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NOT CAN I, BUT SHOULD I: ANALYZING THE PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS SURROUNDING SUCCESSFUL THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION INTO INTRASTATE CONFLICTS

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THESIS

**NOT CAN I, BUT SHOULD I:
ANALYZING THE PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS
SURROUNDING SUCCESSFUL THIRD-PARTY
INTERVENTION INTO INTRASTATE CONFLICTS**

by

Ryan M. Harth, Jonathan A. Desouza, and Ruben L. Costa

December 2018

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The purpose of this study is to identify the conditions that support successful third-party intervention into foreign intrastate conflicts on behalf of resistance movements—specifically, movements aiming at revolution or regime change. While the United States successfully intervened into and even generated resistance movements during the Cold War, most of its interventions failed to achieve strategic objectives. That trend continues today: most saliently, the U.S. military is still present in Afghanistan after nearly two decades, with no successful conclusion in sight. The ongoing war in Afghanistan is the product of strategic decision-making that focused on achieving a specific outcome without considering the pre-existing conditions necessary to achieve success. In order to deter such an outcome, decision-makers must develop more trenchant decision calculus surrounding third-party intervention. To identify the pre-existing conditions that facilitate success, this thesis uses quantitative analysis of intrastate conflicts to determine the effects of political, military, economic, social, and informational condition types upon rebel victory and loss; government victory; and the level of violence within the conflict. Three case studies serve as a means to apply the empirical results and to draw salient conclusions based upon actual conflicts.

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requirements for the degrees of

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIOC	Anglo Iranian Oil Company
BPC	Basic People's Congresses
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FM	Field Manual
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IRGC	Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
IV	Independent Variables
IW	Irregular Warfare
LIC	Low Intensity Conflict
MDI	Media Density Index
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIOC	National Iranian Oil Company
NTC	National Transitional Council
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PMESII	Political, Military, Economic, Social, Informational, and Infrastructure
PPM	Political Process Model
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UW	Unconventional Warfare
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

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I. FRAMING THE PROBLEM AND OUR ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to identify the conditions that support successful third-party intervention into foreign intrastate conflicts on behalf of resistance movements—specifically, movements aiming at revolution or regime change. The United States has intervened in support of such revolutions and regime changes as an integral policy tool for over a century, with a mixed record.[1] The reasons for U.S. intervention in foreign affairs have varied, expanding in concert with the dynamic international political environment. Early in the 20th century, the United States intervened to produce regime change in Hawaii, Nicaragua, and Honduras, not for any measurable improvement to strategic security but rather for economic benefits.[2] However, intervention aimed at fermenting revolution became a key strategic security policy tool after the conclusion of World War Two (WWII) and the opening salvos of the Cold War, when the United States learned it had lost its nuclear monopoly. Because of the threat of mutually assured destruction posed by nuclear war, conventional force-on-force conflict was no longer an option, and so, as the Soviet Union exported communism across the globe, the United States actively worked to counter Soviet expansion by intervening on behalf of resistance movements and insurgencies in countries where the Soviets sought to establish communist governments. Intervention on behalf of resistance movements became one of the primary methods for the United States to counter Soviet expansion.

While the United States successfully intervened into and even generated resistance movements during this period, most of its interventions failed to achieve strategic objectives. That trend continues today; most saliently, the U.S. military is still present in Afghanistan after nearly two decades, with no successful conclusion in sight. The initial fight in Afghanistan, between U.S. Special Forces and the Taliban, was a classic third-party

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[1] See Stephen Kinzer, Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006).

[2] Kinzer, Introduction.

intervention into an intrastate conflict—specifically, an unconventional warfare (UW) campaign, leveraging the indigenous Afghan Northern Alliance to defeat the Taliban government that had taken control of the country.[3] Yet the United States was unable to capitalize on the U.S. Special Forces' tactical victory, and 17 years later, it finds itself still working to stabilize Afghanistan.

The ongoing war in Afghanistan is the product of strategic decision making that focused on achieving a specific outcome without considering the pre-existing conditions necessary to achieve success. Being fair, there was no consensus on what conditions were significant, or more importantly, empirical evidence to determine which conditions actually effected strategic success or failure. While a clearly defined end state is required, solely focusing on the end state while ignoring the pre-existing conditions potentially leads an intervening third party into a quagmire such as Afghanistan.

In order to deter such an outcome, decision makers must develop a more trenchant decision calculus surrounding third-party intervention. Intervention decisions invariably have strategic-level implications, and the outcomes of these decisions have decades-long ramifications. The decision to intervene is never easy. Our contention is that the existence of conducive conditions in a given state *prior* to intervention is the sine qua non of long-term success and that senior decision-makers in the U.S. government should commit resources and personnel to foreign intrastate conflicts only after intensive analysis of these conditions, which will maximize the probability of a strategically beneficial outcome.

B.   RESEARCH QUESTION

Scholarly research on the question of which conditions most readily lead to successful intervention is limited at best; no known predictive model exists for U.S. senior decision makers to reference when making intervention decisions. Our research seeks to fill this void by answering the following question: **What pre-existing conditions in an**

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[3] Numerous books, articles, and even a movie were created to document the USSOF-led defeat of the Taliban. We recommend the books: *Masters of Chaos: The Secret History of the Special Forces* by Linda Robinson and *Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of U.S. Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan* by Doug Stanton, which is now a major motion picture as well.

intrastate conflict facilitate successful third-party intervention focused on spawning regime change?

C.   DEFINITIONS

Before we begin, we must establish working definitions of resistance movements, insurgency, and civil war to provide a common framework for the discussion and to articulate an initial condition—that is, what type of conflict we are analyzing.

(1)   Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC)

The U.S. Army defines "low-intensity conflict" as "political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states."[4] We use LIC as a broad casting of the type of intrastate conflict we are analyzing, specifically those conflicts that include a resistance element opposing a recognized government.

(2)   Resistance Movement

We follow the "broad academic definition" put forth by Doowan Lee, who defines resistance movements as "[collective and] active efforts to oppose, fight, and refuse to cooperate with or submit to … abusive behavior and … control."[5]

(3)   Insurgency

When does a resistance movement become an insurgency? The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) defines insurgency as an "organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict."[6] This definition provides clarity and simplicity while capturing the two critical components that define a shift from resistance to insurgency: the use of violence and a desire to overthrow the

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[4] United States Army, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*, FM 100-20 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1990), 1–1.

[5] Doowan Lee, "Resistance Dynamics and Social Movement Theory: Conditions, Mechanisms, and Effects," *Prism* 6, no. 3 (2016): 130–49, 133.

[6] Department of Defense, *Counter Insurgency Operations,* FMI 3-07.22 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2004), 1–1, https://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fmi3-07-22.pdf.

government. Once a resistance movement organizes, declares that its objective is to overthrow the constituted government, and uses violence to achieve this objective, it becomes an insurgency.

> (4)   Civil War

Articulating what defines a civil war and separates it from an insurgency and a resistance movement allows for a more in-depth analysis of the conditions that affect the success or failure of a movement and the role played by third-party intervention. For this paper's purposes, defining civil war is critical to parsing out the three levels of conflict occurring in Syria, one of which is by definition a civil war. The Correlates of War Project identifies four aspects of an armed conflict that qualify as a civil war:

1. Military action internal to the metropole of the state system member

2. The active participation of the national government

3. Effective resistance by both sides

4. At least 1,000 battle-deaths during each year of the war.[7]

Maya Bhardwaj further argues that one must clearly define the actors and that rebel groups must use violence to achieve their desired end state (i.e., control of the state). She also contends that rebel groups must "be able to credibly defend themselves and militarily confront the government forces in defined battleground regions: thus, rebels in a civil war are distinct from terrorists, insurgents, and other more delocalized conflicts."[8]

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[7] Meredith Sarkees, "The COW Typology of War: Defining and Categorizing Wars—Correlates of War," UC Davis, 1, accessed March 19, 2018, http://cow.dss.ucdavis.edu/data-sets/COW-war/the-cow-typology-of-war-defining-and-categorizing-wars.

[8] Maya Bhardwaj, "Development of Conflict in Arab Spring Libya and Syria: From Revolution to Civil War," *Washington University International Review* I (Spring 2012): 82.

(5)   Conditions

Conditions of a resistance are "phenomen[a] whose presence activates or magnifies the action of a causal law or hypothesis."[9] Further refining this definition, Doowan Lee argues that, "antecedent conditions are locally available ingredients that can be enhanced or amplified through active mechanisms toward robust resistance."[10]

D.   ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Analyzing the contemporary conflict environment reveals that LIC is occurring across the globe in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine, Pakistan, and across South America. Military historian Max Boot believes LIC is the future of warfare.[11] He states, "The possibility of conventional inter-state war is now lower than at any time in 500 years."[12] He also notes in 2013, "the most astonishing fact about the current international scene is that there isn't a single conflict in which two uniformed militaries are pitted against each other."[13] While the potential for a protracted, large-scale conventional military conflict remains, the political, economic, and societal factors across the globe indicate that LIC will remain a fixture for a long time to come. As a result, intervention into these types of conflicts, which often involve some type of resistance movement, is and will remain strategically important.

Numerous other countries have found ways to expand their influence through such intervention strategies without engaging in total war, conducting operations just below the threshold of all-out conflict. Russia effectively annexed Crimea, operationalizing a strategy

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[9] Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 9–10.

[10] Lee, "Resistance Dynamics and Social Movement Theory," 135.

[11] Max Boot, "What the Last 10 Years Tell Us about What Kind of Military We'll Need in the Future," *Foreign Policy* (blog), accessed February 10, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/01/31/what-the-last-10-years-tell-us-about-what-kind-of-military-well-need-in-the-future/.

[12] Max Boot, "Surviving a Revolution in Military Affairs," *Washington Post,* October 19, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/18/AR2006101801462.html.

[13] "The Guerrilla Myth," Max Boot, accessed February 10, 2018, http://maxboot.net/the-guerrilla-myth/.

that harnessed the momentum of a resistance movement.[14] Iran has successfully leveraged Hezbollah as a social movement and then operationalized it as both a terrorist organization and a proxy force.[15] As countries such as China and Russia start to reassert their power both regionally and globally, being able to engage in actions to counter the growing influence of these resurgent countries is a vital capability for the United States. As the country approaches 20 years of almost continuous warfare, it needs new approaches to help retain its global influence, among the most important of which is intervention in LIC. U.S. military doctrine defines this type of intervention as "unconventional warfare."

The U.S. Army specifically organizes and trains the Special Forces operational units to conduct UW. Their operational relevance has increased as LIC has become more prevalent: Doowan Lee writes of the application of U.S. UW strategy stating, "Contemporary conflicts have become more transnational, protracted, irregular, and resistance centric."[16] In addition, Vanda Felbab-Brown notes the effect of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts have dampened the willingness of senior U.S. decision makers to commit to large-scale military operations;[17] conversely, the U.S. government is increasingly interested in achieving policy objectives through special operations and small-scale operations.[18] However, broad application of Special Forces to various problem sets without fully understanding the conditions of the conflict or their effect on achieving successful results has drastically reduced the United States' ability to reach its desired strategic end state. To avoid conventional war and to capitalize on the contemporary

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[14] *Russian Influence and Unconventional Warfare Operations in the 'Grey Zone': Lesson from Ukraine*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (March 29, 2017) (testimony by Dr. Olga Oliker before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee), 2–5, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Oliker_03-29-17.pdf.

[15] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 79–80.

[16] Glen Johnson and Doowan Lee, "Revisiting the Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare," *Small Wars Journal*, December 2014.

[17] Velda Felbab-Brown, "Crime, Low-Intensity Conflict, and the Future of War in the Twenty-First Century," in *Failed States and Fragile Societies: A New World Disorder?*, eds. S. M. Miner and I Trauschweizer (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 92–93.

[18] Felbab-Brown, 95.

conflict environment, as other states have been able to do, the United States must better understand the conditions of the conflicts in which it intervenes.

Literature on how to conduct UW in a LIC environment is extensive. The U.S. Army has an entire field manual, FM 3–05.130, that details how to run a UW campaign at the tactical level. However, while it mentions the importance of understanding the internal and external conditions that create the operational environment in section 4–4, the bulk of it focuses on conducting operations at the operational and the tactical levels, with the majority focused on the latter. The doctrine reflected in this manual relies on tactical-level operators to create all the conditions necessary not only for tactical-level success but also for the eventual transition to a new government and ultimate strategic success on the part of the United States. The manual does not consider the pre-existing conditions that affect success or failure, which we hypothesize have the greatest level of influence on the ultimate outcome of the intervention, especially post conflict.

The U.S. Army's emphasis on tactical-level operations when conducting UW largely comes from the theoretical writings of previous revolutionary leaders such as Che Guevara and Mao Tse-tung. Che, Mao, and others such as Carlos Marighella and David Galula focus much of their analysis on the rebel group, drawing conclusions about the outcome with little consideration for the macro- (state)-level and even geopolitical conditions. These well-respected resources focus instead on the tactical-level actions that rebels or, in Galula's case, governments can employ to win in an intrastate LIC. These writings thus provide detail on how to successfully organize and lead a resistance movement; however, they lack any real discussion or relevant information on the effects that macro state-level conditions have on successful third-party intervention. Historical cases suggest that these conditions should be the first consideration as part of an intervention decision. Che Guevara states, "It is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them"—an approach that led him to succeed in Cuba but fail in Bolivia, where he did not understand the existing conditions and instead tried to "create" the conditions on the ground.[19] Likewise, U.S. intervention

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[19] Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 7.

on behalf of resistance movements in Afghanistan and Syria that achieved initial tactical success failed to produce successful strategic results, which is a clear counter to Che's theory. Despite ideal conditions, failure can still occur, and despite poor conditions, success can still occur. For an intervening third party to achieve any type of measurable success beyond the tactical level, it must first understand the macro-level conditions of the conflict environment. Like investing in a new company or product, if the United States is to support a movement or a government against a movement and invest its precious resources, a return on investment in victory, influence gained, and durable peace is expected. For United States to choose the best situations to increase its influence, decision makers must understand the conditions that set the foundation for success beyond the tactical level in supporting or countering a resistance movement.

Our intent is to identify the "ingredients" or pre-existing conditions of successful and unsuccessful resistance movements across time and space. We also seek to identify conditions that are significant for the government to win and those that effect the level of violence in the conflict. To frame these conditions, we look to established doctrine—specifically, political, military, economic, social, informational, and infrastructure (PMESII), which is a planning doctrine that uses a common analytical framework when gathering and organizing information about a current or future operational environment.[20] Our final intent is to identify general conditions that, if carefully exploited or cultivated, will lead to direct success for the United States when providing assistance to other countries.

We tentatively offer and intend to test the following broad hypotheses for each PMESII condition based upon our research, analysis, and experience. Although we realize that these conditions are highly interrelated and directly affect one another, isolating each condition in our analysis is an expedient way to gain a better understanding of them.

The *political* conditions that most greatly affect the outcome of third-party intervention on behalf of a resistance movement in an intrastate conflict revolve around

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[20] U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Planning,* JP 5–0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2017), 112.

what we broadly describe as the strength and influence of the government among most of the people. We posit that the more democratic the government, the less likely the tactical success of the rebels. However, if the rebels can achieve success and remove the sitting or occupying government, their probability of achieving measurable success based upon our definition is far greater. In addition, we believe that the existence of and persistence of some form of bureaucracy to provide service for the people after the conflict has ended will allow for a durable peace. Finally, from a political perspective, we believe that fewer rebel factions will more likely allow a third party to consolidate support for their cause and assist in gaining control over the country, because, in our judgment/experience, fewer factions mean less internal conflict.

From a macro perspective, when planning an intervention strategy, analyzing the *military* conditions of the government that is in control is an obvious necessity from a tactical perspective. However, understanding the internal social, political, and other conditions within the military, especially when large and/or strong, is crucial to both negating those conditions' effects and leveraging them as a tool for success.

Economic considerations must include not only the country's individual variables, such as gross domestic product (GDP) and military expenditure, but also and more importantly the overall health of the economy. Economic hardships dramatically affect each of the three cases we analyze, either exacerbating the situation or causing it, as in the case of Iran, where access to Persian oil served as the genesis for the eventual overthrow of Mohammad Mossadegh; Syria, in which a multi-year drought had massive influence on the social and economic conditions within the country prior to 2011; and Libya, where years of governmental mismanagement of the economy, especially revenue generated from oil production, left many Libyans extremely dissatisfied with Muammar Qaddafi. We believe that countries that either have a stable economy or retain the potential for an easily stabilized economy provide the best chance of success for third-party intervention.

Social conditions, specifically pre-existing networks, have an almost unparalleled level of influence on the outcome of intrastate conflicts. Arguably, one of the most successful resistance organizations, the National Socialist German Workers or Nazi Party, expanded so rapidly largely due to pre-existing social networks. The influence of mass

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media, including radio, television, the Internet, is undeniable on every facet of society. *Information* flow has significant effects on not only on the onset of conflict but also on the outcome and duration.

Finally, if rebels do not have a physical location to plan, organize, train, and equip, there will be no movement. *Infrastructure* plays a crucial role in a multitude of tactical-level conditions involving the rebels and the government along with serving as a metric for success in terms of who controls what physical space. Macro-level analysis of how these conditions affect successful third-party intervention is virtually nonexistent. Our study aims to generate a discussion that will have a positive influence on future intervention decisions.

E.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Limited scholarly research exists into the conditions that support successful third-party intervention. Patrick Regan conducted the seminal quantitative analysis on the subject in 1999, investigating conflict duration as well as the impact that third-party interventions have on the duration of civil wars.[21] His empirical analysis seeks to "reduce the uncertainty faced by decision makers contemplating an intervention by increasing our understanding of the types of interventions that work best under a given set of conditions."[22] He focuses on only intrastate, or civil, conflicts, collecting data on 138 intrastate conflicts between 1944 and 1994, which included 194 separate international interventions, including 35 by the United States and 16 by the Soviet Union/Russia.[23] He details the success of intervention by types, including military, economic, and mixed compared to the supported party's organization along religious, ethnic, or ideological lines. Regan contends that the fastest way to achieve success, which he defines as an end to the violence and is, he claims, generally the objective of the intervention, is to support the government. He shows that foreign intervention typically increases the duration of

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[21] Patrick Regan, "Third Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (February 1, 2002).

[22] Patrick Regan, Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Outside Intervention in Intrastate Conflict (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 1.

[23] Regan, Table 2.2, 28.

intrastate conflict (specifically civil war).[24] However, his definition, despite his framing, does not always constitute success on the part of the resistance.[25] Therefore, his results are largely inapplicable to understanding third-party intervention if that party's goal is anything other than ending violence. Our analysis defines success differently and generally places an emphasis on instances where the rebels achieve victory, as this often ties to successful third-party intervention.

Understanding how and why one rebel group wins and another loses is a critical piece of understanding how a third-party succeeds when intervening in a conflict involving such groups. Cunningham et al. examine this question—specifically, "why *particular* rebel actors are defeated, emerge victorious, or are given concessions by the state in a negotiated settlement."[26] Their research focuses on the relationship between the rebels and the government and not on intervening third parties, other than acknowledging that their intervention tends to increase the duration of the conflict. They highlight that, typically, intrastate conflict is of an insurgent type and often involves UW tactics by the rebels. They therefore identify two types of rebel strength, one relative to its ability to inflict some type of cost on the government, the other to its ability to hide (e.g., access to safe areas) or evade government persecution. Available infrastructure and rebel strength, as defined by Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan provides specific conditions that affect conflict outcome. Aronson et al. from the University of Maryland support Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan's analysis in their yet unpublished 2016 manuscript, arguing that intrastate conflict outcomes strongly correlate with both rebel strength and access to shelter.[27] They note that "in order to avoid defeat a rebel needs access to areas in a country—harsh terrain, controlled civilian populations, anonymity, fortified bases—that allow them to build,

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[24] Regan, "Third Party Interventions," 24–25.

[25] Regan, Civil Wars and Foreign Powers, 10–11.

[26] David E. Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "It Takes Two: A Dyadic Analysis of Civil War Duration and Outcome," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 4 (2009): 570–97, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002709336458, 572.

[27] Jacob Aronson et al., "How Rebels Win (and Why They Lose)" (report, University of Geneva, November 15, 2016), http://unige.ch/sciences-societe/speri/files/9314/5294/8814/Paul_Huth_-_how_rebels_win_11_26_15.pdf, the entire study covers this idea including empirical results, however they specify in their conclusion on page 27.

maintain and use their military forces."[28] In short, both Aronson et al. and Cunningham et al. seek to explain how rebel groups achieve *tactical* success.

We move forward under the assumption that manipulating the tactical conditions is far easier than attempting to alter macro, state-level conditions, thereby making the latter far more important when considering an intervention strategy. We contend that the macro-level conditions that exist prior to intervention dramatically affect the ability of a third party to achieve a successful outcome. Instead of focusing predominantly on the tactical-level conditions when considering an UW strategy as part of an intervention strategy, senior decision makers must not only consider but also understand the impact of the pre-existing conditions. To do so, we look to social movement theory and specifically social mobilization. As Doowan Lee argues, "We can enhance the operational flexibility and strategic utility of UW by incorporating the logic of social mobilization and understanding of how to leverage existing social infrastructure."[29]

McAdam's political process model (PPM) underlies Lee's approach to analyzing resistance, which includes three different perspectives for analysis: (1) antecedent conditions, (2) mechanisms, and (3) effects.[30] Our research focuses specifically on the antecedent conditions, and we draw on the PPM because it provides a helpful framework for understanding how resistance movements emerge. According to the PPM, three sets of factors or variables "are crucial in the [development] of social [insurgency (movement)]: (1) the level of organization within the aggrieved population, (2) the collective assessment of the prospects for successful insurgency within the same population, and (3) the political alignment of groups within the larger political environment."[31] McAdam simplifies these concepts as (1) organizational readiness (aka, mobilizing structures), (2) insurgent consciousness (aka, cognitive liberation or strategic framing), and (3) the structure of

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28 Jacob Aronson et al., 27.

29 Doowan Lee, "A Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare," *Special Warfare* (September 2013): 27.

30 Lee, "Resistance Dynamics and Social Movement Theory,"132.

31 Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, 1930–1970 (London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 40.

political opportunities."[32] We being by presenting an overview of the PPM before discussing how each portion of the model helps establish the framework for our study and, more specifically, what variables we analyze.

The PPM holds that the formation of a resistance group is contingent upon the appropriate structure of political opportunities. Central to the PPM is the idea that movements do not spontaneously spring up nor are they a result of any single event; rather, the constant interplay in the sociopolitical environment, between those who are in control and those who are not, creates varying levels of political opportunity, which in turn affects the political strength or political advantage of the resistance group. The list of factors or conditions that affect the political environment is infinite; however, McAdam names "wars, industrialization, [internal] political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widespread demographic changes" as "events and processes likely to prove disruptive."[33] These conditions affect the political environment, presenting varying levels of opportunity for resistance groups to capitalize on.

However, political opportunites are merely one piece of the formation of an organized resistance. Capitalizing on these opportunites requires additional conditions be present, speciffically mobilizing structures. Mobilizing structures are formal and informal collective vehicles through which people mobilize and engage in collective action, which one can think of as resources available to the potential resistance group.[34] McAdam identified that the "resources of the minority community" directly affect resistance group's ability to exploit the political opportunities when they arise. The four crucial resources McAdam identified are (1) members, (2) established structure of solidary incentives (i.e., the incentives that motivate people to participate), (3) communication networks, and (4) leaders. Successful resistance is a function of how socioeconomic processes affect the

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[32] McAdam, 40.

[33] McAdam, 41.

[34] D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, and M. N. Zald, Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3.

expanding political opportunities combined with indigenous organizations of the minority community to create structural potential for resistance.

Finally, through "cognitive liberation" or "strategic framing" the structural potential becomes an actual resistance organization.[35] Lee defines strategic framing/ cognitive liberation as "the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understanding of the world and of themselves that legitimize and motivate collective action."[36] As part of their developing strategic framing, David Snow and Robert Benford identify three core-framing tasks: (1) diagnostic, (2) prognostic, and (3) motivational.[37] Lee explains: "Diagnostic frames elevate individual grievances into a systemic failure and identify whom to blame…. Prognostic frames suggest the way forward and desired forms of action to rectify the identified problem … [and] motivational frames compel individuals to participate in collective action."[38] Using the PPM as our framework, we seek to unpack the condition types analyzing existing literature on how each type affects potential intrastate LIC outcomes.

We hypothesize that pre-existing conditions, prior to the formation of a resistance organization, are critical in determining the outcome of any potential insurgency, civil war, or revolution. We begin unpacking each of these conditions by discussing what conditions present the political opportunities the PPM identifies as critical to the formation of a resistance. It holds that "wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of a few groups, thus depriving most people of any real influence over the major decisions that affect their lives."[39] Under this assumption, then, movements are efforts by those without the majority of wealth and power to mobilize sufficient political advantage in an effort to advance their interests outside of the traditional institutional means.[40] Quite simply, the groups involved

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[35] McAdam, Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970, 51.

[36] Lee, "A Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare," 30.

[37] David Snow and Robert Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participation Mobilization," International Social Movement Research 1 (1988): 199–202.

[38] Lee, "A Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare," 30.

[39] McAdam, Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970, 36.

[40] McAdam, 37.

in a social movement are those in control versus those who either are not or feel they are not—the elites and the minority, or, in the case of Syria, the Assad regime and the rebels, or in Iran in the early 1950s, Mohammad Reza Shah and the majority of the population. We summarize the opportunities McAdam's PPM lays out as political instability.

