fictional States & Atomized Public Spheres : A Non-Western Approach to Fragility," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017) ; and Richard Gowan, "The Peacekeeping Quagmire," *The Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 16 (2) (2015) : 39 – 46.

19 Severine Autessere, *The Trouble with the Congo : Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2010).

20 Jeffrey Gettleman, "Mass Rapes in Congo Reveal UN Weakness," *The New York Times*, October 3, 2010.

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22 United Nations, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnerships and People : Report of the High-Level Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (Geneva : United Nations, 2015).

23 For other perspectives on great-power relations and the future of UN peacekeeping, see Barry Posen, "Civil Wars & the Structure of World Power," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017) ; Jones and Stedman, "Civil Wars & the Post–Cold War International Order" ; and Guéhenno, "The United Nations & Civil Wars."

24 In December 2016, for example, China and Russia blocked an American-backed Security Council resolution that aimed to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan. See Michelle Nichols, "UN Council Fails to Impose Arms Embargo on South Sudan," Reuters, December 23, 2016.

25 Colum Lynch, "Trump Administration Eyes $1 Billion Cuts to UN Peacekeeping," *Foreign Policy*, March 23, 2017.

The United Nations & Civil Wars

Jean-Marie Guéhenno

Abstract : The UN engagement in civil wars was almost nonexistent until the end of the Cold War, but recent experience brings some important lessons : the traditional principles of peacekeeping are ill-suited for civil war, as demands on peacekeepers, in particular the protection of civilians, are expanding. But military force is there to support a political strategy. The UN must focus on politics, using its comparative advantage – its independence – to win the confidence of the parties, while preserving its access to big powers to put pressure on them. However, it is challenged by the growing divisions in the Security Council, the changing nature of conflict, and a crisis of states that reflects long-term trends. This is not a reason for the UN to abandon its role in ending civil wars, but it needs to recalibrate its ambitions and adapt its approach : be less state-centric and more inclusive ; more robust militarily ; and more disciplined in its priorities.

JEAN-MARIE GUÉHENNO is a member of the high-level advisory board on mediation recently created by the United Nations Secretary-General. He served as the United Nations Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations from 2000 to 2008. He is the author of *The Fog of Peace : A Memoir of Peace-keeping in the 21st Century* (2015).

The United Nations was not designed to deal with civil wars. It is an organization of sovereign states that decided, at the end of World War II, that their relations should be governed by a set of binding rules, enshrined in a charter, and policed by a select group of nations in the form of the Security Council. The international order that the charter of the United Nations organized is based on the assumption that sovereign states, as the building blocks of the international system, are the benevolent custodians of their people ; and the main purpose of the charter is to regulate relations between sovereign states while refraining from interfering with their domestic affairs, including civil wars.

Paragraph 7 of article 2 of the charter explicitly states :

> Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter ; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.

This paragraph was the result of difficult discussions in San Francisco. France had initially argued that violations of human rights could be a basis for intervention, but this view was strongly rejected by the American delegation, and a few years later, when the Algerian War of Independence started, a preparatory report of John Foster Dulles that had been the basis for that rejection would be quoted in a French periodical to justify the French position.[1] France had come to agree with the United States that there should be no exception to the principle set in paragraph 7 of article 2 of the charter. That is why, until the end of the Cold War, the United Nations did not concern itself with civil wars, with the two exceptions of the Congo, where its role was to protect the integrity of a state emerging from decolonization, and Cyprus, which involved a confrontation between two states (Turkey and Greece).

The end of the Cold War opened a new chapter: there have been fewer interstate wars and more civil wars; and the less-divided Security Council has authorized twice as many operations in the last twenty-six years as it authorized in its first forty-four years, and most of the new missions have been deployed to accompany peace processes aimed at ending civil wars. Based on the assumption that the stabilization of a postconflict country requires a "comprehensive approach,"[2] they have been increasingly multidimensional, often including political, military, development, and humanitarian components.[3]

As a response to that assumption, the UN has developed several new capacities during the last fifteen years. In 2005, a new intergovernmental advisory body, the Peace-building Commission, was inaugurated, and it presently has six countries on its agenda, four of which have been hosts to peacekeeping operations.[4] In addition, a peace-building support office was created in the United Nations Secretariat, with a peace-building fund established under its responsibility. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, recognizing the political nature of peace-building, plans to integrate the peace-building support office in the department of political affairs. Outside the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) was for many years the centralized repository of expertise dedicated to the needs of countries teetering on the brink of civil war or recovering from one. It has now been disbanded and replaced by a leaner Crisis Response Unit; expertise previously housed in the BCPR has been largely decentralized, with the aim of bringing it closer to the areas where it might be deployed, but also with the risk that the critical mass of expertise that was assembled will be diluted, and the specificity of postconflict challenges may be lost.

Twenty-six years after the end of the Cold War, it is time to reflect on this new engagement of the UN in civil wars, all the more so because that experience is book-ended by tragedies: in the nineties, the horrors of Yugoslavia and Rwanda and the debacle of Somalia; now the massive failure of Syria. This gives a particular urgency to the issue, which I will address in three steps. First, there are enough case studies to draw some lessons from the experiences of recent years; second, one must consider that the "international system" is rapidly changing, and so are conflicts, raising questions on the applicability of recent experience; and third, there is therefore a need to redefine what the UN can contribute in the resolution of civil wars, and what it should not do. What is a reasonable level of ambition?

How can a third party help to end a civil war and bring stability to a country emerging from conflict? What is the right balance between political engagement and use of force? Which capacities are most needed after the devastation of war? What should

be the priorities: Demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration? Security sector reform? Transitional justice? Rule of law? Effective governance structures? Provision of basic services (such as education and health care)? Job creation? What is the right timing and sequence for elections? There are probably no definitive answers to any of those questions, and certainly no single answer. They have generated an abundant literature, usually focused on one issue at a time rather than the overall balance and prioritization of numerous, often contradictory goals. And yet I will argue that intelligent orchestration is the most important strategic variable, and that isolated policies, even well-executed ones, are unlikely to produce lasting results unless they are part of an overall coherent and consistent strategy.

The first and most sensitive issue is the balance between politics and force, and the United Nations, like the United States in its own state-building efforts over the last fifteen years, has had great difficulty finding the right answer.[5] Military deployments, because they are concrete, have obvious appeal that messy and inconclusive political processes do not. Gradually, the military component has taken a more central role, which has led to a profound change in what is expected from UN troops. The principle of "no peacekeepers where there is no peace to keep," advocated by a panel on peacekeeping chaired by the experienced UN official Lakhdar Brahimi, has in practice been abandoned. More and more, UN forces are deployed in situations where there is not yet full peace, even if the most intense phase of a civil war has ended. The traditional principles guiding the conduct of UN blue helmets are ill-suited for that gray zone: consent of the parties, impartiality, and nonuse of force except in self-defense. These propositions were established at a time when UN deployments had a largely symbolic value, separating state parties along a cease-fire line and allowing them to save face by ceding ground to a third, neutral party rather than to an enemy. The situation is completely different in the context of a civil war.

Nonstate actors have much less to lose if they break their commitment, because the international community does not have the legal leverage that it holds over a state party. Their chain of command is also weaker, and an agreement reached at the top level does not ensure implementation at lower levels. The notion of consent, both on the government and rebel sides, has also become much less clear; parties to a conflict now tolerate, rather than request, a UN presence, meaning that the UN peacekeepers have to negotiate the continuation of consent. The government of Sudan was always deeply suspicious of an international deployment in Darfur, and would only agree to a hybrid mission combining the UN and the African Union (AU), knowing that its influence on the AU would help constrain the UN.

Meanwhile, the demands on UN forces have increased considerably. In civil wars, civilian populations are often the target, rather than collateral, and the tragedies of Yugoslavia and Rwanda have led the Security Council to include in most UN mandates the protection of civilians, at least in areas where UN forces are deployed and where they have the means to provide protection. This in turn has led to an evolution of the doctrine of peacekeeping, which no longer limits the use of force to self-defense, but includes "defense of the mandate." This evolution has not been formally endorsed, because many of the troop-contributing countries are aware of the much higher level of risk that this new posture entails, and of the great imbalance between the needs and the resources, which can raise undue expectations and set up troops for failure.[6]

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UN blue helmets have repeatedly been accused of standing by as civilians are massacred. In South Sudan, the UN force opened the gates of its bases to terrorized

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Nuer fleeing government forces, de facto transforming parts of the mission into gigantic camps for internally displaced persons, but was unable to stop government forces from raiding a camp in Malakal. If preelectoral violence flares up in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and government forces use excessive force against demonstrators, the UN will be unable to protect civilians: UN blue helmets are not ready, politically and operationally, to shoot at government forces. Politically, impartiality becomes impossible if its logical conclusion is to pit a UN force against a government force. Operationally, even after a peace agreement has been signed, a UN force quickly finds it limits. In most peacekeeping missions, the ratio of troops deployed to the population that needs protection is woefully inadequate, and the problem is compounded by the unwillingness of most troop contributors to take the risks that effective physical protection would require. They are generally reluctant to conduct night patrols and establish mobile forward bases, and they often lack the equipment, training, and capacities that would mitigate risks for troops and compensate for insufficient numbers, such as good intelligence to preempt violence and mobility assets to redeploy rapidly.

