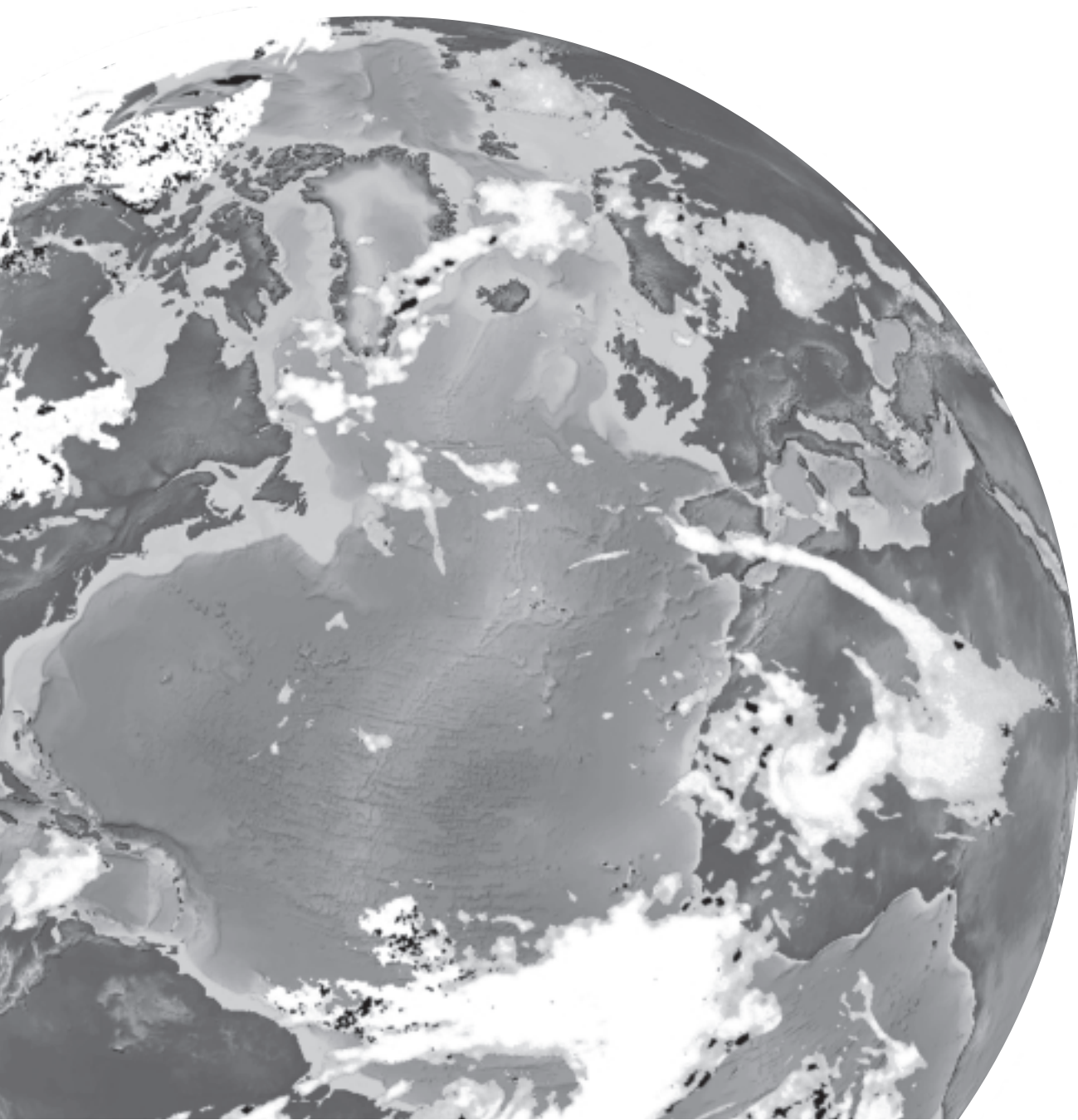


International Actors and Internal Conflicts

PROJECT ON WORLD SECURITY
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Stephen John Stedman



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STEPHEN JOHN STEDMAN is Senior Research Scholar at the Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University. His current research focuses on the implementation of peace agreements in civil wars and the wars of the 1990s in historical perspective.

ROCKEFELLER BROTHERS FUND, INC.
437 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022-7001
Telephone: 212.812.4200
Facsimile: 212.812.4299
E-mail: rock@rbf.org
World Wide Web: www.rbf.org

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SUMMARY

Almost every internal war has an external component. Some external effects are purposive, where external actors aid and abet internal factions and governments. Some external effects are unintended. This category includes actions by international financial institutions (IFIs), which, while narrowly focusing on the requirements of good economic policy, insist on economic programs that disproportionately affect disgruntled ethnic groups within a country or undermine a reformist government under the threat from disaffected regions or ethnic groups. Another example would be the actions of humanitarian agencies, which, while aimed at relieving suffering of vulnerable populations, provide warring groups with needed food and supplies to continue a war. Another example would be well-intentioned mediators, who fail to see likely problems in the agreements they create.

There are cases, however, of purposive international action that prevented, mitigated, resolved, or managed internal conflicts. Analysts point to the successful preventative deployment of peacekeepers into Macedonia, and the protracted diplomatic attention given to that country, as key factors in preventing the spread of war to that country. Several tense transitions of authoritarian states in Africa resulted in peaceful, democratic transition, rather than protracted, bloody civil strife. International mediation produced agreements that promised to end several bloody civil wars. And while agreements failed to be implemented in Rwanda, Angola, and Cambodia, international actors served as custodians for successful peace processes in El Salvador, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

This paper surveys the recent literature on the role of international actors in internal conflicts. It covers a range of activities — conflict exacerbation, preventive action, mediation, implementation, peacekeeping and peace enforcement, and structural mediation or rule-making. It examines a variety of international actors, including states, international organizations, regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

This paper has four messages.

- First, there is a range of options available to international actors who seek to manage internal conflicts.
- Second, the attempt to do good, if poorly planned and lacking in strategy, can do more harm than good.
- Third, we know a lot about different techniques of intervention, but we seem to know little about ourselves; that is, why we care about wars in the rest of the world and what we should do about them.
- Fourth, what has been missing in recent work on the role of international actors in internal conflicts is debate over fundamentals: the ethics of choice among tools, approaches, and criteria of intervention; and the interests that are at stake in our choices.

I. INTRODUCTION

¹ The estimate of thirty-five wars is based on the work done for the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute by Peter Wallensteen and Margareta Sollenberg.

² Dan Smith, “Towards Understanding the Causes of War,” in *Causes of Conflict in the Third World*, ed. Dan Smith and Ketil Volden (Oslo: Idegruppen and Peace Research Institute of Oslo [PRIO], 1996).

³ For detailed information about the international effects of internal wars, see the regional essays, as well as Michael E. Brown, “The Causes and Regional Dimensions of Internal Conflicts,” in *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflicts*, ed. Michael E. Brown (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996). Also particularly good on the regional effects of wars in Africa is Francis M. Deng, Sadikill Kimaro, Terrence Lyons, Donald Rothchild, and I. William Zartman, *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1996), pp. 131–67.

⁴ Stephen John Stedman, “Negotiation and Mediation in Internal Conflicts,” in *The International Dimensions*, ed. Brown, pp. 341–76.

⁵ Dan Smith, *The State of War and Peace Atlas*, New Edition (New York: Penguin and the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo, 1997), p. 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁷ Alison Brysk and Carol Wise, *Economic Adjustment and Ethnic Conflict in Bolivia, Peru, and Mexico*, Working Paper Series, No. 216 (Washington, DC: Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, December 1995).

⁸ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1995).

⁹ John Prendergast, *Frontline Diplomacy: Humanitarian Aid and Conflict in Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

¹⁰ Bruce D. Jones, “‘Intervention without Borders’: Humanitarian Intervention in Rwanda, 1990–1994,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1995), pp. 225–49.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Jones’s requiem for Rwanda reads, “It is important to emphasize that these failures were failures of actions taken, not of the lack of action. If the bureaucrats, diplomats, activists, and scholars who make up the ‘international community’ learn lessons from Rwanda, those lessons are only partially of the costs of inaction in critical situations. The more fundamental lessons of Rwanda are that we can, and do, intervene early in conflicts, that we already engage in a form of preventive diplomacy, and that when we do, the consequences of our interventions can sometimes be catastrophic.”

