Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs

report to

United States Department of State: Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations

Planning to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability: A Comprehensive Approach

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Executive Summary

In August 2021, the shock of the U.S. debacle in Afghanistan sparked fierce debates and reflections on the issue of U.S. involvement in stabilization interventions. In the face of blatant and costly failures in Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan, the public appetite for global engagement has waned. Yet the world remains a violent place, and the United States has interests in a number of unstable parts of the world. Drawing on the lessons learned in past stabilization missions—from large-scale operations in Afghanistan to more targeted ones in the Sahel, or UN missions in the DRC—this research project explores the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. Based on a comprehensive literature review, interviews with relevant stakeholders, a stakeholder analysis, and an expert review of our initial proposal, this report identified five of the most pertinent dilemmas that stabilization interveners are likely to face:

- Dilemma #1: Conflicting strategic intents and measures of success
- Dilemma #2: Frequent Failure to Address Root Causes of Conflict
- Dilemma #3: Working with Proscribed Armed Groups
- Dilemma #4: The Pervasiveness of Militarism and Colonialism in Africa
- Dilemma #5: The lack of interest in prevention

The overarching recommendation of this report is that stabilization interventions, regardless of their scope, should be driven by a political and not military intent. This imperative stems from the recognition that a more substantive focus on governance, and not security, can address the underlying causes of conflict. The main implication of this recommendation is that the U.S. should reframe military interventions as a sub-component of a political strategy. This means a balance must be struck between the exclusively political model of the UN and the myopic perspective of overly militaristic approaches. To improve the design of stabilization interventions and ensure that the overarching strategy is shared between civilian and military entities, we recommend that the U.S. invests in improved interagency relations, drawing on the success of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.

The second core recommendation derived from our research is that the U.S. should shift towards a demand-driven approach to stabilization. This will require the U.S. to integrate both coalition and local partners in the design and conception of the mission, not just the implementation phase. With regards to assessment, this means that the qualitative metrics used to measure performance, monitor achievement, and determine the desired end state should account for how stability looks, sounds, and feels to people on the ground. Not only is this necessary to overcome neocolonial bias and increase the legitimacy of stabilization interventions, it can help better align U.S. objectives with local demands, priorities and aspirations. Another recommendation of this report is that the U.S. should prioritize political dialogue with proscribed armed groups, on the basis of the needs of local stakeholders. In practice, this will mean removing the designation of a group as a terrorist organization if the possibility of a peace process is imminent. In line with previous recommendations, the U.S. should perform assessments of the local civilian perception of an armed group and factor it into any proscription decisions.

Finally, the failures of past stabilization interventions and post-conflict efforts call for a renewed investment in conflict prevention. This will require the U.S. to emphasize the benefits of preventative action to American constituents; creating an early warning system for instability that maps what a country is doing well and not just what needs fixing; and recognizing the value of and supporting preventive action spearheaded by regional and sub-regional organizations.

Introduction

About this report

This report examines previous stabilization interventions, identifying strengths and weaknesses in different approaches taken, and proposes suggestions for how the United States government can align resources and efforts in the implementation of stabilization interventions. In so doing, this project attempts to answer the following research question:

> *How do narrow approaches, such as counterterrorism and military interventions by nation-states compare to broader approaches that include issues of inclusiveness, governance and socio-economic development?*

Subsequent research questions which are explored include:

1. When should stabilization interventions be undertaken? What are the key factors that decision-makers must consider in making that decision?
2. What are the tools that the United States (U.S.) Department of State (DoS) has at its disposal and when should these tools be enacted?
3. What are the key indicators of stability that the U.S. DoS consider when undertaking a stabilization mission?

Definition of stabilization

Although there is much debate about the definition of stabilization, this report uses the Stabilization Assistance Review's (SAR) definition of stabilization to ground its analysis. The SAR declares that,

> *stabilization is an inherently political endeavor that [aligns]—diplomatic engagement, foreign assistance, and defense—toward supporting locally legitimate authorities and systems to peaceably manage conflict and prevent violence." (SAR)*

The definition of stabilization outlined in the SAR calls for intervening forces to create an environment that allows for "legitimate authorities" to gain control of a conflict and establish some level of peace. The definition requires the intervening actor to determine who or what the legitimate authority is that it wishes to support and operate alongside. Issues of legitimate authority and structures prompt questions about whose opinion of legitimacy during conflict matters most. Although intervening forces may consider the State as the appropriate authority to take command, questions of accountability deserve consideration. When considering issues of legitimacy, questions around legitimate power and systems that are inclusive and responsible to all groups need consideration. This report will try to incorporate this into its analysis.

Case studies

In exploring three stages of stabilization (conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and state-building) this report uses case studies to analyze what can be learned from the successes and failures of past stabilization interventions and how, based on these experiences, the U.S. can refine its approach to

conflict resolution. We decided to focus on the following case studies, which provide useful variation in terms intervention size, as well as conflict type and progression:

1. **G5-Sahel:** the G5-Sahel case study provides an overview of a multifaceted situation involving international, regional, and local interventions. With uncertainty about how diplomatic and security approaches will address challenges of violence, governance, and radicalization in the Sahel, the case study offers readers insight into the possible root causes of instability in the Sahel and the ability of foreign interventions to facilitate or undermine peace.

2. **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC):** the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) allows for a comparison of the United Nations (UN) strategic intent for stabilization centered on a political approach and approaches of nation-states that focus on military responses.

3. **Afghanistan**: the U.S. led intervention in Afghanistan serves as an analysis of an intervention outside of Africa and highlights,
    a. the collaboration and confounding factors that exist between different actors of the U.S. government, other countries, and the Afghan government;
    b. the challenges of state-building;
    c. if and when it is acceptable to negotiate with terrorists; and
    d. how the presence of the military impacts the outcomes of stabilization projects.

4. **Mozambique**: Mozambique is a good example of a conflict in what can be argued as its "early stages." It helps facilitate discussion about what can be done to mitigate conflict risks before tensions morph into military conflict. It is also used in the analysis of conflict prevention and how, if at all, interveners can target their initiatives in order to maximize their impact and effectiveness.

Methodological approach

In preparation of this final report, the research team implemented the following methodological approach:

1. a literature review focusing on the key issues;
2. interviews with relevant stakeholders;
3. a stakeholder mapping and analysis through the use of case studies to identify which groups have been served or neglected by past stabilization efforts and understand the interests of particular issues, or stabilization approaches; and
4. stress testing of recommendations via expert review and critique.

(Note, the literature review and list of interviewees are located in the Appendix of this report.)

Context: The Changing Nature of Armed Conflict in the 21st Century

To provide context to the subsequent dilemmas in this report, this section briefly highlights some of the new conflict trends that are occurring and how they may need to be considered by stabilization actors. Research indicates that "conflicts are becoming more intractable and less conducive to traditional political settlements."[1] Furthermore, "data suggests that preventing minor conflicts from escalating into major ones will be an important challenge for the UN and other international actors in the coming years."

Three of the most important issues that stabilization actors will have to contend with are 1) the emergence of organized crime, 2) the increased internationalization of civil wars, and 3) the growing presensce of jihadist groups.[2] Organized crime is a stabilization issue because it acts as a "major stress factor that exacerbates state fragility, undermines state legitimacy, and often lowers the incentives of armed groups to enter political settlements."[3] The internationalization of civil wars, that is conflicts in which other states intervene militarily on one or both sides, "tends to make [wars] deadlier and longer." From 1991 to 2015, the rate of internationalized civil wars increased tenfold from 4% to 40%.[4] Finally, the growing presence of jihadist groups presents a range of problems for stabilization actors, foremost among them being "these groups tend to purse maximalist demands that are difficult to meet or to incorporate into political settlements based on human rights and governance."[5] Any actor attempting a stabilization intervention should consider these issues.

In reference to organized crime, stabilization actors, including the DoS, should consider how they can mitigate its existence and proliferation. One way to do this may be by offering alternative methods of making a living so that individuals are less inclined to undertake warmaking as a livelihood.[6] This amounts to development and humanitarian approaches over military approaches.[7]

In reference to the internationalization of civil wars, it goes without saying that stabilization actors must factor in allies and opposing forces into their strategy. They should also create a plan to factor in not the stated positions of allies and opposition forces but also their underlying interests.[8] This can include exploratory and direct talks with said actors. A policy of honest diplomacy will likely result in the greatest dividends towards stabilization.

In reference to the increase of jihadist groups, this is a problem that will need to be addressed on a case by case basis. The countering/preventing violent extremism frameworks may be considered but they should be used with extreme caution and forethought as they have the ability to prolong conflict.[9]

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[1] Einsiedel, "Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict - United Nations University Centre for Policy Research."
[2] Einsiedel.
[3] Einsiedel.
[4] Einsiedel.
[5] Einsiedel.
[6] Anonymous, Interview with Stabilization Expert and Actor.
[7] Anonymous.
[8] Dudouet, "Mediating Peace with Proscribed Armed Groups."
[9] Day, "Engaging Non-State Armed Groups - Week 3: When to Engage, When to Isolate."

While working in conflict and stabilization contexts is never an easy task, the emergence of ever-changing trends and dynamics must be thoughtfully taken into consideration. While no two interventions are the same, an overarching understanding of how conflicts are changing will help inform the smaller, but just as significant, circumstances, conditions, and factors that must be taken into account in order to optimal decisions. With that in mind, the next five sections discuss some of the most pertinent dilemmas that stabilization interveners are likely to face and make a series of recommendations to address each one.

Dilemma #1: Conflicting Strategic Intents and Measures of Success

Context

The inefficiencies of stabilization interventions can be explained to a large extent by the lack of consensus among key stakeholders concerning their strategic intent. For external interveners, the issue of strategic intent is crucial in that it helps determine the scope and design of a stabilization mission—from narrow CT operations to broader multi-dimensional approaches. Looking back at past stabilization interventions, we first identify important disconnects between the UN's strategic intent and that of Member States like the U.S. and France[10]. Based on its recognition that only political will can bring lasting peace, the UN emphasizes the political strategy of its missions and favors multi-dimensional approaches. This concern for an integrated approach explains why, for example, UN missions are headed by a civilian official with diplomatic and political abilities.[11] On the other hand, stabilization efforts deployed by NATO powers like the U.S. and France tend to be much more militaristic.

Challenges

Today, Europe's failure to promote stability in the Sahel further highlights the lesson learned by Americans in Afghanistan and long emphasized by practitioners: the overarching strategic intent of any stabilization mission ought to be political and military campaigns should be subordinate to those political objectives. This imperative has now become widely acknowledged, including by senior U.S. officials, as evidenced by the recent endorsement of the Global Fragility Act.[12] Similarly in 2017, upon his recognition that the military was driving the strategic intent in the Sahel, French president Macron pushed for a "3D" approach to stabilization aimed at rebalancing the security campaign with enhanced diplomacy and development efforts.[13] However, our analysis of case studies shed light on some key difficulties that hinder these initiatives from yielding more successful coordination in practice. First, the structural imbalance in the civil-military relationship means that key U.S. stakeholders, namely the DoD, the DoS and USAID, push for conflicting internal strategic objectives. The second difficulty concerns the ultimate disconnect between the respective strategic intents of the U.S. and the host government.

Case study analysis and evidence

Many experts interviewed insisted that the tendency of the U.S. to overdo the military dimension of stabilization interventions stems from the structural predominance of the DoD "hammer", which overpowers the DoS and USAID.[14] As a result, stabilization campaigns tend to treat complex problems like a nail, thereby privileging security solutions. Some interviewees noted that Mali marks an example where the involvement of NATO-troop contributing countries (namely France and the U.S.) unsettled the balance of the mission towards greater military emphasis, at the expense of political aims.[15] Official French statements hint at counterterrorism as the overarching strategic end goal, with the ultimate aim of

[10] Anonymous, Interview with Stabilization Expert and Actor.
[11] Anonymous, Interview Concerning Stabilization.
[12] Engel, "H.R.2116 - 116th Congress (2019-2020)."
[13] Crisis Group, "A Course Correction for the Sahel Stabilisation Strategy."
[14] Multiple interviewees
[15] Anonymous, Interview Concerning Stabilization.

"helping local partner states acquire the ability to ensure their security autonomously."[16] France insists that it "does not aspire to conduct pacification in the Sahel."[17] The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali's (MINUSMA) mandate, however, aims at "supporting national political dialogue and reconciliation."[18] While not inevitable, a number of interviewees pointed to the operational tensions that resulted from this strategic disjunction. In some cases for example, NATO-troop contributing countries would refuse to put military utility helicopters to the use of non-military services, such as UN humanitarian operations conducted in insurgent controlled territory. Many experts believe this lack of strategic coordination helps explain why in the Sahel, just like in Afghanistan, the whole of the international effort ends up being less than the sum of its parts.[19]

When asked about the reasons for the enduring security focus in stabilization missions despite inefficient results, one practitioner raised the issue of the military-industrial lobby in the U.S. He explained the difficulty for the U.S. to curtail the military dimension once a mission is deployed is immense, given domestic pressure to maintain budgets, justify defense spending and attract young recruits. Another issue hindering the consolidation of an overarching political strategic goal in past stabilization missions has been miscommunication and misperceptions between different U.S. stakeholders.[20] In his assessment of U.S. engagement in Afghanistan, Steven Biddle, analyst and Adjunct Senior Fellow for Defense Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations highlights the absence of a clearly articulated and communicated desired political end state as a major strategic flaw.[21] The military campaign ought to have been guided in accordance with redlines established by the White House with regards to the concessions the U.S. could provide the Taliban in view of a negotiated political settlement. In Biddle's view, this poor strategic design directly stems from dysfunctional civil-military relations, with actors "maneuvering in an adversarial zero-sum bargaining model."[22] The confusion and ensuing controversy that accompanied the leak of Gen. McChrystal's Afghanistan report in 2009 is partly due because the military and the White House had different doctrinal understandings of what "*defeating* the Taliban" entailed, and was further aggravated by the lack of trust between the different stakeholders.[23]

A second issue hindering the pursuit of political objectives is the ultimate disconnect between the respective strategic intents of the U.S. and the host government**.** The first phase of stabilization tends to bring the U.S. and host governments around a common objective; that of deploying military means to create the space for political processes to occur. As the U.S. faces diminishing returns of the military campaign, it shifts to a second phase to address the root-causes of instability, such as bad governance, corruption and lack of inclusivity. However, as the U.S. increases pressure for governance reform, the relationship with the host government starts to collapse. This dilemma is theorized by Stephen Biddle as the "principal-agent problem," whereby interest misalignment between the U.S. and its partners compromises the efficiency of stabilization interventions.[24] This interest asymmetry is no accident given that the governance problems that justify U.S. interest in stabilization missions "often simultaneously

[16] Ministère des Armées, "Opération Barkhane."
[17] Michael Shurkin, Shurkin, "France's War in the Sahel and the Evolution of Counter-Insurgency Doctrine."
[18] MINUSMA, "MINUSMA Fact Sheet."
[19] Guéhenno, Interview Concerning Stabilization.
[20] Biddle, Interview Concerning Stabilization.
[21] Biddle.
[22] Biddle.
[23] Haddick, "This Week at War."
[24] Biddle, "Building Security Forces & Stabilizing Nations."

promote interest divergence between the United States and its partner."[25] Indeed, the issues stabilization missions are meant to address – regional instability, terrorist infrastructure, and humanitarian crises– are "strongly associated with weak states and corrupt, unrepresentative, clientelist regimes."[26] This is most illustrated in Afghanistan, where the twenty-year presence of the U.S. did little to reduce the regime's infamous corruption and push for effective reform, notably in the security sector. As per the principal-agent dilemma, President Ashraf Ghani and his government were more directly concerned with aligning the balance of rents to the internal balance of power in order to retain the support of armed elites and prevent a coup. In that sense, their immediate priorities diverged from that of the U.S., whose presence aimed at addressing the threat of international terrorists and antigovernment insurgents. Yet, partners are adept at using U.S. aid to pursue their own interests rather than their provider's, given that financial and material aid are fungible: Biddle insists that

> *"Even if the nominal assistance goes to professional military purposes, this can displace state funding that can then be redirected to political allies as rents, leaving the host military no more effective than before. Training can be used as a status reward for reliable loyalists, rather than a means of improving technical proficiency. Material aid can be diverted onto the black market. Aid money transferred to the state treasury can be laundered and directed to other purposes."*[27]

France faces a similar dilemma in the Sahel. It's relationship with the Malian government collapsed after Macron pressed the new military junta for prompt and meaningful political reforms, emphasizing that the maintenance of Operation Barkhane was conditional on more democratic legitimacy. The principal-agent dilemma within stabilization interventions yields implications for the design and scope of intervention the U.S. opts for, as will be explored below.

