



Characteristics of Successful U.S. Military Interventions

Jennifer Kavanagh, Bryan Frederick, Alexandra Stark, Nathan Chandler, Meagan L. Smith, Matthew Povlock, Lynn E. Davis, Edward Geist



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Preface

This report documents research and analysis conducted as part of a project entitled *Characteristics of Successful Military Interventions*, sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7, U.S. Army. The purpose of the project was to inform U.S. Army strategic planning and the decisions of defense leadership by identifying the characteristics of the most effective and efficient U.S. military interventions and the operating environments in which different types of military interventions are most likely to succeed.

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Summary

Objective of This Report

What makes for a successful military intervention? Success is not an abstract concept; it depends on the specific political objectives pursued. By analyzing 145 U.S. military interventions that have occurred over the past century, we can gain an understanding of the political objectives that have been successful and the critical factors underlying the successes, despite how varied and complex these interventions have been.¹ Relatively little prior analysis is available to policymakers and military planners as to what has contributed to successful military interventions. This report seeks to fill that gap through quantitative and qualitative analyses and to offer specific recommendations for any U.S. military interventions that lie ahead.

The insights provided in this report are valuable for the U.S. Army and other military planners, as they can give policymakers considering a military intervention a better sense of the likelihood of success for different objectives and identify which factors that affect success may be critical and which are largely outside of their control. An additional feature of this project is the extensive data set, which can be used in future analyses.

Contributions and Limitations

This report makes two main contributions. First, we address the question of what makes U.S. military interventions successful by conducting a detailed empirical assessment using an original data set that identifies and codes the political objectives of each U.S. military intervention since 1898. While previous work has sometimes assumed

¹ In this report, *military intervention* refers to any overseas deployment of U.S. forces that meets our threshold for size and during which military personnel undertake a particular type of activity, such as armed conflict, deterrence, counterinsurgency (COIN), stability operations, security, humanitarian assistance, intelligence gathering, transport, and advisory operations. This latter condition is intended to distinguish military interventions from forward presence, in which forces are stationed overseas but otherwise engaged in training or other activities similar to what they would undertake if located in the United States.

the objectives of a given intervention based on context (e.g., an intervention into an armed conflict must have ending that conflict as its main goal), our analysis is based on extensive research collecting the actual political objectives for each intervention. The empirical basis for identifying objectives in our analysis is likely to improve its robustness and the relevance of its findings. Second, we consider a much wider range of political objectives and interventions than most studies, which tend to focus only on one particular type of military intervention, such as those into ongoing armed conflicts. This breadth allows us to break new ground, as some types of interventions and objectives are understudied, and to identify similarities and differences in the factors that may promote success across a broader range of objectives and interventions.

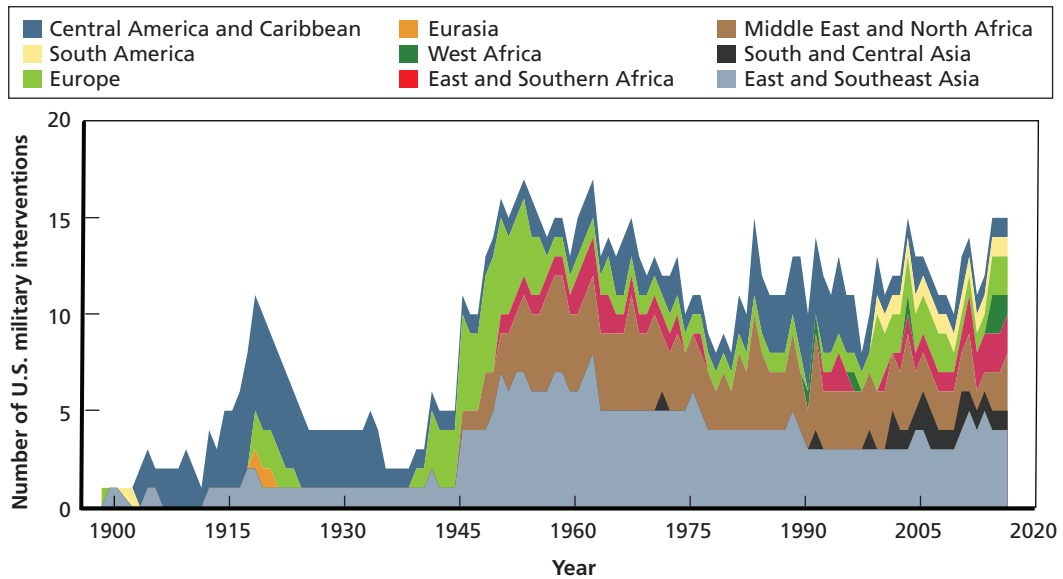
While our approach has some advantages, such as the nuance provided by our detailed empirical analysis and the inclusion of all types of U.S. military interventions, there are also limitations to our approach. Most importantly, the breadth of our analysis naturally involves trade-offs regarding our ability to provide nuanced insights into the factors that promote success of any one type of objective. While our combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is designed to limit this shortcoming, there is still an inherent trade-off between scope, accuracy, and nuance or precision. A second limitation of our approach is that, while our list of objectives is far more comprehensive than data relied upon in previous analyses, it remains imperfect. For some interventions, the true objectives of U.S. policymakers are still topics of debate. We attempted to minimize this limitation through our coding methodology, but it doubtless persists.

Historical Trends

To answer the question of which factors have made U.S. military interventions more or less successful at achieving their political objectives, we collected an original data set of the 145 U.S. ground, air, and naval interventions covering the period from 1898 through 2016. A summary of the number of interventions ongoing in any given year in each geographic region is shown in Figure S.1.

The data set includes every U.S. intervention during this period that met our threshold for size (100 person-years for ground interventions and similar thresholds for air and naval units) and included information on each intervention's size, duration, and primary activities. It also includes information on each intervention's political objectives and the extent to which each objective was successfully achieved. For each intervention within our time frame, we next identified the political objectives that the United States sought to achieve. We focused on political objectives, rather than on narrower operational or military objectives, because the political objectives are what motivate policymakers to commit military forces. Assessing the extent to which these

Figure S.1
Ongoing U.S. Military Interventions by Region, 1898–2016



forces successfully achieved those objectives can therefore inform whether to undertake a future military intervention, as well as what types of forces might best be deployed.²

We identified 492 objectives for the 145 military interventions. We also organized these objectives into categories. This categorization was undertaken to facilitate our analysis, so that we could consider objectives in the service of similar goals together when assessing trends in success rates over time. Our typology involves two main dimensions, as shown in Table S.1. Each objective was also assigned to a more specific subcategory that allowed us to more precisely group together similar objectives.³ Figure S.2 shows which of these objectives the United States has pursued most often over the time frame considered.

With the political objectives coded, we then assessed the degree to which the United States was able to achieve these objectives over the course of its intervention

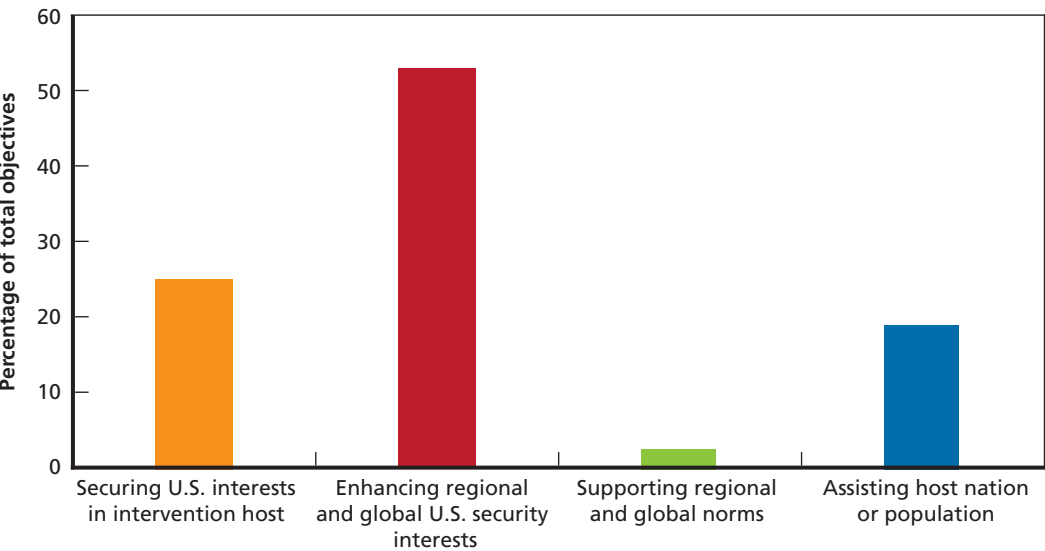
² To identify the political objectives, we considered first whether U.S. officials explicitly stated their objectives at the outset of an intervention, which did occur frequently. However, we did not rely solely on U.S. government statements because they were sometimes incomplete, later shifted without notice, or omitted key motivations that would have been politically or diplomatically difficult to disclose at the time. To correct these omissions, we relied on a broader reading of the historical literature surrounding the intervention and the context in which it was undertaken. Because interventions have multiple objectives and because these objectives may change over time, we also included information on the dates during which a given objective was applicable.

³ A complete list of these subcategories is contained in Chapter Three.

Table S.1
Typology for Categorizing the Political Objectives of U.S. Military Interventions

	Narrower Self-Interest	Broader Self-Interest
U.S. Interests Primarily Inside the Host	Securing U.S. interests in intervention host	Assisting host nation or population
U.S. Interests Primarily Outside the Host	Enhancing regional and global U.S. security interests	Supporting regional and global norms

Figure S.2
Categorization of Political Objectives in U.S. Military Interventions

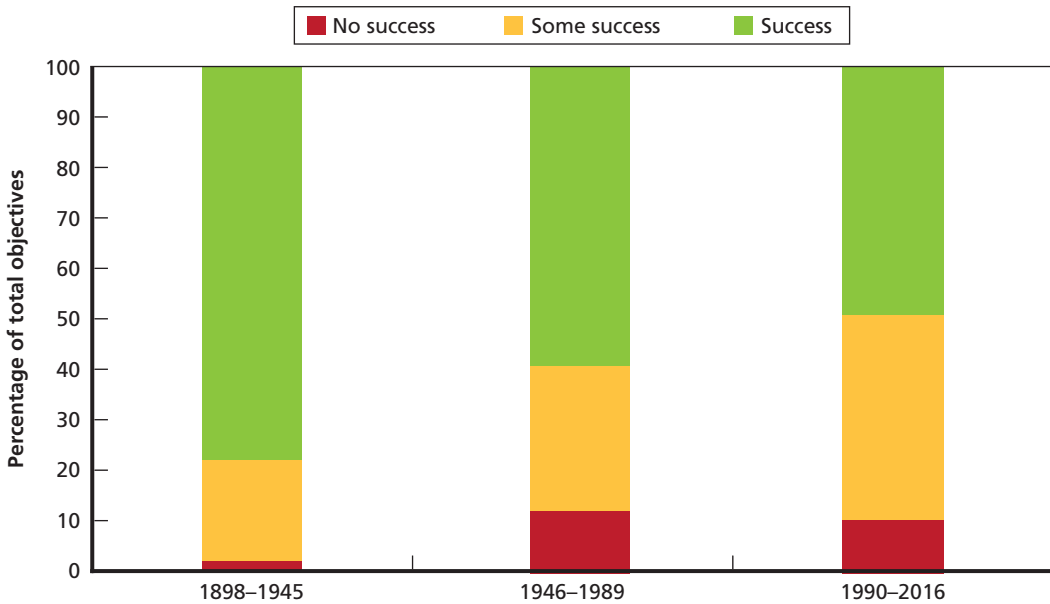


using three categories: success, some success, and no success.⁴ Figure S.3 shows that the United States has been generally successful in achieving the political objectives that it set for itself in undertaking military interventions. In our data, 63 percent of political objectives were coded as having full success, with only 8 percent having no success.⁵ Interventions’ overall levels of success have varied over time, with objectives generally becoming less successfully achieved in recent years; levels of success were highest prior to the Cold War and have been falling since then. Although difficult to capture systematically in our data, it is our impression that much of this shift toward lower degrees of success over time has to do with an expanding degree of ambition in setting

⁴ We use the term *coded* throughout this report to refer to instances in which we assigned raw data (e.g., objectives, numbers of forces) to a category (e.g., success or failure, small or large).

⁵ The remaining 29 percent had some success.

Figure S.3
Percentage of Political Objectives Successfully Achieved, by Historical Period



these political objectives, as partly reflected in their increasingly regional (rather than in-country) focus.

Identifying Factors That Affect Success

Descriptive trends provide us with a good summary of patterns across objective types and interventions, but they do not allow us to identify those specific factors that most directly influence the likelihood that the United States successfully achieves its political objectives. Based on a review of the prior literature, we identified a number of different factors that could potentially affect the likelihood of success, covering five main categories:

- **the execution of the mission**, such as the number and types of forces involved
- **the international system**, such as the balance of power between states (measured using the time period in which the intervention occurred)
- **the relationship between the United States and the host nation**, such as alliances and military assistance
- **the operating environment**, such as the intensity of conflict in the host nation
- **characteristics of the host nation**, such as its political and economic development.

We then conducted both statistical analyses and case studies to investigate potential relationships between these factors and success in achieving U.S. objectives. For our statistical analysis, we developed models that considered all objectives together and by activity type, focusing on three types of military interventions: combat or COIN, stability operations, and deterrence. While the United States may pursue many different types of objectives in a single intervention, the determinants of success across these objectives are likely to be shaped by the context and activities of the specific intervention, which, in turn, should have commonalities across these activity types. By grouping objectives by intervention activity type, our models are better able to isolate these patterns.

In our case studies, we conducted a series of more-detailed investigations of individual interventions. We selected these cases based on the extent to which their outcomes would have been predicted by initial statistical models and to provide reasonable diversity of activity types and geographic regions to enhance the generalizability of our analysis. Table S.2 identifies the five cases we selected, their activity types, and the extent to which they are predicted by our statistical models.

Key Determinants of Success

Together, our statistical analysis and case studies strongly suggest that the factors that matter most to the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives depend on the nature of those objectives and the context in which they are pursued.

Table S.3 identifies the most important factors we found in determining success for objectives pursued in each of the three main intervention activity types on which our analysis focused. The assessments in the table are based on both the statistical analysis and the case studies and were chosen by assessing the strength of the evidence in support of each factor and the assessed substantive contribution made by those

Table S.2
Cases Selected for Analysis

	Well Predicted ^a	Poorly Predicted ^a
Combat or COIN	Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003 ^b	Bosnian air campaign, 1994–1995 ^c
Stability operations	U.S. occupation in Iraq, 2003–2012 ^b Peacekeeping in the Balkans, 1995–2008 ^c	Occupation of Japan, 1945–1952
Deterrence	Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962	South Korea, 1945–1949

^a The extent of the prediction is based on statistical models discussed in Chapter Four.

^b These two items represent two phases of the same case.

^c These two items represent two phases of the same case.

Table S.3
Most Important Factors for Achieving Political Objectives

	Combat or COIN	Stability Operations	Deterrence
Factors supported by both quantitative analysis and case studies	• Number and types of forces, esp. ground forces • Objective scope	• Objective scope • Conflict intensity^a	• Objective scope • Relative U.S. capabilities
Factors supported by case studies only	• Relative U.S. capabilities • Technological superiority • Pre-intervention planning	• Number and types of forces • Host-nation political institutions • Pre-intervention planning • Nonmilitary resources • Interference of third-party actors	• Number and types of forces

^a This factor was statistically significant in quantitative analyses but was assessed to have a limited substantive effect.

factors.⁶ It is important to note that while the statistical models provide evidence of relationships that can be generalized across cases, our case studies provide insights that apply most directly to only the five cases considered. We include some of these insights here, but we also wish to emphasize the caution required when interpreting and extrapolating from these results. We address the direction and relative importance of each factor as it pertains to specific types of interventions in the text below.

Combat or COIN Interventions

Our results highlight two factors that most reliably affected the likelihood of success across both our statistical models and the case studies for objectives pursued during combat or COIN interventions: the number and types of forces committed and the scope of the objective being pursued. Particularly in the post-1945 era, the United States has generally been able to achieve its objectives in these interventions when it applies substantial numbers of forces, and particularly ground forces. Even in such interventions, however, the scope of the objective still appears to matter. Expansive objectives remain more difficult to achieve than those that are more limited in scope.

Our case studies of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and the 1994–1995 campaign in Bosnia suggest three additional factors that may also affect the likelihood of success in achieving objectives in combat or COIN interventions. First, when the United States is relatively more powerful and unconstrained in the international system, this

⁶ Factors are listed in the order in which they were assessed in Chapters Four and Five, not in order of importance. We felt that rank ordering factors would convey a false degree of precision because our synthesized analysis only supports a more-general assessment of the level of importance. Chapter Four and Appendixes B and C provide additional information and regression tables that supported the selection of these factors over others.

may assist its ability to achieve these objectives. The effectiveness of U.S. forces in achieving objectives in combat or COIN interventions may also be augmented by the often-superior technical capabilities of the U.S. military. This stands in contrast to objectives pursued in stability operations, where military technological advantages may be less salient. Pre-intervention planning also emerged as a key factor influencing the ability of the United States to achieve its objectives in combat or COIN operations in the cases we explored. Pre-war planning in particular allows military strategists and tacticians to carefully script U.S. operations, identify key challenges, and ensure that an operation receives the right types and numbers of people. Objectives in combat or COIN operations may also be easier to plan for than, say, objectives for stability operations that are often of greater complexity and require integrating military and nonmilitary expertise.

Stability Operations

Objectives pursued in stability operations, often including efforts to build institutions or promote peacekeeping, have become a particular focus of U.S. interventions since the end of the Cold War. Our analysis highlighted two factors whose effects were consistent across both our qualitative and quantitative analyses: objective scope and conflict intensity. As was true across intervention types, objective scope appears to play a significant role in the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives in these interventions. As objectives were more broadly defined, it was increasingly difficult for the U.S. military to fully achieve them. Conflict intensity was also highlighted as an important factor across both methodologies, although the size of the effect in the statistical analysis was more limited. The ability of the United States to focus on and achieve its objectives in stability operations appears to diminish as the intensity of conflict increases.

We conducted three case studies with important stability operations components: Iraq post-2003, Bosnia post-1995, and Japan post-1945. In these cases, the number and types of forces involved did appear to be crucial to the successful achievement of political objectives. Large force sizes allowed the intervention force to take on the numerous roles needed in an environment where they may be substituting, even if just temporarily, for the entire apparatus of the host-nation government while also maintaining security and stability to facilitate that rebuilding. However, as emphasized elsewhere, force size is unlikely to guarantee success in stability operations. Nonmilitary resources committed to achieving objectives in stability operations may be just as vital. Relatedly, our cases suggest that pre-intervention planning can be central to success in stability operations. While specific plans for stability operations will need to adapt, as plans for combat operations necessarily evolve during fighting as well, establishing the capabilities and expertise needed to plan for stability operations objectives appears to greatly facilitate their achievement.

The initial quality of host-nation political institutions and the support of the host-nation government can also exercise a substantial effect on the success of U.S. stability operations. Finally, third-party interference into countries where the United States is conducting a stability operation can substantially affect the likelihood of success. This can be for good or ill, as the cases of Bosnia and Iraq illustrate.

Deterrence Interventions

U.S. pursuit of objectives in deterrence interventions, and the relative ambition of those objectives, has expanded dramatically since 1945. During the Cold War, these objectives frequently focused on containing the Soviet Union and limiting the spread of communism. In recent years, these interventions have more commonly been focused on deterring potential adversaries in particular regions, such as deterring Russia in Europe and deterring China in East Asia. Two factors were highlighted in both our statistical analyses and case studies: objective scope and the relative capabilities of the United States. As was the case with other intervention types, the objectives of deterrent interventions appear to have been more difficult to achieve when they were more expansive and easier to achieve when they were more limited.

The United States also appears to have been more successful in its pursuit of its objectives in deterrence interventions at points when the country's military capabilities vis-à-vis the rest of the world were higher, as was particularly the case immediately after World War II.

Our case studies of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and post-1945 Korea suggested one additional factor that may affect the ability of the United States to achieve its objectives in deterrence interventions: the numbers and types of forces and resources that the United States commits. These cases illustrated how the substantial application of ground, naval, and air forces can be crucial in supporting deterrent interventions, underlining U.S. commitments, and providing resources to pursue additional tasks that may support the overall success of such interventions.

Recommendations

In this section, we discuss a number of recommendations for military strategists and planners. While several of these recommendations identify new insights, others should seem familiar to experienced military planners. However, despite these recommendations being widely accepted and understood, recent interventions have not always followed their guidance, with significant negative consequences for the United States.

Match Intervention Strategy with Objectives

The overriding theme of this report is that how the United States is best able to achieve success in its military interventions will depend on what political objectives the United

States is trying to pursue. U.S. objectives are heterogeneous, and factors that may promote the success of some goals may be irrelevant or counterproductive for others. For example, advanced military technologies may help to facilitate deterrence or win battles against an adversary (as occurred in the initial 2003 invasion of Iraq), but they will be less useful in nation-building (as illustrated in post-2003 stabilization activities). Large numbers of forces may help to stabilize postconflict societies, but by themselves they may not help to expand U.S. access and influence. Before intervening, the United States should consider the political objectives it hopes to achieve and then consider the mix of military and nonmilitary tools best suited to achieve those objectives.

Ensure Sufficient Force Size

For objectives where large numbers of forces do appear to be an important factor in achieving U.S. objectives, ensuring adequate force size can be vital. In cases where the United States has deployed a sufficient number of personnel, military forces have been able to defeat adversaries (for example, Iraq in 2003), to protect the U.S. homeland and neighbors (Cuban Missile Crisis), and to accomplish stabilization and institution-building (Japan after World War II). Cases where the United States has not deployed a sufficient number of personnel to meet intervention requirements have had less success, including the nation-building phase of the occupation of Iraq, the intervention in Somalia in 1993, and others. Previous studies have underscored the necessity of ensuring sufficient force ratios to support the successful achievement of U.S. objectives, but despite general acceptance of this maxim, insufficient force size has continued to interfere with U.S. efforts to achieve its political objectives. However, it is essential to note that strong evidence linking success in achieving political objectives with force size exists only for combat interventions and ground troops. Thus, ensuring sufficient force size is not likely to be a silver bullet or to guarantee success in the absence of other factors.

Identify and Pursue Narrowly Defined Objectives

Our case studies and descriptive analyses emphasize that the United States has been more successful at achieving political objectives that are narrowly scoped. This is perhaps obvious, but, for a country like the United States with tremendous potential military resources and wide-ranging, global interests, it bears repeating. This recommendation applies across objective types but is most relevant for grand strategy, nation-building, and increasing access and influence objectives, which tend to be the most broadly and ambitiously defined. As objectives become increasingly ambitious, they become more difficult to achieve. This is not only because more ambitious objectives often have more requirements (in terms of resources and time), but also because more-broadly defined goals may require diplomatic or other contributions, which may be difficult to coordinate and integrate into primarily military missions. As an example, an objective that aims to increase regional stability is likely to require not just military

activities, such as stabilization of conflict areas, but also a diplomatic strategy to ensure the support or acquiescence of powerful neighbors. Even an expertly planned military intervention that achieves all military-specific goals might only partially achieve its political objectives if these extend beyond combat outcomes. We encourage policymakers and military planners to consider carefully whether military forces can, on their own, achieve a given objective, and, if not, whether adequate nonmilitary resources can be provided and are likely to be effective.

Pre-Intervention Planning Should Be Comprehensive

In our case studies, those interventions that were carefully planned beforehand were able to achieve greater degrees of success than those for which planning was insufficient or incomplete. This should not be surprising to policymakers or military planners, but recent experience suggests that this recommendation bears repeating. The United States military has historically prepared well for combat interventions but has focused less on planning for the postconflict stabilization phase. The same rigorous and detailed planning that goes into preparing for and scripting combat operations would benefit efforts involving institution-building and peacekeeping. Planning is required in these cases to guide allocation of resources and personnel, to set priorities, to sequence activities, and to identify key leaders and their responsibilities.

Interventions focused on institution-building objectives may be the most difficult for which to plan. However, military planners have several tools at their disposal. First, they may rely on past experience for insights and lessons learned. Second, gaming and simulation can be used to help planners carefully craft operations to maximize the chance for success. Third, expertise to guide planning for institution-building objectives may lie in large part outside the U.S. military, making the coordination of efforts with agencies such as the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development, not to mention with foreign partners and allies, essential.

Evaluate the Possible Role Played by Third-Party Interference

While allies and partners can often be extremely helpful in supporting U.S. goals, our case studies highlight that third-party actors can also fatally undermine the ability of the United States to achieve its objectives. The role played by third parties appears underappreciated in numerous past interventions, and this can have deleterious consequences, particularly for stability operations. A key example from the occupation of Iraq in 2003 is the role played by Iran through its support of Shi'ite militia members and other actors that undermined U.S. efforts to stabilize the country and build relationships between Iraq and other regional neighbors. Given the potential importance of third parties and the difficulties the United States has previously had anticipating and planning to counter their influence, we encourage military planners and strategists to carefully identify and incorporate potential third-party interference into their intervention planning. This would mean exploring who these actors might be, what capa-

bilities they have, and what objectives they might pursue. The presence of third-party actors may increase the number of forces required or alter decisions about resource allocation. They may also highlight the importance of a regional diplomatic strategy for success.

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Abbreviations

ADCOM	Air Defense Command
AFB	Air Force Base
AFPAC	U.S. Army Forces in the Pacific
AIRSOUTH	Allied Air Forces Southern Europe
AQI	al Qaeda in Iraq
ARADCOM	Army Air Defense Command
BLT	Battalion Landing Team
CAS	close air support
CENTCOM	Central Command
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CINC	Composite Index of National Capability
CINCNOAD	Commander in Chief, North American Air Defense Command
COIN	counterinsurgency
CONAD	Continental Air Defense Command
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CPKI	Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence
CR	continuing resolution
DDR	disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
DEFCON	Defense Readiness Condition
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense

EPR	Ethnic Power Relations
EUFOR	European Union Force (Althea)
ExComm	Executive Committee
FID	foreign internal defense
FY	fiscal year
GARIOA	Government Aid and Relief in Occupied Areas
GDP	gross domestic product
GHQ	General Headquarters
GNP	gross national product
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
IFOR	Implementation Force
IGC	Iraqi Governing Council
IHS	inverse hyperbolic sine
IMI	International Military Interventions
IRBM	intermediate-range ballistic missile
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISIS	the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JCP	Japan Communist Party
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KPR	Korean People's Republic
LOC	line of communication
MIPS	Military Interventions in Powerful States
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoI	Ministry of the Interior
MRBM	medium-range ballistic missile
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	nuclear, biological, chemical
NORAD	North American Air Defense Command

NSC	National Security Council
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OPLAN	Operation Plan
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
POW	prisoner of war
PPP	purchasing power parity
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
PRT	provincial reconstruction team
ROE	rules of engagement
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SAM	surface-to-air missile
SCAP	Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOSOM II	United Nations Operation in Somalia II
UNPROFOR	UN Protection Force
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
USAF	U.S. Air Force
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USAMGIK	U.S. Army Military Government in Korea
USMC	U.S. Marine Corps
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
V-J Day	Victory over Japan Day
WMD	weapon of mass destruction

Introduction

What makes for a successful military intervention? Success is not an abstract concept; it depends on the specific political objectives pursued. From the history of the 145 U.S. military interventions over the past century, we can gain an understanding of the objectives that have been successfully achieved and critical factors underlying those successes, notwithstanding how varied and complex these interventions have been.¹ Relatively little prior analysis is available to policymakers and defense planners as to what has contributed to success. Understanding the specific factors most likely to contribute to a successful intervention would be of great advantage to policymakers charged with making decisions about where to intervene and planners responsible for planning those interventions. This report seeks to fill this gap through quantitative and qualitative analyses and to offer specific recommendations for any U.S. military interventions that may lie ahead.

Objective of This Report

When tasked by policymakers with planning a military intervention, military leaders face a number of decisions, including how many and what types of forces should be sent, what types of activities military personnel will be conducting, and how long forces will stay. They must also consider such factors as the region; the specific characteristics of the host nation (for example, its degree of economic and political development and its support for the intervention); and the type of conflict, threat, or circumstance in which U.S. forces will be asked to operate. Throughout these diverse cases, the intention of planners and strategists is the same: to design and execute a military

¹ In this report, *military intervention* refers to any overseas deployment of U.S. forces that meets our threshold for size and during which military personnel undertake a particular type of activity, such as armed conflict, deterrence, counterinsurgency (COIN), stability operations, security, humanitarian assistance, intelligence gathering, transport, and advisory operations. This latter condition is intended to distinguish military interventions from forward presence, in which forces are stationed overseas but otherwise engaged in training or other activities similar to what they would undertake if located in the United States.

intervention that will, given the prevailing circumstances, give the United States the best possible opportunity to achieve its political objectives.

This report aims to provide policymakers and defense planners insight into this question, using a data set of military interventions and their political objectives. Combining statistical analysis with case studies, this report identifies key factors that are associated with the successful achievement of U.S. political objectives, as well as those factors that may impede success. The case studies explore these factors and others in more depth, assessing the role played by context and investigating possible causal mechanisms that may explain why and how factors identified as contributing to or inhibiting success have the impact that they do.

The insights provided in this report are valuable for the U.S. Army for several reasons. First, findings presented in this report may inform decisions about which capabilities to assign to specific missions in order to maximize the chances for success. Past experience suggests the possible consequences of assigning insufficient numbers or the wrong types of forces to a given intervention. For example, some of the challenges faced by U.S. forces in Iraq from 2004 to 2006 may have resulted from not having enough personnel on the ground to accomplish the COIN mission. Similarly, as adaptable as U.S. military personnel have proven to be, mismatches between the types of personnel deployed and the demands of the evolving mission in Iraq during this same time period created additional challenges. The analyses presented in this report may also give military planners a better sense of the likelihood of success for different objectives and identify which factors that affect success may be largely outside of their control. A final contribution is the extensive data set used for the analysis. The data set is a comprehensive accounting not only of U.S. military interventions since 1898, but also of their political objectives and the extent to which those objectives were achieved. These data have wide applicability and can be used in future analyses.

Research Approach

To answer the question of which factors make military interventions more or less successful at achieving their political objectives, we combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. While statistical analysis of historical cases of U.S. intervention provides insight into which factors appear to matter most to success in the aggregate and over time, case studies provided contextual richness and allow for a better exploration of causal mechanisms.

Our quantitative analysis makes use of an original data set of 145 U.S. ground, air, and naval interventions covering the period from 1898 to 2016. The data set includes every U.S. intervention during this period that met specific criteria for the activities conducted and for size (100 person-years for ground interventions and similar thresholds for air and naval units) and includes information on each intervention's size,

duration, and primary activities. It also includes information on each intervention's political objectives and the extent to which each objective was successfully achieved.² We used these data to identify key situational factors and intervention characteristics that appear more or less likely to contribute to the successful achievement of U.S. political objectives.

The qualitative analysis involves five detailed case studies of specific interventions and their political objectives. The selection of cases was guided by the initial statistical models. However, while some of the factors explored in the quantitative analysis are also considered in the case studies, there are other factors explored only in the cases. Thus, the two types of analyses are complementary but not identical. The case studies focus on identifying factors that explain why the United States was or was not able to achieve its political objectives, while also tracking the evolution of objectives over time. Some of the specific cases selected were chosen to validate the findings from the quantitative analysis, while others were selected to explore factors that the quantitative analysis was not able to consider. We also aimed to include a number of different types of interventions in diverse regions so as to increase the generalizability and relevance of their cumulative insights.

Our recommendations integrate the findings from our qualitative and quantitative analyses. By using each method to complement and supplement the other, we are able to provide a more comprehensive and robust set of findings and insights about what has historically made U.S. interventions in particular contexts more or less successful.

Contributions and Limitations of This Report

This report makes two primary contributions to existing work on the factors likely to affect intervention success.

First, we addressed the question of what makes U.S. military interventions successful by conducting a detailed empirical assessment using an original data set that identifies and codes the political objectives of each U.S. military intervention since 1898. The use of this data set allows for a careful assessment of the specific factors that contribute to the success of different types of objectives. While previous work has sometimes assumed the objectives of a given intervention based on context (e.g., an intervention into an armed conflict must have ending that conflict as its main goal), our analysis identifies the objectives empirically, using historical analysis. This empirical basis for identifying objectives improves the understanding of the types of objectives that the United States had pursued using military force and also makes our subsequent statistical and case study analyses more robust.

² See Chapter Three for a complete discussion of the data set and Appendix A for a detailed codebook.

Second, we considered a much wider range of interventions and their accompanying political objectives than most studies, which tend to focus only on one particular type of military intervention, such as those into ongoing armed conflicts. This breadth allows us both to break new ground, as some types of interventions and objectives are understudied, and to identify similarities and differences in the factors that may promote success across a broader range of objectives and interventions.

While our approach has some advantages, such as the nuance provided by our detailed empirical analysis and the inclusion of all types of U.S. military interventions, it also has limitations. Most importantly, the breadth of our analysis naturally involves trade-offs regarding our ability to provide insight into the factors that promote success of any one type of objective. While our combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is designed to limit this shortcoming, there is still an inherent trade-off between scope, accuracy, and nuance or precision. In order to navigate this trade-off, even our more-holistic approach is required to focus on particular types or groupings of objectives, leaving others for future analysis. A narrower focus than ours might have provided more-specific and more-targeted policy recommendations and also might have made it easier to identify causal mechanisms. On the other hand, the broader approach we have chosen may provide more-generalizable and more-flexible policy recommendations that can be applied in a variety of contexts.

A second limitation of our approach is that, while our list of objectives is far more comprehensive than data relied upon in previous analyses, it remains imperfect. For some interventions, the true objectives of U.S. policymakers are still a topic of debate. If we have not accurately assessed the objectives, then the results and our interpretations of those results could be biased. However, as described in more detail in Chapter Three, our methodology for identifying the political objectives of each intervention involved extensive discussions and collaboration to help ensure that the objectives identified were correct and comprehensive to the extent possible, though this limitation doubtless persists.

Report Organization

The remainder of the report is organized as follows. Chapter Two discusses existing literature exploring factors that contribute to the success or failure of military interventions and highlights some of the shortcomings and gaps that this report aims to fill. Chapter Three provides a more-detailed discussion of the data set, the variables included, and the taxonomy used to analyze the frequency of different types of political objectives across U.S. military interventions. It also provides descriptive statistics of the number and types of interventions (air, ground, and naval), the political objectives, and the extent to which they were achieved. Chapter Three also explores differences over time in the use of different types of forces and the pursuit of different types of

objectives. Chapter Four presents the results of the statistical analysis and discusses the implications of these findings. Chapter Five discusses the insights from our five case studies, drawing examples from across the cases and comparing them with findings from the statistical analysis. Finally, Chapter Six summarizes our findings and synthesizes the results to provide a set of recommendations. We also include several appendices. Appendix A provides a detailed codebook for the data set, defining each variable and how it was measured. Appendix B provides the detailed case studies. Appendix C provides additional technical information on the statistical analysis along with complete regression results. Appendix D provides a full list of cases.

Existing Literature: Findings and Shortcomings

In this chapter, we briefly review the existing research on factors that affect intervention outcomes. We summarize this work, discussing characteristics of the intervention and the environment that past work has identified as contributing to an intervention's success or failure, and identify gaps that remain in existing work that our report will seek to address.

Research considering the characteristics of interventions that affect their outcomes is extensive. Key variables considered can be divided into several main categories, including the execution of the mission (e.g., numbers and types of forces, activities), the circumstances of the intervention (e.g., intensity of conflict, support of host-nation population), the context of the host nation (e.g., level of development and relationship with the United States), the U.S. domestic context (e.g., public opinion), and the international context (e.g., geopolitical considerations).

However, the types of outcomes investigated tend to be quite limited. With two exceptions discussed below, most work on intervention outcomes focuses on such outcomes as levels of violence, political regime type, or intervention cost and does not consider in depth an intervention's stated political objectives, how these objectives changed over time, or the extent to which they were achieved. This omission has persisted despite the inclusion of a variable for the objective in two of the major existing intervention data sets, both discussed below: Military Interventions in Powerful States (MIPS) and the International Military Interventions (IMI) data.

Instead, most studies that do consider the achievement of intervention outcomes focus narrowly on either (1) interventions into armed conflict or (2) regime change or democratization interventions, using general objectives such as "end conflict" or "establish democracy" as the standard for success. Studies that assess the success of interventions into armed conflict, for instance, compare the outcomes of conflicts that do have third-party interventions with those that do not. These studies therefore draw conclusions about how interventions of varying timing and length affect the future levels of violence in a conflict, but they do not tend to specifically consider whether the intervening country achieved its political objectives with the intervention or which specific characteristics of the intervention or the conflict are associated with higher rates of success.

Additionally, the existing literature on military interventions is often somewhat stovepiped, so that, for example, occupations, COIN campaigns, interventions into ongoing civil wars, and United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions are treated separately. Each strand of the literature therefore assesses a different universe of cases and draws disparate and sometimes even conflicting conclusions as to what makes these different types of interventions successful. While it certainly makes sense that different factors may contribute to the success of different interventions and while there may be advantages to focusing narrowly on specific types of interventions, attempts to reconcile disparate findings on different types of interventions are lacking and might yield useful insights. We start this chapter with a discussion of existing data sets of military interventions and then highlight some key examples of past work that has explored determinants of the success of military interventions. We emphasize that the literature on factors affecting intervention outcomes is extremely vast, and to try to summarize it all in depth here would be impossible. Instead, we will focus on those military and situational factors that receive the strongest support in existing literature.

Data Sets That Include Political Objectives

The data set constructed for this report improves on existing data sets on intervention in several ways. IMI and MIPS are the two most-comprehensive existing data sets, and we drew from both when building our own data set. However, while both include some information about the political objectives of interventions, our data set includes more-detailed information about objectives, how they have changed over time, and the degree of success achieved.¹

The IMI data set, which includes information about interventions by all countries from 1946 to 2005, includes ground, air, and naval interventions. *Intervention* is defined as “the movement of regular forces or forces (airborne, seaborne, shelling, etc.) of one country inside another, in the context of some political issue or dispute.”² In addition to information about the key states involved and types of forces, the IMI data set includes information about whether the intervention was related to strategic issues, humanitarian issues, diplomatic protective issues, etc. However, it does not provide more specificity within these categories, nor does it code the types of activities conducted during the intervention or whether these objectives were met. Additionally, because it ends in 2005, it does not cover significant portions of more-recent interventions, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as interventions prior to 1946.

¹ We use the term *coded* throughout this report to refer to instances in which we assigned raw data (e.g., objectives, numbers of forces) to a category (e.g., success or failure, small or large).

² Jeffrey Pickering and Emizet F. Kisangani, “The International Military Intervention Dataset: An Updated Resource for Conflict Scholars,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2009, p. 593.

The MIPS data set includes interventions by the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France from 1945 to 2003. *Intervention* is defined as “a use of armed force that involves the official deployment of at least 500 regular military personnel (ground, air, or naval) to attain immediate term political objectives through action against a foreign adversary.”³ The MIPS data include detailed information on the context of the intervention, the number of troops, and some information about the activities conducted as part of the intervention. Like the IMI data, the MIPS data set includes some information on the objectives of each intervention, as well as whether the intervention was successful in achieving its “primary political objective.”⁴ However, it does not include information about whether other objectives driving the intervention were achieved, and it does not include longer-term strategic goals from defined political objectives. While this decision is certainly justified, it also means that the data do not take into account the many broad objectives that have guided U.S. intervention decisions in the past, including to maintain regional stability or stop the spread of communism. The MIPS data set does allow for objectives to change over the course of an intervention, but it treats each intervention-objective pair as a new case rather than as a continuation of previous cases, which could have implications for subsequent analyses. Additionally, the relatively high threshold for inclusion of 500 regular personnel affects which interventions are included. At the same time, the failure to consider duration of involvement as a criterion for inclusion may also skew the data set. Like IMI, the MIPS data set also leaves out more-recent interventions, as well as interventions before the end of World War II.

In addition to IMI and MIPS, there are several data sets that include information about some types of intervention. For example, several data sets code intervention into ongoing interstate or intrastate armed conflicts but do not include other types of interventions.⁵ Others code whether an intervention is successful in democratizing host nations but do not include information about other categories of objectives.⁶ However, these data sets are limited to specific types of interventions, and they rarely

³ Patricia L. Sullivan and Michael T. Koch, *Military Interventions by Powerful States, Codebook*, Version 2.0, 2011, p. 3.

⁴ Patricia L. Sullivan and Michael T. Koch, “Military Intervention by Powerful States, 1945–2003,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 46, No. 5, 2009, p. 712.

⁵ E.g., see Patrick M. Regan, “Conditions of Successful Third-Party Intervention in Intrastate Conflicts,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 1996, pp. 336–359; Nils Petter Gleditsch, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Håvard Strand, “Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 39, No. 5, 2002, pp. 615–637; and Meredith Reid Sarkees and Frank Wayman, *Resort to War: 1816–2007*, Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2010.

⁶ E.g., see Alexander B. Downes and Jonathan Monten, “Forced to Be Free? Why Foreign-Imposed Regime Change Rarely Leads to Democratization,” *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 4, 2013, pp. 90–131; and Bruce Bueno De Mesquita and George W. Downs, “Intervention and Democracy,” *International Organization*, Vol. 60, No. 3, 2006, pp. 627–649.

include information about the types of armed services involved, the type and number of forces used, and so forth.

Data limitations, then, have likely affected previous analyses of the extent to which past military interventions have achieved their political objectives.

Factors That Affect Intervention Outcomes and Success

Execution of Mission

The way that a mission is executed naturally plays an important role in determining whether an intervention successfully meets its objectives. “Execution of mission” refers to such factors as number of forces, type of forces, timing, activities conducted, and strategic and tactical decisions that guide the intervention.

Types and Numbers of Forces

While the effect of the types of forces and number of forces on intervention outcomes has not been exhaustively studied, there is some research that assesses the effects of these variables, particularly in the context of affecting war outcomes. U.S. nation-building efforts are more likely to be successful when they receive more resources and more time—for example, the United States and its allies had invested about 25 times more financial resources and 50 times more personnel on a per capita basis in postconflict Kosovo than in Afghanistan as of 2003. Greater numbers of U.S. military personnel are also associated with lower casualty levels, both suffered and inflicted.⁷ Number of military personnel also appears to have made a difference in the 2007 “surge” in Iraq, although the increase in troop levels was necessary but not sufficient to bring about the temporary decrease in insurgent violence there.⁸ Somewhat counterintuitively, UN nation-building efforts tend to be more successful than U.S.-led ones, but they also tend to be smaller in size; however, UN nation-building missions also often have more-limited objectives and take place in less-demanding circumstances.⁹ Less-mechanized military forces have been found to have more success at COIN because mechanized force structures can inhibit the collection of information from local populations.¹⁰

Several studies have focused explicitly on the effects of airpower on conflict outcomes. On one side of the debate, Pape argues that strategic bombing works only

⁷ James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, Andrew Rathmell, Brett Steele, Richard Teltschik, and Anga Timilsina, *The UN's Role in Nation-Building: From the Congo to Iraq*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-304-RC, 2005.

⁸ Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro, “Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?” *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2012, pp. 7–40.

⁹ Dobbins et al., 2005.

¹⁰ Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson, “Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars,” *International Organization*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 2009, pp. 67–106.

when used against traditional military targets and when intended to undermine the adversary's military capability to achieve its objectives. He argues that bombing used against civilian and economic targets tends to fail.¹¹ This qualitative assessment was supported by a 2001 quantitative study that found similar results.¹² However, a 1999 RAND report found instead that strategic bombing used as a strategic tool has had mixed success.¹³

Timing and Duration

The timing and duration of an intervention is also likely to have a bearing on the outcome. Findings on the effect of the timing of intervention in civil wars are mixed: Some studies find that intervention has a more immediate effect when it occurs in the middle of a conflict,¹⁴ but others argue that the timing of an intervention has no effect on the duration of a civil war.¹⁵ The “ripeness” theory suggests that third parties will be more successful at ending ongoing conflicts in negotiated settlements if they intervene when the conflict has reached a “mutually hurting stalemate” in which neither side can win but both are suffering significant losses.¹⁶ Findings on the effects of intervention duration are less ambiguous, although findings may vary depending on the type of intervention. For instance, a RAND study of nation-building found that the record of U.S. nation-building efforts “suggests that while staying long does not guarantee success, leaving early ensures failure”; as of 2003, no U.S.-led democratization effort of less than five years had been successful.¹⁷

Strategy and Tactics

There is an extensive literature examining the importance to war outcomes of strategy, doctrine, and tactics through which force is employed that likely applies to military interventions as well. Much of this literature focuses on the importance of a state's military capabilities, both in absolute terms and compared to adversaries. For example, Mearsheimer has found that whether deterrence is successful depends on capability

¹¹ Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996.

¹² Daniel Byman, Matthew Waxman, and Eric Larson, *Air Power as a Coercive Instrument*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1999.

¹³ Michael Horowitz and Dan Reiter, “When Does Aerial Bombing Work? Quantitative Empirical Tests, 1917–1999,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 2, pp. 147–173.

¹⁴ Patrick M. Regan and Aysegul Aydin, “Diplomacy and Other Forms of Intervention in Civil Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 50, No. 5, 2006.

¹⁵ Regan, 2002.

¹⁶ William I. Zartman, “The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments,” *Contemporary Peacemaking*, 2008, pp. 22–35.

¹⁷ James Dobbins, John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, Andrew Rathmell, Rachel Swanger, and Anga Timilsina, *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Iraq to Germany*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1753-RC, 2003, p. xxiv.

and how an actor uses that capability: Conventional deterrence is more likely to fail when one side has the capacity to employ a blitzkrieg strategy.¹⁸ Central to this literature is the work of Stephen Biddle, who argues that force employment is one of the primary determinants of battlefield outcomes and suggests that the tactics developed in the early 1900s and used during World War I represent the primary advances in this area, with further technological development simply reinforcing past lessons.¹⁹ There are others who disagree, arguing that the types of COIN and stabilization operations employed during the 2000s and 2010s are a new type of warfare.²⁰ In fact, Lyall and Wilson argue that too heavy a reliance on mechanized warfare may complicate and undermine the ability of today's military forces to achieve political goals in insurgency situations.²¹ From the perspective of this report, what is most significant is the emphasis on strategy and tactics as factors likely to influence war (and, by extension, intervention) outcomes, making these factors worth considering in future analyses.

A related literature considers the means of intervention: military, diplomatic, or economic. Military interventions are more likely to be successful along a variety of dimensions when they are accompanied by diplomatic efforts and economic intervention, such as sanctions, foreign aid, or embargoes. Studies have found that military interventions into ongoing civil wars have a better chance of success when combined with economic intervention²² and that sanctions in combination with military intervention decrease civil war duration.²³ Additionally, diplomatic efforts dramatically decrease the duration of civil wars, both alone and in combination with economic intervention.²⁴ UN peacekeeping missions also tend to be more successful when accompanied by diplomatic efforts.²⁵

¹⁸ John Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983.

¹⁹ Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006.

²⁰ See, for example, Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2012; and Frank Hoffman, *The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, Arlington, Va.: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007.

²¹ Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson, "Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars," *International Organization*, Vol. 63, Winter 2009, pp. 67–106.

²² Patrick M. Regan, "Conditions of Successful Third-Party Intervention in Intrastate Conflicts," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 1996, pp. 336–359.

²³ David Lektzian and Patrick M. Regan, "Economic Sanctions, Military Interventions, and Civil Conflict Outcomes," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 53, No. 4, 2016, pp. 554–568.

²⁴ Regan and Aydin, 2006.

²⁵ Darya Pushkina, "A Recipe for Success? Ingredients of a Successful Peacekeeping Mission," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2006, pp. 133–149.

Nature of the Objective

Still another body of work focuses on how the nature of the objective itself, especially its strategic importance to the intervener, may affect the likelihood of a successful outcome. A number of previous studies consider the role played by the resolve of the intervener in achieving its political goals. According to work that gives more weight to resolve than to other factors, it is not necessarily capabilities that determine war (and, by implication, intervention) outcomes, but the importance of the objectives at stake. Under these arguments, whether a state achieves its intervention goals depends almost solely on whether the objective is of vital or minor importance to the intervener.²⁶

Sullivan offers a nuanced version of this argument, suggesting that interveners typically intervene only when the expected costs of the intervention fall below some acceptable cost threshold and that whether capabilities or resolve is more important depends on the degree to which the achievement of the intervener's objectives depends on the support (or, at least, acquiescence) of the host nation. She argues that uncertainty (and the risk that the intervener will underestimate the cost) is highest when host-nation compliance and, therefore, resolve are relatively more important—which often occurs when strong states pursue limited aims that require compliance from a weak host nation (an example would be the U.S. intervention in Vietnam).²⁷

Finally, although it is not directly considered in existing work, the scope of the objective is likely to matter as well. The odds of success are likely to be significantly lower when the objective itself is broad and ambitious than when the objective is narrow and tractable, especially if broad objectives require not just military force, but also diplomatic, economic, or some other form of assistance. We will explore this hypothesis in subsequent chapters of this report.

Summary

Previous work, then, does suggest that such factors as the number and types of troops and decisions about strategy and tactics are likely to affect the outcome of military interventions and the ability of the intervening state to achieve its objectives. However, there are many unsettled debates—which strategies and tactics are most decisive, whether the use of coercive airpower is likely to lead to success, whether and when capabilities and resolve determine outcomes, and how intervention timing affects outcomes. Some consensus exists that, for certain types of interventions, more forces may

²⁶ Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1975, pp. 175–200; John E. Mueller, "The Search for the 'Breaking Point' in Vietnam: The Statistics of a Deadly Quarrel," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1980, pp. 497–519; Steven Rosen, "War Power and the Willingness to Suffer," in Bruce M. Russett, ed., *Peace, War, and Numbers*, Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1972, pp. 167–183.

²⁷ Patricia Sullivan, "War Aims and War Outcomes: Why Powerful States Lose Limited Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 51, No. 3, 2007, pp. 496–524; Patricia Sullivan, *Who Wins: Predicting Strategic Success and Failure in Armed Conflict*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

yield better results—but, even here, past work makes clear the importance of context. Our statistical analysis and case studies engage with several of the factors explored in this section, including the number and types of forces and the intervention duration.

Circumstances of the Intervention

Support of the Host Nation

Literature on the factors that affect intervention success also explores characteristics of the environment that may affect intervention outcomes, such as the intensity of the conflict, the nature of the threat, and the extent to which the host-nation government or population supports the intervention. One focal point of literature in this area is how support of the host-nation government affects the likelihood of success. In practical terms, this usually boils down to whether the intervention occurs to support the host-nation government (against a rival or internal threat or to combat a crisis) or on behalf of forces fighting the host-nation government. This research has found that biased intervention has mixed effects on the outcome of a civil war: Rebel-biased intervention makes rebel victory more likely, but government-biased intervention is less effective at generating government victory. However, this largely appears to be a selection effect driven by the decisionmaking calculus of the intervener: Third-party interveners are most likely to intervene on behalf of the government in “hard cases” when the opposition group is strong. As a result, it appears that they are less effective at generating positive outcomes for government actors, but this likely reflects the circumstances in which they intervene, rather than a difference in the skill or resolve with which the intervention was pursued.²⁸

Finally, studies have found that intervention in support of the government increases the likelihood of extrajudicial killings, torture, political imprisonment, and forced disappearances²⁹ but decreases the likelihood that the government orders civilians killed.³⁰ Interventions in support of the government that involve a large number of ground forces are also associated with an increased number of insurgent suicide attacks.³¹ The match between the objectives of the intervener and the objectives of the host-nation government may also matter: When the goals of the intervener and the host nation are divergent, intervention tends to increase the duration of an ongoing

²⁸ Patricia L. Sullivan and Johannes Karreth, “The Conditional Impact of Military Intervention on Internal Armed Conflict Outcomes,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2015; Stephen E. Gent, “Going in When It Counts: Military Intervention and the Outcome of Civil Conflicts,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 2008, pp. 713–735.

²⁹ Dursun Peksen, “Foreign Military Intervention and Women’s Rights,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 48, No. 4, 2011, pp. 455–468.

³⁰ Jacqueline H. R. DeMeritt, “Delegating Death Military Intervention and Government Killing,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 3, 2015, pp. 428–454.

³¹ Seung-Wan Choi and James A. Piazza, “Foreign Military Interventions and Suicide Attacks,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2017, pp. 271–297.

civil war, but when the goals of the intervener and the host nation align, intervention has no effect on duration.³²

Other work looks more closely at support for the intervention by a host nation's population. These studies have found that a host nation's population is less likely to actively resist occupation when governing authority is devolved to the local level³³ and when political groups are able to use collaboration with occupiers to effectively suppress their domestic political competition.³⁴ A shared perception of a common threat between the population of the host nation and the occupier may also increase the likelihood of success.³⁵ Much work also considers the role that public opinion in the host nation may play in intervention success. In general, the recent literature on COIN suggests that success in COIN operations "requires the government to be accepted as legitimate by most of the uncommitted middle, which also includes passive supporters of both sides."³⁶ According to this argument, successful COIN campaigns must therefore work to win over the "hearts and minds" of the local population by protecting the population while using minimal force and investing in economic development projects in lieu of more firepower.³⁷ In general, however, practitioners are more optimistic about the "hearts and minds" approach than are academics, who find less evidence that such a strategy is likely to be effective.

Presence and Nature of Intervening Coalition

Existing work also investigates how the number and nature of participants in an intervening coalition might affect outcomes. Studies suggest that multilateral nation-building efforts are more complex and time-consuming than unilateral missions, but such multilateral efforts are also less expensive for participants and can produce more-thorough transformations and greater reconciliation than unilateral ones. Issues around command structure can become more complicated with broader participation, but "unity of command and broad participation are compatible if the major participants share a common vision and can shape international institutions accordingly."³⁸ Interventions led by international organizations also tend to have a positive effect on

³² David E. Cunningham, "Blocking Resolution: How External States Can Prolong Civil Wars," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 2, 2010, pp. 115–127.

³³ Jeremy Ferwerda and Nicholas L. Miller, "Political Devolution and Resistance to Foreign Rule: A Natural Experiment," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 108, No. 3, 2014, pp. 642–660.

³⁴ Matthew Adam Kocher, Adria Lawrence, and Nuno P. Monteiro, "The Rabbit in the Hat: Nationalism and Resistance to Foreign Occupation," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Ill., 2013.

³⁵ Edelstein, 2004.

³⁶ David H. Petraeus and James F. Amos, *Counterinsurgency: FM 3-24*, Boulder, Colo: Paladin, 2009.

³⁷ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

³⁸ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. xxv.

women's rights in the host nation.³⁹ However, UN-led interventions are not associated with democratization and may even be associated with declining levels of democracy in the host nation.⁴⁰ The U.S. public is more likely to support multilateral action when it involves burden-sharing, suggesting that the United States may be better able to sustain interventions that are multilateral in nature.⁴¹

Summary

Literature that considers the circumstances of the intervention focuses on the existence or absence of third-party support, as well as the strength of support provided by the host nation. While this work clearly suggests that support of the host nation can facilitate success, existing research is more mixed on the question of whether the existence of an intervening coalition is conducive to success. On the one hand, coalitions can provide legitimacy, resources, and expertise when tackling complicated nation-building interventions. On the other, the presence of many intervening parties may create challenges for command and control that ultimately undermine the intervention's attempts to achieve its goals. Whether the existence of a coalition ultimately promotes achievement of intervention objectives may depend on the characteristics of coalition members and the nature of the objectives themselves.

Characteristics of Host Nation

Characteristics of the host nation, such as levels of economic development, regime type, and ethnic heterogeneity, may have a significant effect on the successful achievement of intervention objectives because they directly shape the context and challenges that interveners must confront.

Economic Development

The level of economic development in the host nation may also affect the success of an intervention. Existing work has found that peacebuilding efforts following conflict are less successful in less-economically developed nations, which are unequipped to rebuild after conflict and susceptible to additional wars stemming from economic grievances, and in more resource-dependent nations, where fighting can be financed by looting resources and where the state is less likely to have a diversified economy that generates economic growth.⁴² Higher levels of economic development also substantially reduce the chances that a conflict will recur for the same reasons.⁴³ It is possible,

³⁹ Peksen, 2011.

⁴⁰ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, 2006.

⁴¹ Richard C. Eichenberg, "Victory Has Many Friends: U.S. Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981–2005," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2005, pp. 140–177.

⁴² Doyle and Sambanis, 2000.

⁴³ Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Måns Söderbom, "Post-Conflict Risks," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 45, No. 4, 2008, pp. 461–478.

then, that the intervener's ability to achieve certain objectives may depend on both the initial economic condition of the host nation and the intervener's ability to bolster the host nation's economy through reforms or economic assistance. Indeed, studies of COIN have found that, overall, development spending is correlated with reduced levels of insurgent violence, but aid spending may increase insurgent violence in contested areas even as it decreases violence in government-controlled areas.⁴⁴

Ethnic Heterogeneity

In addition to economic development, ethnic heterogeneity in the host nation may have an effect on the success of interventions. While some studies have found that ethnic heterogeneity has no effect on peacebuilding in states that have recently experienced a civil war,⁴⁵ others found that ethnic homogeneity was a helpful (but not necessary) condition for nation-building efforts.⁴⁶ Other studies of COIN have also found that co-ethnic forces are better at conducting COIN campaigns.⁴⁷

Political Institutions

There is an established body of literature that considers the relationship between institutional type, quality, and conflict outcomes. First, there is relatively strong support for the argument that conflict is less likely and less violent and destructive in states with higher political stability and more-established political institutions.⁴⁸ States with the highest risk of conflict and the poorest war outcomes may be anocracies, states with often weak political institutions on the continuum between democracies and dictatorships that have the highest risk of political violence and civil war.⁴⁹ In explaining this relationship, existing work points to the greater numbers of opportunities for corruption and political rents that exist in anocracies,⁵⁰ as well as the fact that many of these states also have weaker institutions and safeguards and so are more susceptible

⁴⁴ Renard Sexton, "Aid as a Tool Against Insurgency: Evidence from Contested and Controlled Territory in Afghanistan," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 110, No. 4, 2016, p. 731.

⁴⁵ Doyle and Sambanis, 2000.

⁴⁶ Dobbins et al., 2003.

⁴⁷ Lyall, 2010.

⁴⁸ Jack A. Goldstone, Robert H. Bates, David L. Epstein, Ted Robert Gurr, Michael B. Lustik, Monty G. Marshall, Jay Ulfelder, and Mark Woodward, "A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54, No. 1, January 2010, pp. 190–208; Alberto Abadie, "Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 96, No. 2, 2006, pp. 50–56; James Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1, 2003, pp. 75–90.

⁴⁹ James Raymond Vreeland, "The Effect of Political Regime on Civil War: Unpacking Anocracy," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52, No. 3, 2008, pp. 401–425.

⁵⁰ "Political rents" refers to monetary gains accrued by exploiting political office or leverage.

to collapse.⁵¹ Related literature finds that political instability can also affect economic outcomes, which may magnify the effect of political instability on the likelihood and outcomes of conflict.⁵²

Although the literature does not explore the relationship between intervention outcomes and the political institutions of the host nation in depth, it is reasonable to hypothesize that some relationship exists. For example, nation-building and stabilization interventions that aim at institution-building, regime consolidation, or peacekeeping are likely to be more successful in states that already have some established institutional infrastructure than in states that have weak or failing institutions. In part, this is because the challenges and costs of accomplishing certain types of political objectives may be lower in host nations where some foundation exists. On the other hand, there is little evidence to suggest that interventions into democracies are more likely to be successful than those into dictatorships. It is possible to identify rationales for such a relationship. For example, interventions into democracies might benefit from the more open and competitive political environment, which can provide multiple local partners. On the other hand, this plurality could interfere with the achievement of other types of objectives. Whether there is a relationship between regime type and intervention outcomes is a question that we will explore in more detail in Chapters Four and Five.

Summary

That the characteristics of the host nation are likely to affect the outcome of the intervention makes intuitive sense: These characteristics determine the raw materials that the intervener has to work with. Characteristics of the host nation may also define the extent of demands placed on the intervening state and the types and number of resources required. Host-nation characteristics are likely to be especially important in interventions focused on stabilization, peacekeeping, or nation-building, as well as those involving conflict and those that are less important to deterrence. While most previous work agrees that interventions into poorer, less-developed countries with weaker political institutions and more extensive ethnic heterogeneity are likely to be more difficult, it remains unclear which of these host-nation characteristics are most important and whether that varies across different types of interventions. We will explore some of the dynamics in our analysis in Chapters Four and Five.

⁵¹ Vreeland, 2008; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph Siverson, and James Morrow, *Logic of Political Survival*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003; Scott Gates, Håvard Hegre, Mark P. Jones, and Håvard Strand, "Institutional Inconsistency and Political Instability: Polity Duration, 1800–2000," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 4, 2006, pp. 893–908.

⁵² Alberto Alesina, Sule Özler, Nouriel Roubini, and Philip Swagel, "Political Instability and Economic Growth," *Journal of Economic Growth*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1996, pp. 189–211.

U.S. Domestic Context

Domestic characteristics of the United States, including domestic politics and public opinion, have been explored in relation to the decision to intervene or to escalate or withdraw, but they are less often considered as potential factors for success.

Leader Characteristics

A number of studies have focused on how the political party or particular presidential administration—or even the president’s personality—may affect the decision to use force or to escalate or withdraw. Some studies focus on the worldview and philosophy of the president, arguing that these factors influence whether and how a president chooses to intervene. Saunders finds that the way that a president perceives threats explains the selection of intervention strategy. Leaders who are “internally focused” see a causal connection between the political institutions of a host nation and whether that nation poses a security threat to the intervener; these leaders are more likely to attempt to change and rebuild the political institutions in the host nation during an intervention. In contrast, “externally focused” leaders see threats as emanating directly from the foreign policies of host nations and are therefore more likely to pursue a “nontransformative” intervention strategy that aims only to resolve a specific policy issue with minimal involvement in the domestic affairs of the host nation.⁵³

Domestic Public Opinion

Several studies assess the relationship between U.S. domestic opinion and the decision to use or escalate the use of force. The “diversionary war theory” finds that leaders may be more likely to launch a new intervention in the face of domestic challenges in order to shore up public support, especially in the lead-up to an election.⁵⁴ However, Meernik finds no support for the diversionary war hypothesis in the United States, suggesting that the President’s decision to use force is influenced by the severity of a crisis rather than public opinion.⁵⁵ Additionally, arguments about “war weariness” find that public opinion about an intervention may be influenced by U.S. casualties: The public becomes less likely to support an intervention as casualty rates rise.⁵⁶ War weariness also makes future interventions less likely, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as

⁵³ Elizabeth N. Saunders, “Transformative Choices: Leaders and the Origins of Intervention Strategy,” *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Fall 2009, pp. 119–161.

⁵⁴ Charles W. Ostrom, Jr., and Brian L. Job, “The President and the Political Use of Force,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 80, No. 2, June 1986, pp. 541–566; Bradley Lian and John R. Oneal, “Presidents, the Use of Military Force, and Public Opinion,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 37, No. 2, June 1993, pp. 277–300; Brett Ashley Leeds and David R. Davis, “Domestic Political Vulnerability and International Disputes,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41, No. 6, December 1997, pp. 814–834.

⁵⁵ James Meernik, “Domestic Politics and the Political Use of Military Force by the United States,” *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 4, 2001, pp. 889–904.

⁵⁶ John E. Mueller, “Trends in Popular Support for the Wars in Korea and Vietnam,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 2, 1971, pp. 358–375.

“Vietnam Syndrome” because the United States did not engage in new, large interventions for an extended period of time after the Vietnam war ended with a high number of U.S. casualties and an unsatisfactory outcome.⁵⁷ The literature suggests that the role of casualties in domestic support for U.S. military operations can be understood as a simple cost-benefit calculation: The public has been more tolerant of even high-casualty operations when the stakes are perceived to be high, such as in World War II, but in interventions in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, the public had a lower willingness to accept costs because the U.S. interests involved were perceived to be unclear and success elusive.⁵⁸ More recently, the “CNN effect” hypothesis has suggested that the pervasive availability of video of ongoing events, and especially coverage of natural and humanitarian disasters, drove the U.S. public and policy elites to support interventions in Somalia, Bosnia, northern Iraq, and elsewhere in the immediate post-Cold War period. However, while there is relatively little evidence for this effect, there is some research suggesting that there may be some circumstances under which media coverage can affect public and elite views on intervention policy.⁵⁹

However, existing research also finds that the effect of U.S. casualties on public opinion is conditional on, or can be outweighed by, other factors. Some studies find that the public is as swayed by the potential costs of withdrawal as they are by casualties and other costs associated with continuing a war, especially where the objective is of high importance,⁶⁰ and that the U.S. public is more likely to support interventions with humanitarian or deterrence-related goals than it is to support interventions aimed at regime change.⁶¹ The public is also more likely to support interventions that are perceived as successful.⁶² The existing literature also suggests that elite opinion may affect where and how the United States intervenes. Western finds that powerful elites are able to leverage their position to advocate for and against military interventions and may thereby influence the decision to intervene.⁶³ Elite opinion may also affect public opinion of interventions. According to this argument, public support for the use of force is

⁵⁷ Jeffrey Pickering, “War-Weariness and Cumulative Effects: Victors, Vanquished, and Subsequent Interstate Intervention,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 39, No. 3, May 2002, pp. 313–337.

⁵⁸ Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for U.S. Military Operations*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-726-RC, 1996.

⁵⁹ Eytan Gilboa, “The CNN Effect: The Search for a Communication Theory of International Relations,” *Political Communication*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 2005, pp. 27–44.

⁶⁰ Patricia L. Sullivan, “Sustaining the Fight: A Cross-Sectional Time-Series Analysis of Public Support for Ongoing Military Interventions,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2008b, pp. 112–135.

⁶¹ Bruce W. Jentleson and Rebecca L. Britton, “Still Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 42, No. 4, 1998, pp. 395–417.

⁶² Richard C. Eichenberg, “Victory Has Many Friends: US Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981–2005,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Summer 2005, pp. 140–177.

⁶³ Jon Western, *Selling Intervention and War: The Presidency, the Media, and the American Public*, Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.

more likely to be divided when elite opinion is also divided, suggesting that the public takes its cues in part from elites.⁶⁴

Summary

Literature on the U.S. domestic context, then, focuses heavily on the decision to intervene but less on how this context may affect the likelihood of success of the intervention. However, there may be an indirect relationship between U.S. domestic context and intervention outcome because domestic context may affect the types of interventions a given leader chooses to undertake or the decisions of that leader about resource allocation that ultimately affect the intervention's success. Most directly, public support and domestic political pressures can constrain the ability of a leader to sustain an intervention until the objective is achieved—especially where the costs of the intervention are higher than expected. Stam makes a similar argument with respect to war outcomes, arguing that the factors that shape the final outcome of military conflict are not only a state's raw military capabilities relative to adversaries, but also considerations of domestic politics, including the leader's own preferences for various outcomes and the operating dynamics between different actors within the state. He argues that these domestic political factors affect strategic and resource decisions that, alongside military capabilities, ultimately determine which countries win the war. It is likely that this argument could be extended to interventions as well, especially those involving conflict and those with high resource demands.⁶⁵

International Context

Region

The international context of an intervention, including regional dynamics, geopolitical concerns, and the structure of the international system, also appears to affect the likelihood that an intervention is successful. Regional dynamics may play a role in whether the United States chooses to intervene in an ongoing conflict or crisis and in the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives. A RAND study of nation-building found that whether neighboring states are willing to cooperate or are more interested in competition with the host nation and their neighbors also matters: The study found that “it is nearly impossible to put together a fragmented nation if its neighbors try to tear it apart.”⁶⁶ Intervention is, therefore, more likely to succeed in bringing stability to the host nation and the wider region when the intervener solicits the cooperation of neighboring nations. Studies of civil war have found that civil wars tend to cluster

⁶⁴ Adam J. Berinsky, “Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict,” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69, No. 4, 2007, pp. 975–997.

⁶⁵ Allan Stam III, *Win, Lose, or Draw*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1996.

⁶⁶ Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. xxv–xxvi.

geographically⁶⁷ and that the presence of other ongoing civil wars in the region makes civil wars likely to last longer,⁶⁸ suggesting that interventions in regions with ongoing civil wars may have more difficulty ending a civil war or stabilizing the region.

Systemic Dynamics and Balance of Power

International systemic considerations may also play a role in intervention success. They may indirectly affect whether an intervention is successful by shaping the types of conflicts and other crises in which the United States is most likely to intervene. Edelstein finds that military occupations are more successful when both the occupier and occupied state share the perception of a common threat to the occupied state.⁶⁹ For many years, the dynamics of the Cold War shaped where the United States was more likely to intervene: Yoon finds that, during the Cold War, the United States was more likely to intervene in ongoing civil wars when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or one of its allies had already intervened and when one of the conflict actors was Communist.⁷⁰ Taken together with findings that civil wars with interventions on more than one side tend to last longer, this suggests that interventions related to great power competition might be less successful in ending the conflict or increasing stability.⁷¹

Finally, the structure of the international system is likely to affect the context of conflicts in which the United States may intervene. Research in this area finds that civil wars during the Cold War were more likely to be asymmetric conflicts between insurgent groups and conventional state militaries, while post-Cold War civil wars tend to be conventional, involving sophisticated weapon technologies and strategy between forces with relatively balanced capacities.⁷² Conventional civil wars have higher battlefield lethality, but asymmetric wars last longer.⁷³ If the U.S. public is more sensitive to casualties or to war duration, these factors might affect whether U.S. forces are withdrawn before they are able to achieve the intervention's objectives. Additionally, several studies, especially those that focus on Cold War-era interventions, have found that the degree of U.S. hegemony, as well as such international strategic factors as arms races and threats to U.S. international interests, affects the likelihood of intervention. This work has found that the United States is more likely to intervene when U.S. relative

⁶⁷ Buhaug and Gleditsch, 2008.

⁶⁸ Balch-Lindsay and Enterline, 2000.

⁶⁹ Edelstein, 2004.

⁷⁰ Mi Yun Yoon, "Explaining U.S. Intervention in Third World Internal Wars," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 48, No. 2, March 2011, pp. 171–184.

⁷¹ Balch-Lindsay and Enterline, 2000.

⁷² Stathis N. Kalyvas and Laia Balcells, "International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No. 3, 2010, pp. 415–429.

⁷³ Laia Balcells and Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Does Warfare Matter? Severity, Duration, and Outcomes of Civil Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 58, No. 8, 2014, pp. 1390–1418.

power is at its strongest and in areas of strategic interest because these factors ensure a greater degree of flexibility and a higher likelihood of success.⁷⁴ These findings suggest that the international system can affect the characteristics of conflicts in which the United States might intervene, which, in turn, has an effect on intervention outcomes.

Summary

Characteristics of the international context, such as the balance of power between states and the strategic importance of specific regions, clearly affect decisions to intervene, but existing work suggests ways in which they might also affect intervention outcomes. For example, previous work suggests that U.S. intervention decisions during the Cold War were heavily swayed by the international context and bilateral competition with the Soviet Union. The literature does not explicitly explore what this international context might mean for intervention outcomes. For example, it is possible that the presence of a near-peer competitor constrains the United States in intervention decisions in ways that limit the ability of the U.S. military to achieve stated objectives. It is also possible that the opposite is true, that the presence of a near-peer competitor raises the stakes in ways that cause the United States to marshal more resources and to fight longer and harder, thus raising the likelihood of success. Our analysis in Chapters Four and Five will attempt to disentangle these possible relationships.

Limitations of Existing Research

This review of the literature on the factors that affect whether interventions are successful suggests that the existing literature has several important limitations and gaps. First, existing studies rarely focus on the objectives of specific interventions. While there are two data sets that do include some coding of political objectives, most analyses of intervention outcomes do not evaluate these outcomes against the actual objectives of the intervener, and neither the data sets nor the literature considers how intervener objectives may change over time. Thus, while these studies assess whether military intervention taken as a whole is successful at achieving generally favorable outcomes—typically, democratization or ending an ongoing conflict—they do not provide much information about whether interventions are successful at meeting the actual political objectives of the intervener. This is as true of qualitative studies as it is of quantitative ones. To take one example, existing studies suggest that military interventions are rarely “successful” at democratizing the host nation, but they often do not consider whether democratization was truly the objective of the intervention in the first place or whether the goal was to ensure a friendly regime or to guarantee regional stability. There are, of course, exceptions. For example, Meernik’s study of democratizing inter-

⁷⁴ Yoon, 2011; and Michael Mastanduno, “Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and US Grand Strategy After the Cold War,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1997, pp. 49–88.

ventions focuses only on interventions that actually had democratization as an explicit goal.⁷⁵ Overall, though, there are remarkably few studies that identify the intended objective of individual interventions before assessing their effects, and there is even less emphasis on identifying those factors that affect the likelihood that specific types of objectives are successfully achieved. While there is some qualitative work that uses case studies to explore factors that may affect success in specific types of interventions, these studies are often not generalizable to other similar interventions and so may be, on their own, of less utility for planners and policymakers looking for factors that may be relevant for planning future interventions.

The excessive stovepiping of existing work on the characteristics of interventions that affect success represents a second major limitation of existing literature. Clearly, there are advantages to maintaining a narrow focus on specific types of interventions, especially if factors that affect success vary from one type of intervention to another. However, there are also limitations to this approach, particularly for intervention types that are largely similar in nature. For example, existing work assesses the factors that make interventions into civil wars successful separately from COIN, peacekeeping, and occupations, even though these different types of interventions actually have substantial empirical overlap. While there may be differences in the factors that contribute to success in different types of interventions, too much segregation may distract from key similarities and important findings. Furthermore, many studies include all intervening states and are not U.S.-specific. They therefore include a group of intervening states that could have different internal characteristics, could have differing levels of military capacity, or could make different strategic and tactical choices.⁷⁶ While there are certainly lessons to be learned from the experiences of other states in military interventions, a narrower focus on the factors that affect the success of U.S. interventions may provide the most relevant insights for Army planners and military decisionmakers. As described in the next section, we make efforts to address both of these first two shortcomings in this report.

In addition to these limitations, this review points to several significant gaps in the existing research in terms of the explanatory variables that may affect whether an intervention is successful. There are very few studies on the relationship between the United States and the host nation—including trade and shared military or cultural ties—and how this relationship may affect whether an intervention is successful, despite the fact that there are several studies that suggest that the United States is more likely to intervene in those nations with which it shares strong military ties, an alli-

⁷⁵ Meernik, 1996.

⁷⁶ Again, there are advantages to looking at multiple countries in a single analysis, including the ability to identify similarities across interveners. However, there are also disadvantages, including the fact that each intervener brings different capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses. These differences may be lost in an aggregated cross-country analysis.

ance, and ethnic or cultural similarities.⁷⁷ This gap suggests that there may be as-yet-unexplored links between military, trade, or ethnic and cultural ties and intervention success. Similarly, there is a good amount of existing research on what factors affect U.S. public opinion on interventions but relatively little on how (or whether) public opinion shapes intervention outcomes—for example, by affecting the timing of withdrawal or the decision of whether to escalate. There is also limited investigation into how characteristics of the military forces deployed, apart from size, affect the likelihood of success. For example, there is minimal attention paid to the types of forces (e.g., air, naval, ground), the capabilities of those forces, or the extent of an intervener's commitment (percentage of total force committed to an intervention).

While we are able to address some of the gaps detailed in this chapter, we are not able to address all of them in this report. As noted in Chapter One, we take a more holistic approach that includes all types of intervention objectives rather than only some types of objectives in limited contexts. Second, we use an original data set that includes empirically based political objectives for each intervention based on careful historical research, rather than more-generic objectives that may be assumed based on the context, timing, or activities. While our approach carries numerous advantages, it also has its own limitations, also discussed in Chapter One. We also explore the relationship between types and numbers of forces and outcomes, as well the ways in which the U.S. relationship with the host nation may affect intervention outcomes, focusing specifically on military assistance funding and the existence of an alliance. We do not consider rigorously the effect of public opinion, except to a limited degree in our case study analyses, and we focus less on the role played by ethnic heterogeneity and ethnic ties than on other areas, largely due to data limitations. These may be areas for future study. In the next chapter, we provide more details on our data set and statistical approach.

⁷⁷ Paul Huth, *Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2009; Michael G. Findley and Tze Kwang Teo, "Rethinking Third-Party Interventions into Civil Wars: An Actor-Centric Approach," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 68, No. 4, November 2006, pp. 828–837; Jacob D. Kathman, "Civil War Contagion and Neighboring Interventions," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 4, 2010, pp. 989–1012; Nicolas Rost and J. Michael Greig, "Taking Matters into Their Own Hands: An Analysis of the Determinants of State-Conducted Peacekeeping in Civil Wars," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 48, No. 2, 2011, pp. 171–184.

Collecting Data on U.S. Military Interventions

Learning from Previous Interventions

As noted in Chapter One, the United States has conducted a large number of military interventions overseas. Particularly since the 1898 Spanish-American War, the United States has frequently taken on substantial overseas commitments and attempted to use military forces to shape outcomes in other countries to better reflect its interests. This long history of the use of military forces provides us with an opportunity to use past experience to explore the questions motivating this report: whether some past interventions have been more effective in achieving the goals of the United States than others, and why.

This chapter discusses the first step in our efforts to answer these questions. It describes how we collected a comprehensive data set of U.S. military interventions since 1898, identified the political objectives that the United States sought to achieve in these interventions, and coded the extent to which the United States was successful in achieving these objectives. It also provides a descriptive analysis of these data, including the objectives and patterns in degrees of success over time. These data provide the foundation for the statistical and case study analyses that follow.

U.S. Military Interventions

In the 2017 report *The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Military Interventions*, RAND Arroyo Center collected data on U.S. military interventions since 1898 that involved ground forces.¹ This report builds on these data and expands them to include military interventions that lacked a ground component; that is, it includes those that employed air or naval assets only. The updated data set also includes information on the air and naval forces involved in primarily ground interventions, which had not been captured

¹ Jennifer Kavanagh, Bryan Frederick, Matthew Povlock, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Angela O'Mahony, Stephen Watts, Nathan Chandler, John Speed Meyers, and Eugeniu Han, *The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Ground Interventions: Identifying Trends, Characteristics, and Signposts*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1831-A, 2017.

in the original data set. This expansion of the data not only allows us to consider the effects of a wider range of military tools, but it also addresses potential selection effect issues, whereby the United States might employ ground forces only for more difficult (or less difficult) policy problems, skewing our assessments of their effectiveness. Our full list of cases is included in Appendix D.

To identify instances of U.S. military interventions, we developed definitions with two components: size and activity type. The size definitions involved three different specifications, each particular to the domain in which the forces operate—ground, sea, or air. In each definition, we sought to be relatively expansive, to allow for considerations of interventions of a wide range of different sizes, while not overwhelming the data with relatively routine movements of small numbers of military personnel.² In general, we coded an intervention as beginning when the size of the intervention passed one of the thresholds below and as ending when the size declined below these same thresholds. Our data, therefore, focus on the military portion of a given intervention and not on civilian or contractor activities that might start before or endure after the end of the direct military involvement. The size thresholds we relied upon to identify military interventions for each domain were as follows:

- *Ground forces:* To qualify as an intervention on the basis of the ground forces involved, we required at least 100 person-years of presence in another country. This could be met by 100 soldiers for a full year, 200 soldiers for six months, and so on.
- *Naval forces:* To qualify as an intervention on the basis of its naval forces, we required the presence of a Carrier Strike Group in the post-1945 era or an equivalent-size force in the pre-1945 era (when carriers were either less prevalent or did not yet exist).
- *Air forces:* To qualify as an intervention on the basis of the air forces involved, we required either roughly a wing-year of aircraft (approximately 80 planes) or an incidence of air-to-air or air-to-ground combat or strikes, which are relatively rare but, we believe, always worthy of assessment.

In order to distinguish between a military intervention and simpler forward presence, we required that the military personnel be engaged in at least one of a set of ten predefined activities, rather than simply being based overseas but otherwise engaged only in ordinary training and readiness activities. These activity types were developed to cover the full range of U.S. military intervention behavior and are defined below,

² Although comparing the size of forces across domains is difficult, the size thresholds we selected were generally higher for naval and air forces than they were for ground forces. Given the frequency with which the United States has dispatched air and naval forces for relatively routine missions, in comparison with a more judicious use of ground forces, low size thresholds for air and naval forces risked overwhelming the data set with deployments that would not be analytically interesting.

with some additional detail provided in Appendix A. Activity types are different than intervention objectives because, while activity types describe what military personnel are doing during an intervention, objectives describe what the United States hopes to achieve through the intervention. Below, we provide the activity types and definitions. To clarify, we include the below activities *only* when they are taken in support of a military deployment that reacts to a specific threat and is intended to be temporary. This means, for example, that lift and transport of U.S. forces to support a U.S. forward presence in Germany in the 1990s is not included, but lift and transport of forces to Iraq or Afghanistan in the 2000s would be included. Similarly, deterrence activities taken to contain the spread of communism during the Cold War are included in our data set, but forward presence in Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union (and up until 2014) is not included, as these forces were not positioned to deter a specific threat but, rather, to maintain U.S. presence and facilitate in other contingency operations as needed.

- *Advisory/foreign internal defense (FID)*: Training and military assistance missions
- *COIN*: Operations against a nontraditional ally, using nontraditional military tactics, and in a nontraditional environment
- *Combat*: Conventional warfighting against a conventional enemy
- *Deterrence*: Activities to deter adversaries or protect allies, both immediate and over the longer term
- *Humanitarian assistance/disaster relief*: Refugee relief, aid, and assistance in the case of natural disasters or in the aftermath of war
- *Security*: Operations to protect U.S. assets and civilians overseas from a temporary and specific threat
- *Stability operations*: Peacekeeping, reconstruction, and other activities to establish law and order and end violence
- *Interdiction*: Naval blockades and no-fly zones intended to prevent the passage or movement of vehicles, aircraft, or specific types of cargo into designated areas
- *Transport/lift*: Operations intended to move personnel, equipment, or supplies from one location to another, typically to support an overseas intervention
- *Intelligence/reconnaissance*: Covert information-gathering to support an ongoing intervention.

To identify instances of U.S. military interventions that fit these criteria, we conducted a wide-ranging historical investigation of the use of U.S. military forces abroad. We consulted primary sources from different U.S. military archives and a wide range of secondary sources. While the full range of publications is too numerous to cite here, several sources were notably useful as general references, including Barbara Salazar Torreon's Congressional Research Service report *Instances of Use of United States Armed*

Forces Abroad, 1798–2016, and John C. Fredriksen’s chronology series on the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force.³

Historical Trends in U.S. Military Interventions

From 1898 to 2016, the United States undertook 145 distinct military interventions, according to our definition. The number of military interventions in which the United States has been involved at any given point in time has varied substantially, as shown in Figure 3.1. Appendix D has a full list of cases included in the report.

U.S. military interventions were most frequent during the early and middle Cold War period and least frequent in the pre-1945 period. Since the end of the Cold War, interventions have generally increased to levels comparable to the height of the Cold War, albeit with greater annual variation.

These interventions have historically been concentrated in four regions, as shown in Figure 3.2: Central America and the Caribbean, Europe, the Mideast and North Africa, and East and Southeast Asia.

The activities that the United States has primarily undertaken in these interventions have also tended to cluster in a handful of categories, including deterrence, stability operations, and combat or COIN, as shown in Figure 3.3. Deterrence was the dominant activity type during the Cold War, while security and stability operations dominate the pre-1945 period. Since 1990, humanitarian interventions have been the most numerous, but stability operations and combat/COIN operations have also been frequent and, of course, have often involved large commitments of forces.

While the majority of U.S. military interventions have involved ground forces (about 75 percent), as shown in Figure 3.4, naval and air forces have also been quite prevalently employed, and increasingly so in recent years. The majority of interventions have involved multiple types of forces simultaneously, with almost 80 percent involving forces from more than one component. Figure 3.4 shows that naval forces are the most likely to be used alone (about 15 percent of interventions) and that air forces have not been deployed in a qualifying intervention without either ground or naval forces also participating.

³ Barbara Salazar Torreon, *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798–2016*, Congressional Research Service Report, R42738, October 7, 2016; John C. Fredriksen, *The United States Army: A Chronology, 1775 to the Present*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2010a; John C. Fredriksen, *The United States Navy: A Chronology, 1775 to the Present*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2010b; and John C. Fredriksen, *The United States Air Force: A Chronology*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2011.

Additional key sources included U.S. Air Force, *One Hundred Ten Years of Flight: USAF Chronology of Significant Air and Space Events, 1903–2012*, Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB), Ala.: Air University Press, 2015; Timothy A. Warnock, ed., *Short of War: Major USAF Contingency Operations, 1947–1997*, Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air Force History and Museums Program and Air University Press, 2000; Adam B. Siegel, *The Use of Naval Forces in the Post-War Era: U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps Crisis Response Activity, 1946–1990*, Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, CRM 90-246, February 1991; and W. Eugene Cobble, H. H. Gaffney, and Dmitry Gorenburg, *For the Record: All U.S. Forces’ Responses to Situations, 1970–2000 (with Additions Covering 2000–2003)*, Alexandria, Va.: CNA Center for Strategic Studies, June 2003.