Research into the causes of political instability has shown that certain factors can help forecast its onset. For example, Goldstone et al. developed a model that examines the onset of political instability in countries worldwide from 1955 to 2003, and, as a result, developed a model "that distinguishes countries that experienced instability from those that remained stable with a two-year lead time and over 80% accuracy."[41] The dependent variable in their study is the onset of instability, which they define as including regime changes, revolution, ethnic wars, and genocides/politicides.[42] To explain this outcome, their model incorporates four independent variables: regime type by category, infant mortality rate, conflict-ridden neighborhood indicator, and state-led discrimination.[43] Their findings, which show that a simple model with limited variables can predict the onset of instability, provided a base concept for our study; in addition, their conclusion that establishing some type of predictability of outcome based upon the human dimension is possible served as a motivation for our statistical analysis. Interestingly, although they found that the variables that influence *instability* are nearly infinite, what determines a *stable* state is a much shorter list. By looking at the problem from the opposite direction, they developed a predictive model for political instability and identified a limited number of variables critical to maintaining stability. Removing even one of these dramatically affected the probability of political instability. The variables they identified provide a deeper understanding of how political instability occurs, which in turn becomes a political opportunity for a resistance group. To what degree a resistance group capitalizes upon the political opportunities is dependent upon their mobilizing structures, which tie directly to pre-existing networks.

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[41] Jack Goldstone et al., "A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability," *American Journal of Political Science* 54, no. 1 (January 1, 2010), 190.

[42] Goldstone et al., 195–197.

[43] Goldstone et al., 191.

Pre-existing networks play a critical role in the expansion of a resistance movement and in the outcome when conflict ensues. Extensive literature exists that emphasizes the important role that social networks, both pre-existing and those that form later, play in the social movements. McAdam's research shows that both types of networks are a significant aspect in the formation and success of resistance movements.[44] Florence Passy articulates that social networks are largely attributable as the causal factor in a person choosing to participate or not in a movement.[45] As we look to parse out the conditions that affect third-party intervention success, we note that Passy's model and subsequent research show that "cross-cutting" pre-existing networks must nearly always be in place for intervention to have any chance for success. Essentially, the less compartmentalization present within the pre-existing networks, the greater ease of spotting and convincing willing participants. Passy identifies that social networks have three types of effects on a social movement: they create an initial disposition to participate, they structurally connect potential participants to the organization, and they greatly influence the intensity of participation—that is, how much the individual is willing to commit to the organization.[46] Mario Diani and Doug McAdam discuss this very idea, detailing how pre-existing networks, such as unions, churches, and even friendship groups provide a catalyst for the mobilization of collective action that leads to the formation of resistance groups.[47]

The rise of the Nazi Party in Germany after World War One (WWI) is an excellent model showing how pre-existing crosscutting networks allowed a resistance movement to rapidly organize and motivate participation. Indeed, its rapid rise to power, largely due to pre-existing crosscutting networks, served as the basis for Helmut Anheier's study into the

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[44] Mario Diani and Doug McAdam, *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*, Comparative Politics Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). There is no specific citation to this statement, however, the entire book is predicated on this idea.

[45] Florence Passy, "Social Networks Matter. But How?," in *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*, Comparative Politics Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 22.

[46] Passy, 41.

[47] Doug McAdam, "Micromobilization Contexts and Recruitment to Activism," in *International Social Movement Research*, vol. 1, Supplement to Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change (Stamford, CT: JAI Press, 1988), 127–130.

formation of social movements. He analyzed the rise of the Nazi organization in post-WWI Germany, identifying that "early Nazi activists were not isolated individuals; rather, they were typically part of an extended organizational network of the nationalist militarist right wing of German Politics and society."[48] This pre-existing network was crucial for the eventual success of the spread of the Nazi Party. Anheier further argues, "The key to mobilization was the combination of three factors: their strong embeddedness in the networks of the Republic's disloyal opposition, a blanket rejection of the political mainstream [the 'system,' in Nazi terminology], and their normal, middle-class, profile."[49]

Like Anheier, Passy further points out the importance of "identity" in the formation of social networks.[50] The existing literature clearly articulates the impact of networks, specifically pre-existing networks, on the level of participation in a resistance movement: why individuals choose to participate in a social movement or resistance organization can be tied back to their social networks, which are formed largely because their individual identity draws them closer to other individuals with similar beliefs, thereby establishing a social network. Passy's research shows that "Social ties provide individuals with specific meaning structures, which significantly affect their perceptions of participation in social movement organizations."[51] Thus, individuals are more likely to participate if they have a similar identity as others in the movement, which is more likely if they initially belonged to a pre-existing social network.

Paul Staniland further examines social networks and contends that "pre-existing networks provide the underpinnings for new insurgent groups."[52] He identifies four categories of insurgent groups, explaining that each type has varying levels of success. He

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[48] Helmut Anheier, "Movement Development and Organizational Networks: The Role of 'single Members' in the German Nazi Party, 1925–1930," in *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*, Comparative Politics Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 49.

[49] Anheier, 52.

[50] Passy, "Social Networks Matter. But How," 23.

[51] Passy, 41.

[52] Staniland, Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014),17.

goes on to explain that each of the four groups "emerge from different combinations of horizontal ties between organizers and vertical ties between organizers and local communities."[53] These pre-existing networks that are based upon individual ties to both other people and groups as a whole provide not only structure for the group but also ultimately define what type of resistance organization will emerge. While stating that the characteristics of an organization effect its success seems intuitively obvious, providing a defined structure for each type allows categorization and analysis based upon type. We will leverage Staniland's categories and research in our case studies. The defining characteristics of Staniland's groups are unified leadership, discipline, and unity at all levels and compliance from members that enact actions directed by group leadership.[54]

Because LIC often focuses on the will and support of the population, understanding the levels of trust and faith that the population has in government institutions, in their fellow citizens, or in foreign support, is important. In places with high levels of economic inequality there exists high levels of distrust between the upper and lower classes.[55] These inequalities start to divide the population. Next, higher levels of government corruption can result in higher levels of economic, political, and social inequality. Michael Johnston notes that societies that have high levels of corruption have low levels of trust.[56] If a government institution can demonstrate that they are reliable and credible, it can develop high levels of trust in the population, which result in civic engagement, economic growth and compliance with government policies.[57] When government actions create and support corruption and abuses of power, they potentially cause citizens to distrust the government

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[53] Staniland, 17.

[54] Staniland, 6.

[55] Henry Farrell, "Institutions and Midlevel Explanations of Trust." In *Whom Can We Trust?: How Groups, Networks, and Institutions Make Trust Possible*, eds. Karen S. Cook, Levi Margaret, and Russell Hardin, 127–48 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009), 142.

[56] Farrell, 143.

[57] Henry Farrell, Introduction, *In Whom Can We Trust?: How Groups, Networks, and Institutions Make Trust Possible,* eds. Karen S. Cook, Levi Margaret, and Russell Hardin, 1–14 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009), 4.

and each other.[58] When government institutions continually abuse their power, they lose the faith and confidence of their citizens in those institutions.

F.   METHODOLOGY

1.   Quantitative Analysis

In order to answer our research question, we first conducted a quantitative analysis of measurable conditions from current and past intrastate conflicts involving a resistance group opposing the government. We categorized the variables into five types of conditions: political, military, economic, social, and informational, modeled after the pre-established framework within the U.S. military planning doctrine. This portion of the study served as a comprehensive examination of all available observations that pertain to the research question. While the quantitative analysis does not tease out the context within which our hypotheses are tested, it does provide an overarching framework to test which independent variables are most impactful and significant on the probability of successful intervention leading to rebel wins.

2.   Case Studies

We show that understanding the political, military, economic, social, and informational networks and the conditions that surround them is crucial to making successful intervention decisions. We chose three specific case studies to include in this thesis based on two criteria: maximum variation on the dependent variable and maximum variation on indigenous conditions. The case studies are the historical analysis of the U.S. intervention into Iran in 1953, overthrowing Mohammad Mossadegh; the overthrow of Muammar Qaddafi in Libya; and the ongoing conflict in Syria. We specifically chose two contemporary conflicts with opposing outcomes: the failed intervention in Syria on the part of the United States and successful intervention (at least tactical success in overthrowing Qaddafi) in Libya. Both of these contemporary conflicts were ongoing when the U.S. intervened and as such, we chose to analyze the U.S. initiation of a revolution through an organized resistance movement in Iran in 1953. Arguably, this was one of the most

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[58] Russell Hardin, *Distrust* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), 305.

successful U.S. interventions on behalf of a resistance organization (especially because the U.S. largely created the resistance, organized it, and provided the political opportunity to act) to date. Regardless of whether or not the United States should have overthrown the Iranian prime minister is a topic we discuss; however, analysis of the specific antecedent conditions that were in place helps to answer our research question. We begin our study by presenting the results of our statistical analysis in Chapter II.

II. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter provides empirical evidence in the form of a statistical model for how an array of conditions affect the outcome of intrastate conflicts involving a resistance organization, which is a critical factor affecting successful third-party intervention. The resulting strategic ramifications from an intervention decision often have decades-long geopolitical level repercussions. Because of this, developing a statistical model has a high level of utility by providing empirical evidence to support or refute an intervention decision.

We leveraged the political process model (PPM) and Doowan Lee's movement framework to determine which variables to analyze. The available data restricted our selection of dependent variables; nevertheless, we compiled a data frame that allows us to identify conditions that significantly affect rebel victory, rebel loss, government victory, and the level of violence in the conflict. All of which, as the model demonstrates, bear on the question of **what pre-existing conditions in an intrastate conflict facilitate successful third-party intervention focused on spawning regime change?**

We begin by presenting our hypotheses concerning the effect of the independent variables on the conflict outcome and the level of violence, organized by dependent variables. We then discuss our empirical approach, explaining how we constructed our data frame, followed by a detailed presentation of our variables. The next section covers the models built with these variables and the results of those models, which show that numerous independent variables do have a statistically significant effect on the outcome and the level of violence. We conclude with a macro-level analysis and key takeaways from the statistical analysis before moving on to the case studies in Chapters III-V, which present scenarios that fit within our parameters, allowing for application of our empirical results and additional analysis from real-world examples to better answer our research question.

A.   HYPOTHESES

We organize our hypotheses by dependent variables: rebel victory, rebel loss, government victory, and violence level. We based some of the hypotheses on the authors' experience conducting these types of operations as well as longstanding doctrinal beliefs, lessons passed down from those who conducted these types of operations during the Cold War, and through our research. We begin with and focus primarily on what is arguably the crux of third-party intervention success: rebel victory.

1.   Rebel Victory

If the rebels do not win and the objective of an intervention strategy is to overthrow the current government, then it is virtually impossible to achieve the desired end state. Therefore, determining what conditions positively and negatively affect a resistance/rebel group or insurgency from achieving victory is critical to answering our overarching research question. Our first hypothesis revolves around the level of the state's democracy level.[59]

[H1a] Our contention is that the level of democracy in the state, both perceived and actual, has a strong effect on the outcome of the conflict. Specifically, in states that are more democratic, the probability of rebel group victory in intrastate conflicts decreases because democratic processes provide existing mechanisms to address popular grievances and rebels will find it difficult to recruit and/or mobilize a large number of people from the populace to join their movement. Specifically, *the more democratic a state, the less likely a rebel victory.*

[H1b] Our second argument surrounds the idea that the higher the level of violence, the greater the likelihood for global visibility. Additionally, the scale of violence can potentially aid the populace's perception of the rebel's capability and competence. This perceived competency potentially helps the rebels extract more resources to sustain and grow their movement, thus increasing the likelihood of rebel victory. *Specifically, the higher the level of violence, the more likely a rebel victory.*

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[59] See below for how democracy is measured.

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[H1c] Critical to leveraging any actual competency of capability on the part of the rebels revolves around the ability to convey an informational message to the populace. Leveraging research conducted previously by Camber Warren on the density of media and how it affects conflict onset we argue that as the media density index increases, the probability of rebel group victory in intrastate conflicts also increases. Our contention is that because the rebel network has an increased ability to communicate internally and to exploit and counter the narrative of the state, their likelihood of success increases. Specifically, the populace will not only be exposed to the rebel message but also the rebels potentially can exploit any actions conducted by the state that the populace would perceive as unjust, such as in Syria through the use of social media. *Specifically, the greater the density of media, the more likely a rebel victory.*

[H1d] The final hypothesis central to rebel victory surrounds the long-standing contention among irregular/unconventional warfare scholars, and as argued by Mao, that protraction favors the guerilla. We posit that the greater the number of conflict years, the higher the probability of rebel group victory in intrastate conflict because the increased duration allows the rebels to exhaust the resources of the state, both tangible in terms of physical material and personnel but also in terms of popular support for an ongoing conflict. *Specifically, the longer the duration of the conflict, the more likely a rebel victory.*

2. Rebel Loss

Understanding the conditions that facilitate a specific rebel loss are as important to understand as those that facilitate victory. Intervention strategies that do not consider the conditions that have the potential to derail the entire campaign, often despite numerous positive conditions, drastically decrease their potential for success. Because of this, we developed hypotheses and analyses surrounding the conditions that facilitate rebel loss.

[H2a] Just as protraction favors the rebel in terms of victory, we posit that the longer the duration of the conflict the higher the cost for the state and thereby the lower the probability of actual rebel loss. The resistance group retains the ability to shift along the framework of organization both forward and back in response to numerous changes in the environment or conditions. Specifically, if the conditions require it, the resistance can

shrink or grow in a way that the state cannot. Therefore, the greater the number of conflict years, the lower the probability of rebel group loss because protraction favors the rebels due to the state having finite resources. *Specifically, the longer the duration of the conflict, the less likely a rebel loss.*

[H2b] Quite simply, the more money the government of the state has at their disposal, the more resources they can potentially dedicate to countering the resistance movement/insurgency. Additionally, the more money the state can leverage, the longer their staying power in the conflict, which directly counters our hypothesis surrounding the duration of the conflict favoring the rebels. Finally, economies that generate considerable levels of wealth typically maintain relationships with larger, more powerful states within the international community, which in turn could potentially result in third-party intervention in support of the state. *Specifically, the higher a state's GDP, the more likely a rebel loss.*

3. Government Victory

[H3a] We contend that because protraction favors the rebels, as their demands for physical material is typically far less than the state, which as the duration increases means a lower total cost for the rebels. *Specifically, the greater the number of conflict years, the lower the probability of government victory.*

[H3b] Access to informational outlets is a critical component of both an insurgent and counterinsurgent strategy. Recent movements have relied upon the Internet, specifically social media, as a primary vehicle for delivery of their information campaign to the populace. Because of this, we posit that increasing access to multiple modes of media affects the resistance's capability to communicate. However, the Internet has the most drastic effect overall, because the rebels will have an increased ability to communicate internally and to broadcast their messaging at a generally low cost. *Specifically, the greater level of Internet access, the lower the probability of government victory.*

4.   Level of Violence

[H4a] Previous empirical research shows that third-party intervention into intrastate conflicts increases the level of violence.[60] Knowing this, we chose to introduce violence as a dependent variable, believing that additional funding and resources provided by the intervening party allows the resistance to move into an insurgent stage where they have the ability to engage governmental forces in combat. *Specifically, in conflicts with third-party intervention, the level of violence will increase.*

[H4b] We posit that the pre-existing democracy level within the state effects the eventual level of violence. Because states that are more democratic typically have higher standards of living, our position is that the threshold for the populace to resort to violent action in response to a grievance is higher and therefore the likelihood for the onset of violence is lower. *Specifically, the more democratic the government, the lower the level of violence in an intrastate conflict.*

While our models and hypotheses are somewhat restricted by available data, we isolate a number of variables that we consider critical to the outcome of the conflict and ultimately the success of any intervening third party. Whether or not the rebels win or lose is arguably the most critical variable in determining intervention success if the intervening party choses to side with the rebels. Conversely, understanding the variables that affect government victory as a unique outcome provides potential critical vulnerabilities when planning against the government. Just as Goldstone et al. found success by simply viewing the problem from the opposite angle, our objective is to ensure we conduct analysis from as many directions as possible. Finally, we isolate the level of violence as a dependent variable because of both previous literature and research done by other scholars and ourselves. We believe the level of violence will prove empirically relevant as both an independent and dependent variable. Looking to understand how each of the four dependent variables affect third-party intervention, we built eight predictive models.

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[60] Regan, "Third Party Interventions."

B.   EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

1.   Building the Data Frame

In order to test our hypothesis, we assembled a conflict-year dataset of all intrastate conflicts based upon the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). We established each observation as an individual conflict year between a rebel group/insurgency and a government where the number of deaths resulting from actual fighting exceeded 25. A conflict episode ends in a year with fewer than 25 battle-related deaths. We qualified success using the UCDP conflict outcomes already established, therefore staying within the boundaries of available data.

In creating our data frame, we began with the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset Version 2-2015.[61] UCDP codifies six potential conflict outcomes, which they base on the final year of activity and first year of non-activity. The potential outcomes include (1) peace agreements, (2) ceasefire, (3) victory for the government, (4) victory for the rebels, (5) low activity, and (6) actor ceases to exist. For the purposes of our analysis, we grouped the outcomes into rebel victory (outcome #4), rebel loss (outcomes #5 and #6), and government victory (outcome #3). This quantitative structure allows for statistical analysis based upon discretely defined results versus a more ambiguous outcome. Later, in the case studies, we discuss the varying types and degrees of success for the intervening third party— specifically, the separation between tactical success on the battlefield and the ability to effect positive change in a given country, thereby achieving strategic-level results in support of U.S. national interest. We then isolated all of the intrastate conflicts and reduced the six outcomes to a dichotomous rebel victory or not. We reduced the entire dataset to country years and merged it with the 2014 UCDP Conflict Onset Dataset, the 2015 Polity IV dataset, and Dr. Camber Warren's development dataset.[62] Finally, we isolated

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[61] Joakim Kreutz, "How and When Armed Conflicts End: Introducing the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 2 (2010): 243–50.

[62] Lotta Wallensteen Harbom and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflict, 1989–2011," *Journal of Peace Research* 49(4), (2012); UCDP, "2014 Conflict Onset Dataset," accessed April 2018 (no longer available, authors retain a copy of the dataset upon request), http://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/; Center for Systemic Peace, "2015 Polity IV dataset," accessed April 2018, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html.

the rows with ongoing conflict in them, leaving us with a data frame with 1,423 rows of data and 92 variables.

2. Dependent Variables

We chose our dependent variables in an effort to answer broad questions about intrastate conflict outcomes and to identify relevant conditions affecting the success and failure of third-party intervention. We use the UCDP outcome #4, "Rebel Win," to define rebel victory for the resistance group. Victory in this case involves a change of the state government as desired by the resistance group. Because our dependent variable, REBEL VICTORY, is dichotomous, we used logit regression. We operationalize rebel loss using UCDP outcomes #5 and #6, creating a dichotomous variable and using logit regression. The conditions that have a positive effect on rebel loss are just as important as those affecting rebel victories. Arguably, in fact, these conditions are the most important because, if not mitigated, they can lead to a failed intervention faster than any other variable. We operationalize government victory using the UCDP conflict outcome #3. Again, we created a dichotomous variable and used logit regression. Because of the significance that the level of violence plays not only our model but also in the research discussed in Chapter I, we created a model with levels of violence, the same independent variable as in our previous models, as the dependent variable. Our intent was to determine what variables had a significant effect on the level of violence while holding all else equal.

3. Independent Variables

To determine what independent variables to include in our models, we use the PMESII framework. We did not include the infrastructure category as part of this analysis. We make no contention that these are the only types of conditions that influence the success of resistance movements; these are simply broad categories allowing for the establishment of a method to organize the nearly infinite list of potential causal conditions. In addition, we acknowledge that none of the variables is mutually exclusive; in fact, the models show that they are interconnected and have dramatic effects on one another and ultimately on whether or not third-party intervention is successful or not.

The first independent variable we include in all models, years of conflict, which includes data from both the UCDP Conflict Termination and Conflict Onset database. This variable captures the effect of the number of conflict years within a given dyad has on rebel victory. The next independent variable is levels of violence; we draw this variable from the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset, which included dichotomous values for dyads that had over 1,000 battle-related deaths in a given year and those that did not. These two variables were included in all eight models. We elected to include a measure of democracy using the Polity IV dataset, specifically democracy, which is the polity score reduced to a dichotomous variable by codifying a given dyad as having a score less than or equal to five or greater than five. For our model using the level of violence as the dependent variable, we introduce the polity score squared in order to establish a positive value for all values in the regression. For military variables, we include the number of military personnel per capita and the total number of military personnel the state has in our models. We choose these variables in order to quantify a measure of strength for the government, specifically military strength. Placing these variables into their own condition type (military), including them in the political type, or placing them in the economic type are all reasonable courses of action. The two independent economic variables we include in our models are relatively straightforward: GDP per capita, which measures a country's economic development and wealth, and military expenditure per capita, which measures the amount of money a country spends on its military per capita. The first informational variable we include in our models is the media density index, constructed by Camber Warren, to show that the higher the media density index, the less likely is onset of civil war.[63] We constructed the media density index using data from Warren's Development Dataset, using the function shown in Figure 1.[64] Additionally, we include variables for Internet access per capita and cell phone access per capita, both of which show individual access to each service. Both of these variables come from Warren's Development Dataset. Looking to find quantifiable variables that would remain relevant across time, space, and culture, we chose to include

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[63] T. Camber Warren, "Not by the Sword Alone: Soft Power, Mass Media, and the Production of State Sovereignty," *International Organization* 68, no. 1 (January 24, 2014): 111–41, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818313000350, 126.

[64] Warren, 154, footnote 53.

variables for literacy per capita, primary education per capita, and secondary education per capita. We acquired the data for these three variables from Warren's Development Dataset.

Figure 1.   Media Density Index Function[65]

$$MDI_{it} = \frac{TV_{it} + Radio_{it} + Newspaper_{it}}{Population_{it}} \times 100$$

Finally, the last variable we include in our rebel-win models is third-party intervention (rebel side), as a measure of the effect that intervention had on rebel victory. The variable comes from the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset and we codified it as dichotomous, indicating the presence of intervention or not. We did not factor in the number of third-party actors that intervened in a given conflict year. We maintained the PMESII framework across all of our models.

C.   MODELS

We constructed 10 models, six with rebel victory as the dependent variable, one with rebel loss as the dependent variable, two with government victory as the dependent variable, and one with the level of violence as the dependent variable. Rebel victory is the dependent variable for models 1–4. These models vary in terms of the independent variables, which included showing refinement aimed at maximizing the number of statistically significant conditions. The next two models, T1 and T2, reduce the number of variables in order to focus on the effect of third-party intervention, specifically aiming to highlight that third-party intervention on its own has a statistically significant effect on rebel victory as well as with a small number of other independent variables. The independent variables in model 5, which has rebel loss as the dependent variable, use the same PMESII framework as the first four models. Models 6 and 7 take government victory as their dependent variable and include the same set of independent variables as Model 6— i.e., all of the variables. By contrast, Model 7 functions as a reduced model, only including

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the independent variables that showed statistical significance in Model 6. Finally, our last model, Model 8, which uses violence level as the dependent variable, includes only those independent variables that were statistically significant according the previous models; this combination maximizes the number of statistically significant variables in a single model. Finally, we show the results for third-party intervention at the bottom of the table as the last independent variable. Table 1 presents the results.

Table 1.   Logit Regressions—Rebel Win, Rebel Loss, Government Win, Violence Level

		Dependent Variables									
		DV= Rebel Victory						DV= Rebel Loss	DV= Gov. Victory		DV= Violence Level
	Independent Variables	Model (1)	Model (2)	Model (3)	Model (4)	Model (T1)	Model (T2)	Model (5)	Model (6)	Model (7)	Model (8)
Base Variables	Years of Conflict	-0.070**	-0.069**	-0.075**	-0.076**			0.026***	-0.027**	-0.032***	
		(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)			(0.006)	(0.013)	(0.012)	
	Level of Violence	0.909***	0.891**	0.923***	0.844**		0.735**	2.328***	0.015		
		(0.349)	(0.354)	(0.348)	(0.341)		(0.316)	(0.428)	(0.234)		
Political Variables	Democracy (Polity>5)	-2.125**	-2.110**	-2.216**	-2.275**					-0.549*	-0.604**
		(1.032)	(1.033)	(1.027)	(1.019)					(0.306)	(0.278)
	Polity 2 Score^2							-0.006**			-0.006**
								(0.003)			(0.002)
Military Variables	#of Military Personnel Per-Capita	-0.070*	-0.074*	-0.082**	-0.089**				-0.051**		0.026***
		(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.040)	(0.041)				(0.022)		(0.008)
	Total Mil Personnel (State side)	0.00000	0.00000						0.00001**		
		(0.00000)	(0.00000)						(0.00000)		
Economic Variables	GDP Per-Capita	-0.0001	-0.0001					-0.0002***	-0.00003		-0.0002***
		(0.0002)	(0.0002)					(0.00004)	(0.0001)		(0.00003)
	Military Expenditure Per-Capita	-0.00000	-0.00000					0.00000***	0.00000		
		(0.00000)	(0.00000)					(0.00000)	(0.00000)		
Social Variables	Literacy Per-Capita	0.0004	0.0004	0.001					0.001		
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)					(0.001)		
	Primary Education Per-Capita	0.00000	0.00003	-0.0001					0.0002		
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)					(0.0004)		
	Secondary Education Per-Capita	-0.001	-0.001	-0.002					-0.001**		
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)					(0.001)		
	Population Density (log)										-0.162***
											(0.056)
Informational Variables	Media Density Index (log)	0.368***	0.369***	0.294**	0.255**		0.203**	-0.140***	0.147*		-0.191***
		(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.118)	(0.112)		(0.098)	(0.051)	(0.084)		(0.046)
	Internet Access Per-Capita (log)	-0.555	-0.558	-0.532	-0.670**				-0.457***	-0.458***	
		(0.341)	(0.342)	(0.335)	(0.339)				(0.173)	(0.168)	
	Cell Phone Access Per-Capita	0.003*	0.003*	0.002*	0.003*				0.002***	0.002***	
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)				(0.001)	(0.001)	
	Third Party Intervention (Rebel side)		0.194	0.185	0.264	1.163***	0.953**	-0.020	-0.371	-0.604	1.401***
			(0.594)	(0.582)	(0.575)	(0.426)	(0.447)	(0.476)	(0.551)	(0.530)	(0.296)
	Constant	-4.863***	-4.884***	-4.353***	-4.221***	-3.391***	-5.130***	-2.486***	-3.006***	-1.924***	0.277
		(1.107)	(1.113)	(0.982)	(0.866)	(0.153)	(0.761)	(0.543)	(0.651)	(0.134)	(0.312)
	Observations	1,317	1,317	1,317	1,327	1,423	1,387	1,330	1,317	1,348	1,341
	Log Likelihood	-155.891	-155.840	-156.918	-159.011	-216.913	-197.628	-562.452	-349.518	-362.769	-739.158
	Akaike Inf. Crit.	339.783	341.679	337.836	336.022	437.826	403.255	1,140.904	729.036	735.537	1,492.315

Note: Conflict Years lagged by one. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p< 0.01

D. RESULTS

Models 4, T2, 5, and 8 all showed a high level of statistical significance across the included independent variables. Surprisingly, the economic and social variables showed very little influence in the outcome. Also interesting was the fact that third-party intervention was not significant when most of the independent variables were included, despite the other variables having strong levels of significance. Duration, violence level, and democracy level all showed a high degree of significance across almost all of the models. A final macro level takeaway from the models as a whole is the significance of media density across the dependent variables show both a strong positive and negative influence. In the following section, we break out the models by dependent variable providing a detailed results summary.

