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ADVISING WAR: LIMITED INTERVENTION IN CONFLICT

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Contents

List of Tables v

List of Figures vi

List of Acronyms vii

Acknowledgements viii

Abstract x

1 Introduction 1
- 1.1 Summary of argument and contributions . . . 4
- 1.2 Existing literature on military advisors . . . 8
  - 1.2.1 Who are military advisors? . . . 9
  - 1.2.2 Advisors as technocrats . . . 11
  - 1.2.3 Advisors as intelligence gatherers . . . 16
  - 1.2.4 Advisors as warrior-diplomats . . . 16
- 1.3 The political role of military advisors . . . 18
  - 1.3.1 Conflicts of interest between interveners and proxies . . . 19
  - 1.3.2 Advisors as a means of influence . . . 21
- 1.4 Plan of the dissertation . . . 24

2 A Formal Model of Conflict Delegation and Monitoring 27
- 2.1 Model . . . 33
  - 2.1.1 Path of Play . . . 39
  - 2.1.2 Payoffs . . . 40
- 2.2 Analysis . . . 42
- 2.3 Discussion . . . 45
  - 2.3.1 Choosing proxy war when interests diverge . . . 45
  - 2.3.2 Monitoring . . . 52
  - 2.3.3 Model extensions . . . 59
- 2.4 Empirical implications . . . 61
- 2.5 Conclusion . . . 64

3 Information Gathering and Influencing 66
- 3.1 Advisors as information gatherers . . . 69
- 3.2 Advisors as conduits of influence . . . 76
- 3.3 Limitations to information gathering and influencing . . . 82
  - 3.3.1 The size and embeddedness of the advising mission . . . 82
  - 3.3.2 Individual characteristics of advisors . . . 86
  - 3.3.3 Strategic factors . . . 88
- 3.4 Conclusion . . . 93

4 Analyzing Why Great Powers Send Advisors **96**
4.1 Data collection . . . 98
4.1.1 Unit of analysis and dependent variable . . . 101
4.1.2 Independent variables . . . 106
4.2 Modeling advisor deployment onset . . . 114
4.3 Modeling advisor deployment duration . . . 122
4.4 Conclusion . . . 131

5 The Effects of Advisors **133**
5.1 Roles of advisors . . . 137
5.2 Effect of advisors on conflict duration . . . 139
5.3 Effect of advisors on human rights . . . 144
5.4 Effect of advisors on the probability of coups during civil war . . . 153
5.5 Conclusion . . . 160

6 US Intervention in El Salvador (1979-89) **162**
6.1 Case selection and overview . . . 165
6.2 Background . . . 168
6.3 Why policymakers sent advisors . . . 170
6.3.1 Advisors deploy after a decrease in Salvadoran military capacity (1979-81) . . . 170
6.3.2 Reagan sends a limited advising mission (1981-1984) . . . 176
6.3.3 Advisors embedded in the brigades (1984-89) . . . 184
6.4 Monitoring and influencing on the ground . . . 186
6.5 Effectiveness of military advising . . . 198
6.5.1 Limitations of monitoring . . . 202
6.5.2 Limitations of influence . . . 204
6.6 Conclusion . . . 207

7 Conclusion **209**
7.1 Summary of main findings . . . 211
7.2 Implications for other kinds of advising . . . 214
7.2.1 Regional powers . . . 214
7.2.2 Coalitions and alliance politics . . . 215
7.2.3 Peacetime training and advising . . . 217
7.3 Implications for the ethics of proxy war . . . 218
7.3.1 Intervener culpability . . . 219
7.3.2 The culpability/effectiveness trade-off . . . 222
7.3.3 Democratic accountability of the use of force . . . 223
7.4 Policy implications . . . 224
7.5 Implications for scholarship . . . 227
7.6 Conclusion . . . 228

Bibliography **230**

Appendices **250**

A Appendix to Chapter 2 **251**
A.1 Formal proofs . . . 251
A.1.1 Assumption 1: Need for delegation . . . 251
A.1.2 Assumption 2: Proxy prefers autonomy . . . 251
A.1.3 Lemma 1 . . . 252
A.1.4 Lemma 2 . . . 252
A.1.5 Lemma 3 . . . 254
A.1.6 Proposition 1 . . . 254

B Appendix to Chapter 3 **256**
B.1 Interview data . . . 256
B.1.1 Interview subjects . . . 256
B.1.2 Question protocol . . . 257
B.2 Cited archival collections . . . 258

C Appendix to Chapter 4 **259**
C.1 Dataset . . . 259
C.1.1 Summary statistics . . . 259
C.1.2 Conflicts . . . 260
C.2 Codebook . . . 263
C.2.1 Unit of analysis . . . 263
C.2.2 Definition of intervention . . . 263
C.2.3 Variables . . . 263
C.2.4 Preference alignment scoresheet . . . 271
C.2.5 Military capacity scoresheet . . . 272
C.3 Quantitative models . . . 274
C.3.1 Advisor deployment onset - Govt proxy . . . 274
C.3.2 Proportional hazard tests – Schoenfeld residuals . . . 275

D Appendix to Chapter 5 **276**
D.1 Proportional hazard tests – Schoenfeld residuals . . . 276
D.2 Human rights . . . 276
D.3 Coups and coup attempts . . . 278

E Appendix to Chapter 6 **280**
E.1 Cited archival collections . . . 280

List of Tables

1.1 The roles of military advisors 23

2.1 Theory predictions for deployment and tasks of advisors 62

3.1 Levels of analysis in the theory 67
3.2 Variation in effectiveness of advisors 84

4.1 Summary of key variables 113
4.2 Advisor deployment onset 119
4.3 Multinomial logistic regression of advisor deployment onset 120
4.4 Duration of advisor interventions 127
4.5 Duration of intervention (aid, arms, troops baseline) 130

5.1 The effect of advisors on conflict duration 143
5.2 The effect of advisors on human rights 149
5.3 The effect of advisors on coups/coup attempts 159

6.1 Advisor deployment cases in the Salvadoran Civil War 166
6.2 Effects of influence 197

C.1 Summary statistics for numeric variables 259
C.2 Conflicts 203-288 260
C.3 Conflicts 288-333 261
C.4 Conflicts 333-14333 262
C.5 Preference alignment scoresheet 271
C.6 Military capacity scoresheet (Part 1) 272
C.7 Military capacity scoresheet (Part 2) 273
C.8 Advisor deployment onset (govt proxy) 274
C.9 Proportional hazard tests for intervention duration models 275

D.1 Proportional hazard tests for conflict duration models – Schoenfeld Residuals 276
D.2 Effect of advisors on human rights (Cases of intervention) 277
D.3 Alternative specifications of coup DV 278
D.4 The effect of advisors on coups/coup attempts (Cases of intervention) 279

List of Figures

2.1 Intervention with monitoring game 41
2.2 Equilibrium policy distortion of the proxy as a function of t 51
2.3 Equilibrium levels of policy distortion with monitoring (shaded regions) . . . 53
2.4 Intervener strategies in monitoring subgame (when $x^{**} > x^* + m$ and $c \leq \beta + N$) 54

4.1 Great power interventions with military advisors, 1946-2019 102
4.2 The geography of intervention with military advisors, 1946-2019. 103
4.3 US and Russian intervention with military advisors, 1946-2019 104
4.4 Advisors as part of larger interventions 105
4.5 Duration of intervention 128

5.1 Roles of advisors 138
5.2 Types of intervention and conflict duration 139
5.3 Predicted values of human rights scores, Cold War and advisors 150
5.4 Predicted values of human rights scores, type of proxy and advisors 151
5.5 Coups and coup attempts during civil war, 1950-2000 154

6.1 2nd Brigade cuartel, Santa Ana 185
6.2 US military advisor to El Salvador (1991-1992), Gregory T. Banner 192

List of Acronyms

ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
BIRI	Immediate Reaction Infantry Battalion
	(Batallónes de Infanteria de Reacción Inmediata)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DAO	Defense Attache Office
DoD	US Department of Defense
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MILGP	U.S. Military Group
MTT	Military Training Team
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NSC	National Security Council
OPATT	Operational Planning and Assistance Training Team
PDC	Christian Democratic Party (*Partido Demócrata Cristiano*)
PRC	People's Redemption Council
SOF	Special Operations Forces

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Abstract

This dissertation examines why great powers send military advisors to work with local militaries during conflict and the circumstances in which this form of intervention is likely to occur. Military advisors are usually thought of as mere technical experts that build military capacity, but they do much more. Using a formal model of delegation, I first theorize military advisors as a costly means for principals to monitor their local agents. Principals are particularly likely to invest in monitoring when they lack alternatives to working with a poor quality agent. Advisors provide high-quality information that helps the intervener condition rewards and punishments on the local partner's behavior as well as evaluate conditions on the ground. Second, drawing on theory from sociology, I theorize military advisors as a key means of influence over other militaries, expanding their role from a static to a dynamic setting. States send military advisors to act as conduits of influence over a local military. Over time, advisors develop personal relationships with their local counterparts, shaping their approach to complicated issues such as human rights and civil-military relations.

To empirically evaluate the theory, I use an original quantitative dataset of interventions with military advisors in civil wars by the United States, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, and China between 1946 and 2019, as well as extensive archival evidence and interviews with 28 current and former US military advisors. I find support for my theory that advisors are sent more often to weak militaries when preference alignment between intervener and proxy is low. Although my theory is focused on the causes of advisor deployments, I also evaluate how advisors affect conflict duration, human rights, and civil-military relations during conflict. I find that advisors are, on average, associated with longer conflicts and more repression by supported governments, although they slightly decrease the probability of coups or coup attempts against supported governments. A qualitative case study on US intervention in the Salvadoran Civil War (1979-89) explores in greater detail the causes and

mechanisms of intervention with military advisors. I find that policymakers expected military advisors to monitor and influence the Salvadoran military, and most advisors thought their key role was to restrain the Salvadoran military from committing human rights abuses.

My research provides three main contributions. First, I theorize how powerful states use training and advising as a means of influence over other militaries. This furthers our understanding of when great powers have leverage over weaker partners – a persistent problem in proxy war and alliance relationships alike. My research shows how powerful states can influence weaker actors not only through carrots or sticks but through personal relationships on the ground. Second, I provide an empirical contribution with an original dataset of great power intervention in civil wars with military advisors from 1946-2019. I expand the temporal scope of data from Regan (2002) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program as well as collect additional disaggregated data on in-country military advising during civil wars. Finally, although my research is focused on the causes and mechanisms of intervention with military advisors, my research provides implications for the effect of interveners on conflict. When interveners seek to limit human rights abuses against civilians, proxy war with military advisors can make the conduct of war more humane. But my analysis of cross-national data shows that these improvements in human welfare are the exception rather than the rule.

Chapter 1

Introduction

> *Can the small number of our boys over in Viet Nam possibly be doing enough good to justify the awful number of casualties? If seems to me that if we are going to have our boys over there, that we should send enough to have a chance – or else stay home.*
>
> — Bobbie Lou Pendergrass,
> Sister of US military advisor KIA,
> Letter to President John F. Kennedy, February 18, 1963

Great powers spend significant blood and treasure intervening in conflict around the world. To minimize the costs of intervention, they frequently delegate war to local proxies instead of sending in their own combat troops. However, these local proxies pursue their own interests rather than their sponsors' and often lack the military capacity to achieve their sponsors' goals. Often proxies abuse human rights, waste aid, and or simply disagree with their supporters on important issues relating to the conflict, from how to fight to when to seek a peace settlement. Existing literature uses principal-agent theory to argue that principals can gain their agents' compliance by consistently rewarding them for good behavior and punishing them for bad behavior.[1] Yet interveners don't always use rewards and punishments like these theories predict. I argue that intervening states frequently rely

[1] Walter C Ladwig III. *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency.* Cambridge University Press, 2017; Eli Berman and David A Lake. *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents.* Cornell University Press, 2019.

on a different, overlooked tool to manage local partners: sending military advisors to directly shape their militaries. We see examples in important historical cases of proxy war such as US intervention in El Salvador and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

Proxy war, it turns out, is not always a "hands-off" intervention where the intervener provides aid or arms to a proxy who fights on its own. Instead, interveners often have a "hands-on" approach that involves directly embedding their own personnel in a proxy military. According to data on intervention in civil wars,[2] China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – all powerful states accounting for around 68 percent of interventions in civil wars between 1949 and 2000 – send advisors in around half of their interventions. Sending military advisors, however, presents a puzzle. It leaves the intervening state half-in and half-out; advisors do not alter the balance of forces in the conflict, yet their lives are often on the line. Military advisors expose the intervener to escalation pressures if they are killed or the conflict deteriorates, as the epigraph illustrates.

Why do states send military advisors to intervene in conflict? What do military advisors do? The existing literature has focused on military advisors as a means to remedy serious problems of low military capacity and the conditions when advisors succeed or fail at this task. It argues that advisors can assist local militaries with "technical, training, planning, and operational advice" to prevent the intervener from having to commit its own combat troops, which are costly and can lead to escalation.[3] The goal of sending military advisors, as described in the literature, is to make the local partner's military competent enough that it can defeat its opponent on the battlefield or force it toward a political settlement.

The military capacity building role of advisors is important and there is a reason why the existing literature has focused on it. I argue, however, that advisors have another, overlooked political role. This role should not be overlooked because it is intertwined with the advisor's

[2]Patrick M Regan. "Third-party interventions and the duration of intrastate conflicts". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46.1 (2002), pp. 55–73.

[3]Brian P. O'Lavin. *War on the Cheap: U.S. Military Advisors in Greece, Korea, The Philippines, and Vietnam:* Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, Dec. 1, 2015. DOI: 10.21236/AD1009181. URL: http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/AD1009181 (visited on 11/19/2018).

role as capacity builders – there is not one without the other. As capacity builders, advisors gain access to the military of the local partner required to play a political role. In turn, the political role of military advisors helps powerful states address a key problem in fighting war with local partners: disagreement over important military and political issues.

Recent scholarship outlines how the local partner, or proxy, often disagrees with the intervener on vital issues that affect the conflict.[4] These issues include political, economic, and military reform and military strategy; the use of military and economic aid; the target of the intervention; and human rights.[5] Reaching a workable compromise between intervener and proxy is made difficult by two problems from principal-agent theory: moral hazard and adverse selection. Moral hazard results when an agent knows more about its behavior than the principal does, which makes it difficult for the principal to condition rewards and punishments on the agent's behavior. Adverse selection results from the constraints that great powers face when choosing an intervention. They will work with far-from-ideal proxies when sending in combat troops is off the table because of political opposition, legal constraints, high risk of escalation, or lack of plausible deniability.[6] When proxies understand these constraints that interveners face, they have an incentive to bargain hard.

In order to gain from proxy war, great powers must exercise some degree of control over their proxies despite the problems of adverse selection and moral hazard. Recent scholarship adopts a principal-agent framework to explain how powerful states can incentivize local partners by consistently rewarding them with material incentives for good behavior and

[4]Vladimir Rauta. "Framers, founders, and reformers: Three generations of proxy war research". In: *Contemporary Security Policy* 42.1 (Jan. 2, 2021), pp. 113–134. ISSN: 1352-3260. DOI: 10.1080/13523260.2020.1800240. (Visited on 03/26/2021).

[5]Barbara Elias. "The Big Problem of Small Allies: New Data and Theory on Defiant Local Counterinsurgency Partners in Afghanistan and Iraq". In: *Security Studies* 27.2 (2018), pp. 233–262; Stephen Biddle. "Building Security Forces & Stabilizing Nations: The Problem of Agency". In: *Dædalus* 146.4 (2017), pp. 126–138; Andrew Boutton. "US foreign aid, interstate rivalry, and incentives for counterterrorism cooperation". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 51.6 (2014), pp. 741–754; Daniel Byman. "Friends like these: Counterinsurgency and the war on terrorism". In: *International Security* 31.2 (2006), pp. 79–115.

[6]Geraint Hughes. *My Enemy's Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics*. Apollo Books, 2012; Andrew Mumford. *Proxy warfare*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013; Daniel Byman. "Why States are Turning to Proxy War". In: *The National Interest* (2018); Andreas Krieg and Jean-Marc Rickli. *Surrogate warfare: the transformation of war in the twenty-first century*. Georgetown University Press, 2019.

punishing them for bad behavior.[7] Incentives are important, but they are not the only tool available to interveners to manage the local proxy. Interveners frequently rely on military advisors to directly shape the behavior of a local military. By performing this political role alongside their capacity building role, advisors help ensure that the increase in capacity they provide serves the intervener's goals. Otherwise, there is little point in building capacity. Military advisors thus complement other forms of strategic incentives used by interveners to manage proxies.

1.1 Summary of argument and contributions

I argue that military advisors can be a tool of information gathering to address the intervener's lack of information about the proxy and the operational environment, and a tool of influencing to address differing goals between the intervener and proxy. Military advisors gain access to the local military through their role as capacity-builders. The local military is willing to accept advisors because they increase military effectiveness.[8] After gaining access, military advisors build personal relationships with their local counterparts, making them a powerful source of information about their counterparts' behavior and attitudes which they then pass up their chain of command. Thus, military advisors provide information needed to monitor the local military, mitigating the moral hazard problem. But they also provide a richer array of information through their embeddedness in the proxy military, such as information about conditions on the ground. After working with their local counterparts for an extended period of time, advisors gain their trust. This allows advisors to influence their counterparts through a myriad of informal and personal interactions taking place over

[7] Berman and Lake, *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*; Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*; Walter C Ladwig III. "Influencing Clients in Counterinsurgency: US Involvement in El Salvador's Civil War, 1979–92". In: *International Security* 41.1 (2016), pp. 99–146.

[8] Military advisors also often come with a lot of other support that proxies want. In Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, US advisors were necessary for local counterparts to gain access to US air power and intelligence, which greatly enhanced their capabilities. *Interview with US advisor to Iraq.* In collab. with Interviewee 9. Jan. 12, 2019.

a meal, a drink, or in the thick of battle. Over time, the preferences and behavior of the local military can begin to shift, bringing the intervener and proxy closer together.

I provide three main contributions to the literature on intervention and military advising. First, I show that military advisors can play a role that is deeply political, using their access to the proxy military to reveal information and influence their counterparts' approach to politics, military strategy, and the conduct of war. I explore in great detail this overlooked political role of advisors and the mechanisms by which it works. My research shows how great powers can influence a proxy not only through carrots or sticks, but through personal relationships on the ground. By conceptualizing military advisors as a certain kind of defense diplomacy where face-to-face interaction and personal relationships are crucial, I also add to a growing literature on the effects of individuals, personal relationships, and emotions in international politics and diplomacy.[9]

Second, I show that there is great variation in what advisors are tasked, permitted, and required by the intervening state to do. In particular, there are striking differences in the extent of involvement, the level at which advisors work, local embeddedness, and the size of the advising force. This variation, in turn, determines how effective advisors will be at both information gathering and influencing. I provide some suggestive results about when military advisors can actually deliver on the tasks that interveners set for them. I also evaluate the effects of advisors on conflict duration, human rights during conflict, and civil-military relations in the governments that receive military advisors. My results show that when interveners make issues like human rights a priority, and apply advisors alongside targeted strategic incentives, they can be effective at gaining more influence over the proxy military. But in general, when interveners do not prioritize human rights, advisors are associated

[9]Todd Hall and Keren Yarhi-Milo. "The personal touch: Leaders' impressions, costly signaling, and assessments of sincerity in international affairs". In: *International Studies Quarterly* 56.3 (2012), pp. 560–573; Marcus Holmes. *Face-to-face diplomacy: Social neuroscience and international relations*. Cambridge University Press, 2018; Barbara Keys and Claire Yorke. "Personal and Political Emotions in the Mind of the Diplomat". In: *Political Psychology* 40.6 (2019), pp. 1235–1249; Tarak Barkawi. ""Defence diplomacy" in north-south relations". In: *International Journal* 66.3 (2011). Publisher: SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England, pp. 597–612, See for example:

with more government repression and a longer conflict duration. These results prompt us to consider more carefully the design of future interventions with military advisors.

Finally, in addition to theoretical contributions, my work provides untapped empirical evidence on advisors. I do that using a unique set of interviews with 28 US military advisors who served in conflicts from Vietnam to Afghanistan (1970-2018) and 1 civilian policymaker (Appendix), and archival documents on military advisors during US intervention in El Salvador collected from the Reagan and Carter Presidential Libraries and the National Security Archive, as well as on US military advisors in Vietnam collected from the National Archives and Records Administration. I also provide a quantitative empirical contribution with an original dataset of great power intervention in civil wars with military advisors from 1946-2019. I significantly expand the temporal scope of data from Regan (2002) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2009) as well as collect additional disaggregated data on in-country military advising during civil wars. My work evaluates both policymaker intentions and what advisors experience on the ground. Knowing how advisors perceive their role is crucial to understanding their role and whether it corresponds with the reasons why states send military advisors in the first place. In addition to providing evidence on the roles of military advisors based on their on-the-ground experiences and high-level policy documents, my research extends beyond the US-centric approach of the current literature. The United States is not the only powerful state that uses military advisors with a similar global scope; therefore, we cannot understand the broader problem of proxy war and how states manage it without looking at how other interveners use military advisors. I move beyond case studies of US intervention with military advisors and add evidence from other great powers such Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom with the quantitative data I collected.

My work also has implications for normative questions about the ethics of proxy war as well as democratic accountability of the use of force. My findings show that in order to restrain a proxy from violating international human rights law, an intervener must become deeply involved in its military's affairs with embedded advisors. But this risks implicating

the intervener in the proxy's human rights abuses. Interveners, then, are faced with a culpability/effectiveness trade-off: the only way to intervene yet improve the situation is to become more culpable. Interveners could always stay out of a conflict, but given past history, interveners will likely instead find ways to still intervene in a conflict while minimizing the appearance of culpability. My work also speaks to ongoing debates about democratic accountability of the use of force in the United States. Advisors are easy to deploy with limited input from the public, even when the public opposes sending American combat troops, despite the "hands-on" nature of intervention with advisors that puts them in harms way and involves them deeply in the affairs of a local proxy. Democratic accountability of the use of force could be undermined when presidents use military advisors to influence the outcomes of foreign wars with far less public input that an intervention with American combat troops might receive.

I also provide several implications for policy and the design of future interventions. First, optimism around proxy war as a cheap and effective means of conflict is unwarranted. Even modest increases in influence over proxies requires substantial commitments from interveners in terms of time and military advisors. Second, when an intervener is willing to commit the time and effort, advisors can be a useful tool of influence over other militaries. They are most successful when embedded throughout a local military with the specific mandate to advocate for painful reforms and are supported by diplomatic efforts from the sending state. Third, advisors are still needed to manage conflict despite modern military technology, such as precision-guided munitions and drones. My work shows that without advisors on the ground and diplomatic pressure on the proxy, great powers cannot influence the political conditions that determine whether proxy war is ultimately successful. Finally, advisors as a mechanism of influence over other militaries can be be useful for building connections and increasing capability for conventional deterrence as part of a traditional alliance relationship.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. First, I outline the existing literature on military advisors. Next, I further develop my argument about the political role of military

advisors.The final section outlines the plan of the dissertation in the remaining chapters.

1.2 Existing literature on military advisors

Great powers "try to organize, shape, and direct armed forces in foreign countries... to constitute armed force for local, regional, and global projects of order-making."[10] To shape other militaries, great powers frequently rely on military-to-military relations: sending members of their military to work with other militaries. In peacetime, military advisors are part of the toolbox of defense diplomacy, such as military aid, military training, and providing arms or entering military alliances.[11] The roles of advisors during peacetime include modernizing another military, nation building, forging closer economic ties with another state, or building ideological ties.[12] I focus on the use of military advisors by great powers to intervene in conflict, either to support an existing order by providing aid to a government engaged in counterinsurgency or to undermine an order by supporting the rebels. I focus on great powers because they have global interests that lead them to frequently intervene in conflict abroad, flexibility to choose among a menu of options for intervention, and are more powerful than the armed actors that they advise.[13]

[10]Barkawi, ""Defence diplomacy" in north-south relations".

[11]Patricia L. Sullivan, Brock F. Tessman, and Xiaojun Li. "US Military Aid and Recipient State Cooperation". In: *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7.3 (July 1, 2011), pp. 275–294. ISSN: 1743-8594. DOI: 10.1111/j.1743-8594.2011.00138.x. URL: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2011.00138.x/abstract (visited on 10/18/2016); Carla Martinez Machain. "Exporting Influence: U.S. Military Training as Soft Power". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (Sept. 16, 2020). Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc, p. 0022002720957713. ISSN: 0022-0027. DOI: 10.1177/0022002720957713. URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002720957713 (visited on 10/29/2020); Keren Yarhi-Milo, Alexander Lanoszka, and Zack Cooper. "To arm or to ally? The patron's dilemma and the strategic logic of arms transfers and alliances". In: *International Security* 41.2 (2016), pp. 90–139; Donald Stoker. *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatization, 1815–2007*. Routledge, Dec. 21, 2007. 280 pp. ISBN: 978-1-135-98821-0.

[12]Stoker, *Military Advising and Assistance*.

[13]Great powers also make up the majority of interventions with military advisors, as data from Regan (2002) shows. Smaller states do advising, too, but the reasons can be different. Australia, for example, frequently intervenes abroad when the United States does, but the motivation is to be a good alliance partner to the United States. Many states that send military advisors tend to be the neighbors of states involved in conflict and/or regional powers. They intervene either to support the government or to undermine it by supporting the rebels. In the conclusion, I discuss the implications of my argument for these other forms of advising.

1.2.1 Who are military advisors?

Military advisors are military personnel sent to work with the military of a state or armed group, sometimes as individuals or as part of a larger advising mission by the sending state.[14] They can be sent overtly in uniform, covertly out of uniform, or, the sending state can publicly acknowledge them but intentionally limit publicity surrounding their deployment.[15] Advisors are distinct from combat troops or special operations forces because they do not have an independent combat role. They may be permitted to accompany local units on extensive, in-field training when the local unit will run a significant risk of engaging with enemy forces, as well as accompany local forces into combat to direct and assist.[16] But advisors cannot add to the combat capacity of the proxy unit except through the advice they provide. In many cases, advisors will be restricted from accompanying proxy forces into combat, be deployed only to "safe" areas of the country, and be given strict orders about self-preservation.

Advisors are also distinct from intelligence personnel because they report to the military chain of command of the intervener. The distinction between intelligence personnel and military advisors sometimes becomes very blurred in actual interventions, however, since interveners will often ask intelligence personnel to play a role very similar to that of military advisors when the intervention is covert. In Laos, for instance, the United States sent CIA advisors to work with the Hmong guerilla forces because the entire mission was covert.[17] While there could be significant overlap between the roles of intelligence officers in advising

[14] Stoker, *Military Advising and Assistance*.

[15] The current US advisors in Afghanistan and Iraq are examples of full publicity about the intervention. Contemporary US deployments to Africa are an example of limited publicity, while US intervention in Laos was an example of covert intervention. Interveners can have both domestic political reasons to limit publicity as well as a desire to control perceptions in the host state. See: Harry H. Kendall. "Vietnamese Perceptions of the Soviet Presence". In: *Asian Survey* 23.9 (1983), pp. 1052–1061. ISSN: 0004-4687. DOI: 10.2307/2644106. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2644106 (visited on 03/04/2019)

[16] Alice Hunt Friend. *The Accompany They Keep: What Niger Tells Us about Accompany Missions, Combat, and Operations Other than War*. War on the Rocks. May 11, 2018. URL: https://warontherocks.com/2018/05/the-accompany-they-keep-what-niger-tells-us-about-accompany-missions-combat-and-operations-other-than-war/ (visited on 10/29/2020).

[17] Joshua Kurlantzick. *A great place to have a war: America in Laos and the birth of a military CIA*. Simon and Schuster, 2017.

roles and military advisors, in this dissertation, I focus on military advisors, that is, advisors who are members of the intervener's military.

Who becomes an advisor? In the US military, Special Forces have traditionally trained partner militaries. They prepare for this mission through training to work with other state and non-state militaries, solve problems to effectively teach others, and learning to speak the local language.[18] While Special Forces have traditionally served as advisors, during US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, conventional brigade combat teams were increasingly sent in to advise their counterparts in the Iraqi and Afghan militaries. These conventional military advisors often lacked preparation or training for their mission; one advisor stated that due to the speed of US deployment to Iraq following the decision to conduct air strikes against ISIS, he learned of his mission 2-3 days before deploying and had to look up the region of Iraq where he was deploying on Google Maps.[19] Another advisor in Afghanistan described handing off responsibilities to incoming US advisors who reported for the assignment with little knowledge of what they would be doing and having prepared for the wrong kind of mission.[20]

[18]I interviewed both Special Forces and regular Army. Interviewees with Special Forces training repeatedly mentioned how their training prepared them for the advising role in which they served. For example, a Special Forces advisors who served in El Salvador and later commanded the Iraqi National Counter-Terrorism Force Transition Team, which tasked US Special Forces with building an Iraqi Special Forces unit, stated the following: "I believe that across the board our Special Forces paid dividends in the end in terms of advising. Now I know that we have set up some advisory brigades. And, in my own mind, in my opinion, they are not as effective as the efforts we had in places like Salvador, Colombia, the Philippines, just because the Special Forces soldiers are culturally trained, usually work in the language in the country to which are assigned, and I think that pays big dividends too. Obviously when we're in Salvador, the working language, Spanish. Same in Colombia. In Iraq, I believe that some of the most effective advisors were the 5th Group soldiers that speak the languages and really bonded with those soldiers you're working with, if that makes sense."

[19]*Interview with US military advisor to Iraq.* In collab. with Interviewee 3. Jan. 17, 2019.

[20]Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan, Interviewee 26: "The second point of failure was, we'd spent a whole year building up those relationships we had. And I thought at the time I was like, We got some great counterinsurgency stuff going on. We have great relationships with all these local (counterparts) . . . As we were getting ready to leave we brought in (our local counterparts) to come in and meet our security people. We had this big two day conference with all the new commanders and at the end of it, one of the incoming commanders in the new unit was like, "Man, I wish we'd known, we'd be doing stuff like this. I would have completely revised my training before getting here." I was like, 'What the fuck?' I almost had an aneurysm and I was like, 'In what fucking war did you think you were coming to?'". *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan.* In collab. with Interviewee 26. Mar. 13, 2020.

1.2.2 Advisors as technocrats

Existing literature conceptualizes the role of advisors in three ways: (1) as technocrats, who build military capacity using their expertise as professionals, (2) as intelligence gatherers, (3) and as warrior-diplomats. The first model of military advisors argues that they build proxy military capacity so that the intervener's troops can stay out of or withdraw from a conflict.[21] Advisors may also be sent to weak states to prevent conflict and influence it if it does develop.[22] As capacity-builders, advisors transfer their knowledge as highly-skilled professionals to their less-skilled counterparts.[23] In this conceptualization of military advisors, they are focused solely on building military capacity and are thus distinct from other military actors engaged in defense diplomacy.[24]

In their roles as capacity builders, military advisors train, provide technical assistance, lead war planning, and build defense institutions. Training can encompass anything from basic training for new recruits to leadership development and tactical decision-making training for non-commissioned officers. When providing technical assistance, advisors teach the local military how to use new weapons systems;[25] substitute for technical specialists when local forces lack the skills to coordinate with air power or use advanced weapons systems; and provide "soft" skills or capability that a local military might not have. For an example

[21] O'Lavin, *War on the Cheap*, Similarly, Barkawi notes that enabling withdrawal of foreign troops is the prime motivation for military capacity building efforts during civil conflict.

[22] Jan Bachmann. "Policing Africa: The US military and visions of crafting 'good order'". In: *Security Dialogue* 45.2 (Apr. 1, 2014). Publisher: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 119–136. ISSN: 0967-0106. DOI: 10.1177/0967010614521267. URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614521267 (visited on 10/29/2020).

[23] Brian Tyrone Crumley. "Attachés, MAAGs, and MACs". In: *A Companion to American Military History*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2009, pp. 604–616. ISBN: 978-1-4443-1506-6. URL: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781444315066.ch39.

[24] See the following way that advisors are often depicted: "The traditional (and still valid) custom of sending military advisors—or financial military assistance—to foreign armies also does not reflect the post-Cold War imperative of a military dialogue for diplomatic purposes, where the sole objective is increasing military efficiency in a conflict or in preparing one." Frédéric Charillon, Thierry Balzacq, and Frédéric Ramel. "Defense Diplomacy". In: *Global Diplomacy: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. Ed. by Thierry Balzacq, Frédéric Charillon, and Frédéric Ramel. The Sciences Po Series in International Relations and Political Economy. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020, pp. 267–278. ISBN: 978-3-030-28786-3. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-28786-3_19. URL: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28786-3_19 (visited on 03/15/2021)

[25] O'Lavin, *War on the Cheap*.

of advisors as both providers of technical skills and technical specialists, consider US intervention in Iraq and Syria. A component of U.S. troops in theater were Joint Tactical Air Controllers (JTACs) responsible for calling in U.S. airstrikes during combat and Marines operating High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), an advanced weapons system capable of firing long distances. Using personnel from the intervening state's military to control and operate advanced weapons systems also avoids the loss of control that comes from giving advanced systems to proxy militaries, while still exploiting the tactical advantage of advanced weapons on the battlefield. Advisors can also provide advice on substantive roles for the local military, such as how to conduct psychological warfare or run a civil affairs program.[26] They can also coordinate with the intervener to expedite the delivery of supplies, such as Soviet advisors did in North Vietnam during the Kampuchean invasion or as US advisors did in Iraq to directly supply Iraqi units.[27]

Advisors also assist proxies with war planning at the strategic and operational levels. Typically, advisors assigned at the operational level work directly with local commanders in the planning and execution of major operations, sitting in when commanders brief the brigade staff on the mission and participating in the after-action review of the mission once completed. At the strategic level, advisors can design military strategy and assist the proxy with "developing a plan for victory", like British advisors did when advising the Sultanate of Oman about how to fight a counterinsurgency.[28] When deployed with a more extensive mandate, advisors can also build the proxy's defense institutions: the set of sub-organizations within the military, and the established practices they use, for managing human resources, the relationship between military and political authorities, equipment procurement, logistics,

[26]Robert D. Ramsey III. *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador*. Combat Studies Institute, 2012. URL: https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/ramsey.pdf (visited on 06/07/2018).

[27]Harry H. Kendall. "Vietnamese Perceptions of the Soviet Presence". In: *Asian Survey* 23.9 (1983), pp. 1052–1061. ISSN: 0004-4687. DOI: 10.2307/2644106. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2644106 (visited on 03/04/2019); *Interview with US advisor to Iraq.* In collab. with Interviewee 9. Jan. 12, 2019.

[28]Walter C. Ladwig III. "Supporting allies in counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion:" in: *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19.1 (2008). URL: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09592310801905793?journalCode=fswi20 (visited on 11/06/2020).

strategy, and war planning.[29] In their role building defense institutions, advisors sometimes recommend deep reforms to increase military effectiveness. They can revise force structure and doctrine, and hire-and-fire the military leadership of the local partner's forces.[30] Advisors can also add new capabilities to a military, as the Soviet Union did in Afghanistan by building a strong army aviation unit that operated helicopters for combat, which even today remain highly-skilled.[31] In Syria, Russian military advisors trained and provided war planning for the Syrian Arab Army as well as other pro-regime militias.[32] Similarly, in Iraq, US advisors built Iraqi SOF units as an elite counterterrorism force designed to undertake operations specific to counterterrorism, such as raids and hostage rescue.[33] The Iraqi units, which became the Counterterrorism Service (CTS) whose units would later contribute ground forces to retake territory from Islamic State in northern Iraq, underwent extremely time-intensive training and consistent advising by trainers from US Army Special Forces (USSF) in Iraq, which were embedded down to the company level.[34]

In contemporary US interventions, a key role that advisors play as capacity builders is connecting the local proxy force with key US or coalition enablers, such as air power, intelligence, or logistics.[35] Advisors described how the forces they were advising could only

[29]Alexandra C Chinchilla and Paul Poast. "Defense Institution Building from Above? Lessons from the Baltic Experience". In: *Connections* 17.3 (2018), pp. 61–71 On military effectiveness more broadly, see: Caitlin Talmadge. *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes*. Cornell University Press, 2015; Stephen Biddle. *Military power*. Princeton University Press, 2010.

[30]Olga Oliker. *Building Afghanistan's security forces in wartime: the Soviet experience*. OCLC: ocn746619384. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011. 100 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8330-5168-4; Mara E Karlin. *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.

[31]Olga Oliker. *Building Afghanistan's security forces in wartime: the Soviet experience*. OCLC: ocn746619384. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011. 100 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8330-5168-4; *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan*. In collab. with Interviewee 25. Jan. 1, 2020.

[32]Cody Roche. "Assad Regime Militias and Shi'ite Jihadis in the Syrian Civil War". In: *Belling-Cat, November* 30 (2016).

[33]Michael O'Brien. "Foreign Internal Defense in Iraq". In: *Special Warfare* 25.1 (Jan. 2012). URL: http://www.soc.mil/swcs/SWmag/archive/SW2501/SW2501ARSOFCoreTasksEnable%5C%5CIraqiCombatingTerrorismCapability.html.

[34]David Witty. *The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service*. 2016. URL: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/David-Witty-Paper_Final_Web.pdf.

[35]An advisor working with the Afghan military's Special Mission Wing, a special operations aviation unit, described his role as the following: "A lot of what we did was coordinating the assault and air support, ensuring that they had different tools available to them, like UAVs and helicopter assaults to protect the helicopters." *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan*. In collab. with Interviewee 25. Jan. 1, 2020

gain access to logistical support, intelligence, and US air support if they were conducting joint operations with US forces or with an advisor present.[36] As technology like precision-guided munitions and air power makes it easier for intervening states to intervene in combat without needing to put boots on the ground, advisors often assume a role more like "connectors" between tactically sound proxy military units and the intervener's overwhelming air power. When using advisors in this way, interveners may not always focus on building sustainable military effectiveness and reforming the institutions that make it possible for a local military to maintain its own logistics and air power. The intervener, in these cases, favors short-term tactical gains over long-term military effectiveness. Much of contemporary US advising is focused on tactical capacity-building at the expense of strategic reforms or strategic level engagement.[37]

While advisors can fulfill all of these capacity-building roles when embedded throughout the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of a military and given the mandate to perform these functions, variation exists in how much advisors are allowed to do.[38] Sometimes advisors are deployed in a minimalist fashion that places them in the role of coordinating aid disbursement, therefore adding little besides additional manpower to what any embassy in-country can already do. In other cases, senior US advisors who liaison with their counterparts in the proxy's Ministry of Defense are not given sufficient authority to push for serious military reforms involving force structure and leadership, which Karlin notes will stymie their ability to improve military effectiveness. What I have presented here is an overview of all that an advising mission can do in regards to military effectiveness when fully empowered by the sending state, permitted to operate by the proxy itself, and deployed throughout the proxy military. Military advisors will not fulfill all of these roles in all cases when they are sent.

[36] *Interview with US advisor to Iraq.* In collab. with Interviewee 9. Jan. 12, 2019.

[37] Bill Nance. *Getting advising right: the Army needs a fundamentally different approach to building partner forces.* Modern War Institute at West Point. Aug. 29, 2019. URL: https://mwi.usma.edu/getting-advising-right-army-needs-fundamentally-different-approach-building-partner-forces/.

[38] Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States.*

As capacity-builders, advisors gain unparalleled access to the local military—especially when they are embedded with local forces. Embedded advisors are sent either alone or in small groups to work and live with their counterparts for a few months or years. In contrast, advisors that are not embedded rotate from unit to unit for short periods of training and advising and have far less consistent contact with their counterparts. Or, as was common during US intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, combat units from the intervener and the local military might be partnered and participate in combat together but advisors are not embedded. The level of access that military advisors have depends on where they work. Advisors usually work both at the strategic level with the local partner's Ministry of Defense or top military leadership, and with operational units like a brigade or battalion, but for large advising missions, they may be embedded with tactical units down to the company level. When embedded at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, advisors have access to the most important people of a proxy military.

The size of the advisor footprint varies depending on whether the advisors are placed at the strategic, operational, or tactical level. Advising at the strategic level only requires the smallest number of advisors, advising at the operational level requires more advisors, while advising at the tactical level, if advisors are responsible for actually conducting training, requires a larger number of people. A small advising force at the operational level where advisors are not allowed to accompany local forces into combat is known as the "Salvador model",[39] where the footprint of advisors is kept light to place the impetus for fighting and training on the local ally. In contrast, the "FM 3-24 model" requires a larger advising force embedded at the tactical level; advisors initially manage operations and training and then transition these tasks over to the local partner. This approach argues large is necessary to build capacity. In reality, most advising missions are quite small. My data indicates that the majority of interventions with military advisors (64 percent) involve fewer than 500 advisors; only 24 percent of interventions with advisors involve more than 1000 advisors on

[39]Biddle, "Building Security Forces & Stabilizing Nations: The Problem of Agency".

the ground.

1.2.3 Advisors as intelligence gatherers

The second role of military advisors in the literature—gathering intelligence—follows directly from the access that advisors have to the proxy military. British military advisors sent to work with the Soviet general staff during the Second World War focused on intelligence gathering (mostly on the order of battle and German equipment), along with some intelligence sharing, coordination, and planning for resistance to a possible German occupation.[40] Similarly, John Waghelstein notes how he and other advisors received intelligence about a likely coup during an advising mission to the Dominican Republic. The American Embassy disregarded the intelligence and then was surprised when the coup happened roughly on the timeline the advisors predicted.[41] By placing their people on the ground to collect critical information, interveners can monitor proxy behavior more broadly.[42] Biddle argues that collecting information is central to the role of certain kinds of advisors, such as special forces, who can offer "language skills, cultural awareness, and intelligence-gathering skills to serve as more-effective monitors of partner behavior."[43]

1.2.4 Advisors as warrior-diplomats

The third role of military advisors in the literature is the military advisor as warrior-diplomat. This literature focuses on military advisors as individuals who build relationships with their counterparts and frequently get involved in local politics. When we think of

[40] Alaric Searle. "Uneasy intelligence collaboration, genuine ill will, with an admixture of ideology: the British Military Mission to the Soviet Union, 1941-1945". In: *Military advising and assistance: from mercenaries to privatization, 1815–2007*. Ed. by Donald Stoker. Routledge, 2007.

[41] John D. Waghelstein. "Ruminations of a wooly mammoth, or training and advising in counterinsurgency and elsewhere during the Cold War". In: *Military advising and assistance: from mercenaries to privatization, 1815–2007*. Ed. by Donald Stoker. Routledge, 2007.

[42] O'Lavin, *War on the Cheap*; Ramsey III, *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador*.

[43] Stephen Biddle. "Building Security Forces & Stabilizing Nations: The Problem of Agency". In: *Daedalus* 146.4 (Sept. 21, 2017), pp. 126–138. ISSN: 0011-5266. DOI: 10.1162/DAED_a_00464. URL: https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00464.

advisors, we often think of those with big personalities who played this warrior-diplomat role, like T.E. Lawrence and Edward Lansdale.[44] They were more akin to "kingmakers"[45] in their relationships with the proxy's military-political leaders than to technocrats or passive gatherers of intelligence. But even a technocratic advisor, focused on building military capacity, must confront politics.[46] This is true not only for advisors to the local military's Ministry of Defense (the focus of Karlin's analysis), but also for rank-and-file advisors on the ground with operational or tactical units. Advisors working alone with local counterparts to manage an insurgency or counterinsurgency face blurred lines between the political and the military.[47] There is "no good way to be effective without becoming enmeshed in local politics."[48] Military and political concerns are particularly enmeshed during contemporary advising missions, as advising transformed from a colonial project to one of regime change or people-centric counterinsurgency. Advisors must rely on their identity as peacekeeper-diplomats, alongside their classical identity as highly-skilled warriors, to develop personal relationships with their counterparts based on cultural flexibility and understanding.[49] The warrior-diplomat role can be filled by ordinary advisors on the ground instead of just high-level ones in a quasi-diplomatic role.

The literature on the intelligence gathering and political roles of advisors relates most closely to my work. While the literature provides us with useful insights about what advisors do, it does not explicitly theorize the kinds of information advisors collect and when they

[44]Max Boot. *The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam*. Google-Books-ID: cTYsDwAAQBAJ. Liveright Publishing, Jan. 9, 2018. 549 pp. ISBN: 978-0-87140-943-0.

[45]Anna Simons. "The Military Advisor as Warrior-King and Other "Going Native" Temptations". In: *Military anthropology: soldiers, scholars and subjects at the margins of empire*. Ed. by Montgomery McFate. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-19-094305-9. URL: http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/cat/bib/12372992 (visited on 03/15/2021).

[46]Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*.

[47]Richard A. Jones. "The Nationbuilder: Soldier of the Sixties". In: *Advice for advisors: suggestions and observations from Lawrence to the present*. Ed. by Robert D. Ramsey. Global war on terrorism occasional paper 19. OCLC: 255404771. Fort Leavenworth, Kan: Combat Studies Inst. Press, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-16-076875-0.

[48]Simons, "The Military Advisor as Warrior-King and Other "Going Native" Temptations".

[49]Remi M. Hajjar. "Military Warriors as Peacekeeper–Diplomats: Building Productive Relationships with Foreign Counterparts in the Contemporary Military Advising Mission". In: *Armed Forces & Society* 40.4 (Oct. 1, 2014). Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc, pp. 647–672. ISSN: 0095-327X. DOI: 10.1177/0095327X13493275. URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X13493275 (visited on 03/15/2021).

will be most effective at collecting it, the roles of advisors and how they are connected to one another, the political issues that advisors face, why advisors are sent in some cases and not others, and the implications of sending advisors for the relationship between intervener and proxy. I build upon this literature to argue that advisors do not merely brush up against politics in their work on military reform or rely on cultural understanding in their relationships with their counterparts. Instead, navigating and influencing the politics of proxy war is an explicit part of their responsibilities and a core reason why interveners send advisors. Advisors end up doing the work typically attributed to "defense diplomacy" — relating to foreign soldiers based on their identity in a shared community and using these connections to improve political understanding between the sending and receiving groups[50] — across the proxy military during conflict.