Civil war is the dominant form of warfare in the 1990s. All thirty-five of the wars in 1997 were primarily internal; that is, they are fought over who shall rule within an internationally recognized territory.¹ Although there has not been an appreciable increase in the number of civil wars since the 1980s, the wars of the 1990s have been tremendously costly; by one estimate 5.5 million people have died in them, making this the bloodiest decade since the 1940s.² In addition to the horrendous costs that such wars bring to the peoples most directly involved, they often have devastating regional impacts, as refugees flee their homes and place burdens on host countries, and combatants cross borders in search of supplies and sanctuary.³

Civil wars are much less likely to end in a negotiated settlement than inter-state wars.⁴ The parties face more severe security dilemmas than inter-state combatants; the antagonists come to fear the consequences of peace more than they fear the consequences of war. Parties in civil wars tend to use a rhetoric of total war that portrays the character of their opponent as the cause of the war. In the civil wars of the 1990s, the lines between combatant and civilian are non-existent; nearly 75 percent of the casualties of these wars are civilians.⁵ Frequently, children are soldiers; UNICEF estimates that two hundred thousand children under the age of fifteen are fighters in today’s wars.⁶

To label these conflicts “internal” misses key dynamics in how they start, rage, fizzle, and end. Almost every internal conflict has an external component. Some effects are purposive; external actors aid and abet internal factions and governments. States and rebels in the midst of war require arms, ammunition, and capital; rebels need sanctuary and supply routes. Some external effects are unintended. This category includes actions by IFIs, which, while narrowly focusing on the requirements of good economic policy, insist on economic programs that disproportionately affect disgruntled ethnic groups within a country⁷ or undermine a reformist government under threat from disaffected regions or ethnic groups.⁸ Another example would be the actions of humanitarian agencies, which, while aimed at relieving suffering of vulnerable populations, provide warring groups with needed food and supplies to continue a war.⁹ Another example would be well-intentioned mediators who fail to see likely problems in the agreements they create.¹⁰ As Bruce Jones points out, when journalists, NGOs, and citizens urge international actors to intervene in deadly wars, they probably already have for a long time — often with disastrous results.¹¹

There are cases, however, of purposive international action that prevented, mitigated, resolved, or managed internal conflicts. Analysts point to the successful preventive deployment of peacekeepers into Macedonia, and the protracted diplomatic attention given to that country, as key factors in preventing the spread of war to that country. Several tense transitions of authoritarian states in Africa resulted in peaceful, democratic transition rather than protracted, bloody civil strife. International mediation produced agreements that promised to end several bloody civil wars.

And while agreements failed to be implemented in Liberia, Rwanda, Angola, and Cambodia, international actors served as custodians for successful peace processes in El Salvador, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

Civil wars pose profound challenges to our collective sense of decency. Lying behind those challenges is a tangle of ethical questions. How, when, where, and by whom should intervention take place? By what lodestar should we make such decisions? Even when particular tools or approaches are selected, ethical dilemmas lie in ambush. What should peacekeepers do in the face of atrocity? What does it mean to be neutral and impartial when warring parties violate civilians? Should mediators insist on accountability for war crimes, if such insistence endangers a negotiated settlement? What should aid agencies do if their emergency relief feeds soldiers and stokes a war?

All too often, pundits have answered what should be done without an understanding of the complexities, difficulties, and limitations of different approaches. This paper attempts to fill the gap between the normative and empirical by surveying the recent literature on the role of international actors in internal conflicts. It covers a range of activities: conflict exacerbation, preventive action, mediation, implementation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and structural mediation or rule-making. It examines a variety of international actors, including states, international organizations (the United Nations and the IFIs), regional organizations (the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE], the Organization of African Unity [OAU], and the Organization of American States [OAS]), and NGOs.

II. CONFLICT EXACERBATION

Before exploring the ways international action can help prevent, reduce, or resolve internal violent conflicts, it is useful to catalogue ways in which international action exacerbates conflict. This paper distinguishes purposive actions from actions with unintended consequences.

PURPOSIVE ACTIONS

Michael Brown lumps together a large bundle of external contributions to internal conflict under the rubric, “bad neighbors.” Bad neighbors are outside actors who inflame crises and aid and abet states and rebels who use violence to prevail in domestic disputes. In his survey of causes of internal conflicts around the world, the impact of bad neighbors is much greater than the impact of bad neighborhoods — the spillover effects of conflict across borders, such as refugee swells and proliferation of light weapons trade.¹²

For example, in the 1990s both African states and former international patrons continue to supply weapons, training, and assistance to clients and friends in Africa, in the hope that they will prevail in civil conflicts. South Africa, France, Egypt, and nine other countries, supplied the former Rwandan government with weapons for its civil war against the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).¹³ The governments of China, France, and South Africa continued to supply former Rwandan soldiers in the refugee camps of Zaire.¹⁴ China and Iran have sold weapons to the Sudanese government. The United States has provided non-lethal military equipment to the governments of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan to fight against the Sudanese government. Burkina Faso, Côte D’Ivoire, and Libya provided military assistance to Charles Taylor’s forces in Liberia. Portugal and Russia supplied military hardware to the Angolan government after civil war resumed in 1992. Uganda has hosted representatives of seven different rebel movements in Africa and supplied arms and equipment to the RPF in Rwanda and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) in Sudan. Sudan, in turn, arms and supplies the Lord’s Resistance Army in Northern Uganda. The Mobutu regime in Zaire, which assisted the former Rwandan government in exile and supplied arms and capital to the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), was toppled by an internal rebellion equipped and assisted by Uganda and Rwanda. In retaliation for Zairean support for UNITA, Angola sent well-trained and equipped sons of former Katangan rebels into Zaire to open a second front against the Mobutu regime, thus hastening its downfall.

¹² Brown, “The Causes and Regional Dimensions,” pp. 572–90.

¹³ Stephen D. Goose and Frank Smyth, “Arming Genocide in Rwanda,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 5 (September/October 1994), p. 89.

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch Arms Project, “Rwanda/Zaire: Rearming with Impunity, International Support for the Perpetrators of the Rwandan Genocide” (May 1995).

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF PURPOSIVE ACTIONS

In addition to the purposive actions of outside actors who intentionally exacerbate internal conflicts, there is a host of ways that outside actors can unintentionally exacerbate conflict. Four types of activities are foremost here: (1) international

economic reform, (2) humanitarian relief, (3) humanitarian intervention, and (4) prevention.

International Economic Reform

The literature on internal conflicts is rife with references to the deleterious effects of structural adjustment, privatization, and economic reform directed by the IFIs. That IFIs have an impact on internal conflicts seems obvious. Less obvious is the character of the impact. Take, for example, the relationship between structural adjustment and stabilization measures, and civil war. Some have argued that such measures were contributors to the collapse of the state in Somalia.¹⁵ Yet, the most detailed empirical examination of economic policy-making under the Siad Barre regime concludes that it was precisely the unwillingness of the regime to implement the IFI's program that led to economic collapse.¹⁶

The most commonly cited example of the role of IFIs in exacerbating internal conflict is the intersection of International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies and the dissolution of the Yugoslavian state in the 1980s. Susan Woodward argues that the IFI's emphasis on economic liberalization in the early 1980s privileged more-prosperous regions in Yugoslavia that were better poised to enter Western markets — and disadvantaged the regions where industries were enmeshed in trade with the Socialist bloc and Third World.¹⁷ The unequal consequences of liberalization drove demands in Slovenia and Croatia for radical decentralization and weakened the commitment of Slovenia and Croatia to Yugoslav federal institutions that were essential for containing pressures for ethnic nationalism and for addressing regional economic inequities. At the same time, the IMF also undermined federal institutions by insisting on government reforms that eliminated consensus rules of decision-making, thus further alienating the republics of Slovenia and Croatia.

Although Woodward's case is plausible for Yugoslavia, one cannot generalize the role of the IFIs to other cases of civil wars. All Eastern European countries went through wrenching economic dislocation as they underwent simultaneous political and economic transition, but only Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union experienced civil war. What is needed is a comparative investigation into the contextual factors in the Yugoslavian case that interacted with the policies of the IFIs to produce violent conflict.

A more nuanced interpretation of the role of IFIs would recognize their enormous capacity for generating and exacerbating conflict but would also realize that the policies themselves are seldom determinative in leading to violent outcomes. As I have argued elsewhere, the economic liberalization programs of the IFIs were universally applied across the continent of Africa. Similarly, most African regimes were based on patrimonial politics and thus were extremely vulnerable to the changes demanded by the IFIs. Despite the similarity in policies of the IFIs, and despite the similarity in regime type in Africa, there were multiple conflict outcomes in the early 1990s. Some African countries imploded; others underwent narrow transitions to multi-party democracy; still others saw leaders turn to the politics of ethnic division and violence; and still others attempted to forge a new basis of legitimacy through authoritarian populism. A crucial intervening variable between the crisis of the state caused by economic liberalization on the one hand and political violence on the other hand was elite choice.¹⁸

¹⁵ Anna Simons, *Networks of Dissolution: Somalia Undone* (Boulder: Westview, 1995).

¹⁶ Jamil Abdalla Mubarak, *From Bad Policy to Chaos in Somalia: How an Economy Fell Apart* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996).

¹⁷ Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, pp. 58-81.

¹⁸ Stephen John Stedman, "Conflict and Conciliation in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The International Dimensions*, ed. Brown, pp. 243-44.

In Latin America, evidence suggests that although structural adjustment programs generate ethnic conflict, there are measures and steps that can be taken by the IFIs and governments to alleviate the effects. In particular, one study suggests that education investment, rural property rights, and social safety nets can play a crucial role in dampening ethnic tensions arising from economic adjustment.¹⁹

The evidence of the negative effects of IFIs on internal conflict has prompted one author to suggest that the mission of IFIs can be changed to play a role in conflict prevention.²⁰ Wolfgang H. Reinicke advocates that the IFIs consider sources of ethno-national disputes in their funding and investment decisions. He ignores, however, that financial institutions possess an organizational culture and decision-making frames hostile to non-economic criteria for investment.²¹ A sobering counter-assessment to those who recommend a new role for the IFIs in conflict management is the experience of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which, even though mandated to take political considerations explicitly into account in its investment decisions, gutted such political criteria within two years of its founding.²²

Humanitarian Relief

Several recent self-critical analyses have emerged from humanitarian relief organizations concerning the counterproductive effects of their actions in exacerbating or prolonging violent internal conflicts. This critical self-awareness has come through experience — through aid workers learning first-hand that their interventions may worsen a conflict.