Figure 3.1
Ongoing U.S. Military Interventions, 1898–2016

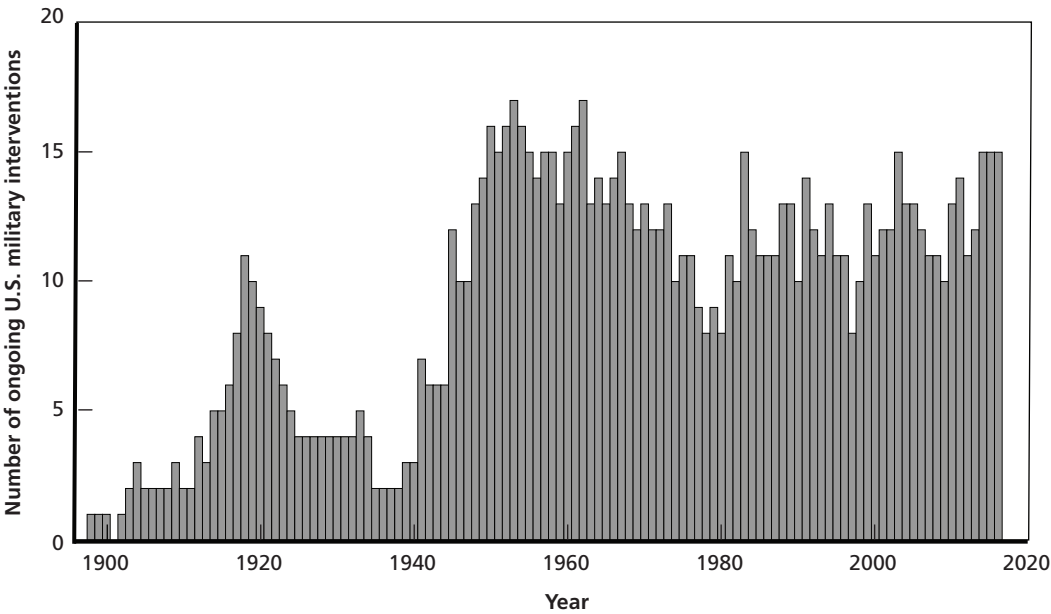


Figure 3.2
Ongoing U.S. Military Interventions by Region, 1898–2016

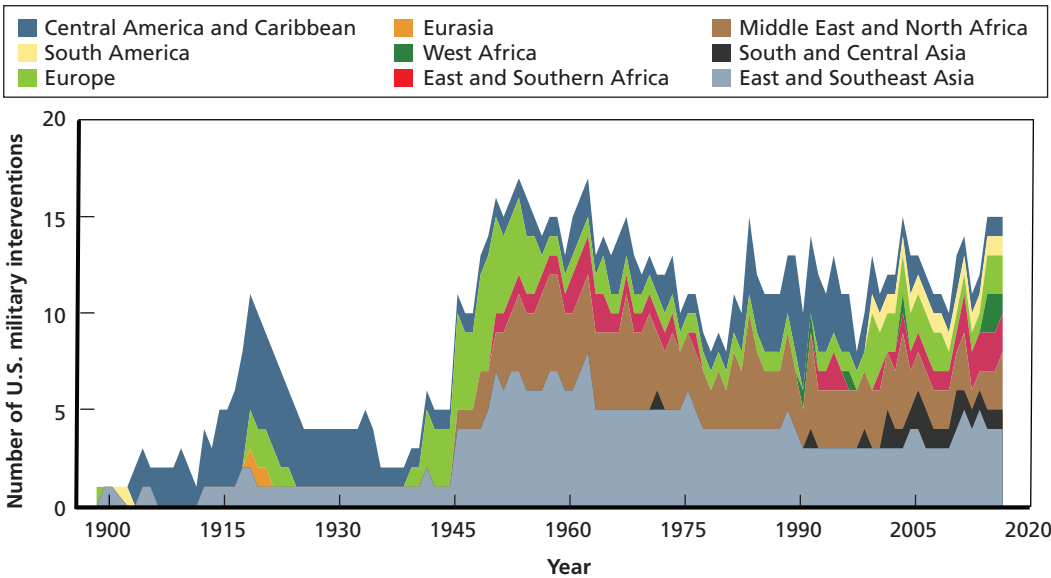


Figure 3.3
U.S. Military Interventions by Activity Type

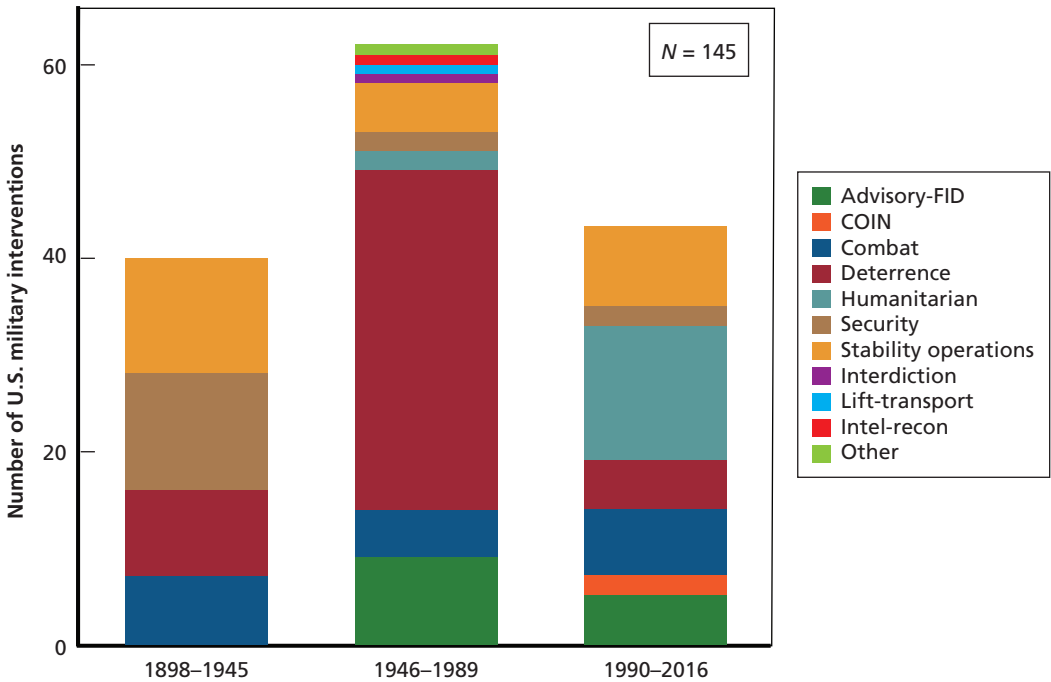


Figure 3.4
U.S. Military Interventions Involving Forces from Ground, Air, and Sea Domains

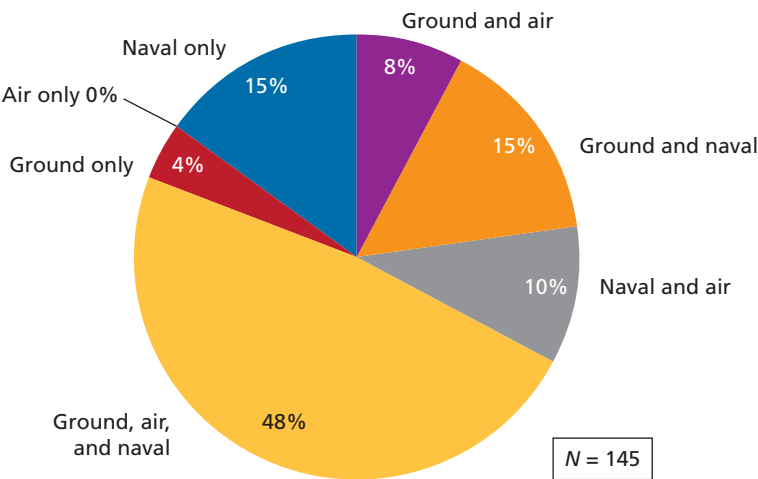
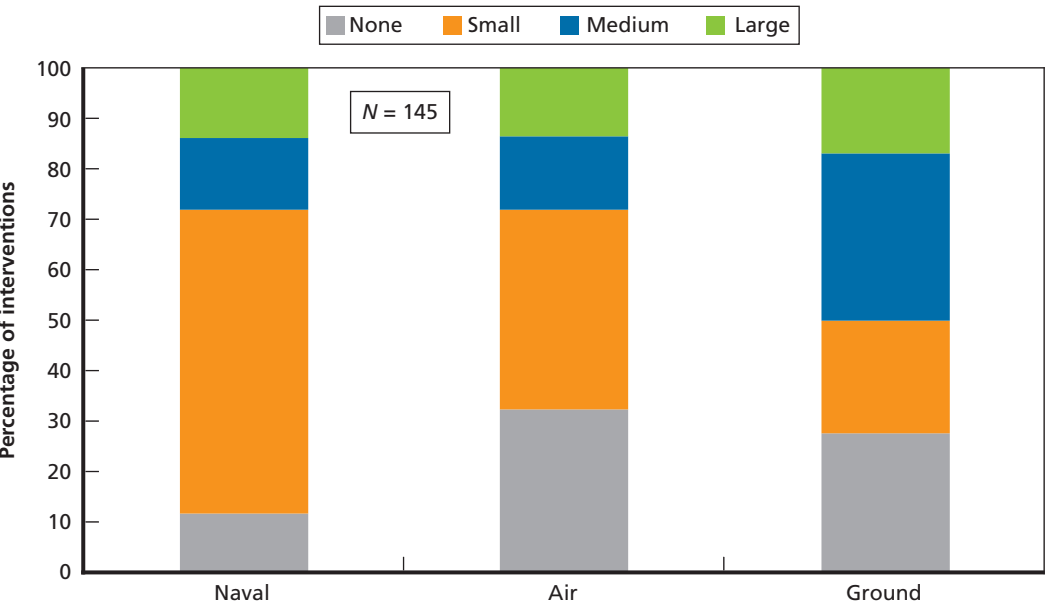


Figure 3.5 shows the percentage of interventions in the data set containing naval, ground, and air forces of specified size. For ground forces, size is based on the total number of personnel, with small interventions having fewer than 1,000 personnel, medium interventions having 1,000 to 20,000 personnel, and large interventions having more than 20,000 personnel. For air and naval interventions, our coding of force size was based not on numbers of personnel but on an assessment of the amount of resources used, in terms of aircraft, carriers, or other types of equipment. The figure shows that naval forces are the most consistently used, but the size of their involvement is typically small. Only about 30 percent of interventions have a large or medium naval presence. Air forces are used in just under 70 percent of interventions, and, as in the case of naval forces, their involvement is most often small. When ground forces are involved in interventions, however, their involvement is typically larger, in the range of 1,000 to 20,000 personnel. Just under 20 percent of interventions fall above this size threshold, having more than 20,000 personnel.

Intervention Political Objectives

Having identified U.S. military interventions that occurred within our time frame, we next identified the political objectives that the United States sought to achieve in undertaking these interventions. We focused on political objectives, rather than on

Figure 3.5
U.S. Military Interventions by Size of Ground, Air, and Naval Components



narrower operational or military objectives, because the political objectives motivate policymakers to commit military forces. Assessing the extent to which these forces successfully achieved those objectives can therefore best inform questions regarding what types of forces might best be deployed in similar contexts in the future. For example, when the United States conducts a stability operation, the political objective that motivates it to do so might be to enhance the stability of the country or to ensure that the regime remains a close partner of the United States. In service of this broader objective, U.S. officials might establish any number of operational objectives, including benchmarks for the number of local forces trained or clearing particular areas of insurgent activity. However, the successful achievement of these narrower operational objectives would be irrelevant for policymakers deciding whether the overall intervention could be considered a success and an effort that should be repeated. For this reason, we focused on identifying the political objectives for each intervention and, as will be discussed later, the extent to which each was successfully achieved.

While some objectives were present at the outset, our research also indicated that, in many instances, intervention objectives have tended to shift, and new objectives are often developed over time. In addition, we observed that interventions are rarely, if ever, undertaken for a single political objective. Instead, there tend to be at least a handful of different political objectives for each intervention. As a result, we allowed each intervention to have as many objectives as necessary and attached a specific time period to each objective. Thus, a given intervention might have three or five objectives of varying lengths, depending on the period during which each was relevant. To identify these objectives, we considered first whether U.S. officials had explicitly stated their objectives at the outset of an intervention, which did occur frequently. However, we did not rely solely on U.S. government statements, as they were sometimes incomplete, later shifted without notice, or omitted key motivations that would have been politically or diplomatically difficult to disclose at the time. To correct these omissions, we relied on a broader reading of this historical literature surrounding the intervention and the context in which it was undertaken. The initial sources consulted were Harry Ellsworth's *One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines*; Barbara Salazar Torreon's Congressional Research Service report *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798–2016*; and John C. Fredriksen's chronology series on the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force.⁴ Other key sources include:

1. U.S. Air Force, *One Hundred Ten Years of Flight: USAF Chronology of Significant Air and Space Events, 1903–2012*, Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 2015.

⁴ Ellsworth, 1974; Torreon, 2016; Fredriksen, 2010a; Fredriksen, 2010b; Fredriksen, 2011.

2. Timothy A. Warnock, ed., *Short of War: Major USAF Contingency Operations, 1947–1997*, Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air Force History and Museums Program and Air University Press, 2000.

3. Adam Siegel, *The Use of Naval Forces in the Post-War Era: U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps Crisis Response Activity, 1946–1990*, Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, CRM 90-246, February 1991.

These sources provided lists of U.S. military interventions and some basic descriptive information. From here, we examined official histories published by the U.S. Army Center for Military History and the Marine Corps History Division for information on the number of personnel involved in interventions. These sources were supplemented by books, journal articles, news reports, websites, government documents, and think tank publications. We also used data from the Defense Manpower Data Center. The official histories were the most useful sources, but they often did not cover lesser-known interventions. This necessitated the use of less authoritative sources, which contain less accurate and scarcer data. To address this issue, high, low, and average estimates of troop numbers were included in the data set from multiple sources.

We identified 492 objectives for the 145 military interventions, or between three and four objectives, on average, per intervention. In addition to identifying the political objectives involved, we also organized these objectives into four categories. This categorization was undertaken to facilitate our analysis so that we could consider objectives in the service of similar goals together when assessing which factors appeared to correlate with the successful achievement of goals. To categorize the objectives, we developed a typology with two main dimensions, as shown in Table 3.1.

We selected these two dimensions, the nature of the U.S. self-interest involved and the extent to which the objective was focused on the host nation, because they were likely to group intervention objectives together in a manner that correlates with the factors that affect their likelihood of success. That is, the factors that might allow the United States to achieve its objectives are likely to differ depending on whether the objectives are concentrated in the host nation or at the regional level, as well as depending on whether the self-interests that motivated the intervention are relatively

Table 3.1
Typology for Categorizing the Political Objectives of U.S. Military Interventions

	Narrower Self-Interest	Broader Self-Interest
U.S. Interests Primarily Inside the Host	Securing U.S. interests in intervention host	Assisting host nation or population
U.S. Interests Primarily Outside the Host	Enhancing regional and global U.S. security interests	Supporting regional and global norms

narrow, such as economic or security objectives, or broader, such as those that relate to the global or regional order or assisting partner states.⁵

Within each of these four main categories, we identified a number of specific subcategories that were similar along these two dimensions (the regional or host-nation focus on the objective and the direct or indirect relationship between the objective and U.S. interests). In identifying these subcategories, we aimed for theoretical completeness across these two dimensions. Some subcategories were, therefore, only rarely used in our data (e.g., “Supporting Regional and Global Norms”). In reality, the subcategories included in each of our four main categories differ significantly from each other in the scope of the objective and the amount of time and resources likely required to achieve it. For instance, looking at the “Assisting Host Nation or Population” category, assisting relief efforts is likely to be substantially easier and to require very different types of commitments from U.S. forces than building institutions. The first asks U.S. military personnel just to distribute supplies and other types of aid, while the second requires U.S. forces to participate in a range of activities, from stabilization to infrastructure-building to training host-nation security forces or government officials. However, the objectives in each category do share similarities in the two dimensions noted above—specifically, the relationship with U.S. interests and regional or host-nation focus. The full list of subcategories is as follows:

1. Securing U.S. Interests in Intervention Host
 - 1.1. Promote commercial interests, access to markets; protect U.S. property.
 - 1.2. Protect U.S. lives.
 - 1.3. Ensure supportive regime.
 - 1.4. Acquire territory.
2. Enhancing Regional and Global U.S. Security Interests
 - 2.1. Protect states from adversaries.
 - 2.2. Defeat adversaries.
 - 2.3. Ensure and support regional or global stability.
 - 2.4. Expand political or military access and relationship-building.
 - 2.5. Advance U.S. global or regional economic interests.

⁵ It is worth noting that, ultimately, we found mixed support for the hypothesis that the factors affecting the likelihood of success correlated with objective type along these four dimensions. We did find evidence that similar sets of factors shape intervention outcomes within the “Enhancing Regional and Global U.S. Security Interests” category and the “Assisting Host Nation or Population” category. We also found evidence that interventions that aimed at similar types of U.S. interests (narrow or broad) tended to share a common set of key factors that contributed to the success of intervention outcomes, particularly for narrowly focused U.S. interests (“Enhancing Regional and Global U.S. Security Interests” and “Securing U.S. Interests in Intervention Host”). However, there were fewer similarities along the other dimension (whether intervention objectives were aimed primarily within the host nation or primarily outside of it). Future work might explore alternate taxonomies to determine whether there are other categorizations that reveal different patterns than those presented in this report.

3. Supporting Regional and Global Norms
 - 3.1. Protect civilians.
 - 3.2. Promote democracy.
 - 3.3. Promote other international norms.
4. Assisting Host Nation or Population
 - 4.1. Assist relief efforts.
 - 4.2. Build institutions.
 - 4.3. Participate in peacekeeping or peace enforcement.

To assign each political objective to a specific category,⁶ we relied on three coders familiar with the history of the case working independently. If all three coders assigned the objective to the same category, then we accepted that coding. This occurred for 55 percent of the objectives. If any of the coders differed in their assessment, then the coding of the objective was discussed in a full meeting of the project team, and the differing rationales were presented. The most common disagreements related to distinguishing objectives in the second category, “Enhancing Regional and Global U.S. Security Interests,” from the fourth, “Assisting Host Nation or Population.” For example, in several instances, coders disagreed about whether a U.S. objective was aimed at providing regional stability or enforcing peace only in the host nation (2.3 versus 4.3). Another common disagreement was between subcategories 1.3 and 3.2: whether the United States was aiming simply at installing a friendly regime or at promoting democracy more broadly. Disagreements also arose within main categories—for example, between institution-building and peacekeeping (4.2 and 4.3) and between protecting states from adversaries, defeating adversaries, or ensuring global stability (2.1, 2.2, and 2.3). Disagreements were resolved through discussion and additional research, where needed, to resolve outstanding claims. In the very rare event that a consensus could not be achieved, the project leaders cast the deciding vote. Table 3.2 shows the political objectives and coding for two example interventions: the Somalia intervention in the 1990s and the 1956 Suez Crisis. We include the political objective codes provided in the preceding list. In the final column of the table, we provide a few notes describing the coding rationale. Appendix A provides the guidelines we used for coding intervention types.

Trends in Political Objectives

As shown in Figure 3.6, “Enhancing Regional and Global U.S. Security Interests” has been the most frequent category of political objectives. More than half of the political objectives that we identified fell into this category. Overall, the United States has been more likely to pursue objectives that aim at narrow U.S. interests. In fact, more than

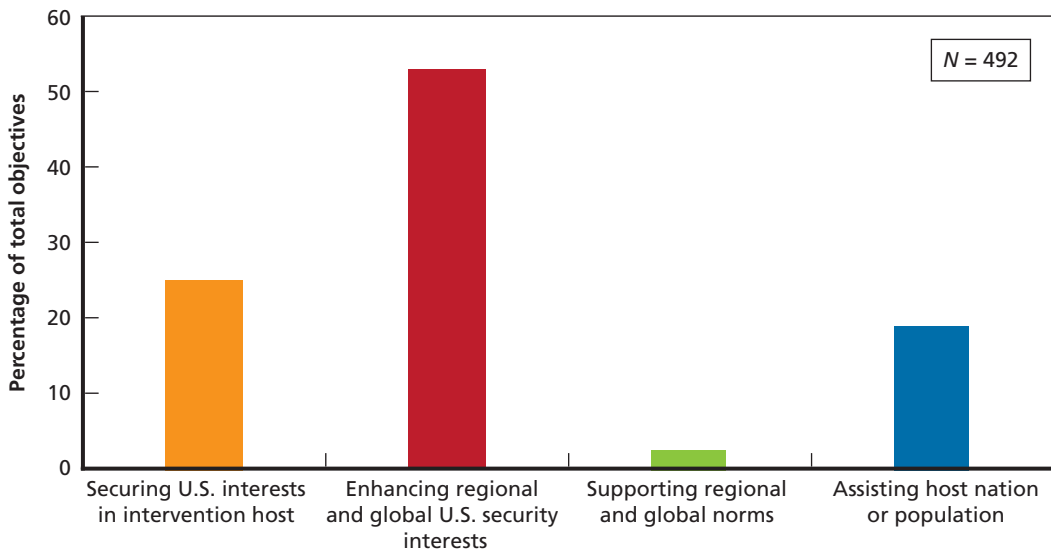
⁶ Although each intervention can have many objectives, each objective was assigned only one code, which was the code the team felt was the best fit.

Table 3.2
Objective Coding Examples

Intervention Name	Objective Start Date	Objective End Date	Objective	Objective Type	Coding Rationale
Multinational peacekeeping force in Somalia	1992	1993	Establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia as soon as possible	4.3	Objective focused on peacekeeping
	1993	1995	Conduct operations to support UNOSOM II in creating a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia	4.3	Objective focused on peacekeeping
	1993	1993	In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 837, the United States was to support UNOSOM II's more aggressive combat operations against the Somali militias responsible for attacks against UN peacekeepers	4.3	Aim is to limit combat
	1993	1994	Withdraw within six months, but in the meantime bolster force protection for U.S. troops	2.4	Focus on force protections to ensure access of U.S. forces
	1993	1995	Continue support of humanitarian relief effort	4.1	Focus on humanitarian efforts
	1993	1995	Support diplomatic resolution among Somali factions	4.3	Aim is to end conflict
Suez Crisis	1956	1956	Evacuate U.S. citizens from Egypt	1.2	Protect U.S. civilians
	1956	1956	Promote freedom of navigation in the region	2.4	Ensure U.S. access to canal
	1956	1956	Exert pressure on conflict participants to end hostilities and reduce tensions	2.3	Focus on ensuring regional stability

NOTE: UNOSOM II = United Nations Operation in Somalia II.

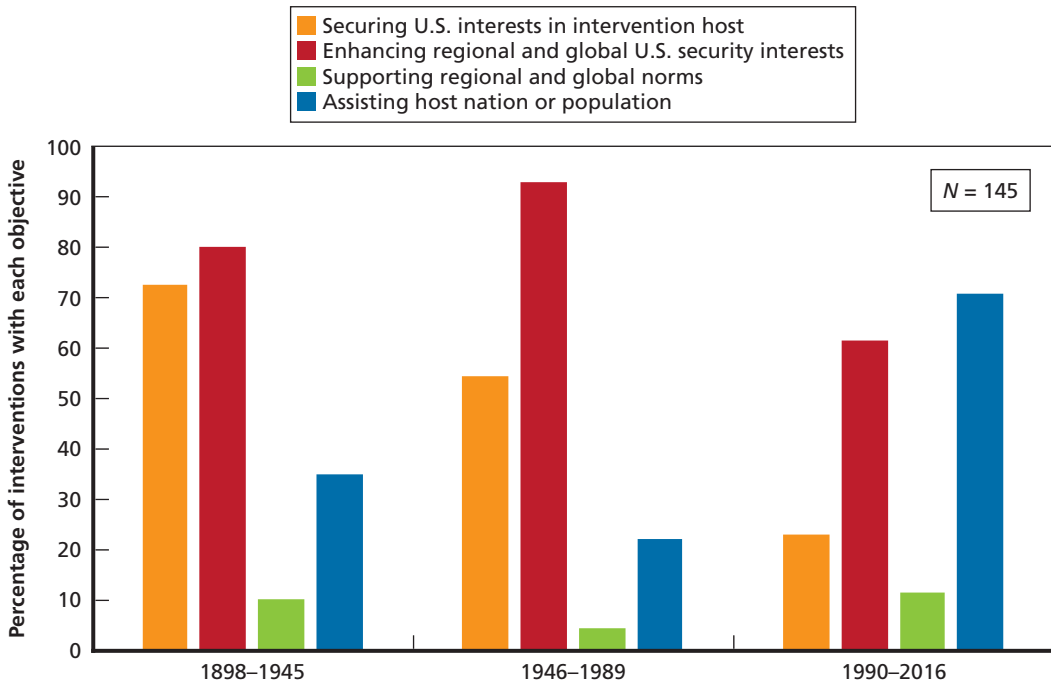
Figure 3.6
Categorization of Political Objectives in U.S. Military Interventions



three-quarters of objectives have focused on these narrower U.S. interests. This is not surprising, as we would expect that the United States would reserve its use of military force primarily for those instances when its interests are most directly at stake. Within the set of objectives that have focused on broader U.S. interests, just under 20 percent fell under the “Assisting Host Nation or Population” category. “Supporting Regional and Global Norms,” while frequently cited as an important driver of U.S. foreign policy in the media, has historically been the least common category of political objectives. The split between objectives focused on regional or global goals and those focused on goals inside the host nation, however, is more even, with 44 percent of objectives aimed at goals within the host nation (the orange and blue bars) and about 56 percent aimed at global or regional objectives (the red and green bars).

However, this pattern has also changed substantially over time, as shown in Figure 3.7. During the Cold War, the United States tended to pursue objectives that were strongly concentrated in the pursuit of its more narrowly defined self-interest. In fact, during this period, over 90 percent of interventions contained at least one objective focused on narrowly defined interests. Since the end of the Cold War, the pursuit of objectives in the broader self-interest of the United States, such as assisting host-nation populations, has become much more prevalent. Specifically, Figure 3.7 shows that, while only about 25 percent of interventions had at least one objective aimed at broader U.S. interests during the Cold War period (the green and blue bars for 1946–1989), since 1990 over 80 percent of interventions have had at least one such objective (the green and

Figure 3.7
Political Objectives in U.S. Military Interventions by Historical Period



blue bars for 1990–2016). It is worth noting, however, that the majority of this change has been driven by an increase in interventions in the “Assisting the Host Nation or Population” category, rather than “Supporting Regional and Global Norms.” Intervention objectives during the pre–Cold War period look more similar to those during the Cold War than to those in the period since the end of the Cold War. Specifically, most interventions focused on narrowly defined U.S. interests. It is also worth noting that limited, in-country objectives were most common during this earliest period.

Due to the number of different subcategories of political objectives, we have focused our brief descriptive look at these data on the top-level categories. However, in the analyses that follow later in this report, we will rely on the specific subcategory coding to more accurately group together similar objectives. Table 3.3 shows the percentage of political objectives that fall into each subcategory.

Twenty-five percent of objectives fall into “Ensure and Support Regional or Global Stability.” This is a broadly defined subcategory that might include such objectives as containing the spread of terrorism or communism or preventing or ending a serious regional conflict. The second-most-frequent subcategory is “Protect States from Adversaries.” This subcategory includes interventions aimed primarily at deterrence and conflict prevention. An almost-equal percentage of objectives falls into the “Ensure Sup-

Table 3.3
Political Objectives in U.S. Military Interventions by Subcategory

Objectives (<i>N</i> =492)	Percentage of Objectives
Securing U.S. interests in intervention host	25.2
Promote commercial interests, access to markets; protect U.S. property	7.5
Protect U.S. lives	8.9
Ensure supportive regime	8.5
Acquire territory	0.2
Enhancing regional and global security	53.0
Protect states from adversaries	13.4
Defeat adversaries	6.1
Ensure and support regional or global stability	25.0
Expand political or military access and relationship-building	4.1
Advance U.S. global or regional economic interests	4.5
Supporting regional and global norms	2.6
Protect civilians	1.0
Promote democracy	0.4
Promote other international norms	1.2
Assisting host nation or population	19.1
Assist relief efforts	8.5
Build institutions	5.1
Participate in peacekeeping or peace enforcement	5.5

portive Regime” (support of host-nation government or regime change), “Protect U.S. Lives” (protection of civilians), and “Assist Relief Efforts” (humanitarian and relief objectives) subcategories. Together, nearly two-thirds of the objectives identified in our analysis fall into these five categories. As noted above, norm promotion objectives do not appear to be commonly pursued. The same is true for objectives aiming at acquiring territory. Objectives that focus on institution-building and peacekeeping together make up about 11 percent of objectives, while those emphasizing expansion of political and military access and advancing global or regional economic interests make up about another 9 percent. In the case of these later two categories, it is likely that these objectives are more often pursued through nonmilitary channels. Finally, it is worth noting that only about 6 percent of objectives focus explicitly on defeating an adversary.

Degree of Success in Achieving Political Objectives

With the political objectives coded, we then assessed the degree to which the United States was able to achieve these objectives over the course of its intervention. While in some cases determining the extent to which one of the United States' political objectives was achieved was reasonably easy, in others it was difficult, and specifying a coding has an unavoidable degree of subjectivity. To minimize these difficulties, we opted for a relatively simple taxonomy of success involving three categories:

- *Success*: The objective was fully or largely achieved.
- *Some success*: The objective was partly achieved.
- *No success*: The objective was not achieved to any substantial degree.

While this taxonomy limits the precision with which we can specify the degree of success, it is also realistic about the difficulties of doing so and helps to avoid a false degree of precision that could accompany a larger five- or ten-point scale. Despite the limited categories, this scheme still allows us to separate objectives that were most clearly achieved from those that were most clearly not, without forcing coders to choose only one of those categories.

To code the degree to which success was achieved, we followed a procedure similar to what was used for our categorization of political objectives. Three different coders familiar with the history of each case coded the degree of success independently. Codes that saw no disagreement were accepted, while those that did were individually discussed by the full project team and resolved. Disagreements were most frequently related to the “some success” category. It was relatively easy to distinguish between “no success” and “success” but often harder to determine whether the United States had achieved enough on a given objective to classify it as “some success” and when the threshold to full success had been passed. As above, we settled disagreements through discussion and additional research when needed.

Importantly, because each intervention has many objectives, a given intervention might achieve success in some dimensions while achieving no success in others. As a result, no single intervention was completely a success or completely a failure. Table 3.4 shows the coding for two interventions, the Somalia intervention in the 1990s and the Suez Crisis in 1956. The table illustrates that both interventions achieved varying degrees of success on different objectives and at different points in the intervention, a pattern common across our data set. Appendix A provides the definitions that we used for the coding of success, while interested readers can review our full list of cases in Appendix D.

Trends in Intervention Success

Overall, the United States has been generally successful in achieving the political objectives that it set for itself in undertaking military interventions. In our data, 63 percent

Table 3.4
Success Coding Examples

Intervention Name	Objective Start Date	Objective End Date	Objective	Objective Type	Success Coding	Success Coding Rationale
Multinational peacekeeping force in Somalia	1992	1993	Establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia as soon as possible	4.3	2	The Unified Task Force was able to provide sufficient security to end the famine, but it did not completely rectify the situation in Somalia.
	1993	1995	Conduct operations to support UNOSOM II in creating a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia	4.3	1	The UN coalition met heavy resistance and was not able to maintain security in the country.
	1993	1993	In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 837, the United States was to support UNOSOM II's more aggressive combat operations against Somali militias responsible for attacks against UN peacekeepers	4.3	1	U.S. and UN forces did not defeat the Somali militia groups and leaders responsible for attacks on the UN.
	1993	1994	Withdraw within six months, but in the meantime bolster force protection for U.S. troops	2.4	3	The addition of heavier U.S. units and more-restrictive operations greatly improved U.S. defensive capability.
	1993	1995	Continue support of humanitarian relief effort	4.1	1	After the Battle of Mogadishu that saw the deaths of 18 U.S. servicemembers, U.S. forces took a much more limited role in the intervention.
	1993	1995	Support diplomatic resolution among Somali factions	4.3	1	After the Battle of Mogadishu that saw the deaths of 18 U.S. servicemembers, U.S. forces took a much more limited role in the intervention.

Table 3.4—continued

Intervention Name	Objective Start Date	Objective End Date	Objective	Objective Type	Success Coding	Success Coding Rationale
Suez Crisis	1956	1956	Evacuate U.S. citizens from Egypt	1.2	3	2,000 Americans were evacuated from Haifa and Tel Aviv, Israel; Beirut, Lebanon; and Alexandria, Egypt.
	1956	1956	Promote freedom of navigation in the region	2.4	2	Israel did not win freedom to use the canal, but it did regain shipping rights in the Straits of Tiran.
	1956	1956	Exert pressure on conflict participants to end hostilities and reduce tensions	2.3	3	Political pressure from the United States directly contributed to the end of hostilities.

NOTE: For success coding, "3" is success, "2" is some success, and "1" is no success.

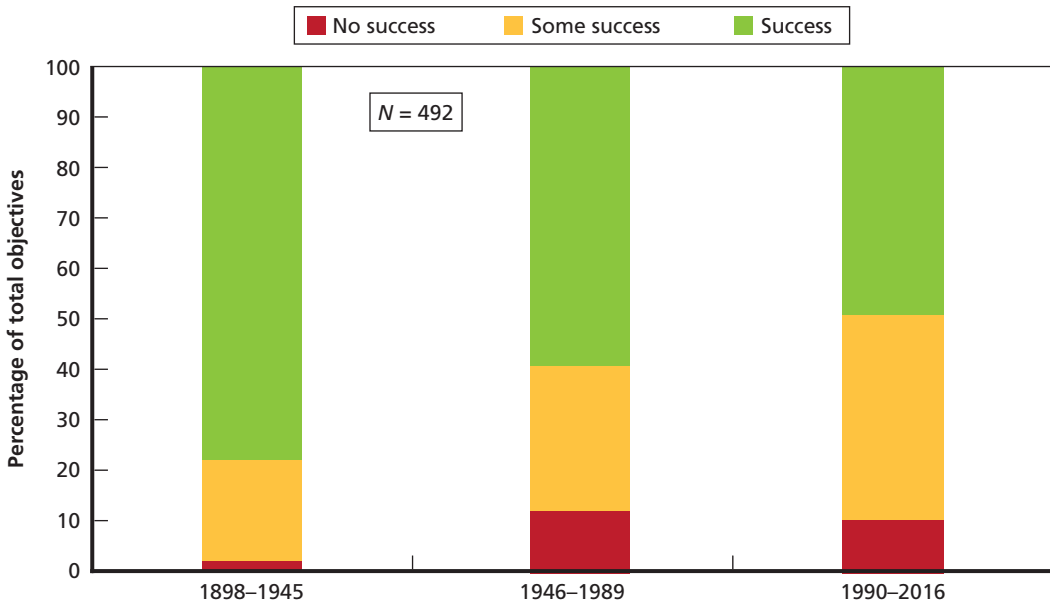
of political objectives were coded as having success, with only 8 percent having no success.⁷ The degree of this success has varied over time, with objectives generally becoming less successfully achieved in recent years, as shown in Figure 3.8. While the United States successfully achieved 78 percent of objectives in the pre-1945 period and 59 percent during the Cold War era, it has achieved only 49 percent in the period since 1990. However, the rate of partial success increased and the rate of failure decreased in the most recent period, when compared with the Cold War era.

Although difficult to capture systematically in our data, it is our impression that much of this shift toward lower degrees of success over time has to do with an expanding degree of ambition in setting these political objectives, as partly reflected in their increasingly regional (rather than in-country) focus. In the pre-1945 era, for example, many objectives involved relatively limited goals, such as protecting U.S. citizens or commercial interests. In the post-Cold War era, much more expansive objectives, such as creating and maintaining regional stability and partnerships and defeating transnational terrorism, have become more common. This can partly be observed in Figure 3.9, which shows the changing likelihood of successfully achieving objectives in different categories over time.

Figure 3.9 illustrates that the change in the extent of success over time is most apparent for regional and global objectives. Before 1945, about 80 percent of regional objectives aimed at narrow U.S. interests and 60 percent of broad regional objectives were successfully achieved. These rates of success dropped to 50 percent and just over 30 percent in the Cold War period and less than 40 percent and 0 percent after the

⁷ The remaining 29 percent had some success.

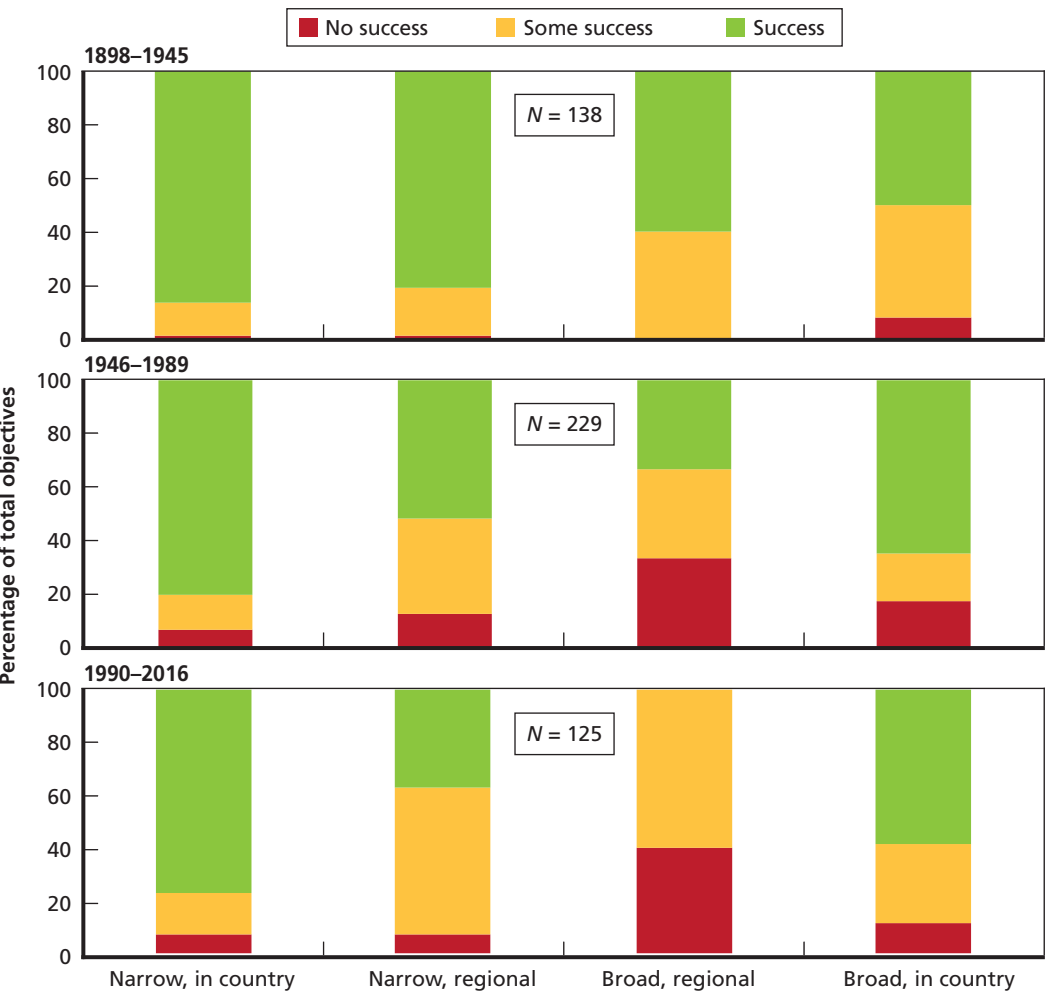
Figure 3.8
Percentage of Political Objectives Successfully Achieved, by Historical Period



Cold War, respectively. The decline has been less significant for objectives that focus on more limited in-country goals. The United States successfully achieved about 90 percent of in-country objectives focused on narrow U.S. interests during the pre–Cold War period, 80 percent of these objectives during the Cold War, and just under 80 percent of these objectives since 1990, representing a much smaller decline in the rate of success. Rates of success for in-country objectives aiming at broad U.S. interests have also not changed much, rising from about 50 percent in the pre–Cold War period to almost 65 percent during the Cold War and falling back to just under 60 percent in the post-1990 era. Furthermore, as noted earlier, regional objectives themselves have become more common since the end of the Cold War. These trends appear to support the hypothesis that it is the changing nature of the objectives themselves that may be driving the observed decline in rates of success, rather than changes in military or operational effectiveness, though we cannot rule those out at this stage.

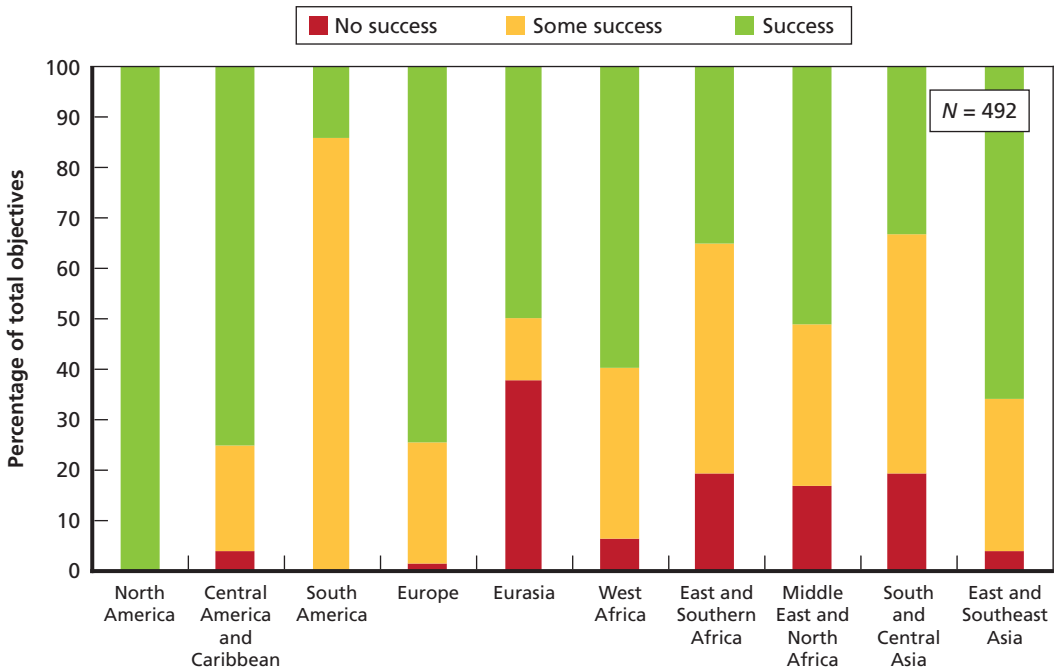
U.S. interventions into different geographic regions have also seen varying degrees of success in achieving their political objectives, as shown in Figure 3.10. Unsurprisingly, the United States has been best able to achieve its political objectives in North America, although it has rarely used force in such instances. Success rates have also been high in Central America and in Europe, with about 80 percent of objectives pursued in each region being ultimately successful. The United States has been least successful in achieving its political objectives in South and Central Asia, South America,

Figure 3.9
Successful Achievement of Political Objectives by Category and Time Period



NOTES: When considering the degree of success achieved on regional objectives that are indirectly associated with U.S. interests (Supporting Regional and Global Norms) it is worth noting that the number of these objectives in each period is very small (6, 2, and 5 in the pre-Cold War, Cold War, and post-Cold War periods, respectively). That the United States was able to achieve some degree of success in earlier periods reflects the somewhat narrower focus of objectives in these earlier periods. U.S. objectives in this category (and others) in the post-1990 period appear increasingly ambitious—so much so that it seems improbable that they could have been accomplished fully using military force alone. As an example, in the Cold War period, objectives in this category include freeing detainees from Nazi concentration camps and evacuating UN personnel during the Arab Israeli War in 1948. Contrast these with such objectives as creating a free and prosperous Iraq (starting in 2004) and fortifying global health infrastructure following the Ebola outbreak in 2014, and the impact of the scope of objectives on rates of success becomes clearer.

Figure 3.10
Degree of Success in Achieving Political Objectives by Region

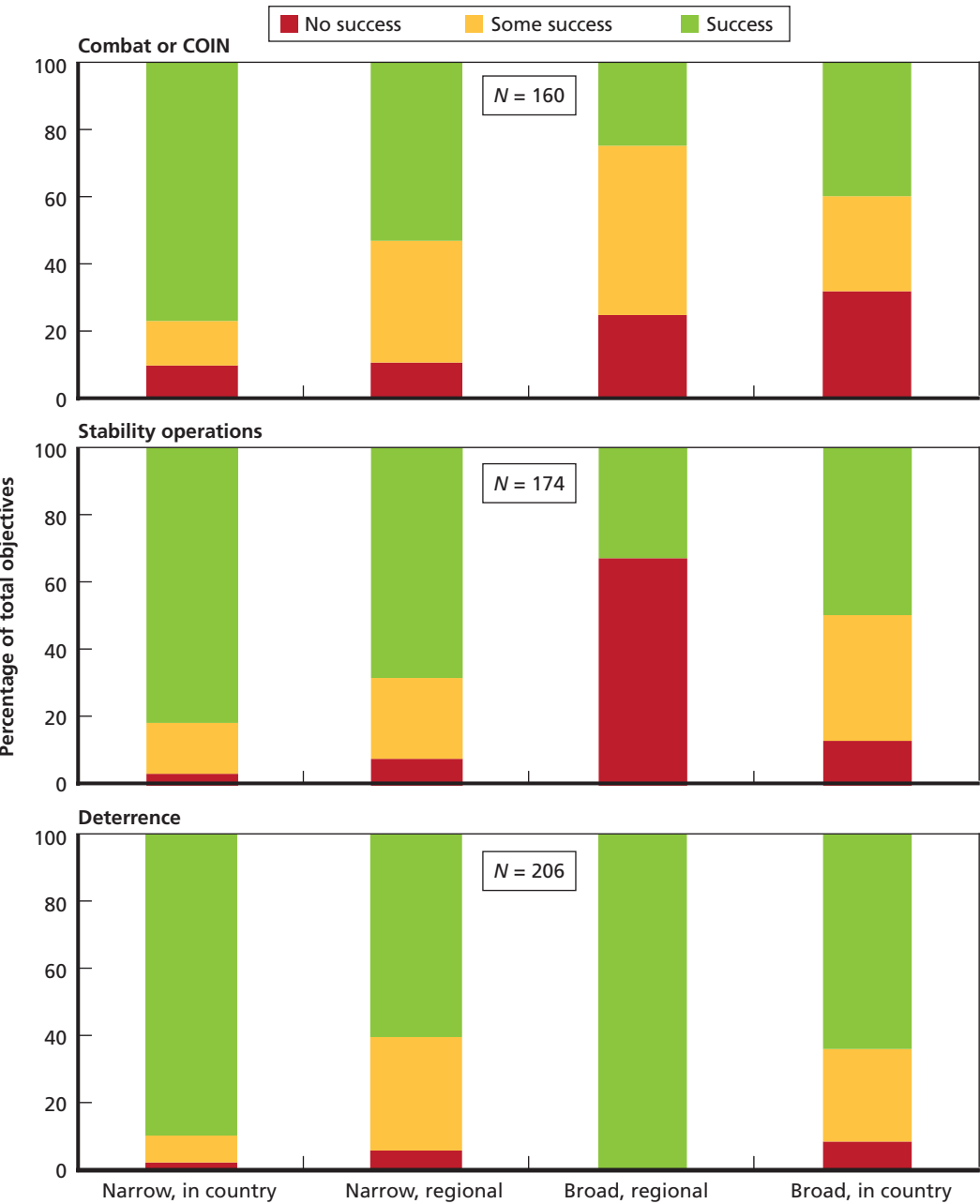


East and Southern Africa, Eurasia, and the Middle East and North Africa region. It is notable that recent U.S. interventions have been concentrated in the Middle East and in South and Central Asia, two regions where the United States has historically struggled to achieve its political objectives through the use of military force.

The extent to which U.S. political objectives were successfully achieved has also varied by the type of activity in which U.S. forces were primarily engaged, as shown in Figure 3.11.

We focused our assessment of the relationship between activity type and objectives on the three primary activity types that appear most often in the data: combat or COIN, stability operations, and deterrence. Combat and COIN operations have been most successful in achieving in-country objectives and somewhat less successful when aiming at regional objectives. Stability operations have had higher rates of success on regional and global objectives interventions and similar success rates with in-country objectives when compared with combat and COIN interventions. Notably, however, stability operations have been used almost exclusively to pursue regional objectives involving narrower U.S. interests. Both combat or COIN and stability operations are more frequently successful in pursuit of narrow U.S. interests than more broadly defined interests. Finally, deterrence missions (also not used generally for norm promo-

Figure 3.11
Degree of Success in Achieving Political Objectives by Primary Activity Type



tion) have been highly successful at achieving in-country objectives and less successful at achieving narrowly defined U.S. objectives at the regional and global level. This is significant because about 70 percent of objectives included in deterrence missions fall into this category.

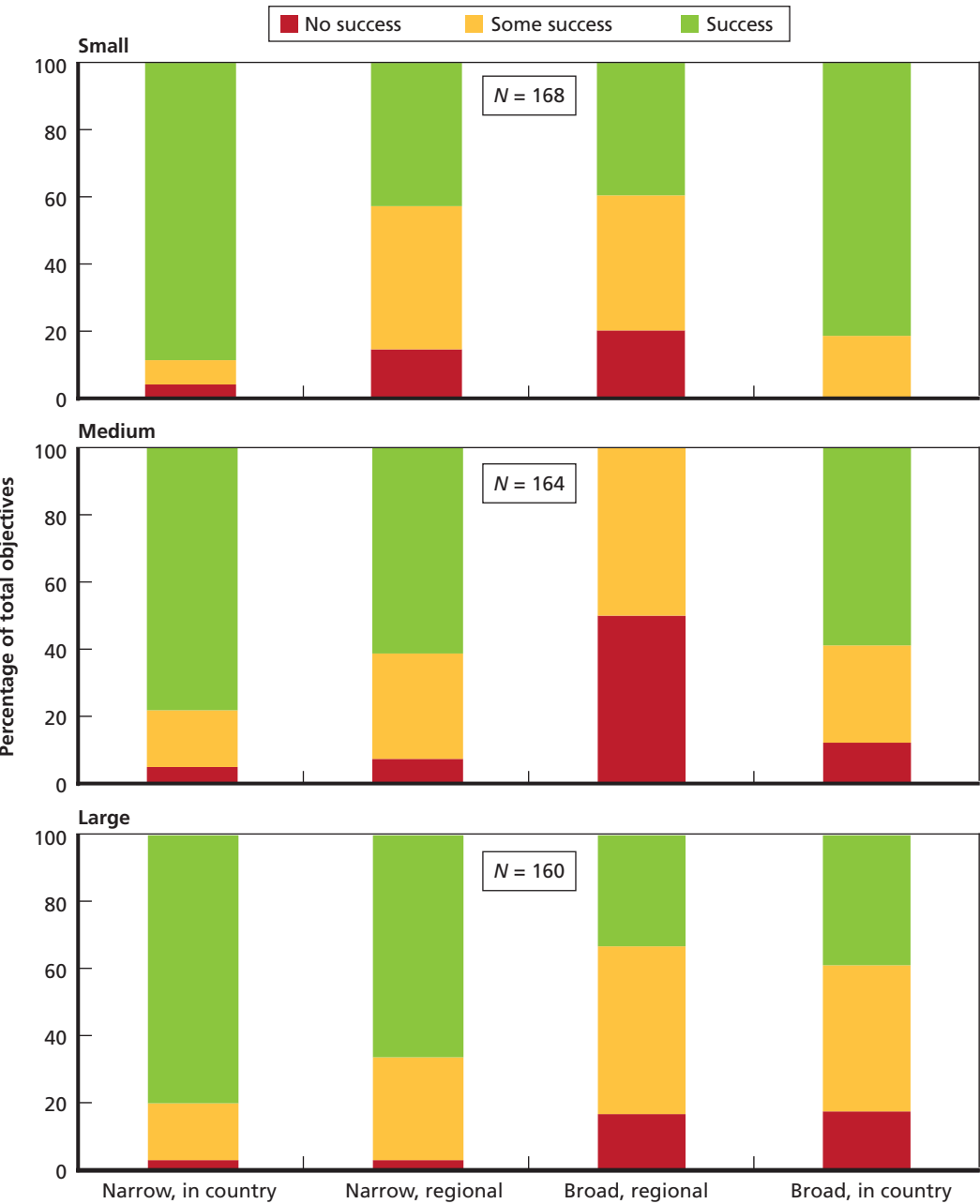
There are two key takeaways from this analysis of rates of success by activity type. First, it is clear that rates of success and perhaps also the factors that influence the likelihood of success vary by activity type. Second, the analysis suggests that different types of interventions may be used to pursue different types of objectives. By implication, then, factors that influence the extent of success that the United States is able to achieve on a given objective are likely to vary across different types of objectives. This will be relevant when we turn to our statistical analysis in Chapter Four.

The extent to which political objectives were successfully achieved has also varied according to the size of the intervention, especially when we consider specific objective categories, as shown in Figure 3.12. At an aggregate level, differences in success rates have been relatively small. Large interventions have achieved about 63 percent of their political objectives, medium interventions have achieved 64 percent, and small interventions have achieved 61 percent. Looking at specific types of objectives, however, reveals some more-significant differences. Small interventions appear to be most effective at achieving in-country objectives. It is likely that these objectives are narrowly defined and so can be achieved with a relatively small number of personnel. Medium and large interventions, however, appear more effective at successfully achieving regional objectives that aim at narrow U.S. interests—for instance, containing communism or preventing the spread of terrorism. This makes intuitive sense, as these often more expansive objectives are more likely to require additional forces. When interpreting these trends, however, it is worth noting that a review of the specific objectives that fall into each size category generally suggests that as the scope of U.S. objectives and the challenge associated with achieving them increases, so too does the size of the intervention. This relationship may operate in either direction, with objectives expanding depending on available capabilities or forces being roughly matched to meet the objectives set.

Using the Data

The descriptive trends presented in this chapter provide insight into the types of political objectives that the United States has typically pursued through military interventions, how these objectives have changed over time, and how successful it has been at achieving these objectives. This chapter has also considered relationships between time period, activity type, intervention size, and rates of success, identifying patterns and suggesting potential hypotheses for these patterns. One observation that appeared frequently was the extent to which rates of success achieved on intervention objectives

Figure 3.12
Degree of Success in Achieving Political Objectives by Size of Intervention



have varied by time period, activity type, region, objective type, and intervention size. It is therefore possible, and even likely, that the factors that most directly shape the extent to which the United States is able to achieve its political objectives also vary along these dimensions. Some of these factors are ones that can be directly influenced by U.S. military planners and decisionmakers. Others, however, are characteristics of the intervention's circumstance.

Descriptive trends provide us with a good summary of patterns across objective types and interventions, but they do not allow us to identify those specific factors that mostly directly shape and influence the likelihood of the United States successfully achieving its political objectives. In Chapter Four, we use more-sophisticated statistical techniques to rigorously assess the relationship between degree of success and characteristics of the host nation and its relationship with the United States, the execution of the mission, the type of intervention, and the international system. This approach allows us to draw a more-robust set of conclusions about the key factors that facilitate or impede successful achievement of the political objectives of U.S. military interventions.

Factors That Affect Success: A Quantitative Look

While Chapter Three provided insight into the types of objectives that the United States has pursued since 1898, the types of forces it has employed, and the degree to which it has achieved these different types of objectives, this chapter uses statistical analysis to identify factors most likely to affect the degree of success achieved in pursuit of these political objectives under different circumstances. In this chapter, we provide a discussion of the analytical approach we took to conduct this analysis and a description of the key findings. Appendix C provides further details of the statistical analysis.

Research Approach

Given the relatively large number of political objectives the United States has pursued since 1898 using military interventions—492, according to the data described in the previous chapter—a rigorous, quantitative analysis has the potential to shed light on which factors have most reliably been associated with success or failure. This section describes our quantitative research approach, including how we operationalized key variables and our statistical modeling strategy.

Dependent Variable

Because we were interested in determining those factors most likely to contribute to successful achievement of political objectives, our primary variable of interest (also known as the dependent variable) was the “degree of success” variable, defined and described in the previous chapter. For each objective, this variable has three values (no success, some success, or success). We used ordered logit regressions for our analysis, a specification appropriate to this type of dependent variable.¹ The unit of analysis was individual objectives. Each objective was included only once. For the purpose of temporal and lagged variables, the year attached to each objective is the first year in which it was pursued by the United States, but the level of success achieved refers to the entire

¹ J. Scott Long and Jeremy Freese, *Regression Models for Categorical Dependent Variables Using Stata*, College Station, Tex.: Stata Press, 2006.

period for which that objective was relevant.² Because each intervention may have more than one objective, and the likelihoods of success among these objectives are not independent of one another, we clustered standard errors by intervention.

Grouping Objectives

We considered several different approaches to conducting the statistical analysis. We first conducted an analysis of all objectives together. However, as noted elsewhere, the factors that contribute to the successful achievement of political objectives are likely to vary depending on the type of objective as well as the different contexts in which they are undertaken. We therefore considered four possible additional approaches: conducting separate analyses for each subcategory of objective based on the coding presented in Chapter Three, grouping objectives according to the four top-line objective categories discussed in Chapter Three, generating a new set of objective groupings to facilitate this analysis, or grouping objectives according to the primary activity type of their associated intervention.

Ideally, we would have liked to analyze separately the factors contributing to success for each objective subcategory, as this approach seemed likely to group the most similar objectives together. However, this ultimately proved not to be viable. There were too few observations in most subcategories to allow for regression analysis or, in some cases, even useful descriptive statistics. So, some degree of greater aggregation of objectives was required. Although the characteristics that determined our four top-line objective categories are important and useful for understanding historical patterns, as discussed in detail in Chapter Three, these top-line categories are also highly heterogeneous. For example, objectives to “defeat adversaries” are likely to be affected by a different set of factors than efforts to “advance U.S. global or regional economic interests,” but both fall into the same “Enhancing Regional and Global U.S. Security Interests” top-line objective category. While there were limitations to this approach, we include results of models utilizing these groupings in Appendix C, as discussed in more detail below.

As a further alternative, we attempted to group together subcategories of objectives that we had theoretical reasons to suspect shared substantive similarities. For example, one group combined several objectives that rely on “hard power” to achieve the desired goal, while another combined objectives that emphasized access and relationship-building. In total, we defined five such groupings of objectives. However, a preliminary analysis of these groupings suggested that, because of sample size and potentially other limitations, this approach was unlikely to yield useful results, and so it was discarded.

² Lagged variables are those included in a statistical model at their values in the period prior to that of the dependent variable. This modeling approach is appropriate when the independent variable in question appears to affect the dependent variable with a time delay.

A final approach, wherein objectives were grouped together based on the activity type of the intervention, was more promising, and these models (along with the models considering all objectives together) form the basis of much of our analysis in this chapter. The rationale for grouping objectives in this manner is that even if the objectives that occur within a given intervention may be quite heterogeneous theoretically, the ability of the United States to achieve them is likely to be affected by similar factors that depend on the actual activities the United States is undertaking. That is, the United States may be trying to defeat an adversary, enhance regional security, protect U.S. citizens, and support a host-nation government (all quite different objectives) in the same combat intervention. But U.S. success in achieving these objectives is likely to be correlated and affected by similar factors, such as force size or the characteristics of the host nation. It therefore is likely to be useful to group objectives together at the intervention level and to group interventions together according to the primary activities they are undertaking.

In this chapter, we describe the statistical results that consider all the objectives together and then focus carefully on the results for objectives grouped according to each of three main activity types defined in Chapter Three: combat or COIN, stability operations, and deterrence. At the end of the chapter, we discuss the key takeaways from the models that group objectives by objective category. The tables and results from these regressions and from the bivariate exploratory analysis are presented in Appendix C.

Independent Variables

We tested a number of different potential explanatory variables (also known as independent variables), listed and defined in Table 4.1. The selection of these independent variables was based largely on the literature review presented in Chapter Two, but also on observations from the descriptive analysis in Chapter Three and initial case study analysis.³ For discussion purposes, we grouped our variables into a number of thematic categories, including the characteristics of the international system,⁴ the relationship between the host nation and the United States, the operating environment, the scope of the objective, the execution of the mission by the U.S. military, and the characteristics of the host nation.

First, we tested two types of controls intended to capture international or systemic-level factors. We assessed a measure of U.S. relative national military capabilities

³ Some factors, such as counterinterventions by third parties or proxy involvement, were not included due to limitations with data availability or the precision of available metrics. Their omission represents a limitation of our analysis and an important area for future efforts.

⁴ By *international system*, we refer to characteristics of the geopolitical context, such as overall balance of power and the relationship between great powers. In practice, we operationalize this primarily using a measure of the time period in which the intervention occurs, as the characteristics of the system tend to vary by time period (e.g., Cold War versus post-Cold War).

Table 4.1
Independent Variables

Type of Factor	Factor	Sources
International system	Time period (pre-/post-Cold War)	N/A
	CINC	Correlates of War ^a
Relationship between United States and host nation	Alliance with United States	Correlates of War ^b
	U.S. military assistance	USAID Greenbook ^c
	Support of host-nation government	RAND data
Operating environment	Battle deaths per capita	Uppsala Conflict Data Program/ Correlates of War ^d
	Threat scale of host nation	RAND-calculated index
Scope of objective	Scope	RAND data
Execution of mission	Number of forces (per capita)	RAND data
	Type of forces (air, ground, naval)	RAND data
	Intervention duration (calculated using start and end dates)	RAND data
	U.S. military expenditures (total)	National military capabilities data ^e
Characteristics of host nation	GDP per capita (lagged)	Maddison ^f
	Level of democracy (lagged)	Polity IV ^g
	Discriminated population	EPR ^h

^a David J. Singer, "Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816–1985," *International Interactions*, Vol. 14, 1987, pp. 115–132.

^b Douglas M. Gibler, *International Military Alliances, 1648–2008*, Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2009.

^c U.S. Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945–September 30, 2015 (Greenbook)*, Washington, D.C., CONG-R-0105, 2015.

^d Sarkees and Wayman, 2010; Uppsala Conflict Data Program, *UCDP Battle-Related Deaths, Dataset v.5-2015*, Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 2015; Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), *Uppsala/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset*, v. 4, 2009; Gleditsch et al., 2002.

^e Singer, 1987.

^f Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*, Paris: Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2003, 2012 update.

^g Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jaggers, *Polity IV Data Set* [computer file; version p4v2016], College Park, Md.: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, 2002.

^h Andreas Wimmer, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Brian Min, "Ethnic Politics and Armed Conflict: A Configurational Analysis of a New Global Data Set," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 74, No. 2, 2009, pp. 316–337.

NOTES: EPR = Ethnic Power Relations; GDP = gross domestic product; USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development.

(also known as the Composite Index of National Capability [CINC]) because it approximately tracks the relative power balance (or imbalance) between the United States and the rest of the world and so can be used as a measure of polarity and the systemic distribution of power. The U.S. CINC variable comes from the Correlates of War National Material Capabilities data set.⁵ We also tested time-period controls that serve the same purpose. We used two variables here: a pre–Cold War period dummy variable that identifies all interventions before 1947 and a post–Cold War period dummy variable that identifies all interventions after 1989. In essence, these variables capture the strength and number of potential adversaries of the United States. In the pre–Cold War period, the United States existed in a multipolar world in which it was one of the strongest powers and in which it had regional dominance over the Western Hemisphere, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean. During the Cold War, the United States faced a direct threat from one peer competitor and powerful adversary, the Soviet Union. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, however, the United States was the sole remaining superpower, with a greater ability to act unilaterally, although this ability has arguably been declining in recent years as countries like China and Russia have been asserting their military and economic power in an increasing number of ways in certain regions.

We further assessed two measures of the United States’ relationship with the host nation: whether the United States was an ally of the host nation and the amount of U.S. military assistance to the host nation, each lagged one year prior. We used the Correlates of War data on formal alliances and the USAID Greenbook for data on total military assistance.⁶ In general, we would expect that closer relationships with the United States would make it easier to achieve U.S. intervention objectives. We also tested a variable that assessed the support of the host nation for the U.S. intervention. We hypothesized that interventions pursued with the support of the host-nation government might be more successful because they could rely on the cooperation—and, potentially, the security personnel and resources—of the host nation. To capture this possible relationship, we coded a “support of the host nation” variable to identify those cases in which the United States had the support of the host nation.⁷

The next set of variables focuses on the context of the intervention, such as the nature of the conflict or other circumstance in which the intervention occurs. We tested the number of battle deaths per capita in a given year to assess the intensity of any ongoing conflict in the host nation in all four models. The battle death data come from several sources, including the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, the Uppsala/

⁵ Singer, 1987, pp. 115–132.

⁶ Gibler, 2009; USAID, 2015.

⁷ To be coded as an instance of national support, we required positive evidence of host-nation support or acceptance of the intervention. Lack of resistance or intervention on behalf of the opposition was not sufficient for the intervention to be coded as having host-nation support.

PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, and the Correlates of War.⁸ We expect that as a given conflict becomes more intense, it will be increasingly difficult for the United States to achieve its objectives. For the deterrence model, we also assessed a threat scale variable, intended to capture the degree of threat faced by the ally or partner that the United States is intervening to defend. Again, we expect that it will become more difficult for the United States to achieve its objectives, especially those related to protecting states from adversaries, as the level of threat increases. The threat scale is calculated by looking at each state's most concerning relationship with its neighbors, combining measures indicating an imbalance in conventional capabilities, a lack of joint democracy, and a history of prior militarized disputes, with the militarized dispute component weighted more heavily.⁹

We also included a variable intended to capture the scope of the objective. This variable was intended to distinguish objectives that are narrowly defined (e.g., evacuate civilians) from those with notably wider scope (e.g., prevent the spread of communism). We defined a variable with three categories ranging from narrow to broad and had two coders independently code each of the objectives according to this scale. When the coders disagreed (which occurred for only about 15 percent of objectives, and never by more than one point on the scale), they discussed further until a consensus was reached.

Variables on mission execution capture characteristics of the interventions themselves, including the number and types of forces, as well as intervention duration. These variables come directly from our data set of U.S. military interventions. Intervention duration (in months) is calculated based on the start and end dates of the intervention. For our number and types of forces variables, we wanted to capture both the size of the intervention and the level of commitment implied by that size—in other words, the portion of total U.S. forces committed to a given intervention. However, we found that size and level of commitment in these terms were highly correlated, making separate analysis of them unadvisable, so we relied solely on intervention size. Theoretically, we expected larger U.S. interventions to be more likely to achieve their objectives. We had three size variables, one for each type of forces—naval, ground, and air—and we scaled this size according to the population size of the host nation. For ground forces, we used the number of ground forces per capita. For naval and air forces, when we did not rely on troop numbers to gauge size, we created two categorical variables: one for intervention size using information on the number of carriers or aircraft employed in the intervention and one for the population of the host nation. Our ultimate measure combined these two indexes to estimate the size of the U.S. air or naval forces relative

⁸ Sarkees and Wayman, 2010; Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2015; PRIO, 2009; Gleditsch et al., 2002.

⁹ Singer, 1987; Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jagers, *Polity IV Data Set* [computer file; version p4v2016], College Park, Md.: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, 2002; Palmer et al., 2015.

to the size of the population of the host nation. We also included a measure of U.S. military spending, intended to capture the overall level of U.S. military activity at the time of the intervention. To be clear, this measure captures total spending, not spending on any one intervention, and is taken from the Correlates of War National Material Capabilities data set.¹⁰ When running our statistical models, we were aware that there might be collinearity between the different variables used to measure the size of U.S. forces involved in an intervention. To guard against this, in addition to running models that included all three force size variables, we also included models that included only one force component variable at a time.

Finally, we included a number of variables intended to capture characteristics of the host nation. Characteristics of the host are likely to affect the ease with which the U.S. military is able to achieve certain types of objectives. Countries with well-established institutions or high GDP per capita, for example, might be more resilient when faced with conflict and more able to quickly rebuild afterward. To capture these relationships, we included GDP per capita and the level of democracy.¹¹ The GDP per capita series, unfortunately, has a large amount of missing data, particularly for less well-developed countries that are often hosts to certain types of U.S. interventions. In order to fill in these data and increase the number of observations that we had to work with, we created a rough categorical GDP per capita measure and estimated missing values.¹² We included a lagged version of each of these variables, since we were interested in how the domestic characteristics prior to the start of the intervention influenced intervention outcomes. Finally, we included a measure of the percentage of the country's population facing formal discrimination to measure the extent of internal ethnic or religious tensions.¹³

While they are discussed frequently in the literature, we did not include variables on U.S. domestic politics because we could not identify a reasonable rationale for why domestic political factors would necessarily affect intervention outcomes, other than

¹⁰ Singer, 1987.

¹¹ Maddison, 2003, 2012 update; World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2013*, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2013; Marshall and Jaggers, 2002.

¹² While we were missing a number of observations at the country-year level for specific GDP per capita numbers, we also did not expect wild fluctuations in those years of missing data. As such, we felt confident filling in missing values based on other years for which data were available for the given country. The measure we developed had four categories: \$0–\$1,000, \$1,000–\$5,000, \$5,000–\$10,000, and \$10,000 and higher. Note that categories were not inclusive at the high end of each category, so that a GDP of \$1,000 would be included in the second category listed, but everything up to \$1,000 would be included in the first.

¹³ The data for this variable came from the EPR data set. See Wimmer, Cederman, and Min, 2009.

Unfortunately, the EPR data also contained a number of missing observations for our country-years of interest, which would have further limited our sample size. To compensate, we examined available data years both before and after the missing year, and if there were no radical changes in government type of political structure in the interim, we assumed that the missing value was similar.

through their indirect effect on the execution of the mission, already captured in the variables described above.

Modeling Strategy

Our approach to modeling involved several steps. Each step was undertaken for each grouping of objectives we considered, as discussed above, including when we considered all objectives together. First, we investigated bivariate relationships between each variable and the degree of success. This allowed us to understand which variables appeared to have independent relationships with success and informed our construction of multivariate models using these variables. We then considered correlations among our many independent variables. Because many of these factors may be closely associated with each other, we used the resulting collinearity matrix to identify variables that should not be included in models together. As already noted, we chose to run separate models in which each type of U.S. forces was included independently precisely due to these concerns. Similar concerns led us to exclude other factors from certain models, such as the CINC score, which correlated strongly with time-period controls, and conflict battle deaths, which sometimes correlated strongly with U.S. force size components. A full set of bivariate regression results and correlation matrixes that informed these decisions is included in Appendix C.

Results

As noted above, we focused our analysis on models that incorporated all objectives together and then on models in which objectives were grouped according to three specific activity types (combat or COIN, stability operations, and deterrence). We included several models for each of these groups. For each of these four sets, we included a model with all types of forces and models with only one type of force (air, ground, or naval). We also included two additional models for the all-interventions and stability operations models that limit the number of control variables tested because of borderline performance in the bivariate models and collinearity concerns for the omitted variables. We also include similar model results for each of the objective categories models in Appendix C.

In the discussion below, we focus on identifying those factors that are consistently statistically significant across models while also noting results that receive less robust support from one or more models. We provide insight into the direction and approximate size of relevant effects and explore their substantive interpretations. In the tables below, we include both the regression coefficients and a simplified color coding scheme that facilitates interpretation. Results shaded in dark red show clear negative relationships with likelihood of success, and results shaded in dark green show clear positive relationships with likelihood of success. Lighter red and green shading indicate posi-

tive and negative relationships in which we have lower confidence. The results for each group of models are summarized in Tables 4.2 to 4.5.

All Objectives

Our first set of models assessed the degree of success for all objectives considered together. The value of this set of models is that it allows us to see which factors may

Table 4.2
Factors for Success—All Objectives

	All Forces	Ground Only	Naval Only	Air Forces	All Forces: Limited Controls	Air Forces: Limited Controls
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.161 (0.117)	0.218** (0.102)			0.255** (0.121)	
Naval forces per capita, categorical	−0.0416 (0.349)		0.367 (0.276)		0.0290 (0.320)	
Air forces per capita, categorical	0.352 (0.367)			0.532* (0.302)	−0.170 (0.322)	0.0926 (0.294)
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	−0.685*** (0.254)	−0.662*** (0.251)	−0.629** (0.260)	−0.657*** (0.255)	−0.671** (0.264)	−0.616** (0.272)
U.S. military assistance, IHS	−0.0156 (0.0155)	−0.0196 (0.0155)	−0.0145 (0.0156)	−0.0120 (0.0159)	−0.0420*** (0.0137)	−0.0409*** (0.0144)
Pre–Cold War era	0.730* (0.386)	0.557* (0.324)	0.562* (0.335)	0.838** (0.352)		
Scope of objective	−0.983*** (0.166)	−0.966*** (0.163)	−0.968*** (0.161)	−0.976*** (0.168)	−0.942*** (0.156)	−0.930*** (0.159)
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)	4.370** (2.075)	3.923* (2.073)	4.222** (2.102)	4.560** (2.111)		
Constant cut1	−3.787*** (0.644)	−4.001*** (0.609)	−3.823*** (0.640)	−3.671*** (0.652)	−5.046*** (0.511)	−5.047*** (0.491)
Constant cut2	−1.624*** (0.564)	−1.845*** (0.540)	−1.682*** (0.553)	−1.516*** (0.573)	−2.933*** (0.394)	−2.954*** (0.373)
Observations	478	478	478	478	483	483
Log likelihood	−357.1	−357.8	−359.3	−358.2	−368.3	−371.6
Chi squared	61.73	62.23	59.34	58.61	68.02	61.04
Pseudo R-squared	0.114	0.112	0.109	0.111	0.104	0.0962

NOTES: Inverse hyperbolic sine (IHS) is a variable transformation used to flatten the distribution of values for a variable with a particularly large range to avoid statistical modeling problems that can otherwise result, similar to a natural log. Results shaded in dark red show clear negative relationships with likelihood of success, and results shaded in dark green show clear positive relationships with likelihood of success. Lighter red and green shading indicate positive and negative relationships in which we have lower confidence. Parentheses indicate standard deviations.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

affect success across the widest range of objectives and circumstances. The limitation is that, as described elsewhere, different objectives and different contexts may have different characteristics that contribute to success. Some of these differences may be lost when the full set of objectives is considered together. Table 4.2 shows the results for these models. In addition to including a model with all force types and three with only one type of force (air, ground, or naval), we also included two models that use a more limited set of controls. These last two models are intended as robustness checks to ensure that specific results are not the result of multicollinearity.

Starting with the results for military forces, there appears to be some evidence that the size of the ground force is positively related to the likelihood of success. This result appears in the ground-only model and the limited control version of the all forces model. Support is not overwhelmingly strong for this relationship, but there is enough evidence to suggest that force size may be a contributing factor to the ultimate intervention outcome. The air forces-only model also shows a weaker positive relationship between the size of the air force and success in achieving political objectives.

Other results are more consistent across models. First, there is relatively strong evidence that success is less likely when conflict intensity, measured as number of battle deaths, is high. This makes intuitive sense: It is likely difficult to achieve political objectives when conflict violence is high and military personnel must struggle to simply maintain their security. Second, the results suggest that success was more likely prior to the Cold War and is also positively associated with U.S. relative capabilities. This suggests that in periods when the United States was stronger than the rest of the world, it was also able to achieve its political objectives during military interventions more easily. Prior to the Cold War, rates of success were also supported by the nature of U.S. interventions at the time—they typically pursued relatively narrow objectives in Central America and the Caribbean, where the United States generally enjoyed a substantial advantage in its relative capabilities. Relatedly, limited objective scope appears to contribute to success across objective types. Success appears to be significantly higher for narrowly defined objectives and lower for those objectives with broadly defined scope. As noted in Chapter Three, the United States has increasingly shifted over time to the pursuit of broader objectives in the Cold War and post-Cold War periods.

Finally, our limited control models identify one additional factor that may be associated with the likelihood of successfully achieving political objectives: military assistance. It should be noted, though, that its lack of significance in the main models somewhat limits our confidence in the robustness of this result. That said, in these models, military assistance is negatively associated with likelihood of success. It is possible that this is a selection effect—in other words, the United States likely provides the greatest amount of military assistance to the most difficult cases, in which it will be most challenging for the United States to achieve its political objectives. Of course, it is also possible that there are characteristics of the ways in which military assistance

is provided that tend to undermine U.S. attempts to achieve political objectives, such as by strengthening opposition forces or increasing popular resistance to the United States. A review of the cases involved, however, suggests that the first explanation is the more likely one. There may also be a time period effect here: In general, the amount of military assistance provided increased dramatically after World War II—the same point at which we have already noted that success rates fell slightly and objectives began getting broader in scope. Therefore, it is possible that the relationship between the military assistance variable and success is reflecting some of these changes over time. We will explore this issue further in the case studies.

Combat or COIN Interventions

The results for the models assessing combat or COIN intervention objectives are shown in Table 4.3. The results are largely consistent across the four models. One of the stronger and more robust results is that increasing the number of ground troops involved in a combat or COIN intervention tends to be associated with higher levels of success. However, this relationship does not appear to exist for air or naval forces. This result is consistent with our expectations based on several notable historical cases. Some of the United States' most successful military operations have involved conventional combat operations in which it has been able to use overwhelming force to defeat an adversary (e.g., Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom [2003], Grenada, Panama).

We also again find consistent and reasonably strong support for a negative relationship between the scope of the objective and degree of success. The apparent relationship between military assistance provided by the United States and degree of success is also negative, as it was in the models discussed above that considered all objectives together. As already discussed, this result may stem from either a selection effect or some negative effect of U.S. military assistance itself. This negative relationship could result if military assistance provided to a host ends up arming forces opposed to the United States or prolonging a conflict by artificially (but insufficiently to change the outcome) strengthening the supported government.¹⁴ The U.S. intervention in Vietnam might be an example in which several of these explanations were operating simultaneously. Other key cases that are likely to be driving this effect include Iraq post-2003 and Afghanistan post-2002.

There are also two variables that appear statistically significant only in the ground-only model. First, the discriminated population variable is weakly significant, suggesting that it may be less likely for the United States to achieve political objectives in societies with higher levels of entrenched, formal discrimination. This could reflect the fact that ethnic conflicts generally tend to be more violent and protracted and, thus, more difficult to resolve. The second is whether the host nation was a U.S. ally, which

¹⁴ Stephen Gent, "Going in When It Counts: Military Intervention and the Outcome of Civil Conflicts," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 2, 2008, pp. 713–735.

Table 4.3
Factors for Success—Combat or COIN Models

	All Forces	Ground Only	Naval Only	Air Only
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.588*** (0.181)	0.627*** (0.187)		
Naval forces per capita, categorical	0.495 (0.719)		0.617 (0.457)	
Air forces per capita, categorical	−0.344 (0.659)			0.410 (0.377)
Intervention duration, IHS	−0.249 (0.269)	−0.259 (0.206)	−0.354 (0.245)	−0.348 (0.253)
U.S. military assistance, IHS	−0.105*** (0.0284)	−0.108*** (0.0294)	−0.0791*** (0.0255)	−0.0817*** (0.0258)
Scope of objective	−0.479** (0.218)	−0.482** (0.221)	−0.411** (0.208)	−0.403* (0.219)
Discriminated population, estimated	−1.817 (1.204)	−2.036* (1.096)	−1.447 (1.286)	−1.647 (1.388)
Alliance with United States	−1.285 (0.955)	−1.828*** (0.506)	−0.0759 (0.295)	−0.588 (0.474)
Constant cut1	−3.770*** (0.901)	−3.939*** (0.843)	−3.777*** (0.916)	−3.950*** (0.899)
Constant cut2	−1.744** (0.714)	−1.917*** (0.636)	−1.812*** (0.687)	−1.994*** (0.665)
Observations	160	160	160	160
Log likelihood	−132.8	−133.1	−136.9	−137.5
Pseudo R-squared	0.148	0.146	0.121	0.117

NOTES: Results shaded in dark red show clear negative relationships with likelihood of success, and results shaded in dark green show clear positive relationships with likelihood of success. Lighter red and green shading indicate positive and negative relationships in which we have lower confidence. Parentheses indicate standard deviations.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

also appears to reduce the chances of success in our statistical model. A closer look at the data, however, suggests that this result is unlikely to be substantively meaningful.¹⁵

As important as the factors that are significant are the ones that are not. There is no evidence that the duration of the intervention, the power dynamics of the international system, or characteristics of the host nation (such as economic development and

¹⁵ There is only one combat intervention in a U.S. ally, that into Panama during Operation Just Cause in 1989. Although the United States achieved some success during this intervention, the success rate seems lower than that for the larger set of combat interventions in non-allies. However, with only one case driving the outcome, we do not place substantial weight on this result.

political regime) are associated with the likelihood of success of a combat operation. Instead, the factors that seem to matter most are the size of the ground force, the scope of the objective, and, potentially, the amount of U.S. military assistance. Importantly, these are all variables that are within the control of either political decisionmakers or military planners. At least in some cases, appropriately scoping the objectives of an intervention and appropriately resourcing those objectives may increase the likelihood of success.

Stability Operations

The factors that seem most likely to affect success for stability operations are included in Table 4.4. As discussed above, we include two additional models here, using more limited sets of control variables, intended to assess the extent to which certain results may be artifacts of multicollinearity. Overall, the results for the stability operations models are somewhat weaker and less robust than those for combat interventions and appear to be more seriously affected by both selection effects and the influence of outlier cases. This may reflect the more important role of contextual factors not in our model for determining the outcomes of stability operations.

Perhaps the most notable result, and the one that is most consistent with the results for both the combat models and the all-objectives models, is the negative relationship between objective scope and the likelihood of success. Once again, success becomes increasingly less likely as the scope of the objective expands, consistent with our expectations.

The other consistent relationship observed for stability operations is the negative association between U.S. military assistance and success. As discussed above, this may be a selection effect, as the United States has frequently sent large amounts of military assistance to countries that are badly in need of assistance, such as Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, where achieving U.S. objectives had proven to be difficult and military assistance levels were increased precisely to attempt to overcome these greater difficulties. It could also be that military assistance interferes in some way with the ultimate success of objectives during stability operations, possibly by strengthening elements within the host nation that work against U.S. objectives or through some other mechanism. Regardless, however, it is worth noting that this negative result is largely driven by a handful of key cases, noted above.

The other two statistically significant results appear in only one model. First, in the model that includes all force types, our measure of conflict intensity, battle deaths per capita, is negative and weakly significant. This suggests that in some cases the United States is less likely to achieve its political objectives when conflict intensity is high, a finding that echoes the results of the all-objectives models discussed above. However, in the stability operation models, this result appears in only one model, suggesting that it should be interpreted with caution. Similarly, the model that includes only naval forces suggests that naval forces may have a positive association with the

Table 4.4
Factors for Success—Stability Operations Models

	All Forces	Ground Only	Naval Only	Air Only	All Forces: Limited Controls	Naval Forces: Limited Controls
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.310 (0.240)	0.388 (0.247)			0.277 (0.219)	
Naval forces per capita, categorical	0.982 (0.724)		1.152* (0.640)		0.845 (0.620)	0.960 (0.674)
Air forces per capita, categorical	-0.265 (0.930)			0.606 (0.790)	-0.456 (0.504)	
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	-0.772* (0.436)	-0.627 (0.469)	-0.714 (0.484)	-0.583 (0.606)		
U.S. military assistance, IHS	-0.0787*** (0.0305)	-0.0763*** (0.0274)	-0.0707** (0.0278)	-0.0614** (0.0291)	-0.101*** (0.0260)	-0.0968*** (0.0274)
Pre-Cold War era	0.0316 (0.929)	0.399 (0.591)	0.157 (0.547)	0.821 (0.762)		
Scope of objective	-1.124*** (0.304)	-1.075*** (0.314)	-1.063*** (0.291)	-0.992*** (0.306)	-1.024*** (0.299)	-1.002*** (0.290)
Discriminated population, estimated	-0.337 (0.944)	-0.499 (0.955)	-0.184 (0.999)	-0.318 (1.023)	-0.454 (1.051)	-0.381 (1.130)
Constant cut1	-5.034*** (1.103)	-5.165*** (1.072)	-4.840*** (1.099)	-4.810*** (1.094)	-4.805*** (1.028)	-4.701*** (1.103)
Constant cut2	-2.871*** (0.936)	-3.029*** (0.859)	-2.725*** (0.869)	-2.730*** (0.881)	-2.696*** (0.754)	-2.628*** (0.802)
Observations	174	174	174	174	174	174
Log likelihood	-117.2	-118.5	-118.5	-120.2	-119.2	-120.5
Chi squared	66.85	61.28	68.86	58.68	82.27	73.19
Pseudo R-squared	0.197	0.188	0.188	0.177	0.183	0.174

NOTES: Results shaded in dark red show clear negative relationships with likelihood of success, and results shaded in dark green show clear positive relationships with likelihood of success. Lighter red and green shading indicate positive and negative relationships in which we have lower confidence. Parentheses indicate standard deviations.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

likelihood of success. This result is more surprising, since most stability operations rely heavily on ground forces to conduct rebuilding and peace enforcement operations. Naval forces rarely seem to play a big role. It is possible that naval forces can play an important lift and transport role or contribute to interdiction efforts that may increase the degree of success achieved. However, a closer look at the data suggests an alternative explanation. Naval forces played a key role in many early 20th century U.S.

interventions in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, which included narrowly defined stability operations tasks that the United States was able to successfully achieve. The geography of these countries, being smaller and either islands or with easy access to the sea, likely enhanced the utility of naval forces in a manner that would not hold in other locations. At the same time, these smaller, more accessible countries also likely posed less substantial challenges to achieving U.S. objectives. The correlation between naval forces and success in such interventions is therefore most likely spurious.