Recommendations

1. **Less radical aims, more balanced missions.** Given the failures and costs of the last two decades of interventions, the U.S. should refrain from establishing overly ambitious strategic intents that have proven unattainable. Conversely, the U.S. should be careful not to revert reactively to a radical position dismissing the purpose of interventions altogether. This implies striking a balance between the exclusively political model of the UN and the pitfalls of overly militaristic approaches. The failure of the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan demonstrated the dangers of having the military drive the mission. However, the fallacies of light footprint models excluding the use of coercive diplomacy shouldn't be downplayed either.
    a. Military component of stabilization missions should remain central as long as they are subordinated to the political strategy.
    b. Use of force should not be foregone but deployed in the pursuit of the stated political aims.
    c. Military commanders should not head stabilization campaigns like in Afghanistan and Iraq. In accordance with White House guidelines, a civilian head of mission ought to clearly articulate the overarching strategy and the desired end state. Military input ought to be seriously taken into account in the design of strategic ways and means as long as it is connected to the pursuit of a political settlement.

[25] Biddle.
[26] Biddle.
[27] Biddle.

2. **Improve civil-military relations.** In practice, designing and implementing carefully integrated missions will necessarily hinge on investing in robust and healthy civil-military relations.
    a. Working against bias: joint training of DoD and DoS staff, joint mission planning.
    b. Improved communication: interagency articulation of doctrines, use of shared definitions in the articulation of strategic ends, ways and means.
    c. Replicate the Goldwater-Nichols Act[28] to the interagency level.

3. **Integrate coalition and local partners in the design and conception of the mission, not only in the implementation phase**.
    a. **Prioritising multilateral coalitions**. The DoS should forgo unilateral approaches and deploy substantial diplomatic efforts aimed at systematically consulting coalition partners and eliciting their input in the design of stabilization strategies. This will allow the DoS to explore more moderate and less militaristic alternatives of stabilization interventions and overcome its tendency to pursue maximalist and reactive strategic goals. Given today's multipolar context, the DoS will have to expand diplomatic outreach to non-Western actors who detain significant leverage on conflicting parties. These measures are necessary to harmonize and align stakeholders' strategic intents.
    b. **Shifting to demand-driven processes**. Solutions to instability ought to be articulated by those directly concerned - be they the host government or civil society groups. The U.S. and its coalition partners should mainly assist in their implementation. Practically speaking, the DoS could establish collaborative processes, such as Contact Groups, with relevant local, regional and national stakeholders to determine the scope and nature of intervention.

4. **Prioritize political and qualitative assessment criterias over quantitative parameters.** Strategic assessments of missions are often evaluated in quantitative terms measuring, for example, the number of patrols and reports conducted in a given timeframe.[29] This is because quantitative indicators provide domestic constituencies with more satisfactory and tangible results.[30] However, assessments should be aligned with the political intent of the strategy and thus account for progress made by a given reform or peace process. Practically speaking, instead of measuring the number of insurgents killed in a month, measures for success could, for example, assess the political penetration and legitimacy of an insurgent group among the population of a village, as well as its evolution.

Trade-offs

The main trade-off that the DoS should consider if it were to follow this set of recommendations is whether setting less maximalist ("radical") aims for its missions will compromise its ability to address the root-causes of instability. In the same vein, reducing the scope of missions by relying more on local partners is likely to decrease efficiency in the short run.[31] Both these tradeoffs stem from the fact that a lighter footprint implies greater delegation, less leverage over local partners as well as less effective

[28] Nichols, "H.R.3622 - 99th Congress (1985-1986)."
[29] Interview with Colonel Givre, Chef Etat Major MINUSMA
[30] Anonymous, Interview Concerning Stabilization.
[31] Biddle, Interview Concerning Stabilization.

monitoring of behavior in terms of corruption, clientelism, and political reforms. This agency loss, however, might be the path forward to less unilateral, more sustainable and demand-driven stabilization interventions.

Dilemma #2: Frequent Failure to Address Root Causes of Conflict

Context

Many stabilization missions end in protracted conflicts.[32] This protraction indicates that in many cases stabilization interventions are failing to resolve the underlying sources of those conflicts. Though overly simplified, debates over this dilemma generally fall into two fields: the belief that stabilization missions do not do enough versus the belief that they essentially do too much and represent an over-involvement of external stabilization actors.

Stabilization actors often emphasize military solutions to conflict which can result in protracted violence when it is not complimented by robust development efforts. Development can refer to economic development administered through aid, infrastructure, loans, etc. Development, however, also refers to strengthening institutions of governance through anti-corruption efforts, improving election processes, reinforcing judicial independence, etc.[33]

It is also essential to remember that war by its nature is a method to resolve political disputes.[34] The purpose of stabilization missions is to mitigate destruction and loss of life but they also often prevent resolution of the disputes that sparked the war. Unless the parties involved can successfully resolve the dispute through negotiation or other non-violent means then a stabilization mission is likely to result in protraction.

Challenges

Stabilization missions frequently become entangled in long-term conflict, but it is difficult for potential intervening actors to determine the risk of a conflict becoming protracted in advance. Additionally, once a stabilization effort is launched the best methods for avoiding protraction are not always clear. Missions often get bogged down in security aims which fail to resolve underlying problems making them unlikely to achieve long-term peace.

Case study analysis and evidence

The G5 intervention in the Sahel has languished as it becomes increasingly unable to control the spread of violence in the region. Critics have pointed to the focus on security as one of the main factors in this failure. The French have been hesitant to engage in broad development and governance efforts because of the potential neocolonialist optics[35]. The focus on security, however, is not working. Areas without government services are hotspots for radicalization. This dynamic is exacerbated by the Malian government's inability to control its eastern regions and unwillingness to deliver services there.[36]

Similarly, the UN interventions in the DRC, first MONUC and then MONUSCO (United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of the Democratic Republic of the Congo), have failed to bring long-term stability.

[32] Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Stability."
[33] Joint Chiefs of Staff.
[34] Clausewitz, "On the Nature of War."
[35] Shurkin, "France's War in the Sahel and the Evolution of Counter-Insurgency Doctrine (Winter 2021)."
[36] Chauzal and van Damme, "The Roots of Mali's Conflict."

The conflict has now gone on for two decades--despite the fact that the first-ever offensive force, the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), was approved as part of MONUSCO stabilization efforts. Like the Sahel, the MONUSCO intervention has primarily focused on improving security through military methods but has not been able to achieve political stability or resolution.[37]

The U.S. mission in Afghanistan did include substantial development efforts which saw some degree of success.[38] While government services were imperfect and fluctuated over the course of the 20-year intervention, they were often more reliably delivered to the population than had been the case under previous regimes.[39] There was also some success in isolating rebel groups to certain regions of the country, but the United States was never able to entirely defeat them. The immediate failure of the Afghan government following U.S. withdrawal was again in part a result of an inability to truly resolve the disagreements within the country through a negotiated political settlement.[40] The United States refused to negotiate with the Taliban through much of the conflict which meant the political system was not inclusive of major portions of the population. Even after negotiations were attempted, the United States was not successful in reaching an agreement between the Taliban and the Afghan government to transition to an inclusive government.

The conflict in Mozambique is still nascent making it difficult to see whether the stabilization efforts there will suffer from the same failures, but there have been complaints that the Mozambican government is entirely focused on defeating the insurgents militarily while neglecting to resolve the socio-economic problems that have driven most of the insurgents to radicalization.[41]

Recommendations

1. **Thoroughly consider non-intervention options.** The United States should consider carefully whether to initiate interventions and recognize that such interventions could artificially prolong a conflict.[42] Along with the intelligence agencies, State Department officials, particularly those in the field, will be critical in performing these analyses.

   As part of the consideration, decision-makers should assess how fundamental the disagreements between parties are and whether or not they have the potential to be resolved through negotiation. If negotiation is infeasible then intervention should be discouraged absent other overriding considerations such as U.S. interest or prevention of genocide.

   Part of the assessment will also need to include consulting and surveying both the general population and local elites to determine the core drivers of conflict and what the domestic population feels is needed to resolve it. Without this information it will be nearly impossible to determine how entrenched the dispute is.

[37] International Crisis Group, "A New Approach for the UN to Stabilise the DR Congo."
[38] Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, "Evaluating U.S. Foreign Assistance to Afghanistan."
[39] Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate.
[40] Interview with Stephen Biddle
[41] Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[42] Luttwak, "Give War a Chance."

2. **Involve political officers.** When interventions are pursued they must be understood as not only security stabilizations but also political stabilizations. This will require the State Department and other non-military actors to take a larger role than they have in past missions like Afghanistan. This recommendation is also in line with best practices to establish unified strategic intents discussed under dilemma two.

   Foreign Service Officers need to engage with common citizens and elites in communities outside of major population centers. Some interviewees explained that since the 2012 Benghazi attack, Foreign Service Officer (FSO) safety has been understandably prioritized, but that rebalancing safety with other priorities may allow these missions to be more effective. Military stabilization components should allow civilian officials to reach as many parts of a country and conflict as possible. Risks to personnel should be mitigated to the degree possible, but there must also be a toleration of some risk to civilian officials if political stabilization is to be achieved.

   Expanding video conferencing technology also presents an opportunity for civilian actors to interact with domestic actors in risky areas though it does not replace in-person contact and many areas may not have sufficient technological infrastructure to allow for it.

3. **Tolerate corruption.** Development and aid should be emphasized in stabilization missions but DoS also needs to be conscious of its drawbacks and the potential for dependency.[43] In order to avoid dependency the U.S. should work to support domestic providers of social services such as the home government or local NGOs. In many cases the decision to support domestic entities will entail an acceptance that some funds will be diverted to corrupt purposes. An interviewee suggested that in the early stages of stabilization, corruption should be considered tolerable so long as it does not pose an existential risk of legitimacy of the government and is not funneled to violent adversaries.

   Importantly, stabilization actors should coordinate to establish unified standards for corruption risk tolerance in order to prevent incentives for recipients favoring certain agencies/partners or playing these agencies/partners off each other.

Trade-offs

A central tradeoff of this dilemma is civil society dependency versus lack of development. Interventions that lack a development component generally fail to produce long term stability. Those that are accompanied by development, however, often result in the populace becoming dependent on the external aid of the intervening actors. It is not always easy to transition delivery of these social services to the domestic government particularly when there is large-scale corruption.

Another major tradeoff exists when states are determining whether or not to start a stabilization intervention. Potential interveners can choose to act in order to mitigate violence but risk preserving political disagreements, or they can choose not to intervene which will likely allow the dispute to be resolved but could result in substantial loss of life and/or destruction

[43] Mazarr, “The Rise and Fall of the Failed-State Paradigm.”

Dilemma #3: Working with Proscribed Armed Groups

Context

Proscription is a set of techniques used to isolate and weaken armed groups. These techniques can include sanctions, travel bans, asset freezes and blackistlisting. These tools are used by government and international agencies to isolate and weaken non-state armed groups (NSAGs), an objective that help stabilization interventions. While proscription has demonstrated upsides, such as norm setting, limiting a group's resources and influence, it is not without its problems.[44]

Challenges

Proscription can often do more harm than good: it is not necessarily effective on "stigma-proof" groups (such as the Taliban); using it to penalize criminal networks can be difficult; it can hurt innocent people; it's sometimes illegal; it drives radicalization; and it usually weakens the peace process.[45] In reference to this last point, "blacklisting" or labeling a group as a terrorist organization can greatly "disincentivize peaceful engagement with non-state armed groups."[46] Given that this is the case, the DoS may want to consider a revision of proscription regimes so that the strategic intent of interventions can be shifted away from military and counterterrorism approaches to conflict resolution, reconciliation, and diplomatic interventions aimed towards peace. This is especially the case when the groups are homegrown and do not have an anti-U.S. or global agenda.

Case study analysis and evidence

Afghanistan is a representative example of the difficulties and potential pitfalls of working with proscribed armed groups. In this example, the Taliban was never formally labeled as a Foreign Terrorist Group (FTG) by the DoS because applying such a label would make diplomatic relations between the US and the Taliban more difficult.[47] President Bush, however, designated the Taliban as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) in 2002 using a presidential order.[48] This allowed the U.S. Treasury department to sanction the Taliban financially. Doing so made reaching a peace deal with the Taliban much more difficult when the U.S. and Taliban reopened negotiations in 2013.[49] The sanctions became a major pain point in making any progress, demonstrating that even limited proscription can make peace processes that much more difficult.[50]

Another problem that presents itself when a NSAG is given a terrorist designation and/or sanctioned, is that it can nullify any chance of negotitions because the proscribed groups believe they are acting righteously.[51] In the case of Afghanistan, the Taliban's political position, and its subsequent underlying

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[44] Collier, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War."
[45] Day, "Engaging Non-State Armed Groups - Week 3: When to Engage, When to Isolate."
[46] Eichmann, "Naming Terror."
[47] Farivar, "Why Isn't Afghan Taliban on US List of Foreign Terror Groups?"
[48] Farivar.
[49] Council on Foreign Relations, "Timeline."
[50] Farivar, "Why Isn't Afghan Taliban on US List of Foreign Terror Groups?"
[51] Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa."

beliefs, are that "the Afghan State is corrupt and deviant from Islamic values; the West should not be in Afghanistan; that the Taliban provides better services; and marginalized groups within Afghanistan find political power in Taliban affiliation."[52] The Taliban therefore believes that they are not a terrorist organization but a justified and legitimate political group. This creates a situation in which the opposing parties (coalition forces vs. the Taliban) believe they are fundamentally correct in their actions. If a political agreement is the strategic end goal of the stabilization intervention, the DoS should therefore perform an extensive analysis of the pros and cons of designating terrorist groups to ensure that a specific group would not become further radicalized.

Labeling an armed group as a terrorist organization can also limit the strategic analysis of such a group. The Cabo Delgado conflict of Mozambique is an example of this. The DoS's labeling of ISIS-Mozambique as a Foreign Terrorist Organization predisposed analysts and experts to believe that the conflict has an Islamic underpinning.[53] Other analysts, however, believe that socioeconomic tensions and grievances along tribal lines are more important factors.[54] If the latter perspective were to be more widely considered by stabilization actors, instead of the more narrow "ISIS-Mozambique is a fundamentally Islamist group" perspective, it could open a range of possibilities for long-term peace processes. Under the broader perspective, one possibility that has been proposed, is a multi-staged strategy that begins with development aid to local populations—among which many ISIS Mozambique fighters live—so that local tensions can be reduced and trust can be rebuilt. This initial development aid could then be segued into engaging in communication with militants with the underlying aim of demobilizing them.[55, 56]

Recommendations

1. **It has been previously recommended by industry experts that any decision to "intervene should be preceded by extensive analysis of the constantly evolving context."[57]** This analysis therefore argues that an assessment of the civilian perception of an armed group should be factored into any decision to proscribe a NSAG. For example if the DoS was looking to engage with the Taliban, there should be an extensive assessment of how local Afghan populations perceive the group. This analysis will need to be tempered with how much of a threat the NSAG represents to U.S. interests, especially if the NSAG is global in nature.