1.3 The political role of military advisors

I argue that states use military advisors to fulfill a two-fold political role acting as both information gatherers and conduits of influence over the local partner's military, and advisors recognize their responsibilities. This political role goes beyond navigating the politics of military reforms aimed solely at increasing military effectiveness and includes influencing the military as a political actor. During wartime, solutions to political disagreements between intervener and proxy requires buy-in from the military. The military makes key decisions about politics on a daily basis, such as how to treat civilians, implement aid and political projects, and relate to civilian authorities. And when the proxy military is a non-state actor or a military with weak command-and-control, buy-in requires lobbying an array of military actors spread out across zones of conflict. Advisors provide "boots on the ground" for the intervener to manage a complicated network of proxy military actors.

[50] Charillon, Balzacq, and Ramel, "Defense Diplomacy".

1.3.1 Conflicts of interest between interveners and proxies

What are some of the political issues that interveners and proxies disagree over and in which the proxy military plays an important part? Proxies and interveners frequently clash over the military and political leadership of the proxy, because who holds power affects how closely aligned the intervener and proxy are on all other issues. Interveners will sometimes remove political leaders in a coup.[51] They will also pressure the proxy to appoint military leaders that support their interests and demote others that do not. As part of its intervention in Greece (1947-49), the United States involved itself in key appointments in the Greek military by working through U.S. advisors in-country.[52] In the context of an ongoing war, the military is an important political actor who can affect the leadership of the proxy.

Interveners and proxies also often disagree about strategy: the political goals of the war and how to achieve them. Sometimes, interveners and proxies do not even agree about the main target of the fighting. Disagreement over the target of war is common in the United State's counterterrorism wars since 9-11. Concerned only about degrading the ability of transnational terrorist groups or their allies to operate, the United States frequently seeks to delegate fighting to local proxies that are less concerned about terrorism than potential threats to their hold on power. US intervention in Yemen is a prime example; the US sought to incentivize the government to fight al-Qaeda, while the government redirected resources received from the US to instead fight the Houthi insurgency.[53]

Even if the intervener and proxy agree about the target of the intervention, they will often still disagree about the main goals to achieve through the war. State proxies are often very concerned about eliminating all opposition to the state, while the intervener may be interested in providing only enough support such that the government can avoid collapse. The state proxy's military will shape policy about whom to fight. Interveners tend to

[51]Edward Luttwak. *Coup d'etat: A practical handbook*. Harvard University Press, 2016.
[52]Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*.
[53]Berman and Lake, *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*.

support non-state proxies for coercive leverage over a rival,[54] while non-state proxies may be interested in goals such as self-determination, like the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, or a change in territorial status, like the separatist statelets in the Donbas region of Ukraine that sought incorporation into Russia, that the intervener does not support.[55] Furthermore, interveners and proxies also often disagree about when to seek peace negotiations and what counts as an acceptable peace settlement.[56].

Interveners and proxies also often disagree about how the goal will be achieved through either political reforms or military victory and about the specifics of each. Reforms to the military – even those that would make it more effective at fighting – can also be painful. Another area of disagreement that directly involves the proxy military is the conduct of war. Tactics and operations can be a major area of disagreement, as interveners and proxies differ on whether the war should be fought using counterinsurgency or conventional operations. To return to the example of US intervention in Greece, US advisors involved themselves in key decisions of war planning, since they believed the Greek approach to fighting would not win the war.[57] In El Salvador, the US tried to persuade the Salvadoran military to adopt US counterinsurgency techniques to counter the guerrillas but had mixed success.[58]

Interveners also will sometimes disagree with the proxy about whether it is fighting hard enough. This is closest to the traditional understanding of effort in the existing principal-agent literature on proxy war. Sometimes, however, interveners are more interested in the opposite problem: getting the proxy military to show restraint. Proxies have a lot at stake in the war, and when choosing between population-centric counterinsurgency or brutal repres-

[54]Ariel Ira Ahram. *Proxy warriors: the rise and fall of state-sponsored militias*. Stanford University Press, 2011; Michael G Findley and Tze Kwang Teo. "Rethinking third-party interventions into civil wars: An actor-centric approach". In: *The Journal of Politics* 68.4 (2006), pp. 828–837.

[55]Tyrone L Groh. *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option*. Stanford University Press, 2019; Andrew S Bowen. "Coercive diplomacy and the Donbas: Explaining Russian strategy in Eastern Ukraine". In: *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2017), pp. 1–32.

[56]David E Cunningham. "Veto players and civil war duration". In: *American Journal of Political Science* 50.4 (2006), pp. 875–892; David E Cunningham. "Blocking resolution: How external states can prolong civil wars". In: *Journal of peace Research* 47.2 (2010), pp. 115–127.

[57]Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*.

[58]Brian D'Haeseleer. *The Salvadoran Crucible: The Failure of US Counterinsurgency in El Salvador, 1979-1992*. University Press of Kansas, 2018.

sion of the population, will often choose the latter.[59] To avoid damaging their international reputation over their support for the proxy, the intervener will sometimes try to induce the proxy to respect human rights and gain the support of the population rather than targeting civilians indiscriminately. They might also induce the proxy to refrain from indiscriminately bombing civilians, executing captured prisoners, or engaging in torture.[60] Furthermore, interveners facing competition from other interveners may prefer restraint from the proxy instead of escalation of the war.[61]

1.3.2 Advisors as a means of influence

For interveners to exercise influence over proxies in these areas, they must also ensure that the proxy's military supports the intervener's position and will execute the commands of the civilian leaders of the proxy. When the proxy is a state, interveners interact with its military at the strategic level using their diplomats, as well as their defense attachés in what is typically thought of as defense diplomacy. These forms of interaction – diplomacy and defense diplomacy – have received plenty of attention from scholars. In this dissertation, I examine a broader use of military-to-military interactions between the intervener and the proxy state's military. Military advisors are embedded throughout the proxy's military with the capacity-building tasks I outlined above. I argue that military advisors, once embedded throughout the proxy military, can play a similar role to that of the diplomats and defense attachés by liaising with their counterparts in the proxy military. Advisors can provide information to the intervener to monitor the proxy military in the field, far outside of the capital, and they can influence the military directly in a unique way by living and working alongside their counterparts and developing shared experiences with them. Furthermore,

[59] Jacqueline L Hazelton. "The "hearts and minds" fallacy: Violence, coercion, and success in counterinsurgency warfare". In: *International Security* 42.1 (2017), pp. 80–113.

[60] This is not to say that such efforts at inducing restraint are uniformly successful; see Dursun Peksen. "Does foreign military intervention help human rights?" In: *Political Research Quarterly* 65.3 (2012), pp. 558–571 I also discuss in the following chapter how interveners are often willing to tolerate high levels of policy distortion from the proxy. Some interveners are indifferent to whether the proxy shows restraint.

[61] Noel Anderson. "Competitive Intervention, Protracted Conflict, and the Global Prevalence of Civil War". In: *International Studies Quarterly* 63.3 (2019), pp. 692–706.

when the proxy is a non-state actor, military advisors embedded with the non-state actor may be the only consistent point of contact between the intervener and the proxy, making the role of the military advisor even more crucial.[62]

The capacity-building role of advisors provides the access for both information gathering and influencing (Table 1). As one advisor put it: "Our excuse for being there was to make them more combat effective, but the real purpose was to modify their behavior."[63] Interveners view the capacity-building and political roles of advisors as interconnected. For example, when considering in 1959 whether to send US military advisors to support the government of Laos in their fight against the Pathet Lao, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the US government "authorize an augmentation of the US training and support personnel in Laos to the extent necessary to ensure more effective training of those forces; and the positive U.S. direction and control of the forces."[64]

Sometimes interveners even organize military advising missions to reflect the dual military and political roles of advisors. North Vietnam (DRV), for example, sent both military and political advisors at the level of the province and the battalion to work in tandem to direct the

[62]When the United States is the intervener, the chain of command is as follows when the proxy is a state. The National Security Council and the president determine foreign policy priorities, and then all security assistance to a host nation is coordinated out of the local US Embassy with (ideally) close cooperation between the US chief of mission in the host nation and counterparts at the respective regional combatant command. At the embassy, security assistance is coordinated by the country team, which includes the Defense Attaché Office (DAO) and a Defense Cooperation Organization (DCO) and their attached personnel who liaison with counterparts in the local military, collect intelligence from such interactions, and manage disbursal of US assistance. See Thomas K Livingston. *Building the capacity of partner states through Security Force Assistance.* Congressional Research Service, 2011. Military advisors, when deployed, report to their military chain of command, which coordinates with the US country team. When the United States supports a proxy that is a non-state actor, the advisors will typically be structured as part of one (or several) US Special Forces Operational Detachments Alpha (ODA), which are trained to work directly with non-state armed groups. The advisors in the ODAs report to their chain of command which then participate in the interagency process coordinated by the NSC. When US advisors were inserted into Afghanistan in October 2001 to work with local militias opposed to the Taliban, advisors along with a few CIA personnel were responsible for all of the day-to-day decisions involved in working with the non-state actors. Whether working with a state military or an armed non-state actor, advisors can at a most basic level augment the capacity of the DAO and DCO to perform their normal intelligence gathering and aid monitoring functions, but typically advisors are usually sent to provide additional capacity-building and monitoring roles which I outline in this chapter.

[63]*Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 16. Mar. 2, 2020.

[64]Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Box 140, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff: Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense," "Laos (3 September 1959)," National Archives and Records Administration.

Table 1.1: The roles of military advisors

Type	Specific roles	Mechanism	Effects
Political	Information-gathering	Embeddedness	Intervener gains deep knowledge about the situation on the ground
	Influencing	Personal relationships	Change in proxy behavior and attitudes
Capacity - building	Training	Advising on training	Access
	Technical assistance	Advises counterparts on or fills specific roles: eg. aviation, PSYOPs, artillery, Joint Tactical Air Controllers (JTACs), engineering, logistics, intelligence	
	War planning	Advises on operations and/or strategy	
	Building defense institutions	Advises on force structure, leadership, recruitment, force posture, procurement, and civil-military relations	

military operations of the Pathet Lao, the guerilla force that North Vietnam was supporting against US armed and trained Hmong fighters in Laos. Political advisors had wide authority to suggest political changes to the Pathet Lao.[65] During Russian intervention in the Donbas, a range of Russian intelligence agencies work to control and direct the Donbas militias. In addition to Special Forces advisors, Russia also deploys a network of embedded *agentura* (spies) of the GRU attached to *spetnasz* units that take on a political role of handling separatists, while the FSB is responsible for "supervising and disciplining" of the separatist forces.[66]

In sum, I argue that interveners are aware of the potential for advisors to both monitor and influence their counterparts, advisors are aware of their roles, and advisors are a key tool for helping the intervener manage a local proxy.

1.4 Plan of the dissertation

The dissertation precedes as follows. In Chapter 2, I develop a formal model of delegation. The model clarifies the conditions under which interveners are more likely to choose proxy war: either the proxy and the intervener have similar interests or their interests are misaligned but the intervener lacks alternative options to influence an important conflict. The model shows why conflicts of interests, and a lack of strategic incentives to address them, can be particularly severe in the latter case. Under these conditions, principals will often invest in costly monitoring to learn more about their local agents, which is common in principal-agent theory from economics but not in the literature on proxy war. I conceptualize advisors as monitors who provide high-quality information that makes it possible for the intervener to condition rewards and punishments on the local partner's behavior, to select better officers to lead the local military, and to identify and address issues of defense reform at the strategic

[65] Paul Fritz Langer and Joseph Jermiah Zasloff. *The North Vietnamese Military Adviser in Laos*. 1968. URL: `https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_memoranda/RM5688.html` (visited on 03/04/2019).

[66] Tor Bukkvoll. "Russian special operations forces in Crimea and Donbas". In: *parameters* 46.2 (2016), p. 13.

level.

In Chapter 3, I theorize military advisors as a key means of influence over other militaries, expanding the role of advisors from a static to a dynamic setting. Since formal modeling has limitations in this dynamic setting, I develop the theory without formal modeling, drawing on theory from sociology. I argue in this chapter that states send military advisors to act as conduits of influence over a local military. Over time, advisors develop personal relationships with their local counterparts, shaping their approach to complicated issues such as human rights and civil-military relations.

In Chapter 4, I test empirical implications from my theory using an original quantitative dataset of interventions with military advisors in civil wars by the United States, China, France, the United Kingdom, or the Soviet Union/Russia between 1946 and 2019. The unit of observation is the supported party- intervener pairing in a given civil war. Data collected include the degree of preference alignment between intervener and the supported party, the military effectiveness of both parties to the civil war, and disaggregated data on the number and type of military advisors and any aid or arms provided by the intervener. Using these data, I quantitatively model when military advisors are deployed as part of an intervention, finding support for my theory that they are sent to build capacity and monitor.

In Chapter 5, I use these data to examine the effects of advisors in monitoring and influencing the proxy military. I find that advisors are associated with a longer conflict and more repression by the supported government. I also find a slightly decreased probability of a coup or coup attempt in the supported government, although the effect of advisors on regime stability may not be that different from the general small stabilizing effect of other forms of support for the government side in a civil war.

In Chapter 6, I explore in greater detail the causes and mechanisms of intervention with military advisors using a qualitative case study of US intervention in El Salvador (1979-89), as well as provide archival evidence to evaluate the theory's predictions about why interveners send advisors and what they expect advisors to do. I find that policymakers were aware of

the potential of military advisors to influence the Salvadoran military and thought carefully about whether to deploy them as part of the overall intervention. The political costs to sending advisors were high for both the Carter and Reagan administrations, who cautiously considered ways to limit public visibility even though these restrictions lowered the overall effectiveness of the mission. I also demonstrate that most advisors thought their key role was to restrain the Salvadoran military from committing human rights abuses through monitoring and influencing their counterparts on the ground. The case of US intervention in El Salvador suggests that intervention with advisors need not always have the negative effects outlined in the previous chapter. Advisors can improve human rights and civil-military relations when deployed if interveners make this a priority, especially when combined with persistent diplomatic pressure on the local partner.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation with a discussion of the implications of my research for other forms of military advising, the ethics of proxy war, policy, and scholarship, as well as opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2

A Formal Model of Conflict Delegation and Monitoring

> *Just being there is good for America because it causes our investment to be better utilized.... There's a lot of effort to have the appearance of towing the line and not being found out or being ratted-out. So the advisory effort serves that purpose, and it's a very open purpose.*
>
> — US military advisor to El Salvador, Interviewee 14

Proxy war may appear like a cost-effective way for powerful states to manage global conflict with limited resources. It can often be cheaper than the alternative of large ground combat deployments. However, keeping combat boots off the ground comes at a cost: Intervening states often struggle to get their local partners to do what they want, which undermines the effectiveness of this form of intervention. The proxy has a lot at stake in the conflict and often disagrees with the intervener on vital issues that affect the conflict, including political, economic, and military reform and military strategy;[1] whether to invest military aid in clientelism or professionalization; whether to arm against external rivals or

[1]Elias, "The Big Problem of Small Allies: New Data and Theory on Defiant Local Counterinsurgency Partners in Afghanistan and Iraq".

the target of the intervention;[2] and whether to target the civilian population.[3]

Recent scholarship adopts a principal-agent framework to explain how powerful states can motivate local partners to undertake costly actions for them when the principal and agent have misaligned interests.[4] Principal-agent theory identifies two factors that make it difficult for principals to get their agents to do what they want. The first is hidden information. PA theory argues that agents have more information about either their preferences (the adverse selection problem) or actions (the moral hazard problem) than the principal has. Otherwise, the principal would easily be able to choose an agent with preferences close to its own or establish a simple contract by which it pays the agent for good work and does not pay it for bad work. The second problem is a commitment problem in the absence of legally enforceable contracts. If the principal cannot commit to paying the agent after it works or has to pay the agent up front before observing its effort, then the principal will be unable to get the agent to do what it wants. Out of these two problems, the second is most severe. If the principal can commit to pay the agent, then an optimal contract exists which incentivizes the agent to work, even if information asymmetries make the payment inefficient.

Principal-agent theory as applied to proxy war, however, has two main shortcomings. First, principal-agent theory does not fully explain why principals often do not use rewards and punishments and why even when they are attempted, the agent often does what it wants regardless of the principal's requests. Proxies often "take the money and run,"[5] ignoring requests from the principal. Berman and Lake (2019) note how the United States largely failed to use rewards or punishments on the government in Yemen, who was more concerned with fighting direct threats to its governance like the Houthi militias than the al-Qaeda militants that the United States wanted it to fight. Similarly, in Pakistan, the United States

[2]Biddle, "Building Security Forces & Stabilizing Nations: The Problem of Agency"; Boutton, "US foreign aid, interstate rivalry, and incentives for counterterrorism cooperation".

[3]Byman, "Friends like these: Counterinsurgency and the war on terrorism".

[4]Berman and Lake, *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*; Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*.

[5]Jacqueline L. Hazelton. *Take the Money and Run.* Discussion Paper, 2017-03. International Security Program, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, Sept. 2017.

tried multiple forms of conditionality on aid, but was unable to get the government to put more effort into fighting militia groups in its tribal regions bordering Afghanistan. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the governments ignored many US requests for reform.[6] In El Salvador, over more than a decade of intervention, the United States largely failed to condition aid on reform to the Salvadoran military which continued committing human rights abuses.[7]

Furthermore, the failure of incentives does not seem to be easily explained by commitment problems. Instead of struggling to commit, interveners often over commit to the proxy. Outlining the commitment problem in principal-agent theory,[8] uses Pakistan as an example, arguing that it does not comply with US requests because the United States cannot commit not to abandon Pakistan if it no longer harbors militant groups. As a result, the United States cannot fully compensate Pakistan for the long-term cost of complying with its directives, thus a "persistent problem persists." I argue in contrast that a different problem exists in the relationship between the United States and Pakistan: the United States is overcommitted due to Pakistan's strategic importance as long as the United States is in Afghanistan. Thus, Pakistan need not worry about the US abandoning it and can pick and choose when to comply with US requests. Similarly, in many instances when interveners work with proxies during conflict, the intervener can commit to fund the proxy because aid is used to fund a war effort instead of merely rewarding loyalty. If the intervener ceases this aid, it would hurt its own objectives in the conflict. Ladwig (2017) quotes Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders commenting on the attempts of Congress to impose aid conditionality on the government of El Salvador: "[Aid conditionality] requires us to threaten to cut off military assistance to achieve the goals of our policy when we know that an actual cut-off would defeat the goals of that policy."[9] This provides a strong incentive for the intervener to follow

[6]Elias, "The Big Problem of Small Allies: New Data and Theory on Defiant Local Counterinsurgency Partners in Afghanistan and Iraq".

[7]Ladwig III, "Influencing Clients in Counterinsurgency: US Involvement in El Salvador's Civil War, 1979–92".

[8]Robert Powell. "Why Some Persistent Problems Persist". In: *American Political Science Review* 113.4 (2019), pp. 980–996.

[9]Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*.

through on its promises to compensate the proxy, ensuring its commitment.

Second, the existing principal-agent literature tends to focus on the contracting problems of adverse selection and moral hazard, both of which are caused by the agent having more information than the principal, but these assumptions of hidden information do not fit cases of actual intervention very well.[10] Interveners are often aware of fundamental and deep-seated incompatibilities of interest before they intervene. For example, just two days before the Carter administration decided to send support to the Salvadoran government, the Washington Post ran a short story about 11 political killings in El Salvador,[11] one of many stories to follow that year in top US news outlets about the victims of deaths squads run by the military and political right in El Salvador. From archival documents, as I detail in Chapter 6, it is quite clear that US officials were well aware of the human rights abuses it would repeatedly try to induce the Salvadoran government to rein in over the duration of the intervention. In the data I collected on intervention with military advisors in proxy war, which I detail in Chapter 4, around 43 percent of interveners and proxies began their working relationship with medium or low preference alignment. And while at the point of initial support, the intervener may not know how the proxy's interests will change over time, the proxy does not know that information, either, so it cannot use this information to its advantage. Even when preferences do change over time, I find that abandonment of the proxy is rare.

In this chapter, I develop a formal model of complete information to show why states will often choose to work with proxies when they disagree about important issues in the conflict despite complete information about the misalignment of preferences between them. I argue that interveners support these kind of proxies when they are constrained by their lack of intervention options. Therefore, the adverse selection problem is one of choosing a misaligned proxy with eyes wide open rather than making a poor choice with missing information. This has direct normative implications for the grand strategy of great powers. My argument

[10]Powell, "Why Some Persistent Problems Persist".

[11]The Washington Post. *11 Political Slayings in El Salvador*. English. Jan. 1980.

implies that when states get involved in prolonged interventions with limited payoffs it is not because they lack information but rather because policy interests are constructed such that states feel compelled to intervene.

I argue that states can address the second hidden information problem – moral hazard – through investing in costly monitoring. Many of the proxy's acts of noncompliance will not even be hidden in the first place because the proxy will simply communicate its position and refuse to comply with the intervener's requests. Consider, for example, the public clash between the United States government and Pakistan when Pakistan prevented the United States from interrogating a captured member of the Haqqani network.[12] Even when the proxy attempts to conceal its actions, interveners can learn about them through a range of monitoring activities – intelligence gathering by assets and diplomats, media reporting, and deploying military advisors to work with the proxy's military. And it can know this information in time to reward the proxy with more aid or punish it with less. I then advance the argument that military advisors can be effective monitors, which I develop more fully in the next chapter. The question that we should be asking is not whether states can monitor effectively but when they are willing to pay to do so.

Interveners, then, sometimes select proxies when the misalignment in interests is deep and incompatible. The question becomes how to manage them. The literature proposes paying the proxy based on its effort (or an imperfect signal of its effort). Conditional aid packages will increase compliance if the intervener can stick to them and if they're sufficiently valuable to buy the proxy's good behavior. But interveners are often reluctant to cut off aid when the proxy does not perform well and proxies often don't comply even when threats or punishments are used. I develop a model that captures the intervener's underlying reluctance to use incentives, and in a section of this chapter, I outline proposed extensions of the model to develop this idea further.

[12]Adam Goldman, Mark Landler, and Eric Schmitt. "Frustrated U.S. Might Withhold $255 Million in Aid From Pakistan (Published 2017)". In: *The New York Times* (Dec. 29, 2017). ISSN: 0362-4331. URL: `https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/29/us/politics/pakistan-american-aid-255-million.html` (visited on 11/15/2020).

I model the intervener's choice of incentives as a set of blunt punishments: either abandoning the proxy or escalating its involvement by sending in combat troops. Interveners will be left with only blunt punishments as incentives when they cannot strategically choose how much the proxy values their support, and as a result, cannot pay the proxy enough to heed its requests. Public opinion, concerns about escalation, other available supporters for the proxy, or the high political costs of compliance can all prevent the intervener from compensating the proxy fully for the cost of complying with its directives. In El Salvador, for example, the US could not directly compensate the Salvadoran far right to make them stop repression because it was politically untenable to fund them. For conservative officers in the military who thought they could win the war by using repression, the aid and arms provided by the United States did not outweigh the costs of ceding political power to a center-left government they viewed as soft on the insurgents. If the intervener can't control how valuable it is to the proxy, it is left with only a blunt means of punishment to control the proxy, either removing all of its support or sending in its combat troops. But if it chooses to apply these incentives, it loses its ability to influence the conflict or commits to the costly intervention it was trying to avoid. As a result, the intervener lacks leverage over the proxy because its threats to withdraw aid are not credible.[13] The model shows how the intervener and proxy settle on a compromise bargain where the proxy makes limited concessions in return for support, making more concessions the more it wants support, and the intervener accepts these limited levels of compliance because it lacks alternatives to supporting a proxy.

My model provides a contribution to the literature by putting forth an argument about why interveners sometimes fail to use more incentives when working with a proxy even under complete information. But the main implication of my model that I will build on in future chapters is that monitoring can be an effective way to gain more compliance from the proxy.

[13]Some have discussed how aid conditionality depends on the ability of aid providers to walk away. See: Thad Dunning. "Conditioning the effects of aid: Cold War politics, donor credibility, and democracy in Africa". In: *International organization* (2004), pp. 409–423 Similarly, others find that US threats to withdraw that are more credible (eg. when US public opinion favors withdrawal), are associated with more compliance from local allies. See:Barbara Elias and Alex Weisiger. "Influence through Absence in US Counterinsurgency Interventions? Coercing Local Allies through Threats to Withdraw". In: *Civil Wars* (2020), pp. 1–31

The benefits of monitoring are increasing in its cost, producing more compliance than under even the perfect and complete information case. I argue that military advisors are a key means of monitoring that allows the intervener to monitor the proxy by gathering critical information on its actions, since their role as capacity builders provides them with unparalleled access to the proxy's military. Interveners are willing to pay the costs of monitoring because it makes possible the enforcement and sustaining of a tacit bargain with the proxy. Monitoring will still be useful if the proxy has interests more aligned with the intervener, but will often be prohibitively costly. My model shows that monitoring can be effective even when the intervener lacks leverage over the proxy, and it will be even more effective if the intervener has more leverage and can apply a wider range of incentives.

In sum, I argue in this chapter that interveners will often work with a proxy despite serious preference misalignment when it is the best option out of the limited menu of foreign policy options that states face for influencing conflict abroad. Staying out of the conflict may be out of the question, such as when the conflict takes place in the powerful state's backyard. Diplomatic means of intervention may already have been tried and failed. Sending in combat troops may be politically impossible. And the proxy may be the only one available. Under these conditions, it will be very difficult for the intervener to wield significant influence over the proxy. Interveners then need to find other ways to manage the proxy, and monitoring can be a key means of getting more compliance.

2.1 Model

I consider a model with two players: the Intervener (I) and Proxy (P). The Intervener would like to influence a civil war, perhaps to support an ally or client;[14] to further ideological

[14]Yarhi-Milo, Lanoszka, and Cooper, "To arm or to ally? The patron's dilemma and the strategic logic of arms transfers and alliances"; Brett Ashley Leeds, Andrew G Long, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. "Reevaluating alliance reliability: Specific threats, specific promises". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44.5 (2000), pp. 686–699; Marita Kaw. "Predicting Soviet military intervention". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33.3 (1989), pp. 402–429.

goals;[15] to respond to domestic pressure to intervene;[16] or for regime change in another state.[17] Proxies can be either non-state actors or states that the Intervener would like to fight against the target of the intervention in exchange for support from the intervener.[18] The target of an intervention is another actor in a civil war, either a non-state armed group or the state.

This model is one of complete information. Constructing the model in this way provides two main advantages. First, as in Powell (2019),[19] a complete information set up highlights the primary cause of tension in the intervener-proxy relationship – disagreement about policy – and shows clearly that incomplete information is not necessary to get outcomes where proxies largely follow their own interests after support. Second, beyond the illustrative purposes of a complete information model, an argument can be made that it is also fairly representative of actual intervener-proxy relationships. US intervention in Vietnam in the 1960s illustrates the ongoing debate within the literature about how much interveners know when they enter conflicts. Some argue that intelligence, though widely available in the leadup to US escalation in Vietnam, was biased or hard to interpret, and uncertainty about how the conflict would change in response to US boots on the ground was unclear.[20] Others argue that the United States entered Vietnam with eyes wide open. Fredrik Logevall highlights how US policymakers chose to escalate involvement in Vietnam despite ample intelligence about

[15]Renato Corbetta. "Determinants of Third Parties' Intervention and Alignment Choices in Ongoing Conflicts, 1946–2001". In: *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6.1 (2010), pp. 61–85.

[16]Patrick M Regan. "Choosing to intervene: Outside interventions in internal conflicts". In: *The Journal of Politics* 60.3 (1998), pp. 754–779.

[17]Michael Poznansky, Alexander B Downes, and Lindsey A O'Rourke. "Friends, Foes, and Foreign-Imposed Regime Change". In: *International Security* 42.2 (2017), pp. 191–195; Alexander B Downes and Lindsey A O'Rourke. "You Can't Always Get What You Want: Why Foreign-Imposed Regime Change Seldom Improves Interstate Relations". In: *International Security* 41.2 (2016), pp. 43–89; Elizabeth N Saunders. "Transformative Choices: Leaders and the Origins of Intervention Strategy". In: *International Security* 34.2 (2009), pp. 119–161.

[18]I focus the nature of proxy support on preventing the target of the intervention from military victory, rather than ensuring the proxy's military victory, in congruence with Vladimir Rauta. "A structural-relational analysis of party dynamics in proxy wars". In: *International Relations* (Oct. 12, 2018). DOI: 10.1177/0047117818802436. (Visited on 10/12/2018)

[19]Powell, "Why Some Persistent Problems Persist".

[20]John Garofano. "Tragedy or choice in Vietnam? Learning to think outside the archival box: A review essay". In: *International Security* 26.4 (2002), pp. 143–168.

the war and misgivings about the prospects for success.[21] I choose a side in this debate to argue that information about the proxy is typically widely available before an intervention. Interveners often observe a potential proxy closely before deciding to intervene, utilizing diplomatic channels and fact-finding missions to learn both the proxy's cost of fighting and political and military reforms that are necessary to prevail in the conflict. Embassies and other government emissaries of the intervener work directly with the political elements of the proxy to gather information on its policy positions, as well as to communicate the intervener's preferences.

In contrast to preferences, however, the proxy's actions, especially its day-to-day military operations, are harder for the intervener to observe. In the model, I allow for hidden actions of the proxy and show when interveners would pay for perfect information by investing in monitoring. Learning more about the military's behavior requires information gathering from military advisors, similar to the information gathered through embassies about the proxy's politicians. While some existing work mentions in passing the potential for advisors as monitors[22], there is not yet a study of monitoring in the context of proxy war.

In the model, I also assume that there is not a market for proxies: The Intervener has only one potential Proxy that it can support, and must either work with this proxy or choose a different intervention option. In many civil wars, a prospective intervener only has one party that it could support in the conflict, either because other options are already aligned with other patrons or the intervener has basic affinities to only one party in the conflict, which some have argued determines support.[23] For example, during the Cold War, the United States never had the option of supporting a leftist insurgency because of its anti-Communist position. Two objections could be raised to this assumption. First, interveners sometimes

[21]Fredrik Logevall. *Choosing war: The lost chance for peace and the escalation of war in Vietnam*. Univ of California Press, 2001.

[22]Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*; Groh, *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option*; Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate warfare: the transformation of war in the twenty-first century*.

[23]Corbetta, "Determinants of Third Parties' Intervention and Alignment Choices in Ongoing Conflicts, 1946–2001".

try to remove proxy leaders with coups. I argue that this is not equivalent to choosing another proxy because replacing one proxy leader with another often does not guarantee, or even make very likely, a change in the preferences of the proxy. Consider, for example, how the prime minister of South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem, was famously removed from power in a 1963 coup after coup plotters achieved tacit support from the United States.[24] Future leaders of South Vietnam ended up being even less in line with US interests than Diem was. Second, when supporting non-state actors, the Intervener often has more than one potential proxy. However, this is not always the case. Often the available non-state proxies are closely aligned such that the intervener does not have a meaningful choice between them. When substantial divergence between non-state actors does exist, the Intervener may not be able to support some of them because of basic affinities or because the non-state actor does not want support from a particular patron. For example, despite the plethora of non-state actors operating in the Syrian civil war from 2011 to present, many of the groups were extremist Islamist groups or had ties to such groups, making them ineligible for US support. In sum, the lack of a market for proxies assumption is strongest when the potential proxy is a state and weakest when a variety of non-state actors are available for support, but is nonetheless a reasonable assumption across a range of cases.

In the model, the Intervener must choose whether to (1) not support the Proxy, thereby staying out completely or limiting its involvement to diplomatic intervention; (2) provide support to the Proxy, which will improve the military prospects of the Proxy; or (3) intervene with its own combat troops. Proxies vary in terms of their quality: their preference alignment with the Intervener and competence to fight. Competence in the model is an exogenous parameter known by both players, $\pi \in (0, 1]$, that denotes how good the military of the Proxy is at fighting, compared to the Intervener's own military, which is highly competent. Alignment is endogenously generated in the model by the proxy's strategic choice of a degree of policy distortion away from its ideal point, t.

[24]Luttwak, *Coup d'etat: A practical handbook*.

If the Intervener chooses to support a Proxy, it wants the Proxy to choose policies as close as possible to its own preferences and the Proxy's competence to be as high as possible, that is $\pi = 1$. An aligned proxy shares the same policy preferences with the intervener, while a competent proxy has sufficient military ability to fight in place of the intervener's own troops. Such proxies are rare. Proxies vary greatly in their willingness and ability to fight and support broader goals of interveners.[25] Even during the Cold War, when we often assume strong ideological affinity and clientilism between the supporting state and the proxy, proxies exhibited significant agency to choose their sponsors and then their behavior after receiving support.[26] Both state and non-state actors have agency in choosing states to give them support.[27] The Proxy prefers to choose policies as close to its ideal point, $t \in \{\mathbf{R}_{\geq 0}\}$, as possible.[28]

To compensate it for deviating from its ideal point in the policies chosen, the Proxy will receive s amount of support. Resources are passed from the intervening state to the proxy in the form of money, civilian technology or equipment, arms, people that can fill technical military roles, or human capital from military advisors.[29] Support is an exogenous parameter, since the Intervener is limited in how useful its support is to the Proxy. The value of s to the Proxy can be thought of as the ceiling on how valuable the Intervener is to the Proxy if the Intervener provided the Proxy with every form of compensation available –

[25]Berman and Lake, *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*; Elias, "The Big Problem of Small Allies: New Data and Theory on Defiant Local Counterinsurgency Partners in Afghanistan and Iraq"; Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*; Rauta, "A structural-relational analysis of party dynamics in proxy wars".

[26]Rauta, "A structural-relational analysis of party dynamics in proxy wars".

[27]Belgin San-Akca. *States in disguise: causes of state support for rebel groups.* Oxford University Press, 2016.

[28]Note the single policy dimension is a major simplification of reality. Barbara Elias notes how proxy compliance is often issue specific, depending on the proxy's capacity to implement the request, its interests at stake in complying with a request, and its dependence on the intervener. Barbara Elias. *Why allies rebel: defiant local partners in counterinsurgency wars.* Cambridge University Press, 2020

[29]Since proxy war involves the transfer of resources from the intervener to the proxy with the intent to influence the conflict, it is different from diplomatic interventions, which include declarations of support (such as recognition for rebel groups), the prospect of such support, or some kinds of sanctions.Paul Poast. "Lincoln's gamble: Fear of intervention and the onset of the American civil war". In: *Security Studies* 24.3 (2015), pp. 502–527; Abel Escribà-Folch. "Economic sanctions and the duration of civil conflicts". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 47.2 (2010), pp. 129–141

such as aid, arms, military advisors, and political support.

Modeling the value of support to the Proxy as exogenous departs from the standard principal-agent framework. Instead of interveners finessing the level of support to choose a value of a reward that will sufficiently compensate their proxies for reforms, the Intervener's hands are tied because it can only use blunt punishments on the Proxy. I argue this assumption is reasonable for two reasons. First, characteristics of the Proxy can limit the value of the Intervener's support. A Proxy might have other allies, making the value of the Intervener's support lower to the Proxy.[30] A Proxy facing a weak opponent or with a strong military and economy will not need the Intervener's support as much as a Proxy in danger of military defeat or economic collapse. Most importantly, the Intervener's support can be of limited value to the Proxy because the Proxy values pursuing its political or ideological objectives much more than receiving aid, arms, or advisors from the Intervener. Proxies are fighting for their political survival and their own objectives in a conflict. Victory on the Intervener's terms may not be worth it – even if the Intervener floods the Proxy's economy with money and provides advanced military technology.

In addition, the value of the support provided to the Proxy can be limited if there are constraints on the Intervener. The Intervener might face domestic or international opposition to its involvement that limits the amount of support it can provide. This can often be the case with covert interventions; the Intervener cannot provide advanced weaponry to the Proxy, for example, or it risks revealing its involvement. In El Salvador, the US Congress placed limits of varying strictness on US support to the Salvadoran government, preventing the Reagan administration from providing as much aid as it thought the proxy needed. In addition, concerns about conflict escalation or how the Proxy might use the support can limit the kinds of support, and thus its value, provided by the Intervener. In El Salvador, the United States limited the amount of helicopters and firepower it provided to the Salvadoran military – despite frequent requests for this especially valuable form of support – because it

[30]Groh, *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option.*

anticipated that the military would use these weapons to cause civilian casualties. Finally, the Intervener might face a budget constraint where it has to limit the support it can provide, though with great powers this is less likely to be the case. The range of scenarios where support is exogenously determined and not a strategic choice by the Intervener shows this assumption is justifiable under a range of common conditions in interventions.

In addition to choosing whether to support the Proxy, the Intervener must also choose whether to invest in monitoring it. If the Intervener chooses proxy support without monitoring, it provides some bundle of aid and arms to the proxy, which are modeled using the s parameter as a transfer to the proxy. Without monitoring, the Intervener cannot observe the Proxy's actions. If the Intervener chooses to monitor, it sends military advisors to the proxy, along with some bundle of aid and arms (the s parameter). With monitoring, the Intervener can observe the Proxy's actions, but it must pay a cost.

Having clarified the premises of the model and the two essential assumptions of the model – that a market for proxies does not exist and support has limited value to the Proxy – I now move to the path of play.

2.1.1 Path of Play

Play proceeds as follows:

1. I chooses an action, $a \in \{\text{No support, Proxy support, Direct intervention}\}$. If it chooses no support or direct intervention, the game ends, and both players receive fixed payoffs (detailed below).

2. I chooses an action $a \in \{\text{Monitor, Not monitor}\}$. If I chooses monitoring, it must pay a cost, m, of sending its personnel in the form of military advisors.

3. P chooses a policy $x \geq 0$, which can be close to or far from the ideal point of the Intervener, which is fixed at 0. The Intervener knows t but does not observe x unless it invested in monitoring.

4. I chooses an action, $a \in \{\text{Withdraw, Proxy support, Escalate}\}$. The game ends.

2.1.2 Payoffs

Payoffs are distributed as follows. If the Intervener chooses no support in the first stage game, then its payoff is $-N$. The fixed payoff for the Proxy of fighting with its own troops in the war without outside help is γ. If the Intervener chooses direct intervention in the first stage, its payoff is $\beta - c$, where $\beta > 0$ is the benefit of achieving the desired outcome of the war and $c \geq 0$ is the cost of intervening with combat troops.

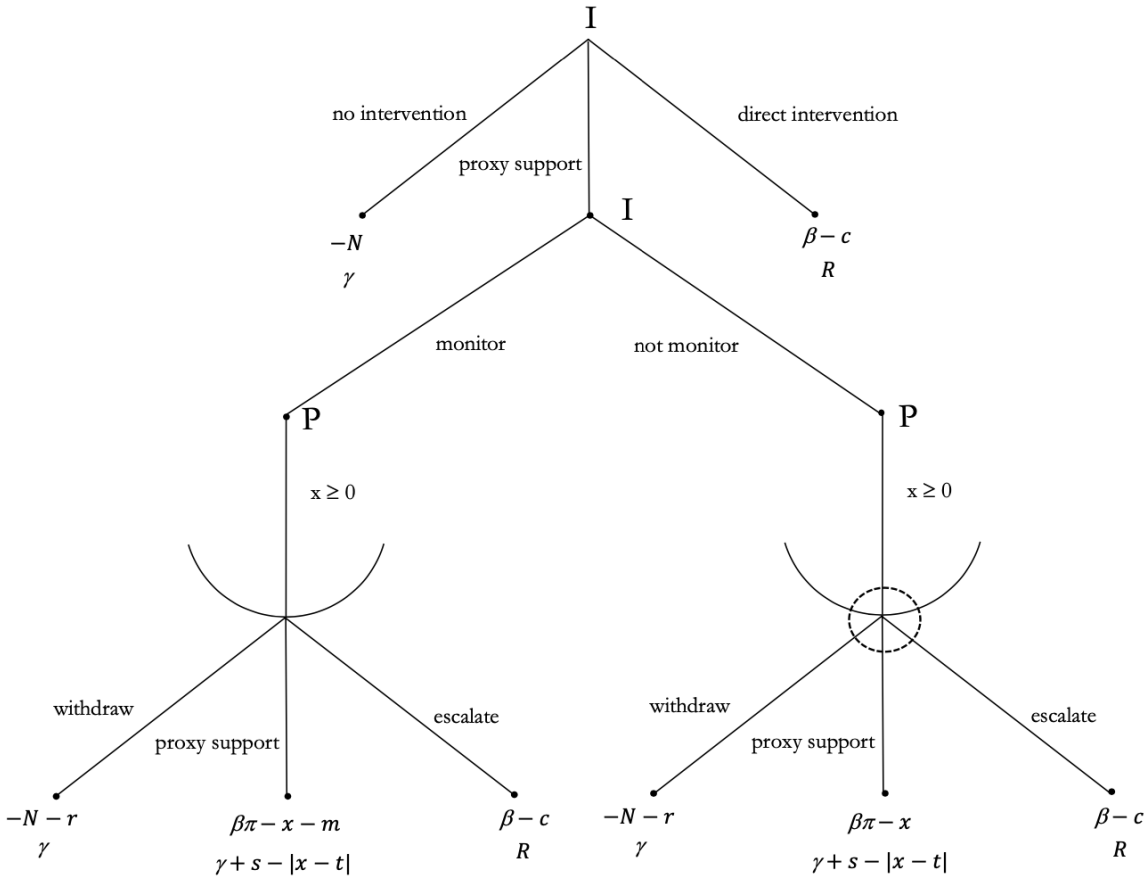
If the Intervener chooses proxy support with or without monitoring, and withdraws in the final stage, its payoff is $-N - r$, where $N \geq 0$ is the payoff of no support, $r > 0$ is the reputational cost of supporting a proxy and then leaving the war. The Proxy again receives the fixed payoff of fighting with its own troops in the war without outside help, γ.

If the intervener chooses direct intervention after proxy support, with or without monitoring, its payoff is $\beta - c$, where $\beta > 0$ is the benefit of achieving the desired outcome of the war and $c \geq 0$ is the cost of intervening with combat troops. The Proxy's fixed payoff from direct intervention is denoted as R.

If the Intervener chooses proxy support in both the first and last stages of the game, without monitoring, its payoff is $\beta\pi - x$, where $\beta > 0$ is the benefit of achieving the desired outcome of the war, $\pi \in (0, 1]$ is the military ability of the Proxy, and $-x$ is the cost of divergence between the Intervener's preference and the bundle of policies chosen by the Proxy.

If the Intervener chooses proxy support with monitoring, the Intervener pays a cost of monitoring, m, if it chooses to continue proxy support in the final stage. The Intervener pays this cost only if it continues proxy support and not if it withdraws or escalates after initial proxy support for two reasons. The r parameter for withdrawing after proxy support already encapsulates the lost resources and reputational cost of leaving without resolving the conflict and can account for sending advisors and then leaving without resolving the

Figure 2.1: Intervention with monitoring game



conflict, as well. Similarly, the cost of direct intervention will be the more relevant cost if the Intervener chooses direct intervention. After ground combat troops are in the country, the cost of sending in advisors will be insignificant. If the Intervener chooses proxy support in both the first and last stages of the game, with monitoring, its payoff is $\beta\pi - x - m$, where m is the cost of monitoring.

For the Proxy, if the Intervener chooses to continue support in the final stage, regardless of whether the Intervener chose to monitor, its payoff is $\gamma + s - x - t$, where γ is the fixed payoff for the Proxy of fighting with its own troops in the war, s is the benefit of the support provided by the Intervener, and $-x - t$ is the cost of divergence between the Proxy's chosen bundle of policies and its true preference, $t > 0$.

In my model, the intervener can commit to compensating the proxy with s support, at least while the conflict is ongoing, because if it abandoned the proxy it would have to give up its ability to influence the conflict's outcome and receive the payoff for non-intervention, $-N$, thus punishing itself. This is in contrast to Powell (2019), who argues that principals cannot use aid conditionality effectively because they cannot commit to compensate their agents after the fact for the cost of complying with their demands.

2.2 Analysis

Having defined the structure of the game, I now move to analyzing when proxy support in both the first and last stage, as well as monitoring, can be sustained as a subgame perfect Nash equilibrium. I make the following assumptions to support such equilibria.

First, for the Intervener to sometimes prefer proxy support to direct intervention, it must be the case that combat is at least as costly as the loss in performance from contracting out fighting to a proxy force, $c \geq (1 - \pi)\beta$. If $c < (1 - \pi)\beta$, choosing direct intervention would always make the intervener better off than choosing proxy support, regardless of how compliant the proxy. I call this assumption the need for delegation.

Assumption 1. ***Need for delegation:*** *Combat is sufficiently costly; otherwise, any strategy involving direct intervention or escalation would strictly dominate proxy support. That is, given strategies $s_i, s_i' \in S_i$, let $s_i = (\textit{Direct intervention}, a_2)$ and let $s_i' = (\textit{Proxy support}, a_2)$. If the cost of combat $c < (1-\pi)\beta$, then $u_I(s_i, s_{-i}) > u_I(s_i', s_{-i})$ for all $s_{-i} \in S_{-i}$.*

Second, the Proxy must prefer autonomy rather than direct intervention: it would rather fight with its own troops and gain support from the Intervener rather than lose control of the fighting when the Intervener sends in ground combat troops. Assumption 2 ensures that the Proxy prefers proxy support and fighting without the Intervener's troops on the ground, as long as it does not have to diverge too much from its preferences, and does not prefer direct intervention regardless of x^*.