And yet effective protection of civilians, apart from its obvious humanitarian value, can become a key dimension of a political strategy; it gives credibility and leverage to a UN mission trying to move a political process forward. This raises fundamental questions for peacekeeping in a context of civil war. The symbolism of blue helmets, which is the basis of peacekeeping between states, is not enough in a situation in which parties have not decisively ruled out the use of force. This consideration becomes a major challenge when criminal armed groups have no negotiable political goal and actually benefit from a continuation of conflict: the UN, if it has a

force on the ground, must have the capacity to make effective use of it, otherwise the presence of troops, far from enhancing its role, may actually undermine it. The gap that opens between the expectations of the population when blue helmets deploy and what the troops can actually achieve can destroy the authority of the UN.[7]

Politics, and not force – unless it is overwhelming force, something that the UN never has the capacity to wield – brings peace. Because it is easier for the Security Council to agree on the number of troops or police than on a political strategy, the excessive reliance on peacekeepers – which has reached record levels, but also an implicit ceiling, with a budget of $8.5 billion – can become a distraction. Troop deployments have to be integrated in a political strategy, and they create expectations that should make the Security Council think twice before including a military component in a peace operation. In the end, military deployments achieve little if they are not supporting a well-thought-through political strategy, as the United States, with forces infinitely superior to what the UN could ever mobilize, discovered in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The United Nations should, in principle, have some comparative advantage there: parties to a conflict are more likely to make lasting compromises if they are encouraged by a neutral organization than if they are responding to the pressure of a powerful state, and external advice is more likely to be accepted if it is not suspected of serving the interests of a particular country. But for that to happen, the United Nations must be given the space to operate with sufficient independence. If it is seen to be just the agent of big powers, it loses its credibility, while if big powers make clear that they will not support the UN effort, it will also fail. In the last decade and a half, experience shows that the UN has had difficulty finding its way along that very narrow

path. The UN by itself has little power, and its leverage to achieve that transition from war to peace depends largely on its capacity to harness the power of its member states, especially the most powerful ones. It must conduct a delicate balancing act, using its independence to win the trust of the conflicting parties and using its access to power to put pressure on them.[8]

The situations in which the UN has most been able to make a difference are those where there was sufficient interest of a major power for the UN to have leverage, but where the UN was given enough space to pursue its own strategy. In Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom had a strong interest, but sometimes disagreed with the strategy pursued by the UN: it wanted more forceful and immediate action against the Revolutionary United Front, while the special representative of the secretary-general, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, preferred to gradually consolidate the authority of the government. But because it was not a vital interest of the United Kingdom, then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan was able to push back, and eventually the UN strategy proved to be the right one. In Afghanistan, the Bonn process was relatively successful because Lakhdar Brahimi, the special representative of the secretary-general, was able to shape an autonomous political strategy while maintaining close and positive relations with the United States. He managed to create an evolutionary process that moved from what was largely a peace of the winners in Bonn to a more inclusive process in the constitutional Loya Jirga two years later. But that was not enough to achieve real success: the UN was unable to influence the military strategy of the U.S.-led coalition, failed in convincing successive administrations to engage with the Taliban before they had recovered from their defeat in 2001, and had almost no say in the massive bilateral aid efforts that often undermined the state of Afghanistan, rather than helped build it (more on that below).

In Iraq, the United Nations was not given any significant space, and the process was largely driven by the United States. Apart from Washington's well-documented mistakes, this secondary role has deeply damaged the image of the UN in the Middle East, which is now often seen as an adjunct of U.S. power and has therefore a limited capacity to play a constructive role in the region.

When the UN is given enough space to develop a political strategy, how should one define success? What is a successful political strategy to end a civil war? The end goal has the appearance of clarity: to consolidate a center of power that is perceived as legitimate enough not to rely on coercion to maintain its authority. That statement raises many more questions: Is perceived legitimacy distinct from legitimacy? Or should we accept that the definition of legitimacy is circular, that legitimacy is what is perceived as legitimate? And what is "legitimate enough"? Every state relies on some measure of coercion, and the balance between coercion and voluntary adherence varies considerably around the world. And in a country in which the state has lost its monopoly on the legitimate use of force, coercion may have a greater role than in a well-established regime. That monopoly is not reinstated all at once, and a political strategy should carefully map the different power centers and make appropriate judgments on the appropriate mix of political incentives, use of force, and other means that can gradually move a country from open war to peace, even wary peace.

The role of the United Nations in civil wars is further complicated by the growing role of regional and subregional organizations.[9] In Africa, the UN has had to adjust to the increased relevance of the African Union and subregional organizations. In

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the 1990s and early 2000s, the UN was usually the lead actor, for instance in Mozambique or Namibia. But in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, the Organization of African Unity tried to define its own strategy, to be implemented by the UN; although in these cases, the Security Council intervened and redefined the role of the UN. Moreover, the UN peacekeeping operation and the UN envoy for the Great Lakes have seen their political role gradually reduced, and a pattern has emerged whereby the UN plays a civil-humanitarian-military role, while the African Union or subregional organizations like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development or the East African Community are expected to play the lead political role. This division of labor has not worked well: it raises excessive expectations on the operational role of the UN, and hands over political responsibilities to organizations that are deeply divided, institutionally weak, and therefore often incapable of playing a strong political role.

And yet the emergence of regional and subregional organizations is a welcome evolution that should in time strengthen the capacity of the international community to deal with civil wars; but only if the relationship with the UN is clarified first. Such clarification depends on a shared political understanding that needs to be reached between the UN and African institutions and leaders. The fact that the African Union and Secretary-General António Guterres have agreed to have regular consultations at the head-of-state level is an important first step. Chapter VIII of the UN charter envisaged an important role for regional organizations. In coming years, the diffusion of power should in principle give increased relevance to regional organizations.

The UN is, however, often hesitant to play an active political role: the members of the Security Council are deeply divided on what the ultimate goal of a political

strategy should be. They all want to restore stability, but their understanding of stability varies widely. Is stability based on inclusive government and robust institutions that can manage differences and allow for free and fair elections that do not lead to confrontation? Or is stability based on the capacity of a government to suppress dissent? The balance between coercion and adherence is seen differently by different countries, and the Security Council is unable to give a unified answer to that question. In itself, that ambiguity is not fatal to a UN role, and can actually give more political space to a UN envoy who is not bound by detailed prescriptions of the Security Council. But it requires envoys who are prepared to take the initiative without the cover of a Security Council mandate, and it frequently leaves open the role of elections in a political strategy: too often, the Security Council has found dubious unity in pushing for elections as an exit strategy, even if the context of elections makes it unlikely that they will provide a solid foundation for stability. More recently, various electoral crises in Africa have confronted the Security Council with real dilemmas: an election can trigger violence if its results are contested, but the postponement of an election, as seen in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, can also be a source of violence and instability. This raises new questions for countries like China that do not prioritize elections as the foundation of stability but are worried about instability. The liberal agenda that dominated the first twenty years of the post–Cold War period may be under attack and fading, but the question of how to stabilize countries emerging from conflict remains, and there is no genuine agreement in the Security Council on what the answer should be.

That ambivalent attitude of the Security Council with respect to the centrality of a political strategy largely explains why the Security Council tends to focus more on the

military part of a mandate and on a technical approach to peace-building. This technical bias suits development agencies well, since they have traditionally stressed the nonpolitical nature of their work and their technical expertise to gain access to governments. But this focus jeopardizes a credible UN role in dealing with civil wars. Not only does it provide a convenient alibi for not addressing the most difficult political issues, but it exposes the limits of state-building strategies.[10] Over the last fifteen years, the state-building record of the UN and of the international community more generally has been mixed at best: a lack of prioritization, an absence of effective orchestration, and a supply-driven approach that often ignores locally identified needs and accountability have resulted in considerable waste. In the worst cases, like South Sudan, the state-building focus entirely missed the fact that the political foundations of the state were missing, leading to a devastating resumption of war.