2. **The DoS should give careful consideration to 1) blacklisting groups from the beginning and 2) removing the label if and when the possibility of a peace process is imminent.** More specifically, the DoS should consider proscription and blacklisting as a part of their toolbox. When considering making such a decision, the DoS should consider the political and ideological leanings of the group in question. That is to say, if a NSAG has political objectives that the DoS finds acceptable while having ideological perspectives that it does not, the political objectives should be the main priority. Doing so may not always be popular with U.S. public sentiment so efforts to manage this sentiment should be considered.

[52] Day, "Engaging Non-State Armed Groups - Week 3: When to Engage, When to Isolate."
[53] Crisis Group, "Eastern Africa's Jihadis: Mozambique | Crisis Group."
[54] Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[55] Dudouet, "Mediating Peace with Proscribed Armed Groups."
[56] Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[57] Day, "Engaging Non-State Armed Groups - Week 3: When to Engage, When to Isolate."

3. **Beyond that, this paper makes the following recommendations for working with proscribed groups:**

    a. **End goals need to be collaboratively created by all relevant stakeholders.** The end goal should have processes that bring people to the negotiating table. This was exemplified by negotiations with the Taliban and the lack of agreement between stabilization actors about the group's role in a peace agreement.

    b. **Determine which interveners will be taking on which responsibilities.** This has already been suggested in the SAR, however, it fails to give any details beyond this. This analysis suggests the following division of responsibilities and labor when it comes to the decision to either label or work with proscribed armed groups:
        i. Currently, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury, are the designators of FTOs, under the approval of Congress. This analysis argues that a representative from USAID should also be considered as a designator and given as much decision-making power as the previously listed actors. Such an arrangement would allow humanitarian operations on the ground in a designated conflict zone to have a larger influence and may mitigate the problems discussed above. USAID's insight would provide for a more extensive analysis as recommended by certain scholars.

        ii. An anonymous official at an unlisted organization cited that stabilization efforts, "Need to look at a whole of government approach." They then went on to point out that in many conflict areas the DoD has an outsized influence. There should therefore be an agreement of clearly defined roles and responsibilities between USAID, DoD, and DoS vis-a-vis engaging with NSAG groups before a stabilization intervention is undertaken. Specifically, it should be clarified in advance under what circumstances the DoS and USAID can negotiate with a NSAG, what the redlines are for those negotiations, and when the DoD should step in for security reasons.

        iii. The interviewee specifically mentioned that U.S.military activities should not guide our policy approaches but that the reverse should be the case. They then recommended a co-deployment of development and diplomacy actors. This analysis therefore recommends that if DoS and USAID representatives are willing to accept a higher security risk to themselves, then they should be given the authority to continue engaging with a NSAG against the DoD's recommendations or preferences. This will help solve the problem of DoD guiding our policy approaches.

Trade-offs

Blacklisting a non-state armed group restricts the possibilities of diplomatic engagement with said group. As a result, narrow, military-centric interventions including counterterrorism (CT) and countering violent extremism (CVE) become more prevalent. This makes a political solution much more difficult.

Blacklisting a group also has the potential to further radicalize them, again limiting the possibility of a political outcome.

However, blacklisting and/or sanctioning a group can give interveners the ability to interfere with a group's finances, thereby limiting their ability to engage in conflict. A label can also give the intervener's government the opportunity to pressure other governments that are supporting the armed group.[58] Conversely, this pressure may also help to disrupt the group or force them to the negotiating table.

[58] Farivar, "Why Isn't Afghan Taliban on US List of Foreign Terror Groups?"

Dilemma #4: The Pervasiveness of Militarism and Colonialism in Africa

Context

European militarism was a key component of colonialism until the independence of African nations in the 1960's. The collapse of colonialism in the 1960's did not eradicate the systems built and imposed during Europe's reign. Left with a fragile, rudimentarily established concept of democracy and elite-dominated, weak state structures, African countries turned to the familiar forms of authoritarian command ingrained in society during colonial rule.[59] The construction of new autocracies overlapped with the Cold War; in an attempt to establish influence and power, Cold War and former imperialist powers both sought to establish or maintain their presence in the continent. The United States began to fund more moderate nationalists to deter Soviet influence and maintain presence in varying African countries.[60] Autocracies were funded and legitimized by the U.S. Government and the CIA through the 1980's.[61]

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 ended the Cold War; the U.S. subsequently rescinded funding toward African autocracies as their assistance was no longer needed. The lack of financial support from the U.S. government instigated the collapse of several regimes, and civil wars broke out across the continent. Poverty, underdevelopment, and poor living conditions became ubiquitous circumstances in pre-colonial countries; however, instead of recognizing the role of colonialism in the creation of these "failed states," the international community attributed the blame to the mismanagement and poor governance of the African people. To course correct, foreign intervention brought a security component to re-stabilize African nation states.[62]

The international community began to utilize security apparatuses as a primary tool for intervention. This marriage of security and development, viewing security as a necessary precursor for development, gave an indispensable importance to the role of militaries and armed force units to bring stability and peace to African nations. Militaries from the Global North were quick to re-establish their presence in Africa as trainers and providers of security, simultaneously maintaining their authority for geopolitical purposes.[63]

Even though the international community has theoretically accepted the ending of colonialism, many argue the presence of colonialism is still deeply rooted in many African countries. Instead of truly eradicating colonialism, many argue colonialism persists under the guise of military intervention and stabilization missions. Colonialism manifests itself through language and rhetoric, as African nations are often belittled for their ineptitude for self governance.

Challenges

The establishment of United States Africa Command AFRICOM is challenged throughout the narrative of this section, which argues that militarism is a pervasive manifestation of colonialism that continues to subjugate African countries to the interests of foreign nations. The implementation of AFRICOM is a

[59] Young, "The Heritage of Colonialism."
[60] Schmidt, "Foreign Intervention in Africa During the Cold War."
[61] Arieff, "Democratic Republic of Congo: Background and U.S. Relations."
[62] Abrahamsen, "Return of the Generals?"
[63] Schmidt, "Foreign Intervention in Africa During the Cold War."

primary example of U.S. engagement for purposes of counter-terrorism and the overall establishment of U.S. presence for important geopolitical and economic concerns.

AFRICOM vies to provide security to African countries but does so primarily with the use of force, and with U.S. national interests, whether geo-political or economic, as paramount to the mission's objectives. The challenge lies within establishing an alignment of US national interests with the interests of African people; how do we provide support needed by African people without placing overemphasis on our own agenda? How do we provide this support without military intervention serving as our primary tool, and how do we allow African people to construct the future of their own continent with their own vision? This vision may include governance structures misaligned with western templates of democracy.

Case study analysis and evidence

The Democratic Republic of Congo serves as a primary example of the long-lasting destruction and destabilization of colonialist and neo-colonialist practices: King Leopold II's brutal reign in the late 1800's, killing up to an estimated 10 million people in his establishment of "civilization;" the propping up of Mobutu Sese Seko, a master manipulator of western fear of Communism, by the Central Intelligence Agency in an effort to establish military, democratic and economic ties with central Africa during the Cold War; the brutal Civil war that began in the 1990's and the continued, failing efforts to bring stability to Eastern DRC by the UN, foreign militaries, and the state.[64, 65]

The 20-year period of UN involvement has garnered some praise, but mostly criticism. The contradictory initiation of the UN's first Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) engaged in a much more aggressive approach to fighting armed groups in the area, notably the Mouvement de 23 mars (M23) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). This model of offensive brigades has not resulted in a suppression of violence; conflict continues to proliferate in Eastern DRC.[66]

Several issues continue to plague the peacekeeping mission; "a lack of state authority…, limited decentralization, weak governance and rampant impunity feed a vicious cycle of instability." Democracy remains in limited scope, and protection of civilians is often scrutinized; as one civilian stated, "the UN seems to care more about trees and animals [in Virunga National Park] than about Congolese being slaughtered every day."[67] Extreme poverty continues to rise, and epidemics of Cholera and Ebola frequently surface.

Recommendations

1. **Provide robust anthropological education services to all deployed civilians and military personnel in every region/country of operation.** Conversations on Africa are wrought with stigma and stereotypes. Africa is not experiencing a "resource curse;" it is cursed by the systemic historical underdevelopment and exploitation of its resources by foreign nations. It is not helplessly torn apart by civil wars; it has a growing generation of youth longing for peace and

[64] Schmidt, "Conflict in Africa: The Historical Roots of Current Problems | Perspectives on History | AHA."
[65] W. French, "Anatomy of an Autocracy: Mobutu's 32-Year Reign."
[66] The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, "Armed Conflict and Location Event Data."
[67] The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project.

speaking up for necessary reforms.[68] Understanding the history of colonialism in the continent, and how colonialism continues to manifest itself through global military and aid complexes, will naturally birth a more positive and progressive rhetoric of Africa. This education should be an ongoing process, beginning prior to deployment and continuing into a person's employment post-arrival.

   a. Include mandatory education and training programs prior to deployment to create a better understanding of cultural and historical context to the respective deployment site. Fostering an environment of education of the people's history will generate a greater understanding of the situation.
   b. Create courses in conjunction with local think-tanks and non-governmental organizations which should answer the following question; what do the people of the country or region want foreign interveners to know upon their arrival?
   c. Incorporate weekly language training to enable all people, not just translators, to converse with locals. A permanent liaison can exist between knowledge curators and AFRICOM in each deployment place to build such curricula and roll out the educational services. Local consultations can take place to provide perspectives on the implications of US presence in the region as well.

2. **Revisit the imposition of western ideologies.** Are we intervening to replicate or superimpose our model of governance in places that might operate differently? Does our model of governance overlap with the respective national vision for governance? As stated by one of our interviewees; "the main problem with stabilization is that it sees the liberal state as the solution to today's conflicts. Stabilization is about extension of state authority, support to state institutions, as the panacea to conflict. But that model has proven wrong over the past thirty years; spending a bit more time on the extensive literature on non-state governance is necessary."[69]
   a. Generate a space for local actors to create a form of governance they see best fit for their respective country.
   b. The U.S. is capable of providing the type of social empowerment that other "new cold war" powers cannot, and the US can utilize this comparative advantage.. China and Russia are not as likely to intervene through supporting good governance; they are more likely to engage in international affairs through infrastructural development and military intervention. The U.S. can alternatively invest in value driven foreign policies: investing in values that empower people to drive change internally and speak up against systems of oppression experienced in their respective countries.

3. **De-prioritize military intervention, establish the primacy of politics.** The use of force and military presence needs to be revisited.
   a. Only implement a military component when necessary. It must do no harm and support a political vision. Social and political mandates can integrate a military component when necessary, but a military component should never have the authority to dictate the trajectory of an intervention strategy.

[68] United Nations, "African Youth Activists Call for Greater Inclusion of Young People in Continent's Development, as Security Council Takes up 'Silencing the Guns by 2020' Initiative | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases."
[69] Anonymous, Correspondence with Stabilization Practitioner and Academic.

b. Conduct and create all mandates with African leaders and local actors dictating the direction of the intervention, discouraging U.S. intervention from leading with our own economic and geopolitical interests.[70] This would require more decision-making power for DoS and USAID, and less decision-making power and funding for the DoD. This will be a difficult behavior to adjust in the US considering our relationship with the military industrial complex, but it will be necessary for re-structuring currently harmful practices of excessive military intervention.

Trade-offs

The U.S. needs to grapple with their presence as an international superpower with any intervention. An inescapable baggage will accompany the U.S. due to their colonial past and previous intervention strategies in the Middle East and Africa. U.S. presence naturally invokes an array of sentiment from local actors, but this sentiment can be positive or negative. If the U.S. decides to intervene in a given country, an assessment should be made to attribute any benefits or conflict their presence will bring.

[70] Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa."

Dilemma #5: The Lack of Interest in Prevention

Context

States and international organizations increased their capacities in early-warning, mediation, and peace-building from the late 1990s to the early 2000s.[71] For example, U.S. intelligence has integrated state fragility and political instability analysis and forecasting tools into reports to senior decision-makers.[72] Also, qualitative evidence points to the effectiveness of new UN envoys that focus on mass atrocities and regional conflict prevention in helping defuse crisis.[73] Despite these advances, there is a lack of a clear definition for how stability is measured.

Confronted with the failure of large-scale stabilization interventions, confidence in post-conflict stabilization has diminished. The recent departure of the U.S. military from Afghanistan, after almost 20 years of war, has fueled disapproval for expensive wars that fail to realize stable peace despite trillions of dollars invested. Similarly, Wars in Syria, Yemen, and Libya show the tragedy and enormous human cost of failed violence prevention (the global refugee crisis warranted a record $23.5 billion in 2017).[74] Since 2010, the number and intensity of violent conflicts have steadily increased. 2015 marked the most violent year since 1945, with 101,400 battle deaths.[75]

In the Sahel, the public consensus amongst western governments favor the operations of the French-led Sahel stabilization mission, but an underlying tone of disappointment with recent failures is mounting.[76] Operation Barkhane successfully demolished hideouts in the Libtako-Gourma region and killed dozens of identified terrorists, but victory is often short-lived.[77] Futile attempts from both international and regional interveners to resolve the crisis in the Sahel have resulted in increased violence and terrorist groups intensifying and expanding conflict into neighboring countries.[78] In war-torn nations, leadership is weak, and the failure of governance has pushed societies over the brink and threatened social cohesion. Several conflicts rendered intractable pose challenges to stability because of violent extremism, weak states with porous borders, and asymmetric tactics.

Challenges

In today's society, the concept of sustaining peace is aspirational. A lack of political will from nations prevents the elevation of the idea from aspiration to a place of reality. To maintain peace, governments must advocate for activities that aim to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict and address root causes.

Maintaining peace is reactionary. There is little investment in proactively maintaining stability. We are entering an era where sluggish interventions, in which interveners wait for things to unfold before

[71] Call and Campbell, “Is Prevention the Answer?”
[72] Call and Campbell.
[73] Call and Campbell.
[74] Call and Campbell.
[75] Call and Campbell.
[76] Crisis Group, “A Course Correction for the Sahel Stabilisation Strategy.”
[77] Crisis Group.
[78] Shurkin and Bernard, “Ten Things the United States Should Do to Combat Terrorism in the Sahel.”

responding, are unpopular and seriously questioned. Consideration for how to act before situations, like the ones listed above, become a source of confrontation or conflict has prompted a renewed interest in conflict prevention.

Although discussion regarding conflict prevention is on the rise, decision-makers remain reluctant to invest significantly in preventive action, which is harder to sell to their constituents.[79] Unfortunately, many nations cannot convince their constituents that it is worth mobilizing efforts before tragedy strikes. Mobilization to interfere takes place when something goes wrong. Countries obey their national interests, and prevention is slow to manifest tangible results. The question becomes, how can governments mobilize for something hypothetical? Reacting to conflict provides visible results, and nations are more likely to respond to something instead of working to prevent something from happening. The challenge for policymakers today is to avoid the pitfall of large-scale stabilization interventions by exploring alternative middle-ground strategies, specifically investing more in prevention.