Mary Anderson, for example, observes several ways that humanitarian assistance can worsen a conflict. When groups are in conflict in a resource-scarce environment, the introduction of aid and assistance often increases the competition among warring parties. External assistance in times of war often frees scarce resources that are put back into the war effort. External assistance “can result in severe distortions in local economic activities thus reducing income and employment opportunities for some groups and, correspondingly, increasing inter-group tensions.” The compromises made by outside agencies in order to provide relief may stoke the conflict. For example, some organizations may hire local guards to protect food deliveries and further consolidate the position of those with weapons. Or “by working through existing regimes in order to gain access to people in need, international assistance agencies can buttress such regimes. In some cases, such apparent support for the legitimacy of a regime can prolong oppression and resultant warfare.” On the other hand, if humanitarian organizations take sides in a conflict or even if they “circulate pictures or stories of war-based atrocities in their own publicity as a means of enlisting support for their work,” they may encourage a hardening of positions and a refusal to negotiate.²³

Often what we believe to be a humanitarian imperative turns out to be more of a humanitarian impulse.²⁴ For example, the enormous outpouring of relief to the refugees fleeing Rwanda in 1994 consolidated the position of those who plotted and carried out the genocide there, and enabled them to regroup to continue the war from across the border in Zaire. Food aid to Sudan is considered to have continued the war there; estimates of how much food aid reached civilian populations in Bosnia range from 10 percent to 33 percent, with the rest feeding the warring armies.

¹⁹ Brysk and Wise, “Economic Adjustment and Ethnic Conflict.”

²⁰ Wolfgang H. Reinicke, “Can International Financial Institutions Prevent Internal Violence? The Sources of Ethno-National Conflict in Transitional Societies,” in *Preventing Conflict in the Post-Communist World: Mobilizing International and Regional Organizations*, ed. A. Chayes and A. Chayes (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1996), pp. 281–338.

²¹ Melanie H. Stein, “Conflict Prevention in Transition Economies: A Role for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development?” in *Preventing Conflict*, ed. Chayes and Chayes, pp. 339–80.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Mary B. Anderson, *International Assistance and Conflict: An Exploration of Negative Impacts*, The Local Capacities for Peace Project: Issues Series No. 1 (Cambridge, MA: The Collaborative for Development Action, July 1994).

²⁴ Thomas G. Weiss and Cindy Collins, *Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention: World Politics and the Dilemmas of Help* (Boulder: Westview, 1996).

That humanitarian assistance has unintentional consequences does not imply that one should eschew purposive action to relieve suffering in war. Rather, it suggests that humanitarian agencies should weigh difficult choices, seek ways of overcoming basic dilemmas, and sometimes choose not to engage. John Prendergast, for example, has developed a professional code of conduct for humanitarian relief agencies that insists that short-term decisions about providing assistance be explicitly tied to a theory of resolving the specific conflict.²⁵ It remains to be seen, however, whether such a code will be an effective restraint against the humanitarian ‘urge’. Humanitarian relief remains a competitive industry, with low barriers to entry and enormous incentives to use specific humanitarian disasters to rally public sentiment and donations.²⁶

Humanitarian Intervention

Much of what I have written above for humanitarian assistance can be said of humanitarian intervention. The case of Liberia demonstrates that well-intentioned military intervention to stop a war can have devastating unintended consequences.

In August 1990, eight months after the war began in Liberia, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), decided to intervene for humanitarian reasons. At that time, the forces of Charles Taylor’s National People’s Liberation Front (NPLF) controlled almost all of Liberia and were laying siege to Monrovia, the capital city and redoubt of President Samuel Doe. A small faction commanded by Prince Johnson had broken away from Taylor in July 1990, creating a three-sided war.

Nigeria, the largest and most powerful country in West Africa, argued that the ECOWAS charter provided a mandate and rationale for military intervention in the Liberian war. The purported reason for military intervention was that the civil war endangered the security of the entire community. The fighting was said to have reached a military stalemate; with little chance of one side winning, anarchy would continue indefinitely. The original mandate of the intervening force was peacekeeping or “cease-fire monitoring.” Since there was no cease-fire to monitor, mediation efforts sought to bring about a cease-fire and to set up elections to end the conflict. The proposal for the military force, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), was contested by the Francophone members of the community, who saw it as a tool for furthering Nigerian interests in the region.

Almost every aspect of ECOWAS reasoning about the intervention was suspect.²⁷ It was premature to conclude that the war had become a military stalemate; the fight for Monrovia had been going on for only a month. The Doe government had almost completely collapsed, Johnson’s troops were far outnumbered by Taylor’s, and most impartial observers believed it was only a matter of time before Taylor triumphed. Although the first eight months of war had forced Liberian refugees into neighboring countries, the fighting had not spread outside the borders of Liberia. That a civil war was taking place in Liberia was not in and of itself a threat to peace and stability in the region; Taylor was in fact receiving assistance from two neighboring states. The architects of intervention assumed that ECOMOG would be seen as an impartial peacekeeping force; in fact, Taylor immediately recognized it as a belligerent, intent on denying him victory. The architects of intervention believed that they could impose a peaceful settlement on the civil war; yet, time and time again, political

²⁵ John Prendergast, *Frontline Diplomacy*. See also Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: Supporting Local Capacities for Peace through Aid* (Cambridge, MA: Local Capacities for Peace Project and the Collaborative for Development Action, 1996).

²⁶ Michael Maren, *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity* (New York: Free Press, 1997).

²⁷ For a discussion of the faulty logic and preparation behind the intervention, see Herbert Howe, “Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter 1996/97), pp. 1–31.

differences within the coalition prevented them from developing and implementing a unified and coherent strategy for ending the war.²⁸

Indeed, the ECOMOG intervention created the very situation it hoped to prevent. As Taylor escalated his attacks against the ECOMOG forces, ECOMOG increased its initial deployment from three thousand to seventeen thousand troops. Caught unprepared by Taylor's attacks and unwilling to engage in direct peace enforcement, ECOMOG made the fateful decision of arming ethnic factions to fight Taylor.²⁹ This in turn led to a proliferation of fighting forces, thus complicating the task of reaching a negotiated settlement.³⁰

The intervention transformed a war that probably would have ended in a quick victory for Taylor into a protracted struggle that continued into 1997. In August 1990, when ECOMOG intervened, an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 people had died in the Liberian war; by 1997, an estimated 150,000 people had been killed.³¹ By turning the war into a protracted one, the ECOMOG intervention succeeded in spreading the fighting to other countries in the region. In August 1990, the conflict had generated an estimated 250,000 to 375,000 refugees; by October 1994, the war had produced an estimated 1,250,000 refugees. Denied resources in Liberia, Taylor's forces invaded Sierra Leone and instigated a civil war there in February 1991.³² Taylor's forces also plundered parts of Guinea.

Prevention

Scholars have suggested several ways in which actions taken to prevent a conflict can have the unintended consequence of triggering or exacerbating the conflict. Here I focus on structural mediation, warning without action, and conflict mediation.

Structural mediation refers to the normative principles that international actors insist upon, regarding issues of national self-determination, autonomy, sovereignty, and minority rights.³³ Such norms are usually embedded in international regimes but are subject to periodic revision, usually during times of international upheaval or transformation, as took place in the period at the end of the World Wars and the end of the Cold War.

Such rules are established in order to prevent conflict by establishing a set of shared expectations regarding rules of international recognition of national demands for state sovereignty and of shared standards for state behavior towards ethnic minorities. When the international system is in flux, however, ethnic and national groups look for signals of disunity among powerful international states and regimes and for evidence of encouragement of their demands for autonomy or statehood. Precipitous decisions taken by important states or organizations on such key matters as recognition, even when done with the intent of preventing a conflict, can incite and/or reward strategies of ethnic violence.

Again, the Yugoslavian case provides several examples where international actors inadvertently stoked violence through structural mediation. In 1991, the European Union (EU) failed to support its own established standards of recognition and encouraged violent separatism by Slovenia and Croatia.³⁴ German recognition of these new countries, as well as EU insistence on extending the opportunity for recognition to the rest of Yugoslavia, insured a civil war in Bosnia.³⁵

²⁸ See Binaifer Nowrojee, "Joining Forces: United Nations and Regional Peacekeeping, Lessons from Liberia," *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, Vol. 18 (Spring 1995), pp. 129–52; and George Klay Kieh, Jr., "The Obstacles to the Peaceful Resolution of the Liberian Civil Conflict," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January-March 1994), especially pp. 102–105.

²⁹ Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping."

³⁰ Stephen Ellis, "Liberia 1989-1994: A Study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence," *African Affairs*, Vol. 94 (April 1995), pp. 165–97.

³¹ The 1990 estimates can be found in Mark Huband, "Doe's Last Stand," *Africa Report*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (July-August 1990), p. 49; and Rick Wells, "The Lost of Liberia," *Africa Report*, Vol. 35, No. 5 (November-December 1990), p. 21. The estimate of 150,000 is a common one.

³² William Reno attributes Taylor's invasion to the need for resources. Stephen Ellis argues that Taylor invaded Sierra Leone to punish it for participating in the ECOMOG intervention. Both considerations can be traced to the ECOMOG intervention, and both probably influenced Taylor's decision. See William Reno, "Reinvention of an African State," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (January 1995), pp. 109–20; Ellis, "Liberia 1989-1994," p. 170.

³³ Timothy Sisk, *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace [USIP] and the Carnegie Commission for the Prevention of Deadly Conflict, 1996).

³⁴ Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*.

³⁵ Ibid.