Assumption 2. ***Proxy prefers autonomy:*** *The Proxy prefers autonomy in warfighting: it will always be weakly worse off if the Intervener sends in combat troops than if it chose some other strategy. That is, for $s_{-i}, s_{-i}' \in S_{-i}$, let $s_{-i} = (\textit{Direct intervention}, a_2, a_3)$. If $R \leq \gamma + s$, then $u_P(s_i, s_{-i}) \leq u_P(s_i, s_{-i}')$ for all $s_i \in S_i$.*

Assumption 2 ensures that the Proxy does not prefer direct intervention regardless of x^*.[31] I then solve for the equilibria of interest using the concept of subgame perfection. Formal proofs follow in the Appendix.

Lemma 1. *In equilibrium, the Proxy sets x equal to its ideal point, $s_P^* = \{t\}$, if the Intervener chooses not to monitor.*

To see this, suppose the Proxy chooses some $s_P < \{t\}$. Since the Intervener chooses between withdrawing, maintaining support, and escalating without knowing what the Proxy chose, its strategy does not depend on the Proxy's action. The Proxy can then benefit by deviating to $s_P^* = \{t\}$. Therefore, in equilibrium, the Proxy must always play $s_P^* = \{t\}$ if

[31] Assumption 2 is only needed for subpoint 1 of Lemma 3 below, since if I is playing an equilibrium strategy of proxy support if $x \leq x^*$ and escalate if $x > x^*$, the Proxy will choose $x > x^*$ if it prefers direct intervention. In that case, an equilibrium will exist where the Intervener escalates after proxy support and the Proxy chooses an $x > x^*$. If $s_I^* = (\text{Proxy support}, \text{ Proxy support})$ if $x \leq x^*$ and $s_i^* = (\text{No intervention}, \text{Withdraw})$ if $x > x^*$, the Proxy will choose $x \leq x^*$ if $t - s \leq x^* \leq t$ – even if Assumption 2 does not hold.

the Intervener chooses not to monitor. The Intervener's equilibrium strategies are as follows (I abbreviate the action "Proxy support" as PS):

Lemma 2. *1. If $c \leq \beta + N$, then*

$$s_I^* = \begin{cases} \textit{PS, Monitor, PS, Escalate} & \textit{if } x \leq x^* \ \& \ x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, Monitor, Escalate, Escalate} & \textit{if } x > x^* \ \& \ x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, } \neg \textit{ Monitor, PS, PS} & \textit{if } x \leq x^* \ \& \ x^{**} < x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, } \neg \textit{ Monitor, Escalate, PS} & \textit{if } x > x^* \ \& \ x^{**} < x^* + m \end{cases}$$

and $x^* \equiv (\pi - 1)\beta + c - m$ is the equilibrium value of x in the subgame with monitoring and $x^{**} = t$ is the equilibrium value of x in the subgame without monitoring.

2. If $c > \beta + N + r$, then

$$s_I^* = \begin{cases} \textit{PS, Monitor, PS, Withdraw} & \textit{if } x \leq x^* \ \& \ x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{No intervention, Monitor, PS, Withdraw} & \textit{if } x^* < x \leq x^* + r \ \& \\ & x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{No intervention, Monitor, Withdraw, Withdraw} & \textit{if } x > x^* + r \ \& \\ & x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, } \neg \textit{ Monitor, PS, PS} & \textit{if } x \leq x^* + r \ \& \ x^{**} < x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, } \neg \textit{ Monitor, Withdraw, PS} & \textit{if } x > x^* + r \ \& \ x^{**} < x^* + m \end{cases}$$

and $x^* \equiv \beta\pi + N - m$ is the equilibrium value of x in the subgame with monitoring and $x^{**} = t$ is the equilibrium value of x in the subgame without monitoring.

Lemma 2 shows that the Intervener will choose monitoring if the Proxy's ideal point, t, is above the threshold at which, under perfect and complete information without monitoring, the Intervener would choose proxy support over either direct intervention or no support

$(x^{**} > x^* + m)$. If t is exactly equal to this threshold, than the Intervener is indifferent between monitoring and not monitoring; if t is below this threshold, the Intervener will never need to pay the cost of monitoring because the Proxy's preferences are sufficiently close to the Intervener's preferences.

For the Proxy, if the policy distortion required by the Intervener is moderate and the value of the support provided is high enough, the following equilibrium conditions apply:

Lemma 3. *Let s_I be as defined in Lemma 2. In equilibrium:*

1. *Let $x_1^* \equiv (\pi - 1)\beta + c - m$. Then $s_P^* = min\{x_1^*, t\}$ implies $R - \gamma - s + t \leq x_1^* \leq t$.*

2. *Let $x_2^* \equiv \beta\pi + N - m$. Then $s_P^* = min\{x_2^*, t\}$ implies $t - s \leq x_2^* \leq t$.*

I derive Proposition 1 from assumptions 1 and 2 and lemmata 1-3.

Proposition 1. *If the cost of combat is high but withdrawal is more costly; the Proxy prefers independence in warfighting; and the Proxy's preferences diverge sufficiently from the Intervener's preferences, there exists an equilibrium where I invests in monitoring and continues proxy support if $x \leq x_1^*$ and escalates after initial proxy support if $x > x_1^*$, and P chooses $min(x_1^*, t)$, provided $x_1^* \geq R - \gamma - s + t$. If the cost of combat is sufficiently high and the Intervener and Proxy divergence sufficiently in preferences, there exists another equilibrium where I invests in monitoring and continues proxy support if $x \leq x_2^*$ and does not support a proxy at all if $x > x_2^*$, and P chooses $min(x_2^*, t)$, provided $x_2^* \geq t - s$.*

2.3 Discussion

2.3.1 Choosing proxy war when interests diverge

In the absence of constraints, either budgetary or political, great powers with capable militaries would prefer to rely on their own militaries to shape political violence around the world. When the cost of combat, c, is low the Intervener will always choose to intervene

with its own troops and will also prefer to use force instead of staying out of the conflict or intervening with limited means such as diplomacy or economic sanctions. Intervening with combat troops, however, is rarely this easy. Even for great powers, combat can be quite costly if it lacks support from the public, either because foreign policy elites have mobilized public consensus against the war,[32] the public has doubts about the success of the war,[33] or because of public aversion to casualties.[34] Direct intervention can also provoke other states to intervene in the conflict, usually by covert means where the risk of escalation is managed but still present.[35] Proxy war can be particularly attractive when direct intervention is not an option because of lack of domestic support, legal constraints,[36] high risk of escalation,[37] high costs,[38] or lack of plausible deniability.[39]

Given these constraints on their use of force, great powers delegate to proxies to avoid the cost of sending in their own combat troops. An intervener would prefer to delegate to a highly competent proxy with preferences very similar to its own. I find, as do other models of delegation[40], that the Intervener's utility is maximized when the Proxy's military is nearly as competent as the Intervener's ($\pi \approx 1$) and when its preferences align with the Intervener's perfectly ($t \approx 0$). If aligned and competent proxies were common, great powers would always delegate to proxies to advance their interests on the cheap.

Interveners delegate to unaligned and incompetent proxies when the cost of combat is very high and withholding support is unattractive. Great powers may perceive withholding

[32]Adam J Berinsky. "Assuming the costs of war: Events, elites, and American public support for military conflict". In: *The Journal of Politics* 69.4 (2007), pp. 975–997.

[33]Christopher Gelpi, Peter D Feaver, and Jason Reifler. *Paying the human costs of war: American public opinion and casualties in military conflicts*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

[34]James Burk. "Public support for peacekeeping in Lebanon and Somalia: Assessing the casualties hypothesis". In: *Political science quarterly* 114.1 (1999), pp. 53–78.

[35]Austin Carson. "Facing off and saving face: covert intervention and escalation management in the Korean War". In: *International Organization* (2016), pp. 103–131.

[36]Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics*.

[37]Mumford, *Proxy warfare*.

[38]Byman, "Why States are Turning to Proxy War".

[39]Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate warfare: the transformation of war in the twenty-first century*.

[40]John D Huber and Charles R Shipan. *Deliberate discretion?: The institutional foundations of bureaucratic autonomy*. Cambridge University Press, 2002; Berman and Lake, *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*.

support as off the table when they are concerned about a potential loss of relative power, international status, and prestige[41]; or when the conflict takes place in their geographical "backyard" or in former colonies.[42] Under these conditions, the Intervener will tolerate significant policy distortion without withdrawing or escalating. The maximum level of policy distortion by the Proxy that the Intervener will tolerate in equilibrium, x^*, is increasing in the cost of combat, c. This is true whether the Intervener's strategy is to withdraw or escalate if the Proxy chooses a level of policy distortion higher than x^*. Furthermore, the lower the Proxy's competence, the higher the costs of combat and of staying out of the conflict must be to sustain proxy support in equilibrium. In other words, interveners will only support proxies that are bad at fighting when the other options are terrible.

We can see some of these dynamics at play in US intervention in El Salvador. To gain public support for intervention, the United States government publicly reaffirmed both the importance of El Salvador to the United States and assured the public that under no circumstances would it put US boots on the ground there. In a major address to Congress in 1983, President Reagan stated "there is no thought of sending American combat troops to Central America" and then linked combating the Salvadoran insurgency to the broader issue of American credibility against the Soviet Union with these words:

> If Central America were to fall, what would the consequences be for our position in Asia, Europe and for alliances such as NATO? If the United States cannot respond to a threat near our own borders, why should Europeans or Asians believe that we are seriously concerned about threats to them? If the Soviets can assume that nothing short of an actual attack on the United States will provoke an American response, which ally, which friend will trust us then?[43]

The message was clear that supporting the government of El Salvador against the insurgency was the only option available. In this sort of environment, US leverage was greatly

[41] Jeffrey W Taliaferro and Jeffrey W Taliaferro. *Balancing risks: Great power intervention in the periphery*. Cornell University Press, 2004.

[42] Findley and Teo, "Rethinking third-party interventions into civil wars: An actor-centric approach".

[43] Ronald Reagan. "PRESIDENT REAGAN'S ADDRESS ON CENTRAL AMERICA TO JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS (Published 1983)". In: *The New York Times* (Apr. 28, 1983). ISSN: 0362-4331. URL: https://www.nytimes.com/1983/04/28/world/president-reagan-s-address-on-central-america-to-joint-session-of-congress.html (visited on 11/16/2020).

limited since the Salvadoran military believed that the United States would not cut off aid substantially or permanently. US leverage was enhanced, in fact, during times when Congress appeared ready to cut off aid to the Salvadoran government, which I discuss further in Chapter 6. The US government viewed the situation similarly and was aware of its lack of leverage. In a report produced in 1984 by The Select Committee on Intelligence in the United States Senate, report authors outlined the problem quite clearly:

> The leverage which the U.S. can exert over the conduct of ruling circles whose very survival might appear to be dependent on U.S. good will and material assistance can easily be overestimated. In reality, such leverage is inversely proportional to the degree to which the U.S. is perceived by those whom it is attempting to influence to be constrained by independent policy considerations (e.g., the effort to limit Communist influence in Central America) that restrict its freedom of action....Unless there is at least a perceived willingness to take this kind of a drastic step [withdrawing U.S. support for the government], however, the U.S. cannot expect easy success in efforts to combat political violence in El Salvador or in similar situations elsewhere.[44]

Even when the proxy greatly needs assistance, as the Salvadoran government did, if the intervener cannot credibly threaten to withdraw its support (or send in combat troops), then the proxy has a lot of leverage in the relationship since it gets to control whether the intervener reaches at least some of its policy goals. In sum, an intervener cannot simply buy compliance from its proxy; the proxy knows when the outside options for the intervener are not great and therefore will not need to compromise much to keep support. And when the support the intervener provides is not enough to compensate the proxy for certain painful reforms that the intervener requests, the proxy will not make the reforms.

Delegating to unaligned and incompetent proxies can be dangerous when it leads to escalation under conditions unfavorable to the Intervener. The Intervener can become “locked in" to the conflict if withdrawing after initial proxy support imposes high costs and would rather escalate its involvement if policy distortion is too high, even though it will pay a high

[44]Report, "The United States Government and Recent Political Violence in El Salvador," September 13, 1984, folder "El Salvador (09/14/1984)", box 30, NSC Country File: Latin America, Ronald Reagan Library.

cost for combat. Therefore, when the Intervener believes it must influence a conflict and combat is sufficiently costly, the Intervener will choose proxy support even if the Proxy will act against the Intervener's interests and is willing to escalate if the Proxy distorts policy too much.

Another related insight from the model is that when the proxy wants the intervener to shoulder the burden of fighting with its own combat troops, proxy war is likely to lead to the intervener sending in its own combat troops – yet another instance where the proxy gets what it wants. This is because if the proxy knows the intervener wants to win badly, and badly enough to send in combat troops if the situation deteriorates, it has every incentive not to fight hard and to deliberately choose policies that will provoke more intervention. The Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan is a good example of these sort of dynamics. The Soviet Union supported Nur Muhammad Taraki's Communist-aligned government after it seized power in a coup on April 27, 1978. Shortly after the coup, Afghan tribal fighters began attacks against the government which developed into an insurgency by spring 1979. The Soviet Union initially provided political, educational, and financial support alongside political and military advisors to support Taraki's government. Soviet leaders rebuffed repeated calls by their Afghan proxy for direct Soviet military intervention, although they increased the number of advisors in Afghanistan after the insurgency developed.[45] The Soviet Union wanted its proxy to broaden its political coalition, but the Taraki government was focused on a power struggle within the government. The infighting led to Hafizullah Amin replacing Taraki against Soviet wishes. Feeling that the Soviet Union was an unreliable ally, Amin tried to limit his dependence on the Soviet Union and threatened to request American support. Faced with the potential loss of the proxy, the Soviets decided to switch to direct intervention and invaded the country, replaced Amin, and took over the majority of the fighting. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan illustrates how interveners often cannot avoid escalation of their commitment should the proxy want more intervention or if it disregards all requests

[45]Odd Arne Westad et al. *The global Cold War: third world interventions and the making of our times*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

from the intervener.

These results show further that delegation to proxies with misaligned interests can happen even when the Intervener has complete information about the proxy's incompetence and preference misalignment. While the traditional principal-agent problem of adverse selection is caused by information asymmetries between the principal and agent that prevent the principal from selecting an aligned agent, the model shows that interveners will sometimes delegate to proxies when interest alignment is low. Since an Intervener has only one available proxy to work with in a given conflict, the Intervener cannot shop around for a better agent. Instead, the Intervener will sometimes decide the agent it has available is worth supporting and attempt to manage it.

Furthermore, the model also puts forth an argument about why the Intervener will sometimes struggle to apply incentives. Since the Intervener cannot strategically choose the value of its support to the Proxy, the Intervener can only withdraw support entirely or send in combat troops if compliance is low. Yet, interveners only choose proxies with low interest alignment when they have a great need to influence a conflict and combat is too costly. Therefore, if the Proxy's policy distortion is within the range that the Intervener will tolerate without withdrawing or escalating, the Proxy knows that any attempt to withhold aid will be temporary and will not result in the punishment outcomes that the Proxy fears most. Therefore, it will resist complying further with the Intervener's demands than what is necessary to keep support. The Intervener cannot always commit to punishing the Proxy because the punishment instrument in the model is a blunt one of completely withdrawing or escalating. If it uses the first, the Intervener hurts itself, too, because withdrawing completely leaves it unable to reap the benefits of influencing the conflict's outcome. If it uses the second instrument, escalating hurts the Intervener because it will have to pay the high costs of combat. With their fates thus intertwined, the Intervener lacks leverage in reducing policy distortion when it supports an incompetent Proxy with misaligned preferences, unless the Proxy's policy distortion is very high.

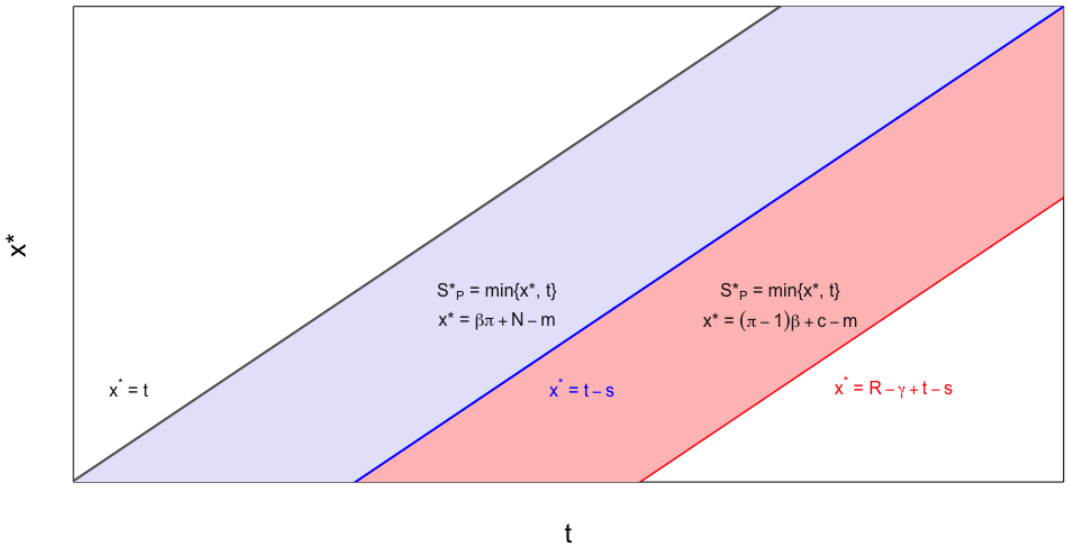


Figure 2.2: Equilibrium policy distortion of the proxy as a function of t

If the Intervener can credibly commit to escalate or withdraw if the Proxy commits a given level of policy distortion, this blunt instrument of punishment is effective in reining in the Proxy. Empirically, we would expect, then, to see credible threats by the Intervener to withdraw and send in combat troops to be effective in gaining the Proxy's compliance. The credible threat of escalation is a particularly effective one. For the Proxy, escalation is a worse punishment than withdrawal since the Proxy, per Assumption 2, strongly prefers autonomy in warfighting. The Proxy must prefer some autonomy in fighting or it has an incentive to provoke direct intervention and proxy support will not be sustainable in equilibrium. Since the Proxy views escalation as a worse punishment compared to withdrawal, t can be higher in equilibrium when the Intervener will escalate if $x > x^*$ versus when it will withdraw. To avoid escalation, the Proxy is willing to distort policy less than when it would be punished with withdrawal. To see this, compare the size of the equilibria regions in Figure 2. Shaded in blue is the range of equilibrium values of x that can be sustained when the Intervener will punish the Proxy for non-compliance with withdrawal. The shaded red region plus the shaded blue region show the equilibrium values of x when the Intervener will punish the

Proxy with loss of autonomy through escalating to direct intervention if the Proxy does not comply.

2.3.2 Monitoring

The other main set of insights from the model is that monitoring can help interveners get more compliance when they delegate to proxies with misaligned interests. To enforce the bargain made with the Proxy, the Intervener needs to verify the Proxy's actual level of policy distortion. If the proxy's actions are hidden, even if its preferences are known, the intervener cannot condition further support on the proxy's actions because it cannot observe them. The intervener must pay the proxy without observing its performance and as a result, the proxy is unable to commit to a lower level of policy distortion. The proxy chooses its ideal point and the resulting policy distortion is large if the proxy and the intervener have very misaligned preferences. Under these conditions, the Intervener is willing to pay a lot to have perfect information about the Proxy's actions in order to enforce a bargain with the proxy.

Since monitoring is costly, policy distortion under monitoring is always lower than policy distortion in the perfect and complete information case, because interveners expect to be rewarded for their costly monitoring by even more compliance from the proxy. Furthermore, the higher the cost of monitoring, the lower the equilibrium level of proxy policy distortion. Figure 3 shows the proxy's level of policy distortion, x, in equilibrium based on the proxy's ideal point. Without monitoring, the proxy chooses its ideal point, t. Once the proxy's ideal point gets too far away from the intervener's ideal point, that is when the proxy's ideal point is equal to the equilibrium value of policy distortion if the intervener had perfect information about the proxy's actions, the intervener is willing to pay for monitoring. The gap of m length between x^* (the dark blue shaded region) and $x^* + m$ (the light blue shaded region) shows the increased proxy compliance when monitoring is present. When monitoring is present, then, we should expect to see the proxy making more of an effort to follow the

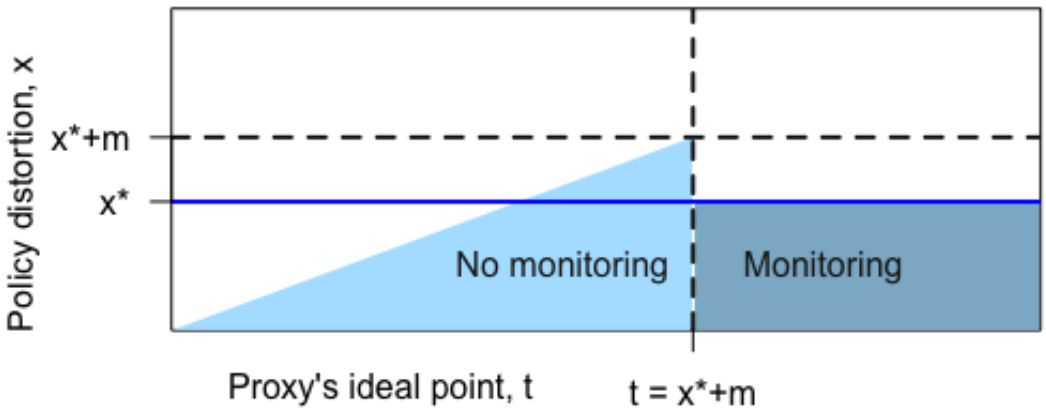


Figure 2.3: Equilibrium levels of policy distortion with monitoring (shaded regions)

intervener's interests, even when its interests are farther away from the intervener's interests.

When monitoring is costly, an intervener will only choose monitoring when it anticipates difficulty observing the proxy's actions and expects the proxy to diverge from the intervener's preferences so much if unobserved that proxy support would not be a sustainable option. The higher the cost of monitoring, the more policy distortion the Intervener will tolerate before investing in monitoring. Interveners will be cautious about sending in advisors when the costs of monitoring are high. If policy distortion would be minimal without monitoring, the Intervener does not invest in monitoring unless it is not costly.

Figure 4 shows how the intervener strategies in the monitoring subgame and the equilibrium level of policy distortion vary with the cost of monitoring. The first dotted line represents the equilibrium level of policy distortion with perfect and complete information, $x^* + m$, while the second dotted line represents the proxy's policy distortion if the intervener does not choose monitoring, x^{**}, which is equal to the proxy's ideal point, t. In Figure 2, the proxy and the intervener disagree sufficiently such that the proxy's ideal point is greater

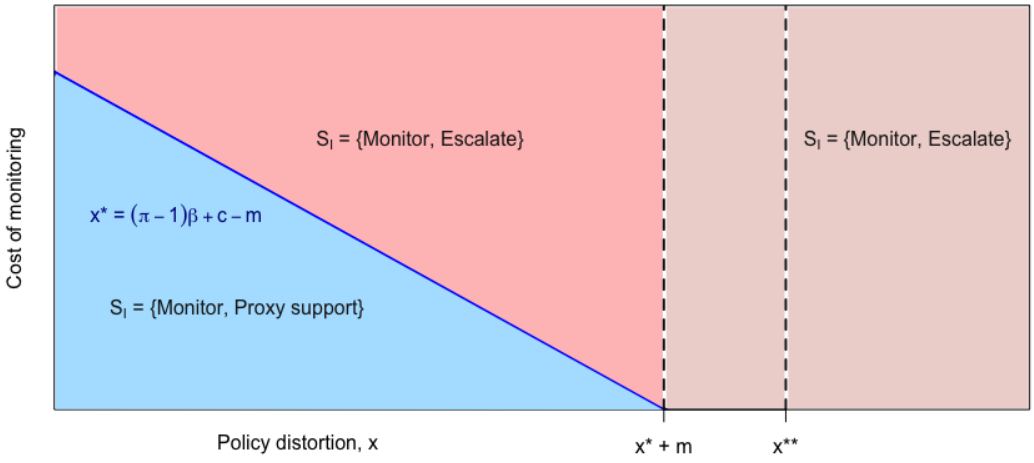


Figure 2.4: Intervener strategies in monitoring subgame (when $x^{**} > x^* + m$ and $c \leq \beta + N$)

than the maximum level of policy distortion that the intervener will tolerate in equilibrium if it could perfectly observe the proxy's actions without paying for monitoring. In this case, the intervener is forced to invest in monitoring in order to gain the proxy's compliance. The dark red region to the left of the figure represents the additional compliance gain that the intervener gets from monitoring, moving the proxy's level of policy distortion in equilibrium (the dark blue line) toward the intervener's ideal point of zero. As the cost of monitoring gets higher, the proxy will be more compliant in equilibrium. When the cost of monitoring is equal to zero, the proxy's policy distortion is equal to what it would be in a version of the game with perfect and complete information ($x^* + m$).

My model shows that monitoring can increase the benefits of proxy war for the intervener, even when the proxy and intervener have misaligned interests. It is important to underscore, however, that investing in monitoring does not ensure that the Intervener will get high levels of compliance from the Proxy.[46] Even with monitoring present, the compliance of the proxy depends on the alignment of interests between the intervener and proxy and the intervener's

[46]See for example the following on early US interventions with military advisors as monitors: O'Lavin, *War on the Cheap*.

willingness to use incentives to reward or punish the proxy for its behavior. While monitoring reduce the policy distortion of the proxy, the proxy will still distort policy up to the point at which the intervener can credibly threaten to escalate or withdraw.

The formal model provides a guide for what monitoring will look like and how it might vary across cases. We can think of the model more dynamically as a multi-step process by which the intervener first communicates its policy positions to the proxy, the proxy then complies enough to keep support, the intervener verifies this and then maintains support if the proxy complies enough. Compliance will be higher the more costly monitoring. Monitoring, then, will be anything that allows the intervener to verify the proxy's distortion. To be costly, monitoring will require the intervener itself to put effort into collecting that information and to have that cost observed by the proxy.

In the context of a proxy war, monitoring can take many different forms. Human rights organizations, NGOs, and journalists can collect information on the proxy's human rights abuses. Think tanks and conflict analysts on Twitter can collect data on the proxy's military engagements, terror attacks, or leadership turnover. And as powerful states, great powers have extensive intelligence organizations that can collect information using tools from human intelligence to drones or satellite images to surveil the proxy. While monitoring with intelligence organizations can be costly, the full cost of this monitoring is not observed by the proxy since great powers go to great lengths to conceal the depth of their surveillance of other actors.[47] The ideal form of monitoring, then, will provide extensive coverage for collection of information, will be costly to the intervener, and the cost of monitoring will be observed by the proxy because it sends a costly signal about the need for compliance.

I argue that a key form of costly monitoring is when the intervener sends personnel – military advisors – who can observe the Proxy's policy distortion, especially in the key areas of strategy and the conduct of war. Advisors as monitors act like two-way conduits of infor-

[47] Consider the European reaction when it was revealed that US intelligence had tapped German Chancellor Angela Merkel's phone. Reuters in Berlin. *NSA tapped German Chancellery for decades, WikiLeaks claims.* The Guardian. Section: US news. July 8, 2015. URL: `http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/08/nsa-tapped-german-chancellery-decades-wikileaks-claims-merkel` (visited on 06/15/2021)

mation. They first communicate the intervener's policy preferences to the local military and in turn communicate the behavior of the local military back to the intervener. Interveners can use the valuable information that advisors provide on the actions of the military – anything from advance warning on a possible coup to reports of atrocities committed by security forces – to hold the local partner accountable for its actions. Their visible presence reminds the proxy's military of the intervener's preferences and that information about its behavior will be communicated back to the intervener. Interveners can use this information provided by advisors to specifically condition their future actions on the proxy's past behavior.

In addition to opening a communication channel between the proxy's military and the intervener that promotes accountability, military advisors also provide specific kinds of information that are highly useful to the intervener. Through their positions on the ground working in close quarters with their local counterparts while embedded throughout the proxy military, advisors collect highly detailed information on the behavior and preferences of their local counterparts – even those who would otherwise be unwilling to work as intelligence assets for the intervener. Being embedded with local counterparts created the proximity to allow additional informal relationships to develop and create trust between advisors and their counterparts. The proximity and personal relationships advisors develop with their local counterparts allows them to collect information directly about their local counterparts' competence and approach to issues such as human rights and civil-military relations. Advisors are in a position to reveal information about which military officers support reform and the desired state of civil-military relations and which are opposed – which allows the intervener to influence the selection and promotion of military personnel. This selection and promotion can also reach more widely to field commanders instead of just General Staff officers with whom embassy officials would have the opportunity to interact. When the proxy is a non-state actor, military or intelligence officers working in an advisory capacity may be the only personnel who can safely interact with the proxy's military.

The second kind of information that military advisors provide is intelligence about the

operational environment. Military advisors serve as an important complement to intelligence channels as sources of this kind of information, although this kind of information is easier to gather through technology or intelligence assets than the specific information about their local counterparts. The information on local conditions allows the intervener to rapidly respond to changing circumstances on the ground. Advisors are often equipped for the task of intelligence gathering; special operations forces, for example, are specifically trained in how to collect intelligence.[48] My argument is not that advisors render other sources of information collected through intelligence agencies superfluous, but rather that their position on the ground 24/7 with local counterparts and the personal relationships they develop provide them with unique, high-quality information that adds to information collected through other sources of intelligence. When it comes to units in the field, advisors embedded with these local units play a role similar to that of a Defense Attaché and leverage their access to their counterparts to provide valuable intelligence.

In addition to providing unique information to the intervener and being visible to the proxy, military advisors are particularly costly forms of monitoring. Advisors are sent in insufficient quantities to change the balance of military capability, but are often deployed in dangerous positions close to the front lines or in exposed outposts where they could be attacked. This is especially true if advisors are embedded at forward operating bases or accompany their local counterparts into combat. If military advisors die, interveners could face public pressure either to escalate and pay the costs of combat or to withdraw and give up the goals of the intervention, similar to how combat casualties have these effects depending on public opinion and the nature of domestic politics at the moment.[49] As a result, decisionmakers in intervening states view advisors as a serious commitment to a conflict that could change the political costs and benefits of intervention and are often reluctant to deploy them. For example, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, which ended in a nearly ten-year

[48]Biddle, "Building Security Forces & Stabilizing Nations: The Problem of Agency", p. 135.

[49]Dieuwertje Kuijpers and Gijs Schumacher. "Don't Mention the War versus Escalating Commitment: Political Party Responses to Military Casualties". In: *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16.4 (2020), pp. 587–607.

commitment of Soviet combat troops, began with Soviet officials refusing even to begin a training program for officers and border guards, despite repeated Afghan requests.[50] When considering how to support the Salvadoran government, the Carter administration concluded that advisors should be sent but then decided not to send advisors to limit public opposition to intervention.

My model predicts that when advisors are costly to send, they will lead to larger increases in the proxy's level of compliance since they serve as a costly signal about the importance of compliance. However, interveners will send advisors less often when they are costly. But when interveners want to build military capacity and monitor a local military despite the high costs, interveners can lower the costs through limiting the public visibility of advisor deployments. The smaller the size of the advisor deployment, the less media attention and public backlash it will attract in both the host and sending countries. As the cost of monitoring gets higher, the proxy will be more compliant in equilibrium. Interveners minimize attention to the small numbers of advisors that they do need to deploy through actions such as requiring the advisors to wear civilian clothing when traveling to their work location (as US advisors did in 1950s Vietnam and 1980s El Salvador) or limiting their contact with the media (as US advisors were restricted in El Salvador).

The international system can influence the cost of sending advisors. When the system is bipolar and proxy wars take their traditional form of competition between two (or more) great powers, the cost of sending advisors will be higher because it increases the commitment of interveners to the conflict as well as increases the potential for escalation. Therefore, I expect interveners to send advisors less often when the international system is multi- or bipolar than when it is unipolar, since great powers have more freedom of action when they are unlikely to be challenged by a competing intervention that could put their advisors in harm's way.

In the aftermath of 9-11, when the United States faced few challenges from other great

[50]Westad et al., *The global Cold War: third world interventions and the making of our times.*

powers, it deployed advisors throughout the world to help local governments contain armed non-state actors. As I will show with quantitative data in Chapter 4, US interventions with military advisors in the past 20 years far outpaced US and Soviet advisor deployments at the peak of the Cold War. Moreover, with modern air power, the United States can limit the likelihood of causalities and a resulting public exposé.[51] As a result, US policymakers know that a small deployment of advisors is unlikely to attract much attention, especially when ubiquitous. Advisors have deployed to many African countries, for instance, with little public visibility except when casualties happen, such as when four US advisors were killed in 2017 in Niger.[52] When costs of sending advisors are low, we should expect to see them deployed more often to a wider range of conflicts.

2.3.3 Model extensions

The model that I have developed here can be easily extended for future research on the relationship between intervener and proxy. An obvious extension in future research would be to make the value of support endogenous to the Intervener's actions, with a upper bound on the amount that the Intervener can provide. This would allow a more flexible strategy for I; it would be bounded in how valuable it can make itself to P, consistent with the existing model, but could give P less support to punish it short of withdrawing all support. This extension would likely make P more compliant under conditions where in the current model I will tolerate a high level of policy distortion, x^*, in equilibrium. Support could also affect the proxy's performance rather than acting simply as a cash transfer like in the current model. Extensions that allow support to affect the proxy's performance and I to strategically choose s may provide similar results to the current model while also fitting better to the empirical cases.

[51] For an extended discussion of the ways that states take on more expansive projects of intervention by using technology and limiting casualties, see: Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate warfare: the transformation of war in the twenty-first century*; Vladimir Rauta et al. "A Symposium–debating 'surrogate warfare'and the transformation of war". In: *Defence Studies* 19.4 (2019), pp. 410–430

[52] Rukmini Callimachi et al. "'An endless war': Why 4 US soldiers died in a remote African desert". In: *New York Times* 20 (2018).

In the current model, the intervener's failure to incentivize more compliance from the proxy stems from its lack of outside options. Additional extensions to the model could add more nuance and develop additional arguments about why incentives often fail or are not used. The first possible extension could be to allow I to have hidden information about its cost of combat. Since I's cost of combat is public information in the current model, P can use that information to keep its level of compliance just low enough to prevent I from sending in combat troops. If I could generate uncertainty about its willingness to escalate its involvement, perhaps by keeping an intervention covert or avoiding public statements about how much it needs to influence the conflict, P might be more compliant in order to avoid provoking more intervention. Similarly, the intervener's loss function from the proxy's policy distortion could be private information for the intervener. In reality, interveners often have a long laundry list of which issues they care about in a conflict, but only a few are serious enough to prompt withdrawal of aid or escalation of involvement. In Afghanistan, for instance, the Soviet Union and its Afghan proxy clashed over a range of policy issues. But it was Amin's growing ties with the United States that finally prompted Soviet intervention.[53] Interveners, then, have incentives to lie about their true priorities in order to get more compliance and proxies have an incentive to push the intervener to reveal its true preferences so it can maximize its policy distortion without provoking escalation or abandonment.

Other extensions could examine the domestic politics of proxies and how they intersect with the intervener's use of incentives (or lack thereof). Proxies can threaten to collapse in order to gain more support from the intervener. In countries with unstable civil-military relations, militaries can threaten to launch a coup if the intervener pushes them to make reforms they don't want to accept. Interveners can also craft a more compliant proxy over time by intervening in the politics of government proxies or of rebel groups.

A related extension could be to make it possible for P to share the cost of monitoring with I. When would a proxy welcome external monitoring? Some existing work on security

[53]Oliker, *Building Afghanistan's security forces in wartime*, p. 14.

sector reform in the post-conflict context suggests that political elites may actually want an external actor to monitor their military in order to enforce civil-military relations where the military strengthens rather than undermines the civilian government.[54] In the context of conflict, the Proxy's political elites may well want the Intervener to monitor the military and prevent a destabilizing coup. This is arguably what happened during US intervention in El Salvador; the democratically elected and moderate government was in constant danger of a coup from rightist political and military elements and therefore actively welcomed US efforts to restrain and monitor the military. In this extension to the model, the Proxy could offer to pay part of the cost of monitoring in order to indicate its willingness to stick to the bargain with the Intervener despite incentives by some domestic actors (such as the military) to overturn it.

A final extension of the monitoring portion of the model could be to make the cost of monitoring strategic, where the intervener could choose not only whether to monitor but how much to monitor. This could be developed alone or coupled with incomplete information about the intervener's loss function, making it possible for the proxy to learn something about the intervener's commitment to compliance based on how much the intervener monitors.

2.4 Empirical implications

While my model provides many empirically testable implications, I focus on the implications of monitoring in the remainder of this dissertation instead of other possible implications like proxy compliance or when interveners escalate or withdraw (or threaten to do so). In Chapter 5, I empirically test the implications of advisor deployments on another dependent variable, proxy compliance (x^* in the model), but I focus my analysis on why interveners send advisors and what they expect them to do. The dependent variables for the remaining

[54] Louis-Alexandre Berg. "Elite Bargains and External Influence: Security Assistance and Civil-Military Relations in Post-War Liberia and Sierra Leone". In: *Civil Wars* 22.2 (July 2, 2020). Publisher: Routledge _eprint: https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2020.1707495, pp. 266–288. ISSN: 1369-8249. DOI: 10.1080/13698249.2020.1707495. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2020.1707495 (visited on 11/10/2020).

chapters are the deployment of military advisors and what interveners ask them to do.

Table 2.1: Theory predictions for deployment and tasks of advisors

	High alignment	*Low alignment*
High military capacity		Monitoring
Low military capacity	Capacity-building	Monitoring and Capacity-building

The model predicts that interveners prefer to support proxies with similar interests, but they will support proxies with misaligned interests when non-intervention is off the table and combat is an equally bad option. Under these conditions, interveners will send aid and arms to augment the proxy's capabilities but will also use military advisors to gain more compliance from the proxy by monitoring. The lower the preference alignment between the intervener and proxy, the more likely interveners will be to deploy military advisors.

Table 1 illustrates the interaction between the preference alignment of the intervener and proxy and the proxy's military capacity. My theory predicts that advisors will be sent to monitor when the preference alignment between the intervener and proxy is low. They will also be sent to build military capacity when the proxy's military capacity is low. As I detail in the following chapter, the military capacity building role of advisors is essential to allow them to monitor the proxy, so most cases of advisors should be in the bottom row of the table. Advisors will rarely be sent when the proxy is both highly aligned with the intervener and has high military capacity, and cases of monitoring without capacity building will also be comparatively rare.

The data I collected on military advising show that cases exist in each cell of the table. Chinese support for the Pathet Lao (1959-73) is an example of support for highly aligned, high military capacity proxies, although there are few similar cases in my data. Soviet support for the Somali government (1976-77) is a proxy with high capacity but low alignment. I found that most cases are in the bottom row of the table, as predicted. An example of advisor deployments to a proxy with high alignment but low capacity is US support for

the government of Ukraine (2014-present). The cases I have referenced frequently in this chapter – US support for the government of El Salvador (1979-92) and Soviet support for the government of Afghanistan (1978-79) – are cases of low alignment and low military capacity.

The theory provides several hypotheses that can be directly empirically tested. First, interveners that decide to support proxies with low alignment will send military advisors to monitor the proxy's actions. In their internal deliberations before sending military advisors, policymakers should make clear their intent to send advisors not just to build military capacity but also to reduce the proxy's level of policy distortion. Military advisors on the ground should view decreasing policy distortion as part of their job, seeking both to monitor and report levels of distortion and also to influence the proxy to be aligned to the intervener's interests.

Second, the higher the cost of monitoring, the greater the proxy's reductions in policy distortion will be. Empirically, it is not possible to observe the counterfactual in a given case for what policy distortion would look like if advisors were not sent, so it is impossible to prove directly that policy distortion is lower if advisors are sent. Nevertheless, less direct evidence will be available. Archival documents of internal deliberations of policymakers can provide evidence that interveners sending costly monitors are both acutely aware of their costs and also expect their deployment to result in reductions in policy distortion. Interveners will be less concerned about reductions in policy distortion when monitoring is not costly. Evidence should also show that sending advisors results in some reductions in policy distortion, although the extent of the reduction in policy distortion could be quite modest and will vary from case to case based on the overall strategic interaction between the intervener and proxy, as the model shows.

Third, interveners' decisions to deploy advisors depend not only on the proxy's military capacity and alignment but also on the cost of monitoring. When the cost of monitoring is low, great powers should deploy them more often, and to more aligned proxies. When the cost of monitoring is high, great powers will deploy them less often and to less aligned

proxies.

2.5 Conclusion

Proxy war is a common tool used by powerful states to influence conflicts abroad without deploying their own troops into combat. In choosing proxy war, interveners leave the ultimate success or failure of their efforts in the hands of local partners, who usually have their own strong interests that do not align with that of their supporters. While principal-agent theory predicts that interveners will use rewards and punishments to incentivize more compliance, interveners often fail to use them and proxies often do not respond positively even when rewards and punishments are used. I argue that interveners behave this way when they are limited in how much they can actually reward their proxies for complying with their directives, due to characteristics of the proxy or structural factors. Under these conditions, interveners are forced to rely on blunt punishments of withdrawing all support or sending in their own combat troops to gain compliance from the proxy. When the cost of combat is high and states have important interests at stake that require them to intervene in some way in a conflict, powerful states eager to preserve their prestige and their sphere of influence will support proxies whose interests diverge from their own despite full information. They will continue supporting these proxies despite continual problems in the relationship. In these cases, the proxy looks more like the principal than the intervener does because it sets the terms of the relationship.

Furthermore, using a model with complete information where the intervener can commit to compensating the proxy, I show that these dynamics can be present even when traditional barriers to a successful principal-agent relationship – hidden information about preferences and commitment problems – are not present. Interveners can overcome hidden information about their proxies' actions by investing in monitoring. By providing valuable support to build up the proxy's military competence, military advisors are given access to many facets

of the military's operation, from high command to tactical units on the ground, putting them in a unique position to monitor the proxy's military. Furthermore, when advisors are costly to send, they can improve the proxy's compliance even further than under perfect and complete information. As a result, their role as monitors is an essential means for interveners to manage proxy war. I develop this role further in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Information Gathering and Influencing

All of this splendid [counterinsurgency] effort, its organization, its training, its equipment, are working towards having what it takes to win at the point of decision on the insurgent battlefield. It boils down to a pretty lonely spot. At some place, on the insurgent battlefield, it comes to a unit of an allied military force, with an American military advisor, right up against the enemy. That American had better know his stuff. One day, that American might be you.
You'll be key man, on the spot.

— Brigadier General E.G. Lansdale,
Talk at the USAF Academy, 1962.

Military advisors are conducting US foreign policy at the very tip of the spear.

— US military advisor to El Salvador,
Interviewee 15

In the previous chapter, I advanced a theory about the strategic interaction between the intervener and its proxy and why the intervener would choose to invest in costly monitoring of the proxy. The theory is useful for understanding the big picture of what policymakers expect advisors to do and the broader strategic environment in which the intervener chooses an intervention and the proxy chooses compliance. But advisors are ultimately individuals who must work with local counterparts on the ground. To more fully understand what advisors

do and why interveners send them, then, I shift the level of analysis from the interaction between the intervener and proxy at the highest levels of policymaking to the interaction between the advisor and his counterpart on the ground.[1] In other words, I focus on advisors as a mechanism in the theory of proxy war and proxy compliance I advanced in the previous chapter. I further develop the concept of advisors as monitors by detailing the kinds of information they can collect and why interveners would choose to send them to complement other forms of monitoring. The interaction between the advisor and his counterpart is at the heart of this story. I also develop the concept of advisors as more general gatherers of information for the intervener. Advisors are the "eyes and ears" of interveners on the ground, leveraging their personal relationships with their local counterparts and a wide array of local actors to gather a specific kind of human intelligence.

Table 3.1: Levels of analysis in the theory

Role of Advisors	Level of Analysis for Effects
Information gathering	Strategic level
Influencing	Individual and local level

The story I have been telling about advisors thus far is a rationalist one playing out at the strategic level; advisors gather information for the state that sends them, which then allows the intervener to hold the proxy accountable for its actions and uphold the policy bargain that makes it profitable for the intervener to stay involved. The top row of Table 1 highlights this first role of advisors as local actors who transmit information back to the intervener to use to gain the proxy's compliance at the strategic level. But this view of advisors as mere conduits of information is a rather limited one. It requires us to believe that advisors live

[1]Note that I use the male pronoun to refer to both the advisor and counterpart. Since advisors and their counterparts in other militaries are nearly always male—and all of the advisors I interviewed were male—it seemed appropriate in this case. While I could have consistently referred to "advisors and their counterparts," "advisor and his counterpart" seemed during specific anecdotes to better convey the intimacy of these relationships as personal ones at the individual level.

with their local counterparts, often in close quarters, for months or years, and yet have no effect on their counterparts (or their counterparts have no effect on them) other than the strategic incentives generated by advisors' reporting. This seems obviously false. Advising is ultimately a deeply personal endeavor; a relationship between a soldier and his counterpart. In the second part of this chapter, I move beyond the strategic level explanation I previously advanced of advisors as conduits of information between intervener and proxy and theorize advisors as a means of influencing their counterparts at the individual and local level (the second row in Table 1).