Case study analysis and evidence

Mozambique has held several elections with the FRELIMO party ruling since independence.[80] The centralized nature of the government and the lack of authority held by subnational governments has resulted in little protection for or representation of minority groups.[81] The people in Cabo Delgado cannot settle their grievances in the political sphere because the FRELIMO party dominates political structures.[82]

The government of Mozambique is currently struggling to combat insurgency groups.[83] To a certain extent, Islamists from outside the country, who have taken refuge in Mozambique, drive the insurgency.[84] This fact may potentially frame the conflict incorrectly as one centered on religion. Although many insurgent leaders are not from Mozambique, most insurgent supporters are Mozambicans and lack a strong history of religious extremism.[85] Affiliation with ISIS is being used out of convenience by insurgents.[86] This fact refutes the idea that religious doctrine drives the insurgency and highlights other factors at play.[87]

The government has latched on to the notion that religion is the driving force behind the insurgency, disregarding the economic challenges Mozambicans experience that motivates them to participate in armed groups.[88] The government also fails to deliver services to groups that do not support the FRELIMO party.[89] The drivers behind insurgency are inequality, poverty, and crime.[90] Responding militarily to the insurgency[91] and focusing solely on the non-Mozambicans Islamists, the government has failed to

[79] Call and Campbell, "Is Prevention the Answer?"
[80] Call and Campbell.
[81] Call and Campbell.
[82] Call and Campbell.
[83] Call and Campbell.
[84] Call and Campbell.
[85] Call and Campbell.
[86] Vines, "Responding to Mozambique's Islamic Insurgency."
[87] Sheehy, "Five Keys to Tackling the Crisis in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[88] Sheehy.
[89] Vines, "Responding to Mozambique's Islamic Insurgency."
[90] Vines.
[91] Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."

implement solutions that improve the livelihoods of Mozambicans in Cabo Delgado[92] and thus fails to resolve the underlying problems[93] and prevent Mozambicans from joining the growing insurgency.[94] If livelihood issues are not acknowledged, actual affiliation with Islamic groups could grow.[95]

Outside military contractors such as the Russian Wagner Group or the South African Dyck Group have weakened armed groups.[96] But, the use of these groups does not help resolve tensions around inequitable political structures.[97] Insurgents have demonstrated an ability to bounce back after being hit by these contractors.[98] Without directly addressing the underlying reasons for affiliation with the insurgency, the Mozambican government will only see an increase in future participation with armed groups.[99] Therefore, prevention methods that avoid troop deployments are necessary to prevent a "quagmire."[100] The priorities to prevent full-on conflict should consider operations through humanitarian missions that focus on tribal and ethnic equity issues.[101]

It is worth noting that with the help of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the government has recently regained control over areas in Cabo Delgado. With these victories, there is pressure from local populations to manage economic and governance issues and to enable the return of displaced populations. The international community can no longer consider Mozambique an early-warning case study. The situation in the country should serve as a jolt to the global community to test cases for practical and effective conflict prevention. Methods suggested should acknowledge how to incorporate voices from local actors to lessen the risks of violent conflict before the situation reaches a point of no return and transforms into crisis.

Recommendations

In moving from a culture of crisis to a culture of prevention,

1. **The U.S. should formally identify how stability is measured.** The SAR defines what stabilization is and aims to achieve, but how does one know when stability exists? What are the qualitative metrics that measure performance, monitor achievement, and determine the accountability of stability? What are the indicators for how stability looks, sounds, and feels to people on the ground? How does one know a nation has reached "a breaking point," the point at which parties at odds lose control of a situation and spiral into conflict? These are all questions that need fleshing out to fully understand what stability is and how preventative measures can ensure no nation reaches a breaking point. While conceptualizing possible stability benchmarks, the U.S. should also explore perceptions of stability. How do people on the ground experiencing conflict define stability? What do successful interventions that promote stability look like, and how do they incorporate local voices into the designs and implementation of interventions?

[92] Sheehy, "Five Keys to Tackling the Crisis in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[93] Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[94] Sheehy, "Five Keys to Tackling the Crisis in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[95] Vines, "Responding to Mozambique's Islamic Insurgency."
[96] Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[97] Sheehy, "Five Keys to Tackling the Crisis in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[98] Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[99] Sheehy, "Five Keys to Tackling the Crisis in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[100] Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."
[101] Sheehy, "Five Keys to Tackling the Crisis in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado."

2. If the U.S. adopts the role of supporter, it can show constituents that the U.S. is not leading operations but instead assisting nations to do the work themselves. There are questions about why the U.S. should support challenges abroad when several issues need solving right in its backyard. Also, some Americans may not want to see tax dollars go to something they think does not directly impact them. For Americans to see prevention tangibly, **the U.S. must do a better job of objectively explaining the challenges the U.S. will face if nations reach a level of full-on war.** Candid conversations about consequences of conflict (such as forced migration, refugee flows, capital flight, and the destruction of societies' infrastructure) that combat misinformation and disinformation must occur. Along with objective, sincere conversation, U.S. Representatives must be prepared to exemplify how prevention can limit the negative consequences of conflict. Representatives should highlight successful examples of prevention measures from around the world.

3. While designing measures, **the U.S. may want to consider creating an early warning system for instability.** FEWS NET, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, provides early warning and analysis on acute food insecurity.[102] Established in 1985 in response to famines in East and West Africa, FEWS NET aims to present impartial, evidence-based data to governments and relief agencies that prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises.[103] Publications include, but are not limited to, reports and maps describing current and forecasted food vulnerability and exclusives on factors that add to or ease food insecurity.[104] If used responsibly and productively, such a warning system serves to lessen mortality rates attributed to cases of acute food insecurity by presenting governments, organizations, individuals, and communities information that they can use to help safeguard the lives of those in need.

   Combined with clear language and emergency preparedness that generates and disseminates timely and meaningful information, early warning data can empower people to take action before a crisis. The U.S. should create a model that defines and forecasts when stability is at risk, giving response systems time to counter adverse events. To be effective, the model for an instability early warning system must include feedback and recommendations from communities at risk, promote awareness of risks, efficiently broadcast warnings and advice, and ensure continuous preparation.

4. Assessing the factors that drive violence is not enough. Every society, however broken, has capacities and assets, not just needs and vulnerabilities.[105] With this in mind, **the U.S. must consider mapping what is working and not just what needs fixing.** What are nations doing to drive stability? How are local systems and practices upholding stability? What examples of partnership and collaboration exemplify success, and what makes these examples stand out? With such information, the U.S. can support interventions, programs, projects, partners, and ideas that help to prevent a country from plummeting into full-on war.

[102] Famine Early Warnings System Network, “About Us | Famine Early Warning Systems Network.”
[103] Famine Early Warnings System Network.
[104] Famine Early Warnings System Network.
[105] The HIPPO Report and Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), “UN Security Council, Implications for Peacekeeping, More Reform and Adaptation,.”

5. **The U.S. should recognize the value of preventive action spearheaded by regional and sub-regional organizations**. Given their proximity, regional and sub-regional organizations may have a good grasp of the significance of escalating violence.[106] These organizations may also hold greater legitimacy in their region than organizations like the UN, which is increasingly associated with a Western agenda.[107] These organizations have also achieved success without overt or credible use of force.[108]

   A concrete example of the practical use of regional organizations transpired in 2014 when the UN Special Envoy flew into Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, with top executives of ECOWAS and AU the day after President Blaise Compaoré stepped down in the face of protests that warned of mass violence.[109] The visiting collective spoke for Burkina Faso's neighbors, the broader African continent, and the global community.[110] This sign of regional solidarity fostered an exchange that relieved tensions and stopped mass violence around the transfer of political power.[111]

6. **The U.S. must better engage in true multilateral partnerships.** There is an erosion of multilateralism and nations have difficulty working together to push for prevention. There is a breakdown in the multilateral system, and the U.S. should re-engage international partners and inspire its partners to work as a collective behind prevention efforts.

Trade-offs

1. Although strong support from the international community is needed to champion prevention topics, there is debate among the UN Security Council's permanent five members, with France, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. on one side, and China and Russia on the other, centered around sovereignty issues. China and Russia would argue prevention risks encroachment on the sovereignty of a nation. Nations that take this stance believe countries can manipulate preventative strategies to mask the political underpinnings of suggested preventive methods.

2. There are political implications for suggesting a nation should implement preventive methods as a precaution. Without a clear definition and agreement of what constitutes instability, and when a country's stability has reached a point of deterioration, governments may link suggestions for preventive approaches as accusations of negligence and the inability to properly govern their state. Highlighting that a state has reached a certain level of instability may force a government to disengage with the international system and the very idea of prevention.

3. If there is a lack of political support, it will not matter how much support interveners throw behind prevention. Preventive methods cannot succeed if governments are unwilling or unable to lead strategies. If there is no political will to change things, no real change can occur.

[106] Call and Campbell, "Is Prevention the Answer?"
[107] Call and Campbell.
[108] Call and Campbell.
[109] Call and Campbell.
[110] Call and Campbell.
[111] Call and Campbell.

Appendix

Appendix A: Literature review

Introduction

As a term, stabilization was first introduced in the mid-1900s to refer to economic reinforcement from market shocks.[112] In 1996 the United States participated in the NATO-led Stabilization Force sent to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in 1997 the U.S. featured the term “stability operations” in the U.S. National Military Strategy.[113] In 2004, the U.S. Department of State formed the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.[114] In 2011, the Department of State replaced the office with the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

Since its original use, the concept of stabilization expanded to include the "complex relationship between national security, economic development, and physical and human security."[115] The cumulative history of stabilization efforts demonstrate that most of them fail because of conflicting strategic interests, failure to address root causes, and a lack of interest in prevention. Due to these dynamics, the DoS endeavors to understand why this is the case and implement systemic changes that can improve the current situation. To that end, the research objectives and questions of this report are the following:

1. How do narrow approaches, such as counterterrorism and military interventions by nation-states compare to interventions that take broader approaches such as inclusion and utilization of governance and socio-economic initiatives?
2. When should stabilization interventions be undertaken? What are the key factors that decision-makers must consider in making that decision?
3. What are the tools that the U.S. State Department has at its disposal and when should these tools be enacted?

[112] Gorur, “Defining the Boundaries of UN Stabilization Missions • Stimson Center.”
[113] Gorur.
[114] Gorur.
[115] Gorur.

4. What are the key indicators that the U.S. State Department should consider when undertaking a stabilization mission?

THEME 1 - Stabilization and Anti-stabilization Definition

The definition of stabilization is highly contested and varies in different situations. The U.S. Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR) defines stabilization as

> "a political endeavor involving an integrated civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict."

Stabilization interventions are generally handled differently by different powers. For the U.S, an intervening power fights a rebellion and aids a legitimate authority to gain a "monopoly on the use of force" so that the legitimized power can defend its civilians.[116] For the United Kingdom, a united force of civilian and military personnel cooperate to "protect and promote legitimate political authority, reduce violence, reestablish security and prepare for longer-term recovery."[117] For France, it is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that should lead a political process that aims to stop violence and restore the "minimum viability of the state."[118]

Luttwark proposes that stabilization excludes intervention in conflicts, and focuses on providing aid, emigration, and refugee care to those impacted by wars. Gorur defines stabilization as supporting the transfer of territorial control from spoilers to legitimate authorities.

When it comes to UN operations that include elements of stabilization, some stakeholders hold that leaving the term undefined "provides flexibility." However, this "flexibility" may lead to violation of the principles of peacekeeping, create a risk of unrealistic expectations for missions' accomplishment, and hinder the evaluation of success. Further, it can contribute to a mismatch between mission objectives and capabilities, lead to ad hoc and ineffective implementation of mandated tasks on the ground, and discourage countries from authorizing or contributing troops to approved missions.

The concept of stabilization is vague and insufficiently regulated across governments and multilateral structures. Lacking a clear idea of what stabilization implies, actors involved in stabilization efforts remain in a cycle of repeated errors, wasteful spending, and little accountability concerning results.

Source	• Defining the Boundaries of UN Stabilization Missions • Aditi Gorur • Simpsons Center (2016)
Summary & Context	As a term, stabilization was first introduced in the mid-1900s to refer to economic reinforcement from market shocks. In 1996 the United States participated in the NATO-led Stabilization Force sent to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in 1997 the U.S. featured the term "stability operations" in the U.S. National Military Strategy. In 2004,

[116] Gilder, "The Effect of 'Stabilization' in the Mandates and Practice of UN Peace Operations."
[117] Gilder.
[118] Gorur, "Defining the Boundaries of UN Stabilization Missions • Stimson Center."

	the U.S. Department of State formed the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. In 2011, the Department of Stated replaced the office with the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. Since its original use, the concept of stabilization expanded to include the "complex relationship between national security, economic development, and physical and human security". Specifically for UN peacekeeping, there are three broad schools of thought within this literature on how to understand stabilization: 1. Stabilization as Pre-Peacebuilding Intervention; 2. Stabilization as Active Conflict Intervention; 3. Stabilization as Robust Use of Force. There is no consensus about what stabilization means conceptually with respect to UN peacekeeping.
Key Insights	For the absence of definition, it is unclear to many stakeholders whether these missions violate the core principles of peacekeeping. The report proposed a new definition in the context of UN peacekeeping: **supporting the transfer of territorial control from spoilers to legitimate authorities.** In this way, it makes it possible to **evaluate success**.

Source	● Stabilization Assistance Review: A Framework for Maximizing the Effectiveness of U.S. Government Efforts To Stabilize Conflict-Affected Areas ● United States Department of State, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations ● Designed by A/GIS/GPS, January 2018
Summary & Context	The concept of stabilization is vague and insufficiently regulated across governments and multilateral structures. Lacking a clear idea of what stabilization implies, actors involved in stabilization efforts remain in a cycle of repeated errors, wasteful spending, and little accountability concerning results. To manage these issues, in 2018 the Department of State, USAID, and Department of Defense approved the Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR). The SAR details lessons learned from prior stabilization contexts and proposes a new structure to streamline diplomatic engagement, foreign assistance, and defense operations launched in conflict-affected efforts. Designed to serve as a "north star" and help to optimize interagency efforts, the SAR outlines a definition of stabilization to guide efforts outlined and initiated. Highlighting that stabilization is most effective where there is some level of basic security on the ground, the SAR defines stabilization as *"a **political endeavor** involving an **integrated civilian-military process** to create conditions where locally **legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict**."*

	Viewed as short-term interventions, typically lasting between one and five years, examples of stabilization activities include establishing civil security, providing access to dispute resolution, and delivering aid. According to the SAR successful stabilization missions: 1. Link to long-term development efforts, 2. Include donors and the private sector in planning processes early, 3. Include communication strategies that emphasize national ownership over interventions, 4. Depend on flexible funding that allows for agile and sequenced approaches to programming, 5. Use evidence and analytics to supplement experiments, learning, adaptation, and accountability, 6. Change course if partners do not deliver on their commitments, and 7. Adjust political objectives if there is a lack of investment in a collective understanding from local political partners
Key Insights	The definition of stabilization outlined in the SAR calls for intervening forces to create an environment that allows for "legitimate authorities" to gain control of a conflict and establish some level of peace. The mention of legitimate authorities and structures prompts questions about whose opinion of legitimacy during conflict matters most. When considering state-society legitimacy, questions around legitimate power and systems that are inclusive and responsible to all groups also need consideration. Another key element of stabilization as defined by the U.S. included collaboration between civilian and military personnel. This framework, in tandem with expert interviews, has indicated that stabilization work that focuses on the "triple nexus" (humanitarian, development, and peace approaches) is completely crowded and dominated by counterterrorism and military interventions which fundamentally undermine humanitarian actors. The methods with which military interventions are conducted have a huge impact on what broader, humanitarian interventions can do. A sustainable approach would find more context specific ways of operating across the triple nexus. In practice, this means including local stakeholders on military planning to the greatest possible extent allowable and realizing in many cases that terrorist groups are often a manifestation of the conflict, not the cause. More practically, our interviews have indicated that military actors are not good at sharing information. This subsequently hampers the ability of stabilization efforts to be coordinated. One possible approach to resolve this problem is embracing the triple nexus approach with the aim of creating a more coherent approach between the military and non-military actors so as to prevent stabilization efforts from becoming siloed.