1. Rebel Victory (Models: 1–4, T1, T2)

The base variables included two independent variables (IV), years of conflict and level of violence, which are significant at least at the 0.05 level through Models 1–4. Years of conflict has a negative effect on rebel victory, while level of violence has a significant positive effect. The results support hypothesis H1b that greater levels of violence increase the chance of rebel victory. However, the results refute hypothesis H1d, which we made under the longstanding belief that protracted conflicts support rebel victory, which the data show is not the case. We will show later that the longer the conflict goes on, the less likely either party is to achieve victory.

We included two political independent variables, the level of democracy, which is statistically significant throughout Models 1–4, and the Polity score squared, because it was statistically significant in the rebel loss and level of violence models (#5 and #8, respectively). The results show that the greater the level of democracy, the less likely a rebel victory, which supports hypothesis H1a. Further analysis is required to isolate additional variables associated with governments that are more democratic in order to determine whether or not democracy has an effect or if some other by-product of countries with higher Polity scores is the true significant variable.

We include the variables number of military personnel per capita and the total number of military personnel to capture the military conditions. Total military personnel show no significance; however, the number of military personnel per capita does show significance, especially in our adjusted Models 3 and 4 with a p-value < 0.05 in both.

Our economic variables include GDP per capita and military expenditure per capita. None of the economic variables shows significance throughout the rebel victory models. However, they do show significance in the rebel loss model.

We chose to include literacy per capita, primary education per capita, and secondary education per capita in the social type for Models 1–4 and in Model 6. We include population density as an independent in Model 8 as it showed statistical significance. The availability of data restricted the condition types for this model, which is unfortunate because, as Chapter I discusses, we believe pre-existing social networks likely have a significant impact on the success or failure of third-party intervention. That said, the results of our analysis show that none of the social variables we included have any significance on rebel victory. Future analysis should focus on variables similar to those reported by Helmet Anheier in the research into the Nazi Party formation.[66]

Our informational variables include media density index, Internet access per capita, and cell phone access per capita. The media density index showed statistical significance with a p-value < 0.001 in Models 1 and 2, and then remains significant at least at the 0.05 level through Models 3 and 4. Internet access per capita is only significant in Model 4, our model with the highest level of predictability. Cell phone access per capita is significant at a p-value < 0.1 through all four models. Once we removed the education and economic variables, however, Internet access per capita becomes significant at the 0.05 level in Model 4.

We add in third-party intervention (rebel side) beginning with Model 2. In Models 1–3, third-party intervention (rebel side) shows no statistical significance. Knowing from previous research and our own research that third-party intervention has a strong positive

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[66] Anheier, "Movement Development and Organizational Networks."

influence on both increasing the level of violence and the duration of the conflict, the potential for these two individual variables to play against one another exists. Therefore, we built Models T1 and T2 to see the independent effects third-party intervention had on rebel victory. It turns out that third-party intervention has a significant positive effect (p-value < 0.001) on rebel victory when we hold all other variables equal. In Model T2, we were able to introduce media density index and level of violence without reducing the statistical significance of third-party intervention, retaining a p-value < 0.05 across all three independent variables, indicating a correlation between each of them.

In an effort to create the most predictive model possible, we began eliminating independent variables. In Model 3, we remove both economic variables and total military personnel retaining the number of military personnel per capita. In doing this, both the level of violence and the media density index became slightly less significant, moving above the 0.001 p-value, but remaining below the 0.05 level. In Model 4, our most predictive model with rebel victory as the dependent variable, we removed all of the social variables, as none of them showed any statistical significance. The other variables—years of conflict, level of violence, the Polity score, number of military personnel per capita, media density index, and Internet access per capita—all show statistical significance.

2. Rebel Loss (Model 5)

In order to see how the independent variables affected rebel loss, we built Model 5, which includes all of the PMESII independent variables. The statistically significant independent variables include years of conflict, level of violence, GDP per capita, and military expenditure per capita. Years of conflict had the same negative effect on rebel loss as rebel victory, indicating that the longer the conflict goes on, the less likely a clear winner will emerge. The economic independent variables showed marginal impact; however, the results were statistically significant with GDP per capita showing a negative effect on rebel loss and military expenditure per capita showing a positive impact.

3. Government Victory (Models 6 and 7)

The government victory model uses a logit regression with government victory as a dichotomous dependent variable. Our independent variables included years of conflict,

Polity score, Internet access per capita, and cell phone access per capita, all of which were statistically significant at the 0.05 p-level or less and most closely mirrored the rebel victory models. The media density index and level of violence did not show any significant effect on government victory; however, Internet access per capita and cell phone access per capita both showed statistical significance at the 0.001 p-value or below.
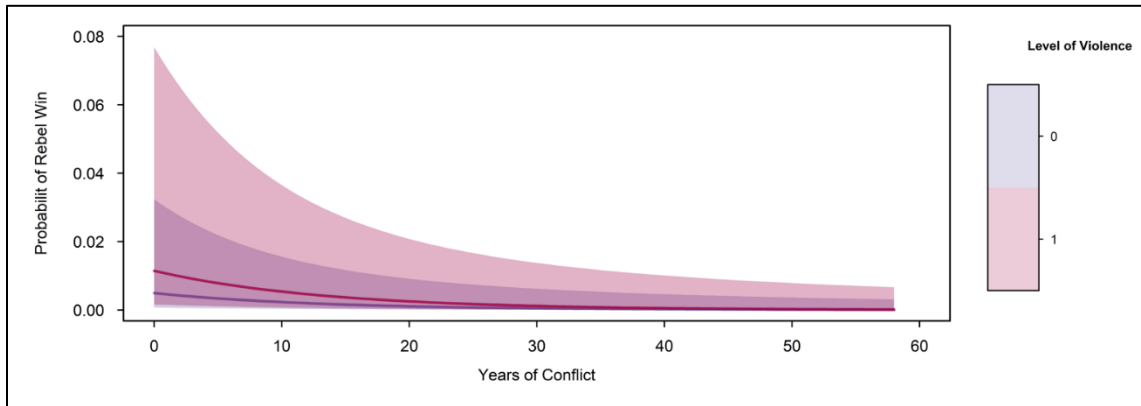
4. Level of Violence (Model 8)

Because of the significant effect that level of violence had on rebel victory and considering the results of previous research, we chose to build a logit model with level of violence as a dichotomous variable to see what independent variables had an effect on the violence in these conflicts. Our results support Regan's previous research, which showed that third-party intervention into ongoing civil wars increase the level of violence.[67] In our model, third-party intervention (rebel side) had a very significant positive effect on the level of violence with a p-value < 0.01. GDP per capita also had a slight effect that was statistically significant at a p-value < 0.01. Both the media density index and the population density had statistically significant negative effects on violence at the 0.01 p-value. Finally, the number of military personnel per capita had a positive, statistically significant effect on the level of violence at the 0.01 p-value.

5. Summary

The data from our research show that the variables affecting rebel victory include the level of violence, how quickly (or not) the conflict ends, the level of democracy of the government, and media density. Despite these statistically significant results, the likelihood of a rebel victory where the movement removes the sitting or occupying government is very low. Figure 2 is a visual representation of Model 4, showing the chance of a rebel win against the number of years of conflict and the level of violence. Even at the uppermost range of the variance, the rebels still have less than an 8% chance of winning.

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[67] Regan, "Third Party Interventions."

Figure 2.   Logit Regression—Rebel Wins (Model 4)

E.   CONCLUSION

The data show that third-party intervention on behalf of the rebels has substantive statistical significance in rebel victory when we hold all other variables equal. We successfully added level of violence and media density to the predictive model as well, showing that each of these independent variables were significant. However, once we introduce the other PMESII variables, third-party intervention is no longer relevant. The possibility exists that the intervention has other unintended consequences that potentially negatively affect the ultimate outcome. However, as we apply the data to our case studies, we show that third-party intervention does play a very significant role in the outcome because of a variety of resulting factors, many of which are intangible and difficult to measure empirically.

Most of these results follow the generally accepted "norms" of intrastate conflict involving an organized resistance; however, we identified a number of surprising results, most notably that third-party intervention shows little to no statistical significance on the majority of the models. Unpacking third-party intervention, we know that these interventions are into ongoing conflicts and overt (UCDP knows about the intervention). Therefore, we can qualify them as such—specifically overt and post-conflict initiation. Considering this type of intervention, we see that rebel victory is less likely the more democratic the government, the greater number of years of conflict, the more military personnel per capita in the government's military, and the greater the access to the Internet.

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Conversely, we see that rebel victory is more likely the greater the level of violence and the higher the media density index.

Our results indicating a negative effect on rebel victory are not surprising given previous research. They show that democratic governments with higher levels of democracy tend to have a negative effect on rebel victory. However, these same governments also have a negative effect on government victory. Additionally, the duration of conflict and Internet access both have a negative effect on both rebel victory and government victory. Considering the four other potential outcomes versus rebel victory or government victory including peace agreements, ceasefire, low activity, and actor ceases to exist, we can draw the conclusion that definitive victory for either party becomes less likely the more developed the country (higher GDP, higher democracy score) and the longer the conflict goes on. Chances are high that the outcome of the conflict will result in one of the other four possibilities, which likely does not support the objectives of an intervening third party.

In the following chapters, we address these variables in the conflicts in Syria and Libya, analyzing the resulting situations post intervention in an effort to shed light on the various conditions the statistical analysis did not address. We will also discuss the U.S. intervention into Iran in 1953 to overthrow Mohammad Mossadegh in order to analyze what conditions were present during the establishment of the resistance movement and eventual coup. We use the models as a starting point for detailed analysis of each case study in an effort to develop a better understanding of what conditions have a significant effect on successful third-party intervention.

III.   U.S. INTERVENTION INTO IRAN: 1953

As the previous chapter shows, the state of political, economic, social and informational conditions that exist in a country prior to intervention have a significant impact on the probability that a third party can successfully intervene. Likewise, the quantitative analysis demonstrated that third-party intervention is rarely beneficial for any country, a lesson the United States, as a world power, should understand thoroughly. Understanding the inherent danger of intervening into another country's conflict potentially mitigates the risk, thereby enhancing the potential for successful intervention.

This chapter discusses the overthrow of Mohammad Mossadegh, the prime minister of Iran in 1953 by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in an operation code-named TP-Ajax. The objectives of TP-Ajax were to secure the oil rights of the British and Americans and prevent the spread of communism. Using the 1953 coup in Iran as a case study, we demonstrate that capitalizing on the pre-existing political, economic, social, and informational conditions in Iran allowed the CIA to execute a successful coup d'état.

A.   HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

The Iranian coup of 1953 provides an illuminating example of a third party, in this case the United States, recognizing the pre-existing conditions in a country to achieve success. These conducive conditions developed for several reasons: (1) the discovery of oil in Iran, (2) the desire of the British to maintain control over Iranian oil, and (3) the threat of communism in Iran.

The basis of TP-Ajax centered on Iranian oil and the British Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC): In 1901, British explorer William Knox D'Arcy obtained a 60-year concession that provided the British with exclusive rights to prospect for oil in Iran.[68] The Iranian government was unaware of the extent of its oil resources at the time: it was not until 1908 that D'Arcy discovered oil; shortly thereafter, British executives formed AIOC.

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[68] Edward Henniker-Major, "Nationalization: The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, 1951 Britain vs. Iran," *Moral Cents: The Journal of Ethics in Finance* 2, no. 2 (Summer/Fall, 2013): 16–34.

This arrangement would serve as a major point of friction between the governments of England and Iran and would be the primary reason why the British wanted to enact TP-Ajax. The British maintained exclusive rights to Iranian oil for four decades, until March 1951, when a member of an extremist religious group, Fedaʾeyān-e Eslām, assassinated the Iranian prime minister, Razmara, in Tehran, which solidified national opposition to British ownership of the oil.[69]

One week later, the Iranian Parliament voted in favor of nationalizing Iranian oil.[70] In May, Mohammad Reza Shah, then king of Iran, signed a law that established the National Iranian Oil Company, revoking AIOC's concession.[71] The British were aghast that Iran would violate the oil contract made in 1908 that allowed the British sole rights to an Iranian natural resource, even while the British were subjugating the Iranian people as laborers in the oil fields under almost unimaginable circumstances.[72]

The British quickly took the government of Iran to the International Court of Justice, or the World Court and then to the newly formed United Nations in an effort to repeal the nationalization.[73] While doing so, British political leadership looked to the United States, specifically President Harry Truman, for support. Truman initially focused on efforts to negotiate a settlement between the two countries. Ultimately, the British and the Iranians were unwilling to settle, both seeing the situation as a matter of survival: the British were still struggling to overcome the devastation of WWII, and AIOC was a critical component to their recovery; the British government owned a significant portion of AIOC, which in turn provided that country with over $100 million in annual profits and taxes and provided 85% of the fuel requirements for the British Navy.[74] For its part, Iran rightly

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[69] Farhad Diba, *Mossadegh: A Political Biography* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

[70] Andreas Etges, "All That Glitters Is Not Gold: The 1953 Coup against Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran," *Intelligence and National Security* 26, no. 4 (August 2011), 498.

[71] Etges, 498.

[72] Henniker-Major, "Nationalisation,"17.

[73] Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. Case (United Kingdom v. Iran), Judgement of July 22, 1952, International Court of Justice, 93.

[74] Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 118.

believed that oil would improve its economy, improve Iranian quality of life, and free the country from foreign meddling.

In 1953, President Eisenhower's eventual decision to authorize the coup that would lead to over 26 years of relative stability in Iran. He based his decision on the perceived threat of communism in Iran: intelligence sources, mainly British agents, were able to portray the current climate under Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh as one close to succumbing to communism.[75] The contemporary political, economic, social and informational conditions made the portrayal possible. Because of the coup, the Soviets were never able to establish a credible foothold, thereby preventing communist control of the strategically important country. However, while Eisenhower's decision allowed the United States to maintain its critically important relationship with the British government, Iran would eventually become unstable a generation later.

Many scholars, such as Stephen Kinzer, attribute the success of TP-Ajax mainly to the influence of the CIA. However, the development of the conditions that allowed the CIA to execute TP-Ajax successfully began several years earlier. The CIA assessed the status of the existing conditions and manipulated them to produce the success of TP-Ajax. On 18 August 1953, the political, economic, social, and informational conditions in Iran existed in a unique state that would enable the prime minister of Iran's removal from power. By this time, Mossadegh's attempts to reduce government and military corruption, enact land reforms to free the oppressed citizens of Iran's working class, nationalize Iranian oil, reduce foreign meddling in Iranian affairs, limit the shah's power, and move Iran toward a secular democracy had alienated his supporters among Iran's powerful elite.[76] Additionally, the support from the Iranian communist party—the Tudeh, which Mossadegh received during his reinstatement as prime minister in 1951—assisted in stirring up fears both domestically and internationally that Iran would turn into a communist state. Combined with the sustained sanctions and embargoes the British had placed on Iranian

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[75] Stephen Kinzer, All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 158.

[76] Donald N. Wilber, *Contemporary Iran* (New York: Praeger, 1963), 97.

oil and oil production and the diplomatic pressure from the British, Mossadegh was easily blamed for Iran's failing economy and his inability to settle the disputed oil rights with the British. While, Mossadegh did enjoy support from the general populace of Iran, his own personal prestige was no match for the state of the conditions that led to his downfall.

Before assessing how the CIA utilized the conditions that enabled this overthrow, it is critical to explain how the conditions evolved to their state pre-August 1953, as tensions that had developed over a relatively short period in Iran allowed the CIA to orchestrate the overthrow of the country's very popular prime minister, Mohammed Mossadegh.

B.   CONDITIONS

By the time the CIA was preparing to execute TP-Ajax, Iran had been subjected to international and domestic factors that shaped the status of its political, social, economic, and informational conditions. One of the most prominent factors that shaped the conditions in Iran in 1953 and allowed for the ouster of Mossadegh was the political situation, in particular, the history of immense foreign influence and meddling in Iranian affairs. This meddling arose because Iran is economically and geopolitically significant: for one, it sits on enormous amounts of oil; when Winston Churchill helped Britain seize Iran's oil industry in the late 1920s, he called it "a prize from fairyland beyond our wildest dreams."[77] In addition, Iran lies at the hub of Europe, Russia, and the East. With access to multiple seaports, Iran, or Persia as it was known prior to being renamed by Reza Shah in 1935, had served as a strategic nexus for thousands of years.[78]

Foreign influence in Iran caused disgust among Iranians, spurring a constitutional revolution in 1905–1909, which created a nominally democratic government; yet the Shah retained immense power. Ultimately, the people's antipathy toward foreign meddling led to a coup d'état that overthrew the ruling Qajar Dynasty. Later, during WWI, multiple countries occupied what was then Persia, primarily the Russians and British. Following

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[77] Kinzer, All the Shah's Men, xi.

[78] Michael Axworthy, *A History of Iran: Empire of the Mind*, 1st ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 28.

WWI, the newly formed Soviet Union took control of northern Iran, prompting a reaction by the British, who nominated Reza Pahlavi to command the brigade that took control of Tehran and eventually pushed the Soviets out of Iran.[79] In 1921, through a coup backed by the British, Reza Khan took control of the Iranian government.[80]

Mohammad Reza enjoyed immense support from the military, a factor that would play a huge role in the removal of the prime minister years later.[81] It was during Reza's tenure that Mohammad Mossadegh became the prime minister of Iran. Mossadegh was already an outspoken critic of the foreign influence that plagued Iranian affairs and the massive amount of power granted to the shah by the constitution. In addition, his stance on nationalization and his anti-British inclinations made him extremely unpopular with the British. Furthermore, Mossadegh's beliefs and his platform benefitted the newly formed middle class and the lower classes of Iran, which was immensely popular with the general populace but not as popular with the Iranian elite.[82]

1. Political Conditions

The tension surrounding the political conditions inside Iran in 1951 only increased when the parliament elected Mossadegh prime minister. Mossadegh's open criticism of foreign interlopers into Iranian affairs and his advocating of nationalized oil led to the British embargo and sanctions. His efforts to reduce the disproportionate power of the Shah, enact class reforms, and his targeting of government corruption and attempts to steer Iran toward becoming a secular and democratic nation that governed its own affairs made him popular with the average Iranian. However, his actions alienated four groups of people that once supported him. First were those who were in favor of the Shah's reign, primarily

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[79] Axworthy, A History of Iran: Empire of the Mind, 209–211.

[80] Axworthy, 209–220.

[81] Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 177.

[82] Sepehr Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era: Roots of the Iranian Revolution* (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1982), 80.

Iranian elites consisting of rich landowners, military officers, and politicians.[83] Even though Iranians were tired of the shah, who slowly lost public support because of his dependence on foreign support—primarily military and economic aid—and because he reminded the people of his dictator father, the Iranian elite still supported him.[84] This faction included many high-ranking military officers, both retired and active duty, who held influence over military and did not look favorably on Mossadegh's efforts to cut military spending and limit corruption.[85] The shah modernized the military, often protected military officers from trials, and showered military commanders with promotions and rewards, thereby ensuring their loyalty.[86] Legally, the shah maintained control over the military, and the shah considered Mossadegh's reforms a direct threat to the shah's power, causing a further rift between the two men.[87] Mossadegh wanted to limit the power of the shah and eventually either remand the shah to a ceremonial position, like the English monarchy, or do away with the concept of a shah entirely; some Iranians seriously disagreed with him.

Second, there were the Anglophiles. While a minority, this group believed that the British and Western influence had improved and was improving life in Iran. This group consisted of politicians, journalists, and other public figures, who held close ties with British organizations and benefited from British patronage; their positions as influential members of Iranian society would assist in mobilizing opposition to Mossadegh.[88] Additionally, this group held political influence that both nationalization of Iranian Oil and Iranian nationalism threatened.[89] The Anglophiles also solely blamed Mossadegh for not

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[83] Fakhreddin Azimi, "Unseating Mosaddeq: The Configuration and Role of Domestic Forces," in Mohammad Mossaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 32.

[84] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 252.

[85] Zabih, The Mossadegh Era, 71.

[86] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 178.

[87] Zabih, The Mossadegh Era, 71.

[88] Fakhreddin Azimi, "Unseating Mosaddeq: The Configuration and Role of Domestic Forces," in *Mohammad Mossaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 40–41.

[89] Azimi, 40–41.

compromising with the British over the disputed oil rights. This group held close ties with the British, and notable Anglophiles like the Rashidian brothers would help mobilize anti-Mossadegh support on behalf of the British and the CIA.[90] When Mossadegh nationalized Iranian oil, continued to promote Iran nationalism, and expelled the British Foreign Service from Iran in 1952, this group increased its opposition to Mossadegh.

The third group that opposed Mossadegh was the religious rightists. While religion is certainly a social condition, Islam is an inseparable part of Iranian life, with religious leaders enjoying massive amounts of political influence over citizens. Ayatollah Kashani, who once supported Mossadegh, led the religious faction that wanted Iran to become an Islamic state. Kashani and Mossadegh thus had a falling out over Mossadegh's aspirations to turn Iran from a religious state into a secular one.[91] Additionally, Kashani disagreed with Mossadegh increasing his own emergency powers, proclaiming them "dictatorial" and believing that Iran needed to implement Sharia law.[92] While this split initially did not appear to be detrimental to Mossadegh and his agenda, Mossadegh lost his former ability to have Kashani mobilize, at a moment's notice, "a large mob of uncomprehending illiterates" to rally in support of his policies or in rage against his opponents.[93] Because of the rift with Kashani, Mossadegh lost a key portion of his base, and with his adherence to driving Iran toward secularization, the rest of his religious support quickly evaporated.[94]

The last group that rescinded its support for Mossadegh were the Iranian communists, the Tudeh party. The one major position that all the anti-Mossadegh groups had in common was their hatred of the Tudeh party; even the British agreed about the threat of the Tudeh party and the influence they appeared to gain with Mossadegh. The Tudeh party initially denounced Mossadegh.[95] However, realizing that Mossadegh's platform of

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[90] Azimi, 38.

[91] Richard Walter Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 153.

[92] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 276.

[93] Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, 155.

[94] Azimi, "Unseating Mosaddeq," 68

[95] Azimi, 69.

land reform, equality for all, and liberalization was the closest political platform to communism, the Tudeh party changed their stance and began supporting Mossadegh in hopes that he would eventually institute communism.[96]

In fact, Mossadegh never openly announced his support for communism or even accepted the support of the Tudeh party; however, to many, especially foreign powers such as the United States and Britain, his actions demonstrated his support.[97] The Tudeh party took it upon themselves to attack Mossadegh's opponents both verbally and physically. However, instead of generating support for Mossadegh, the Tudeh party's attacks only solidified opposition to Mossadegh and increased fears of communism among Iranian citizens and members of the world community. George Middleton, the British charge d'affairs, told the U.S. State Department that, "As matters are developing a Coup d'état may be the only hope of saving Persia from communism."[98] Externally, fears of Iran becoming a communist state were reinforced by Mossadegh's inability to solve the oil crisis that was weakening the Iranian economy and could provide fertile grounds for communism.[99] Internally, dislike and fears over Mossadegh's consolidation of power and his land reforms made his opposition believe he was waging class warfare in Iran, and his fervent nationalism, which politically active clerics believed was turning Iran into a secular society, fueled the belief that Iran was degrading to communism.[100]

Further creating an unstable political condition was the fact that Iran's political institutions were weak and poorly organized, a state of affairs that would continue to weaken the overall political condition in Iran. While there were political parties, they were

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[96] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 321.

[97] W. M. Roger Louis, "Britain and the Overthrow of the Mosaddeq Government," in *Mohammad Mosddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 128.