As before, it is important to explore those variables that appear not to be significant in our assessment. First, we find little evidence that the time period or relative power of U.S. forces affects the likelihood of a successful outcome. Certainly, the outcomes of major stability operations, such as those in Iraq after 2003, Afghanistan after 2002, and the post–World War II rebuilding effort, seem to have been more strongly affected by domestic context and the scope of objectives than by relative U.S. power or the characteristics of the international system. Indeed, the United States was in a relatively strong position in each, though the degree of success obviously varied substantially.

A more unexpected result was that the number of ground troops did not have a statistically significant association with the likelihood of success. A common argument made about stability operations is that they are fundamentally dependent on the number of troops. We did not find such a relationship here, although, in the ground forces–only model, the result misses statistical significance relatively narrowly. This suggests that, at least in some cases, simply sending more troops may not be the answer. As will be discussed further in the concluding chapter, however, interpreting null results for resourcing variables, such as the number of troops, is difficult precisely because military planners generally alter the number of troops committed based on their assessment of what will be required to accomplish their objectives, and, particularly for often-lengthy stability operations, they face incentives not to overestimate these numbers.

Also surprising is the fact that domestic characteristics of the host nation do not appear to shape the degree of U.S. success. We would have expected that the nature of domestic political institutions or level of economic development in the host nation would be associated with the degree of success achieved. We will explore these issues further in Chapter Five.

Deterrence Interventions

Our final set of models focuses on deterrence interventions. The results are shown in Table 4.5. The first notable result is that in this case, across models, the size of U.S. forces involved in the intervention is not associated with the degree of success achieved. This is interesting because it suggests that successful deterrence may not depend on the size of the local forces committed. The success of deterrence may rest more heavily on such factors as the strategic balance of forces internationally or the credibility of the

Table 4.5
Factors for Success—Deterrence Models

	All Forces	Ground Only	Naval Only	Air Only
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.224 (0.237)	0.160 (0.167)		
Naval forces per capita, categorical	-0.727 (0.465)		0.0344 (0.346)	
Air forces per capita, categorical	1.065 (0.778)			0.759 (0.775)
Support of host nation	0.477 (0.548)	0.539 (0.514)	0.609 (0.510)	0.504 (0.504)
Pre-Cold War era	0.744 (0.610)	0.378 (0.680)	0.477 (0.746)	0.535 (0.606)
Scope of objective	-1.051*** (0.306)	-0.993*** (0.269)	-0.994*** (0.263)	-1.043*** (0.312)
Polity, one-year lag	0.0291 (0.0216)	0.0285 (0.0226)	0.0238 (0.0212)	0.0289 (0.0206)
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)	5.026** (2.375)	4.980** (2.418)	5.039** (2.388)	5.727** (2.340)
Constant cut1	-3.434*** (0.921)	-3.351*** (0.857)	-3.370*** (0.820)	-3.052*** (0.875)
Constant cut2	-1.083 (0.881)	-1.042 (0.836)	-1.073 (0.794)	-0.717 (0.825)
Observations	204	204	204	204
Log likelihood	-141.2	-143.4	-143.8	-142.4
Chi squared	26.66	21.63	22.49	24.52
Pseudo R-squared	0.121	0.108	0.105	0.114

NOTES: Results shaded in dark red show clear negative relationships with likelihood of success, and results shaded in dark green show clear positive relationships with likelihood of success. Lighter red and green shading indicate positive and negative relationships in which we have lower confidence. Parentheses indicate standard deviations.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

commitment that the force represents. Further, the models also showed a reasonably consistent, positive relationship between relative overall U.S. capabilities and the likelihood of success. This again suggests that it may be the overall position of the United States and the capabilities it possesses that affect success in deterrent missions, rather than the forces present locally.

Other results from these models were less notable. The scope of the objective again had a strong negative association with the likelihood of success, a consistent finding across previous models. Support of the host nation and characteristics of the host

nation (such as polity or economic development), meanwhile, failed to reach the level of statistical significance, suggesting that, in contrast with other activity types, local conditions appear to have less influence over success for deterrence missions.

Objectives by Typology Category

As discussed above, we also conducted additional analyses grouping the objectives into the four top-level categories defined in our typology, discussed in detail in Chapter Three. We expected that the results would be somewhat similar to those already described. First, because of the large percentage of objectives that fall into the “Enhancing Regional and Global Stability” category, we expected that our results for that model would be similar to the results for the overall model. We expected that the results for the “Assisting Host Nation or Population” category would be similar to the model above for stability operations, as many of the objectives included as part of stability operations fall into this category (e.g., institution-building, peacekeeping). Unfortunately, one of the four categories, “Supporting Regional and Global Norms” had too few objectives (nine) to conduct a multivariate statistical analysis. We discuss the results of the remaining categories briefly here to illustrate their overall similarity with the findings above, but we provide the regression tables in Appendix C for the sake of brevity. Also in Appendix C are the results from our models that explored potential alternative groupings of hypotheses, in which we grouped objectives according to defined themes (e.g., “hard power” and “grand strategy”).

Securing U.S. Interests in Intervention Host

Our first set of models focuses on objectives that intend to “secure U.S. interests in the intervention host.” As a reminder, this includes such subcategories as protecting U.S. citizens and economic interests, ensuring that regimes are supportive to the United States, and acquiring territory. For these models, we found only two variables that appear statistically significant: our measure of conflict intensity and the scope of the objective. Both are negatively associated with the likelihood that the United States achieves its political objectives. In other words, success for these objectives becomes less likely as conflict intensity increases and objectives become broader. Both are consistent with results described above and are particularly similar to the results in the stability operations models. We found no evidence here that the number or types of troops affect success. It is worth noting that several of the subcategories involve activities that are generally unlikely to require large numbers of forces (protecting U.S. citizens) or are objectives that have really only been pursued historically in the pre–Cold War period in Central America and the Caribbean, where U.S. forces were comparatively much stronger and could easily accomplish most goals.

Enhancing Regional and Global U.S. Security

Objectives intended to enhance regional and global security interests include defeating adversaries, protecting partners, and acquiring military access. These models share

many underlying objectives with the all-objectives, combat or COIN, and deterrence models described above. First, we found relatively strong evidence that larger numbers of ground forces are associated with a higher degree of success on political objectives. Given that this category of objectives includes defeating adversaries, a task that often relies on the large-scale application of U.S. military force, this result is not surprising and is consistent with the findings discussed previously. This result was consistent across the two models that included ground forces. Second, we found that conflict intensity (battle deaths) and the scope of the objective are both negatively associated with the degree of success. Both results are also broadly consistent with others in this chapter. We found weaker evidence that success in this category of objectives is positively associated with relative U.S. capabilities. In other words, when the United States is relatively more powerful, it is able to achieve higher levels of success on objectives in this category. Finally, the United States has tended to be more successful on these objectives prior to the Cold War, a result again consistent with other models discussed in this chapter.

Assisting Host Nation or Population

As was true for the stability operations models, our explanatory variables did a relatively poor job in this case of identifying the factors that predict success for objectives aimed at assisting the host nation or its population through nation-building, peace-keeping, or humanitarian objectives. The scope variable was statistically significant in one of the four models and was negative, again suggesting that success is more likely when political objectives are more limited. The military assistance variable was also statistically significant and again negative, a pattern discussed in detail above. In one model, which included all types of forces, we also found that intervention duration was negatively related to the degree of success achieved. The direction of this relationship is likely to be reversed, however. The hardest interventions are likely to also be the longest, as the objectives are continuously not achieved, and the intervention therefore prolonged. It seems less likely that an intervention is not successful *because* it is long. We also found that the likelihood of success on these objectives was higher prior to the start of the Cold War. As noted above, this likely reflects the relative dominance of the United States during this period when compared with the other regional actors involved in key interventions in Central America and the Caribbean. A final point about this set of models is that we had only 91 observations, which is somewhat smaller than the other models discussed in this chapter. This may affect our ability to identify significant relationships and also limits our confidence in the results we did find.

Summary

Table 4.6 provides a summary of the key factors that affect the degree to which the United States achieves its political objectives across the main sets of models discussed above. Where relevant, we have also referenced insights from the supplementary analy-

Table 4.6
Factors for Success—Summary

	All Objectives	Combat or COIN	Stability Operations	Deterrence
Ground troops per capita, IHS		*		
Naval forces per capita, categorical				
Air forces per capita, categorical				
Battle deaths per capita, categorical				
U.S. military assistance, IHS				
Pre–Cold War era	*			
Scope of objective	*	*	*	*
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)	*			*
Discriminated population, estimated				
Alliance with the United States		*		

* Variables with an asterisk appear to have larger substantive effects on outcomes.

ses by objective category. As in the tables above, the green cells indicate those factors that increase the likelihood of success, and the red cells indicate those factors that reduce the chances of success. Darker shades of red and green identify relationships supported by stronger statistical evidence. We also assessed whether, in the key models driving these results, the size of the effect of the variable appeared to be relatively substantial in nature or more peripheral.¹⁶ An asterisk in Table 4.6 indicates those variables that appear to have larger substantive effects on outcomes. For the sake of brevity, we do not list factors here that were not assessed to be important for any of these models, other than those related to U.S. forces, where a nonfinding is itself substantively notable.

Taken together, the results of our analyses in this chapter highlight several key factors that may shape the ability of the United States to achieve the political objectives of its military interventions. There are some factors that are relevant across intervention types. For example, success consistently appears to be less likely for expansive objectives than for objectives that are more limited in scope. As noted elsewhere, this is consistent with our assessment from Chapter Three that the likelihood of success appears

¹⁶ To calculate effect size: (1) For categorical variables, we considered a change from one category to the next; (2) For continuous variables, such as ground forces per capita, we considered changes from the 50th to the 75th percentile of the nonzero values of that variable. Our final assessment reflects our summary judgment. We assessed the relevant effect sizes across different model specifications, although, for the most part, the results were broadly consistent. Effects were deemed to be “substantial” if the change in the factor noted above resulted in a change in the likelihood of success of 5 percent or greater.

higher in earlier decades, when political objectives tended to be more narrowly scoped. Military assistance also appears to be negatively associated with success, especially for combat/COIN and stability operations. For reasons already mentioned, this may be due to selection effects, rather than highlighting a more causal relationship, though, at a minimum, this result appears to call into question the efficacy of a reliance on military support to positively affect success. In addition, the size of the effect appears to be relatively limited, suggesting that notable changes in the likelihood of success may be associated only with very high levels of military assistance.

Other variables appear to matter only for objectives in specific types of interventions. For instance, success seems more likely for combat interventions with larger numbers of ground forces and for deterrence interventions when U.S. relative capabilities are greater. Both effects appear to be relatively substantial in size. In contrast, stability operations do not appear to be affected by these variables but are shaped by conflict intensity, which reduces success, although the size of the effect appears to be limited. Finally, the likelihood of success for combat interventions also appears to be negatively affected by the presence of a sizable discriminated population (which may lead to higher levels of combat intensity), although the support for this finding and the observed size of the effect are both limited.

At least two other variables of note emerge as statistically significant in the all-objectives model. First, the pre-Cold War control variable suggests that the United States was more successful in achieving its political objective in the period prior to the Cold War, when it was the dominant power in its region and acted mostly within Central America and the Caribbean. While this result appears only in some models, the size of the effect is substantial. Second, this is the only model in which we saw some support for the importance of air forces to successful outcomes. Because we did not see this result in any of the individual models, we did not put too much weight on the finding. The effect size is also limited, but it nonetheless bears further investigation.

It is also worth noting some of the variables that are not statistically significant based on our analyses. First, it is notable that the size of ground forces does not appear to affect the likelihood of success for deterrence and stability operation interventions. However, as noted above, interpreting this result is difficult. In most cases, military planners specifically size the force involved in an intervention based on some expectation of how many forces will be required to accomplish the mission. This means that they will tend to allocate more forces to more difficult missions. If their resources were unconstrained, and they had sufficient information to make accurate assessments, then the number of forces deployed on each intervention would rise proportionally with the difficulty of the mission, and the likelihood of success would be constant across interventions, assuming that all else remains equal.¹⁷ Under these assumptions, we would expect no statistically significant association between force size and success because the

¹⁷ While not a realistic assumption in the real world, this is a basic assumption in a statistical model.

United States would be equally successful at achieving its political objectives in both large and small interventions. In practice, of course, military planners are constrained by available forces and often lack sufficient information to adequately anticipate the forces required to achieve the objectives of the mission. In general, these constraints are likely more salient in larger, more difficult interventions of longer duration. For these types of interventions, the United States does have a history of underestimating the number of forces required to achieve its objectives; Iraq is a prominent example. This tendency to underestimate could result in a positive association between troop levels and success, as observed in some of our models, if success occurs more often in larger interventions when sufficient forces are actually provided. It could result in a negative association if larger interventions are chronically underresourced and, therefore, are less successful but are still larger in size than more-successful smaller interventions. Thus, the lack of consistent statistical findings across models for these variables is not necessarily surprising. The crucial question of whether greater numbers of forces and which types of forces assist the United States in achieving the political objectives of its military interventions, particularly in deterrence or stability operation interventions, will be central to the case studies discussed in the following chapter.

A final surprising result is the lack of relationship between domestic characteristics of the host nation and the degree of success achieved—especially for stability operations, which seem to rely so heavily on such factors as the strength of host-nation institutions and the level of economic development. There are a few reasons why we might not have found a statistically significant relationship here. First, it may be that the factors we included to account for domestic characteristics were not the right ones and that other, unaccounted-for factors are more salient. Second, it may be that our perception that these factors should matter is largely shaped by a small number of cases that have occurred since the end of the Cold War, when, in fact, these operations may be very different from stability operations in previous decades. It is possible that, if we were able to conduct statistical analysis with the post–Cold War cases alone, we might find a different result. The small sample size prevents this. We will, however, further explore the role of these domestic features through our case studies in Chapter Five.

Factors That Affect Success: Case Studies

While statistical analysis can reveal factors that consistently favor success across political objectives, case studies can explore the role of context, identify factors that may be difficult to quantify or include in statistical models, and tease out causal mechanisms—that is, why certain factors appear to have the effect that they do on intervention outcomes. In this chapter, we review five case studies conducted to augment the statistical analysis presented in Chapter Four. Because the intent of the case studies is to identify and understand those factors that appear to either contribute to or impede successful achievement of an intervention's political objectives, we have organized the chapter around the same categories of independent variables that we used in Chapter Four: characteristics of the international system, scope of objective, execution of mission, operating environment, domestic characteristics of the host nation, and the relationship between the United States and the host nation. In this chapter, we draw examples and insights from across the cases and provide a summary that highlights those factors that the case studies suggest may be most important to understanding intervention outcomes. Appendix B provides the full case studies, including a complete discussion of the political objectives of each intervention, the extent to which those objectives were achieved, and the variables that seem most directly relevant in each case.

Case Selection

In choosing our cases, we considered a number of criteria. First, we wanted a set of cases that captured the broad diversity of interventions that the United States has undertaken since 1898.¹ To mirror our categorization in the empirical chapter, we also wanted cases that included examples of each of our primary intervention types: combat (to include COIN), deterrence, and stability operations. We chose cases that covered diverse regions, that together included as many different types of objectives as possible, and that drew from several periods of U.S. history, though we did focus on post–World War II cases

¹ Stephen van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997.

for the sake of relevance and applicability. The conditions, demands, and constraints on interventions in the pre–World War II period were decidedly different than today.

The other important consideration in our case selection was the extent to which each case fit with the statistical models used in Chapter Four.² We selected some cases that were well predicted by the empirical models, meaning that the factors driving success or failure in these instances would be captured by the statistical analysis.³ However, we also included some cases that were not well predicted by the statistical analysis, meaning that success or failure in these cases was likely driven either by factors not included in the quantitative analysis or by factors that simply did not rise to the level of statistical significance in our results, despite their actual importance. By including both types of cases, we are able to assess the validity of the results from our quantitative analysis and also to identify additional factors, including those that may be more difficult to quantify or for which data are available for only some years or some of the countries included in our data set.

Table 5.1 identifies the five cases included in our analysis, their intervention types, and the extent to which they were well predicted by our statistical models. Some cases proceed through more than one phase and incorporate more than one activity type. Thus, they appear in more than one of the categories below, and our cases leverage these different phases to increase the number of cases we are able to consider in our analysis.

In total, our cases have 35 objectives, listed in Table 5.2. The majority of the objectives included in these cases come from two categories: “Enhancing Global or Regional Stability” and “Assisting Host Nation or Population.” All three degrees of success defined in our taxonomy are represented. In the following sections, we discuss the factors that have contributed to or impeded U.S. success at achieving these objectives, with a focus on those factors that appear in several cases.

Table 5.1
Cases Selected for Analysis

	Well Predicted	Poorly Predicted
Combat or COIN	Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003 ^a	Bosnian air campaign, 1994–1995 ^b
Stability operations	U.S. occupation in Iraq, 2003–2012 ^a Peacekeeping in the Balkans, 1995–2008 ^b	Occupation of Japan, 1945–1952
Deterrence	Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962	Reconstruction of South Korea, 1945–1949

^a These two items represent two phases of the same case.

^b These two items represent two phases of the same case.

² John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

³ To ensure adequate time to conduct robust case studies, the statistical models used for case study selection were earlier versions of those presented in Chapter Four.

Table 5.2
Political Objectives Coded for Five Case Studies

	Objective	Time Period	Level of Success
Operation Iraqi Freedom and U.S. occupation of Iraq, 2003–2012	Remove Saddam Hussein from power (2.2)	March–May 2003	Success
	Neutralize the threat posed by the alleged Iraqi WMD programs ^a (2.3)	March–May 2003	Success
	End alleged Iraqi support for terrorism (2.3)	March–May 2003	Some success
	Create a prosperous, free Iraq (3.2)	March–May 2003	No success
	Create a peaceful, united, stable, and secure Iraq (1.3)	May 2003–December 2011	No success
	Build Iraqi institutions (4.2)	May 2003–December 2011	Some success
	Create an Iraq that is a full partner in the War on Terror (2.3)	May 2003–December 2011	Some success
	Help establish an Iraq at peace with its neighbors (2.3)	March–May 2003	Some success
	Create an Iraq well integrated into the international community (2.3)	May 2003–December 2011	Some success
Multinational intervention in Bosnia, 1992–2008 (air campaign and peacekeeping)	Provide humanitarian and medical assistance to Croatia and Bosnia, including Operation Provide Promise (4.1)	July 1992–2008	Success
	Monitor and log violations of no-fly zone (2.1)	October 1992–March 1993	Success
	Compel Bosnian Serbs to participate in a peace agreement that would end the Bosnian War (2.3)	1993–1995	Success
	Enforce economic sanctions and arms embargo against Croatia, Serbia, and the former Yugoslavia (2.3)	June 1993–June 1996	Success
	Enforce no-fly zone and degrade Bosnian Serb military capabilities (4.3)	1994–1995	Some success
	IFOR: Enforce the provisions of the Dayton Accords ^b (4.3)	December 1995–1996	Some success
	SFOR and EUFOR: Stabilize the peace by contributing to a safe and secure environment conducive to civil and political reconstruction (4.3)	December 1996 and 2004–2008	Some success
Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962	Prevent escalation to global or regional war and instability (2.3)	1962	Success
	Protect the United States and hosts in the Western Hemisphere from the threat of nuclear attack (2.1)	1962	Success
	Contain Soviet influence in Cuba and the Western Hemisphere (2.3)	1962	Some success
	Prevent additional weapons and military equipment from reaching Cuba (2.3)	1962	Success

Table 5.2—continued

	Objective	Time Period	Level of Success
Occupation of Japan, 1945–1952	Protect the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay against possible attack by Soviet or Cuban forces during the Missile Crisis (2.1)	1962	Success
	Evacuate U.S. noncombatants from the Guantanamo Bay base (1.2)	1962	Success
	Prevent remilitarization of Japan (2.3)	1945–1952	Success
	Liberate and repatriate Allied POWs (2.2)	1945	Success
	Provide humanitarian relief to Japanese population (4.1)	1945–1952	Some success
	Repatriate internally and externally displaced Japanese soldiers, POWs, citizens, and foreign civilian internees (4.1)	1945–1948	Some success
	Promote democratic institution-building and democratization of Japanese economy (4.2)	1945–1952	Success
	Contain expansion of Soviet/Chinese influence and spread of communism in East Asia (2.2)	1947–1952	Some success
Reconstruction of South Korea, 1945–1949	Preserve access to strategic LOCs and military staging areas for contingencies in Asia and Pacific, especially during Korean War (2.4)	1950–1952	Success
	Repatriate displaced Japanese citizens to end Japan's colonial influence in Korea (4.1)	1945–1946	Success
	Provide humanitarian relief to Korean population (4.1)	1945–1949	Success
	Promote longer-term political and social stability through democratic institution-building and economic aid/reconstruction (4.2)	1945–1949	Some success
	Ensure a pro-Western government (led by Syngman Rhee) amenable to U.S. interests (1.3)	1945–1948	Success
	Contain the expansion of Soviet/North Korean influence and spread of communism in East Asia (2.3)	1945–1949	Some success
	Support the security and stability of the Rhee government against leftist/communist insurgent threats in Jeju, Suncheon, and Yeosu (2.3)	1948–1949	Success

NOTES: EUFOR = European Union Force. IFOR = Implementation Force. LOC = line of communication. POW = prisoner of war. SFOR = Stabilization Force. WMD = weapon of mass destruction.

^a We coded the extent of U.S. success in neutralizing Iraq's alleged WMD program and ending Iraq's supposed support for terrorism taking into account the fact that there is little evidence that Iraq ever had a WMD program and there were only weak connections between Saddam Hussein's regime and terrorist organizations. The neutralization of the WMD program is considered a success insofar as any threat that did exist was neutralized, and attempts to end Iraqi support for terrorism were coded as a partial success because of the emergence of terrorist organizations (some with illicit support from government actors) in the months and years after the U.S. invasion.

^b These were to implement a ceasefire between belligerents, establish an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, and create a "zone of separation" between Bosnians and Serbs.

Factors That Affect Success

As noted in Chapter Two, the factors that affect intervention outcomes can usefully be divided into a number of categories: characteristics of the international system, execution of mission, characteristics of the operational environment, domestic political characteristics of the host nation, and the relationship between the United States and the host nation. We considered the findings of our cases by following the same general categorization. As was true of the statistical analysis, we also considered the scope of the objectives to assess whether expansive or limited goals have been more or less difficult to achieve. Most of the specific factors that we consider in this chapter are similar to those in the quantitative analysis, but we also include some that are distinct to the qualitative analysis and represent factors that we were unable to include in our statistical models because of data availability concerns.

Importantly, because our number of cases is small, we are limited in our ability to generalize findings from these cases to the full set of interventions. As noted previously, some hypotheses in this report we tested only quantitatively, others we tested qualitatively, and some we tested using both methods. We have relatively more confidence about results that are supported by both our statistical analysis and the case studies and a moderate level of confidence about observations that emerge from more than one or two of the cases presented here. Even for relationships that appear consistently across our cases, however, we remain cautious about our ability to generalize from what remain a limited set of cases, despite our efforts to make them representative of a range of different activities and contexts. In the final chapter of this report, where we pull the qualitative and quantitative results together, we are explicit about which results come from which type of analysis and the degree of confidence we have in the generalizability of each result.

International System (Relative Capabilities of the United States)

In several of our cases, the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives was influenced by relationships between the United States and other great powers and by the balance of power in the international system. In our cases, constraints from the international system were most salient during the Cold War and appear particularly relevant for deterrence cases, a finding that is consistent with the statistical results discussed in Chapter Four. Perhaps the clearest example of this came in the Cuban Missile Crisis. The actions and involvement of the Soviet Union, the United States' peer competitor in the international system at the time, were, of course, central to the case. While the United States was able to mostly achieve its objectives in this case, the involvement of the Soviet Union and the Cold War context limited the options available to American policymakers and likely shaped the objectives that policymakers ultimately set for the intervention. While the Kennedy administration might have liked to remove Castro entirely, this objective was not realistic, given the ongoing Cold

War and the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Even the more limited objectives, such as preventing additional weapons from reaching Cuba and protecting the U.S. base at Guantanamo, had to be pursued carefully because of the potential for nuclear escalation. While the United States did successfully achieve these objectives despite these constraints, it was somewhat fortunate to do so, and rather than providing a model for how the United States would address similar problems in the future, the crisis underlined the importance to both sides of avoiding such situations.

The geopolitical situation also limited the ability of the United States to achieve certain objectives pursued during the post–World War II missions in Korea and Japan. Specifically, the United States wished, in both cases, to prevent the expansion of Soviet influence in East Asia and to establish stable democratic regimes. However, while the United States was largely successful in achieving its other in-country objectives in both of these interventions, it was only partially successful in its efforts to limit the spread of communism more broadly. The strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union and the active efforts of the Soviets to promote their own interests in the region appear to be key reasons why the United States had limited successes in these areas.

Similar to the difficulties of achieving geostrategic objectives during the Cold War, the ability of the United States to achieve in-country objectives was also challenged by the bipolar international system and the competition of the Cold War. While building democracy in Korea, the United States faced challenges from a strong Communist party in Korea. The Soviets aligned themselves with the leftist and communist elements of Korean political groups, while the United States shunned these groups, focusing on conservative organizations.⁴ As the United States worked to set up a democratic government, the divisions between these leftists and Korean conservatives deepened, leading to political tensions that undermined institutional stability and, along with the threat of invasion from the North, helped convince the United States not to push for stronger democratic institutions. U.S.-Soviet competition prevented any possible reunification, as each side feared that the unified state would become a proxy for the other.⁵ South Korea was then locked into a relatively authoritarian, conservative government that persisted until the 1980s.

In contrast, our post–Cold War cases offer evidence of how the relative dominance of the United States in the 1990s and early 2000s can make some objectives easier to achieve while encouraging an expansion of aims in other areas that may, paradoxically, make achieving success more difficult. In both Bosnia and Iraq, the United States was able to act more freely and pursue regime change and grand strategy objectives based less on balance of power concerns and more on other national secu-

⁴ James I. Matray, “Hodge Podge: American Occupation Policy in Korea, 1945–1948,” *Korean Studies*, Vol. 19, 1995, p. 22.

⁵ Matray, 1995, p. 29.

rity interests. At the same time, however, this freer hand led the United States to take on other, more difficult objectives, particularly in Iraq, that were ultimately much less successful. The constraints of the Cold War, although unwanted, may have spared the United States from trying to do too much in some circumstances and, therefore, actually increasing the likelihood that it would successfully achieve the objectives it did set.

Execution of Mission

Number of Forces

One factor that emerged as important in several of our cases is the number of forces and capabilities committed to the intervention. The strong relationship between force size and the degree of success is clearest for combat operations. In combat interventions, the United States has been most successful in achieving its political objectives when it has allocated sufficient numbers of personnel and has provided these personnel with the equipment and other resources necessary to overwhelm the adversary or prevent any realistic possibility of opposition victory. In the case of the 2003 initial invasion of Iraq, for example, it was the sizable U.S. force and its overwhelming military capabilities that allowed the United States to be successful in the combat phase of the conflict.

However, while our statistical analyses did not uncover a strong relationship between force size and success for stability and deterrence operations, our case studies suggest that, at least in certain circumstances, force size and capabilities can matter. While the United States was highly successful in achieving its initial objectives during the combat operation in Iraq in 2003 (in part because of the large force size), personnel that the United States allocated to the later postwar occupation proved to be woefully inadequate, especially initially, and this contributed to the challenges faced in the 2004–2006 period.⁶ The surge in personnel that followed was, in part, a recognition that a larger force would be needed to regain control over the country. While the additional forces were certainly not the only factor that ultimately contributed to the eventual reduction in violence, they did likely play a role.⁷

In the Japanese occupation following World War II, the United States planned to commit a massive force of up to 600,000 to the stabilization and reconstruction of Japan. As it happened, U.S. officials ultimately found that this was a dramatic overestimation of the number of personnel required, given the unexpectedly cooperative nature of the Japanese public (due in part to a successful influence campaign by U.S. forces prior to the occupation) and institutional response to the occupation. That said, even the roughly 200,000 personnel that were present in the early stages of the occupa-

⁶ Colonel Gregory Fontenot, Lieutenant Colonel E. J. Degen, and Lieutenant Colonel David Tohn, “On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom,” Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004; Larry Diamond, “What Went Wrong in Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2004.

⁷ Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, 2012, p. 7. While it is not clear whether even a massive increase in the number of forces allocated to this intervention could have prevented the problems that arose, available evidence suggests that more forces might have reduced the scope of some of the post-intervention challenges and failings.

tion (which was a significant reduction from the 400,000 that were in the country in October 1945) represented a sizable commitment of forces, especially given that they were working alongside a largely intact Japanese government bureaucracy.⁸ In Korea, the United States committed far fewer personnel for the postwar stabilization mission and withdrew them much more quickly. This reflected the overall lower priority that Korea held for the United States at the time, but the smaller commitment may have also limited U.S. leverage and options to promote South Korean democratization and institutional development. In Bosnia, the United States and the international community more broadly were initially hesitant to commit any sizable number of forces or to risk casualties to achieve their objectives related to stopping the violence. It was only once this reticence was overcome and substantial combat and postcombat forces were committed that success was achieved. In the postcombat period, it is notable that the United States had the advantage of sizable European interest and commitment, such that U.S. forces did not need to pursue difficult reconstruction and institution-building objectives on their own.

The number of forces was also a critical factor affecting the success of the Cuban Missile Crisis. This example suggests the ways in which force may matter even in deterrence operations, especially those in which reputation and signaling are important to the effectiveness of the deterrent and to the ultimate success of the intervention. Documentary evidence revealed after the collapse of the Soviet Union shows that the massive nuclear and conventional forces assembled by the United States (which included both naval and air assets and ground forces ready to deploy) during the Cuban Missile Crisis succeeded in their objective of intimidating the Soviet leadership and backing up U.S. diplomacy.⁹ As the most comprehensive Russian account of the event notes, thanks to its military posture, the United States possessed a “sword of Damocles that took the form of a threatened air strike followed by an invasion” that granted it “the ability to exert pressure in any talks. It was precisely this sword that in the end played the deciding role in accelerating Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev’s proposal

⁸ The early phases of the occupation of Japan proceeded so smoothly that deployment of additional combat forces (except combat engineers) was halted by the end of September 1945; in the same month, General Douglas MacArthur announced that the total occupying force would be drawn down to 200,000 by July 1946. The pace of withdrawal was also impacted by congressional legislation to reduce the size of the U.S. armed forces after World War II. For estimates of troop deployment figures in Japan after World War II, see General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur, MacArthur in Japan: The Occupation: Military Phase*, Volume 1 Supplement, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966a, pp. 44–45, p. 57; Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 30; James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, Christopher S. Chivvis, Andrew Radin, F. Stephen Larrabee, Nora Bensahel, Brooke K. Stearns, and Benjamin W. Goldsmith, *Europe’s Role in Nation-Building: From the Balkans to the Congo*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-722-RC, 2008; Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), official statistics (accessed in 2015); Arnold Fisch, Jr., “Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945–1950,” U.S. Army, Center of Military History, rev. 1988; and Tim Kane, “Global US Troop Deployments, 1950–2003,” troop deployment database, Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, October 2004.

⁹ See case study on the Cuban Missile Crisis in Appendix B for details.

for compromise.”¹⁰ The American “sword of Damocles” consisted of a mutually reinforcing spectrum of capabilities that granted the U.S. what Herman Kahn dubbed “escalation dominance.”¹¹ The United States could threaten a broad array of plausible military options, ranging from selective air strikes to an invasion to general nuclear war. While the position of the communist forces in Cuba was considerably stronger than U.S. intelligence realized at the time, the USSR was not in a position to use this strength to its diplomatic advantage—both because revealing the full extent of the Soviet military presence might have triggered a U.S. military response and because these forces could only deny the United States a meaningful victory rather than attain the Kremlin’s objectives.

Overall, the history of U.S. interventions suggests that the United States has typically been more effective at ensuring that sufficient numbers of personnel are sent to combat missions than at ensuring that sufficient numbers of personnel are committed to postcombat operations, such as stability operations and institution-building. While the case of Japan after World War II is an outlier in this way (as well as an outlier in its degree of success in institution-building and reconstruction), in more-recent postwar stability operations, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States has generally had too few forces to effectively pursue its in-country objectives. The postconflict Bosnia intervention, meanwhile, relied to a relatively greater degree on ground forces from partners and allies. This suggests a general tendency for the United States to underestimate the number of forces required for “Phase IV,” which includes postcombat and stabilization operations, and highlights the potentially negative effects that this underestimation can have on the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives.

Technological Superiority

While the number of personnel present certainly plays an important role, it has often been reinforced by the technical capabilities of the U.S. military and its ability to use superior technology and equipment to overwhelm adversaries and achieve its political objectives. The benefits of technological superiority appear to be most significant in combat operations. This is especially true in more-recent interventions, where more-powerful technology has provided more-decisive advantages. In Bosnia, for example, success during the air campaign depended not only on the number of planes and crews available to fly sorties, but also on the technical proficiency of U.S. forces and equipment, such as the increasingly widespread use of precision munitions. Similarly, in Iraq, it was not just the size of the U.S. force that overwhelmed the Iraqi Army in the combat phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, but also the heavy forces and equip-

¹⁰ Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, and the Missiles of October*, Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012, p. 94.

¹¹ Herman Kahn, *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios*, New York: Praeger, 1965.

ment and capabilities of these forces.¹² When the fighting shifted to urban operations, however, insurgents were able to neutralize some of this technical and technological superiority, and this resulted in sizable challenges for U.S. forces.

Finally, as discussed above with respect to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the superior technological capabilities of U.S. nuclear and conventional forces played a major role in the ability of the United States to achieve its most significant geopolitical goals of preventing an attack on the United States or other targets in the Western Hemisphere and getting Soviet missiles out of Cuba. For instance, in the case of enforcing the blockade, overwhelming U.S. naval superiority enabled the United States to pressure Soviet leaders even though it only stopped a single vessel. The USSR lacked the ability to seriously challenge the U.S. Navy in the Atlantic and particularly in the waters off Cuba. The United States was able to find and pursue all of the Soviet shipping en route to the island, and most of the Soviet ships turned around rather than risk confrontation. When the resources of the U.S. Navy proved inadequate, as in the case of aerial surveillance, interservice cooperation filled the gaps. Furthermore, the U.S. show of force made it clear that threats of military force against the United States would be ineffective. If the communists escalated to conventional war, the United States could bring superior forces to bear even without resorting to nuclear weapons. If the communists attempted to counter U.S. conventional superiority with tactical nuclear weapons, the Americans could respond with a larger number of similar weapons. Similarly, any strategic nuclear strike on the U.S. mainland would spark a vastly larger retaliation.

Nonmilitary Resources

As important to success as the commitment of military resources, however, has been the commitment of nonmilitary resources, including economic assistance, humanitarian aid, and funding for the tremendous costs associated with such tasks as institution-building. Nonmilitary resources may also include civilian contractors or nongovernmental organizations participating in the intervention. In our cases, a lack of resources was associated with a lower likelihood of achieving intervention objectives. High levels of nonmilitary resources appear to have been most important for stability operations, which typically have humanitarian or other nation-building objectives that require more than military personnel.

Successes in Japan and Korea, for instance, were supported by sizable U.S. economic and humanitarian aid. In Korea, where the success of the military intervention depended on building a strong and stable Korean government and economy, large sums of economic aid and humanitarian assistance were essential to the ultimate success of U.S. efforts to achieve objectives focused on economic rebuilding and humani-

¹² Walter L. Perry, Richard E. Darilek, Laurinda L. Rohn, and Jerry M. Sollinger, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Decisive War, Elusive Peace*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1214-A, 2015, p. 376.

tarian relief.¹³ In Japan, economic assistance, humanitarian relief, ships and supplies to support repatriation, and funding to support both military operations and government advisors were used to rebuild and democratize Japanese government institutions.¹⁴ In Bosnia, sufficient resources were generally available in the postconflict stabilization phase, due in large part to the greater presence and investment of European allies in this case.

Insufficient nonmilitary resources, meanwhile, undermined the ability of the United States to achieve political objectives in other contexts. In Iraq, for instance, initial delays in funding meant that early reconstruction was delayed, preventing U.S. personnel from tending to important administrative and strategic tasks, both inside and outside of Baghdad.¹⁵ Funding limitations also constrained the efficacy of programs to train Iraqi security forces and military personnel and the amount of reconstruction and rebuilding that could occur throughout the country. By 2011, key programs intended to train Iraqi police, strengthen government institutions, and enhance stability were scaled back or canceled.¹⁶ This insufficient funding severely constrained the ability of the U.S. forces and civilian advisors in Iraq to carry out the many institution-building tasks that would have been required to ensure a strong and functioning Iraqi government and an effective, well-trained security force able to maintain law and order, particularly once U.S. forces were withdrawn from the country. It should be noted, however, that the nonmilitary resources the United States eventually applied to Iraq were enormous. They just appear to have been insufficient or too unevenly available to achieve the very expansive, difficult U.S. objectives.

Pre-Intervention Planning

Early planning and decisionmaking by U.S. military planners and other officials consistently played a major role in the degree to which the United States achieved its objectives. Based on the cases considered here and others explored in the building of the data set, the United States has typically been most successful when it planned extensively for the operation and possible contingencies. Our cases suggest that prewar planning allows military strategists and tacticians to carefully script U.S. operations, identify key obstacles and how they should be overcome, and ensure that the operation receives the personnel and resources it needs. They also suggest that early decisions made during the course of an intervention can often have lasting implications. As a result, decisions in the first phases of an intervention, especially those phases that cover the immediate

¹³ USAID, "U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants: July 1, 1945–September 30, 2013," CONG-R-0105, Washington, D.C., 2015.

¹⁴ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 89, 102, 115–116.

¹⁵ L. Paul Bremer III with Malcolm McConnell, *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006, p. 114.

¹⁶ Bremer, 2006, pp. 311–312.

aftermath of a combat operation, should be carefully considered prior to the intervention and planned out to the greatest extent possible beforehand.

In Iraq, extensive planning for the combat phase contributed to the success of the combat operation and the achievement of initial objectives.¹⁷ However, it was a lack of planning for the postcombat phase that contributed to many of the challenges faced starting in mid-2003. Because there had not been sufficient planning, many of the early decisions made during the intervention—the decisions to disband the Army, to not secure weapons storage areas, and to pursue de-Baathification—were taken without careful, robust analysis of alternatives and consequences and had significant adverse consequences in later years.¹⁸

The occupation of Japan after World War II provides a clear contrast. Planning for the occupation began well before the intervention commenced and included multiple scenarios. The scenario ultimately employed, known as Operation BLACKLIST, had very detailed and specific plans outlining the objectives of the initial phase of the American occupation; the organizational structure and responsibilities of the ground, air, and naval units to be involved; and the tactical phased deployment of these U.S. resources. In the first weeks of the occupation, the objectives of the foreign intervention force were purely military in orientation and were focused on immobilization of Japanese forces, suppression of any local opposition, establishment of control of strategic LOCs, and liberation of Allied POWs.¹⁹ Subsequently, by October 1945, military operations fused with civil and political tasks to lay the groundwork for longer-term governance, economic, and societal reforms. BLACKLIST envisioned the rapid deployment to and occupation of 14 strategic geographic areas in Japan, which would permit control of over 60 percent of the population, 80 percent of the country's industrial capacity, and 48 percent of food production.²⁰ Much of the initial success of the United States at achieving its political objectives in Japan can be attributed to the careful detail included in the pre-intervention planning, which mapped out how the United States would govern and rebuild Japan after the end of the combat operation.

¹⁷ Perry et al., 2015, p. 55.

¹⁸ Nora Bensahel, Olga Oliker, Keith Crane, Richard R. Brennan, Jr., Heather S. Gregg, Thomas Sullivan, and Andrew Rathmell, *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-642-A, 2008, p. 165; James Dobbins, Michele A. Poole, Austin Long, and Benjamin Runkle, *After the War: Nation-Building from FDR to George W. Bush*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-716-CC, 2008, p. 129.

¹⁹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 4.

²⁰ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 2–6. The plans for Operation BLACKLIST also called for occupation of three to six areas in Korea covering 39 percent of the population, 18 percent of industrial capacity, and 44 percent of food production.

Scope of Objective

In our cases, the United States has been more successful at achieving objectives that have been narrowly scoped and limited (e.g., protecting U.S. civilians and businesses, providing humanitarian aid, defeating an enemy) than those that are more ambitious or broad in nature (e.g., institution-building, enhancing regional stability). This seems to be true across these five interventions (and others in the data set) and, within specific interventions, across objective types. For example, in the intervention into Korea after World War II, the United States was more effective at achieving its limited aims, such as providing humanitarian relief, establishing a friendly regime, and repatriating displaced Japanese citizens, than at achieving its more expansive objectives, such as establishing stability through institution-building and deterring the spread of communism. Similarly, in Japan, the United States was relatively more successful at achieving its more-limited in-country aims and less successful at achieving broad regional objectives, such as containing the spread of Soviet and Chinese influence, securing U.S. military access, and building partnerships, though it should be noted that some of the objectives the United States successfully achieved in Japan, such as institution-building, proved to be beyond its reach in other cases. The Cuban Missile Crisis provides a final example. While the United States achieved its narrowly defined aims—preventing an attack on Guantanamo, protecting noncombatants, preventing an attack on the United States mainland, and preventing additional weapons from reaching Cuba—it was not able to fully achieve its broader strategic objectives of containing Soviet influence and maintaining global and regional stability.

There are many reasons why narrowly defined and limited objectives may have higher success rates than those that are more broadly defined and ambitious. First, more-limited and narrowly defined objectives may be more immediately achievable through the use of military forces. It seems reasonable to expect sufficient numbers of armed forces to be successful in protecting a key location or defeating a specific armed adversary. However, achieving a broader political goal, such as building regional stability or containing communism, is likely to require not just military forces, but also political and diplomatic actions. Military forces are also not designed to build institutions. Such a task requires training and resources that are not typically provided to military personnel. It is also a complex task that might be more efficiently pursued by individuals with different sets of experiences. More-limited objectives typically also involve less risk and a lower commitment of forces and resources, making them easier to maintain through to objective completion. Ambitious and far-reaching objectives are typically time-consuming and costly to achieve, and it may be difficult to sustain the monetary or policy commitment required.

Operating Environment

Conflict Intensity

Our case studies generally confirm the finding from some of our statistical analyses that objectives may be more difficult to achieve when the level of violence from an ongoing conflict or other circumstance is higher. Based on the cases, this is especially true of stability operations because ongoing violence works directly against the goal of establishing stability and maintaining peace, but this may also be true of combat operations. As illustrated in our cases, ongoing and intense violence likely impedes progress on many types of objectives, whether they focus on narrow, in-country goals or broader regional ones, such as achieving stability or building relationships. Ongoing violence may act to impede the success of military interventions in several ways. First, it clearly serves as a distraction, diverting the attention and resources of U.S. military personnel away from primary objectives focused on stabilization, institution-building, and humanitarian relief. Second, ongoing intense violence may undo progress toward key objectives. With every resurgence of violence in both Iraq and Bosnia, progress made toward stabilization and efforts to build state capacity or to limit the humanitarian costs of the conflict were undermined. Violence can also threaten the long-term viability of new political and economic institutions and, in the case of Iraq, decimate (both physically and psychologically) the security forces charged with maintaining the stability.

While a lack of large-scale continued conflict in Japan and Korea favored the U.S. ability to achieve its political objectives, the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives in Iraq and Bosnia was unfavorably affected by the intensity of conflict. In Iraq, the attempts of the United States to build strong and stable institutions and even to hold elections were undermined by extreme and intensifying violence.²¹ Sectarian and anti-American violence commanded the attention of U.S. military personnel and diverted resources from institution-building to security provision and stabilization. However, violence was not only a drain on resources, but it also weakened the Iraqi military and police forces, both by eroding their numbers and by making them an unattractive option for possible recruits. As one example, police recruitment sites increasingly came under attack by insurgents, who saw them as “soft targets” that could demonstrate that the United States was unable to provide adequate security and unable to deter Iraqis from working with the Americans. These attacks further degraded the capacity of the Iraqi police forces and discouraged high-quality recruits from joining.²² Finally, as violence escalated in 2006, U.S. attention shifted away from establishing the necessary organizational and governance processes needed to achieve U.S. objectives related to the building of a strong and stable democratic Iraq. Only

²¹ Larry Diamond, *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005, p. 240.

²² Bensahel et al., 2008, p. 131.

after the surge, when violence declined somewhat, did the United States focus more directly on institution-building and the political dynamics in the country.²³

In Bosnia, U.S. efforts to broker a peace agreement and to establish and enforce peace and stability were challenged by the intensity of the ethnic conflict. As noted in the case study, despite a largely successful no-fly zone, the United States was unable to achieve the broader objective of ending the war by compelling the warring factions to participate in a peace agreement until 1995. The European Community and UN, and, later, the “Contact Group” made up of the United States and several European countries, were able to secure several short-lived ceasefires and put forth different peace plans, none of which were ever accepted by all factions.²⁴ Notably, the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) also often failed to prevent attacks on civilians and seemed unprepared to handle the level of violence in the country and, particularly, the extent to which it was directed against civilians. Had the violence been less severe, it might have been more easily controllable by forces on the ground, even though they were operating under restrictive mandates.

Given its seeming importance to intervention outcomes based both on the cases and on the statistical analysis, military planners should factor the level of conflict into their decisionmaking in at least two key ways. First, they should consider whether U.S. objectives are even achievable at the existing level of violence and scale their objectives accordingly. Second, they should carefully consider the sequencing with which they pursue their objectives, including whether violence must be slowed or halted for reconstruction and institution-building to take place or whether the roots of the violence are such that political and institutional progress are likely to be prerequisites for a cessation of violence. The best approach is likely to depend on the local context.

Degree of External Threat

Based on the cases described here and others in the data set, for objectives related to deterrence or regional security, the degree or severity of the threat that the host nation faces appears to be more relevant to the degree of success than the level or intensity of conflict. The severity of the external threat may be correlated with the capabilities of the adversary but may also include such factors as the aims and objectives of the adversary and the centrality of the host nation to U.S. strategic objectives. For instance, a territorial claim may imply a greater degree of threat to the host nation than the theft of resources or some other threat that is more economic in nature. Our cases suggest that more-severe external threats tend to impede the achievement of certain political objectives, both by constraining the U.S. ability to act and by undermining what

²³ There is an extensive debate regarding whether the U.S. focus on addressing violence levels prior to institution-building or the establishment of a political settlement between Iraq’s major ethnic groups was the optimal choice. See the Iraq case study in Appendix B for more detail on this issue.

²⁴ Florian Bieber, *Post-War Bosnia: Ethnicity, Inequality and Public Sector Governance*, Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 27.

progress is made toward those objectives. The severity of the external threat clearly constrained the ability of U.S. policymakers to achieve one political objective in particular during the Cuban Missile Crisis. As noted above, while the United States might have wished to rid the Western Hemisphere of Soviet influence, the nature and severity of the external threat posed by the Soviet Union to the U.S. homeland prevented the United States from taking military action to neutralize Soviet influence in Cuba. The nature of the threat also undermined the ability of the United States to achieve two of its political objectives in the post-1945 Korean intervention. Soviet military capabilities encouraged the United States to accept a division of Korea and a communist state in the North despite the difficulties this posed for its policies in the region more broadly and for stabilizing South Korea in particular. Conversely, Japan did not experience a similarly existential threat from Soviet or Chinese forces during the early postwar occupation, and this may have allowed the United States to support relatively more democratic institutions in Japan.

It should be noted, however, that while the degree of threat does appear to have an effect on the U.S. ability to achieve objectives that would bring the United States into direct conflict with the source of that threat (the Soviet Union, in most of our cases), the United States has also been able to achieve other objectives in these same interventions despite the large external threat. In Cuba, the United States successfully achieved its more limited objectives (other than a rollback of Soviet influence) despite the threats posed by the crisis. In both Korea and Japan, U.S. concerns over communist expansion did not prevent it from achieving other, more domestically focused objectives successfully. This distinction may not hold in cases in which the external threat is itself more domestically focused, however, as will be discussed in the next section.

Presence of External Actors

The ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives also is likely to be affected by the presence (sometimes assistance and sometimes interference) of other actors operating in the same environment. Not surprisingly, when the United States has third parties either acting directly against its political objectives or complicating its efforts from within (in the case of partners), it seems to be less successful in achieving its political objectives. Conversely, the presence of supportive external actors, such as European forces in Bosnia following the 1995 Dayton Accords, can greatly enhance the likelihood that the United States will achieve its objectives. Allies and partners, and particularly the United Kingdom, were also active in Iraq in supporting U.S. objectives. In the cases we studied, however, the effects of external actors were more typically negative.

In several of our cases, these other actors actively worked to prevent the United States from fully achieving its political goals, a sort of counterintervention. One of the primary examples of this relationship comes from the case of Iraq. Although the United States benefited from having several strong partners on its side of the interven-

tion, the most important third party was arguably Iran. Iran's objectives in Iraq have been ensuring "that Baghdad is governed by a friendly, Shi'a-dominated regime; that Iraqi political entities be sufficiently divided to empower Tehran to be a power broker in Iraqi politics; that Iraq remain stable and weak to prevent it from posing a significant security threat to Iran," and to ensure that U.S. forces depart without establishing permanent bases in Iraq.²⁵ To achieve these objectives, Iran has pursued a dual policy of supporting Shi'ite politicians in the government and providing resources to nonstate militia groups. This approach allows Iran to maintain a strong influence within the central government while also encouraging nongovernmental actors who undermine the government's authority, ensuring that the Iraqi government does not become too powerful or independent.²⁶ As a result, Iranian influence fed ethnic and anti-U.S. violence and also undermined nascent democratic institutions. Furthermore, it compromised U.S. attempts to build stronger ties between Iraq and its other regional partners, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran's primary regional competitor.

In other cases, even partners acting on the same side of the conflict as the United States can have an adverse effect on the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives. As an example, the decision to partner with the UN (which was focused on remaining impartial in the conflict) in the initial implementation of the no-fly zone and safe areas in Bosnia limited the efficacy of the humanitarian mission and the enforcement of UN resolutions designed to bring an end to the conflict.

Domestic Characteristics of the Host Nation

Ethnic and Religious Tensions

Our cases also suggest that ethnic and religious tensions within the host nation can further complicate attempts to achieve intervention objectives, especially those that aim at peacekeeping, institution-building, and stabilization. They appear to do so both by hampering attempts to end violence and by making widely accepted political, security, and economic institutions more difficult to build.

Iraq and Bosnia provide the two clearest examples. In Iraq, severe ethnic and religious tensions and conflict between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims undermined U.S. efforts to achieve its political objectives from the start of the postinvasion stabilization mission. Initially, U.S. advisors tended to favor the Shi'a, who had been excluded from the government under Saddam, but this tendency only stoked tension and conflict between the two sides. Rushed decisionmaking and a failure to appreciate the fragility of the ethnic balance in Iraq led to the unintentional institutionalization of ethnic ten-

²⁵ Richard R. Brennan, Jr., Charles P. Ries, Larry Hanauer, Ben Connable, Terrence K. Kelly, Michael J. McNerney, Stephanie Young, Jason Campbell, and K. Scott McMahon, *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq: The Final Transition, Operational Maneuver, and Disestablishment of United States Forces-Iraq*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-232-USFI, 2013, p. 127.

²⁶ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 5.

sions into early government institutions.²⁷ The exclusion of many Sunni groups from the government remained a destabilizing factor throughout the U.S. intervention in Iraq. These tensions then weakened Iraqi political institutions and interfered with U.S. efforts to establish a free and fair democratic process in the country.²⁸ These tensions also undermined the efficacy of the security forces, as these forces tended to be heavily Shi'a and used their positions, in some cases, to carry out violence against Sunnis. Widespread intergroup violence, beginning with armed militia groups, began as early as 2003 and continued throughout the U.S. intervention despite intensive efforts by both U.S. and Iraqi forces to prevent it. For instance, a 2007 assessment found that the Iraqi Police Service was "underequipped and compromised by militia and insurgent infiltration" and incapable "of providing security at a level sufficient to protect Iraqi neighborhoods from insurgents and sectarian violence."²⁹ Finally, ethnic and religious tensions ultimately undermined U.S. efforts to strengthen Iraq ties with other regional partners, as many of Iraq's neighbors were Sunni-dominated and were wary about forming strong ties with a Shi'a-dominated state increasingly closely allied with Iran.

In Bosnia, ethnic and religious tensions also impeded the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives, as they lay at the heart of the conflict. As in the case of Iraq, such violence in Bosnia undermined U.S. attempts to establish and secure peace, to provide security to civilian populations, and to provide humanitarian aid to affected civilians. For example, Bosnian Serbs actively targeted Bosnian Muslim populations for ethnic cleansing and worked to prevent the delivery of humanitarian assistance, although war crimes were committed on all sides of the conflict. By contrast, these tensions were largely absent in the much more homogeneous societies of Japan and South Korea, where U.S. institution- and peace-building efforts were generally more successful, although, of course, ethnic and religious tensions are not the only factors that explain this difference.

Political Institutions

The case studies also offer insights into the role played by the host nation's political institutions in the lead-up to the U.S. intervention. Strong political institutions in a host nation appear to be particularly relevant for achieving objectives related to stabilization or humanitarian efforts, as well as in cases where having financial or security support from the host-nation government may be vital in assisting U.S. efforts. Based on evidence from our cases, for stabilization and nation-building objectives, having reasonably well-established political institutions can give the United States a

²⁷ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xxiv.

²⁸ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 96.

²⁹ James L. Jones, "The Report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq," September 6, 2007.

foundation on which to build.³⁰ Existing political and economic infrastructure can be enhanced and built upon rather than created from scratch. Where institutions exist, there may also exist capable and trained partners. In the case of combat interventions, the United States may benefit from strong host-nation institutions when the nation can provide political and military support to augment U.S. forces.

In the Iraq case, for instance, the need to create political and security institutions from the ground up was a substantial obstacle for U.S. military personnel, although some of these problems were of the United States' own making. The sheer magnitude of the task and the lack of Iraqi experience with democratic political institutions was one of the main reasons for the U.S. failure on those objectives related to institution-building.³¹ Tasks such as setting up and staffing Iraqi ministries, writing a constitution, and holding fair elections were made more difficult by the fact that the removal of Saddam Hussein and the de-Baathification that followed hollowed out the existing government infrastructure and removed the majority of individuals who had experience working in civil service jobs.³² This meant that not only did U.S. advisors have to establish institutions, but they also had to train personnel to fill key posts. In addition, most government institutions, even once established, were exceedingly weak. The U.S. military and U.S. policymakers could not rely on the Iraqi government to support or advance U.S. political objectives. For example, without a strong Iraqi partner to work toward law and order, it was unlikely that the United States would ever have been able to achieve its objective of building a stable Iraq. Notably, the situation was not all that different in the security sector, where, after disbanding the Iraqi Army, the United States was forced to quickly build functioning and effectively trained security forces.³³

The case of Japan provides an example of the ways in which having a strong political infrastructure can advance U.S. political objectives. The U.S. government was able to rely heavily on the Japanese emperor and the existing governmental infrastructure to carry out its initiatives, maintain law and order, and institute policies that worked toward U.S. political objectives.³⁴ U.S. military authorities chose to work through existing political institutions, rather than disbanding them and starting over. MacArthur communicated his directives to the various relevant Japanese ministries through a Central Liaison Committee. In turn, bureaucrats and parliamentarians debated how to implement MacArthur's decisions, and then orders were handed down

³⁰ This is a hypothesis that we explore only qualitatively. While there are some data sets that assess the strength of political and economic institutions since World War II, there is little available data to address the quality of institutions pre–World War II.

³¹ Bremer, 2006, pp. 24, 26.

³² Bremer, 2006, pp. 24, 26.

³³ Perry et al., 2015, p. 335.

³⁴ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur, MacArthur in Japan: The Occupation: Military Phase*, Volume 1 Supplement, Washington, D.C.: U.S Government Printing Office, 1966a.

to governors and mayors for execution. Local liaison offices were also established to interact with Military Government teams in each prefecture.³⁵ As Japanese authorities received increasing control over administrative decisions, the 47 prefectural Military Government teams were gradually deactivated in 1949; their functions were absorbed by seven Civil Affairs teams, which subsequently faded out before disappearing altogether in June 1951.³⁶ At the same time, however, the sophistication of existing Japanese institutions presented some challenges. Specifically, numerous prewar structural problems endemic to these institutions presented significant challenges to the occupiers' democratization objectives: In pre-war Japanese society, there essentially existed no freedom of speech, religion, or education; women did not possess the right to vote; political dissidents were imprisoned; secret police monitored the population; and Shintoism as practiced at the time was in essence an ultranationalistic, militaristic state religion.³⁷ Thus, while having functioning political institutions does seem to have played an important, positive role in facilitating the achievement of U.S. political objectives in Japan, these institutions still presented challenges that needed to be overcome.

Economic Development and Infrastructure

Our case studies suggest that the level of economic development of the host nation may also matter, particularly for stability operations and objectives that involve institution-building or peacekeeping that may benefit from the presence of local infrastructure and resources. Local infrastructure may be able to facilitate rebuilding efforts and efforts to distribute and make use of economic aid, while countries with higher levels of economic development may be able to contribute more to their own rebuilding. The presence of these resources may have value beyond nation-building interventions if they ease the economic burden on the United States of achieving its political objectives.

For instance, the occupation of Japan after World War II involved a number of objectives focused on economic reconstruction and enhancing economic development. Although the United States was ultimately able to achieve a great deal of success on these objectives, the task was made significantly more challenging by the initial poor state of economic infrastructure in Japan at the start of the occupation. Economically and industrially, the Japanese empire was devastated and exhausted at war's end. An estimated one-quarter of Japan's wealth was erased during the conflict. Inflation was rampant, productive capacity and gross national product (GNP) were depleted to about two-thirds of prewar levels, imports of basic commodities were disrupted, revenues and raw materials from the empire's overseas colonies were lost, government debts exceeded 200 percent of GNP, unskilled labor was organized in feudalistic patterns,

³⁵ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 195; Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. 30–32, p. 39.

³⁶ Eiji Takemae, *Allied Occupation of Japan*, New York, London: Continuum, 2002, p. 120; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 296–297.

³⁷ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 57.

and the economy was structurally handicapped by the dominance of family-controlled monopolies (*zaibatsus*) in the industrial and banking sectors.³⁸ The United States was eventually able to restore the Japanese economy to (or above) prewar levels, but only through the provision of significant aid and support. They also benefited from the fact that, although it had been decimated, Japan had once had a strong, thriving economy and largely still had the necessary human capital to regain its economic footing. Due in part to these advantages, the United States was able to take a largely hands-off approach to economic development, providing aid and oversight but allowing Japanese officials to implement broad U.S. directives, likely increasing their effectiveness.

The situation was similar in Korea at the end of World War II, where building economic institutions was one goal of the U.S. occupation. The weak Korean economy was also riddled with inflation and struggled with shortages of food and other supplies. When the United States occupied Korea, the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) announced that 663,950 acres of Japanese-owned lands would be returned to Koreans, landowners could collect no more than 30 percent of a rice harvest from tenants, and Korean agricultural products would be sold at free-market prices.³⁹ The initial announcement caused an immediate negative response, as speculators bought up tons of rice for sale to Japan and many farmers refused to work unless they could be guaranteed high prices, leading to the loss of some of the harvest.⁴⁰ Military leaders struggled to stem rising inflation. The U.S. leadership imposed price controls and a government buying program to mitigate the damages, but, by spring 1946, the previous year's harvest had been nearly depleted, and the current harvest would not be sufficient for the country's needs. Massive flooding and a fertilizer shortage further contributed to the 20 percent drop in rice production in 1946. In response, in June 1946, the United States began sending food to Korea to mitigate the losses, exporting 670,000 metric tons of food between 1946 and 1958.⁴¹ Difficult living conditions and economic challenges led to domestic instability, and Koreans took to the streets en masse in the fall of 1946, protesting low wages, the struggling economy, and the American occupation.⁴² It was only through additional aid that the situation was stabilized. In this case, then, poor economic conditions of the host nation not only complicated

³⁸ Koichi Hamada and Munehisa Kasuya, "The Reconstruction and Stabilization of the Postwar Japanese Economy: Possible Lessons for Eastern Europe?" New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, Economic Growth Center Discussion Paper No. 672, September 1992; Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 28; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 212–219.

³⁹ Inhan Kim, "Land Reform in South Korea Under the U.S. Military Occupation, 1945–1948," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Spring 2016, pp. 97–129.

⁴⁰ Allen R. Millett, *The War for Korea 1945–1950: A House Burning*, Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2015, p. 107.

⁴¹ Charles R. Frank, Jr., Kwang Suk Kim, and Larry E. Westphal, "Economic Growth in South Korea Since World War II," *Foreign Trade Regimes and Economic Development: South Korea*, NBER, 1975, p. 8.

⁴² Millett, 2015, p. 133.

efforts by the United States to achieve objectives related to political and economic stability, but they also increased the economic burden placed on the United States.

The second major challenge concerned the status of Korean manufacturing. The country's colonial history and loss of industrial sectors in the northern half of the country posed the greatest challenge.⁴³ Many in Congress held reservations about approving a comprehensive aid package to Korea, which led many supporters to repeatedly petition Congress for more funding. The United States ultimately contributed a total of \$181.2 million in aid during the 1946–1948 period.⁴⁴ However, despite this success, the overall economic development of South Korea in the wake of World War II continued to lag, due to the lack of infrastructure and an economic industrial base.

The poor state of Iraq's economy may also have played a role in limiting the success of U.S. efforts to create a stable and secure Iraq that was a partner in the War on Terror. The lack of a well-functioning economy and the weak economic reserves that existed in Iraq in 2003 following more than a decade of international sanctions severely undermined U.S. attempts to rebuild the country politically and economically.⁴⁵ The lack of resources made it difficult to attract high-quality personnel to government positions, to provide needed services (such as electricity and water) to Iraqi citizens, and, perhaps most importantly, to develop, acquire, or sustain the sort of security force that would be needed to establish domestic stability or become a security partner of the United States in the War on Terror.⁴⁶ These shortcomings ultimately fed instability and widespread shortages of water, food, and electricity, which undermined support for the new Iraqi government and the American intervention. Finally, the poor state of the economy contributed to sectarian tension over the division of resources, including oil and hydrocarbons, further undermining domestic stability and interfering with the achievement of U.S. political objectives.⁴⁷

The lack of a strong economy, in terms of GDP, growth, and infrastructure, appears to make achieving U.S. political objectives more difficult, at least in our five cases, particularly when those objectives focus on conditions in the host nation. This is because the lack of a strong economy undermines stability, creates grievances, and increases demand for additional U.S. resources to fill any gaps, which risks making the U.S. commitment ultimately unsustainable.

⁴³ Frank, Kim, and Westphal, 1975, p. 8.

⁴⁴ USAID, 2015.

⁴⁵ Bremer, 2006.

⁴⁶ Perry et al., 2015, p. 335.

⁴⁷ Brennan et al., 2013, pp. 305–306.

Relationship Between Host Nation and United States

Support of the Host Nation for the Intervention

The cases also illustrate how having the support of the host-nation government can be a key factor in determining the ultimate success of the intervention. As noted in Chapter Four, there are several mechanisms through which support of the host-nation government might contribute to the ultimate success of the mission. First, having the acquiescence of the host-nation government may facilitate U.S. efforts by reducing obstacles to U.S. actions and giving the United States more flexibility overall. Second, a supportive government might be willing to provide resources and personnel, such as security forces, to supplement those provided by the United States. Third, the host-nation government might also assist more actively, by providing messaging or implementing U.S. policies.

The occupation of Japan provides an example of the benefits that can accrue from having host-nation cooperation. Japanese leaders and public officials were almost wholly cooperative with U.S. forces during the intervention, which was not expected by U.S. policymakers. Multiple preemptive actions contributed to this support. For instance, on August 19, 1945, two weeks before the official signing of surrender, the United States received a delegation of Japanese government officials in Manila, Philippines, to brief them on the operational plans for BLACKLIST. During these sessions, U.S. officers provided their Japanese counterparts with detailed instructions necessary to prepare them for and to help them facilitate the smooth and peaceful reception of occupying forces.⁴⁸ Indeed, no violence accompanied the advanced party of U.S. forces that began landing on August 30, and “it soon became apparent that the Japanese had meticulously followed the requirements stipulated in Manila.”⁴⁹

Emperor Hirohito further contributed to the absence of the emergence of an armed resistance movement. In his address to the parliament (the Diet) on the day after the surrender signing ceremony on the *Missouri*, Hirohito urged the nation to peacefully abide by the terms of the surrender.⁵⁰ As such, Japanese officials willingly took the lead on one of the most important objectives—demilitarization. In the political and economic sectors, Japanese government officials, mostly at the regional and local levels, carried out U.S. directives under the oversight of U.S. personnel and encouraged Japanese citizens to cooperate with U.S. forces. The United States was able to maintain this goodwill not only by acting judiciously, but also by working to repatriate Japanese nationals who had been displaced, by providing economic and humanitarian aid, and by gradually turning power back to the Japanese themselves.

⁴⁸ The delegates returned to Tokyo with four documents outlining these plans and their specific requirements and responsibilities; when presented to the Emperor, he was “quite relieved” that the terms were not as harsh as he had feared (General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 19–23).

⁴⁹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 28.

⁵⁰ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 38, 42, 49–51.

The case of the Cuban Missile Crisis, in contrast, provides an example of the challenges faced when the host nation does not support the U.S. intervention. The United States presence in Guantanamo Bay was a holdover from the pre-communist regime, and continuing to defend it against Cuban, and possibly also Soviet, forces was a cause for concern, as was the possibility that communist Cuba could be used as a beachhead for the Soviet Union to spread its influence throughout Latin America. While the opposition of the Cuban government did inhibit the ability of the United States to achieve the objective of limiting Soviet influence in the region, the United States was still able to achieve its other objectives, such as the removal of Soviet missiles and the protection of Guantanamo, despite Cuban wishes.

The failures in Iraq also owe much to the lack of support the United States received from the Iraqi people and Iraqi public figures who became its political leaders. Even political figures who owed their positions to U.S. forces were largely unwilling to support U.S. policy objectives when they conflicted with their own political interests. Instead, figures like Maliki encouraged and benefited from an expanding Iranian influence, fed violence against Sunnis, and took steps to undermine the stability and security of Iraq and U.S. attempts to build democracy in order to ensure his own political career.⁵¹ The relatively weak commitment and sometimes low motivation of the Iraqi security forces and Iraqi Army also suggested that low support for the U.S. presence was more broadly based. The question of whether low popular support for U.S. objectives was a symptom or a cause of U.S. difficulties in Iraq is difficult to untangle. For example, had the United States better planned for the postwar effort and employed larger numbers of personnel to ensure initial security, greater popular and elite support for the U.S. presence and its objectives might have resulted. Regardless of its sources, however, after this initial period, the lack of Iraqi support for U.S. objectives clearly became an important factor in its own right in inhibiting the achievement of U.S. goals.

Closeness of Relationship with the United States

Although previous research suggests the importance of a close, formal relationship between the United States and the host nation as a factor in the U.S. decision to intervene, our cases provide less insight into the ways in which the existence of such a relationship might contribute to the intervention's success. Although the United States later became a close ally of Korea and Japan (the security relationship with Japan was formalized during the occupation), neither was a close U.S. partner at the end of World War II or at the start of the occupation. The fact that the countries were not allies, however, had no negative effect on the success of the U.S. intervention in either case. Cuba had been in the U.S. sphere of influence at one point, but, after the Castro revolution, Cuba was no longer an ally and did not receive military or economic aid. Cuba's

⁵¹ Emma Sky, "How Obama Abandoned Democracy in Iraq," *Politico*, April 7, 2015; Judith S. Yaphe, "Maliki's Maneuvering in Iraq," *Foreign Policy*, June 6, 2012.

proximity to the United States clearly raised the priority of its close relationship with the Soviet Union as a foreign policy threat and may have contributed to the successes achieved during the Cuban Missile Crisis, if only because it ensured a significant contribution of resources and facilitated a relatively rapid response. The U.S. relationship with Iraq in the lead-up to the intervention was also not close and was actively hostile for much of Saddam Hussein’s rule. However, it is not clear that this relationship affected the outcome of the intervention. It may have affected the attitude of Iraqis toward the U.S. military personnel when they arrived, but there is little evidence documenting the extent of such attitudes or their ultimate effect.

Of course, this does not mean that the relationship between the United States and the host-nation government plays no role in the success of the intervention. Instead, the apparent importance of having the support of the host nation in these cases and others suggests that it may be less the formal alliance relationship that affects the likelihood of success and more the broader bilateral relationship that is important. Specifically, although neither Japan nor Korea was a formal ally at the end of World War II, both were important strategically to the United States, and both were also dependent on the United States for assistance, protection, and reconstruction. On the other hand, in both the Cuban Missile Crisis and the intervention in Iraq, the relations between the United States and the host nation were openly hostile at the start of the intervention, and each viewed the other as an adversary.

Summary: Factors That Matter

This chapter has discussed the factors that appear to have influenced the degree of success that the United States achieved on its political objectives in five specific interventions. Not all factors applied to all interventions, but there are several that appear broadly important across these cases. Table 5.3 summarizes which factors appear to have mattered most for which types of interventions.

The table identifies factors for which there is strong evidence (black) and moderate evidence (gray) of a relationship in our cases between the factors listed on the vertical axis and the objectives undertaken during interventions of different activity types on the horizontal axis. White or blank cells indicate that we did not find substantial evidence in the case studies of such a relationship.

The observations in this chapter are based on only five cases, with as few as two of any particular intervention activity type, so it is important to be cautious about making broad generalizations. However, we can still identify some apparent patterns. Table 5.3 shows that the types of factors that influence the likelihood of success appear to vary by intervention activity type, although there are some similarities. Characteristics of the international system appeared to matter for all activity types but seem most important for combat/COIN and deterrence objectives in our case studies.

Table 5.3
Factors Affecting Success in Case Studies

Factors		Objectives		
		Combat or COIN	Stability Operations	Deterrence
International system	Relative U.S. capabilities	Black	Gray	Black
Execution of mission	Number of forces	Black	Black	Black
	Technological superiority	Black	White	Gray
	Nonmilitary resources	Black	Black	White
	Pre-intervention planning	Black	Black	Black
Limited objective scope		Black	Black	Black
Operating environment	Conflict intensity	Black	Black	White
	Degree of external threat	Black	White	Gray
	Third-party involvement	Gray	Black	Gray
Domestic characteristics of the host	Ethnic and religious tensions	Gray	Black	White
	Strong political institutions	Black	Black	White
	High economic development	Black	Black	White
Relationship with the United States	Support of host nation	Black	Black	Gray
	Closeness of relationship with United States	Black	Black	Gray

NOTES: Black = strong evidence of a relationship. Gray = moderate evidence of a relationship. White = no substantial evidence of a relationship.

Our cases also suggest the importance of a number of execution of mission factors. First, the number of forces was assessed as an important factor in each of our case studies. But the cases also illustrate that, at least for stability operations, large numbers of troops, while useful, are often insufficient to ensure success. In our five cases, technological superiority appears especially important for the achievement of combat objectives. Technological superiority seems less relevant to stability operations, however, which often lean more heavily on other nonmilitary resources in the form of humanitarian aid and economic assistance. Pre-intervention planning seems to matter for both our combat and stability operations cases, but it seems to matter less for deterrence, where, in each of our cases, the United States was more improvisational, though ultimately largely successful.

Across activity types, the cases suggest that objectives with a more limited scope have a higher likelihood of success. This may be because they require more-limited resources, can be carefully scripted, and often involve tasks that are more traditionally

military ones, as opposed to objectives that include difficult, nontraditional tasks, such as institution-building.

The cases also suggest that the intensity of the ongoing conflict can be highly relevant to stability operations. The substantial effect of conflict intensity on the likely success of efforts to build institutions is a key insight that emerged from several of our case studies discussed in this chapter. Similarly, the cases suggest that the severity of the external threat can complicate efforts to achieve objectives in deterrent interventions, particularly if the adversary is comparable in its power and influence to the United States. The involvement of a third party appears relevant across activity types, but, again, particularly in the case of stability operations. As noted previously in this chapter, third-party allies and partners can be helpful in supporting the achievement of U.S. objectives, but the United States often faces third-party interference from states or nonstate actors who seek to undermine U.S. efforts to achieve its objectives. The cases suggest that the effect of these third-party actors appears most important for stability operation interventions, where they can undermine often-fragile U.S. efforts to promote institution-building and domestic stability.

In our cases, domestic characteristics appeared to matter most for stability operations. Attempts to restore stability, to build institutions, and to provide relief often depend heavily on the preexisting domestic political, economic, and social structures. Weak political and economic institutions and high levels of ethnic or religious conflict or division can reduce the likelihood of success for nation-building objectives.

Finally, our cases suggest that having the support of the host nation can be important to achieving objectives in stability operations and, to a lesser extent, objectives in deterrence missions. Stability operation objectives often require close host-nation cooperation and buy-in; without such support, it will be difficult to build and sustain functioning institutions in a host nation without a permanent and costly occupation. In the case of deterrence objectives, having host-nation support can provide additional resources (money or personnel) and infrastructure (bases, ports) that can facilitate success.

The results in this chapter complement those from our statistical analysis that were presented in Chapter Four. The results differ somewhat because our qualitative and quantitative analyses each take slightly different approaches to the question at hand, but both can inform an assessment of the factors that shape intervention outcomes. While our statistical analysis helped us to identify key patterns across cases, our case studies allowed us to understand how these factors operate in particular contexts and to identify potential insights that might be missed by a large-*n* analysis. In the final chapter, we synthesize the results from these two approaches and explore the implications of these findings for the Army and our resulting recommendations.

Synthesis and Recommendations

The United States has pursued a highly diverse set of objectives through the military interventions it has undertaken over the past century or more. Our analysis suggests that the factors that influence whether the United States is successful in its pursuit of these objectives are equally diverse. Moreover, different methodologies highlight the importance of different types of factors. Below we synthesize the results of our statistical analysis and case studies to identify the factors that most consistently and substantially contribute to the achievement of different types of objectives. We then conclude by exploring the implications of these findings for U.S. policymakers, and U.S. Army planners in particular.

Key Determinants of Success

Combining our statistical analysis and case studies strongly suggests that the factors that matter most to the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives depend on the nature of those objectives and the context in which they are pursued. After providing a synthesis of the results of Chapters Four and Five, we offer recommendations that emerged from our analysis that may be useful to military planners and strategists in the future. We discuss our results around the three main types of interventions considered in this report—combat or COIN interventions, stability operations, and deterrent interventions.

Table 6.1 identifies the most important factors for determining the success of objectives pursued in each of the three intervention types. The assessments in the table are based on both the statistical analysis and the case studies and were chosen by assessing the strength of the evidence in support of each factor and the assessed substantive contribution made by each factor.¹ It is important to note that while the

¹ Factors are listed in the order in which they were assessed in Chapters Four and Five, not in order of importance. We felt that rank ordering factors would convey a false degree of precision, when our synthesized analysis only supports a more general assessment of the level of importance. Chapter Four and Appendixes B and C provide additional information and regression tables that supported the selection of these factors over others.

Table 6.1
Most Important Factors for Achieving Political Objectives

	Combat or COIN	Stability Operations	Deterrence
Factors supported by both quantitative analysis and case studies	• Number and types of forces, especially ground forces • Objective scope	• Objective scope • Conflict intensity^a	• Objective scope • Relative U.S. capabilities
Factors supported by case studies only	• Relative U.S. capabilities • Technological superiority • Pre-intervention planning	• Number and types of forces • Host-nation political institutions • Pre-intervention planning • Nonmilitary resources • Interference of third-party actors	• Number and types of forces

^a This factor was statistically significant in quantitative analyses but was assessed to have a limited substantive effect.

statistical models provide evidence of relationships that can be generalized across cases, our case studies provide insights that apply most directly to only the five cases considered. We include some of these insights here, but we also wish to emphasize the caution required when interpreting and extrapolating these results. We use the table to identify specific factors that policymakers and military planners should consider when planning interventions with these types of objectives in order to maximize the chances for success. We address the direction and relative importance of each factor as it pertains to specific types of objectives in the text below.

Combat or COIN Interventions

Our results highlight two factors that most reliably affected the likelihood of success across both our statistical models and the case studies for objectives pursued during combat or COIN interventions: the number and types of forces committed and the scope of the objective being pursued. Particularly in the post-1945 era, the United States has generally been able to achieve its objectives in these interventions when it applies substantial numbers of forces, particularly ground forces. Even in such interventions, however, the scope of the objective still appears to matter. Expansive objectives remain more difficult to achieve than those that are more limited in scope.

Our case studies of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and the 1994–1995 campaign in Bosnia suggest three additional factors that may also affect the likelihood of success in achieving objectives in combat or COIN interventions. First, when the United States is relatively more powerful and unconstrained in the international system, this may assist its ability to achieve these objectives. In the period after the Cold War, the

United States appears to have been more willing to apply decisive levels of force to the achievement of objectives in combat interventions, with both lower likelihood of great power opposition and less risk of conflict escalation.

The effectiveness of U.S. forces in achieving objectives in combat interventions may also be augmented by the often-superior technical capabilities of the U.S. military. This stands in contrast to objectives pursued in stability operations, where military technological advantages may be less salient.

Pre-intervention planning also emerged as a key factor influencing the ability of the United States to achieve its objectives in combat operations in the cases we explored. Prewar planning in particular allows military strategists and tacticians to carefully script U.S. operations, identify key challenges, and ensure that an operation receives the right types and numbers of personnel. Objectives in combat operations may also be easier to plan for than objectives for stability operations, which are often of greater complexity and require integrating military and nonmilitary expertise.

Stability Operations

Objectives pursued in stability operations, often including efforts to build institutions or promote peacekeeping, have become a particular focus of U.S. interventions since the end of the Cold War, as discussed in Chapter Three. Our analysis highlighted two factors whose effects were consistent across both our qualitative and quantitative analyses: objective scope and conflict intensity. As was true across intervention types, objective scope appears to play a significant role in the ability of the United States to achieve its political objectives in these interventions. Because objectives were more broadly defined, it was increasingly difficult for the U.S. military to fully achieve them. This is perhaps most expected in the case of stability operations, where objectives that may necessitate such tasks as institution-building and peace enforcement may require substantial nonmilitary capabilities and favorable conditions on the ground to be achievable.

Conflict intensity was also highlighted as an important factor across both methodologies, although the size of the effect in the statistical analysis was more limited. The ability of the United States to focus on and achieve its objectives in stability operations appears to diminish as the intensity of conflict increases. Conflict can undermine state institutions and worsen humanitarian crises, increasing the difficulty of efforts to address these issues and diverting the attention of military forces. Aid deliveries may be more likely to be attacked or stolen, and individuals may be more fearful of working with nascent government institutions if threatened with reprisals by nonstate antigovernment groups.

We conducted three case studies with important stability operations components: Iraq post-2003, Bosnia post-1995, and Japan post-1945. Our analysis of these cases suggested several additional potential factors that may affect success. In these cases, the number and types of forces involved did appear to be crucial to the successful achieve-

ment of political objectives. Large force sizes allowed the intervention force to play the numerous roles needed in an environment where they may be substituting, even if just temporarily, for the entire apparatus of the host-nation government while also maintaining security and stability to facilitate rebuilding. The massive forces available for post–World War II deployments to Japan stand in contrast in this regard to the more limited forces committed to stabilizing post-invasion Iraq in 2003. Because these forces are likely to be called upon to fulfill a variety of roles, specialized training can also be helpful, as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces committed to Bosnia after 1995 illustrate. However, as emphasized elsewhere, force size is unlikely to guarantee success in stability operations. While it was important in our case studies, it did not reach the level of statistical significance in our statistical analysis.

Nonmilitary resources committed to achieving objectives in stability operations may be just as vital. Even in advanced economies, such as Japan, if interventions occur in postconflict environments, they may encounter great devastation and require tremendous resources to rebuild the economy and relevant infrastructure. In countries that were poorer or lacked economic infrastructure to begin with, the needs may be more acute. Military forces of any size seem unlikely to achieve nation-building objectives absent adequate provision of these nonmilitary resources.

Relatedly, our cases suggest that pre-intervention planning can be central to success in stability operations. Japan and Iraq again provide a clear contrast, with intensive, detailed efforts in the former that estimated (indeed, overestimated) needed personnel and resources and addressed in detail such issues as governance and security contrasting with the lesser attention provided to the issue in the latter. While specific plans for stability operations will, of course, need to adapt, just as plans for combat operations necessarily evolve during fighting, establishing the capabilities and expertise needed to adequately plan for stability operations objectives appears to greatly facilitate their achievement.

The initial quality of host-nation political institutions and the support of the host-nation government can also exercise a substantial effect on the success of U.S. stability operations. Improving already-functional government institutions is generally easier than constituting such institutions from scratch. Efforts to “start over” and rebuild new institutions may therefore be more challenging in the long run than efforts to reform existing institutions, even when that progress might appear frustratingly slow.

Finally, third-party interference into countries where the United States is conducting a stability operation can substantially affect the likelihood of success. This can be for good or ill, as the cases of Bosnia and Iraq illustrate. In Bosnia, the commitment of numerous European partners was crucial to facilitating the degree of success the United States was able to achieve, while in Iraq the substantial role played by Iran was an important contributing factor in impeding several key U.S. objectives.

Deterrence Interventions

U.S. pursuit of objectives in deterrence interventions, and the relative ambition of those objectives, has expanded dramatically since 1945. During the Cold War, these objectives frequently focused on containing the Soviet Union and limiting the spread of communism. In recent years, these interventions have more commonly been focused on deterring potential adversaries in particular regions, such as Russia and China in Europe and East Asia, respectively. Two factors were highlighted in both our statistical analyses and case studies: objective scope and the relative capabilities of the United States. As was the case with other intervention types, the objectives of deterrent interventions appear to have been more difficult to achieve when they were more expansive and easier to achieve when they were more limited.

The United States also appears to have been more successful in its pursuit of its objectives in deterrence interventions at points when the country's military capabilities vis-à-vis the rest of the world were higher, as was particularly the case immediately after World War II. U.S. relative capabilities also increased after the Cold War when the United States became the sole superpower, although the effect of this factor in increasing success in this period may have been tempered by an accompanying expansion of objective scope that made achievement of success more difficult in many instances.

Our case studies of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and post-1945 Korea suggested one additional factor that may affect the ability of the United States to achieve its objectives in deterrence interventions: the numbers and types of forces and resources that the United States commits. These cases illustrated how the substantial application of ground, naval, and air forces can be crucial in supporting deterrent interventions, underlining U.S. commitments, and providing resources to pursue additional tasks that may support the overall success of such interventions. Further, when these forces were absent, as they increasingly were toward the end of the Korea intervention in 1949, the United States' ability to achieve its goals appears to have been more limited. While this factor was not statistically significant in our quantitative analyses, which raises questions as to whether U.S. commitments and overall capabilities might be more effective than local forces, the presence of local forces and capabilities did appear to exercise an important effect on the United States' ability to pursue its objectives in the cases we selected.

Recommendations

In this section, we discuss a number of recommendations for military strategists and planners based on the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative findings discussed previously. Some of our recommendations identify previously undervalued considerations for policymakers and military planners to take into account when planning future interventions. Others may not be surprising to military planners and have been iden-

tified by previous studies. However, despite being well understood in principle, these recommendations are often not applied in practice, leading to unnecessary costs and, sometimes, an inability to meet key objectives. As a result, we believe that they bear repeating and further explanation.

Match Intervention Strategy with Objectives

The overriding theme of this report is that how the United States is best able to achieve success in its military interventions will depend on what objectives the United States is trying to pursue and what type of intervention is being undertaken. U.S. military intervention objectives are heterogeneous, and factors that may promote the success of some goals may be irrelevant or counterproductive for others. For example, advanced military technologies may help to win battles against an adversary or facilitate deterrence, but they will be less useful in nation-building. In the case of Iraq, technological superiority facilitated the U.S. defeat of Saddam Hussein's forces but was less useful for subsequent institution-building tasks. Similarly, large numbers of forces may help to quickly win conventional conflicts, but by themselves they may not be sufficient to expand U.S. access and influence. The host-nation domestic context may not determine success in deterrent interventions, but it may be vital for stability operations. Before intervening, the United States should carefully consider the political objectives it hopes to achieve and then consider the appropriate mix of military and nonmilitary tools best suited to achieving those objectives.