Source	● From SAR to GFA: The ABCs of Conflict Prevention and Stabilization ● Daphne McCurdy and Nick Lopez ● Irregular Warfare Podcast, April 23, 2021 (Modern War Institute and Princeton

	University's Empirical Studies of Conflict Project)
Summary & Context	As a supplemental framework to the SAR, the Global Fragility Act (GFA) organized the principles outlined in the SAR into law. Passed in December 2019, the GFA will allot funds to evidence-based approaches to conflict prevention and stabilization. Partisan in nature, stabilization efforts developed and tested under the GFA, the U.S. government intends to pilot new strategies in five countries, some with ongoing conflicts and others where concerns of conflict escalation exist. Highlighting the need for the U.S. to be realistic about how long stabilization takes, the GFA suggests that ten-year intervention plans that align development, governance, and security are appropriate.
Key Insights	Both the SAR and GFA mention the need for strong linkages between diplomacy, development, and defense. Clear lines of communication between these three elements of stabilization can allow for collaborative course corrections and a reversal of bureaucratic competition. The U.S. State Department, USAID, and DoD must learn each other's mandates and what support each has available to resolve challenges. They can use this information to their collective advantage.

Source	**Reading 1:** ● The Effect of 'Stabilization' in the Mandates and Practice of UN Peace Operations ● Alexander Gilder ● Netherlands International Law Review Volume 66 (2019) **Reading 2:** ● Defining the Boundaries of UN Stabilization Missions ● Aditi Gorur ● Simpsons Center (2016)
Summary & Context	When analyzing the United Nation (UN) and its peacekeeping operations, there is an agreement among practitioners and academics that the UN Security Council lacks a comprehensive understanding of the term and has yet to embrace guidelines on what activities a stabilization mission includes that make it different from other UN peace operations Comparing the UN to the U.S., United Kingdom (U.K.), and France, Gilder, and Gorur walk readers through how the definitions of stabilization among the three UN Security Council members are similar and different. Highlighting that three Council members possess shared experiences from stabilization efforts undertaken in Iraq and Afghanistan, Glider highlights the following interpretations of stabilization for the U.S. and UK: 1. The U.S. - an intervening power crushes a rebellion and aids a legitimate authority to gain a "monopoly on the use of force" so that the legitimized power can defend its civilians. (Gilder) 2. The U.K. - a united force of civilian and military personnel cooperate to "protect

	and promote legitimate political authority, ... reduce violence, reestablish security and prepare for longer-term recovery." (Gilder) For France, Gorur highlights the following: 3. France - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs leads a political process that aims to stop violence and restore the "minimum viability of the state." (Gorur) Considering all the interpretations above, Gorur proposed a working definition for stabilization that the UN can adopt. He notes, "The term stabilization in the context of UN peacekeeping should be defined as **supporting the transfer of territorial control from spoilers to legitimate authorities**. This definition of stabilization serves to distinguish it from other types of peacekeeping missions. **It is a political outcome and therefore it is a whole-of-mission objective and not an activity driven by the military component**. The proposed **definition also avoids naming the host-state government as the actor to whom territorial control is to be transferred, leaving room for situations where other actors (such as legitimate opposition parties or non-state actors) may be better placed to assume control**."
Key Insights	Supporting a legitimate authority to gain power, stabilization defined by the U.S., U.K., and France is partisan. All three definitions require the intervening actor to determine who or what the legitimate authority is that they wish to support and operate alongside what is typically State forces. The U.S. calls for stabilization efforts that are resilient to the causes of conflict. The U.K. definition of stabilization focuses on a holistic approach of merging civilian and military-led efforts to achieve long-term recovery. France calls for a return to normalcy through reconstruction. Building capacities of legitimate forces, all three interpretations of stabilizations call for stakeholders to re-establish contain spoilers to conflict, the rule of law and defend civilians. Gorur's proposed definition of stabilization requires that interventions ensure identification of the most suitable authority to seize control of an area and realize stabilization linked to a political strategy. Although intervening forces may consider the State as the appropriate authority to take command, questions of accountability deserve consideration.

Source	• Give War a Chance (1999) • Edward Luttwak • Foreign Affairs
Summary & Context	War causes damage but it also allows actors to resolve disputes. Stabilization efforts often result in protracted conflicts that would have resolved more quickly had war been permitted to continue. If they wish to reduce damage, the United States and other powers should avoid intervening in other states' conflicts and instead focus on being

	prepared to provide aid, emigration, and refugee care to those impacted by wars.
Key Insights	1. Stabilization efforts paradoxically create a less stable international environment because they prevent political disputes from being resolved. As it is wars generally occur when other means for resolving a dispute are not workable (this undermines the argument for stabilization and negotiation) 2. Luttwark argues that war ultimately leads to peace, whereas stabilization and interventions lead to long drawn out conflicts.

THEME 2 - Stabilization Problems & Failures

Many problems and failures experienced by stabilization interventions arise because of the changing nature of armed groups and the narrow conception of them by interveners; attempts to work with proscribed armed groups; and the disordered efforts to implement humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP) interventions in tandem with military interventions.

In reference to the changing nature of armed groups, stabilization actors must consider the type and classification of the armed group(s) they engage. Even though there are various armed groups, their underlying reasons for undertaking violence are similar and generally fit under a "greed and grievance" framework.

Working with proscribed armed groups—generally, those that are sanctioned or labeled as terrorist groups—while undergoing stabilization interventions is complex, and doing so requires thoughtful evaluation and consideration. In order to foster dialogue and encourage stabilization efforts, the DoS could, in cooperation with the executive branch, undertake the following recommendations: "1) evaluation of the effectiveness of current proscription efforts; 2) improve the transparency of the designation process (so that groups understand why a prescription assignment was undertaken); and 3) create separate legal and political compartments or exemption protocols that facilitate mediation and constructive engagement with proscribed groups."[119]

In reference to the disordered efforts to implement humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP) interventions in tandem with military interventions, stabilization actors including the U.S. DoS should consider this set of recommendations as developed in a UN review of working in complex environments: "develop a greater civilian capacity to work on addressing conflict drivers; invest in new skill sets and more flexible approaches to working with communities; include community security as a significant component; and exercise caution before designating conflict parties as 'aggressors', 'terrorists' or 'violent extremists.'"[120] Furthermore, our interviewees have highlighted the lack of information sharing between the military and stabilization actors as a challenge. Any efforts that can be undertaken to mitigate this difficulty should be enacted.

[119] Dudouet, "Mediating Peace with Proscribed Armed Groups."
[120] McAleenan, "Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence."

Source	● Mediating Peace with Proscribed Armed Groups ● Veronique Dudouet ● United States Institute of Peace: Special Report
Summary & Context	BLUF: "Current incentive structures and decision-making processes within governments performing stabilization interventions do not give adequate weight to the value and potential benefits of nonmilitary engagement. This impairs states' and organizations' abilities to move toward potentially lasting peace agreements with non-state armed groups (NSAGs)." Instead of hard power-power interactions, states should consider soft-power engagement which can include humanitarian engagement, dialogue, negotiation, meditation, facilitation and capacity building. Engagement with NSAGs is possible and desirable when the following 5 conditions are met: 1. The conflicting parties are interested in a political solution. 2. The parties are seen as the legitimate representatives of their community. 3. The parties have the capacity to deliver a ceasefire agreement. 4. The parties can generate behavioral change. 5. National and/or allied strategic interests favor engagement. There are some instances where the positions and demands of an armed group are so radical or outrageous that there is little to no possibility of reaching an agreement. Engagement is not recommended in these instances. Instead of being a highly focused proscription regime, the US has an opportunity to relax that tendency and engage with armed groups for humanitarian or peacemaking purposes.
Key Insights	Working with proscribed armed groups (generally, those that are sanctioned or labeled as terrorist groups) while undergoing stabilization interventions is incredibly complicated but needs to be given thoughtful evaluation and consideration. In order to foster dialogue and encourage stabilization efforts, the DoS could, in cooperation with the executive branch, undertake the following recommendations: 1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of current prescription efforts 2. Improve the transparency of the designation process (so that groups understand why a prescription assignment was undertaken) 3. Create separate legal and political compartments or exemption protocols that facilitate mediation and constructive engagement with proscribed groups. "The policy interests and preferences of key strategic allies, such as foreign governments and the United Nations, as well as concerning communities, such as domestic or foreign NGOs, are an additional decision-making factor." Any stabilization

	efforts need to make a conscious and thorough decision to factor these into their overall strategy.

Source	● United Nations Peace Operations in Complex Environments: Charting the Right Course ● Larry Attree, Jordan Street, and Luca Venchiarutti ● Saferworld: Preventing Violent Conflict. Building Safer Lives
Summary & Context	There are five main shortcomings in using counter-terrorism and militarised stabilization efforts in interventions. They are: 1. "The over-reliance on military methods without a wider peace strategy. 2. The use of military force – and support for it – which exacerbates violence and grievances while reducing scope for dialogue. 3. Support for abusive, corrupt and exclusive 'partners', which prolongs and worsens conflict. 4. The perverse effects of efforts to build the security capacities of host states for CT and stabilisation. 5. The neglect of long-term, inclusive political dialogue and conflict transformation efforts." In an effort to curtail these problems, "counterving/preventing violent extremism (C/PVE)" have been advocated and used, however, they are also flawed for a variety of reasons such as "oversimplifying conflicts and creating gaps in response strategies." These approaches create areas of risk for the UN, namely hurting the UN's credibility, potentially prolonging conflits, and making the UN a conflict party. To mitigate these risks, the UN needs explicit norms and boundaries to guide it's engagement in complex environments. These include but are not limited to: "separating itself from the military strategies and approaches of all parties to the conflict; excercising extreme caution when providing funds, logistical and operational support, and training to other military missions; develop greater civilian capacity to work on addressing the conflict; and strongly discouraging the UN Security Council members from instrumentalizing UN peace operations to further their own counter-terror strategic interests."
Key Insights	The responsibility of the UN while working in complex environments and in coordination with member states is precarious and unpredictable. This is especially the case when the UN is attempting to work with states that are performing military, CT, or C/PVE interventions. To navigate the complexities of working in these spaces the UN needs to acknowledge the risk associated with doing so and consider the recommendation of this paper. The paper's recommendation should also be considered for stabilization interventions undertaken by any state, organization, or regime, especially if they are working in coordination with the UN. The recommendations that are most applicable in these cases

	are: "develop greater civilian capacity to work on addressing conflict drivers; invest in new skill sets and more flexible approaches to working with communities; include community security as a significant component; and exercise caution before designating conflict parties as 'aggressors', 'terrorists' or 'violent extremists'"

Source	• The Challenge of Non-State Armed Groups (Introduction) • Keith Krause & Jennifer Milliken • Contemporary Security Policy (Journal)
Summary & Context	The label of "non-state" in reference to non-state armed groups (NSAGs) is too narrow and limits one's understanding of the variety of roles and functions that NSAGs can perform. With that being the case, it would be wise to consider NAGs under five difference categories: "(1) insurgent groups; (2) militant groups; (3) urban gangs and warlords; (4) private militias, police forces and security companies; and (5) transnational groups." These groups need to be considered in stabilization efforts for three reasons: 1. New types of organized violence are "now more significant than those created by internal wars." 2. Analyses of armed groups indicate that, "the dynamics that fuel the resort to violence do not necessarily differ across different types of armed groups." 3. "There are good reasons to explore the adequacy of contemporary inter- national legal frameworks in addressing the humanitarian and human rights obli- gations (or not) of different kinds of non-state armed groups." Paul Collier's "greed and grievance" hypothesis should also be considered in assessing NAGs. The greed argument posits that elites consider engaging in violence for financial gain. The grievance argument posits that NAGs engaged in violence over perceived injustices along ethnic or nationalist identities. While major civil wars may be less frequent, NAGs are able to keep armed conflicts going at a low-intensity level. We must therefore have a thorough understanding and analysis of the types of armed groups.
Key Insights	1. The nature of armed groups is changing and must therefore be considered when undertaking stabilization interventions. The type of armed group that the DoS or other parties are engaging with is crucial. 2. Building up a state's capacity is crucial to stabilization efforts. Specifically, this means maintaining the legitimate use of force and the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the population. 3. Despite there being a variety and differentiation of the types of armed groups, their underlying reasons for undertaking war do not differ that much: greed & grievance. 4. Exploring the strength of international legal frameworks to address the humanitarian and human rights obligations of these different kinds of armed

	groups could have wider implications for stabilization interventions (especially if paired with some of the other readings concerning proscription and clarification of proscription circumstances to the armed groups.)

THEME 3 - Statebuilding

Recent decades have demonstrated that state-building as a policy is ineffective. When deployed as part of stabilization it is generally designed instead of customized to the specific needs of the place of interest.

Following the end of the Cold War attention shifted from great power competition to interests in failed states and defending against asymmetric threats such as those from so-called "rogue states" or non-state actors. This attention accelerated rapidly after 9/11 and influenced the United States' justification for increased global involvement.

Some postcolonial theorists also view state-building as a form of neo-imperialism. They point out that its approach determines the weakness of countries based on the Western conception of a State. Other experts however suggest that fear of appearing imperialist has unproductively driven stabilization actors to try and keep their interventions apolitical despite the intrinsically political nature of state-building.

Source	• The Rise and Fall of the Failed State Paradigm: A Requiem For a Decade of Distraction • Michael Mazaar • Foreign Affairs (2014)
Summary & Context	The rise of the failed-state paradigm is contingent on the decline of great power competition accompanying the end of the Cold War. It was sustained by the narrative that in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, new issues like terrorism, regional chaos, crime, disease and global warming are more visible and harder to ignore. For the author, however, these issues provide the U.S. with an excuse not to reduce its global role and reassess the prevailing consensus for continued primacy by giving a purpose to the surplus of national power the U.S. enjoyed after the Cold War. 9/11 contributed to the **elevation of this paradigm as a bipartisan foreign policy consensus** ⇒ War on Terror + Bush in 2002 National Security Strategy "*America is now threatened less by conquering states than by failing ones. Menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few*." 1. Francis Fukuyama also wrote in his book State-Building (2002) "*Weak and failing states have arguably become the single most important problem for international order*" Beyond the many practical challenges to state-building ("l*ong, difficult, expensive with success demanding an open-ended commitment to a messy, violence and confusing endeavours*" pp115), the author identifies a number of strategic flaws of state-building and stabilization: 1. **Unclear definitions and too many sets of different criteria** resulted in a

	general approach when tailored and context-specific solutions were needed 2. **Threats like terrorism and organized crime were never unique to weak states**; nor would state-building campaigns necessarily help mitigate them a. Most effective terrorists tend to be products of middle class (Germany, France, Saudi Arabia), not impoverished citizens of failed states b. Terrorist groups can easily shift bases of operation c. Scholar Stewart Patrick (2006) notes "*What is striking is how little empirical evidence underpins these assertions and policy developments. Analysts and policymakers alike have simply presumed the existence of a blanket connection btw state weakness and threats to the national security of dev countries and have begun to recommend and implement policy responses*" 3. **Misplaced confidence about the mission's feasibility**. Past decade of stabilization missions in Afghanistan & Iraq show that there are simply no proven methods for generating major social, political, economic or cultural change relatively quickly. 4. **Post-colonial concerns have pushed external powers to privilege apolitical and technical approaches to stabilization despite the inherent political exercise of building a state. However, in** Michael Wesley's words,"the *intention of remaining aloof from politics while concentrating on technical reforms has proved unrealistic*" (2008). 5. **Dependency paradox that impedes reform:** outside interventions undermine internal motives for reform by transferring responsibility for a better future from local leaders to external actors 6. **State-building obsession distorted the U.S.' sense of its central purpose** and role in global politics. Effective diplomacy vs stabilization tradeoff has diminished U.S. diplomatic creativity and distracted US officials from responding appropriately to changes in global landscape.
Key Insights	The U.S. engagement in stabilization interventions is based on a number of assumptions that ought to be replaced by more strategic assessments of stakes and interests at play. First off, when considering the need for an intervention mission in a given conflict theatre, the U.S. should assess the level of threat that the conflict raises to its strategic interests, rather than presume the existence of a blanket connection between state weakness and threats to U.S. national security. The U.S. should relativize the threat that they perceive to be emanating from failed states in the sense that they are rarely unique to these countries and therefore can hardly justify intervention in those countries. For example, most effective terrorists tend to be products of the middle class of developed countries like Germany, France and Saudi Arabia rather than impoverished citizens of failed states. Second, should strategic stakes warrant intervention, there is no evidence suggesting that intervention operations can feasibly generate the expected social, political, economic or cultural changes. This has often been because intervening powers, out of postcolonial concerns, have privileged apolitical, technical and one-size-fits-all approaches despite the inherent political exercise of building a state. Doing so, U.S. interventions have undermined internal motives for reform by transferring responsibility for a better future from local leaders to external actors - a process referred to as the

	dependency paradox. Instead of investing efforts in technical approaches to state-building, the U.S. ought to regain diplomatic agility and creativity.