The lessons of a decade and a half offer a cautionary tale on the limits of what the UN can achieve militarily, politically, and from a state-building standpoint. However, they should not lead to abandoning the effort altogether. And there is considerable risk today that it might happen, as skepticism on what can actually be done grows and as many countries that once supported a global agenda are confronted with pressing domestic issues. Adopting an "isolationist" posture and dealing only with emergencies has increasing appeal when conflict resolution and peace-building are found to be protracted enterprises with uncertain results.

The doubts about what the international community and, more specifically, the UN can do to prevent or end civil strife are reinforced by the rapid deterioration of the international system and by the changing nature of conflict.[11]

At the global level, the impotence of the international community to bring the Syrian tragedy to an end casts a long shadow on the potential role of the United Nations in ending civil wars. The divisions of the Security Council were always there, as noted above. The repeated vetoes that have prevented any sustained joint effort in Syria are an illustration of the zero-sum game that often guides Security Council decision-making. Security Council intervention in Libya in 2011, which led to the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime, appears to have served as a warning to permanent members China and Russia, who abstained from the Libya vote but have more proactively vetoed such proposals for action since. For a while, advocates of a more active Security Council hoped that the escalating tension between Russia and the United States would affect only those conflicts in which Russia has a direct and pressing interest, like in Syria and Ukraine. But it is now clear that, even if the Security Council is still capable of reaching consensus on a number of peace operations, the confrontation is spilling over to other conflicts. The principles of sovereignty and noninterference in domestic affairs have provided a rallying point to countries suspicious that a regime-change agenda might hide behind demands for a more proactive posture of the Council. Thus, in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the risk of large-scale violence has not been enough to mobilize the Security Council.

At the regional level, preexisting divides are also deepening, and are given increased salience by paralysis at the global level, allowing regional powers to fill the vacuum and play a greater role. The Syrian crisis is a case in point: Regional powers such as Iran or Saudi Arabia cannot be considered as proxies of Russia and the United States, even if they receive support from them. They have their own distinct agendas, which add a layer of complexity to the res-

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olution of the conflict. This can create situations in which allies are on opposite sides. For example, because it has been among the most effective fighting forces against the Islamic State, the United States has provided military support to the YPG (People's Protection Units, a Kurdish militia in Syria). However, the YPG is affiliated with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), which is designated a terrorist organization by both the United States and Turkey, and which Turkey considers the greatest regional threat to its security! This has been a bitter point of contention between allies Turkey and the United States. Too often, conflicting priorities mean that regional actors can manipulate global actors for their own purposes, prolonging conflict without having to bear the consequences.

In theory, the shared threat of global terrorism should bring together the international community and facilitate joint efforts. In reality, the agenda of "countering violent extremism" complicates rather than facilitates cooperation. Different countries have different views on who is a terrorist, and the "terrorist" label, generously applied to a multitude of groups, considerably shrinks the political space needed to conduct effective negotiations. Many "terrorists" have joined terrorist organizations for opportunistic reasons, ranging from military prowess to criminal gains. Their motives, even when they join organizations with a global agenda like Al Qaeda or the Islamic State, can be very local, related to tribal affiliations more than to a religious program. Lumping together individuals and groups with very different agendas makes it more difficult to support inclusive processes and peel off those who could be co-opted.[12] The dominance of the "countering violent extremism" agenda thus contributes to the diminishing political role of the United Nations in resolving civil wars, and puts the UN in the awkward position of accompanying overly militarized strategies of powerful member states over which it has no influence.

While a better effort should be made to engage terrorists and even terrorist organizations, contemporary terrorism presents a specific challenge for the international community and the United Nations. At the operational level, successful peacekeeping requires peacekeepers to create a sense of proximity with the population; it is an important part of the psychological reassurance they provide. And the civilian component of a mission needs to engage as intensely and continuously as possible with the people of the host country. But when security concerns limit such contacts, and even armed peacekeepers have to patrol in convoys, that proximity is lost, and most UN troops are poorly equipped and prepared for that environment. In many situations, irreconcilable agendas suggest that, on the military side, peace enforcement rather than peacekeeping is required. On the political side, if the radical nature of many of the demands of terrorist groups was not enough to make any negotiation very difficult, their transnational and diffuse character can destroy the possibility of a credible political process. Moreover, uncoordinated parallel military operations conducted by non-UN troops, aimed at destroying the chain of command of groups labeled as terrorist, can make any engagement impossible.

Another evolution that contributes to making the termination of a conflict more difficult is the blurring of the distinction between political and criminal agendas, or maybe more accurately, the criminalization of politics. There are a number of situations around the world – from Central America to the Great Lakes region in Africa – in which powerful groups have an interest in having neither full war nor full peace. Full war is bad for business, and full peace is bad for their business, which can thrive only in a situation of semilawless-

ness that allows for all sort of illicit traffics.[13] The United Nations is ill-equipped for that kind of low-intensity, protracted conflict, which knows no borders and is often shaped by transnational relationships. Ending these conflicts would require forensic capacities to track money flows that the UN does not have. And criminal agendas, like terrorist agendas, cannot be accommodated in the same way a political agenda can through an inclusive process.

The civil wars of the twenty-first century are not a passing phenomenon, but are symptoms of evolutions that go beyond the birth pangs of decolonization or the unraveling of former empires. We sometimes read the crises affecting countries in Africa or the Middle East as a sign of their backwardness, as they catch up with other regions where the state has found its definitive form; we describe such countries in crisis as "failed states."[14] But that is ignoring the crisis that is creeping into some of the most advanced countries of the world, where indeed no civil war has broken out, but where the polity is at risk of fracturing.[15] Its causes go beyond the scope of this essay, but flow in large part from a combination of the atomization of society and globalization that have unraveled geographically defined communities. States are suffering from a dual crisis of legitimacy: they reflect the fragmentation of the polities of which they are the expression, as well as their own declining effectiveness, while they confront challenges that are beyond their capacities. And this crisis of politics – observed worldwide – also affects conflicts: they are less about the control of power in a given polity than about the polity itself and what defines it. And that transformation of conflict in turn affects the United Nations, whose main comparative advantage remains its unparalleled capacity to broker political compromises precisely because it does not itself have a political agenda. But that assumes that the framework in which the conflict is to be resolved – a functioning state – is not questioned. Confronted with actors who are beyond political compromise, either because of the radical nature of their goals, or because of their nonpolitical character, the UN will often find itself powerless.

What then can be done? An organization of states like the United Nations cannot be expected to be more effective than its component parts. In the absence of a global polity, a global organization needs the legitimacy of its member states to be legitimate, and legitimacy is a condition of its effectiveness: precisely because they are in crisis, states will deflect the challenges against their authority by passing the blame to more global institutions, as we see today with the European Union.

This crisis, as noted above, is not going to go away. An old order of nation-states – which found its modern form in Europe with the treaties of Westphalia that ended a century of religious wars – is slowly beginning to unravel, and the United Nations is part of that order. In the flatter and less-territorial world produced by the Internet, human communities will invent new political structures to organize themselves, and it is impossible to predict them. But the transition is likely to take time, just as during the Renaissance, it took time for Europe to overcome the crisis of legitimacy that was opened by religious war. In an age of nuclear weapons, making that transition as peaceful as possible should be an absolute priority, and the United Nations, with its limitations, can nevertheless help manage that transition while not abandoning its role in ending civil wars.

The UN should, however, define its role with the utmost humility, acknowledging that it cannot be the solution to the challenges that states face, nor can it limit itself to shoring up nation-states in their most traditional form.[16] Global government is

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not a realistic response to globalization, nor is a return to self-contained fully autonomous states. What the United Nations can do is help fractured communities, through negotiations, find new compromises that eventually will help human communities redefine themselves. To take the example of Syria and Iraq, the solution is probably not in redrawing the borders drawn by Messieurs Sykes and Picot, but in redefining the exercise of power within those borders.