Ensure Sufficient Force Size, But Understand the Limits of Adding Forces

While having more personnel does not guarantee success of any objective, regardless of objective type, for objectives where large numbers of forces do appear to be a relevant tool (specifically objectives pursued during combat interventions and some stability operations), ensuring adequate force size can be vital. In cases where the United States has deployed a sufficient number of personnel, this has helped it to defeat adversaries (for example, Iraq in 2003), to protect its homeland and neighbors (the Cuban Missile Crisis), and to accomplish stabilization and institution-building (Japan after World War II).² Cases where the United States has not deployed a sufficient number of personnel to meet the requirements of the intervention have had notably less success, including the nation-building phase of the occupation of Iraq, the intervention in Somalia in 1993, and others. For an experienced military planner, this recommendation may appear obvious. However, despite widespread agreement and numerous previous studies underscoring the necessity of proper force ratios to successful intervention outcomes in certain

² In general, our results suggest that more forces increase the likelihood of success for combat/COIN and stability operation interventions and potentially also for deterrence interventions. However, it is also likely that there is a threshold above which additional forces have diminishing returns. Our analysis does not identify this threshold. However, our case studies do suggest that it may be better to initially deploy too many forces and then reduce the size of the U.S. footprint than the reverse.

contexts, the United States has failed numerous times to send an adequate number of forces to achieve its defined objectives and has incurred substantial costs as a result. Understanding why and how larger force size contributes to the likelihood of success can help Army leaders as they develop operational and strategic plans.

For objectives in combat or COIN interventions, force size appears to matter because it allows the United States to overwhelm the adversary with superior capabilities or to compel the state to cooperate with U.S. demands. In Iraq, an advantage in both number and quality of forces allowed the United States to easily defeat Iraqi forces in the initial combat phase. Similar patterns can be seen in the 1991 Gulf War and in the final years of the Second World War.

We found the clearest link between force size and success in combat/COIN interventions, but our cases suggest that, at least in certain instances, it may be crucial for stability operation and deterrence intervention objectives as well. While this assessment is based only on our case studies, the evidence for it appears to be consistent with several other cases in our data set as well. The cases included in this report and others in our data set suggest that the United States has historically tended to underestimate the number of forces required for “Phase IV” operations, which include stabilization and institution-building. Both tasks require a tremendous force presence: Forces are needed to assist in infrastructure-building and institutional development, security force training, peacekeeping, security, disarmament (in some cases), and many other tasks. The number of forces required may increase when the host nation lacks strong political institutions or has a weak economy. The different degrees of success of nation-building efforts in Japan and Korea after World War II demonstrate the role that the strength of preexisting institutions can play. The number of forces required may also increase when there are ethnic or religious tensions or when there is an ongoing insurgency. Stability operation and nation-building tasks appear to rely heavily on ground forces. Ground forces are required to conduct stabilization operations, to rebuild infrastructure, and to conduct train-and-assist missions with host-nation security force personnel. That said, as underlined by the lack of a statistically significant relationship in our quantitative models, more forces do not always lead to success in stability operations. While force sizes in post-2003 Iraq eventually increased dramatically, and these additional forces did help the United States to limit levels of violence in the country, several key political objectives remained unfulfilled despite the substantial commitment of forces. Force size may, at least in some cases, be a necessary condition for success, but this does not mean it will be a sufficient one.

The relationship between force size and success in deterrent interventions appears to be even more complex. In principle, a large force size can enhance deterrence by denying an adversary the ability to achieve its objectives or by underlining U.S. commitment to the host nation and willingness to fight, and if necessary die, in defense of that state. We did not find a statistically significant relationship between force size and success in deterrent interventions, while we did find such a relationship between

overall U.S. relative power and success. This would appear to suggest that success in deterrent interventions is driven more by the credibility of U.S. commitments than by the capabilities of local U.S. forces. However, in cases such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, we did find clear evidence that the capabilities of local U.S. forces appear to have assisted the United States in achieving its objectives. So, while we did not find a consistent relationship between force size and success in deterrent interventions across all our cases, we also found that, at least in particular circumstances, substantial local forces can play an important role.

Identify and Pursue Narrowly Defined Objectives

Our case studies and statistical analyses emphasize that the United States has been more successful at achieving political objectives that are more narrowly scoped. This is perhaps obvious, but, because the United States has tremendous potential military resources and wide-ranging, global interests, it bears repeating. This observation is relevant across intervention types but is perhaps most relevant to objectives in deterrence interventions and stability operations, where more-expansive objectives are most common. As objectives become increasingly broad and ambitious, they become more difficult to achieve. This is not only because more-ambitious objectives often have more requirements (in terms of resources, time, and steps that must be taken to achieve), but also because more broadly defined goals may be ones that require not only military action, but also diplomatic or other contributions, which may be more difficult to generate, coordinate, and integrate into primarily military missions. As an example, an objective that aims to increase regional stability is likely to require not just military activities, such as stabilization of conflict areas, but also a diplomatic strategy to ensure the support or acquiescence of powerful neighbors. Even an expertly planned military intervention that achieves all military-specific goals might only partially achieve its political objectives when these extend beyond combat outcomes.³

Pre-Intervention Planning Should Be Comprehensive

In our case studies, those interventions that were carefully planned beforehand were able to achieve greater degrees of success than those for which planning was insufficient or incomplete. This finding was consistent across intervention types, but it bears repeating particularly for objectives in stability operations. Again, the necessity of planning is not something that will come as a surprise to current or past military planners. However, as noted previously, while the United States has generally done a good job of planning for objectives in combat interventions, planning for such tasks as institution-building in stability operations has historically been less robust, with signif-

³ We emphasize that we do not mean to suggest that the United States should only set narrow political objectives for its military interventions. Instead, we suggest that policymakers and military planners consider carefully whether military forces can, on their own, achieve a given objective—and, if not, whether adequate nonmilitary resources can be provided and are likely to be effective.

icant negative consequences for the United States. This recommendation is intended to underscore the necessity of planning for all objectives as carefully as the United States has historically planned for combat interventions, while also offering some suggestion on how this planning can be efficiently and effectively accomplished.

Our case studies clearly illustrate the costs of not planning sufficiently for stability operation objectives and the benefits of developing a rigorous plan prior to initiating the intervention. In Iraq, the combat phase was carefully planned, while the postconflict phase suffered from a severe lack of rigorous planning. In contrast, in post–World War II Japan, the United States was able to be relatively successful in achieving its objectives in the follow-on stability operation, thanks in part to a carefully written, researched, and executed plan. This illustrates how the same rigorous and detailed planning that goes into preparing for and scripting combat operations can benefit efforts to pursue other objectives, particularly those involving institution-building and peacekeeping. Planning is required in these cases to guide allocation of resources and personnel, to set priorities, to sequence activities, to identify key leaders and their responsibilities, and to provide and maintain security.

As noted, interventions focused on stability-operation objectives may be the most difficult to plan for. However, military planners have several tools at their disposal. First, they may rely on past experience for insights and lessons learned. Hard-won lessons from Afghanistan and Iraq are likely to inform U.S. planning for future interventions. The data set constructed to support this project also provides a rich set of cases to explore and consider. Second, gaming and simulation can be used to help planners carefully craft operations to maximize the chance for success. Gaming and simulation are already heavily used to plan for combat operations and deterrence missions but are less often employed for institution-building and stabilization. The application of this tool to planning for nation-building would allow for the consideration of many different scenarios and a better understanding of both immediate and medium-term implications. Third, the expertise to guide planning for nation-building objectives may lie in large part outside the U.S. military, making the coordination of efforts with such agencies as the State Department and USAID, not to mention with foreign partners and allies, essential.

Evaluate the Possible Role Played by Third-Party Interference

While allies and partners can often be extremely helpful in supporting U.S. goals, our case studies highlight that third-party actors can also fatally undermine the ability of the United States to achieve its objectives. While the role played by partners and allies in supporting the achievement of U.S. political objectives typically is incorporated into military planning and discussions about possible future interventions, the role played by third-party spoilers has received more-limited attention. Our analysis suggests that this may be a serious limitation, given the significant consequences of failing to account and plan for the role played by these third-party actors.

Our case studies offer important examples of the ways in which third-party interference may complicate the achievement of key U.S. objectives—particularly for objectives in stability operations, but also to a lesser extent for objectives in other interventions. For instance, during the occupation of Iraq in 2003, Iran, through its support of Shi'ite militia members and other actors, undermined U.S. efforts to stabilize the country and build relationships between Iraq and other regional neighbors. Given the potential importance of these third party actors, and the difficulties the United States has previously had anticipating and planning to counter their influence, we encourage military planners and strategists to carefully identify and incorporate potential third-party interference, including that presented by powerful adversaries operating in the same area, into their intervention planning, especially for stability operations. This would mean exploring who these actors might be, what capabilities they have, and what objectives they might pursue. Including third-party actors in the games and simulations discussed above may be one way to implement this recommendation. The presence of third-party actors may increase the number of forces required, affect the sequencing decisions made during the intervention, and alter decisions about resource allocation. Third-party actors may also highlight the importance of a regional or international diplomatic strategy for success. Possible interference by third-party actors should also be incorporated into the initial decision to conduct an intervention: A goal may seem eminently achievable without interference and much more difficult with such interference. Third-party interference might even increase the risk of possible escalation (in the case of a conflict) or further deterioration (in the case of postconflict stabilization efforts), making the intervention itself counterproductive.

Areas for Future Research

There are several areas where additional research might provide insights that complement the findings and recommendations in this report.

- Our results suggest that force size is a crucial variable for some types of objectives. Having better guidelines on how to develop estimates for the number of forces required to accomplish specific types of objectives under various operating conditions would help military planners ensure that an appropriate number of forces are provided to a given intervention.
- We noted that there are certain types of broad objectives that require not just military forces, but also diplomatic, economic, and political strategies. It would be useful to investigate the intersection of these different tools and to understand more completely how they interact to work toward political objectives. This deeper understanding could help policymakers and military planners make more-informed decisions about how to advance important national security interests

and how to appropriately mix these approaches, and the resources to support them, to achieve the best possible outcome.

- Because the United States has infrequently pursued objectives related to strengthening regional and global norms through the use of military force, our analyses shed limited light on the factors that might contribute to their successful achievement. However, conducting in-depth case studies of the 12 instances that we were able to identify might reveal some common factors that appear to contribute to success across cases. These insights would be valuable for future interventions that pursue objectives in this category.

Codebook: Data Collection and Definitions

Introduction

The initial version of this data set was developed as part of “Past and Future Trends in U.S. Army Interventions,” a RAND Arroyo Center project focused on studying the historical demand for U.S. ground forces and what past trends might mean for future demands that the Army is likely to face. The data set was then augmented as part of “Successful Characteristics of U.S. Military Interventions,” a second RAND Arroyo Center project that considered the characteristics of interventions and operating environments that affect the degree to which the United States is able to achieve the political objectives it defines for military interventions. The data set includes information on interventions, their size, types of forces, activities conducted, objectives, degrees of success, and the specific types of units deployed for ground forces. This codebook describes all the variables included in the data set and includes a discussion of the data-collection methodology.

Defining Interventions

The data set covers the years from 1898 through 2016. The start date was chosen to correspond with the start of the Spanish-American War, an event cited by many as marking the emergence of the United States on the international stage. For the purpose of this data set, our definition of an intervention was specific to the type of forces used. For ground interventions, we defined an intervention to include any deployment of ground forces from the United States to another sovereign country that included at least 100 “person-years.” This size threshold could include 100 personnel deployed for one year or a larger number of forces deployed for a shorter period of time. We used a threshold because, for the purpose of this database, we were most interested in those interventions that would have significant implications for force planning and force structure. While interventions that fall short of this threshold may be important for a number of reasons, they are unlikely to place the military’s force structure under any serious stress. To qualify as an intervention on the basis of its naval forces, we required

the presence of a Carrier Strike Group in the post-1945 era or an equivalent-size force in the pre-1945 era (when carriers were either less prevalent or did not yet exist). To qualify as an intervention on the basis of the air forces involved, we required either roughly a wing-year of aircraft (about 80 planes) or an incidence of air-to-air or air-to-ground combat or strikes, which are relatively rare but, we believe, always worthy of assessment. To be included, an intervention only needed to meet one of these thresholds. We included information on all forces involved for any intervention that qualified. So, for example, for an intervention that qualified for inclusion based on the size of its ground component, we also included any air and naval forces involved, even if those components did not independently meet the criteria for inclusion. As described below, we included a variable denoting whether each component (air, ground, and naval) qualified for inclusion independently.

We did not include general forward deployments in the data set. U.S. forces needed to be engaged in one or more of the activity types we identified and not simply stationed overseas for convenience, because of inertia, or to maintain a strategic relationship. So, for example, U.S. forces in West Germany during the Cold War were coded as a deterrent intervention and are included in this data set. After the Cold War ended, those forces were no longer serving a clear deterrent purpose, though moderate numbers of forces remained in Germany for many years. Because of the lack of clear intervention activity, those forces were not included in this data set for the post-Cold War period.

After these parameters were established for the intervention data set, research was conducted to identify cases that met the criteria. The initial sources consulted were Harry Ellsworth's *One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines*; Barbara Torreon Salazar's 2016 report for the Congressional Research Service, *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798–2016*; and John C. Fredriksen's chronology series on the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force.¹ Other key sources include the following:

1. U.S. Air Force, *One Hundred Ten Years of Flight: USAF Chronology of Significant Air and Space Events, 1903–2012*, Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, updated by Daniel Haulman, Priscila Jones, and Robert Oliver, 2015.
2. Timothy A. Warnock, ed., *Short of War: Major USAF Contingency Operations, 1947–1997*, Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air Force History and Museums Program and Air University Press, 2000.
3. Adam Siegel, *The Use of Naval Forces in the Post-War Era: U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps Crisis Response Activity, 1946–1990*, Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, CRM 90-246, February 1991.

¹ Ellsworth, 1974; Torreon, 2016; Fredriksen, 2010a; Fredriksen, 2010b; Fredriksen, 2011.

These sources provided lists of U.S. military interventions and some basic descriptive information. From here, we examined official histories published by the U.S. Army Center for Military History and the Marine Corps History Division for information regarding the number of personnel involved in interventions. These sources were supplemented by books, journal articles, news reports, websites, government documents, and think tank publications. The Defense Manpower Data Center was also used. The official histories were the most useful sources, but they often did not cover lesser-known interventions. This necessitated the use of less-authoritative sources which contained less-accurate and scarcer data. To address this issue, high, low, and average estimates for number of ground troops were included in the data set from multiple sources.

The primary data set has three iterations, an “intervention cases” data set, a “country-years” data set, and an “intervention objectives” data set. We also include a list of sources. The three versions of the data set are linked by an “intervention_id” field that is the same for a given intervention across the two data sets and for every relevant country-year in the data set.

The observations in the intervention cases data set are individual interventions with start and end dates. Each intervention is coded according to its typical size, primary activities, and type of environment (all defined further below). Also included is information on the countries involved, the region, and a brief description of what the intervention entailed. The observations in the country-years data set are individual country-years of U.S. involvement. This data set has an observation for each country and each year of U.S. involvement. Each observation includes information on the number of U.S. forces involved and primary activities. With this version of the data set, we are able to capture instances when a single intervention involves the deployment of U.S. forces to many different countries, when the primary activities change over the course of the intervention, and when an intervention involves a widely varying number of U.S. forces as it endures.

The country-years version of the data set includes much of the same information as the intervention cases data set, but instead of including one observation per intervention, it has one observation for each “country-year” of an intervention. This means that there will be one observation for each year in each country where troops are deployed. An intervention that spans multiple countries will have separate annual observations for each location. The country-years data set only covers ground interventions and does not contain information on naval or air activities.

The intervention objectives data set includes information on the political objectives of each military intervention. We include the start and end year of each objective, a description of that objective, and the degree of success achieved on the objective. Each objective has its own identifying number (ID) and is associated with the appropriate intervention using the same intervention ID. It is worth noting that a given intervention can have many objectives and the objectives of an intervention can change over the course of the operation.

Important Coding Decisions

While collecting the data, we had to make a number of decisions regarding how specific deployments of U.S. ground forces were coded. First, many U.S. ground interventions are long-lasting and involve many phases from their start to their end. For example, U.S. involvement in Japan during and after World War II involved a combat phase, which was followed by stability operations, which was followed by deterrence. However, each of these interventions had a distinctly different purpose and involved different numbers and even types of forces. We coded U.S. activities in a given country as a single intervention only while the overarching purpose of the intervention remained the same. Once the intervention changed in nature or objective, we coded it as a new intervention. In the above example, then, we coded three separate interventions. However, our default was to code the presence of U.S. forces in a given country as one continuous intervention, so we required clear and convincing proof that the purpose of the intervention had shifted. In some cases, the distinction between one and several interventions followed a change in the name of the operation, but this was not always the case. For instance, there were many named deterrent interventions in the Persian Gulf. However, because these had a single purpose and involved a continuous U.S. presence, we coded this as a single intervention.

The treatment of the combat phases of the U.S. interventions into World War I and World War II requires additional discussion. For the purpose of the intervention data set, the treatment of the world wars is fairly straightforward. World War I counts as a single intervention, and World War II is treated as two: the Pacific and Atlantic theaters. There are also a number of interventions associated with World War II that are coded separately because they had distinct start and end dates and so can be considered as having involved separate deployment decisions. These include deterrent deployments to Iceland, Greenland, and the Atlantic bases in the Caribbean. Each of these deployments had a distinct start and end date that predated the U.S. involvement in World War II. Therefore, while each was undoubtedly closely related to the U.S. decision to intervene in World War II, the specific decision to deploy forces to these locations was separate. The country-year data set is slightly more complicated. Both of the world wars involved a large number of forces deployed in a large number of countries with a fluid presence, meaning that military personnel might be fighting in one country within the European theater and then move to a new country shortly thereafter. As a result, determining the number of forces in any one country at a given point in time during the combat phase was not possible. Therefore, for the major interventions in World War I and World War II, we did not attempt to distinguish U.S. presence based on country. Instead, we created a European theater “country” for both World War I and World War II and a Pacific theater “country” for World War II. We then coded the aggregated theater as a “country-year.” As a final point, for the related interventions in Iceland, Greenland, and the Atlantic bases in the Caribbean, we coded individual country-years as we did for other interventions.

Coding Political Objectives

Having identified U.S. military interventions that occurred within our time frame, we next identified the political objectives that the United States sought to achieve in undertaking these interventions. We focused on political objectives, rather than on narrower operational or military objectives, because it is the political objectives that motivate policymakers to commit military forces. Assessing the extent to which these forces successfully achieved those objectives can therefore best inform questions regarding what types of forces might best be deployed in similar contexts in the future. For example, when the United States conducts a stability operation, the political objective that motivates it to do so might be to enhance the stability of the country or ensure that the regime remains a close partner of the United States. In service of this broader objective, U.S. officials might establish any number of operational objectives, including benchmarks for the number of local forces trained or clearing particular areas of insurgent activity. However, the successful achievement of these narrower operational objectives would be irrelevant for policymakers deciding whether the overall intervention could be considered a success and an effort that should be repeated. For this reason, we focused on identifying the political objectives for each intervention and, as will be discussed later, the extent to which each was successfully achieved.

While some objectives were present at the outset, our research also suggested that intervention objectives tend to shift and new objectives are often developed over time. In addition, we observed that interventions are rarely undertaken for a single political objective. Instead, there tend to be at least a handful of different political objectives for each intervention. To identify those objectives, we considered first whether U.S. officials had explicitly stated their objectives at the outset of an intervention, which did occur frequently. However, we did not rely solely on U.S. government statements, as they were sometimes incomplete, later shifted without notice, or omitted key motivations that would have been politically or diplomatically difficult to disclose at the time. To correct these omissions, we relied on a broader reading of the historical literature surrounding the intervention and the context in which it was undertaken.

Overall, we identified 492 objectives for the 145 military interventions noted previously, or between three and four objectives per intervention. In addition to simply identifying the political objectives involved, we also organized these objectives into four categories. This categorization was undertaken to facilitate our analysis so that we could consider objectives in the service of similar goals together when assessing what factors appeared to correlate with their successful achievement. To categorize the objectives, we developed a typology involving two main dimensions, as shown in Table A.1.

We selected these two dimensions, the nature of the U.S. self-interest and the extent to which the objective was focused on the host nation, as being likely to group intervention objectives together in a manner that correlates with the factors that affect

Table A.1
Typology for Categorizing the Political Objectives of U.S. Military Interventions

	Narrower Self-Interest	Broader Self-Interest
U.S. Interests Primarily Inside the Host	Securing U.S. interests in intervention host	Assisting host nation or population
U.S. Interests Primarily Outside the Host	Enhancing regional and global U.S. security interests	Supporting regional and global norms

their likelihood of success. That is, the factors that might allow the United States to achieve its objectives are likely to differ depending on whether the objectives are concentrated in the host nation, as well as depending on whether the self-interests that motivated the intervention are relatively narrow, such as economic or security objectives, or broader, such as those that relate to the global or regional order or assisting partner states. Within each of the broader categories, we also defined a number of more-specific subcategories, which are listed in detail with definitions in a later section of this appendix.

To assign each political objective to a specific category, we relied on three coders who were familiar with the history of the case working independently. If all three coders assigned the objective to the same category, then we accepted that coding. This occurred for 55 percent of the objectives. If any of the coders differed in their assessment, then the coding of the objective was discussed in a full meeting of the project team, and the differing rationales were presented. In the event that a consensus could not be achieved, the project leaders cast the deciding vote. However, it is worth noting that, following discussion, the team was able to reach a consensus in most cases.

Coding Success

With the political objectives coded, we then assessed the degree to which the United States was able to achieve these objectives over the course of its intervention. While in some cases determining the extent to which one of the United States’ political objectives was achieved was reasonably clear, in others it was difficult, and specifying a coding has an unavoidable degree of subjectivity. To try to minimize these difficulties, we opted for a relatively simple taxonomy of success involving three categories:

- *Success:* The objective was fully or largely achieved.
- *Some success:* The objective was partly achieved.
- *No success:* The objective was not achieved to any substantial degree.

While this taxonomy limited the precision with which we could specify the degree of success, it is also realistic about the difficulties of doing so and helps to avoid a false

degree of precision that could accompany a larger five- or ten-point scale. Despite the limited categories, this scheme still allowed us to separate objectives that were most clearly achieved from those that were most clearly not, without forcing coders to choose only one of those categories.

To code the degree to which success was achieved, we followed a similar procedure to our categorization of political objectives. Three different coders familiar with the history of each case coded the degree of success independently. Codes that saw no disagreement were accepted, while those that did were individually discussed by the full project team and resolved.

Intervention Cases and Country-Years Data Sets

The intervention cases data set includes 145 individual interventions, coded along a number of dimensions, including region, primary activities, and environment, along with detailed information on the location and a description of the intervention. Table A.2 defines each of the variables included in the intervention cases data set, and Table A.3 lists the variables in the country-years data set.

Table A.2
Definition of Variables in the Intervention Cases Data Set

Variable Name	Description
intervention_id	Integer, starting at 1, used as unique identifier for each intervention; it links the intervention cases and country-years tabs of the database
intervention_name	Common name for the intervention, which often incorporates country location
intervention_location	Text field with detailed information on the location of the intervention
start_date	Text field detailing when intervention began
start_year	Integer denoting year in which intervention began (minimum value 1898, maximum value 2016)
end_date	Text field detailing when intervention ended
end_year	Integer denoting year in which intervention ended (minimum value 1900, maximum value 2016; -9 indicates ongoing or uncompleted intervention as of 2016)
intervention_description_short	Text field that includes a description of the intervention and the U.S. role in that intervention
ground_intervention	Integer indicating whether there were ground forces present and, if so, whether that force qualifies independently for inclusion as an intervention or only as a supporting component: 0: No ground forces present 1: Supporting ground force, does not meet size threshold for independent ground intervention 2: Ground force meeting independent size threshold

Table A.2—continued

Variable Name	Description
naval_intervention	Integer indicating whether there were naval forces present and, if so, whether that force qualifies independently for inclusion as an intervention or only as a supporting component: 0: No naval forces present 1: Supporting naval force, does not meet size threshold for independent naval intervention 2: Naval force meeting independent size threshold
air_intervention	Integer indicating whether there were air forces present and, if so, whether that force qualifies independently for inclusion as an intervention or only as a supporting component: 0: No air forces present 1: Supporting air forces, does not meet size threshold for independent air intervention 2: Air forces meeting independent size threshold
ground_activity_type1, ground_activity_type2, ground_activity_type3	These three integers denote the activities conducted by U.S. ground forces during the intervention. The primary activity is considered to be the dominant or most common activity, followed by the secondary and third activities. This determination was made based on a careful reading of the case and discussion with subject-matter experts where necessary. We defined ten possible activity types: 1 (Advisory/FID): Interventions involving U.S. military advisors or trainers. May include both operational training and institutional assistance and advice, as well as accompanied missions or other types of support. 2 (COIN): Interventions involving counterinsurgency activities, which, according to FM 3-24, p. iii, include “comprehensive civilian and military efforts,” often in nontraditional environments and against guerilla or other nonstate actors 3 (Combat/conventional warfare): Interventions involving traditional military operations and fighting, characterized by large formations of organized military forces on both sides 4 (Deterrence): Interventions involving activities intended to dissuade an adversary from taking an action not desired by the United States, both immediate and longer term. This may also include intimidation interventions aimed at the same purpose. 5 (HA/DR [humanitarian assistance and disaster relief]): Interventions involving humanitarian and relief operations, including responses to natural disasters and conflict 6 (Security): Interventions involving protection of U.S. assets or personnel during periods of threat or unrest 7 (Stability operations): Interventions involving operations to stabilize or maintain peace in postconflict situations. This may include operations following coups or other situations causing unrest among the civilian population. 8 (Interdiction): Interventions that use blockades or no-fly zones 9 (Lift/transport): Interventions involved primarily with moving equipment or personnel from one location to another, usually in support of an ongoing intervention 10 (Intelligence/reconnaissance): Interventions where collection of information from adversary or other forces is a key part of the operation
naval_activity_type1, naval_activity_type2, naval_activity_type3	Integer describing activity in which U.S. naval forces were engaged during the intervention. Each intervention has three of these fields. The primary activity is considered to be the dominant or most common activity, followed by the secondary and third activities. This determination was made based on a careful reading of the case and discussion with subject-matter experts where necessary. Categories are the same as above.

Table A.2—continued

Variable Name	Description
air_activity_type1, air_activity_type2, air_activity_type3	Integer describing activity in which U.S. air forces were engaged during the intervention. Each intervention has three of these fields. The primary activity is considered to be the dominant or most common activity, followed by the secondary and third activities. This determination was made based on a careful reading of the case and discussion with subject-matter experts where necessary. Categories are the same as above.
troop_size_min	Integer that denotes the lower-bound estimate for the number of U.S. ground forces involved in the intervention (–9 indicates that the number is unknown)
troop_size_max	Integer that denotes the upper-bound estimate for the number of U.S. ground forces involved in the intervention (–9 indicates that the number is unknown)
troop_size_typical	Integer that denotes the best estimate for the number of U.S. ground forces involved in the intervention (–9 indicates that the number is unknown)
troop_size_description	Text field describing numbers of forces, variation over time, and other details
intervention_ description_long	Text field with longer description of the intervention
intervention_ objectives	Text field identifying objectives of the intervention
troop_size_sources	Text field listing sources used for troop size data
other_sources	Text field listing other sources

**Table A.3
Definition of Variables in the Country-Years Data Set**

Variable Name	Description
intervention_id	Integer identifying the intervention associated with that country-year
country_year_id	Integer identifying the country-year observation
country	Text field naming the country where the intervention occurred
year	Year integer identifying the year of the intervention
country_code	Correlates of War Country Code
troop_size_low	Integer providing a lower-bound estimate for the number of U.S. troops involved in that country year of the intervention. Where we were unable to find information on yearly troop numbers, we have left the cell blank. Where uncertainty exists about yearly troop numbers, we have left the number in red.
troop_size_high	Integer providing an upper-bound estimate for the number of U.S. troops involved in that country-year of the intervention. Where we were unable to find information on yearly troop numbers, we have left the cell blank. Where uncertainty exists about yearly troop numbers, we have left the number in red.
troop_size_best	Integer providing a best estimate for the number of U.S. troops involved in that country-year of the intervention. Where we were unable to find information on yearly troop numbers, we have left the cell blank. Where uncertainty exists about yearly troop numbers, we have left the number in red.
ground_activity_type1, ground_activity_type2, ground_activity_type3	Integer denoting the primary activity in which U.S. troops were involved during that country-year of the intervention (see Table A.2 for integer definitions)
sources	Text field providing information on the source for the troop number estimates

Intervention Objectives Data Set

A third version of the data set includes details on the political objectives of each intervention. This version of the data set includes 492 political objectives, each with information on relevant years and the degree of success achieved. Each observation is an objective, and the objectives can be linked back to the interventions using the “intervention_id” variable. The procedures used for identifying and coding political objectives were already discussed above. In this section, we provide information on the variables included in this data set and the criteria used for coding each objective, both into our objective taxonomy and to capture the degree of success achieved.

Objective Taxonomy

The United States has historically undertaken military interventions in pursuit of a wide range of political objectives. This document illustrates a taxonomy that can be used to categorize these objectives to allow for further analysis. The taxonomy categorizes objectives along two dimensions.

- 1. Scope of objective: Were U.S. objectives focused primarily on achieving goals in the host nation or on achieving wider regional or global political or strategic objectives?
- 2. Nature of U.S. interests: Were U.S. objectives focused on furthering more narrowly defined U.S. interests (including strategic or economic motivations) or more broadly defined, diffuse U.S. interests (including the support of international norms or assisting foreign populations)?

Coders were instructed to first determine where the objective being coded fell along these two dimensions, as illustrated in Table A.4. It may be easier to first determine the scope of the objective (within the host nation or at the regional or global level) and then consider the nature of U.S. interests, but this may vary by objective.

Once this top-level category was determined, coders consulted the appropriate list of subcategories, below, to determine the final coding for the objective.

Table A.4
Categorization of U.S. Political Objectives Along Two Dimensions

	Primarily in Host Nation	Primarily Wider Regional or Global
Narrowly defined U.S. interest	Category 1	Category 2
Diffuse, broadly defined U.S. interest	Category 4	Category 3

1. Securing U.S. Interests in Intervention Host

This set of objectives includes those in support of more narrowly defined U.S. interests and focused on achieving a desired outcome primarily within the specific location where the intervention occurred.

1.1. Promote commercial interests, access to markets; protect U.S. property.

Includes objectives involving protecting U.S. economic interests, assets, or property within a specific country. This would include both property and businesses owned by private citizens and most property or assets owned by the U.S. government. This category would also include objectives focused on achieving economic access to the host nation's markets. Objectives focused on securing or establishing U.S. government property that serves a broader strategic purpose, such as military bases, however, should not be included in this category (coders may instead consider category 2.4).

1.2. Protect U.S. lives.

Includes objectives involving the protection of U.S. civilian lives within the host nation. In general, this category should be interpreted to include objectives involving the protection of U.S. lives in the host nation as opposed to efforts to prevent attacks on U.S. civilians within the United States (instead consider category 2.3).

1.3. Ensure supportive regime.

Includes objectives involving ensuring that the host nation is ruled by a government friendly to the United States. This may include objectives to install a democratic ruler but may also include objectives to protect the power of an autocrat who is friendly to the United States. Common to all objectives in this category is that they should all involve a desire to ensure a government with closer or at least positive ties to the United States, rather than the promotion of democracy for broader strategic or normative U.S. goals (instead consider category 3.2). It is also assumed that the value for the United States of having a supportive regime in the host nation primarily comes from what that specific regime can offer, rather than how it may affect broader U.S. regional or global strategic goals (instead consider category 2.1 or 2.3).

1.4. Acquire territory.

Includes objectives to acquire or expand U.S. territorial possessions. These objectives should seek formal possession or acquisition of territory, and not de facto control during a temporary occupation.

2. Enhancing Regional and Global U.S. Security Interests

This set of objectives includes those in support of more narrowly defined U.S. interests that are focused on achieving a desired outcome primarily at a regional or global level, with the intervention in the host nation intended to contribute to that end.

2.1. Protect states from adversaries.

Includes objectives involving the protection of other states from invasion or other security threats from their adversaries. This refers particularly to objectives that preceded a conflict or were motivated by an emerging or proximate threat, including the objective of deterring conflict. The objective of preventing an interstate war is assumed to always affect important regional or global security interests and would therefore fall under this category. If the objective involves protecting states from domestic adversaries, and the state by itself is not important for narrowly defined U.S. regional or global interests, then this category should not be used, and category 3.1 should be considered. Objectives involving the defeat of an adversary during an ongoing armed conflict should not be included here, and category 2.2 should be considered. For objectives that are focused on broader strategic goals, such as the defeat of communism, rather than the protection of the host nation itself, category 2.3 should be considered.

2.2. Defeat adversaries.

Includes objectives involving the military defeat of an adversary. These can include the goals of supporting an ally in an ongoing war or any other goal involving the defeat a power acting counter to U.S. interests. Defeating state adversaries is assumed to always involve important regional or global security interests. If the objective involves defeating an adversary that is purely domestic for the host nation (e.g., not a direct adversary of the United States), and the state by itself is not clearly and immediately important for U.S. regional or global interests, then this category should not be used (instead consider category 1.3).

2.3. Ensure and support regional or global stability.

Includes objectives involving the promotion of stability and peace at the global or regional level. Objectives such as preventing the spread of communism during the Cold War or stemming the spread of transnational terrorism should fall into this category. Objectives focused primarily on ensuring stability within a particular location, where that location is not by itself important for narrowly defined U.S. regional or global interests and the actors involved do not have substantial transnational ties, should not be included in this category (instead consider category 1.3). For objectives including the promotion of stability and peace where the U.S. lacked a clear narrowly defined strategic or political motivation, category 4.3, 3.1, or 3.3 may be more appropriate. For objectives focused on the protection of the host nation itself, rather than the implications for broader U.S. strategic goals, category 2.1 should be considered.

2.4. Expand political or military access and relationship-building.

Includes objectives involving the projection of U.S. political influence or military access in a host nation or building stronger relationships with the host-nation government. Such objectives would include the protection of U.S. bases, guarantees of U.S. rights

to use specific airfields or waterways for military operations, or ensuring a substantial continued U.S. role in the host-nation government. While military base access is assumed to always have important global or regional implications and, therefore, to be eligible for coding under this category, other types of access and relationship-building may not. If the host nation is not by itself important to narrowly defined U.S. regional or global interests, then efforts to improve relations with it should not be coded here (instead consider category 1.1 or 1.3).

2.5. Advance U.S. global or regional economic interests.

Includes objectives involving the support or advancement of U.S. economic interests at the global or regional level. This might include the objective of ensuring safe passage of commercial ships or airliners, securing access to new markets (that extend across country borders—e.g., oil resources or South America), or eliminating other threats to U.S. global or regional economic interests. Economic interests that do not have important regional or global implications and instead are primarily based on the economic importance of the host nation itself should not be coded here (instead consider category 1.1).

3. Supporting Regional and Global Norms

This set of objectives includes those in support of more broadly defined U.S. interests that are focused on supporting these interests at a regional or global level, with the intervention in the host nation intended to contribute to that end.

3.1. Protect civilians.

Includes objectives involving the protection of civilians without a clear, immediate U.S. security or political motivation to do so, such as intent to reinforce long-standing U.S. commitments to civilian protection or the laws of war. Objectives involving a desire to ensure humanitarian relief or assistance to a specific country, where policymakers do not appear to have been primarily concerned with the global norms or precedents involved, should not be coded here (instead consider category 4.1).

3.2. Promote democracy.

Includes objectives to promote democracy at the regional or global level that are largely separate from narrowly defined U.S. strategic goals or a desire to ensure friendly regimes specifically in the host nation. For objectives involving securing a friendly regime in the host nation specifically, category 1.3 should be considered. For objectives involving more general support for or protection of U.S. or Western-oriented regimes (which may happen to be democracies), category 2.3 should be considered.

3.3. Promote other international norms.

Includes objectives to promote other international norms beyond civilian protection and democratic governance without a clear and narrowly defined U.S. security or

political motivation to do so. Could include a desire to promote such norms as minority rights, the right to sovereignty or territorial integrity, or others where the United States did not have a clear and immediate strategic interest in doing so. For objectives that promote norms where the United States did have a clear security interest in doing so, category 2.3 should be considered.

4. Assisting Host Nation or Population

This set of objectives includes those in support of more broadly defined U.S. interests that are focused on supporting these interests within the specific location where the intervention occurred.

4.1. Assist relief efforts.

Includes objectives to assist refugees or mitigate humanitarian disasters in the host nation without a clear, narrowly focused U.S. security or political motivation to do so. For objectives to promote general norms of civilian protection, category 3.1 should be considered. For objectives aimed more narrowly at securing the support of the host nation or promoting U.S. security interests (with relief assistance efforts as the vehicle), category 1.3, 2.3, or 2.4 should be considered.

4.2. Build institutions.

Includes objectives to build institutions (including political or even potentially military institutions) in the host nation where there was not a clear narrow U.S. security or political motivation to do so. For objectives to build institutions that did include a clearly and narrowly focused U.S. security or political motivation, category 1.3 or 2.1 should be considered. For objectives focused on promoting democratic institutions as part of a broader regional or global effort, category 3.2 should be considered.

4.3. Participate in peacekeeping or peace enforcement.

Includes objectives to keep or make peace in the host nation where there was not a clear and narrowly focused U.S. security or political motivation to do so. For objectives to keep or make peace where there was a narrowly focused U.S. security or political motivation to do so, category 1.3, 2.1, or 2.3 should be considered. For objectives where the U.S. intervention was motivated primarily by regional or global concerns rather than by the situation in the host nation itself that also lack a narrowly focused U.S. security or political goal, category 3.1 should be considered.

Coding Success

To code the degree of success the United States achieved on identified political objectives, we used a relatively simple coding scheme. While we do think it is possible to reliably identify instances where objectives were particularly well or particularly poorly achieved, we think that trying to code success in any more precise manner risks false precision and resulting data that would not be substantively meaningful. To that end,

we coded the degree of success that the United States achieved into one of just three categories:

- Success: The objective was fully or largely achieved.
- Some success: The objective was partly achieved.
- No success: The objective was not achieved to any substantial degree.

In coding the extent to which the objective was achieved, we did not consider the extent to which the intervention itself was determinative in leading to this outcome, only what outcome actually happened. We recognized that parsing out the individual contributions of the intervention would be hugely difficult. In cases where we were able to identify a large mismatch between ultimate outcome and the contribution of the intervention itself, such as an intervention that was a near-total failure and was rescued by a separate diplomatic deal or third-party action, we noted this in a separate field.

When evaluating each objective, we encouraged coders to consider both subjective evidence (e.g., the views of leaders and other participants at the time, as well as those of later historians), and objective measures (e.g., later events, clear changes in policies or trends in measurable outcomes.) Along with the coding determination, we included a brief statement regarding the evidence used to arrive at that determination. This should include objective metrics wherever possible (although these will not be available for all objectives or interventions) and other specific pieces of qualitative data that support the argument.

Variables Included in the Intervention Objectives Data Set and Definitions

Table A.5 provides a full list of the variables included in the intervention objectives data set and definitions.

Sources

All sources for these data are documented and provided with the data file.

Table A.5
Variables Included in the Intervention Objectives Data Set

Variable Name	Description
objective_id	Integer used as unique identifier for each objective
intervention_id	Integer used as unique identifier for each intervention
intervention_name	Common name for the intervention, which often incorporates country location
objective_start_year	Integer denoting first year in which the United States began pursuing a given objective
objective_end_year	Integer denoting year in which the United States stopped pursuing a given objective
objective_description	Text field describing the objective
success_degree	Integer from 1 to 3 denoting the degree of success achieved (3 = Success, 2 = Some success, 1 = No success)
success_explanation	Text field describing rationale for success coding
success_unrelated	Integer, taking a value of 1 if the outcome was largely unrelated to the military intervention
objective_type_code	Integer identifying the objective type subcategory; see previous tables for full set of codes and definitions

Case Studies

This appendix presents our five detailed case studies. Chapter Five presented a synthesis of the key findings across all five case studies and a discussion of how these five cases were chosen.

U.S. Occupation of South Korea, 1945–1949

Background

Without Japanese occupation, Korea would have been an unlikely arena for U.S.-Soviet competition post-World War II. Korea had been under Japanese occupation since 1910, and Koreans were deeply divided over how to develop an independent Korean state as the defeat of Japan in World War II became inevitable. Many factions across the political spectrum represented the Korean people as the war came to a close, but two groups were most successful in vying for influence in the new Korean state. The first was heavily influenced by the West, largely originating from early missionary work by American Presbyterians. Supporters of this group predominantly came from expatriate communities in the United States. In opposition, communist-influenced Koreans aimed to develop a state focused on leftist principles. Expatriate supporters for these groups were often based in China.

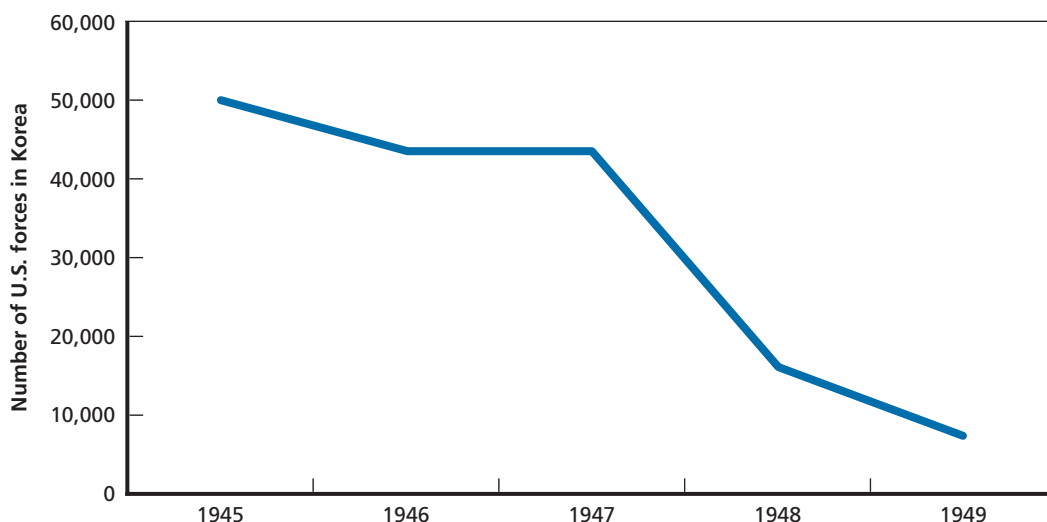
As World War II came to an end, the 38th parallel was selected as a line of demarcation between Soviet and U.S. areas of responsibility. This decision has been painted as a matter of military expediency; as President Truman explained in his memoirs, “there was no thought at the time other than to provide a convenient allocation of responsibility for the acceptance of the Japanese surrender.”¹ However, broader strategic and political objectives that sought to avoid total Soviet control of the Korean peninsula contributed to the selection as well. U.S. leaders hoped to force the surrender of Japan prior to Soviet involvement in the Pacific theater, leaving control

¹ Yoshikazu Sakamoto, *Korea as a World Order Issue*, Working Paper No. 3, World Order Models Project, 1978, p. 5.

of the entirety of the Korean peninsula to the United States.² After the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the Soviets immediately saw through this strategy, declared war on Japan, and moved forces into the country to ensure their own involvement in postwar Korea.³ The United States quickly assigned its own forces to accept the surrender of Japan in Korea, satisfying its policy objective of, at the very least, occupying the area south of the 38th parallel.⁴ This political maneuvering between the Soviet Union and the United States would continue in Korea as Cold War tensions grew. The number of U.S. forces in Korea started at about 50,000 in 1945 but had fallen to less than 10,000 by 1949, as shown in Figure B.1.

Korea was not seen as a priority in the region, as Japan was the primary U.S. focus in Asia after World War II. This, along with the competing priorities of three other postwar occupations, left President Truman with a limited selection of military commanders in Korea. When Japan requested terms of surrender in August 1945, General MacArthur ordered Lieutenant General John G. Hodge to occupy Korea south of the 38th parallel in order to accept the surrender of Japanese forces. A man with little prior experience in Asia, no administrative experience, and (relative to his peers) modest career ambitions, Hodge received the surrender of half of the 375,000 Japanese forces

Figure B.1
Number of U.S. Forces in Korea, 1945–1949



SOURCE: Schnabel, 1992.

² James I. Matray, "Captive of the Cold War: The Decision to Divide Korea at the 38th Parallel," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2, May 1981, p. 147.

³ Matray, 1981, p. 162.

⁴ Millett, 2015, p. 82.

in Korea in September 1945.⁵ He served as commander of the U.S. occupation of South Korea under General MacArthur for most of the period between World War II and the Korean War. Hodge would repeatedly advocate early U.S. withdrawal throughout his service in South Korea, initially because of the vulnerable U.S. military position in South Korea and later because of low soldier morale and the continued consolidation of Soviet power in North Korea.⁶ His time in the country was tumultuous as he worked to build a new government, balance warring factions in the Korean political arena, manage public demonstrations and a violent police force, and counter Soviet meddling.

The first postwar presidential election in South Korea was held in 1948. While violence surrounded the process, it was a fair election. Syngman Rhee received an overwhelming majority of the vote, becoming the first president of South Korea. General Hodge was recalled to the United States in August 1948, replaced by his deputy, Major General John B. Coulter, as U.S. forces began to draw down.⁷ A UN resolution in late 1948 called for the withdrawal of all forces from the Korean peninsula, and, by 1949, U.S. forces had almost completely withdrawn.⁸ Despite the conflict that ultimately followed, the United States was successful in achieving most of its initial goals in South Korea.

Intervention Objectives

The objectives of the U.S. occupation can be categorized into four overarching themes: humanitarian aid, institution-building, containment of Soviet influence, and assurance of a long-term pro-Western government. Initially, the United States sought to provide much-needed humanitarian relief to the South Korean population and repatriate Japanese citizens in order to end Japan's colonial influence in South Korea. This expanded into promoting the long-term stability of the South Korean state through economic reconstruction and institution-building.

The United States also sought to limit Soviet influence on the Korean peninsula and in the region. Prior to World War II, communists and pro-Western Koreans developed opposing groups aimed at reclaiming Korean sovereignty. Tensions increased as Soviet and U.S. forces occupied the peninsula, displacing the Japanese and deepening the divide between the two Korean factions. The U.S. relationship with the Soviet Union was strained from the beginning; during a cholera epidemic shortly after Soviet forces occupied Korea in 1945, Soviet commanders controlling the only chlorine plant in Korea refused to send water purification tablets until the Americans

⁵ Matray, 1995.

⁶ Matray, 1995, p. 25.

⁷ "General Hodge Replaced as Head of American Soldiers in Korea," *Chicago Tribune*, August 24, 1948.

⁸ Harry S. Truman, "310—Statement by the President on the Decision to Withdraw U.S. Forces from Korea, 1947–1949," October 27, 1952.

threatened to cut off rice shipments.⁹ These tense relationships set the stage for an ideological battle as the United States attempted to support the Rhee government in opposing leftist insurgent threats within South Korea and contain Soviet and North Korean influence in the region.

The longer-term objective of the United States was to ensure a pro-Western government that would be amenable to U.S. interests. While Korea was not a particularly important strategic concern during the war, its importance increased thereafter. Korea was one of the first locations where the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in Cold War–type activities. The success of communists in North Korea and continued communist uprisings in the south increased U.S. fears of expanded Soviet influence around the world. The expulsion of the Japanese and Soviet influence transformed South Korea into an exemplar of self-determination in the region. Rather than being a secondary front in the fight against Japan, the peninsula became a front line in the emerging competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹⁰

Overall, the United States was successful or partially successful in achieving these objectives. Table B.1 lays out the objectives we identified for this intervention and the degree of success coded for each. All Japanese were repatriated within a year of the U.S. occupation. Humanitarian aid provided necessary food and other essentials as the country recovered and weathered low crop yields. While U.S. attempts to achieve political stability and economic reconstruction were not wholly successful, industrial production recovered relatively rapidly, and functioning, though imperfect, political institutions were created to replace Japanese colonial rule.

Table B.1
U.S. Objectives in the Occupation of South Korea

Objective	Time Period	Level of Success
Repatriate displaced Japanese citizens in order to end Japan’s colonial influence in South Korea.	1945–1946	Success
Provide humanitarian relief to South Korean population.	1945–1949	Success
Promote longer-term political and social stability through democratic institution-building and economic aid and reconstruction.	1945–1949	Some success
Ensure a pro-Western government (led by Syngman Rhee) amenable to U.S. interests.	1945–1948	Success
Contain the expansion of Soviet and North Korean influence and the spread of communism in East Asia.	1945–1949	Some success
Support the security and stability of the Rhee government against leftist/communist insurgent threats in Jeju, Suncheon, and Yeosu.	1948–1949	Success

⁹ Millett, 2015, pp. 88–89.

¹⁰ Millett, 2015, p. 94.

U.S. policymakers were successful in promoting a pro-Western government led by President Rhee. Alongside U.S. forces, the Rhee government and its developing police and military forces were able to successfully suppress leftist insurgencies throughout South Korea. The United States was not able to fully contain Communist expansion in East Asia more broadly, most notably in China, but was relatively successful in maintaining order in South Korea during the occupation.

The remainder of this case study discusses each of the objectives in South Korea and the U.S. strategy for achieving them. Some objectives, like the repatriation of the Japanese, were relatively quick and simple to achieve. Others, including building political, social, and economic stability, were ambitious from the start and were made doubly difficult by Soviet meddling and limited U.S. resources. We explore these and other factors that influenced the successes and struggles of the U.S. occupation.

Humanitarian Aid

Repatriate Displaced Japanese Citizens in Order to End Japan's Colonial Influence in South Korea

The end of Japan's 35-year colonial rule introduced a large logistical challenge for General Hodge. In August 1945, there were an estimated 600,000 Japanese nationals south of the 38th parallel.¹¹ Repatriation was a top priority for both the South Korean people and U.S. forces in the country. While Japanese government officials were initially expected to remain in place to ease the transition, quick public outcry altered these plans early on. The State Department advised against retaining any Japanese officials, and President Truman encouraged any remaining Japanese officials to leave South Korea.¹² The Japanese colonial government was terminated on September 11, 1945, replaced by General Arnold as military governor, and a repatriation of Japanese civilians and military members began.

Japanese ferry boats and 20 U.S. tank landing ships repatriated Japanese citizens from mainland South Korea and surrounding islands starting in September 1945. By the end of the month, an average of 4,000 people were repatriated each day.¹³ By November 1945, fewer than 3,000 Japanese military personnel (and some number of civilians) remained in South Korea.¹⁴ Hodge aimed to remove all vestiges of Japanese colonial power, repatriating Japanese politicians and police forces and returning property owned by the Japanese, which made up one-third of arable land in the South, to Korean owners.¹⁵

¹¹ U.S. Army History Command, "Reports of General MacArthur: Chapter 6," 1994.

¹² Millett, 2015.

¹³ U.S. Army History Command, 1994, p. 161.

¹⁴ U.S. Army History Command, 1994. The exact number of civilians remains unclear.

¹⁵ Millett, 2015, p. 101.

The operation was not without its challenges. The addition of Japanese soldiers in Soviet territory who traveled south of the 38th parallel for repatriation, a railroad strike, flooding, and a subsequent cholera epidemic slowed progress. Despite these challenges, the majority of the evacuation operation was completed in April 1946, and all Japanese had been repatriated by December 1946.

A number of specific factors contributed to U.S. success on this objective. First, completing repatriation was a high priority for both U.S. policymakers and the Korean populace. Additionally, Japanese citizens in Korea had a strong incentive to cooperate, fearing retribution from angry Koreans if they stayed. A large commitment of U.S. resources also allowed the United States to achieve this objective. Recognizing that Japanese ferries were insufficient for the operation, the United States provided tank landing ships to ease the transition. The large number of U.S. forces in the country at the time provided ample manpower to organize the repatriation effort. The complicated operation of moving a large number of people, particularly with the ever-present risk of disease, was a relatively quick success for the U.S. military.

Provide Humanitarian Relief to the South Korean Population

The United States successfully provided humanitarian relief to South Korea during its occupation while promoting the growth of South Korea's agricultural sector. The Korean population numbered 25 million in 1944, more than 6 million of whom were forced to participate in Japan's war effort.¹⁶ Under Japanese rule, Korean rice was exported to Japan. Exports increased from 1910 to 1940, quickly outpacing increases in rice production. This forced Koreans to supplement insufficient supplies with lower-quality grains imported from Manchuria.¹⁷ The increase in rice exports further intensified as Japan joined the second World War. In the early 1940s, rice production doubled in Korea, but consumption dropped by half because Japan exported much of the harvest to support its war effort.¹⁸

When the United States occupied South Korea in mid-1945, food shipments to Japan from South Korea were immediately stopped, and the United States sent \$4.9 million in aid.¹⁹ USAMGIK announced that 663,950 acres of Japanese-owned lands would be returned to Koreans, landowners could collect no more than 30 percent of a rice harvest from tenants, and Korean agricultural products would be sold at free-market prices.²⁰ The initial announcement caused an immediate negative response, as speculators bought up tons of rice for sale to Japan, and many farmers refused

¹⁶ Millett, 2015, p. 68.

¹⁷ Betty L. King, "Japanese Colonialism and Korean Economic Development: 1910–1945," *Asian Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1975, p. 13.

¹⁸ Millett, 2015, p. 70.

¹⁹ Millett, 2015, p. 101.

²⁰ Kim, 2016, pp. 97–129.

to work unless they could be guaranteed high prices, leading to the loss of some of the harvest.²¹ Military leaders struggled to stem rising inflation. The U.S. leadership imposed price controls and a government buying program to mitigate the damages, but by spring 1946, the previous year's harvest was nearly depleted, and the current harvest would not be sufficient for the country's needs. The initial hardships were worsened by a cholera epidemic early in the year and a steady flow of people entering the country from Japan and North Korea.

The location of industrial centers slowed economic recovery because coal, fertilizer, and other industrial goods were controlled by Soviet occupiers in the north. Massive flooding and a fertilizer shortage further contributed to the 20-percent drop in rice production in 1946. In response, in June 1946, the United States began sending food to South Korea to mitigate the losses, exporting 670,000 metric tons of food between 1946 and 1958.²² Despite U.S. assistance, the limited harvest forced General Hodge to enact forced rice collections for distribution and General MacArthur to request an additional 150,000 tons of rice from the United States.²³

In response to difficult living conditions and an American occupation that felt increasingly similar to Japanese colonial rule, South Koreans took to the streets en masse in the fall of 1946, protesting low wages, the struggling economy, and American occupation. The United States suspected Soviet involvement, as the 214 incidents of violence between September and November were orchestrated by groups of more than 500 people, were often simultaneous, and included the use of explosives to interrupt roadways and communications.²⁴ The highly organized nature of the incidents suggested outside involvement, and while General Hodge and conservative politicians publicly accused communists of involvement, direct support could not be proven.

The newly created Korean National Police violently suppressed the uprising, killing hundreds, arresting almost 4,000, and resulting in millions of yen in property losses.²⁵ The crowds often fought back, killing and maiming many police officers. During a lull in the violence in November, General Hodge created the Representative Democratic Council in an effort to appease protestors and begin the transition to Korean governance.

The U.S. humanitarian relief strategy in South Korea was largely focused on feeding the population while providing fertilizer and other goods to increase land production.²⁶ The United States used a massive infusion of food and monetary aid

²¹ Millett, 2015, p. 107.

²² Frank, Kim, and Westphal, 1975, p. 8.

²³ Millett, 2015, p. 128.

²⁴ Millett, 2015, p. 133.

²⁵ Central Intelligence Group, "The Situation in Korea," January 3, 1947, p. 6.

²⁶ G. Granger, "Occupation Feeding," *Editorial Research Reports*, Vol. I, Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1949.

to improve living conditions, increase agricultural yields, and begin the process of rebuilding the economy.²⁷ Food made up 35 percent of the aid that went to South Korea, followed by agricultural supplies at 24 percent and fuel at 12 percent.²⁸ By the beginning of 1947, U.S. grain shipments still left South Korea 25 percent short of its minimum requirement, but the economy began to slowly recover.²⁹ Land reform efforts and shipments of much-needed fertilizer resulted in increased agricultural production. The rice harvest increased 7 percent between 1947 and 1948, and barley production increased 40 percent during the U.S. occupation.³⁰ U.S. aid also subsidized the badly damaged industrial sector on the assumption that if the economy functioned more effectively, it would create jobs and wages that would improve the standard of living and relieve the humanitarian crisis. Many in Congress held reservations about approving a comprehensive aid package to South Korea, which led many supporters to repeatedly petition Congress for more funding. The United States ultimately contributed a total of \$181.2 million in aid during the 1946–1948 period.³¹ The South Korean economy steadily improved during this period, and, by 1949, South Korea had a small number of exports. This had the desired effect of addressing humanitarian concerns, but, as will be addressed in more detail below, it was only partially successful in rebuilding a self-sustaining South Korean economy.

Overall, the United States was successful in addressing the humanitarian crisis, largely through a massive commitment of resources. Early difficulties can largely be attributed to the U.S. government's inability to provide aid quickly enough after Japanese surrender and the loss of much of the first year's harvest in South Korea. While South Korea had a low level of development after World War II, most of its agricultural goods were sent to Japan during occupation, resulting in a large Korean agricultural sector. The loss of the industrial north slowed economic development, particularly with respect to fertilizer production and consumer goods. In spite of its initial challenges, the United States was able to provide humanitarian aid to support the South Korean populace as they began to rebuild. Shipments of fertilizer and rice collections for distribution in cities improved agricultural production and moved South Korea toward self-sustainment.

²⁷ We note that there is some overlap between this discussion and that of economic reconstruction described in the next section. Economic reconstruction was one of the primary means through which humanitarian relief was provided.

²⁸ K-Developedia, "Overview of Korea's Development Experience," 2012.

²⁹ Central Intelligence Group, 1947, p. 7.

³⁰ Frank, Kim, and Westphal, 1975, p. 9.

³¹ USAID, 2015.

Promote Longer-Term Political and Social Stability Through Democratic Institution-Building and Economic Aid and Reconstruction

The United States had partial success in achieving political and social stability through institution-building and economic reconstruction. By 1949, the United States had presided over the establishment of a new South Korean government with an authoritarian but democratically elected leader and a fragile but functioning economy, as discussed above.

Economic Recovery

The efforts to rebuild the Korean economy were described in the previous section. To summarize, the United States provided a total of \$181.2 million in aid during the 1946–1948 period to support agricultural restoration and development and the reestablishment of an industrial base, much of which had been located in the North and so was lost when the country was split.³² Although the extent of the economic recovery was modest, significant improvements were made in both the agricultural and industrial sectors, considering the duration of U.S. involvement and the very low starting point. This economic development also contributed to greater social stability in the final years of U.S. occupation.

However, much of the progress was lost after the United States largely withdrew from the peninsula and a violent police force and the increasingly autocratic President Rhee struggled to enforce order and control the economy. Inflation began to rise as the United States withdrew from South Korea starting in 1947. Rice prices doubled between 1947 and 1948.³³ The loss of industries in the North became increasingly apparent as demand for electricity and consumer goods grew, leaving cities to endure frequent blackouts and brownouts. The Rhee government did not take moves to slow inflation, instead printing more money. Despite a successful harvest, the government struggled to collect rice from farmers for distribution in cities out of fears of discontent and noncooperation.³⁴ U.S. aid continued, but at lower levels and with additional stipulations for economic reform. Meanwhile, tensions with the North increased. A growing group of North Korean guerillas began stealing weapons and building bases in the mountains, eventually swarming a police station and killing 60 policemen and their families.³⁵ With additional U.S. aid, Rhee's government was able to prevent economic collapse, and the developing South Korean military forces were able to limit rebel attacks. However, it is worth noting that the Korean economy remained heavily dependent on economic assistance provided by the United States even after U.S. forces left in 1949.

³² USAID, 2015.

³³ Millett, 2015, p. 227.

³⁴ Millett, 2015, p. 257.

³⁵ Millett, 2015, p. 242.

Institution-Building and Democracy-Building

Efforts to rebuild institutions focused on professionalizing and training the security forces and building democratic political institutions. A primary problem with the existing security sector was the existence of paramilitary forces that were not officially affiliated with the government but often violently attacked protests and demonstrations. Early in the U.S. occupation, General Hodge outlawed these groups. In 1946, the United States reinstated the Korean National Police, providing additional training to professionalize the force and reduce violence against civilians, which often only exacerbated the violence at demonstrations. At the same time, the State Department approved a plan to develop a 25,000-person police reserve.³⁶ The United States invested heavily in training the force but found that many in both the Korean National Police and police reserve continued to be influenced by the heavy-handed approach of Japanese colonial rule.

During the Autumn Harvest Uprisings in 1946, 30,000 workers and 16,000 students protested in the capital and 8,000 workers went on strike in Pusan amid large demonstrations across the country.³⁷ The police force violently responded to demonstrations in the streets, firing into crowds and arresting communists they believed to be responsible for the demonstrations. After hundreds died on both sides of the violence, the need for additional police reform became apparent. Efforts at professionalizing the force continued throughout the U.S. occupation, while South Korean politicians simultaneously used the forces to stamp out political rivals.

Efforts to reform and stabilize South Korea's political institutions were also complicated and challenging. As described in the section below, South Korean politics during the U.S. occupation were contentious and sometimes violent. Despite Koreans' desire for self-rule, both the United States and the Soviets anticipated a period of trusteeship before a transition to independent governance. The leaders of the conservative groups that General Hodge supported were particularly adept at manipulating public opinion at the expense of the United States. The leaders also needed U.S. forces, aid, and public support, and the United States needed public support from politicians in return. This resulted in contentious relationships with General Hodge and the South Korean political leadership he supported.

Additional missteps by General Hodge driven by a fear of any leftist influence in the South Korean government contributed to some of the infighting. While large communist protests often took place in cities, leftists had little power in South Korean politics. Much of the violence was due to infighting among the authoritarian figures that emerged from conservative political groups in South Korea. The successful election of Rhee as the first president of South Korea signaled the end of U.S. occupation and

³⁶ Millett, 2015, p. 125.

³⁷ James I. Matray, "Development Delayed: U.S. Economic Policy in Occupied Korea, 1945–1948," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, Vol. 10, No. 1/2, Spring–Summer 2001, pp. 29–52.

the beginning of true independence. A constitution similar to that of the United States was soon ratified, though it also contained a provision that allowed the president to govern by decree in times of crisis.³⁸ Although the United States began with the goal of establishing a democracy and although Rhee was elected through a democratic process, his regime ended up being somewhat more authoritarian than expected. It is possible that the priority was ensuring a leader with favorable attitudes toward the United States, an objective considered in the next section.

Rhee asked for the continued presence of U.S. forces as protection against the Soviet North, a move that the U.S. military opposed but that drew State Department support. The United States allowed some forces to stay, with the provision that South Korea build up its own Army and avoid provoking the north. By Rhee's election in 1948, U.S. forces were already down to 16,000 from 43,500 the prior year.³⁹ Waning U.S. interest in South Korea was also obvious from a financial standpoint. U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall dropped his support for a \$600 million South Korean aid bill in favor of the Marshall Plan, leaving General Hodge with only the War Department's \$48 million funding allocation for South Korea until 1949.⁴⁰

Factors Affecting Success

The successes and failures (the United States achieved only "some success" on this objective) of the effort to build social and political stability are largely due to the state of South Korean political and economic development at the time of withdrawal and the somewhat hasty withdrawal of U.S. forces before South Korean economic and political institutions were self-sustaining. The South Korean government was very new and fragile and was still heavily reliant on aid from the United States. It frequently resorted to the use of violence to suppress popular dissent and demonstrations. Rhee had already begun consolidating power prior to withdrawal and continued to do so, relying on the presidential powers provided in the constitution. Rhee provided a stable government structure, but it was also imperfect and increasingly authoritarian. A developed police force was able to maintain civil order, though it sometimes used violence. While these institutions were not ideal, their creation was a big step toward independence and a success for the United States.

While the economy had strengthened during the U.S. occupation, these gains were not stable because of the loss of the industrial sector in the North and continued reliance on agriculture as the foundation of the economy. The clear lack of long-term U.S. commitment to stability in South Korea contributed to the upheaval, as lower aid commitments increased pressure on the South Korean agricultural industry. South Korea was still highly reliant on its agricultural sector and U.S. aid. The existing

³⁸ Millett, 2015, p. 223.

³⁹ Analysis of RAND Arroyo Center data.

⁴⁰ Millett, 2015, p. 168.

infrastructure was not yet able to handle the energy demands of a growing population. Rhee's inability to address inflation extended the economic instability.

U.S. signals indicating a lack of interest, including the hasty and early withdrawal of forces and decreased aid, clearly had an impact on the stability of the South Korean state and the ability of the United States to achieve its reconstruction and institution-building objectives. But limitations on the ultimate success of U.S. operations and the country's hasty withdrawal can be partially attributed to the Rhee government as well. The lack of congressional funding and U.S. support for the occupation indicates that the United States intended to withdraw from Korea. As mentioned earlier, General Hodge argued early on that the United States should withdraw. However, Rhee's public denunciations of General Hodge and the American occupation made it increasingly difficult to continue supporting the effort, particularly as the United States focused on the European front of the Cold War.

Ensure a Pro-Western Government Amenable to U.S. Interests

In September 1945, acknowledging the dearth of Koreans in government under Japanese colonial rule, Hodge initially announced that the Japanese would be kept in government positions to ease the transition. An immediate public uproar resulted in the quick dismissal of all Japanese in government posts.⁴¹ Hodge was left to build a South Korean government from the warring factions across the political spectrum.

In anticipation of his own country's surrender, Japanese Governor General Abe Nobuyuki had established the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) prior to U.S. occupation, intended to prepare South Korea for self-rule. Because many conservative groups refused to participate, the CPKI was dominated by leftists.⁴² The CPKI in turn announced the establishment of the Korean People's Republic (KPR) ahead of the U.S. occupation. Despite its leftist membership, the group appointed several conservatives to high positions, some of whom were unaware of their appointments, including Syngman Rhee, who was living in the United States, and Kim Ku, the head of the conservative Korean Provisional Government based in China.⁴³ Rhee built his own support network in the United States and was supported largely by Christian, American-educated, conservative South Koreans. Kim Ku, on the other hand, built his network among Korean expatriates in China.⁴⁴

⁴¹ William Stueck and Boram Yi, "An Alliance Forged in Blood": The American Occupation of Korea, the Korean War, and the U.S.-South Alliance," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2010, pp. 177–209.

⁴² Stueck and Yi, 2010.

⁴³ Stueck and Yi, 2010.

⁴⁴ Millett, 2015, pp. 61–62.

U.S. Administration of South Korea

When General Hodge was assigned to head operations in South Korea, he had little knowledge of the KPR, the Korean Provisional Government, or the South Korean political landscape. He did, however, harbor a deep distrust of leftists, particularly in light of the Soviet forces occupying the country north of the 38th parallel. A warm initial welcome of Hodge and his American forces was short lived. Early in the occupation, Hodge was quoted as labeling Koreans “the same breed of cat” as the Japanese, angering many Koreans.⁴⁵ This was, unfortunately, not the last instance of General Hodge’s lack of diplomacy when discussing the Korean people, a habit that engendered caustic relationships with South Korean politicians.

Early food and fuel shortages put strain on the lives of ordinary South Koreans, and Soviets were suspected of supporting agitators who held demonstrations in the streets.⁴⁶ Despite Koreans’ desire for self-rule, both the United States and the Soviets anticipated a period of trusteeship before a transition to independent governance. Soviets aligned themselves with the leftist and communist elements of Korean political groups, while the United States shunned these groups, focusing on conservative organizations like those led by Rhee and Ku. While there was widespread support of the KPR, Hodge chose to align with the conservative Korean Democratic Party, generally favored by educated, Christian, English-speaking Koreans.⁴⁷ The leaders of the conservative groups that General Hodge supported were particularly adept at manipulating public opinion at the expense of the United States. The leaders also needed U.S. forces, aid, and public support, and the United States needed public support from politicians in return. This resulted in contentious relationships with General Hodge and the South Korean political leadership he supported.

U.S. actions over the first few months of the occupation and the preeminence of its commitment to ensuring a pro-U.S. regime in South Korea, even at the expense of establishing a democracy, deepened the leftist-conservative divide and the challenge of setting up a stable government. In spite of Hodge’s orders, the KPR continued to publicly proclaim itself the legitimate government and enjoyed the support of many members of the public who were critical of U.S. actions.⁴⁸ USAMGIK, established in September 1945, was modeled after Japan’s colonial governance system. To many South Koreans, this resembled a replacement colonial government rather than a transitional

⁴⁵ Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, “The Acting Political Adviser in Korea (Langdon) to the Secretary of State,” *The British Commonwealth, The Far East*, Volume VI, 711.90/11–2645, November 26, 1945.

⁴⁶ Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, “The Political Adviser in Korea (Benninghoff) to the Secretary of State,” *The British Commonwealth, The Far East*, Volume VI, 740.00119 Control (Japan)/9–1545, September 15, 1945.

⁴⁷ Matray, 1995, p. 22.

⁴⁸ Stueck and Yi, 2010.

administration.⁴⁹ The U.S. military governor appointed an Advisory Council of 11 South Koreans, all of whom were conservatives, and ordered South Korean papers to publish his critical remarks on the KPR. The United States also organized the return of Syngman Rhee from the United States, holding a large welcome rally in his honor. Ever concerned about the spread of communist ideals, Hodge hoped that the conservative Rhee would partner with the head of the Korean Provisional Government, Kim Ku, to consolidate conservative power. The move failed in its intent and, to many, appeared as though the Americans were orchestrating the appointment of government officials.⁵⁰

As reports of the December 1945 Moscow Conference agreements on trusteeship were released, both Rhee and Kim Ku organized public demonstrations in protest. Kim Ku called for general disruption, including work stoppages, demonstrations, and physical attacks on employees of Hodge's government. In an effort to regain control in the disruption that followed, Hodge threatened Kim Ku with arrest and trial for treason.⁵¹

By early 1946, Hodge planned to outlaw the people's committees that were created prior to the American occupation, consolidating conservative power. Despite a tense relationship, Hodge and Rhee shared a common goal of preventing the influence of leftists in South Korea's political scene. Rhee and his conservative allies sought to prevent the reintegration of the two Koreas (which would almost certainly result in communist rule in the entire peninsula with Soviet involvement) while maintaining the ultimate goal of uniting the two sides under democratic governance.⁵² Hodge created the Representative Democratic Council in early 1946 with Rhee as its head but retained veto power on many of the council's decisions.⁵³

Election of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly

Upon receiving Washington's approval to begin elections for local legislatures, Hodge initiated the creation of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly in July 1946. Half of the assembly would be elected and the other half appointed by Hodge. Tensions between Hodge, Kim Ku, Rhee, and leftist political parties grew. Despite demonstrations in the fall of 1946, likely encouraged by political parties and made worse by a brutal crackdown by the Korean National Police, elections were held in October. It was far from a free and fair election, with heavy police presence and continued leftist demonstrations disrupting the vote, leading to a lack of public credibility.⁵⁴ Thirty-one conservatives and 14 moderate socialists were elected to the assembly, with Hodge

⁴⁹ Matray, 1995, p. 22.

⁵⁰ Matray, 1995, p. 23.

⁵¹ Millett, 2015, p. 113.

⁵² Stueck and Yi, 2010, p. 202.

⁵³ Matray, 1995, p. 26.

⁵⁴ Adrian Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea*, London: Routledge, 2017, p. 97.

appointing 45 assemblymen who were widely considered to be moderate and were deemed acceptable by socialist party leaders.⁵⁵ In December, 20 conservative delegates boycotted the opening session of the legislature to protest Hodge's appointment of the assemblymen.⁵⁶

In early 1947, Rhee traveled to the United States to argue against the occupation of South Korea. This prompted Hodge's own return to Washington to address discontent among South Koreans and reports of low morale among American servicemen in South Korea.⁵⁷ Waning U.S. commitment and enthusiasm appear to be an important factor in explaining the half-hearted U.S. efforts to establish robust institutions. Throughout 1947, Hodge continued in his attempts to preserve the Moscow agreement as Rhee and his supporters argued for an independent South Korea. As the strained relationship between Rhee and Hodge became increasingly public, it became clear that the United States could not ultimately support reunification for fear of a total communist takeover, which would have completely undercut its objective of establishing a pro-U.S. regime in South Korea. In fact, regardless of public pronouncements to the contrary, Hodge believed early on that the reunification of Korea was not possible under the split occupational zones. Writing to General MacArthur in September 1945, he wrote that he considered "the current division of Korea into two occupational zones under widely divergent policies to pose an insurmountable obstacle to uniting Korea into a nation."⁵⁸ Rhee vacillated on the issue, aware that Soviet involvement would guarantee a communist state but hopeful that a strengthened South Korea could eventually reunite the two sides under Southern leadership. Rhee continued to consolidate his power, enacting a "reign of terror" to silence leftist voices in the south.⁵⁹

Elections in 1948 and American Withdrawal

In November 1947, the United Nations approved a resolution calling for the reestablishment of a free and independent South Korean state and withdrawal of occupying forces.⁶⁰ The U.S. military withdrawal was scheduled for the summer of 1948, with elections to be held in May. Rhee was elected as the first president of South Korea, with 92.3 percent of the vote.⁶¹ Considerable violence surrounded the

⁵⁵ Millet, 2015, p. 139.

⁵⁶ Matray, 1995, p. 27.

⁵⁷ Stueck and Yi, 2010, p. 198.

⁵⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI, 895.01/9-2645.

⁵⁹ Matray, 1995, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Yearbook of the United Nations, 1947–1948, "The Problem of the Independence of Korea," November 14, 1947, New York: United Nations General Assembly, 1949, pp. 87–88.

⁶¹ Aurel Croissant, "Electoral Politics in South Korea," *Electoral Politics in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2002, p. 237.

elections as groups protested the formal creation of the South Korean state and police forces violently suppressed the protests. Three hundred and twenty-three people were killed in skirmishes with the police in the ten days prior to the election, and there were additional accusations of forced voter registration.⁶² While the UN ultimately declared the election free and fair, there was considerable controversy within the UN over whether elections in such a nascent state were even appropriate and whether the 35 UN observers could adequately observe the election.⁶³ Shortly thereafter, Hodge was recalled to the United States, and U.S. forces began their withdrawal.

Factors Affecting Success

The road to a pro-U.S. and democratically elected government in South Korea was made more difficult by political infighting and Hodge's combative relationship with South Korean political leaders, Rhee in particular. The initial political context and combative nature of South Korean politics at the time were also factors. However, through USAMGIK, the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly and the eventual democratic election of Syngman Rhee enabled the United States to maintain a pro-Western government both during its occupation and after U.S. forces withdrew. The United States was able to exclude leftists from government in favor of conservative and some moderate politicians. However, as noted above, achievement of this goal required some sacrifice of the commitment to democratic principles.

Well aware of the threat of Soviet invasion, Rhee balanced public anti-American rhetoric with his need for American support, requesting aid and forces that the United States continued to provide through 1949. While General Hodge had a strained relationship with Rhee and other South Korean politicians, the need for U.S. protection ensured a government amenable to U.S. interests. Rhee was very aware of waning U.S. interest in the region, as the rapid withdrawal demonstrated that the United States was far less invested in protecting the country than it had been in the past.

Contain the Expansion of Soviet and North Korean Influence and the Spread of Communism in East Asia

The creation of the Korean split at the 38th parallel was borne of Soviet and U.S. competition. Very early in the U.S. occupation, Hodge suggested that the Soviet Consul General and his staff's presence in the south be reconsidered amid unrest in October 1945.⁶⁴ He repeatedly publicly accused communists of fueling protests and violent demonstrations. South Korean forces were largely allowed to violently suppress any protests or demonstrations that they believed were rooted in leftist ideals.

⁶² Jay Hauben, "Is the UN Role in Korea 1947–1953 the Model Being Repeated Today?" Columbia University, 2012, p. 6.

⁶³ Hauben, 2012, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI, Records of the Office of the Political Advisor in Japan, Lot 57, F103, 800 Korea-Soviet: Telegram.

Tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union only increased throughout the late 1940s. During the U.S. occupation of South Korea, communist insurgencies in China, Vietnam, and other Asian countries battled local governments, creating fears that post-colonial states in Asia could largely choose to align with the Soviet Union. None of these governments fell to communists until after the end of the U.S. occupation, however. Internal U.S. government documents indicate a reluctance to withdraw for fear of communist expansion and the belief that U.S. presence in South Korea was essential for deterring Soviet aggression in the region. A 1949 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) document advocated keeping some forces in South Korea out of fear that South Korean national forces were unable to deter a possible Soviet invasion and that withdrawal would signal to Japan and others in the region that the United States would not assist them in countering communism.⁶⁵ With the exception of the North Korean government, China was the first to install a communist government in 1949. Most other communist governments were not established until much later. Whether the U.S. occupation and the South Korean model it created actually had an impact on the spread of communism during this early period is unclear, but, prior to 1950, most communist groups were not able to build the strength to challenge their national governments.

Support the Security and Stability of the Rhee Government Against Leftist and Communist Insurgent Threats in Jeju, Suncheon, and Yeosu

Late in the U.S. occupation, a series of uprisings in the southern portion of the country threatened the South Korean government. Demonstrations that ultimately led to the Jeju rebellion began in 1947. Communism had a long history on the island, having spread to Jeju in the 1920s, and it grew quickly in an area long neglected by the central government. After Rhee became president, his attacks on moderate and leftist parties extended to the island, which nonetheless attempted to maintain its independence, leading to clashes between the groups. U.S. involvement in suppressing the uprising was limited to higher-level commanders. While U.S. forces provided some support, including the training of South Korean COIN forces, conducting prisoner interrogations, and using spotter planes to identify guerilla locations, the majority of operations were conducted by South Korean national forces.⁶⁶

Smaller demonstrations began on Jeju in 1947, when groups initially protested the interim government and U.S. occupation. After military government officials tried to break up one of the protest group's meetings, 20,000 people gathered in the streets,

⁶⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "Consequences of US Troop Withdrawal from Korea in Spring 1949," February 28, 1949.

⁶⁶ Korean War Crimes Tribunal, "The Question of American Responsibility for the Suppression of the Chejudo Uprising," *New York Report on US Crimes in Korea 1945–2001*, June 23, 2001.

moving toward the administration building in a protest that nearly turned violent.⁶⁷ Several other demonstrations prompted the government to reinforce the island's 300-officer police force with an additional 400 policemen and a number of right-wing youth group members intended to assist the police.⁶⁸

Angered locals continued to organize, with Halla Mountain as the epicenter of guerilla activity. Eventually, the group reached a force of 400 guerillas and up to 4,000 citizens in the villages as part of self-defense groups.⁶⁹ Several workers' strikes throughout 1947 were organized by communists in the mountains and aided by civilians in the villages. Months of small skirmishes between police and rebels preceded the rebellion, creating a cycle of escalating police violence in response to attacks and increasing anger from civilians who often endured police repression alongside the perpetrators. Finally, on April 3, 1948, guerillas attacked half of the police buildings on the island, overwhelming the police force. The government quickly sent reinforcements, igniting a tit-for-tat that lasted for weeks as rebels attacked police buildings and retreated to the mountain, and police retaliated. At the end of April, a constabulary company defected, leading to a gunfight between the police and defectors fighting alongside the guerillas.⁷⁰ In response, the U.S. military governor visited the island, appointing a Jeju native as police chief in an attempt to quell the violence. This did little to alter the tide. Attacks continued up to and including the May 10 election day, during which voting stations were attacked, ballot boxes burned, and villages raided. The U.S. deployed the U.S.S. Craig to the island to prevent the resupply of arms.

The final violent campaign to pacify the guerillas began in late May. Government forces picked up all males, some as young as ten, in villages near Halla Mountain. Planes identified guerilla hideouts in the mountains, entire villages were burned, and residents were moved to relocation camps, where they were subjected to additional screening intended to identify guerillas concealing themselves among the populace.⁷¹ An estimated 25,000 to 30,000 people were killed in the fighting, and 95 percent of villages in the center of the island were destroyed.⁷²

Similar rebellions soon followed in the fall in Suncheon and Yeosu, where guerillas conducted attacks to protest military actions in Jeju. Many civilians were killed in the military response, and questions once again arose about the allegiance of

⁶⁷ John Merrill, "The Cheju-Do Rebellion," *The Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 2, 1980, p. 154.

⁶⁸ Merrill, 1980, p. 154.

⁶⁹ Merrill, 1980, p. 159.

⁷⁰ Merrill, 1980, p. 169.

⁷¹ Merrill, 1980, p. 175.

⁷² Soul Park, "The Unnecessary Uprising: Jeju Island Rebellion and South Korean Counterinsurgency Experience 1947–48," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2010.

police forces, some of whom were found to be supporting the rebels.⁷³ The anticipated U.S. drawdown and eventual withdrawal spread uncertainty over the South Korean government's ability to quell the violence.

Martial law was instituted in Suncheon and Yeosu and on Jeju Island. The last major rebel attacks took place in January 1949, when Soviet submarines were spotted in the area and rebels set fire to Jeju City Hall, but by that time most of the rebels had been killed or captured.⁷⁴ Many atrocities were discovered in the aftermath. Entire villages of men, women, and children were found murdered, and many homes were destroyed. While the level of violence certainly exceeded most South Korean government responses to communist guerrillas in other areas, indiscriminate violence was not uncommon for the South Korean police forces. While it was later found that North Korean and Soviet coordination with the rebels was unlikely, Rhee's government suspected their involvement at the time.⁷⁵

For the remainder of 1949, the efforts were ultimately successful in eliminating the insurgent threat and maintaining stability under the Rhee government. The government response was later seen as a violent overreaction to a relatively small group of guerrillas. While the United States was withdrawing from South Korea during this period, it provided assistance for the operations, including a ship to block resupply for the rebels. U.S. resources were likely constrained because troop levels were quickly drawing down, but this is unlikely to have had a significant impact on the success of the operation. The South Korean military and police were most actively involved in the operations, and more-overt U.S. involvement was specifically at higher levels of military command. It is also unlikely that the rebellion was somehow spurred or strengthened by indications that U.S. interest in South Korea was waning. The rebellion was driven by local militias with a historical independent streak, and the South Korean military response spurred the escalation of hostilities. Ultimately, the conflict deepened the divide between the leftists and conservatives in South Korea. What started as a small insurgency spread onto the mainland, and the violent government response angered many South Koreans. However, the operations successfully demonstrated South Korean government resolve and eliminated the insurgency.

Summary: U.S. Withdrawal and Factors Affecting Success

The United States began a full withdrawal from South Korea immediately after the election of President Rhee in 1948. The economy had improved since the end of Japanese occupation, and all vestiges of the colonial government had been removed. Some U.S. forces stayed in the country, but by 1949, only a small number of forces and advisors remained. The United States left South Korea with an increasingly authoritarian but

⁷³ Merrill, 1980, p. 183.

⁷⁴ Merrill, 1980, p. 188.

⁷⁵ Park, 2010.

democratically elected government. The police and military, while often violent, were capable of enforcing the government's edicts within the country's borders. Despite the war that was to come, the U.S. occupation was modestly successful, particularly in light of limited interest in the country by U.S. policymakers.

The largest contributing factors to the successes and failures of the U.S. occupation were the state of the South Korean economy, General Hodge's challenging relationships with Rhee and other South Korean political leaders, and the leftist-conservative divide that started prior to the creation of South Korea and continued after the U.S. withdrawal.

The United States struggled to achieve its humanitarian objectives, but investment in the mission ultimately resulted in the successful repatriation of Japanese citizens and soldiers and the provision of humanitarian aid. The South Korean economy experienced volatility during and after the U.S. occupation, but this was in part because it was so reliant on the agricultural sector and lacked needed industrial goods produced in the north. The U.S. mission focused on feeding the population first and developing the agricultural sector. The provision of fertilizer and other aid sustained the South Korean population during occupation and allowed their agricultural industry to develop.

Despite contentious relationships with many South Korean politicians, General Hodge successfully pulled warring factions together to create democratic institutions and improve economic stability. As illustrated by the police force's violent suppression of protestors and the South Korean military's brutal response to the Jeju uprising, these institutions were imperfect. Politically, Rhee was a democratically elected president with credibility and the capacity to rule without being propped up by the United States. He was increasingly authoritarian, however, and ultimately abused powers provided to the president in the constitution. The decline of U.S. troop and aid commitments likely had some impact on the decisionmaking of some South Korean political actors and almost certainly contributed to Rhee's increasingly public rebuke of General Hodge and the U.S. occupation. However, by the time U.S. forces began to significantly draw down in 1948, South Korea had built a strong-enough political structure and police and military force to provide stability, at least with respect to domestic threats. At the end of the U.S. occupation, the economy had improved significantly, largely thanks to the U.S. provision of food and other goods to supplement the agricultural industry as it recovered. The country still relied on U.S. aid and struggled to contain inflation after occupation but had made great strides from its days as a Japanese colony.