Source	● The State of the Art on the Art of State Building ● Michael Wesley ● Brill (2008)
Summary & Context	1. Author's thesis: Western state-building interventions stem from **postcolonial conceptions on the nature of the state in the developed world**. Some critics even refer to "postmodern imperialism". 2. The concern for fragile states rose with the doctrine of "negative sovereignty," coined by Robert Jackson and found a rationale in the "theory of Modernization". The underlying **expectation was that with the requisite resources and advice, economic development and political matury would emerge in postcolonial states**. 3. 9/11 reinforced the **perception that poorly governed states constituted weakness in the fabric of international society** and that developed world had considerable self-interests in helping strengthen their governance capacities a. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), "*the events of September 11, 2001 profoundly demonstrated the global reach of state failure*."15 4. As moved through stages of concern about economic management, quality of democracy, protection of human rights, and standards of governance in dev states, **intervention became more intrusive and insistent**: from advice to aid conditionality to direct physical intervention. 5. **Increasingly complex mandates**, from disarmament and demobilization of combatants to overseeing elections, post conflict reconstruction, and supporting development of state institution and eventually the "right to protect" (R2P) in cases of humanitarian crises
Key Insights	1. An important part of the literature highlights western state-building interventions as a postcolonial endeavour ("postmodern imperialism"), with western-centric preconceptions about the nature of the state. 2. The paradigm of failing-state reached momentum with 9/11, which reinforced the **perception that poorly governed states constituted weakness in the fabric of international society** and that developed world had considerable self-interests in helping strengthen their governance capacities.

THEME 4 - Geopolitics and U.S. Grand Strategy

After the collapse of the Soviet Union-U.S. grand strategy became too comprehensive. Perceiving it had achieved an ideological victory the United States became activist in attempting to advance liberalization globally. This trend resulted in an enlarged strategic scope which led to misled ventures such as the Iraq War.

The U.S. perception of expansive interests has led other powers such as China, Russia, and Iran to feel the need to balance against U.S. activism. The contemporary U.S. grand strategy needs to recalibrate. The unipolar moment is over and power has become more dispersed. In light of the emerging competitive nature of geopolitics the United States should minimize its conception of national security threats. The United States will need to continue addressing issues such as terrorism, but it should also recognize that they do not threaten U.S. soveriegnty.

Source	● The Case for restraint ● Barry R. Posen ● The American Interest (2007)
Summary & Context	1. Posen argues that the U.S. has grown incapable of moderating its ambitions in international politics. Since the collapse of Soviet power, it has pursued a grand strategy that he calls "liberal hegemony," one that Posen sees as unnecessary, counterproductive, costly, and wasteful. 2. Unipolarity, hegemony and the feeling of ideological triumph **have skewed the American security-policy debate toward activism**. The bi-partisan foreign policy consensus that has prevailed over the past three decades is henceforth unsustainable. 3. Through interventions, the U.S. is 1. exposing itself to hostile narratives, 2. encouraging other nations to concert their action in view of balancing U.S. hegemony (Russia, China, Turkey, Iran), 3. causing allies to distance themselves from the U.S., by fear of being drawn into policies inimical to their interest.
Key Insights	1. Now that the global distribution of power is more diffused, U.S. policymakers ought to be more cautious about the projects they choose. a. "*The United States needs to be more reticent about the use of military force; more modest about the scope for political transformation within and among countries; and more distant politically and militarily from traditional allies*" (p.7) 2. This entails **revising assessment of threats**, especially because many of the threats that the U.S. Grand Strategy encompasses **do not actually challenge U.S. sovereignty**: a. Rise of Islamic jihadist groups can better be explained by conditions of global disorder than by the interpretation of religious texts.Yet it is American power and actions over the years that have largely contributed to cause these conditions: i. « *By overstressing offensive action in Iraq, and in particular by occupying an Arab country, the United States has added credence to the al-Qaeda story in the Arab world and done a terrible job of telling its own* ». b. **Threat of terrorist groups should not be minimized, but neither should it be exaggerated**: will not bring down the United States. c. U.S. have engaged in preventive war against new nuclear weapons states for fear that they will give nuclear weapons to terrorists, or simply lose them (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq) - however ought to be

	able to **come up with a better answer than an open-ended series of costly preventive wars** & should also adopt a **more measured view of the risks of nuclear proliferation** 3. If more activism has not produced better policy, what is to be done? The United States should try doing less: It should pursue **a grand strategy of restraint**. Less is not nothing, however, meaning in essence that the **United States should conceive ways to shape rather than to control international politics.**

THEME 5 - The Changing Nature of Armed Conflict

The nature of conflict is changing and this must be acknowledged when considering stabilization interventions. Any actor attempting stabilization interventions should consider the nature of organized crime, the internationalization of civil wars, and the growing presence of jihadist groups.

In reference to organized crime, stabilization actors, including the U.S. DoS, need to consider how they can mitigate its existence and proliferation. One way to do this may be by offering alternative methods of making a living so that individuals are less inclined to undertake war-making as a livelihood. This amounts to development and humanitarian approaches over military approaches.

In reference to the internationalization of civil wars, it goes without saying that interveners must factor in allies and opposing forces and create a plan to factor in their positions and underlying interests. This can include exploratory and direct talks with said actors. A policy of honest diplomacy will likely result in the greatest dividends towards stabilization.

In reference to the increase of jihadist groups, this is a problem that will need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The C/PVE frameworks may be considered but must be used with extreme caution and forethought as they have the ability to prolong the conflict.

The fact that most new civil wars since 2003 are occurring in Muslim-majority countries should move the U.S. DoS to place significant consideration on how they will engage with Muslim-majority countries in attempting stabilization interventions. If the U.S. DoS is pursuing its own interests in stabilization efforts it may be diametrically opposed to the ideologies that are sought by populations in Muslim-majority countries. If this is the case, the DoS needs to consider new approaches that don't call for the direct implementation of liberal democracy U.S. DoS but instead something else. What that "something else" is must be determined.

The rise and use of the internet is also a highly significant dynamic. If the internet enables rebel groups to sustain themselves for longer and promote the spread of civil war, stabilization interventions need to factor the internet into their overall approaches.

Source	• Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict • Sebastian von Einsiedel • United Nations University Centre for Policy Research

Summary & Context	"Conflicts are becoming more intractable and less conducive to traditional political settlements mainly due to three developments: 1. Organised crime has emerged as a major stress factor that exacerbates state fragility, undermines state legitimacy, and often lowers the incentives of armed groups to enter political settlements; 2. The internationalisation of civil wars tends to make them deadlier and longer; 3. The growing presence of jihadist groups in conflict settings complicates peacemaking and fosters a "hunker down and bunker up" mentality among international actors, especially UN peace operations, on the ground." "Data suggests that preventing minor conflicts from escalating into major ones will be an important challenge for the UN and other international actors in the coming years." "The 2011 World Development Report (WDR), which reflected extensive research on causes of civil war, highlighted the central importance of weak institutions as the key structural cause that – particularly in combination with political and economic exclusion – create the conditions for conflict and violence.7 Quantitative studies also indicate that countries that have experienced regime change, sudden changes in the degree of democracy, or recent independence are particularly conflict prone (factors that featured variously in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, CAR, DRC, and Ukraine)." Referring to organized crime, the issues are as follows: conflict economies offer an incentive to rebel groups to maintain violent conflict; lootable resources can make conflicts go on for longer; "the growth of illicit markets has lowered entry barriers to the market of organized violence"; and "the political economy of conflict can increase violence against civilians." Conflicts are becoming more internationalized: "In 1991, 4% of conflicts were internationalised according to this definition; by 2015, that number had multiplied ten-fold to 40%." "A significant part of the changing nature of conflict is the growing influence of jihadist groups in modern conflict settings." As a result of these trends, the report asks the UN and other international conflict resolution actors the following questions: 1. How is the changing nature of conflict affecting mediation and preventive diplomacy? 2. What knowledge gaps exist when it comes to understanding the drivers of violent extremism, including with regards to youth who join extremist groups? 3. What is the impact of conducting peacekeeping in settings with (a) strong influence of extremist armed groups, and/or (b) deeply entrenched criminal networks? 4. How have changing conflict dynamics affected the ability of sanctions to

	prevent and manage conflict actors? 5. How has the changing nature of armed conflict impacted stabilization and institution-building approaches?
Key Insights	The nature of conflict is changing and must be acknowledged and considered when considering stabilization interventions. Based on the information presented in this report, any actor attempting a stabilization intervention should consider the nature of organized crime, the internationalization of civil wars, and the growing presence of jihadist groups. In reference to organized crime, stabilization actors, including the DoS, need to consider how they can mitigate its existence and proliferation. One way to do this may be by offering alternative methods of making a living so that individuals are less inclined to undertake warmaking as a livelihood. This amounts to a development and humanitarian approach over a military one. In reference to the internationalization of civil wars, it goes without saying that interveners must factor in allies and opposing forces and create a plan to factor in their positions and underlying interests. This can include exploratory and direct talks with said actors. A policy of honest diplomacy will likely result in the greatest dividends towards stabilization. In reference to the increase of jihadist groups, this is a problem that will need to be addressed on a case by case basis. The C/PVE frameworks may be considered but they need to be used with extreme caution and forethought as they have the ability to prolong conflict.

Source	● The New New Civil Wars ● Barbara F. Walter ● School of Global Policy and Strategy
Summary & Context	"Post-2003 civil wars are different from previous civil wars in three striking ways. First, most of them are situated in Muslim-majority countries. Second, most of the rebel groups fighting these wars espouse radical Islamist ideas and goals. Third, most of these radical groups are pursuing transnational rather than national aims. Innovations in information and communication technology are currently manifesting themselves in the rise of global Jihadi groups in the Muslim world, but we can expect them to be exploited by other groups as well." The "new new" civil wars are troubling for three reasons: 1. "They have the characteristics of wars that tend to last a long time." 2. "These wars are likely to resist negotiated settlements." 3. "These wars are occurring in regions where neighboring countries have many of

	the risk factors associated with civil war and are, therefore, in danger of contagion. Jordan, Bahrain, Algeria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Egypt all have a history of authoritarian regimes practicing exclusionary politics, which are known for corrupt and bad governance" The "new new" civil wars also have the following attributes: "religion and ideology appear to play a predominant role" and "the internet appears to influence behavior in novel and unexplored ways." There were three waves of civil wars: the first wave was the result of the end of colonialism and the Cold War rivalry between the U.S. and the USSR; the second wave was a period of retrenchment in which many civil wars were resolved in agreements; the third wave began in 2003 when civil wars began to increase and features the attributes described up to this point. However, "What distinguishes this third wave of civil wars from previous waves is that it is the first to be fought in a new information environment that rewards a more extreme and global orientation." Six key trends arise as a result: 1. "First, information technology is likely to benefit individual citizens (especially citizens in highly repressive countries) more than political elites in those countries." 2. "Second, global Internet campaigns are likely to make it more feasible for rebel groups to form, leading to civil wars with a greater number of warring factions." 3. "Third, the new information environment also means that rebel groups are likely to have greater incentives to frame their objectives in global terms—something we have observed with the proliferation of Sunni groups." 4. "Fourth, the Internet is likely to make it possible for rebel groups to sustain themselves longer in war." 5. "Fifth, the Internet is likely to promote the spread of civil war. Research has found that civil wars produce a contagion effect; the outbreak of one civil war increases the risk that civil war will break out in neighboring countries." 6. "Finally, the Internet could potentially eliminate the restraints that limit the abuse of local citizens by rebel and government leaders."
Key Insights	The fact that most new civil wars since 2003 are occuring in Muslim-majority countries should move the DoS to place signficant consideration on how they will engage with Muslim-majority countries in attempting stabilization interventions. This brings us to larger themes such as the Fukuyam's *The End of History* and Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*. All of which is to say that if the DoS is pursuing its own interests in stabilization efforts they may be diametrically opposed to the ideologies that are sought by populations in Muslim-majority countries. If that's the case, the DoS needs to consider new approaches that don't call for the direct implementation of liberal democracy but instead something else. What that "something else" is to to be determined.

	The rise and use of the internet is also a highly significant dynamic. If the internet both enables rebel groups to sustain themselves for longer and promote the spread of civil war, stabilization interventions need to factor the internet into their overall approaches. Exactly how that is done needs to be given careful consideration.

THEME 6 - Prevention

The expensive failures of stabilization interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, etc. call for renewed attention and investments in conflict prevention. If the full-scale post-conflict intervention has proved unsuccessful and is losing momentum as a doctrine, conflicts' increasing intensity and human costs mean that the U.S. can hardly turn its back on violence prevention altogether. However, investing further in prevention will require that policymakers overcome the political challenge that selling preventive action to constituents

In future efforts of prevention, the U.S. should capitalize on Regional Organizations' comparative advantages when it comes to conflict prevention. Not only do these organizations suffer from less bureaucratic inertia than larger international organizations, they also present a better grasp of the significance of escalating violence, given their proximity, and greater legitimacy in their own region. Their successes can and have been achieved, without overt or credible use of force. Finally, it would be wiser to identify occasional successes rather than focus on absolute failures.