I argue that consistent, prolonged interactions between the advisor and his counterpart can leave both changed by the experience. If the advisor is able to cultivate a relationship with his counterpart that is based on trust, understanding, and even friendship, he can exercise a great deal of influence over his counterpart, acting as a conduit of influence for the intervener at the local level. In formal modeling terms, the role of advisors as conduits of influence is a game with dynamic preference updating. Players don't have to finish the game with the same preferences they began it with; as a result of their interaction, they can fundamentally change not only how they are interacting, but also what they want over time. Since formal modeling has limitations in such a dynamic setting, I develop the theory informally. To make my argument, I draw on a range of literature across political science, sociology, and anthropology.

Although I am focused on what advisors do and why interveners send them, my theory of the personal interactions between an advisor and his counterpart allows me to make some predictions about when we would expect advisors to have more influence over counterparts and when they will have less influence. Advising is ultimately a complicated process playing out at the individual level, and therefore its effects are likely to vary across conflicts and across advisors in the same conflict. Some advisors are not up to the task of advising, have little to contribute to their counterparts, and exert little influence in the process. Others are fully capable but are put in impossible positions, with hostile counterparts that have

different political goals or methods of fighting than their advisors. In yet other instances, the advisor can become the influenced and "go native," that is, begin to identify too strongly with the perspectives of the local community when that conflicts with the interests and goals of the sending state.[2] I discuss these limitations of influence in a section of this chapter.

My plan for the chapter is as follows. In the next section, I theorize how advisors are able to monitor and their more general role as information gatherers for the intervention. The following section lays out the theory of advisors as conduits of influence and key terms. I then move to discussing the limitations of information gathering and influence – that is, at the individual level when the personal relationship between advisor and counterpart breaks down or the intervener fails to capitalize on opportunities for proxy compliance at the strategic level. I also theorize when advisors will be most effective at gathering information and influencing their local counterparts. The final section concludes.

3.1 Advisors as information gatherers

I first theorize the role of advisors as information gatherers. That is, advisors collect specific kinds of information that can only be collected through personal relationships on the ground and that are useful to the intervener to hold the proxy accountable, understand the proxy's military, and assess the operational environment.

While it is clear from the literature that advisors can gather intelligence about the proxy's military capability, it is unclear what kinds of information they gather, how they collect information, and whether this information is actually useful to the intervener. The literature does not fully develop the former two concepts, and is rather skeptical about the overall usefulness of information collected by people on the ground. The literature on monitoring, for instance, argues that it is not an important determinant of success in controlling the local partner,[3] and can often fail to be informative when a combat situation is rapidly evolving,[4]

[2]Simons, "The Military Advisor as Warrior-King and Other "Going Native" Temptations".
[3]Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*.
[4]Ramsey III, *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador*.

when the monitoring contingent is small,[5] or when advisors are afraid they will be punished if they report the true competency of the local partner's military.[6] I argue that when we examine information gathering through advisors more carefully, we can see that substantial variation exists in when and how much information advisors can gather. Even less-than-ideal circumstances still yield a lot of information to the intervener.

Because military advisors are embedded with the proxy, they can collect a kind of information that the intervener could not gain in any other way. Embeddedness creates the proximity for informal relationships to develop and creates trust between advisors and their counterparts. Advisors use these relationships to collect highly detailed information on the behavior, opinions, and attitudes of their local counterparts—even those who would be unwilling to work as intelligence assets for the intervener. They can reveal information about which military officers support reform and appropriate civil-military relations and which are opposed. They can reveal information about the operational environment and micro-changes in the local context. Military advisors gather a kind of information that could not be gained through technology, short-term visits from Embassy personnel, or even intelligence assets. It is a kind of information that requires intimate observation by people on the ground.

The first kind of information that advisors can collect is useful information about the proxy's behavior. Recall that a source of tension in the relationship between intervener and proxy is the proxy's hidden information about its own behavior, which makes it difficult for the intervene to properly apply incentives. To address this problem of moral hazard, interveners can invest in monitoring.[7] We can think of monitoring dynamically as a multi-step process by which the intervener first communicates its policy positions to the proxy, the

[5]Stephen Biddle, Julia Macdonald, and Ryan Baker. "Small footprint, small payoff: The military effectiveness of security force assistance". In: *Journal of Strategic Studies* 0.0 (Apr. 12, 2017), pp. 1–54. ISSN: 0140-2390. DOI: 10.1080/01402390.2017.1307745. URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2017.1307745.

[6]Oliker, *Building Afghanistan's security forces in wartime*.

[7]For an extensive discussion of principal-agent theory and various incentive structures for addressing moral hazard, see: Jean-Jacques Laffont and David Martimort. *The theory of incentives: the principal-agent model*. Princeton university press, 2009; Biddle, Macdonald, and Baker, "Small footprint, small payoff"; Berman and Lake, *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*.

proxy then complies enough to keep support, the intervener verifies this and then maintains support if the proxy complies enough. Advisors can act like two-way conduits of information.[8] They first communicate the intervener's policy preferences to the local military and in turn communicate the behavior of the local military back to the intervener. Interveners can use the valuable information that advisors provide on the actions of the military – anything from advance warning on a possible coup to reports of atrocities committed by security forces – to hold the local partner accountable for its actions. The visible presence of advisors reminds the proxy's military of the intervener's preferences and that information about its behavior will be communicated back to the intervener.[9] Interveners can use this information provided by advisors to specifically condition their future actions on the proxy's past behavior.[10] Therefore, with military advisors on the ground, the intervener gains information about the proxy and the proxy knows it is being watched, which changes its behavior.

Furthermore, since advisors are acknowledged by the intervener, their information can be revealed when useful, unlike some kinds of intelligence that cannot be shared to protect sources and methods.[11] This specific and revealable information about leaders in the proxy's military allows the intervener to press for reforms with the proxy's political and defense

[8]Colonel Bryce Denno, US military advisor in Vietnam, describes the use of advisors to communicate messages from the intervener and then to report back on the counterpart. Bryce F. Denno. "Advisor and Counterpart". In: *Advice for advisors: suggestions and observations from Lawrence to the present*. Ed. by Robert D. Ramsey. Global war on terrorism occasional paper 19. OCLC: 255404771. Fort Leavenworth, Kan: Combat Studies Inst. Press, 2006, pp. 33–43. ISBN: 978-0-16-076875-0, pp. 33–43.

[9]On this point, many interviewees talked about how their presence was a deterrent to the proxy military, e.g.: "The good thing about an advisory effort is it does two things. It gives the host nation, the receiving nation, an incentive to use what we give them properly. It also gives them an incentive not to commit human rights violations.... Just the idea of having someone physically present with the indigenous armies is very beneficial, even if what I did for 14 months was completely ineffective, because just by me being there changes their behavior....There's a lot of effort to have the appearance of towing the line and not being found out or being ratted-out. So the advisory effort serves that purpose, and it's a very open purpose....I want to make sure I mention that because it's not just a collateral benefit. In some cases it's the number-one benefit. And if you can get them to do anything that makes sense, well, that would be good too." *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador*. In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020

[10]Biddle, Macdonald, and Baker, "Small footprint, small payoff".

[11]Allison Carnegie and Austin Carson. "The Disclosure Dilemma: Nuclear Intelligence and International Organizations". In: *American Journal of Political Science* 63.2 (2019). _eprint: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12426, pp. 269–285. ISSN: 1540-5907. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12426. URL: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ajps.12426 (visited on 03/25/2021), States can face a "disclosure dilemma": disclosure of intelligence can further political goals but tip off a violator that it is being observed.

officials. These reforms can range from modernizing defense institutions to requesting the removal of specific military leadership. While several studies note the importance of hiring-and-firing decisions about military leadership by great powers seeking to shape a proxy military,[12] I highlight the role of information asymmetries that make it difficult to determine who should be hired without advisors on the ground.

The second kind of information that military advisors provide to the intervener is situational awareness based on the local context in which they are embedded. Using their position on the ground embedded with a local military unit, advisors complement information collected through other sources of intelligence. Advisors pass on information about the micro-dynamics of civil war: information about local threats and enemies, successes or failures, public opinion, and trends over time. To collect this kind of information, advisors talk to a wide variety of people, from local civilians, military officers, and rank-and-file soldiers to captured enemy combatants. A US military advisor embedded with a militia unit in northern Mali in 2011 described how his team used its position on the ground to report on the threat of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which was not being provided by other channels:

> I think [we were] the first Operational Detachment Alpha [small Special Forces unit] up in Northern Mali in a couple of years at that point... And what we were gathering from our discussions with locals and then some of the intelligence work that we were doing was like, "Hey, Al-Qaeda and the Islamic Maghreb is much more entrenched and bigger up here than I think anyone realizes now"... I think that the [US Embassy Mali] Country Team at the time in 2011, was interpreting the lack of reporting on Al-Qaeda activity in Northern Mali as evidence of lack of Al-Qaeda. Whereas in reality, there was a lack of reporting because there was a lack of access. So we submitted a number of reports while we were up there about what appeared to be a growing influence. And frankly that was generally discounted because we didn't have any other reporting of Al-Qaeda growing in influence out there.[13]

Another kind of information that advisors provide is high-quality information on the

[12] Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*; Berg, "Elite Bargains and External Influence"; O'Lavin, *War on the Cheap*.

[13] *Interview with US military advisor.* In collab. with Interviewee 23. Nov. 25, 2020.

military effectiveness of the local military and its use of arms and aid, which allows the intervener to continuously evaluate the success of the intervention. A case that illustrates this kind of reporting is US intervention in Vietnam: the last US military intervention where archives are now fully open. US advisors reporting to the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) were responsible for collecting information on and evaluating the progress of the Republic of Vietnam's military in preparing for both conventional and unconventional conflict. To evaluate reporting by the MAAG, I reviewed the entirety of outgoing messages by the MAAG from 1954 through 1960, now housed in the National Archives in College Park, Maryland.[14] Many of these messages were routine communiques regarding logistics, personnel transfers, or even a request for provisions for a New Year's Eve party. Others were messages up the chain of command from the Chief or other senior officers of the MAAG or messages sent to other US military commands in the Pacific region. The theme of these messages was clear: US advisors in the field combined with rotational visits from senior officers in the MAAG were tasked with evaluating the military effectiveness of the Republic of Vietnam's Army (ARVN) in real time as well as tracking progress in problem areas.

MAAG-Vietnam saw reporting as a key part of its mission. Consider its response to a 1959 series of articles by reporter Albert M. Colgrove which criticized the MAAG Viet-Nam effort, "labeling one of the best United States aid programs a 'fiasco' and 'hidden scandal.'"[15] After detailing the procedures that the MAAG used for tracking material aid and providing "full accounting [of] every dollar," an internal MAAG memo states:

> The entire organization of this MAAG functions to provide Chief MAAG [with] continuous and timely flow [of] detailed information on all aspects [of] his mission. All officers here (and many elsewhere in the military establishment) [are] fully cognizant of [the] consequences of failure to do just that.
>
> Chief MAAG frequently takes field trips to observe maneuvers and for [the] purpose of terrain reconnaissance. He is in frequent personal contact with Pres-

[14]Boxes 1-11, Classified Outgoing Messages, December 3, 1954-December 31, 1959, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam (MAAG, Vietnam) Adjutant General Division, Security Records of the U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia (RG 472). National Archives at College Park, MD.

[15]Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Vietnam, Volume I, eds. Edward C. Keefer and David W. Mabon (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1986), Document 86.

> ident Diem; Assistant Secretary of Defense and Chief of General Staff. He also conducts quarterly conferences of all senior advisors who report on status of training, equipment, morale and advisor-RVNAF-community relationships.[16]

The reports themselves that I reviewed corroborate the MAAG's assessment of the kinds of information that leadership were reporting up the chain of command. Officers from the MAAG, sometimes accompanied by senior Vietnamese military officers, made regular, rotational training visits to the field to assess different units in the ARVN. While there, MAAG officers spoke with US advisors embedded with the units and evaluated everything from the equipment of the unit, its general state of readiness, and the quality of its leadership. These reports did not sugarcoat the situation; for example, consider the visit by MAAG officers to the 4th Military Region on April 30, 1956. MAAG officers assessed that "US advisors are not satisfied with the military abilities of the region commanders and assess that he has gained his command through political rather than military abilities" before recommending replacement of the commander.[17] They also reported intelligence on the morale of the unit, its desertion rate, and the poor relations between the Montagnards and the local military unit due to "reported mistreatment of the civilian population by troops of the division."[18]

The rotational visits showed strong evidence of monitoring despite occasional efforts of ARVN units to obfuscate their true quality. In a January 1957 report on a training visit to the 2nd Military Region, MAAG officers noted that "some individuals were deliberately giving false information to the American and Vietnamese visiting party" and that "in the cited instances, the advice of Advisors is being ignored."[19] In many cases, it was clear that

[16]"CHMAAG to OSD," July 26, 1959, pg. 6. Security Classified Outgoing Messages #624-762. Box 10. Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam (MAAG, Vietnam) Adjutant General Division, Security Classified Outgoing Messages, December 3, 1954-December 31, 1959, Records of the U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia (RG 472). National Archives at College Park, MD.

[17]"Training Visit Report No 1, 16 to 20 April 1956." April 30, 1956. Report No. 1: 16 to 30 April, 1956. Box 1. Training Visit Reports 04/1956 – 12/58. Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam (MAAG, Vietnam) Adjutant General Division, Records of the U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia (RG 472). National Archives at College Park, MD.

[18]Ibid.

[19]"Training Visit Report No 10, 1-31 January 1957." MAAGV Training Visit Report #10. Box 1. Training

MAAG officials and the embedded American advisors had a better handle on whether field units implemented ARVN General Staff guidance and their overall combat quality than did senior ARVN leadership itself.[20] While some note that the United States rarely pushed for the replacement of incompetent political or military leaders,[21] this was the result of US policy rather than a lack of information about which leaders were incompetent. While advisors can collect information for monitoring, the ultimate success of monitoring depends on the willingness and ability of the intervener's senior political leadership to apply credible rewards and punishments to the proxy. In a section at the end of this chapter, I discuss in more detail ways in which monitoring can fail despite the presence of ample information.

In sum, advisors provide interveners with key access to the local environment. They use their personal relationships with locals and people in the proxy military to collect information. The intervener can use this information to monitor, that is, hold the proxy accountable for its actions through selectively revealing information. Advisors are a visible sign of monitoring, which makes them deterrents to misbehavior. But advisors can also collect a second kind of information about local dynamics that allows interveners to "keep a finger on the pulse" of the conflict. In turn, interveners can use this information to continually assess the success of intervention.

Visit Reports 04/1956 – 12/58. Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam (MAAG, Vietnam) Adjutant General Division, Records of the U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia (RG 472). National Archives at College Park, MD.

[20]For example, consider this training report from February 1957: "The 1st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion did not comply with the ARVN Training Directive of October 1956 until 1 February when it received another order to do so. Consequently, this battalion is far behind many other units. Until the Battalion Commander is taught to carry out ARVN instructions and until he is required to pay attention to the recommendations of his U.S. Advisor, it is doubtful that the status of training of this battalion can be anything but poor. This is one more example of the ARVN General Staff failing to check on directives that have been issued and of Vietnamese Army officers disregarding orders received from higher headquarters." "Training Visit Report No 11, 1-26 February 1957." MAAGV Training Visit Report #11. Box 1. Training Visit Reports 04/1956 – 12/58. Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam (MAAG, Vietnam) Adjutant General Division, Records of the U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia (RG 472). National Archives at College Park, MD.

[21]Sabrina Karim and Ryan Gorman. "Building a more competent security sector: The case of UNMIL and the Liberian National Police". In: *International Peacekeeping* (2016). URL: `http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13533312.2015.1115354` (visited on 11/10/2020).

3.2 Advisors as conduits of influence

Advisors do not command local units, so getting their counterparts to adopt advice is a mission of influence.[22] Historically, colonial powers or other powerful states sometimes sent military advisors to directly command the local partner's troops.[23] When intervening in Oman during the Cold War, British military advisors filled the roles of non-commissioned officers since outsiders had more credibility than locals did in commanding a multi-ethnic force.[24] In Afghanistan (1978-89), Soviet advisors assumed operational planning and even direct command of military forces.[25] Today, countries often use military advisors in a manner similar to the US model of letting the local counterpart lead. While intervening in the Donbas (2014-present), Russian military advisors from the spetnasz forces of the GRU assist and provide advice while avoiding combat.[26]

Since advisors have no command authority, their impact is greater when they have more influence over their counterparts. To explain how influence develops and when it is likely to be strongest, I draw on sociological theory of social bonding between diplomats.[27] To begin a relationship, the advisor and his counterpart first must have *bodily co-presence*, i.e. they must interact in person.[28] The initial reason for interacting in person is purely practical: advisors are there to provide value by building military capacity for their counterparts.[29] This is

[22]Captain Richard A. Jones, US military advisor to Vietnam, put it this way: "Our soldiers are deprived of command—the most necessary factor in influencing the action—although, curiously enough, they may still be charged with a large measure of the responsibility. Therefore, our leadership training must be almost completely recast. We must study and teach all the subtle nuances, all the Carnegie-like techniques of winning friends, and we must learn to be patient and to apply Lenin's maxim of 'one step backward, two steps forward.' Otherwise the advisor may face endless frustration and will be only marginally effective." Jones, "The Nationbuilder: Soldier of the Sixties".

[23]Barkawi, ""Defence diplomacy" in north-south relations".

[24]Ladwig III, "Supporting allies in counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion:"

[25]Oliker, *Building Afghanistan's security forces in wartime*, p. 24.

[26]Bukkvoll, "Russian special operations forces in Crimea and Donbas", pp. 13–21.

[27]Marcus Holmes and Nicholas J. Wheeler. "Social bonding in diplomacy". In: *International Theory* 12.1 (Mar. 2020). Publisher: Cambridge University Press, pp. 133–161. ISSN: 1752-9719, 1752-9727. DOI: 10.1017/S1752971919000162. URL: https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-theory/article/social-bonding-in-diplomacy/6DFE8CD5B2096259259FAEAFC0819285 (visited on 03/15/2021).

[28]Holmes and Wheeler, "Social bonding in diplomacy"; Randall Collins. *Interaction ritual chains*. Princeton University Press, 2004.

[29]David L Shelton. "Some Advice for the Prospective Advisor". In: *Advising Indigenous Forces: American*

why the capacity-building and political roles of military advisors are so closely intertwined: without their role as capacity-builders, advisors would have no reason to interact with their counterparts and would bring little to the table. Advisors tend to call the outcome of positive relationships with their counterparts "rapport." They emphasize the importance of doing a good job at capacity-building as the foundation for rapport. One advisor described the process as the following: "The best way to establish a rapport is through hard work. And so maybe start off with something quick and easy that, whoever your counterpart is supposed to be, wanted."[30]

For a positive interaction to result between advisor and counterpart, *barriers to outsiders* and *mutual focus of attention* must be present.[31] In the diplomatic context, clear separation must exist between those involved in the interaction and those who are excluded, and the interacting individuals must understand that they are "jointly trapped in this conflict together."[32] In the context of a military advisor and his counterpart, their shared identity as warriors[33] provides a sense of exclusivity. Advisors have credibility because they are insiders; their advice comes from a place of understanding and expertise. Because the advisor is the "expert" from a strong and powerful military, the counterpart might seek to emulate the advisor.[34] When the advisor and his counterpart work together on defeating a shared enemy, they have a mutual focus of attention. This focus will be heightened when advisors accompany their counterparts into combat or incidentally come under fire. In combat, advisors can directly demonstrate their expertise as soldiers as well as focus their attention on the task

Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador. Ed. by Robert D. Ramsey III. Combat Studies Institute, 2012. URL: `https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/ramsey.pdf` (visited on 06/07/2018).

[30] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 5. Jan. 15, 2020.

[31] Holmes and Wheeler, "Social bonding in diplomacy".

[32] Holmes and Wheeler, "Social bonding in diplomacy", p. 149.

[33] For more on professional military identity, see the following on the US context: Risa Brooks. "Paradoxes of Professionalism: Rethinking civil-military relations in the United States". In: *International Security* 44.4 (2020). Publisher: MIT Press, pp. 7–44.

[34] I thank Risa Brooks for suggesting this mechanism. Simons, "The Military Advisor as Warrior-King and Other "Going Native" Temptations"; Robert D. Ramsey. *Advice for advisors: suggestions and observations from Lawrence to the present.* Global war on terrorism occasional paper 19. OCLC: 255404771. Fort Leavenworth, Kan: Combat Studies Inst. Press, 2006. 181 pp. ISBN: 978-0-16-076875-0.

of fighting alongside their counterpart. One advisor told me how he saved his counterpart's life under fire, and after that "everybody knew what happened. So I was pretty bulletproof after that, and I could pretty much do what I wanted to do."[35] Advisors as skilled practitioners of combat can thus more easily bond and establish personal relationships with their counterparts than the intervener's civilians can.

In addition to interacting through their professional relationship, advisors are able to 'get on the same page' with their counterparts through an array of social activities as part of working and living alongside their counterparts on a daily basis. Advisors utilize these informal interactions as a key way to generate influence over their local counterparts, using occasions like a meal or a meeting over drinks as an opportunity to broach proposals for reform in a non-threatening way.

One advisor described using social engagements, like meeting for drinks after work, as a means to get a meeting with his counterpart (who was higher in rank). While deployed as US military advisor to the Ministry of Defense of the Central African Republic (CAR), this advisor took his Ministry of Defense counterpart out for drinks and spoke French to bond with him. As a result, he convinced his counterpart to contribute to a US-Ugandan coalition fighting against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) when the US Ambassador and the country team hadn't been successful.[36] Another advisor described a lengthy process of social interactions that generated influence: "...It was often after a couple of beers or something that you could even broach the subject with your counterpart and say, once alcohol sort of dulled the sensitivities a little bit...golly, 'don't you realize' and 'you know what this is doing.' And then they would respond, and little by little, you could make that argument. And that's what happened. It happened a little by little over time."[37]

The final criterion for a positive interaction is *shared mood* between the interacting individuals, that is, recognizing shared interests and the "human" in the other.[38] Shared mood

[35] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 13. Feb. 6, 2020.
[36] *Interview with US military advisor.* In collab. with Interviewee 23. Nov. 25, 2020.
[37] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 16. Mar. 2, 2020.
[38] Holmes and Wheeler, "Social bonding in diplomacy".

is the product of repeated interactions with mutual focus of attention.[39] Over time, interacting individuals can develop trust and empathy, understanding each other's motivations.[40] When the elements of a successful interaction (face-to-face interaction, barriers to outsiders, mutual focus of attention, and shared mood) are present, the interacting individuals share a positive, "excited reaction of experiencing something together."[41] As one advisor put it: "...Both [the other American advisor] and I lived on that cuartel with [our counterparts]. It was a rather austere place, they saw us sharing both their hardships and their victories with them. And that made it easier to assimilate into the organization."[42] But if the interactions occur and the individuals do not recognize shared interests, a negative rather than positive social bond will develop.[43]

Advisors often build close personal relationships with their counterparts that are characterized by positive emotions, loyalty, and even affection. Some of these positive bonds are the expected outcome of an exchange relationship where both parties benefit,[44] e.g. the advisor provides advice and the counterpart feeds and provides security for the advisor. But over time, some of these relationships become intense and more akin to the bonds between two close friends than between two individuals working with one another.[45] I asked my interviewees to describe their relationships with their local counterparts. Advisors often responded using emotive language, such as: "He was the finest officer I ever met in my life....We became good friends, really good friends"[46]; "We really liked [him]. We believed in him. We

[39]Jonathan H. Turner and Jan E. Stets. *The sociology of emotions*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

[40]Naomi Head. "Transforming Conflict: Trust, Empathy, and Dialogue". In: *Emotions in international politics: Beyond mainstream international relations*. Ed. by Yohan Ariffin, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Vesselin Popovski. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

[41]Holmes and Wheeler, "Social bonding in diplomacy", p. 150.

[42]*Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 11. Mar. 9, 2020.

[43]Holmes and Wheeler, "Social bonding in diplomacy", pp. 150–151.

[44]Turner and Stets, *The sociology of emotions*; Simons, "The Military Advisor as Warrior-King and Other "Going Native" Temptations".

[45]Gibby differentiates between "professional courtesy" and "genuine friendship." Bryan R. Gibby. *The Will to Win: American Military Advisors in Korea, 1946-1953.* Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2012. 1 online resource (393 pages). ISBN: 978-0-8173-8611-5. URL: `http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/cat/bib/11143118` (visited on 10/29/2020).

[46]*Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 5. Jan. 15, 2020.

didn't go native. It wasn't like in that sense, it's just we had faith in him"[47]; "...I made the mistake of getting emotionally involved to some extent because it did feel like a paternal relationship. I felt like I was their company commander and I was responsible for them because I realized that if I didn't fight for them, nobody else would"[48]; and "I had better relationships with the people I was advising than I did with a lot of my [American] counterparts."[49] Other advisors described strong friendships with their counterparts that continued even after their professional relationships ended.[50]

Both the more "thin" and "deep" forms of these personal relationships, I argue, allow military advisors to act as conduits of influence for the intervener at the local level, influencing their counterparts' approach to issues such as human rights and civil-military relations. After building trust through positive interactions, advisors can persuade their local counterparts that certain reforms or objectives that the intervener wants are in the local counterpart's best interests, too,[51] persuading them that actions like restraint toward the civilian popu-

[47] *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan.* In collab. with Interviewee 27. Apr. 27, 2020.

[48] *Interview with US advisor to Iraq.* In collab. with Interviewee 9. Jan. 12, 2019.

[49] *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan.* In collab. with Interviewee 25. Jan. 1, 2020.

[50] To build close relationships, advisors had to be able to actually converse with their counterparts in a language that both understood reasonably well. While interpreters can assist, communication is better when it includes only the advisor and counterpart. US advisors who spoke the local language well or whose counterparts were fluent in English felt they more easily built relationships and had more influence. An advisor described the importance of language in fostering connection with his counterparts in an Afghan Special Operations aviation unit and intelligence unit (but note how he puts the burden for cultural connection on the Afghan advisees rather than himself): "We trained them to fly helicopters at Fort Rucker in the U.S, so they're very competent, great English, really smart guys. They know American culture. They understand how U.S. advisors work and talk and think. So, it just was a really cool thing to see on the ground, that really strong relationship. It did translate to the intel side. It wasn't quite as easy for me, only because none of the intel guys had come to the U.S. So, they were, I guess, maybe a little bit less culturally understanding and a little bit ... They just didn't have the same level of interaction with Americans prior to the advisory mission happening that some of the other guys had, but very, very intelligent....I just got really lucky in that I had a team of guys that was already really smart and competent and that could speak English well. And that it was already a cut above the rest in that sense. I don't think I could have gotten a quarter of as much done if I was in a regular unit that got to interact with their guys for a quarter the amount of time and in a different capacity. I got lucky, essentially, because it does not look like that everywhere." *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan.* In collab. with Interviewee 25. Jan. 1, 2020. For more on the importance of language competency, see: David T. Gardner. *Lessons from the Past: Vital Factors Influencing Military Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.* Section: Technical Reports. NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY CA DEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, Mar. 1, 2012. URL: `https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA560642` (visited on 03/15/2021)

[51] Carol Atkinson. *Military soft power: Public diplomacy through military educational exchanges.* Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

lation or proper and humane interrogation of prisoners can lead to better military results. When relationships are close between advisors and their counterparts, advisors can exercise substantial influence over them and even change their minds over time.

Archival evidence shows that at the highest levels of the United States government – the National Security Council – policymakers considered the influence of US advisors over their counterparts. In Liberia, following a coup on April 12, 1980, the People's Redemption Council (PRC) led by Master Sergeant Samuel Doe established itself as Liberia's government. The PRC immediately arrested members of the former government, and executed some of them. In June 1980, the head of the US Military Mission in Liberia, Colonel Robert Gosney, was due to be transferred back to the United States. Carter's National Security Council intervened to keep him in his post for a few months longer, stating that Gosney was "playing the key and absolutely essential role in keeping the members of the PRC in-line. It was he who told the PRC to stop the executions. [Samuel] DOE and the whole group see him as a father/uncle figure, and if anyone is going to keep them in-line, Col. Gosney is the man to do it." [52] Policymakers clearly recognized the importance of personal relationships as a source of influence. Not just any American advisor could fill Gosney's role: it had to be Gosney himself because he was the one with close relationships already in place.

The advisors I spoke with were confident that they did possess some measure of influence. An advisor who served in El Salvador summed it up quite confidently as "... We were able to get them to support democracy, get them to respect human rights, and get them to win, as well."[53] US advisors who served in Iraq and Afghanistan were more pessimistic about their influence on political issues, such as political and tribal divisions, but repeatedly stated that being on the ground allowed them to directly influence their counterparts' decision-making about the use of force. Advisors were also aware, however, of limitations to their influence, which I discuss in more detail below. An advisor to Iraq described having a lot of control over

[52] Memo, Jerry Funk to Zbigniew Brzezinski, June 7, 1980, Folder "Meetings – Muskie/Brown/Brzezinski, 5/80," Box 23, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Jimmy Carter Library.

[53] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 20. Jan. 9, 2020.

missions where he accompanied his counterparts. However, he was unsuccessful in stopping an operation where his counterparts wanted to conduct house-to-house raids based on flimsy intelligence against another tribe. He eventually agreed to accompany them in order to "go out there and supervise and make sure it just doesn't get stupid."[54]

3.3 Limitations to information gathering and influencing

When might we expect information gathering and influencing to be successful? I theorize how the effectiveness of information gathering will vary with the level and degree of embeddedness of advisors, as well as the total number of advisors in country. I also theorize potential threats to influence, ranging from the individual characteristics of advisors to the challenge of "going native."

3.3.1 The size and embeddedness of the advising mission

Since information gathering depends on a combination of first-hand observation and personal relationships with counterparts, it is improved when more advisors are present in country and when they work with a wider range of local units. The kind of information that advisors provide will vary with the level at which the advisor is embedded and whether the advisor can accompany the local unit into combat. The table on the next page (Table 2) shows how I expect the effectiveness of information gathering to vary with the level of embeddedness of advisors. I use El Salvador as an example. Advisors were embedded at the strategic level and with brigades at the operational level but were not allowed to accompany their counterparts into combat.

Advisors embedded at the strategic level can provide information on the attitudes of senior officers toward the conduct of war, as well as on strategic decisions. When embedded

[54] *Interview with US advisor to Iraq.* In collab. with Interviewee 9. Jan. 12, 2019.

with local forces in the field at the operational level but not allowed to accompany local forces into combat, advisors can provide first-hand information on military leadership and mostly accurate information about how the military performs in combat, whether they are using appropriate plans and tactics, and how they treat the civilian population and captured enemy combatants. When advisors are also allowed to accompany proxy forces into combat at the tactical level, the quality of the information provided will be even higher since advisors will have first-hand knowledge of the proxy military's combat performance. Information gathering, then, is at its best when all three rows of the table are populated by advisors, which will require a fairly large number of embedded advisors.

Table 3.2: Variation in effectiveness of advisors

Embeddedness	Number	Accompany in Combat?	Information Gathering	Influence	El Salvador
Strategic Ministry of Defense	Few	No	Highly accurate information on: - Civil-military relations - Top military leadership - Budgetary and strategic decisions	Influence strategic decisions, defense institution building, and civil-military relations	Yes
Operational Brigade level	Some	No	Mostly accurate information on: - Combat - Human rights/atrocities - Local environment Highly accurate information on: - Attitudes of officers in key field command positions	Influence war planning, district-level COIN, treatment of local population	Yes
Tactical Battalion level or below	Many	Yes	Highly accurate information on: - Combat - Human rights/atrocities - Local environment	Directly influence conduct of war, the proxy's effort in combat, specific instances of human rights abuses or atrocities	No

That being said, advisors can provide "good enough" information gathering with a far smaller force. The case of El Salvador, as I will describe in Chapter 6, shows that interveners can "keep a finger on the pulse" with a relatively small advising force. Even when only a few advisors are assigned at the brigade (operational) level, advisors circulate among units and seek out a wide range of people to talk to, effectively gathering information about the local military unit and broader environment. Advisors can still get a good sense of the local force's capability by observing their training and sitting in on after action reports, even if they do not accompany them into combat.

The advisors' task of influence will also be easier when advisors are present in larger numbers and more thoroughly embedded in a local military. When advisors are present at all levels of a military, they will be able to influence decisions from defense institution building to the local use of force by a tactical unit. And when advisors are permitted to accompany local forces into combat, they will likely have the greatest level of influence, since they can provide real-time advice to their counterparts and because joint participation in combat is a powerful form of bonding between them and their counterparts. The issue areas that advisors will be able to influence also vary with advisors' extent and level of embeddedness. Advisors will be able to influence strategic decisions about the military and defense institutions when embedded at the strategic level. When embedded at the operational level, they can influence specific plans for military operations, as well as influence their counterparts as they interact with local political officials at the district level. They can influence the broad strokes of local-level implementation of counterinsurgency strategy or help their local counterparts organize an insurgency. When embedded at the tactical level, advisors can directly influence specific military operations and specific instances of human rights abuses or atrocities that local forces may consider carrying out.

Having now theorized the effectiveness of advisors based on their level of embeddedness and force size, I now discuss some of the potential limitations to the ability of advisors to monitor and influence a local military.

3.3.2 Individual characteristics of advisors

The first potential threat to monitoring and influencing is the individual characteristics of the advisors and their relationships with their counterparts. Some advisors will simply be better at the job than others, especially those with better interpersonal skills.[55] For example, the advisor working with Hamid Karzai in late 2001 explained how once Karzai was identified as a potential future leader of Afghanistan, a US lieutenant colonel was assigned to interface with Karazi when "talking geopolitics and the future of Afghanistan." The advisors that had been working with Karzai for several weeks at that point "had a degree of trust and the battalion commander didn't really know how to work with Karzai" so Karzai kept working with the Americans he trusted and sidelined the others.[56] In some cases, the advisor's own incompetence or lack of experience prevents a relationship from developing. In Iraq and Afghanistan, military personnel lacking combat experience and training in how to effectively advise local forces were sent as advisors,[57] and they often struggled to work successfully with their counterparts until they could prove their worth in combat.[58]

The success of monitoring and influence also depends on the personal approach that advisors choose to adopt to their work. Take the issue of human rights as an example. Many of the US military advisors I interviewed claimed they either reported or did not receive credible evidence of human rights abuses during their tenure as advisors. However, some advisors stated that they did observe human rights abuses and refused to elaborate further. While it is impossible to know exactly why some advisors refused to discuss this issue, it is clear that many were required to work with local military forces that they knew had committed or would commit human rights abuses. Advisors, then, are put in the difficult position of building capacity for a local military that has different values from their own

[55] Christopher Ely Phelps. "Selecting and Training U.S. Advisors: Interpersonal Skills and the Advisor-Counterpart Relationship". Accepted: 2010-01-07T18:25:42Z. Thesis. University of Kansas, Apr. 24, 2009. URL: `https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/5657` (visited on 10/29/2020); Gardner, *Lessons from the Past*.

[56] *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan.* In collab. with Interviewee 27. Apr. 27, 2020.

[57] *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan.* In collab. with Interviewee 26. Mar. 13, 2020.

[58] Owen West. *The Snake Eaters: Counterinsurgency Advisors in Combat.* Simon and Schuster, 2013.

military, and although their own obligations to follow the laws of war as members of the US military is clear, they are often given very little guidance or doctrine for how to engage local forces on issues such as human rights.[59] For example, one advisor described giving human rights training to former rebels being reintegrated into the military in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since records on military units were often incomplete, no legal barrier existed to US training, even though this advisor had little doubt that "... just a few months or possibly a couple years before, they were operating completely outside of the laws of land warfare."[60] When compelled to work with proxy forces that they knew had or might commit human rights abuses, advisors themselves determine how much they report and how much they emphasize difficult or uncomfortable topics when working with the proxy.

It was clear from the advisors I interviewed that they had a lot of agency to determine what they chose to prioritize when working with the proxy forces. My interviewees who served in El Salvador described debates among advisors and between advisors and their chain of command about whether their mission was to increase capacity or restrain the proxy military. Some advisors believed "... the central issue was teaching them military doctrine and the military way to do things"[61] while others believed that their mission was to "develop a different social context"[62] where "the single most important thing we did was enforce human rights."[63] However, some advisors decided to take the opposite approach, focusing primarily on building military capacity and placing other issues like civil-military relations, or inducing the proxy military to show restraint, on the back burner.

Another individual level threat to an advisor's ability to influence his counterpart is what I call "reverse influence." When the relationship between an advisor and his counterpart becomes very close, and bonds of loyalty and emotion develop, sometimes the advisor begins

[59] Pat Paterson. "Training surrogate forces in international humanitarian law: Lessons from Peru, Colombia, El Salvador, and Iraq". In: *Training Surrogate Forces in International Humanitarian Law: Lessons from Peru, Colombia, El Salvador, and Iraq (2016)* (2016).

[60] *Interview with US military advisor.* In collab. with Interviewee 23. Nov. 25, 2020.

[61] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020.

[62] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020.

[63] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 12. Feb. 1, 2020.

to identify so closely with his local counterpart that he becomes the influenced.[64] When an advisor "goes native," he is unlikely to serve as a useful conduit of influence and his ability to gather information that could reflect negatively on his counterpart will decrease.

It's not just advisors in the field who can be influenced by their counterparts; reverse influence can also affect top military leadership working with a local military. The commander of MAAG-Vietnam during 1955-1960, Lieutenant General Samuel T. Williams, seems to have been too close to President Diem to see his faults accurately. When US Ambassador Elbridge Dubrow made clear that he saw Diem as a flawed ally, Williams responded: "I resent a friend of mine being referred to as a SOB."[65] As the senior US military officer in Vietnam, Williams was responsible for the flow of information up his chain of command. Instead of reporting accurately on the deteriorating security situation in Vietnam, he gave rosy reports of progress to US Congressional delegations and policymakers and was unwilling to hear negative reports from advisors about their units' lack of military effectiveness.[66] Information gathering can break down, even when information is accessible, because of the biases and emotions of those responsible for reporting it.[67]

3.3.3 Strategic factors

The relationship between advisor and counterpart, moreover, depends to some extent on strategic factors, such as how much the local military needs advice and how much the intervener and proxy disagree (i.e. the strategic interaction modeled in the previous chapter). When the proxy's military effectiveness is high, the intervener's support will be less valuable and the proxy will likely have the upper hand in the interaction. An advisor who worked with Hamid Karzai in the early days of US intervention in Afghanistan against the Taliban

[64]Simons, "The Military Advisor as Warrior-King and Other "Going Native" Temptations".
[65]Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*, p. 73.
[66]Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*, p. 100.
[67]Of course, even completely impartial observers (if such individuals exist) can struggle to accurately determine what and how to report. For instance, the US Army in Vietnam found itself awash with data but uncertain which indicators were worth tracking to evaluate progress. Gregory A. Daddis. *No Sure Victory: Measuring US Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War*. Oxford University Press, 2011

stated how Karzai ignored his advice about how to resist the Taliban, preferring to conduct operations his own way. The advisor commented that "I don't know in his eyes... what he wanted us there for. I think the simplest answer... is that we gave him the credibility that the U.S. backed him, just by our presence... he wanted that. Just by us being by his side, but letting him and his fellow Pashtun have the lead on securing the Pashtun tribal belt. He showed U.S. support, but he wasn't a puppet, it was just that happy medium I think he was going for, probably."[68]

When the proxy's military effectiveness is low and the intervener has boots on the ground, it also has little incentive to heed advice because the intervener will pick up the slack. US advisors in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, repeatedly mentioned how their local counterparts would be indifferent to their efforts to build military capacity.[69] An advisor to Iraq mentioned how his counterparts did not a have strong will to fight: "They would make up holidays (such as Shiite holidays when they were all Sunni) so they could get out of training."[70] Another advisor who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan stated: "Believe it or not, the most frustrating thing is trying to get the military to defend their own country. Otherwise dealing with tribal, clan, local, and national politics that demand bad security decisions or unwillingness to cooperate even if cooperation means their own job would be easier."[71]

Strategic factors also influence whether advisors (and policymakers) choose to focus on building capacity or changing behavior in their interactions with the proxy. When the proxy's military is ineffective and US combat troops are present, advisors often focus on building capacity because it is the most pressing issue today and necessary for US forces to with-

[68] *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan.* In collab. with Interviewee 27. Apr. 27, 2020.

[69] Note that I am speaking here from the perspective of the advisors; the Iraqi and Afghani militaries sustained many casualties and fought hard during years of conflict, as noted in West, *The Snake Eaters.* The presence of cultural differences in how and when to fight no doubt contributed partially to the assessment of advisors, so the "will to fight" assessment may not be objective. However, more objective assessments of military capacity in Iraq and Afghanistan do make clear that relative to US forces, the local militaries had less capacity and were eager to have US forces do more of the fighting

[70] *Interview with US advisor to Iraq.* In collab. with Interviewee 1. Dec. 15, 2020.

[71] *Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan and Iraq.* In collab. with Interviewee 7. Sept. 29, 2019.

draw—even though in the long-term the behavior issue, that is, the military's approach to human rights and civil-military relations, may become more important. Advisors who served in contemporary conflicts like Iraq and Afghanistan would often omit discussion of human rights abuses, civil-military relations, or anything political during interviews. Instead, they seemed focused on the challenge of building military capacity in local military units at the tactical and operational levels, since many units had a low level of military effectiveness. When they did mention political issues, they would frequently describe issues at the strategic level that directly affected military effectiveness, like the lack of coordination between the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior in Afghanistan, or a lack of logistical or intelligence support.

Advisors in Iraq and Afghanistan described their local counterparts as heavily dependent on US support to conduct basic combat operations. Hence, a major role of advisors was to serve as a conduit for US enablers, like airpower and intelligence. Advisors therefore had substantial control over the conduct of operations and tactical combat. Targets would be chosen based on US intelligence and advisors would provide tactical-level advice when accompanying their local counterparts into combat. In these cases, advisors exercised something akin to direct influence over the use of force. In contrast, advisors who served in El Salvador described their counterparts as motivated, competent, and capable of conducting independent combat operations (although not always with the greatest skill). Advisors were not allowed to accompany their counterparts into combat, except under special circumstances. Therefore, advisors had to rely much more heavily on persuasion to influence the use of force in El Salvador. When local units are dependent on advisors to conduct combat operations, advisors have a high degree of effective control over the unit and therefore the nature of the agency problem is more likely to focus on will to fight than on restraining the local counterpart. It is unsurprising, then, that advisors to units with more military capacity were more concerned about restraining them, while advisors to units with incompetent leadership and low capacity were more concerned with getting them to conduct independent combat

operations.

While I have argued that advisors can be used to influence their local counterparts, the question remains: in what way? The goals of the intervener are the most important strategic factors that can determine how advisors will use their influence, even though advisors will still have substantial local agency to implement policy and their innovation can sometimes make up for poor policy by their superiors, as I show in the chapter on El Salvador. In some cases, restraining the proxy from committing human rights abuses and preventing a coup will be the intervener's top priority. In other cases, interveners will choose capacity building over broader political objectives. Interveners get to decide what they want and how they will interact with the proxy.

Interveners decide first of all what kind of incentives they use with the proxy at the strategic level, and the proxy's overall compliance depends on this, as my formal model shows.[72] When interveners are committed to supporting their proxies no matter what, proxies have a lot of leverage. There is little point in monitoring, for instance, unless the intervener will use the information it receives to apply diplomatic pressure to the proxy. Advisors cannot substitute for diplomatic efforts to influence the proxy at the strategic level, and their efforts at influence at the individual level will be either impeded or magnified depending on how the intervener chooses to incentivize the proxy at the strategic level.

Contemporary interventions show further how the mission of advisors, and whether they focus on building capacity or changing behavior, depends on the strategic environment and US policy made at the highest levels of government. The recent focus among advisors on building military capacity could be because at the strategic level, the United States has since 9-11 chosen to use advisors in conjunction with small numbers of US Special Operations forces to directly target high-value terrorist targets or to build capacity in order to secure the exit of US forces from direct combat. The data I will present in the next chapter show the massive expansion of US intervention with military advisors; the United States conducted

[72]Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*; Berman and Lake, *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*.

more interventions per year since 9-11 than it did at any point during the Cold War. Data on military intervention overall shows a similar trend.[73] Technological changes and airpower have facilitated this approach and the global US presence of advisors working with proxy forces. At the strategic level, the United States often pays little attention to how local units that it trains fit into the politics of the country or how capacity will be used when US forces depart.[74]

When intervening in a civil war, the United States has focused on building lethal force in the proxy it supports with the hope that will force a political settlement.[75] It is unclear, however, how this development of lethal force will translate into achieving political objectives like a peace settlement or stability in a given conflict. For example, consider Somalia, where US advisors have trained a highly capable military unit that carries out operations against al-Shabaab.[76] Though competent, this military unit is very tactically focused, dependent on American advisors, and does not make the Somali state stronger.[77] Should US advisors depart, it would likely be incapable of conducting its own operations. Advisors may well have a lot of influence when working with local forces but the focus of this influence and whether it is accompanied by other levers of US influence at the strategic level will determine its effectiveness in areas such as human rights, civil-military relations, and reaching a political settlement to conflict. In Chapter 5, I quantitatively test whether advisors have an effect on human rights and civil-military relations at the national level in countries where they are deployed as well as discuss how their effect depends on what interveners want.

[73]Monica Toft Duffy. "Why is America addicted to foreign interventions". In: *The National Interest* (2017).

[74]Tommy Ross and Melissa Dalton. "A Roadmap for Better Choices from Security Partners". In: *War on the Rocks* (Jan. 17, 2020). URL: https://warontherocks.com/2020/01/a-roadmap-for-better-choices-from-security-partners/.

[75]*Interview with US military advisor to Afghanistan.* In collab. with Interviewee 24. Oct. 1, 2020.

[76]Mark Mazzetti, Jeffrey Gettleman, and Eric Schmitt. "In Somalia, US escalates a shadow war". In: *The New York Times* 16 (2016).