While the United States occupied South Korea, communism made only limited advances in the region. Its more-rapid advances in China and Southeast Asia after the U.S. withdrawal of forces from South Korea in 1949 were driven primarily by localized factors in those areas, but an overall reduction in U.S. focus on the region may have contributed. The United States was ultimately successful in its efforts to contain communism within South Korea. While U.S. forces were not directly involved

in the suppression of insurgencies in Jeju, Suncheon, and Yeosu, their support and training assisted in successful South Korean military missions and helped ensure the continued anticommunist orientation of the government.

The overall mission in South Korea was successful but, like many interventions, was violent and imperfect. The Rhee government was successful from the U.S. standpoint, as it was democratically elected and capable of maintaining relative peace and security. This allowed the United States to withdraw forces and at least some of its aid. The economy still struggled, however, and police and military forces were extremely violent toward any sign of an uprising. The later spread of communism and the Korean War would ultimately put at risk much of the work of the United States in the country. Despite this, the United States was successful overall in helping to transform a colony split in half into a reasonably stable country.

U.S. Occupation of Japan, 1945–1952

Background

By the spring of 1945, the tide of war was turning in the Pacific Theater. Allied forces had conquered Iwo Jima and the Philippines, and in the bloodiest battle of the entire Pacific campaign, they were near victory in Japan's southernmost prefecture, Okinawa. Anticipating this eventuality, U.S. military planners were concurrently preparing for a two-phased invasion of the Japanese main islands that would ostensibly lead to an expected, albeit costly and difficult, military occupation by overwhelming Allied force. The first drive, Operation OLYMPIC, was planned to begin in the fall of 1945, and the second assault, Operation CORONET, would commence in the spring of 1946.⁷⁶

In parallel with these plans, however, Washington was secretly preparing for an alternative, seemingly unlikely contingency: uncontested occupation of Japan following a sudden collapse or surrender of the imperial government in Tokyo. These latter directives, code-named Operation BLACKLIST, began to be drafted in May 1945 and were first published and briefed to the highest ranks of U.S. military leadership on July 16, 1945. Were such unexpected events to unfold, military assets earmarked for OLYMPIC would be reassigned to BLACKLIST. Precisely one month later—following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union's subsequent declaration of war against Japan during the three days separating these nuclear events—Emperor Hirohito capitulated to an unconditional surrender. On the

⁷⁶ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 1–2, 11–12. For a more detailed account of the advanced planning involved in Operation BLACKLIST, see “Chapter 1: Prelude to Occupation” in that volume.

same date, August 15, 1945, a directive was issued to cancel OLYMPIC. Another was ordered to implement BLACKLIST.⁷⁷

The plans for BLACKLIST specified the objectives of the initial phase of the American occupation, and they detailed the organizational structure and responsibilities of the ground, air, and naval units to be involved, as well as the tactical phased deployment of these U.S. resources. In the first weeks of the occupation, the objectives of the foreign intervention force were purely military in orientation and were focused on immobilization of Japanese forces, suppression of any local opposition, establishment of control of strategic LOCs, and liberation of Allied POWs.⁷⁸ Subsequently, by October 1945, military operations fused with civil and political tasks to establish firmer control over the population and to lay the groundwork for longer-term governance, economic, and societal reforms. As outlined by BLACKLIST, the key initial objectives of the U.S. occupation were essentially fivefold:⁷⁹

1. Prevent the remilitarization of Japan.
2. Liberate and repatriate Allied POWs and civilian internees.
3. Prevent acute humanitarian crises among the Japanese population.
4. Repatriate internally and externally displaced Japanese soldiers and citizens and foreign conscripts and internees located in Japan.
5. Promote democratic institution-building and democratization of Japanese economic and social structures.

As discussed in greater detail below, the first four objectives were achieved in relatively short order. Thereafter, postconflict stabilization efforts turned to institution-building and to economic and societal reforms. After the beginning of the Cold War—and, in particular, after Mao Zedong's communist defeat of Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist forces in October 1949 and then the subsequent North Korean invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950—two broader geopolitical objectives would gain increasing significance for U.S. strategic interests during the post–World War II occupation of Japan and would provide the rationale for an enduring U.S. military presence in Japan and the Ryukyu Islands:

1. Contain the expansion of Soviet and Chinese influence and the spread of communism in East Asia and the Pacific.
2. Preserve U.S. access to strategic air and naval LOCs and access to enduring basing arrangements, depots, and staging areas for deployment of personnel

⁷⁷ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 11–12.

⁷⁸ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 4.

⁷⁹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 10–11; Dobbins et al., 2003.

and equipment for contingencies in Asia and the Pacific, particularly during the Korean War.

To achieve the mission's initial five objectives, BLACKLIST envisioned the rapid deployment to and occupation of 14 strategic geographic areas in Japan, which would permit control of more than 60 percent of the population, 80 percent of the country's industrial capacity, and 48 percent of food production.⁸⁰ The pre-occupation plans for Japan and Korea called for the availability and potential utilization of all U.S. forces in the Pacific Theater, including approximately 279,000 personnel from the Sixth U.S. Army, 247,000 from the Eighth U.S. Army, 92,000 from the XXIV Corps, and 89,000 from the Far East Air Forces.⁸¹ General Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army Forces in the Pacific (AFPAC), initially estimated that between 200,000 and 600,000 personnel would be necessary to stabilize Japan and to deter armed resistance. To widespread disbelief, however, by the end of the first month of the occupation it became apparent to MacArthur that execution of the postwar stabilization policies could be achieved with only a fraction of the financial and personnel resources originally projected. U.S. forces deployed to Japan peaked at roughly 400,000 in October 1945, decreased to approximately 355,000 by year's end, and were drawn down to about 137,000 in 1950 (Figure B.2). After the Korean War began, they again swelled to approximately 173,000, and throughout the remainder of the Cold War (1954–1989) they averaged about 36,000 annually.⁸²

On the eve of the announcement of Japan's surrender, General MacArthur was designated the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) by the terms of an international agreement signed by the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and the Soviet Union.⁸³ In this capacity, MacArthur was accorded broad unilateral powers in administering the occupation and in leading the implementation of post-

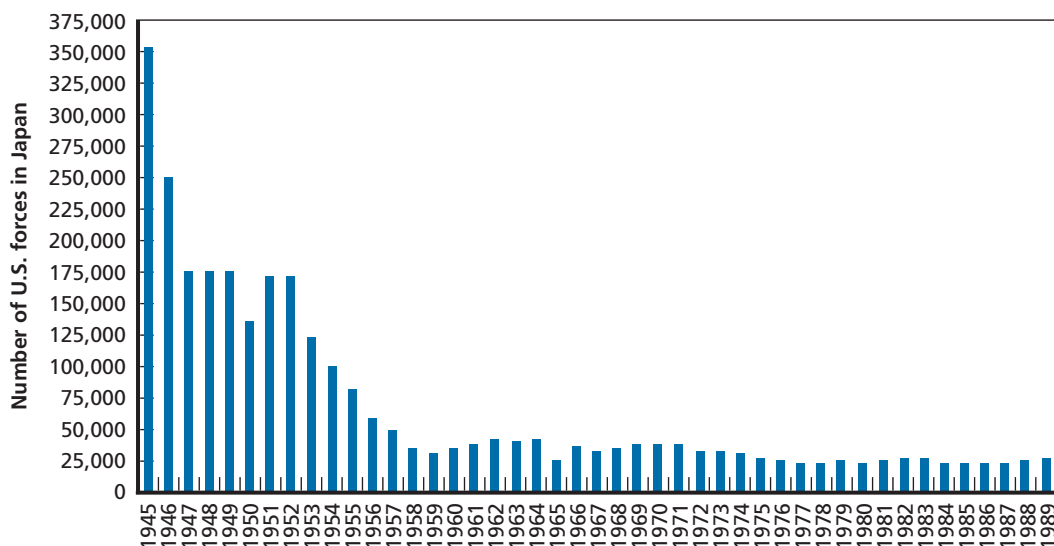
⁸⁰ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 2–6. The plans for Operation BLACKLIST also called for occupation of three to six areas in Korea covering 39 percent of the population, 18 percent of industrial capacity, and 44 percent of food production.

⁸¹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 15–16.

⁸² The early phases of the occupation of Japan proceeded so smoothly that deployment of additional combat forces (except combat engineers) was halted by the end of September 1945; the same month, MacArthur announced that the total occupying force would be drawn down to 200,000 by July 1946. The pace of withdrawal was also later affected by congressional legislation to reduce the size of the U.S. armed forces after World War II. For estimates of troop deployment figures in Japan after World War II, see General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 44–45, 57; Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 30; Dobbins, Jones, et al., 2008; Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), official statistics (accessed 2015); Fisch, 1988; and Kane, 2004.

⁸³ For practical reasons, after MacArthur's appointment as SCAP, the General Headquarters of SCAP and AFPAC were physically combined and many personnel functioned in dual roles under both command structures. However, a distinction in mandate remained: SCAP's authority was circumscribed to Japan, whereas AFPAC's authority extended to all U.S. Army forces in the Pacific.

Figure B.2
Estimated Number of U.S. Forces in Japan, 1945–1989



SOURCES: Dobbins et al., 2003; Dobbins, Jones, et al., 2008; DMDC, 2015; Fisch, 1988; Kane, 2004.

surrender policies. Unlike in postwar Germany, there would be no spheres of influence or distinct occupation zones; the U.S. military would dominate the intervention with virtually no international oversight or coordination—a feature of the occupation that expedited policymaking decisions and implementation, particularly during the first critical months.⁸⁴ Another dissimilarity to postwar Germany was that a direct military government would not be established in Japan. This feature of the occupation was the product of intense deliberations in the planning phase of BLACKLIST, during which Washington policymakers debated whether to force the Emperor's abdication and dissolve Japan's imperial institutions after surrender. Ultimately, the General

⁸⁴ Eventually, two international advisory bodies were formed—the Far Eastern Commission in December 1945 and the Allied Council for Japan in February 1946—but these institutions never gained strong influence over the intervention, in large part because most of the initial policies toward postwar Japan were determined before they were stood up. Both the former body, which consisted of 11 members who had fought Japan, and the latter body, which consisted of four representatives (one each from the United States, China, and the Soviet Union and one jointly representing the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and India) were additionally constrained by weak mandates. The Far Eastern Commission, for instance, required a consensus agreement before new policies could be implemented and SCAP interim directives could be overruled; the Allied Council, which was led by a representative from SCAP, held no powers to obligate SCAP to accept its advice. Additionally, it should be noted that beginning in December 1945, small occupation forces were contributed by Great Britain, New Zealand, Austria, and India. Troop levels from the British Commonwealth Occupation Force peaked in August 1946 at 36,154 officers and men. See Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 29; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 62–64, 69–71; and U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Occupation and Reconstruction of Japan, 1945–52," undated.

Headquarters (GHQ) issued an amendment to the initial Occupation Instructions declaring that instead of instituting a military government, the existing government structures would be retained and postwar policies would be administered through them.⁸⁵ In part, this was because U.S. planners desired to limit American troop commitments and costs, but it was also because they recognized that American civil and military personnel lacked the linguistic and cultural knowledge to be effective administrators of Japanese society.⁸⁶ This fateful decision would later prove critical to the successful achievement of U.S. objectives in postwar Japan. As one U.S. Army officer later reflected, “It was wisely decided that [political, economic, and social democratic reforms] could best be implemented through the Japanese themselves. To this end . . . the occupation, aside from the strictly military aspects, was to be essentially advisory in nature.”⁸⁷

The plans for BLACKLIST essentially called for the employment of the full spectrum of U.S. air, naval, and ground forces and unit types. The structure of the occupation was essentially two-tiered. On the planning and policymaking level, General Headquarters–SCAP was primarily responsible for the nonmilitary civil affairs and governance tasks, and on the operational level, the 8th Army and the 6th Army were responsible for executing SCAP directives.⁸⁸ Throughout the early years of the occupation, SCAP coordinated civilian and military activities by dispatching Military Government teams populated with civil affairs officers across Japan’s 46 prefectures to work directly with local governments.⁸⁹ Each team was organized into sections that mirrored the structure of their local Japanese counterparts, such as public health, information and education, and economic development.⁹⁰ Their main role was to observe the implementation of SCAP’s decisions and report back to SCAP headquarters accordingly. They also played an advisory role, when needed.⁹¹

⁸⁵ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 25–27. As the General Staff report explains (p. 11): “It was emphasized that in view of the limited forces which would have to occupy a country of roughly eighty million, army commanders would make possible use of Japanese demobilized forces within the bound of security, and would take all steps to insure that public servants, such as the civil police, railway workers, communication workers, utilities operators and public health officials, not only remained at their tasks, but intensified their efforts to insure a continuation of all functions under what was certain to be a period of great stress.”

⁸⁶ As John Dower notes: “Because the victors had no linguistic or cultural entrée to the losers’ society, they had little choice but to govern ‘indirectly,’ through existing organs of government.” John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company/The Free Press, 1999, p. 27; Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 30.

⁸⁷ James B. Gibson, “The Occupation of Japan—Ten Years Later,” *World Affairs*, Winter 1955, p. 109.

⁸⁸ The 6th Army was inactivated in January 1946, after which time the 8th Army performed these functions for the remainder of the occupation. General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 196–198.

⁸⁹ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 30; Takemae, 2002, p. 117.

⁹⁰ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 30.

⁹¹ Gibson, 1955, p. 109; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 194–195.

In Tokyo, SCAP headquarters was organized into nine divisions that roughly paralleled the Japanese cabinet. MacArthur communicated his directives to the various relevant Japanese ministries through a Central Liaison Committee. In turn, bureaucrats and parliamentarians debated how to implement MacArthur’s decisions, and then orders were handed down to governors and mayors for execution. Local liaison offices were also established to interact with Military Government teams in each prefecture.⁹² As Japanese authorities received increasing control over administrative decisions, the 47 prefectural Military Government teams were gradually deactivated in 1949; their functions were absorbed by seven Civil Affairs teams, which subsequently faded out before disappearing altogether in June 1951.⁹³

The occupation of Japan is generally viewed as a success. Nearly all U.S. objectives were achieved, though some took longer than others to accomplish (Table B.2). In the immediate aftermath of the war, an armed resistance movement never emerged; the Japanese armed forces were quickly dissolved, and nearly 7 million Japanese soldiers were peacefully disarmed; pervasive, prolonged humanitarian crises were largely prevented; and national and local governance bodies were able to provide public services and maintain order. Over the course of the occupation, the foreign interveners were able to put Japan on a course toward democratization and economic growth. And in the long run, a former enemy was transformed into a crucial Cold War ally; Japan emerged as a world economic power with a stable and secure civil society; and the United States secured permanent defense posture access to military bases, thereby advancing its own interests and strategic geopolitical goals as the Cold War intensified.

Table B.2
Objectives of the Occupation of Japan, 1945–1952

Objective	Time Period	Level of Success
Prevent remilitarization of Japan (2.3)	1945–1952	Success
Liberate and repatriate Allied POWs (2.2)	1945	Success
Provide humanitarian relief to Japanese population (4.1)	1945–1952	Some success
Repatriate internally and externally displaced Japanese soldiers, POWs, citizens, and foreign civilian internees (4.1)	1945–1948	Some success
Promote democratic institution-building and democratization of the Japanese economy (4.2)	1945–1952	Success
Contain expansion of Soviet and Chinese influence and contain the spread of communism in East Asia (2.2)	1947–1952	Some success
Preserve access to strategic LOCs and military staging areas for contingencies in Asia and the Pacific, especially during the Korean War (2.4)	1950–1952	Success

⁹² General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 195; Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. 30–32, 39.

⁹³ Takemae, 2002, p. 120; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 296–297.

Objective 1: Prevent the Remilitarization of Japan

At Potsdam in July 1945, the leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom, and China proclaimed the terms of surrender to be offered to Japan, the key principle of which was that Japan should never again be allowed to menace the peace and security of the world: “There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.”⁹⁴ The foremost objective for U.S. occupiers was thus the immediate demilitarization of Japanese society.

On Victory over Japan Day (V-J Day), the Imperial Japanese Forces numbered some 6,983,000 soldiers, of which approximately 3.5 million enemy forces were localized in Japan and an additional 3.5 million soldiers were scattered across the arc of the former Japanese empire, including forces in China, Manchuria, Korea, and islands throughout the Central and Southwest Pacific.⁹⁵ Despite the Emperor’s unconditional surrender, the Allied occupiers expected to encounter armed resistance in many parts of the mainland islands of Japan.⁹⁶ To prevent the remilitarization of Japan, BLACKLIST focused on six critical military-oriented tasks in the first weeks and months of the occupation: (1) destruction of any remaining hostile elements; (2) complete disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of approximately 7 million Japanese soldiers; (3) dissolution of the imperial Japanese armed forces and related ministries of war; (4) arrest of war criminals; (5) purges of government officials suspected of promoting militarism and foreign aggression; and (6) securing intelligence information of high value to the United States and its Allies.

Contrary to Washington’s pre-occupation fears, the spearhead of U.S. forces encountered no hostile resistance in the early weeks, months, and years of the intervention. Multiple preemptive actions likely contributed to this positive outcome. For instance, on August 19, 1945, two weeks before the official signing of surrender, the United States received a delegation of Japanese government officials in Manila, Philippines, in order to brief them on the operational plans for BLACKLIST. During these sessions, U.S. officers provided their Japanese counterparts with detailed instructions necessary to prepare them for and to help them facilitate the smooth and peaceful reception of occupying forces.⁹⁷ Not a shot was fired as the advanced

⁹⁴ Potsdam Declaration, Proclamation Defining Terms for Japanese Surrender, July 26, 1945.

⁹⁵ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 117; Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. 26, 33; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur: Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area*, Vol. II, Pt. II, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966c, pp. 752–753.

⁹⁶ Indeed, for years, unknown numbers of Japanese soldiers remained hidden on remote Pacific islands because word of surrender had not reached them. General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 4.

⁹⁷ The delegates returned to Tokyo with four documents outlining these plans and their specific requirements and responsibilities; when presented to the Emperor, he was “quite relieved” that the terms were not as harsh as he had feared. General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 19–23.

party of U.S. forces began landing on August 30, and “it soon became apparent that the Japanese had meticulously followed the requirements stipulated in Manila.”⁹⁸ As the airborne and amphibious landings proceeded over the following days and weeks, Japanese military commanders were given 72 hours’ and 48 hours’ notice, respectively, of the deployment of advance reconnaissance teams and troop movements into a given area. These warnings gave Japanese commanders time to disarm their soldiers and restrict troop barracks movements in advance of the arrival of U.S. personnel, thereby reducing the danger of renewed conflict. As U.S. ground forces spread throughout the country, Japanese soldiers and police forces “stood at attention but faced away from the road, an additional security measure which was customarily used only for the movements of the Japanese imperial family.”⁹⁹

At the same time, SCAP immediately took effective control of the nation’s print media and airwaves to communicate compliance expectations directly with the local population and prevent the occurrence of any incidents of violence. These measures were also effective: “Everywhere women and children ran into hiding, while men and boys saluted and bowed at the approach of [U.S. soldiers]. There was no sign whatever of civil disturbance or Japanese resistance.”¹⁰⁰ The Emperor further contributed to the absence of the emergence of an armed resistance movement. In his address to the parliament (the Diet) the day after the surrender signing ceremony on the *Missouri*, Hirohito urged the nation to peacefully abide by the terms of the surrender, and he intimated that failure to do so might result in the loss of his status as “Emperor-head of the Japanese Nation-family.” For the Allies’ part, strict directives were handed down that all U.S. soldiers should conduct themselves with discipline and military courtesy—including considerable attention to protecting shrines and religious and historic artifacts and works of art—in order to mitigate incidents of conflict with the local population. Given Japan’s own unsavory historical record as imperial conquerors abroad, these expressions of friendliness and respect were unexpected by most of the population, and they “produced an immediate, favorable effect upon Japanese public opinion.”¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, DDR processes proceeded quickly in the first phase of the occupation. In large part, this success was attributable to the decision by U.S. policymakers to allow the Japanese Army and Navy ministries to handle these activities themselves—with American oversight—to avoid possible incidents that could lead to renewed conflict. Indeed, American forces were explicitly prohibited from directly disarming

⁹⁸ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 28.

⁹⁹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 30–36.

¹⁰⁰ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 31–35.

¹⁰¹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 38, 42, 49–51.

any Japanese forces.¹⁰² Under the terms of the Potsdam Conference, Japanese-led demobilization processes began in the two weeks prior to the arrival of the first U.S. occupying forces on August 30, 1945, and were completed by October 15, 1945.¹⁰³ Likewise, the Imperial Headquarters and headquarters of the army and navy were quickly dissolved, and by the end of the year Japan no longer possessed a military.¹⁰⁴ In February 1946, Japan's new constitution was drafted; by the terms of Article 9, Japan disavowed war as a means of settling international disputes and pledged not to maintain future military forces, thus formalizing the nation's demilitarization commitment.¹⁰⁵

In parallel with these immediate security-related stabilization activities, the occupying forces turned their attention to the task of suppressing individuals and organizations who might oppose and otherwise undermine U.S. objectives and activities—potential “spoilers” of the peace. Beginning in the fall of 1945, the occupying forces apprehended and indicted over 5,700 individuals on suspected war crimes charges, including 24 high-ranking officials of the former military. By January 1946, SCAP began the process of purging the government of some 210,000 individuals who had held positions suspected of promoting militarism and foreign aggression.¹⁰⁶

As a result of these combined security-related tasks, by the second year of the occupation the objective of permanently demilitarizing Japanese society had been successfully achieved. Multiple factors contributed to affect this accomplishment: careful pre-occupation planning to properly match resource levels and strategy to desired objective outcomes; the overwhelming size, speed, and capabilities of U.S. resources deployed; Japanese political willingness to cooperate with—and, indeed, self-implement—Allied directives (assisted, crucially, by statements from the Emperor); the resulting absence of any organized resistance; and the positive response of the defeated Japanese people to occupiers who treated their former enemy with respect and dignity.

¹⁰² The Japanese Army and Navy Ministries were subsequently renamed the First and Second Demobilization Ministries, respectively. Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 34; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 25–27.

¹⁰³ To preserve law and order, the police were initially exempt from the DDR processes.

¹⁰⁴ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ Though drafted in February 1946, the new constitution did not officially come into effect until May 3, 1947. Article 9 reads: “Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.” For the complete text of the constitution, see the website of the Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, “The Constitution of Japan,” 1946.

¹⁰⁶ Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. 41–43.

Objective 2: Liberate Allied Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees

At the end of the war, approximately 32,000 Allied POWs and civilian internees remained detained in approximately 160 internment camps throughout Japan, Korea, and Manchuria.¹⁰⁷ The operational instructions of BLACKLIST asserted that the urgency of the mission to repatriate these POWs was “second only to military operations and to the maintenance of the forces of the occupation.”¹⁰⁸ Through meticulous planning, rapid amassing and deployment of ample resources, and mutual cooperation with Japanese leaders, the liberation and repatriation of these prisoners was achieved quickly and efficiently.

The greatest challenge for the planning and execution of this task was the lack of reliable pre-occupation intelligence regarding the location and population of the detention centers. The best available intelligence was provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross, but because Japan did not consider itself bound by the terms of the Geneva Convention, the Red Cross had been given access to only a handful of camps during the war. As early as August 16, 1945, AFPAC ordered the Japanese government to provide a comprehensive review of the coordinates and populations of the detention camps, but compliance with these orders was complicated by severed communication systems throughout the empire.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile, in early August 1945, the United States began organizing approximately 70 POW recovery teams—one per every 500 prisoners—in preparation for the occupation. Each of these was composed of nine officers and 20 enlisted soldiers, and they would begin deployment in the first hours following the landing of U.S. forces on the mainland. At the same time, preparations were made to conduct airdrops of 30 days of food, medical supplies, clothing, and other relief materials to the camps—rations estimated sufficient to sustain the prisoners until recovery teams could arrive. These airdrops, conducted by the Twentieth Air Force, commenced on August 27, a week prior to the surrender ceremony, and continued through September 20, during which time 4,470 tons of supplies were delivered to 158 camps. Extensive logistical preparations were simultaneously made to establish processing centers and medical centers throughout the country and to coordinate the evacuation of Allied POWs to locations across the globe.¹¹⁰

The objective was accomplished swiftly. Within three weeks of V-J Day, nearly 33,000 POWs had been liberated and processed. By the end of October, virtually all detainees had been repatriated to their home countries, with the exception of a handful of the most serious hospital cases and approximately 6,500 Dutch soldiers who were prevented from immediate return to the Dutch East Indies by the unfolding insurgency

¹⁰⁷ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 90, 99, 116; Dower, 1999, p. 54.

¹⁰⁸ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 89.

¹⁰⁹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 96–97.

¹¹⁰ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 17, 34, 93, 98–99.

there following Indonesia's declaration of independence from the Netherlands' colonial administration.¹¹¹

In short, credit for this success is attributable to many of the same factors that enabled the rapid demilitarization of Japanese society. First, during the planning for BLACKLIST, American officials prioritized the gathering of available, albeit limited, intelligence on detention locations and populations in order to prepare properly resourced evacuation teams to begin their work from the first day that U.S. boots landed in Japan. In parallel, pre-intervention plans were laid to establish the logistical means to care for, process, and transport POWs as soon as they were liberated. Second, during the two-week interlude between surrender and occupation, Japanese officials demonstrated a willingness to cooperate in intelligence-sharing with their former enemy. Third, that no opposition movement emerged in the early days of occupation allowed U.S. forces to access known and unknown detention centers at a rapid pace.

Objective 3: Prevent Acute Humanitarian Crises

As a depleted and impoverished country, Japan risked an acute humanitarian crisis at war's end. The Allied bombings had left nearly 9 million people homeless, including approximately 30 percent of the nation's total urban population. Hiroshima and Nagasaki lay as nuclear wastelands. In total, 66 major cities had been bombed, leveling approximately 40 percent of Japan's urban landscape. The Allied policy of "economic strangulation" had disrupted wartime food imports, the food distribution system was destroyed, and, throughout the country, as many as 10 million citizens were threatened by hunger and starvation. Health and sanitation systems could generously be described as "substandard." At least one-ninth of the population needed some form of public welfare for survival. Particularly vulnerable populations included more than 100,000 children left orphaned by the war and some 1 million foreign workers who had been forced into conscription labor in wartime industries.¹¹²

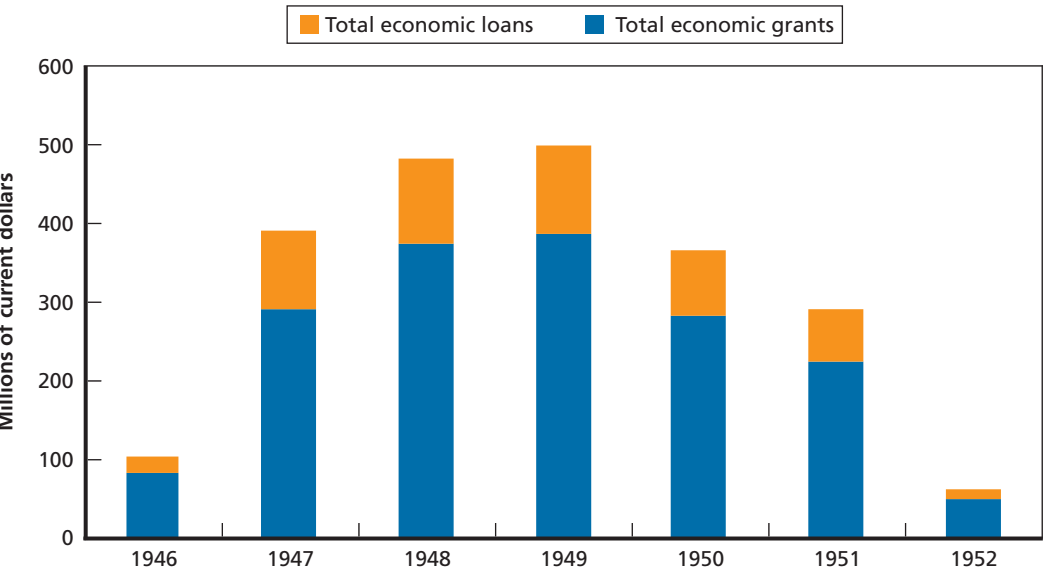
Provision of public welfare and humanitarian relief was one of the first priorities of the U.S. occupation. For MacArthur's staff, the objective of preventing acute humanitarian crises in postwar Japan served not only normative purposes; it advanced strategic ones as well. U.S. leaders feared that widespread starvation and health epidemics would undermine the occupation's ability to achieve other longer-term political and economic goals. Conversely, they recognized that "in a country in which the government had previously acknowledged little responsibility for the care of its people, in need of food, clothing, shelter, or medical attention," delivery of

¹¹¹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 102, 115–116.

¹¹² Dower, 1999, pp. 45–48, 89–97; Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 26; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 209; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur: Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area*, Vol. I, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966b, p. 459.

such materials and services represented an opportunity to improve popular opinion of the intervention force.¹¹³ At first, policymakers in Washington were not forthcoming with resources to feed the former enemy. Eventually, the first formal aid program, Government Aid and Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIOA), was initiated in July 1946. Though total aid levels were relatively low in the first year of the occupation—just \$107 million in 1946 (or \$859 million in constant 2005 dollars)—they quickly rose, peaking at \$502 million in 1949 (\$3.4 billion in constant 2005 dollars) (Figure B.3).¹¹⁴ While economic aid to Germany was roughly double that to Japan over the 1946–1952 period, “food shipments from the United States helped avert the anticipated disaster—and, in the process, enhanced the image of the United States as a generous benefactor.”¹¹⁵ Indeed, in the early years of the occupation, U.S. aid accounted for the vast majority of Japanese imports: approximately 77 of imports in 1947, 67 percent in 1948, and 59 percent in 1949.¹¹⁶

Figure B.3
U.S. Economic Assistance to Japan, 1946–1952



SOURCE: Serafino, Tarnoff, and Nanto, 2006.

¹¹³ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 209.

¹¹⁴ Nina Serafino, Curt Tarnoff, and Dick Nanto, “U.S. Occupation Assistance: Iraq, Germany, and Japan Compared,” Congressional Research Service, CRS Report for Congress, March 23, 2006, pp. 11–13.

¹¹⁵ Dower, 1999, p. 93; Serafino, Tarnoff, and Nanto, 2006, p. 1. Measured in constant 2005 dollars, total assistance to Germany totaled approximately \$29.3 billion between 1946 and 1952, compared with \$15.2 billion to Japan over the same period.

¹¹⁶ Dower, 1999, p. 576.

Within SCAP, the Public Health and Welfare Section quickly initiated a national public health program, under which local Military Government teams began to supervise and assist Japanese public health agencies and facilities. These advisory teams compelled their Japanese counterparts to take positive actions against a range of public health threats, including dysentery, venereal diseases, illegal drug use, tainted food supplies, and disease-bearing insects and rodents. At the same time, SCAP's Public Health and Welfare Section immediately conducted surveys of relief needs nationwide and subsequently organized the execution of emergency relief programs. Military Government teams inventoried and oversaw the distribution of food and clothing stocks previously belonging to the Japanese army and navy. And in 1946, the Diet passed the first comprehensive welfare legislation in Japanese history, the "Daily Life Security Law."¹¹⁷

In total, between 1946 and 1952, the United States invested an estimated \$2.2 billion (\$18 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars) in humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts in Japan.¹¹⁸ The majority of this aid was provided through GARIOA grants, of which approximately two-thirds went to foodstuffs and agricultural equipment; the remainder mostly went to directly aiding economic reconstruction (e.g., fuel, vehicles, equipment, industrial machinery and raw materials).¹¹⁹ While it would be difficult to declare these exertions an unmitigated success—for instance, theft and black market sales of relief stocks were endemic; subsistence food rations were often delayed; the food distribution system was chaotic; housing shortages remained an acute problem falling outside the occupiers' mandate; and, for years, food stuffs supplied citizens with just one-quarter to one-half of the proper caloric intake—nationwide starvation and health epidemics were avoided.¹²⁰

Achievement of these ends was made possible by several planning and operational mechanisms. First, MacArthur's humane directives judiciously elevated the objective to a matter of strategic importance. This arguably loosened the purse strings of Washington, where some critics opposed offering aid to the former enemy on principle. Second, the size and duration of human and economic resources employed mattered greatly. Third, as in many other field-level areas, trust and cooperation developed between local U.S. Military Government teams and Japanese bureaucrats, enabling the execution of emergency relief policy initiatives. During the war, Japanese health

¹¹⁷ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 208–210; Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. 217–219; Ritu Vij, *Japanese Modernity and Welfare: State, Civil Society, and Self in Contemporary Japan*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007, pp. 123–125.

¹¹⁸ By contrast, the United States provided approximately ten times as much foreign assistance (\$22 billion) for reconstruction efforts in 16 postwar European states (Patrick Christy, "America's Proud History of Post-War Aid," *U.S. News and World Report*, June 6, 2014).

¹¹⁹ Serafino, Tarnoff, and Nanto, 2006, pp. 5–6.

¹²⁰ Dower, 1999, pp. 89–97.

officials had little access to international advancements in medicine. Thus, as one civil affairs officer observed, “The [Japanese] were anxious to learn [Western medical practices] and were apt pupils. . . . The response was excellent. . . . Home and village sanitation, child care, hospital improvements, welfare centers, medical improvements, all were studied diligently and effected as soon as possible insofar as time and money would permit.”¹²¹

Objective 4: Repatriate Displaced Japanese Nationals and Foreign Aliens

Among the most pressing humanitarian challenges at the time of surrender was the repatriation of more than 6 million Japanese nationals scattered throughout Asia and the islands of the Pacific and more than 1.3 million foreign aliens in Japan (mainly Koreans, Chinese, Formosans, and Ryukyuan), many of whom had been forcibly conscripted to work in Japan’s wartime mines and other industries.¹²² The urgency of the task was compounded by the economic burdens these vulnerable populations placed on their host nations, as well as the risk they created for health and sanitation epidemics. Indeed, hundreds of thousands of returnees would die from disease, starvation, and maltreatment before reaching their homelands.¹²³ In logistical scope, this mass naval migration was “without parallel in history.”¹²⁴

Achievement of this objective was complicated by multiple resource factors. It was determined that, to the fullest extent possible, the government of Japan would be responsible for the costs and logistics to repatriate their own citizens from abroad, while the United States would take responsibility for the foreign aliens in Japan. At war’s end, however, Japan’s once-mighty navy and merchant marine lay in ruins. The military and commercial vessels that had survived the war were in a poor state of maintenance, and their use for repatriation activities was subordinate to utilization for economic shipping. Only an estimated 167 Japanese ships operating at 50-percent capacity were available. Japan’s littoral waters were infested with mines, and much of its port infrastructure had been destroyed by the Allied bombing campaigns. SCAP directives placed burdensome requirements on the limited resources of the Japanese government officials charged with running the overcrowded repatriation centers, including conducting thorough medical examinations and quarantines as necessary; providing food, clothing, and shelter to returnees; disarming demobilized soldiers; vetting war criminals; and screening illegal contraband.¹²⁵ Perhaps most egregiously, repatriation of Japanese soldiers was delayed in many areas of Asia and the Pacific

¹²¹ Gibson, 1955, p. 110.

¹²² General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 149, 164.

¹²³ Dower, 1999, pp. 50–53.

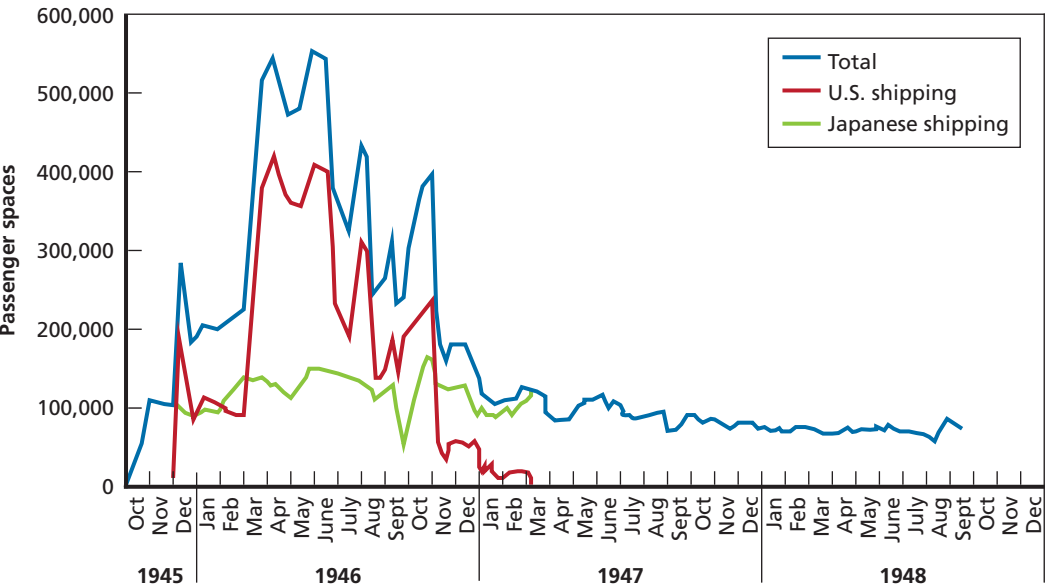
¹²⁴ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 193.

¹²⁵ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 149–152.

by the Allied victors, who retained ex-combatants as laborers for postwar projects throughout the former theater of war.¹²⁶

The repatriation process, which unfolded in four phases, thus took many years to finalize, though the bulk of personnel movements were complete by the end of 1946 (Figure B.4). In the first phase, from September 1945 to February 1946, prioritization was given to return of Japanese nationals from U.S.-controlled areas in the Western Pacific—in particular, Korea, the Philippines, and the Ryukyus—and to evacuation of non-Japanese from Japan. Early in 1946, 100 U.S. Liberty-type cargo ships and 100 Tank Landing Ships were made available to the effort. At the end of phase one, approximately 1.5 million Japanese and over 800,000 non-Japanese had been repatriated. The rate of repatriation peaked in the second phase, lasting from March 1946 to July 1946, during which time emphasis shifted to evacuation of nearly 1.5 million Japanese in China, Manchuria, and Formosa, as well as 750,000 in British-controlled areas of the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and Australia. During this period, the majority of personnel movements was conducted by Japanese operators on U.S.-owned ships. Having mostly cleared China, Manchuria, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and other U.S.-controlled areas of the Pacific, repatriation numbers declined significantly beginning in the third phase, which lasted from July 1946 to

Figure B.4
Pace of Repatriation of Japanese and Non-Japanese Nationals, 1945–1948



SOURCE: General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 177.

¹²⁶ Dower, 1999, pp. 50–53.

December 1946. During this time, over half of the U.S. Liberty ships were returned to the United States. Finally, beginning in December 1946, the Soviet Union began repatriating approximately 1.6 million Japanese POWs and citizens from areas under its control (namely, Siberia, North Korea, Dairen, and Karafuto-Kuriles). To the consternation of General MacArthur, however, these movements proceeded haltingly; by the end of 1948—over three years after surrender—approximately 469,000 Japanese remained interned in Soviet labor camps.¹²⁷

Overall, the relatively rapid—albeit far from perfect—accomplishment of this daunting logistical challenge amid humanitarian chaos and resource constraints can be viewed as a partial success. The key factor in achievement of this objective was the willingness of the United States to let the Japanese use its naval vessels, without which the task could not have been realized. Equally important, perhaps, was cooperation between the United States, Japan, Britain, China, Korea, the Philippines, and other nations in planning and executing the unprecedented mass naval migration of these vulnerable populations.

Objective 5: Promote Democratic Institution-Building and Economic Democratization

Economically and industrially, the Japanese empire was devastated and exhausted at war's end. An estimated one-quarter of Japan's wealth was erased during the conflict, including "four-fifths of all ships, one-third of all industrial machine tools, and almost a quarter of all rolling stock and motor vehicles."¹²⁸ Inflation was rampant, productive capacity and GNP were depleted to about two-thirds of prewar levels, imports of basic commodities were disrupted, revenues and raw materials from the empire's overseas colonies were lost, government debts exceeded 200 percent of GNP, the country faced overwhelming war reparations, unskilled labor was organized in feudalistic patterns, and the economy was structurally handicapped by the dominance of family-controlled monopolies (*zaibatsus*) in the industrial and banking sectors.¹²⁹

By contrast, the governance environment that the occupying forces confronted in August 1945 was relatively more favorable than the economic conditions. Emperor Hirohito remained a popular figurehead even after surrender, and Japanese governmental institutions—including the parliament and the cabinet—endured intact. On the other hand, numerous pre-war structural problems endemic to these institutions presented significant challenges to the occupiers' democratization objectives: In prewar Japanese society, there essentially existed no freedom of speech, religion, or education; women did not possess the right to vote; political dissidents were imprisoned;

¹²⁷ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 152–193.

¹²⁸ Dower, 1999, p. 45.

¹²⁹ Hamada and Kasuya, 1992; Dower, 1999, pp. 45–48; Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 28; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 212–219.

secret police monitored the population; and Shintoism had become, in essence, an ultranationalistic, militaristic state religion.¹³⁰

After the first phase of stabilization activities was completed in October 1945, U.S. military forces began to be drawn down and SCAP initiatives turned to achieving longer-term democratic and economic reform objectives. In the occupation's second month, SCAP famously issued a "Bill of Rights" directive, which was subsequently followed by a stream of actions to establish democracy and purge civil society of the influences that had led Japan into war.¹³¹ First, beginning in October 1945, SCAP began dissolving the Special Higher Police—who had censored free speech and thought in Japanese society—as well as removing restrictions on free speech and freeing political prisoners. Second, in December 1945, directives were ordered to amend existing election laws, giving women the right to vote and lowering the voting age from 25 to 20. Third, the occupying forces conducted concerted psychological operations to advance support for their presence and political reform goals. These propaganda efforts included public relations campaigns to portray Emperor Hirohito as a supporter of democratic reform and orchestration of a national tour for Hirohito in which he praised the U.S. occupiers and their objectives. Additionally, SCAP's Civil Information Branch took nationwide control of the Japanese press, radio, and motion picture industries as part of a social education and reorientation program. Fourth, with Japanese cooperation, beginning in the fall of 1945, the occupying forces apprehended more than 5,700 individuals on suspected war crimes charges, including 24 high-ranking officials of the former military; these actions removed from civil society many individuals who might have acted as spoilers to the occupation's governance ambitions. Fifth, relatedly, beginning in January 1946, SCAP began the process of purging the government of some 210,000 individuals who had held positions suspected of promoting militarism and foreign aggression. Sixth, in the fall of 1946, SCAP ordered directives eliminating militarists from educator roles and discontinuing the propagation of militaristic and ultranationalist materials in the country's schools. "State Shintoism" was prohibited in the education system, and the existing state curriculum was amended to teach new democratic norms and values, such as the rights of freedom of assembly, speech, and religion. Finally, as noted earlier, in February 1946, SCAP officials drafted a new constitution—later ratified in May 1947—in less than two weeks. Taken in aggregate, these measures firmly put Japanese society on a trajectory toward liberalization and put government institutions on a path toward democracy.¹³²

Meanwhile, although U.S. policy generally took a hands-off approach to far-reaching economic reconstruction efforts in Japan, the Economic Division of SCAP

¹³⁰ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 57.

¹³¹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 57.

¹³² Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. 39–43; General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 205–208; Tetsuya Kataoka, *The Price of a Constitution: The Origin of Japan's Postwar Politics*, New York: Crane Russak, 1991, p. 26.

was initiating policies to democratize economic opportunity in Japanese society. The immediate activities undertaken focused on legalizing trade unions, strengthening workers' rights, instituting comprehensive land reforms, developing natural resources, educating the labor force, taking custody of valuable government property (such as precious metals and gems), and dissolving the monopolistic *zaibatsu* industrial and financial combines that dominated the economy.¹³³

Despite these immediate steps, by 1947 an economic crisis was emerging, as hyperinflation took hold of the Japanese economy. In response, Joseph Dodge, a Detroit banker who headed the Fiscal Department of the U.S. Military Government in Germany, was reappointed to SCAP to develop a drastic economic stabilization plan for the nation. Based on Dodge's counsel, in late December 1948 MacArthur issued a nine-point directive to contain inflation and to strengthen the stagnating economy. Fortuitously for the Japanese economy, the Korean War ignited as these reforms were implemented, producing a rapid growth in demand for Japanese exports and an influx of capital and investment from abroad as well as raw material imports. Between 1946 and 1954, for instance, exports rose from \$65 million to \$1,289 million (Figure B.5).¹³⁴ Many other metrics illustrate the improving health of the economy: By the fourth anniversary of V-J Day in August 1949, unemployment had decreased to less than 400,000 in a country of 79 million people; coal production had nearly doubled from a monthly rate of 1.7 million metric tons in 1946 to 3.2 million metric tons in 1949; production of chemicals had more than quadrupled since 1946 and now exceeded prewar levels; and the government had balanced its budget.¹³⁵ Largely due to U.S. advisory actions and reform directives, by the end of the U.S. occupation, Japan's GNP had returned to prewar levels, and the country's astonishing economic growth would continue apace for the rest of the decade (Figure B.6). Today, Japan possesses the world's fourth-largest economy as measured by GDP at purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates.¹³⁶

The enduring democratization of Japan's post-World War II economy, politics, and society is attributable to multiple mechanisms. First, because the country had a highly industrialized prewar economy and a well-educated labor force, a significant infrastructure base—in terms of both physical and human capital—existed upon which to build the foundation of economic recovery. Second, with advisory assistance from GHQ-SCAP, Japanese policymakers proved open to accepting U.S. direction

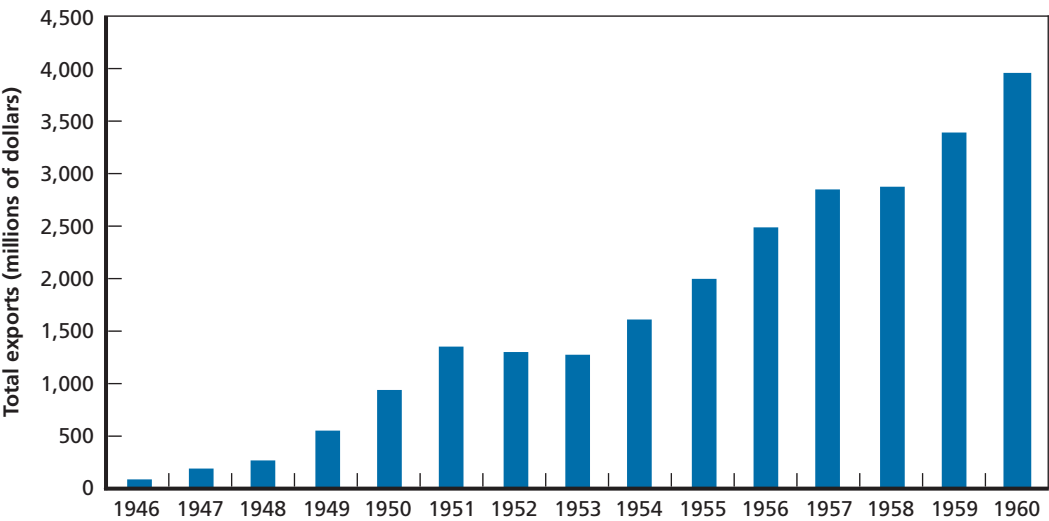
¹³³ Hamada and Kasuya, 1992, pp. 3–9; Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. 45–46. For a more detailed discussion of these tasks, see General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 212–224.

¹³⁴ Hamada and Kasuya, 1992, pp. 21–25, 50; U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Occupation and Reconstruction of Japan, 1945–52," undated.

¹³⁵ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, pp. 291–296.

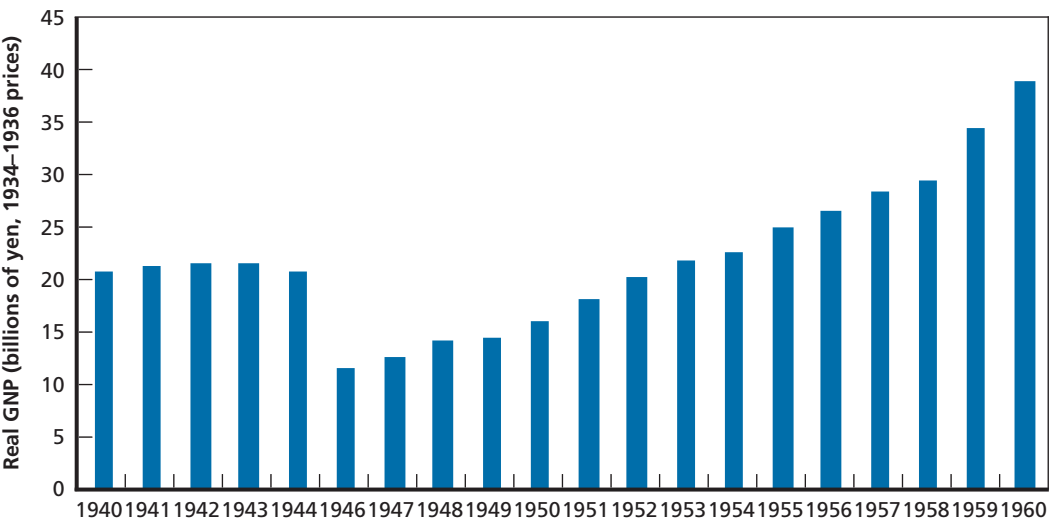
¹³⁶ In 2016, Japan's GDP (at PPP) trailed only China, the United States, and India (Central Intelligence Agency, *The CIA World Factbook*, undated).

Figure B.5
Japanese Exports, 1946–1960



SOURCE: Hamada and Kasuya, 1992, p. 51.

Figure B.6
Japanese Gross National Product, 1940–1960



SOURCE: Hamada and Kasuya, 1992, p. 47.

NOTE: Data for 1945 were not available.

in many areas of reform. Throughout the occupation, working rapport was built at both the centralized and localized levels between U.S. and Japanese civil affairs teams to execute new policy initiatives. While advice was sometimes “not well given and sometimes the Japanese rejected it,” the overarching formula of “Japanese self-determination under occupation guidance” worked.¹³⁷ In this regard, the duration of the occupation mattered too; formal termination of the occupation was largely conditional on democratic progress in these priority areas. Third, the willingness of the Emperor to act as a partner and agent in communicating the merits of democratic reform and urging national acceptance of change appears to have had a powerful effect on public support for SCAP initiatives. Finally, the character of Japan’s culture and society may have helped it to adapt to these changes; as John Dower writes in his Pulitzer Prize–winning account of the occupation, “The ease with which the great majority of Japanese were able to throw off a decade and a half of the most intense militaristic indoctrination, for instance, offers lessons in the limits of the socialization and the fragility of ideology that we have seen elsewhere in this century in the collapse of totalitarian regimes.”¹³⁸

Objective 6: Contain Communist Expansion in Asia and the Pacific

In the half-decade following the end of World War II, the United States’ international threat perceptions changed profoundly, creating a new strategic objective for the occupation of Japan: containment of the spread of communism in East Asia.¹³⁹ By late 1947 and early 1948, these fears were particularly exacerbated by the increasing prospects of a communist victory over Chiang Kai-shek’s nationalist forces in the Chinese Civil War. At the same time, as noted above, an economic crisis was emerging in Japan just as the United States was rapidly withdrawing its force presence. Despite the country’s conservative history, U.S. occupiers were growing increasingly concerned about the convergence of these events alongside the rising influence of leftist movements in the country.¹⁴⁰ The objective of containing communist expansion and influence in Japan (narrowly) and in East Asia and the Pacific (more broadly) thus focused both internally and externally.

Domestically, from the outset of the occupation, the United States established robust counterintelligence and operational intelligence units to monitor and combat potentially subversive elements in Japan’s postwar society. BLACKLIST, for instance,

¹³⁷ Gibson, 1955, p. 109.

¹³⁸ Dower, 1999, p. 29.

¹³⁹ For one of the most influential Cold War analyses of these shifting threat perceptions, see the Executive Secretariat on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, “A Report to the National Security Council—NSC 68,” Washington, D.C., April 14, 1950.

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Occupation and Reconstruction of Japan, 1945–1952,” undated.

initially specified numerous dangerous organizations and individuals—such as the Military Police, the Secret Intelligence Service, the Black Dragon Society, the Political Association of Japan, and the Extreme Nationalist Party, as well as disillusioned government officials and demobilized military personnel—demanding vigilant scrutiny by the occupation’s intelligence organs.¹⁴¹ Eventually, as the Cold War began, left-wing movements and sympathizers fell increasingly under the observation of these units. The Japan Communist Party (JCP) was the most dangerous threat. Since early in the occupation, as new labor unions began springing up across the country, the JCP proved adept at infiltrating organized labor movements and instigating strikes and worker unrest. The JCP engaged in countless other subversive and illegal activities to undermine the occupation’s democratization program, including “interfering with the vital food production, shipbuilding, merchant shipping, democratic organization of labor, and the collection of taxes.”¹⁴² To curtail the JCP’s influence, in the “Red Purge” of 1949, the occupation forces cleansed the government of all communist and leftist members. With the assistance of informant networks, American intelligence officials successfully contained the emergence of a strong communist movement capable of challenging the new democratic structures of Japanese society during the occupation—but the internal communist threat remained real throughout the Cold War. Indeed, as of 2007, JCP membership numbered some 400,000, making it arguably “the most successful non-ruling communist party in Asia, if not the world.”¹⁴³

From the broader geostrategic perspective, the U.S. presence in Japan during the occupation and throughout the Cold War played a role in containing the spread of communism, though a precise assessment of this objective is somewhat difficult to make. For instance, it is difficult to disentangle the deterrent value of forces in Japan from the comprehensive U.S. regional defense posture and nuclear umbrella, including other major ground and air assets deployed to Korea and the Philippines, as well as the roving 7th Fleet in the Pacific. Moreover, whatever benefit the U.S. presence in Japan and elsewhere in the region provided as a check on communist ambitions in Asia and the Pacific, they were certainly not absolute successes—as evidenced, for instance, by the fall of China to communist forces in 1949 and the disastrous Cold War legacy of Indochina.

Nevertheless, the U.S. defense posture in Japan can at minimum be characterized as a partial success in containing the geostrategic aspirations of regional communist powers. Since the signing in 1951 of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, for instance, China has not aggressively pursued military actions to resolve territorial disputes with Japan in places such as the Senkaku and Dioyu Islands. From its forward operating bases in Japan and Okinawa, the U.S.

¹⁴¹ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 231.

¹⁴² General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 264.

¹⁴³ Bryan Walsh, “Communism Is Alive and Well and Living in Japan,” *Time Magazine*, June 22, 2007.

military has helped diffuse repeated crises in the Taiwan Strait and launched major combat operations against communist forces in Korea and Vietnam. And the robust U.S. air and naval basing posture on Asia's perimeter has assured the security of other outposts in the Pacific and has removed threats to international oceanic trade from Cold War adversaries. In sum, while it is difficult to parse the exact extent to which U.S. forces on Japan contributed to this broader regional objective, there is little doubt that the size of U.S. forces deployed, the types of units and weapon systems deployed (including strategic nuclear assets), and the types of activities conducted (such as intelligence collection) made a significant impact in limiting Chinese and Soviet territorial expansion, particularly during the early years of the Cold War.

Objective 7: Preserve Strategic Basing Access and LOCs in the Asia-Pacific Region

At the time of Japan's surrender, the desirability of an enduring U.S. military presence in East Asia was not an ordained conclusion. In Korea, for instance, the United States moved rapidly to end its force commitment, removing all but 500 military advisors by 1949. However, by the end of the decade, several key events—such as the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb and the nationalists' defeat in the Chinese Civil War—brought into sharp relief the necessity of a new strategic geopolitical objective for the U.S. occupation: permanently entrenching Japan within the U.S. defense perimeter in Asia and maintaining long-term access to military bases and LOCs for future contingency events in the Eastern Hemisphere.¹⁴⁴

The first of these contingencies was, of course, the Korean War, during which the ability to project power and resources from military bases and depots in Japan proved indispensable to containing communist aggression south of the 38th parallel. After the United States and United Nations entered the Korean War in June 1950, Japan became the central staging area for supplies, aircraft, naval vessels, and personnel bound for the Korean peninsula.¹⁴⁵

In September 1951, representatives of 52 nations met in San Francisco to finalize a bilateral security pact between the United States and Japan, formally ending the U.S. occupation of the Japanese home islands. Under the terms of the treaty, the United States gained permanent basing rights for an unregulated number of U.S. forces in Okinawa and elsewhere in Japan, thereby achieving its new Cold War objective of preserving access to strategic locations in order to protect U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific. As noted above, the U.S. basing posture in Okinawa would prove critical

¹⁴⁴ The Executive Secretariat on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, 1950, pp. 54–55.

¹⁴⁵ For detailed discussions of Japan's role as a staging depot and in ensuring LOCs and projecting U.S. and allied power during the Korean War, see Terrence Gough, *U.S. Army Mobilization and Logistics in the Korean War: A Research Approach*, U.S. Army Center of Military History, CMH Pub 70-19, 1987; U.S. Army Center of Military History, *Korea: 1950*, CMH Pub 21-1, 1952; and William Flanagan, *Korean War Logistics: The First One Hundred Days, 25 June 1950 to 2 October 1950*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 1985.

for the projection of power in response to contingencies in Taiwan and elsewhere in Southeast Asia throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

In no small part, the outbreak of the Korean War contributed to the short-term achievement of this objective by persuading both the public and Prime Minister Yoshida's government of the need for permanent U.S. security guarantees in Japan's demilitarized society.¹⁴⁶ As the Cold War struggle expanded and potential existential threats to Japan's territorial integrity continued to materialize, the superiority of U.S. military capabilities and capacities reinforced the mutual desirability of this security relationship, ensuring the longer-term success of this objective.

Conclusion

The U.S. military's relatively smooth and timely achievement of most of its key objectives in postwar Japan surprised not only the occupiers themselves but most of the world as well. Several factors mattered disproportionately across goals. First, with the foresight of meticulous U.S. planning, civil and military capabilities and capacities were properly aligned with postwar objectives, enabling critical gains to be made in the first days of the occupation. The intervention in Korea, conducted at nearly the same time, did not benefit from this same degree of planning and suffered as a result. Second, the pre-occupation decision to maintain rather than disband the existing government helped avoid the emergence of any armed resistance, rendered the former enemy a collaborative partner in execution of postwar policies, and contributed to the relatively easy transition from Japan's authoritative past to a democratic future. Third, relatively, the Allies' relatively "tolerant and humane treatment of the vanquished foe" and its patient handling of "a humiliated and defeated people," facilitated by a respectful treatment of the Emperor and his resulting support for the occupying administration, produced unforeseen improvements in the public opinion of the foreign interveners.¹⁴⁷ Finally, the initiation of the Cold War helped consolidate occupation-era institutional reforms and put U.S.-Japanese bilateral security and economic relationships on a long-term trajectory characterized by geostrategic interdependence and mutual interests.

Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962

In mid-1962, the Soviet Union began deployments of intermediate- and medium-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs and MRBMs) to Cuba. In October, those deployments were discovered by U.S. aerial reconnaissance. On October 16, President John F. Kennedy was notified of the missile deployments, setting off the 13-day Cuban Missile

¹⁴⁶ Akagi Kanji, "The Korean War and Japan," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, June 2011, pp. 175–184.

¹⁴⁷ General Staff of General Douglas MacArthur, 1966a, p. 230.

Crisis. During the crisis, President Kennedy and his Executive Committee (typically referred to as the “ExComm”) agonized over the United States’ response to the missile deployments. ExComm considered military options ranging from a naval blockade to a massive air strike to a full-scale invasion of Cuba, while also seeking diplomatic rapprochements. On October 22, President Kennedy announced U.S. knowledge of the missile deployments and the imposition of a blockade to prevent further shipments of offensive weapons to Cuba. The naval cordon did not solve the underlying issue, though, as the missiles already in Cuba remained and preparations to bring them to operational readiness accelerated. President Kennedy and the ExComm debated further, more-aggressive actions that would employ large U.S. forces to remove the missiles. Before the crisis escalated further, the Soviet Union made a clandestine offer on October 26 to remove the missiles in exchange for a pledge to not invade Cuba. The next day, Soviet leaders made a second proposal publicly, adding an extra stipulation: the withdrawal of U.S. Jupiter missiles from Turkey. By that time, the ExComm was leaning toward a military resolution to the crisis. This did not occur, however, as the United States accepted the first offer and ignored the second (while concluding a private, informal agreement to remove the Jupiters).

Though the Cuban Missile Crisis is remembered most for the deliberations of high-level U.S. leadership, the U.S. military played a large role as well. Aircraft from the Navy and Air Force provided reconnaissance of Soviet installations and prepared for air strikes. Navy ships patrolled the Caribbean to prevent further deliveries of Soviet weapons to Cuba and watch for Soviet submarines in the region. Meanwhile, some U.S. Marines deployed to the base at Guantanamo Bay, while others—along with alerted U.S. Army formations—readied themselves for a possible invasion. These military efforts effectively complemented the political calculations of President Kennedy and his advisors, allowing the United States to achieve nearly all the goals of the intervention.

Objectives

We have identified six objectives that the United States was trying to achieve during the Cuban Missile Crisis. They are presented in Table B.3 along with their objective types (in parentheses):

Save for the evacuation mission, the United States’ objectives during the Missile Crisis reflected high-level global security interests. While U.S. leaders desperately wished to overthrow Cuba’s communist government, they concluded that the Soviet weapons posed a much greater threat than Castro’s regime. The missiles on the island posed both a serious challenge to international stability and a potential existential threat to the United States itself. Recognizing these considerations, President Kennedy and his advisors struck an agreement with their Soviet counterparts to protect the Cuban revolution in exchange for removing the Soviet missiles.

Table B.3
Objectives of the Cuban Missile Crisis

Objective	Time Period	Level of Success
Prevent escalation to global or regional war and instability (2.3)	October 16, 1962–November 20, 1962	Success
Protect the United States and targets in the Western Hemisphere from the threat of nuclear attack (2.1)	October 16, 1962–November 20, 1962	Success
Contain Soviet influence in Cuba and the Western Hemisphere (2.1)	1959–1991	Some success
Prevent additional weapons and military equipment from reaching Cuba (2.3)	October 22, 1962–November 20, 1962	Success
Protect the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay against possible attack by Soviet/Cuban forces during the Missile Crisis (2.1)	October 16, 1962–November 20, 1962	Some success
Evacuate U.S. noncombatants from the Guantanamo Bay base (1.2)	October 21–22, 1962	Success

Change in Objectives

While the objectives of the U.S. intervention evolved relatively little, given the brief duration of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the sub-objectives delegated to U.S. military forces evolved as diplomacy progressed. The most critical goal, avoiding general nuclear war, remained a concern for the military into 1963 even though the USSR withdrew its missiles in November.¹⁴⁸ After the discovery of the missile installations, U.S. leaders’ immediate goal was to eliminate Soviet nuclear forces from Cuba either by compelling the USSR to withdraw them or by destroying them, if necessary. The U.S. military began preparations for a variety of potential responses. These included a full invasion of Cuba to remove Castro from power and air strikes to destroy the missile sites before they could become operational. Preparations for these military options continued after President Kennedy’s decision to resort to the blockade was announced on October 22. The primary objective of the blockade was to prevent additional weapons and military equipment from reaching Cuba. After the agreement to withdraw the missiles on October 28, U.S. forces had new sub-objectives: maintaining pressure to ensure that the USSR removed the missiles and to extract an agreement to remove the IL-28 bombers, which were not explicitly included in the October 28 deal. At the time, it was unclear

¹⁴⁸ David G. Coleman, “The Missiles of November, December, January, February . . . The Problem of Acceptable Risk in the Cuban Missile Crisis Settlement,” *The Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Summer 2003, pp. 5–48.

whether the USSR would abide by the terms of the agreement, especially if NATO politics undermined the informal deal to withdraw U.S. Jupiter missiles from Turkey. U.S. pressure included continuing the blockade and a sustained nuclear alert status, in addition to regular surveillance flights over Cuba. While Soviet leaders initially considered transferring the IL-28s to the Cubans, on November 20 Khrushchev agreed to remove them in exchange for lifting the quarantine. By the beginning of 1963, U.S. leaders were confident that the USSR had, in fact, withdrawn its offensive forces from Cuba.¹⁴⁹

Types of Forces

Nuclear Capabilities

Before turning to a discussion of factors that influenced the degree of success achieved on specific objectives, we discuss the role played by the types and numbers of forces more generally. We considered this factor separately because it played an important role in the outcome of the intervention, one that cuts across all objectives defined for this intervention. The Cuban Missile Crisis is remembered primarily as the Cold War's tensest nuclear standoff, but it involved large conventional forces in addition to the superpowers' strategic nuclear forces. While these strategic nuclear forces were instrumental in both fomenting and quelling the Cuban Missile Crisis, most of the military activity that occurred during the crisis was carried out by conventional forces.

At the time of the crisis, the United States still enjoyed massive quantitative and qualitative superiority over the Soviet Union in strategic nuclear weapons. Khrushchev had boasted that his country was producing missiles "like sausages," but in actuality the USSR's strategic nuclear arsenal remained in its infancy. The bulk of Soviet nuclear delivery systems capable of reaching the United States were subsonic manned bombers—the turboprop Tu-95 "Bear" and the jet-powered 3M "Bison." With about 100 of the former and 60 of the latter, these planes posed a nontrivial threat to the United States.¹⁵⁰ Soviet political and military leaders, however, seem to have had little faith that these bombers would fare well against the formidable system of air defenses the United States had developed during the Eisenhower years.¹⁵¹ As a consequence, in 1960 Khrushchev deemphasized bomber acquisition and development in favor of ballistic missiles. But despite the Soviet leader's enthusiasm for these weapons, in October 1962 the Soviet Union had only 38 operational intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

¹⁴⁹ For an account of recent scholarship on the "long Cuban Missile Crisis," see Barton J. Bernstein, "Examining *The Fourteenth Day*: Studying the Neglected Aftermath Period of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Underscoring Missed Analytical Opportunities," in Len Scott and R. Gerald Hughes, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Critical Reappraisal*, London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 40–74.

¹⁵⁰ Robert S. Norris, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Nuclear Order of Battle, October/November 1962," Woodrow Wilson Center presentation, October 24, 2012, p. 27.

¹⁵¹ B. E. Chertok and V. V. Zelentsov, eds., *Oruzhie raketno-iadernogo udara*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo MG TU, 2009, pp. 20–21.

Six of these were R-7s, the military version of the rocket that launched Sputnik in 1957 but proved hopelessly impractical as a weapon. The remaining 32 were R-16s, an ICBM roughly equivalent to the U.S. Atlas employing cryogenic propellant.¹⁵² While a massive improvement on the R-7, the R-16 was fragile, unreliable, and slow to launch.¹⁵³ The USSR had also pioneered the launching of ballistic missiles from submarines, but its naval nuclear forces were also extremely modest compared with those of the United States at the time. The bulk of these forces were diesel-electric ballistic missile submarines of the Zulu and Golf classes, along with diesel-electric Whiskey-class cruise missile submarines.¹⁵⁴ The Soviet Navy also boasted its earliest nuclear-powered missile submarines, the Hotel class, which carried ballistic missiles, and the Echo class carrying cruise missiles. Like all early Soviet nuclear submarines, these were troubled craft with serious operational reliability and safety limitations. The availability of Soviet strategic nuclear forces in October 1962 is difficult to ascertain. Ongoing programs to refit bombers and submarines with more-modern weapons probably reduced the number that might be generated during the crisis. Typical estimates count about 300–350 weapons as the maximum that the Soviet Union might be able to deliver to the continental United States.¹⁵⁵

In contrast with the USSR's nascent strategic nuclear forces, in the early 1960s the U.S. nuclear arsenal was near its historical apex. The ultimate "triad" of bombers, land-based missiles, and submarines existed in an emergent form at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, even though a large fraction of U.S. nuclear forces consisted of outdated systems that would be retired within a few years. The bulk of U.S. strategic delivery systems still consisted of manned subsonic bombers, which had been the focus of U.S. investment in the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. In October 1962, the mainstay of the bomber force consisted of 639 subsonic B-52 bombers. The B-52s were complemented by 880 older, shorter-range B-47 jet bombers and 76 of the exotic, supersonic B-58 Hustler.¹⁵⁶ Advancing Soviet air defense capabilities were increasingly threatening the survivability of all these bombers, however, helping impel a transition to missiles. President Kennedy had won the 1960 election in part thanks to claims that the Eisenhower administration had allowed the Soviets to open a "missile gap," but in actuality the United States had beaten the USSR to operational ICBMs and had over five times as many intercontinental missiles available during the crisis than its communist adversary did. These were mostly relatively crude liquid-fueled missiles, such as the Atlas and Titan I, which were unreliable and difficult to maintain on alert

¹⁵² Chertok and Zelentsov, 2009, pp. 25–26.

¹⁵³ Pavel Podvig, *Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001, pp. 189–192.

¹⁵⁴ Norris, 2012, p. 26.

¹⁵⁵ Norris, 2012, p. 27.

¹⁵⁶ Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Christensen, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Nuclear Order of Battle, October and November 1962," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 68, No. 6, November/December 2012, p. 87.

status, but the first ten solid-fueled Minuteman I ICBMs became operational during the crisis. Moreover, the United States enjoyed an even larger advantage in missiles over the Soviet Union than its larger number of ICBMs implied, as it had also deployed nuclear-armed intermediate-range missiles to the territories of its European allies. These included Thor IRBMs in the United Kingdom and Jupiter MRBMs in Italy and Turkey, all of which could target the Soviet homeland. Finally, the United States had a growing fleet of submarines carrying Polaris ballistic missiles and conventional and nuclear submarines armed with Regulus cruise missiles.¹⁵⁷ The Polaris submarines in particular were immensely superior to their Soviet counterparts, and the Soviet navy's meager antisubmarine warfare capabilities made them even more threatening.

Overwhelming U.S. military superiority established the context in which President Kennedy secured the diplomatic resolution to the Cuban Missile Crisis. With the exception of conventional forces in central Europe, in October 1962 the United States and its allies enjoyed substantial military advantage over the USSR almost everywhere, and Soviet leaders knew it. Their desire to readjust this imbalance in Moscow's favor was one factor in their decision to deploy both nuclear and conventional forces to Cuba. In their view, Soviet missiles in Cuba were a logical *quid pro quo* for U.S. missiles in Turkey and Italy, giving the capitalists a taste of their own medicine. Deploying hundreds of nuclear weapons in Cuba would narrow the gap between the superpowers, if only somewhat. Yet Khrushchev had another goal: preserving the Cuban Revolution. The addition of a state in the Western Hemisphere to the Soviet camp was a triumph for Moscow and the world communist movement at a time when the Kremlin had faced a number of setbacks, including the unfavorable resolution to the Berlin Crisis in 1961. Because the two goals were not mutually exclusive, Khrushchev could—and did—pursue them simultaneously. Historians disagree as to the relative importance of these two goals to Soviet leaders, but increased availability of Soviet sources shows that Khrushchev and his advisors had no intention to use Cuba as leverage for countermeasures in Europe—a possibility that seriously concerned Kennedy and his advisors.¹⁵⁸

Conventional Forces

The United States' response to the Cuban Missile Crisis was primarily a naval operation. The U.S. Navy's main responsibility was carrying out the blockade of Cuba, but it was also tasked with supporting the Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay and preparing for possible air strikes against Cuba. The U.S. naval contingent was massive, totaling 180 ships, among them eight aircraft carriers.¹⁵⁹ Those ships held 100,000 crew and

¹⁵⁷ Norris and Christensen, 2012, pp. 87–88.

¹⁵⁸ Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, and the Missiles of October*, Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012, p. 94.

¹⁵⁹ Siegel, 1991.

embarked forces at the height of the deployment.¹⁶⁰ The largest naval formations were Task Force 135, Task Force 136, and Task Force 83.2. Task Force 135 consisted of two aircraft carriers, seven destroyers, and two support ships. Its objectives included the reinforcement of Guantanamo Bay, the evacuation of the noncombatants there, and the transfer of Marine aircraft to bases in Florida and Puerto Rico. In the event of escalation, Task Force 135 would play a key role in air strikes against Cuba.¹⁶¹ Task Force 135, which was located near Jamaica for most of the crisis, also helped detect Soviet submarines within the blockade line.¹⁶² Task Force 136, meanwhile, was focused primarily on maintaining that line. An antisubmarine warfare carrier, two cruisers, 22 destroyers, and two frigates were part of Task Force 136.¹⁶³ Task Force 83.2 was an antisubmarine hunter killer formation, with one carrier and seven destroyers as its core.¹⁶⁴ U.S. Navy aircraft carried out reconnaissance missions to provide intelligence on the Soviet deployments in Cuba, support the blockade, and verify the withdrawal of the missiles at the end of the crisis.¹⁶⁵

The U.S. Air Force's (USAF's) chief tasks during the Cuban Missile Crisis were aerial reconnaissance and airlift. Meanwhile, the USAF prepared for a possible air strike or invasion by mobilizing its fighter and bomber aircraft. The intelligence about the missile deployments was derived from USAF reconnaissance flights carried out by U-2s on October 14 and 15, 1962. These U-2 flights would continue throughout the crisis; one of the high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft was shot down on October 27. At the same time, the U-2 flights were supplemented by low-level reconnaissance aircraft from the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing. These missions provided detailed imagery showing the dispositions of the Soviet missiles, the defenses on the island (such as Soviet surface-to-air missile [SAM] sites), and priority targets in the event of a U.S. strike. Other USAF reconnaissance aircraft helped spot vessels approaching the quarantine line. USAF transport aircraft airlifted U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) units to Guantanamo, helped reposition Army units to the southeastern United States, and ferried supplies—almost 7,000 tons of supplies and over 5,000 personnel were transported. Toward the end of the crisis, on October 27, 24 reserve transport squadrons were activated, making available another 14,000 airmen and 400 aircraft.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ John M. Young, *When the Russians Blink: The U.S. Maritime Response to the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1990, p. 94.

¹⁶¹ Young, 1990, pp. 84–85.

¹⁶² Curtis A. Utz, *Cordon of Steel: The U.S. Navy and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 1993, pp. 25, 36.

¹⁶³ Young, 1990, pp. 84–85.

¹⁶⁴ Utz, 1993, p. 33.

¹⁶⁵ Utz, 1993.

¹⁶⁶ Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed., New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999, p. 123; Edward T. Russell, "Cuban Missile Crisis," in A. Timothy

The USAF also made preparations for escalation. Tactical Air Command (TAC) increased its presence in Florida to 511 fighters, 72 reconnaissance aircraft, and 40 tankers.¹⁶⁷ These TAC aircraft, along with those of the Navy and USMC, would have been responsible for Operation Plan (OPLAN) 312—the plan for an air strike against Cuba. Different variants of OPLAN 312 existed. Option I would have required only 52 sorties, limited to the nuclear weapons themselves on Cuba. Subsequent variants would have expanded target sets (including Soviet aircraft, ships, and SAM sites) and correspondingly larger numbers of sorties; the most intensive option would have sent more than 2,000 sorties against all military targets on Cuba as the opening move for a follow-on ground invasion.¹⁶⁸ Strategic Air Command (SAC) was also brought to a higher degree of readiness as its 1,400 bombers and 900 tankers prepared for a possible nuclear exchange.¹⁶⁹

Ground forces played a smaller role in the Cuban Missile Crisis. U.S. Army units were not deployed from the United States, but they made extensive preparations for a possible invasion and postured themselves within the United States for such an eventuality.¹⁷⁰ The 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions, the 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions, the 1st Armored Division, and supporting artillery and armor units were to participate in OPLAN 316, the plan for the invasion of Cuba. A further two infantry divisions and one armored division would be in reserve. The U.S. Marine Corps did deploy to Cuba during the crisis, sending 1,800 personnel to Guantanamo Bay to reinforce the garrison there (these forces will be described in greater detail below). In the event of an actual invasion, the USMC's contribution would have been the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force and the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade.¹⁷¹

The Cuban Missile Crisis was the only occasion when it appeared that the massive system of continental defenses developed in the Eisenhower years might be put into use. For much of the 1950s, most U.S. analysts believed that it would be many years before Soviet missiles would pose a threat to the continental United States. American planners focused instead on the threat from manned bombers like those being acquired by the United States. The continental defense the United States fielded consisted of two components: early warning based on stationary and mobile radar installations to detect incoming Soviet bombers, which was complemented by SAMs

Warnock, ed., *Short of War: Major USAF Contingency Operations*, Air Force History and Museums Program, 2000, pp. 33–41.

¹⁶⁷ Russell, 2000, pp. 33–41.

¹⁶⁸ Allison and Zelikow, 1999, p. 227.

¹⁶⁹ Russell, 2000, pp. 33–41.

¹⁷⁰ Utz, 1993, p. 22.

¹⁷¹ Blaine Pardoe, *The Fires of October: The Planned US Invasion of Cuba During the Missile Crisis of 1962*, Stroud, UK: Fonthill Media, 2014.

and manned interceptors to shoot them down.¹⁷² Responsibility for these systems was divided between the USAF Air Defense Command (ADCOM), which operated the radars, interceptors, and longer-range SAMs, and the Army Air Defense Command (ARADCOM), which operated the shorter-range SAMs. Both of these fell under the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) and, in conjunction with Canada, the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD). ADCOM's radar coverage included two lines of radar installations across the continent—the Mid-Canada Line and the Distant Early Warning Line in the Canadian arctic. These were supplemented by additional radar installations inside and outside of the United States, including airborne and ship-based mobile radars. An increasingly important component of ADCOM's surveillance capability was the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, which had two sites as of the beginning of 1963. ADCOM's interceptor force at that date consisted of F6As, F4Bs, F-101s, F-102s, and F-106s in 44 squadrons. Supplemented by five Canadian CF-101 squadrons, these comprised 978 aircraft at the beginning of 1963.¹⁷³ Many of these interceptors were armed with a tactical nuclear weapon—the AIR-2 Genie unguided air-to-air rocket. ADCOM also operated 450 Bomarc long-range SAMs. These missiles could destroy Soviet bombers at a range of up to 250 miles.¹⁷⁴ ARADCOM's forces consisted of shorter-range Nike missiles. By the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the older, conventionally armed Nike-Ajax had been reassigned to the Army National Guard, with 960 missiles authorized in 48 units.¹⁷⁵ ARADCOM had 139 newer Nike-Hercules units with 1,802 missiles authorized on January 1, 1963. Continental air defense at the time of the Cuban Crisis required substantial manpower. NORAD and its components had 175,677 authorized personnel, supplemented by 42,789 National Guard and Reserve.¹⁷⁶

Post-Cold War revelations show that the massive nuclear and conventional forces assembled by the United States during the Cuban Missile Crisis succeeded in their objective of intimidating the Soviet leadership and backing up U.S. diplomacy. The United States could threaten a broad array of plausible military options, ranging from selective air strikes to an invasion to general nuclear war. While the position of the communist forces on Cuba was considerably stronger than U.S. intelligence realized at the time, the USSR was not in a position to use this strength to its diplomatic advantage both because revealing the full extent of the Soviet military presence might

¹⁷² Christopher J. Bright, *Continental Defense in the Eisenhower Era: Nuclear Antiaircraft Arms and the Cold War*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

¹⁷³ Directorate of Command History, *North American Air Defense Command and Continental Air Defense Command Historical Summary July–December 1962*, NORAD/CONAD Headquarters Office of Information, April 1, 1963, pp. x–xi.

¹⁷⁴ Directorate of Command History, 1963, pp. x–xi; and Bright, 2010.

¹⁷⁵ Directorate of Command History, 1963, p. x; and Bright, 2010.

¹⁷⁶ Directorate of Command History, 1963, p. xii.

have triggered a U.S. military response and because these forces could only deny the United States a meaningful victory rather than attain the Kremlin's objectives.

Objective 1: Evacuate U.S. Noncombatants

In addition to its other tasks, Task Force 135 was charged with the evacuation of U.S. noncombatants from the base at Guantanamo Bay. At the time of the Missile Crisis, there were around 3,000 noncombatants living on the base. Most of these (2,700) were dependents of service members stationed at Guantanamo, but there were 280 U.S. civilian personnel assigned to the facility as well. On October 21, an order was given to the base commander to remove these persons from Cuba.¹⁷⁷ In turn, instructions for evacuation were passed on to the civilians at Guantanamo. The orders were delivered by hand to avoid possible detection by Soviet personnel monitoring communications. The evacuation order carefully specified where the civilians needed to go and what they needed to bring or leave behind.¹⁷⁸ The evacuation began the next day, October 22, and proceeded smoothly. One of the units tasked with reinforcing the base, the 2/2 Battalion Landing Team (BLT), arrived via Navy vessels on the 22nd. As they disembarked, civilians waiting to leave the island were loaded aboard the 2/2 BLT's transports. Other civilians with medical conditions were airlifted off the island. The transports departed the island by late afternoon, completing the evacuation. While the noncombatant evacuation of Guantanamo Bay was certainly the least intensive of the tasks facing the United States during the Missile Crisis, it was still an important one. It allowed the base's personnel to put the facility on a "combat footing" and concentrate on the next objective, its defense against an attack. As for the civilians, they were able to return to Guantanamo in early December after the crisis had passed.¹⁷⁹

Factors Contributing to Success

The limited scope and duration of the evacuation mission helped the United States obtain its objectives. The entire operation was conceived and actualized in only two days. The fact that the evacuation coincided with efforts to reinforce the base allowed the use of the same transports bringing in additional forces to evacuate civilians to the mainland, avoiding the need to employ additional forces and facilitating the goal of hiding the evacuation effort from the adversary. The fact that the United States enjoyed undisputed control of Guantanamo also simplified the operation. Despite their proximity to the base, communist forces made no attempt to disrupt the evacuation. These fortuitous circumstances permitted the United States to swiftly evacuate civilians from the base.

¹⁷⁷ Young, 1990, pp. 120–124.

¹⁷⁸ John Ismay, "Leaving Guantanamo with the World on the Nuclear Brink," *At War: Note from the Front Lines*, *New York Times*, October 23, 2012.

¹⁷⁹ Ismay, 2012; Young, 1990, p. 130.

Objective 2: Protect the U.S. Base at Guantanamo Bay Against Possible Soviet and Cuban Attack

Even with its civilian population relocated to the mainland, the U.S. Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay continued to pose a problem for the United States during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Around 4,000 U.S. service members were stationed at Guantanamo Bay. Before the onset of the crisis, the base's ground defense was provided by five Marine infantry companies with small supporting tank and artillery units. Two mobile construction battalions were also present.¹⁸⁰ On October 18, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered the reinforcement of the base. The 2/1 BLT arrived by October 22 via airlift, bringing an additional 1,800 Marines to Cuba.¹⁸¹ More Marine infantry units began arriving around the same time, with the 1/8 BLT (by air) and the 2/2 BLT (by sea) also reinforcing the perimeter around the base. Support units included a headquarters detachment to coordinate the base's artillery units, personnel to coordinate air support from U.S. Navy carriers responding to the Missile Crisis, and a battery of antiaircraft missile launchers. Offshore, U.S. Navy destroyers remained in proximity to the base to provide fire support. As the Missile Crisis progressed, the Marines at Guantanamo Bay established a defensive line, prepared fortifications, and carried out training exercises. The reinforcements remained in Guantanamo Bay for around a month after the United States and the Soviet Union reached an agreement to end the standoff. By the end of November, orders were issued to redeploy the reinforcements back to the United States, and by the middle of December, these movements were completed.

The reinforcement mission was successful, proceeding without any serious setbacks. From late October to late November, when the force structure at the Naval Station was enhanced, there were occasional reports of Cuban harassment and infiltrators, but the defenses were not seriously challenged. Accidents did occur: Some Marines were wounded in a friendly fire incident, others received serious injuries after inadvertently setting off a mine, and one transport aircraft bringing supplies to the base crashed, resulting in the deaths of seven service members.¹⁸² These issues did not compromise the operation, though. The base was quickly divested of civilians, reinforced by a significant amount of military forces, and preparations were made for possible military operations. While the base's inherent vulnerabilities could not be completely rectified, they were addressed somewhat by the new forces.¹⁸³

The reinforcement operation itself proceeded well, but it is difficult to assess how the base at Guantanamo Bay would have fared if the Cuban Missile Crisis had escalated into a military conflict. The base's small size (its total area is 45 square miles) and its

¹⁸⁰ Young, 1990, p. 120.

¹⁸¹ Young, 1990, p. 127.

¹⁸² Col. Allen R. Millett, *Crisis in Cuba*, Marine Corps Association and Foundation, 1987.