Another way that attempts to prevent a conflict can trigger or exacerbate conflict is the phenomenon of threat without action. Barbara Harff argues that a key factor that can trigger genocide in susceptible countries could be the explicit threats “of external involvement, ranging from warnings to sanctions to the threat to intervene against governing elites, that are not backed by action.” Her examination of Bosnia and Rwanda points to instances of human rights violations and killings before genocidal attacks. These acts in turn triggered an international rhetoric of outrage and veiled threat against the perpetrators. Harff interprets these pre-genocidal attacks as tests of international will; when international rhetoric was not supported by action, the perpetrators judged that they could carry out more systematic killings. She thus concludes, “well intentioned international meddling not backed up by credible tactics and strategies is potentially deadly to the targeted groups.”³⁶

Harff’s findings tally with Bruce Jones’s evaluation of the attempts to mediate a settlement to the Rwandan civil war. Jones’s analysis shows that the peace settlement to end the war created powerful enemies of peace who felt excluded from the agreement and threatened to destroy it. These potential spoilers were known to the mediators, yet they failed to craft an implementation plan that would marginalize them and protect the parties committed to peace. While his analysis does not shift the responsibility of genocide away from those who carried it out in Rwanda, it shows that failures of international judgment, as well as well-intentioned action, contributed to the genocide.³⁷

That some international action inadvertently leads to disaster obviously does not imply that international actors should ignore and stay disengaged from internal conflicts. Rather, it shows that good intentions are not enough and that ill-thought-out intervention can be substantially worse than no intervention at all. The remainder of this survey looks at what recent research can contribute to understanding the limits and potentials of various tools and strategies for intervention: preventive action, mediation, implementation of peace agreements, peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention and peace enforcement, and structural mediation.

PREVENTIVE ACTION

The wars of the 1990s have spawned a cottage industry in preventive action. But despite the best efforts of its proponents, prevention remains a contested topic. There remain disagreements about its definitions and components. There have been no breakthroughs in prevention research to suggest that it warrants the attention it has received; indeed, much of the research points to the complexities and difficulties of prevention, findings reinforced by specific attempts to *do* preventive action in places like Burundi and Nigeria.

When people use preventive diplomacy or preventive action or conflict prevention, it is not clear that they agree on the definitions of the terms. Michael Lund, for instance, insists on a constrained definition of preventive diplomacy that requires that a conflict be in a pre-violence phase.³⁸ Likewise, Lund believes that preventive diplomacy should only consist of relatively short-term measures, and he eschews the tendency to conflate prevention with long-term socioeconomic development.³⁹ Others take a broader view. Boutros-Ghali, for instance, argues that prevention includes the phase before a conflict becomes violent, and the phase after the short-

³⁶ Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Early Warning of Communal Conflicts and Genocide: Linking Empirical Research to International Responses* (Tokyo: United Nations University, 1996), pp. 76–78, 80–82.

³⁷ Jones, “Intervention without Borders.”

³⁸ Michael S. Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace [USIP], 1996).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

term implementation of a settlement, to insure that violence does not break out again (peacebuilding as prevention).⁴⁰ Leatherman and Vayrynen include action at any time in a conflict that prevents it from becoming more violent; thus, even though one hundred thousand people died in Burundi in 1993, and even though people were dying at a rate of two hundred fifty to five hundred people a week in 1996, they would consider NGO activity in Burundi to be prevention. Further, they have a broad view of what constitutes prevention, including long-term development and education.⁴¹

In a critique of prevention I listed three components of preventive diplomacy: prediction, prescription, and mobilization.⁴² There has been a boom in research on the first of the three categories under the rubric of early warning. At the same time there is a growing frustration with early warning, and a feeling that it is probably the least important of the three components.

Most of the recent work on early warning has been confused by a lack of clarity of what should be warned about, who should issue the warning, and what form the warning should take. Concerning the what of early warning, it makes a difference if the warning is about likely humanitarian disaster, political violence, or genocide. Concerning the who of early warning, various scholars have suggested that different actors are better situated to produce early warning: states, international organizations, regional organizations, or NGOs. Concerning the form of early warning, there is debate over whether early warning should be given in the form of indicators or scenarios and whether the warning should include prescription.

Much of the current work on early warning consists of the search for statistical indicators of imminent violent conflict.⁴³ The work of Gurr and Harff, for example, attempts to identify background conditions that predispose countries toward ethnic violence and accelerators that “rapidly increase the level or significance of the most volatile of the general conditions, but may also signify system breakdown or basic changes in political causality.”⁴⁴ Gurr and Moore have used three different quantitative models to create conflict profiles that suggest whether a country will be at risk for large-scale ethnic violence in the next five to ten years.⁴⁵ Although they acknowledge that this approach does not yield falsifiable predictions, it can help funnel attention from approximately 180 countries in the world to thirty or forty that show significantly higher risk profiles.

Howard Adelman argues that we now have several adequate indicator-based early warning systems. But, as he states, “the problem is not in anticipating such crises, but in the willingness of the international community to do anything about them. The dilemma is not simply formulating an early warning system, but developing a response strategy that is both workable and acceptable to the international community.”⁴⁶ Thus, Adelman argues that early warning indicators must be accompanied explicitly by policy suggestions to address the potential conflict.

Several scholars have written on the high organizational and individual barriers to responding to early warning in internal conflicts, what Alexander George and Jane Holl and others have referred to as the “warning-response” problem.⁴⁷ Situating their research in a stimulus-response paradigm, George and Holl note that an individual policy-maker’s ability to respond to early warning is in part a function of the “signal-

⁴⁰ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda For Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peace-Keeping* (New York: United Nations, 1992).

⁴¹ Janie Leatherman and Raimo Vayrynen, “Structure, Culture, and Territory: Three Sets of Early Warning Indicators,” Paper prepared for the International Studies Association meetings (March 1995).

⁴² Stephen John Stedman, “Alchemy for A New World Order: Overselling Preventive Diplomacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (May/June 1995), pp. 14–20.

⁴³ There is a burgeoning literature on this topic. For examples, see Gurr and Harff, ed., *Special Issue on Early Warning of Communal Conflicts and Humanitarian Crises: Proceedings of a Workshop*, *Journal of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (July 1994); Gurr and Harff, *Early Warning of Communal Conflicts and Genocide*; John L. Davies and Ted Robert Gurr, ed., *Proceedings of the Workshop on Risk Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, forthcoming); and Will H. Moore and Ted Robert Gurr, “Assessing Risks of Ethnorebellion in the Year 2000: Three Empirical Approaches,” Paper prepared for presentation to the Synergy in Early Warning Conference, York University, Ontario, Canada (March 15–18, 1997).

⁴⁴ Gurr and Harff, *Early Warning of Communal Conflicts and Genocide*.

⁴⁵ Moore and Gurr, “Ethnorebellion.”

⁴⁶ Howard Adelman, “Early Warning, Research and Conflict Management,” Paper prepared for the symposium on Early Warning and Conflict Prevention, Clingendael, The Netherlands (November 26, 1996), p. 3.

⁴⁷ Alexander L. George and Jane E. Holl, “The Warning-Response Problem and Missed Opportunities in Preventive Diplomacy,” Discussion Paper, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, prepublication draft (March 1997).

to-noise” ratio of the warning, the prior expectations of those who evaluate the warning, and “the rewards and costs associated with recognizing and correctly appraising” the warning.⁴⁸ Adelman, Surkhe, and Jones in their study of the Rwandan genocide describe several organizational and individual blinders that prevented policy-makers from accurately interpreting the warnings of genocide.⁴⁹ Adelman has further argued that response to early warning of humanitarian disasters is more difficult than response to early warning of national security threats, precisely because the motivation by outside actors is compassion and not their national interest.⁵⁰

Several scholars have suggested that NGOs have virtues that large states or international organizations lack and that they should take a lead in early warning.⁵¹ Yet the work of Jones and Stein on Rwanda suggest that NGOs also suffer from organizational decision-making pathologies that limit their effectiveness in early warning. As they point out, “in Rwanda, a number of local actors and community groups spoke ‘good words’ to NGOs in French, and simultaneously participated in the planning of the genocide in Kinyarwanda. Despite the fact that they were in touch and collaborating with Rwandans throughout the society, NGOs gleaned no insights which gave them any form of early warning of potential or actual escalation. Moreover, NGOs delivered relief supplies to tens of thousands of men who would later participate in the genocide militias, without learning anything about the development of that movement.”⁵² Jones and Stein offer two explanations of the failure. First, these organizations often lack the time and energy to take on added tasks of political analysis and reporting in addition to their developmental and relief responsibilities. Second, as emergency needs expand, expatriates are often flown in at the last moment into crisis situations and therefore lack a deep contextual knowledge of the conflict.

Others have argued that the task of early warning and response should fall primarily to regional and sub-regional organizations.⁵³ Based on such calls, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has established a mechanism for early warning and conflict prevention. The OSCE, relying primarily on the High Commissioner for Minorities, has a similar capability.

The only comparative in-depth study of the potential for regional organizations in conflict prevention argues that the OSCE has been the only regional organization to show signs of success in early warning and response.⁵⁴ The study further argues that it is unlikely for other regional organizations to show similar success. The OSCE’s approach is a long-term one, based on the notion of managing political change. Its early warning approach is not based on statistical indicators but on violations of community norms of good governance. Its success is based on a clear set of standards for responsible treatment of citizens and groups, a set of incentives for governments to meet these norms; and by the fact that most states in the OSCE are strong, capable, and adhere to the norms. The difficulty in applying this model to Africa through the OAU is that most of its members do not adhere to norms of good governance, which then establishes perverse organizational tendencies to ignore norm-based violations and to “diplomatize” or soften early warning. The one sub-regional organization that may be an exception is SADC (Southern African Development Community), based on functioning states that share a stated normative preference for good governance and democracy, with a powerful lead member, South Africa, that can contribute leverage to preventive diplomacy.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁴⁹ Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, with Bruce D. Jones, *Early Warning and Conflict Management, The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience, Study 2*, (Copenhagen: Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, 1996), pp. 66–76.