To remain relevant, the UN should evolve in the way it approaches conflict resolution, taking into account the changes in the strategic as well as the operational environment. At the strategic level, it should have a less state-centric approach, and broaden its focus. On the one hand, it should have a greater regional focus: most conflicts now spill over borders, and while defining them as proxy wars between regional powers is excessive, it is unrealistic to expect to resolve them in isolation from their regional context. And in many situations, hard borders are part of the problem.[17] Managed movements of a population are part of the solution. On the other hand, many issues need to be resolved at a smaller level than the state, and a political deal in the capital is not sufficient to address problems of peripheries or of megacities. "National" politics are increasingly irrelevant not only for minorities who do not identify with the group controlling power at the central level – a problem that could be solved through more inclusive government – but for groups who do not expect a distant power structure to solve their specific problems. Paradoxically, in a connected and mobile world, physical proximity is seen as a key ingredient of effectiveness, accountability, and legitimacy. That means that more and more, any national peace process will need to be complemented by more locally driven efforts.[18]

The UN should also acknowledge that a traditional diplomatic approach will not be sufficient to manage the multiple layers of contemporary conflict. The representativeness of traditional political organizations is weakening, and it is often not enough to bring them into a negotiation to achieve implementable results. As noted above, the distinction between criminal and political agendas is eroding. There are also many new nontraditional actors who can play a critical role in restoring the fabric of society. Women's associations are a case in point. The United Nations needs an inclusive approach that makes room for such political actors. It must also recognize that elections, which make no distinctions – and should not! – between individuals, except through quotas, cannot be the only foundation of political legitimacy, all the more so because the legitimacy provided by numbers competes with other sources of legitimacy. Depending on the circumstances, other nonelected bodies can acquire a greater role. The UN must be at the forefront of such new forms of political organizations.

At the operational level, the United Nations should accept that, in a period of profound transformation, it might be an illusion to aim for an end state. Peacefully managing a process of transformation is already an ambitious goal, and it may be preferable to build into peace agreements enough flexibility for them to evolve and be revisited as circumstances change. In that respect, the Dayton Peace Accords, which were not negotiated by the UN, are a good example of what not to do, since they freeze into the unwieldy constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina the specific circumstances that presided over the termination of war in the former Yugoslavia.

The UN should also adapt its peace operations to the changing situation. Its military posture has already evolved. To avoid failure, it must not only lower expectations, but deploy stronger capacities, which will not turn UN blue helmets into a war-fighting machine, but should allow them to raise the

threshold for spoilers intent on derailing a peace process. And in theaters in which irreconcilable groups operate, peace enforcement needs to coexist with peacekeeping. That requires a much greater engagement from the best-equipped armies of the world. In some cases of peace enforcement, they may operate in parallel with a UN force, which creates considerable operational complications. In other situations, they should operate within the UN mission, providing it with the mobility, firepower, and intelligence that will allow UN peacekeepers to act early and decisively: effective quick-reaction forces should be a component of any peacekeeping operation deployed in an unsettled environment. But military force cannot be the centerpiece of a strategy, and the separation, enshrined in the budgetary arrangements of the UN between peacekeeping operations and political missions, should disappear. The path to peace is not linear, and the military component may fluctuate, from significant to zero.

In the end, the UN must recalibrate its ambitions: it should not abandon multidimensional operations, recognizing that, in complex situations, only a comprehensive approach has a chance of succeeding. But it should not be supply-driven; instead it should be more disciplined and focused in its agenda, limiting its role to those areas that are key to the sustainability of a state apparatus: governance, the security

sector, legal framework, and revenue collection. And to be effective in its delivery, it should become a much more open architecture, ready to partner with organizations, governmental and nongovernmental, that may be better equipped to deal with specific issues.

The United Nations therefore needs to be both very ambitious in the methods it is prepared to adopt, revisiting long held practices and testing new approaches, and very humble in the results it expects to achieve. In the best of circumstances, bringing to an end a civil war has always been a daunting task. Throughout history – from the Greek wars of Antiquity to the French Wars of Religion, the war of secession in the United States to the devastating war in Syria today – civil wars have been the most vicious wars *because* they challenge identities. And that challenge is even greater for foreigners, whose future is not at stake and can only nudge warring parties toward peace. Only those who have made war can make peace. When the end goal is elusive because the concept of the state itself is going through a radical evolution, the task of a third party becomes even more difficult. But it is not a reason to give up: the alternative would be a protracted period of spreading chaos. The UN has an important role to play in accompanying the evolution toward an unknown future.

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ENDNOTES

[1] See John Foster Dulles, "The General Assembly," *Foreign Affairs* (October 1945); and Georges Fischer, "Quelques réflexions sur la position de la France à l'ONU," *Politique étrangère* 20 (6) (1955).

[2] The European Union has made the "comprehensive approach" an important component of its strategy. See European Union Global Strategy, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe: A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (Brussels: European Union Global Strategy, June 2016).

[3] Richard Gowan and Stephen John Stedman, "The International Regime for Treating Civil War, 1988 – 2017," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (2018).

4 These are Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Central African Republic.

5 James D. Fearon, "Civil War & the Current International System," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (2017).

6 The standard language, "within its capabilities and areas of deployments," gives legal cover but exposes troop-contributing countries politically. See also Gowan and Stedman, "The International Regime for Treating Civil War."

7 "In the absence of a larger political process to end wars, peacekeeping missions to protect civilians become lengthy, protracted, dangerous assignments. It is worth asking how committed troop contributing countries will be to open-ended missions in ongoing civil wars." Gowan and Stedman, "The International Regime for Treating Civil War."

8 Charles T. Call and Susanna P. Campbell, "Is Prevention the Answer?" *Dædalus* 147 (1) (2018).

9 Ibid.

10 Fearon, "Civil War & the Current International System."

11 Nancy E. Lindborg and J. Joseph Hewitt, "In Defense of Ambition: Building Peaceful & Inclusive Societies in a World on Fire," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (2018); Barry R. Posen, "Civil Wars & the Structure of World Power," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (2017); and Hendrik Spruyt, "Civil Wars as Challenges to the Modern International System," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (2017).

12 Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Jihadi Rebels in Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (2018).

13 Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Organized Crime, Illicit Economies, Civil Violence & International Order: More Complex Than You Think," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (2017).

14 William Reno, "Fictional States & Atomized Public Spheres: A Non-Western Approach to Fragility," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (2017).

15 Bruce D. Jones and Stephen John Stedman, "Civil Wars & the Post–Cold War International Order," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (2017).

16 The timeframe of the UN, and of political actors, is inevitably much shorter than the timeframe of history. See Francis Fukuyama, "The Last English Civil War," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (2018). That is a reason for humility.

17 Spruyt, "Civil Wars as Challenges to the Modern International System."

18 Clare Lockhart, "Restoring Core Governance Functions as a Postconflict & Conflict-Prevention Measure," *Dædalus* 147 (1) (2018).

Conclusion

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STEPHEN D. KRASNER, a Fellow of the American Academy since 1991, is Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, the Graham H. Stuart Professor of International Relations, and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He is the author of *Power, the State, and Sovereignty: Essays on International Relations* (2009), *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (1999), and *Asymmetries in Japanese-American Trade: The Case for Specific Reciprocity* (1987). He codirects the Academy's project on Civil Wars, Violence, and International Responses.

KARL EIKENBERRY, a Fellow of the American Academy since 2012, is the Oksenberg-Rohlen Fellow and Director of the U.S.-Asia Security Initiative at Stanford University's Asia-Pacific Research Center. He served as the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan and had a thirty-five-year career in the United States Army, retiring with the rank of lieutenant general. He codirects the Academy's project on Civil Wars, Violence, and International Responses.

Civil wars have occurred often in the post–World War II era. Their frequency of initiation decreased after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, but the persistence of these conflicts meant that there was not a dramatic decline after the end of the Cold War. The causes of civil wars and their consequences for the stability of the international environment have, however, changed dramatically in the last two-and-a-half decades. During the Cold War, most civil wars were proxy battles between the Soviet Union and the United States; both superpowers were interested in maintaining regimes that were sympathetic to their side. The Soviet Union was never interested in the promotion of democratic regimes. The United States professed a commitment to democracy, but when faced with a choice between a Communist or even left-leaning democracy and an autocrat who aligned his state with the West, the United States chose the latter. The strongly positive statistical relationship between per capita income and democracy, which holds for most of the period between 1820 and 2000, disappears during the Cold War, when both superpowers were more interested in external alignment than in democracy.[1]

The impact of civil wars on the stability of the international system has increased during the twenty-first century. September 11, 2001, marks a watershed because, for at least some observers in the advanced industrialized world, the ability of transnational terrorists to destroy two of the tallest buildings and kill thousands of people in the commercial center of the most powerful country in the world,

as well as to fly a commercial airliner into the command center of the most powerful military (an event that one of us witnessed first-hand from inside the Pentagon and the other witnessed from the State Department across the Potomac River) represented a sea change in the extent to which developments in poor and remote countries could affect even the strongest and most powerful. September 11 created an urgency that was absent during the 1990s, when major powers believed that they could walk away from war-torn countries such as Somalia with limited consequences for their own polities.

Greater urgency, however, has not led to agreement, even in the academic world, on two critical issues: First, what are the potential threats to stability that might emanate from civil wars and weak governance in poor and remote areas of the world? Second, what policy instruments, if any, can be deployed to treat civil wars and reduce the downstream effects on other states and global order? There are no consensus answers to any of these fundamental issues.