¹⁸³ Young, 1990, p. 190.

bifurcation by the bay itself gave the Naval Station a difficult defensive position.¹⁸⁴ The balance of forces was not ideal, either. Cuban forces positioned near the base possessed more and longer-ranged artillery than did the base's defenders, though this was alleviated somewhat by nearby U.S. naval and air support.¹⁸⁵ The greatest threat to the base, however, was posed by the tactical nuclear weapons the Soviets had deployed to Cuba. Some of these, Soviet FKR cruise missiles, were repositioned to a village only 15 miles from Guantanamo Bay. The Soviet Union had sent these cruise missiles, along with nuclear bombs for the IL-28 bombers, to Cuba to repel a possible invasion by the United States. Khrushchev remarked in a meeting during the crisis that the base would "disappear the first day" should an invasion occur. Unlike the MRBMs and IRBMs, authority to use tactical nuclear weapons had been devolved to local Soviet commanders.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, even if a general invasion of Cuba did not spark a strategic exchange, the smaller nuclear weapons could have been employed by lower-level commanders.¹⁸⁷ If these weapons had been used, an already difficult defensive situation at Guantanamo Bay could have become completely untenable.

Factors Contributing to Success

The effort to reinforce Guantanamo succeeded in its immediate objectives for similar reasons as the civilian evacuation effort. The reinforcement operation was small, clearly defined, and of limited duration. Moreover, the USMC forces at the bases never had to engage an enemy force and take territory. While the reinforcement effort bolstered the defenses of the base, these built upon infrastructure that the United States had cultivated for decades. Adversary forces refrained from interfering with the reinforcement effort. But while the United States succeeded at bolstering the base's defenses, these reinforcements would probably have mattered little if the conflict had escalated. Today we know that Soviet forces in Cuba would likely have employed tactical nuclear weapons against the U.S. base under these circumstances.

Objective 3: Contain Soviet Influence in Cuba and the Western Hemisphere

The resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis only partially fulfilled U.S. objectives of limiting Soviet influence in Cuba and the Western Hemisphere. Many in the United States, including military leaders and congressional hawks, preferred the option of invading Cuba because they hoped to eliminate Castro's Communist regime. The deal struck by Kennedy to promise not to invade Cuba in exchange for the removal of all offensive weapons foreclosed this possibility forever, and Castro's government has survived until the present day. The fact that the Soviets appeared to have capitulated

¹⁸⁴ Young, 1990, p. 190.

¹⁸⁵ Young, 1990, p. 190.

¹⁸⁶ Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

¹⁸⁷ Kenneth Jack, "The Forgotten Missile Crisis of the Cuban-Missile Crisis," USNI News, October 21, 2012.

to U.S. pressure, however, helped undermine Soviet prestige and caused fissures in the Moscow-Havana relationship that persisted for years afterward.¹⁸⁸ Soviet leaders, such as Anastas Mikoyan, concluded that Castro was hot-headed and impulsive, while Castro believed that the Soviets had proven themselves unreliable allies in their capitulation to U.S. demands and their refusal to transfer more of their advanced military equipment to his government.¹⁸⁹ More importantly, the demonstrated willingness of the United States to resort to extreme measures—including the real possibility of nuclear war—to combat communist influence in the Western Hemisphere surely had a chilling effect on Soviet ambitions, even if Cuba remained firmly in the Leninist camp.

Factors Contributing to Success

U.S. capabilities and its strong force posture, described previously, were an important factor in allowing the United States to achieve partial success on this objective. However, at least some of this success was due to factors outside U.S. control. The chill in Soviet-Cuban relations that followed the Missile Crisis resulted primarily from intrinsic dysfunction within the communist bloc rather than U.S. policy. Castro resented the fact that Soviet diplomacy circumvented him and that the Kremlin reneged on initial plans to transfer some of its advanced weaponry to his control. Even though the USSR continued to shower the regime with economic and technical aid, Cuba refused to play the part of a typical Soviet satellite state. Had the United States better understood this dynamic, it might have been possible to exploit it to further undermine Moscow-Havana relations and minimize Soviet influence in the New World.

Objective 4: Prevent Escalation to Global or Regional War and Instability and Protect the United States and Targets in the Western Hemisphere from the Threat of Nuclear Attack

Following confirmation of the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba, President Kennedy and his advisors faced the challenge of finding some way of convincing the USSR to withdraw its forces from the island while avoiding world war. All of the available options entailed considerable risk. These included air strikes to destroy the missiles and other offensive weapons, a conventional invasion of the island to remove Castro from power, and a blockade to prevent additional Soviet weapons from reaching Cuba. Many in the military and ExComm strongly favored a combination of these steps, but President Kennedy preferred a more diplomatic approach.¹⁹⁰ Military leaders who favored attacking Cuba naively assumed that the Soviets would not retaliate proportionately, but Kennedy feared that this step might result in swift escalation. He chose to pursue only the mildest of the three options—a blockade of Cuba, while

¹⁸⁸ Richard R. Fagen, "Cuba and the Soviet Union," *The Wilson Quarterly*, Winter 1978, pp. 69–78.

¹⁸⁹ Mikoyan, 2012, pp. 195–234.

¹⁹⁰ Allison and Zelikow, 1999, pp. 119–129.

undertaking preparations for either air strikes or an invasion. The blockade had the advantage of allowing the United States to signal resolve while retaining a desirable balance of escalation control. When Khrushchev protested the quarantine, the onus was on him to either escalate or deescalate the standoff. Furthermore, the United States enjoyed an overwhelming local advantage. The USSR had little prospect of breaking the blockade, and if it escalated, the United States could retaliate with air strikes or an invasion of the island. To drive this point home, no effort was made to disguise the forces being assembled in Florida, including hundreds of tactical bombers and an invasion force numbering over 200,000.¹⁹¹

Surveillance

SAC was a major player in the Cuban Missile Crisis in reconnaissance as well as a nuclear deterrent role. SAC's involvement began in June 1962 when it began flying electronic reconnaissance flights in the vicinity of Cuba. In September, SAC began flying R-47 electronic intelligence missions near the island. The crisis began in earnest as a result of SAC U-2 reconnaissance flights in mid-October. Responsibility for this mission was transferred from the CIA to the Air Force at the beginning of the month, and SAC dispatched two experienced U-2 pilots from the 4080th Strategic Wing, Majors Richard S. Heyser and Rudolf Anderson, Jr., to qualify in the new U-2F model, which boasted in-flight refueling capability and a higher operational ceiling (75,000 feet) than its predecessors. Benefiting from a fortuitous break in cloud cover during Cuba's rainy season, they conducted reconnaissance flights on October 14 and 15 that uncovered the construction of the IRBM and MRBM sites.¹⁹² SAC continued regular U-2 reconnaissance flights over Cuba until October 27, when Major Anderson's U-2 was shot down by a Soviet SA-2 missile. Anderson became the only U.S. combat casualty of the crisis.¹⁹³ Disturbingly, it became apparent decades later that local Soviet commanders had taken this highly escalatory step without the approval of Moscow.¹⁹⁴ SAC reauthorized additional U-2 flights with additional protective measures starting on November 3 to monitor Soviet compliance with the agreement to remove the missiles. By November 10, high- and low-altitude photography had confirmed that the IRBM and MRBM launchers had been dismantled and their launchers loaded onto ships to return to the USSR. The United States continued routine surveillance to detect any attempt to reintroduce Soviet nuclear weapons to Cuba.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Allison and Zelikow, 1999, p. 122.

¹⁹² Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, *Strategic Air Command Operations in the Cuban Crisis of 1962*, Historical Study No. 90, Vol. 1, National Security Archive, undated, pp. 6–11.

¹⁹³ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, pp. 14–15.

¹⁹⁴ Mikoyan, 2012, pp. 143–144.

¹⁹⁵ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, pp. 17–19.

Strategic Nuclear Forces

SAC's most comprehensive actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis were its efforts to ready its bombers and missiles for possible nuclear war. General Thomas Power first proposed generating U.S. nuclear forces at a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on October 16, but this step was only undertaken the following week.¹⁹⁶ The initial preparations consisted of evacuating SAC bombers from bases in southern Florida so that these sites could host the flurry of military activity associated with the situation in Cuba, including reorienting air defenses and supporting the possible invasion.¹⁹⁷ On October 20, General Power began ordering steps to prepare for an unprecedented readiness posture. On October 22, the JCS accepted Powers' October 16 recommendation to execute 1/8 airborne alert and initiate B-47 bomber dispersal. At 2300Z on that day, U.S. military forces adopted a Defense Readiness Condition (DEFCON) 3 posture. Late on October 23, the JCS directed SAC to begin generating its forces at 1400Z the next day. This involved the establishment of DEFCON 2 for SAC forces.¹⁹⁸

The airborne alert begun on October 22 built on a regular indoctrination program in which B-52s regularly carried out airborne alerts using actual nuclear weapons, both as practice and to enhance the U.S. deterrence posture. The Cuban Missile Crisis showed that Operation Chrome Dome, as it was called, had succeeded in its goal of preparing SAC to carry out a large-scale airborne alert on short notice.¹⁹⁹ Given the large number of sorties generated and their nuclear payloads, SAC was fortunate to avoid any accidents of the type that regularly occurred during the indoctrination program and led to the cancellation of Operation Chrome Dome in 1968.²⁰⁰ The airborne alert caused planning challenges in part because neither the then-current SIOP-63 nor the basic SAC strike plans considered it, and most available weapons lacked the flexibility to use in different types of targeting. The airborne alert lasted for nearly a month, terminating on November 21. In that time 2,088 B-52s were launched, with about 65 "target effective" at any one time. At the same time as it initiated the airborne alert, SAC also dispersed its B-47 medium bombers to bases around the United States.

¹⁹⁶ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, p. 30.

¹⁹⁷ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, pp. 30–33.

¹⁹⁸ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, pp. 33–36.

¹⁹⁹ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, pp. 36–37.

²⁰⁰ For an influential account of the five major nuclear weapons–handling accidents that resulted from the airborne alert program, see Scott Sagan, *The Limits of Safety*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993. For a recent reassessment of Sagan's argument, see Campbell Craig, "Reform or Revolution? Scott Sagan's *Limits of Safety* and Its Contemporary Implications," in Len Scott and R. Gerald Hughes, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Critical Reappraisal*, London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 102–116.

Late in October, SAC upgraded 41 of its 183 dispersed B-47s to first-cycle status by allocating 87 KC-97 tankers.²⁰¹

With the adoption of DEFCON 2 on October 24, SAC began the full generation of its nuclear forces (see Table B.4). Preliminary steps taken in previous days enabled rapid generation of most of SAC’s bombers and missiles. Within 24 hours, SAC had generated all of its forces except for some B-58s, ICBMs, and spare B-47s.²⁰² Remaining forces reached their peak generation in early November, with over twice as many delivery systems and weapons available as before the alert was called (see Table B.5). Within one hour, 92.5 percent of its weapons systems were ready to launch.²⁰³ The missile alert created some complications due to the nature of the liquid-fueled Atlas missiles that made up most of the ICBM force—not enough liquid oxygen was available on the bases to fuel them, necessitating a crash program to acquire it.²⁰⁴ The earliest Minuteman-1 ICBMs also joined in the alert. In its haste to comply with the DEFCON 2 order,

Table B.4
Generation of SAC Nuclear Forces, October 24–25, 1962

Force Type	October 24, 1400 GMT	October 25, 1400 GMT
Bombers	912	1,436
Missiles	134	145
Tankers	402	916

SOURCE: Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated.

Table B.5
Generation of SAC Nuclear Forces, October–November 1962

Force Type	October 19, 1962	November 4, 1962
Strike aircraft	652	1,479
Missiles	112	182
Total weapons	1,422	2,962
Tankers	358	1,003

SOURCE: Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated.

²⁰¹ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, pp. 37–48.

²⁰² Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, p. 55.

²⁰³ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, p. 58.

²⁰⁴ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, pp. 63–64.

the 341st Strategic Missile Wing at Malmstrom AFB “inadvertently” accepted its Minuteman-1s “prior to the completion of all required contractor demonstrations.”²⁰⁵ Given the newness of the missiles and the lack of demonstration tests, SAC was concerned about inadvertent launches. To forestall such a possibility, it ordered that the explosives to eject the silo lid would remain disconnected and the safety control switch manually locked until a launch order was received.²⁰⁶ Peak missile alert was reached on November 3, with 183 missiles on alert status. At this point a drawdown began, which reduced the number of alert missiles to 130 on November 29.²⁰⁷

U.S. strategic forces in Europe participated in the alert only partially. General Lauris Norstad, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Forces, Europe, feared that spontaneously engaging in a unilateral alert would alarm NATO allies and undermine their support for Washington’s policy on the Cuban Missile Crisis. He requested, and received, permission to carry out a partial alert instead.²⁰⁸

General Power was eager to broadcast SAC’s generated posture to the Soviet Union to maximize its psychological effect. This position contradicted official U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) policy during the crisis.²⁰⁹ Some accounts assert that he pursued this goal by intentionally broadcasting unencrypted messages about SAC’s shift to DEFCON 2 without official authorization, although documentary evidence for this accusation is lacking.²¹⁰ It is known, however, that Power pressed repeatedly for the policy to be changed, arguing explicitly that “from a deterrent point of view, I believe it to the national advantage that the high degree of readiness of this command be known, within the bounds of security, to all members of the Communist Bloc, and particularly, the Soviet Union.”²¹¹ In any case, the Soviet military received the transmission authorizing the enhanced alert posture. Initially they wondered whether it was a bluff, but observations of SAC activity soon proved that the alert was genuine.²¹²

SAC concluded that its activities during the Cuban Missile Crisis were not merely operationally successful but were instrumental contributors to the ultimate triumph of U.S. interests. According to the official SAC history of the crisis, “only under the protection of the strategic nuclear forces could the forces policing the quarantine operation

²⁰⁵ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, p. 72.

²⁰⁶ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, pp. 72–73.

²⁰⁷ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, p. 66.

²⁰⁸ Raymond Garthoff, *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis, Revised Edition*, Washington D.C.: Brookings, 1989, p. 161.

²⁰⁹ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, p. 94.

²¹⁰ Garthoff, 1989, pp. 61–62.

²¹¹ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, p. 95.

²¹² Garthoff, 1989, p. 62.

operate with confidence.”²¹³ The generation of U.S. nuclear strategic forces had the desired effect of intimidating the Soviet Union and helping to compel it to withdraw its missiles from Cuba. But these activities also involved a significant risk of escalation to general war. After the announcement of the quarantine, the USSR began generating its own, much more modest strategic nuclear forces. While available sources do not allow us to assess how far this alert extended before the Kremlin backed down, had the crisis continued, the volatile combination of generated strategic forces and confrontation between U.S. and Soviet forces in and around Cuba meant that inadvertent escalation—perhaps resulting from Soviet commanders on the island using tactical nuclear weapons on their own initiative—threatened to spiral into a general nuclear exchange. In short, the U.S. nuclear alert during the Cuban Missile Crisis was a successful experiment, but much of this success might be attributed to luck.

Continental Defense

CONAD responded to the elevation to DEFCON 3 status by dispersing its forces and reinforcing air defenses in Florida. In concordance with preexisting plans, CONAD interceptors were dispersed with their primary weapons (including many nuclear weapons) to alert bases. Within six hours, 155 aircraft had been dispersed to 20 bases.²¹⁴ The dispersal created logistical problems in part because of the lack of essential facilities at the dispersal bases to handle nuclear weapons.²¹⁵ An unanticipated challenge arose because the continental defenses had not been designed in anticipation of an attack directed from the Caribbean. CONAD reinforced the defense of Florida by sending additional interceptors there during the first week of the crisis. By October 22, CONAD had about 150 interceptors in the state, compared with 24 in peacetime. Between October 24 and November 2, CONAD forces in Florida were further augmented with three Hercules batteries, eight Hawk batteries, and one 40mm antiaircraft battery.²¹⁶ Controversy erupted due to concerns about the potential use of nuclear warheads for the Nike-Hercules missiles over U.S. territory. Commander in Chief, North American Air Defense Command (CINCNORAD) General John Gerhart tried to rescind initial guidance to substitute high-explosive (HE) warheads both because he “considered it imperative to use weapons with a maximum kill capability” and, in any case, “in most locations Nike Hercules units have no HE warheads.”²¹⁷ The JCS reiterated that defense forces in Florida were to abstain from using nuclear warheads unless

²¹³ Strategic Air Command, History & Research Division, undated, p. 96.

²¹⁴ Directorate of Command History, 1963, pp. 1–2.

²¹⁵ Directorate of Command History, 1963, pp. 1–2.

²¹⁶ Directorate of Command History, 1963, pp. 1–4.

²¹⁷ General John Gerhart, CINCNORAD, cable to Joint Chiefs of Staff, CINCNORAD message 262345Z, *National Security Archive*, October 27, 1962.

conditions indicated that general war was under way.²¹⁸ The USAF also developed an improvised Cuban missile early warning capability. NORAD and CONAD remained at DEFCON 3 until November 27, when all districts, with the exception of the Montgomery District, reverted to DEFCON 5. The Montgomery District returned to DEFCON 5 on December 3.²¹⁹

While continental defenses, such as the Nike-Hercules and Bomarc, were controversial in their day because they seemed redundant following the emergence of the Soviet missile threat, they seem to have helped undermine Soviet leaders' faith in the viability of their nuclear deterrent.²²⁰ At the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the bulk of Soviet intercontinental forces still consisted of manned subsonic bombers. Memoir accounts suggest that Soviet analysts had little faith that such bombers as the Tu-95 could overcome the Nike and Bomarc batteries, even using the AS-3 cruise missiles that these planes were being converted to carry.²²¹ Continental defenses therefore contributed to the Kremlin's sense of strategic inferiority and increased the pressure to accede to Washington's demands.

U.S. naval nuclear forces, including both submarines and surface ships, were also involved in the alert during the Cuban Missile Crisis. At the start of the crisis, the Navy had six *George Washington*-class nuclear-powered, ballistic missile-carrying submarines that had already completed deterrence patrols. During the crisis, two more departed for their initial deterrence patrols. Accounts vary as to how many submarines were available during the crisis, but one attests that seven submarines with 112 missiles were on alert.²²² Once the JCS elected to go to DEFCON 3 status, Polaris submarines moved to their launch points, although it is unclear how many of the alert submarines were in their patrol zones at various points during the alert.²²³ In 1962, all Polaris submarines were based in the Atlantic, but the Pacific Fleet had its own complement of cruise missile submarines. These included four diesel-electric submarines and a unique nuclear submarine, the *Halibut*. Three of the five Regulus submarines were on patrol in late October and early November of 1962, with a total of eight Regulus 1 cruise missiles.²²⁴

²¹⁸ JCS, memorandum for General Parker, Admiral Sharp, General Burchinal, and General Hayes, National Security Archive Cuban Missile Crisis document collection, document no. CC02780, December 21, 1962, p. 50.

²¹⁹ Directorate of Command History, 1963, p. 5.

²²⁰ Bright, 2010.

²²¹ Chertok and Zelentsov, 2009, pp. 20–21, and Podvig, 2001, p. 350.

²²² Norris, 2012, p. 16.

²²³ James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002, p. 163.

²²⁴ David K. Stumpf, *Regulus: America's First Nuclear Submarine Missile*, Paducah, Ky.: Turner, 1996, p. 181.

Planning

The plan developed by the JCS for the invasion of Cuba, OPLAN 316, would have been a larger operation than D-Day. The buildup for it included one Marine division and five U.S. Army divisions, of which two were Airborne. This force totaled about 100,000 Army and 40,000 Marine combat forces. Naval forces counted 183 ships, including eight aircraft carriers on station. Air Force and Navy tactical air forces totaled 579 planes, which were planned to fly 1,190 strike sorties on the first day of combat.²²⁵ This massive force took weeks to assemble, and General Taylor assessed these plans as “adequate and feasible” presuming no use of tactical nuclear weapons, even though casualties were expected, estimated at 18,500 for the first ten days of combat.²²⁶ The Marine contingent was expected to experience 2,500 casualties on D-Day alone. Noting that a nuclear-capable Luna-M short-range missile launcher had been spotted in Cuba, Taylor acknowledged that “we must accept the possibility that the enemy may use nuclear weapons to repel invasion” but promised that “if the Cuban leaders took this foolhardy step, we could respond at once in overwhelming nuclear force against military targets.”²²⁷ As it happened, U.S. intelligence had grossly underestimated the number of both Soviet personnel and tactical nuclear weapons on the island. About 42,000 of the 45,526 personnel that Moscow dispatched to Cuba had already arrived as of October 22, compared with the 10,000–12,000 estimated by the CIA. The CIA had also grossly underestimated the size of Cuban forces as half of their actual size of 200,000 forces, and Castro had another 150,000 auxiliary forces that could be called up.²²⁸ Furthermore, while U.S. intelligence had spotted a single Luna cruise missile, in fact the Soviets were armed with 12 of these missiles, in addition to 80 FKR-1 “Meteor” land-attack cruise missiles.²²⁹ While Taylor predicted that the war would remain conventional had U.S. forces invaded, latter-day assessments found that the Soviet contingent in Cuba would probably have attempted to repel the invasion with these nuclear armaments.²³⁰ As a consequence, had OPLAN 316 been put into action, the results would likely have been a nuclear engagement that the invasion force was not prepared for.

Factors Contributing to Success

The enormous conventional and strategic forces fielded by the United States during the Cuban Missile Crisis succeeded in their goal of putting pressure on the Kremlin to

²²⁵ Blight, Allyn, and Welch, 2002, p. 163.

²²⁶ Chairman JCS Maxwell Taylor, memo for the President, “Evaluation of the Effect on US Operational Plans of Soviet Army Equipment Introduced into Cuba,” National Security Archive, November 2, 1962.

²²⁷ Young, 1990, p. 70.

²²⁸ Mikoyan, 2012, p. 213.

²²⁹ Norris, 2012, p. 36.

²³⁰ Mikoyan, 2012, and Dobbs, 2008.

remove its missiles from Cuba. Immense qualitative and quantitative U.S. superiority at the nuclear level severely undermined the Soviet negotiating position. The enormous U.S. advantage in strategic nuclear armaments denied the Soviet Union the ability to plausibly threaten escalation to general war, and the unprecedented degree of readiness achieved during October and November of 1962 drove this point home for Soviet leaders. Continental defenses further undermined the credibility of Moscow's strategic deterrent, most of which still consisted of manned subsonic bombers. The massive conventional forces prepared for the invasion provided the United States with a credible option to expel the Soviet military from Cuba and overthrow Castro's regime. Finally, the United States also threatened to destroy the missile sites in air strikes. Facing an adversary with a broad spectrum of plausible military options, Soviet leaders lacked conventional escalation options and found themselves under immense pressure to capitulate to Washington's core demand that the missiles be removed from Cuba. But the success of U.S. diplomacy belied serious intelligence and planning oversights that would probably have resulted in disastrous outcomes had plans to attack Cuba been carried out.

Objective 5: Prevent Additional Weapons and Military Equipment from Reaching Cuba

In order to prevent additional weapons and military equipment from reaching Cuba, the U.S. quarantine declared its right to stop and search any Soviet ship en route to the island. The quarantine (so termed because President Kennedy considered the term *blockade* too aggressive) was carried out by the U.S. Navy with assistance from the Air Force. Kennedy announced the policy on October 22, and it went into effect on the 24th. Compared with what Navy leaders and other members of ExComm wanted, the quarantine was relatively permissive.²³¹ They wanted to stop and search all the ships and forcefully engage with any vessels that attempted to defy the quarantine. Kennedy regarded this step as too escalatory and authorized a less confrontational quarantine with enough advance warning to allow the Soviets to withdraw their ships. Kennedy's primary goal was intimidation rather than halting all of the Soviet ships, some of which passed through the quarantine and made their way to Cuba. Starting on October 24, 46 ships, 240 aircraft, and more than 30,000 personnel were engaged in the effort to locate ships going to or returning from Cuba.²³² The aircraft searching for Soviet ships included planes from the USAF, whose assistance Admiral Anderson requested to complement U.S. Navy (USN) forces.²³³ In practice, blockade forces began tailing Soviet merchant ships as they approached the quarantine line. This

²³¹ Robert M. Beer, "The U.S. Navy and the Cuban Missile Crisis," Trident Scholar Project Report, Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Academy, 1990, pp. 123–124.

²³² Young, 1990, p. 80.

²³³ Beer, 1990, p. 145.

quarantine line shifted during late October, and the exact policy is obscure enough that a historiographic debate emerged about exactly where the line was located at various times. The initial line was 500 miles from the easternmost point of Cuba, but this location might be in range of the IL-28 bombers on the island. Some in the Navy, however, argued that the IL-28s were not yet available and that a quarantine closer to the island would require fewer ships. In actuality, the line was ill-defined, as the commander of the blockade force had discretion to shift his forces.²³⁴

Despite indications that the Soviets might challenge it, the quarantine force largely succeeded in its goal of forestalling the arrival of additional weapons and military equipment to Cuba. While a few ships passed through the quarantine, the most significant—large-hatch cargo vessels carrying the IRBMs—slowed down and ultimately turned around. Khrushchev, however, declared on the evening of October 24 that the USSR would not heed the quarantine and would resist any attempts by the United States to board and search the vessels. The quarantine force only searched one vessel, however: the *Marucla*, a Lebanese freighter chartered by the Soviet Union, which was stopped on the 25th to demonstrate the credibility of the blockade to Moscow.²³⁵

The Air Force also contributed to the blockade. General LeMay offered USAF assistance to the Commander-in-Chief Atlantic (CINCLANT), Admiral Robert L. Dennison, who accepted. Admiral Dennison specifically requested that SAC help locate and identify every merchant ship in a section of the mid-Atlantic. Initially conceived as a one-time mission for October 25, by the next day it appeared that these flights might continue indefinitely. R-47s were also dispatched for an additional mission to locate a specific Soviet ship, the tanker *Grozny*, which was carrying missile fuel tanks on its upper deck. One R-47 crashed on this mission, killing four crewmen, although one of the others successfully located the ship. After this accident, SAC's shipping surveillance flights ended.²³⁶

The Navy also engaged in extensive antisubmarine warfare operations at the same time as the blockade. These efforts located five Soviet diesel-electric submarines between October 24 and 26. Alarmed by the discovery of Soviet submarines so far south, the Navy established the "Argentine sub-air barrier." Consisting of 17 P-2V Neptune patrol planes and ten attack submarines, the USN detected no submarines penetrating this barrier between its establishment on October 27 and its dissolution on November 13. The USN attempted to force the Soviet submarines it identified to surface for positive identification, often simply by pursuing them until they needed to surface to recharge their batteries, but sometimes by using low-strength depth charges.²³⁷ It only became apparent decades later that this practice nearly resulted in

²³⁴ Beer, 1990, pp. 140–141.

²³⁵ Beer, 1990, pp. 153–156.

²³⁶ Beer, 1990, pp. 21–25.

²³⁷ Beer, 1990, pp. 148–150.

escalation to nuclear use. On October 27, the Soviet *Foxtrot*-class submarine *B-59* had been out of contact with Moscow for days, and its commander concluded that the depth charges might be an indicator that general war was under way. He wanted to fire the submarine T-5 nuclear torpedo, only to be overruled by submarine flotilla commander Alexei Arkhipov, who happened to be aboard. This disturbing incident only became public knowledge in 2002.²³⁸

Much like the nuclear deterrence mission, the U.S. military's successful conclusion of quarantine and antisubmarine warfare operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis belied hidden risks. A real possibility of inadvertent escalation to nuclear war existed that neither U.S. political nor military leaders understood at the time.

Factors Contributing to Success

The blockade of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis exemplifies Mahan's observation that "force is never more operative than when it is known to exist but is not brandished."²³⁹ Overwhelming U.S. naval superiority enabled the United States to use the blockade to pressure Soviet leaders even though it only stopped a single vessel. Khrushchev blustered about defying the quarantine, but the USSR lacked the ability to seriously challenge the U.S. Navy in the Atlantic and particularly in the waters off Cuba. The United States was able to find and pursue all of the Soviet shipping en route to the island, and most of the Soviet ships turned around rather than risk confrontation. When the resources of the U.S. Navy proved inadequate, as in the case of aerial surveillance, interservice cooperation filled the gaps.

Conclusion and Aftermath

Thanks to the availability of Soviet sources, today we know that President Kennedy's strategy for resolving the Cuban Missile Crisis succeeded at its goals. As the most comprehensive Russian account of the event notes, thanks to its military posture, the United States possessed a "sword of Damocles that took the form of a threatened air strike followed by an invasion" that granted it "the ability to exert pressure in any talks. It was precisely this sword that in the end played the deciding role in accelerating Khrushchev's proposal for compromise."²⁴⁰ The American "sword of Damocles" consisted of a mutually reinforcing spectrum of capabilities that granted the United States what Herman Kahn dubbed "escalation dominance."²⁴¹ Khrushchev could not plausibly threaten to use military force to resolve the confrontation in his favor, and despite some characteristic bluster, he ultimately capitulated to most U.S. demands. If

²³⁸ Alexander Mozgovoi, *The Cuban Samba of the Quartet of Foxtrots: Soviet Submarines in the Caribbean Crisis of 1962*, trans. by Svetlana Savranskaya, Moscow: Military Parade, 2002.

²³⁹ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Armaments and Arbitration*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912, p. 105.

²⁴⁰ Mikoyan, 2012, p. 148.

²⁴¹ Herman Kahn, *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios*, New York: Praeger, 1965.

the communists escalated to conventional war, the United States could bring superior forces to bear even without resorting to nuclear weapons. If they attempted to counter U.S. conventional superiority with tactical nuclear weapons, the Americans could respond with a larger number of similar weapons. Similarly, any strategic nuclear strike on the U.S. mainland would spark a vastly larger retaliation. But U.S. leaders grossly underestimated the risks associated with their strategy. Had the air strike and invasion plans actually been carried out, the probable results would have been disastrous, or even apocalyptic. The Russian account notes that “the Pentagon had a surprisingly careless approach to such a serious operation The predicted number of casualties was overly optimistic.”²⁴² While Washington wielded escalation dominance, it lacked a plausible path to victory—the communists would have lost the war, but American losses would probably have been so extreme as to render this result moot. U.S. success depended on an unreliable element: luck. It would be foolhardy to plan future interventions on the assumption that ill fortune will never strike.

Bosnian Air Campaign and Multinational Peacekeeping Operation in the Balkans, 1992–2008

Introduction

Yugoslavia, a federation of six republics created in the aftermath of World War I, began to rapidly dissolve in the aftermath of the Cold War. After the republics of Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence in 1991, Bosnia followed suit, holding a referendum and declaring its independence in March 1992. While independence was supported by the majority of Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) and Bosnian Croats, Bosnia’s Serbs, backed by the leadership of Serbia, resisted, and a civil war ensued. From 1992 to 1995, intense fighting was accompanied by ethnic cleansing, the use of widespread violence and intimidation to create an ethnically homogeneous state. The Bosnian War created the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II and led to widely documented war crimes, including genocide, mass rape, the systematic mistreatment of civilians and prisoners of war, and the two-year siege of the city of Sarajevo.²⁴³ The total number of casualties is contested, but estimates suggest that 100,000 to 300,000 people were killed during the war, 1.2 million Bosnians became refugees, and an additional 1.1 million were internally displaced: Therefore, more than half of Bosnia’s population was forced to leave their homes during the course of the conflict.²⁴⁴ UN peacekeepers deployed to facilitate humanitarian aid but did little to

²⁴² Kahn, 1965, p. 213.

²⁴³ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995, p. 29.

²⁴⁴ Bieber, 2006, p. 29.

stop the fighting. NATO intervention, prompted by an escalating humanitarian crisis, eventually led to peace negotiations and the Dayton Accords. The U.S. military deployed 20,000 soldiers in December 1995 as part of a multinational stabilization force to implement the Dayton Accords.

Summary of Success and Failure

The objectives in the Bosnia case and whether they were successfully achieved are summarized in Table B.6. The objectives can be divided into three phases. In the first phase, between 1992 and the summer of 1993, the international community largely took a noncoercive approach, providing humanitarian assistance while attempting to remain impartial to the warring factions. Two of the objectives in this phase—providing humanitarian and medical assistance and monitoring and logging violations of the no-fly zone—are coded as successful largely because the objectives were so modest in scope. However, the broader objective of ending the conflict was not achieved in this period. In the second period, the international community gradually escalated the use of force to compel the Bosnian Serbs to participate in a peace agreement. This objective was successfully achieved in the fall of 1995 with the Dayton Accords. Additionally, the objective of enforcing economic sanctions and an arms embargo is coded as successful in this period. However, the objective of enforcing the no-fly zone is coded as partially successful because while the no-fly zone was enforced in some instances, in others Bosnian Serb aircraft were able to get through. Broadly

Table B.6
Objectives of Bosnia Intervention, 1992–2008

Objective	Time Period	Level of Success
Provide humanitarian and medical assistance to Croatia and Bosnia, including Operation Provide Promise (4.1)	July 1992–2008	Success
Monitor and log violations of no-fly zone (2.1)	October 1992–March 1993	Success
Compel Bosnian Serbs to participate in a peace agreement that would end the Bosnian War (2.3)	1993–1995	Success
Enforce economic sanctions and arms embargo against Croatia, Serbia, and the former Yugoslavia (2.3)	June 1993–June 1996	Success
Enforce no-fly zone and degrade Bosnian Serb military capabilities (4.3)	1994–1995	Some success
IFOR: Enforce the provisions of the Dayton Accords ^a (4.3)	December 1995–1996	Some success
SFOR and EUFOR: Stabilize the peace by contributing to a safe and secure environment conducive to civil and political reconstruction (4.3)	December 1996 and 2004–2008	Some success

^a These provisions were to implement a ceasefire between belligerents, establish an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, and create a “zone of separation” between Bosnians and Serbs.

speaking, from the summer of 1993 until the late summer/early fall of 1995, the international community's strategy was not successful in ending the conflict in Bosnia. It was not until NATO demonstrated that it was willing to escalate the use of coercive force in the wake of a massacre of civilians in Srebrenica, and an alliance of Bosniak and Bosnian Croat forces made significant territorial gains, that Bosnian Serb leaders were willing to come to the negotiating table. Finally, in the third phase, NATO (and later the European Union) deployed a stabilization force to assist in the implementation of the Dayton Accords. The final two objectives in this time period—enforcing the provisions of the Dayton Accords and subsequently stabilizing the peace—are coded as partially successful because the stabilization force was able to prevent a relapse in the conflict and provide internal security, but it was unable to prevent the return of nationalist political parties to power in the 1996 elections and the failure of other elements of civil and political reconstruction.

Change in Objectives

The objectives evolved across each of the three phases of the Bosnia intervention. In the first phase, the international community's policy in Bosnia was largely built around efforts at negotiating a peace agreement while providing humanitarian assistance and working to prevent attacks on civilians. However, a failure to end the conflict in this period led to a gradual escalation in military efforts against the Bosnian Serb forces. Changes in U.S. public opinion do not appear to have driven the changes in objectives over time (indeed, the majority of the U.S. public consistently opposed intervention), but it did shape how policymakers thought about the risks of escalation versus the risks of a failed policy. Specifically, perceived public opposition to potential casualties discouraged the United States from putting forces on the ground until after the fighting had ended and led to air strikes as a coercive tool to end the fighting instead. However, a vocal group of U.S. elites (including nongovernmental organizations, members of Congress, and some members of the Clinton administration itself) put pressure on the Clinton administration to escalate the use of force in order to end the conflict. Public access to images of the conflict (sometimes referred to as the "CNN effect"), particularly of violence against civilians, drove the perception that the Clinton administration's policies in Bosnia were failing because they did not end the conflict. Frustration within the administration mounted as officials failed to put together a coherent policy that European allies would agree to, even though President Clinton's 1992 election platform included doing more about Bosnia. Finally, after the Dayton Accords, U.S. objectives pivoted toward implementing and subsequently stabilizing the peace.

This case study assesses the three main phases of the intervention: an impartiality phase between July 1992 and the summer of 1993; the escalating use of coercive force from the summer of 1993 through 1995; and, finally, a stabilization phase from December 1995 until 2008. A detailed summary of military operations in Bosnia can be seen in Table B.7. In the first phase, variables contributing to success include the

Table B.7
Military Operations in Bosnia

Operation	Time Period	UN Security Council Resolution
Air:		
Operation Provide Promise: Provide humanitarian and medical assistance to Croatia and Bosnia	July 2, 1992–January 9, 1996	
Operation Sky Monitor: Monitor and log violations of no-fly zone	October 16, 1992–April 12, 1993	Res. 781
Operation Deny Flight: Enforce no-fly zone over Bosnia; provide close air support (CAS) for UNPROFOR	April 12, 1993–December 20, 1995	Res. 816
Operation Deliberate Force: Undermine the military capability of the Bosnian Serb Army, which had attacked “safe areas”	August 30, 1995–September 20, 1995	
Naval:		
Operation Sharp Guard: Enforce economic sanctions and arms embargo against former Yugoslavia	June 15, 1993–June 19, 1996	Res. 787
Ground Forces:		
UNPROFOR:	June 5, 1992–December 20, 1995	Res. 743
Phase 1: Protect Sarajevo airport and humanitarian aid convoys in Sarajevo	June 5, 1992–December 20, 1995	Res. 758
Phase 2: Protect humanitarian relief convoys in Bosnia	September 14, 1992–December 20, 1995	Res. 776
Phase 3: Protect “safe areas” in Bosnia	April 16, 1993–December 20, 1995	Res. 819, 824, 836
Phase 4: Monitor zones of separation and weapons control points during U.S.-brokered ceasefire	March 31, 1994–December 20, 1995	Res. 908
Phase 5: Reflagged under IFOR	December 20, 1995	Res. 1031
IFOR: Enforce the provisions of the Dayton Accords	December 20, 1995–December 20, 1996	Res. 1031
SFOR: Stabilize the peace and contribute to a secure environment conducive to civil and political reconstruction	December 20, 1996–December 2, 2004	Res. 1088
EUFOR: Stabilize the peace and contribute to a secure environment conducive to civil and political reconstruction	December 2, 2004–present	Res. 1575

deeply limited ambition of the objectives, the UN’s impartiality approach, and U.S. leadership and technical capacity in Operation Provide Promise, while the lack of consensus within the Clinton administration and with NATO allies on how best to end the conflict limited the actions undertaken and contributed to failure. In the second phase, lack of agreement with European allies and UN officials inhibited success early

on, but later, the political will to escalate the use of force, U.S. and NATO air capabilities in Operation Deliberate Force, the success on the ground of Bosniak-Croat forces, and the peace negotiation process all contributed to eventual success. Finally, in the postwar stabilization phase, the number of forces and rules of engagement, the existence of a peace agreement, and international control over electoral institutions all contributed to success, while the institutionalization of ethnic divisions, artificial timelines, a lack of cooperation between military and civilian organizations, and the host-nation context all prevented the achievement of complete success in U.S. objectives in this period.

Phase One: Impartiality (July 1992 to Summer 1993)

From the time that fighting broke out in Bosnia in April 1992 until mid-1993, the United States, along with its European allies, pursued a series of policies that, taken together, were intended to help end the war, but that were applied in a neutral way (that is, without favoring any particular side in the conflict) and without the use of force. In this period, the United States provided support to Operation Provide Promise, a humanitarian and medical assistance mission, and Operation Sky Monitor, an effort to monitor and log violations of the no-fly zone in Bosnian air space (without taking on the responsibility of enforcing the no-fly zone). These two objectives—providing humanitarian assistance and monitoring (but not enforcing) the no-fly zone—are coded as successful in the data set because U.S. forces, usually assisted by forces from several European states, were able to accomplish these discrete tasks. However, the broader objective of ending the war by compelling the warring factions to participate in a peace agreement was a failure in this time period because the fighting, including atrocities against civilians, continued. The fact that these policies were largely seen as failures led to significant debate within the U.S. administration and, eventually, to a more coercive use of force that implicitly favored one side.

Success Coding

Beginning in July 1992, the United States aimed to provide humanitarian and medical assistance to Croatia and Bosnia through its support for UNPROFOR, as well as through air and land provisions of humanitarian relief supplies and medical support through Operation Provide Promise.²⁴⁵ After fighting broke out in the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations deployed a peacekeeping force, UNPROFOR, to Croatia and Bosnia. Established in February 1992, UNPROFOR was composed of units from 31 countries. There were 23,000 UNPROFOR troops deployed in November 1992; by March 1994, that number had grown to 40,000.²⁴⁶ Through

²⁴⁵ Lois M. Davis, Susan D. Hosek, Michael G. Tate, Mark Perry, Gerard Hepler, and Paul S. Steinberg, *Army Medical Support for Peace Operations and Humanitarian Assistance*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-773-A, 1996.

²⁴⁶ Davis et al., 1996.

Operation Provide Promise, the longest-running humanitarian airlift in history, the United States was able to bring humanitarian aid into Sarajevo through its international airport and to provide humanitarian supplies to enclaves isolated by the fighting through land convoys and airdrops, delivering more than 160,000 metric tons of food and medical supplies into Sarajevo during the course of the war. The U.S.-led air drops “significantly aided the host populations in specific enclaves, both materially and psychologically.”²⁴⁷ Air drop assistance was a relatively small proportion of the total assistance provided, making up 18,000 of the estimated total need of 532,000 metric tons of food aid from February 1993 to April 1994, but air drops played a crucial role in reaching enclaves that were inaccessible by road. Although it is difficult to measure the impact of the air drops beyond the amount of assistance disbursed, assessments suggest that the humanitarian air drops “did reduce human suffering from hunger, cold, illness, trauma, and deprivation.”²⁴⁸ The air drops also served an important political purpose, serving as a symbol of U.S. military capability and the United States’ concern for Bosnian civilians. In addition, the air drops helped to develop coordination mechanisms linking UN humanitarian operations with NATO command and control systems, which became increasingly important as NATO escalated the use of air power in Bosnia.²⁴⁹ The international humanitarian missions together provided support to 2.74 million Bosnians, almost 70 percent of the population, by October 1993.²⁵⁰ Additionally, U.S. Army medical forces ran a field hospital in Zagreb, Croatia, that provided emergency medical care through a field hospital supporting UNPROFOR, admitting more than 2,000 patients and performing more than 1,200 surgeries during UNPROFOR’s deployment.²⁵¹

The United States also successfully monitored and logged violations of the no-fly zone over Bosnia between October 1992 and March 1993 through Operation Sky Monitor. The operation was led by NATO and established in response to UN Security Council Resolution 781, which established “a ban on military flights in the airspace of Bosnia Herzegovina.”²⁵² The text of the resolution stated that the no-fly zone was “a decisive step toward the cessation of hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” intended to prevent Bosnian Serb forces from using aircraft to conduct attacks, as well as to facilitate “the safety of the delivery of humanitarian assistance.”²⁵³ NATO provided

²⁴⁷ A. Martin Lidy, David Arthur, James Kunder, and Samuel H. Packer, *Bosnia Air Drop Study*, Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, 1999, p. ES-8.

²⁴⁸ Lidy et al., 1999, p. ES-8.

²⁴⁹ Lidy et al., 1999, p. ES-9.

²⁵⁰ Lidy et al., 1999, p. I-1.

²⁵¹ U.S. Department of Defense, “Operation Provide Promise: Mission Complete,” February 7, 1996.

²⁵² Dick A. Leurdijk, *The United Nations and NATO in Former Yugoslavia, 1991–1996*, The Hague, Netherlands: Netherlands Atlantic Commission, 1996, p. 28.

²⁵³ Leurdijk, 1996, p. 28.

Airborne Early Warning and Control System aircraft that had been involved in the naval operations in the Adriatic, thus extending the monitoring operation at sea. The operation observed and logged hundreds of violations of the no-fly zone, particularly by Bosnian Serb combat aircraft.²⁵⁴

The United States, working alongside UN, NATO, and European forces, was able to accomplish these two discrete objectives in the time period between July 1992 and mid-1993. However, the United States was unable to achieve the broader objective of compelling the Bosnian Serbs to participate in a peace agreement in this stage of the war. The European Community and UN, and later the “Contact Group” made up of the United States and several European countries, did work toward negotiations. They were able to secure several short-lived ceasefires and put forth different peace plans, none of which were ever accepted by all factions.²⁵⁵ Notably, UNPROFOR also largely failed to prevent attacks on civilians, including most famously in the “safe area” of Srebrenica. The key variables that explain this set of outcomes include the extremely limited ambitions of the first three objectives, divisions within the Clinton administration and between the United States and its European allies, the UN’s impartiality approach, and U.S. leadership and technical execution of air drops in a nonpermissive environment.

Variables Contributing to Success: Extremely Limited Ambition

The objectives of providing humanitarian assistance and monitoring the no-fly zone were achieved in large part because they were easy to achieve—that is, the modesty of the scope of the objectives meant that they were well within the capacity of U.S. and NATO forces. At first, the objectives were deeply limited in scope because the George H. W. Bush administration understood the conflict to be a European problem that was best solved by Europeans themselves and, therefore, allowed the European Community to take the lead on negotiating a solution. After images of Bosnian men in concentration camps emerged in the summer of 1992, the United States joined European allies in withdrawing diplomatic ties and imposing sanctions on Slobodan Milosevic’s Serbia, as well as organizing the humanitarian efforts and later embargo and no-fly zone.²⁵⁶ The U.S. administration was also guided by the idea, in this early phase of the conflict, that the war was caused by “ancient hatreds” and that, therefore, as articulated by the Bush administration’s Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, “until the Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats decide to stop killing each other, there is nothing

²⁵⁴ Col. Robert C. Owen, “Chapter 16: Summary,” in Robert C. Owen, ed., *Deliberate Force: A Case Study in Effective Air Campaigning*, Montgomery, Ala.: Air University Press, 2000, p. 461.

²⁵⁵ Bieber, 2006, p. 27.

²⁵⁶ Derek Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, pp. 3–4.

the outside world can do about it.”²⁵⁷ The Bush administration was also distracted by several other pressing foreign policy issues in 1992 that took attention away from Bosnia, including the dissolution of the Soviet Union and control over its nuclear arsenal, the outcome of the Maastricht Treaty, and the U.S. intervention in Somalia.²⁵⁸ In this context, the administration determined that intervention in Bosnia was not in the U.S. national interest: According to National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, the administration decided not to use additional force because “we could never satisfy ourselves that the amount of involvement we thought it would take was justified in terms of the U.S. interests involved.”²⁵⁹ Because the United States and its European allies were not willing to use coercive force beyond the naval blockade, the first three objectives remained limited in scope and were readily achieved.

Variables Contributing to Success: The UN’s Impartiality Approach

The objective of providing humanitarian and medical assistance was also met because of the UN’s approach of acting impartially and obtaining consent from all warring parties. In a departure from past peacekeeping missions where UN forces were deployed to monitor a peace that had been agreed to by the warring parties, in Bosnia, UN peacekeepers were deployed to provide humanitarian assistance in an active conflict environment. While attempting to navigate this fraught territory, UN officials were “reluctant to single out one faction, for fear of compromising its mandate and imperiling the safety of its lightly armed forces.”²⁶⁰ Part of UNPROFOR’s role was to protect road convoys transporting humanitarian aid. In addition to the air drops that reached isolated locations, road convoys were a crucial source of humanitarian assistance: 70 percent of all food assistance delivered in 1993 and 1994 was transported by road. Truck convoys operated out of warehouses based in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and, as a result, often crossed territory that was controlled by opposing forces.²⁶¹ Road convoys faced direct attacks by the warring parties, as well as threats and blockades preventing them from crossing territory. In an attempt to remain impartial and to minimize the chances of attack, the UN adopted a policy of explicit “consent,” meaning that it needed consent of all factions controlling transit routes to make each delivery.²⁶² U.S. officials also emphasized that their humanitarian aid delivery program was impartial during this period: President Clinton declared in February that air drops would be

²⁵⁷ Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, New York: The Modern Library, 1999, p. 23.

²⁵⁸ Woodward, 1995, p. 177.

²⁵⁹ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, New York: Basic Books, 2007, p. 288.

²⁶⁰ Schulte, 1997, p. 25.

²⁶¹ Lidy et al., 1999, p. I-8.

²⁶² Lidy et al., 1999, p. ES-3.

“accomplished without regard to ethnic or religious affiliation,”²⁶³ and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a comparatively nonpolitical international organization, was tasked with choosing which enclaves needed aid most urgently so that the United States and European states would be less likely to be accused of favoring a particular ethnic group or side in the conflict.²⁶⁴ The impartiality approach allowed the UN and U.S. forces to successfully deliver humanitarian aid to Bosnian civilians. However, this approach also limited the effectiveness of humanitarian aid: Estimates suggest that the international community was only able to meet about 60 percent of total humanitarian requirements in Bosnia between April 1993 and March 1994, for example, in part because “Armed factions employed a diverse array of techniques to stymie humanitarian convoys, ranging from newly invented documentation requirements to attacking and killing convoy personnel.”²⁶⁵

Variables Contributing to Success: U.S. Technical Capacity

Finally, U.S. leadership in Operation Provide Promise facilitated the successful provision of humanitarian assistance in Bosnia. Operation Provide Promise focused on 12 enclaves where civilians were isolated by difficult road access.²⁶⁶ The air drops were executed by the USAF 435th Air Wing stationed in Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, and U.S. flights were occasionally accompanied by German and French aircraft.²⁶⁷ The air drops managed to successfully provide humanitarian assistance without sustaining any casualties despite operating in a nonpermissive environment. The Bosnian government initially requested air drops as part of UN humanitarian assistance operations in the summer of 1992, but the concept was initially rejected because it would present what were perceived to be unacceptable risks to air crews. However, because of widespread acknowledgment of the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia as well as the encouragement of the incoming Clinton administration, the air drop phase of the operation began in early 1993.²⁶⁸ Air crews faced a nonpermissive environment that included the presence of man-portable SAMs on the ground and the threat of small arms fire.²⁶⁹ Additionally, operational intelligence was limited because of a lack of friendly force presence in drop zone areas, combined with cloud cover and mountainous terrain that inhibited the

²⁶³ President William J. Clinton, “Statement Announcing Airdrops to Provide Humanitarian Aid to Bosnia-Herzegovina,” February 25, 1993.

²⁶⁴ James J. Brooks, “Operation Provide Promise: The JFACC’s Role in Humanitarian Assistance in a Non-Permissive Environment,” Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Joint Military Operations Department, 1996, p. 5.

²⁶⁵ Lidy et al., 1999, p. I-8.

²⁶⁶ Lidy et al., 1999, p. ES-3.

²⁶⁷ Lidy et al., 1999, p. ES-5.

²⁶⁸ Lidy et al., 1999, p. I-15.

²⁶⁹ Brooks, 1996, p. 4.

collection of useful intelligence.²⁷⁰ Because of these restrictions, “The ultimate success of the air drop operation hinged on both the technical capabilities of the air drop aircraft and the innovative tactics developed by the air and ground crews tasked with the mission.”²⁷¹ Air drop aircraft flew in formation to minimize threat exposure, and pilots tried to be as unpredictable as possible when flying in the same drop zones. Air crews were also restricted to conducting drops at night above 10,000 feet above ground target to minimize the risk of attack.²⁷² However, the drops tended to be less accurate because of the height, and while the height restrictions minimized risks, they also “placed great stress on the ability to hit the desired drop zone accurately. Only C-130s equipped with adequate defensive systems were allowed to participate.”²⁷³ Some of the U.S. C-130E aircraft also had all-weather aerial delivery systems installed, allowing for the use of radar to drop supplies more accurately even in adverse weather conditions. French and German aircraft that occasionally accompanied U.S. aircraft also did not have the onboard equipment or the proficiency to deliver drops as accurately as U.S. aircraft. U.S. crews trained allied crews on how to conduct the air drop missions, with allied crews flying with American crews on missions to observe and U.S. instructors training allies at the airbase in Germany before they could fly missions themselves. Because the United States had only seven aircraft and 20 trained crews to conduct the mission, this training allowed for the addition of four allied aircraft, but resources devoted to training limited how many sorties could be flown.²⁷⁴ The United States also took steps to reduce the potential threat to air drops that acknowledged their impartiality, including “permitting inspection of cargoes by Bosnian Serb officials, agreeing to consider drops to Serb and Croat communities, and dropping leaflets in planned host areas to explain the purpose of air drops.”²⁷⁵

Variables Inhibiting Success: Lack of Consensus

These objectives remained limited in scope through the early years of the Clinton administration because of divisions within the U.S. government and between the United States and its European allies. Clinton had criticized the Bush administration’s Bosnia policy during the 1992 election campaign for “turning its back on violations of basic human rights” and expressed support for air strikes against the Serbs if they continued to block the delivery of humanitarian aid to Sarajevo.²⁷⁶ When President

²⁷⁰ Brooks, 1996, p. 13.

²⁷¹ Lidy et al., 1999, p. ES-5.

²⁷² Brooks, 1996, p. 6.

²⁷³ Lidy et al., 1999, p. ES-6.

²⁷⁴ Brooks, 1996, pp. 8–9.

²⁷⁵ Lidy et al., 1999, p. I-16.

²⁷⁶ Holbrooke, 1999, pp. 41–42.

Clinton came into office in January 1993, his administration recognized that the ongoing war in Bosnia was one of the key foreign policy crises on the agenda. The administration spent the first few months in office conducting a policy review on Bosnia but ultimately was unable to come up with a concerted strategy that did not face significant opposition within the administration itself.²⁷⁷ The administration considered a more forceful strategy, but this was opposed by a majority of members of Congress, as well as most military leaders, including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell.²⁷⁸ Military leaders insisted that any U.S. intervention that used force, even a limited one, would require a large number of forces: For example, General Powell argued that even just to secure the Sarajevo airport, the United States would need to deploy tens of thousands of forces, who would likely sustain many casualties and require billions of dollars and an open-ended commitment.²⁷⁹ Military leaders also worried about “mission creep” in humanitarian interventions and “regarded almost anything beyond self-protection and the carrying out of the military provisions of any peace agreement as constituting ‘mission creep’—that is, an undesirable broadening of their mission.”²⁸⁰

Additionally, U.S. officials were unable to come to an agreement with their European allies on the use of force in Bosnia. Many European countries had deployed their own forces as part of UNPROFOR, and European leaders worried that any use of force would cause the Bosnian Serbs to retaliate against their forces, which could ultimately make the presence of UN peacekeeping forces untenable. Any plan to use air power would inevitably require a willingness to abandon the policy of impartiality toward the different warring factions that the international community pursued through 1995, as well as either withdrawing UN peacekeeping forces or reinforcing them with U.S. and NATO forces to protect them against attack.²⁸¹ The leader of UNPROFOR, French Lieutenant General Philippe Morillon, even opposed the air drops, which were impartial in that they provided humanitarian supplies to Bosnian civilians regardless of their ethnic background, because he believed that they would increase the likelihood of attacks on UNPROFOR.²⁸² In May 1993, the Clinton administration decided to pursue a policy known as “lift and strike,” where the UN arms embargo would be lifted and NATO would threaten air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs unless they agreed to negotiate a peaceful agreement. Secretary of State Warren Christopher even

²⁷⁷ David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*, New York: Scribner, 2001, pp. 196–200.

²⁷⁸ Richard Holbrooke, “Forward,” in Chollet, 2005, p. x.

²⁷⁹ Madeleine Albright, *Madame Secretary*, New York: Hyperion, 2003, p. 182.

²⁸⁰ Richard Holbrooke, “Why Are We in Bosnia?” *The New Yorker*, May 18, 1998, p. 39.

²⁸¹ Gregory L. Schulte, “Former Yugoslavia and the New NATO,” *Survival*, Vol. 39, 1997, p. 48.

²⁸² Lidy et al., 1999, p. I-17.

traveled to Europe to try to get European allies onboard with the lift and strike policy, but the policy was not implemented because “the Europeans had no stomach for lift and strike, and the Clinton Administration had no stomach to implement the policy alone or risk rupturing Transatlantic relations.”²⁸³ Whenever the U.S. administration suggested that NATO air power should be used in Bosnia, European leaders would block it unless the United States was willing to put U.S. forces on the ground alongside the European forces in UNPROFOR, a step that the administration was unwilling to take, especially after the failure of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia.²⁸⁴ The growing tension between the United States and its European allies over the use of coercive air power in Bosnia was thought to be the worst division in the Western alliance in decades.²⁸⁵ The opposition within the U.S. government and among European allies toward the use of coercive force meant that U.S. objectives in Bosnia remained deeply limited in this time period and that the United States did not attempt to coerce the Bosnian Serbs to come to the negotiating table or degrade their military capabilities in any serious way.

Phase Two: Coercive Force (Mid-1993 to 1995)

As the fighting continued in spite of the presence of UN peacekeeping forces and the no-fly zone, the United States and the international community gradually escalated from impartial, largely humanitarian measures toward the use of force to coerce the Bosnian Serbs to participate in good faith in peace negotiations while working to degrade Bosnian Serb military capabilities. In this phase, the United States participated in a naval blockade (Operation Sharp Guard) to enforce economic sanctions, an arms embargo against all of the fighting factions in the former Yugoslavia, NATO-led efforts to enforce (rather than just monitor) the no-fly zone (Operation Deliberate Force), and, later in 1995, when the war still had not ended, it led NATO efforts to escalate the use of coercive air power to compel the Bosnian Serbs to participate in a peace agreement that would end the war. The primary variable contributing to initial failure in this period was again a lack of agreement between U.S. and UN/European officials over the international community’s approach to Bosnia. This led to a lack of willingness to escalate the use of force and a lack of effective command and control even when force was authorized. The variables contributing to subsequent success in ending the conflict in late 1995 were the achievement of a consensus to escalate the use of coercive force, U.S. and NATO air capabilities employed in Operation Deliberate Force, NATO’s air campaign, the success on the ground of Bosniak-Croat forces, and the peace negotiation process.

²⁸³ Chollet, 2005, p. 4–5.

²⁸⁴ Halberstam, 2001, p. 199.

²⁸⁵ Halberstam, 2001, p. 285.

Success Coding

In this phase, the United States aimed to enforce economic sanctions and an arms embargo against Croatia, Serbia, and the former Yugoslavia. Operation Sharp Guard was a joint NATO–Western European Union operation under NATO command tasked with monitoring, and later enforcing compliance with, the arms embargo on all factions in the conflict in the Adriatic Sea and Strait of Otranto between June 1993 and October 1996.²⁸⁶ Allied forces also provided air surveillance as part of the blockade, logging 62,300 flight hours over the Adriatic.²⁸⁷ NATO and Western European Union forces challenged more than 73,000 ships, boarded and inspected almost 6,000 ships, and diverted 1,500 ships to port for further inspection during the course of the operation. The operation intercepted six ships that were attempting to run the blockade.²⁸⁸ Arms did frequently enter the former Yugoslavia over land during this period, especially through Croatia. Weapons and ammunition, primarily from former Soviet and majority Muslim countries, including Iran, were smuggled to Bosniak and Bosnian Croat forces through Croatia during the war. This objective is coded as successful in spite of this evasion of the embargo for two reasons. First, the United States (and NATO) did not have forces on the ground during this period, and the intervention was therefore implicitly aimed at preventing evasion of the embargo by sea but not by land. Second, reporting during the war and congressional testimony after the war had ended revealed that the United States may have “turned a blind eye” to the Croatian government’s weapon smuggling activities because they contributed to the American strategy in the region of achieving a balance of power among the fighting factions by strengthening the Croat and Bosniak forces vis-à-vis the Bosnian Serbs, which they hoped would “create conditions favorable to a peace settlement.”²⁸⁹ According to Richard Holbrooke, who led the Dayton peace negotiations in 1995 and later served as a U.S. envoy to the region, U.S. officials’ policy of ignoring this violation of the arms embargo constituted “a policy of not having a policy.”²⁹⁰ Thus, although the Croatian government’s activities constituted a violation of the embargo, they did so in a way that furthered U.S. objectives in the region.

The objective of enforcing the no-fly zone and degrading Bosnian Serb military capabilities is coded as partially successful in this period. After a series of violations of the no-fly zone between October 1992 and March 1993, especially by Bosnian Serb forces using Bosnian airspace to bomb villages, the UN Security Council authorized the use of force against further violations of the no-fly zone in March 1993. Under

²⁸⁶ Kathleen M. Reddy, “Operation Sharp Guard: Lessons Learned for the Policymaker and Commander,” Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, 1997, p. 1.

²⁸⁷ Reddy, 1997, p. 10.

²⁸⁸ Christopher Bellamy, “Naval Blockade Lifts in the Adriatic,” *The Independent*, June 19, 1996.

²⁸⁹ Roger Cohen, “Arms Trafficking to Bosnia Goes on Despite Embargo,” *New York Times*, November 5, 1994.

²⁹⁰ Tim Weiner, “No U.S. Arms Role in Bosnia, Holbrooke Says,” *New York Times*, May 22, 1996.

Operation Deny Flight, which began in April 1993, NATO conducted air operations to prevent flights that were not authorized by the UN from entering the no-fly zone. The operation was tasked with intercepting, escorting, monitoring, turning away, and, if necessary, engaging with unauthorized aircraft.²⁹¹ The operation, which was the first time that NATO fighter aircraft had operated out-of-area, involved aircraft from the United States, France, and the Netherlands, as well as 4,500 personnel from 12 NATO members deployed in Italy and the Adriatic to support the mission.²⁹² By the end of its mandate in December 1995, more than 100,000 sorties had been flown as part of Operation Deny Flight.²⁹³ This objective is coded as partially successful because Deny Flight “neutralized the Bosnian Serbs’ advantage in fixed-wing air-power.”²⁹⁴ In one of the few major tests of enforcement of the no-fly zone, two U.S. F-16s shot down four of six Bosnian Serb aircraft that attempted to violate the no-fly zone near Banja Luka.²⁹⁵ However, there were still numerous violations of the no-fly zone, especially by rotary-wing aircraft, that went undisputed.²⁹⁶

The objective of compelling Bosnian Serbs to participate in a peace agreement is also coded as partially successful in this time period. Escalated use of coercive air power, in combination with territorial advances made by Bosniak and Croat forces, eventually compelled Bosnian Serbs to participate indirectly in the negotiations that resulted in the Dayton Accords, reached in November and officially signed in December 1995. However, although NATO forces were authorized to provide CAS to UNPROFOR and to engage in retaliatory air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces, NATO did not escalate the use of air power significantly until after Bosnian Serb forces captured and used 370 UN peacekeepers as hostages in May 1995, and Bosnian Serb forces overran the “safe area” of Srebrenica and massacred approximately 7,000 Bosniak civilians in July 1995. These events, as well as NATO’s inability to stop the fighting more broadly, were seen as significant setbacks that eventually spurred the international community, led by the United States, to escalate the use of force to end the war.

Variables Inhibiting Initial Success: Lack of Agreement with European Allies and UN Officials

From mid-1993 until the fall of 1995, the international community continued to be divided on how to approach the ongoing conflict in Bosnia. Over this time period, members of the Clinton administration became increasingly frustrated with the lack of progress on ending the conflict in Bosnia and pushed for more coercive action.

²⁹¹ Roberto Corsini, “The Balkan War: What Role for Airpower?” *Airpower Journal*, Winter 1995, p. 5.

²⁹² Leurdijk, 1996, pp. 29–30.

²⁹³ Leurdijk, 1996, p. 32.

²⁹⁴ Schulte, 1997, p. 21.

²⁹⁵ Schulte, 1997, p. 21.

²⁹⁶ Corsini, 1995, p. 5.

However, European leaders and high-ranking UN officials largely opposed taking more coercive action, fearing that if UNPROFOR appeared to take sides, it would come under increasing attack by the Bosnian Serbs (UN peacekeeping forces included forces from European countries). The lack of agreement between U.S. officials on the one hand, and European and UN officials on the other, largely prevented escalation until late 1995.

Regarding the no-fly zone, on an operational level, NATO had difficulty detecting low-signature and low-speed aircraft flying close to the ground. More importantly, politically, there was reluctance among NATO leaders to provoke confrontation that might lead to retaliation against UN forces and relief convoys. Interpretation of the rules of engagement for Operation Deny Flight demonstrated the tension between the United States and the UN and European allies: While the UN agreed to a more robust set of rules of engagement in theory, in practice UN officials were reluctant to act on them. A study of NATO's air campaign in Bosnia found that while NATO "always viewed the use of force in terms of compelling the Bosnian Serbs . . . the UN viewed force in the much more limited context of self-defense."²⁹⁷

As a result, violations by helicopters were not easily detected or prioritized, and there were some 1,400 violations of the no-fly zone by rotary-wing aircraft between April 1993 and March 1994.²⁹⁸ Additionally, although the enforcement of the no-fly zone was an important symbol of the international community's willingness to increase its presence in Bosnia, "The operation was seen by many as largely symbolic, taking into account the limited contribution of air forces to hostilities on the ground."²⁹⁹ Lack of agreement between U.S. and European/UN officials "also explains why the rules of engagement for the no-fly zone operation turned out to be 'highly circumscribed'. . . the pilots were issued with instructions to refrain from firing on Serbian aircraft that violated the ban, except as a last resort. They would be able to shoot down planes which would not obey repeated commands to leave the no-fly zone."³⁰⁰ Enforcement of the no-fly zone was also complicated by the presence of Bosnian Serb air defenses and a lack of willingness by the international community to escalate. UN Security Council Resolution 816 authorized NATO to enforce the no-fly zone but did not provide NATO with the authority to attack air defense systems on the ground unless they could demonstrate a direct threat to NATO aircraft. Furthermore, a U.S. F-16 aircraft was shot down in June 1995, and subsequently, rather than retaliating, NATO

²⁹⁷ Owen, 2000, p. 472.

²⁹⁸ Leurdijk, 1996, p. 31.

²⁹⁹ Leurdijk, 1996, p. 31.

³⁰⁰ Leurdijk, 1996, p. 31.

limited the presence of aircraft in Bosnian airspace, limiting the effectiveness of the no-fly zone except in the most egregious cases.³⁰¹

These tensions were further reflected in a lack of unity of command over the air campaign in Bosnia, which limited NATO's ability to escalate the air power campaign. This, in turn, limited NATO's effectiveness in coercing the parties to the conflict, especially the Bosnian Serbs, to come to the negotiating table. UN Security Council Resolution 836 authorized the use of air power to support UNPROFOR in deterring attacks on the six safe areas in June 1993, and NATO forces also began to offer to provide CAS to UN forces at this time.³⁰² However, because European allies were reluctant to escalate, they struck a compromise with U.S. officials known as the "dual-key" system, where one UN and one NATO official had to jointly authorize each air strike once they had received approval from their respective organizations.³⁰³ As a result of the dual-key system, NATO aircraft were rarely able to engage effectively to provide CAS to UN forces. For example, the first time that UNPROFOR requested CAS, in March 1994, when Bosnian Serb forces were closing in on the safe area of Bihac and had attacked French UN forces, NATO did not receive UN authorization in time to engage. Similarly, UN peacekeepers protecting the safe area of Srebrenica called for CAS and "NATO jets were ready to attack within minutes, but the UN refused to turn its key for two days, by which time the fall of the city to the Serbs was assured."³⁰⁴ UN officials did not actually authorize CAS to defend peacekeeping forces until March 12, 1994, almost a year after Deny Flight began. As a result, "The availability of NATO close air support from July 1993 did little to change the immediate situation on the ground."³⁰⁵

The "overlapping responsibility and friction" between the UN and NATO created by the dual-key system also limited NATO's ability to use air strikes to retaliate against Bosnian Serb aggression. NATO did begin to carry out air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces in 1994. Notably, in November 1994, NATO forces bombed a Serbian airbase, Udbina Airfield, in Croatia. However, although the commander of Allied Air Forces Southern Europe (AIRSOUTH) created plans to strike aircraft, the runway, and air defense systems and weapons in the area, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali only approved attacks on the runways because of concerns about demonstrating restraint so as not to provoke retaliation by the Bosnian Serbs. Such NATO air strikes in 1994 through mid-1995 were derided as "pinprick" strikes because they were largely

³⁰¹ Schulte, 1997, p. 21.

³⁰² Owen, 2000, p. 21.

³⁰³ Schulte, 1997, p. 22.

³⁰⁴ Owen, 2000, p. 474.

³⁰⁵ Shulte, 1997, 22.

symbolic and inflicted relatively little damage.³⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Bosnian Serb forces seized about 450 UN peacekeepers in late November and used them as hostages to prevent further air strikes.³⁰⁷ Bosnian Serb forces captured an additional 370 UN peacekeepers as hostages in May 1995 after NATO jets struck ammunition depots around the city of Pale, using them as human shields by chaining them to potential air strike targets.³⁰⁸ The hostage-taking “underlined the extreme vulnerability of UN peacekeepers, operating in a hostile environment” and therefore “made it clear that the international community in fact had no answer to the deliberate efforts by the Bosnian Serbs to frustrate the functioning of UNPROFOR . . . and could not guarantee the safety of UN [peacekeepers].”³⁰⁹ The hostage-taking further strained the relationship between the U.S. and UN and European officials by increasing UN reluctance to authorize coercive air strikes. Furthermore, the limited impact of the “pinprick” air strikes eroded the deterrent effect of NATO airpower on the ground, “as the warring factions realized that the ‘dual-key’ arrangements prevented an immediate and effective response to violations of the exclusion zones and that heavy weapons left in the zone around Sarajevo were not subject to effective control. . . . The mismatch of mission and capabilities between the UN on the ground and NATO in the air made it difficult to pursue a concerted approach to protecting the ‘safe areas.’”³¹⁰ As a result, according to Samantha Power, by the fall of Srebrenica, “U.S. relations with its European allies had decayed to their lowest point since NATO was founded.”³¹¹

Variables Contributing to Later Success: Achievement of Consensus to Escalate

The fall of the “safe area” Srebrenica, which led to the massacre of about 10,000 Bosniak civilian men and boys, shifted the international community’s willingness to use coercive force in Bosnia, eventually leading to successful efforts to coerce the Bosnian Serbs to come to the negotiating table. In April 1993, the UN Security Council passed UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 819, calling for Srebrenica to be treated as a “safe area,” meaning that it “should be free from any armed attack or any other hostile act.” All fighting factions were required to withdraw to within a certain distance of the safe areas, and compliance would be monitored by UN military observers.³¹² UNSCR 824, issued three weeks later, made Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zepa, Gorazde, and Bihac safe areas as well. However, the resolutions raised questions about the precise legal status of

³⁰⁶ Owen, 2000, p. 473–474.

³⁰⁷ Chuck Sudetic, “Conflict in the Balkans: The Hostages; Bosnian Serbs Set Free 43 U.N. Forces Held Hostage,” *New York Times*, December 1, 1994.

³⁰⁸ Owen, 2000, p. 477.

³⁰⁹ Leurdijk, 1996, p. 68.

³¹⁰ Schulte, 1997, p. 23.

³¹¹ Power, 2007, p. 435.

³¹² UN Security Council resolution 819, S/RES/819 (1993), April 16, 1993.

safe areas and what military measures might be taken to protect safe areas in case of attack. In June 1993, UNSCR 836 authorized UNPROFOR to use force in response to bombardments, armed intrusion, or threats to freedom of movement of UNPROFOR troops or humanitarian convoys. But ambiguity around the status of the safe areas, combined with the lack of unity in the international community over its approach to Bosnia, led to the fall of Srebrenica.³¹³

The safe areas, including Srebrenica, were guarded by relatively few, lightly armed UN peacekeeping forces. Officials hoped that they would be enough to deter an attack by Bosnian Serb forces, but they would not be able to counter such an attack with force.³¹⁴ On July 10, 1995, Bosnian Serb forces took over the safe area of Srebrenica, taking the Dutch peacekeeping forces guarding the town hostage, and systematically massacred around 7,000 Bosniak men and boys.³¹⁵ Srebrenica shocked the international community and helped generate the political will to escalate the use of coercive force against the Bosnian Serb forces.³¹⁶ Following the fall of Srebrenica, NATO was authorized to strike targets outside of the immediate areas surrounding the remaining safe areas; this allowed for a wider set of targets that inflicted more damage on Bosnian Serb forces.³¹⁷ Crucially, UN officials also transferred dual-key authority to the force commander for UNPROFOR, therefore allowing the commanders on the ground to authorize air strikes directly.³¹⁸ In response to Bosnian Serb shelling of a marketplace in Sarajevo in August 1995, NATO launched Operation Deliberate Force on August 30, 1995, attacking “Serb positions throughout the country using airpower.”³¹⁹ The UN withdrew its peacekeeping forces from the field and reconsolidated them in defensive positions before the bombing.³²⁰ The bombing campaign continued, with intermittent pauses to allow for negotiations, until September 20, when Bosnian Serb leaders agreed to participate in a peace process indirectly through the president of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic. The bombing campaign likely played a critical role, along with contextual factors (see below), in successfully coercing Bosnian Serb leaders into coming to the negotiating table. According to President Clinton, “air strikes, together with the renewed determination of our European partners and the Bosnian [Muslim] and Croat

³¹³ Leurdijk, 1996, p. 35.

³¹⁴ Power, 2007, p. 391.

³¹⁵ Holbrooke, 1999, p. 69.

³¹⁶ Daalder, 1998.

³¹⁷ Owen, 2000, p. 480.

³¹⁸ Owen, 2000, p. 481.

³¹⁹ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 88.

³²⁰ Owen, 2000, p. 495.

gains on the battlefield, convinced the Serbs, finally, to start thinking about making peace.”³²¹

In addition to the fall of Srebrenica, two other factors helped to create the consensus to engage in a coercive bombing campaign. In December 1994, President Clinton committed to deploying U.S. forces as part of a NATO ground force to assist UNPROFOR if they were withdrawn. This promise obligated the deployment of U.S. forces on the ground in the context of defeat, which would likely have been opposed by the U.S. public. The Clinton administration was therefore further motivated to find a solution in Bosnia that did not involve the deployment of U.S. forces.³²² Additionally, while the majority of the U.S. public still opposed intervention in Bosnia, nongovernmental organizations, members of Congress, and others who supported humanitarian intervention in Bosnia “had mobilized extensive public and internal political pressure on the administration to take action.”³²³ The administration also increasingly believed that a failure to decisively deal with the conflict in Bosnia would impede Clinton’s goals in other policy areas: A senior administration member later said that Bosnia “had become a cancer on our foreign policy and on [Clinton’s] leadership. It had become clear that continued failure in Bosnia was going to spill over and damage the rest of our domestic and foreign policy.”³²⁴ In addition to the Clinton administration’s changing calculations, Jacques Chirac became president of France in May 1995, replacing François Mitterrand. While Mitterrand had opposed more coercive action in Bosnia, Chirac declared the treatment of French UN peacekeeping hostages to be unacceptable and joined the Clinton administration as a supporter of escalating the use of force in Bosnia.³²⁵

Variables Contributing to Later Success: U.S. and NATO Air Capabilities

The way that the NATO bombing campaign was conducted, including the use of precision-guided munitions and targets that were carefully selected for their utility in coercing the Bosnian Serbs to participate in negotiations, also contributed to success in Operation Deliberate Force. Here, a counterfactual is illustrative: If the campaign had required a longer commitment, created more collateral damage, or generated casualties (there were no NATO casualties), it may not have been sustainable, especially given the relative lack of support for intervention among the U.S. public. Precision-guided munitions helped to achieve a quick campaign with minimal casualties: They gave NATO “the ability to conceive and execute a major air campaign that was quick, potent, and unlikely to kill people or destroy property to an extent that would cause world opinion

³²¹ Tirpak, 1997, p. 38.

³²² Chollet, 2005, p. 9.

³²³ Western, 2002, p. 136.

³²⁴ Power, 2007, p. 436.

³²⁵ Leurdijk, 1996, p. 84.

to rise against and terminate the operation.”³²⁶ Precision-guided munitions accounted for 69 percent of weapons used.³²⁷

Additionally, targets were chosen for their strategic and operational-level effects rather than for tactical ones. NATO commanders decided to focus on targets related to the command structure and mobility of Bosnian Serb forces, including lines of communication, logistical support, and headquarters and command facilities, rather than the forces themselves or materiel. In other words, the campaign was not designed to destroy the Serb forces’ ability to fight; “[r]ather, NATO limited the [targets] and used force in a graduated manner to compel the behavior of the Bosnian Serbs.”³²⁸ The Commander of AIRSOUTH, General Michael E. Ryan, exercised direct control over the choice of targets to minimize the risk of collateral damage and other errors.³²⁹ General Ryan subsequently noted that “We were not at war with any faction so it was not an attack that was meant to take away or destroy their army. It was an attack to take away the military capability they had . . . that made them dominant.”³³⁰ The careful selection of targets meant that NATO aircraft successfully hit 97 percent of targets and inflicted serious damage on more than 80 percent of targets while minimizing the risk to civilian lives and property.³³¹ Finally, the robustness of the bombing campaign contributed to its success in coercing Bosnian Serb leadership. A subsequent assessment of the air campaign found that, especially given the international community’s clear unwillingness to escalate previously, which had emboldened Bosnian Serb forces, a more restrained or half-hearted campaign, like the earlier “pinprick” strikes, likely would have led Bosnian Serb leadership to believe that the international community was acting indecisively and that they could continue fighting without significant repercussions.³³²

Variables Contributing to Later Success: Success on the Ground of Bosniak-Croat Forces

The fighting that took place on the ground was between Bosnian Serb forces on one side and a coalition of Bosniak and Bosnian Croat forces on the other side. Throughout most of the war, Bosnian Serb forces controlled about 70 percent of the territory of Bosnia and significant territory in Croatia. However, with the help of significant training provided by Western countries, the Croatian army was able to drive Serbian forces out of the Croatian regions of Krajina and western Slavonia in the summer of

³²⁶ Owen, 2000, p. 507.

³²⁷ Tirpak, 1997, p. 40.

³²⁸ Owen, 2000, p. 409.

³²⁹ Owen, 2000, pp. 485–486.

³³⁰ Tirpak, 1997, p. 41.

³³¹ Tirpak, 1997, p. 39.

³³² Owen, 2000, p. 506.

1995. A simultaneous Bosniak-Croat offensive within Bosnia that summer allowed Bosniak-Croat forces to make significant territorial advances in central and western Bosnia.³³³ The offensives of the summer of 1995 brought the division of territory in Bosnia almost exactly to 51 percent controlled by Bosniak-Croat forces and 49 percent controlled by Bosnian Serbs, mirroring the 51/49 split envisioned by the Contact Group in their plans for a peace agreement. The loss of significant amounts of territory likely contributed to Bosnian Serb leaders' decision to engage in negotiations because they were facing the possibility of military defeat for the first time. This division of territory also facilitated the subsequent peace negotiations in Dayton, Ohio, because neither side had to give up significant amounts of territory.³³⁴ In fact, some scholars have even argued that the shift in territorial control on the ground in the summer of 1995 played a more important role in bringing the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table than the NATO air campaign did. However, according to a 2002 CIA assessment, both the ground offensives and NATO bombing campaign played a role in Bosnian Serb decisionmaking: "Although the NATO campaign successfully damaged or eliminated most of the [targets] it set out to hit, the [Bosnian Serb forces were] nevertheless able to continue combat operations against its Muslim and Croat opponents all through the aerial campaign."³³⁵ But the NATO bombing campaign affected Bosnian Serb morale and their calculations about their ability to sustain future fighting.³³⁶

Variables Contributing to Later Success: Peace Negotiation Process

Finally, the existence of an ongoing offer to participate in peace negotiations contributed to NATO and the United States' success in ending the conflict in Bosnia. The carrot and stick approach—of offering a way to resolve the conflict while escalating the air campaign—effectively ended the conflict within a month once Operation Deliberate Force began. Peace negotiations had occurred on and off throughout the conflict, but Bosnian Serb leadership had not seriously engaged in them. However, after Bosnian Serb forces lost significant ground and faced a robust NATO air campaign in the fall of 1995, peace negotiations offered an alternative to fighting to the finish and facing possible military defeat. Peace negotiations resumed in the aftermath of the fall of Srebrenica, but the NATO air campaign began at the end of August 1995, in part due to the slow progress of the negotiations. Just before Deliberate Force began, Holbrooke, the lead U.S. negotiator, stated publicly that "If this peace initiative does not get moving—dramatically moving—in the next week or two, the consequences will be very adverse to the Serbian goals."³³⁷ Throughout Deliberate Force, international officials offered

³³³ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 88.

³³⁴ Owen, 2000, p. 514.

³³⁵ CIA, 2002, p. 395.

³³⁶ Owen, 2000, p. 498.

³³⁷ Leurdijk, 1996, p. 79.

to suspend the bombing campaign in response to Bosnian Serb compliance with their demands and resumed bombing when the Serbs did not engage in negotiations to end the conflict in a serious manner. Late on the second day of the bombing campaign, the Bosnian Serb leadership indicated that they were willing to discuss the ultimatum that the UN and NATO had given them to suspend the bombing campaign, of withdrawing heavy weapons more than 12 miles outside of Sarajevo, ending the siege of Sarajevo, and allowing civilians free passage. In response, the bombing campaign was suspended for 24 hours and extended for several days as negotiations proceeded. However, when it became clear that the Bosnian Serbs were not in fact moving their heavy weaponry, the bombing resumed on September 5. The campaign was again temporarily suspended late on September 9 after reports that Bosnian Serb forces had begun to withdraw from the 12-mile zone around Sarajevo. The bombing then continued until the 14th, when Bosnian Serb leaders finally agreed to end the fighting and begin negotiations. Only after it was determined that the Bosnian Serbs were complying with the ceasefire agreement was Deliberate Force permanently ended.³³⁸ The terms offered in the prospective peace plans also helped to facilitate an end to the fighting. Most notably, the provision of two federal governments in peace plans proposed by U.S. officials and by the Contact Group was an important incentive for the Bosnian Serb leadership to negotiate rather than keep fighting, since political autonomy was one of their key objectives. They were therefore less willing to continue fighting because they could achieve a key objective through negotiations instead.³³⁹

Phase Three: Postconflict Stabilization (December 1995 Through 2008)

In September 1995, all parties to the conflict agreed to enter into peace negotiations. Led by the United States, the negotiations took place at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. The subsequent agreement, known as the Dayton Accords, was reached in November and signed in Paris on December 14, 1995, formally ending the three-and-a-half-year war in Bosnia. On December 20, 1995, most of the UN peacekeeping personnel who remained in Bosnia changed helmets and became IFOR, led by NATO. NATO deployed additional personnel, including about 20,000 U.S. personnel, bringing IFOR to a total of about 60,000 personnel. One year later, on December 20, 1996, IFOR became SFOR and remained under NATO command. SFOR was replaced by EUFOR on December 2, 2004. The number of international forces in Bosnia has declined substantially since IFOR was first deployed. By February 2007, EUFOR's troop levels had decreased to about 1,600, and by 2012, there were only about 600 EUFOR troops remaining in Bosnia, primarily tasked with building capacity and training the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.³⁴⁰ Variables contributing to suc-

³³⁸ Tirpak, 1997, pp. 42–43.

³³⁹ Owen, 2000, p. 514.

³⁴⁰ European Union External Action, "About EUFOR," September 12, 2016.

cess in this period included more robust rules of engagement for the stabilization force and the number of forces, the existence of a peace agreement that had been agreed to by all sides, and initial international control over electoral institutions. The variables that made this stage of the intervention less successful were the institutionalization of ethnic divisions built into the Dayton Accords, artificial timelines for the first election that returned ethno-nationalists to power, an initial lack of cooperation between military and civilian components of the intervention (although this was somewhat ameliorated as time passed), and the country's recent history of ethnic cleansing.

Success Coding

There are two objectives related to Bosnia in the post–December 1995 time period in the data set. Between December 1995 and 1996, IFOR is coded as having some success in enforcing the provisions of the Dayton Accords, including implementing a ceasefire between belligerents, establishing an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, and creating a “zone of separation” between Bosnians and Serbs. Under the provisions of the Dayton Accords, IFOR was tasked with establishing a cessation of hostilities, ensuring force protection, and enforcing a separation of the warring parties, including the withdrawal of heavy weapons into designated areas. The UN International Police Task Force was also given the responsibility of providing law enforcement. The objective of stabilizing the peace by contributing to a safe and secure environment conducive to civil and political reconstruction between December 1996 and 2008 is also coded as partially successful. The stabilization forces in Bosnia were largely successful at implementing a “negative peace”—that is, they were able to stop the fighting and maintain peace for more than two decades while ensuring that Bosnia remained a united, multi-ethnic state.³⁴¹ However, the stabilization forces struggled to establish a “positive peace.” Specifically, the international community has struggled to consolidate authority in the central government and strengthen state institutions. Postwar politics have also notably been characterized by the “consistent pre-eminence of the [ethno-] national parties that had dominated Bosnian politics and institutions since 1990” who started the war in the first place.³⁴² Significant issues around the return of refugees and displaced peoples also hindered success. The first year of the postwar peace was especially “marked by minimal return of refugees to areas where they now constituted a minority.”³⁴³ While the pace of return eventually accelerated significantly, “most of Bosnia remains ethnically homogeneous with only small minorities from the other two nations.”³⁴⁴ Almost two decades after the war, nationwide protests in February 2014 in which demonstrators burnt local government offices pointed to popular disaffection

³⁴¹ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 93.

³⁴² Bieber, 2006, p. 40.

³⁴³ Bieber, 2006, p. 30.