[98] Mostafa Elm, Oil, Power, and Principle: Iran's Oil Nationalization and Its Aftermath (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 244.

[99] Darioush Bayandor, *Iran and the CIA: The Fall of Mosaddeq Revisited* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 174.

[100] Bayandor, 4.

poorly organized and existed as mere shifting alliances that offered temporary support.[101] Without a party to consolidate support, Mossadegh became a victim of the ever-shifting political landscape as his policies became less popular. Personal rivalries frequently splintered coercive parties, for example, when Mossadegh lost the support of Ayatollah Kashani.[102] Elections in Iran were also subject to vast amounts of rigging, with landlords telling their workers whom to vote for in an attempt to undermine the government, especially Mossadegh and his reforms.[103] Additionally, electoral oversight and law enforcement was weak, allowing anti-Mossadegh forces to tamper with elections, which allowed the election of a heavily anti-Mossadegh parliament.[104]

A cause of still more political instability was the disagreement between Mossadegh and the shah over the extent of power the shah had. Because of Iran's wholesale dependence on foreign aid and to the ever-increasing meddling in its affairs by foreign governments, the citizens of Iran were tired of dictators. As a result, in 1906 the shah had been forced to sign the Iranian constitution, which created a parliament and attempted to limit the shah's power. However, while the constitutional convention of 1906 sought to limit the shah's power and give more power to the people through the creation of parliament, an assassination attempt in 1949 by a Tudeh party member on Muhammad Reza Shah resulted in the shah convening the Iranian parliament, demanding increased power.[105] As a result, the shah gained strong powers granted by an amended constitution. The new constitution granted the shah massive amounts of power, including appointing half of parliament, issuing executive decrees, appointing or relieving prime ministers, and dissolving parliament if needed.[106] Another of the shah's constitutional powers was the

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[101] Mark J. Gasiorowski, "Conclusion: Why Did Mosaddeq Fall?" in *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 271.

[102] Mary Ann. Heiss, Empire and Nationhood: The United States, Great Britain, and Iranian Oil, 1950–1954 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 127.

[103] Heiss, 127.

[104] Gasiorowski, "Conclusion," 271.

[105] Fariborz Mokhtari, "Iran's 1953 Coup Revisited: Internal Dynamics versus External Intrigue," *The Middle East Journal* 62, no. 3 (2008): 465, http://doi.org.10.3751/62.3.15.

[106] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 250.

power to issues decrees or "firmans," which would aid in the deposing of Mossadegh in 1953.[107] However, riding a wave of popular support, Mossadegh would successfully remove these powers of the shah in efforts to return power to the people; yet Mossadegh's methods, which consisted of consolidating power in his hands and potentially dissolving parliament, alienated his supporters and strengthened his opposition to him.[108] Applying our empirical results from the statistical analysis provides an interesting insight into the situation and political conditions in Iran just prior to the eventual coup.

The political conditions in Iran just prior to the coup supported third-party intervention on behalf of a resistance group. Our statistical analysis shows that democracy has a negative effect on rebel victory; specifically, the higher the level of democracy, the greater the negative influence on rebel victory potential. In 1953 Iran's polity score equaled -1.00, which helps explain, at least in part, the success of the CIA's intervention and facilitation of the coup.[109] In addition to the supportive political conditions, the economic conditions not only supported intervention on behalf of a resistance, more importantly they presented an opportunity to address one of the primary grievances between the government and the populace.

2.   Economic Conditions

The political conditions in Iran gave rise to the economic, and the economic conditions directly affected the political conditions, which would give the CIA a unique advantage while orchestrating the overthrow of Mossadegh. Economically, the conditions in Iran were degrading due to the country's disputed oil rights. Many Iranians believed that the economic woes that Iran faced were due to "government corruption and foreign exploitation."[110] Because the British owned most of the rights to Iranian oil and refused to negotiate a more amenable deal with Iranian leadership, nationalization of Iranian oil

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[107] Kinzer, All the Shah's Men, 11–12.

[108] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 272–275

[109] "Authority Trends, 1946–2013: Iran," Center for Systemic Peace, accessed July 2018, https://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/irn2.htm.

[110] Elm, Oil, Power, and Principle, 52.

became a priority for Mohammad Mossadegh. The shah did negotiate a better deal with the AIOC, which facilitated Iran receiving 32% to 37.5% of the royalties from its oil production; however, this concession was an insult to Iranians, who believed they should receive at least an equal share.[111] Due to this proposal and other frustrations with the British, the Iranians nationalized their oil in 1951 and formed the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).[112] Additionally, the AIOC had consistently ignored their agreements on the royalties due to the Iranians, causing more angst over foreign involvement in Iran.[113] In response to the formation of the NIOC, the British and AIOC removed all their personnel and resources from Iran, halting oil production. Additionally, the NIOC took over the offices of the AIOC, which yielded documents that showed the AIOC and British were actively meddling in Iranian affairs in order to keep their access to Iranian oil.[114]

In response, Mossadegh doggedly pursued nationalization of Iranian oil. Parliament ratified the nationalization of oil, which the shah signed into law; the British, in response to Iranian nationalization, and failing to secure a favorable world court ruling, conducted a boycott and embargo of Iranian oil and goods and persuaded other countries to do the same.[115] Additionally, the British prevented oil production experts from entering Iran, which prevented Iranian oil production because, while Iran had plenty of laborers, they lacked the engineers and upper-management expertise, roles historically filled by British and foreign oil experts.[116] Many in Mossadegh's government would claim that nationalization of Iranian oil was more a matter of national pride and an effort to remove the influence of foreign powers than an economic matter per se, but the resulting sanctions severely degraded the Iranian economy.[117] This pressure created turmoil in Iran: to say that Iran utilized oil revenue to fund their government is an understatement the

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[111] Elm, 55.

[112] Elm, 116.

[113] Elm, 52.

[114] Elm, 119.

[115] Elm, 144.

[116] Elm, 148.

[117] Heiss, Empire and Nationhood, 222.

development rate.[118] Mossadegh's government was barely able to balance the loss of oil revenue and institute programs to mitigate that loss. However, demand for development in Iran was high and without oil revenues to support it, the Mossadegh government could not sustain

To help alleviate the problem, Mossadegh decided to enact an austerity program to counter the loss of oil revenue. The programs he implemented were very popular among the people of Iran. The stated goals of these programs were to balance the economy and build democratic institutions while improving the quality of life for Iranians.[119] These programs sought to improve work and living conditions of rural workers by abolishing feudal dues, establishing social security and social welfare programs, and establishing institutions to protect against government corruption and election meddling/tampering, even creating a bill to allow women the right to vote.[120] While these reforms may have improved life for the middle and lower classes of Iran, they increased enmity toward Mossadegh from the Iranian elite, who believed that these programs would reduce their power and wealth as well as turn the country toward communism.

3.   Social Conditions

The factors that influenced the economic and political conditions in Iran further shaped the social conditions within Iran, priming the CIA to leverage them during the coup. Through the years, Iran's attempts to modernize had been inspired by many Western countries, such as England, France, and the United States. While Mossadegh was extremely anti-British, a portion of the population and members of parliament were not. While many Iranians understood the negative impacts of foreign meddling, an admiration for Western culture in Iran persisted there. This foreign influence had helped to establish the middle class, which became the basis of support for Mossadegh. Foreign influence, particularly Western influence, had transformed the middle class from isolated socio-economic entities

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[118] Elm, Oil, Power, and Principle, 272.

[119] Elm, 273.

[120] Elm, 274.

into a body of merchants with vast amounts of property and extreme political influence.[121] This educated middle class was a key source of power for Mossadegh; however, they that group was not as active in protesting or demonstrating as the intelligentsia or the religious masses.[122] This lack of willingness of the bulk of Mossadegh' supporters to mobilize in support of him to counter his opposition would cost Mossadegh greatly when his enemies were able to mobilize their masses in protest of Mossadegh and in support of his removal. Iran's vast amounts of contact with Western influence had created the intelligentsia in Iran that focused on promoting Western values and modern norms; specifically, the intelligentsia espoused constitutionalism, secularism, and nationalism as the three major ideals for a prosperous future Iran.[123] However, while the intelligentsia would rally to support Mossadegh, they did not exist in the numbers needed to counter Mossadegh's opposition.

Another social fracture that enabled an effective intervention was the Tudeh party, which the Soviet Union supported heavily.[124] The Tudeh movement was strictly anti-government and anti-religion. While the Tudeh party helped Mossadegh get elected and reinstated, its growing influence in politics would eventually solidify internal and external opposition to Mossadegh's government.[125] Support from the Tudeh party therefore pit Mossadegh against Iran's religious, social, political, and economic segments. Shia Ayatollahs such as Ayatollah Kashani held enormous sway over the members of the religion. It is next to impossible to separate Iranian society and politics from religion, making religious leaders extremely influential. Additionally, the foundations of the communist ideology directly conflicted with the heavily religious Iranian society. As a result, anyone supported or thought to be supported by the Tudeh party would immediately find themselves at odds with the religious society.

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[121] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 58.

[122] Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, 155.

[123] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 62.

[124] Nikki R. Keddie and Yann Richard, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 119.

[125] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 324.

4.   Informational Conditions

Finally, the 1953 coup in Iran also relied heavily on the informational condition in the country at the time. Both external and internal forces helped shape the narrative about Mossadegh's stability and competence that would eventually aid the CIA in removing him from power. Once Iran began to push to nationalize its oil resources, the AIOC and the British began an unrelenting information campaign in Iran that attempted to explain why nationalizing the oil was a bad idea.[126] Additionally, pro-nationalization politicians were targeted by the British-sponsored information operations to discredit their character and position to prevent nationalization. The British also sponsored and aided the shah and prime ministers that they believed would aid their cause and conducted campaigns against nationalization using Iranian radio and newspaper hosts and reporters.[127]

The British utilized information operations on the international stage as well, taking the oil rights dispute to international court and utilizing their prestige to deny aid to Iran from other countries. Furthermore, they sponsored anti-Mossadegh articles in foreign newspapers such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times.* The goal of utilizing these specific papers was to erode American support of Mossadegh.[128]

Information operations inside Iran also enhanced existing grievances against Mossadegh by his' internal opposition. The British laid much of the groundwork for the anti-Mossadegh campaigns. While Iranians were extremely unhappy with British meddling in their affairs, another of their major concerns was the constant threat of Soviet invasion, both physical and doctrinal. The Soviets continually encroached on Iranian territory, even occupying part of the country during WWI and WWII. With the communist revolution in 1917, the global fight against communism began and the British even used Iran as a staging point to fight Soviet encroachment. However, it was the population's disgust with the communist ideology that would have a drastic effect on its support for Mossadegh. The Tudeh party supported Mossadegh in his bid for election as prime minister. However, once

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[126] Heiss, Empire and Nationhood, 56.

[127] Elm, Oil, Power, and Principle, 99–100.

[128] Elm, 226–227.

he was elected, the support of the party became an information operational goldmine to counter Mossadegh. Every one of his opponents utilized the support of the communist party to discredit Mossadegh as prime minister. Many of Mossadegh's prime supporters abandoned him causing reduced support; this was especially felt when Ayatollah Kashani split with Mossadegh. Kashani believed that because of the Tudeh's party support, Mossadegh was trying to turn Iran away from Islam. Additionally, Iranian elites and military officers did not like the inherent reversal of power in the class structure of communism that it appeared Mossadegh was pushing. Finally, the British used the Tudeh party's support of Mossadegh to convince President Eisenhower to support a coup against Mossadegh to prevent the spread of communism and prevent Iran from turning into a communist state.[129]

5. The Coup

By the time President Eisenhower supported the coup against Mossadegh, the conditions were prime for execution, and the CIA only needed apply a relatively small amount of pressure to enact the coup. Since the inception of the oil rights dispute, the British had conducted an information operation campaign against nationalization of oil in Iran. They extended their information campaign to Mossadegh when he came into power. The British even went as far as to attempt a poorly organized coup against Mossadegh in 1952. Once this attempt came to light, Mossadegh expelled all British foreign-service officers. However, the networks the British had developed and the seeds of dissent they had sowed remained in place. The CIA was able to capitalize on these feelings and the other prevalent conditions to successfully carry off a coup.

In fact, the CIA was given an unprecedented *two* chances to attempt the overthrow of Mossadegh. The first attempt failed due to the CIA's miscalculation surrounding the political condition, as he underestimated Mossadegh's personal prestige, resulting in Mossadegh and his supporters in the military to prevent the first attempt. The CIA learned that Mossadegh's policies, pride, and hatred of the British had prevented the negotiation of

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[129] Elm, 282.

oil rights to come to a compromise. Next, utilizing British networks, the CIA increased the intensity of the information campaigns, highlighting Mossadegh's failure to re-start oil production, his acceptance of the Tudeh party, and the rift between him and the clerics.[130] Additionally, the CIA utilized the Iranian constitution and the power of the shah to ensure Mossadegh's removal. Since the shah could issue a decree to remove the prime minister, the CIA had the shah issue this decree and ensured that it was spread throughout the country and the military.

Despite the CIA's efforts, however, this initial coup attempt backfired due to the popularity of Mossadegh and the inability of anti-Mossadegh elements to mobilize the average Iranian citizens to support his removal, while pro-Mossadegh military units were mobilized to secure the cities and prevent any coup.[131] The CIA relied too heavily on the power and prestige of the shah to overcome Mossadegh's reputation with the people. He utilized one aspect of the political condition without coordinating a simultaneous exploitation of the other conditions and underestimated the power of Mossadegh without coordinating a simultaneous exploitation of the other conditions.

Thus, while the CIA consolidated support for a coup among the Iranian elite by arranging for the "firman" (decree) from the shah, the first coup attempt failed. When Colonel Nematollah Nassiri delivered the decree to remove Mossadegh and he was arrested, the declaration of Mossadegh's removal was met with violent protests from his supporters and the Tudeh party.[132] Forces loyal to Mossadegh were able to contain and diffuse the crowds and arrest those believed to be the architects of the coup attempt. General Fazollah Zahedi, the man who would replace Mossadegh as prime minster, Kermit Roosevelt (the CIA lead agent), and the robust network were not arrested. While justified in arresting the men that were trying to destabilize his government, Mossadegh's containment of the coup by utilizing the military to suppress the rioters stoked fears that he

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[130] Mervyn Roberts, "Analysis of Radio Propaganda in the 1953 Iran Coup," *Iranian Studies* 45, no. 6 (2012): 761, http://doi:10.1080/00210862.2012.726848.

[131] Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup D'Etat Against Mosaddeq," in *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 249.

[132] Keddie and Richard, *Roots of Revolution,* 139.

was purging the government to further consolidate his power. Failure to truly contain the forces opposing him would lead to Mossadegh's downfall. The resulting chaos and quick thinking by the CIA and their networks within Iran were able to regroup and execute the coup utilizing all the conditions.

In preparation for a second coup attempt, Zahedi and Roosevelt met with pro-shah supporters and anti-Mossadegh members. The plotters utilized an aggressive information campaign to trigger and solidify the political, economic, and social conditions against Mossadegh. Utilizing the information condition to take advantage of the earlier confusing coup attempt, they convinced the country that the first coup attempt had actually been to overthrow the shah.[133] Unlike the first coup, where the CIA thought that a hand-delivered firman to the shah would be enough to remove Mossadegh, the second coup attempt widely distributed the firmans across the entire country, which effectively fired Mossadegh, via both radio and paper. This aggressive campaign gave the new coup an air of legitimacy across Iran, capitalizing on the fact that the shah was still a legitimate source of power and still had the power, granted by the constitution, to remove the prime minister.[134]

The second coup saw a much more robust use of the informational condition that existed in Iran. The CIA utilized the anti-Mossadegh networks to widely spread false messages about how Mossadegh was trying to remove the shah and turn the country to communism, thus inciting widespread anger toward Mossadegh and opinions that Mossadegh was losing control of the country.[135] Continuing to utilize the informational and social networks already established by the British, the CIA was able to consolidate opposition to Mossadegh into a unified front. The CIA was collectively able to organize riots and protests disguised as Tudeh-sponsored communist revolutions, capitalizing on the Iranians' unified hatred of the communist party. These riots by the "Tudeh" party targeted symbols of capitalism and nationalism; the protesters angered and disgusted Iranian citizens, who did not like foreign meddling and especially despised the communist

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[133] Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup D'Etat Against Mosaddeq," 251.

[134] Gasiorowski, 251.

[135] Gasiorowski, 252.

ideology, which they associated with Mossadegh and the destruction of their cities and businesses.[136] To counter the "communists," another group of instigators, paid by the Rashidian brothers under orders from the CIA, organized Iranians to violently counter-protest.[137] Additionally, Ayatollahs Kashani and Behbahani organized religious protests against Mossadegh. These groups violently clashed all over the country, especially in Teheran. The Iranian army was used to put a stop to the violence caused by these protests and however, unlike the first coup attempt, General Zahedi took advantage of the opportunity to utilize pro-shah army units to arrest and remove Mossadegh from power.[138] Mossadegh's supporters urged him to organize a resistance; however, he refused and turned himself in. The second coup thus attempt succeeded due to the thorough exploitation of the political, economic, social, and informational conditions that were present in Iran at the time.

C.   CONCLUSION

While the CIA's involvement in the Iranian 1953 coup is undisputed and was no doubt helpful, it was not the main reason it facilitated Mossadegh's removal from power. The underlying political, economic, social, and informational conditions were the real reason why Mossadegh was overthrown, allowing the CIA to design an operational plan that succeeded even after a failed first attempt. The fact that Mossadegh enjoyed immense popularity and support from the population of Iran yet was still overthrown highlights the power of these conditions.

Politically, Mossadegh had alienated his support from powerful religious figures such as Ayatollah Kashani. Additionally, his goal of eliminating corruption in the military made him the enemy of powerful military officers. That, in conjunction with his attempts to limit the power of the shah, whom the military supported, did not make him any friends. Finally, his silence and implicit cooperation with the Tudeh party alienated others still. Economically, while many supported the nationalization of oil and the reduction of foreign

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[136] Gasiorowski, 252.

[137] Gasiorowski, 253.

[138] Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions, 280.

intervention, Mossadegh's inability to negotiate a deal with the British degraded his support as the lack of oil production and sale and the British sanctions crippled the Iranian economy.

Socially, Mossadegh's reforms alienated his supporters and made his actions appear to be in line with communist ideology. Finally, the condition that highlighted and exacerbated the other conditions was the informational condition. It was the highlighting of the support of Mossadegh by the Tudeh party, his failure to negotiate the oil crisis and fix the economy, and his consolidation of power that solidified external and internal opposition to his reign as prime minister.

The informational conditions in Iran both prior to and during the coup were immensely influential. Specifically, they were so powerful that even after the first coup attempts, the riots conducted by the Tudeh party imposters were able to rally pro-government, pro-shah, pro-religion, and anti-Mossadegh supporters to counter the threats and overthrow Mossadegh. The Iranian coup was not a success merely because Mossadegh was deposed but because there was also relative stability after the removal of Mossadegh.

The CIA restarted the Iranian economy via the oil industry, providing an immediate solution to a decades-long problem and providing stability. Additionally, their ability to work with the Shah and anti-Mossadegh factions to quickly quell the riots and return the country to normalcy was also extremely useful in stabilizing the country. Military support of the Shah also aided the situation, allowing the Shah to leverage the military to establish internal stability. Finally, by utilizing radio and influential members of society to bolster the shah's legitimacy, specifically that he was the one removing Mossadegh, the coup gained an air of legitimacy, thereby making people less likely to resist the change since it appeared that Mossadegh's removal was performed under the auspices of the law. This coup example highlights the importance of understanding the political, social, economic, and informational conditions prior to an intervention decision, which the CIA did in Iran, thereby allowing them to recognize the correct timing for the regime change. More pointedly, this not only allowed for successful regime change but also for stability in the country afterward. Our empirical results applied to Iran only reinforce this idea.

Based on our statistical analysis, the pre-existing conditions in Iran prior to the CIA executing the coup of Mohammad Mossadegh were such that not only was orchestrating a resistance possible, but facilitating a successful transition post-regime change was less difficult. Specifically, the short duration, low democracy level, and relatively dense media throughout the country all facilitated successful intervention. However, the key factor in Iran was the ability to rapidly improve Iran's economy through the oil industry, as economic grievances were a high priority for the populace at the time. U.S. aid combined with revenue generated from the oil industry energized the Iranian economy, which in turn provided employment and basic services the population demanded, thereby increasing support for the shah. The political and security situation in Iran after the coup prevented a communist revolution in the country and maintained relative stability for nearly three decades. Unfortunately, the increasingly brutal tactics of the shah and his government would eventually lead to the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Muammar Qaddafi's tactics in Libya were not dissimilar to the shah's and, combined with U.S. intervention, were a large reason for his eventual overthrow.

IV.   U.S. INTERVENTION INTO LIBYA: 2009

Currently, Libya is in a state of turmoil. The situation is incredibly complicated and often confusing: the degradation of the political, economic, social, and informational conditions in Libya today dates back to regimes prior to Qaddafi's, back when oil was discovered. During the Qaddafi regime, the conditions continued to decline, resulting in the mix of conditions that eventually, with inspiration from the Arab Spring, led to the revolt against Qaddafi and the state of civil war that persists in the country today. After Qaddafi's fall, the conditions worsened further, turning Libya's political landscape into a complex web of shifting alliances, undermining the country's economic potential and what little faith people had in the government. As a result, the populace turned to regional tribal affiliations and extremist organizations for leadership, thereby eliminating any uniting force that might help stabilize the country. While the international community has attempted to aid countries in extreme states of civil war such as that in Libya, such aid can come at a high price without understanding the underlying conditions of instability. As it stands, Libya's current situation illuminates the types of political, economic, social, and informational conditions that would render a third-party intervention disastrous.

This chapter traces the creation of the current political, economic, social, and informational conditions that exist in Libya. Using these conditions, we highlight what led to the overthrow of Qaddafi. Additionally, utilizing the framework of political, economic, social, and informational conditions, this chapter shows that foreign intervention to remove Qaddafi helped to create the climate of chaos that exists in Libya today. Finally, utilizing the conditions, the chapter explains why, although the Qaddafi regime was overthrown, third-party intervention into Libyan affairs is ill-advised, costly, and ultimately would be unsuccessful.

A.   HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

In 2011, the Libyan populace rebelled against Muammar Qaddafi's corrupt and oppressive regime; the roots of the uprising are embedded deep within Libyan history. At different points during the Qaddafi regime, protests would spring up in different parts of

the country with Qaddafi always violently putting them down, justifying his actions on the fact that Libyan law forbade political opposition. By 2011, Libya was the most censored and oppressed country in Africa.[139] Eventually, the people's anger over the government's corruption and its inability to fulfill promises to build government housing using oil revenue led to protests and riots. When Jamal Al-Hajji, a human rights activist, was arrested for speaking out against the government and attempting to incite change, riots broke out all over Libya, eventually leading to a full-scale civil war.[140] Uprisings throughout the Arab world, especially in Tunisia and Egypt, inspired riots and civil unrest in Libya. Instead of transforming into a new and prosperous country, Libya descended into conflict.

The conditions in Libya currently undermining its stability stem from the historical foundations of its independence. It was not until after the end of WWII that Libya became an independent state under King Idris I. During his reign, foreign companies discovered oil in the country, thereby leading Libya to become a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Arab League, as well as to develop close ties with the United Kingdom and the United States. Before the discovery of oil, Libya ranked near the bottom on every measurable development scale.[141] Afterward, however, it became an extremely wealthy country.[142] As a result, foreign involvement in Libya increased as oil accounted for almost half of Libya's GDP. During this time, King Idris maintained close ties with Western nations, and Libya began to prosper.

However, the new oil economy and the government under King Idris had some downsides: agricultural development declined due to the country's increased focus on oil production; wealth became consolidated among a few; and the monarchy became corrupt, oppressive, and unwieldy. Idris separated himself from the urban areas and instead

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[139] "Global Press Freedom Rankings," The Way Back Machine, accessed June 02, 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20110515162314/http://freedomhouse.org/images/File/fop/2011/FOTP2011GlobalRegionalTables.pdf.

[140] Jason Pack, ed., The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 92.

[141] Omar I. El Fathaly and Monte Palmer, *Political Development and Social Change in Libya* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1980), 1.

[142] Ruth First, *Libya the Elusive Revolution* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1975), 144.

identified with a minority of rural elites, which increasingly led to his unpopularity.[143] Some of the tribes and urban elites even opposed his appointment as king, as tribal leaders feared he would rule along tribal and religious lines; however, they acquiesced to his rule in order to keep the country unified.[144] Additionally, Libya's citizens were suspicious of the king's close ties with Western governments, which foreign oil companies leveraged to steer decisions regarding Libya in their favor.[145] The king's close ties to certain tribes and foreign powers appeared to many Libyans as more important than running an inclusive nation.

Additionally, as King Idris solidified his power, apparent election tampering by his regime caused the Libyan populace to distrust the government, which resulted in full-scale riots by members of the losing political party.[146] This led the king to enact oppressive measures that dismantled any remnants of a democratic political system.[147] Idris's government immediately repressed any overt resistance on behalf of the Libyan populace, typically isolating the resistance members so as not to infect the rest of the society. The government quickly dismantled any organization that could stand as opposition. For example, in the 1960s, the government infiltrated influential student organizations and powerful trade unions and discredited the leaders of these organizations, who it then removed through mass trials, effectively dissolving any ability these organizations had to oppose the government.[148]

During King Idris's reign, promised social reforms and any benefits to the population from a booming economy thus went unrealized. The discovery of oil turned Libya into a rentier state. Specifically, Libya received massive amounts of revenue from foreign investment in Libyan oil. However, the money generated went to develop further

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[143] El Fathaly and Palmer, Political Development and Social Change in Libya, 17.