⁵⁰ Howard Adelman, “Defining Humanitarian Early Warning,” paper presented to the Conference on Synergy in Early Warning, York University, Ottawa, Canada (March 15–18, 1997).

⁵¹ Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Vigilance and Vengeance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1996).

⁵² Bruce D. Jones and Janice Gross Stein, “NGOs and Early Warning: The Case of Rwanda,” Working Paper No. 2, Care Canada, NGOs in Complex Emergencies Project, March 1997; presented to the Conference on Synergy in Early Warning, York University, Ottawa, Canada (March 15–18, 1997).

⁵³ Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflicts*, pp. 176–78.

⁵⁴ Klaas van Walraven, *Conflict Prevention and Early Warning in the Political Practice of International Organizations* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael, 1996).

The advantage of norm-based early warning is that prescription is built into the early warning. The premise is that state provocation often leads to counter-violence and civil war.⁵⁵ The task of early warning and preventive diplomacy is to manage peaceful political change; this is the message of the best analysis of today's civil wars, that the fundamental cause of civil violence is states that lack legitimacy, use their resources for plunder, and use their lethal capabilities to murder their own citizens.⁵⁶ The most overwhelming finding from the study of security in Africa is that the state has been the fundamental threat to individual security on the continent.⁵⁷ The solution is not to insist that Leviathan is better than chaos, but to figure out ways to create Leviathans that neither use arbitrary violence nor create chaos themselves.

The biggest barrier to managing such change is that there are often powerful actors who benefit from the status quo and resist any diminution of their power. Thus, the work of Lund and Ackermann suggests that successful preventive diplomacy depends on moderate, reasonable elites.⁵⁸ Where political change is needed, and one finds tyrants who are unwilling to change — Nigeria, Kenya, and Zaire are examples — preventive action will take more than diplomacy, incentives, socialization, and threats.⁵⁹ Indeed, it is likely that such conflicts will have to be intensified if they are to result in change.⁶⁰

To conclude this section on international actors and conflict prevention, it is necessary to mention the efforts of various NGOs involved in preventive action, track-two diplomacy, and human rights. There has been a dramatic rise in the number of groups dedicated to working with citizens in war-torn or conflict-ridden countries in order to increase dialogue and interaction among hostile groups. It is difficult to analyze the efforts of such groups, because unlike NGOs involved in humanitarian relief, these NGOs suffer from organizational immaturity or the tendency to believe that they can do no wrong, and that even in the absence of tangible results there is an imperative for them to stay engaged. Prevention NGOs seldom show enough self-awareness to even begin to answer the question, “How would you know if you have failed?” One is hard-pressed to find a seldom-written, self-critical evaluation by these organizations suggesting that they have failed in a country, that their efforts have had no discernible effect on the conflict, and that they may have made a conflict worse. So far, organizations like Search for Common Ground and International Alert take it on faith that they are making a difference, and ask us to accept their worth on faith as well.

Similarly, human-rights organizations tend to have an elastic standard of success in influencing internal conflicts. Even in the most egregious instances of states or rebel groups abusing human rights, rights advocates fall back on an axiomatic evaluation that they have succeeded, if only “in restating a principle and publicizing a violation.”⁶¹ This approach is generating much soul-searching among those sympathetic with the protection of human rights. Caroline Moorehead and Ursula Owen, for example, insist, “In any other field of human endeavor, such results as are being seen today for such an enormous quantum of effort would not be tolerated.”⁶² Alex de Waal argues that the history of massive failures of human rights organizations in Africa is proof of a bankrupt approach, and he calls for “reinvention of human-rights professionalism.”⁶³

⁵⁵ This aspect of internal violence is captured wonderfully in Chinua Achebe's novel, *Anthills of the Savannah* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1987), p. 212. One character ruminates, “I say, there is too much fighting in Kangan, too much killing. But fighting will not begin unless there is first a thrusting of fingers into eyes. Anybody who wants to outlaw fights must first outlaw the provocation of fingers thrust into eyes.”

⁵⁶ Kalevi Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁵⁷ Stephen John Stedman, “Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Africa,” in *Conflict Resolution in Africa*, ed. Francis M. Deng and I. William Zartman (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1991) and Stedman, “Conflict and Conciliation in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

⁵⁸ Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflicts*, pp. 100–102; Alice Ackermann, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: A Relatively Successful Case of Conflict Prevention in Europe,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Fall 1996), pp. 414–15.

⁵⁹ For analysis of the failure of prevention and the difficulty of prescription in these cases, see the essays by Peter Lewis, Gilbert Khadiagala, and Stephen Morrison in the *SAIS Review* (Summer 1995).

⁶⁰ Stedman, “Alchemy for a New World Order”; and Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflicts*, p. 147.

⁶¹ Alexander de Waal, “Becoming Shameless: The Failure of Human-Rights Organizations in Rwanda,” *Times Literary Supplement* (February 21, 1997), p. 4.

⁶² Quoted in de Waal, “Becoming Shameless,” p. 4.

⁶³ de Waal, “Becoming Shameless,” pp. 3–4.

III. MEDIATION

Much recent research focuses on the ability of external actors to mediate civil wars. This research examines properties of civil wars that make mediation difficult; the circumstances in civil wars when mediation is optimal (ripeness of conflicts); the properties that a mediator should bring to be effective (leverage, problem solving, unity, strategy, and learning); and how to improve the relationship between mediation and implementation of agreements.

Civil wars are the most difficult of wars to settle through negotiation. In the twentieth century, only about 15 percent of civil wars have ended through negotiation; the rest have ended through the unconditional surrender or elimination of one of the parties. By contrast, about 50 percent of inter-state wars end through negotiation.⁶⁴ Several explanations have been put forward to explain the difference. First, parties in civil wars who contemplate a negotiated settlement face a severe security dilemma. Since settlement will entail disbanding one's army to create a new national army, parties fear that their adversary may take advantage of the settlement to eliminate them.⁶⁵ Second, parties in civil wars often fight over principles for which compromise is difficult. Third, parties in civil wars often use the rhetoric of total war aims, and pledge to eliminate their rivals if they come to power. Fourth, enough parties in civil wars hold total war aims to suggest that their pledge to eliminate their rival is more than rhetoric. Fifth, parties in civil wars often are led by individuals who show decision-making pathologies of megalomania and paranoia.⁶⁶

Scholars differ over whether there are ripe moments when civil wars are amenable to mediation. Early research by Zartman posited that ripeness is a function of a mutually hurting stalemate, where the parties sense a precipice or a point where they will both be dramatically worse off if fighting continues. My research based on Zimbabwe showed that not all parties need to feel a hurting stalemate for mediation to succeed; it may be enough for a party's patron to feel the hurting stalemate. Subsequent work has bemoaned the slippery conceptual nature of the mutually hurting stalemate.⁶⁷ My work suggested that shifts in leadership within the warring groups may be indicators of ripeness. Work by Kleiboer and t'Hart suggests that several different sets of indicators correspond with different theoretical models of mediation and should be considered in a multi-model approach.⁶⁸

Leverage has been examined as a key component of mediation success. Leverage is the ability to affect the objective environment of the warring parties — through the provision of carrots or application of sticks. Sources of leverage include the remunerative, normative, and coercive bases of power, which need to be packaged in a way that makes continued fighting painful and settlement rewarding. The ability of a mediator to make promises or deliver on threats is often constrained by a lack of flexibility from domestic constraints or alliance consideration.⁶⁹

Beyond the ability of the mediator to affect the objective environment of the parties, the mediator must seek to affect the subjective assessments of the parties, either

⁶⁴ Stedman, "Negotiation and Mediation," p. 343.

⁶⁵ Stephen John Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991) and Barbara Walter, "The Resolution of Civil Wars: Why Negotiations Fail" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1994).

⁶⁶ For a discussion of these factors, with examples, see Stedman, "Negotiation and Mediation," pp. 343-50. The only structural difference between civil war and inter-state war is the first factor — the imperative of disarmament and the security dilemma in forming a new army and constitution. The second through fifth factors can also be reasons why particular inter-state wars do not lead to negotiated settlement. The argument, however, is that given the ferocity, protracted nature, and close proximity of warring groups in civil war, one tends to find the last four factors more frequently than in inter-state wars.

⁶⁷ Marieke A. Kleiboer, "Ripeness of Conflict: A Fruitful Notion?" *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1994), pp. 109-16.

⁶⁸ Marieke A. Kleiboer and Paul t'Hart, "Time to Talk? Multiple Perspectives on Timing of International Mediation," *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (1995), pp. 307-48.

⁶⁹ Johannes Botes and Christopher Mitchell, "Constraints on Third Party Flexibility," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 542 (November 1995), pp. 168-84.

through problem solving or relationship building. Problem solving stresses the intellectual component of searching for alternatives to conflict that meet the minimal needs of the parties. Relationship building focuses on questions of communication, trust, and definition of interests. The key to both of these components is to help the parties create a mutual vision of the future in which there is at least a minimal role for one's former enemy.