Rather than trying to identify some common ground, which we do not believe exists, we offer our own assessment of the consequences of civil wars, the nature of civil wars, and possible interventions that external actors might most effectively pursue. Our judgments have been informed by the essays in this issue of *Dædalus* and in the previous issue, but are not dictated by them.

Civil wars can impact the wealthiest and most powerful countries in the world. The most consequential potential impacts are transnational terrorism and pandemic diseases, global crises that could be caused by intrastate conflict. Civil wars might also lead to large-scale migration, regional instability, and potential great-power conflict. And high levels of intrastate violence and loss of government control can often give rise to massive criminality, though this is most effectively addressed through domestic law enforcement rather than international initiatives.

The nature of civil wars varies. The most important distinction is between civil strife that is caused by the material or political interests of the protagonists and civil strife that is caused by transnational ideological movements. The latter, if successful, might threaten regional stability and even the stability of the contemporary international system that is based on sovereign statehood. Transnational ideological movements, which in the contemporary world are almost all associated with particular versions of Islam, base legitimacy on the divine and reject both existing boundaries and secular authority. While transnational movements claiming divine authority are more threatening to the existing international order, it is very difficult for such movements to secure material resources. Institutions that control these resources, primarily states but also international organizations, NGOs, and multinational corporations, are manifestations of the extant global order. When combatants in civil wars are motivated by material incentives and accept the principles of the existing international order, then the "standard treatment" for addressing civil strife – UN peacekeeping plus some foreign assistance – is the most effective option if combatants believe that they are in a hurting stalemate, and if there is agreement among the major powers. If, however, combatants reject the existing order, then the standard treatment will not work.

Finally, based on most, but not all of the essays in these two issues of *Dædalus*, the opportunities for external interveners are limited. Countries afflicted by civil strife cannot become Denmark or be placed on the road to Denmark; they cannot be transformed into prosperous democratic states. The best that external actors can hope for is adequate

governance in which there is security, the provision of some services especially related to health and possibly education, and some limited economic growth. This is true whether the standard treatment is applied or if one side can win decisively. More ambitious projects aimed at consolidated democracy, sustained economic growth, and the elimination of corruption are mostly doomed to fail and can be counterproductive regardless of whether the combatants are interested in seizing control of an existing state or are motivated by some alternative, divine vision of how political life might be ordered. National political elites in countries afflicted with civil strife will be operating in limited-access, rent-seeking political orders in which staying in power is their primary objective. National elites will not accept accountability, legal-rational bureaucracies, or free and fair elections, all of which would threaten their power.

The essays in these two issues of *Dædalus* and the literature more broadly identify six threats from civil strife that might directly impact the wealthy and more powerful polities of the world, or the nature of the postwar liberal international order. The first two – pandemic diseases and transnational terrorism – are potentially the most consequential, although neither poses the kind of existential threat presented by war among nuclear armed states.

Pandemic diseases. As the essay by Paul Wise and Michele Barry points out, since 1940, some four hundred new diseases have emerged among human populations.[2] Most of these diseases have been zoonoses: disease vectors that have jumped from animal populations, in which they may be benign, to human populations, in which they might cause serious illness. Most of these outbreaks have occurred in a belt near the equator, where human beings intermingle more closely with animals, such as bats and monkeys. The main impact of civil wars is,

however, not in increasing the number of new diseases, but rather diminishing the capacities of health monitoring systems that could identify, isolate, and possibly treat new diseases. Effective detection requires constant monitoring, which is extremely difficult in areas that are afflicted by civil war. Epidemics, or at least disease outbreaks, are inevitable given the ways in which human beings impinge more and more on animal habitats, but allowing an epidemic to evolve into a pandemic is optional. If effective detection and monitoring are in place, a disease outbreak will not turn into a pandemic that could kill millions. So far, the world's population has been spared such an outbreak. If, however, a disease can be transmitted through the air, and if civil strife or something else prevents effective monitoring, the likelihood of a pandemic increases.

Transnational terrorism. Terrorism, which in recent years has primarily, but not exclusively, been associated with Islamic jihadism, can arise in many different environments. At the time of the September 11 attacks, Al Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden were resident in Afghanistan, a very poor, land-locked country. Before that, Bin Laden had found refuge in Sudan. Most of the participants in the September 11 attack, however, were born in the heart of the Arab world, namely in Saudi Arabia, and had resided for a number of years in Germany. The perpetrators of the July 7 attacks on the mass transit system in London were Muslims of Somali and Eritrean origin, raised and schooled in the United Kingdom. The bomber, whose efforts to bring down an airliner headed for Detroit were frustrated by a courageous and alert passenger, was a Nigerian citizen who had spent time with jihadi ideologues in the Middle East. The attacks in Paris and Nice in 2015 – 2016 were carried out by individuals born in North Africa, but who had lived for many years in Western Europe. The murders of fourteen peo-

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ple in San Bernardino, California, were perpetrated by a U.S. citizen born in Chicago, whose parents were from Pakistan and who was educated at California State University, San Bernardino, and his wife, who was born in Pakistan but spent many years in Saudi Arabia. The massacre at the Orlando, Florida, night club in 2016 was carried out by the American-born son of a man who had emigrated from Afghanistan and had lived for many years in the United States.

While terrorism associated with Islamic jihadism is hardly an exclusive product of safe havens in countries afflicted by civil strife or poor governance, the existence of such safe havens does, as Martha Crenshaw argues, exacerbate the problem.[3] Safe havens are environments within which would-be terrorists can train over an extended period of time. A number of terrorists, even those raised in Western, industrialized countries, have taken advantage of such training. Transnational terrorist organizations might or might not secure weapons of mass destruction; they might or might not develop more effective training; their operatives might or might not be discovered by intelligence services in advanced industrialized democracies. Civil war and weak governance, however, increase the likelihood that transnational terrorist groups will find safe havens, and safe havens increase the likelihood of attacks that could kill large numbers of people.

Global pandemics and transnational terrorism are the two most serious threats presented by civil wars. The probability that either will significantly undermine the security of materially well-off states is uncertain, but both are distinct sources of danger. Civil wars and weak governance increase the likelihood that large numbers of people could be killed by either threat. Neither is an existential threat, but both could have grave consequences for advanced industrialized democratic states. Hundreds of thousands or millions of peo-

ple could die from a pandemic outbreak resulting from an easily transmissible disease vector or from a transnational terrorist attack that could involve dirty nuclear weapons, an actual nuclear weapon (still quite hard to obtain), or artificial biologics (increasingly easy to produce).

Either a global pandemic or terrorist attack, possibly using weapons of mass destruction, would almost certainly lead to some constraints on the traditional freedoms that have been associated with liberal democratic societies.

Migration, regional instability, and great-power conflict. Civil wars are also dangerous because they could lead to greater refugee flows, regional destabilization, and great-power conflict. Not every civil war has the potential for generating these global crises, but if generated, they would be a product not just of civil strife but also of policy choices that were made by advanced industrialized countries. In this regard, they should be contrasted with possible pandemics and transnational terrorism that, arguably, would occur regardless of the policies adopted by wealthy democratic states.

As Sarah Lischer's essay shows, the number of migrants – especially people displaced by civil wars – has increased dramatically in recent years.[4] Most of these migrants have been generated by three conflicts, those in Afghanistan, Syria, and Somalia. The wave of migrants entering Western Europe has destabilized traditional politics and contributed to the success of Brexit in the UK, the increased share of votes secured by right-wing parties in a number of Western European countries, and the electoral gains of a number of right-wing parties in Eastern Europe. Anxiety about immigration contributed to Donald Trump's victory in the United States. European countries, even those on the left like Sweden, have responded to rising numbers of refugees by tightening the rules for potential migrants. The European Union reached a

deal with Turkey in 2016 to provide financial resources in exchange – among other things – for an increase in acceptance of refugees. At the same time, the sheer number of refugees in Jordan and Lebanon can potentially undermine government control in those countries.

The impact of civil wars in one country can spread to surrounding areas. ISIL's ambitious campaigns have afflicted Syria and Iraq. Civil strife in Somalia has, as Seyoum Mesfin and Abdeta Beyene write, influenced the policies of Ethiopia.[5] The FARC insurgency in Colombia impacted Venezuela and Ecuador. Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) drew in several neighboring states. Some regional conflicts have resulted in millions of deaths, most notably the war in the DRC, with limited impact on and attention from wealthy industrialized countries. Wars in the Middle East, however, have been more consequential because they have led to the involvement of Russia and the United States, they are closer to Europe and have therefore generated more refugees, and Middle Eastern oil is a global commodity on which much of the world depends. Regional destabilization in the Middle East does matter for the West; regional destabilization in Central Africa may only matter for those who live in the neighborhood.