Source	• Is Prevention the Answer? • Charles T. Call and Susanna P. Campbellj, *Is Prevention the Answer?* • The MIT Press (2018)
Summary & Context	1. Frustrating and expensive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq failed to achieve stable peace despite trillions of dollars invested. This contributes to **reduced confidence in post-conflict stabilization, calling for renewed interest in conflict prevention.** 2. Wars in Syria, Yemen, and Libya show the tragedy and enormous human cost of failed violence prevention (the global refugee crisis has warranted a record $23.5 billion in 2017). The end of the Cold War showed a slow decline in the number and intensity of violent conflicts, but they have been rapidly increasing since 2010. 2015 marked the most violent year since 1945, with 101,400 battle deaths. 3. Yet, decision-makers remain reluctant to invest significantly in preventive action, which is harder to sell to their constituents given that potential for escalating violence in prospective crises remains uncertain rather than manifest. 4. The U.S. should recognize the value of preventive action spearheaded by Regional Organizations (ROs), whose greater facility with conflict prevention may be due to three factors: a. **Better grasp of the significance of escalating violence** in a neighboring country, incentivizing them to act more quickly to support or obstruct preventive action. b. **Less bureaucratic inertia** than larger IOs due to smaller

	decision-making bodies c. **Greater legitimacy in their own region** than the UN which, in the past decade, has been increasingly associated with a Western agenda. Translates into possible greater host-government willingness to consent to preventive actions. Example : in 2014, the UN Special Envoy flew into Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, with top officials of ECOWAS and AU the day after President Blaise Compaoré stepped down in the face of protests that threatened mass violence. Collectively spoke for Burkina Faso's immediate neighbors, the broader African continent, and the global community and helped foster a dialogue that eased the crisis and prevented mass violence around the transfer of political power. **It is important to note in this example that there was no overt or credible threat of force.** 1. The U.S. should keep in mind that in faraway civil wars where its vital national security interests are not at stake, the **threat of use of force bears little credibility** given the likelihood that they won't follow through. a. 2. Since 1990/2000s, states and IOs have enhanced their capacities in early-warning, mediation, and peace-building: a. U.S. intelligence has integrated tools for analysis and forecasting of state fragility and political instability, including internal armed conflict and mass atrocities, which are fed into regular reports to senior decision-makers. b. New UN envoys on preventing mass atrocities and regional conflict prevention; qualitative evidence points to their effectiveness in helping defuse crises. 3. Finally, given the numerous barriers facing conflict prevention, intervening states should not aim for overly ambitious aims that they are unlikely to meet - instead, they should aim for more progressive and incremental success.
Key Insights	The expensive failures of stabilization interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya etc. call for renewed attention and investments in conflict prevention. If full-scale post-conflict intervention has proved unsuccessful and is losing momentum as a doctrine, conflicts' increasing intensity and human costs mean that the U.S. can hardly turn its back on violence prevention altogether. However, investing further in prevention will require that policymakers overcome the political challenge that selling preventive action to constituents represents, given the uncertain rather than manifest nature of escalating violence in prospective crises. In future efforts of prevention, the U.S. should capitalize on Regional Organizations' comparative advantages when it comes to conflict prevention. Not only do these organizations have more bureaucratic inertia than larger IOs, they also have a better grasp of the significance of escalating violence, given their proximity, and greater legitimacy in their own region. Their successes have been and can continue to be achieved without overt or credible use of force.

	Finally, intervening states should not aim for overly ambitious aims that they are unlikely to meet - instead, they should aim for more progressive and incremental success.

Case Studies

G5 Sahel

Source	● Defining the Boundaries of UN Stabilization Missions ● Aditi Gorur ● Simpsons Center (2016)
Summary & Context	The UN Security Council launched the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in April 2013. This mission replaced an African Union mission operating in Mali at the time. At the onset of MINUSMA, the goal was to stabilize "key population centers and support for the re-establishment of state authority throughout the country." Interventions under this concept of stabilization included preventing armed groups from conquering lands, "supporting disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform activities." In June 2014, the Council revised the mission's mandates to prioritize the protection of civilians (POC). With this new priority, mission personnel attempted to expand its presence in the North of Mali, implement a peace agreement, and build national military capacities. In 2015 and 2016, the Council authorized new renditions of the mandate. In June 2015, the resolution displayed two interpretations of stabilization. The troops on the ground were tasked with obtaining control over urban centers, while civilians led development project activities. In 2016, the Council included POC as a component of stabilization which only added to the already daunting tasks laid out for peacekeepers.
Key Insights	For the UN, there is no clear guideline as to what stabilization involves. It is a hodge-podge of mandates and tasks that are course-corrected as the situation on the ground unfolds.

Source	● A Course Correction for the Sahel Stabilisation Strategy ● ICG, 2021
Summary & Context	Revisiting the military approach to the Sahel: 1. Key stakeholders have been disappointed with recent failures in the French-led Sahel Stabilisation efforts. 2. The current approach has not resolved the crisis in the Sahel; the anthesis is occurring in whichwe have seen an expansion of violence and terrorist groups proliferating and spreading the conflict further into neighboring countries a. While the initial French operation in 2013 was successful, it resulted in

	a "whack-a-mole" long-term result where a militant group suppressed in one region would re-emerge in others.ns. 3. The current approach is leading to a growing frustration amongst Malian citizens. This is reflected in the two military coups that took place in the past year, and the peaceful manner in which these coups were conducted with very little resistance. 4. Highlights the events occurring around the Pau Summit - where Macron warned that a lack of support for French military would result in their pulling out; however, a doubled-down effort took place, and more troops were committed under the International Coalition for Sahel 5. Operation Barkhane has seen it's successes, destroying several hideouts in the Libtako-Gourma region and killing dozens of identified terrorists; however, advances are often short lived and enemy combatants will appear in several other regions (p. 16) 6. Public consensus amongst western governments supports the operations of the French Military in the Sahel, but an underlying tone of disapproval for the success of the mission has been growing - those who disapprove offer little in terms of alternate solutions. Notable concerns include: a. Ineffective European Union Training Missions in the Sahel (EUTM) are now being purported in neighboring countries, like Burkina Faso. b. Growing fear of a waning support for European troops in the Sahel, as attempts to quell violent extremism is often short lived; credibility of mission integrity is at stake c. U.S. dwindled their support of Operation Barkhane, G5-Sahel, and MINUSMA during the Trump admin. The deaths of 4 Americans in Niger fueled the anti-involvement rhetoric. 7. Alternative solutions: a. A reduction of Western presence - more ownership from African partners for the mission against jihadism. b. Lesser prominence of military intervention c. More support for campaigns specifically targeting corruption, poor governance, and impunity of security forces d. The construction of a more robust AU force e. Support the Sahel with other services, like healthcare and education, instead of investing so much of security; 40% of all funds in the Sahel are spent on Security.
Key Insights	ICG's recommendations on what should be done: 1. Increase Sahelian government's communication strategies with rural people as well as militants 2. Expansion of social services 3. Fiscal reforms a. Military operations can be important, but only if done so with a larger overarching strategy in which military is only one component 4. **The report attributes most of the problematic behavior in the Sahel to poor governance.**

	a. Further underpinned by decades of financial and resource mismanagement b. Local governance needs to adopt a stronger belief in the solutions to the issues; states need to more assertively engage in dispute resolving in conflicted regions, notably Libtako-Gourma.

Source	● Ten things the U.S. Should Do To Combat Terrorism in the Sahel ● Michael Shurkin and Aneliese Bernard ● Texas National Security Review
Summary & Context	1. Despite the presence of Barkhane, terrorist threats have been on the rise in the region, and the issues are continuing to spread to neighboring countries. 2. Operation Barkhane will be ending as a result of the Military coup that occurred in May (2nd one in a year in Mali) - they are cutting the troop forces in half, but their presence will remain. a. Transitioning to Task Force Takuba - **geared more toward training forces, and performing accompany and assist missions.** 3. Vital American interests are not at stake in the Sahel a. However, the growing population can pose enormous threats to the stabilisation of the region and the EU if conflict remains unsuppressed and unaddressed. 4. "One can almost say the same for France, whose enlistment of European militaries serves priorities other than fighting jihadist insurgencies in the Sahel, namely its interest in building and shaping a European defense capability and policy." 5. **Stats:** a. 1 in 4 living in SSA by 2050 b. $1.18 billion price tag for operation Barkhane
Key Insights	**What Can the U.S. do?** 1. Special forces is part of the answer, but what can special forces do? a. Need to understand the degree that terrorists constitute insurgencies and act accordingly. 2. The U.S. should emphasize an improvement of governance, de-emphasize security forces; however, this is exactly what the U.S. is terrible at doing. 3. Not act in isolation: U.S. needs to recognize it is a smaller operational force in the Sahel, and should act to complement the bigger UN and EU operations already in existence. 4. Work with African governments for counter-terrorism (and do so not to simply compete with China/Russia) a. Don't repeat the cold war, and no anti-China rhetoric. China should never even be mentioned 5. Most significant argument: growing population: 1 in 4 people will be living in SSA by 2050.

	a. "All of those people living in poorly developed economies and often fragile states represent tremendous opportunities and spectacular risks for the rest of the globe. In any case, the world has become far too small for America to pretend that what happens in Africa stays in Africa. And it goes without saying that whatever happens in the Sahel will affect the surrounding states in West and Central Africa and beyond."

Other Sources Used/Referenced:

- https://info.publicintelligence.net/FR-TacticalCOIN.pdf
- https://tnsr.org/2020/11/frances-war-in-the-sahel-and-the-evolution-of-counter-insurgency-doctrine/

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Source	● The Use of Force in UN Peacekeeping Operations ● Mats Berdal & David H Ucko ● The RUSI Journal, 2015
Summary & Context	1. This article discusses the shift in the dynamics of UN presence in peacekeeping missions over time. Starting in 1995, the mood had changed in respect to the UN's view on traditional peacekeeping - a reliance on consent, impartiality and minimal use of force - to a more aggressive approach taken (like in DRC with the FRB). 2. The article discusses some arguments toward the incompatibility of aggressive mandates and peacekeeping; however, the more aggressive stance taken by the UN since the early 1990's is reflective of the disasters that occurred in Srebrenica and Rwanda, leading the UN to take a "never again" approach, resulting in a bolstering of UN's capacity for peacekeeping. 3. It summarizes the immense demand more robust and use of force mandates create. More resources and energy need to be placed on troop training, acquisition of weaponry and equipment, specialized military units, etc. Limitations of these agenda items in conjunction with a more aggressive mandate leads to several inefficiencies and a general failure of the United Nations Peacekeeping (UNPK) mission. UNPK has been able to supply these requirements in particular missions (Haiti, for example).
Key Insights	1. Outsourcing military operations to the member states militaries is a way to circumvent the resource shortage experienced in the UN a. Success: RUF (UK Force) in Sierra Leone b. Failure (Cautionary Tale): **Operation Artemis, DRC.** Undermanned and ill-equipped, failed to suppress violence outside of Bunia as a result of their limited scope. 2. Claims robust use of force was successful in overtaking the M23 in DRC **(this is a controversial take, though - it cannot be attributed just to the actions of MONUSCO).** Although this may have been a success, it was only a success in

	small pockets. a. Rwanda was supporting the M23 covertly - it was eventually discovered that Kagame was supporting the M23, which was engaged in numerous war crimes. Mounting international pressure forced Kagame to cease his relationship with the armed group. The subsequent lack of financial and provisional support caused the group to dissipate. The UN will often claim this victory as a result of their actions, but it can be more attributed to mounting international pressure. 3. Bottom line - results of more robust peacekeeping are often mixed, and by themselves they cannot create an environment to effectively address underlying causes of violence.

Source	● The UN Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo ● Major general Patrick Cammaert ● IPI, 2013
Summary & Context	After 14 years of peacekeeping in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the UN decides to establish the first ever intervention brigade, taking an aggressive chapter VII mandate to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in an attempt to end some of the vicious cycles of violence in Eastern DRC and to better protect civilians. This was in response to the UN's utter failure to protect the people of Goma from an M23 overtake that occurred in 2012, despite the presence of 1500 UN troops. Information about the brigade: 1. 1st ever offensive combat force created for neutralizing rebel groups 2. Began deploying troops in May 2013. 3. Created as a result of the primary goal of POC. 4. Goal: "to carry out targeted offensive operations in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner" for **one year** (it's still continuing today) to neutralize armed groups. 5. Labelled as **peace enforcement** (a bit oxymoronic), not peacekeeping **Context:** The DRC has experienced endemic conflict for more than several decades. 5.4 million people died from war-related causes from 1998-2007, and this number has increased since then. The conflict in DRC has been a harbinger for massive human rights atrocities, namely the persistent rape and abuse of women as a tactic of war (to suppress and terrorize the population). 1. The conflict has escalated since the end of the conflict in Rwanda, as many hutus fled west when Kagame regained power 2. Worsened by abysmal infrastructure in the area, and massive amounts of land to patrol and cover 3. Spillover conflicts with neighboring countries, namely Uganda and Rwanda.
Key Insights	Key feedback of the establishment of the Brigade: 1. It may be successful at deterring violence, but the weakness of the Congolese forces is a major issue.

	2. The Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) will always be ineffective if it is not accompanied by a wider strategy for political stability 3. Broader strategy must be driven by national actors in conjunction with regional powers; decision-making should not be coming from UNHQ or member states' own interests. Other Factors that need to be considered: 1. This cannot exist in a silo from the national military; the Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo FARDC has been known for committing their own crimes against humanity - an effective PKO will never exist without accountability and competency of local forces to support the mission. Building the capacity of the FARDC is essential 2. Regional support needs to occur as well; the regional conflict is multifaceted and extremely complex, and the issues cannot be resolved without the cooperation of neighboring countries.

Source	● The Effect of 'Stabilization' in the Mandates and Practice of UN Peace Operations ● Alexander Gilder ● Netherlands International Law Review
Summary & Context	About Stabilization: 1. Stabilization is used in the titles of four different missions, but **there is no UN-wide interpretation of stabilization depending on the mission.** 2. UN impartiality becomes difficult when a mandate calls for the extension of state authority as this expanding state authority is likely to clash with non-state actors. 3. U.S. Definition: intervening force to defeat insurgency, support of domestically owned transition towards peace and the capacity building of a society a. Goal: support the legitimate authority in securing the monopoly on the use of force 4. UK Definition: **protect and promote legitimate political authority**, using a combination of **integrated civilian and military actions** to reduce violence, re-establish security and **prepare for longer-term recovery** by building an **enabling environment for structural stability**.
Key Insights	UN Stabilization and extending state authority: 1. Extending state authority is a significant issue as it bolsters the importance of the state, disregarding alternative communal forms of governance and also rejecting compromise and cooperation with areas of land not controlled by the state. 2. With a historical comprehensive analysis it can be argued that the concept of a "modern state" is an extremely western concept. For example, states in Africa were constructed completely artificially, often dividing clans into separate countries, cutting up land once governed as a single body, disavowing alternative forms of governance and civil cohesion and replacing it with the

	western ideology of governance that isn't always applicable in African countries. As a result of this perspective, it should be noted by those working on stabilization interventions that a reliance on state cooperation is prescriptive and limiting.

Other Sources Used:

- https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/asia-and-africa
- https://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.ab/

Mozambique

Source	• Five Keys to Tackling the Crisis in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado • Thomas P. Sheehy • United States Institute of Peace website
Summary & Context	Mozambique has successfully held numerous elections but due to how little authority subnational governments have and how centralized the government is under the executive there is little protection for, or representation of, minorities. This is particularly because the FRELIMO party has been the ruling party since independence. Some Islamists from outside the country have come into Mozambique especially from Tanzania and to an extent are driving the insurgency, but this may potentially frame the conflict incorrectly as one focused on religion. While many of the leaders of the insurgency are foreigners, most of the supporters are Mozambicans who lack a strong history of religious extremism. This indicates other factors are at play. The government's messaging about the conflict has failed to manage the underlying economic issues that are motivating people to participate. The government has emphasized the involvement of foreign actors/Islamists but not focused on improving the lives of Mozambicans in Cabo Delgado to prevent them from joining.
Key Insights	1. The nature of Mozambique's political structure and the domination of the FRELIMO party have prevented people in Cabo Delgado from settling their grievances in the political sphere. 2. The priorities to resolve the conflict should be a two-pronged approach of 1) quelling the insurgency through conventional military operations, and 2) complimenting these operations through humanitarian missions that focus on tribal and ethnic equity issues 3. Even if the government and its partners manage to eliminate this insurgency there will likely be more if they do not address the structural political issues and allow opposition groups to be more involved in the government.

Source	• Responding to Mozambique's Islamic Insurgency: Will Foreign Military Assistance Make a Difference?

	• Alex Vines • Georgetown Journal of International Affairs
Summary & Context	Outside assistance from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces has borne some fruit in pushing back the insurgency. Mozambican President Nyusi is skeptical about the SADC intervention and given the limits of previous SADC peacekeeping efforts. Affiliation with ISIS is mostly being used out of convenience by the insurgents. Actual affiliation could grow though if it is allowed to remain and develop. The government does not do a good job at delivering services to groups that do not support the FRELIMO party, and the drivers behind insurgency are inequality, poverty, and crime.
Key Insights	1. Stabilization actors (SADC and especially the government) need to improve delivery of services to the population especially those in opposition or part of disadvantaged ethnic groups. 2. The government should not mistake the insurgency as being primarily driven by ISIS but it should be highly cautious of a genuine affiliation with ISIS developing. 3. This is the first SADC non-peacekeeping mission. It may be helpful to use as an example of an external intervention but one originating from the region rather than being Western.