[77]Colin D. Robinson and Jahara Matisek. "Military advising and assistance in Somalia: fragmented interveners, fragmented Somali military forces". In: *Defence Studies* 21.2 (Apr. 3, 2021), pp. 181–203. ISSN: 1470-2436. DOI: 10.1080/14702436.2021.1885976. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2021.1885976, See the following for a description of how interveners in Somalia provide security assistance to local units and bypass the state:

In sum, personal relationships between advisor and counterpart can often be extremely close, but this does not mean that advisors will always have influence. Structural factors can determine how much counterparts are willing to listen. Advisors have significant agency as man "on the spot," as Lansdale put it in the epigraph to the introductory chapter, to decide how they will behave and the kind of relationship they will build with their counterparts.[78] Their local agency can lead to good results when advisors innovate and make wise decisions about how to handle their counterparts and analyze the information available to them, but sometimes advisors will not be up to the task of influence. In other instances, the close personal relationships built between advisor and counterpart will backfire, prompting the advisor to identify too closely with his counterpart's point of view. Furthermore, the overall effect of advisors will depend on how intervening states use this tool of monitoring and influencing. Advisors are just one part of a complicated interaction between an intervening state and the proxy, and the goals of intervening states run the gamut from enabling repression to attempting to restrain a proxy force.

3.4 Conclusion

States send military advisors to help interveners manage the costs of proxy war by gathering information and influencing the proxy's military. This political role of advisors is possible because advisors have access to the proxy's military through their other role of building military capacity. As information gatherers, advisors provide specific and detailed information about the behavior and attitudes of their counterparts from top military leadership down to officers in the field, the operational environment, and the proxy's military effectiveness. The precision and wide coverage of this information complements other sources of intelligence and allows interveners to hold their proxies accountable without revealing intelligence sources and methods. When watched carefully by advisors, the proxy military is more likely to follow

[78]Hajjar, "Military Warriors as Peacekeeper–Diplomats", Hajjar also notes the agency that advisors have to construct their own role.

the interests of the intervener than when they are not. Suggestive evidence from interviews and archival sources shows that both interveners and advisors expect that monitoring will lead to more compliance.

In addition, the personal relationships advisors develop with their counterparts allow them to move beyond this more narrow role of gathering information and serve as conduits of influence for the intervener at the local level. As such, advisors rely on persuasion and informal interactions with their counterparts to influence their decision-making on issues ranging from military effectiveness to proper restraint in the use of force. Advisors cultivate this influence first by providing value for their local counterparts and encouraging them to make self-interested changes in behavior. As the relationship between advisor and counterpart deepens, however, advisors can leverage these personal connections to influence their counterparts' beliefs.

By focusing only on the military capacity building role of advisors, we overlook an important tool for interveners to directly shape a military at the local level. While this influence operates within the constraints of the overall strategic relationship between the intervener and proxy, advisors can play the same role for the proxy's military as diplomats do for its government, nudging it toward better outcomes.

One final story. A true one. It happened several years ago in Vietnam, before we had MAAG advisors out with the Vietnamese units. President Diem saw one of the MAAG advisors and asked him to go out and stay for some days with a Vietnamese general. The general was commanding an operation against insurgents, near the Plaine des Joncs.

President Diem pointed out that the Vietnamese general was a good fighting man. He needed little advice on how to fight and win. But, said President Diem, this highly moral soldier is an aloof man. So, please teach him how to love the people. You know, the way you do, as an American.

I appreciate that this sounds highly idealistic and, perhaps an unusual chore for a military man. However, even President Diem's enemies admit that he is a tough and practical realist. He was right on the vital dynamic beam of successful counter-insurgency, when he asked this American's help.

— Brigadier General E.G. Lansdale
Talk at USAF Academy, May 25, 1962.

Chapter 4

Analyzing Why Great Powers Send Advisors

Why send military advisors to a conflict? The previous two chapters outlined my theory of when great powers will send military advisors as part of an intervention in a civil war. The formal model in Chapter 2 outlined the strategic environment in which great powers choose to delegate war to other states or non-state actors. The formal model showed that interveners will be more likely to support a proxy when it shares the intervener's preferences about the political goals of war and its conduct. However, interveners will sometimes choose proxies when preferences are misaligned when the cost of combat is high and the intervener's important national security interests are at stake in the conflict. In these cases, the intervener will be willing to pay a lot to monitor the proxy's performance. Chapter 3 unpacked the role of advisors as a key – yet expensive – means for the intervener to monitor the proxy military by embedding directly within it. It also extended the formal theory by informally theorizing the dynamic effect of advisors as conduits of influence over the local military. I hypothesized that advisors use personal relationships with their counterparts to influence their approach to human rights and civil-military relations.

Chapters 2 & 3 provided the following hypotheses that I empirically test in this chapter with original quantitative data. First, interveners will be more likely to send military advisors when the military capacity of the proxy is low, since the raison d'être of advisors is building

military capacity. Second, interveners will be more likely to send military advisors when the preference alignment between the intervener and proxy is low, so advisors can monitor the proxy. Third, some of the same factors that contribute to the original decision to send advisors should also contribute to overall duration of advisor deployments during conflict.

To test these hypotheses, I first collected original quantitative data on the deployment of advisors by the United States, Russia/USSR, China, France, and the United Kingdom during periods of conflict from 1946-2019. Existing datasets were useful as a guide to data collection but either did not cover a sufficiently broad time period or relied on an overly expansive definition of military training that did not capture the core phenomenon I study: the on-the-ground presence of military advisors with a government's armed forces or a rebel group during periods of conflict. In this chapter, I first describe the data I collected, as well as present descriptive data on the deployment of military advisors and key trends in when, where, and how intervening states deploy military advisors. I then quantitatively model advisor deployments, to directly test my theory of when military advisors are most likely be sent to intervene in conflict. Finally, I model the duration of advisor deployments and compare them specifically to other forms of intervention.

I find consistent evidence across a variety of quantitative models that a potential proxy's military capacity is a key factor in the decision to deploy military advisors. Advisors are particularly likely to be deployed to a conflict when the proxy is a weak government. This evidence indicates that a primary task of military advisors is building the proxy's military capacity. When the proxy is a rebel group, however, interveners send advisors to those rebel groups with high military capacity, reflecting the general preference of interveners not to support the weakest rebel groups.[1] In addition, I find some evidence that interveners are more likely to send advisors to support a proxy when it disagrees more with the government, although the data on preference alignment is an inexact and imperfect measure. This suggests that advisors play a political role as I theorize.

[1]Idean Salehyan, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and David E Cunningham. "Explaining external support for insurgent groups". In: *International Organization* 65.4 (2011), pp. 709–744.

4.1 Data collection

My analysis focuses on deployments of military advisors by the United States, Russia/USSR, China, France, and the United Kingdom to support either the government or rebel side in a civil war between 1946-2019. I focus on that time period because it is highly relevant for understanding contemporary patterns of conflict. As for focusing on great powers, this is sensible given the extent of their interventions in global conflict. As a large body of academic literature has shown, great powers frequently intervene in civil wars abroad and affect these conflicts in important ways, such as how long they last, how they end, and the probability of victory for the supported party.[2]

According to data from Regan (2002),[3] great powers conduct around 68 percent of all interventions in civil conflict. Therefore, understanding both when and how great powers intervene in civil conflict is key. While other states besides the great powers do intervene in conflict and even send military advisors as part of their interventions, focusing on the great powers should still shed light on the broader phenomenon of intervention involving military advisors. In the conclusion chapter, I discuss the broader implications of my argument and findings for intervention by states besides the great powers.

As I mention in the introductory chapter, I define advisors as military personnel sent to work with the military of a state or armed group, sometimes as individuals or as part of a larger advising mission by the sending state.[4] They can be sent overtly in uniform, covertly out of uniform, or, the sending state can publicly acknowledge them but intentionally limit publicity surrounding their deployment. Advisors are distinct from combat troops or special operations forces because they do not have an independent combat role. They may be permitted to accompany local units on extensive, in-field training when the local unit will run a significant risk of engaging with enemy forces, as well as accompany local forces into

[2]Patrick M Regan. *Civil wars and foreign powers: Outside intervention in intrastate conflict*. University of Michigan Press, 2002.

[3]Regan, "Third-party interventions and the duration of intrastate conflicts".

[4]Stoker, *Military Advising and Assistance*.

combat to direct and assist.[5] But advisors cannot add to the combat capacity of the proxy unit except through the advice they provide.

To construct the dataset, I identified cases of advisors sent to work directly with proxy militaries using existing datasets of intervention in civil wars. However, existing datasets all had some characteristics that made re-coding and collection of new data necessary. For the 1945-1999 period, I used Patrick Regan's data on Third Party Interventions, 1945-99,[6] to identify possible cases where advisors were deployed as part of an intervention. His intelligence/advisors variable does not distinguish between the two, does not contain disaggregated data on what advisors do or the number of advisors in-country, and could be extended to cover a more recent time period. The other existing dataset is the UCDP External Support Project (1975-2009),[7] which I used to add additional observations to the datset and extend its time period through 2009. The dataset includes a variable for when the external supporter provides training/expertise to the proxy; however, this variable includes cases when training occurred outside the territory of the state experiencing conflict.

For my data collection, I used a more narrow definition of advising that required advisors to work in close contact with a local military. To count as a case of advisor deployment, advisors had to be deployed to a state or non-state actor engaged in conflict within the territorial borders of the country experiencing conflict. Advisors need not deploy directly to the area of the country where conflict was actually taking place nor accompany local forces into combat. I sorted training that took place outside of the country undergoing conflict into two types. In the first type, a great power trained forces at installations belonging to the great power outside of the country in which the intrastate war took place (for example, the United States trained Latin American militaries out of country at the School of the Americas, and Salvadoran officers at bases in the United States). Many observations in the

[5]Friend, *The Accompany They Keep*.

[6]Regan, "Third-party interventions and the duration of intrastate conflicts".

[7]Stina Högbladh, Therése Pettersson, and Lotta Themnér. "External support in armed conflict 1975–2009: Presenting new data". In: *52nd Annual International Studies Association Convention, Montreal, Canada*. 2011, pp. 16–19.

UCDP External Support dataset fit this definition and did not meet the criteria for inclusion in my dataset. In the second type of training outside the country undergoing conflict, a great power sent trainers and advisors to guerrilla bases and safe havens just across the border from the conflict in a neutral or supportive state. I coded these types of training as cases of advisor deployment, since advisors had to be deployed outside their home country to work for periods of a few months or years in close contact with a proxy unit.

After identifying possible cases of advisor deployment using the Regan (2002) dataset and UCDP External Support dataset, I then used a combination of academic and primary source materials to identify whether the cases met the above criteria for inclusion in my dataset. Academic sources included the detailed case studies in Jeffrey S Dixon and Meredith Reid Sarkees. *A Guide to Intra-state Wars: An Examination of Civil, Regional, and Intercommunal Wars, 1816-2014.* CQ Press, 2015; historiography of conflicts; as well as academic articles on Cold War history, the Global War on Terror, and policy reports and journals detailing contemporary intervention. For some of the cases, additional primary sources such as ProQuest historical newspapers and online collections of US archival documents (the CIA Digital Collections and National Security Archive) were available.

I then extended the time period of the dataset from 2009 to 2019 by conducting targeted Google searches for intervention with military advisors by the five interveners included in the dataset. For overt interventions conducted during the final ten years included in the dataset (2009-2019), such as the ongoing US intervention in Afghanistan, information from policy and news sources about the interventions was usually abundantly available. However, many of the interventions during this period were partly or entirely covert, which made collection of the data, particularly the disaggregated data, more difficult and in some cases, less reliable. For interventions during the Cold War period, in contrast, information about covert deployment of military advisors was usually fully available in the historiography of the Cold War.[8] An indicator variable, *covert*, in the dataset codes for whether part or all

[8]The dataset does include US intervention in Laos, for instance, as a case of intervention by military advisors since CIA trainers were present in large numbers performing exactly the same role as military

of the intervention was covert. Around half of the observations in the data show that the intervention contained a covert component.

4.1.1 Unit of analysis and dependent variable

The unit of analysis for my dataset is the intervener-supported party dyad. This unit of analysis is appropriate since my analysis focuses on the decision of states to deploy advisors to support a party to a conflict. To be included in the dataset, the intervention had to take place during a period of armed conflict as defined by the UCDP-PRIO Armed Conflict dataset (version 20.1) and involve combatants listed in UCDP data. After identifying possible interventions through the approach described above, I then aligned the dates of intervention with the start and end dates of conflict episodes present in UCDP data.

Since in many cases, interveners already had a relationship with the supported party before the conflict episode began, I included a variable, *prior_support*, to code for the nature of the intervener-supported party relationship before the start of a new conflict or conflict episode. Only 30 percent of the supported parties had no support from intervener before the start of the conflict or conflict episode. In 33 percent of the interventions with military advisors, interveners supported an eventual party to a civil war with aid, arms, advisors, troops, or air power as part of normal diplomatic relations at some point in the twelve months immediately before the start of a new conflict or conflict episode. In 23 percent of interventions in my dataset, the intervener provided support in the 12 months prior to the start of the conflict or conflict episode because it intended to prepare for future conflict or influence the developing conflict. In the remainder of the complete observations of *prior_support*, the intervener had previously supported the supported party before regime change. For example, China supported the Khmer Rouge during the Cambodian civil war when it was a rebel group and continued its support once the Khmer Rouge moved into the

advisors, information about the intervention is widely available, and the intervention is commonly included in work on proxy war and military advisors (see Groh, *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option*). The dataset, however, does not systematically code for covert presence of trainers from intelligence agencies since it focuses on the presence of personnel from the military services.

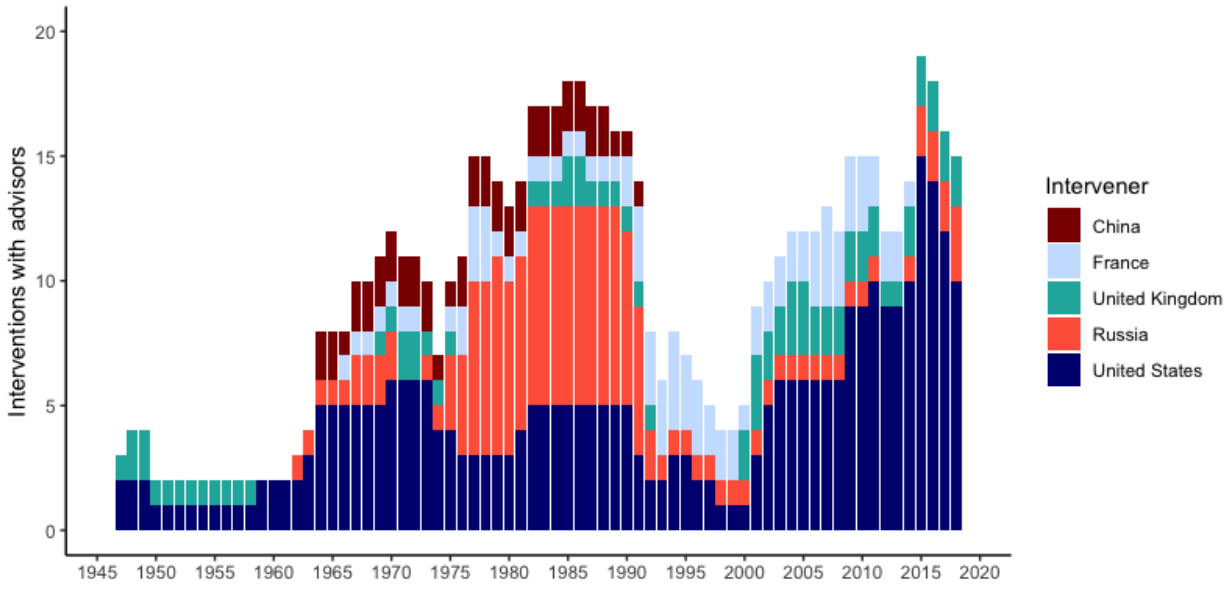


Figure 4.1: Great power interventions with military advisors, 1946-2019

government, which I coded as an instance of regime change in my dataset.

Using this approach, I identified 82 events of intervention with military advisors across 730 conflict-years between 1946 - 2019 by the United States, Russia/USSR, China, the United Kingdom, and France. Figure 1 shows the distribution of intervention with military advisors by interveners over time. As the figure shows, China only intervened with military advisors after the Sino-Soviet split until the fall of the Soviet Union. Soviet intervention with military advisors peaked – and actually surpassed – US intervention with military advisors during 1975-1990, indicating how proxy war was quite common during the last decade of the Cold War. These data add new meaning to US fears about Soviet expansionism at the end of the Cold War. As General Jones complained during Reagan's first National Security Council meeting in February 1981, "American influence has declined. In 1970, we had 500 advisers in Latin America. That number has now fallen to 65. The Soviets have more military advisers in Peru than we have in all of Latin America." [9]

All great powers conducted fewer interventions with advisors in the decade following the

[9]National Security Council Meeting Minutes February 6, 1981, Folder "NSC 0001 6 Feb 1981," Box 1 Executive Secretariat Meeting Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

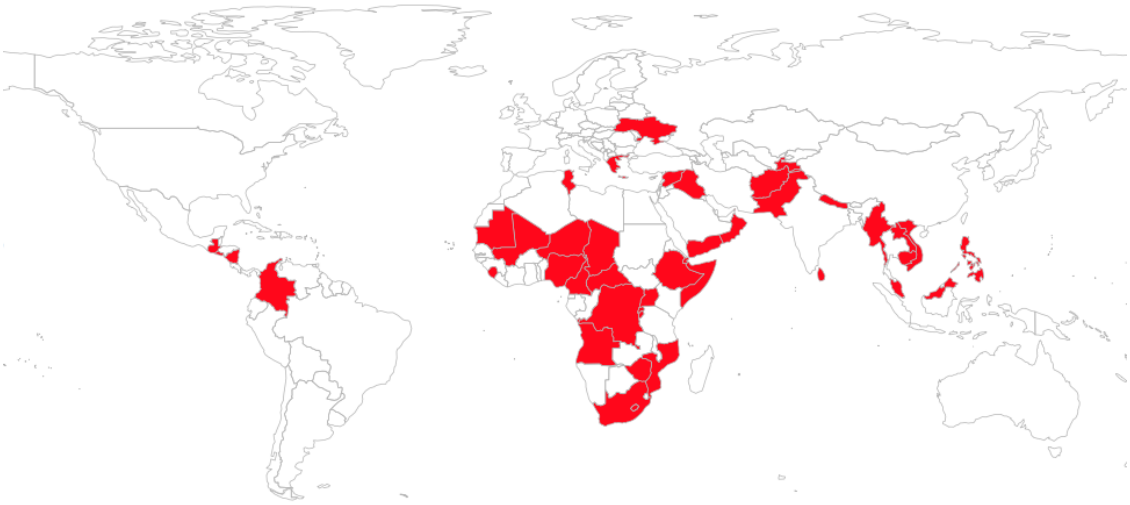


Figure 4.2: The geography of intervention with military advisors, 1946-2019.
The map plots the location of conflicts with one or more parties that were trained and advised by great power military advisors. In the case of some rebel groups, training occurred across the border in a neighboring state. Zimbabwe, for instance, is highlighted in red on the map even though there were no Soviet advisors deployed there because rebel groups were trained by the Soviet Union across the border in Angola.

Cold War. After 9-11, US intervention with advisors spiked, reaching levels surpassing those of the Cold War. Most of these interventions took place in the context of the Global War on Terror, alongside other forms of intervention like special operations forces, combat troops, and the use of airpower.

Figure 2 shows the global extent of interventions with military advisors. Interventions are clustered in each great power's "backyard", in countries adjacent to them or in the immediate region. This is consistent with the findings of Clare and Danilovic (2020) that great powers tend to intervene in regions within their "sphere of influence" or where they have important interests in terms of alliances and trade.[10] The "hands-on" nature of intervening with military advisors could account for why interveners tend to send them to the most important conflicts, either in a country neighboring them or one of their rivals. Interventions on the African continent are the exception, partly because of the United States' strategy of extensive counterterrorism interventions in the region after 9-11 but also because of Soviet

[10]Joe Clare and Vesna Danilovic. "The Geopolitics of Major Power Interventions in Civil Wars". In: *Political Research Quarterly* (2020), p. 1065912920976910.

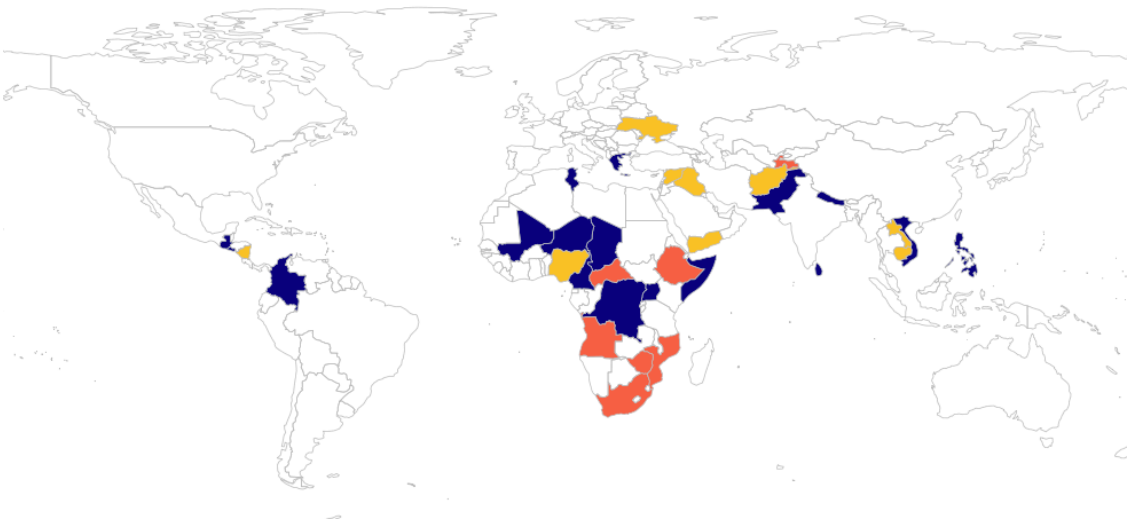


Figure 4.3: US and Russian intervention with military advisors, 1946-2019
US = Blue, Russia = Red, Both = Yellow

support for movements of national liberation within the continent.

For each intervention with military advisors, I also coded whether they were accompanied by other forms of intervention in conflict. Interveners could also provide *aid*: money or other economic aid, civilian equipment, or technical assistance. They could also provide *arms*: military equipment of any sort, such as body armor, tactical gear, uniforms, rations, language training courses for soldiers, night vision goggles, mortar rounds, helicopters, guns. I coded the extent of aid provided, ranging from largely symbolic transfers of money or material that did not make a significant difference in sustaining or funding the proxy's political and military operations to substantial support where the political and military operations of the proxy were sustained primarily by the intervener's aid. The extent of arms provided ranged from largely symbolic support that did not make a significant difference in the proxy's ability to fight to substantial support where the intervener provided enough equipment for the proxy to surpass its opponent's military capabilities and/or provided advanced technology or weapons systems. Most interventions with advisors also included aid and arms.

I also coded whether the intervention included special operations forces or combat troops. If the intervener described the military forces sent as "advisors" but they were used to aug-

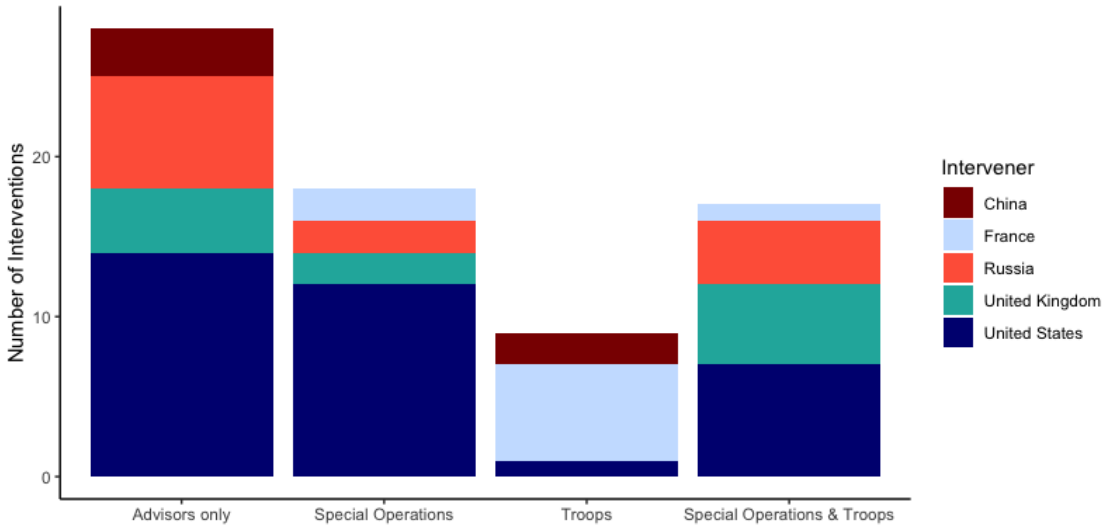


Figure 4.4: Advisors as part of larger interventions

ment the proxy's military capability by engaging in combat rather than advising, the *sof* indicator variable took a value of 1. Coding for the presence of special operations forces in country allows me to show the difference between forces from the intervener engaged in combat versus those sent solely for the purpose of military advising. I also coded an indicator variable *troops* for the presence of more than 1,000 ground combat units from the intervener sent with an independent combat mission. Figure 3 shows that interveners frequently send advisors alongside these other forms of intervention. France, for instance, never sends advisors without either a special operations or troops component to the intervention. Nevertheless, a substantial number of interventions involved advisors only, which indicates that advisors really do perform different functions from those of combat troops.

Additional evidence that advisors play roles separate from combat troops is the small size of most advisors deployments, which prevents them from adding much combat capability to the local military. Out of the interventions where I was able to collect data on the size of the advisor deployment,[11] 34 percent involved fewer than 100 advisors, while another 30 percent involved fewer than 500 advisors, for a total of 64 percent involving fewer than 500 advisors. Fewer than 24 percent of the interventions involved more than 1000 advisors. More than

[11] 15 out of 82 observations have an unknown value for this variable.

half of these interventions with 1000 or more advisors involved an acknowledged presence of combat troops by the intervener, further indicating that advisors are not used to obfuscate the deployment of combat troops but rather have their own role.

4.1.2 Independent variables

Having described the unit of analysis and my dependent variable, the deployment of military advisors, I now turn to how I measure my key independent variables: *preference alignment* and the proxy's *military capacity*. I was only able to code these variables for civil wars with intervention with military advisors – only 42 out of the 207 total intrastate conflicts between 1946-2010. To code my preference alignment variable across civil wars with other forms of intervention or no intervention at all would be a massive undertaking given the number of observations and would have been prohibitively costly and time-consuming at this juncture. However, for cross-national regression analysis, I need to include cases of intervention with only aid and arms as well as non-intervention in order to avoid selecting on the dependent variable. In my regression analysis, I use alternative measures for *preference alignment* and *military ability* from existing datasets, which I describe in detail later in this section. Although I use off-the-shelf measures for the independent variables in my regression analysis, coding these variables for the subset of civil wars with intervention with military advisors provided useful qualitative information on the kinds of issues about which interveners and proxies disagree as well as the military capacity issues that prompt intervention with advisors.

To measure preference alignment, I constructed a ten point scale to measure alignment between the preferences of the intervener and the proxy (see Appendix). As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, interveners and proxies tend to disagree or agree over three main issue areas specific to the conflict and its management: (1) the proxy's leadership and their regime type; (2) war goals; and (3) conduct of war. With respect to the first area, proxies and interveners often disagree on when regime change and leadership turnover is

desirable and what the proxy's regime type should be. Interveners try to induce leaders they do not like to leave and when that fails, will go so far as to support or instigate coups against leaders that oppose their interests. Diem was famously removed from power in a 1963 coup in South Vietnam after coup plotters achieved tacit support from the United States.[12] Interveners will also pressure the proxy to appoint military leaders that support their interests and demote others that do not. As part of its intervention in Greece (1947-49), the United States involved itself in key appointments in the Greek military by working through U.S. advisors in-country.[13]

The proxy and intervener often differ on the political goals of the war. Specifically, they often disagree on the main target of the war, that is, who to fight; strategy, that is, whether the goal is a political solution or a military victory, and for what ends; and termination – when to keep fighting or to end the war. Interveners may be interested in fighting one particular target of the intervention, while proxies might have a broader range of potential enemies. During US intervention in Syria, the US military tried to raise a militia to fight the Islamic State. Most of the rebels it recruited preferred to fight Assad. Interveners and proxies often disagree about the reforms necessary for the proxy to govern, prepare to govern, or win political support. The reforms that interveners think will be best for resolving the fundamental issues driving civil conflict are often painful for local political and military elites to implement and thus will be opposed. For example, the United States viewed land reform in El Salvador as essential to increasing popular support for the regime, but landed oligarchs backed by the military obviously opposed such reform.[14] Interveners and proxies also often disagree about when to seek peace negotiations and what counts as an acceptable peace settlement.[15]

Finally, proxies and interveners can differ on the conduct of war: how the war is fought

[12]Luttwak, *Coup d'etat: A practical handbook*.

[13]Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*.

[14]T David Mason. "Land reform and the breakdown of clientelist politics in El Salvador". In: *Comparative Political Studies* 18.4 (1986), pp. 487–516.

[15]Cunningham, "Veto players and civil war duration"; Cunningham, "Blocking resolution: How external states can prolong civil wars".

and the appropriate amount of restraint. Interveners will sometimes push the proxy to fight harder,[16] but in other cases, they will push the proxy to show more restraint. Proxies have a lot at stake in the war, and will often choose to fight it using brutal repression of the population.[17] The intervener will sometimes try to induce the proxy to show restraint by refraining from indiscriminately bombing civilians, executing captured prisoners, or engaging in torture. Interveners facing competition from other inteveners may prefer restraint from the proxy instead of escalation of the war.[18]

In measuring preference alignment, I coded one variable for preference alignment at the start of the intervention and one variable for alignment at the end of the intervention. The aim for the first variable was to assess the baseline level of preferences of each party. I took care to differentiate what the intervener sought to achieve from the proxy (its ideal point in the model) rather than the actual outcome of negotiations between the intervener and proxy, which is the product of compromise on preferences (eg. x^* in the model). In coding this variable, I privileged historical sources that discussed the intervener's objectives and motivations in supporting the proxy.

The second empirical challenge in coding this variable was the tendency of historical sources to discuss only the areas of significant disagreement or agreement between the intervener and proxy. In scoring the scale, then, I had to account for the likely high number of missing values in the scale component. To address this problem, I coded the preference alignment variable as Low, Medium, or High based on the extent of disagreement present, with 0 as the high score and -10 as the maximum low score. A High preference alignment implied a score of 0 points to -1 point (minimal disagreement present); Medium implied a score of -2 points to -4 points (some disagreements are present and up to one category of the scale is completely misaligned); and Low implied more than -4 points (many disagreements are present across multiple categories).

[16]Berman and Lake, *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*.

[17]Hazelton, "The "hearts and minds" fallacy: Violence, coercion, and success in counterinsurgency warfare".

[18]Anderson, "Competitive Intervention, Protracted Conflict, and the Global Prevalence of Civil War".

For the observations where the preference alignment variable for the start of the intervention is fully coded, 57 percent are High, 31 percent are Medium, and only 11 percent are Low.[19] This fits with the implication of the formal model that interveners will tend to support proxies whose preferences are highly aligned with their own, supporting proxies with low alignment only under extenuating circumstances. Furthermore, analysis of the change in preference alignment over the course of the intervention shows that out of the 60 observations without missing values, preference alignment stayed the same or improved around 60 percent of the time and declined in the other 40 percent of observations.

My data on preference alignment is useful for learning about the primary tensions between intervener and proxy in cases of intervention with military advisors. But, as described previously, I was able to code preference alignment only for conflicts with intervention by military advisors – only 42 out of the 207 total intrastate conflicts between 1946-2010 – due to funding and time constraints. Therefore, I use an off-the-shelf measure for preference alignment in my cross-national regression analysis. I measure preference alignment with a variable *disaffinity score*, coded using data from Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten (2017).[20] *Disaffinity score* measures the absolute value of the distance between the ideal points of the intervener and the government of the country involved in a civil war, estimated from UN General Assembly voting records, with higher scores indicating more disagreement. Does the Bailey et. al *disaffinity score* actually measure the same thing as my *preference alignment* measure? If the two variables measure agreement between intervener and proxy in a similar way, I would expect the two variables to be positively correlated. In other words, when the *disaffinity score* shows more disagreement between intervener and proxy, my *preference alignment* measure should also show more disagreement.

To check if the two variables are positively correlated, I first partition my data to observations of intervener support for a government proxy and then conduct a Pearson's correlation

[19]For 22 observations, some or all of the preference alignment variables are missing due since that part of the data collection project is still in progress.

[20]Michael A Bailey, Anton Strezhnev, and Erik Voeten. "Estimating dynamic state preferences from United Nations voting data". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61.2 (2017), pp. 430–456.

test. I find that the two variables are, in fact, negatively correlated ($p < 0.05$).[21] Similarly, a regression of *disaffinity score* on *preference alignment* shows that the two variables are negatively correlated ($p < 0.00$). These results indicate that the *disaffinity score* and the *preference alignment* variable measure somewhat different things. My *preference alignment* variable is coded for the set of issues that matter most directly to the conduct and resolution of the conflict, while the *disaffinity score* could be measuring the overall strength and depth of political agreement between two states. For example, I coded the *preference alignment* between the Soviet Union and the government of Afghanistan in 1978 at the start of intervention as low. Soviet military advisors observed that the military was ineffective and its brutal approach alienated the local population, while Afghan leaders threatened to make overtures to the Americans and opposed Soviet attempts to control them. During this period, however, the *disaffinity score* showed high alignment between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, perhaps because of their increasingly close (though contentious) relationship.

Disaffinity scores, then, are a less sensitive measure than what I intended to capture using preference alignment, since even allies that are politically close (in the context of the United Nations General Assembly) can disagree about specific issues related to the conflict. Conversely, interveners and proxies that have less in common in terms of their overall political goals sometimes might agree about the conflict itself – especially if interveners tend to ask more of their close friends and less of proxies with whom they have more transactional relationships. Though disaffinity scores are a blunt measure of preference alignment, I still use them as an independent variable in the cross-national regression analysis, following the convention in the literature in the absence of a better measure.

The second independent variable of interest is the military capacity of the proxy. Similar to preference alignment, I assessed the proxy's military capacity just before intervention, to establish a baseline level of military capacity. Military capacity was coded by assess-

[21] Recall that *disaffinity score* is a continuous numeric variable where a higher score indicates less agreement between two states. I recoded *preference alignment* as an ordinal numeric variable where are higher value indicates less alignment between the intervening state and a proxy that is a government.

ing the proxy' capabilities in three main areas: discipline, equipment, and human capital. Disciplined militaries have rank-and-file soldiers who follow commands, do not desert, and maintain their ground during combat. Well-equipped militaries have enough aid and arms to keep fighting and match their opponent's capabilities. Militaries with high human capital have capable leadership and knowledge of how to expertly develop and apply military strategy to good war plans. Militaries with high ability will be more likely to succeed at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Using a scoresheet (Appendix), I coded each proxy military into three categories: high, medium, and low military capacity. Below I describe the three ideal types of military capacity as well as provide examples of each type.

Militaries with high capacity have soldiers that are disciplined, well-trained, capably led, and have enough guns, ammunition, people, and other resources to survive in the field for operations. The military will tend to succeed in tactical engagements (eg. a single battle), and conduct operations (eg. series of battles oriented around an objective) that allow them to make progress at containing the military threat posed by their opponent – even if they sometimes lose battles or territory. As part of a military with high human capital, military leadership will also make good strategic decisions regarding how the war will be fought and won, as well as the force structure needed to achieve their strategic goals. For rebel groups, they will have high local support and experience fighting in past insurgencies, in the military, or have received training from experienced fighters.

The data I collected on military capacity show that less than 13 percent of proxy militaries had high capacity, which supports my conjecture that military advisors will be sent when the proxy's military capacity is low. The Colombian military was one such high quality military. The Colombian military was disciplined and easily held its ground against the much weaker Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The military was well equipped and had already been receiving US equipment at the start of the conflict. Colombia's military was sufficient in size to combat the guerrilla forces, greatly outnumbering them. The first operation against the FARC saw 16,000 Colombian soldiers carry out an operation to clear

48 FARC guerrillas. Human capital, strategy, and defense institutions remained strong throughout the years of conflict, though corruption and the use of conscripts remained issues for the Colombian military. However, the professionalized enlisted component and highly trained officer corps mitigated these issues when it came to operational effectiveness.

Militaries of medium capacity are noticeably better than those of low quality. Soldiers receive some training and while conscripts may be used, they are supplemented by professional soldiers, especially at the officer level. The military is lacking equipment and human capital, but has enough to succeed at the tactical level and the capacity to easily absorb aid. Soldiers typically do not desert and are capable of holding ground in engagements with the enemy. Furthermore, leadership tends to make good operational plans and may even have some insights at the strategic level, although reform of leadership and force structure are still needed to improve military capability.

In the data I collected, around 32 percent of proxy militaries had medium capacity. An example of a military with medium quality was the Iraqi military when war began with Kurdish separatists after years of Soviet assistance to the government of Iraq. The Iraqi military was disciplined and its troops fought with tenacity. The military was also well-equipped thanks to Soviet assistance during peacetime. But the military had a poorly developed officer corp, with junior officers who were unable to take initiative and senior officers who struggled to design good strategy and compel their subordinates to execute it.[22]

Militaries with low capacity have poorly trained trained soldiers, often conscripts, who are poorly equipped, lacking basic necessities such as ammunition, uniforms, or arms and transportation required to match their opponent's tactics or capabilities. Furthermore, their deficiencies in areas such as supply and logistics make it difficult for weak militaries to easily absorb new aid. At the tactical level, soldiers will struggle to win battles, and may even run when under fire. Leadership is corrupt and incompetent, with chains of command inefficient and slow. The military may be overly top heavy, with few non-commissioned officers or

[22]Kenneth M Pollack. *Arabs at war: military effectiveness, 1948-1991*. U of Nebraska Press, 2004.

junior officers. Leadership may be overly concerned about promotion rather than effectively fighting the war and show a lack of operational and strategic leadership. Numerous strategic errors will be made by leadership. For rebel groups, they will have low local support and no experience fighting in past insurgencies, in the military, and have received little training from experienced fighters.

In the data I collected, around 54 percent of proxy militaries had low capacity. An example of a military with low capacity was the military of Afghanistan when civil war began in 1978. The Afghan army lacked morale, discipline, and the will to fight.[23] The Afghan army did not take care of Soviet military equipment and simply continued to request additional arms. The army was conscript-based and defections were high. It did not have the skill to develop a strategy that could counter the guerrilla warfare of its opponents.[24]

Table 4.1: Summary of key variables

Author's Variable	Author's Coding	Sources	Replacement variable used in regression
Military advisors	Binary variable equal to 1 if advisors present in country during conflict	Regan (2002); UCDP External Support Dataset (2009); Author coding from conflict histories	
Military capacity	High, Medium, or Low coded from scale ranging from 0 to +7	Author coding from conflict histories	Rebel strength (NSA Dataset, Cunningham, Gleditsch, & Salehyan 2009)
Preference alignment	High, Medium, or Low coded from scale ranging from 0 to -10	Author coding from conflict histories	Disaffinity score (Bailey et. al 2017)

[23]Oliker, *Building Afghanistan's security forces in wartime.*

[24]Minton F Goldman. "Soviet Military Intervention in Afghanistan: Roots & Causes". In: *Polity* 16.3 (1984), pp. 384–403.

For cross-national regression analysis, I measure the military capacity of the proxy using the Non-State Actor (NSA) Data from Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan.[25] The NSA dataset includes information about the non-state actors in civil wars from the UCDP/PRIO dataset (1946-2010) as well as external support for either the rebels or the government in the civil war. The *rebel strength* variable codes for the strength of rebel groups relative to the government forces, ranging from "Much Weaker" to "Much Stronger" than the government. Since the NSA dataset measures rebel strength relative to the government forces, the *rebel strength* variable is a good approximation of my *military capacity* variable, which measures the proxy's military capacity. When the proxy is a government, high *rebel strength* indicates that the proxy's *military capacity* will be low, and vice versa. And for proxies that are rebel groups, the NSA *rebel strength* variable directly measures their military capacity.

The data I created and the substitutes for cross-national regression analysis are summarized in Table 1. Full details on the variables I collected and the codebook are in the Appendix. The next step is to analyze these data to see if they support the hypotheses outlined at the beginning of the chapter. I do this in the next section.

4.2 Modeling advisor deployment onset

Recall I proposed three main hypotheses earlier in the chapter. I restate the first two here:

Hypothesis 1. ***Capacity-building:*** *Interveners will be more likely to send military advisors when the proxy's military capacity is low.*

Hypothesis 2. ***Monitoring and Influencing:*** *Interveners will be more likely to send military advisors when their preference alignment with the proxy is low.*

To test these hypotheses, I need to analyze my data in light of other interventions

[25] David E Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan. "It takes two: A dyadic analysis of civil war duration and outcome". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53.4 (2009), pp. 570–597.

and cases of non-intervention in conflict. The unit of analysis is the conflict-intervener-year.[26] I identify conflict-years between 1946 and 2010 using the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/PRIO Armed Conflict dataset version 20.1[27] Next, using the NSA Data, I code an indicator variable for the presence of other forms of intervention (*aid, arms, or troops*) as well as whether the support was given to the government or the rebels.

My independent variables are preference alignment and military capacity. As described previously, I use the NSA Data to code for the military strength of rebel groups. I generate a numeric variable, *total rebel strength*, that is equal to the strength of the strongest rebel group fighting the government in a conflict-year, since some governments face multiple rebel groups in a given year of a conflict. *Total rebel strength* ranges from 1 (rebels are much weaker) to 5 (rebels are much stronger than the government). As described above, I use the Bailey et. al (2017) UN voting data to construct a measure of the absolute distance between the ideal points of the intervener and the government of the country where the conflict is taking place. This *disaffinity score* variable takes a value of 0 if the two states are perfectly aligned; the max score is 5.50003. On average, the ideal points of the intervener and the local government are about 2.04867 points away from each other.

For the dependent variable, I code an indicator variable, *advisors*, which takes a value of 1 for the first year that advisors are sent to a conflict. If the intervener withdraws advisors and then deploys them again to the same conflict, the *advisors* variable would take a value of 1, but if advisors remain in country for multiple consecutive years, only the first observation is coded as 1. This measures the decision of interveners to deploy advisors to a conflict rather than the duration of intervention with advisors and is my preferred operationalization of the

[26]The conflict-year is the appropriate level of analysis since many conflicts and even conflict episodes last for years and the conflict dyads are constantly changing. Analysis with event data based on the conflict or conflict episode would not capture significant temporal change in the conflict and its accompanying interventions. Analysis at the level of the conflict-dyad would similarly not capture temporal dynamics as well as would introduce dependency between observations of intervention since interveners often support all of the rebel groups or the government against all of the rebels.

[27]Nils Petter Gleditsch et al. "Armed conflict 1946-2001: A new dataset". In: *Journal of peace research* 39.5 (2002), pp. 615–637; Therese Pettersson and Magnus Öberg. "Organized violence, 1989–2019". In: *Journal of peace research* 57.4 (2020), pp. 597–613.

dependent variable. My research question is focused on the initial decision to send advisors to a conflict, rather than asking why interveners keep advisors in a conflict for a long or short time. Therefore, it makes sense to drop conflict-years after the initiation of intervention with advisors. In the next section, I model the duration of advisor deployments directly.

In my model, I include standard control variables from the literature on third party intervention. All of the control variables I include have been shown by the literature to affect the propensity of third parties to intervene in a conflict. Relative to other forms of intervention, sending advisors represents a serious and potentially costly commitment to a conflict. Therefore, we might expect other variables that are known to increase (or decrease) the likelihood of intervention to affect the likelihood of intervention with advisors. First, I code for whether another intervener has intervened in the conflict. This indicator variable takes a value of 1 if another great power intervenes in the conflict-year. Existing literature on great power intervention finds that states generally prefer to intervene if another great power does, as well.[28] Second, I consider whether the government party to the civil war has an alliance with the great power considering intervention, based on an indicator variable coded from the Correlates of War Formal Alliances data (v4.1).[29] Alliance data is most commonly used as a proxy for the intervener's security interests in a conflict.[30] As another measure of a different kind of connection between states besides a formal alliance, I include an indicator variable from the GeoDist database for whether the country ever had a colonial relationship with the intervening state.[31] I also include a measure of the distance between the intervening state and the country where the conflict is located, also from the GeoDist database, as a proxy variable for a great power's sphere of influence.

Finally, I include standard controls like the natural log of GDP per capita from World

[28]Michael Gibilisco and Sergio Montero. "Do Major-Power Interventions Encourage the Onset of Civil Conflict? A Structural Analysis". In: *Forthcoming, Journal of Politics* (2020); Findley and Teo, "Rethinking third-party interventions into civil wars: An actor-centric approach".

[29]Douglas M Gibler. *International military alliances, 1648-2008*. CQ Press, 2008.

[30]Jacob D Kathman. "Civil war diffusion and regional motivations for intervention". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55.6 (2011), pp. 847–876.

[31]Thierry Mayer and Soledad Zignago. "Notes on CEPII's distances measures: The GeoDist database". In: (2011).