Direct confrontation between major powers has not occurred since the end of World War II. In well-governed areas, where civil wars are absent, the likelihood of great-power conflict is small. Territorial conquest has been delegitimized (though Russia's annexation of Crimea stands as a recent exception to this norm). The existence of nuclear weapons has removed uncertainty about the costs of a confrontation between nuclear-armed states with assured second-strike capability. Great-power confrontations are, however, more likely in areas that are afflicted by civil strife, because instability and appeals from local ac-

tors could draw in major state actors with vested interests. This is especially true for the Middle East. Moreover, in countries on the periphery of Russia that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, especially those with sizeable Russian ethnic populations, the government in Moscow has demonstrated that it can increase the level of internal unrest. There is no guarantee of stability, even in countries that might have been stable absent external support for dissident groups that would otherwise have remained quiescent.

As Barry Posen suggests in his essay, multipolarity makes all aspects of external involvement in civil wars more fraught, including the possibility of a conflict among the major powers.[6] In a multipolar world, no single pole is likely to be able to dictate outcomes to potential combatants. The possibility of a hurting stalemate declines because all sides hope that their fortunes could be resurrected by some outside power. Absent a hurting stalemate, which makes the standard treatment including UN Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKOs) and other forms of assistance attractive to major combatants, civil wars are more likely to continue. The contemporary international environment is more multipolar than was the case during the bipolarity of the Cold War or the unipolarity of the United States that lasted for a little over a decade after the Soviet Union collapsed. Managing civil wars will now be more difficult. The possibility of great-power conflict has increased. And because wars will prove harder to end, refugee flows will persist.

Criminality. Criminality is a final area in which there may be some association between civil wars and weak governance, and the well-being of individuals in advanced industrialized countries. Because of the ease of transportation and communication, criminality is not limited to specific countries. Internet theft can originate from and impact many different countries. The loss

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of billions of dollars a year, drug smuggling, and human trafficking are familiar manifestations of transnational criminality. As Vanda Felbab-Brown writes, large-scale criminality can greatly exacerbate the challenges states face in defeating insurgencies and ending civil wars.[7]

Addressing criminality associated with civil wars is fraught with difficulty. The association between criminal gangs and the state may be uncertain. National elites may protect criminal organizations. Some criminal organizations may generate revenues that help national elites stay in power. Yet while transnational criminality does affect individuals and institutions in the wealthier democracies, it is not a threat to their domestic political orders. The problem is best dealt with through national and international law enforcement.

The most important conclusion that emerges from the discussions at the core of our project is that the policy options for addressing civil wars are limited. The essays in these two issues suggest that there are four factors that external actors must take into account when considering responses to intrastate warfare in weakly governed polities: the extent to which the interests of external and national political elites are complementary; the presence of irreconcilable groups in a civil conflict; the threat of great-power conflict; and the costs of intervention.

Alignment of interests. Of these four factors, the greatest impediment to successful interventions is the misalignment of domestic and external elites' interests. Domestic elites governing an area afflicted by civil strife will be primarily interested in keeping themselves in power. The path to Denmark is paved with free and fair elections, rational-legal bureaucracies, and the rule of law, all of which are antithetical to the interests of those who hold power in closed-access or exclusive polities.

The best that external actors can hope for is to bring some degree of security to areas that are afflicted with civil strife, which is easier to accomplish if none of the combatants are motivated by ideologies that cannot be reconciled, and if competing major or regional powers are not engaged in waging proxy wars. But even if irreconcilable and contending states are not part of a civil war's landscape, ambitious programs for state-building and democratization will usually fail because domestic elites are primarily interested in staying in power, not in structural reform.

Foreign and security assistance has been effective in creating a limited number of better state institutions and probably lessening the chances of civil war, but then only under favorable circumstances and only to some extent. Foreign assistance might create islands of excellence, but these islands are likely to remain isolated or wither away when foreign assistance is withdrawn. Without the support of domestic elites, external actors will usually fail to quell civil wars or effectively deal with spillovers from such strife.

Most of the world's polities, especially polities plagued by intrastate warfare, are rent-seeking states in which the political elite maintains itself in power through foreign assistance and corruption. Election results will not lead to ruling factions going quietly into the night unless the number of votes approximates the number of guns that political leaders require to stay in power. The Madisonian sweet spot in which the government is strong enough to maintain order but constrained enough to allow individual freedom within a polity is not the natural order of things. For almost all of human history in almost all places in the world, governments were exploitative and repressive. If individuals could escape the grip of the state they did.[8]

In some instances, external actors might be able to alter the incentives of nation-

al elites in predictable ways. But the conditions under which this might happen are uncommonly found. Political elites in poorer countries torn by civil war are almost always enmeshed in what economist Daron Acemoglu and political scientist James Robinson have termed an exclusive order.[9] Their primary objective is to stay in power. This requires the care and feeding of members of their essential support network. Most important, they must have command over enough of those who control the instruments of violence so that they cannot be overthrown. Political leaders in exclusive or rent-seeking orders are focused on avoiding the loss of status, prestige, money, and even life that would follow from a loss of office. These leaders will regard efforts to, for instance, hold free and fair elections or to eliminate corruption as existential threats.

Even more modest policies, like reforming customs services, which are often revenue sources for elites in exclusive orders, might be regarded as problematic. External actors are only likely to have leverage if domestic elites are highly dependent on foreign assistance, which, as James Fearon's essay notes, is often the case, and if external actors can credibly threaten to withdraw aid, which is often not the case.[10] If domestic rulers have alternative sources of revenue, such as payments from extractive industries, or if the recipient state is strategically important, donors will not be able to credibly threaten to withdraw assistance as government scholars Desha Girod and Michael Ross have explained.[11]

These constraints were vividly apparent in Afghanistan, where the United States, despite investing billions of dollars in elections, anticorruption efforts, and counternarcotics campaigns, was unable to curb the rapaciousness of the Karzai regime. Hamid Karzai resented rather than embraced American efforts to alter the fundamental character of Afghanistan's polity because such initiatives threatened his position. The 2009 elections were manifestly corrupt because Karzai could not risk losing office (though corruption abounded on all sides). Efforts to investigate the plundering of some $800 million from the Bank of Kabul were blocked by Karzai because the loot benefited his family and his supporters.

As Stephen Biddle indicates in his essay, principal-agent analysis provides a framework for understanding the problems that occur when the interests of external and internal actors are misaligned, which will always be the case when external actors try to promote accountability in rent-seeking polities. Biddle focuses on security force assistance. He argues that creating an effective national security force, at least effective in the eyes of external donors, is much harder than has generally been recognized or accepted.[12] As noted above, interests of domestic elites are often profoundly different from the interests of external elites. The former focus on retaining power and domestic threats to their position, while the latter focus more on international or transnational threats that could endanger their home countries.

Adverse selection is, as Biddle emphasizes, a problem that cannot be avoided: the United States is most likely to provide security assistance to states that are badly governed polities; if these polities were well-governed, they would not need external security assistance. In corrupt rent-seeking states, political leaders will not view the military as an objective neutral force. Rather the armed forces will be viewed, as William Reno emphasizes, as a potential rival that must be contained through some combination of enfeeblement, pay-offs, and enmeshing military officers in illegal activities that tie them to the fate of the regime.[13] A well-organized, efficient military capable of fighting effectively in the field is exactly what leaders in poorly governed, rent-seeking states do not want. As Biddle remarks, it

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would be almost impossible for an external actor to monitor behaviors, such as rewarding loyalists with military sinecures or stealing or diverting funds, which would be in the interests of clientelistic national elites, but not in the interests of external actors attempting to create an effective national military force.

From this perspective, the sudden collapse of the Iraqi army in Mosul in 2014, despite one decade of U.S. military effort and billions of dollars of expenditures, was hardly surprising. The United States wanted that army to fight effectively against its ideological enemy, ISIL. Iraqi leaders wanted an army that would not threaten them and their grip on power.

Civil wars usually do not create the conditions that allow countries to build stable inclusive polities and significantly improve the economic livelihoods of large parts of the population. As Steven Heydemann illustrates with regard to the Middle East, the rent-seeking patterns that were established before the conflict are likely to be reinforced during periods of civil war.[14] Economic activity is essentially a protection racket that allows elites to pay off those with guns, whom they need to stay in power.

Further complicating the task of the external powers is the problem of information asymmetry, referred to above when noting the challenges of monitoring the implementation of security assistance programs. External actors are not likely to be able to fully, or even partially, understand the interests and capabilities of relevant actors in countries crippled by civil strife. Cultures may be alien. Language facility may be elusive. Local power brokers and their families live in towns and villages for a lifetime, while foreign diplomats and soldiers often remain for one year at most.