Mediators need to create a strategy to wed leverage and problem solving in the creation of alternatives for the parties. Since the mediator may have to borrow leverage from others, call upon others to play a role in problem solving, or overcome the constraints on his or her flexibility, the mediator must build a coalition for the desired outcome. Often to get internal parties on board, there must be careful sequencing of promises and threats. Often, mediators will have to rely on deadlines to create a sense of urgency. Crucial to the development of an effective strategy is the ability of the mediator to learn from previous failures and from other similar cases to explore possible solutions and to adapt to unforeseen changes in the bargaining positions of the warring parties.

The issues of leverage and strategy are important for the consideration of who should mediate. Saadia Touval argues that the United Nations should not mediate civil wars because it lacks independent leverage. Since it must always derive leverage from member-states, many of whom have different interests in and ideas about a particular settlement, the United Nations will never be able to make and deliver credible threats and promises.⁷⁰ But as the mediator of the Salvadoran peace process, Alvaro de Soto, points out, the key variable is not the UN's lack of leverage, but whether the interested member-states have forged a consensus about an appropriate strategy for ending the war and are willing (or forced due to the demands of the warring parties) to be conducted by a UN mediator.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Saadia Touval, "Why the UN Fails," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 5 (September/October 1994), pp. 44-57; and "Mediator's Flexibility and the UN Security Council," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 542 (November 1995).

⁷¹ Alvaro de Soto, "Letter to the Editor," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 6 (November/December 1994).

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Until recently, analysts of civil war focused their attention on the negotiation of peace agreements and paid scant attention to the implementation process. Rather legalistically, they assumed that a contract between state and insurgent leaders would remain binding in the post-agreement phase. Analysts also conceived of conflict resolution in a linear fashion, where successful negotiation signaled an irreversible reduction in conflict. These assumptions proved to be sadly mistaken. In the 1980s and 1990s, negotiated agreements in such countries as Angola, Cambodia, Liberia, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka collapsed and resulted in new deadly violence. In some cases, more blood was shed after the failure to implement a peace accord than before the peace negotiations began; the two deadliest outbreaks of civil violence between 1992 and 1996 were in Angola in 1993, when over three hundred thousand people died, and in Rwanda in 1994, when over one million people died. Far from being a time of conflict reduction, the period immediately after the signing of a peace agreement is one fraught with risks, uncertainty, and vulnerability for the warring parties.

To date, there has been no comprehensive study of the implementation of peace agreements in civil wars. There have been, however, several case studies of implementation;⁷² a comparative study of the role of spoilers in peace processes;⁷³ comparative studies of implementation of aspects of treaties such as disarmament and demobilization of combatants⁷⁴ and the role of third parties in promoting successful implementation;⁷⁵ analytic articles by individual practitioners;⁷⁶ and general analyses of dilemmas of strategic interaction and organizational problems in implementation.⁷⁷

Existing work has produced several hypotheses to explain the failure to implement peace agreements in civil wars. I have argued that the most frequent threat to peace implementation is the presence of spoilers who use stealth or violence to undermine peace.⁷⁸ I have also written that implementation of agreements tends to be shoddy because of the lack of coordination among implementing agencies; a lack of international attention to seeing peace consolidated; poor coordination between those who mediate agreements and those who have to implement them; and the tendency of international custodians to allow incomplete fulfillment of obligations to a treaty, in exchange for getting one overriding commitment to an election.⁷⁹ In subsequent work with Donald Rothchild, we added another factor that helps to explain poor implementation of peace agreements: the fact that the mediated agreement may be vague, incomplete, or expedient.⁸⁰

PEACEKEEPING, HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION, AND PEACE ENFORCEMENT

In recent years an immense amount of literature has addressed military operations other than war: peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and humanitarian intervention.⁸¹ Central issues include the circumstances under which peacekeepers should be

⁷² Among the best are Michael Doyle, *UN Peacekeeping in Cambodia: UNTAC's Civil Mandate*, International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995); Trevor Findlay, *Cambodia: The Lessons and Legacy of UNTAC*, SIPRI Research Report No. 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Steven R. Ratner, *The New UN Peacekeeping: Building Peace in Lands of Conflict After the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin's and the Council on Foreign Relations, 1995).

⁷³ Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall 1997), pp. 5–53.

⁷⁴ Mats Berdal, "Disarmament and Demobilisation after Civil Wars," Adelphi Paper 303 (Oxford: Oxford University Press and the Institute for International and Strategic Studies, 1996); and UNIDIR, Disarmament and Conflict Resolution Project, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes*, An Eleven Volume Study (Geneva: UNIDIR, 1996 and 1997).

⁷⁵ Fen Hampson, *Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail* (Washington, DC: USIP, 1996).

⁷⁶ Margaret Joan Anstee, *Orphan of the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996); and Alvaro de Soto and Graciana del Castillo, "Implementation of Peace Agreements: Staying the Course in El Salvador," *Global Governance*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1995), pp. 189–203.

⁷⁷ Stedman, "Negotiation and Mediation"; Stephen John Stedman and Donald Rothchild, "Peace Operations: From Short-term to Long-term Commitment," *International Peacekeeping, Special Issue on Beyond the Emergency: Development Within UN Peace Missions*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Summer 1996), pp. 17–35; and Barbara Walter, "The Resolution of Civil Wars."

⁷⁸ Stedman, "Spoiler Problems."

⁷⁹ Stedman, "Negotiation and Mediation."

⁸⁰ Stedman and Rothchild, "Peace Operations."

⁸¹ Among the best works are Ratner, *The New UN Peacekeeping*; William J. Durch, ed., *United Nations Peacekeeping, U.S. Policy, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995); Donald Daniel and Bradd Hayes, *Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995); UNIDIR, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: The Issues* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 1997).

deployed; necessary changes in doctrine, organization, and capabilities; and whether regional organizations should take a more active role in peacekeeping.

United Nations peacekeeping has developed in two stages: before and after 1989.⁸² Before 1989 one sees a gradual evolution of peacekeeping concepts, demands, and techniques, as well as a continuity of participating countries that trained their troops in the tasks of peacekeeping. The net result of the first forty years of UN peacekeeping was an explicit UN joint peacekeeping approach; the major troop-contributing countries before 1989 formed a remarkable consensus about what peacekeeping is and when it should be used.

United Nations peacekeeping was born of necessity; it was an ad hoc response to international crises, where it was believed that the interposition of a military force could create a buffer between warring parties to lessen the military insecurities of both sides. To reduce conflict and enhance security, the force had to be seen as legitimate, neutral, and impartial. Legitimacy came from the consent of the warring parties; neutrality and impartiality were insured by the multinational composition of the force, by the fact that it was lightly armed, and by its rules of engagement that strictly limited the use of force to self-defense. Only in the Congo in 1964 did the United Nations stray from these concepts, and both supporters and detractors of that mission agreed on one basic appraisal: “Never again a Congo.”⁸³

A fundamental change came in 1989 when the United Nations was asked to assist the implementation of a peace agreement to end Namibia’s civil war and bring that country to independence. By accepting, UNTAG (United Nations Transition Assistance Group) injected peacekeeping troops into a civil conflict and took on unprecedented tasks such as the cantonment and demobilization of soldiers, voter registration and education, and election assistance and monitoring. Later that year the United Nations became involved in the Nicaraguan peace process, when it established ONUCA (United Nations Observer Group in Central America) to supervise the external supply of weapons to internal factions, help disarm one faction, and observe elections.

Since UNTAG and ONUCA, the United Nations has been asked to implement civil war settlements in Angola, Western Sahara, Cambodia, Rwanda, Mozambique, and El Salvador. The United Nations has also been used in the former Yugoslavia, Haiti, and Somalia in humanitarian and peace enforcement operations.

The challenges and risks of these missions differ dramatically from prior ones. These missions take place in civil wars, which are much more difficult to resolve than interstate wars, and have multiple unprecedented political, humanitarian, and military components. These factors produce an unusual degree of complexity, volatility, and vulnerability for the peacekeeping of the 1990s. If such complex operations were framed by explicit mandates, then their fulfillment might be easier. But almost all of the post-1989 missions have been marred by ambiguous mandates implying that forceful action can be taken to enforce a settlement, without an explicit command or appropriate troops and material to use a forceful approach.

Not only have the tasks of peacekeeping changed, the participants in peacekeeping have also changed.⁸⁴ Until 1988 UN peacekeeping had a regular pool of contributing

⁸² The next six paragraphs draw from Stephen John Stedman, “Consent, Neutrality, and Impartiality in the Tower of Babel and on the Frontlines: UN Peacekeeping in the 1990s,” in UNIDIR, *Managing Arms*, pp. 35–55. Overviews of the genesis of UN peacekeeping can be found in Paul Diehl, *International Peacekeeping* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1993); and William J. Durch, ed., *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1993).

⁸³ Bo Hult, “Working Multilaterally: The Old Peacekeepers’ Viewpoint,” in Daniel and Hayes, *Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping*, p. 103.

⁸⁴ Trevor Findlay, ed., *The New Peacekeepers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

nations, formed by the core states of Canada, Ireland, Italy, Australia, and the Nordic countries (Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark). Canada was the only member state to participate in all thirteen peacekeeping operations between 1948 and 1987; the Nordic countries participated in approximately two-thirds of the operations. During that time, the United States took part in three operations, France contributed troops to two missions, the Soviet Union and United Kingdom to one mission, and Austria to none.

In the thirteen missions between 1989 and October 1993, the cast changed. Canada remained the only country to participate in every UN peacekeeping mission, and the participation of the Nordic countries, Ireland, Australia, and Italy remained high. What was different was the participation of France (eight operations and the largest troop contributor during that time), the United States and Austria (seven operations), Russia (six operations), and the United Kingdom (four operations and the second-largest troop contributor).