Bank data and the regime type of the government side in the civil war, based on an indicator variable of whether the country scores a 7 or higher on the Polity institutionalized democracy scale.[32] We would expect insurgent groups to be supported less often when the government they are fighting is a democracy,[33] while governments that are democracies could be more likely to get support from liberal great powers, like the United States, when they face insurgencies. Finally, I control for characteristics of the conflict itself: whether the conflict has reached 1,000 battle deaths at the time of intervention, as measured by the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset.

I conduct multivariate regression analysis using my binary dependent variable of advisors deployment onset. I subset the data to observations where some form of intervention has occurred to evaluate, when conditional on intervening, does a great power send advisors? In my analysis, I need to account for unit-level unobserved heterogeneity, because failure to account for differences between conflicts and/or interveners could lead to omitted variable bias. Two common approaches to addressing this problem are unit-level fixed effects and random effects. In this case, a fixed effects model is my preferred approach, since it allows for the possibility that the individual-specific effect can be correlated with the explanatory variables. I would expect a relationship between country (and conflict) specific characteristics and the variables included in the model.

As a baseline specification, I first use ordinary least squares (OLS) with no unit-level heterogeneity corrections and no time dynamics in Model 1. In Model 2, I use OLS with unit-level (conflict-intervener) fixed effects (using the *plm* package in R). In Model 3, I use logistic regression without unit-level heterogeneity corrections (using the *glm* package in R). In the final model, I estimate a logistic regression model by maximizing the conditional likelihood using a stratified Cox model with each conflict-intervener unit assigned to its own stratum (using the *clogit* package in R). This addresses the unit-level heterogeneity. To

[32]Monty G Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr. "Polity5 project dataset users' manual, v. 2020". In: *Polity5 Project* (2020), pp. 1–85.

[33]Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining external support for insurgent groups".

improve the speed of computation, I include only the first five explanatory variables since these are the most important variables in the model.

My results are shown in Table 2. As hypothesized, a higher disaffinity score between the intervener and proxy, that is, interests that are further apart, is associated with a higher probability that advisors will be sent to the conflict. However, *disaffinity score* it is not statistically significant except in the logistic regression model. This is not surprising given the imprecision of the measure, as discussed earlier. Total rebel strength is highly statistically significant and is associated with an increase in the probability that the intervener will send military advisors instead of other forms of support to a proxy. This is true even when the data sample contains intervention both to support the government and the rebels. It seems interveners prefer to send advisors to support militarily weak governments but prefer to support stronger rebel groups. This fits with findings in the literature that interveners tend to support rebels of moderate strength.[34]

Out of the control variables, the presence of another intervener in the conflict is negatively associated with intervention with advisors, indicating that intervention with advisors may not be subject to the same positive complementarities between interveners as other forms of intervention. Out of the other controls, GDP per capita is consistently negatively correlated with advisor deployment onset, suggesting that interveners tend to send advisors to poorer countries. Furthermore, intervention with military advisors is consistently more likely when the government is a current or former colony. In the appendix, I also run the first three models in Table 2 using a different dependent variable. This dependent variable takes a value of 1 if advisors are sent to support the government in a conflict, and is coded as 0 otherwise. This is to account for the directionality of proxy support. The results align with those in Table 2, largely because the majority of proxies in the data are governments.

I now address selection issues by including cases of non-intervention in the model, since it is reasonable to expect that conflicts interveners enter are different from those where

[34]Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining external support for insurgent groups".

Table 4.2: Advisor deployment onset

Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Estimation	*OLS*	*OLS*	*Logistic*	*Logistic*
Unit-specific effects	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*	*Fixed*
Affinity score	0.007	0.005	0.407**	0.036
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.206)	(0.108)
Total rebel strength	0.075***	0.073***	0.757**	0.788***
	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.306)	(0.210)
Other intervener	-0.096***	-0.080**	-1.215***	-0.533*
	(0.027)	(0.035)	(0.450)	(0.317)
Democracy	0.029	0.025	0.446	-0.503
	(0.027)	(0.032)	(0.484)	(0.358)
Alliance	-0.069**	-0.033	-0.263	-0.128
	(0.029)	(0.038)	(0.513)	(0.355)
Distance	-0.00001**	0.00000	-0.0001**	
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.0001)	
Colony	0.071**	0.169***	0.961**	
	(0.029)	(0.038)	(0.418)	
GDP	-0.038***	-0.061***	-1.199***	
	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.265)	
Conflict intensity	-0.013	0.043	-0.169	
	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.428)	
Constant	0.274***		3.691**	
	(0.097)		(1.715)	
Observations	589	589	589	787
R^2	0.093	0.118		0.023
Adjusted R^2	0.079	-0.045		
Log Likelihood			-122.152	-202.656
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4.3: Multinomial logistic regression of advisor deployment onset

	Dependent variable:	
	Aid, Arms or Troops	Advisors
	(1)	(2)
Affinity score	0.391^{***}	0.531^{***}
	(0.098)	(0.014)
Total rebel strength	0.492^{***}	0.773^{***}
	(0.008)	(0.018)
Other intervener	-0.170^{***}	-0.490^{***}
	(0.007)	(0.002)
Democracy	-0.458^{***}	-0.843^{***}
	(0.004)	(0.001)
Alliance	1.531^{***}	2.402^{***}
	(0.009)	(0.003)
Distance	0.00004	0.00001
	(0.00003)	(0.00005)
Colony	1.174^{***}	1.639^{***}
	(0.007)	(0.004)
GDP	0.041	-0.593^{***}
	(0.038)	(0.048)
Constant	-6.472^{***}	-4.171^{***}
	(0.004)	(0.007)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,240.419	1,240.419
Baseline:	*Non-intervention (Category 0)*	
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

they stay out. Multinomial logistic regression allows me to include a dependent variable with three outcomes for intervening states: non-intervention; intervention with aid, arms, and troops; or intervention with military advisors. Using multinomial logistic regression, I can explicitly compare cases when a great power intervenes with advisors against cases where they choose other forms of intervention or stay out of the conflict altogether. The sample for this model includes all conflict-intervener-years in the full dataset. I transform the dependent variable into a categorical variable where the intervener can stay out of the conflict altogether, intervene with aid, arms, or troops, or intervene with advisors. The baseline (reference) category for this analysis is non-intervention. I use the same controls as in the OLS models described above.

The results (as shown in Table 3) largely align with the results of the OLS models. When interveners disagree more with the government in a civil war they are more likely to send advisors than they are to send aid, arms, or troops, supporting my first hypothesis. When rebel strength is higher, interveners are more likely to send advisors than just aid or arms, supporting my second hypothesis. As in the previous models, states are more likely to intervene with advisors when the government was a former colony, but unlike the previous models, states are more likely to intervene with advisors when they have an alliance with the government of the country where the civil war is taking place. This suggests that interveners may view advisors as a means to show political support and commitment to their proxies. In interviews, US advisors to Ukraine and Kurdish forces in Syria told me they viewed advisors as a show of US support for the proxy, even though the United States does not have a formal alliance with either the Syrian Democratic Forces or the government of Ukraine.[35] Intervening states could be even more inclined to send advisors when they have a formal alliance commitment as a means of signaling ongoing commitment to the alliance. States use a variety of costly strategies to signal their commitment to alliances, such as signaling

[35]Interview with US military advisor to Ukrainian armed forces, Interviewee 4; Interview with US advisor to Syrian Democratic Forces, Interviewee 8.

external audiences to increase deterrence or building up their militaries at home.[36] Sending advisors during a civil war could be a way of signaling commitment to the ally's domestic audience as well as deterring other states from intervening.

In sum, I find strong support for Hypothesis 1, that advisors are sent to help proxies with low capacity. I also find some support for Hypothesis 2, that advisors are sent when the intervener's preference alignment with the proxy is low. Existing measures, however, do not precisely capture preference alignment, making it more difficult to test this hypothesis.

4.3 Modeling advisor deployment duration

In this section, I examine an additional question about intervention with advisors: what explains the duration of advisor deployments? My theory does not provide a prediction for the length of advisor deployment per se, since it is focused on the decision to send advisors to a conflict rather than the decision to keep them there. However, the theory provides some insight into this question since the formal model is an extensive-form game where the intervener can withdraw if the proxy distorts policy too much. The model predicts that interveners will stay in the conflict when preferences are more closely aligned with the proxy. However, an intervener will work with a proxy with whom it disagrees when the cost for withdrawing and losing the opportunity to influence the conflict is high. Interveners might be less willing to withdraw if another state has also intervened in the conflict, making the intervention competitive, or if they disagree with another state that also intervened on the same side of the conflict.[37] Similarly, they might be less willing to withdraw if they have an

[36] Matthew Fuhrmann and Todd S. Sechser. "Signaling Alliance Commitments: Hand-Tying and Sunk Costs in Extended Nuclear Deterrence". In: *American Journal of Political Science* 58.4 (2014). Publisher: Wiley Online Library, pp. 919–935; Michael C. Horowitz, Paul Poast, and Allan C. Stam. "Domestic signaling of commitment credibility: Military recruitment and alliance formation". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61.8 (2017). Publisher: SAGE Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA, pp. 1682–1710.

[37] Anderson, "Competitive Intervention, Protracted Conflict, and the Global Prevalence of Civil War"; Aysegul Aydin and Patrick M Regan. "Networks of third-party interveners and civil war duration". In: *European Journal of International Relations* 18.3 (2012), pp. 573–597.

alliance with the proxy, which increases the degree of commitment to the proxy.[38] Therefore, we would expect that intervention with advisors will have a longer duration when, all else being equal, the intervener and the proxy have more closely aligned preferences, when another great power has intervened, and when the intervener and proxy have a formal alliance.

The duration of intervention with advisors could also be driven by the dynamics of the conflict itself. The data I collected on intervention with military advisors showed that interveners tend to stay in the conflict once they have sent advisors, regardless of their satisfaction with the proxy. I coded how the intervener exited the conflict. *Exit* could occur due to a break in relations between the proxy and intervener; if the intervener believed intervention had served its natural course, the conflict was at or near an end, and consequently the intervener withdrew all or nearly all support; or if the UCDP conflict episode ended before the intervener withdrew support. Exit due to a break in relations while the conflict was still ongoing happened in less than 22 percent of cases. This implies that in the interventions when advisors are involved, interveners largely know what they are getting into when they support a proxy, similar to the perfect and complete information set up of the formal model. They rarely abandon the proxy solely based on differences in preferences, tending to stay the course until conditions with the conflict allow them to withdraw. Therefore, if interveners are committed once they intervene with military advisors, we would expect advisor deployments to closely mirror the duration of the conflict. The factors that influence conflict duration should also influence the duration of advisor deployments.

The literature identifies several explanations for the duration of conflict; I list the most prominent here. First, conflict is likely to last longer when rebels are weaker, so we would expect a shorter intervention with advisors when the rebels are stronger.[39] In addition, the

[38]For example, in contexts such as Afghanistan, intervention through a formal alliance like NATO keeps states involved through increasing the benefits of cooperation. One might expect similar dynamics when intervention takes place in the context of a formal alliance between the intervener and the proxy. Sarah Kreps. "Elite consensus as a determinant of alliance cohesion: why public opinion hardly matters for NATO-led operations in Afghanistan". In: *Foreign policy analysis* 6.3 (2010), pp. 191–215.

[39]Cunningham, Skrede Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "It takes two: A dyadic analysis of civil war duration and outcome"; Halvard Buhaug, Scott Gates, and Päivi Lujala. "Geography, rebel capability, and the duration of civil conflict". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53.4 (2009), pp. 544–569.

intensity of the conflict (that is, the amount of battlefield casualties in a given year) should be related to its duration, since many civil wars of especially long length tend to be irregular conflicts than are less intense than shorter conflicts, which tend to be conventional.[40] If advisors tend to be committed to a conflict for its duration once deployed, than I expect these factors that contribute to conflict duration to contribute to the duration of advisor deployments.

In light of the above discussion, I propose the following hypotheses about the duration of advisor deployments.

Hypothesis 3. *The intervener's relationship with the proxy will affect the duration of advisor deployments. Specifically,*

1. *Advisor deployments will be longer when preference alignment is higher between intervener and proxy.*
2. *Advisor deployments will be longer when the intervener and proxy have an alliance.*
3. *Advisor deployments will be longer when another great power has also intervened.*

Hypothesis 4. *Characteristics of the conflict will affect the duration of advisor deployments. Specifically,*

1. *Advisor deployments will be longer when rebel strength is weaker.*
2. *Advisor deployments will be longer when the conflict is less intense.*

To measure these independent variables, I use variables similar to those described in the previous analysis of advisor deployment onset. *Preference alignment* is once again coded using the *disaffinity score* variable from Bailey et al. *Alliance* is once again an indicator variable for whether the great power intervener and proxy had an alliance in a given year,

[40] Shivaji Mukherjee. "Why are the longest insurgencies low violence? Politician motivations, sons of the soil, and civil war duration". In: *Civil Wars* 16.2 (2014), pp. 172–207; Laia Balcells and Stathis N Kalyvas. "Does warfare matter? Severity, duration, and outcomes of civil wars". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58.8 (2014), pp. 1390–1418.

as coded from the Correlates of War data. I generate a new variable *Multiple great power interventions* that takes a value of 1 whenever more than one great power has intervened in the same conflict in a given year. I once again measure *total rebel strength* using the NSA Dataset from Cunningham et. al. I measure *conflict intensity* using an indicator variable for whether the conflict reaches 1,000 battle deaths in a given year, as coded by the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict database. As an additional control, I once again include an indicator for whether the government side in the civil war is a *democracy*, as coded from Polity 5 data.

To analyze how the independent variables affect the duration of advisor deployments, I use semi-parametric Cox proportional hazard models. The Cox model is a good alternative to parametric models since it does not require specific assumptions about the distributional form for the duration and because I am only interested in estimating how the relative hazard changes based on the covariates of the model. The Cox proportional hazard model also can accommodate the fact that some of the covariates in the model vary over time (time-dependent covariates).[41] To code for time-dependent covariates, I structure the data into periods with one observation per year of the conflict-intervener dyad. The dependent variable for my analysis is an indicator variable for whether the intervention with advisors ended in a particular year of the conflict. When interveners are absent from a conflict for more than one year and then re-enter the conflict with support, I code that as a new intervention. US intervention in Afghanistan, for instance, is coded as three separate interventions: one to support the mujahideen against the Soviet-backed Afghan government, one to support the Northern Alliance against the Taliban regime, and one right-censored intervention to support the new government of Afghanistan against the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State Khorasan. I subset the data to cases of intervention with advisors only, thereby examining why some interventions with advisors last longer than others.

The Cox model requires an assumption of proportional hazards, hence I conduct a test

[41] Terry Therneau, Cindy Crowson, and Elizabeth Atkinson. "Using time dependent covariates and time dependent coefficients in the cox model". In: *Red* 2.1 (2013).

for proportional hazards based on the scaled Schoenfeld residuals.[42] This test reveals strong evidence of non-proportional hazards for the *total rebel strength* variable. The standard way to proceed when the proportional hazard assumption is violated for a covariate is to include an interaction term between *total rebel strength* and *time*. Another alternative is to divide the data into *strata* based on the value of the covariate, which allows each stratum to have a different baseline hazard.[43] However, this second approach has the disadvantage of removing the stratifying covariates from the analysis. Repeating the test for the stratified model shows that the covariates and global model now meet the proportional-hazards assumption (more details in the appendix).

I present my results in Table 4.4. The first model shows that in cases where interveners have formal alliances with the government side in a civil war, interventions with advisors tend to last longer. This suggests that interveners may view advisors as a means to show political support and commitment to their proxies. Some of the cases where interveners deploy advisors for an extended period of conflict include US intervention in Guatemala from the 1960s to 1990s in the context of the Cold War and Soviet support to Iraq during conflict with Kurdish forces as part of a longstanding alliance relationship between the two countries. In these cases, advisors could extend and deepen in wartime the alliance commitments made between states in peacetime.[44]

None of the other variables in the first model have a statistically significant effect on the duration of interventions with advisors. Since the proportional hazards assumption is violated for *total rebel strength*, in the second model I include an interaction term for *total rebel strength* and *time*. The second model shows that unlike what I proposed in my second hypothesis, increased rebel strength is correlated with longer intervention duration. This

[42] I use the cox.zph() function in *R*, which calculates tests of the proportional-hazards assumption for each covariate.

[43] John Fox and Sanford Weisberg. "Cox proportional-hazards regression for survival data". In: *An R and S-PLUS companion to applied regression* 2002 (2002).

[44] Indeed, some of these advisor deployments actually began as part of peacetime alliance commitments between states. Some existing work has begun to examine the relationship between alliances and military advisors. See Adam E Casey. "The Durability of Client Regimes: Foreign Sponsorship and Military Loyalty, 1946–2010". In: *World Politics* 72.3 (2020), pp. 411–447

Table 4.4: Duration of advisor interventions

	Dependent variable:		
	End of advisor intervention		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Disaffinity score	0.103	0.114	0.053
	(0.160)	(0.162)	(0.165)
Total rebel strength	−0.049	−0.750*	
	(0.226)	(0.385)	
Multiple interveners	0.212	0.164	0.142
	(0.340)	(0.348)	(0.373)
Democracy	0.300	0.324	0.213
	(0.425)	(0.426)	(0.432)
Alliance	−1.481***	−1.422***	−1.252***
	(0.421)	(0.402)	(0.439)
Conflict intensity	−0.501	−0.625*	−0.730**
	(0.315)	(0.324)	(0.348)
Rebel strength × Time		0.133**	
		(0.056)	
Observations	383	383	383
R^2	0.050	0.066	0.036
Max. Possible R^2	0.567	0.567	0.445
Log Likelihood	−150.230	−147.113	−105.573
Wald Test	16.550** (df = 6)	21.950*** (df = 7)	12.270** (df = 5)
LR Test	19.714*** (df = 6)	25.947*** (df = 7)	14.061** (df = 5)
Score (Logrank) Test	18.113*** (df = 6)	24.942*** (df = 7)	12.968** (df = 5)
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

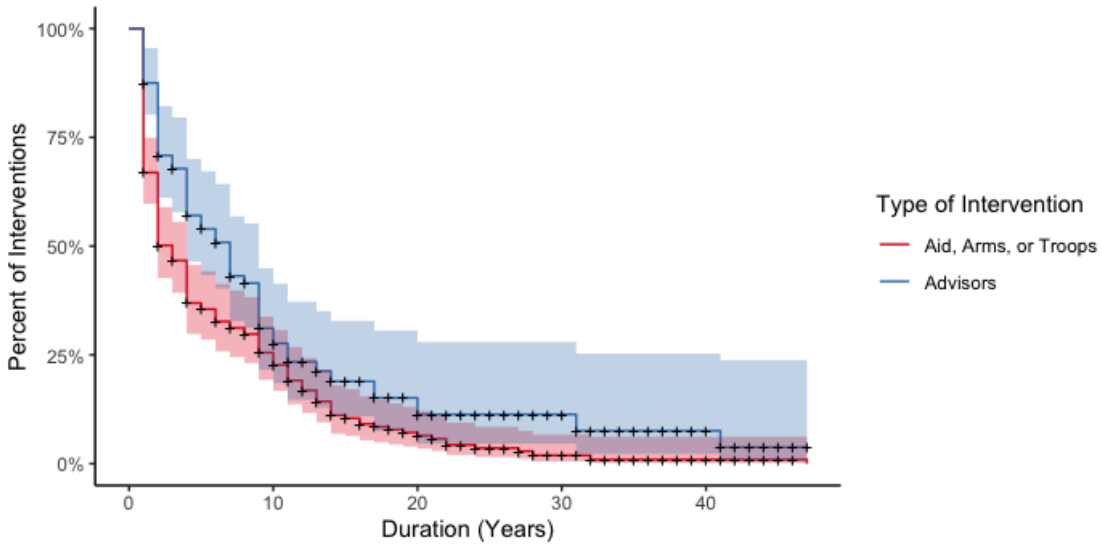


Figure 4.5: Duration of intervention

could be because the majority of interventions with advisors prop up weak governments (as my results on advisor deployment onset show). Advisors could artificially buoy weak governments and decrease their incentives to seek peace negotiations. However, there is a limit to the patience of interveners to keep supporting weak governments with advisors. The positive and significant coefficient for the interaction term shows that the effect of rebel strength on prolonging interventions decreases over time. That is, the initial effect of strong rebels prolongs the intervention, but over time, interveners are less willing to stay in the conflict simply as a result of the rebels being strong. Perhaps interveners give up on governments that are unable to defeat the rebels and push them to seek peace. In the second and third models, conflict intensity is negative and statistically significant, indicating that interveners stay longer in a conflict when fighting is more intense, contrary to my second hypothesis. These results together suggest that interveners send advisors to government that they very committing to supporting, although their support weakens over time.

This analysis raises the question of how the duration of intervention with advisors compares to intervention with aid, arms, or troops. Figure 7 shows that interventions with advisors tend to last longer than other kinds of interventions in civil wars. Why might this be the case? Conflict tends to last longer when the parties are more closely matched

and neither side can win a quick victory.[45] Conflicts with advisors could last longer if advisors support weak governments who otherwise would be willing to seek a peace settlement without the strong external backing that advisors provide.

I run the same Cox proportional-hazards model described earlier using the full data on cases of intervention. The dependent variable is the duration of intervention. I include as an independent variable the indicator variable, *advisors*, which indicates if the intervention included advisors. My results are shown in Table 5. Similar to the previous model, using a test for proportional hazards, I find strong evidence of non-proportional hazards for *advisors*, *total rebel strength*, and *alliance*, as well as the global model. To address this issue, I include interaction terms for advisors and time, as well as rebel strength and time and alliances and time. Repeating the test finds evidence of non-proportional hazards remain for the global model and the interaction terms. Therefore, I include a stratified Cox model in Model 3, which allows each stratum to have a different baseline hazard, and find that the global model now fits the proportional hazard assumption.

Both Models 1 and 2 show that the difference in intervention duration shown in Figure 7 is statistically significant; interventions with military advisors really do seem to last longer than those with other kinds of intervention. The models also provide some insight into what contributes to longer interventions as a whole. When interveners disagree more with the government side in a civil war, intervention tends to last longer, although the result is not statistically significant. When the full sample of interventions is included, my results align with the finding in the literature that rebel strength tends to decrease the overall length of conflict and therefore, if intervention duration is tied to conflict duration, the overall length of the intervention. The positive sign on the coefficient for the interaction of rebel strength and time indicates that the effect of rebel strength increases over time, increasing the hazard of intervention end for each additional year of the conflict. In this analysis, the presence of an alliance between the intervener and the government side in a civil war is not statistically

[45]Katherine Sawyer, Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and William Reed. "The role of external support in civil war termination". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61.6 (2017), pp. 1174–1202.

Table 4.5: Duration of intervention (aid, arms, troops baseline)

	Dependent variable:		
	End of intervention		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Advisors	-0.395^{**}	-0.429^{*}	
	(0.190)	(0.245)	
Affinity score	-0.093	-0.079	-0.104
	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.074)
Total rebel strength	0.319^{**}	0.110	
	(0.126)	(0.161)	
Multiple interveners	0.268	0.251	0.240
	(0.182)	(0.184)	(0.203)
Democracy	0.015	0.097	-0.082
	(0.196)	(0.198)	(0.219)
Alliance	-0.226	0.066	
	(0.217)	(0.273)	
Intensity level	-0.466^{**}	-0.548^{***}	-0.928^{***}
	(0.195)	(0.202)	(0.250)
Advisors × Time		0.015	
		(0.029)	
Rebel strength ×Time		0.057^{**}	
		(0.025)	
Alliance × Time		-0.054^{*}	
		(0.030)	
Observations	1,109	1,109	1,109
R^2	0.019	0.027	0.015
Max. Possible R^2	0.710	0.710	0.480
Log Likelihood	-676.061	-671.516	-354.620
Wald Test	20.360^{***} (df = 7)	27.660^{***} (df = 10)	15.220^{***} (df = 4)
LR Test	20.987^{***} (df = 7)	30.079^{***} (df = 10)	16.727^{***} (df = 4)
Score (Logrank) Test	20.487^{***} (df = 7)	29.280^{***} (df = 10)	15.661^{***} (df = 4)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

significant. Like the previous models, however, conflict intensity decreases the hazard that the intervention will end. It could be the case that interveners are reluctant to abandon proxies before their objectives are completed and are less likely to leave a conflict when it is still quite active.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed data on the deployment of advisors collected as part of an original quantitative dataset. I first show major trends in the deployment of advisors over time, from competitive interventions between great powers during the Cold War, to participation in the Global War on Terror by the United States since 9/11. I then use these data to evaluate my theory about when interveners deploy military advisors to support a proxy. I find consistent evidence across a variety of quantitative models that a potential proxy's military capacity is a key factor in the decision to deploy military advisors. Advisors are particularly likely to be deployed to a conflict when the proxy is a weak government. This evidence indicates that a primary task of military advisors is building the proxy's military capacity. When the proxy is a rebel group, however, interveners send advisors to those rebel groups with high military capacity, reflecting the general trend of interveners not to support the weakest rebel groups.[46] In addition, I find some evidence that interveners are more likely to send advisors to support a proxy when it disagrees more with the government, although the data on preference alignment is an inexact and imperfect measure. This suggests that advisors are useful for navigating the politics of conflict.

Furthermore, I examine the factors that contribute to the duration of intervention with advisors. I find that interventions with advisors tend to last longer when the intervener has an existing alliance with the government, supporting the hypothesis that interveners will be less likely to abandon proxies in the presence of a formal alliance and suggesting that advisors can signal commitment to a proxy. Survival analysis of advisor deployments further

[46]Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining external support for insurgent groups".

reveals that interventions with advisors tend to last longer than interventions with aid, arms, or troops – and this difference is statistically significant. Although I examine the effects of advisors on conflict duration in the next chapter, these results indicate that advisors could lengthen and exacerbate conflict when they are deployed, since longer conflicts and longer interventions tend to go together.

The analysis in this chapter raises questions about the effect of advisors on a variety of conflict outcomes. If interventions with advisors last longer than those without them, are conflicts with advisors present longer than those without them? Since advisors are often sent to weak governments to augment their military capacity, does this improve or worsen human welfare in conflict zones? Do advisors have any other effects on the militaries with which they work, such as their propensity to launch a coup during conflict? I tackle these questions about the effects of advisor deployments during conflict in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

The Effects of Advisors

> *...We're always going to flood areas of interest with Special Forces guys to try and get the little people to work on our behalf....So, there's a lot of questions about how do you use this tool? It's another arrow in your quiver, but be careful what you ask for. What are the unintended consequences?*
>
> — US military advisor to El Salvador, Interviewee 17

Sending military advisors has become the default way that great powers intervene in conflict in the contemporary era. The previous chapter demonstrated the global extent of intervention with military advisors, particularly in the past 20 years as the United States has increasingly used military advisors to prop up weak governments against an array of non-state actors. It provided evidence in support of the theory that interveners send military advisors because they think they will be useful to build military capacity and can prevent the proxy from drifting too far from the intervener's goals. But do military advisors actually work?

Although the focus of my theory is on why states send advisors rather than their effects, in this chapter I address the effects of advisors in three main areas: conflict duration, human rights, and civil-military relations during conflict. I choose to focus on these outcomes because of the obvious implications for human welfare. If advisors are sent to build military

capacity and further the intervener's goals with a wide range of unsavory actors, they have an opportunity to directly impact the issues of human rights and military involvement in politics by virtue of their up-close-and-personal role with local militaries. It is important to know whether this external involvement through training and advising increases human welfare or detracts from it. I also choose this focus because comparatively more work has focused on the capacity-building effects of advisors, and when they will be most effective at this task.[1] But the politics of security force assistance – who controls the military and to what end it is used – ends up being an important factor in both long term military effectiveness and a local military's relationship with society and civilian government.[2]

The conventional wisdom about training and advising during conflict, or in weak states, is that it has negative effects, worsening the human rights environment and increasing the military's involvement in politics – or at best has no effect. The majority of scholarly work in this area examines US military training. A large body of work on US involvement in Latin America outlines the many ways in which US involvement exacerbated and, in some cases, initiated campaigns of political violence and state repression.[3] For the United States, the Global War on Terror seems to have provoked a pattern similar to the Cold War practice of working with unsavory allies.[4] Current news headlines are also replete with examples of human rights abuses committed by US-trained militaries, such as Uganda's military, indicating that the effect of military training is not enough to reform a military.[5] Uganda is a major US security partner in Africa who has helped the United States with a

[1]Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States*; Biddle, Macdonald, and Baker, "Small footprint, small payoff".

[2]Jahara Matisek and William Reno. "Getting American security force assistance right: Political context matters". In: *Joint Force Quarterly* 92 (2019), pp. 65–73; Emily Knowles and Jahara Matisek. "Western Security Force Assistance in Weak States". In: *The RUSI Journal* 164.3 (Apr. 16, 2019), pp. 10–21. ISSN: 0307-1847. DOI: 10.1080/03071847.2019.1643258.

[3]Cecilia Menjívar and Néstor Rodriguez. *When states kill: Latin America, the US, and technologies of terror*. University of Texas Press, 2009.

[4]Jack Donnelly. "International human rights: Unintended consequences of the war on terrorism". In: *The Wars on Terrorism and Iraq*. Routledge, 2004. ISBN: 978-0-203-42104-8.

[5]Emily Knowles and Jahara Matisek. "Is Human Rights Training Working with Foreign Militaries? No One Knows and That's O.K.". In: *War on the Rocks* (May 12, 2020). URL: https://warontherocks.com/2020/05/is-human-rights-training-working-with-foreign-militaries-no-one-knows-and-thats-o-k/.

variety of counterterrorism goals, but its security forces engage in targeted repression against the political opposition, torture, and extrajudicial killings.[6] Others argue that US training and advising has similarly negative effects on civil military relations, empowering recipient militaries and increasing their involvement in politics.[7] Interveners could also themselves organize coups in recipient countries.[8]

Other work, however, supports the idea that training and advising could, under the right conditions, improve human rights and civil-military relations. Security assistance in the long-term can improve civil-military relations and the military's respect for human rights by socializing them into new norms, but this effect seems to depend on how security assistance is dispensed, as quick increases in capacity lead to worse outcomes.[9] And earlier findings that US military training is associated with an increased risk of coups may only be true for a particular subset of US training programs that brings students from poorer countries to study in the United States.[10]

As the above discussion shows, the literature tends to focus on US security force assistance. There is comparatively little work on security force assistance in comparative

[6]Ross and Dalton, "A Roadmap for Better Choices from Security Partners"; *Uganda | Country Page | World*. Human Rights Watch. 2021. URL: https://www.hrw.org/africa/uganda# (visited on 06/08/2021).

[7]John S. Fitch. *The Political Consequences of US Military Assistance to Latin America.* Section: Technical Reports. ARMY WAR COLL STRATEGIC STUDIES INST CARLISLE BARRACKS PA, Oct. 15, 1977. URL: https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA047590 (visited on 06/08/2021); Jesse Dillon Savage and Jonathan D. Caverley. "When human capital threatens the Capitol: Foreign aid in the form of military training and coups". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 54.4 (2017). Publisher: Sage Publications Sage UK: London, England, pp. 542–557.

[8]Lindsey A. O'Rourke. "The Strategic Logic of Covert Regime Change: US-Backed Regime Change Campaigns during the Cold War". In: *Security Studies* 29.1 (Jan. 1, 2020). Publisher: Routledge _eprint: https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2020.1693620, pp. 92–127. ISSN: 0963-6412. DOI: 10.1080/09636412.2020.1693620. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2020.1693620 (visited on 06/01/2020).

[9]Renanah Miles Joyce. "Exporting Might and Right: Great Power Security Assistance and Developing Militaries". PhD thesis. Columbia University, 2020. DOI: 10.7916/d8-10yz-ef66. URL: https://doi.org/10.7916/d8-10yz-ef66 (visited on 06/08/2021); Carol Atkinson. "Constructivist Implications of Material Power: Military Engagement and the Socialization of States, 1972–2000". In: *International Studies Quarterly* 50.3 (Sept. 1, 2006), pp. 509–537. ISSN: 0020-8833. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2478.2006.00412.x. URL: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2006.00412.x (visited on 03/15/2021).

[10]Théodore McLauchlin and Lee Joseph Marshall Seymour. "How IMET your mother : revisiting foreign military training, human capital, and coup risk". In: *American Political Science Association's Annual Meeting & Exhibition*. American Political Science Association's Annual Meeting & Exhibition. Accepted: 2020-09-21T19:07:30Z Issue: 116. 2020. URL: https://papyrus.bib.umontreal.ca/xmlui/handle/1866/23902 (visited on 06/08/2021).

perspective, that is, the consequences of security force assistance when other great powers besides the United States provide it.[11] In addition, the literature focuses on a particular kind of security force assistance that occurs either during peacetime, or in the unique context of capacity-building during counterinsurgency or counterterrorism, such as recent US interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and others. I add to existing literature by studying training and advising cross-nationally across different providers during conflict. Training and advising in the country where conflict is taking place deserves to be its own object of study, since having advisors present on the ground presents a unique opportunity both to inculcate norms and practices in local militaries and observe their implementation of such practices through monitoring. The on-the-ground presence provided by military advisors during conflict thus maximizes the involvement of great powers in the affairs of weaker militaries at the same time as these militaries will be tempted to abuse human rights or seize control of the government.[12] Are interveners enabling repression and coups with military advisors or are they improving an already bad situation? Or do advisors have no effect at all?

I find that conflicts with advisors last longer and governments supported by military advisors commit more human rights abuses. Advisors, however, seem to decrease the probability that the regimes they support will face a successful coup or coup attempt. Weak governments, then, seem to be the main beneficiaries of intervention with advisors.

In the remainder of this chapter, I first analyze the quantitative data I collected on the

[11] Jesse Dillon Savage. "Foreign Military Training and Coups d'État". In: *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 2021.

[12] Human rights and conflict are intimately connected. Human rights abuses can spur conflict. During conflict, both state and non-state actors frequently commit human rights abuses at high levels. See Oskar NT Thoms and James Ron. "Do Human Rights Violations Cause Internal Conflict?" In: *Human Rights Quarterly* 29 (2007), pp. 674–705; Emilie M. Hafner-Burton and Jacob N. Shapiro. "Tortured Relations: Human Rights Abuses and Counterterrorism Cooperation". In: *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43.3 (2010), pp. 415–419. ISSN: 1049-0965. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25699343 (visited on 06/08/2021); Yonatan Lupu. "Explaining Human Rights Abuses: Comparing Contemporary Factors and Historical Factors". In: *Virginia Journal of International Law* 56 (2016), p. 481. URL: https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/vajint56&id=491&div=&collection=. Recent scholarship has also studied the connection between civil wars and coups, as around 25 percent of coups take place during civil wars. See Curtis Bell and Jun Koga Sudduth. "The causes and outcomes of coup during civil war". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61.7 (2017), pp. 1432–1455.

roles of military advisors, and show how these roles place advisors in close proximity to local militaries. Advisors are doing far more than just increasing capacity through training local forces. Having outlined my case for why advisors should have some effect on conflict as a result of their expansive work with other militaries, I examine the effect of advisor deployments on the duration of conflict – a conflict outcome that scholars have often studied because of its connection to human welfare. Next, I examine the effect of advisors on human rights during conflict. I then examine the effect of advisors on the propensity of the military to launch a coup during civil war. The final section concludes.

5.1 Roles of advisors

As I have outlined at length in other chapters, we tend to think of advisors most simply as trainers. But this is just a small portion of what they do when placed on the ground with a local military. For the data I collected, I coded the roles military advisors play across five areas: Training, Monitoring, War planning, Technical Assistance, or Defense Institution Building. Advisors engaged in training provided tactical advice or trained the proxy's military units. Advisors engaged in monitoring participated in fact-finding missions or were embedded in proxy units. I looked for evidence of high-level delegations visiting the front, advisors sent to "assess aid needs," or advisors embedded with proxy units. Advisors engaged in war planning provided operational or strategic level advice about how, when, and whether the proxy's units should engage in combat with the enemy. They also advised the proxy about the overall conduct of war, such as the best way to fight and how to treat civilians. They worked with small independent combat units like battalions (operational level) or up to the Ministry of Defense (strategic level) attempting to influence the decisions of the military. Advisors engaged in technical assistance either filled technical roles for the supported party's military (such as Joint Tactical Air Controllers that provided targeting instructions to the intervener's air force) or provided training on new equipment provided

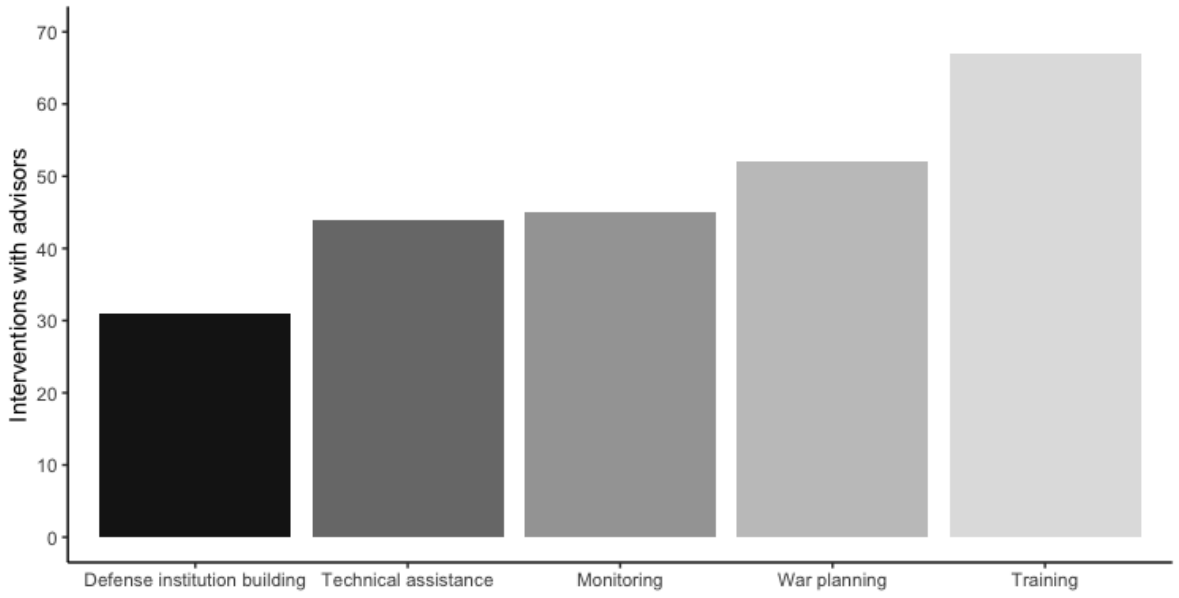


Figure 5.1: Roles of advisors

by the intervener. Advisors engaged in defense institution building provided advice at the strategic level (eg. top military leadership or Ministry of Defense) on recruitment, organization, military reform, or leadership of the military.

Figure 1 shows the frequency of these roles across the intervention events. Advisors are most often sent to train local militaries, followed by war planning. Monitoring is also quite common, though I often could not find evidence that advisors were directly monitoring the proxy. Interveners are reluctant to admit that advisors are monitoring – or essentially collecting intelligence on – their counterparts. Instead, I coded monitoring as a role of advisors any time they were embedded with local forces and therefore in a position to monitor.

What this figure shows is that advisors are frequently involved quite extensively in the affairs of a local military, working with top military officers or planners on defense institution building and on the ground with tactical units as part of technical assistance or monitoring. The idea of the military advisor as a lone officer conducting training far from the front lines is a Cold War fiction of governments eager to hide the extent of what their advisors were doing in foreign countries. In the next chapter, for instance, I will detail how the Reagan

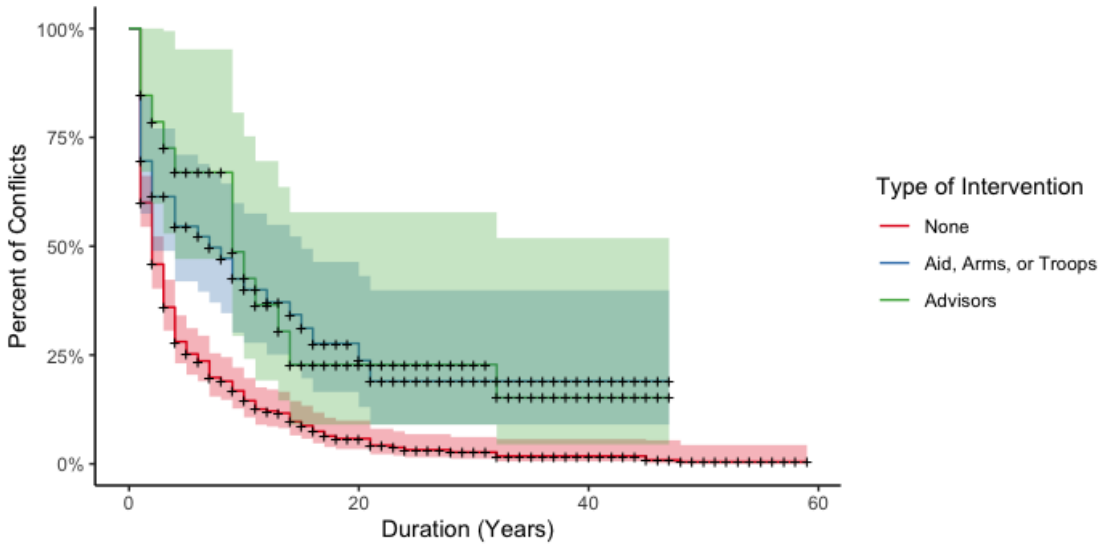


Figure 5.2: Types of intervention and conflict duration

administration instructed staff to refer to US advisors in El Salvador as trainers, even though their role was far more extensive.[13] Therefore, given the involvement of advisors in a local military, it is reasonable to expect them to have some effect on what that military does, as I theorized in earlier chapters.

5.2 Effect of advisors on conflict duration

In the previous chapter, I outlined how interventions with advisors tend to last longer than those without them. I suggested that this could be because advisors tend to strengthen weak governments who otherwise might have been forced to seek a peace agreement, while perhaps aid and arms do not have quite the same confidence-boosting effect on a government. This analysis raises an additional question: do interventions with advisors tend to increase the overall duration of the conflict itself? In Figure 2, I plot the duration of conflict based on whether the conflict had no intervention, intervention with aid, arms, or troops, or interven-

[13]On the other hand, the idea of military advisors as merely a cover for Special Forces or small numbers of combat troops is also a fiction of the Cold War. During US intervention in El Salvador, Soviet propaganda spread the idea that US advisors were leading Salvadoran forces into combat. That was also untrue. Advisors were often playing a role solidly in the middle, both integrated with the local military yet removed from directly participating in combat operations.

tion with advisors. Conflicts that experience intervention with advisors are conspicuously longer than the baseline of conflict without intervention.

Existing literature has examined at length the relationship between third party intervention and the duration of conflict, generally finding that intervention lengthens civil war.[14] The duration of civil wars matter because it is directly related to both the total number of deaths caused by the conflict (a longer conflict typically means more deaths) as well as the opportunities for ending the conflict (conflicts are hard to end when they last a long time, since that is usually the result of military stalemate).[15] As conflict drags on, civilians are exposed to airstrikes, retribution from the government and/or rebels, and worse health outcomes.[16]

The literature identifies several explanations for the duration of conflict. First, conflict is likely to last longer when rebels are weaker, so we would expect a shorter conflict when the rebels are stronger.[17] Second, structural factors should also contribute to the longevity of the conflict. Conflicts in countries with a lower GDP, for instance, should last longer.[18] In addition, the intensity of the conflict (that is, the amount of battlefield casualties in a given year) should be related to its duration, since many civil wars of especially long length tend to be irregular conflicts than are less intense than shorter conflicts, which tend to be conventional.[19]

[14]Regan, "Third-party interventions and the duration of intrastate conflicts"; Cunningham, "Blocking resolution: How external states can prolong civil wars".

[15]Christopher Linebarger and Andrew Enterline. "Third Party Intervention and the Duration and Outcomes of Civil Wars". In: *What Do We Know about Civil Wars?* Ed. by T. David Mason and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. Google-Books-ID: rSPjCwAAQBAJ. Rowman & Littlefield, May 5, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-4422-4226-5.

[16]Neta Crawford. "Afghanistan's Rising Civilian Death Toll Due to Airstrikes, 2017–2020". In: *Watson Institute Costs of War Project* (2020); Andreas Kotsadam and Gudrun Østby. "Armed conflict and maternal mortality: A micro-level analysis of sub-Saharan Africa, 1989–2013". In: *Social Science & Medicine* 239 (Oct. 1, 2019), p. 112526. ISSN: 0277-9536. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112526. URL: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953619305209 (visited on 06/09/2021).

[17]Cunningham, Skrede Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "It takes two: A dyadic analysis of civil war duration and outcome"; Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala, "Geography, rebel capability, and the duration of civil conflict".

[18]Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Måns Söderbom. "On the duration of civil war". In: *Journal of peace research* 41.3 (2004), pp. 253–273.

[19]Mukherjee, "Why are the longest insurgencies low violence? Politician motivations, sons of the soil, and civil war duration"; Balcells and Kalyvas, "Does warfare matter? Severity, duration, and outcomes of civil wars".