In sum, if the goal of the United States or other external actor is to help countries that have been afflicted with civil war move toward consolidated democracy and open-market systems, there will inevitably be wide, unbridgeable chasms between the preferences of domestic and foreign elites.

The presence of irreconcilables and great powers. If one or more of the major warring factions are irreconcilables, or if two or more major powers have significant and diverging interests regarding conflict termination, policy options to treat civil wars will be limited.

Transnational terrorism has been motivated primarily by ideological movements that entirely reject the extant rules and norms of the global order. As the essays by Tanisha Fazal and Stathis Kalyvas make clear, religiously motivated insurgents have embraced a worldview that is completely antithetical to the reigning, almost taken-for-granted, norm of appropriateness in the contemporary international order: the sovereign state system.[15] The principles and norms associated with Westphalian sovereignty and international legal sovereignty are completely hostile to those that have been accepted and promulgated by Islamic jihadi groups.

For Islamic jihadis and, as Fazal points out, other religious groups, authority is derived from God, not from some man-made institution. For Islamic jihadis, there is a fundamental distinction between Dar al-Islam, the world of Islam populated by Muslims and ruled by Islamic law, and Dar al-Harb, the house of infidels or where Islamic law is not implemented. According to some interpretations of Islamic law, Islamic states can only sign permanent treaties with other Islamic polities; with the non-Islamic world, agreements are limited to ten years. ISIL, the most prominent contemporary example of Islamic jihadi thought, has indicated that its purpose is to create a caliphate in the Middle East. Such a caliphate would ignore established state borders and the norms and rules of sovereignty.

To an extent, secular rebels who uncompromisingly wish to establish a breakaway

independent sovereign state pose the same challenge to external powers that place a premium on the maintenance of the contemporary international system and the preservation of existing state borders. They cannot be bought off with foreign assistance and they will not accept compromise.

In such instances, the most realistic policy option for those committed to the defense of the status quo might be to "give war a chance." As Sumit Ganguly describes, the Sri Lankan armed forces were able to defeat the separatist Tamil Tigers, who, while subscribing to the international order, were, from the perspective of the Sri Lankan government, irreconcilable.[16] Indigenous forces may not, however, always be strong enough to prevail. Foreign forces may have to be deployed. However, as the painful examples of Afghanistan and Iraq make clear, subjugating irreconcilables, particularly when partnered with a domestically unpopular corrupt regime, usually involves a costly, protracted investment. Special forces or raiding parties are a more attractive option.

Just as the misalignment of domestic and external actors' interests has far-reaching policy consequences, so do the misalignment of major powers' interests. The presence of opposing major powers in a civil war, as already noted, can potentially threaten the security of each, as well as the international system. But the presence of contending external powers also complicates and constrains efforts to end the fighting and establish a lasting peace. If the permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5) are on opposing sides in a civil war, the standard treatment will not be an option. UN Security Council approval for peacekeeping forces will not be forthcoming. Even if a state is not a member of the P5, but provides refuge or support for one of the contending parties, as has been the case in Afghanistan and Syria, it will be much more difficult to end a civil war. There will be no hurting stalemate. The diffusion of glob-

al power not only makes civil wars more threatening, it also makes their resolution more problematic.

The costs of intervention. The instruments that are available to external actors to address civil wars can be arrayed along a continuum that is defined by cost and lead-actor identity. It is easiest to think of these instruments as falling into three bundles. The first is characterized by unilateral or multilateral foreign military interventions, usually accompanied by robust aid and development programs, designed to install a friendly government or reinforce a threatened state. The second encompasses various kinds of foreign assistance focused on improving governance, boosting the economy, and strengthening indigenous security forces. The third, consists of what several authors in this collection have termed the standard treatment for ending civil wars: namely, peacekeeping operations (PKOs) administered by the United Nations or regional organizations, plus some assistance.

Unilateral and multilateral ("coalitions of the willing") are often hugely expensive undertakings. Well-equipped and well-paid volunteer military forces of the wealthy democracies of the world are sent abroad at a high cost to taxpayers. The price of just one U.S. Army soldier or Marine serving in Iraq or Afghanistan for one year at the height of President George W. Bush's military surge, in the first instance, and President Barack Obama's military surge, in the second, was estimated at $1 million. The entire UN peacekeeping budget in 2016 was about $8 billion and paid for the deployment of ninety thousand blue helmets per annum, or about $88,000 per peacekeeper per year. This is not to argue that UN blue helmets would have succeeded in either Iraq or Afghanistan; there was no peace to keep and they decidedly would have failed. But the difference in cost is stark.

As costs and casualties mount, political opposition within the countries of the con-

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tributing forces rises. Progress remains elusive due to the misaligned interests of the domestic elites and those of the intervening powers, the presence of irreconcilables, or the hand of opposing powers. Strategic opportunity costs become more evident and levels of ambition decrease. Delivering credible commitments to host-nation partners becomes impossible. The search for an exit strategy becomes a policy priority. A wealthy democracy will only sustain an extended costly foreign military intervention aimed at quelling a civil war when there is a domestic political consensus that a vital national interest is at stake, which will be rare.

In instances in which political and security conditions do not permit the application of UN PKOs, foreign assistance comes at far lower costs than unilateral and multilateral military interventions (foreign aid is far cheaper than direct military action). Again, the challenges of the misalignment of domestic and external actors' interests loom large, but with a lighter footprint, monitoring of the aid rendered becomes even more problematic. As noted by Stephen Biddle, indigenous security forces rarely meet the expectations of their foreign patrons. This can become a severe and often intractable problem when irreconcilables are present on the battlefield or capable opposing powers decide to meddle.

However, contingency matters. There are situations in which this approach can achieve success. Colombia, whose peace process is examined by Aila Matanock and Miguel García-Sánchez, provides an excellent example.[17] A middle ground between the first two approaches, in which the intervening power militarily focuses its security assistance efforts on training, equipping, and enabling small numbers of indigenous special operations forces rather than attempting to build and maintain large, expensive conventional formations, might also be feasible. Indigenous special operations forces can be closely monitored, are cost-effective, and do not pose to domestic political rulers existential political threats or offer the irresistible rent-seeking opportunities that big armies do. In Colombia, however, at least part of the national elite was supportive of U.S. assistance because the position of that elite was endangered by narcotics cartels and left-wing guerrillas. The recent battlefield successes of Iraqi and Afghan special operations forces, mentored and enabled by U.S. special operations forces, also make this option worthy of further exploration.

Mediated peace agreements monitored by the UN (or regional organizations) and including peacekeeping forces are far less expensive than unilateral intervention by a major power for any extended period of time. There have been seventy-one UN PKOs since 1948; sixteen operations are ongoing. At the end of 2016, there were over ninety thousand troops involved in UN operations. Among the ongoing missions with more than one thousand committed personnel in December 2016, the longest lasting have been Cyprus since 1964, Lebanon since 1978, Liberia since 2003, and the Ivory Coast since 2004. The longest UN PKO still in operation is the UN Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan, which has been in place since 1948, but only has 111 individuals committed to its mission.

Troops and police in peacekeeping operations, however, rarely fight their way into a country. Casualties are usually very low. PKOs usually help to keep the peace after national actors have reached some kind of agreement. Both sides recognize that they are in a hurting stalemate that neither can win. Combatants are motivated by conventional material objectives; they accept the existing international order. They are not motivated by ideological or religious concerns that lead them to reject compromise of any kind. As Richard Gowan and Ste-

phen Stedman highlight, PKOs work best when there are a limited number of national parties, when there are no hostile neighbors, when there are no national spoilers, and when there is a functioning state. Under the best possible circumstances, a peace agreement guaranteed by a UN PKO may have to be in place for an extended and indefinite period of time if a new outbreak of hostilities is to be avoided.

