Dædalus

Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

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
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Introduction

Karl Eikenberry & Stephen D. Krasner

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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-

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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-

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

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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.

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> 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.

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

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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 byproduct 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.

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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.

[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).

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.

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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 con- flict and of the international order do not bode well for international cooperation to prevent civil wars. As Bruce Jones and Stephen Stedman have described, grow- ing tensions among the great powers have undermined the ability of the coopera- tive post–Cold War "treatment" for civ- il wars – from international mediation to peacekeeping – to work in places like Syr- ia, Yemen, and Libya. As James Fearon has noted, the growing transnational charac- ter of nonstate actors like ISIS compli- cates the ability to exercise leverage on the perpetrators of violence and terror- ism in civil wars. Indeed, the new roles of technology and nonstate actors generally require more actors and different incen- tives to avert conflict. And as Stedman and Richard Gowan have indicated, the "treat- ment" 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 chang- es to the status quo inside a country. As political scientist Barnett Rubin has writ- ten, "All prevention is political."[21] Where- as 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. Exter- nal conflict prevention – whether it occurs pre-, post-, or during civil war – is based on the assessment that a country's politi- cal institutions are unable to prevent the escalation of violent conflict on their own and that international intervention is nec- essary 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, cultur- al, or political sources of conflict," even if the specific way in which this should be done is hotly debated.[22] To change the sta- tus quo of a conflict-prone country, inter- vening 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 con- flict prevention, instead of using it to ad- dress 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 chal- lenges also plague prevention. It is diffi- cult for decision-makers to decide to take preventive actions. Decision-makers are busy. The higher their position, the busi- er they are. At the same time, sensitive pre- vention actions usually require the buy-in of high-level decision-makers.[23] To make numerous decisions daily, high-level deci- sion-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, rein- forcing the organization's standard operat- ing procedures and existing policies.[25] In- ternational affairs scholar Lori Gronich has argued that decision-makers avoid com- plexity, delaying decisions that appear to be complex and risky in favor of simple solu- tions 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

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Conclusion

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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 people 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 manmade 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 opera-

tions 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

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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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¹⁷ Aila M. Matanock and Miguel García-Sánchez, "The Colombian Paradox: Peace Processes, Elite Divisions & Popular Plebiscites," *Dædalus* 146 (4) (Fall 2017).

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