Source	• Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado • International Crisis Group (ICG) Report
Summary & Context	The Mozambican government has been eager to respond militarily to the insurgency but that approach neglects to resolve the underlying problems. President Nyusi was hesitant to accept assistance from SADC because it could create witnesses to illegal activity occurring in Mozambique such as drug trade. President Nyusi appeared to be courting assistance from Rwanda as an alternative option to SADC assistance. Locals in Cabo Delgado are suffering economically in part because they have been left out of gains from development of resources in the area such as natural gas and gems.
Key Insights	1. ICG recommended that Western powers support the government through aid and training but avoid large troop deployments in order to prevent a "quagmire." 2. It is important to cut off ties between the insurgency and international groups such as ISIS or Islamists coming from Tanzania, Somalia, etc. 3. Outside military contractors such as the Russian Wagner Group or the South African Dyck Group have had some success in weakening the rebels but the use of these groups does not help resolve underlying problems and insurgents have demonstrated an ability to bounce back after being hit by these groups.

Source	Reuters reports: ● African Nation to Send Troops to Tackle Mozambique Insurgency (June 2021) ● Southern African Bloc Extends Troop Deployment in Mozambique to Fight Insurgency (Oct 2021)
Summary & Context	In June 2021 SADC nations authorized a deployment of troops to combat the insurgency. The deployment was accepted by President Nyusi who had previously been hesitant about a SADC intervention, but he emphasized that the Mozambique government would continue to have control over the counterinsurgency including the efforts by external forces. In October 2021 SADC states agreed to extend the deployment of troops to continue COIN efforts.
Key Insights	Given that the local government is most familiar with the territory and people it is likely ideal for that government to have primarily control over counterinsurgency operations, however this might not always be feasible to advisable (translation to other conflicts will not be uniform.)

Source	● Children 'Indoctrinated' to Fight for Insurgents in Mozambique ● UNICEF Report
Summary & Context	Violence has mostly prevented UN aid workers from being able to provide relief in Cabo Delgado, but they have recently gained access in some areas. Insurgents are now indoctrinating and arming children as young as 5 years old to fight in the conflict. The children are subject to abduction, violence, and sexual abuse. 730,000 people have been displaced from the conflict and without access to their land are unable to earn a living. 363,000 are predicted to be highly food insecure as of October.
Key Insights	The UNICEF report emphasized the importance that child soldiers be treated as victims. Counterinsurgency efforts, including foreign interventions should aim to reintegrate them into society.

Afghanistan

Source	● Negotiating with the Taliban: Issues and Prospects ● Antonia Giustozzi ● A Century Foundation Report
Summary & Context	"This report attempts to lay out how the Taliban are structured and organized with an eye to assessing the impact of their organization and modus operandi on their willingness to negotiate to reach a political settlement." To do so the author highlights

	the following components of the Taliban: 1. The Taliban is organized on the basis of personal networks focused on charismatic leaders. As a result, the Taliban's ability to wage war depends on the supply of charismatic leaders. 2. Communication within the Taliban greatly depends on the messenger and couriers. This means that the Taliban operates in a largely decentralized manner. 3. Recruitment into the Taliban has been largely clerical. 4. Funding appears to come from the sale of opium and racketeering. 5. The Pakistani army sees the Taliban as a useful tool for it's geopolitical ambitions. 6. It does not appear that the Taliban provides services such as health or education. 7. Despite the above points, some structures of the Taliban began to change in 2009. They appeared to be sensitive to public opinion given that they allowed some women to attend schools. They also made their organizational structure more institutionalized during this time. 8. Finally, ""The Taliban can correctly claim to have been able to inflict growing casualties on the enemy, while maintaining that their own casualties were roughly stable, an indicator of increased military efficiency." The Taliban's demands: 1. Withdrawal of foreign troops. 2. Recognition as a legitimate interlocutor i.e. no longer being referred to as terrorists. 3. A reengineering of the Afghan constitution to allow for more Islamic law and the Islamization of the judiciary. With these conditions and the Taliban's demands, the prospects of a coalition government are as follows: 1. "It is difficult to see how it would be possible to have a functioning government that included representatives of all factions, ranging from the secular progressives to the Taliban." 2. "If the Taliban were to be weakened substantially in another round of fighting, they probably would become more accommodating in their demands, but it seems premature to speculate about this at this stage." 3. Ultimately a coalition government would be unlikely.
Key Insights	1. Engaging with the Taliban in a series of negotiations aimed at stabilization in the country is incredibly difficult for a number of reasons. The primary among them is that they operate in a decentralized nature and their organization structure heavily relies on the personalities of its leaders. Stabilization efforts will need to consider and address these circumstances by ensuring that they have sufficient enough information and resources to deal with the wide variety of leadership personalities as well as work sufficiently up and down the leadership chains among the variety of independently operating cells. 2. Recruitment to the Taliabn is clerical so stabilization work needs to address this.

	3. How the Taliban are funded is unclear, meaning that it is either a dead end for a stabilization strategy or more research needs to be undertaken to develop one. 4. Pakistan needs to be factored into stabilization efforts as they see the Taliban as a useful geopolitical tool. 5. The Taliban will bend to popular support within limits, indicating that effective propaganda among these populations may be more than marginally useful. 6. The demands and objectives of the Taliban appear to be at odds with anything that the State Department would be comfortable with representing what may be an insurmountable problem for stabilization efforts in this case study. 7. Since a coalition government is unlikely it seems like the only way towards a "stable environment" is heavy military engagement in order to weaken the Taliban and bring them to the negotiating table. This in and of itself is not without a myriad of problems itself, namely that further kinetic engagement with the Taliban seems to make the conflict more intractable. The Taliban will be happy to play the waiting game until ISAF forces decide that it is no longer sustainable to continue the war. (This perspective is put with 20/20 hindsight.)

Source	● Talking to the Other Side: Humanitarian Engagement with the Taliban in Afghanistan ● Ashley Jackson & Antonio Giustozzi ● Humanitarian Policy Group
Summary & Context	BLUF: "In Afghanistan, approaches to negotiating humanitarian access, assistance and protection with the Taliban have been largely inconsistent and ad hoc. After 2001, aid agencies enjoyed access to the majority of the country, but access rapidly declined as security began to deteriorate. as Taliban influence expanded and violence increased, aid workers were caught up in hostilities or explicitly targeted." The article then lists the problems that aid agencies can encounter in trying to deliver services. In sum, they are: 1. Aid agency access broadly depends on the discretion and flexibility of local Taliban commanders. This means the rules are fluid and contextualized. 2. Delivery of humanitarian aid is impeded by suspicion of it by Taliban personnel who often cite concern over Western ideas about the role of women and an inability to distinguish between the different aid agencies and/or parts of the UN. 3. "Local elders, an important part of Afghan society and often the decision makers of whether or not aid will be allowed to be delivered may not be as hostile towards the aid agencies as the Taliban but will share many of the Taliban's criticisms: "uneven distribution of aid in favor of more peaceful areas, corruption, and a lack of respect for Afghan culture." 4. "The withdrawal of international troops [which has since happened since this article was written] will bring even greater uncertainty with regard to aid agency access. Findings from this research clearly demonstrate the need for aid agencies to enhance their understanding of this issue and pursue more rigorous

and structured approaches to working in Taliban areas. While engagement with the Taliban presents formidable risks and challenges, it is likely to become increasingly important for those agencies that wish to continue working in Afghanistan."

5. The article then makes a series of recommendations to aid agencies, the UN, donors and their governments, and the Taliban. While they are worthy of being repeated here, for the purposes of our lit review they would be better understood if the recommendations for "aid agencies" were thought of as recommendations for USAID; and if the recommendations for the UN and donors and their governments were thought of as recommendations for the DoS. To that end:
    a. To aid agencies:
        i. Improve internal transparency and openness, particularly between senior management in Kabul and staff at the local level, on the risks, policies and tactics for engagement – directly or indirectly, through 'acceptance' or other approaches – with the Taliban.
        ii. Develop common minimum 'principles of engagement' with anti-government groups. lack of unity and consistency has created confusion and made it more difficult for agencies to work safely in Taliban areas. Such guidelines could substantially improve access negotiations over the long term – if adhered to.
        iii. NGO consortia have played a valuable role in assisting aid agencies to communicate their mandate and to monitor the risks and opportunities for humanitarian engagement with the Taliban. The agency Coordinating body for afghan Relief (aCbaR) should continue to publicly communicate the role and mandate of aid agencies. The Afghan NGO Safety Office (aNSO) has also played a critical role in providing independent analysis and recommendations for NGOs,andshouldcontinuetoprovidethissupport.
    b. To the UN:
        i. UNaMa should develop dialogue with aid agencies about the risks of, and prospects for, political talks on aid agency access. While aid agencies may understandably be wary of sharing their information with political actors, UNaMa should keep aid agencies abreast of any relevant political developments that may affect their work.
        ii. OCHa should do more to develop its information coordination and management. Mapping accessibility and providing greater understanding, even simple mapping of agencies present, local needs and the prospects for intervention, could greatly assist aid agencies in planning appropriate and safe programming.
    c. To donors and their governments:

	i. Provide funding and support for further research on developing approaches on access. Encourage frank and confidential discussions about the risks and prospects of intervention, and provide support and guidance to assist agencies in efforts to maintain and expand access. ii. Provide greater clarity on counter-terror restrictions. Providing clear guidance on engagement with the Taliban would be a positive step.
Key Insights	1. To sum up the article in a sentence: "The picture of aid agency access at present is highly complex, localised and varied." 2. The branches of a stabilization effort need to inform one another. For example, it's hard to stabilize with aid if the ISAF military is targeting leaders. The strategy must be comprehensive. 3. The "failure of aid agencies and donors to support the Taliban government." is in and of itself the problem. As one Taliban leader put it, "'if they want to bring development why didn't they want to bring it in the time of Taliban regime?" This bring us to the larger question of 4. "Women's rights were the most contentious point and were seen as a prime example of what was seen as the morally corrosive implications of Western-defined 'development'. Negotiating on these issues was often seen as a red line." Any stabilization effort working in societies where this is a problem will need to factor this into their approach as it was a major tripping point in the Afghan intervention. 5. The Taliban is not one group but rather a collection of semi-independently operating cells and is personality-dominated. That means any stabilization strategy is required to be the utmost comprehensive i.e. prepared and ambitious enough to have a staff that is large enough and knowledgeable enough to work with a range of personalities simultaneously. It almost should be so daunting in scope that it should appear impossible which it may well be. The positive news on this front is that at the local and individual level, commanders seem more willing to bend the rules. This indicates that such a comprehensive 1:1 approach could be more effective than the one taken even if it is near impossible. a. This approach is called structured engagement: "It is clear, however, that structured engagement in most circumstances, with multiple levels of the Taliban and with the community, provides the best guarantee of security for aid workers and the community. Structured engagement works best where the Taliban are relatively uniform, comprise local residents and have either relatively weak or near-complete control. In areas where such conditions do not exist aid agencies face greater risks and obstacles to access." 6. This quote from a Taliban district commander: "First, U.S. troops should leave our country. but in their withdrawal, arrangements should be made for reconstruction. *In that case, the UN and other countries could carry out reconstruction on the condition that they would not pursue any political or military goals.* Then we could agree to their activities. but with the government

	now and the U.S. in our country, we will not allow them." Brings up an important point of DoS involvement in stabilization operations. The DoS will undoubtedly have a political goal in stabilization efforts and engagement with the Taliban. If the Taliban is diametrically opposed to this, is negotiation/stabilization even possible? 7. Stabilization efforts must address suspicions of aid agencies and work closely with local populations to make clear the differences among them and their goals.

Source	● Dangerous Liaisons with the Afghan Taliban: The Feasibility and Risks of Negotiations ● Matt Waldman ● United States Institute of Peace: Special Report
Summary & Context	While the Taliban's objectives may vary, with little exception, they generally include the following: "Withdrawal of foreign forces; law and order, especially as enforced by ulema (Islamic scholars) against criminals; application of sharia, involving harsher punishments and changes to the Afghan constitution; legitimate exercise of power or Islamic government; conformity with perceived Islamic social rules, involving further constraints on women; political, but possibly not administrative, power; and peace and security." The article then goes on to posit that while the Taliban undertakes actions that are unacceptable, the motivations for performing such actions can be understood. With that being the case, and because counterinsurgency and transition strategies will only get us so far, the Afghan-international coalition should engage in exploratory or direct talks with the Taliban. To do so, confidence building between the parties needs to occur. Confidence can include, "delisting and release of insurgents, amnesty, de-escalation of hostilities, or local cease-fires, but each measure requires careful control and reciprocity. The negotiating process involves major challenges, especially in managing spoilers on all sides. It requires the support, but not excessive influence, of Pakistan and other regional powers." At the same time, these talks should not be rushed and they must not detract from capacity and state building. It must also be taken into account that, "An agreement could threaten human rights and freedoms, especially those of women and girls, and democratization. Talks should therefore involve legitimate representatives of Afghan society, and the process should be reinforced by long-term efforts to promote genu- ine reconciliation between hostile groups." Any agreement must address the underlying causes of the conflict. In sum: "Afghans must broadly regard any political settlement as both inclusive and just; an agreement that does not reflect the aspirations of Afghanistan's different social,

	ethnic, tribal, and other groups or factions, or one that is perceived to trade justice for expediency, is unlikely to endure."
Key Insights	1. Taliban demands are diametrically opposed to western goals so stabilization with them is going to be solely through aid which they have also guaranteed will not really assert western influence unless you get creative (i.e. separation of women) so that's how you have to stabilize in those areas. 2. Confidence building towards stabilization can occur through delisting. 3. This quote: "However, this process should not lead to neglecting efforts to build the capacity and legitimacy of the state; a rush to negotiate would be self-defeating. Moreover, the goal should not be a quick deal between power holders, but a settlement that reflects the will and aspirations of the nation." is not really sustainable because the Taliban will always be spoilers because their goals are "the withdrawal of foreign forces and establishment of sharia." 4. The make-up of the Taliban as far as an organization is too splintered to prevent spoilers. Propaganda towards stabilization would have to reach every level from commander to fighter. 5. Key question: if you can't negotiate from a position of strength as was desired by the US forces, what do you do when it comes to stabilization? 6. Strategies for dealing with spoilers must be developed BEFORE a stabilization effort is undertaken.

Appendix B: Interviewee list

Anonymous, US Government Employee

Stephen Biddle, Professor at SIPA, Columbia University; Part of General Stanley McChrystal's Initial Strategic Assessment Team in Kabul, 2009

Arthur Boutellis, Stabilization Expert, International Peace Institute

John Cockell, Head of Strategic Planning at MINUSMA

Richard de la Falaise, Head of MONUSCO's stabilization program

Pierre-Joseph Givre, Chef Etat Major MINUSMA

Richard Gowan, UN Director at Crisis Group

Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Director, Kent Program on Conflict Resolution at SIPA, Columbia University

Georgia Jewett, Stabilization Advisor, Office of African Affairs

Josie Kaye, Researcher on Stabilization Issues

Chris Kennedy, Foreign Affairs Officer, Advanced Analytics

Youssef Mahmoud, IPI Senior Advisor

Dino Mahtani, Deputy Director for Africa, International Crisis Group; Authored ICG's report on Mozambique

Ronnie Shamberger, Stabilization Operations Analyst, U.S. Central Command

Michael Shurkin, Director of Global Programs; Former CIA and RAND Senior Political Scientist

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