To examine whether the difference in conflict longevity between conflicts where advisors intervene and those where they do not (shown in Figure 2) is statistically significant, I model the hazard of a conflict ending with a Cox proportional hazards model. The Cox model is a good alternative to parametric models since it does not require specific assumptions about the distributional form for the duration and because I am only interested in estimating how the relative hazard changes based on the covariates of the model. The Cox proportional hazard model also can accommodate the fact that some of the covariates in the model vary over time (time-dependent covariates).[20] I identify conflict-years between 1946 and 2010 using the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/PRIO Armed Conflict dataset version 20.1[21] To code for time-dependent covariates, I structure the data into periods with one observation per year of the conflict. The dependent variable for my analysis is an indicator variable for whether the episode of conflict ended in a particular year. If a conflict is inactive for more than two years, I code that as an end of the conflict episode and restart the clock on conflict duration.[22]

My main independent variable is an indicator variable, *advisors*, for whether a conflict experienced an intervention with advisors in a given year. For the control variables, I first code an indicator variable for whether intervention with *aid, arms, or troops* took place in a conflict-year. I control for whether the government side in a civil war had an *alliance* with a great power, as coded from the Correlates of War Formal Alliances data (v4.1).[23] I generate a variable *Multiple great power interventions* that takes a value of 1 whenever more than one great power has intervened in the same conflict in a given year. I measure *total rebel strength* using the Non-State Actor (NSA) Data from Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan.[24] I measure *conflict intensity* using an indicator variable for whether the conflict

[20]Therneau, Crowson, and Atkinson, "Using time dependent covariates and time dependent coefficients in the cox model".

[21]Gleditsch et al., "Armed conflict 1946-2001: A new dataset"; Pettersson and Öberg, "Organized violence, 1989–2019".

[22]This is a conservative estimate of the dependent variable, since many conflicts last for decades, and the episodes are much shorter than the overall conflict.

[23]Gibler, *International military alliances, 1648-2008*.

[24]Cunningham, Skrede Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "It takes two: A dyadic analysis of civil war duration and

reaches 1,000 battle deaths in a given year, as coded by the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict database. Finally, I include standard controls like the natural log of *GDP per capita* from World Bank data and the *regime type* of the government side in the civil war, based on an indicator variable of whether the country scores a 7 or higher on the Polity institutionalized democracy scale.[25]

My results are shown in Table 1. The baseline model is Model 1. I find that advisors, like other forms of intervention, are strongly associated with a longer conflict duration. In line with the results from other studies, conflicts are shorter when the rebels are stronger. Conflict intensity, however, is associated with a longer conflict duration. GDP, which is commonly used as a proxy for state capacity, is associated with a shorter conflict duration.

I include two additional models because a test for proportional hazards based on the scaled Schoenfeld residuals[26] reveals strong evidence of non-proportional hazards for the *multiple great power interveners* variable. The standard way to proceed when the proportional hazard assumption is violated for a covariate is to include an interaction term between *multiple interveners* and *time*. In Model 2, I interact *multiple interveners* and *time*. The positive coefficient on the interaction term indicates that although multiple great power interventions increases conflict duration, this effect decreases over time. If the conflict goes on long enough, having multiple interveners present in the conflict actually increases the likelihood that the conflict will end. In Model 3, I adopt another approach to handling violations of the proportional hazard assumption by dividing the data into *strata* based on the value of the *multiple interveners* covariate, which allows each stratum to have a different baseline hazard.[27] However, this second approach has the disadvantage of removing the stratifying covariates from the analysis. Model 3 shows similar results to the other two models. Repeating the test for these additional models shows that the covariates and global model now

outcome".

[25]Marshall and Gurr, "Polity5 project dataset users' manual, v. 2020".

[26]I use the cox.zph() function in *R*, which calculates tests of the proportional-hazards assumption for each covariate.

[27]Fox and Weisberg, "Cox proportional-hazards regression for survival data".

Table 5.1: The effect of advisors on conflict duration

	Dependent variable:		
	Conflict end		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Advisors	-1.589^{***}	-1.538^{***}	-1.530^{***}
	(0.535)	(0.535)	(0.536)
Other intervention	-0.984^{***}	-0.964^{***}	-0.919^{***}
	(0.256)	(0.257)	(0.255)
Rebel strength	0.211^{**}	0.211^{**}	0.199^{**}
	(0.098)	(0.097)	(0.097)
Multiple interveners	-0.228	-1.238^{**}	
	(0.310)	(0.563)	
Democracy	-0.060	-0.050	-0.067
	(0.171)	(0.171)	(0.171)
Alliance	0.063	0.059	0.045
	(0.158)	(0.158)	(0.159)
Colony	-0.596^{*}	-0.571	-0.560
	(0.351)	(0.351)	(0.351)
GDP	0.116^{*}	0.112^{*}	0.106
	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.066)
Conflict intensity	-0.781^{***}	-0.772^{***}	-0.759^{***}
	(0.248)	(0.248)	(0.249)
Multiple interveners × Time		0.132^{***}	
		(0.050)	
Observations	1,265	1,265	1,265
R^2	0.040	0.046	0.033
Max. Possible R^2	0.733	0.733	0.714
Log Likelihood	-809.369	-805.855	-770.148
Wald Test	42.150^{***} (df = 9)	47.030^{***} (df = 10)	36.070^{***} (df = 8)
LR Test	52.256^{***} (df = 9)	59.285^{***} (df = 10)	42.767^{***} (df = 8)
Score (Logrank) Test	45.847^{***} (df = 9)	50.719^{***} (df = 10)	38.627^{***} (df = 8)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

meet the proportional-hazards assumption (see appendix for the results).

In sum, the models in Table 1 show consistent evidence that intervention with advisors is associated with a longer conflict duration, potentially increasing the burden of conflict on civilians. The effect of advisors on conflict, however, is similar to that of other forms of intervention, which have long been known to prolong conflict. In the following section, I examine whether advisors have an effect on another key metric of human welfare: the amount of repression during wartime.

5.3 Effect of advisors on human rights

While my dissertation is focused on when states send advisors, my model also provides implications for the effects of military advisors on the proxy's behavior during wartime. Since advisors can monitor the proxy, we should observe more compliance when advisors are present than when the intervener provides aid and arms alone. An issue area in which interveners often try to influence their proxies is respect for human rights. I found consistent evidence while coding these quantitative data that interveners care about human rights – if not for normative reasons, at least for purely instrumental reasons because human rights abuses committed by the proxy damage the intervener's international reputation.

For example, China supported the Khmer Rouge when it was a rebel group and continued its support once the Khmer Rouge took control of the government. Due to the international condemnation that the new Democratic Kampuchea regime was receiving for its human rights abuses, China was embarrassed due to its support and urged its proxy's leadership to "take steps to sanitize their woeful image."[28] Similarly, when debating intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, the Soviet Politburo viewed it as a top priority to get its local ally to change tactics and to stop torture, execution, and disrespecting religious communities.[29]

But the evidence also points in the other direction, as well. French advisors to govern-

[28] John D Ciorciari. "China and the Pol Pot regime". In: *Cold War History* 14.2 (2014), pp. 215–235.

[29] Opis 25, Reel 1.998, File 1 / Hoover22169 – 22193. Meeting of the Politburo of the CPSU CC, 17 March 1979

ment forces in Rwanda in the years preceding the 1994 genocide repeatedly shared their observations with the French government about the potential for genocide. When the genocide began, France could have used its military assets in place to pressure the Rwandan government or attempt to stop the developing genocide. Yet the French government did not take any substantial steps to try to prevent it from occurring.[30]

As discussed in the introduction, the academic literature on training and advising offers competing hypotheses of their effect on human rights. Similarly, the academic literature on repression during wartime provides competing hypotheses about whether interveners improve or worsen human rights when they intervene and whether different kinds of intervention affect human rights differently. Some argue that interveners can decrease human rights abuses under certain conditions. Interveners could improve respect for human rights for the side they support simply through enhancing its capabilities relative to its opponent, which reduces the need to commit human rights abuses.[31] But this effect depends on the kind of intervention: when states provide their proxies with aid and arms, they infuse the military with additional capability that may actually increase human rights abuses, while education tends to decrease abuses.[32] On the other hand, interveners can increase human rights abuses. They can insulate a rebel group from the need for popular support and incentivize it to commit more human rights abuses.[33]

Whether interveners increase or decrease human rights abuses, however, may really depends on the characteristics of the principals; democracies, for instance, care more about

[30]Rene Lemarchand. *Reconsidering France's role in the Rwandan genocide*. Africa is a Country. June 2018. URL: https://africasacountry.com/2018/06/reconsidering-frances-role-in-the-rwandan-genocide (visited on 05/31/2021).

[31]Reed M Wood, Jacob D Kathman, and Stephen E Gent. "Armed intervention and civilian victimization in intrastate conflicts". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 49.5 (Sept. 1, 2012). Publisher: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 647–660. ISSN: 0022-3433. DOI: 10.1177/0022343312449032. URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343312449032 (visited on 05/27/2021).

[32]Emma Cutrufello. "Arming Agents or Assailants? A Principal-Agent Approach to Examining US Military Aid and Repression". In: (2015). Accepted: 2015-06-25T05:42:17Z. DOI: 10.13016/M2V03J. URL: https://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/16458 (visited on 05/27/2021).

[33]Reed M. Wood. "Opportunities to kill or incentives for restraint? Rebel capabilities, the origins of support, and civilian victimization in civil war". In: *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 31.5 (Nov. 1, 2014). Publisher: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 461–480. ISSN: 0738-8942. DOI: 10.1177/0738894213510122. URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894213510122 (visited on 05/27/2021).

reducing human rights abuses than other interveners do.[34] And democracies like the United States often face stricter legal standards in terms of when and to whom they can provide training and advising. The United States, for example, is legally prohibited by the Leahy law from providing training and advising to foreign units or individuals with a documented history of human rights violations.[35] Some interveners, like Russia when supporting the Assad regime during the ongoing Syrian civil war, may care more about augmenting their proxies' capability by any means necessary than reducing civilian victimization.[36] Policies toward human rights can also vary over time within the same intervener; the United States at times gave the green light to proxies in Latin America to commit human rights abuses (especially early in the Cold War) and at other times pursued more principled human rights policy.[37]

From the existing literature and the empirical examples I provided earlier, it is not obvious what effect advisors would have on human rights abuses. My model provides the empirical implication that in cases when interveners are intent on improving the proxy's approach to human rights, advisors should improve compliance through monitoring the proxy relative to the baseline of intervener support without advisors. But in cases where interveners are not interested in influencing their proxies' approach to human rights, my theory does not provide a prediction. It is clear that advisors increase the capacity of the proxy military. As the literature argues, this capacity boost could be stabilizing and lead to a decrease in human rights abuses, or it could encourage or even empower further human rights abuses by the proxy. Therefore, I focus on the former mechanism of intervener intentions and control as a potential factor in the effect of advisors on human rights abuses. I provide the following

[34]Idean Salehyan, David Siroky, and Reed M. Wood. "External Rebel Sponsorship and Civilian Abuse: A Principal-Agent Analysis of Wartime Atrocities". In: *International Organization* 68.3 (2014). Publisher: Cambridge University Press, pp. 633–661. ISSN: 0020-8183, 1531-5088. DOI: 10.1017/S002081831400006X.

[35]Paterson, "Training surrogate forces in international humanitarian law: Lessons from Peru, Colombia, El Salvador, and Iraq".

[36]Keith A. Grant and Bernd Kaussler. "The battle of Aleppo: external patrons and the victimization of civilians in civil war". In: *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 31.1 (Jan. 2, 2020). Publisher: Routledge _eprint: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2020.1672959, pp. 1–33. ISSN: 0959-2318. DOI: 10.1080/09592318.2020.1672959. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2020.1672959 (visited on 05/27/2021).

[37]Kathryn Sikkink. *Mixed Signals: U.S. Human Rights Policy and Latin America*. Google-Books-ID: VFpuDwAAQBAJ. Cornell University Press, Sept. 5, 2018. 282 pp. ISBN: 978-1-5017-2990-4.

hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5. *When an intervener wants the proxy to commit fewer human rights abuses, the presence of military advisors will improve human rights.*

To test this hypothesis, I conduct multivariate regression analysis. I take as the dependent variable the estimated human rights score from Fariss (2014), who uses existing ordinal and event- based human rights indicators to estimate an annual human rights score for every country between 1946 and 2018.[38] Since the standard of accountability in human rights reporting has changed over time – and fluctuates based on events like increased US attention on a conflict that improve monitoring and reporting – Fariss uses an item response theory model to estimate the latent respect for human rights in a given country and year. The measure ranges from -3.77 to 5.14, with higher values indicating greater latent respect for human rights in a given country year. Human rights, in Fariss' definition, refer to the physical integrity of civilians from repression such as arrests, political imprisonment, beatings and torture, extrajudicial executions, mass killings, and disappearances. This measure is a good way to capture the kind of repression that governments tend to use against civilians during periods of conflict.[39] In my analysis, I take as my dependent variable the running average of the human rights scores for every country in years 2-3 after each year that military advisors are present in a country experiencing conflict. The data covers all civil wars between 1946 - 2010.

To measure the intentions of interveners to control human rights abuses, I adopt the approach used in Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood (2014)[40] to measure characteristics of the intervener that could influence whether it pushes the proxy to respect human rights. I include a variable *democratic intervener* that indicates whether the intervener is a democracy

[38]Christopher J Fariss. "Respect for human rights has improved over time: Modeling the changing standard of accountability". In: *American Political Science Review* (2014), pp. 297–318.

[39]Philip Hultquist. "Is collective repression an effective counterinsurgency technique? Unpacking the cyclical relationship between repression and civil conflict". In: *Conflict management and peace science* 34.5 (2017), pp. 507–525.

[40]Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood, "External Rebel Sponsorship and Civilian Abuse".

in a given conflict-year of intervention (that is, the intervener must score 7 or higher in the Polity 5 data). Like Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood, I also include a second model with an alternative measure of intervener intentions: the variable *human rights org* which measures the presence of human rights organizations in the intervener's country from 1991-2004.[41] I lag this variable by one year in case human rights in countries where interventions are ongoing prompts the opening of new human rights organization offices. Interveners with more human rights organizations present in their country should face more intense domestic lobbying pressure, increasing the salience of human rights when intervening.

My main independent variable is an indicator variable *advisors*. As control variables, I include the intensity of conflict, that is, whether the conflict reaches 1000 battle deaths in a given year (coded from UCDP/PRIO data). Existing research indicates that greater conflict intensity increases the opportunity for human rights abuses.[42] I include another indicator variable for the Cold War (1956-1991), since the literature suggests that international norms around the use of force and intervention evolved over the twentieth century.[43] I include a categorical variable for total rebel strength and control variables specific to the country where the conflict is taking place: an indicator variable for whether the government where the conflict is taking place is a democracy, and the GDP per capita of the country.

My results are shows in Table 2. The results offer mixed support for my hypotheses. First, it is clear that advisors are associated with a decrease in respect for human rights in the countries where they are sent, and this finding is robust to the inclusion of conflict-intervener fixed effects (Models 2 and 4). Like advisors, intervention with aid, arms, or troops seems to have a negative effect on human rights scores, although the coefficient is

[41] Amanda Murdie and Tavishi Bhasin. "Aiding and abetting: Human rights INGOs and domestic protest". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55.2 (2011), pp. 163–191.

[42] Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood, "External Rebel Sponsorship and Civilian Abuse"; Reed M Wood. "Rebel capability and strategic violence against civilians". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 47.5 (2010), pp. 601–614; Lisa Hultman. "Battle losses and rebel violence: Raising the costs for fighting". In: *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19.2 (2007), pp. 205–222.

[43] Martha Finnemore. "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention". In: *The Culture of National Security*. Ed. by Peter Katzenstein. Columbia University Press, 1996. URL: `http://cup.columbia.edu/book/the-culture-of-national-security/9780231104692` (visited on 06/10/2021); Martha Finnemore. *The purpose of intervention*. Cornell University Press, 2013.

Table 5.2: The effect of advisors on human rights

Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Unit-specific effects	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*
Advisors	−0.077*	−0.141***	−0.043	−0.131**	0.386***
	(0.044)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.066)	(0.089)
Govt proxy					0.010
					(0.070)
Advisors × Govt proxy					−0.613***
					(0.121)
Aid, arms, or troops	−0.001	−0.080*	−0.022	0.057	−0.003
	(0.032)	(0.048)	(0.037)	(0.050)	(0.064)
Conflict intensity	−0.373***	−0.158***	−0.228***	−0.082***	−0.375***
	(0.022)	(0.015)	(0.025)	(0.018)	(0.022)
Cold War	−0.125***	−0.244***	−0.109**	−0.069**	−0.124***
	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.046)	(0.033)	(0.018)
Democratic intervener	−0.038*	−0.114***	−0.032	−0.031	−0.039*
	(0.020)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.020)
Human rights organizations			0.0002	0.015***	
			(0.001)	(0.003)	
Multiple interveners	0.139***	−0.084**	−0.142***	−0.153***	0.122***
	(0.028)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.047)	(0.029)
Rebel strength	0.035**	−0.119***	−0.043**	−0.260***	0.032*
	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.016)
Democracy	0.151***	0.242***	−0.146***	0.214***	0.151***
	(0.021)	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.033)	(0.021)
GDP	0.152***	0.040***	0.149***	0.242***	0.152***
	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.018)	(0.008)
Constant	−2.470***		−2.187***		−2.463***
	(0.064)		(0.062)		(0.063)
Observations	4,589	4,589	2,368	2,368	4,589

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

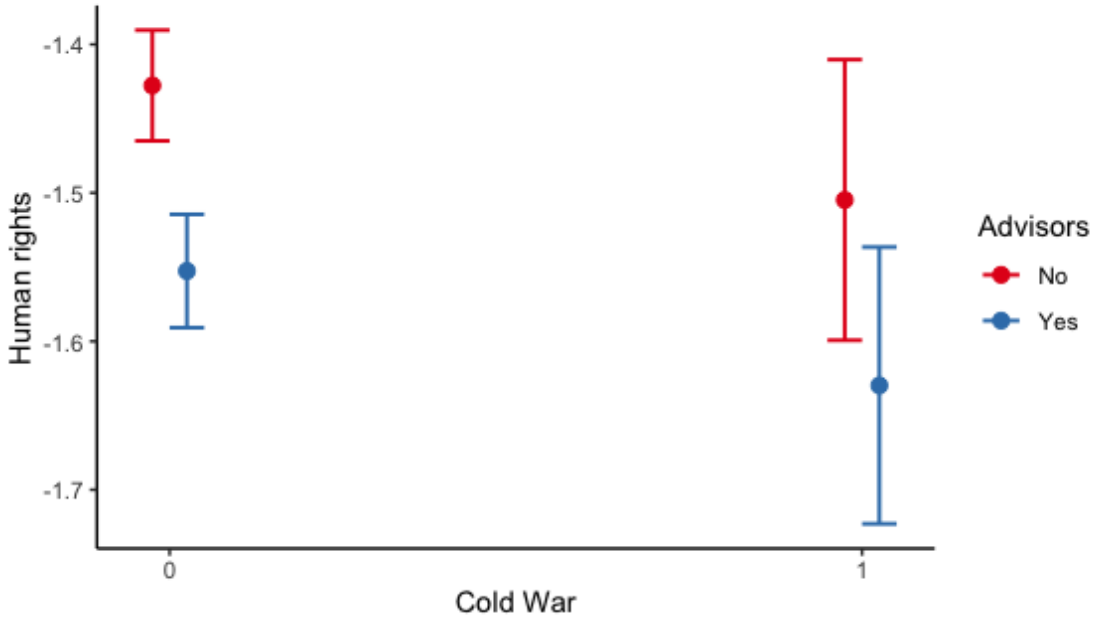


Figure 5.3: Predicted values of human rights scores, Cold War and advisors

statistically significant only in Model 2 with conflict-intervener fixed effects.[44] This finding points to the value of disaggregating intervener support to better understand how different kinds of support affect conflict in different ways. Second, interveners who are democracies are associated with a decrease in human rights scores in the 2-3 years after their intervention. This is unsurprising because the United States conducted the majority of the interventions in the dataset, intervening in 58 out of the 204 conflicts, and during the Cold War in particular the United States was more concerned with preventing Soviet expansion than in protecting human rights.[45] Indeed, my results show that human rights scores were lower during Cold War conflict than in the post-Cold War period.

Figure 3 plots predicted values of human rights scores from Model 1 based on whether advisors were present in the country. The figure shows that human rights scores are lower for all conflicts during the Cold War than they are after the Cold War. However, advisors

[44]In the appendix, I include results from a model where the data is subset to cases of intervention only. The general findings from this model are substantiated.

[45]See, for instance, work on US foreign policy toward Latin America during the Cold War: Sikkink, *Mixed Signals*

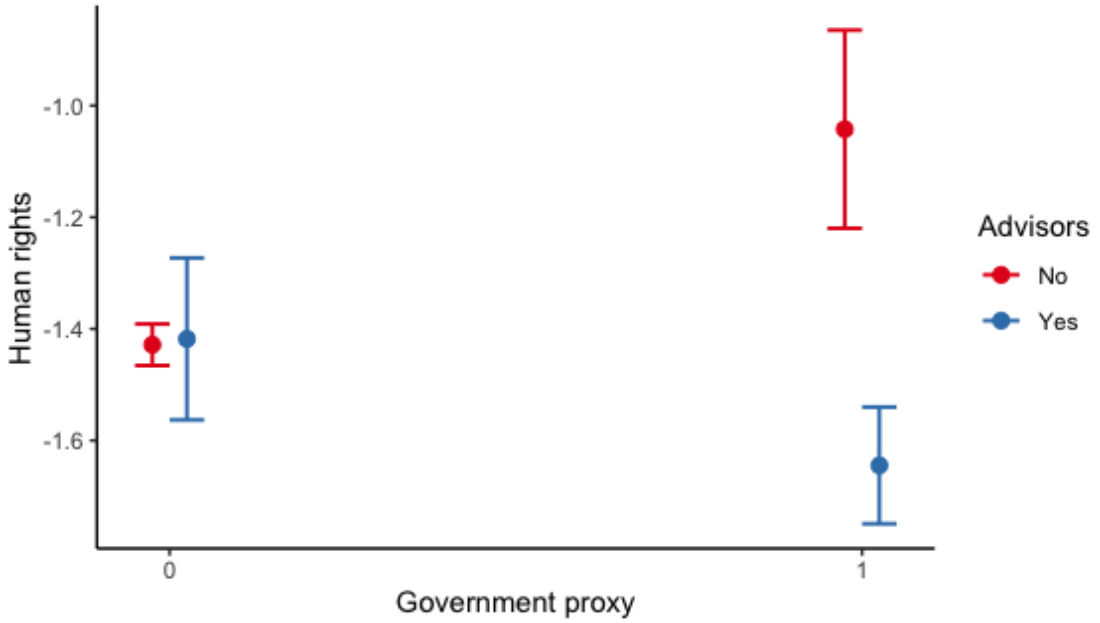


Figure 5.4: Predicted values of human rights scores, type of proxy and advisors

are uniformly associated with lower human rights scores both during and after the Cold War. Why might this be the case? Selection could be at play if advisors are sent to the worst conflicts with the most embattled governments or stronger insurgents who then have a decreased need for local support. A possible explanation for this finding could be found in the kind of proxy that tends to receive military advisors as support. As I found in the previous chapter, military advisors are typically sent to weak governments facing serious insurgencies. These are the kind of governments that are likely to use repression in the lead up to and immediately after the onset of a civil conflict.[46] Military advisors, and the political support they represent from an intervening state, could encourage these kind of governments to "dig in their heels," so to speak, in combating an insurgency by any means necessary. Or, advisors could be merely along for the ride, deploying to governments that are already using repression in the context of deteriorating political conditions. Model 5 provides some support to this "weak governments" hypothesis; the interaction of advisors

[46] Joseph K Young. "Repression, dissent, and the onset of civil war". In: *Political Research Quarterly* 66.3 (2013), pp. 516–532.

and a proxy that is a government is negative and statistically significant. Figure 4 further shows that the point estimate for the effect of advisors on human rights when the proxy is a rebel group is close to that of conflicts without military advisors (although the confidence intervals are large because of the small sample size). The boost in capacity that advisors provide to rebels does not seem to provoke additional repression from the government. But when advisors work with a government proxy, they are associated with a substantial drop in the human rights scores of the country that receives them. Though selection could explain my findings, the inclusion of unit fixed effects at the conflict-intervener level indicates that even when we address the possibility of omitted variables across the conflict-intervener dyads, advisors are still associated with a decrease in human rights scores, highlighting the need for further research on the relationship between advisors and human rights abuses during conflict.

My theory predicts that advisors will be effective at monitoring and influencing a local military in the area of human rights only when interveners make human rights a priority. At the strategic level, monitoring is only effective if it leads to rewards or punishments based on the information that the interveners gather through advisors. Monitoring without consequences only shows the proxy where the intervener's real priorities lie. My results do provide some support that the preferences of interveners matter for determining the effect of intervention on human rights. Although democratic interveners do not seem to uniformly value human rights in their deployments of advisors, I find that an increased presence of human rights organizations in the intervening country is associated with an increase in human rights scores (Models 3 and 4), adding support to the hypothesis that interveners tend to value human rights more when they are held accountable by their constituents.

As I detail in the next chapter, this is exactly what happened in El Salvador. Repression by a weak government prompted the onset of a civil war in 1979, which then led the United States to send in advisors to support the government. The government then responded to the developing civil war with more repression in a vicious cycle to repress the insurgency. This

caused an outcry in the United States and international community, which pressured the Reagan administration to make human rights a more important part of US policy toward El Salvador by placing conditions on aid. Advisors were placed in positions where they could actually work closely with Salvadoran troops and monitor them. Coupled with the government's reduced need for repression as its capacity increased, advisors were followed by a large decline in levels of repression. Since interveners will exhibit significant variation is when and why they care about reducing human rights violation during conflict, future research should more directly measure how the effect of advisors on human rights varies with the intentions of interveners.

The effects of advisors in influencing the local military should also depend to some extent on the intentions of the states that send them. Advisors will not be primed to influence their counterparts to show more respect for human rights unless interveners make that a priority. In addition, since influence is the result of interaction between individuals, it will likely be local, specific, and small in its effect size. Future work should investigate more precisely the causal effect of advisors on human rights at the local level. One way to estimate a causal effect of advisors would be to leverage in-country variation in where and when advisors are deployed to a country, along with incorporating measures of embeddedness as an independent variable in the analysis and a more disaggregated measure of human rights and repression at the local level for the dependent variable.

5.4 Effect of advisors on the probability of coups during civil war

Another area where I theorize we will see the influence of military advisors is in civil-military relations. Civil wars and coups are intimately connected. A government's exclusion of rivals can lay the groundwork for civil war, and civil war itself increases the potential

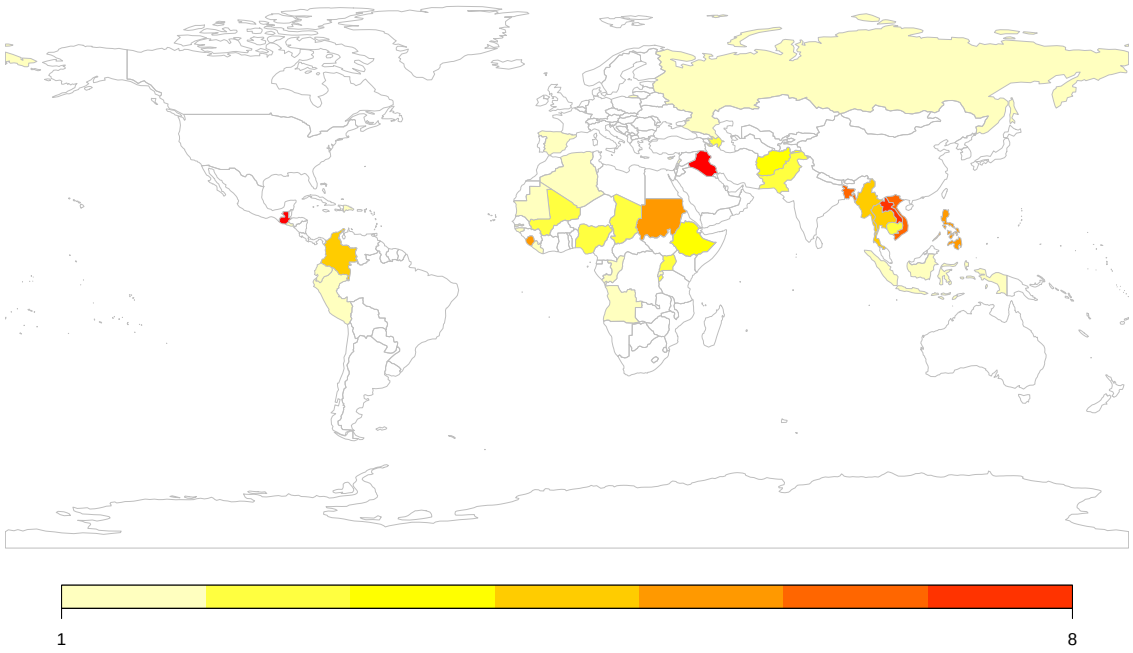


Figure 5.5: Coups and coup attempts during civil war, 1950-2000

for coups.[47] Around 25 percent of all coup attempts, and 24 percent of all successful coups, take place during civil wars. The literature posits that more coup attempts happen during civil wars because conflict exacerbates some of the conditions that prompt militaries to launch a coup.[48] When the government is facing particularly strong rebels or the capital is threatened, senior and junior officers in the military become increasingly dissatisfied with the status quo. They wish to insulate themselves from both the short-term risks of combat as well as potential consequences if the rebels negotiate a settlement or win the war.

Figure 5 above shows that coups during civil war are a world-wide phenomenon, with 41 countries having experienced either a coup attempt or a successful coup during civil war between 1950 and 2000. Three countries – Iraq, Laos, and Guatemala – have experienced

[47]Philip Roessler. *Ethnic politics and state power in Africa: The logic of the coup-civil war trap.* Cambridge University Press, 2016; Bell and Sudduth, "The causes and outcomes of coup during civil war".

[48]Bell and Sudduth, "The causes and outcomes of coup during civil war".

eight coup attempts and successful coups during civil war. Civil conflict seems to increase the likelihood that a state will experience a coup, and many proxies tend to be weak governments with troubled civil-military relations.[49]

How might interveners alter the cost-benefit calculus of conducting a coup for proxy militaries? The conventional wisdom is that great powers destabilize leaders they do not support and stabilize their favored ones[50] Sometimes, great powers will instigate coups to craft local governments in line with their priorities. Great powers can plot a coup to roll back regimes aligned with a rival, or initiate one preemptively to ensure a friendly regime remains friendly.[51] Sometimes, these great-power instigated regime changes take place in the context of civil war. The US-backed coup against the Diem regime in South Vietnam in 1963 is one example.[52] Intervention in a civil war could present an opportunity for local military officers to plot a coup with the support of a great power backer.

On the other hand, great powers often provide stability to their client regimes. The Soviet Union, in particular, helped insulate authoritarian client states from regime change, and military advisors and advisors to the clients' security forces were a key part of ensuring stability. Democratic great powers, such as the United States, however, did not increase the stability of their authoritarian client states.[53] Interveners might have similar preferences for stability when intervening in support of a particular regime. The existing literature implies that authoritarian interveners would be most likely to improve their clients' stability. However, democratic interveners could have similar preferences for stability, especially when supporting a regime that would become more authoritarian should a military coup succeed. Writing on American and Soviet approaches to clients and insurgents, William Odom (director of the National Security Agency under President Reagan) notes how American officials "realize that stability is the prerequisite for all the other things they seek" even though the

[49]Byman, "Friends like these: Counterinsurgency and the war on terrorism".

[50]Clayton L Thyne. "Supporter of stability or agent of agitation? The effect of US foreign policy on coups in Latin America, 1960—99". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 47.4 (2010), pp. 449–461.

[51]Lindsey A O'Rourke. *Covert regime change: America's secret cold war*. Cornell University Press, 2018.

[52]O'Rourke, *Covert regime change: America's secret cold war*.

[53]Casey, "The Durability of Client Regimes: Foreign Sponsorship and Military Loyalty, 1946–2010".

media and the public "are inclined to want democracy above all else."[54]

The case of US intervention in El Salvador illustrates how interveners could be indifferent to coups in authoritarian regimes while eager to prevent coups from overthrowing a more democratic regime. As I detail in the following chapter, the United States stood by as a military coup led by liberal officers replaced the authoritarian Salvadoran regime in an October 1979 coup. But thereafter, the United States intervened and worked to prevent coups or coup attempts led by reactionary officers from overthrowing the more democratic junta. Military advisors working in conjunction with US diplomats were an important part of that effort. As I argued in Chapter 3, advisors can directly influence their counterparts and socialize them to be more sympathetic to the norms of the intervener's military.

I propose that both democratic and authoritarian interveners will prefer regime stability when intervening on behalf of the government in a civil war. Military advisors, then, should decrease the likelihood of a coup relative to other forms of support for a government because they can directly influence the local military through interacting with local counterparts. In addition, advisors can provide information that allows interveners to work ahead of time to stop a coup attempt before it happens. As monitors, advisors serve as conduits of information about potential coup attempts. John Waghelstein, who served as a US advisor to the Dominican military in 1964, described getting advance knowledge of a coup from his foreign counterparts:

> One day during training, my team sergeant and I were invited to a luncheon at San Cristobal's Military Club. During the after-dinner speeches I was stunned to hear several retired ex-Trujillista [former president of the Dominican Republic, assassinated in 1961] officers complaining about the country's current political leadership. It was evident that this "San Cristobal Group," as it was called, was deeply involved in the coming attempts to overthrow the government. What made this particularly unsettling was the presence of many of the Dominican active-duty officers we were working with. The US embassy dismissed my incident report as the usual muttering of those left out at the feeding trough.

[54]William E Odom. *On Internal War: American and Soviet Approaches to Third World Clients and Insurgents*. Duke University Press, 1992.

> ....In my out-briefing to the embassy, I said the Dominican army was split, trouble was brewing, and the lid would blow when the coup was attempted. I said it would happen within the next 60 days. I was wrong – it took 90 days.[55]

Advisors, then, could decrease the probability of a coup or coup attempt both through their influence over a foreign military and through the monitoring they provide. I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6. *Military advisors sent to support the government will decrease the likelihood of coup and coup attempts in the host country.*

I test this hypothesis using multivariate regression analysis. For my dependent variable, I code an indicator variable for the occurrence of a successful coup or a coup attempt(s) in a given conflict-year using data from Jonathan Powell and Clayton Thyne on coups from 1950-2010.[56] I include in my dataset only years of active conflict as coded in UCDP data. Some countries experienced multiple coups or coup attempts in the same year, so my variable is equal to the sum of coups and/or coup attempts in a given year. I adopt this approach because it does not require me to make assumptions about whether a single successful coup should be given more weight than multiple coups or coup attempts. In Models 1 and 2, I code for the sum of all coups or coup attempts in a given conflict-year, which better captures the magnitude of the instability generated by multiple coups or coup attempts. In the appendix, I also include additional models with two different specifications of the dependent variable. In these models, I code a categorical variable that takes a value of 1 if a coup or coup attempt took place in a given year, and 2 if both a coup or coup attempt took place in a given conflict-year, as well as a binary indicator for whether any coup or coup attempt took place.

My key independent variable is the type of government support provided by the intervener in the given year of a conflict, which can be either advisors or other forms of intervention

[55] Waghelstein, "Ruminations of a wooly mammoth, or training and advising in counterinsurgency and elsewhere during the Cold War".

[56] Jonathan M Powell and Clayton L Thyne. "Global instances of coups from 1950 to 2010: A new dataset". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 48.2 (2011), pp. 249–259.

such as aid, arms, or troops. As controls, I include the total rebel strength (to capture the main competing explanation in the literature that coups during civil wars are driven by coup plotters' perceptions of rebel strength), the Polity score of the government where the conflict is taking place, whether the government is in an alliance with the intervener, whether the government is a former colony, the GDP per capita of the country and the intensity level of the conflict.

My results are shown in Table 3. As in the existing literature, rebel strength is a strong predictor of an increased probability of a coup or coup attempt in a given year of a conflict. Model 1 shows some support for my hypothesis that advisors are associated with fewer coups or coup attempts when they are sent to support the government during a year of active civil war. However, the results are not robust to additional estimations of the model. Model 2 with unit fixed effects shows that the coefficient on *advisors*, though negative, is not statistically significant. The results also depend to some extent on the coding of the dependent variable. Models 3-5 in the appendix with a binary dependent variable for any coups or coup attempts during a civil war shows that the effect of military advisors, though negative, is not statistically significant. Furthermore, the effect of advisors does not seem much different than that of other forms of intervention. Government support with aid, arms, or troops is associated with a lower probability of coups, though the result is not statistically significant. In the appendix, I subset the data to cases of intervention only and find that relative to other forms of intervention, advisors have no effect on the probability that coups or coup attempts with occur in a given year of a conflict.

These results suggest that the effect of advisors on government stability during war time may not be much different from the general small stabilizing effect of any type of intervener support for a government during a civil war. Any kind of aid for a government facing an insurgency could send a signal of support for a government that will decrease the probability of a coup, similar to the stabilizing effect of great power signals of support for a government

Table 5.3: The effect of advisors on coups/coup attempts

	Dependent variable:	
	Coups and coup attempts (sum)	
Estimation	*OLS*	*OLS*
Unit-specific effects	*None*	*Fixed*
	(1)	(2)
Govt support - Advisors	-0.055^{*}	-0.001
	(0.032)	(0.056)
Govt support - Aid, Arms, or Troops	-0.030	-0.033
	(0.025)	(0.059)
Rebel strength	0.195^{***}	0.235^{***}
	(0.010)	(0.017)
Democracy	-0.047^{***}	-0.012
	(0.013)	(0.025)
Alliance	0.007	-0.080^{**}
	(0.020)	(0.039)
Colony	-0.002	
	(0.019)	
GDP	-0.025^{***}	-0.114^{***}
	(0.005)	(0.010)
Conflict intensity	-0.052^{***}	
	(0.015)	
Constant	0.001	
	(0.041)	
Observations	6,251	6,251
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

during peacetime.[57] An alliance between the great power intervener and government side in a civil war should send a similar signal of support, which Model 2 shows is associated with fewer coups or coup attempts. Support from external backers to a regime under threat from an insurgency could calm officers who would otherwise be inclined to launch a coup in response to increased rebel success in a civil war. External support not only presents the prospect of additional assistance in combating an insurgency but also the potential for a future loss of assistance if the intervener does not support regime change. These factors together could work to make coups during civil war less likely when interveners are present.

5.5 Conclusion

In the epigraph to this chapter, one of my interlocutors asked us to consider the unintended consequences of deploying military advisors to work with local militaries during conflict. I examined the effects of military advisors in three areas – the duration of conflict, human rights, and coups during civil war – and found a mostly negative picture of the effects of advisors on human welfare during conflict.

Conflicts where advisors are deployed last longer, which exposes civilians to harm from the conflict as it drags on. Local governments commit more human rights abuses during conflict when they are supported by advisors. This is true even when the sending state is a democracy, although intervening states do seem more concerned about human rights abuses during conflict when they have a greater presence of human rights organizations in their home country. Furthermore, my results show that the relationship between military advisors and human rights abuses during conflict is not just a relic of the Cold War. Governments in the post-Cold War era still commit more human rights abuses when they are supported by advisors than when they are not. The relationship between military advisors and repression during conflict is worthy of further research to disentangle the causal effect of

[57] Thyne, "Supporter of stability or agent of agitation? The effect of US foreign policy on coups in Latin America, 1960—99".

advisors on human rights using exogenous variation in either the location or timing of advisor deployments at the subnational level. Future research should also differentiate between the effects of advisors at the local level in monitoring and influencing their counterparts, and at the strategic level as interveners use information gleaned by monitoring to hold local governments accountable (or neglect to do so).

I also found that advisor deployments are associated with greater regime stability during civil wars. However, my results suggest that the mechanism for this increased regime stability could be the general effect of intervener signals of support for a government, since alliances between the intervener and the government are also associated with a decline in coups and coup attempts. My results also highlight that intervener-instigated coups during intervention are not particularly common, and intervention need not be destabilizing.

Having outlined these potential negative effects of advisors on conflict outcomes, I now turn to a case study of US intervention in El Salvador. This case study helps to evaluate the theory's mechanisms as well as shows how advisors can perhaps have a positive effect on human rights and civil-military relations when interveners make these issues a priority.

Chapter 6

US Intervention in El Salvador (1979-89)

I am very worried by the news that the government of the United States is studying a form of abetting the arming of El Salvador by sending military teams and advisors to 'train three Salvadoran battalions in logistics, communications, and intelligence.' If this information from the newspapers is correct, the contribution of your government instead of promoting greater justice and peace in El Salvador will without doubt sharpen the injustice and repression against the organizations of the people which repeatedly have been struggling to gain respect for their most fundamental human rights.

— Archbishop Oscar Romero, Letter to President Jimmy Carter, February 19, 1980

The single most important thing we did was enforce human rights. This changed the whole character of the war.

— US advisor to El Salvador, Interviewee 12

The Salvadoran Civil War (1979-1992), fought between the center-right junta government of El Salvador and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), a Communist insurgency, was from the beginning marked by widespread human rights violations commit-

ted by the military and political right in El Salvador.[1] Scholars estimated that there were around 71,000 civilian forced disappearances and killings over the course of the conflict, or about 1–2 percent of El Salvador's prewar population. The vast majority of these crimes committed by the Salvadoran army, paramilitary security forces, and allied death squads, especially early in the conflict.[2] These civilian killing ranged from assassinations to massacres in which entire villages were wiped out. The Salvadoran security forces also committed other human rights abuses such as torture and execution of captured FMLN prisoners or detained suspects. On January 26, 1980, just two days before the Carter administration's National Security Council (NSC) met for the first time to consider greater US support for the government of El Salvador, the Washington Post ran a short story about 11 political killings in El Salvador.[3] Though repression decreased over time, government forces never stopped committing atrocities.[4] Notable instances of atrocities near the end of the war include the murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter during the 1989 guerilla offensive.[5]

As El Salvador moved closer to civil war in October 1979, a centrist junta took power, replacing an authoritarian regime that had few ties to the United States. While the new junta was a centrist one that replaced an authoritarian government, the majority of the military was still authoritarian and viewed repression as the best way to defeat the developing insurgency in El Salvador. The Carter administration debated whether to support the new government, and if so, how. The conflict from the beginning took on larger importance in the Cold War context of a newly installed Communist regime in Nicaragua. If the Carter administration stayed out of the conflict, it would risk the possibility of another Communist victory in

[1]The FMLN committed human rights abuses, too, but it is generally agreed in scholarly literature that groups affiliated with the government committed the vast majority.

[2]Amelia Hoover Green and Patrick Ball. "Civilian killings and disappearances during civil war in El Salvador (1980–1992)". In: *Demographic Research* 41 (2019), pp. 781–814.

[3]The Washington Post, *11 Political Slayings in El Salvador*.

[4]Green and Ball, "Civilian killings and disappearances during civil war in El Salvador (1980–1992)".

[5]Danny Hajek. "Remembering The 1989 Massacre Of Jesuits In El Salvador". In: *NPR.org* (Nov. 15, 2019). Library Catalog: www.npr.org. URL: https://www.npr.org/2019/11/15/779628824/remembering-the-1989-massacre-of-jesuits-in-el-salvador.

El Salvador. But if it intervened, US aid might empower the military to commit more repression (as Archbishop Romero stated in the epigraph quote only one month before he was assassinated by a death squad allied with members of the Salvadoran military). Carter opted for a middle option: support the Salvadoran government but place strong conditions on aid in the hope they would incentivize reform. Reagan was elected in November 1980 on a fiercely anti-Communist platform, vowing to remove conditions that prevented the United States from fully helping its anti-Communist allies. Quickly, however, Reagan realized that Carter had been right. Without conditions on aid, Congress wouldn't fund intervention in El Salvador and without reform, the Salvadoran government would likely fail.

While the civilians in the Salvadoran government were broadly sympathetic to US goals and priorities, getting the right (exemplified by the ARENA party's Roberto D'Aubuisson, a known death squad leader) and the Salvadoran military on board turned out to be extremely difficult. The military threatened repeatedly to launch a coup and fight without US help if pushed too hard. This was no idle threat given its history of direct military rule from 1931-1982 and broad political backing from powerful Salvadoran oligarchs.[6] But if a right-wing government were to take power in a coup, both the Carter and Reagan administrations agreed that continued US support to the Salvadoran government would be untenable. Reforming Salvadoran civil-military relations – or to put it more realistically, responding to the ever-present danger of a coup – thus became a top US priority.

The key goals of the Carter and Reagan administrations thus became remarkably similar: first and foremost, to prevent a leftist military or political victory in El Salvador; second, to compel the military to work with a coalition of centrists politicians and not overthrow the government; and third, to reduce the level of repression enough to maintain Congressional support for intervention, as well as increase Salvadoran support for the government. To maintain US Congressional support for military assistance to El Salvador, the Reagan administration relied on a toolbox of diplomatic pressure on the Salvadoran government and

[6]William D Stanley. "El Salvador: The Consolidation and Collapse of Military Domination". In: *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 2020.

occasional conditions on aid.

6.1 Case selection and overview

While others have written at length about aid conditionality and strategic incentives during US intervention in El Salvador,[7] I focus on a complimentary but no less important part of US efforts to protect and promote reform: sending military advisors to directly shape the Salvadoran military. In this chapter, I examine US intervention in the Salvadoran Civil War under the Carter and Reagan administrations (1979-1989). I demonstrate first that policymakers considered both the capacity-building and political roles of advisors when choosing an intervention, and second, advisors considered information gathering and influencing to be a key part of their responsibilities. Finally, although my theory is focused on the intentions of policymakers and advisors, I show suggestive evidence that military advisors may have actually had a positive impact on human rights and civil military relations through their information gathering and influencing.