[144] El Fathaly and Palmer, 16.

[145] First, Libya the Elusive Revolution 76.

[146] First, 79.

[147] Lillian Craig Harris, *Libya: Qadhafi's Revolution and the Modern State* (Boulder, CO: Croom Helm, 1986), 11.

[148] First, Libya the Elusive Revolution, 85.

oil production versus investment in the broader infrastructure and/or economy of Libya.[149] The benefits that the poor and middle class should have received never materialized; instead, the wealthy minority simply became wealthier.[150] Additionally, while the government attempted to enact some social reforms, it was too corrupt and bureaucratic to change; even a letter from King Idris to heads of government that cited the Koran on the "evils of taking bribes and practicing nepotism and squandering the country's wealth in secret and in public" was not enough.[151] Moreover, King Idris's regime lacked a unifying narrative: once Libya became its own country, he made only half-hearted attempts to unite its different factions and tribes into one national identity.[152] His inability to develop a nationalist narrative to capitalize on the discovery of oil and secure buy-in from the people failed to mitigate their growing dissatisfaction with his regime. The political, economic, social, and informational conditions in Libya degraded under King Idris, and the people's dissatisfaction and loss of faith in the government grew. Eventually, this resulted in a military coup led by Muammar Qaddafi.

During the Qaddafi regime, the conditions in Libya continued to deteriorate. Politically, the regime maintained control over an ethnically and ideologically heterogeneous society, but it did so via harsh policies aimed at suppressing any opposition.[153] The government became relatively isolated after it cut ties with the West and focused its attention internally and regionally. One goal of cutting Western ties was to ease the Libyan populace's anger toward foreign powers that had intervened in their affairs.[154] By focusing internally, Qaddafi's regime consolidated its power, brutally eliminating and implementing laws banning political opposition.[155] It also nominally

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[149] El Fathaly and Palmer, Political Development and Social Change in Libya, 22.

[150] First, Libya the Elusive Revolution, 82.

[151] First, 81.

[152] El Fathaly and Palmer, Political Development and Social Change in Libya, 38.

[153] Mohammed El-Katiri, *State-Building Challenges in a Post-Revolution Libya* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2012), 1.

[154] First, Libya the Elusive Revolution, 122.

[155] First, 123.

aligned with the Soviet Bloc and supported anti-colonial revolutions throughout the African continent and the world.[156] However, the regime became isolated after its support for terrorism—such as the Lockerbie bombing—became apparent. This drew the attention of foreign governments, most notably the United States, which led to the implementation of harsh sanctions that harmed the Libyan economy.[157]

Because of its policies, the Qaddafi government turned into a thinly disguised dictatorship. It destroyed all affiliations of the Libyan citizens with domestic political groups and minimized their tribal identities, which reduced the political community of the people of Libya and fostered extreme dependence on their government.[158] As a result, economically, the Qaddafi regime became a welfare state seeking "Islamic socialism" and "collective ownership" that would provide the people of Libya free social services.[159] Qaddafi partially nationalized oil production and holdings, but he still received aid from European countries and needed a few international companies to continue to produce the oil.[160] His intent in nationalizing oil had been to invest more money into the Libyan economy and infrastructure, but it also allowed Libya to use their oil production as a political weapon, such as when Libya used cutbacks to support OPEC's oil embargo in 1973 against countries supporting Israel during the Yom Kippur War.[161] Domestically, the government channeled the funds generated from oil production into infrastructure reforms and the local economy at Qaddafi's discretion.

The majority of these reforms did not benefit the Libyan people, however. In its attempts to make the people of Libya economically equal and fund government projects, the regime restricted individuals' access to their bank accounts, taking the money for the

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[156] El Fathaly and Palmer, Political Development and Social Change in Libya, 65

[157] Harris, *Libya,* 105.

[158] Peter Cole and Brian McQuinn, eds., *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath* (London: Hurst, 2015), 22–23

[159] Harris, *Libya,* 37.

[160] Harris, 111.

[161] Harris, 112.

"greater good."[162] Libyans lost faith in the government due to Qaddafi's use of economic patronage, which forced the people of Libya into further dependence on the government for survival.[163] These policies were very unpopular, as they denied all Libyans economic freedom. Such radical economic reforms continued to exacerbate the people's discontent with Qaddafi.[164] In fact, as was the case under King Idris, most of Qaddafi's economic reforms only benefitted a small number of Libyans, namely, his friends and family. Among the rest of the population, unemployment rates rose as high as 20% in 2009, mainly because of a mismatch between Libyans' education level and the skills needed for available jobs, most of which were in resource extraction and manual labor and did not appeal to most Libyans, who felt such jobs were beneath them.[165]

Qaddafi further cultivated a culture of government dependence by heavily subsidizing social services, allowing the state to control all aspects of the economy and dissolving non-state holdings and businesses. Likewise, the selective benefits resulting from the Qaddafi government's economic reforms caused high housing and food prices, which led to high inflation and eventually a general decline in living conditions.[166] When comparing themselves with other oil-rich countries, Libyans felt they should have had a higher standard of living.[167] Many disapproved of how Qaddafi spent the state's resources, particularly on foreign intervention in other countries, the support of terrorism, benefits to his close friends and family, and the building of a man-made river in the Libyan Desert, something most Libyans considered ridiculous.[168] The Qaddafi regime's inability to build promised subsidized housing, reduce government corruption, and mitigate high inflation rates led to a complete loss of faith in the government among the majority of Libyans and an attempted coup in 1975.

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[162] Harris, 113.

[163] Cole and McQuinn, The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath, 23

[164] Harris, *Libya*, 127.

[165] El-Katiri, State-Building Challenges in a Post-Revolution Libya, 7.

[166] El-Katiri, 8.

[167] El-Katiri, 7.

[168] El-Katiri, 5.

Qaddafi then decided to transition Libya to the *Jamahiriyya,* which is a form or rule that nominally returns power to the people by turning a country into a "stateless state."[169] Jamahiriyya is a system of government based on Qaddafi's *Green Book,* which proposed a solution to the corrupt political systems that existed in Libya and in the world. The goal of the Jamahiriyya was to give power over all aspects of governance back to the people. In Libya, citizens were supposed to participate through Basic People's Congresses (BPC), which run local and state governments with "popular committees" acting as the bureaucratic institutions to convert policy into action.[170] However, while in theory the people were in charge, if Qaddafi disagreed with their decisions, he could veto any policy they enacted. He justified such actions because he viewed himself one of the people; however, he saw himself as more enlightened and therefore better positioned to decide what was best. He vetoed BPC decision frequently, which slowly changed the Jamahiriyya into an autocracy.[171] Additionally, he created the Revolutionary Committee Movement to solidify his control over the government and to ensure it carried out his vision. These committees were under direct control of Qaddafi and his closest advisors, and they acted as a check to "recalcitrant behavior" and sought to coerce citizens to live up to the ideals of Qaddafi.[172] Libya's citizens and the tribes disliked the new system of government because it violated traditional Libyan values and nullified the tribal system. Moreover, they resented being coerced into participating in direct democracy. The extreme political repression instituted by the Qaddafi regime countered the resistance, shutting down any hint of revolt or dissent, often violently. The concept of Jamahiriyya essentially broke the Libyan government, abolishing any established organizations. Qaddafi further eroded trust and faith in the government by the nepotism he practiced, which demonstrated his distrust of those outside of his social circle.[173] The creation of the Jamahiriyya so ruined the Libyan government and society that even the "complex tribal system or institution to Islam, no

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169 Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings, 24.

170 Pack, 25.

171 Harris, *Libya,* 64.

172 Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings, 27.

173 Cole and McQuinn, The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath, 22.

longer appeared to provide a basis for political coherence."[174] The domestic and economic infrastructure continues to suffer because of Jamahiriyya. Pack notes: "Usually the requirement of the extractive industries necessitates a successful push toward centralization, bureaucratization, and nationwide infrastructure."[175] This approach led to success in other oil-rich nations like Kuwait, but the Qaddafi regime went the opposite direction.

By the time the Arab Spring spread across the region, the population of Libya was ready to rid itself of Qaddafi and hoped for a better future. They met the attempts by the Qaddafi regime to cultivate a "revolutionary spirit" with disdain as they saw this as coercion and against traditional Libyan values.[176] As the Qaddafi regime became increasingly repressive and violated human rights at an alarming rate, governments throughout the world started to condemn it,[177] and eventually led the people of Libya to revolt. The movement was met with the extreme violence typical of the Qaddafi regime, but with the aid of a U.S.-led coalition, which provided air support, the rebels managed to overthrow Qaddafi. This led to his eventual death and the current state of conditions in Libya.

B.   CONDITIONS

Understanding the lineage of the current political, economic, social, and informational conditions of Libya offers critical insight into how these conditions facilitate third-party involvement success or failure. As a result of its complex history, the political landscape of Libya involves far too many stakeholders, its economy is severely disrupted, it is a socially heterogeneous society returning to its tribal affiliations or turning to extremist organizations, and finally, it lacks any central narrative that can rebuild a consensus around a governing entity. Underlying each of the conditions is the Libyans'

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[174] Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings, 23.

[175] Pack, 10.

[176] Harris, *Libya*, 63.

[177] Pack, 35.

lack of faith and trust in the abilities of the government and elected officials.[178] Additionally, Qaddafi's autocratic regime led to Libyans' distrust of any form of centralized government.[179] The state of the four conditions thus makes intervention in Libya a costly and potentially fruitless endeavor

1.   Political Conditions

Currently, two governments are vying for control over Libya and its resources. Additionally, the lawless environment of Libya has allowed the following groups to establish footholds: multiple military factions that support different governments, militia factions that have emerged due to the lack of any central authority, and finally, extremist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Some of the factions are Qaddafi loyalists. Without a strong central power, or indeed any dominant power in the country, the militias and extremist groups are able to thrive and provide support to the people of Libya. Qaddafi's Jamahiriya ideology led to a lack of a central government because it "had prevented the formation of any national institutions."[180] This prevented the Libyan uprising from taking over any already established bureaucracies that administered the country, forcing the various revolutionary groups to essentially start from scratch. Currently, the two contending Libyan governments are unable to provide for their population losing the trust and faith of their people due to previous corruption and the civil war.[181] Additionally, following the overthrow of Qaddafi, cities and towns began taking charge of their own affairs and asserting their own autonomy, making consolidation of power by a central Libyan government extremely difficult.[182] Further complicating matters, multiple foreign governments, including NATO, the UN, the United States, Russia, and Italy are involved in attempting to solve the current crisis. These stakeholders make a peace agreement extremely difficult because among them there is little

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178 Cole and McQuinn, The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath, 20.

179 Cole and McQuinn, 22.

180 Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings, 6.

181 Hardin, *Distrust*, 79.

182 Cole and McQuinn, The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath, 23

coordination, agreement on goals, or an end state for Libya. The current political situation has caused more conflict and has continued to contribute to the loss of faith in the Libyan government among the international community and the citizens of Libya.

The nations that have intervened in Libya thus find themselves in a complex and unwinnable environment. The multiple political factions, both external and internal to the country, make peace a daunting proposition. First, as indicated by third-party interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, nation building is a costly affair, with approximately between $31 billion and $60 billion wasted in attempts to stabilize two countries that were on the verge of collapse as of 2015.[183] In the case of Libya, any third-party support would have to assist in building and establishing the necessary system to govern.

Second, controlling the militias and integrating all the different factions and tribes into one government under mutually beneficial and non-violent terms is almost impossible. Although both Qaddafi and King Idris managed this feat, it was conducted with extreme nepotism and favoritism.[184] Overcoming the distrust between the militia factions, tribal factions, and the government is difficult, but developing trust between the militia factions and the government is necessary to reestablish security, especially because the factions and militias enjoy public support.[185] Their support comes from the fact that they are focused on purging Libya of former members of the Qaddafi regime, a concept popular among the people and that has given the various factions legitimacy of their own to counter the legitimacy of the burgeoning government.[186]

Third, backing one of the two governments over the other could cause international and local turmoil. Since there are so many international stakeholders, at any given moment, it is difficult to discern who is on whose side; siding with one faction over the other could pit international governments in a conflict by proxy. Additionally, since the political

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[183] Tom Engelhardt, "How Much Does It Cost to Liberate a Country?" *The Nation,* November 13, 2015, https://www.thenation.com/article/how-much-does-it-cost-to-liberate-a-country/.

[184] El-Katiri, State-Building Challenges in a Post-Revolution Libya, 12.

[185] Christopher S. Chivvis and Jeffrey Martini, *Libya after Qaddafi: Lessons and Implications for the Future* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2014), 80.

[186] Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings, 8.

alliances in Libya are so fluid, a third-party supporter could inadvertently support extremist organizations. Finally, though the Libyan government would appreciate foreign aid, any foreign involvement could potentially re-ignite hostilities between the multiple factions vying for control because of the country's inherent disdain for foreign involvement.[187]

2.   Economic Conditions

If the Libyans can restart their economy, it could become a catalyst for stability. Because oil was Libya's primary export product, there is a tremendous amount already established refinement infrastructure, thereby allowing rapid initiation of oil production.[188] However, Libya's oil fields are highly sought after and contested. The two competing governments and the multiple militias are all attempting to secure control over the fields. This has led to a lack of security, which has resulted in a drop in oil production and essentially scared off foreign investors.[189] Additionally, the oil fields are geographically spread across the northern part of the country, making controlling them extremely difficult. In fact, militia groups have often seized control over the oil fields and shut down seaports, holding the government hostage unless their demands are met.[190] All these issues pose a tremendous challenge because oil is the foundation of the Libyan economy. The country's dependence on oil could become an issue if oil production and foreign investment does not increase.[191] For example, Libya could find itself a victim of the resources curse, which are the negative effects that a country's natural resources have on its political, economic, and social conditions. Specifically, higher rates of corruption, prolonged violence, and decreased chances for democracy in a civil war all link to oil production.[192] Moreover, because of the current war and Libya's history of overdependence on oil revenue, agricultural production remains down, leaving the country

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[187] El-Katiri, State-Building Challenges in a Post-Revolution Libya, 36.

[188] Chivvis and Martini, *Libya after Qaddafi,* 53.

[189] Chivvis and Martini, 53.

[190] Chivvis and Martini, 40.

[191] Chivvis and Martini, 54.

[192] Michael L. Ross, "What Have We Learned about the Resource Curse?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 18, no. 1 (2015): 250–251, doi:10.1146/annurev-polisci-052213-040359.

unable to produce enough food to support the many people in need; Libyans are living in poverty, creating a need for immense foreign aid. Additionally, the civil war has further degraded Libya's physical infrastructure, already poor because of a lack of investment in the infrastructure by the Idris and Qaddafi regimes[193]

A further significant challenge with aiding a resource-rich country like Libya is that if it can increase its oil production, the influence of a third party will potentially decrease. This happened when Iran nationalized its oil production, thereby reducing British influence in the country in the early 1950s. If Libya's oil economy is firmly reestablished, it may not believe it needs monetary help provided by third parties since they would try to use such aid as an incentive for the Libyan government to act in ways beneficial to them.[194] However, before oil production could increase, a third party would have to help secure Libya's oil fields. Oil production could then return, and the Libyan government could then have money to use in rebuilding the country. This poses another problem because states that have nationalized oil fields, such as Libya, are more susceptible to corruption because of the "oil curse."[195] A corrupt Libyan government would be no better than the previous regimes and could risk a revolt and unrest. A third party would have to carefully advise the Libyan government on how to manage their oil wealth properly; however, such outside involvement in the economy could breed contempt among the citizens of Libya who might view it as another attempt by foreign powers to control their affairs.

3.   Social Conditions

Libya's current social conditions result from issues and problems that trace their roots in the past and continue to pose significant trouble for third-party intervention. Divisions and rivalries among the tribes are recurring after the Qaddafi and Idris regimes suppressed them.[196] Complicating matters is the fact that some of the tribes were loyal to

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[193] Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings, 95.

[194] Chivvis and Martini, *Libya after Qaddafi,* 53.

[195] Chivvis and Martini, 56.

[196] El-Katiri, State-Building Challenges in a Post-Revolution Libya, 1.

Qaddafi. These loyalists have kept fighting long after the regime had fallen.[197] Tribally affiliated armed militias roam throughout the country as do extremist groups such as ISIL. These elements prey on the population for support and provide security in place of a stable government. Protecting the population of Libya against these elements is a difficult task for a divided government with no consolidated military.[198] Additionally, the government of Libya may be required to pay reparations to the victims of atrocities conducted by the Qaddafi regime; however, without any functional government institutions, the reparations and other issues will continue to go unaddressed.[199] Libya's citizens still have grievances due to lack of housing, social services, and job opportunities, all of which the civil war has exacerbated.[200] Additionally, they have been heavily dependent on the government for many social services to which many feel they are still entitled. This dependency allows militias to prey on the population to provide their members, friends, and family with the services that the government once provided.[201] Because of a history of poor governments, exacerbated by the Qaddafi regime, the average Libyan citizen has lost faith and harbors an enduring dislike of the government and politicians, especially former Qaddafi officials. Illustrating the lasting distrust of the Qaddafi regime is the killing of Abdul-Fattah Yunis, a former member of the Qaddafi regime and the defense minister and general of the National Transitional Council (NTC).[202] Finally, as stated previously, many Libyans lack employment for many reasons, such as a sense of entitlement and unwillingness to do certain jobs.

These degraded social conditions pose further difficulties for any third party attempting to aid Libya during the civil war. First, assessing the political positions of all the tribes that were once loyal to Qaddafi and run their own militias will be difficult. In fact, the tribes are so ingrained in Libyan society that any new Libyan government must

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[197] El-Katiri.

[198] El-Katiri, 16.

[199] El-Katiri, 32.

[200] Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings, 93.

[201] Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings, 95.

[202] Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings, 7.

consider their demands and grievances or risk inciting tribal revolts.[203] Third parties intervening into Libya would find themselves drawn into aiding the Libyan security apparatus. Rebuilding a military is time-consuming and requires a great deal of money and other resources. Additionally, trying to subdue militias that are afraid of political marginalization is another difficult task.[204] Providing security in the interim for the Libyan government would be needed, especially in the uncontrolled deserts and borders, which could result in mission creep or could be seen as infringement by a tribe in that region. The fact that a third party may have to assist in moderating reconciliation would also be problematic. Finally, there are many social issues that a third party will have to assist in solving, such as the people's heavy dependence on the government due to Qaddafi-era policies of providing all social services.

C. CONCLUSION

The current state of Libya is a complicated and sometimes confusing environment. While the citizens of Libya initially applauded the fall of Qaddafi, the aftermath did not produce the desired results. The political, economic, social, and informational conditions in Libya currently exist in less than optimal states. Our empirical statistical findings do show that a number of the conditions positively affect the potential for rebel victory. The democracy level in the country is very low and the violence level is very high. However, the duration of the conflict does not support a rebel victory or the limited media density. In fact, based upon our results, the actual conditions do not support any type of definitive outcome, either rebel victory, rebel loss, or government victory. This is largely due to the multitude of factors contributing to the instability of the Libyan economy, political system, and social infrastructure, which all present a scenario where successful transition of power is nearly impossible. Any new government established, with or without third-party intervention, will immediately have to address the deep grievances of the Libyan populace, which requires a significant amount of resources not readily available. The continued degradation of the conditions makes running Libya incredibly difficult. The current state

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[203] El-Katiri, State-Building Challenges in a Post-Revolution Libya, 29.

[204] El-Katiri, 19.

of the conditions all point to the fact that intervention in this conflict would be too costly to have any significant benefit to a country like the United States. As it stands, the current case in Libya is an instructive example of a situation in which the political, economic, social, and informational conditions are not advantageous to a third party looking to intervene. U.S. leadership should have looked to the situation in Libya prior to making the decision to intervene in Syria, a conflict whose complexity level is almost unmatched in recent history and one that unfortunately led to U.S. failure.

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V. U.S. INTERVENTION INTO SYRIA: 2009 TO PRESENT DAY

A. INTRODUCTION

Most of the international community considers the U.S. intervention on behalf of Syrian rebel groups a failure, despite its tactical defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), largely because most believe the United States intervened to overthrow Bashar al-Assad through a revolution. U.S. leaders made numerous statements as early as 2011 that Assad should step aside and allow a democratic transfer of power in Syria.[205] However, at the time of this writing, the civil war in Syria is approaching an end, with Assad's government retaining power. The strategic geopolitical situation in Syria is highly complex. This complexity lies at the root of numerous failed intervention decisions into the Syrian conflict spanning three different U.S. presidents. According to a Bipartisan Policy Center study published in 2013, the situation in Syria presents a "wicked problem" of the highest order due to the

> myriad U.S. national security interests … at stake, [including] thwarting Iran's aspirations for regional hegemony and raising pressure on the Tehran regime; tempering the ascendancy of political Islamism; denying violent extremists yet another haven; preventing the use of chemical weapons; avoiding the further destabilization of Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq; and reducing a threat to Israeli security.[206]

Considering the number of security interests Syria influences, determining the political objective for the United States is extremely difficult, and it has changed significantly with each president. This study focuses on the conditions surrounding the intervention, but to determine what success is for the intervention, we must first unpack

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[205] Scott Wilson and Joby Warrick, "Assad Must Go, Obama Says," *Washington Post*, August 18, 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/assad-must-go-obama-says/2011/08/18/gIQAelheOJ_story.html?utm_term=.4fc095be37ab.

[206] Morton Abramowitz and Eric Edelman, "U.S.-Turkish Cooperation Toward a Post-Assad Syria," Bipartisan Policy Center, April 2013, http://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/BPC%20US-Turkey-Syria.pdf, 5. A wicked problem is the most difficult to solve because of the level of complexity.

the political objective because, as Clausewitz tells us, "War is merely the continuation of policy by other means."[207]

Our objective is to identify the antecedent political, military, economic, social, informational, and infrastructural conditions within Syria between 2009 and 2011 that would have affected the success of the U.S. intervention on behalf of the resistance groups within Syria fighting against the Assad government. We divide the following discussion into three sections. We begin by providing a historical framework of the long path to civil war in Syria. Because of deep-seated and longstanding fissures within the socio-ethnic conditions in Syria, we unpack the formation of Syria post-WWI through 2014. Next, we discuss each of the condition types, identifying the conditions leading up to U.S. intervention and analyzing the effect of those conditions had on U.S. intervention; additionally, we discuss the relevancy of our statistical findings to these conditions and the outcomes they produced. We then sequentially present the U.S. intervention in Syria, beginning with U.S. sanctions and U.S. State Department-sponsored funding, the covert intervention to overthrow Assad, and finally the Train and Equip operation led by the DoD. Our objective is to determine how the conditions affected either successes or failures within the intervention. We focus primarily on the policy decisions by the Obama administration to provide both covert military support and training to the rebels fighting Assad and the U.S. government's decision to continue the DoD Train-and-Equip program, designed to provide support to the rebels fighting against ISIS. Ultimately, our contention is that given the conditions, late 2011 was the ideal time to intervene, so we focus our analysis there. By illuminating the conditions that led to the United States' failure to overthrow Assad, we aim to provide answers to the overarching question: what conditions permit an external sponsor to leverage organic movements successfully.

B.   HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

To understand the root causes of the tension between the Syrian government and the populace we must begin with the formation of the country, as we know it today. The

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[207] C. von Clausewitz et al., *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), book I, chapter I.

modern history of Syria begins just after WWI, when in 1916, Great Britain, France, and Russia signed the Sykes-Picot agreement.[208] The agreement created many of the social and cultural problems in the present-day Middle East by establishing territorial state borders via arbitrary lines in the sand, with no consideration of the tribal and religious politics that had occurred there for over 1,000 years. Through the agreement, France received nominal control of the physical area that is modern Syria, which British and Arab troops took actual control of in 1920.[209] In 1925, the Syrian people organized the "Great Syrian Revolt," which ultimately led to the signing of a treaty of independence in 1936 between France and the Syrian people.[210] Nevertheless, British and French troops continued to occupy Syria through WWII until in 1946, when Syria became an independent country.[211]

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Syria suffered through multiple government coups and other events that generated instability, such as the Six-Day War with Israel over the Golan Heights.[212] The period of instability, at least in terms of who was running the country, ended in November 1970, when Hafez al-Assad (the Father) affected a bloodless coup—the 10th military coup in Syria in 17 years—and established himself as president. His ascension to the presidency was the product of his association with the Ba'ath Party combined with his position as head of the Syrian Air Force, which later provided him the opportunity to emplace his fellow Alawites into critical positions of authority.[213] Having close allies in numerous powerful positions helped protect his regime and allowed him to maintain tight control over the human and physical network within the Syrian military. While this arrangement served to maintain his position, the social and economic divide

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[208] *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916," accessed March 26, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/event/Sykes-Picot-Agreement.

[209] "Syria - Facts & Summary," History, accessed March 26, 2018, http://www.history.com/topics/the-history-of-syria.

[210] History.

[211] History.

[212] History.