In many cases, UN peacekeeping efforts will not work at all. If one of the contending parties believes that it can win outright, which, as Sumit Ganguly explains, is what happened in Sri Lanka, then the stronger party will not agree to external mediation and the interposition of a peacekeeping force. Nor will a combatant motivated by ideological concerns that reject the extant sovereign state system. Peacekeeping operations are, as Jean-Marie Guéhenno explains, in tension with some fundamental norms that have informed the UN system, especially the principle of nonintervention in the affairs of other states.[18] Peacekeeping operations require a consensus among the major powers. In the bipolar world of the Cold War, the number of UN PKOs requiring the approval of both the United States and the Soviet Union were limited. In fact, the amount of UN peacekeeping operations may have already peaked in the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first, when the United States held exceptional unilateral power. As Barry Posen suggests, as the world becomes more multilateral, it will be more difficult for the major powers to agree on peacekeeping operations, even in the absence of jihadi movements that reject the extant international order.[19]

There is a strong argument to be made, however, that the standard treatment regime offers cost-effective therapy when the conditions are right. PKOs are less expensive than military interventions by troops from advanced industrialized countries, es-

pecially the United States. The UN's 2016 peacekeeping budget of $8 billion is less than 2 percent of the budget of the United States Department of Defense. In 2016, the United States contributed about 29 percent of the UN PKO budget, which amounted to less than 1 percent of its own defense budget. The largest expense for PKOs is personnel, and most troops are drawn from developing countries whose pay scale is far less than that of militaries in the industrialized north. In 2016, the largest number of troops came from Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Rwanda, all of which contributed more than five thousand troops; the United States contributed thirty-four. And since 1948, there have been 3,508 fatalities associated with UN peacekeeping missions, amounting to an average of sixty deaths per year.

The results have been noteworthy. As James Fearon writes: "A remarkable 41 percent of the civil wars that have ended since 1991 (twenty-one out of fifty-one) have had UN PKOs. This does not mean that the PKO (and associated postconflict aid regime) caused or secured a durable peace in each case. But the evidence from comparisons of similar 'treated' and untreated cases suggests that PKOs probably lower conflict recurrence and may increase the feasibility of peace deals that would be less likely without this third-party monitoring and enforcement instrument."[20] Moreover, as Clare Lockhart and as Nancy Lindborg and Joseph Hewitt point out in their essays, well-designed, targeted, and monitored development assistance can help improve governance and economies when conditions are suitable, which they may be when UN PKOs can be effectively deployed.[21] Still, the subset of ongoing and yet-to-emerge civil wars amenable to the standard treatment may be shrinking as the great-power cooperation appears to be declining, militant international jihadists are unlikely to agree to mediation, and America's appetite for large-

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scale foreign military interventions that entail nation-building has declined dramatically over the past decade (see Table 1).

The essays in these two issues of *Dædalus* suggest that external actors, especially external actors from the advanced industrialized world, confront a daunting task in addressing the problems posed by weak government institutions and civil war. The challenges arise both because of the nature of the threats and the character of the political environment within which external interventions might be conducted. The threats associated with civil wars and badly governed states are pandemic disease, transnational terrorism, migration, regional instability, great-power conflict, and crime. Although the first two of these threats could have direct and serious negative material consequences for advanced industrialized countries, they do not pose existential risks that could destroy the basic political order in wealthy democratic states. Severe shocks, however, could lessen – temporarily at least – commitments to liberal political values and norms.

These two threats – pandemic disease and transnational terrorism – demand a response, but this does not mean that the advanced industrialized democracies must address every civil war. The most effective measures for addressing the threat of pandemic disease (the sources of which are limited to particular regions of the world) would be either to strengthen the national health services of states where epidemics might begin or, if the domestic governance structure is too weak, strengthen the international capacity for monitoring and identifying national epidemics that could become pandemics. The most vexing situations, and the ones germane to this study, are those in which national health services are deficient and civil strife prevents international agencies from operating effectively. If an easily transmissible new disease vector arises in human populations in areas impacted by civil strife, this would warrant the use of a short-term military intervention. The intervention would be designed to facilitate the work of trained public health officials who could monitor, identify, and possibly develop treatment regimes to mitigate the possibility of a global pandemic.

The other threat that might warrant the use of military operations by the United States or some other major power is transnational terrorism. In the contemporary period, transnational terrorism has been primarily (although not exclusively) generated by Salafist Islamic groups that reject the basic principles of the extant international order. Safe havens facilitate terrorist training. Major terrorist attacks, especially attacks involving dirty nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons, or biological agents could kill hundreds of thousands or even millions of people. The most effective response would be to put in place a national regime that could guarantee security and contain transnational terrorism. Such a regime might not protect human rights or adopt policies consistent with civilian accountability. If external actors cannot establish or support an effective national regime, the only option might be a raiding strategy designed to destroy or degrade terrorist targets.

Even, however, in the case of the two threats that could have a major impact on the material interests of advanced industrialized democracies – pandemics or transnational terrorism – national military operations, if they are undertaken at all, should be short-term and targeted. Differences in the preferences between elites in advanced wealthy democracies and those in polities affected by civil strife are so great that there is little possibility of achieving good governance. The best that external actors can hope for is adequate governance. Short-term targeted military interventions could achieve this objective. Ambitious,

Table 1
Summary of Policy Options

*Stephen D.
Krasner
& Karl
Eikenberry*

Policy Option	Cost	Necessary Conditions	Modalities	Objectives	Possibility of Success
Standard Treatment	Medium	No irreconcilables, no great-power conflict, mutually recognized hurting stalemate	UN peacekeepers, foreign assistance	Security, but no necessary improvement in governance	High, if conditions are met
Adequate Governance	Medium to Low	Central or regional governments that can effectively police their territory, closed-access or exclusive order, no irreconcilables	Foreign and security assistance	Security, some service provision, some economic growth	Medium to high, if conditions are met
Path to Denmark (Democracy, Economic Growth, Protection of Human Rights)	High to Medium	Transitioning society	Foreign assistance to groups favoring more open order	Open-access order	Uncertain even in transitioning polities; impossible in closed-access polities
Give War a Chance	Potentially low if military victory is achievable	One side or government has dominant power	Destruction of opposition	Security, but no necessary improvement in governance	High, if conditions are met
Long-Term Military Intervention by Major Power	Very High	Irreconcilables, no hurting stalemate, limited government capacity	U.S. or other forces	Security and governance improvement	Low, especially with regard to improved governance
Short-Term Special Forces or Raiding Parties	Medium to Low	Irreconcilables, no hurting stalemate, limited state capacity	U.S. or other special forces	Security	Medium

protracted, expensive (and usually unsustainable) armed interventions will fail to accomplish more. Finding and proceeding along the path to Denmark is not a realistic possibility.

The standard treatment is more cost-effective than the use of military forces from advanced industrialized democracies. UN peacekeeping is less expensive and less dangerous than deploying national military forces. However, the standard treatment can only be applied under certain specific conditions. None of the major antagonists can be irreconcilables. All of the major antagonists must recognize that they are in a hurting stalemate that no party can win and that international mediation is the best option. The major powers must all agree that a UN peacekeeping mission is appropriate.

Migration, regional instability, and possible great-power conflict are a second set of threats that could be consequential for advanced industrialized democracies. These threats only arise, however, as a result of policy choices that have been made by the major powers. Not every civil conflict generates such threats. Migration, regional instability, and potential great-power conflict are, however, much more of a threat in the Middle East, where jihadi movements are active and which is geographically close to Europe. Some European states have already reacted to the increase in migrant flows by writing new rules that have limited new entrants and represent at least a temporary retreat from previous norms of generosity and openness. Broader regional conflicts breaking along intermixed sectarian, national, and ethnic lines are being spawned by Middle Eastern civil wars. And of even greater concern, the U.S. and Russian militaries are operating in close proximity, supporting opposing warring factions. The continuing diffusion of global power and redefining of major and regional powers' geographic areas of interest may increase the risks civil wars pose to international order.

There are many civil wars in the international environment for which there is no fully satisfactory solution. The interests of domestic and external actors are usually not aligned and are sometimes in conflict. Ambitious efforts to engineer political and social transformations among peoples who do not share a deep sense of national identity and whose norms are inconsistent with those of the intervening power are likely to fail. If good governance is not a realistic short-term goal, however, adequate governance might be.

The type of interventions selected must be based upon the interests and resources of the external actors and the conditions within the conflicted country and its surrounding region. Large unilateral and multilateral military operations will likely fail if protracted and, over time, the intervening power concludes no vital national security interest is at stake. Foreign assistance to improve governance and economic performance and strengthen indigenous security forces is less expensive and hence sustainable, but will often flounder under the combined effects of misaligned interests, external/internal actor principal-agent problems, or irreconcilables. The standard treatment including the use of UN PKOs has a proven (though far from perfect) track record, but will only be acceptable to combatants if they recognize that they are in a hurting stalemate, if there is agreement among all of the major powers, which will be increasingly difficult in a more multipolar world, and if none of the combatants are motivated by ideological or religious concerns, which do not allow for compromise. If the threats are significant and the standard treatment cannot be applied, then the use of short-term and targeted national military force or containment will be the only options.

ENDNOTES

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Inside back cover: Ebola survivor and nurse's aide Benetha Coleman comforts an infant girl with Ebola symptoms in the high-risk area of the Doctors Without Borders (MSF) Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) on January 26, 2015, in Paynesville, Liberia. © John Moore/Getty Images.

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