³⁴⁴ Bieber, 2006, p. 31.

with the Bosnian government, as well as anger around continued poverty and unemployment. Government and state capacity has been negatively affected by “chronically poor regulatory oversight, bad governance and political infighting,” issues that resulted from decisions made by international officials after the war, as well as from context-dependent factors.³⁴⁵

Variables Contributing to Success: Number of Forces and Robust Rules of Engagement

At the end of the war, the armies of the warring factions remained intact. Under the conditions of the Dayton Accords, each side was able to retain its militaries, a state of affairs that could have led to a relapse in the conflict. Thus, IFOR’s first priority was to separate the former warring parties and establish a durable cessation of hostilities. The number of IFOR troops in Bosnia allowed IFOR to keep the warring parties separated. A RAND study found that of several major cases of post–World War II U.S. military intervention, the IFOR mission in Bosnia had one of the highest ratios of forces to civilians. The study notes that stabilization missions with higher troop levels run a lower level of risk, with larger forces associated with lower numbers of casualties, both suffered and inflicted. In the Bosnia case, IFOR and the subsequent stabilization forces did not suffer any combat-related casualties.³⁴⁶ In contrast with UNPROFOR troops, who were “too lightly armed, too widely disbursed [and] . . . unable to intimidate or risk escalation,” IFOR was more successful in preventing violence, in part because of the number of forces deployed.³⁴⁷ As the security situation stabilized, the number of forces was gradually drawn down, to 32,000 in 1998. However, the gradual withdrawal has “not adversely affected the security situation in Bosnia,” and the remaining forces continued to “exert an important stabilizing influence in the country.”³⁴⁸ According to a 1996/1997 assessment, there had been very few violent incidents involving the former warring parties: “the parties have not dared test its will or capacity, precisely because of its strength of numbers and good organization.”³⁴⁹

In addition to more forces, IFOR also had more robust rules of engagement than the UN peacekeeping forces in Bosnia did during the war. Facilitated by unity among international officials about IFOR’s role, IFOR was able to act more aggressively in the face of potential hostile action. According to Holbrooke, the fact that no NATO soldier was killed in hostile action in Bosnia is attributable, “in large part, to the authority given to NATO in the Dayton agreement: to shoot first and ask questions later—the

³⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, *Bosnia’s Future*, Brussels, Belgium: 2014a, p. 4.

³⁴⁶ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. xxv.

³⁴⁷ Pauline Neville-Jones, “Dayton, IFOR and Alliance Relations in Bosnia,” *Survival*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 1996–1997, p. 63.

³⁴⁸ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 98.

³⁴⁹ Neville-Jones, 1996–1997, p. 54.

exact opposite” of UNPROFOR.³⁵⁰ The commander of IFOR, General Leighton W. Smith, later reflected that

[IFOR] was much more robust than its predecessor, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). . . . We were also sized to the job at hand and given the right ROE [rules of engagement]. In Bosnia, our ROE were quite broad and robust. Because of that we were able to use the professional forces assigned to us quickly and convincingly. This allowed us to set the stage in the early days of IFOR’s existence and, later, to gain control of situations which might have otherwise gotten out of hand.³⁵¹

Variables Contributing to Success: Existence of Peace Agreement

IFOR and subsequent missions were also able to prevent the outbreak of further violence because they were monitoring a peace agreement that was already in place that had been agreed to by the warring factions. In contrast with UNPROFOR, which deployed into an active conflict environment, IFOR was deployed when a ceasefire was being actively observed, and the incentives for warring parties to resume fighting were lower because each side had gained at least some of its key goals through the Dayton Accords. IFOR patrolled a 1,400 km-long boundary that had been agreed to in Dayton that separated the two federal entities and the armies of the warring parties. IFOR also approached the task of keeping the two sides separated with “even-handedness,” which was different than UNPROFOR’s impartiality approach: “The UN force was reluctant to single out one faction, for fear of compromising its mandate and imperiling the safety of its lightly armed forces. IFOR treated all factions equally, but had the capability and authority to take enforcement action against any party violating the terms of the peace agreement.”³⁵²

Variables Contributing to Success: International Control over Electoral Institutions

Under the Dayton Accords, several different international organizations were given responsibility for implementing different elements of the agreement. While IFOR (and later SFOR and EUFOR) were responsible for security-related tasks, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was responsible for managing elections until 2001 and effectively had control over how the first few elections held after the war were administered until an election law could be adopted. The OSCE implemented programs to promote the development of democratic governing institutions at all levels of the state. Crucially, the OSCE used its authority to remove from the ballot

³⁵⁰ Holbrooke, 2005, p. xii.

³⁵¹ Leighton W. Smith, “NATO’s IFOR in Action: Lessons from the Bosnian Peace Support Operations,” National Defense University Strategic Forum, Institute for National Strategic Studies, January 1999, p. 2.

³⁵² Schulte, 1997, p. 25.

“candidates suspected of war crimes or believed to have ‘obstructed Dayton’ . . . and forced those in power with similar track records to withdraw from official positions.”³⁵³ For example, the OSCE refused to allow the Serb Radical party to register for the April 2000 municipal elections. The first few rounds of elections did largely return the same ethno-nationalist groups to power that had been in office when the war began (see below); however, the OSCE’s administration at least prevented the worst individuals and some particularly extreme parties from gaining office. Furthermore, in contrast with Iraq, where electoral officials used disqualification as a tool to harm their political opponents, resulting in perceptions that the elections were corrupt and unfair, the OSCE ensured that the power to remove individuals and parties from the ballot remained relatively apolitical. OSCE officials also took steps to prevent elections from becoming corrupt: For example, national elections were held on September 14, 1996, but the OSCE delayed for one year municipal elections that were supposed to take place on the same day “due to fraud and manipulation procedures, primarily by the Bosnian Serbs, and other problems.”³⁵⁴

The OSCE also took steps after the first elections, held in 1996, to promote more-moderate parties, changing many of the election laws prior to the 2000 elections, including introducing open lists and multi-member constituencies.³⁵⁵ Moderate and non-nationalist parties did make substantial advances in the 2000 election results, but electoral reforms had less of an effect than members of the international community had hoped. The OSCE hoped that the moderate opposition would make further gains and, in fact, actively encouraged Bosnians to vote for opposition parties.³⁵⁶ Some of this activism had the unintended effect of strengthening nationalist parties’ claims that the international community was interfering in the elections.³⁵⁷

The OSCE gradually turned more authority for elections over to national authorities until an election law was adopted in August 2001 and an Election Commission appointed in November 2001.³⁵⁸ Thus while the postwar elections were not seen as entirely successful, OSCE officials were able to prevent the worst individuals from taking office and to prevent the power of disqualifying candidates from becoming politicized.

³⁵³ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 103.

³⁵⁴ Steven R. Bowman, Julie Kim, and Steven Woehrel, *Bosnia Stabilization Force (SFOR) and U.S. Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 29, 1998, pp. 1–2.

³⁵⁵ Bieber, 2006, p. 94.

³⁵⁶ Bieber, 2006, p. 99.

³⁵⁷ Bieber, 2006, p. 146.

³⁵⁸ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 103.

Variables Inhibiting Success: Institutionalization of Ethnic Divisions

The architects of the Dayton Accords intended to create a power-sharing arrangement in which representatives of all three major ethnic groups in Bosnia had a say in how the country was governed. However, in the process, provisions of the Dayton Accords inadvertently institutionalized ethnic divisions in ways that proved harmful for postwar politics and governance. According to Lise Howard, the Bosnian constitution that was drafted as part of the Dayton Accords “created clear structures that recognized group rights over individual rights and introduced rigid ethnic quotas in all of the state’s basic institutions.”³⁵⁹ Divisions between the three national groups are built into the institutions of the government: For example, the Presidency is made up of one Croat, one Serb, and one Bosniak who rotate on a regular basis and wield equal veto power. This arrangement provides equal representation for each of the groups and was intended to facilitate power-sharing, but it means that the institution of the Presidency, which controls Bosnia’s foreign policy and can nominate bills to parliament, is based on national and territorial representation rather than on other foundations that could unite Bosnians across the ethnic groups.³⁶⁰ Bosnians must run for office based on the ethnic group that they belong to, a system that has inadvertently institutionalized ethnic divisions in Bosnian politics. Bosnian citizens who do not belong to one of the three major ethnic groups are effectively excluded from participation in the political system, which is built around the idea of balancing the three major ethnic groups.³⁶¹ Nearly every public office at every level, from local-level administrative jobs to the national level, “is allotted according to an ethnic quota, a spoils system that has led to extensive patronage networks, corruption, and inefficiencies. . . . the framework is tailor-made for those who wish to stoke ethnic antagonisms for political gain.”³⁶² Notably, Bosnia is not able to join the European Union “in part because its constitution and basic state institutions are considered discriminatory.”³⁶³ Thus, while the constitutional arrangements drafted at Dayton were intended to promote institutional power-sharing, they inadvertently hardened ethnic divisions that remained after the war ended.

Variables Inhibiting Success: Artificial Timelines

At the outset of the postwar stabilization mission, U.S. officials intended to withdraw relatively quickly: When IFOR deployed in December 1995, President Clinton pledged that the U.S. commitment would last only one year. As a result, at the

³⁵⁹ Lise Howard, “US Foreign Policy Habits in Ethnic Conflict,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 4, 2015, p. 728.

³⁶⁰ Bieber, 2006, p. 48.

³⁶¹ Bieber, 2006, p. 33.

³⁶² Patrice C. McMahon and Jon Western, eds. *The International Community and Statebuilding: Getting Its Act Together?* London, England: Routledge, 2012, p. 73.

³⁶³ Howard, 2015, p. 728.

beginning of the postwar stabilization operation, there was considerable pressure to meet artificial timelines, especially for holding elections and withdrawing forces. The OSCE decided, “with strong backing by the Clinton administration,” to hold national elections in September 1996, less than a year after IFOR was deployed.³⁶⁴ This decision was controversial among human rights groups, the U.S. Congress, and others, who “pressed for a postponement of the vote until conditions on the ground in Bosnia were more suitable for elections.”³⁶⁵ The elections were held in spite of these reservations. Although the OSCE was able to fix some of the mistakes made in the 1996 elections (see above), “The complete victory of the dominant national parties consolidated the outcome of the war and re-legitimized the national parties and made them a fixture” that the international community was forced to work with after the war.³⁶⁶ Observers point to the fact that the elections were held so early as an important explanation as to why nationalist parties were largely returned to power: Because the nationalist parties had fairly strict control over the media, ties to armed forces, and economic interests built up over the course of the war, they had an advantage over newer and opposition parties in competing in the postwar elections.³⁶⁷ However, while the international community initially focused on holding elections quickly, after disappointing results in 1996, there was a shift in focus toward supporting the election of more-moderate groups (see above), which helped to ameliorate some (but not all) of these problems.

Similarly, although President Clinton had initially intended to withdraw U.S. forces at the one-year mark, the administration and stabilization force shifted toward a focus on meeting on-the-ground benchmarks instead of artificial chronological deadlines. Despite President Clinton’s promise to Congress that U.S. forces would only be in Bosnia for a year, “it had become increasingly apparent that neither the IFOR tasks nor the provisions of the Dayton Accords would be fully accomplished before the end of that time period.”³⁶⁸ According to Madeleine Albright, then–U.S. ambassador to the UN who became Secretary of State in January 1997, the policy of keeping U.S. forces in IFOR for only a year was intended to reassure the Pentagon and Congress that the United States would not remain indefinitely or get sucked into an endless nation-building exercise. However, in November 1996, President Clinton “abandoned one premature deadline and immediately established another” by announcing that SFOR would be created as a follow-on to IFOR, and that U.S. forces would be withdrawn by

³⁶⁴ Julie Kim, *Bosnia Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR): Activities of the 104th Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 6, 1997, p. 16.

³⁶⁵ Kim, 1997, p. 16.

³⁶⁶ Bieber, 2006, p. 86.

³⁶⁷ Bieber, 2006, p. 41.

³⁶⁸ Phillips, 2006, p. 33.

June 1998.³⁶⁹ Prior to the new 1998 deadline, some within the administration, including new Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen, argued that SFOR should still withdraw on schedule, while others, including Albright, argued that it was the United States' and international community's responsibility to continue to assist in the implementation of Dayton, as had been promised in 1995. According to Albright, "It took weeks of discussion, but we finally agreed that our emphasis in public should not be on when SFOR would leave but on what the entire international community, including SFOR, could help Bosnians achieve." This new approach was announced in May 1997.³⁷⁰ During this phase of SFOR, NATO "outlined a number of benchmarks to measure progress toward a self-sustaining peace in Bosnia" and reviewed SFOR operations.³⁷¹ These reviews indicated an increasingly stable security situation, prompting "gradual reductions in SFOR's force strength over time."³⁷² Thus, although withdrawal of ground forces was initially tied to dates, a shift in the U.S. administration's policy led to withdrawal being tied to mission reviews and on-the-ground benchmarks instead, allowing the international community the time and resources necessary to maintain the relatively stable security situation in Bosnia.

Variables Inhibiting Success: Lack of Cooperation Between Military and Civilian Organizations

The sharp distinction made between civil and military tasks in the Dayton Accords led to negative consequences for the intervention. Some tasks did not fall squarely under either the military or civilian purview and therefore fell through the cracks, especially in the early years of the stabilization mission. For example, initially it was unclear who had responsibility for apprehending individuals who had been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and IFOR was initially unwilling to become involved in law enforcement tasks: "As a result, virtually no individuals were arrested for possible war crimes during the first two years of reconstruction."³⁷³ Poor coordination between the military and civilian elements of the intervention was exacerbated by a U.S.-European split over tasks related to implementation. U.S. officials opposed giving the EU responsibility for civilian efforts because they believed that an EU pillar could end up competing with NATO for authority, so civilian efforts fell largely under the authority of the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR), created in 1995 after Dayton to oversee civilian implementation, with no established coordinating mechanism between

³⁶⁹ Albright, 2003, p. 265.

³⁷⁰ Albright, 2003, p. 266.

³⁷¹ Kim, 1997, p. 1.

³⁷² Kim, 1997, p. 1.

³⁷³ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 96.

NATO and OHR in the early stages of the stabilization mission.³⁷⁴ According to a 2003 RAND report, “In a misguided effort, [the United States] sought to advance NATO authority at the expense of the EU, and U.S. influence at the expense of the Europeans. . . . the result has been endemic conflict among competing international agencies, indecisive leadership of the transformational effort, and unnecessary prolongation of the international military presence.” Implementation of civilian-related tasks was also delayed by U.S. military leaders’ fears over the potential for “mission creep”: Concerns about expanding the military mission made officials reluctant to allow IFOR and SFOR to assist with civilian tasks.³⁷⁵ This led to what Albright termed “reverse mission creep,” with NATO forces “taking no risks and doing little to help achieve civilian-related goals.”³⁷⁶

However, after the first year or so of the postwar stabilization mission, cooperation improved, and the implementation of civilian-related tasks picked up to a marginal extent. This was in part because SFOR and the OHR developed a better working relationship.³⁷⁷ Fears about mission creep also subsided, and SFOR began to expand into civilian-related tasks. SFOR began to seize indicted war criminals in July 1997, and SFOR also expanded its activities to include increasing the availability of public services, economic reconstruction, and the use of military force to enforce elements of Dayton, such as seizing control of extreme nationalist radio stations.³⁷⁸ Additionally, in the first two years of the stabilization mission, the OHR had relatively little authority and was largely ignored by the former warring parties. However, after 1997, the High Representative was endowed with additional authority, known as the Bonn powers, including executive and legislative authority. This additional power transformed the OHR from a facilitator role “to an integral institution of the current system of government in Bosnia.”³⁷⁹ After 1997, the High Representative was able to step in to enact laws and make decisions that the Bosnian government was unable or unwilling to make.³⁸⁰ To take one important example, prior to 1997, each of the two federal entities had their own license plates for cars. The High Representative acted unilaterally to designate a common national license plate so that license plates no longer indicated which federal entity the driver came from, leading to a decline in vandalism and harassment by the police.³⁸¹

³⁷⁴ Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. 100–101.

³⁷⁵ Phillip, 2005, p. 31.

³⁷⁶ Albright, 2003, p. 265.

³⁷⁷ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 101.

³⁷⁸ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 107.

³⁷⁹ Bieber, 2006, p. 84.

³⁸⁰ Kim, 1997, p. 1.

³⁸¹ Dobbins et al., 2003, p. 102.

Variables Inhibiting Success: History of Ethnic Cleansing

The war in Bosnia, including ethnic cleansing that led to high levels of displacement, hardened ethnic divisions and left the two federal entities far more homogeneous in terms of ethnic representation than they had been in 1992. This, in turn, made the implementation of civilian-related tasks, especially refugee return, more challenging. Over the course of the war, 1.2 million Bosnians became refugees in other countries, and an additional 1.1 million were internally displaced: Thus, more than half of Bosnia's population was forced to leave their homes during the course of the conflict. Annex 3 of the Dayton Accords stipulated freedom of movement for all Bosnians regardless of ethnic background, and Annex 7 stipulated the "right of return" for all refugees and displaced peoples to their original homes and restoration of all prewar property or financial compensation. Progress on the return of refugees and displaced people to minority areas was seen as an important litmus test of internal stability and postconflict relations between Bosnia's ethnic groups because the return process depended on providing security for returnees and on the clarification of property ownership and restitution to prewar owners.³⁸²

In practice, this was severely complicated by the fact that many displaced people would be returning to areas where they were now in the minority and where the risk of violence would therefore be high; civilians who had stayed in their neighborhoods had also taken over displaced peoples' houses and property in many cases. Additionally, returnees faced many obstacles to returning home, including particularly "the security and political situations—exacerbated in most areas by the continuance in power of nationalist authorities and in some areas of indicted or suspected war criminals—as well as discrimination, inadequate and sometimes intentionally distorted information about" returning.³⁸³ As a result, the first year of the stabilization mission "was marked by minimal return of refugees to areas where they now constituted a minority."³⁸⁴ The pace of return did begin to accelerate in the late 1990s, especially "minority returns"—i.e., Bosnians returning to areas where their ethnic group was in the minority, thus somewhat reducing the ethnic homogeneity of the immediate postwar period. The pace of return was accelerated by the reestablishment of the freedom of movement across territory, "although reprisals against refugees returning to their pre-war place of residence" continued sporadically even several years after the war had ended.³⁸⁵ The international community also tried several initiatives to assist refugees in returning home, some with more success than others: For example, the UNHCR provided a free bus service to cross the lines of ethnic enclaves, which assisted more than

³⁸² Bieber, 2006, p. 111.

³⁸³ International Crisis Group, *Going Nowhere Fast: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Brussels, Belgium: May 1, 1997, p. i.

³⁸⁴ Bieber, 2006, p. 30.

³⁸⁵ Bieber, 2006, p. 32.

283,000 passengers.³⁸⁶ Return to minority areas accelerated in 1999 and reached a peak in 2001 and 2002, including to areas where nationalist forces had deliberately prevented minority return immediately after the end of the war.³⁸⁷ Overall, the number of refugees and displaced peoples returning home after the war fell short of expectations: Only about 250,000 refugees and displaced peoples had returned home 16 months after Dayton, leaving about 815,000 refugees and 750,000 displaced peoples.³⁸⁸ In spite of some progress, “most of Bosnia remains ethnically homogeneous with only small minorities from the other two nations.”³⁸⁹ Security and civilian elements of postwar reconstruction were significantly hindered by the ethnic cleansing and ethnic division that had hardened over the course of the conflict.

Conclusion

Three themes are evident throughout all phases of the Bosnian intervention. First, unity or disunity in the international community played a crucial role in shaping the scope of the intervention and, therefore, its outcome. In the initial phases, lack of agreement between the United States and its European allies, along with UN officials, over what the intervention should try to accomplish and the means it should employ led to an intervention with deeply limited ambitions and a lack of willingness to escalate the use of force, even when it became evident that the original policy was not working. This lack of agreement also meant that UN peacekeeping forces were placed in the untenable position of trying to enforce a peace that did not exist without the authority to exert significant force. Even after UNPROFOR was officially authorized to call in CAS, UN officials were reluctant to do so. It was only after the fall of Srebrenica that the international community was galvanized into action, and once there was unity in the international community, air strikes coupled with negotiations quickly facilitated the end of the conflict. International support for the postwar stabilization mission allowed for a large number of forces with robust ROE to be deployed over a fairly long period of time, which created the conditions for success in maintaining the peace.

Second, the consent (or lack thereof) of the warring parties played an important role in each phase of the intervention. In the first phase, U.S. limited objectives were facilitated by the UN's insistence on maintaining the consent of the warring parties, although this also constrained how much aid was delivered. The insistence of UN and European officials that the international community maintain impartiality limited the effectiveness of UNPROFOR, as well as the enforcement of the no-fly zone and efforts to end the conflict, until the international community was galvanized into support for a more coercive bombing campaign after the massacre in Srebrenica. The consent of

³⁸⁶ International Crisis Group, 1997, pp. i–ii.

³⁸⁷ Bieber, 2006, p. 112.

³⁸⁸ International Crisis Group, 1997, p. i.

³⁸⁹ Bieber, 2006, p. 31.

the previously warring parties facilitated the implementation of the Dayton Accords, since NATO forces were implementing a peace that had already been agreed to by all sides.

Finally, the number and capability of forces, as well as the specific weapons used, were key to the execution of the mission in each phase. In the first phase, U.S. air capabilities made Operation Provide Promise successful in delivering humanitarian aid. In the second phase, the U.S. contributions to Operation Deliberate Force, including the use of precision-guided munitions and careful target selection, helped make the NATO bombing campaign successful. Finally, in the third phase, having enough forces with robust rules of engagement contributed to the success of the postwar stabilization mission.

Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003–2011

Background

Operation Iraqi Freedom began on March 20, 2003, when the United States, along with the United Kingdom and several allies in a “coalition of the willing,” launched an intervention into Iraq. The ensuing war lasted almost nine years, one of the longest in U.S. history. U.S. casualty rates were high: 4,475 U.S. service members, 12 DoD civilians, and at least 1,595 U.S. contractors were killed between March 2003 and December 2011, when the last U.S. forces left Iraq, with an additional 32,337 personnel wounded in action.³⁹⁰ Although estimates of Iraqi casualties vary widely, some sources suggest that between March 2003 and December 2011, about 162,000 Iraqis were killed by violence, of whom 79 percent were civilians.³⁹¹

Although the United States had only intended to intervene in Iraq for a short period of time, U.S. forces stayed in Iraq until December 2011, owing to the tremendous difficulty of rebuilding a government and security apparatus and the insurgency of former Ba’ath regime officials, terrorist groups, and others that emerged soon after the successful removal of Saddam Hussein from power in 2003 and began to attack coalition forces and civilians. Following the removal of the former regime and about a year under the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the United States officially turned sovereignty over to an Iraqi government appointed by U.S. and UN officials in June 2004. Elections were held in January 2005 for an interim government, the Transitional National Assembly, which drafted a constitution that was ratified in October 2005. Parliamentary elections were held in December 2005 and in March 2010, but on both occasions several months of negotiations passed following the elections before a government was formed.

³⁹⁰ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 292.

³⁹¹ Iraq Body Count, “Iraqi Deaths from Violence 2003–2011,” 2012.

Attempts to establish a stable government were undermined at every turn by a strong insurgency and rampant violence between the Sunni and Shi'a Muslim sects. In February 2006, after al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) bombed the al-Askari mosque in Samarra, one of the holiest sites for Shi'a Muslims, a cycle of reprisal sectarian violence escalated to all-out civil war. After an assessment of U.S. strategy, the administration sent 30,000 more forces to Iraq, and military forces shifted to a COIN strategy. This, combined with other initiatives, such as alliances formed with tribal chieftains, led to a temporary decline in violence, but sectarian infighting continued to plague the Iraq government and security forces. The George W. Bush administration negotiated a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the government of Iraq in the fall of 2008, but the failure to secure a new SOFA led to the withdrawal of all U.S. forces in 2011.

Intervention Objectives

The political objectives of the United States evolved dramatically over the course of its involvement in Iraq. The United States was able to quickly achieve the objectives of removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power and neutralizing the threat posed by Iraqi WMD programs (of which very little was ever found). Its third original objective, to neutralize Iraqi support for terrorism, proved more difficult. In retrospect, there is little (if any) evidence that Saddam Hussein's regime provided support for terrorism. However, terrorist groups and insurgents increasingly took advantage of the security vacuum that persisted after the fall of the regime, creating within Iraq a haven for insurgents and some foreign fighters. The United States did much to reduce this insurgency over its time in Iraq, but terrorist elements remained at the time of the 2011 withdrawal (and are still active today). However, the threat posed by regime support to terrorism, or the threat that was presumed to exist, was severed with the removal of Saddam Hussein from power. This objective is therefore coded as partially successful in our data set.³⁹²

U.S. success on other objectives was limited. At the beginning of the intervention in 2003, the U.S. administration aimed to create an Iraq that was prosperous and democratic. Over time, as violence increased and U.S. officials encountered several

³⁹² Coding the relative success of neutralizing the threat posed by WMDs and Iraqi support for terrorism was difficult, given the limitations of the project's typology: In both cases, U.S. objectives were based on information that turned out not to be true. The WMD objective is coded as "success" for the reason that there was no ongoing Iraqi WMD program as of 2003, but this is somewhat misleading, given that this outcome did not occur because of the intervention itself. Below we describe U.S. preparations to secure and eliminate potential WMDs and conclude that those efforts were relatively successful at putting systems in place that would have been able to secure and eliminate WMDs, had they existed. Similarly, the terrorism objective is coded as "some success" because in the March–May 2003 time period, the Iraqi regime did not have ties to terrorist groups. However, this was also not due to the efforts of the intervention, because it was subsequently found that Saddam Hussein's regime did not have ties to terrorist groups (Mike Mount, "Hussein's Iraq and al Qaeda Not Linked, Pentagon Says," *CNN*, March 13, 2008). Furthermore, the security vacuum left after Saddam Hussein's regime had fallen and decisions made by U.S. officials that exacerbated Sunni grievances somewhat ironically gave al Qaeda a presence in Iraq that it had not previously had.

obstacles to building a well-functioning democratic government in Iraq, these objectives shifted to the more modest goals of creating an internally stable and secure Iraq that had a reasonably representative government. Additionally, in March 2003, the U.S. administration planned to turn responsibility for governance over to Iraqis, likely a group of exiles including Ahmed Chalabi, within a few months. However, as the security situation deteriorated and U.S. officials realized that Iraqi governing institutions had deteriorated more than they expected, U.S. officials began to focus more on institution-building. Finally, the United States initially aimed to create an Iraq that was at peace with its neighbors. However, over time this objective too became more modest in scope, evolving from creating an Iraq at peace with the region and that would be a partner to the United States in the “War on Terror” to creating a sovereign Iraq that could stand up to Iran’s influence and providing enough internal security and capacity in the Iraqi security forces to drive out terrorist groups. Success on these altered objectives was mixed. The United States was somewhat successful at building Iraqi institutions, creating a full partner in the “War on Terror,” and establishing an Iraq that was at peace with its neighbors and well-integrated into the international community. It found no success in creating a free and prosperous Iraq and later a peaceful, united, stable, and secure Iraq. Table B.8 identifies the objectives attached to this intervention, the dates during which these interventions were pursued, and the degree of success achieved, according to our database.

The remainder of this case study reviews factors that shaped the level of success achieved by the United States on the objectives above. It divides the objectives into three sets: defeat adversaries and neutralize WMDs, establish democracy and build

Table B.8
Objectives of Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003–2011

Objective	Time Period	Level of Success
Remove Saddam Hussein from power (2.2)	March–May 2003	Success
Neutralize the threat posed by Iraqi WMD programs (2.3)	March–May 2003	Success
End alleged Iraqi support for terrorism (2.3)	March–May 2003	Some success
Create a prosperous, free Iraq (3.2)	March–May 2003	No success
Create a peaceful, united, stable, and secure Iraq (1.3)	May 2003–December 2011	No success
Build Iraqi institutions (4.2)	May 2003–December 2011	Some success
Create an Iraq that is a full partner in the War on Terror (2.3)	May 2003–December 2011	Some success
Help establish an Iraq at peace with its neighbors (2.3)	May 2003–May 2003	Some success
Create an Iraq well-integrated into the international community (2.3)	May 2003–December 2011	Some success

institutions, and establish regional peace and stability. It demonstrates how objectives shifted over time and why, summarizes the level of success on each, and identifies key variables that explain success or failure for each objective.

Defeat Adversaries and Neutralize WMDs

Prewar Planning and Capabilities of Coalition Forces

The intervention in Iraq quickly achieved the objectives of removing Saddam Hussein and his Ba'athist regime from power. These initial achievements were the most successful part of the intervention. By the end of major combat operations on April 14, 2003, "the entire Iraqi military structure collapsed in the face of far superior coalition forces."³⁹³ Saddam Hussein was able to escape but was eventually captured in December 2003.³⁹⁴ However, while coalition forces were able to quickly and decisively defeat Iraqi forces, former Ba'athist regime officials and military officers played an important role in the subsequent insurgency, including in the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's (ISIS's) military victories in 2014. Based on some assessments, U.S. decisions made in the initial months helped set the stage for the insurgency's rise. These subsequent developments temper, but do not reverse, any assessment of initial success.

A number of factors contributed to the initial success of the U.S. intervention. First, extensive military planning for the first phase of the intervention played an important role in coalition forces' decisive victory over Iraqi forces. Military planning for a potential intervention in Iraq began in November 2001, shortly after the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, when Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld directed Central Command (CENTCOM) to develop a plan to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Planning therefore took place over a 15-month period.³⁹⁵ Military planners eventually generated OPLAN 1003V, a four-phased plan that was an updated version of plans developed to eject Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait in the event that he attempted to occupy it again after the 1991 Gulf War. The plan thus benefited from 12 years of focus on the region and intelligence gleaned from the no-fly zones enforced over northern and southern Iraq during this period.³⁹⁶ The military planning process also benefited from "considerable guidance from the President and Secretary of Defense."³⁹⁷ The President was briefed on the plan 12 times between December 2001 and February 2003. Secretary Rumsfeld spoke with General Tommy Franks

³⁹³ Perry et al., 2015, p. xxii.

³⁹⁴ Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama*, New York: Pantheon, 2012, p. 38.

³⁹⁵ Perry et al., 2015, p. 55.

³⁹⁶ Perry et al., 2015, p. 31.

³⁹⁷ Perry et al., 2015, p. 55.

almost every day, and the planning staff frequently revised plans in response to this guidance.³⁹⁸

Prewar planning also aimed to prepare U.S. forces to dismantle Iraq's WMD program, although U.S. forces discovered when they arrived in Iraq that no such program existed. Prewar planners spent a good deal of time and effort preparing for contingencies involving the use of WMDs during major combat operations and put teams in place to search for and secure WMD-related facilities; however, no WMDs were found, and subsequent assessments have determined that "there was a massive intelligence failure regarding WMD in Iraq."³⁹⁹ Thus, there was not much that U.S. forces had to do to achieve this objective, at least in the immediate aftermath of the regime collapse.⁴⁰⁰ U.S. efforts toward this objective still offer insights into several key aspects of the intervention, including prewar planning and execution to those plans.

Although no active WMD program was ever found, military prewar planning developed extensive efforts to prevent the use of WMDs against coalition forces, including information operations designed to deter Iraqi forces from using WMDs against coalition forces. Locating WMDs was one of CENTCOM's primary concerns, and intelligence sources developed an extensive list of potential WMD storage sites before the invasion began. Prior to the war, the Exploitation Task Force (XTF) was established in part to find and secure stockpiles of WMDs. Teams of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) experts, supported by special forces and intelligence officers, were deployed during the invasion. The 75th XTF was able to inspect 337 sites without injury, collecting evidence and assisting in the detention of Iraqi scientists. However, the teams were impeded by extensive looting early in the intervention, which made it difficult to determine whether WMDs or other evidence had been removed or destroyed. Additionally, because coalition forces moved so rapidly toward Baghdad, there were not enough personnel available to stay behind to secure sites and the civilian NBC personnel.⁴⁰¹ Ultimately, coalition forces and supporting personnel failed to find WMDs because "there was a massive intelligence failure regarding WMD in Iraq"—in other words, no active WMD programs were discovered because they did not actually

³⁹⁸ Perry et al., 2015, p. 55.

³⁹⁹ Perry et al., 2015, p. 143.

⁴⁰⁰ U.S. forces did eventually recover more than 4,990 chemical munitions in Iraq through 2011, but these were determined to be residual weapons that predated the 1991 Gulf War rather than an active program. This was not publicly revealed until 2014, and most information is likely still classified. It is therefore difficult to determine how successful these efforts were. However, more than 600 U.S. personnel in Iraq reported exposure to chemical weapons between 2003 and 2011, and Pentagon officials apologized in 2015 for not correctly following policies for caring for forces exposed to abandoned chemical munitions, indicating that recovery efforts may not have been entirely successful ("U.S. Intelligence Documents on Chemical Weapons Found in Iraq," *New York Times*, October 14, 2014; C. J. Chivers, "Veterans Hurt by Chemical Weapons in Iraq Get Apology," *New York Times*, March 25, 2015, p. A1).

⁴⁰¹ Perry et al., 2015, pp. 126–138.

exist.⁴⁰² Nevertheless, the U.S. military was reasonably well-prepared and equipped to find WMDs, had they existed. In fact, by mid-May 2003, some of the inspection teams were tasked with other non-WMD-related responsibilities, such as investigating suspected war crimes sites.⁴⁰³

Second, the relative quality and capabilities of U.S. and Iraqi forces contributed greatly to the decisive victory and fall of the regime. Coalition forces were able to achieve a decisive victory rapidly and at low cost. In contrast with Iraqi forces, coalition forces' battlefield domination was due to their highly trained and motivated fighting forces, air supremacy, ability to find and strike targets with aerial and ground firepower, and ability to advance forces rapidly over long supply lines to take Baghdad relatively quickly.⁴⁰⁴ The use of primarily heavy forces, operating in tandem with some medium-weight and light forces and supported by artillery fires and CAS, was "overwhelmingly effective" in defeating the Iraqi Army.⁴⁰⁵ As CENTCOM commander General Franks explained the concept for the campaign in September 2002, "by applying mass simultaneously at key points, rather than trying to push a broad, slow convention advance, we throw the enemy off balance . . . [rapid maneuver] creates momentum. We put our forces deep into the enemy's territory, moving so quickly that the Iraqis will not have time to react."⁴⁰⁶ A decade of operating no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq gave coalition air forces detailed knowledge of Iraqi air defenses and enabled them to consolidate air superiority before the ground invasion began. Because most Iraqi resistance came from lightly equipped irregular forces, air forces provided CAS that targeted Iraqi ground forces, likely preventing coalition ground force casualties.⁴⁰⁷

In contrast with coalition forces, a RAND study of Operation Iraqi Freedom determined that "while poor planning, leadership, training, and equipment contributed to the rapid Iraqi defeat, the prime reason for the lack of resistance was the Iraqi military's extremely poor motivation and morale."⁴⁰⁸ Most of the army left the battlefield altogether, putting on civilian clothing and returning to their homes. This was in part because of leaflets dropped into Iraq before the invasion began directing members of the Iraqi military to take off their uniforms and "stay home with your families."⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰² Perry et al., 2015, pp. 126–138, 143.

⁴⁰³ Judith Miller, "A Nation at War: 75th Exploitation Force: Special Team Seeks Clues to Establish War Crimes," *New York Times*, March 31, 2003.

⁴⁰⁴ Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn, 2004.

⁴⁰⁵ Perry et al., 2015, p. 376.

⁴⁰⁶ Tommy Franks, *American Soldier*, New York: Regan Books, 2004, pp. 395–396.

⁴⁰⁷ Perry et al., 2015, pp. 149–150.

⁴⁰⁸ Perry et al., 2015, p. 217.

⁴⁰⁹ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006, p. 76.

Saddam Hussein was overly optimistic that the United States would not invade Iraq, and that, if it did, U.S. forces would attack by air and not deploy ground forces. Iraqi forces were therefore not well-prepared for the initial invasion and were poorly placed to repel coalition forces.⁴¹⁰ Additionally, Saddam's coup-proofing efforts and preoccupation with internal threats weakened the Iraqi military's capacity to counter a conventional ground invasion.⁴¹¹ Iraqi forces were poorly equipped and lacked even the most basic training.⁴¹² This was also due to UN sanctions that severely limited the regime's ability to replace lost equipment. Furthermore, the regime did not have control over the Kurdish north, which was protected by the no-fly zone, long before the intervention began.⁴¹³ However, some indirect efforts made by Saddam to counter coalition forces prior to the invasion, including his attempts to disperse weapons and munitions stockpiles, arm Ba'athist leaders, instruct the secret police to implement a strategy of organized insurgent resistance after the fall of the regime, and release a large number of criminals from Iraqi prisons, contributed to the subsequent insurgency.⁴¹⁴

Assessing U.S. Success at Ending Iraqi Support to Terrorism

Attempts to assess U.S. efforts toward eliminating Iraqi support to terrorism are complex. President Bush asserted in his speech announcing the invasion of Iraq in 2003 that Saddam Hussein's regime "has aided, trained, and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda" and that the regime could help terrorists obtain WMDs and use them to "fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country, or any other."⁴¹⁵ However, several subsequent reports concluded that, as in the case of the existence of WMDs, there was no evidence of such a link. Findings reported at a June 2004 hearing of the 9/11 Commission, for instance, concluded that while there was some communication between leaders of al Qaeda, including bin Laden and his aides, and Saddam Hussein's regime in the 1990s, "they do not appear to have resulted in a collaborative relationship . . . we have no credible evidence that Iraq and al Qaeda cooperated on attacks against the United States."⁴¹⁶ However, as the next section will show, Iraq would become a sanctuary for al Qaeda and later for ISIS during the instability and civil war that followed the U.S.-led intervention.

⁴¹⁰ Perry et al., 2015, p. 192.

⁴¹¹ Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003, p. 36.

⁴¹² Cordesman, 2003, pp. 43–47

⁴¹³ Perry et al., 2015, p. xxi.

⁴¹⁴ Perry et al., 2015, p. 237; Bremer, 2006, p. 127.

⁴¹⁵ "Full Text: Bush's Speech," *The Guardian*, March 17, 2003.

⁴¹⁶ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "Twelfth Public Hearing," June 16, 2004.

Establish Democracy and Build Institutions

At the beginning of the intervention in Iraq, the United States aimed to create a prosperous, free Iraq. During the course of the intervention, this objective shifted in subtle but important ways. In May 2003, the United States aimed to create a peaceful, united, stable, and secure Iraq; to build Iraqi institutions; and to create an Iraq that was a full partner in the War on Terror. Over time, U.S. officials began to recognize that the facts on the ground did not align with optimistic assumptions made before and at the very beginning of the intervention. In response, U.S. objectives became more limited, decreasing in scope from establishing a well-functioning, economically prosperous democracy with a good relationship with the United States and that actively fought terrorism in the region to creating a unified, internally stable country with a reasonably representative government that was not an active host to terrorist organizations.⁴¹⁷

The factors that affected the level of success that was achieved on objectives related to democracy and institution-building include prewar planning and assumptions; initial decisionmaking by U.S. political leaders; the number of coalition forces; the timeline for transition of sovereignty and withdrawal of forces; and the existing local context, specifically preexisting ethno-sectarian divisions driven by political issues. In the subsequent sections, we describe the ways in which these factors contributed to what limited successes were achieved and to failures that resulted in other areas. The section is organized by time period, as progress toward U.S. political objectives in this instance was gradual and relevant factors changed over time.

A Series of Failures: 2003–2006

Pre-Intervention Planning and Assumptions

Progress toward U.S. objectives was limited in the first three years because of a lack of effective and realistic planning for what would be required in the postcombat phase of the intervention. At the beginning of the intervention, U.S. policymakers planned to withdraw from Iraq as quickly as possible. While their goal was a democratic Iraq, U.S. officials did not initially plan to participate in the institution-building process, preferring for Iraqis to work it out on their own. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice indicated in early April 2003 that the United States planned to leave Iraq “completely in the hands of Iraqis as quickly as possible.”⁴¹⁸ This meant that, unlike the extensive and valuable planning that contributed to the success of the initial phase of the intervention, planning for the postcombat phase of the operation was much more limited. Initially, the Bush administration intended to overthrow the regime and leave Iraq after a limited, four-month transition, turning sovereignty over to a group of Iraqi exiles that included Ahmed Chalabi to build a democratic state. The

⁴¹⁷ E.g., see Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008*, New York: The Penguin Press, 2009, p. 316.

⁴¹⁸ Condoleezza Rice, “Dr. Condoleezza Rice Discusses Iraq Reconstruction,” press briefing, April 4, 2003.

Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), the U.S. civilian presence in Iraq in the first weeks of the intervention, “was designed as a short-term holding mechanism, to be followed by a rapid shift to an interim Iraqi authority.”⁴¹⁹ However, the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Iraq immediately following the intervention caused White House officials to abruptly change these plans.⁴²⁰ During the CPA’s tenure, coalition forces increasingly came under attack from an insurgency of former Ba’athist officials and other Sunnis emanating from the Sunni Triangle.⁴²¹

U.S. officials at first systematically underestimated the strength and effectiveness of the growing Sunni insurgency, with Secretary Rumsfeld tellingly referring to them as “dead-enders” who would soon be defeated.⁴²² Over time, U.S. officials increasingly began to recognize the fact that the insurgency would not soon dissipate and that a more robust U.S. presence was needed. The establishment of the CPA, the successor to ORHA, on April 21, 2003, “marked a transformation in the scope and scale of postwar U.S. military involvement” to “an explicit occupation with an indeterminate time frame,” driven by the increasing recognition of the scope and scale of the insurgency.⁴²³ It was at this point that the United States adopted the objective of institution-building, although U.S. officials would continue to press for a rapid turnover of sovereignty to Iraqis and withdrawal of U.S. forces until early 2007 (see below).

Prewar planning, including the optimistic assumptions that undergirded such planning efforts and a lack of planning for the challenging tasks of nation- and institution-building, played a role in the unsuccessful early efforts to stabilize Iraq and create democratic institutions. Senior U.S. officials failed to provide guidance on which agencies were in charge of planning for postwar operations in Iraq (i.e., Phase IV planning), and many of the important decisions in the lead-up to the war (including, according to CIA Director George Tenet’s memoirs, the decision to intervene itself) were not subjected to an organized interagency process.⁴²⁴ In addition to its failure to coordinate an interagency planning process, the National Security Council (NSC) was guided by the overly optimistic assumptions that coalition forces would win a decisive victory and would be able to withdraw quickly and therefore failed to provide strategic guidance on postwar contingencies or to consider less-optimistic alternative scenarios.⁴²⁵

⁴¹⁹ Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009a, p. 64.

⁴²⁰ Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009a, p. 64.

⁴²¹ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. 165.

⁴²² Malcolm W. Nance, *The Terrorists of Iraq: Inside the Strategy and Tactics of the Iraq Insurgency*, Abingdon, Oxfordshire: CRC Press, 2007, p. 196.

⁴²³ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 25.

⁴²⁴ Dobbins, Poole, et al., , 2008, p. 129.

⁴²⁵ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xix.

As a result, many agencies, including CENTCOM, the State Department, and the NSC, conducted studies of postwar contingencies, but these different streams were never merged into actionable plans. The State Department had prior experience in many of the tasks that would be required in a postwar environment, like training police forces and providing economic assistance, and the State Department sponsored a project called “The Future of Iraq” that identified challenges that could arise after the invasion. However, the State Department “remained on the margins of the post-war planning process.”⁴²⁶ CENTCOM leadership largely assumed that civilian authorities would be responsible for the Phase IV period and focused most of their planning on major combat operations.⁴²⁷ After noticing a lack of Phase IV planning late in the planning process, CENTCOM created Task Force IV (TFIV) in January 2003 to focus on Phase IV planning, but it was disbanded in March 2003 as it became clear that Task Force IV had been marginalized from the planning process. The NSC tasked DoD with postwar planning in January 2003 and with setting up a new office (ORHA) for planning.⁴²⁸ However, ORHA’s prewar planning process was impeded by a lack of interagency cooperation: For example, ORHA personnel did not have access to warplans until shortly before the war began, and by the time they did gain access, many of their plans had been rendered obsolete.⁴²⁹

Additionally, ORHA’s planning suffered from faulty assumptions made by senior U.S. policymakers, who believed that only the most senior levels of the Iraqi administration would have to be replaced and that the large civil service staffs would remain and would keep the ministries running; U.S. civilians would therefore have to do little by way of direct governance. U.S. officials believed, guided by the experience of the 1991 Gulf War, that the main problems that the United States would face in Iraq after the invasion would be massive internal displacement and the destruction of oil facilities, but they did not foresee the complete collapse of Iraqi institutions and the lack of qualified civil servants to take over key positions.⁴³⁰ ORHA’s preparations therefore focused on immediate emergency humanitarian relief operations rather than on longer-term institution-building.⁴³¹ According to L. Paul Bremer, the head of the CPA, which replaced ORHA in April 2003, “ORHA was meant to be a civilian rapid reaction force, a fire brigade, responsible for meeting immediate needs,” but once the war began, “ORHA found themselves orphans, thrust into responsibility they had

⁴²⁶ Perry et al., 2015, p. 325.

⁴²⁷ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xviii.

⁴²⁸ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xxi.

⁴²⁹ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xxii.

⁴³⁰ Paul Bremer, “I Ran Iraq in 2003. Washington Hadn’t Prepared for the Aftermath of War,” *The Guardian*, July 2, 2016.

⁴³¹ Perry et al., 2015, p. 110.

never anticipated, and without sufficient resources, whether human or financial.”⁴³² Thus, when the CPA finally took over from ORHA in May 2003, the United States was already behind on postwar institution-building, and plans had to be built from scratch.

Early Decisionmaking

Between March 2003 and early 2006, when an all-out civil war erupted, senior U.S. officials made a series of decisions that, rather than working toward a stable, peaceful, and secure Iraq, facilitated the growth of an anti-coalition insurgency and eventually a sectarian civil war. Initial decisions made by U.S. officials—namely, the CPA’s decision to dissolve the army and the de-Ba’athification policy, as well as the decision to confront Sunni insurgents in Fallujah and Moqtada al-Sadr’s Shi’a uprising in April 2004 simultaneously —also severely interfered with efforts to achieve U.S. objectives in the areas of democracy and institution-building. The decisions also likely contributed significantly to increasing sectarian divisions and therefore to the strength of the insurgency.

According to prewar planning, surrendered army units were supposed to go through a large disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration plan administered by a private contractor.⁴³³ However, instead of keeping the Iraqi military intact as planned, Bremer signed CPA Order Number 2, which officially dissolved the Iraqi Army, on May 23, 2003. According to Bremer, the order only formalized what had already happened in practice: Most military personnel had by that time abandoned their posts and returned to civilian life, and almost every army barracks had been completely destroyed, so there was nowhere for military personnel to return. Bremer believed that standing up an entirely new army would help to deal with a number of problems built into the old Iraqi military. Under Saddam Hussein, the army had a needlessly top-heavy structure, with 11,000 generals (compared with 300 in the U.S. Army).⁴³⁴ Furthermore, of 715,000 personnel, 400,000 were Shi’a conscripts who likely would not have chosen to stay on in an all-volunteer force.⁴³⁵ Perhaps most importantly, Bremer saw the old Iraqi Army as a symbol of Sunni political supremacy and of Saddam’s oppressive rule; in his view, disbanding the army was symbolic of the fresh start offered by the U.S. intervention and a more representative future for Iraq.⁴³⁶

However, the dissolution of the armed forces put approximately 350,000 men out of work who had not been paid since February 2003. Thousands of former

⁴³² Bremer, 2006, pp. 24, 26.

⁴³³ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. 121.

⁴³⁴ Bremer, 2006, p. 55.

⁴³⁵ Bremer, 2006, p. 26.

⁴³⁶ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. 140; Ibrahim Al-Marashi and Sammy Salama, *Iraq’s Armed Forces: An Analytical History*, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 28.

military members demonstrated on the streets soon after the fall of Baghdad in April, demanding stipends. The CPA eventually established a plan in July 2003 to pay former army personnel a stipend based on their rank. Many former military members also expressed a sense of betrayal by the United States at the decision, after they had followed instructions to not fight against coalition forces.⁴³⁷ Additionally, Bremer underestimated the symbolic importance of the army to Iraqis' sense of nationhood: The decision was seen by many as a humiliation and an attack on Iraqi identity, not just by Sunnis but across sectarian lines.⁴³⁸

De-Ba'athification, which removed all senior-level Ba'ath Party members from employment in the public sector, was another initial policy decision, based perhaps on incomplete pre-intervention planning, that had negative consequences. Bremer intended de-Ba'athification to apply to the top four layers of membership in the Ba'ath Party; the top three layers of management in every government agency would also be reviewed, and anyone found to be a high-ranking member of the Ba'ath Party would be removed. Bremer also reserved the authority to grant exemptions in specific cases. The policy appeared to be popular among Iraqis at least initially, especially among Shi'as and Kurds, who had been excluded from the government in the past.⁴³⁹ However, the CPA turned authority for administering the de-Ba'athification policy over to the High National De-Ba'athification Commission in September 2003. The commission, headed by former exile Ahmed Chalabi, took a harder line—for example, declaring some exemptions void and expanding the employment ban beyond public employment to other sectors. Chalabi was accused of using the de-Ba'athification process for his own political ends.⁴⁴⁰ Bremer later wrote that he quickly became disenchanted with the commission: "I mistakenly gave Iraqi politicians responsibility to implement this narrowly drawn program."⁴⁴¹ De-Ba'athification also alienated many in the Sunni community because they were the most affected, and many Sunni leaders were thereby blocked from participating in the new political process and security forces.⁴⁴² Additionally, because public servants, including teachers, hospital administrators, and civil servants, were required to be Ba'ath Party members regardless of whether they were active participants in Saddam Hussein's regime, de-Ba'athification led to a significant loss of institutional capacity—for example, according to Bremer, "depriving thousands of teachers of their jobs."⁴⁴³

⁴³⁷ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. 140.

⁴³⁸ Dexter Filkins, "Did George W. Bush Create ISIS?" *The New Yorker*, May 15, 2015.

⁴³⁹ Dobbins, Poole, et al., 2008, p. 112.

⁴⁴⁰ Dobbins, Poole, et al., 2008, pp. 117–119.

⁴⁴¹ Bremer, 2016.

⁴⁴² Bensahel et al., 2008, p. 189.

⁴⁴³ Bremer, 2006, p. 297.

Finally, the U.S. approach to dealing with emerging Sunni and Shi'a insurgencies proved counterproductive and worked against the establishment of a stable and peaceful Iraqi state rather than toward it. In 2004, the United States faced two crises between April and November of 2004, one instigated by Sunni insurgents in Fallujah and the other by Moqtada al-Sadr's Shi'a militia in Karbala, Sadr City in Baghdad, and other Shi'a areas. Coalition forces' actions in Fallujah alienated the Sunni community, including Sunni leadership, and almost led to the collapse of the national political process. In contrast, military operations against Sadr's militia did not go far enough in reining in their activities.⁴⁴⁴

The city of Fallujah in Anbar Province had effectively slipped out of the control of coalition forces and into the hands of Sunni insurgents in February and March 2004. On March 31, insurgents ambushed a convoy and killed four American private military contractors, burning their bodies and dragging them through the streets. In response, coalition forces launched Operation Vigilant Resolve in the beginning of April to take back the city. One Iraqi Army unit was supposed to fight alongside the coalition forces, but the entire unit deserted, providing a demonstration of the poor training and battle effectiveness of Iraqi security forces. The operation had the opposite of its intended effect, as it became a rallying cry for insurgent groups and alienated members of the Sunni community, including Sunni members of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), who threatened to quit: According to Bremer, the IGC "was on the verge of disintegrating due to Sunni resignations over Fallujah."⁴⁴⁵ The operation was called off by the White House 48 hours after it began.⁴⁴⁶ Coalition forces engaged in a second offensive to clear insurgents in Fallujah in November through December 2004.

Actions to stem the growth of Shi'a militias were no more successful—again, at least in part due to poor planning and decisionmaking. The CPA began to push for the arrest of Moqtada al-Sadr, a Shi'a cleric and leader of the Mahdi Army militia, in mid-August. However, coalition forces refused to confront Sadr because of concerns that this could antagonize Sadr's followers and Shi'a communities more generally. After an arrest warrant was issued for Sadr in April 2004, the Mahdi Army rose up in several southern cities, taking over police stations and municipal buildings and attacking coalition forces. Coalition forces remained unwilling to confront Sadr and his followers. In August 2004, the Mahdi Army engaged in heavy street fighting with coalition and Iraqi forces in the city of Najaf. Sadr and the Mahdi Army withdrew and took refuge in the Imam Ali Mosque complex. Reluctant to siege the holy site, the coalition initially demanded the disarming and dissolution of the Mahdi Army, but it eventually agreed to a settlement where the Mahdi Army withdrew from Najaf and coalition forces returned to their bases, the Mahdi Army was allowed to stay intact,

⁴⁴⁴ Bremer, 2006, p. 334.

⁴⁴⁵ Bremer, 2006, p. 333.

⁴⁴⁶ Dobbins, Poole, et al., 2008, pp. 307–314.

and the issue of the arrest warrant against Sadr was dropped.⁴⁴⁷ Sadr continued to play an important role in Iraqi politics, and the Mahdi Army participated in violence, including sectarian cleansing in 2005–2006.

The decisions to dissolve the Iraqi Army and implement de-Ba'athification are two of the most criticized decisions made by U.S. officials in the early years of the intervention in Iraq. Taken together, the dissolution of the army and de-Ba'athification policy had significant negative, though unintended, consequences. They alienated hundreds of thousands of Iraqis by taking away their salaries, undermined the security and government institutions that were needed for normal social and economic activity, and undermined security, creating a pool of potential recruits for the insurgency who were angry at the United States—many of whom had military training and weapons.⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, the decision to confront Sunni insurgents in Fallujah and the Shi'a Mahdi Army in Najaf drove anti-coalition sentiment among members of the Sunni and Shi'a communities and facilitated recruitment by insurgent and militia groups. The failure to defeat or co-opt these groups also meant that they were able to continue to perpetrate violence, generating further instability.

Number of Forces

A shortage of coalition forces on the ground also hampered progress toward U.S. objectives in the initial years. This shortage resulted again from optimistic assumptions and a failure to recognize the large number of forces that would be needed to stabilize the country post-regime removal or control emerging insurgent violence and contributed to the looting and lawlessness that immediately followed the invasion. At the beginning of the intervention, the United States had 150,000 troops in Iraq; including contributions from other members, the total coalition forces numbered 173,000.⁴⁴⁹ U.S. officials assumed that Iraqi police forces would remain intact and would be able to provide law and order immediately after the intervention began, and that parts of the army would also be able to assist in these efforts. Police training efforts also suffered from a lack of civilian police advisors: While initial plans drafted by the U.S. Department of Justice called for 6,500 civilian police trainers, the total number in Iraq never rose above the dozens during the CPA's tenure.⁴⁵⁰ Widespread looting—including of Iraqi government ministries and army barracks—encouraged by a general sense of lawlessness began soon after the U.S. invasion. The looting began on a small scale, but it quickly escalated because coalition forces did little to stop it, in part because they

⁴⁴⁷ Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008, pp. 322–323; Bremer, 2006, p. 277.

⁴⁴⁸ James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Benjamin Runkle, and Siddharth Mohandas, *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-847-CC, 2009.

⁴⁴⁹ Michael E. O'Hanlon and Ian Livingston, *Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 2011, p. 13.

⁴⁵⁰ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. 128.

did not have orders to do so but also because there were not enough coalition forces in the country to provide adequate policing, including a significant shortage of military police.⁴⁵¹

The looting and lack of rule of law complicated reconstruction efforts in the short term, but they also led to a decline in Iraqis' quality of life, pushed Iraqi opinion against the occupation, and "gave encouragement and momentum to elements who would actively oppose the coalition occupation," including insurgent and terrorist groups.⁴⁵² A RAND report found that "a substantially larger U.S. military force could have restricted the looting, guarded munitions sites and borders, and significantly dampened the lawlessness that swept over Iraq. . . . [more forces] probably could have prevented the insurgency from gaining as strong a foothold in Iraq as it came to enjoy."⁴⁵³ According to Larry Diamond, a senior advisor to the CPA, "the Bush administration was never willing to commit anything like the forces necessary to ensure order in postwar Iraq," in spite of warnings from some senior leaders in the military and State Department that more forces, including military police and forces specifically trained in crowd control and civil reconstruction, would be needed.⁴⁵⁴

Timeline for Withdrawal

White House officials also confined themselves to a strict timeline with specific milestones, including elections and ratification of a constitution, which undermined their ability to commit the time and resources toward institution-building that were required for lasting success. The timeline, which culminated in the transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis, scheduled for June 2004, was driven in part by concerns about both U.S. and Iraqi public opinion: Officials worried that delays would not be tolerated in the United States, where presidential elections in 2004 were approaching, or in Iraq, where public opinion had started to turn against the occupation.⁴⁵⁵ U.S. officials also believed that the insurgency was driven in part by the occupation's lack of legitimacy, and that standing up an Iraqi government as quickly as possible would mitigate suspicions that the United States would stay in Iraq indefinitely.⁴⁵⁶ The short timeline impeded CPA staffing and resourcing. Because the CPA was assembled only after the invasion, it was formed on an ad hoc basis and only managed to reach half of its authorized level of staffing before it was dissolved in June 2004. Many staff members, called up with very short notice, lacked government experience and only served short rotations of

⁴⁵¹ Todd Purdum, "Interview: Todd Purdum," *Frontline*, January 29, 2004.

⁴⁵² Perry et al., 2015, p. 240.

⁴⁵³ Perry et al., 2015, p. 241.

⁴⁵⁴ Diamond, 2004.

⁴⁵⁵ Bremer, 2006, p. 164.

⁴⁵⁶ Diamond, 2005, p. 240.

90 days or less.⁴⁵⁷ Bremer reports that as of July 2003, of the 250 staff members who he had specifically requested for their expertise and backgrounds, not one had arrived in Baghdad.⁴⁵⁸ White House officials had also underestimated how much funding would be needed, since they had assumed that very little postwar reconstruction would be needed and that the Iraqi government budget would be bolstered by income from oil production. The administration made an emergency request to Congress for supplemental funding for reconstruction in Iraq that was passed in November 2003,⁴⁵⁹ but that funding was slow to be disbursed: Bremer claims that “Washington red tape would slow reconstruction funds and personnel for almost a year.”⁴⁶⁰ The systematic understaffing and underresourcing of the CPA made it difficult for the CPA to administer all of the tasks related to the occupation and meant that it had very little presence outside of Baghdad.⁴⁶¹ The timeline also meant that CPA officials had to make difficult decisions about how staff time and resources were allocated, balancing the need to move reconstruction along as quickly as possible in order to meet the deadlines with the need to invest enough time and resources to build sustainable institutions.

Perhaps the most important example of the negative effects of the shortened timeline was the CPA’s rushed effort to train Iraqi police forces. The CPA was tasked with training police forces, through its oversight of the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), until March 2004, when that responsibility was transitioned to coalition forces after a deeply critical assessment of the CPA’s efforts. CPA’s advisors to the MoI were torn between efforts to get police patrolling the streets as soon as possible and ensuring that they had effective training, exacerbated by the lack of sufficient funding and the slow disbursement of available funds, which meant that the MoI lacked a sufficient number of civilian police trainers and other staff. As a result, many more police recruits were hired than could be adequately trained, and the quality of training remained very inconsistent and low overall.⁴⁶² Additionally, because of various logistical and funding issues, the bulk of police training did not begin until late November 2003, over six months after the intervention began.⁴⁶³ Tension was also reported between the civilian CPA staff and military figures over how police recruits should be trained after responsibility for police training was turned over to the coalition forces; military leaders wanted to train and stand up police recruits as quickly as possible so

⁴⁵⁷ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xxiii.

⁴⁵⁸ Bremer, 2006, p. 114.

⁴⁵⁹ Stephen Daggett, Larry Nowels, Curt Tarnoff, and Rhoda Margesson, *FY2004 Supplemental Appropriations for Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Global War on Terrorism: Military Operations & Reconstruction Assistance*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2003.

⁴⁶⁰ Bremer, 2006, p. 114.

⁴⁶¹ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xxiii.

⁴⁶² Perry et al., 2015, p. 335.

⁴⁶³ Dobbins, Poole, et al., 2008, pp. 75–80.

that they could replace coalition forces, while CPA officials preferred to move slowly enough to thoroughly vet and train recruits.⁴⁶⁴ The result of all of this was an Iraqi police force that was growing steadily in size but lacked the capacity to work effectively. Police recruitment sites also increasingly came under attack by insurgents, who saw them as “soft targets” that could demonstrate that the United States was unable to provide adequate security and deter Iraqis from working with the Americans. These attacks further degraded the capacity of the Iraqi police forces and discouraged high-quality recruits from joining.⁴⁶⁵

The timeline also constrained the CPA’s ability to build effective government institutions to which the United States could turn over sovereignty in June 2004. The desire to build institutions that could begin governing as quickly as possible after being created from scratch and that were reasonably representative of the population of Iraq led U.S. officials to inadvertently institutionalize sectarian divisions. In July 2003, the CPA formed the IGC to act as the provisional government of Iraq under the CPA’s auspices. CPA officials wanted to ensure that the IGC was representative along sectarian lines, which they saw as the most important divisions in Iraqi society and politics.⁴⁶⁶ The IGC had 25 members, including 13 Shi’as, 11 Sunnis, and one Christian; among the Sunnis, five were ethnic Kurds, five were Arab, and one was an ethnic Turkmen.⁴⁶⁷ As a compromise among its members, the presidency of the IGC rotated on a monthly basis among the major ethno-sectarian groups.⁴⁶⁸ The IGC’s most important task during its tenure was to create the template for the political process to select a government and write a new Iraqi constitution. After a significant period of debate, the November 15 agreement between the IGC and CPA specified that the IGC would approve a Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) by February 28, 2004, that would essentially serve as an interim constitution for the selection of the transitional government that would draft the final constitution.⁴⁶⁹ Although the IGC was divided over specific issues, such as when elections for a transitional government should take place,⁴⁷⁰ Bremer and CPA staff pushed the IGC to

⁴⁶⁴ Bremer, 2006, p. 186.

⁴⁶⁵ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. 131.

⁴⁶⁶ International Crisis Group, “Make or Break: Iraq’s Sunnis and the State,” Brussels, Belgium, August 14, 2013.

⁴⁶⁷ Chandrasekaran, 2006, p. 79.

⁴⁶⁸ Bremer, 2006, pp. 123–124.

⁴⁶⁹ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xxiv.

⁴⁷⁰ As an example of such a disagreement, most Shi’a representatives were leaders of Shi’a political parties that had existed in exile for decades; the Shi’a delegates supported holding elections and having an Iraqi body draft a constitution as soon as possible since they were already well organized and poised to do well as representatives of the majority of Iraqis. Conversely, Sunnis did not have a political organization that could effectively compete in elections because the Ba’ath Party had been dissolved; they therefore supported postponing elections. Finally, the

work into the early hours of March 1 to meet the preset deadline.⁴⁷¹ The forced timeline meant that many Sunni concerns were ignored, leading Sunni community leaders to feel excluded from the political process and eventually to the decision of all Sunni Arab political parties to boycott the January 2005 elections, which undermined the legitimacy of the election itself.⁴⁷² Although several Sunni delegates were eventually added after the elections, the process of assembling the IGC and drafting the TAL left a legacy of Sunni exclusion from Iraqi political processes and drove feelings of disaffection in the Sunni community. Additionally, the IGC was not able to agree to a format for elections before the June deadline; the CPA therefore ended up working with UN representatives to appoint an interim government that would govern until the constitution was ratified and new elections could be held. This angered elements of the Shi'a community, who had wanted to hold elections sooner.⁴⁷³ In short, the appointment of the IGC and TAL process managed to institutionalize sectarian divisions while alienating elements of both the Sunni and Shi'a communities. The framing of politics as a forum for ethno-sectarian competition would shape Iraqi political institutions through the present day.

Of course, it would be unfair to entirely blame U.S. actions for the severity of the sectarian divides in post-2003 Iraq or the effect that these divides had in thwarting political progress and national stability. The sectarian divides in Iraq far predated the arrival of U.S. forces. Under Saddam Hussein and his predominantly Sunni Ba'ath Party, Iraq had long been ruled by the Sunni minority. Decades of violent oppression of Shi'a groups, and the Iran-Iraq war, which further inflamed sectarian tensions, made the sectarian cleavage a salient division in Iraqi politics. Any form of representative government would have necessarily elevated the Shi'a majority at the expense of the Sunni minority. Thus, given the existing sectarian divisions, the inevitable shift in the political balance of power along sectarian lines lead many Iraqis to view politics as a zero-sum game. Additionally, the Kurds in northern Iraq had likewise been targeted as an ethnic community by Saddam Hussein's regime, including during a period known by Kurds as the War of Annihilation in the 1980s and 1990s, when up to 200,000 Kurds were killed by the regime.⁴⁷⁴ Divisions over the questions of how hydrocarbon revenues should be distributed and whether the Kurds could keep their *Peshmerga* militia independent of the Iraqi security forces would have existed regardless of these decisions about what Iraqi democratic institutions should look like. Neverthe-

Kurds were concerned about retaining regional autonomy and wanted guarantees around federalism and minority rights written into a constitution before elections were held. See Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xxiv.

⁴⁷¹ Bensahel et al., 2008, p. xxiv.

⁴⁷² Allawi, 2007, p. 388.

⁴⁷³ Zalmay Khalilzad, *The Envoy: From Kabul to the White House, My Journey Through a Turbulent World*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016, p. 244.

⁴⁷⁴ Dexter Filkins, "What We Left Behind," *The New Yorker*, April 28, 2014.

less, it is likely that U.S. officials' insistence on sticking to their predetermined timeline and their use of ethno-sectarian groups as the foundation for the IGC and the negotiation of the TAL helped to harden, rather than mitigate, these existing tensions in Iraqi politics. The hardening of ethno-sectarian divisions continued past the 2003–2006 period, weakening Iraqi governing institutions and contributing to the outbreak of the sectarian civil war in 2006.

Temporarily Turning the Tide: 2007–2008

Number of Forces

By August 2006, 1,500 Iraqi civilians were killed each month in sectarian violence, on average, and U.S. forces suffered almost 100 fatalities and 700 wounded per month by late fall 2006.⁴⁷⁵ The onset of a sectarian civil war in early 2006, alongside continued insurgent attacks against U.S. forces, led the Bush administration to reassess U.S. strategy in Iraq.⁴⁷⁶ This review led to a dramatic increase in the number of U.S. forces sent to Iraq, known as “the surge,” that, along with other factors, at least set the stage for some of the progress toward institution-building that the United States was able to accomplish in the 2009–2011 period.

Acknowledging that “the situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people, and it is unacceptable to me,” the President announced that the United States would send an additional five brigades to Iraq (this eventually rose to a total of 30,000 additional troops⁴⁷⁷). In addition to a larger number of troops on the ground, the mission of those forces would be “to help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods, to help them protect the local population, and to help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind are capable of providing the security that Baghdad needs.”⁴⁷⁸ Implicit in the strategic shift was the acknowledgment that the United States' objectives in Iraq had shifted from leaving a full-fledged democracy that was a reliable strategic partner in the region to the more modest goals of providing stability and ensuring that Iraq was not a haven for al Qaeda.⁴⁷⁹ The surge announcement was also seen as an important political signal that the United States was committed to staying in Iraq, despite growing calls for the administration to commit to a timetable for withdrawal.⁴⁸⁰ The surge lasted a total of 18 months, with the last of the additional forces leaving Iraq in summer 2008.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁵ Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, 2012, p. 7.

⁴⁷⁶ *CNN*, “Poll: Approval for Iraq Handling Drops to New Low,” December 18, 2006.

⁴⁷⁷ In January 2007, the United States had 132,000 personnel in Iraq, and coalition forces totaled 146,650. The number of U.S. forces peaked at 171,000 in October 2007, when coalition forces totaled 182,668, and declined thereafter until all forces were withdrawn by December 2011 (O’Hanlon and Livingston, 2011).

⁴⁷⁸ Ricks, 2009, p. 122.

⁴⁷⁹ E.g., see Ricks, 2009, p. 316.

⁴⁸⁰ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 52.

⁴⁸¹ Ricks, 2009, p. 124.

The surge coincided with a significant decline in levels of violence in Iraq. By the end of 2007, U.S. monthly fatalities had declined from a peak of 126 in May 2007 to 23 in December. Civilian fatalities also fell, from more than 1,700 in May 2007 to about 500 by December. This decline of violence was also sustained throughout the rest of the U.S. tenure in Iraq: Civilian fatalities continued to decline to an average of about 200 per month between June 2008 and the end of 2011.⁴⁸² While researchers dispute the relative influence of the increased number of forces and other context-dependent factors, such as the Anbar Awakening, a ceasefire among Shi'a militias, and the division of Sunni and Shi'a neighborhoods (factors discussed in more detail below), it seems likely that the increased number of forces played at least some role in creating conditions more favorable to the institution-building that the U.S. government hoped to work toward.

Although coalition forces had attempted to implement a “clear, hold, and build” strategy, insurgents were able to move back into cleared areas quickly after coalition forces turned them over to Iraqi security forces. The additional surge forces helped coalition forces to clear and hold critical areas, especially in western and central Iraq, by giving them the manpower to extend their reach and maintain their gains.⁴⁸³ Furthermore, along with the arrival of new forces, coalition forces shifted to a COIN strategy. General David Petraeus took over as commander general of coalition forces in Iraq from General George Casey in February 2007. General Petraeus, who led the publication of the Counterinsurgency Field Manual FM 3-24 in December 2006, emphasized COIN in his directions to U.S. forces.⁴⁸⁴ FM 3-24 asserted that “the cornerstone of any COIN effort is establishing security for the civilian populace” and called for maintaining direct contact with local populations and making efforts to win over their “hearts and minds.”⁴⁸⁵ While under General Casey the focus had been on transitioning responsibilities to Iraqi security forces, General Petraeus emphasized moving off of large, heavily fortified forward operating bases to establish smaller posts closer to population centers and conducting dismounted patrols.⁴⁸⁶ In addition to COIN strategy, U.S. and British Special Operations Forces engaged in an intensified campaign to kill or capture militia and insurgent leadership and operatives. U.S. and British forces also advised and provided support to Iraqi counterterrorism forces in the form of intel-

⁴⁸² Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, 2012, p. 7.

⁴⁸³ Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, 2012, p. 22.

⁴⁸⁴ Note that some have argued that U.S. forces were using similar tactics before the surge; see Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counter-Insurgency*, New York: The New Press, 2013, pp. 92–95.

⁴⁸⁵ David Petraeus and James F. Amos, *Counterinsurgency: FM3-24*, Boulder, Colo.: Paladin Press, 2007, p. 5-2.

⁴⁸⁶ Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, 2012, p. 8.

ligence and helicopters.⁴⁸⁷ According to some arguments, the additional forces and COIN strategy led to the reduction of violence in Iraq by late 2007.

However, while the large increase in forces likely played some role in the subsequent reduction in violence, the contribution of the increase in forces to the establishment of effective governance institutions was more mixed. The assumption underlying the surge was that providing security would give Iraqis the space to build up governing institutions, but this assumption was largely not borne out, at least initially or to the extent hoped for. Reduced violence did allow for some additional U.S. investment in building local governance institutions. Most notably, U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad introduced Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in November 2005. A concept first developed in Afghanistan, PRTs consisted of teams of personnel from the State Department, USAID, and other civilian agencies supported by military forces, to increase capacity of provincial governments.⁴⁸⁸ During the surge, each brigade and division headquarters was provided with an embedded PRT, funded by the Commander's Emergency Response Program. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also increasingly took on oversight for larger reconstruction projects for the embassy and military.⁴⁸⁹ The PRTs represented the first major collaboration between Multinational Force–Iraq and the embassy, but they suffered from significant challenges related to resolving basic issues around resources and command-and-control relationships; success was ultimately highly dependent on the capabilities of individual PRT members.⁴⁹⁰

Overall, the surge contributed to a decline in violence that did eventually open some space for political reforms, but success in the security realm was not met with significantly improved governance. Signs of significant political progress remained limited even in elections held years later, in 2009 and 2010.

Contextual Factors

As noted above, some scholars have argued that context-dependent factors, specifically the Anbar Awakening, the Shi'a militia temporary ceasefire, and the formation of ethnic enclaves, played an important role in the reduction in violence, perhaps even more so than the increase in forces. As a result, these factors may also deserve some of the credit for creating what space existed for political reforms after 2008. By the end of 2006, many Sunni tribes that had been fighting alongside al Qaeda in western Iraq grew tired of "the slaughter of Iraqi civilians at the hands of al Qaeda in Iraq. The tribespeople had also grown tired of al Qaeda's attempts to dominate them by dictating marriages of Sunni women to al Qaeda members and controlling illicit Sunni tribal

⁴⁸⁷ David Petraeus, "How We Won in Iraq," *Foreign Policy*, October 29, 2013.

⁴⁸⁸ United States Institute of Peace, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq," March 20, 2013.

⁴⁸⁹ Petraeus, 2013.

⁴⁹⁰ Brennan et al., 2013, pp. 47–48.

trade.”⁴⁹¹ As early as 2004, local U.S. military commanders had made attempts to work with the Sunni tribes in Anbar Province, but Sunni tribes did not receive the level of protection from coalition forces necessary to allow these efforts to survive.⁴⁹² However, U.S. forces in Anbar were finally able to make a deal with Sunni tribes that stuck beginning in mid-2006. According to Gian Gentile, the Sunni tribes who participated in the Awakening, who were known as the Sons of Iraq (SoI), “had figured out that they were losing the civil war with the Shia-dominated government” and realized that their best option was to ally with coalition forces.⁴⁹³ The Sons of Iraq, predominantly former Sunni insurgents, were added to the U.S. payroll in exchange for ceasing their attacks on U.S. forces and providing security at checkpoints and other local sites.⁴⁹⁴ U.S. forces were also able to take advantage of the intelligence about al Qaeda fighters provided by the Sunni tribes and were therefore able to degrade al Qaeda’s capabilities in Anbar.⁴⁹⁵ At the same time as the Anbar Awakening, Moqtada al-Sadr, the leader of the Mahdi Army (the Shi’a militia), declared a six-month ceasefire in August 2007, stating that the Mahdi Army would not attack other Shi’a militias or U.S. forces.⁴⁹⁶ The Anbar Awakening and Mahdi Army ceasefire together contributed to the decline in attacks against U.S. forces.

Another factor that contributed to the decline in violence in the 2007–2008 period was the effective segregation of Sunni and Shi’a populations. Neighborhoods in Baghdad that had once had mixed Sunni-Shi’a populations had experienced so much violence aimed at sectarian cleansing that they had been sorted into homogeneous enclaves. The bombing of the al-Askari mosque in Samarra on February 22, 2006, intensified a cycle of retaliatory sectarian violence that had begun in 2005. In the days after the bombing, more than a thousand civilians were killed, and the violence continued to escalate throughout 2006 and early 2007. As Shi’a militias used gruesome violence against civilians in an attempt to intimidate Sunnis to leave Shi’a-dominated areas, Sunni insurgents set off a series of car bombs and attacked Shi’a civilians. Some members of the Iraqi police and military forces, dominated by Shi’as, either stood by while violence occurred or actively took part in it. According to this argument, by mid-2007, neighborhoods had been effectively segregated by the violence so that, according

⁴⁹¹ Gentile, 2013, p. 87.

⁴⁹² Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, 2012, pp. 18–19.

⁴⁹³ Gentile, 2013, p. 88.

⁴⁹⁴ Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 30, 2009b, p. 8.

⁴⁹⁵ Gentile, 2013, p. 88.

⁴⁹⁶ Ewen MacAskill, “Al-Sadr Declares Ceasefire in Iraq,” *The Guardian*, August 29, 2007.

to a civilian advisor to the U.S. Army, “there was no one left to kill,” thus contributing to the decline in violence.⁴⁹⁷

As was true of the increase in forces, the contextual factors noted here—while they likely contributed to the significant decline in violence and perhaps the laying of the foundation for future political progress—did not immediately lead to improved governance or the emergence of stable local- or national-level government institutions.

Transition and Withdrawal: 2009–2011

Sectarian Tensions

With violence somewhat under control, attention returned to establishing functioning political institutions and ensuring some kind of stability in Iraq that would facilitate a U.S. withdrawal. Efforts to hold new elections, to establish a government seen as legitimate, and to build up the Iraqi security forces had some successes but many setbacks. Perhaps the most significant source of these setbacks was continued sectarian tensions and their institutionalization in new government institutions and the security forces.

A large portion of the prevailing sectarian divisions were driven by disputes over access to political power. As an example, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s growing authoritarian bent both contributed to and was driven by such sectarian divisions. Maliki first took office as prime minister in April 2006. An election was held in December 2005 to elect members of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, in the first election after the constitution was ratified, and the United Iraqi Alliance, an alliance of Islamist Shi’a parties that had the blessing of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, won a plurality of votes but was unable to form a government. The U.S. administration did not want the currently serving prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, to continue on in the position because he was seen as unwilling to stop the sectarian violence after the February 2006 bombing of the al-Askari mosque in Samarra. After months of negotiating, Ambassador Khalilzad and his staff chose Maliki, a relatively unknown politician from the Dawa Party, to form a government and “made the case for Maliki with Iraqi leaders.”⁴⁹⁸ Khalilzad’s team chose Maliki because he was seen as acceptable to the Shi’a bloc but politically weak enough that he would be forced to reach across ethno-sectarian divisions to work with other political blocs.⁴⁹⁹ At first, U.S. officials believed that Maliki was willing to work across sectarian lines and work alongside the United States to push back against the influence of Shi’a militias. Maliki worked closely with

⁴⁹⁷ Filkins, 2014. Note that, according to Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro (2012), even once neighborhoods had become more homogeneous, the violence continued because Shi’a militias attempted to use cleared areas as bases to continue fighting to take over Sunni territory; thus, the end of sectarian cleansing did not contribute to the decline in violence in 2007, in this analysis.

⁴⁹⁸ Khalilzad, 2016, p. 264.

⁴⁹⁹ Ali Khedery, “Why We Stuck with Maliki—and Lost Iraq,” *Washington Post*, July 3, 2014.

Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Commander General David Petraeus during the surge, and he personally led an offensive against Sadr's Mahdi Army in Basra in March 2008. The offensive was poorly planned and badly coordinated with coalition forces, but it was nevertheless seen as an important sign that Maliki was willing to confront Iranian-backed Shi'a militias.⁵⁰⁰

However, after 2008, Maliki became increasingly sectarian in his approach and made efforts to consolidate state power in his favor, eroding the institutions that had been built. March 2010 parliamentary elections took place in an atmosphere of heightened sectarian tension, as the Justice and Accountability Commission, the successor to the de-Ba'athification Committee with members appointed by Maliki, invalidated hundreds of mostly Sunni candidates from running in the elections, raising fears of another Sunni boycott.⁵⁰¹ Maliki's State of Law Coalition, a coalition of Shi'a parties, won two fewer seats than Ayad Allawi's Iraqiyya party, a secular, Western-leaning bloc. After several months of negotiations, Maliki was able to form a government with the support of Sadr's Shi'a political bloc in December 2010. In part because of worries about upcoming U.S. midterm elections and the upcoming deadline for the withdrawal of forces, U.S. officials supported Maliki's efforts to form a government. However, the sectarian divisions, the opaque post-election negotiations, and the fact that Maliki was given the chance to form a government even though his party had not won the most votes undermined confidence in Iraqi political institutions.⁵⁰² In the eyes of many Sunnis, the 2010 election was stolen from Allawi.⁵⁰³

Maliki continued to consolidate his personal power at the expense of security and governance institutions after the 2010 elections. He took steps to strengthen the central government's authority, diminishing independent checks and balances in parliament and provincial governments. As the U.S. drawdown of forces proceeded, Maliki also "created several special brigades within the army as counter-terrorism brigades and moved them out of the defense ministry to report directly to him. . . . His special operations forces, which Iraqis refer to as Fedayeen al-Maliki, a term reminiscent of Saddam's infamous *fedayeen Saddam*, number approximately 4,200 and are under his direct control."⁵⁰⁴ These forces were often accused of committing sectarian violence themselves. The Sons of Iraq program was one casualty of Maliki's increasingly sectarian security measures: Maliki's office arrested and detained some leaders of the Sunni SoI⁵⁰⁵ and was slow to disburse the promised payments to the Sunni militias

⁵⁰⁰ Khedery, 2014.

⁵⁰¹ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 96.

⁵⁰² Sky, 2015; Yaphe, 2012.

⁵⁰³ Gordon and Trainor, 2012, p. 625.

⁵⁰⁴ Yaphe, 2012.

⁵⁰⁵ Gordon and Trainor, 2012, p. 593.

after the Iraqi government was given responsibility for the program, while expressing unwillingness to incorporate the SoI into Iraqi security forces.⁵⁰⁶ These actions pushed Sunni leaders out of the political process—for example, Iraqiyya suspended its participation in parliament—and gave strength to the Sunni insurgency.⁵⁰⁷

Evidence suggests that a continued U.S. presence may have been able to restrain Maliki's abuse of his office and exploitation of sectarian divisions for personal gain: The fact that Maliki began to turn away from the United States and pursue more-divisive policies after the 2008 announcement of the withdrawal suggests that the U.S. presence did play a role in restraining his worse impulses. Furthermore, less than 24 hours after the last U.S. forces left Iraq, an arrest warrant was issued for several of Maliki's political opponents, including Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi.⁵⁰⁸

In addition to the actions of individuals like Maliki, outstanding issues regarding the division of political power and economic resources between Arabs and Sunnis were left unaddressed during this period and contributed to sectarian tensions that undermined political effectiveness and stability. According to provisions of the Iraqi constitution, a referendum should be held for Kurds in northern Iraq to vote on whether several Kurdish regions in the governorates of Ninawa, Salah ad Din, Kirkuk, and Diyala should become part of the region of Kurdistan, which has substantial autonomy from the central government. The referendum was first scheduled for 2007 but has been delayed several times. As of mid-2017, it was scheduled for September 2017.⁵⁰⁹ Article 140 of the constitution states that Saddam Hussein's "Arabization" policy, which forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands of Kurds from northern Iraq and moved Arabs from southern and central Iraq into Kurdish areas,⁵¹⁰ should be reversed before a referendum is held. However, negotiations over how to implement Article 140 were stalled even after U.S. forces left Iraq. Additionally, questions of how revenues from hydrocarbon development in the region should be divided remained after 2011.⁵¹¹ U.S. officials had been able to keep a lid on Kurdish-Arab tensions by serving as neutral brokers between the two groups. U.S. forces played an important role in keeping conflicts between Iraqi security forces and Kurdish *Peshmerga* from escalating, including through the establishment of a trilateral Combined Security Mechanism (CSM) in late 2009.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁶ Ricks, 2009, pp. 264–267

⁵⁰⁷ Ricks, 2009, pp. 264–267.

⁵⁰⁸ Mohammed Tawfeeq and Frederik Pleitgen, "Iraqi Vice President Predicts Return to Sectarian Violence," *CNN*, January 30, 2012; Brennan et al., 2013, p. xxxiv.

⁵⁰⁹ Masoud Barzani, "The Time Has Come for Iraqi Kurdistan to Make Its Choice on Independence," *Washington Post*, June 28, 2017.

⁵¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, *Claims in Conflict: Reversing Ethnic Cleansing in Northern Iraq*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2004, p. 7.

⁵¹¹ Brennan et al., 2013, pp. 305–306.

⁵¹² Brennan et al., 2013, p. 151.

However, the CSM ended when U.S. forces withdrew, and Iraqi Army and *Peshmerga* units have come close to fighting on several occasions since 2011.⁵¹³ Unresolved issues regarding the status of Kurdistan threaten governing institutions and stability in Iraq.⁵¹⁴

Thus, while Iraq had nominally independent political institutions when the United States withdrew in 2011, they were still riddled with problems, many deriving directly from sectarianism, that impeded their political efficacy and undermined the extent to which the United States was able to achieve its political objectives. On the positive side, by December 2011, Iraqi institutions, especially the MoI, had made significant progress in terms of improved capabilities. Iraqi security forces had the capacity to deal with most of the threats posed by violent internal organizations, especially Sunni violent extremist groups. Nevertheless, the uncertainty in how many U.S. forces would actually need to leave Iraq, coupled with a lack of political support from the Iraqi government, U.S. Congress's lack of willingness to fund key elements of the transition, and tensions between U.S. military and diplomatic senior officials, all hampered U.S. military and diplomatic efforts in Iraq through the end of 2011 and beyond. Additionally, ongoing sectarian divisions and political disputes, including Prime Minister Maliki's increasing authoritarian tendencies and a lack of agreement over key issues between Kurds and Arabs, impeded institution-building and the Iraqi government's willingness to work with the United States to fight terrorism.