[213] "Ḥafiz Al-Assad: President of Syria," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed September 25, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hafiz-al-Assad.

between the predominantly Alawite officer corps and the enlisted ranks, which were filled by mostly poor Sunnis, created many of the issues that led to the 2011 social movement, which mutated into the current civil war. Hafez al-Assad remained president until his death, in 2000, when Bashar, his son, assumed the presidency, largely due to Ba'ath Party influence rather than a democratic process.[214]

Bashar al-Assad took the constitutional oath of office of the presidency on 17 July 2000. Initially, he represented a dramatic shift from the repressive and often brutal policies of his father.[215] His inaugural speech carried an enlightened tone, presenting him as pro-reform and even including concepts that were pro-democracy.[216] His vision of a new and economically sound Syria gave hope to the people that the corruption, repression, and authoritarian rule was ending. By opening up Syrian society, even just slightly, Bashar found himself on the receiving end of open criticism from the Ba'ath Party elite, specifically from his father's former cadre.[217] Because of this, he reversed a number of his policies, re-imprisoned opposing party members, and clamped down on the media and demonstrations.[218] The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States changed the face of the world, including the situation in Syria. Despite proclaiming support for the United States after the attacks, Bashar's government continued to support multiple Islamists and Jihadists; behind the scenes, the United States and Israel were still the common enemy.[219]

The relationship between Bashar and the West continued to deteriorate when, in February 2005, assassins killed the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri with a car bomb in Beirut, which many in the international community believed the Syrian regime

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[214] D. W. Lesch, *Syria: The Fall of the House of Assad* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), https://books.google.com/books?id=L4zVpcTmSxoC, 1.

[215] Robert Danin, "Remembering Hafez Al-Assad," Council on Foreign Relations, November 11, 2011, https://www.cfr.org/blog/remembering-hafez-al-assad.

[216] Lesch, *Syria,* 10.

[217] Lesch, 9–12.

[218] C. R. Lister, *The Syrian Jihad*: Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Evolution of an Insurgency (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 20–21.

[219] Lister, 32–33.

ordered.[220] Outrage about Hariri's assassination triggered the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon, which ultimately led Assad to order a complete withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon and generated a massive shakeup in the inner circles of the Syrian government.[221] Bashar capitalized on this fallout, removing many of his political foes and implanting his Alawite allies within the military, drastically consolidating his power and undercutting his critics. While this move reinforced Bashar's position as president, it also further alienated the Syrian Sunni majority from both the government and the military, which in turn increased the tension between Bashar and the majority of the population. Meanwhile, the Bush administration shifted focus away from Syria toward Iran due to its nuclear ambitions, which, combined with Syrian's assistance in capturing a number of wanted terrorists—including Saddam Hussein's half-brother, assisted Bashar in surviving politically.

Syria's positive relationship with Washington was short-lived, however, due to Syrian nuclear ambitions. During the night between September 5 and 6, 2007, Israeli Air Force jets bombed a suspected Syrian nuclear reactor that was under construction and nearing completion.[222] Only recently, in March 2018, did Israel formally acknowledge the attack,[223] but, the longstanding consensus of the global community was that Israel conducted the strike.[224] The Israeli strike, combined with intelligence provided by Israel on the Syrian reactor, altered the U.S. foreign policy calculus: Syria now was a potential possessor of weapons of mass destruction. This designation would come back to haunt the

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[220] Lesch, *Syria,* 20.

[221] Vanessa E. Shields, "Political Reform in Lebanon: Has the Cedar Revolution Failed?," *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 14, no. 4 (December 1, 2008): https://doi.org/10.1080/13572330802442881, 478.

[222] Stephen Farrell, "Israel Admits Bombing Suspected Syrian Nuclear Reactor in 2007, Warns Iran," Reuters, March 20, 2018, sec. World News, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-syria-nuclear/israel-admits-bombing-suspected-syrian-nuclear-reactor-in-2007-warns-iran-idUSKBN1GX09K.

[223] Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, "Three Minutes over Syria: How Israel Destroyed Assad's Nuclear Reactor," *Times of Israel*, March 21, 2018, https://www.timesofisrael.com/three-minutes-over-syria-how-israel-destroyed-assads-nuclear-reactor/.

[224] Mohammed Arshad and Zakaria Tabassum, "U.S. Says North Korea Gave Syria Nuclear Assistance," Reuters, April 24, 2008, sec. Politics, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-korea-north-usa/u-s-says-north-korea-gave-syria-nuclear-assistance-idUSN2422257920080424?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews.

Assad regime, even today, as the Syrian government is widely accused of using chemical weapons on its own people. U.S. intervention into Syria to overthrow Assad began to take shape shortly after the Israeli airstrikes.

These machinations had consequences the United States could never have predicted—namely, the resistance movements and revolutions that would transpire across the Middle East from 2009 to 2011, arguably in part because of efforts already in effect to undermine the Assad regime by the United States. The Arab Spring of 2011 saw social and resistance movements spread across the Middle East as masses of demonstrators took to the streets in protest of numerous dictatorial leaders and their oppressive regimes. In Syria, protests began to emerge in early 2011 in numerous locations; however, it was the arrest and torture of a group of teenage boys in the city of Daraa that served as the catalyst for the civil war that still rages there today.[225] On 6 March 2011, a group of Syrian teenage boys from the city of Daraa spray-painted anti-government graffiti on a school wall: "The people want to topple the regime."[226] Shortly after the boys painted the graffiti, the Syrian Political Security Directorate took them into custody and allegedly beat and tortured them.[227] Lacking any information on the welfare of their children and told by the Syrian government to "move on" and not ask any more questions, the people in Daraa took to the streets to protest.[228] Most scholars and journalists agree that the protests in Daraa served as the spark that ignited the movements that rapidly spread across the country.[229] These movements, and the violent response by Bashar's government, arguably led to the civil war that still grips the country today.

The Syrian Civil War is only one part of the much larger and more complex conflict that has occurred in the country over the last seven years. Unpacking the conflict reveals

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[225] Jamie Doran, "The Boy Who Started the Syrian War," *Al Jazeera,* 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/specialseries/2017/02/boy-started-syrian-war-170208093451538.html.

[226] Lister, The Syrian Jihad, 12.

[227] Lister, 12–17.

[228] Doran, "The Boy Who Started the Syrian War."

[229] Lister, The Syrian Jihad, 12.

three distinct layers: the civil war, a holy war, and a proxy war.[230] All of these conflicts combined produce the impossibly complex situation on the ground in Syria. The civil war we have already discussed. The holy war that has metastasized both within the borders of Syria and in the surrounding area is not only a product of the social and religious divide between the majority Sunni and the Alawite Shia but also the outcome of the spread of the Islamic State from Iraq into Syria. Interventions by Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah on behalf of the Assad regime have only exacerbated the situation and have given rise to a proxy war, largely between the United States and the governments of Russia and Iran.

Hezbollah initially intervened on behalf of the Syrian government in April 2013, when an estimated 1,700 fighters directly supported Syrian regime forces in the battle for Qusayr, between Damascus and the coast.[231] The reasons for Hezbollah's support to the Syrian regime is debatable, but it certainly revolves around keeping Assad in power to please Tehran, Hezbollah's key source of logistical support. While Hezbollah has moved beyond being just an Iranian proxy force, it still maintains a symbiotic host relationship with the Iranian ruling regime, and losing logistical, military, and diplomatic support from Tehran would be catastrophic for them.[232] Hezbollah's intervention is, in truth, one portion of Iran's campaign of support for Assad.

The government of Iran has provided support to the Assad regime since at least 2011.[233] From the macro perspective, Iran and its influence across the entire Fertile Crescent, running from Iran through Syria to the Mediterranean coast, presented the greatest threat to U.S. intervention in Syria. At the time of this writing, Iranian forces and their proxies, which include fighters from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Lebanon and whose numbers are as high as 20,000, are deployed across Syria, including both Islamic

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[230] Marc-Oliver Cantin, "Syria: Examining the Roots of the Present Civil War," *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, no. 19 (April 2017), 86–88.

[231] Zafer Kızılkaya, "Hizbullah's Moral Justification of Its Military Intervention in the Syrian Civil War," *Middle East Journal* 71, no. 2 (Spring 2017), https://doi.org/HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.3751/71.2.12, 213.

[232] Kızılkaya, 218.

[233] Garrett Nada, "Part I: Iran in Syria," United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, April 12, 2018, https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2018/apr/10/iran-syria-part-1.

Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and conventional forces advising and supporting Syrian forces directly.[234] On numerous occasions, Qassem Soleimani, the IRGC Quds Force commander, has posed for photographs with Syrian militias inside Syria.[235] As of late 2018, Iran has suffered over 2,000 military deaths associated with the conflict in Syria, along with an estimated $30 billion cost.[236] Russian intervention came with similar costs in both blood and treasure.

Russia officially began its overt support for the Assad regime in September 2015, when it launched airstrikes against what the Russians claimed were ISIS targets at the request of the Syrian government.[237] Russian intervention did not stop with airstrikes; Russian ground forces provided direct advising and support to Syrian forces, combined with a coordinated diplomatic campaign aimed at undermining the United States and its allies.[238] Russian president Putin invited Assad to Moscow in October 2015 as part of the diplomatic campaign, which was Assad's first major trip outside Syria since the conflict began in 2011.[239] After the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights published a study showing that Russian airstrikes had killed over 4,000 people (more than 1,700 of them civilians) in March 2016, Putin announced the withdrawal of the majority of Russian forces from Syria.[240] Regardless, as of this writing Russian military aircraft have continued to bomb numerous locations throughout Syria.

In the next section, we analyze each condition type present circa 2011–2014. The purpose of this analysis is to describe the immensely complex situation U.S. senior leaders faced when determining if they would, and how to, intervene in Syria. Critical variables

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[234] Nada.

[235] Nada.

[236] Borzou Daragahi, "Iran Wants to Stay in Syria Forever," *Foreign Policy* (blog), June 1, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/06/01/iran-wants-to-stay-in-syria-forever/.

[237] "Key Dates since Russian Intervention in Syria," *Daily Mail*, September 29, 2016, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~/article-3813013/index.html.

[238] Ben Quinn, "Russia's Military Action in Syria—Timeline," *Guardian*, March 14, 2016, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/14/russias-military-action-in-syria-timeline.

[239] *Daily Mail,* "Key Dates since Russian Intervention in Syria."

[240] Quinn, "Russia's Military Action in Syria—Timeline."

they had to weigh included the civil war itself, ISIS, and the situation in Iraq. Additionally, intervention by and influence of Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah in the region, combined with the potential use of chemical weapons and, even worse, the potential for those same weapons to fall into the hands of those who would not hesitate to inflict them on the international community, raised the stakes exponentially for the United States. With the Iraq war still haunting those same decision makers, the war in Afghanistan raging, and a slow economic recovery after the crash in 2008, U.S. senior leaders faced a wicked problem of a magnitude not previously conceived of in recent world history.

C.   THE CONDITIONS

For the purposes of this discussion, we must hold a number of factors equal, especially the idea of "not can I, but should I." Our purpose here is to not discuss whether the United States "should" have orchestrated a revolution, but rather if it could do so successfully and what conditions would have facilitated that success. We begin by outlining the structure of the Syrian government at the time of the intervention, covering specifically the primary political party holding power in Syria, the Ba'ath Party.

1.   Political Conditions

Syria's current government, as well as the one in place in 2011, is a unitary presidential republic with a highly authoritarian regime run by the al-Assad family, which has been in power since 1970.[241] The Syrian constitution dictates that the president serve an initial seven-year term and may be reelected one additional time.[242] Additionally, it authorizes the president to appoint members to the Council of Ministers, declare war, and issue laws.[243] The Ba'ath Party's deeply-rooted network of control over the political landscape in Syria, which a pervasive security/intelligence service known as the *Mukhabarat* enforces, is the source of much of the president's power.

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[241] "What Type Of Government Does Syria Have?," World Atlas, accessed September 18, 2018, https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-type-of-government-does-syria-have.html.

[242] "The World Fact Book," Central Intelligence Agency," accessed September 18, 2018, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html.

[243] World Atlas, "What Type Of Government Does Syria Have?"

The leading and indeed only influential political party in Syria with any semblance of power is the Ba'ath Party (formerly the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party), which has maintained control of the Syrian government since 1961.[244] Ambassador Fredrick Hof, who served as Special Advisor for Transition in Syria, describes the Syrian Ba'ath Party: "Founded in 1947 by … a Syrian Christian, Sunni, and Alawite … the Ba'ath espoused a secularist mix of pan-Arab nationalism, socialism, and anti-imperialism."[245] After taking control in 1961, the first Ba'ath government suffered an internal coup in 1966 and again in November 1970, when Hafez al-Assad took control and established an authoritarian government that passed to his son, Bashar, in 2000.[246] Hafez established the framework for the Syrian government that Bashar leads today.

The Syrian government has three branches: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branch. The ministers, the deputies, and the prime minister constitute the executive branch, with the Prime Minister as the official head of government who oversees the administration of laws.[247] The Syrian people elect officials to the legislative branch, which includes 250 members, for four-year terms.[248] The judicial branch has civil, military, and religious courts that the High Judicial Council oversees, which includes the president and senior civil judges.[249] The path to this style of government was not an easy one, originating from the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the division of territory by the French and the British during the Sykes-Picot agreement. Many of the grievances claimed by the eventual resistance-turned-insurgency are rooted in the failure of the French and the British to understand or at least acknowledge the socio-cultural, tribal, and religious differences in the region.

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[244] World Atlas.

[245] Frederic Hof and Alex Simon, "Sectarian Violence in Syria's Civil War: Causes, Consequences, and Recommendations for Mitigation" The Center for the Prevention of Genocide, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2013, https://blackboard.angelo.edu/bbcswebdav/users/rlaflamme1/ ISSA4301%20Advanced%20Intel%20Analysis/Hof-Simon-Sectarian-Violence-in-Syrias-Civil-War.pdf, 6.

[246] Hof and Simon, 6.

[247] World Atlas, "What Type Of Government Does Syria Have?"

[248] World Atlas,

[249] World Atlas.

The political conditions and the current state of the civil war in Syria coincide with our statistical analysis, which showed that the democracy level of a government, defined by their polity score, had a significant negative affect on the outcome probability of rebel victory or government victory. Since Hafez al-Assad took the mantle of the president in 1971, Syria's polity rating has been below negative six although there was a slight uptick in 2000 after Bashar assumed the presidency.[250] Based on our model, this suggests that the political conditions in Syria favored an outcome other than a definitive victory for the rebels or the state. That is still the case today although it appears that Assad will eventually emerge victorious.

Moving beyond the simplicity of the statistical model and analyzing the situation in its entirety, we see that the domestic and international political conditions were also in favor of a robust U.S. intervention in 2011. The world was witnessing a massive social revolution in the Middle East on social media and in the news. The idea of liberation and the downfall of dictatorial regimes was on the minds of the global community. A key component to nearly all of the movements that were occurring across the Middle East were the organic militaries.

2. The Military Conditions

An in-depth analysis of the Syrian military would exceed the bounds of this discussion; instead, we provide a macro perspective on the history, purpose, reputation, size, general capabilities, and overall effectiveness of Syrian forces, all aimed at providing enough information to analyze the U.S. intervention and to parse out the conditions that affected the outcome of that intervention. We focus our analysis on the Syrian military's condition/state during the initial outbreak of the resistance groups in early 2011.

Hafez al-Assad organized and staffed the Syrian military as a means to ensure his position as president, allocating nearly a third of the Syrian land forces to his praetorian units while simultaneously providing the best equipment, training, and the highest pay to

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[250] "Polity IV Regime Trends: Syria, 1946–2013," Center for Systemic Peace, accessed September 23, 2018, https://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/syr2.htm.

the soldiers assigned there.[251] Further exacerbating the socio-cultural divide between the various groups within Syrian society, Alawites made up 90% of these praetorian units' strength, many selected because of "close tribal links to Hafez al-Assad."[252] The Assad regime deployed these same Praetorian units to Daraa in March 2011 with orders to put down the rebellion happening there at all costs.[253]

The result of employing forces that were ill-trained to perform any type of counterinsurgency warfare was the civil war. In 2011, Bashar al-Assad's military was organized, trained, and equipped for three primary objectives. First, to project power into Lebanon; second, to defend against Israeli aggression or invasion; and third, to prevent dissent and/or attempts to overthrow the Assad regime.[254] According to the Institute for the Study of War, "At the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the Syrian Army was one of the largest and best-trained forces in the Arab world."[255] However, corruption, combined with the application of Soviet doctrine that did not support any type of initiative or flexibility by low-level tactical commanders, severely limited the capabilities of the military as a whole.[256] The armor-centric military focused training against conventional military threats, not waging a counter-insurgency. These constraints, combined with antiquated Soviet equipment from the 1970s, produced a military that appeared strong on paper: in 2011, the Syrian Army's personnel strength was near 220,000, divided among 13 divisions that included armor, mechanized Special Forces, and republican guard units. However, the Syrian military had fundamental flaws, which the impending insurgency and civil war exacerbated.[257] The major takeaway is that, ceteris paribus, in the case of Syria,

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[251] Joseph Holliday, "The Syrian Army Doctrinal Order of Battle," The Institute for the Study of War, February 2013, http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syrian-army-doctrinal-order-battle, 6.

[252] Holliday, 6.

[253] Lesch, *Syria,* 96–97.

[254] Holliday, "The Syrian Army Doctrinal Order of Battle," 5.

[255] Holliday, 5.

[256] Holliday, 5.

[257] Joseph Holliday, "The Syrian Army Doctrinal Order of Battle," 5.

the standing military did not significantly influence the potential for U.S. intervention to achieve a successful outcome.

Our statistical model shows the same results—that the military conditions do not have a statistically significant effect on the outcome, be it rebel victory, rebel loss, or government victory. The model does show a slight negative effect on both rebel victory and government victory as the number of military personnel per capita increases. Additionally, the number of military personnel per capita has a positive effect on the level of violence, which, considering that Syria ranked eighth in the world in 2005 with over 21 military personnel per capita, it is no surprise that the violence level there has remained so high. Nevertheless, as we discussed in our historical analysis of the conflict, the economic and infrastructural conditions played a much more significant role leading to the situation today.

3. Economic and Infrastructural Conditions, 2000–2011

Despite the results from our model, which show that economic conditions have no statistical significance on conflict outcome, we argue that the domestic economic conditions in a country embroiled in intrastate conflict are some of the most influential in determining the probability of successful third-party intervention. At the root of our analysis is the idea of success. Oftentimes, the pre-conflict economic conditions are the driver of the internal conflict, and failure to address grievances of the populace surrounding these conditions by any government, including the one in power or a transition government, only results in a continuation of the very same conditions that originally caused the tension and the resistance; Syria is no different.

The Syrian economy grew during the initial period of Bashar's presidency largely due to efforts by the government to transition to a social market economy, establishing private banks, cutting loan rates, and consolidating various exchange rates.[258] The Syrian

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[258] "Staff Report for the 2009 Article IV Consultation," IMF Staff Country Reports (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, March 2010), https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2016/12/31/Syrian-Arab-Republic-2008-Article-IV-Consultation-Staff-Report-Staff-Statement-Public-22702, 4.; Lesch, *Syria,* 58, 61.

GDP more than doubled from the years 2000 to 2007 (the last year of data from the World Bank), growing from $19 billion to $40 billion.[259] In 2007 alone, the Syrian economy grew 5.7%—a rate most economists would consider excellent if not for the country's massive youth bulge and subsequent unemployment.[260] The unemployment and drastic increase in the working age populace are especially impactful for Syria, considering the country's proximity to Iraq (where a sectarian war was raging and the authors of this study were at the time) and its lack of status as an economic powerhouse. However, the financial crisis of 2009 and a catastrophic multi-year drought caused the overall economic health of the country to deteriorate.

From 2006 to 2011, Syria was devastated by what most climate scholars agree is the worst drought in millennia.[261] For a country whose economy and society depended upon agricultural production, the results were catastrophic.[262] Traditionally, the agricultural sector accounted for approximately 25% of the country's GDP and employed over half of the Syrian workforce.[263] The multi-year drought reduced the agricultural portion of the GDP to 17%, which taken on its own was economically catastrophic.[264] Average rainfall in the country fell below eight inches per year, which in turn caused nearly three-quarters of the country's crops to fail and an even larger percentage of the country's livestock to die of thirst and hunger.[265] The vast majority of Syrian farmers abandoned their farms and began migrating to the major city centers looking for necessities and employment opportunities. Largely due to the drought, "outside observers including UN

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[259] "Syria Arab Republic: Country Profile," World Bank, accessed September 19, 2018, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/
reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfile&Id=b450fd57&tbar=y&dd=y&inf=n&zm=n&country=SYR.

[260] World Bank.

[261] Lina Eklund and Darcy Thompson, "Differences in Resource Management Affects Drought Vulnerability across the Borders between Iraq, Syria, and Turkey," *Ecology and Society* 22, no. 4 (n.d.), 11.

[262] Lesch, *Syria,* 55.

[263] Lesch, 85.

[264] World Bank, "Syria Arab Republic: Country Profile."

[265] James Fallows, "Your Labor Day Syria Reader, Part 2: William Polk," The Atlantic, September 2, 2013, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/09/your-labor-day-syria-reader-part-2-william-polk/279255/.

experts estimated that between 2 and 3 million of Syria's 10 million rural inhabitants were reduced to 'extreme poverty.'"[266] The internal migration of rural inhabitants to the urban centers exacerbated an already dire unemployment situation.

Worsening the economic situation was that Iraqi refugees, numbering over a million from 2003 to 2011, fleeing the U.S.-led war in Iraq, came to Syria, causing massive overcrowding, congestion, and an increase in rent.[267] The already dire situation became worse with internal migration from the drought. The migration of the rural workforce made an already difficult and tense relationship between the Syrian populace and the Bashar regime worse. Internally displaced rural farmers were now in competition with Iraqi and Palestinian refugees for food, water, and employment. Economic prosperity was on the back burner, as mere survival became the overarching consideration for the majority of the Syrian populace. According to Fallows, the senior UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representative in Syria describe the situation as

> "A perfect storm," in November 2008, he warned that Syria faced "social destruction." He noted that the Syrian Minister of Agriculture had "stated publicly that [the] economic and social fallout from the drought was 'beyond our capacity as a country to deal with.'"[268]

The perfect storm of social conditions was further inflamed by a rapidly tanking Syrian economy from 2009 to 2011. Economic growth from 2009 to 2011 came to a virtual standstill, in stark contrast to the unemployment rate, which skyrocketed to 20%.[269] More specifically, for those under 25 years of age, the unemployment rate surpassed 30%.[270] Considering that more than half the population in Syria was under the age of 25 at the time, the social and economic conditions for the perfect revolutionary storm were in place.[271]

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[266] Fallows.

[267] Lesch, *Syria,* 62.

[268] Fallows, "Your Labor Day Syria Reader, Part 2."

[269] World Bank, "Syria Arab Republic: Country Profile."

[270] World Bank.

[271] Lesch, *Syria,* 55–63.

Moreover, the economic fallout exacerbated the already strained relationship between Bashar al-Assad's primarily Alawite regime and the majority Sunni population. As previously mentioned, the catastrophic economic conditions, including high levels of unemployment and a drastic decline in the country's GDP, drove the migration of the rural population, who were mostly poor Sunni farmers, to the major urban centers, where many of the rich Alawite's lived, inflaming the pre-existing social divide between the ruling Alawites and the majority Sunni.

4.   The Social Conditions

Pre-existing social conditions are often the most influential on not only the decision of a third party to intervene into an intrastate conflict but also on the outcome of the conflict and the eventual success of the intervention. In Syria, the ethnoreligious divide between the ruling Alawite class and the Sunni majority is the most salient and influential social condition affecting the establishment of the resistance, but additional underlying conditions exist that we must analyze when considering intervention in Syria.

Sectarian politics divided along religious and ethno-cultural lines lie at the heart of the Syrian conflict. Glenn Robinson, associate professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, summarizes the situation as follows:

> The root issues and the competing sides have been the same: a minority based regime, allied with other minorities along with privileged elements from the majority population, ruling over a poor and often dysfunctional state that does not tolerate dissenters.[272]

Demographically, the Syrian populace falls into the broad categories of Shia (including the Alawites), Christian, and Kurdish minorities, and a 60% Sunni Arab majority.[273] Fissures along ethnic and religious lines have long prevented the establishment of a strong Syrian identity and instead produced a strong sense of Arab nationalism. We trace the roots of

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[272] Glenn Robinson, "Syria's Long Civil War," *Current History*, December 2012, https://www.joshualandis.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/Robinson-Current-History.pdf, 331.

[273] Joseph Holliday, "The Struggle for Syria in 2011: An Operational and Regional Analysis (Middle East Security report, Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2011, http://www.understandingwar.org.

these divides back to Sykes-Picot and the early French rule of the Syrian people: the French colonial powers sought to maintain these divides in order to prevent unification of the populace and potential for revolt or revolution. The Ba'ath Party, and more specifically Hafez al-Assad, continued the same tactics in order to maintain control of the majority Sunni population. Former U.S. Turkish ambassadors Morton Abramowitz and Eric Edelman explain:

> Rather than a unitary nation-state, the Syrian Arab Republic, which emerged from the remains of the Ottoman Empire, is a patchwork of ethnic and sectarian groups that, for the last 40 years, were held together by the strength, brutality, and corruption of the Assad regime.[274]

The brutality and corruption of the Hafez-led Ba'ath Party regime was what gave it the strength to remain in power despite representing only a small fraction of the general populace (Alawites make up less than 15% of the population in Syria).[275] Alawites, more specifically Hafez al-Assad, worked for years to maintain their dominance in the military-security apparatus, only further strengthening Assad's grip on power, which he achieved by leveraging fear, enforced through acts of violence.

The violence and fear associated with Hafez's rule cemented deep grievances within the Syrian populace that exacerbated fissures in the relationship between the people and Assad resulting in numerous uprisings long prior to 2011. In one example, Hafez al-Assad violently put down a Muslim Brotherhood-led Sunni uprising in Hama, Syria, in 1982, resulting in the deaths of over 20,000 Syrian people.[276] Less than 30 years later, the Sunni populace had surely not forgotten what Bashar al-Assad's father had done.