One result of the proliferation of peacekeepers is the proliferation of new national doctrines of peace operations, with a corresponding loss of unity of approach, training, and meaning. When different armies speak of consent, neutrality, and impartiality, they now often mean different things.⁸⁵ The challenge to international peacekeeping is obvious. It is impossible to have a debate about priorities among concepts, when countries interpret those concepts differently. More importantly, it is difficult to have a coherent peacekeeping mission when troop contributors fail to agree on the purpose, strategy, and conduct of an operation.

Most analysts agree that the institution of UN peacekeeping is in crisis. They differ, however, on the cause of, and solution to, the crisis. Some argue that UN peacekeeping is in trouble because of its overreach — that its problems stem from taking on challenges for which it was not suited.⁸⁶ Others argue that UN peacekeeping is in trouble because of its underambition — that its crisis stems from adhering to a traditional doctrine that is inappropriate to its new challenges.⁸⁷ Solutions follow from diagnosis. For those who believe that the United Nations has overreached its capabilities, the policy prescription is to limit the deployment of peacekeepers to situations for which they were designed — situations of well-defined consent. For those who believed that the United Nations has been an underachiever, the recommendation is to revise peace operations doctrine and capability to take on more muscular tasks.

Both of these solutions are problematic. Even those who argue that peacekeeping should only be deployed in situations of well-defined consent, acknowledge that in civil war situations, consent can decay or be withdrawn. Faced with a faction or party that seeks to spoil a peace agreement, peacekeepers can only attempt to renegotiate consent. In some cases, it may be possible to gather international support to isolate the spoiler or bring it back into the peace process. But in other cases, where the spoiler has total goals and a high insensitivity to costs, for example as with the CDR in Rwanda or UNITA in Angola, peacekeepers will find that inducement and negotiation fail. But since the peacekeepers deployed on the basis of consent, they are usually constrained from switching to peace enforcement. Thus, even those who argue that peacekeepers should only be deployed when consent is present may find the troops quickly engaged in a hot war, helpless to intervene to stop atrocities, and having withdrawal as their only option.

⁸⁵ Stedman, "Consent, Neutrality, and Impartiality," compares emerging French, British, American, and NATO doctrines of peacekeeping and peace enforcement on these issues.

⁸⁶ Alan James, "Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era," *International Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1995).

⁸⁷ Donald C.F. Daniel, "Is There a Middle Option in Peace Support Operations?" and Fred Tanner, "Consensual vs. Coercive Disarmament," in UNIDIR, *Managing Arms: The Issues*; John Gerard Ruggie, "The UN: Wandering in the Void," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 5 (November-December 1993).

This dilemma has led the French military, as well as NATO planners, to speak of the grey area in peace operations and to argue that peacekeepers should be equipped and ready to change missions to peace enforcement. Experience in peace operations in the 1990s suggests a checklist for the use of force in peace operations. Force should be based: on the likely effects on the targeted faction — will it back down or counterattack, a response often dictated by what is asked of the target; on the effects of achieving other aspects of the mission’s mandate, such as the delivery of humanitarian assistance or carrying out an election; on the effects on troop-contributing countries — will they agree and form a unified front against the target; on the effect on interested countries — will they support the sustained use of violence, if necessary, to compel a faction; and finally, on the judgment that if an escalation of violence occurs, the international community will have the will to achieve escalation dominance.

This last factor is paramount, because for the most part the member-states of the United Nations have not had the will to enforce peace in the 1990s. This means that any faction that tests the will of robust peacekeepers will likely succeed.

STRUCTURAL MEDIATION

As mentioned earlier, structural mediation refers to overriding international norms or principles that are supposed to act to mitigate conflict by establishing a sense of predictability over such fundamental issues as sovereignty, self-determination, and recognition. Although scholars have devoted enormous attention to the issue of whether sovereignty is diminishing or whether the rules of recognition and self-determination have changed,⁸⁸ I would like to conclude this essay on a different note: to examine several scholars who are asking what should sovereignty be, and what rules should be established to bring predictability to international and internal conflict.

Sovereignty is a normatively derived concept that has varied in meaning over time. Rules concerning recognition and intervention have changed because great powers perceive new threats to the stability of the international system and attempt to adapt sovereignty to meet those threats.⁸⁹

The most recent of the normative shifts in sovereignty occurred in 1945 with the creation of the United Nations, where the fundamental rules of sovereignty — non-intervention and self-help — were enshrined. Simultaneously, however, norms of self-determination were given priority in questions of decolonization, and universal human rights were introduced to guide the internal practice of sovereignty. One important challenge for the stability of the state system was how to use sovereignty as a means for coping with demands for colonial independence and as a means for addressing the specter of racial and ethnic genocide so recently seen in Nazi Germany.

The history of sovereignty over the past fifty years is a tale of how institutions, desiring to create international order, have fundamentally contributed to internal disorder, as the new states of Africa and Asia were given international recognition but lacked the internal attributes and capabilities to establish internal legitimacy. They were, in Robert Jackson’s words, “quasi-states.”⁹⁰ While the rules of sovereignty successfully socialized the new states into the external regime of diplomacy, the same rules gave license to these same states to rule repressively at the expense of their own

⁸⁸ Illustrative of those who believe that sovereignty has not radically changed are Janice E. Thompson, “State Sovereignty in International Relations: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Empirical Research,” *International Studies Quarterly* (1995), pp. 213–33; and Stephen D. Krasner, “Compromising Westphalia,” *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 115–51. Illustrative of the counter-position is any of the voluminous writings of James Rosenau.

⁸⁹ J. Samuel Barkin and Bruce Cronin, “The State and the Nation: Changing Norms and the Rules of Sovereignty in International Relations,” *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Winter 1994), p. 114.

⁹⁰ Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

people. Concerns over human rights were subordinated to the rules of recognition, reciprocity, and non-intervention. International support provided to these states — donor aid, IFI capital, and superpower assistance — allowed and encouraged them to create the conditions for ongoing internal instability. As Charles Tilly observes, the quasi-states of the post-World War II era relied almost exclusively on external legitimacy; indeed, external support meant that Third World rulers need not bargain with their own populations for legitimacy.⁹¹

There are two ironies here. First, the cumulative instability within these quasi-states is now creating problems for overall international systemic stability. Second, rules that were thought to be complementary in the UN Charter — self-help, non-intervention, self-determination, and universal human rights — have proven to be contradictory. On the one hand, many people look to the United Nations as the embodiment of an international commitment to universal rights which is supposedly eroding sovereignty.⁹² On the other hand, the United Nations has been the biggest resource for the external legitimacy and sovereignty of deadly states.

Yet, there is room for optimism. The normative discussion of sovereignty in the mid-1990s has changed in ways that were thought to be impossible in 1990. At that time Robert Jackson asserted that one reason the regime of quasi-states was unlikely to change was because of a powerful taboo that operates “silently as a form of self-censorship by virtually all agents and representatives of states and international organizations and adds decisive normative sanction to the traditional reluctance of diplomats to engage in public criticism of each other’s domestic affairs.” This particular taboo was attributed to fear of being seen as racist by condemning African governments and to the hegemony of cultural relativism that “forbids negative evaluations of nationalities, societies, or cultures different from one’s own.”⁹³

Yet we have seen a dramatic rapid reversal in this taboo. As indicative of this change, witness the discussion of the possible return to various UN trustee-type statuses for failed states;⁹⁴ the nostalgic call for Africa’s colonial powers to establish stewardships for their former colonies;⁹⁵ the demand for a doctrine of humanitarian intervention;⁹⁶ the calls by African elites that states adhere to standards of human rights; the assertion by the Organization of African Unity (no matter how dampened by its own organizational culture and frames) that non-interference in members’ affairs cannot be invoked to protect violations of human rights; the willingness of Transafrica (an American lobbyist group for self-determination in Africa) to call publicly for sanctions against the Nigerian government for its dictatorial practices; and the public chastisement by Nordic governments (an important ally of the quasi-state regime) of African governments for their corruption.

⁹¹ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992, rev. ed.* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992).

⁹² Kathryn Sikkink, “Human Rights, Principled Issue Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America,” *International Organization*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 411–41; and Thomas Biersteker, “The Changing Face of Sovereignty and the New Organization of Authority in the International System” (unpublished paper, Brown University, November 1995).

⁹³ Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p. 197.

⁹⁴ Gerald B. Helman and Steven Ratner, “Saving Failed States,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 89 (Winter 1992–1993), pp. 3–20.

⁹⁵ William Pfaff, “A New Colonialism? Europe Must Go Back to Africa,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (January/February 1995), pp. 3–6.

⁹⁶ Francis M. Deng, *Protecting the Dispossessed: A Challenge for the International Community* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1993); and Francis M. Deng, “State Collapse: The Humanitarian Challenge to the United Nations,” in *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, ed. I. William Zartman (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995).