Sectarian tensions also interfered with progress made on building the Iraqi security forces. Throughout the intervention and especially starting with the surge in 2007, U.S. forces focused on increasing the number of Iraqi soldiers and police while providing them with the capacity to perform their responsibilities. They also attempted to build the capacity of Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MoD) and MoI to manage the Iraqi security forces after the U.S. departure.⁵¹⁵ A 2007 assessment found that Iraqi military forces had greatly improved in terms of their ability to exercise internal security functions but still relied heavily on coalition combat support. The Iraqi Police Service was found to be "underequipped and compromised by militia and insurgent infiltration" and incapable "of providing security at a level sufficient to protect Iraqi neighborhoods from insurgents and sectarian violence."⁵¹⁶

Both the MoI and MoD made substantial progress in the period between 2009 and 2011. Between 2009 and 2011, "U.S. forces and Embassy Baghdad made great strides enhancing ISF and related capabilities. . . . The MoI in particular evolved from what U.S. forces considered to be a relatively effective organization prior to 2010

⁵¹³ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 305.

⁵¹⁴ Ramzy Mardini, "Factors Affecting Stability in Northern Iraq," Combating Terrorism Center, August 15, 2009.

⁵¹⁵ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 157.

⁵¹⁶ James L. Jones, "The Report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq," September 6, 2007.

to a ministry that [U.S. Forces–Iraq] assessed as having achieved almost all of its [minimum essential capability] goals by 2011.”⁵¹⁷ By October 2011, Iraq had a total of about 279,000 military personnel and 645,000 MoI security personnel.⁵¹⁸ U.S. and Iraqi military forces had successfully degraded the capacities of Sunni insurgent groups, especially al Qaeda in Iraq. According to CIA director John O. Brennan, AQI (later ISIS) had been “pretty much decimated when U.S. forces were there in Iraq. . . . It had maybe 700 or so adherents left.”⁵¹⁹ U.S. military forces and diplomatic personnel were largely successful in transferring responsibilities for security and diplomatic tasks to the Iraqi ministries and Embassy Baghdad.

However, this success was not sustained after the U.S. withdrawal, largely due to a more troubling development, which was that Iraq’s security forces had also become increasingly sectarian institutions. The security forces were 55 percent Shi’a in 2010 and by 2014 had become 95 percent Shi’a.⁵²⁰ This undermined the neutrality of the security forces in fighting insurgents and allowed political leaders to exploit the security services to further sectarian objectives. For example, Maliki used an “extra-constitutional command structure” to arrest and detain his enemies and Sunnis more broadly. Prisoners in detention facilities run directly by the prime minister’s office were reportedly tortured and denied judicial review even after being detained for long periods of time.⁵²¹ Increasingly sectarian Iraqi security forces often failed to prevent violence against Sunni civilians by Shi’a militias,⁵²² and in some cases they even actively participated in extrajudicial violence against Sunni civilians.⁵²³ Thus, the gains that were made in improving the quality of Iraqi security forces between 2007 and 2011 were largely not sustained after the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

U.S. Withdrawal Planning and Execution

Another factor that hampered U.S. progress toward its institution- and stability-building goals was the planning and eventual execution of the U.S. withdrawal in 2011. At the conclusion of the surge, U.S. and Iraqi officials began to negotiate the United States’ eventual withdrawal from Iraq. International legal authority for the occupation through the UN Security Council expired on December 31, 2008. According to the

⁵¹⁷ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 201.

⁵¹⁸ Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report and Semiannual Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2011, p. 75.

⁵¹⁹ Ian Fisher, “In Rise of ISIS, No Single Missed Key but Many Strands of Blame,” *New York Times*, November 18, 2015.

⁵²⁰ Alireza Nader, *Iran’s Role in Iraq: Room for U.S.-Iran Cooperation*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, PE-151-OSD, 2015, p. 2.

⁵²¹ Gordon and Trainor, 2012, pp. 624–625.

⁵²² Human Rights Watch, “Iraq: Possible War Crimes by Shia Militia,” January 31, 2016.

⁵²³ Human Rights Watch, “Iraq: Campaign of Mass Murders of Sunni Prisoners,” July 11, 2014.

terms of the new SOFA, the relationship between the United States and Iraq would transition from occupation to a normal bilateral relationship between sovereign states. In accordance with the provisions of the agreement, military operations had to be approved by a joint U.S.-Iraqi committee, U.S. forces would move out of Iraqi cities by July 2009, and the last U.S. forces would leave the country by December 31, 2011.⁵²⁴ The drawdown in U.S. forces was accompanied by efforts to advise and assist Iraqi security forces and to transition security-related responsibilities to Iraqi forces and civilian tasks to the U.S. embassy, some of which were described in the previous section as being partially successful but facing continued challenges.⁵²⁵ President Barack Obama had campaigned on a platform of withdrawing all U.S. forces from Iraq, and he announced in a February 2009 speech that the last U.S. combat forces would leave Iraq in August 2010, and a transition force of 35,000–50,000 troops would remain until the December 31, 2011, deadline.⁵²⁶

However, despite the timeline in the 2008 agreement, many U.S. officials believed that they would be able to negotiate leaving behind a residual force after 2011, leaving the door open for a continued U.S. presence.⁵²⁷ Negotiations over what type of security forces might remain were delayed when Prime Minister Maliki was unable to form a government after the March 2010 elections until November. Furthermore, “neither the U.S. administration nor the Iraqi government had a clear position on the desirability of a follow-on presence when transition planning began in earnest in 2009 and 2010.”⁵²⁸ The key issue was whether Iraq would enter into a security agreement that provided U.S. forces with legal immunity, a precondition from the U.S. administration’s perspective for any continuing U.S. military presence.⁵²⁹ All major political factions in Iraq, aside from Sadr’s political party, then called the Sadr Trend, were prepared to agree on a continued U.S. training mission, but not on extending immunities to U.S. forces. After extended negotiations, on October 21, 2011, President Obama announced that “the rest of our forces in Iraq will come home by the end of the year. After nearly nine years, America’s war in Iraq will be over.”⁵³⁰

Uncertainty about what the military withdrawal would look like and whether a training mission would remain behind made planning the transition more difficult and ultimately undermined the efficacy of the transition. Problems that arose from

⁵²⁴ R. Chuck Mason, *U.S.-Iraq Withdrawal/Status of Forces Agreement: Issues for Congressional Oversight*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 21, 2011, pp. 9–10.

⁵²⁵ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 13.

⁵²⁶ “Barack Obama’s Address Calling an End to the Iraq War,” *The Guardian*, February 27, 2009.

⁵²⁷ Tim Arango and Michael S. Schmidt, “Despite Difficult Talks, U.S. and Iraq Had Expected Some American Forces to Stay,” *New York Times*, October 21, 2011.

⁵²⁸ Brennan et al., 2013, p. xxx.

⁵²⁹ Arango and Schmidt, 2011.

⁵³⁰ The White House, “Remarks by the President on Ending the War in Iraq,” October 21, 2011.

this lack of planning, in turn, may also have affected Iraqi institutions' abilities to carry forward the progress made between 2009 and the end of 2011. Because the U.S. administration had waited until October to announce that there would be no remaining forces after December 31, the withdrawal was designed to keep forces in-country as long as possible to preserve policy flexibility. In order to move all U.S. forces out of Iraq by the December deadline, U.S. forces began operational maneuver of forces out of Iraq in July 2011, eventually closing over 50 bases and moving about 50,000 military personnel and 56,000 contractors out of Iraq by December.⁵³¹ When the final withdrawal began in earnest after October 21, a process that had been originally envisioned as a gradual withdrawal became a rapid "waterfall" withdrawal, without the ordered transfer of responsibility that might have set up Iraqi institutions for more long-lasting stability and success.⁵³²

Ineffective interagency cooperation during the withdrawal similarly had negative effects on the smoothness of the transition and the ability of U.S. forces and civilian personnel to ensure that Iraqi institutions had the foundations they needed to survive after the U.S. withdrawal. The relationship between U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill and General Raymond Odierno, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, and their staff was reportedly tense, and "meaningful interaction between the embassy and [U.S. forces] was virtually nonexistent," impeding embassy-military cooperation in transition planning.⁵³³ For his part, Hill was concerned that the embassy was functioning as an adjunct to the military and intended to use his tenure to get control for policy back to the State Department. However, U.S. military forces in Iraq had a much larger staff than the embassy team and also had better connections to Iraqi politicians and more in-country experience than Hill's team.⁵³⁴ Ambassador Hill did not have experience in the Middle East or with working with a large military operation connected with a diplomatic mission, factors that strained the relationship between State Department and military personnel. As Operation Iraqi Freedom transitioned to Operation New Dawn on September 1, 2010, Ambassador James Jeffrey took over for Hill, and General Lloyd Austin replaced Odierno. Interagency cooperation in Iraq improved significantly under their leadership.⁵³⁵

Additionally, the U.S. embassy was tasked with the political elements of the U.S.-Iraq relationship during the process of withdrawal. However, political engagement was delinked from the transition process, and the transition process therefore did not identify measures to support the political engagement mission. This likely contributed to

⁵³¹ Brennan et al., 2013, pp. xxvi–xxvii.

⁵³² Brennan et al., 2013, p. xxx.

⁵³³ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 78.

⁵³⁴ Gordon and Trainor, 2012, pp. 583–584.

⁵³⁵ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 78.

U.S. officials' failure to anticipate the political effects of a full withdrawal on the fragile Iraqi political context.⁵³⁶

Lack of Host-Nation Support

Lack of political support from the Iraqi government was a significant factor impeding standing up an American diplomatic presence in Iraq after the transition and therefore in undermining U.S. efforts to provide a longer-term commitment that might have improved the stability of Iraqi institutions. Because of concerns about public opinion, the Iraqi government opposed having a large-scale, highly visible U.S. presence in the country after 2011 and pressured the United States to reduce the embassy's 17,000-person footprint, forcing drastic cuts in personnel and some facilities.⁵³⁷ A RAND report on the 2009–2011 transition found that “a more concerted effort to engage Iraqi officials in transition planning might have generated a greater and quicker measure of host-nation support,” but “gridlock at senior levels of the Iraqi government meant that there were no clear, empowered interlocutors with whom the embassy could collaborate.”⁵³⁸ Additionally, the politicized nature of the debate over whether the United States would leave a residual force in Iraq made high-level bilateral planning around other issues and continued work toward institution-building “almost impossible.”⁵³⁹

Lack of Domestic Support and Funding

Finally, Congress's refusal to fund key elements of the transition and reliance on Continuing Resolutions (CRs) that carried over the previous year's budget also limited the resources that the State Department was able to deploy for post-2011 planning and bilateral assistance programs and thus undermined the ability of remaining U.S. forces and civilian personnel to make the deep commitment to institution-building that would have been required for success.⁵⁴⁰ Congress appropriated 34 percent less than was requested by the State Department's fiscal year (FY) 2010 supplemental budget for Iraq Diplomatic and Consular Program operations and 15 percent less than was requested by the FY 2011 budget. These cuts to the requested budget, according to the State Department, “resulted in no flexibility to accommodate increasing costs of security and interim facilities.”⁵⁴¹ After five short-term CRs in FY 2012, Congress appropriated 17 percent less than requested. The budgetary uncertainty and cuts meant that the State Department did not know the size of its budget for at least a third of the fiscal

⁵³⁶ Brennan et al., 2013, p. xxxi.

⁵³⁷ Brennan et al., 2013, p. xxvi.

⁵³⁸ Brennan et al., 2013, p. xxvi.

⁵³⁹ Brennan et al., 2013, p. xxvi.

⁵⁴⁰ Brennan et al., 2013, pp. 97–98.

⁵⁴¹ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 113.

year, at a key moment just as U.S. forces were completing their withdrawal.⁵⁴² Due to these cuts, and to rising costs of providing security that ate up larger portions of the budget as U.S. forces left, the State Department's Police Development Program, among other institution-building and stability-enhancing initiatives, had to be significantly scaled back: The program was originally planned for 350 advisors and requested \$850 million in funding for 190 advisors in the FY 2013 budget. By July 2012, the number of advisors had been scaled back to 36 and the program budget reduced to \$11 million. In the FY 2013 budget request, 94 percent of the costs of the training program were related to providing security for civilian trainers and other overhead expenses.⁵⁴³ This lack of funding severely constrained the ability of the U.S. forces and civilian advisors in Iraq to carry out the many institution-building tasks that would have been required to ensure a strong and functioning Iraqi government and an effective, well-trained security force able to maintain law and order. In many ways, limited funding in the final years of U.S. involvement only set the stage for the 2014 U.S. return to Iraq to fight a renewed insurgent threat, ISIS.

Aftermath: Post-2011

Much of the progress that had been made in building Iraqi political and security institutions was lost after 2011. After U.S. forces departed, AQI launched a campaign against Iraqi security forces and Shi'a targets to reestablish itself in areas that U.S. forces had expelled the group from. According to a Special Inspector-General for Iraq Reconstruction report, July to September 2012 had the highest level of violence in Iraq since 2009, with more than 850 Iraqi civilians killed; Sunni insurgent groups conducted most of the violence. By the fall of 2012, attacks by AQI had increased to 140 per month, and the number of AQI fighters had more than doubled from about 1,000 to 2,500 in the year from October 2011 and October 2012. Many of the new insurgents had escaped from prison or had been released by the Iraqi government after U.S. forces departed. In this period, violence by Iran-sponsored Shi'a militias appeared to drop off; this may be because some of the groups were angling to become part of the mainstream political process, as well as "because Iraqi Shi'a viewed Maliki's increasingly authoritarian anti-Sunni measures as contributing to their security, which may be one of the factors that led Maliki's popularity to rise during 2012."

Ongoing sectarian divisions, as well as the political and security vacuum created next door by the Syrian civil war, facilitated the rise of new terrorist groups, including most prominently ISIS in Iraq. Beginning in 2013, thousands of Sunni Iraqis began to gather to protest the Shi'a-dominated government. Iraqi security forces responded harshly, detaining many Sunnis indefinitely and, in one instance, clashing with protestors and killing hundreds of civilians. After Iraqi security forces arrested a Sunni

⁵⁴² Brennan et al., 2013, p. 115.

⁵⁴³ Brennan et al., 2015, pp. 311–312.

member of parliament in a violent raid of his home in Anbar Province,⁵⁴⁴ a wave of car and suicide bombs struck Baghdad in January 2014, killing thousands of mostly Shi'a civilians. Iraqi forces surrounded the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi and shelled them, leading 44 Sunni members of parliament to resign and Sunni police to abandon their posts in the cities.

This cycle of rising sectarian violence and political tension facilitated the rapid military advance of ISIS in the summer of 2014: ISIS fighters moved into Fallujah just hours after Maliki ordered the Iraqi Army to pull back from Fallujah and Ramadi.⁵⁴⁵ ISIS advanced rapidly across several cities in northern Iraq with about 10,000 fighters in the summer of 2014.⁵⁴⁶ In part, ISIS's high-tempo military expansion was due to its ability to "co-opt local Sunni communities, using networks of patronage and privilege," and exploit mounting sectarian tensions.⁵⁴⁷ Additionally, Iraqi security forces in Mosul, Tikrit, and other areas collapsed in the face of ISIS's advance: The Army 2nd Division, which was stationed in Mosul, abandoned several posts without a shot fired and retreated in disarray, leaving beyond weapons and vehicles that ISIS was able to use.

The collapse of Iraqi security forces has been attributed to sectarian divisions in the security forces, as well as corruption and a shortage of combat-ready personnel—shortcomings that were not addressed before the U.S. withdrawal in 2011.⁵⁴⁸ According to the International Crisis Group, "the insurgents pushed against a house of cards, a state structure weakened by accumulated Sunni grievances, suppressed by what is experienced locally as an 'occupation' army of Shiites influenced by Iran next door." Likewise, ISIS continues to frame itself as the frontline of persecuted Sunnis fighting against a sectarian regime. ISIS has also been able to build support among networks of former senior Ba'athist military officials, who have significantly increased ISIS's fighting capacity; ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi reportedly relies on a military council of about a dozen officers from Saddam Hussein's military.⁵⁴⁹ After the virtual collapse of official Iraqi security forces, pro-government Shi'a militias, many of them fighting alongside U.S. forces against ISIS, have become the strongest Iraqi military force.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁴ Kamal Namaa, "Iraq Forces Arrest Leading Sunni MP in Violent Raid," *Reuters*, December 28, 2013.

⁵⁴⁵ Filkins, 2014.

⁵⁴⁶ International Crisis Group, "Iraq's Jihadi Jack-in-the-Box," *Middle East Briefing*, No. 38, June 20, 2014b.

⁵⁴⁷ Fawaz Gerges, "ISIS and the Third Wave of Jihadism," *Current History*, 2014, p. 340.

⁵⁴⁸ Yasir Abbas and Dan Trombly, "Inside the Collapse of the Iraqi Army's 2nd Division," *War on the Rocks*, July 1, 2014; in other areas, including Fallujah, government forces lost after more-extensive fighting.

⁵⁴⁹ Gerges, 2014, p. 340.

⁵⁵⁰ Babak Dehghanpisheh, "Special Report: The Fighters of Iraq Who Answer to Iran," *Reuters*, November 12, 2014.

Summary

Several policy decisions and context-dependent factors account for the United States' failure to achieve objectives related to democratization, institution-building, and economic development in Iraq. Prior to the intervention itself, a poorly managed prewar planning process based on overly optimistic assumptions led to a lack of preparedness by diplomatic and military officials once major combat operations had ended. U.S. officials also made a series of decisions in the first year of the intervention, including dissolving the Iraqi Army, enacting de-Ba'athification policies, fighting in Fallujah, and failing to capture Moqtada al-Sadr, that intensified sectarian divisions and strengthened the insurgency over time. Poor planning also meant that there were not enough forces present to contain looting and general lawlessness early on and, eventually, to contain the insurgency and the descent into sectarian reprisal violence. White House officials also insisted on adhering to a strict timeline within the first few years of the intervention that undermined their ability to commit the time and resources toward institution-building that were required for success.

By sending 30,000 additional troops and shifting toward a COIN strategy, the United States was able to temporarily turn the tide during the surge in 2007 and early 2008. Additionally, some scholars have argued that contextual factors, including the Anbar Awakening, the temporary ceasefire by some Shi'a militias, and the formation of ethnic enclaves, also contributed to the decline in violence during this period. However, this was not accompanied by significant political development, and the persistent failure to reconcile sectarian factions remained a difficult problem even after the intervention ended in 2011.

As the United States began the withdrawal of its military forces, the continued sectarian tensions and their institutionalization in government institutions and security forces continued to prevent political reconciliation. Additionally, uncertainty in U.S. planning and execution, a lack of host-nation support leading to the failure to renegotiate a SOFA after 2011, and a lack of domestic support and funding contributed to the lack of success in the final years of the intervention. The increases in sectarian political divisions and violence after U.S. forces departed, which eventually contributed to the rise of ISIS, speak to the lack of success in achieving these objectives.

Establish Regional Peace and Stability

The final set of U.S. objectives in Iraq focused on creating an Iraq at peace with its neighbors and well integrated into the international community. The U.S. administration believed in 2003 that democratization in Iraq would have a domino effect in the region, supporting democratizing forces in other states while sending a message to Iran, Syria, and others about the risks of pursuing WMDs. The administration aimed to create a strong partner of the United States and for regional allies in the

War on Terror.⁵⁵¹ The United States has had some success in this area: Iraq has not been involved in any direct violent conflicts with other states in the region. However, rather than driving Iraq away from Iran and toward regional partnerships, the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime and the eventual rise of Nouri al-Maliki's Shi'a-dominated government strengthened Iraq's ties with Iran and alienated U.S. Arab Gulf state allies, and although Iraq did not appear to have ties to al Qaeda and other violent extremist groups at the beginning of the war, it became host to such groups as the country spiraled into civil war.

Over time, U.S. regional objectives also became more limited, evolving from creating an Iraq at peace with the region and that would be a partner of the United States in the War on Terror to creating a sovereign Iraq that could stand up to Iran's influence and providing enough internal security and capacity in the Iraqi security forces to drive out terrorist groups. Iran's sponsorships of Shi'a militias and divisive Shi'a political figures, including Prime Minister Maliki, in the context of sectarian violence, are the primary factors that shaped Iraq's relationship with its neighbors. Additionally, however, U.S. officials' unwillingness to arrest Moqtada al-Sadr and U.S. support for Maliki after the 2006 and 2010 elections contributed to the inability of the United States to deter Iran—and, to a lesser extent, Syria—from these activities in Iraq.

Iranian Influence

The role played by Iran in undermining Iraqi political stability and preventing Iraq from forming close alliances with other Gulf states was a key factor limiting U.S. success in its regional objectives. At the beginning of the intervention in Iraq, the U.S. administration believed that a democratic Iraq would help build democracy and stability in the region. In a speech in November 2003, President Bush stated that "The establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East will be a watershed event in the global democratic revolution. . . . As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export. And with the spread of weapons that can bring catastrophic harm to our country and to our friends, it would be reckless to accept the status quo."⁵⁵² However, the unexpected insurgency and cycles of sectarian violence that ensued opened the door for Iraq to have a different relationship with its neighbors than the U.S. administration had envisioned by allowing Iran to substantially increase its influence in Iraq through Iranian support of Shi'a militia organizations and politicians.

The fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq greatly strengthened Iran's position in the region. Saddam's Iraq had served as a bulwark against the Iranian regime's attempts to export the Iranian revolution model to the Arab world and played a role

⁵⁵¹ Gordon and Trainor, 2012, p. 8.

⁵⁵² George W. Bush, "Remarks by President George W. Bush at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy," National Endowment for Democracy, November 6, 2003.

in depleting Iran's power and resources through the Iran-Iraq war. Additionally, Iran benefited from the intervention because it was able to expand its regional influence by supporting Shi'a militias in Iraq, supporting insurgent attacks against U.S. forces, and building economic ties in Iraq. Since 2003, Iran's objectives in Iraq have been ensuring "that Baghdad is governed by a friendly, Shi'a-dominated regime; that Iraqi political entities be sufficiently divided to empower Tehran to be a power broker in Iraqi politics; that Iraq remain stable and weak to prevent it from posing a significant security threat to Iran," and to ensure that U.S. forces depart without establishing permanent bases in Iraq.⁵⁵³ A unified Iraq, even under a Shi'a government, could choose to act independently and therefore to threaten Iran; thus, instability and sectarian divisions in Iraq perpetuated in part by the Shi'a militias supported by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) "have translated into more Iranian power in Iraq."⁵⁵⁴ The dual policy of supporting both politicians in the government and nonstate militias allows Iran to maintain a strong influence within the central government while also encouraging nongovernmental actors that undermine the government's authority, ensuring that the Iraqi government does not become too powerful or independent.⁵⁵⁵

Iran had connections to the leaders of many of the Shi'a militias in Iraq that predated the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime: The Badr Corps (now the Badr Organization), the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq's armed wing, fought alongside the IRGC during the Iran-Iraq war.⁵⁵⁶ After the fall of the regime, the IRGC built on these connections and began supporting others. Supporting a variety of different militia groups and establishing new ones allowed Iran to "diversify its political and military portfolio in Iraq."⁵⁵⁷ The leader of Iran's Quds Force, Qassem Solemani, has coordinated Iran's activities in Iraq since 2003 and "has been directly involved in nearly all major Iraqi government deliberations since the fall of Saddam."⁵⁵⁸ By 2004, the IRGC was providing Sadr's Mahdi Army with weapons and training. The Mahdi Army eventually grew to 15,000 fighters and played an important role in the cycle of sectarian violence that began in early 2006.⁵⁵⁹ Shi'a militias supported by Iran also played a large role in attacks on coalition forces: By 2004, the IRGC was supplying Shi'a militias with weapons that accounted for 20 percent of U.S. combat deaths.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵³ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 127.

⁵⁵⁴ Nader, 2015, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁵ Nader, 2015, p. 5.

⁵⁵⁶ Lionel Beehner, "Iraq's Militia Groups," Council on Foreign Relations, October 26, 2006.

⁵⁵⁷ Matthew Levitt and Phillip Smyth, "Kataib al-Imam Ali: Portrait of an Iraqi Shiite Militant Group Fighting ISIS," The Washington Institute, January 5, 2015.

⁵⁵⁸ Nader, 2015, p. 6.

⁵⁵⁹ Mapping Militant Organizations, "Mahdi Army," Stanford University, 2017.

⁵⁶⁰ Dexter Filkins, "The Shadow Commander," *The New Yorker*, September 30, 2013.

The IRGC also provided Shi'a militias with explosively formed projectiles, the most lethal form of roadside bombs, which accounted for 73 percent of U.S. casualties by 2007.⁵⁶¹ Iran and its proxy organization Hezbollah have also provided training to Iraqi militia members in training camps in Iran.⁵⁶² This makes deterring Iranian action more difficult for the United States because U.S. forces were unable to take action against training sites and munitions depots within Iran—doing so would have risked expanding the war. The porousness of the Iran-Iraq border and the failure of Iraqi border guards to maintain border security also contribute to the flow of weapons and support across the border.⁵⁶³ In addition, Iran is able to dial up or down the level of violence conducted by Iraqi militias to pressure different actors. Notably, attacks against U.S. forces have been useful from Iran's perspective because they are a form of leverage against the United States: Such attacks kept the United States bogged down in fighting and diverted U.S. policymakers' attention from regime-change goals in Iran.⁵⁶⁴

As U.S. forces began to withdraw, Iranian influence permeated the political, economic, and security sectors of Iraq, threatening the development of a stable and unified state and creating regional tensions that undermined U.S. regional goals as well.⁵⁶⁵ Even as the United States stepped up efforts to counter Iranian influence, Iranian officials continued to operate throughout Iraq, especially in the south, and continued to provide financial and other forms of assistance to Shi'a militias.⁵⁶⁶

Regional Engagement with Sunni Neighbors

U.S. officials do not appear to have done enough in terms of diplomatic efforts to engage the support of Sunni allies in the region, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey. Engaging the support of these states might have helped to balance Iran's influence in Iraq: For instance, Sunni states in the region could have pressed the Iraqi government harder to engage in reconciliation efforts with Sunni factions in Iraq and could also have helped to persuade Iraqi Sunnis to become more engaged in political institutions. Ambassador Khalilzad writes in his memoirs that he engaged in bilateral diplomatic engagement efforts with Sunni U.S. allies in the region,

⁵⁶¹ Ricks, 2009, p. 48.

⁵⁶² Nader, 2015, p. 7.

⁵⁶³ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 131.

⁵⁶⁴ Frederic M. Wehrey, David E. Thaler, Nora Bensahel, Kim Cragin, Jerrold D. Green, Dalia Dassa Kaye, Nadia Oweidat, and Jennifer Li, *Dangerous but Not Omnipotent*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-781-AF, 2009, p. 105.

⁵⁶⁵ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 131.

⁵⁶⁶ Wehrey et al., 2009, p. 107.

even though it was unusual for an ambassador to engage directly with neighboring governments, because he “saw that Washington was not being proactive enough.”⁵⁶⁷

Iran’s influence with Iraq’s government leaders had an increasingly negative impact on Iraq’s relationship with Gulf Arab states after Maliki became Prime Minister, with many states viewing Maliki’s Shi’a government as an Iranian puppet. Led by Saudi Arabia, the Gulf Cooperation Council member states began to isolate Iraq because of its ties with Iran, with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia refusing to even establish a diplomatic relationship with Iraq. Saudi Arabia was also a large source of individual fighters to al Qaeda in Iraq, and private individuals from Saudi Arabia contributed a disproportionately large share of financial contributions to AQI in 2007 through 2008. Individuals and charities in Saudi Arabia were historically an important source of funding for al Qaeda, and before 2003, Saudi officials had turned a blind eye to the problem. However, after a series of car bombings of a housing complex in Riyadh in May 2003 that killed 34 people, the government of Saudi Arabia substantially stepped up surveillance and conducted a series of raids against suspected members of al Qaeda. The Saudi government also made efforts to crack down on extremist messages coming from religious leaders and deleted passages in school textbooks that criticized non-Muslims. Nevertheless, in 2007, Bush administration officials privately expressed increasing frustration that Saudi Arabia was playing a counterproductive role in Iraq, providing financial support to Sunni groups, allowing a flow of foreign fighters over the shared border, and providing financial support to Maliki’s political opponents, in efforts to counter Iran’s influence.

In contrast, Turkey has been able to establish a more positive and productive relationship with Iraq since 2007, when the Turkish government changed its policy toward the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq and began to work closely with the government.⁵⁶⁸ Turkey has developed substantial economic ties to Iraq, which is Turkey’s second-most valuable export market, and has invested especially in the Kurdish region, where some 1,000 Turkish businesses, including banks, hotels, and retailers, are operating.⁵⁶⁹ Turkey has also reportedly played a diplomatic role in encouraging Sunni reconciliation, hosting Sunni political representatives and the U.S. ambassador for a meeting in Istanbul in December 2005 and mediating with Sunni members of parliament to support the negotiation of the SOFA in 2008. In addition, Turkey has organized democracy and good governance training programs for Iraqi politicians of all ethnic backgrounds.⁵⁷⁰ Turkey’s positive diplomatic and economic

⁵⁶⁷ Khalilzad, 2016, p. 273.

⁵⁶⁸ Henri J. Barkey, “Turkey and Iraq: The Making of a Partnership,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2011, p. 663.

⁵⁶⁹ Daniel Dombey, “Turkey Is Economic Winner of Iraq War,” *Washington Post*, March 12, 2013.

⁵⁷⁰ Hasan Turunc, “Turkey and Iraq,” in Nicholas Kitchen, ed., *Turkey’s Global Strategy*, London, England: LSE IDEAS, 2011, p. 41.

engagement in Iraq demonstrates how U.S. diplomatic engagement with Iraq's Sunni neighbors could have contributed to achieving these objectives.

U.S. Planning and Decisionmaking

Failures in U.S. planning and decisionmaking regarding how to build regional ties between Iraq and its neighbors and how to control Iranian influence also limited U.S. success in achieving regional goals. There are two steps in particular that U.S. officials might have taken at the earlier stages of the intervention that could have affected Iran's destabilizing influence in Iraq. While neither of these steps would necessarily have deterred Iranian action in Iraq, they might have mitigated its worst effects. First, U.S. officials might have engaged in a more robust diplomatic dialogue with Iran from the start. It appears that the U.S. administration did not prioritize securing Iran's cooperation at the early stages of the intervention, perhaps another sign of rushed or incomplete prewar planning. According to Ambassador Khalilzad's memoirs, he and Ryan Crocker, representing the State Department, held talks with senior Iranian officials in 2003 before the intervention began. Their instructions for the meetings were not vetted by the President or Principals Committee, suggesting that they were given relatively low priority. In those meetings, Khalilzad told Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Zarif that the United States expected Iranian cooperation in Iraq if the United States chose to intervene. Zarif committed to some baseline measures of cooperation, including that Iran would not fire on U.S. aircraft that accidentally crossed into Iranian territory. Iranian officials wanted to discuss the possibility of trading al Qaeda operatives being held in Iran for Mojahedin-e Khalq leaders, but the U.S. administration would not consider these conditions.⁵⁷¹ Additionally, according to Ambassador James Dobbins, in 2002, Iranian officials offered to help the United States to train the new army of Afghanistan after the U.S. intervention there. The principals of the NSC discussed this offer but chose to ignore it.⁵⁷² These anecdotes suggest that Iranian officials may have been open to more robust diplomatic engagement with the United States over Iraq as well. Having more constructive Iranian support might have had a number of advantages, including allowing Iraq to maintain closer ties with other neighbors, such as Saudi Arabia, and could also have reduced Iranian support for the insurgency, which might have contributed to the stability-oriented goals discussed previously. According to a RAND report on nation-building, the support of neighboring states is crucial to successful nation-building outcomes.⁵⁷³

Second, U.S. officials could have arrested Moqtada al-Sadr early on in the intervention. This may have removed one major Shi'a militia that Iran subsequently

⁵⁷¹ Khalilzad, 2016, p. 165.

⁵⁷² James Dobbins, *Foreign Service: Five Decades on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2017, p. 258.

⁵⁷³ Dobbins et al., 2003, pp. xxv–xxvi.

supported. According to Bremer, U.S. forces had several opportunities to arrest Sadr in 2003 and early 2004, when he still lacked popular support and had only about 200 armed followers. Bremer believed that the only way to deal with Sadr and his growing organization was “to put him behind bars as soon as possible.”⁵⁷⁴ In August 2003, CPA officials asked Iraqi police to execute an arrest warrant against Sadr, but U.S. military and CIA officers were “concerned that the arrest might lead to unrest in the south and in the Shia sectors of Baghdad,” concerns that were compounded after riots in the Shi’a city of Basra.⁵⁷⁵ The CIA sent a memo to the President outlining the risks of taking action against Sadr, arguing that his support would eventually fade away. At this point, efforts to deal with Sadr were put on hold until the Mahdi Army attacked coalition forces in Najaf in April 2004.⁵⁷⁶ Of course, arresting Sadr in Najaf risked unrest in Sadr City and Shi’a cities in the south.⁵⁷⁷ Additionally, Iran has supported several other Shi’a militias, including the Badr Organization, Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq, and Kata’ib Hezbollah. Most of these militias are more directly loyal to Iran, whereas Iranian officials see Sadr as too willing to act independently. However, the Mahdi Army was able to inflict considerable violence during the civil war beginning in 2006 and has more popular support than other militias.⁵⁷⁸ Thus, arresting Sadr in 2003 would not have disrupted Iranian support for other militias, but it would have cut off one important source of Iranian influence.

Some U.S. actions even increased the leverage and influence of Iran within Iraqi politics. U.S. officials played a substantial role in ensuring that Maliki formed a government after the March 2010 elections, even though his party had won fewer seats than the Iraqiyya coalition, inadvertently ensuring that Iran retained a critical source of leverage in Iraq through its influence in Maliki’s government. In fact, Iran also supported Maliki’s candidacy in 2010, and Soleimani even brokered a deal among Shi’a political parties to support Maliki’s candidacy; in return, Maliki reportedly promised to ensure that the U.S. military would leave Iraq at the end of 2011.⁵⁷⁹ In addition to its support for individual Iraqi Shi’a politicians, Iran continued to build its formal bilateral ties with Iraq, signing security cooperation and trade agreements and providing more than \$1 billion in foreign aid. Iranian commercial ties and private investments in Iraq also “are significant and increasing.” As U.S. forces began to withdraw, Maliki’s government became more reluctant to take unilateral action or pursue warrants for Shi’a militias, “both because it did not want to alienate its own political base

⁵⁷⁴ Bremer, 2006, p. 129.

⁵⁷⁵ Bremer, 2006, p. 129.

⁵⁷⁶ Bremer, 2006, p. 131.

⁵⁷⁷ Bremer, 2006, p. 141.

⁵⁷⁸ Mapping Militant Organizations, 2017.

⁵⁷⁹ Khedery, 2014.

and because it did not want to antagonize Iran.”⁵⁸⁰ The government did, however, target Sunni extremist groups aggressively at the same time, sending the message that Maliki’s government was willing to use Iraqi security forces and the judicial apparatus to reinforce Shi’a dominance, further deepening sectarian political divisions.⁵⁸¹

As time passed, the United States did develop a more effective strategy for dealing with the threat posed by Iranian influence. In November 2008, U.S. embassy and military forces developed a joint strategy to counter Iranian influence in Iraq. The goal was to counter Iranian influence by making Iraq an equal bilateral partner to Iran through the strengthening of the Iraqi government’s legitimacy and enhancements to internal security, governance, and economic development. U.S. officials tried to engage Maliki’s government in these areas, and in private discussions with U.S. officials Maliki agreed to these goals, but “he and some of the most senior military leaders became increasingly less interested in conducting any action that would alienate Tehran as the deadline for the departure of U.S. forces approached. . . . [the government of Iraq] was rarely willing to take actions that would jeopardize its relations with Iran.”⁵⁸² U.S. officials and embassy personnel also worked to encourage senior Iraqi political figures to integrate Sunnis into political and security institutions and to protect the judiciary’s independence.⁵⁸³

Aftermath: Iran in Iraq Post-2011

The presence of U.S. forces in Iraq until the end of 2011 increased U.S. leverage over Maliki’s government, but this leverage disappeared once U.S. forces pulled out. After the U.S. departure, Maliki allowed militant leaders with strong ties with Iran to continue to receive training and funding from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps–Quds Force. Some of these leaders facilitated Maliki’s relationship with Iranian officials: For instance, Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, the leader of the Shi’a militia Kata’ib Hezbollah, lived in the Green Zone in a house near Maliki’s residence and occasionally delivered messages between Iranian officials and Maliki during his frequent visits to Iran. Maliki also released Shi’a militant leaders who had been arrested during the occupation. The influence of Shi’a militias also grew after the U.S. withdrawal, and in some areas their power overshadowed that of official government institutions: As of 2014, more than 50 Shi’a militias were fighting and recruiting in Iraq.

⁵⁸⁰ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 143.

⁵⁸¹ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 144.

⁵⁸² Brennan et al., 2013, p. 132.

⁵⁸³ Brennan et al., 2013, p. 145.

Conclusion: Key Variables

Several key factors help explain the extent to which the United States was successful in achieving its political goals across the full range of objectives in Iraq from 2003 to 2011.

Prewar planning contributed to success in the earliest phase of the intervention. However, once major combat operations were complete, a lack of planning for the postcombat phase (i.e., Phase IV) contributed to the failure to create a democratic, prosperous Iraq that would be a reliable partner in the War on Terror and only partial success in U.S. efforts to build Iraqi institutions. U.S. officials assumed that they would be able to quickly turn over sovereignty to an Iraqi government and begin to withdraw forces after just a few months. Rushed and ill-informed decisionmaking also led to poor policy outcomes in multiple areas, such as the initial division of political power and the decision to fully exclude former Ba'ath party members. Many of these decisions were made under pressure to adhere to predetermined timelines that kept policymakers from investing the time and resources necessary to achieve original objectives. In the first year of the intervention, White House officials' insistence that the U.S. turn sovereignty over to an Iraqi government by June 2004 rushed negotiations over which groups would be included in the government, generating dissatisfaction among both Sunni and Shi'a leaders. Later on, in the push to withdraw forces by the December 2011 deadline, U.S. officials supported the formation of a government that exacerbated sectarian divisions and facilitated Iran's influence in the country.

The size and quality of forces were also significant factors in determining success across objectives. The superior capabilities of coalition forces led to a quick success in defeating Saddam Hussein's regime. However, due in large part to poor prewar planning, there were not enough forces in Iraq after major combat operations ended to prevent widespread looting, the rise of the insurgency, and the eventual onset of civil war in 2006. During the surge in 2007, the rise in total troop numbers probably contributed to the temporary decline in violence. However, the withdrawal of all U.S. forces by the end of 2011 was followed by an increase in insurgent violence and a deterioration in the quality of Iraqi institutions as sectarianism took a stronger hold. Additionally, the presence of U.S. forces helped to dampen Iranian influence in Iraq, a constraining force that was lost once U.S. forces withdrew. The presence of U.S. forces apparently gave U.S. officials some leverage over Maliki's government and allowed the United States to pressure the Iraqi government to push back against Shi'a militias and pursue some political reconciliation efforts, both of which ended abruptly when U.S. forces departed.

Contextual factors, including the presence of sectarian divisions and the influence of Iran, also affected the United States' ability to achieve its objectives in Iraq. Although sectarian divisions were intensified by events that occurred during the intervention, these divisions predated the U.S. presence in Iraq. These divisions drove sectarian and insurgent violence. Iran's involvement with several Shi'a political parties and

their associated militias, which dated to the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, gave Iran a means to increase those parties' influence within Iraq's governing and security institutions. The lack of host-nation support for the U.S. presence also impeded the achievement of many of the objectives. For instance, this opposition made it very difficult to negotiate an updated SOFA that would have allowed the United States to keep a military presence after 2011. Finally, a lack of adequate support from the U.S. government made it more difficult to achieve these objectives throughout the intervention. For example, at the beginning of the intervention, the lack of willingness to commit enough forces—driven in part by concerns that the U.S. public would not support a larger military presence—hindered the ability of the United States to provide security. The surge marked a temporary increase in support, but as the withdrawal of U.S. forces proceeded, war weariness and skepticism about the war in Iraq influenced the administration's decision not to renew the SOFA in 2011 and Congress's decision to underfund crucial elements of the transition.

U.S. forces intervened again in Iraq beginning in 2014 to militarily defeat ISIS, an indicator of the failure to reach the intervention's objectives between 2003 and 2011. However, even after ISIS has been militarily defeated in Iraq, itself a difficult task, the problems of ethno-sectarian political divisions, Iranian influence, and the weakness of Iraqi political and security institutions will remain. Given that these unresolved issues facilitated the rise of ISIS and therefore prompted the United States to intervene again after withdrawing just two and a half years earlier, they should be of concern for U.S. military planners when considering future interventions.

Statistical Analyses

This appendix contains the output of regressions and other statistical analyses used to support the discussion in Chapter Four.

Bivariate Regression Results

In our analysis, we conducted bivariate regressions assessing the relationship between the success of an intervention objective and a large number of potential explanatory variables discussed in Chapter Four. These tests were performed in several groupings. First, we conducted these analyses considering all objectives together. Second, we conducted these analyses according to the different activity types of the interventions (e.g., combat versus deterrence). Third, we conducted these analyses by separating objectives according to their top-level categorical coding, as introduced in Chapter Three.¹ The following sections provide the full regression output for each of these bivariate models.²

¹ The exception is that objectives in category 3, Supporting Regional and Global Norms, were not sufficiently numerous to allow for regression analyses.

² In each model, the standard errors are clustered on the intervention ID.

All Objectives

Table C.1
Bivariate Regressions, All Objectives, Set 1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Ground Forces	Naval Forces	Air Forces	Duration	Host-Nation Support
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.111 (0.0916)				
Naval forces per capita, categorical		0.217 (0.225)			
Air forces per capita, categorical			-0.247 (0.215)		
Intervention duration, IHS				-0.00176 (0.0825)	
Support of host nation					0.105 (0.278)
Constant cut1	-2.322*** (0.239)	-2.272*** (0.282)	-2.518*** (0.264)	-2.402*** (0.333)	-2.325*** (0.325)
Constant cut2	-0.445*** (0.136)	-0.395** (0.176)	-0.640*** (0.153)	-0.528** (0.223)	-0.450* (0.237)
Observations	492	492	492	492	492
Log likelihood	-421.2	-421.5	-421.3	-422.1	-421.9
Chi squared	1.468	0.933	1.319	0.000455	0.143
Pseudo R-squared	0.00198	0.00139	0.00190	6.91e-07	0.000325

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.2
Bivariate Regressions, All Objectives, Set 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Battle Deaths	Military Assistance	Scope	Discrimination	GDP per Capita
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	-0.704*** (0.244)				
U.S. military assistance, IHS		-0.0557*** (0.0135)			
Scope of objective			-0.934*** (0.159)		
Discriminated population, estimated				-1.044 (0.818)	
GDP per capita, categorical, one-year lag					-0.0639 (0.116)
Constant cut1	-2.717*** (0.204)	-2.805*** (0.246)	-4.490*** (0.509)	-2.466*** (0.236)	-2.504*** (0.320)
Constant cut2	-0.799*** (0.146)	-0.883*** (0.138)	-2.491*** (0.379)	-0.586*** (0.126)	-0.629*** (0.231)
Observations	492	483	492	492	492
Log likelihood	-414.5	-398.1	-397.9	-420.9	-421.9
Chi squared	8.311	16.88	34.52	1.629	0.305
Pseudo R-squared	0.0179	0.0317	0.0573	0.00283	0.000495

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.3
Bivariate Regressions, All Objectives, Set 3

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Variables	Regime Type	U.S. Capabilities	Alliance with United States	Time Periods
Polity, one-year lag	0.0124 (0.0165)			
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)		3.941** (1.759)		
Alliance with United States			0.0594 (0.241)	
Pre–Cold War era				0.989*** (0.292)
Post–Cold War era				–0.386 (0.268)
Constant cut1	–2.288*** (0.275)	–1.630*** (0.474)	–2.383*** (0.257)	–2.326*** (0.280)
Constant cut2	–0.412** (0.184)	0.266 (0.404)	–0.509*** (0.144)	–0.387** (0.163)
Observations	492	478	492	492
Log likelihood	–421.7	–398.6	–422	–407.4
Chi squared	0.564	5.017	0.0606	19.39
Pseudo R-squared	0.000749	0.0112	9.49e–05	0.0347

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Objectives in Interventions Involving Combat or COIN

Table C.4
Bivariate Regressions, Objectives in Combat or COIN Interventions, Set 1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Ground Forces	Naval Forces	Air Forces	Duration	Host-Nation Support
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.109 (0.155)				
Naval forces per capita, categorical		0.120 (0.384)			
Air forces per capita, categorical			-0.168 (0.323)		
Intervention duration, IHS ^a				-0.418** (0.186)	
Support of host nation					-0.368 (0.454)
Constant cut1	-1.680*** (0.401)	-1.697*** (0.554)	-1.906*** (0.498)	-2.657*** (0.626)	-1.960*** (0.412)
Constant cut2	-0.0660 (0.272)	-0.0867 (0.400)	-0.294 (0.357)	-0.997** (0.456)	-0.340 (0.279)
Observations	160	160	160	160	160
Log likelihood	-155.4	-155.7	-155.6	-152.3	-155.1
Chi squared	0.493	0.0977	0.271	5.054	0.658
Pseudo R-squared	0.00234	0.000438	0.00140	0.0221	0.00461

^a Intervention duration calculated using start and end dates, transformed using inverse hyperbolic sine.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.5
Bivariate Regressions, Objectives in Combat or COIN Interventions, Set 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Battle Deaths	Military Assistance	Scope	Discrimination	GDP per Capita
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	-0.617 (0.502)				
U.S. military assistance, IHS		-0.100*** (0.0201)			
Scope of objective			-0.735*** (0.247)		
Discriminated population, estimated				-1.495** (0.760)	
GDP per capita, categorical, one-year lag					0.173 (0.209)
Constant cut1	-2.231*** (0.439)	-2.622*** (0.410)	-3.396*** (0.800)	-1.917*** (0.382)	-1.479*** (0.539)
Constant cut2	-0.590 (0.420)	-0.722*** (0.244)	-1.706*** (0.559)	-0.288 (0.247)	0.138 (0.463)
Observations	160	160	160	160	160
Log likelihood	-153.8	-140.7	-150.2	-154.6	-155.2
Chi squared	1.508	24.86	8.883	3.874	0.680
Pseudo R-squared	0.0130	0.0970	0.0356	0.00745	0.00371

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.6
Bivariate Regressions, Objectives in Combat or COIN Interventions, Set 3

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Variables	Regime Type	U.S. Capabilities	Alliance with United States	Time Periods
Polity, one-year lag	0.0174 (0.0302)			
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)		5.576 (4.274)		
Alliance with United States			0.667*** (0.232)	
Pre–Cold War era				1.418** (0.658)
Post–Cold War era				–0.394 (0.624)
Constant cut1	–1.638*** (0.395)	–0.839 (0.892)	–1.763*** (0.360)	–1.581** (0.678)
Constant cut2	–0.0257 (0.302)	0.824 (0.827)	–0.150 (0.230)	0.212 (0.529)
Observations	160	156	160	160
Log likelihood	–155.6	–147.4	–155.4	–143
Chi squared	0.330	1.702	–	15.78
Pseudo R-squared	0.00137	0.0143	0.00213	0.0820

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Objectives in Interventions Involving Deterrence

Table C.7
Bivariate Regressions, Objectives in Deterrence Interventions, Set 1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Ground Forces	Naval Forces	Air Forces	Duration	Host-Nation Support
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.111 (0.0916)				
Naval forces per capita, categorical		0.217 (0.225)			
Air forces per capita, categorical			-0.247 (0.215)		
Intervention duration, IHS				-0.00176 (0.0825)	
Support of host nation					0.105 (0.278)
Constant cut1	-2.322*** (0.239)	-2.272*** (0.282)	-2.518*** (0.264)	-2.402*** (0.333)	-2.325*** (0.325)
Constant cut2	-0.445*** (0.136)	-0.395** (0.176)	-0.640*** (0.153)	-0.528** (0.223)	-0.450* (0.237)
Observations	492	492	492	492	492
Log likelihood	-421.2	-421.5	-421.3	-422.1	-421.9
Chi squared	1.468	0.933	1.319	0.000455	0.143
Pseudo R-squared	0.00198	0.00139	0.00190	6.91e-07	0.000325

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.8
Bivariate Regressions, Objectives in Deterrence Interventions, Set 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Battle Deaths	Military Assistance	Scope	Discrimination	GDP per Capita
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	−0.704*** (0.244)				
U.S. military assistance, IHS		−0.0557*** (0.0135)			
Scope of objective			−0.934*** (0.159)		
Discriminated population, estimated				−1.044 (0.818)	
GDP per capita, categorical, one-year lag					−0.0639 (0.116)
Constant cut1	−2.717*** (0.204)	−2.805*** (0.246)	−4.490*** (0.509)	−2.466*** (0.236)	−2.504*** (0.320)
Constant cut2	−0.799*** (0.146)	−0.883*** (0.138)	−2.491*** (0.379)	−0.586*** (0.126)	−0.629*** (0.231)
Observations	492	483	492	492	492
Log likelihood	−414.5	−398.1	−397.9	−420.9	−421.9
Chi squared	8.311	16.88	34.52	1.629	0.305
Pseudo R-squared	0.0179	0.0317	0.0573	0.00283	0.000495

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.9
Bivariate Regressions, Objectives in Deterrence Interventions, Set 3

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Variables	Regime Type	U.S. Capabilities	Alliance with United States	Time Periods
Polity, one-year lag	0.0124 (0.0165)			
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)		3.941** (1.759)		
Alliance with United States			0.0594 (0.241)	
Pre–Cold War era				0.989*** (0.292)
Post–Cold War era				–0.386 (0.268)
Constant cut1	–2.288*** (0.275)	–1.630*** (0.474)	–2.383*** (0.257)	–2.326*** (0.280)
Constant cut2	–0.412** (0.184)	0.266 (0.404)	–0.509*** (0.144)	–0.387** (0.163)
Observations	492	478	492	492
Log likelihood	–421.7	–398.6	–422	–407.7
Chi squared	0.564	5.017	0.0606	19.39
Pseudo R-squared	0.000749	0.0112	9.49e–05	0.0347

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Objectives in Interventions Involving Stability Operations

Table C.10
Bivariate Regressions, Objectives in Stability Operation Interventions, Set 1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Ground Forces	Naval Forces	Air Forces	Duration	Host-Nation Support
Ground troops per capita, IHS	−0.0597 (0.181)				
Naval forces per capita, categorical		0.546 (0.525)			
Air forces per capita, categorical			−0.549 (0.372)		
Intervention duration, IHS				−0.119 (0.210)	
Support of host nation					−0.135 (0.683)
Constant cut1	−2.360*** (0.576)	−1.921*** (0.695)	−2.577*** (0.492)	−2.564*** (0.782)	−2.399*** (0.803)
Constant cut2	−0.736** (0.344)	−0.290 (0.454)	−0.935*** (0.264)	−0.938* (0.534)	−0.776 (0.616)
Observations	174	174	174	174	174
Log likelihood	−145.8	−145.1	−144.2	−145.6	−145.9
Chi squared	0.109	1.085	2.176	0.320	0.0393
Pseudo R-squared	0.000654	0.00533	0.0119	0.00183	0.000398

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.11
Bivariate Regressions, Objectives in Stability Operation Interventions, Set 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Battle Deaths	Military Assistance	Scope	Discrimination	GDP per Capita
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	-1.125*** (0.362)				
U.S. military assistance, IHS		-0.109*** (0.0218)			
Scope of objective			-1.257*** (0.328)		
Discriminated population, estimated				-2.229*** (0.637)	
GDP per capita, categorical, one-year lag					0.0359 (0.280)
Constant cut1	-2.888*** (0.363)	-3.200*** (0.399)	-5.037*** (1.141)	-2.427*** (0.477)	-2.241*** (0.573)
Constant cut2	-1.135*** (0.250)	-1.290*** (0.224)	-3.238*** (0.790)	-0.771*** (0.233)	-0.618 (0.458)
Observations	174	174	174	174	174
Log likelihood	-138.1	-129.4	-133.3	-143.9	-145.9
Chi squared	9.645	24.89	14.65	12.24	0.0165
Pseudo R-squared	0.0537	0.113	0.0867	0.0137	0.000116

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.12
Bivariate Regressions, Objectives in Stability Operation Interventions, Set 3

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Variables	Regime Type	U.S. Capabilities	Alliance with United States	Time Periods
Polity, one-year lag	−0.0165 (0.0396)			
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)		5.241 (3.568)		
Alliance with United States			0.0689 (0.408)	
Pre–Cold War era				1.202** (0.537)
Post–Cold War era				−0.766 (0.589)
Constant cut1	−2.434*** (0.517)	−1.247 (1.025)	−2.273*** (0.528)	−2.284*** (0.684)
Constant cut2	−0.810** (0.371)	0.466 (0.814)	−0.651** (0.292)	−0.521 (0.404)
Observations	174	173	174	174
Log likelihood	−145.8	−140.4	−145.9	−134.7
Chi squared	0.174	2.158	0.0286	16.56
Pseudo R-squared	0.000761	0.0217	0.000121	0.0767

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Category 1 Objectives: Securing U.S. Interests in Intervention Host**Table C.13**
Bivariate Regressions, Category 1 Objectives, Set 1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Ground Forces	Naval Forces	Air Forces	Duration	Host-Nation Support
Ground troops per capita, IHS	−0.106 (0.189)				
Naval forces per capita, categorical		0.222 (0.531)			
Air forces per capita, categorical			−0.553 (0.418)		
Intervention duration, IHS				−0.105 (0.142)	
Support of host nation					0.0291 (0.510)
Constant cut1	−3.258*** (0.525)	−3.051*** (0.592)	−3.363*** (0.521)	−3.407*** (0.636)	−3.150*** (0.660)
Constant cut2	−1.677*** (0.314)	−1.470*** (0.383)	−1.777*** (0.301)	−1.825*** (0.413)	−1.571*** (0.416)
Observations	124	124	124	124	124
Log likelihood	−67.81	−67.87	−67.44	−67.75	−67.93
Chi squared	0.317	0.174	1.750	0.542	0.00325
Pseudo R-squared	0.00177	0.000910	0.00720	0.00258	2.42e−05

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.14
Bivariate Regressions, Category 1 Objectives, Set 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Battle Deaths	Military Assistance	Scope	Discrimination	GDP per Capita
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	-1.252** (0.542)				
U.S. military assistance, IHS		-0.00140 (0.0367)			
Scope of objective			-1.083*** (0.417)		
Discriminated population, estimated				0.00931 (2.447)	
GDP per capita, categorical, one-year lag					-0.388 (0.342)
Constant cut1	-3.703*** (0.446)	-3.175*** (0.452)	-5.029*** (0.860)	-3.169*** (0.469)	-3.688*** (0.567)
Constant cut2	-2.067*** (0.338)	-1.595*** (0.272)	-3.391*** (0.757)	-1.590*** (0.252)	-2.094*** (0.567)
Observations	124	124	124	124	124
Log likelihood	-64.98	-67.93	-64.36	-67.93	-67.03
Chi squared	5.326	0.00145	6.744	1.45e-05	1.290
Pseudo R-squared	0.0434	1.30e-05	0.0525	1.12e-07	0.0133

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.15
Bivariate Regressions, Category 1 Objectives, Set 3

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Variables	Regime Type	U.S. Capabilities	Alliance with United States	Time Periods
Polity, one-year lag	0.00299 (0.0457)			
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)		-0.0601 (5.505)		
Alliance with United States			-0.476 (0.494)	
Pre-Cold War era				0.752 (0.497)
Post-Cold War era				-0.105 (0.817)
Constant cut1	-3.144*** (0.570)	-3.183** (1.422)	-3.290*** (0.510)	-2.881*** (0.526)
Constant cut2	-1.564*** (0.441)	-1.604 (1.261)	-1.705*** (0.287)	-1.283*** (0.327)
Observations	124	124	124	124
Log likelihood	-67.93	-67.93	-67.56	-66.67
Chi squared	0.00427	0.000119	0.929	2.592
Pseudo R-squared	2.61e-05	1.81e-06	0.00548	0.0185

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Category 2 Objectives: Enhancing Regional and Global U.S. Security Interests

Table C.16
Bivariate Regressions, Category 2 Objectives, Set 1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Ground Forces	Naval Forces	Air Forces	Duration	Host-Nation Support
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.305** (0.122)				
Naval forces per capita, categorical		0.402 (0.311)			
Air forces per capita, categorical			-0.0834 (0.297)		
Intervention duration, IHS				0.123 (0.103)	
Support of host nation					0.284 (0.302)
Constant cut1	-2.206*** (0.233)	-2.141*** (0.300)	-2.429*** (0.300)	-2.115*** (0.352)	-2.192*** (0.299)
Constant cut2	-0.0597 (0.162)	-0.0128 (0.227)	-0.313 (0.206)	0.00898 (0.274)	-0.0706 (0.250)
Observations	261	261	261	261	261
Log likelihood	-230.8	-233	-234.2	-233.4	-233.7
Chi squared	6.215	1.672	0.0790	1.428	0.881
Pseudo R-squared	0.0148	0.00543	0.000226	0.00365	0.00243

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.17
Bivariate Regressions, Category 2 Objectives, Set 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Battle Deaths	Military Assistance	Scope	Discrimination	GDP per Capita
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	-0.878*** (0.285)				
U.S. military assistance, IHS		-0.0574*** (0.0167)			
Scope of objective			-0.942*** (0.222)		
Discriminated population, estimated				-1.971* (1.126)	
GDP per capita, categorical, one-year lag					0.101 (0.132)
Constant cut1	-2.811*** (0.245)	-2.798*** (0.282)	-4.706*** (0.633)	-2.546*** (0.239)	-2.202*** (0.359)
Constant cut2	-0.610*** (0.183)	-0.635*** (0.178)	-2.474*** (0.543)	-0.401** (0.160)	-0.0832 (0.294)
Observations	261	256	261	261	261
Log likelihood	-227.7	-221.4	-223.3	-231.9	-234
Chi squared	9.520	11.82	18.08	3.063	0.582
Pseudo R-squared	0.0279	0.0350	0.0468	0.0103	0.00115

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.18
Bivariate Regressions, Category 2 Objectives, Set 3

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Variables	Regime Type	U.S. Capabilities	Alliance with United States	Time Periods
Polity, one-year lag	0.0303 (0.0194)			
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)		5.208*** (1.994)		
Alliance with United States			0.347 (0.300)	
Pre–Cold War era				1.287*** (0.419)
Post–Cold War era				–0.451 (0.336)
Constant cut1	–2.126*** (0.289)	–1.384*** (0.480)	–2.305*** (0.247)	–2.311*** (0.285)
Constant cut2	0.00149 (0.225)	0.772 (0.477)	–0.182 (0.176)	–0.0938 (0.188)
Observations	261	252	261	261
Log likelihood	–233	–218.3	–233.5	–222.9
Chi squared	2.450	6.820	1.341	14.40
Pseudo R-squared	0.00538	0.0180	0.00322	0.0487

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Category 4 Objectives: Assisting Host Nation or Population**Table C.19**
Bivariate Regressions, Category 4 Objectives, Set 1

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Ground Forces	Naval Forces	Air Forces	Duration	Host-Nation Support
Ground troops per capita, IHS	-0.202 (0.244)				
Naval forces per capita, categorical		-0.233 (0.424)			
Air forces per capita, categorical			0.343 (0.457)		
Intervention duration, IHS				-0.394* (0.204)	
Support of host nation					-0.0653 (0.932)
Constant cut1	-2.174*** (0.540)	-2.139*** (0.589)	-1.837*** (0.451)	-2.982*** (0.798)	-2.061* (1.117)
Constant cut2	-0.433 (0.305)	-0.408 (0.352)	-0.102 (0.258)	-1.203** (0.565)	-0.333 (0.872)
Observations	93	93	93	93	93
Log likelihood	-86.54	-86.93	-86.76	-85.08	-87.07
Chi squared	0.682	0.301	0.562	3.722	0.00491
Pseudo R-squared	0.00619	0.00165	0.00366	0.0230	9.66e-05

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.20
Bivariate Regressions, Category 4 Objectives, Set 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Variables	Battle Deaths	Military Assistance	Scope	Discrimination	GDP per Capita
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	0.152 (0.456)				
U.S. military assistance, IHS		-0.0448* (0.0236)			
Scope of objective			-0.614** (0.294)		
Discriminated population, estimated				2.177 (2.134)	
GDP per capita, categorical, one-year lag					0.310 (0.313)
Constant cut1	-1.956*** (0.452)	-2.367*** (0.436)	-3.264*** (0.857)	-1.925*** (0.470)	-1.559** (0.751)
Constant cut2	-0.227 (0.281)	-0.623** (0.258)	-1.482** (0.681)	-0.181 (0.255)	0.196 (0.602)
Observations	93	91	93	93	93
Log likelihood	-87.01	-83.57	-84.96	-86.27	-86.06
Chi squared	0.111	3.618	4.343	1.040	0.984
Pseudo R-squared	0.000744	0.0208	0.0243	0.00933	0.0116

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.21
Bivariate Regressions, Category 4 Objectives, Set 3

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Variables	Regime Type	U.S. Capabilities	Alliance with United States	Time Periods
Polity, one-year lag	−0.0356 (0.0392)			
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)		1.539 (2.108)		
Alliance with United States			−0.134 (0.467)	
Pre–Cold War era				−1.116** (0.548)
Post–Cold War era				−0.307 (0.561)
Constant cut1	−2.354*** (0.610)	−1.670** (0.732)	−2.058*** (0.573)	−2.382*** (0.574)
Constant cut2	−0.617 (0.436)	0.0383 (0.559)	−0.330 (0.326)	−0.610 (0.408)
Observations	93	90	93	93
Log likelihood	−86.62	−84.57	−87.03	−85.59
Chi squared	0.824	0.533	0.0828	4.536
Pseudo R-squared	0.00526	0.00250	0.000582	0.0171

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Pairwise Correlation Analyses

Variables that were statistically significant in the bivariate analyses were then used to construct multivariate analyses, which are discussed in greater detail below. Before doing so, however, we assessed the extent to which these different variables correlated with one another, to better understand whether there were particular combinations of highly correlated variables that might produce inconsistent or unpredictable results. To do so, we ran a pairwise correlation matrix using all of these potential variables, subject to the same categorizations discussed above.

Table C.22
Pairwise Correlation Matrix, All Objectives

	Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	Naval Forces per Capita, Cate- gorical	Air Forces per Capita, Cate- gorical	Battle Deaths per Capita, Cate- gorical	U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	Pre-Cold War Era	Scope of Objective	Relative U.S. Capa- bilities (CINC)
Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	1							
Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.527	1						
Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.446	0.501	1					
Battle Deaths per Capita, Categorical	0.153	0.063	0.175	1				
U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	0.060	-0.142	0.081	0.232	1			
Pre-Cold War Era	0.043	0.140	-0.414	-0.104	-0.417	1		
Scope of Objective	0.062	0.045	0.132	0.008	0.120	-0.198	1	
Relative U.S. Capabilities (CINC)	-0.078	-0.161	-0.253	-0.133	-0.300	0.133	0.112	1

Table C.23
Pairwise Correlation Matrix, Interventions Involving Combat or COIN

	Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	Inter- vention Duration, IHS	U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	Scope of Objective	Discrim- inated Population, Estimated	Pre-Cold War Era	Alliance with United States	Battle Deaths per Capita, Categorical	Relative U.S. Capabilities (CINC)
Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	1										
Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.265	1									
Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.520	0.689	1								
Intervention Duration, IHS	-0.017	0.404	0.459	1							
U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	0.215	0.048	0.153	0.298	1						
Scope of Objective	0.133	0.097	0.128	0.194	0.267	1					
Discriminated Population, Estimated	0.040	-0.160	-0.071	-0.292	0.137	0.010	1				
Pre-Cold War Era	-0.364	-0.357	-0.653	-0.308	-0.543	-0.182	-0.198	1			
Alliance with United States	0.336	-0.092	0.279	-0.099	-0.130	-0.056	-0.099	-0.163	1		
Battle Deaths per Capita, Categorical	0.208	-0.193	-0.075	-0.039	0.339	-0.018	0.072	-0.089	-0.069	1	
Relative U.S. Capabilities (CINC)	-0.235	-0.400	-0.446	-0.034	-0.280	-0.070	-0.193	0.542	-0.140	0.128	1

Table C.24
Pairwise Correlation Matrix, Interventions Involving Deterrence

	Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	Intervention Duration, IHS	Support of Host Nation	Pre–Cold War Era	Scope of Objective	Polity, One-Year Lag	Relative U.S. Capabilities (CINC)
Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	1								
Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.646	1							
Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.402	0.576	1						
Intervention Duration, IHS	0.393	0.213	0.394	1					
Support of Host Nation	0.180	0.087	0.080	0.451	1				
Pre–Cold War Era	0.174	0.266	–0.064	0.112	0.146	1			
Scope of Objective	–0.032	–0.074	0.084	0.203	0.107	–0.235	1		
Polity, One-Year Lag	–0.146	–0.155	–0.168	0.043	0.209	0.248	–0.041	1	
Relative U.S. Capabilities (CINC)	0.023	–0.215	–0.162	0.342	0.349	–0.041	0.126	0.276	1

Table C.25
Pairwise Correlation Matrix, Interventions Involving Stability Operations

	Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	Battle Deaths per Capita, Categorical	U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	Pre–Cold War Era	Scope of Objective	Discriminated Population, Estimated	Relative U.S. Capabilities (CINC)
Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	1								
Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.331	1							
Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.492	0.246	1						
Battle Deaths per Capita, Categorical	0.315	0.199	0.468	1					
U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	0.235	0.013	0.245	0.557	1				
Pre–Cold War Era	–0.208	0.182	–0.680	–0.458	–0.491	1			
Scope of Objective	0.139	–0.030	0.183	0.086	0.226	–0.277	1		
Discriminated Population, Estimated	0.111	–0.011	0.152	0.218	0.262	–0.182	0.137	1	
Relative U.S. Capabilities (CINC)	–0.261	–0.289	–0.421	–0.471	–0.371	0.081	0.009	–0.268	1

Table C.26
Pairwise Correlation Matrix, Category 1 Objectives

	Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	Battle Deaths per Capita, Categorical	Scope of Objective	Pre–Cold War Era
Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	1					
Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.508	1				
Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.525	0.099	1			
Battle Deaths per Capita, Categorical	0.196	–0.068	0.323	1		
Scope of Objective	0.043	–0.161	0.064	0.024	1	
Pre–Cold War Era	0.044	0.327	–0.574	–0.192	–0.162	1

Table C.27
Pairwise Correlation Matrix, Category 2 Objectives

	Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	Battle Deaths per Capita, Categorical	U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	Pre–Cold War Era	Scope of Objective	Discriminated Population, Estimated	Relative U.S. Capabilities (CINC)
Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	1								
Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.550	1							
Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.487	0.592	1						
Battle Deaths per Capita, Categorical	0.142	–0.003	0.087	1					
U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	0.104	–0.129	0.062	0.281	1				
Pre–Cold War Era	–0.002	0.086	–0.310	–0.019	–0.377	1			
Scope of Objective	0.024	–0.022	0.108	0.026	0.162	–0.252	1		
Discriminated Population, Estimated	–0.073	–0.201	–0.092	0.114	0.160	–0.200	–0.063	1	
Relative U.S. Capabilities (CINC)	–0.076	–0.184	–0.259	–0.098	–0.251	0.152	0.043	–0.213	1

Table C.28
Pairwise Correlation Matrix, Category 4 Objectives

	Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	Intervention Duration, IHS	U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	Pre–Cold War Era	Scope of Objective
Ground Troops per Capita, IHS	1						
Naval Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.513	1					
Air Forces per Capita, Categorical	0.305	0.640	1				
Intervention Duration, IHS	0.019	0.306	0.210	1			
U.S. Military Assistance, IHS	–0.141	–0.188	–0.141	–0.089	1		
Pre–Cold War Era	0.216	0.158	–0.367	0.092	–0.339	1	
Scope of Objective	0.197	0.199	–0.040	0.328	–0.143	0.233	1

Multivariate Regressions

Most of the multivariate regressions we conducted are presented in Chapter Four, including those covering all objectives and those separated by intervention activity type (combat, deterrence, and stability operations).³ We also conducted multivariate regressions for objectives separated by top-level category, as defined in Chapter Four. These results were already discussed in Chapter Four, but we present these results here for the sake of completeness.⁴

Table C.29
Multivariate Regressions, Category 1 Objectives

	All Forces	Ground Only	Naval Only	Air Only
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.0341 (0.387)	0.0466 (0.241)		
Naval forces per capita, categorical	-0.301 (0.853)		-0.116 (0.708)	
Air forces per capita, categorical	0.341 (1.036)			0.308 (0.718)
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	-1.297** (0.566)	-1.280** (0.574)	-1.240** (0.547)	-1.307** (0.544)
Scope of objective	-1.109*** (0.428)	-1.106*** (0.412)	-1.102*** (0.409)	-1.093*** (0.411)
Pre-Cold War era	0.729 (0.782)	0.515 (0.540)	0.535 (0.544)	0.662 (0.676)
Constant cut1	-5.371*** (1.156)	-5.397*** (0.842)	-5.463*** (0.961)	-5.256*** (0.968)
Constant cut2	-3.644*** (1.058)	-3.675*** (0.798)	-3.741*** (0.881)	-3.532*** (0.897)
Observations	124	124	124	124
Log likelihood	-60.68	-60.79	-60.80	-60.73
Chi squared	15.76	15.22	15.37	15.09
Pseudo R-squared	0.107	0.105	0.105	0.106

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

³ Minor additional variations of these models focusing on the effects of air and naval forces using different sets of additional control variables where no substantive results differed from those presented in Chapter Four were also run, but they are not presented here. They are available from the authors upon request.

⁴ As with the bivariate regressions described above, the dependent variable for each is the success of the intervention objective, and the standard errors are clustered on the intervention ID.

Table C.30
Multivariate Regressions, Category 2 Objectives

	All Forces	Ground Only	Naval Only	Air Only
Ground troops per capita, IHS	0.460*** (0.158)	0.431*** (0.126)		
Naval forces per capita, categorical	−0.316 (0.450)		0.400 (0.329)	
Air forces per capita, categorical	0.198 (0.466)			0.580 (0.395)
Battle deaths per capita, categorical	−0.973*** (0.311)	−0.973*** (0.314)	−0.843*** (0.306)	−0.884*** (0.298)
U.S. military assistance, IHS	−0.0124 (0.0196)	−0.0105 (0.0193)	−0.00192 (0.0196)	−0.000956 (0.0195)
Scope of objective	−0.894*** (0.257)	−0.883*** (0.251)	−0.881*** (0.252)	−0.904*** (0.260)
Discriminated population, estimated	−1.173 (1.067)	−1.069 (1.040)	−1.087 (1.176)	−1.002 (1.149)
Pre–Cold War era	1.024** (0.460)	0.958** (0.425)	0.926** (0.451)	1.155** (0.480)
Relative U.S. capabilities (CINC)	4.194* (2.392)	4.423* (2.403)	4.576* (2.374)	4.895** (2.397)
Constant cut1	−4.147*** (0.886)	−3.983*** (0.839)	−3.830*** (0.891)	−3.749*** (0.898)
Constant cut2	−1.608** (0.811)	−1.452* (0.805)	−1.371* (0.822)	−1.265 (0.831)
Observations	252	252	252	252
Log likelihood	−190.2	−190.5	−195.3	−194.5
Chi squared	48.08	45.06	39.19	39.80
Pseudo R-squared	0.144	0.143	0.121	0.125

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table C.31
Multivariate Regressions, Category 4 Objectives

	All Forces	Ground Only	Naval Only	Air Only
Ground troops per capita, IHS	-0.197 (0.223)	-0.101 (0.185)		
Naval forces per capita, categorical	0.695 (0.978)		0.212 (0.458)	
Air forces per capita, categorical	-0.329 (0.932)			0.0263 (0.460)
Intervention duration, IHS	-0.353 (0.232)	-0.293 (0.200)	-0.325 (0.209)	-0.296 (0.223)
U.S. military assistance, IHS	-0.0776*** (0.0298)	-0.0743*** (0.0246)	-0.0732*** (0.0247)	-0.0735*** (0.0260)
Pre-Cold War era	-1.578* (0.839)	-1.279** (0.502)	-1.395*** (0.498)	-1.332*** (0.477)
Scope of objective	-0.485 (0.336)	-0.460 (0.320)	-0.497* (0.300)	-0.485 (0.301)
Constant cut1	-4.765*** (0.937)	-4.626*** (0.990)	-4.587*** (0.995)	-4.590*** (0.943)
Constant cut2	-2.816*** (0.818)	-2.688*** (0.776)	-2.653*** (0.781)	-2.657*** (0.767)
Observations	91	91	91	91
Log likelihood	-77.07	-77.44	-77.45	-77.54
Chi squared	21.86	22.95	19.26	20.01
Pseudo R-squared	0.0970	0.0927	0.0925	0.0915

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

List of Cases

Table D.1
List of Cases

Intervention Name	Start Year	End Year
Spanish-American War	1898	1898
Second Samoan Civil War	1899	1899
Boxer Rebellion	1900	1900
Naval Maneuvers to End Blockade of Venezuela	1902	1903
Honduran Peacekeeping Force During Civil Unrest	1903	1903
U.S. Occupation of Panama	1903	1915
Dominican Republic Peacekeeping Force and Blockade During Civil Unrest	1904	1904
Marines Landing During Russo-Japanese War	1904	1905
Cuban Pacification Intervention	1906	1909
U.S. Naval and Marine Intervention in Nicaragua During Civil Unrest	1909	1910
U.S.-Mexican Border Wars (I)	1911	1911
Marines Landing During Kuomintang Rebellion	1912	1926
U.S. Peacekeeping Force in Cuba	1912	1912
Marines Landing During Nicaraguan Revolution	1912	1925
Naval Intervention to End Bombardment of Puerto Plata	1914	1914
U.S. Occupation of Veracruz	1914	1914
U.S. Deterrence Force in the Panama Canal Zone	1915	1989
U.S. Occupation of Haiti	1915	1934
U.S. Invasion of Mexico: Pershing's Expedition Versus Pancho Villa	1916	1917
U.S. Occupation of Dominican Republic	1916	1924

Table D.1—continued

Intervention Name	Start Year	End Year
U.S. Occupation of Cuba (The Sugar Intervention)	1917	1922
World War I	1917	1918
U.S.-Mexican Border Wars (II)	1918	1919
American Expeditionary Forces in Vladivostok and Archangel	1918	1920
Post-World War I Naval Occupation of Dalmatia/Croatia	1918	1921
Allied Occupation of the Rhineland Post-World War I	1918	1923
U.S. Occupation of Nicaragua	1926	1933
The “China Marines” Deployment	1927	1941
Naval Intervention During Cuban Civil War	1933	1934
World War II—Bases for Destroyers/Lend-Lease Bases/Neutrality Patrols in the Atlantic	1939	1945
World War II—U.S. Protectorate of Iceland	1941	1945
World War II—U.S. Protectorate of Greenland	1941	1945
World War II (Asian/Pacific Theater)	1941	1945
World War II (European/Mediterranean/North African Theater)	1941	1945
U.S. Cold War Deterrent Posture in Saudi Arabia	1945	1989
U.S. Occupation of Germany (Post-World War II)	1945	1955
Allied Occupation of Austria (Post-World War II)	1945	1955
U.S. Occupation of Mainland Japan and Okinawa (Post-World War II)	1945	1952
U.S. Occupation of South Korea (Post-World War II)	1945	1949
Marines in Northern China Post-World War II (Operation Beleaguer)	1945	1949
U.S. Cold War Deterrent Posture in Europe	1946	1989
Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group–Philippines (Post-9/11: Operation Freedom Eagle)	1946	Ongoing
Turkish Straits Crisis	1946	1946
U.S. Military Advisory Assistance Group–Greece (Greek Civil War); Naval Contingency Force During Greek Martial Law	1947	1950
U.S. Cold War Deterrent Posture in Libya	1948	1970
First Arab-Israeli War	1948	1948
Berlin Airlift (Operation Vittles)	1948	1949
Naval Deterrence Against Soviet Aggression Toward Yugoslavia	1949	1953

Table D.1—continued

Intervention Name	Start Year	End Year
Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea	1949	1950
U.S. Cold War Deterrent Posture in Ethiopia/Eritrea	1950	1973
Taiwan Assistance and Deterrence Mission, First, Second, Third Taiwan Straits Crises	1950	Ongoing
The Korean War	1950	1953
Military Assistance Advisory Group, Indochina/Vietnam; First Indochina War	1950	1962
Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group Thailand	1950	1962
U.S. Cold War Deterrent Posture in Morocco	1951	1977
U.S. Cold War Deterrent Posture in Asia/Pacific	1952	1989
U.S. Cold War Deterrent Posture in Iran/Military Advisory and Assistance Group–Iran	1953	1978
U.S. Military Government in South Korea	1953	1957
Blockade of Guatemala	1954	1954
Suez Crisis	1956	1956
U.S. Deterrent Posture in South Korea	1957	Ongoing
Naval Deterrence Against Syrian Invasion of Turkey	1957	1957
Naval Contingency Force During Indonesia Coup	1958	1958
Operation Blue Bat (Lebanon Crisis of 1958); Naval Contingency Force (pre–Blue Bat)	1958	1958
Crisis in the Congo (Operation New Tape, Operation Safari, Operation Dragon Rouge)	1960	1964
Naval Contingency Force During Cuban Threat in Central America	1960	1960
Advisory Assistance During Pathet Lao Insurgency (Operation Millpond)	1961	1961
Bay of Pigs Invasion	1961	1961
Vietnam War (Combat Phase)	1962	1975
Laos Crisis, U.S. Show of Force	1962	1962
Cuban Missile Crisis	1962	1962
Naval Contingency Force During Turkish Threat to Cyprus	1964	1964
U.S. Occupation of Dominican Republic (Operation Power Pack)	1965	1966
Advisory Assistance in Guatemalan Civil War	1966	1968
Six-Day War	1967	1967

Table D.1—continued

Intervention Name	Start Year	End Year
DD Eilat Sinking	1967	1967
Naval Contingency Force During Syrian Invasion of Jordan	1970	1970
Naval Contingency Force During Indo-Pakistani War of 1971	1971	1971
Nicaraguan Earthquake Relief	1972	1973
Yom Kippur War (Operation Nickel Grass)	1973	1973
Mayaguez Affair	1975	1975
Philippine Typhoon Relief	1976	1976
Naval Contingency Force During Ugandan Threat to Kenya	1976	1976
Naval Contingency Force During Yemen Civil War	1979	1979
Naval Contingency Force Post–Iranian Revolution (Operation Eagle Claw)	1979	1981
Advisory Assistance in Salvadoran Civil War	1981	1992
Naval Contingency Force During al Biqa Missile Crisis	1981	1981
Gulf of Sidra Incident I	1981	1981
Multinational Force and Observers in Sinai	1982	Ongoing
Lebanese Civil War (Multinational Force Lebanon)	1982	1984
U.S. Training Missions and Demonstrations of Force in Honduras (Operations Big Pine I, II, & III, Operation Solid Shield, Operation Golden Pheasant, Contra/Salvadoran/Honduran/Panamanian/Costa Rican training)	1983	Ongoing
Naval Contingency Force During Libyan Threat Toward Sudan	1983	1983
Naval Contingency Force During Libyan Threat Toward Chad	1983	1983
Naval Deterrence Against Iranian Threat in Persian Gulf	1983	1984
U.S. Invasion of Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury)	1983	1983
Naval Contingency Force During TWA Flight 847 Hijacking	1985	1985
Gulf of Sidra Incidents II, III (Operation Eldorado Canyon)	1986	1986
Kuwaiti Oil Tanker Protection (Operation Earnest Will, Operation Praying Mantis)	1987	1988
Naval Contingency Force During Seoul Olympic Games	1988	1988
Gulf of Sidra Incident IV	1988	1989
U.S. Show of Force in Panama (Operation Nimrod Dancer)	1989	1989
U.S. Invasion of Panama (Operation Just Cause)	1989	1990
U.S. Peacekeeping Force in Panama (Operation Promote Liberty)	1990	1994

Table D.1—continued

Intervention Name	Start Year	End Year
Mamba Station Liberia (Operation Sharp Edge)	1990	1991
U.S. Deterrence Posture in the Persian Gulf (Operation Desert Shield)	1990	1991
Persian Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm)	1991	1991
U.S. Peacekeeping Force in Kuwait (Task Force Freedom)	1991	1991
U.S. Peacekeeping and Deterrent Force in Turkey and Northern Iraq (Operation Provide Comfort, Operation Northern Watch)	1991	2003
Cyclone Relief in Bangladesh (Operation Sea Angel)	1991	1991
Haitian Refugee Relief in Cuba (Operation Safe Harbor)	1991	1993
Bosnian Air Campaign, Multinational Peacekeeping Force in the Balkans (UNPROFOR, IFOR, SFOR, EUFOR)	1992	2008
Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Somalia (Operation Restore Hope, Operation Continue Hope, Operation United Shield)	1992	1995
U.S. Deterrent and Training Force in the Persian Gulf (Operation Southern Watch, Operation Vigilant Warrior, Operation Vigilant Sentinel, Operation Desert Strike, Operation Desert Thunder, Operation Desert Fox, Operation Desert Focus, Exercise Intrinsic Action/Desert Spring, Exercise Iris Gold)	1992	2003
Haitian and Cuban Refugee Relief (Operation Sea Signal, Operation Safe Haven, Operation Safe Passage)	1994	1996
Rwandan Genocide Relief Mission (Operation Support Hope)	1994	1994
U.S. Nation-Building Operations in Haiti (Operation Uphold Democracy, Operation New Horizons)	1994	1996
U.S. Security Force in Liberia (Operation Assured Response)	1996	1996
Cruise Missile Attacks on al Qaeda (Operation Infinite Reach)	1998	1998
Hurricane Relief in Central America (Operation Strong Support [also known as Fuerte Apoyo])	1998	1999
U.S. COIN and Counternarcotics Advisory and Assistance in Colombia (Plan Colombia)	1999	Ongoing
Kosovo Air Campaign (Combat Phase: Operation Allied Force, Operation Noble Anvil, Operation Sustain Hope, Operation Shining Hope)	1999	1999
Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Kosovo	1999	Ongoing
Earthquake Relief in Turkey (Operation Avid Response)	1999	1999
Flood Relief in Mozambique (Operation Atlas Response)	2000	2000
U.S. Overthrow of the Taliban Regime (Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Swift Freedom)	2001	2001

Table D.1—continued

Intervention Name	Start Year	End Year
U.S. Occupation of Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom, International Security Assistance Force, Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Resolute Support)	2001	Ongoing
Joint Task Force Horn of Africa	2002	Ongoing
U.S. Invasion of Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom)	2003	2003
U.S. Occupation of Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn)	2003	2011
U.S. Peacekeeping Force in Liberia (Joint Task Force Liberia)	2003	2003
Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Haiti (Operation Secure Tomorrow)	2004	2004
Tsunami Relief in the Indian Ocean (Operation Unified Assistance)	2004	2005
Earthquake Relief in Pakistan (Operation Lifeline)	2005	2006
Earthquake Relief in Haiti (Operation Unified Response)	2010	2010
Flood Relief in Pakistan	2010	2010
Deterrence of China in Japan	2010	Ongoing
Air Campaign to Overthrow Gaddafi (Operation Odyssey Dawn, Operation Unified Protector)	2011	2011
Earthquake and Tsunami Relief in Japan (Operation Tomodachi)	2011	2011
U.S. Military Support to African-Led Counter-Lord's Resistance Army Operations	2011	2017
Typhoon Humanitarian Relief in the Philippines	2013	2013
Operation Atlantic Resolve (Baltics and Black Sea Deterrence)	2014	Ongoing
U.S. Military Support to African-Led Counter-Boko Haram Operations	2014	Ongoing
Combined Joint Task Force Against the Islamic State (Operation Inherent Resolve)	2014	Ongoing
Ebola Relief in West Africa (Operation United Assistance)	2014	2015
Anti-ISIL Air Strikes in Libya	2016	Ongoing

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Using an original data set of 145 ground, air, and naval interventions from 1898 through 2016, this report identifies those factors that have made U.S. military interventions more or less successful at achieving their political objectives. While these objectives were often successfully achieved, about 63 percent of the time overall, levels of success have been declining over time as the United States has pursued increasingly ambitious objectives.

The research combines statistical analysis and detailed case studies of three types of interventions—combat, stability operations, and deterrence. The research highlights that the factors that promote the successful achievement of political objectives vary by the nature of the objective and the intervention. For example, sending additional ground forces may help to defeat adversaries in combat missions but may have a more contingent effect on success in institution-building in stability operations, where nonmilitary resources and pre-intervention planning may be especially vital.

The report offers five main policy recommendations. First, planners should carefully match political objectives to strategy because factors that promote success vary substantially by objective type. Second, sending more forces does not always promote success, but for certain types of objectives and interventions, greater capabilities may be essential. Third, policymakers should have realistic expectations regarding the possibility of achieving highly ambitious objectives. Fourth, pre-intervention planning is crucial. Finally, policymakers should carefully evaluate the role that might be played by third parties, which is often underappreciated.



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