Any intervention strategy must consider the longstanding social grievances between the populace and the ruling majority when formulating an intervention decision. Even with tactical success and a successful transition of power, social conditions, specifically grievances similar to those held by the Syrian Sunni community, could

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[274] Abramowitz and Edelman, "U.S.-Turkish Cooperation Toward a Post-Assad Syria," 9.

[275] World Bank, "Syria Arab Republic: Country Profile."

[276] Jason Rodrigues, "1982: Syria's President Hafez Al-Assad Crushes Rebellion in Hama," *The Guardian*, August 1, 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/from-the-archive-blog/2011/aug/01/hama-syria-massacre-1982-archive.

undermine a new government. In Syria, a representative Sunni government that potentially chose tactics and policies based upon revenge, would in turn alienate a different portion of the populace, creating another unstable situation derailing any chance of long-term success. So, while social fissures are excellent conditions to leverage to facilitate the formation of a resistance group and/or the expansion of an already existing group, specifically in gaining additional followers/members, they are also dangerous. Increasing a divide such as the Sunni versus Shia (Alawite) fracture within the Syrian populace will often lead to immense post-transition power difficulties. For the United States, they could win the battle (the revolution) but lose the war (achieving a successful transition and outcome).

5.   The Informational Conditions

Any person or group with a stake in the Syrian civil war has some type of social media presence, including those who support the Assad regime, those who oppose it, and everyone in between. A search of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, or virtually any social media platform will result in thousands of posts discussing the Syrian conflict. Chris Zambelis wrote in 2012 that, "In a country such as Syria, where information is held by a dictatorial government, social media has become fundamental in shaping how the crisis is portrayed and perceived."[277] This summary of the information conditions in Syria captures the essence of the effect that social media has had on every facet of the conflict. The Syrian state-controlled media, resistance-group social media sites, and ISIS-information operations, all combined with third-party information operations (United States, Russia, Iran, and others), have pooled to create volumes of recorded media data that played a critical role in the outcome of the conflict.

The Syrian media complex includes newspaper, radio, television, and the Internet. The Assad regime tightly controls every state-sponsored media outlet, primarily through the intelligence service. Young, attractive Syrian news anchors spread regime-influenced messaging across the various platforms. The majority of Syrians who watch the news do

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[277] Chris Zambelis, "Information Wars: Assessing the Social Media Battlefield in Syria," *CTC Sentinel: Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* 5, no. 7 (July 2012), https://ctc.usma.edu/information-wars-assessing-the-social-media-battlefield-in-syria/, 19.

so on satellite television, which broadcasts from outside Syria that are critical of the Assad regime.[278] Radio remains an important medium for both the Syrian state and the opposition groups. Radio stations broadcast primarily via the Internet and through smart phone apps, along with traditional FM transmissions. In 2017, according to Internet World Stats, Syria had approximately 5.5 million Internet users, which at the time represented over a quarter of the population. Considering that prior to Bashar's assumption of the presidency there was no outside news, this represented a major shift in access to information for the people of Syria despite the regime's efforts to control the narrative.

As access to the Internet in Syria increased steadily from the year 2000 to today, according to our statistical models the likelihood of an outcome with a rebel or government victory decreased. In the year 2000, less than 1% of the Syrian population had access to the Internet, whereas today an estimated 30% or more of the population can access the Internet despite numerous obstacles and limits on content.[279] Our models show that increased Internet access per capita has a negative effect on both rebel victory and government victory, indicating that the conflict reaches some other type of resolution. Therefore, as access to the Internet has increased in Syria, the probability that either the government or the rebels will win outright has decreased, with one of the other four possible outcomes becoming more likely.

Additionally, our research shows that both the media density and Internet access per capita have statistically significant influence on rebel victory, rebel loss, government victory, and the level of violence, which reinforces the relevancy that informational conditions have in an intrastate conflict. Currently, the situation in Syria is such that is appears Bashar al-Assad is achieving a tactical victory despite the cost of over a half-million people, billions of dollars, and the destruction of more than half the country, which would refute our findings if in fact the government does win. However, our model does not account for third-party intervention on behalf of the government. In the case of Syria,

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[278] "Syria Profile," BBC News, December 12, 2017, sec. Middle East, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995.

[279] "Syria Country Report," Freedom House, November 14, 2017, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2017/syria.

Russian and Iranian intervention on behalf of the Syrian government irrefutably influenced the outcome of the conflict.

Any one of the conditions we have analyzed have serious implications for the outcome of an intrastate conflict, but, taken in total, they will absolutely have a determining effect on the outcome of any third-party intervention. We have provided both a historical framework and a detailed presentation and analysis of the conditions that were present in Syria when the U.S. government made its decisions to intervene in the situation there economically, diplomatically, and militarily both in an overt and covert fashion. What follows is a detailed description of the various forms of U.S. intervention into Syria dating back to the early 2000s.

D.   U.S. INTERVENTION

The U.S.'s relationship with Syria has remained contentious since Syria's inception after WWI. The signing of legislation in 2003 by President Bush that authorized economic and diplomatic sanctions against the Syrian government for its alleged ties to terrorism further strained the contemporary international diplomatic and economic relationship between the states.[280] While not physical in nature, the mere public acknowledgement by the United States of suspected nefarious actions on the part of the Syrian government affected not only the Syrian economy and international political position but also a near-infinite number of both tangible and intangible variables that gave rise to the resistance movement that formed in 2011 in Daraa.

The current trajectory of the U.S.-Syrian relationship initiated with the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. When the United States began the Shock and Awe campaign in preparation for the eventual invasion of Iraq in 2003, the already present anti-American sentiment in Syria only grew, facilitating the establishment of jihadi training camps and giving rise to actual armed groups entering Iraq against the U.S.-led coalition.[281] In 2002, during his State of the Union speech, then President George Bush named Iran, Iraq, and

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[280] "Bush Signs Syria Sanctions Bill," CNN, December 13, 2003, http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/12/12/bush.syria/.

[281] Lister, *The Syrian Jihad*, 36–37.

North Korea as the "axis of evil."[282] Syria and Assad's longstanding support of Hezbollah, Hamas, and especially Iran likewise ultimately led to their designation as a rogue state by the Bush administration and, as a result, the Syrian Accountability Act, which imposed sanctions against Syria after President Bush signed it into law in 2004.[283] At the time, Syria still had over 14,000 troops in Lebanon, and the United States suspected Assad's government was providing direct support to the groups who were fighting the U.S. military in Iraq. The United States viewed Syria, and more specifically the Assad regime, as a threat to U.S. national security, and rightly so.

Furthermore, newly released documents show that Washington did not limit its intervention to sanctions: U.S. diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks describe a finance campaign run through the U.S. Department of State that "funneled as much as $6 million to the [opposition] group[s] since 2006 to operate the satellite channel and finance other activities inside Syria."[284] The article goes on to describe how the government cables detailed concerns by U.S. embassy officials when they learned that Syrian intelligence units were beginning to ask questions about U.S. influence on behalf of the opposition groups.[285] What effect the influence of these U.S.-backed groups had on the eventual outbreak of conflict is difficult to determine. However, presuming well-funded opposition groups served as a catalyst for the formation of the resistance groups is reasonable, which ultimately led the organized movements in early 2011.

In August 2011, just five months after the outbreak of violence in Darra, then President Obama publicly called for Assad's resignation and ordered the U.S. government to freeze Syrian government assets. President Obama specifically stated, "The future of Syria must be determined by its people, but President Bashar al-Assad is standing in their

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[282] George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, "The 'Axis of Evil' Speech," *New York Times* Video, accessed March 28, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/politics/100000004021075/the-axis-of-evil-speech.html.

[283] Lesch, *Syria,* 12–17.

[284] Craig Whitlock, "U.S. Secretly Backed Syrian Opposition Groups, Cables Released by WikiLeaks Show," *Washington Post*, April 17, 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/us-secretly-backed-syrian-opposition-groups-cables-released-by-wikileaks-show/2011/04/14/AF1p9hwD_story.html.

[285] Whitlock.

way. For the sake of the Syrian people, the time has come for President Assad to step aside."[286] Capturing the exact words spoken by the U.S. president is important; they become policy once he says them. After this speech, clearly the United States is calling for the removal of Bashar al-Assad as President of Syria. President Obama continued:

> The United States cannot and will not impose this transition upon Syria. It is up to the Syrian people to choose their own leaders, and we have heard their strong desire that there not be foreign intervention in their movement. What the United States will support is an effort to bring about a Syria that is democratic, just, and inclusive for all Syrians. We will support this outcome by pressuring President Assad to get out of the way of this transition, and standing up for the universal rights of the Syrian people along with others in the international community.[287]

President Obama is here professing that Syria should transition to a democracy, that Assad should step aside and let that happen, the United States will pressure Assad to do so, and that the United States acknowledges that the Syrian populace does not want foreign intervention into their affairs. In early 2012, president Obama signed an intelligence finding that authorized U.S. support for rebels seeking to depose Bashar al-Assad.[288] In response, in July 2012, the Syrian government warned that they would use chemical weapons against any foreign intervention and never use them against their own populace.[289] Just one month later, President Obama made his infamous red line statement:

> We have been very clear to the Assad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical

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[286] Wilson and Warrick, "Assad Must Go, Obama Says."

[287] Macon Phillips, "President Obama: 'The Future of Syria Must Be Determined by Its People, but President Bashar Al-Assad Is Standing in Their Way,'" White House, August 18, 2011, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/08/18/president-obama-future-syria-must-be-determined-its-people-president-bashar-al-assad.

[288] Mark Hosenball, "Obama Authorizes Secret Support for Syrian Rebels," Reuters, August 2, 2012, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-syria-obama-order/obama-authorizes-secret-support-for-syrian-rebels-idUSBRE8701OK20120802.

[289] Neil MacFarquhar and Eric Schmitt, "Syria Threatens Chemical Attack on Foreign Force," *New York Times*, July 23, 2012, sec. Middle East, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/24/world/middleeast/chemical-weapons-wont-be-used-in-rebellion-syria-says.html.

weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus. That would change my equation.[290]

Whether the international community should perceive presidential statements such as the red line comment as policy is matter of debate. However, in this instance, little doubt remained when, in December 2012, President Obama said, "The use of chemical weapons is, and would be, totally unacceptable and if you make the tragic mistake of using these weapons, there will be consequences and you will be held accountable."[291] The U.S. media and the majority of the international community saw Obama's statement as firm U.S. policy against the potential use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime.

In March 2013, a sarin gas attack occurred in northern Syria that killed 26 people; an attack that an UN-sponsored investigation later confirmed as sarin nerve gas, without identifying who actually deployed the gas.[292] Just a few weeks later, President Obama made the following public statement:

> If we end up rushing to judgment without hard, effective evidence ... we can find ourselves in a position where we can't marshal the international community in support of what we do. It's important for us to do this in a prudent way.[293]

Understanding the political calculus of the U.S. government and even more specifically of President Obama when he authorized the overt intervention into the Syrian conflict is critical to acknowledging the factors and conditions that were important concerning the conflict. Simply identifying what conditions were required for the rebels to win does not answer the overarching question at hand. We have already established a desire

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[290] James Brady, "Remarks by the President to the White House Press Corps," White House, August 20, 2012, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/08/20/remarks-president-white-house-press-corps.

[291] "Obama Warns Syria's Assad against Use of Chemical Weapons," Reuters, December 3, 2012, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-syrian-obama-warning/obama-warns-syrias-assad-against-use-of-chemical-weapons-idUSBRE8B21C320121203.

[292] "Timeline: How the U.S. Has Responded to Syria's Civil War," PBS NewsHour, April 6, 2017, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/timeline-how-the-u-s-has-responded-to-syrias-civil-war.

[293] Julie Pace, "US Doesn't Know All the Facts on Chemical Weapons in Syria, Obama Says," *Boston Globe*, April 30, 2013, https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2013/04/30/doesn-know-all-facts-chemical-weapons-syria-obama-says/b8R5fcHoqt84f7oLz8kDBL/amp.html.

on behalf of the United States for Assad to step down, for Syria to transition to democracy, and a policy stance threatening action if the Assad regime employs chemical weapons.

On 21 August 2013, in the suburbs of Damascus, canisters of poisonous gas opened, killing over 1,000 people, including women and children.[294] While there is no verification of the specific delivery system used or who perpetrated the attack, but the dead bodies and the cause are irrefutable. Ten days later, President Obama announced that he would ask for congressional approval for a forceful response against Syria for what U.S. intelligence showed was a rocket-delivered chemical attack against rebel forces in Damascus:[295] "Now, after careful deliberation, I have decided that the United States should take military action against Syrian regime targets."[296] He further noted that "We would not put boots on the ground" and that the "action would be designed to be limited in duration and scope." President Obama was very specific in his language, stating, "The purpose of this strike would be to deter Assad from using chemical weapons, to degrade his regime's ability to use them, and to make clear to the world that we will not tolerate their use."[297] On September 14, 2014, U.S. and Russian diplomats agreed to a plan that required Syria to surrender all of its chemical weapons and to halt the production of any new weapons, thereby halting the proposed U.S. airstrikes that were a part of the conventional response proposed by president Obama.[298] At this point in 2013, the United States was already intervening into the conflict in nearly every way imaginable except using conventional military forces.[299]

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[294] Fallows, "Your Labor Day Syria Reader, Part 2."

[295] "Statement by the President on Syria," White House, August 31, 2013, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/31/statement-president-syria.

[296] White House.

[297] White House.

[298] Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. and Russia Reach Deal to Destroy Syria's Chemical Arms," *New York Times*, September 14, 2013, sec. Middle East, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/15/world/middleeast/syria-talks.html.

[299] Mark Mazzetti and Matt Apuzzo, "U.S. Relies Heavily on Saudi Money to Support Syrian Rebels," *New York Times*, January 19, 2018, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/24/world/middleeast/us-relies-heavily-on-saudi-money-to-support-syrian-rebels.html.

U.S. forces were already covertly training and equipping rebel forces at this point, as reported by numerous news sources.[300] U.S. statute 50 U.S.C. 413b defines covert action as "An activity or activities of the United States Government to influence *political*, *economic*, or *military* conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly." Pinpointing the actual date of the classified presidential finding authorizing actual intervention is difficult using open sources; however, there is no doubt that sometime between 2012 and 2013, the United States began arming, equipping, and training rebel forces fighting in Syria.[301] By the end of 2013, U.S. clandestine operations to train and equip opposition fighters in Syria were front and center in the U.S. news cycle. The *Washington Post* reported on October 2, 2013 that, "the CIA is expanding a clandestine effort to train opposition fighters in Syria amid concern that moderate, U.S.-backed militias are rapidly losing ground in the country's civil war."[302] A 2016 article in the *New York Times* clarified the murky timeline a bit explaining that the CIA was "mostly on the sidelines" as multiple Arab states funneled weapons to various rebel groups in Syria throughout 2012.[303] It was in late 2012 or early 2013 when President Obama authorized the CIA to begin arming and training rebels from a base in Jordan and paid for by Saudi Arabia.[304] The article also clarifies that the CIA program called "Timber Sycamore" was different from the Pentagon-led Train-and-Equip program with the former focused on fighting the Syrian military and the Pentagon's program focused on fighting ISIS.[305] In June 2014, ISIS declared a caliphate in Iraq and

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[300] Mazzetti and Apuzzo.

[301] David S. Cloud and Raja Abdulrahim, "U.S. Has Secretly Provided Arms Training to Syria Rebels since 2012," *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 2013, http://articles.latimes.com/2013/jun/21/world/la-fg-cia-syria-20130622.

[302] Greg Miller, "CIA Ramping up Covert Training Program for Moderate Syrian Rebels," *Washington Post,* October 2, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-ramping-up-covert-training-program-for-moderate-syrian-rebels/2013/10/02/a0bba084-2af6-11e3-8ade-a1f23cda135e_story.html.

[303] Mazzetti and Apuzzo, "U.S. Relies Heavily on Saudi Money to Support Syrian Rebels."

[304] Mazzetti and Apuzzo.

[305] Mazzetti and Apuzzo.

Syria.[306] Former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter wrote a detailed article chronicling his assumption of the office of the Secretary of Defense with explicit details on how he directed a strategic shift in the program to counter ISIS.

When Ash Carter assumed the role of U.S. Secretary of Defense in 2014, he inherited the Pentagon's Train-and-Equip program that, according to Carter, "was to constitute whole anti-ISIS units from scratch by recruiting individual fighters, forming them into units, providing them training and equipment in Turkey and Jordan, and re-inserting them into the fight in Syria."[307] Carter described the operations when he arrived as "an embarrassing failure." Carter detailed the litany of almost ridiculous constraints placed upon the DoD in regard to the operation including the necessity to provide assurance to Congress that any resistance fighters trained by the United States "would fight only ISIS, and not engage in the bloody civil war to unseat Bashar al-Assad."[308] These ridiculous constraints applied by U.S. politicians were not grounded in reality. In July 2015, Carter had to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the DoD had only trained and deployed approximately 60 anti-ISIS fighters.[309] One of the authors of this thesis, Ryan Harth, personally briefed Secretary Carter on operations Harth had recently led, similar to those conducted in Syria two weeks after Carter had testified before the Senate. To his credit, Secretary Carter was upbeat and positive about the situation. Through his leadership and guidance, the U.S. training and assistance program would take a turn for the better and actually achieve noticeable results in 2016.

Secretary Carter convinced President Obama to approve a number of changes to the failing program, including "authority to deploy a small group of special operators into Syria" in October 2015.[310] This authority, combined with clearly articulated strategic goals

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[306] "A Timeline of the Syrian Conflict as It Enters Its Eighth Year," Bloomberg, March 15, 2018, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-15/timeline-of-the-syrian-conflict-as-it-enters-8th-year.

[307] Ash Carter, "A Lasting Defeat: The Campaign to Defeat ISIS" (special report, Harvard Kennedy School: Belfer Center, October 2017), 14, https://www.belfercenter.org/LastingDefeat.

[308] Carter, 14.

[309] Carter, 14.

[310] Carter, 19.

of "dealing ISIS a lasting defeat in its homeland of Iraq and Syria, eliminating the cancer's parent tumor; combatting metastases in places like Libya and Afghanistan; and protecting our homeland from ISIS terror," greatly streamlined U.S. efforts and started producing results.[311] The tactical-level successes of the rebel groups the U.S. special operators were guiding led President Obama to authorize an additional 250 troops in April 2016 and another 200 in December of the same year.[312] Unfortunately, these additional troops were not enough to salvage operation Timber Sycamore.

In July 2017, President Trump ordered an end to Timber Sycamore, the CIA operation to train-and-equip resistance forces in Syria fighting against the Assad regime.[313] After investing over $1 billion into the program over time, Bashar al-Assad remains in power. The U.S.-backed rebel forces are nearly nonexistent, Russia and Iran maintain their relationship with the Assad regime, and despite brutal tactics that killed scores of civilians, the credit for defeating ISIS in Syria is generally associated with the Russian- and Iranian-backed Syrian military. What started out as diplomatic and economic efforts by the Bush administration aimed at pressuring Bashar al-Assad to step aside turned into both a covert and overt intervention on behalf of resistance forces during the Obama administration. Despite the belief by most if not all of the international community that the Syrian government deployed chemical weapons against its own people, the only tangible tactical result that remains the destruction of an airfield by U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles. (Besides the near destruction of Syria, the death of more than a half million people, and the displacement of over six million Syrians.) The Council on Foreign Relations Global Conflict Tracker indicates that 2,000 U.S. troops are currently in Syria, all of whom according President Trump will remain to prevent a resurgence of the Islamic State.[314]

[311] Carter, 26.

[312] Luis Martinez, "Why 200 More U.S. Troops Are Going to Syria," ABC News, December 12, 2016, https://abcnews.go.com/International/200-us-troops-syria/story?id=44140298.

[313] Mark Mazzetti, Adam Goldman, and Michael S. Schmidt, "Behind the Sudden Death of a $1 Billion Secret C.I.A. War in Syria," *New York Times*, August 7, 2018, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/middleeast/cia-syria-rebel-arm-train-trump.html.

[314] "Global Conflict Tracker: Civil War in Syria," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed September 23, 2018, https://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/.

E.   CONCLUSION

Initially, U.S. intervention in Syria in early 2006–2009 focused on facilitating the removal of Bashar al-Assad. After violence erupted in Deraa in 2011, its goal shifted to fermenting a revolution within Syria to force Assad's removal. The Syrian chemical attacks in 2013 added to the desire to prevent further use of weapons of mass destruction to the list of U.S. objectives. ISIS's establishment of a declared caliphate and its rapid capture of territory in Iraq shifted U.S. priorities, placing Assad's removal below defeating ISIS. These priorities remained in place for the duration of the covert intervention (although it never saw success) and currently, the United States has proclaimed around 2,000 U.S. service members will remain in Syria to prevent the resurgence of ISIS. As of late 2018, wide-ranging estimates place the death toll in Syria at or above half a million people since 2011.[315] Arguably, the civil, proxy, and holy wars all taking place within Syria today are a direct result of both U.S. intervention and non-intervention decisions. As the situation in Syria demonstrates, failing to understand the conditions for successful intervention has the potential for massive global ramifications, including excessive civilian death, economic downfall, and increased violence and duration of conflicts.

The U.S. intervention into Syria that focused on facilitating Assad's overthrow failed to achieve its objective, not because of the conditions prior to the intervention but because of a variety of political factors and third-party intervention on behalf of the Syrian government. Considering these factors, was it ever possible for the United States to achieve success? Our position is that, yes, it was. However, the inconsistent and wavering levels of commitment from the Obama administration severely hampered the possibility of success. Fractured lines of effort, unclear objectives, inconsistent policy, and an immensely complex situation all played a role in the outcome that we see today, which is that in all likelihood Bashar al-Assad will remain in power.

Arguably, the ill-timed, largely restricted, and micromanaged intervention made the macro situation worse for all parties involved, as the result of drastically increasing levels of violence due to the United States facilitating the delivery of or directly delivering

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[315] "Death Tolls," I Am Syria, accessed March 17, 2018, http://www.iamsyria.org/death-tolls.html.

weapons to the various resistance groups. Initially, one can argue that U.S. intervention in the early 2000s created the conditions that led to the formation of resistance movements in 2011 and ultimately the civil war. While this would be very difficult to prove empirically, drawing a logical conclusion that the U.S. effort to destabilize Syria in order to undermine the Assad regime actually did is not hard to believe. Unfortunately, the United States failed to capitalize on the small period where intervention had the highest potential for success.

Despite recommendations by multiple senior leaders to intervene militarily into the conflict in Syria early, President Barack Obama choose not to.[316] Multitudes of reports indicate that the CIA was prepared to execute an UW mission to overthrow Assad, but President Obama was unwilling to authorize it.[317] Regardless, we question whether the United States could have orchestrated a revolution in Syria in 2011. That is, were the conditions in place to facilitate success? In all likelihood, given the totality of the assets at the disposal of the U.S. government, yes absolutely. The next question then is what the situation would look like post-revolution. To answer this, we address the conditions that were in place both prior to and during the insurgency-turned-civil war. Unsurprisingly, our findings illuminate a situation before 2011 that was ripe for the emergence of a resistance group and even an insurgency.

The political conditions in place both domestically in the United States and in the international community favored U.S. intervention on behalf of the rebel groups opposing the Assad regime. The United States had almost completely left Iraq and the international political theme surrounding the Arab Spring would have likely supported a revolution in Syria. The Syrian military was not prepared to fight a counter-insurgency campaign and neither Russia nor Iran had troops positioned to provide the type of tactical level support that would have been required to defeat a U.S. sponsored insurgency. Economically, Syria was in decline; however, considering the amount of money the United States spent to train and equip the rebels surpassed $1 billion. If the United States had used this money to

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[316] "The Rise of ISIS," Frontline, 2014, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/rise-of-isis/.

[317] Ken Dilanian and Kevin Monahan, "Obama Nixed CIA Plan for Syria: Officials," NBC News, April 2, 2016, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/obama-nixed-cia-plan-could-have-stopped-isis-officials-n549111.

jumpstart the economy instead, post-transition, the revolution and a new representative government would have stood a chance. The social conditions remain in favor of a revolution as long as the government does not represent the majority of the population. A Sunni-led revolution would have countered the Iranian and Hezbollah narrative and as long as the government put in place post-revolution served to address the grievances of the populace as a whole, there was a modicum chance of success. The information campaign is the wild card because of the extensive number of rebel groups that did not fall under one central command or leadership. Because of the relative ease that social media allows for the dissemination of information, whether true or fabricated, the advantage goes to any group that would oppose a newly established government. However, with the totality of the U.S. resources behind the effort, a new government would have a significant chance of success. This highlights a critical component of an intervention strategy: the level of effort.

In order for a third-party intervention into an intrastate conflict as complex as the one in Syria to succeed, the intervening government must allow the application of the totality of the resources available. We summarize political decision makers placing restrictions upon the civil and military leaders who are implementing the intervention strategy with an analogy. Imagine a situation where one Soldier faces another in combat but the first Soldier must shoot through their own foot to kill the enemy in front of them. In this scenario, the foot is the political objective desired after the intervention. We have identified that the conditions that support a resistance, insurgency, or revolution oftentimes do not necessarily support a transition. However, we have also identified that despite this, there is a potential to overcome the negative conditions when enough resources are applied. In the case of Syria, slow decision making combined with extreme restrictions on the civil and military leaders led to a complete failure to orchestrate the overthrow of Assad. Maybe this was the goal. However, the massive loss of life, the almost incomprehensible economic cost, the internal and external migration that has caused numerous secondary and tertiary problems, and the loss of U.S. blood and treasure, the bottom line is U.S. political leaders must better consider the conditions both in terms of domestic politics along with those in the country where the conflict is occurring prior to making an intervention decision.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study was to determine which pre-existing conditions facilitate successful third-party intervention into intrastate conflicts on behalf of a resistance group aimed at regime change. Our research included an empirical statistical analysis, a historical case study of Iran, and analysis of two contemporary intrastate conflicts—Libya and Syria. The statistical analysis showed that numerous macro state-level independent variables *do* have a statistically significant impact on the outcome of an intrastate conflict. Our case studies support these findings; however, we also discovered that the conditions facilitating successful regime change do not always support successful transition and, therefore, overall success, which requires establishing stability after the removal of the government.