V. WHAT SHOULD SOVEREIGNTY BE?

Sovereignty may be in its beginning terminal stages, but we are unlikely to see its death in our lifetimes. Just as sovereignty's consolidation took centuries and saw a multiplicity of institutional forms, a competition of normative principles, and gaps between formal rules and informal practice, sovereignty's decline will be protracted and incremental.⁹⁷ We will likely see the appearance of hybrid units that share some of the attributes of sovereignty but do not meet its full current definition — whether it be larger supranational entities such as the European Union or smaller non-state entities such as the West Bank, Taiwan, Somaliland, and the Republic of Srbska. We will likely see the number of such anomalies arise around the margin, as *de jure* states collapse entirely, and international actors invent new statuses to cope with them; or as the most developed countries cede authority over functional issues to large multilateral bodies in order to adjust to the increasing complexity, amount, and speed of global financial transactions and informational flows. It is implausible, however, that we will see the regime of sovereignty disappear overnight, for the very reason that it would have to be jettisoned by the very states and nations that still benefit from the regime. Indeed, if one has to suggest a likely outcome to sovereignty's current interregnum, it would be complete *de facto*ism — a bifurcated world consisting of *de facto* sovereign states with the internal control and external power to assert the rights and privileges of sovereignty for themselves, but deny them to others, and all the rest.⁹⁸

Yet complete *de facto*ism need not be the only outcome. Historical work on past changes in the sovereignty regime suggests that powerful states can insist on a redefinition of rules. If this is so, then a purposeful change in the content of sovereignty is not out of the question.

What alternatives are there to choose among? First, some argue that the states system is unable to cope with ethnic violence in the world, and therefore what is needed is the diminution of sovereignty by splitting nations from states — by arrangements that locate authority for security matters in states and authority for cultural matters in sub-state or super-state bodies. Second, others argue that internal conflicts and humanitarian emergencies stem from bad governance, and therefore what is needed is to tie “statehood” to the internal obligation to be responsive to one's own citizens and to the external obligation to intervene where other states fail to meet their internal responsibilities. Such a solution does not seek to diminish sovereignty, but rather to redefine its norms — in potentially contradictory ways.

SEPARATING THE NATION FROM THE STATE

The idea of establishing dual institutional solutions to address conflicts over self-determination comes from Gidon Gotlieb, who argues that sovereignty is both declining and yet surviving as a potent barrier to resolving ethnic claims to self-determination.⁹⁹ Sovereignty cannot adequately cope with contemporary excessive demands for self-determination. Its two solutions — protections for groups within recognized states, or the granting of statehood to groups who make claims for self-

⁹⁷ My position on this is influenced by Stephen D. Krasner, “Westphalia and All That,” in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, ed. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1993); and Christopher Schreuer, “The Waning of the Sovereign State: Towards a New Paradigm for International Law?” *European Journal of International Law*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1993).

⁹⁸ This *de facto*ism was captured for me in the fall of 1996 at a meeting on Burundi sponsored by the State Department's policy planning staff and the United States Institute of Peace. During a coffee break, one participant expressed qualms about so much talk about intervention in Burundi and asked about the issue of its sovereignty. Another participant responded promptly, “Sovereignty? We're not talking about China here, we're talking about Burundi.”

⁹⁹ Gidon Gotlieb, *Nation Against State* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1993).

determination — fail; the former provides only weak incentives for states to respect the rights for minorities within their borders, while the latter leads to exponential claims for statehood.

Gotlieb offers as an alternative the creation of an international status for nations that is distinct from states, redistributing various authority functions from states to nations, drawing multiple borders to meet diverse functional purposes, and drafting rights of citizenship and nationality that are not derived from states. The key questions are: how is it possible to create this system, and how does one sustain it as an effective conflict management system?

The progress of the European Union is instructive on these questions, as the EU seems to be slowly progressing towards Gotlieb's goal of separating states from nations. One study of the EU concludes that the biggest threat to European integration stems from nations that are insecure about their survival: "a nation will only allow integration when it is secure that its national identity will not be threatened, that it may even be strengthened by its exposure to different identities. If a nation feels that it is only able to survive through a close correspondence with a state that is sovereign and independent, if it does not believe that the state can be integrated while its culture is reproduced, it will block further integration."¹⁰⁰ The author is not referring to persecuted nations or nations endangered by violent conflict, but the nations of Germany, France, and England, among others. The implication is straightforward; if the nations of Europe — comfortable, secure, and relatively free from threat — can maintain high anxiety about identity survival, how can one expect nations in real struggle for their survival to perceive their security as independent from the establishment of their own state?

Gotlieb's solution assumes what cannot be assumed: parties genuinely interested in compromise solutions who are secure enough to divorce their national security from self-help, either through a state or by continuation of armed rebellion. And given that the powerful must themselves make compromises to those who demand self-determination, then even if one finds parties who genuinely seek compromise and have a modicum of trust, it is unclear why they cannot be accommodated through minority status in a multinational state pledged to minority rights.

It is too early to point to the Kurds of Northern Iraq, the Abkhazians, Palestinians in the West Bank, or Serbians in the Republic of Srbska as trailblazers in the separation of nation and state. These will likely turn out to be temporary, unstable transit points that quickly engender more violent conflict or appeasement through recognition of statehood.

SOVEREIGNTY AS RESPONSIBILITY

A second prescriptive analysis of sovereignty and civil conflict argues that sovereignty needs to be redefined as a privilege that states earn by undertaking internal and external responsibilities and obligations.¹⁰¹ To earn sovereignty, states must "maintain national peace and security, be concerned about the welfare of their people, provide them with adequate protection and assistance, and if unable, invite or welcome foreign assistance, or else expect international repercussions." But this is not enough. Sovereignty should also confer a positive external obligation to intervene, militarily if need be, if other states fail to live up to their responsibilities. Such a redefinition

¹⁰⁰ Ole Waever, "Identity, Integration and Security: Solving the Sovereignty Puzzle in E.U. Studies," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Winter 1995), p. 404.

¹⁰¹ Francis M. Deng, et al., *Sovereignty as Responsibility*.

would turn the traditional normative rules of sovereignty on their heads; far from sovereignty being a constraint on external interference in internal affairs, sovereignty will entail a positive obligation to interfere in others' internal affairs.

Such a redefinition of sovereignty immediately runs head-first into resistance, some from the usual suspects and some from unusual sources. The usual suspects, of course, are those states that have everything to lose and little to gain from such a regime. In the category of usual suspects, one would find states, such as China and Singapore, that define internal obligations differently from the West. Indeed, the norms of sovereignty as self-help and non-interference are currently at their historic peak in Asia. But even if one were to overcome such resistance, the great majority of states in the world may not be able to achieve the standards of internal responsibility. As Mohamed Ayoob points out, there is a huge gap between standards of state behavior based on the experience of Western countries and the capabilities of most poor states.¹⁰²

Finally, a key source of resistance will be Western states, who will have to be convinced that they carry a positive external obligation to provide for those who are the victims of irresponsible states. Here lies a key potential contradiction in the sovereignty-as-responsibility approach: if a people does not want to intervene elsewhere and chooses to be insular, should a state ignore (or coerce) its populations in order to meet its external obligations? Might not the meeting of sovereignty's external obligations do irreparable harm to a state's internal obligations? For the West this is a question of the potentially harmful effects of military intervention on one's own state's legitimacy; for elsewhere it is a question of scarce resources, whether they should be allocated to meet the demands of one's own citizens or to fight someone else's battle.¹⁰³

The redefinition of sovereignty as responsibility must be convincing to states that will have to strive to meet the norm's internal obligations and must be convincing to the states and nations of the West that must meet the external obligation of intervention. The two are linked; to the extent that states believe they will be the target of external intervention if they fail to discharge their duties, the greater the likelihood they will fulfill them, which is to say the rule of sovereignty as responsibility will need both effective monitoring and enforcing.

¹⁰² Mohamed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994).

¹⁰³ An interesting case in this regard is South Africa, which has come under enormous pressure from the United States and countries in Africa to play a more active role in African peacekeeping. This comes at a time of tremendous political and economic change within South Africa, where a peace dividend could be extremely helpful for increasing allotments to housing, education, and other social needs for the black majority. It is no surprise then, that the South African National Defence Force has used these calls for a more active continental role as a counter-argument to defense budget cuts.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper has four messages. First, there is a range of options available to international actors who seek to manage internal conflicts. Second, the attempt to do good, if poorly planned and lacking in strategy, can do more harm than good. Third, we know a lot about different techniques of intervention, but we seem to know little about ourselves; that is, why we care about wars in the rest of the world and what we should do about them. And fourth, what has been missing in recent work on the role of international actors in internal conflicts is debate over fundamentals: the ethics of choice among tools, approaches, and cases of intervention—and the interests that are at stake in our choices.

An enormous amount of literature and debate has focused in the last several years on methods that international actors can use to prevent and manage internal conflicts elsewhere. This review has highlighted some of these methods—preventive action, mediation, peacekeeping and peace enforcement, and rule-making. What is striking, however, is what has been lacking: a debate about how internal conflicts in the world affect fundamental national foreign policy and security interests. Yet such interests are basic for judging whether these various methods will be effective. The performance of any of the actions discussed above—prevention, peace operations, mediation, and structural mediation—will likely improve, the more states are willing to invest in them. The effectiveness of these various methods depends in part on the willingness of states to expend resources, time, reputation, and attention; and to take stands and risks.

There seems to be an assumption that if we can just know more about techniques, if we could just understand the tools of conflict prevention, policy-makers will seize upon this knowledge and apply it. But, to state the obvious, these are independent processes. Absent an evaluation that preventing conflict is important to national interest, early warnings will be ignored. (Indeed, I have a perverse hypothesis that the more unwilling a state is to act, the more it is willing to define the problem as one of insufficient knowledge and therefore to fund more research into techniques that will go untapped.) Absent a judgment that a mediated settlement is important to national interest, mediators will likely be hamstrung by insufficient leverage. Absent a judgment that implementation of peace agreements is important to national interest, custodians of the peace process will likely watch as spoilers attack those who want to make peace.

This is not to argue that we have all of the answers and merely need to apply them. It is simply to say that we have some of the answers, and we need a debate about why we should apply them.