Our focus in this chapter is to present a synthesis of our ideas and conclusions from the main thesis. We begin by presenting a macro-level summation of our findings chapter by chapter before applying the results to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, which serves as an instructive contemporary example of the U.S. government failing to consider the transition phase post regime change as part of their decision-making calculus. Our ultimate objective with this thesis was to develop rigorous analytical research aimed at better informing U.S. senior leaders when they are faced with a decision to intervene in an intrastate conflict. We therefore then streamline our findings into a graphical representation of optimal intervention conditions, which so-and-so can use for things. We close with our suggestions for future research, including recommendations for ways to refine our optimal intervention model by applying the framework of a similar study as part of an empirical analysis.

B. CHAPTER REVIEW

Our research found that pre-existing conditions do indeed play a significant role in the outcome of an intrastate conflict and thus the overall success of third-party intervention. In Chapter II, we modeled the pre-existing conditions that facilitate rebel victory/loss, government victory, and the level of violence in the conflict; the models showed only an eight-percent probability of success for the rebels even when all of the conditions support

their victory. Analysis of the U.S.-led intervention in Iran in 1953 revealed that a variety of pre-existing conditions already in place in Iran facilitated that intervention's eventual success. In Libya, we identified and traced the genesis of the conditions that, though they led to the fall of Qaddafi, are nevertheless not conducive to third-party intervention because they did not yield any means of securing the stability of the country following Qaddafi's fall. Our research into Syria unpacked a multi-level conflict that includes a civil war, a proxy war, and a holy war all occurring at once. Despite the complexity of this situation, our research shows the potential for successful intervention in Syria did exist within a small window of time had the United States properly analyzed the pre-existing and evolving conditions.

(1) Statistical Models

In Chapter II, our empirical analysis identified a series of independent variables that negatively and positively affect both rebel victory and defeat, government victory, and the level of violence in intrastate conflicts. Our models show that there are significant effects from political, military, and information variable types on rebel victory. Surprisingly, the economic and social independent variables we analyzed had little to no statistically significant influence on the outcome of the conflict. However, we discovered in the cases of Iran, Libya, and Syria that the economic and social pre-existing conditions *did* in fact have tremendous effects on the outcome.

(2) Iran

In 1953, the United States took advantage of pre-existing political, economic, social, and informational conditions to facilitate the removal of Mohammed Mossadegh, the prime minster of Iran. The CIA did not create the conditions that aided in the overthrow of Mossadegh; rather, it exploited and enhanced existing conditions to execute the coup. Political rifts within the Iranian government, the reduction of the shah's power, the influence of the Tudeh party, and the Iranian, British, and United States governments' inability to solve the ongoing oil crisis provided the base for the degraded political conditions. The Iranian economy, which was in a state of decline because of the oil crisis, and the economic reform policies of the Mossadegh government, increased the tension

between the government and the populace. Socially, Mossadegh's policies driving Iran toward nationalization and an increasingly liberal society alienated the religious elite. Additionally, his failure to renounce the Communist Tudeh party created the sense among the religious faction that he was steering Iran from being an Islamic nation to a faithless state. These conditions provided fertile informational narratives that the CIA used to degrade the ability of the Mossadegh government to run the country. When President Eisenhower authorized the CIA to overthrow Mossadegh, the tension between Mossadegh and Iran's many factions was already putting the country on the path to unseat him as prime minister. The existing conditions thus directly facilitated the overthrow of Mossadegh.

(3)   Libya

The removal of Muammar Qaddafi, while successful, turned Libya into a quagmire for third-party interveners. The pre-existing political, economic, and social conditions were not such that they would facilitate a successful transition from the Qaddafi regime. Qaddafi created a Libyan society that was devoid of political parties and heavily dependent on the government. Qaddafi's removal forced citizens to turn to local power brokers, who filled the void left by a newly non-existent central government, thereby drastically complicating the political and social situation, which further reduced the probability of achieving a successful intervention. Economically, the isolation of Libya, its dependence on oil revenue, and the government's inability to invest in its non-oil infrastructure and economy degraded Libya's ability to provide for its citizens. Lack of necessities further exacerbated the fissure between the government and the local populace, supporting regime change but negating the probability of successful transition and thereby overall success. Instead, Qaddafi's policies of nepotism and isolationism turned Libya into a rentier state propped up by oil revenue, which positively shifted the potential for a resistance movement achieving regime change. Following Qaddafi's removal from power, however, the pre-existing political, economic, and social conditions did not facilitate successful transition to a semi-stable environment. Instead, Libya was plunged into civil war, further degrading any potential for successful third-party intervention.

(4)   Syria

Researchers often refer to the ongoing Syrian conflict as a "three-headed monster" due to the complexity of the multilevel wars occurring there.[318] The initial resistance in Darra morphed into an open civil war, drawing in multiple external actors, which have been waging both a holy war and, in the case of Russia, Iran, and the United States, a proxy war. Our analysis unpacked the Syrian conflict and identified two separate U.S. interventions aimed at achieving two distinct objectives: overthrowing Bashar al-Assad and defeating ISIS. The intervention into the conflict aimed at defeating ISIS began in 2014 and, as of this writing, has achieved a modicum of success. The U.S. intervention to overthrow Assad began long prior to the campaign against ISIS. This aspect of U.S. intervention is largely a failure, as the pre-existing conditions at the time of the initial U.S. intervention did not facilitate a successful regime change, with all current indications suggesting that Assad will remain in power for at least the duration of his current presidential term.

However, our research showed that this outcome was not always certain. The pre-existing conditions in 2012 were such that the United States had a small window of opportunity to intervene decisively into the Syrian conflict in a meaningful way, with some probability of achieving success in unseating Assad. Specifically, had the United States intervened at the correct time and achieved tactical success the totality of U.S. assets certainly would have at least mitigated the effects of the longstanding drought and the massive internal and external displacement of the Syrian populace.

Numerous factors negatively influenced the U.S. political calculus regarding intervention into Libya and Syria from the beginning. In light of the findings from our model and the earlier successful intervention in Iran, the most critical lesson from our research into both conflicts is that decision-makers must consider the totality of the pre-existing conditions—asking themselves not "can I?" but "should I?"

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[318] Marc-Oliver Cantin, 85–95.

C. APPLYING OUR RESULTS

It is imperative for the United States to understand the conditions that not only facilitate a regime change if needed but will offer the best opportunity for long-term success—i.e., a transition to stability. Typically, U.S. operations focus solely on the removal of an individual or regime as a successful end state; our research has shown that this laser-like focus leads to instability post–regime change, as in Libya. Perhaps, the most prominent contemporary example of the United States' failure to address the transition phase after a regime change is the U.S.-led invasion into Iraq. While the situation was not initially an intrastate conflict, it eventually became one, and the resulting failed transition of power parallels the type of situation we are describing, specifically a regime change executed with little to no consideration for the overall importance of the transition phase.

When planning for the invasion of Iraq, U.S. senior decision-makers failed to develop a comprehensive plan for the consequences of removing existing population control measures. This lapse of planning largely stemmed from failing to account for the pre-existing conditions that would dramatically affect, for better or worse, a successful transition phase. After the United States overthrew Saddam Hussein, the U.S. government enacted a policy, enforced by Paul Bremer, the top U.S. civilian administrator in Iraq, to disband the "Iraqi Armed Forces, the ministries of Defense and Information, and other security institutions that supported Saddam Hussein's regime."[319] It is difficult to comprehend the strategic calculus behind a decision of this magnitude, if there was any. Mark Thompson, writing for *Time* magazine in 2015, summarizes the impact of the decision and inadvertently highlights its impact on the conflict in Syria:

> Combined with sectarian strains that persist 12 years later,…[the decision] also drove many of the suddenly out-of-work Sunni warriors into alliances with a Sunni insurgency that would eventually mutate into ISIS. Many former Iraqi military officers and troops, trained under Saddam, have spent

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[319] Jane Arraf, "U.S. Dissolves Iraqi Army, Defense and Information Ministries," News Media, CNN.com, May 23, 2003, http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/05/23/sprj.nitop.army.dissolve/.

the last 12 years in Anbar Province battling both U.S. troops and Baghdad's Shi'ite-dominated security forces.[320]

Those same out-of-work Sunni fighters fed into al-Nusra and a variety of other al-Qaeda–linked organizations in Syria.[321]

The U.S. decision to disband the Iraqi Army reflected a failure to understand the pre-existing roles the army played to keep the society together. It also failed to take into account the immediate and future security and economic impacts of firing the 250,000 people who ran the government, maintained security, and were major producers for the Iraqi economic engine. All these factors contributed to the destruction of the Iraqi economy, destabilized a large and influential portion of the populace, and virtually ensured that the intervening (occupying) forces would not be able to establish and maintain security in the country, which made any type of transition essentially impossible.

Failure to address the pre-existing domestic and interstate political conditions; apathy toward the pre-existing multi-thousand-year deep socio-religious divide between the Sunni and Shia; and lack of foresight to predict the almost overwhelming third-party intervention on behalf of the various resistance groups opposing the U.S.-sponsored regime: all of these lapses led to the U.S. failing to achieve success in Iraq. The United States could have mitigated most if not all of these conditions and the resulting actions by widening its aperture to consider not only the conditions that facilitated tactical success but also the political, economic, and social conditions that would have facilitated stability and thereby eventual overall success.

In an effort to achieve our objective, in the next section, we synthesize our conclusions into streamlined models, which provide decision-makers a distillation of very complex situations into straightforward concepts supporting informed decision making that considers the totality of the situation, which includes not only a tactical phase of an intervention but also just as importantly the transition phase.

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[320] Mark Thompson, "How Disbanding the Iraqi Army Fueled ISIS," Time, May 29, 2015, http://time.com/3900753/isis-iraq-syria-army-united-states-military/.

[321] "The Sunni-Shia Divide," Council on Foreign Relations, 2014, https://www.cfr.org/sunnishia.

D.   SYNTHESIZING OUR CONCLUSION

Based on our findings, we break third-party intervention into an intrastate conflict into three distinct portions, depicted in Figure 3: (1) pre-existing conditions; (2) the tactical phase, initiated by actual intervention aimed at achieving regime change; and (3) a transition phase, initiated by regime change, that culminates in the establishment of at least a semi-stable government and society, thereby achieving overall success.

Figure 3.   The Three Portions of a Third-Party Intervention into an Intrastate Conflict
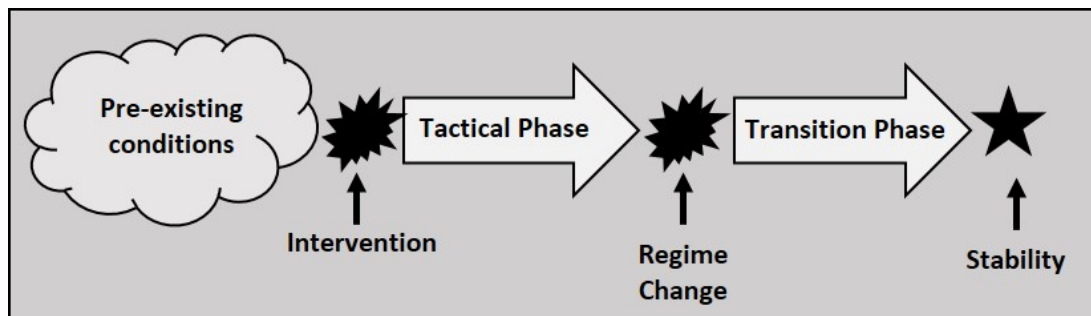

We simplify third-party intervention into an intrastate conflict by breaking it into three distinct portions: (1) pre-existing conditions; (2) the tactical phase, initiated by actual intervention aimed at achieving regime change; and (3) a transition phase, initiated by regime change, that culminates in the establishment of at least a semi-stable government and society, thereby achieving overall success.

We focused our empirical research on the conditions that facilitate rebel victory, which we categorize as achieving regime change. Through our research, we identified that the conditions that facilitate successful regime change do not always facilitate a successful transition phase; indeed, such conditions often actually *negate* achieving stability, as they produced the instability that prompted the regime change in the first place.

To illustrate this idea, we offer a high-level schematic depicting the optimal intervention conditions—i.e., where the pre-existing conditions are such that they support both unseating the current government *and* establishing stability post–regime change. Figure 4 is the graphical depiction of the optimal intervention conditions. We do not intend for the graph to represent a rigorous empirical presentation of pre-existing conditions but

instead to show the concept of an *optimal intervention situation*. The horizontal axis represents a simplified version of the pre-existing conditions, supporting either regime change on the right or stability on the left. The vertical axis depicts the level of success of the tactical phase and the transition phase of an intervention. Where the two graphs intersect represents a near-perfect situation for intervention, when the conditions are such that they facilitate a rapid regime change and quickly establishing stability within the state. Only interventions carried out as close to or under conditions within the optimal area have any real probability of achieving overall success. If the pre-existing conditions for either successful regime change or transition reside too far outside the optimal zone, a third-party intervention is unlikely to achieve overall success. The dashed lines represent the minimal and maximal acceptable conditions for both tactical and transition success. Later, in our future research section, we present a conceptual scoring table that can serve as a starting point for building an empirical data frame applicable for use in an actual graph comparing the conditions' effect on regime change and transition in a particular real-world situation.

Figure 4.   Optimal Intervention Conditions
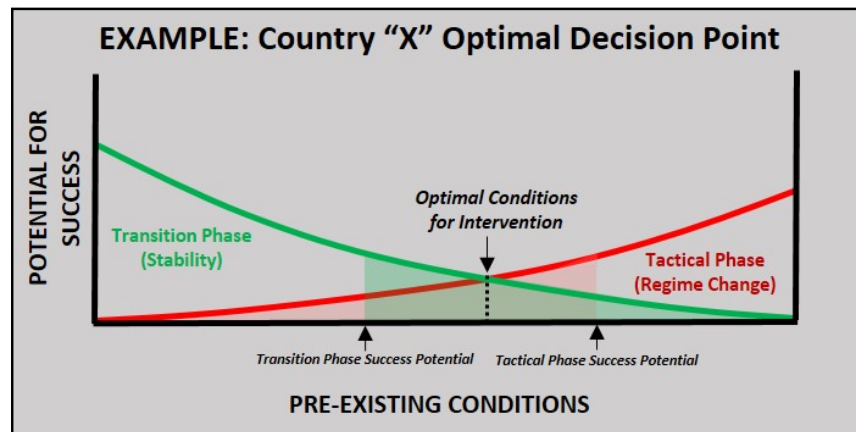
The horizontal axis represents the pre-existing conditions as diametrically opposed, supporting either regime change on the right or stability on the left. The vertical axis depicts the level of success of the tactical phase and the transition phase of an intervention. Where the two graphs intersect represents a near-perfect situation for intervention—when the conditions are such that they facilitate a rapid regime change and quickly establishing stability within the state. Only interventions carried out close to or under optimal conditions have any real probability of achieving overall success. If the pre-existing conditions for either successful regime change or transition reside to far from the optimal point, a third party intervention is unlikely to achieve overall success.

By contrast, Figure 5 shows the negative ramifications of a sub-optimal intervention decision—specifically, that decisions that fail to consider the effect of pre-existing conditions on successful transition are destined to fail. Under any circumstances, our empirical evidence shows a very limited probability of success for achieving tactical success via rebel victory (eight percent); however, our contention is that the clear majority of the interventions we analyzed happened under sub-optimal conditions. Figure 5 thus shows a graphical depiction of U.S. decision-making focused solely on achieving tactical success—unseating a current government—without considering the transition phase (Sub-Optimal Decision), compared to our original optimal conditions graph. The circle-x represents where, along the tactical phase graph, the pre-existing conditions reside without any consideration for the transition phase. This graphic highlights the all-to-common failure by U.S. decision-makers to consider the transition phase or the dramatic effect pre-existing conditions have on achieving stability and thereby overall success. The U.S. led invasion of Iraq is a perfect example of U.S. senior leaders only considering the tactical objective without any consideration for the transition phase, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5.   Optimal Intervention Conditions versus Sub-Optimal
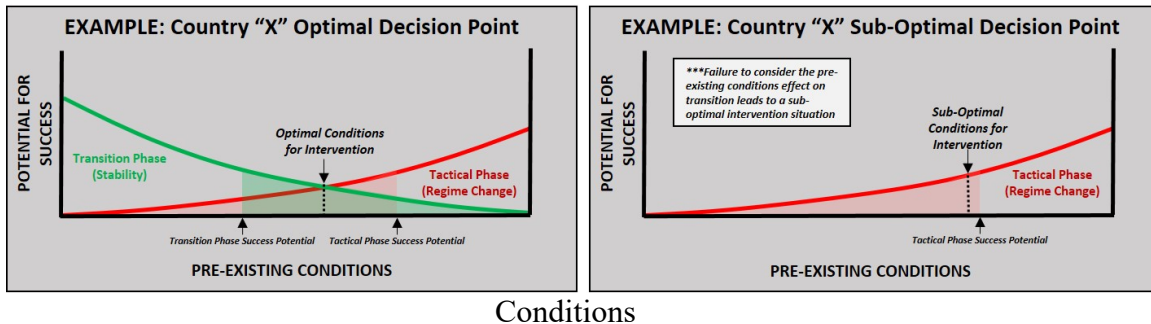
Conditions

The graph on the left depicts a decision calculus that considers the effect of pre-existing conditions on achieving both successful regime change and establishing stability, thereby achieving overall success. The graph on the right is representative of a decision calculus that fails to consider the effects of pre-existing conditions on establishing stability after a regime change, thereby negating overall success.

At the same time, it is our contention that, in circumstances where the conditions are only slightly sub-optimal, an intervening party can influence, effect, and/or alter individual conditions in such a way as to "create" an optimal situation. That is, prior to

third-party intervention, the possibility exists for an intervening party to manipulate the political, economic, social, and informational conditions to create an optimal intervention situation where success is possible. Altering the situation so that conditions reside on the graph closer to the optimal situation facilitates not only a successful regime change but also the establishment of stability and, ultimately, overall success.

Achieving success as an intervening third party into an intrastate conflict requires the pre-existing conditions harmonize in such a way that regime change is possible without fully destabilizing the country when this is the overall objective. Understanding that the conditions that affect human behavior are infinite, there are no set solutions to the problem of facilitating regime change and transitioning to stability. Nevertheless, we have sought to provide an analytical framework that we believe helps policymakers understand the current conditions specific to a particular country and determine whether those conditions facilitate a regime change *and* transition to stability.

E.   FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Our research is by no means exhaustive; in fact, we believe it has only scratched the surface of a vastly complex area of study. We highlight three specific areas to pursue this line of research: conditions that facilitate successful intervention on behalf of the government; establishing an empirical base for further developing our optimal decision graph; and methods for national-level shaping of the pre-existing conditions to support intervention.

Our research focused solely on third-party intervention on behalf of a resistance or insurgency. We identified the impact that a conducive configuration of political, economic, social, and informational conditions has on facilitating a regime change. We identified that these conditions differ from case to case, so it logically follows that there may be different conditions that facilitate a regime's defeating a resistance movement rather than vice versa. Understanding the conditions that facilitate intervention on behalf of the government will aid third parties assisting allied regimes in maintaining their sovereignty and power against an insurgency. More relevant to our research here is that understanding what conditions

facilitate the government's winning better enables negating them as part of an intervention strategy on behalf of the rebels, thereby maximizing the probability of success.

As our research continued, again we identified that the conditions that facilitate regime change do not always facilitate a transition to stability. Highlighting this fact is the Libya case study: the conditions that catalyzed Qaddafi's removal from power did not facilitate a successful transition of power. Instead, multiple factions and power brokers continue to scrabble for control over the country, dragging third parties such as the United States into a quagmire of trying to establish peace. Finding the conditions or the status of conditions that could provide regime change *through* a transition to stability could provide third parties key insights into when to intervene and conduct a regime change because they assure transition to stability.

We believe applying a rigorous statistical analysis determining an empirical score for each condition would allow for plotting of actual graphs depicting the success level pertaining to regime change and establishing security in order to specifically identify the optimal situation for intervention. We developed a table with analysis of Iran, Libya, and Syria that could serve as a base for future research and analysis.[322] We developed a table with analysis of Iran, Libya, and Syria that could serve as a base for future research and analysis. Figure 6 is a graphical representation of that table, which compiles a nominal score for pre-existing conditions influencing tactical success and transition success; the evaluations are our own and are intended for illustrative purposes only. Our intention here is to provide a stepping-off point for future research. That said, based on a similar scoring method used in the Rand study, we quantified each condition using a score of 1, 2, or 3 as follows:

- **1 (white):** The condition negatively affected the potential for success

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[322] Paul Davis et al., "Understanding and Influencing Public Support for Insurgency and Terrorism" (Rand National Defense Research Institute, 2012), https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1122.html, 153–154. Future research could utilize the style of analysis from this study as a framework for establishing complete empirical analysis to support the optimal intervention graphs example present earlier.

- **2 (gray):** The condition neither negatively nor positively affected the potential for success

- **3 (black):** The condition positively affected the potential for success

We totaled the scores at the bottom of each table, determining the tactical and transition success potential score for each conflict. Each individual condition score is representative of our effort to analyze the effect on intervention while remaining subjective. The closer the total score is to 27, the higher the likelihood for achieving success in either regime change or establishing stability. If the individual scores for regime change and transition do not reside in the optimal range, then the situation requires specific operations to shape conditions facilitating overall success.

Figure 6.   Pre-existing Conditions Score Table for Successful Intervention

TACTICAL Success Macro-Condition Score				
Macro Condition Type	Individual Conditions	Iran '53	Libya '09	Syria '12
Political	Level of Democracy	3	3	3
	Popular Representation	2	3	3
Economic	GDP	3	3	3
	Military Expenditure	2	1	1
Social	Literacy	1	3	2
	Education	1	3	2
Informational	MDI	2	2	3
	Internet Access	2	1	3
Total Score		13	19	20

TRANSITION Success Macro-Condition Score				
Macro Condition Type	Individual Conditions	Iran '53	Libya '09	Syria '12
Political	Level of Democracy	3	1	1
	Popular Representation	2	1	1
Economic	GDP	1	1	1
	Military Expenditure	2	2	1
Social	Literacy	1	3	3
	Education	1	3	3
Informational	MDI	2	2	3
	Internet Access	2	3	3
Total Score		14	16	16

Finally, we realize that third parties that are looking to provide support to either a regime or a resistance cannot often wait for all the conditions to arrive at the exact status that would facilitate a successful regime change and transition to stability. Our research leads us to believe that countries can use elements of their national power in pre-crisis

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phases to shape the political, economic, social, and informational conditions prior to intervening in another country's affairs. Understanding the necessary means to shape the facilitative conditions prior to conducting a regime change could increase the success of the intervention and save untold amounts of a country's blood and treasure. Additionally, effectively using elements of a country's national power to shape conditions in other countries could increase the power, influence, and security of both countries. Future research should focus on both of these concepts rounding out the models to understand not only the specific empirical conditions that support regime change but also those specific conditions that support establishing stability.

F.   CONCLUSION

For too long, the United States has intervened in other countries' affairs with mixed results. Two of the most recent examples, the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the current war in Afghanistan, are prime examples of a regime change that has led to instability. While the invasion of Afghanistan had an internationally-recognized legitimate reason, both decisions to intervene were ultimately based on emotion. The results of these decisions wasted an unacceptable amount of U.S. blood and treasure. The authors of this study have had firsthand experience in most of the conflicts over the past 15 years that the United States has been involved in. Because we are by no means naïve enough to believe that the Unites States will stop intervening in other countries' affairs, we have sought to better understand what would have been required to increase the chances of success, if not guarantee successful intervention of a third-party aimed at regime change.

Our empirical research indicates that intervention into another country's affairs frequently proves costly to a third party. Confirming this research are the current case studies of Libya and Syria, which paint a bleak picture that seems to solidify the harsh reality of the difficulties of third-party intervention. However, the historical example of Iran, in addition to the analysis of the existing underlying conditions in Libya and Syria, provide a beacon of hope that understanding these conditions can show the way to success for third-party intervention aimed at a regime change. Our research shows the power of these underlying pre-existing conditions, an understanding of which can allow a third party

to harness those conditions to maximize the probability of a successful regime change and transition to stability, such as the CIA did in Iran in 1953. However, this research is just the tip of the iceberg, and these conditions require further refinement and understanding—in-depth understanding, which, our research leads us to believe, will allow for successful third-party intervention aimed at regime change.

Our hope in this research is not to dissuade decision-makers from intervening but to encourage thoughtful analysis and discourse and to emphasize the importance, if the decision is made to intervene, conduct a regime change, and attempt to transition to a new and stable government, of considering the underlying conditions, which offer a powerful means of achieving success if thoroughly understood. Finally, when decision-makers are considering an intervention aimed at regime change, the in-depth analysis of the pre-existing underlying conditions will allow them to answer the all-important question—not "can I?" but "should I?"

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