The Salvadoran Civil War exhibits significant within-case variation in the key variables that my theory predicts should lead to deployment of military advisors. Table 1 shows the variation. In the first period, Carter declined to send military advisors for capacity-building since it would tie the US government publicly to the Salvadoran military. Advisors were sent on a rotational basis solely for monitoring to assess the quality of the Salvadoran military. In the second period, the capacity of the Salvadoran military sharply declined, as the FMLN launched its Final Offensive in January 1981. Carter quickly approved advisors for capacity-building. Upon taking office, Reagan continued Carter's policies. These initial deployments of advisors by Carter and Reagan offer mixed support for my theory. Advisors were not permitted to accompany their counterparts into combat, which would have been a more effective form of monitoring, because of the potential high cost if that information

[7] Ladwig III, "Influencing Clients in Counterinsurgency: US Involvement in El Salvador's Civil War, 1979–92"; Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*.

Table 6.1: Advisor deployment cases in the Salvadoran Civil War

US President	Dates	Preference Alignment	Capacity	Advisors	Details	Theory support
Carter	1979-1981	Low	Medium	Yes	Advisors sent for monitoring, not for capacity-building	Strong
Carter	1981	Low	Low	Yes	Advisors sent on short, rotational missions, not embedded	Mixed
Reagan	1981-1984	Low	Low	Yes	Advisors sent on short, rotational missions, not embedded	Mixed
Reagan	1984-1984	Low	Low	Yes	Advisors embedded in the brigades on a temporary basis	Strong
Reagan	1984-1989	Medium	Medium	Yes	Advisors embedded in the brigades on a permanent basis	Mixed

became public. But the limits on embedded advisors does not fit my theory. It is not clear why advisors were not embedded more thoroughly in the Salvadoran military, which would have likely been no more costly than the deployment of advisors in the first place. In 1984, advisors were finally embedded within the brigades to monitor the 1984 presidential election in El Salvador despite no change in the cost of monitoring. This deployment of advisors to the brigades offers strong support for my theory. After the 1984 election led to the successful installation of a pro-US and liberal candidate, Congress was more forgiving of the Reagan administration's intervention. The Salvadoran government also initiated major reforms. My theory predicts that embedded advisors would be permanent as the cost of monitoring declined. But, as I highlight later in the chapter, the decision to embed the advisors in the brigades was a bottom-up one made by the USMILGP in El Salvador, rather than a decision of US policymakers, which is outside the scope of my theory.

Once embedded in the brigades, advisors complemented US diplomatic efforts to restrain the Salvadoran military from committing human rights abuses and to stop the military from overturning the civilian government in a coup. I argue that by providing specific information gleaned through personal relationships on the ground, US military advisors made it easier for the United States to conduct the monitoring needed for a policy of aid conditionality. Furthermore, I shows that advisors attempted to influence their local counterparts to adopt a more humane approach to counterinsurgency as well as adopt a more democratic view of civil-military relations. I do not directly evaluate the effect of advisors on reducing repression, but evidence suggested they had some success as overall levels of repression fell around the time that advisors were embedded in the Salvadoran brigades. Advisors also provided specific, first-hand accounts of their successes (and failures) of influence, which suggest they had local and tenuous effects on levels of repression.

The case study of the Salvadoran Civil War also shows the challenges of advising when preference alignment between the proxy and intervener is low and when the cost of monitoring is high. The political constraints of intervention in El Salvador restricted the size

and scope of the advising mission, imposing serious limitations on advisors' ability to monitor and influence their counterparts. Monitoring and influencing were made more difficult by the delay in allowing advisors to work with operational units and by restrictions that prevented advisors from accompanying their counterparts into combat. Sometimes influence was completely out of the question when advisors faced hostile counterparts who refused to work with their advisors. And in other instances, advisors "went native," identifying too closely with their counterparts and losing their objectivity in what remained a dirty war.

6.2 Background

The Salvadoran civil war grew out of a decade of worsening tensions between a conservative regime backed by oligarchs and the military on the one side and poor, subsistence laborers with little outlet for political participation on the other.[8] In 1972, the military overturned an electoral victory by a coalition of leftist and centrist parties, including the centrist Christian Democratic Party (PDC), which the United States would later end up supporting during intervention in the civil war. The military's subverting of the legitimate democratic process made reform through armed revolution a more attractive option.[9] Rapidly rising commodity prices increased commercial agriculture, leading to displacement of the poor campesinos who did not own land and a huge decline in living standards for the rural poor.[10] It is this dissatisfaction that promoted insurgent mobilization into a front that at its peak had "perhaps 14,000 full-time combatants, 100,000 part-time fighters and hundreds of thousands of sympathizers."[11] The right in El Salvador organized in the form of paramilitary organizations called "death squads," some linked with the security forces and

[8]Hugh Byrne. *El Salvador's civil war : a study of revolution.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996. 241 pp.

[9]Byrne, *El Salvador's civil war : a study of revolution*, p. 8.

[10]Hal Brands. *Latin America's Cold War.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010. 385 pages, [16] pages of plates. ISBN: 978-0-674-05528-5; Elisabeth Jean Wood. *Insurgent collective action and civil war in El Salvador.* Cambridge studies in comparative politics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 308 pp., pp. 22–28.

[11]Brands, *Latin America's Cold War*, p. 10.

military while others were not. The death squads along with the National Guard and police organizations intensified repression and intimidation on anyone suspected of leftist sympathies.[12] It is this environment of repression that led US advisors to wonder when they first got to El Salvador in the 1980s which side the United States should actually be supporting.[13]

During this period of increasing violence in El Salvador, the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua in July 1979 alarmed US policymakers. The Carter administration, concerned about the potential for another crisis that would strengthen the Communist left in Latin America, began debating how to re-engage with countries like El Salvador to "reverse the perception of US vacillation or withdrawal."[14] Carter's central focus on human rights in foreign policy had led to detachment from many countries in the region; the Salvadoran regime at the time Carter took office rejected aid once it was linked to conditions on human rights.[15] In October 1979, a group of reform-minded young officers and civilians overthrew General Humberto Romero in a coup. The junta was genuinely reformist and willing to consider issues like land reform; some of the members included Communists.[16] Carter's initial response was positive. Though the administration didn't want to "give a bear hug" to a new regime without seeing how the internal politics would play out, it welcomed the change.[17] Two weeks later, Carter promised military and economic aid to the new government.[18]

[12]Todd R. Greentree. *Crossroads of intervention : insurgency and counterinsurgency lessons from Central America*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2008. 196 pp., p. 78.

[13]*Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 13. Feb. 6, 2020.

[14]Memo from Zbigniew Brzezinski for President Carter, June 13, 1979, Box 25, Folder "Meetings PRC111 6/11/79," Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Jimmy Carter Library.

[15]Byrne, *El Salvador's civil war : a study of revolution*, p. 47.

[16]Greentree, *Crossroads of intervention : insurgency and counterinsurgency lessons from Central America*, pp. 78–79.

[17]Press briefing, October 30, 1979, Box 20, Folder "El Salvador 10/15-31/79," Staff Material - North/South Files (NSA 24), Jimmy Carter Library.

[18]Russell Crandall. *The Salvador Option*. Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 133.

6.3 Why policymakers sent advisors

6.3.1 Advisors deploy after a decrease in Salvadoran military capacity (1979-81)

In this section, I outline the Carter administration's decision-making about how to support the government of El Salvador. The worsening security situation provided the imperative for US involvement. During the rapprochement period with El Salvador in the second half of 1979, the US Department of Defense gained access to additional information about the Salvadoran military that it had lacked during the period of limited contact. Military officers from the US embassy were sent out to inspect Salvadoran units in the field. It didn't look good.[19] Similarly, the CIA estimated the insurgents with foreign support had a "better-than-even chance" to seize power in El Salvador.[20] In addition to keeping the left from armed victory in El Salvador, the Carter administration's top priorities were to restrain the military from overthrowing the moderate junta in a coup and to keep the military and death squads from committing extrajudicial killings, execution of prisoners, and torture. Progress in this area was imperative for domestic and international political backing of US intervention. In addition, the Carter administration believed that looking the other way on human rights violations would ultimately be self-defeating since the impetus for the insurgency was the government's lack of reform—a "crisis of delegitimization," as NSC staffer Robert Pastor called it.[21]

The junta and reform-minded officers (the minority in the military) enacted reforms like purging 80 officers and 1,400 enlisted men accused of human rights abuses.[22] The right

[19]Telegram US Department of State, From San Salvador to Sec State, Cable 07097, December 11, 1979, "The military of El Salvador in its moment of crisis," El Salvador Collections, DNSA

[20]Memo from Zbigniew Brzezinski to President Carter, January 29, 1980, Box 32, Folder "Meetings, SCC 261 1/28/80," Zbigniew Brzezinski Material - Subject Files (NSA 7), Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[21]Memo from Robert A. Pastor for Zbigniew Brzezinski, July 19, 1979, Box 30, Folder "Meetings – SCC 183, 7/17/79," Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Jimmy Carter Library.

[22]Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*, p. 218.

began to strongly push back against these reforms and repression actually increased in the few months following the coup.[23] Consequently, by February 1980, Pastor noted that the right was the "most immediate threat to US interests" in El Salvador, and if the right seized power to prevent reform, a "bloodbath of unbelievable proportions" would ensue, ensuring a victory for the Communists.[24] The right was enabled by the perception that the United States would support El Salvador no matter what given the decline of US influence in Latin America.[25] Carter needed to deter the right from staging a coup since a rightist government would be difficult for the United States to support.[26] Not only would a coup undermine the efficacy of intervention by perpetuating the root causes of insurgency, but it would also make intervention hard to justify politically in the United States. To drive the point home that Carter would not stand for a coup, the US defense attaché and US MILGP commander accompanied State Department representatives to meet with Salvadoran Minister of Defense Garcia.[27]

To prevent a military coup and build the political legitimacy of the Salvadoran government, the Carter administration sought to broker a deal between the moderate Christian Democratic Party, or PDC, led by Napoleon Duarte, to rejoin the junta with the military.[28] Carter faced a dilemma: if he didn't provide support, the United States had no leverage over the Salvadoran government, but providing support without reform would send a signal of commitment, disincentivizing future reform. In this context of ongoing negotiations, the Carter administration was wary of sending in more substantial aid such as helicopters and military advisors, since it would represent a bigger commitment.[29]

The administration began deliberating in February 1980 about how to use to the Sal-

[23]Greentree, *Crossroads of intervention : insurgency and counterinsurgency lessons from Central America*, pp. 78–79.

[24]Memo from Robert A. Pastor for Zbigniew Brzezinski, February 26, 1980, Box 37, Folder "Serial Xs (2/1/80-4/15/80)," Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Jimmy Carter Library.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Minutes from Special Coordination Committee Meeting, January 28, 1980, Box 32, Folder "Meetings, SCC 261 1/28/80," Zbigniew Brzezinski Material - Subject Files (NSA 7), Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[27]Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*, pp. 225–226.

[28]Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*, pp. 221–225.

[29]Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: RAC Project: NLC-6-20-9-7-7.

vadoran military's desire for military advisors and US aid to fight the insurgency as a carrot to incentivize reform. The solution to the dilemma was to promise military advisors and helicopters as a reward for cooperation between the military and the PDC. Outlining the benefits of sending military advisors, a Carter administration official stated that the PDC saw US military advisors "as a way to increase their own influence (through us). Moreover, the 36-man team will train the army, which is more supportive of reforms and opposed to the repression, than the Treasury police or the security forces, and so the [military advisors] will help us to strengthen the hands of those who are more willing to curb the repression. . . .One of the purposes of sending them is to let the extreme right and left know we're there and to send a clear message to all kinds that we support reforms and oppose terrorism."[30]

As it was considering advisors, the Carter administration made clear that it expected advisors to build capacity, monitor, and influence their counterparts. By March 1980, the Department of Defense had briefed Pastor on the potential roles of military advisors, should Carter choose to send them. The briefing (after Pastor's edits) made clear that the administration envisioned three main roles for the military advisors: first, to demonstrate US support for the junta government that is "critical to: forestall any coups, carry out announced reforms," second, to build military capacity, and third, to teach "the military proportionate responses to various situations rather than the overuse of force which they tend to rely on." The advisors would assess what else was needed once they got on the ground.[31] Pastor wrote after the briefing that if the "DOD/JCS understand clearly that their mission is not just to help the Salvadoreans [sic] beat the Left, but also to curb the right and minimize the use of lethal force on their part" then "There is no question in my mind that the [military advisors] could be an effective instrument because our military has tremendous influence over the military in Central America. . . "[32]

[30]Memo from Robert Pastor to Zbigniew Brzezinski, March 13, 1980, "Mini-SCC on El Salvador," El Salvador Collections, DNSA.

[31]Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: RAC Project: NLC-24-21-2-12-7.

[32]Memo from Robert Pastor to Zbigniew Brzezinski, March 13, 1980, "SCC on El Salvador – March 13, 1980," El Salvador Collections, DNSA.

Even though the Carter administration recognized that military advisors were needed both to build capacity and curb the right, they were reluctant to send advisors because of potential domestic and international political backlash. The principals agreed the United States should not send advisors unilaterally; they would only send in military advisors if Venezuela followed suit.[33] When a Washington Post article on US aid to El Salvador revealed that Carter was considering sending in military advisors, the Venezuelan public was outraged. The Carter administration considered gradually sending in military advisors in small groups to reduce political pressure on Venezuela.[34]

While the Carter administration tried to settle on a means of intervention, the centrist government that the United States was trying to broker in El Salvador was slipping away, as the reactionary elements in the military and the right intensified their repression. Rather than forcing out the civilians in a coup, the Salvadoran right used repression to force leftists and centrists out of the government and replaced progressive military officers with rightist ones.[35] These actions intensified the violence in El Salvador into a bona fide civil war, much as Pastor had predicted. In this context, the US ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White, strongly opposed sending in advisors lest it tie the United States to the Salvadoran right. He threatened to resign as ambassador if the Carter administration went through with sending the advising teams.[36]

The DoD continued advocating for military training teams to be sent to El Salvador. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown argued that the visibility of advisors could be reduced if the teams were small enough and had instructions to avoid combat (similar to what the Reagan administration eventually adopted).[37] Though a few teams of advisors were sent

[33]Special Coordination Committee Meeting Minutes, January 28, 1980, Folder "Meetings – SCC 274, 2/15/80," Box 32, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection Subject File, Jimmy Carter Library.

[34]Special Coordination Committee Meeting Minutes, February 15, 1980, Folder "Meetings – SCC 274, 2/15/80," Box 32, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection Subject File, Jimmy Carter Library.

[35]William M. LeoGrande. *Our own backyard : the United States in Central America, 1977-1992.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. 773 pp., p. 47.

[36]LeoGrande, *Our own backyard : the United States in Central America, 1977-1992*, p. 45.

[37]Memo from Harold Brown for Zbigniew Brzezinski, [nd], Folder "Serial Xs (10/80-12/80)," Box 37, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection Subject File, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library

on a temporary basis to assess the situation on the ground, the Carter administration was still concerned about appearing too close to the Salvadoran government and not putting appropriate pressure on it to reform.[38] Carter gave the Salvadoran military a set of conditions for badly needed aid – 6 helicopters – and waited for the reforms.[39] Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, agreed that military advisors should not be sent before the reforms were enacted, or they would be a signal of support for the right.[40] By November, Carter even considered withdrawing the operational planning teams because rumors that US military advisors were in El Salvador were starting to circulate.[41]

The Carter administration noted some progress on the reforms, partly through the information gathering efforts of US advisors. For instance, American officers were present at briefings where Salvadoran officers ordered subordinates to capture soldiers alive, though taking prisoners was not common until 1983.[42] The State Department noted the need for monitoring to track the progress of the Carter administration's proposed military reforms in training, professionalism, and respect for human rights but emphasized the difficulty of monitoring. In general, it would be easier to track reforms and their implementation than specific levels of violence and the military's commission of atrocities.[43] As I will discuss later in this chapter, it was in collecting local information throughout a decentralized military where US military advisors could be most useful at monitoring.

On December 2, 1980, four US churchwomen were murdered in El Salvador by troops from the Salvadoran National Guard.[44] In response, the Carter administration suspended all aid to El Salvador, despite the worsening security situation and growing evidence that the

[38]Crandall, *The Salvador Option*, p. 134.

[39]Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*, pp. 226–229.

[40]Memo from Zbigniew Brzezinski to the Secretary of Defense, [nd], Folder "Serial Xs (10/80-12/80)," Box 37, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection Subject File, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[41]Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: RAC Project: NLC-6-21-1-35-3.

[42]Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: RAC Project: NLC-6-21-1-34-4.

[43]Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: RAC Project: NLC-15-11-6-43-0.

[44]Ray Bonner. "How One American Diplomat Solved the Case of the Murdered Churchwomen in El Salvador". In: *The Atlantic* (Feb. 11, 2016). URL: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/02/el-salvador-churchwomen-murders/460320/ (visited on 03/31/2021).

FMLN was receiving support from Nicaragua.[45] In this context, the Carter administration debated how to restore support to a Salvadoran government that increasingly needed it yet showed little willingness to reform. The rationale for withholding aid was once again to give the PDC leverage in its ongoing negotiation with the military.[46] Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte and the new Commander in Chief of the Army, Jaime Abdul Gutierrez, settled on a plan to increase the Army's role in counterinsurgency and empower it vis-à-vis the other security forces, who were conducting the majority of the human rights abuses. They asked for US help to implement it.[47]

Once again, the Carter administration noted the need for military advisors but was concerned about receiving blame if it supported the Salvadoran government and the military did not follow through on reform.[48] Pastor summed up the case against advisors: "They will give us many more problems than they can possibly help the Salvadorans."[49] After the military and the PDC reached a bargain, to include installing Duarte as President and committing to firing some rightist officers that the United States wanted to depose, the Carter administration agreed to resume assistance.[50] In terms of priority, military advisors were ranked "last because they are the most visible and will require significant political justification both in Salvador and elsewhere."[51]

After the FMLN launched a Final Offensive on January 11, 1980, revealing the strength of the insurgency, the Carter administration reversed course and rushed military assistance to the Salvadoran government. Brzezinski advised Carter to renew assistance because the

[45]Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: RAC Project: NLC-6-21-2-9-1.

[46]Memo from Edmund Muskie to the President, December 16, 1980, Folder "El Salvador: 12/80-1/81," Box 21, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection Country File, Jimmy Carter Library; Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[47]Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: RAC Project: NLC-6-21-2-19-0.

[48]Special Coordination Committee Meeting, December 11, 1980, Folder "Meetings – SCC 354, 12/11/80," Box 33, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection Subject File, Jimmy Carter Library.

[49]Memo from Robert Pastor to ZB, December 11, 1980, Folder "Meetings – SCC 354, 12/11/80," Box 33, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection Subject File, Jimmy Carter Library.

[50]Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: RAC Project: NLC-24-22-3-9-8.

[51]Memo from Zbigniew Brzezinski to President, December 16, 1980, Folder "El Salvador: 12/80-1/81," Box 21, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection Country File, Jimmy Carter Library; Jimmy Carter Presidential Library: RAC Project: NLC-24-22-5-4-1.

situation was now urgent and the US MILGP in country believed the Salvadoran military had only one week of ammo left.[52] Given this decrease in the Salvadoran military's capacity, Carter approved a few teams of advisors not just for monitoring but also for capacity-building by training Salvadoran units.[53] Carter approved this assistance even though Duarte had told White just a few days earlier that what he "did not want or need was US military advisors, Green Berets, or any other military presence that could give the impression of US military participation."[54]

6.3.2 Reagan sends a limited advising mission (1981-1984)

El Salvador was now the incoming Reagan administration's problem. Despite Reagan's public critique of the Carter administration for not doing enough to help the Salvadoran government resist a Communist insurgency, his plan for intervention in El Salvador differed from Carter's only in its rhetoric.[55] In initial meetings of the Security Council, Reagan complained that "We don't throw out our friends just because they can't pass the 'saliva test' on human rights," while General Jones made clear that he saw military advisors as an important way to increase US influence in Latin America and increase the competence of the Salvadoran military.[56] But the administration soon encountered the political constraints on US intervention in El Salvador. Despite its eagerness to visibly support the government of El Salvador, the Reagan administration recognized that a coup or publicly visible atrocities could jeopardize the political sustainability of intervention.[57]

Advisors, in particular, would be costly to send to El Salvador. Just 5 days after the first optimistic meeting, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger observed: "As far as the

[52]Memo from Zbigniew Brzezinski to President, January 14, 1981, Folder "El Salvador: 12/80-1/81," Box 21, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection Country File, Jimmy Carter Library.

[53]Crandall, *The Salvador Option*, p. 180.

[54]US State Department Telegram "Demarche on Military Assistance," January 1981, Folder "El Salvador 1/16-19/81," Box 22, Robert Pastor Country Files, Jimmy Carter Library.

[55]Crandall, *The Salvador Option*, pp. 200–220.

[56]National Security Council Meeting Minutes February 6, 1981, Folder "NSC 0001 6 Feb 1981," Box 1, Executive Secretariat Meeting Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

[57]White House Situation Room message to San Salvador, State 054865, March 4, 1981, Folder " El Salvador Vol I 1/20/81 - 5/31/81," Box 87, Executive Secretariat Country Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

training teams are concerned, there are problems. If American military men are caught in the crossfire, there is the temptation to send in more men to protect them and we get into a Vietnam situation."[58] Besides deciding whether advisors were worth the risk of escalation, the Reagan administration had to balance between the most effective and the most politically palatable ways to use military advisors. Deploying US advisors throughout El Salvador was the best way to build capacity, but it had serious drawbacks. An interagency report put it this way:

> Deployment outside of the capital, however, adds a new dimension to U.S. involvement. It brings U.S. personnel closer to areas that might be subject to attack by major hostile forces, increases U.S. visibility, blurs the distinction between 'trainer' and 'advisor,' possibly undermines [Government of El Salvador] efforts to project an independent image, could 'legitimize' the introduction of Cuban and Nicaraguan 'advisors' into El Salvador, and could also eventually bring us within the terms of the War Powers Resolution. While these teams will be instructed not to accompany Salvadoran units on combat missions, the insurgency is such that their inadvertent involvement in hostilities cannot be discounted.[59]

To overcome the political problems of sending advisors to El Salvador, the DoD proposed sending advisors to Honduras to train Salvadoran troops there. But NSC staff rejected this option and developed an in-country alternative. They argued that US advisors needed to be present in-country in order to influence the Salvadoran troops: "U.S. presence at brigade locations will also have an important disciplining effect on the Salvadorean [sic] troops. The sense of despair and fear when you are in combat alone and losing sometimes leads to acts of brutality and even barbarism. Conversely, any group of soldiers in the world tries to 'show' better in the presence of military 'observers' from another nation."[60]

In the end, the NSC staff won. The Reagan administration decided to send in-country

[58]National Security Council Meeting Minutes February 11, 1981, Folder "NSC 0002 11 Feb 1981," Box 1 Executive Secretariat Meeting Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

[59]El Salvador Interagency Options Paper for the NSC, February 18, 1981, Folder "NSC 0003 18 Feb 1981 (1/2)," Box 1 Executive Secretariat Meeting Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

[60]Memo from Robert L Schweitzer and Roger Fontaine for Richard V Allen, February 24, 1981, Folder "NSC 0004 27 Feb 1981 (4/4)," Box 1 Executive Secretariat Meeting Files, Ronald Reagan Library. Emphasis in the original.

advisors to multiple training sites, in both San Salvador and other garrisons, but with clear restrictions: "They would not go on patrol. They would not accompany on helicopter combat missions. They would use arms only in self-defense. They would not be stationed in areas where guerrillas are strong."[61] While advisors were placed in country, their presence was also limited in its coverage of the brigades; one was a rotating team, and the other was located with the Atlacatl Battalion (a special forces unit which I discuss in more detail later in the chapter).[62] Advisors also could not be considered properly embedded, as they were there for a few months at a time either rotating or training a unit while it was not conducting operations.

Consistent with my theory, however, policymakers took steps to limit the costs of sending advisors. They decided to "avoid the Laos approach" and send the advisors in uniform, to avoid the even worse political consequences of getting caught in a deception. But advisors couldn't wear their berets in the field, and they had to travel to El Salvador in civilian clothes.[63] They couldn't be photographed carrying weapons.[64] Nonetheless, despite these restrictions, "the media was so ubiquitous about the country at the time that it was impossible to hide" the presence of advisors.[65]

Advisors were a politically sensitive issue within El Salvador. Duarte was adamant about not being seen as too close to the United States and wanted to keep the US presence to "a bare minimum."[66] As I mentioned previously, he originally did not want advisors and then reversed course when the Reagan administration offered them. But the worst political

[61]National Security Council Meeting Minutes, February 27 1981, Folder "NSC 00004 27 February 1981 (3/4)," Box 1 Executive Secretariat Meeting Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

[62]*Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 16. Mar. 2, 2020.

[63]United States Department of State, Letter from Powell A. Moore to Gary Lee, February 10, 1982, El Salvador Collections, DNSA; Department of Defense Joint Chiefs Message Center, March 06, 1981, El Salvador Collections, DNSA.

[64]In interviews, advisors to El Salvador mentioned how they knew advisors who had been sent home early as punishment for breaking these restrictions.

[65]*Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 22. Mar. 18, 2020.

[66]Memo for the Secretary of Defense, February 9, 1981, "Military Training Teams (MTTs) and Other US Military Programs for El Salvador." https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/FOID/Reading%20Room/MDR_Releases/FY19/FY19_Q4/Military_Training_Teams_and_Other_US_Military_Programs_9Feb1981.pdf

problems were at home. Former Ambassador White (who was promptly fired by Secretary of State Alexander Haig upon taking office) told a Congressional hearing that US military aid would increase killings by government forces and provide the excuse for a right-wing coup. Congress compared the Reagan administration's proposed policies to the early days of US involvement in Vietnam.[67] Only 6 percent of Americans supported sending advisors.[68] The cost of monitoring was clearly extremely high.

To dampen the political consequences at home, the Reagan administration decided to consult with Congress to inform it of the decision to send advisors. It would not ask Congress for permission because administration lawyers determined that the War Powers Act (which limits the President's authority to deploy troops to participate in hostilities without Congressional approval) did not apply in this case because the advisors would only train rather than accompany Salvadoran soldiers in combat.[69] To highlight the distinction between the proposed policy in El Salvador and US policy in Vietnam, the Reagan administration began calling the advisors "trainers" both internally and in discussions with the press. As Richard Allen put it in a letter to Congressman Bill Goodling: "The small number of trainers (not advisors) in no way represents a repetition of the unhappy and ill-conceived Vietnam experience."[70]

The specter of Vietnam and the high cost of monitoring led the Reagan administration to limit the size of the advising mission. Here again Reagan merely maintained Carter's size of the US advising mission, which was limited to 55 men after a December 1980 internal administration meeting.[71] When the Reagan administration first sent advisors to El Salvador,

[67]United States Department of State. Testimony of Ambassador White [Reprint of "Washington Post" Account of Testimony before the House Appropriations Committee] 1981. El Salvador Collections, DNSA.

[68]1961- Peceny Mark. *Democracy at the point of bayonets*. University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999. 254 pp.

[69]Legal Considerations, Folder "El Salvador Meetings February 19, 1981," RAC BOX 7, Roger Fontaine Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

[70]Letter from Richard V. Allen to The Honorable William Goulding, March 81, Folder "El Salvador 03/07/1981 – 03/10/1981," RAC BOX 6, Roger Fontaine Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

[71]Cecil Bailey. "Counterinsurgency in El Salvador: What Was The Model?" Unpublished Manuscript. Unpublished Manuscript. 2020, The 55-man limit counted only US military advisors who were training Salvadoran forces, and not members of the MILGP, defense attaché staff, or humanitarian, medical or civilian teams.

in March 1981, Undersecretary of State Walter J. Stoessel promised the Senate Appropriations Committee that the administration would not raise the limit without consulting with Congress.[72] Reagan was bound by these words. In 1983, when the Reagan administration considered increasing the number of advisors in El Salvador, Congress began working on legislation to formally limit US presence in El Salvador. To preempt this, Reagan agreed to maintain the informal limit of 55 advisors.[73]

Despite its early bluster, the Reagan administration began to view human rights and preventing the military from launching a coup as central to winning the war in El Salvador. In November 1981, General Fred Woerner led a team from DoD to assess the Salvadoran military and work with it to develop a new strategy. Woerner's report became the basis for US security assistance in El Salvador.[74] The Salvadoran armed forces were unwilling to define right wing violence as a threat. Woerner, however, saw right wing violence as a direct threat to the survival of the armed forces, which he argued is "inextricably linked to the support of the people, international legitimacy, and continued US assistance." If the Salvadoran military perpetuated rightist terror, it "could dangerously erode popular support to the point wherein the Armed Force would be viewed not as the protector of society, but as an army of occupation."[75]

To address these problems with the Salvadoran military, the Reagan administration saw a clear role for military advisors, and considered expanding their role to allow more effective monitoring and influencing. NSC staff member Roger Fontaine bemoaned how "the Government of El Salvador continues to be its own worst enemy and demonstrates that it cannot

[72]LeoGrande, *Our own backyard : the United States in Central America, 1977-1992*, p. 208.

[73]Crandall, *The Salvador Option*, p. 253.

[74]Brian D'Haeseleer. *The Salvadoran crucible : the failure of US counterinsurgency in El Salvador, 1979-1992*. Modern war studies. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2017. 253 pp., pp. 70–71.

[75]Memo from Francis J. West, Jr. to Secretary of Defense, "El Salvador Military Strategy Assistance Team Report," March 13, 1982, OSD/JS FOIA Office, https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/FOID/Reading%20Room/MDR_Releases/FY19/FY19_Q1/Military_Strategy_Assistance_Team_Report_18Mar1982.pdf; Fred E. Woerner, "Report of the El Salvador Military Strategy Assistance Team," 12 Sept - 8 Nov 1981, OSD/JS FOIA Office, https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/FOID/Reading%20Room/MDR_Releases/FY13/13-M-10510001.pdf.

come to grips with the excesses of its security forces."[76] And the Salvadoran military seemed to be losing the war to boot. To increase the military effectiveness of the Salvadoran military and address these broader issues of a military's role in a democratic society, the Reagan administration once again revisited the role of the US advising mission. General Paul Gorman (Commander in Chief, United States Southern Command) recommended that US advisors accompany Salvadoran combat units into combat, which would "ensure most effective use of US intelligence but also would discourage excesses by the units themselves."[77] NSC staff member Richard Childress responded that the DoD proposal to have advisors accompany Salvadoran forces would be politically untenable: It would "carry the inherent danger of permanently halting our current program – especially the role of the military advisor in El Salvador. This change could create a lightning rod for Congressional and public sector opposition. The effectiveness of this change on the battlefield becomes irrelevant if its symbolism become [sic] dominant – the President's announced policy will be cynically viewed as a cover-up for direct US involvement and the emotional baggage of Vietnam will be attached to us immediately."[78] The proposal was not adopted on essentially these grounds.

Due to the political environment and the high cost of monitoring, the US advising mission was not expanded to include embedded advisors that could accompany their counterparts into combat. As a result, US advisors were constrained in their information gathering and influencing. The decision of the Reagan administration to limit the size of the advising mission as well as to prevent advisors from accompanying the Salvadoran military into combat makes sense in light of my theory. Monitoring was important but too costly to invest in to the full extent possible. What is less clear, however, is why the Reagan administration did not embed advisors in the brigades at this point, since a permanent presence at the brigades

[76]Memo from Roger Fontaine and Chris Shoemaker for William P. Clark, February 25, 1982, Folder "El Salvador 01/29/1982 – 03/01/1982," Box 30, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Ronald Reagan Library.

[77]Memo from Roger Fontaine and Chris Shoemaker for William P. Clark, February 25, 1982, Folder "El Salvador 01/29/1982 – 03/01/1982," Box 30, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Ronald Reagan Library.

[78]Memo from Richard Childress to William P. Clark, February 26, 1982, Folder "El Salvador 01/29/1982 – 03/01/1982," Box 30, Executive Secretariat, NSC Country File, Ronald Reagan Library.

would have been possible under the 55-man limit, as it later was despite little change in the cost of monitoring, and would likely not have attracted more attention than rotational advisory missions.

The United States had to find other ways of influencing the Salvadoran military since US advisors could not accompany it in combat. To drive the message home that human rights abuses were counterproductive, the United States enrolled Salvadoran military officers in human rights training in classrooms at Ft. Benning and Ft. Bragg, as well as at the central Salvadoran training center and Salvadoran bases (cuartels). Advisors were supposed to "look in on" the training in the cuartels, although as one advisor put it: "... when I talked about human rights training to a Salvadoran Colonel once he just turned and spat ... and just rolled his eyes. That's just the complexity of a war."[79] Other strategic US priorities in reforming the military and the conduct of the war included instituting a prisoner system and civic action program. US advisors were instrumental in enacting these reforms. Another key reform was strengthening command and control of the military by the high command, which helped address the problem of low-level human rights abuses (although not of abuses sanctioned by the high command like the 1989 murder of Jesuit priests).[80]

US intervention in El Salvador, however, shows that strategic incentives in conjunction with monitoring are necessary for more compliance of the proxy. US efforts to restrain the Salvadoran military often rang hollow because the military thought there would be no consequences for failure to comply. Reagan administration officials reinforced this belief by frequently advocating for a policy of unconditional support, and covering up some of the military's human rights abuses. This gave the Salvadorans the impression that US support didn't depend on their actions, even though archival documents make clear there were red lines that the United States was unwilling to cross, such as supporting a right-wing government should a coup happen. President Reagan further reinforced this belief by making

[79] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 12. Feb. 1, 2020.

[80] Department of State Telegram 065259 "Human Rights Action Plan," March 82, Folder "El Salvador – Human Rights," RAC Box 3, Jaqueline Tillman Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

public statements dismissing rightist violence as leftist propaganda.[81] But even if the Reagan administration had taken a tough stance with El Salvador (as it later did), US threats were only credible up to a point. The United States had clear and public national interests in El Salvador, therefore the prospect of abandonment and a true shutdown in aid was unlikely.[82] And the US lack of leverage would likely have been far worse if the US Congress hadn't been so reluctant to fund the intervention, which helped make Carter and Reagan's use of aid conditionality more effective.

In the first two years of US intervention, reforms remained either tenuous or non-existent. Some officers with reputation for human rights abuses and links to death squads were shuttled out, but others were kept in place.[83] Congressional support for the war depended on whether the Salvadoran military could contain right wing violence and succeed on the battlefield. Faced with yet another battle with Congress, the administration decided to send a high level official, Vice President George H.W. Bush, to deliver a demarche to make clear that the Salvadoran military needed to clean up its act. Salvadoran President Álvaro Alfredo Magaña Borja welcomed Bush's visit because it would strengthen his position with the military. In parallel, General Woerner and General Gorman were sent to talk to the military because they had a lot of credibility with the military as accomplished military officers.[84] Magaña decided to use the Congressional certification as the stick to prompt reform, because it was

[81]LeoGrande, *Our own backyard : the United States in Central America, 1977-1992*, pp. 229–230.

[82]Recall the report produced in 1984 by The Select Committee on Intelligence in the United States Senate, cited in Chapter 2: "The leverage which the U.S. can exert over the conduct of ruling circles whose very survival might appear to be dependent on U.S. good will and material assistance can easily be overestimated. In reality, such leverage is inversely proportional to the degree to which the U.S. is perceived by those whom it is attempting to influence to be constrained by independent policy considerations (e.g., the effort to limit Communist influence in Central America) that restrict its freedom of action....Unless there is at least a perceived willingness to take this kind of a drastic step [withdrawing U.S. support for the government], however, the U.S. cannot expect easy success in efforts to combat political violence in El Salvador or in similar situations elsewhere. Report, "The United States Government and Recent Political Violence in El Salvador," September 13, 1984, folder "El Salvador (09/14/1984)", box 30, NSC Country File: Latin America, Ronald Reagan Library.

[83]Report by the Comptroller of the United States, US military aid to El Salvador and Honduras, August 22, 1985, Folder "Military aid to El Salvador (and Honduras)," Box 2, Oliver North Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

[84]Message from SecState for Vice President and Asst. Secty. Motley, December 11, 1983, Folder "El Salvador V, 11/1/83 - 3/31/84," Box 30, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File Latin America, Ronald Reagan Library.

possible the US would totally cut off assistance if the Congressional certification failed.[85] The carrot was a substantial increase in US military aid.[86]

This visit by President Bush was successful in prompting reforms, and death squad violence plunged within a month.[87] As a result, US cooperation with the Salvadorans deepened. Some military officers that had committed human rights abuses were sidelined and the heads of the police services were replaced,[88] which then opened the door for the United States to train them. Bush's visit worked "in a huge way," as one advisor put it. After the visit, "We got some senior commanders in some of the important commands that let us do things that we would have never been able to do before the Bush visit. Most of that was in special operations territory, or the counterterrorism that was put together in response to increasing urban terrorism, that would have never been allowed earlier."[89] But the decrease in violence was not permanent. Death squad violence increased again (though never to its former levels) by 1985 and periodically resurfaced until the end of the war.[90]

6.3.3 Advisors embedded in the brigades (1984-89)

The quality of US monitoring and influencing was also improved once advisors were embedded in Salvadoran brigades. Each Salvadoran military zone had its own cuartel, or military base, for the brigade (see Figure 1), where US advisors were then housed alongside their Salvadoran counterparts. The circumstances that finally brought about an embedded presence of US military advisors in the Salvadoran brigades was the 1984 Salvadoran presidential election, where US favorite José Napoleón Duarte was running against the far-right

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*, p. 26.

[87] Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*, pp. 261–62.

[88] "Recent political violence in El Salvador," Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, US Senate, October 1984, Folder "El Salvador - Death squads," Boxes 54, 56, Oliver North Files, Ronald Reagan Library.; Memo from Oliver L. North for Robert C. McFarlane , October 24, 1985, Folder "El Salvador - Death squads," Boxes 54, 56, Oliver North Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

[89] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 22. Mar. 18, 2020.

[90] Americas Watch Committee (U.S.), ed. *El Salvador's decade of terror : human rights since the assassination of Archbishop Romero.* Human Rights Watch books. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991. 207 pp.

Figure 6.1: 2nd Brigade cuartel, Santa Ana
US military advisor to El Salvador, Gregory T. Banner

ARENA party's candidate Roberto D'Aubuisson. Given the military's past history of intimidating civilians as well as meddling in politics, US Ambassador to El Salvador Thomas Pickering wanted to be sure that the Salvador military would cooperate during the elections, especially since they were charged with running security at the polling places. Though Pickering wasn't concerned that the military would reject the results of the election—the military had agreed to guarantee them earlier—he clearly wanted to monitor them.[91] To monitor the military during the elections, Pickering changed the advising mission from temporary teams of advisors to one where advisors were embedded for several months at a time with the Salvadoran brigades.[92] One of the advisors sent to the brigades told me about his efforts to monitor the election.[93] He was supposed to keep quiet about his election monitoring role, and part of his responsibility was to let the Embassy know the location of the polling places as well as accompany Salvadoran soldiers to secure them. The elections resulted in a decisive

[91] LeoGrande, *Our own backyard : the United States in Central America, 1977-1992*; Crandall, *The Salvador Option*, Cable from Ambassador Pickering to General Vessey, San Salvador 01844, February 18, 1984, El Salvador Collections, DNSA..

[92] Kenneth Finlayson. "OPATT to PATT: El Salvador to Colombia and the Formation of the Planning and Assistance Training Teams". In: *Veritas* 2.4 (2006). URL: `https://arsof-history.org/articles/v2n4_patt_page_1.html` (visited on 04/01/2021); Bailey, "Counterinsurgency in El Salvador: What Was The Model?"

[93] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador*. In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020.

win by Duarte, with help from the CIA and US funding.[94] If D'Aubuisson had won, the US intervention in El Salvador would have been over.[95] This democratic election increased Congressional support for the war and led to loosening of the restrictions on advisors – a decline in the overall cost of monitoring.

Under these conditions, my theory would predict that embedded advisors stay on in the brigades, which is exactly what happened but not at the initiative of US policymakers. Salvadoran officers were not happy to have US advisors transition from short-term training to embedding with them: "The Salvadorans were kind of resisting that because it's one thing to have a visitor, it's another thing to have somebody live with you."[96] As a result, US policymakers did not replace the initial embedded advisors when their tours were finished. Officers in the MILGP took initiative to request replacements for the embedded advisors and found a way to pay them.[97] But this ended up being a lucky turn of events: officers from the MILGP were able, with cooperation from SOUTHCOM, to request "the right people" for the job who spoke Spanish, understood the culture, and weren't "flamboyant" characters without awareness of the sensitivity of building capacity while restraining the military.[98] After this on-the-ground innovation by the MILGP, advisors were embedded in the brigades until the end of the war, which as I will show in the next section, improved the quality of US monitoring and influencing through advisors.

6.4 Monitoring and influencing on the ground

Policymakers understood that advisors would have to navigate human rights and civil military relations, but did advisors recognize their role? Advisors initially understood their

[94] Philip Taubman. "C.I.A. SAID TO AID SALVADOR PARTIES". in: *The New York Times* (May 12, 1984). ISSN: 0362-4331.

[95] Crandall, *The Salvador Option*, p. 318.

[96] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020, Bailey (previous footnote) notes how the Salvadoran colonels were especially opposed to higher ranking officers, which called their authority into question. He also notes how US advisors with good rapport with counterparts were considered more acceptable.

[97] Bailey, "Counterinsurgency in El Salvador: What Was The Model?"

[98] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 22. Mar. 18, 2020.

mission as one of capacity-building (as Carter NSC staff member Robert Pastor had feared), but quickly realized their true mission was information gathering and influencing. One of the first advisors in El Salvador described it as an organic process of discovery. I include the full quote because it shows the tension between the capacity-building and political roles of advisors and how their role can be informed by learning about the situation on the ground:

> When we were planning and thinking about this in 1980 and before we deployed in '81 we considered our role to enhance the combat effectiveness of the Salvadoran army and help their army and air force to defeat the guerrillas on the battlefield. However, once we got there and it happened within the first six months... we realized the real mission was to guide and correct the behavior of the Salvadoran military.
>
> ... The guys in the first OPAT [team of military advisors] went to train up the Atlacatl Battalion. There were two teams, one with the Atlacatl and then my team was sort of roving. We went to Sonsonate and then to Chalatenango. I became aware of an atrocity out in the Sonsonate area and thought that I should probably pull my guys out of there. I went to the MILGP [office in the US Embassy that was coordinating security assistance] and ended up talking with the MILGP ops officer, a Lieutenant Colonel at the time. He was a special forces officer, an old Vietnam guy. And he said, let's go talk about this. And we went over to British club and had some fish and chips and a beer. And essentially what he said is 'You can pull your guys out of there, but then who's going to change how they act?'
>
> And that became where I personally understood the change of mission. Now, to my knowledge the army, from anybody above us to include the MILGP, was still bringing us in telling us how to do tactical operations. In fact, we were put on a helicopter with our brigade ops officers and sent to Panama and shown by the Rangers how to do a proper ambush to kill more guerrillas. So that's where the army was at but that's not where we were at. And that continued as an informal sort of mission at the O-4 [US Major rank] and below level. Now, not everybody adhered to that but most did. And in my opinion, that's what made the difference there because we did change their behavior.[99]

The bottom-up process described by this advisor does not exactly fit with my theory's prediction that policymakers determine the role of advisors. But it does highlight a civil-military relations issue between what US civilian policymakers wanted (as shown in the archival evidence I presented earlier) and what the military chain of command actually

[99] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 16. Mar. 2, 2020.

asked the advisors to do. The JCS chose to focus on the capacity-building role of advisors. This also highlights the fact that policy can be made by the principals, but it is individuals entrusted with responsibility to implement it who must figure out the best way to proceed as "man on the spot." The advisors thus had significant agency to determine their own role in a bottom-up process. In their conversations with me, advisors explained at length how they were both gathering information and influencing their local counterparts. Their capacity building role was critically important—as one advisor mentioned, Salvadoran units after training were "like night and day"—but so was the political role of advisors.[100]

In the early stages of US intervention under the Carter administration, the role of advisors on the ground was to gather information. An advisor who worked with the Military Group in El Salvador, described how the Department of Defense used military advisors to gather intelligence for intervention planning in the fall of 1980:

> We were getting those one or two guys in out to the field to gather information, usually under fairly reasonable covers. One was communications.... all of those people would go right back and give all of their information directly to the defense attaché. So more than just collecting information for what we might have to deploy to do, it was entering into intelligence channels that real senior planners in Washington were, we assume, going to be using.[101]

The Operations Planning and Training Team (OPATT) mission, which embedded advisors in the Salvadoran brigades, rounded out the larger US advising presence with the Estado Mayor (Ministry of Defense), air force, artillery, and after 1985, the police forces.[102] By placing the advisors with the decentralized centers of where the ground war was taking place, the OPATT mission improved information gathering for monitoring: "One of the things that I think the OPATTs instantly provided was accuracy in what the Salvadorans were really doing. Could have been a lot better because they weren't allowed to go to the field with them. But they had a finger on the pulse that did not exist before....Once we

[100] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 18. Feb. 19, 2020.
[101] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 22. Mar. 18, 2020.
[102] Bailey, "Counterinsurgency in El Salvador: What Was The Model?"

had people living inside the cuartels, we had the information, and the Salvadorans knew we had the information about what they were doing."[103]

This information gathering was enhanced through informal relationships that developed and created trust between advisors and their counterparts. Advisors would collect information by eating meals with their counterparts and engaging them in conversation.[104] A US advisor in El Salvador commented on how advisors formed close bonds with Salvadoran NCOs, who were sidelined by their commanding officers and therefore were grateful to US advisors for working closely with them. US advisors would de-brief them after patrols to get the real story of what happened.[105] Another advisor stated that Salvadoran NCOs were more than willing to share information because US advisors "treated the troops well, and they weren't used to that from their folks, from their officers. And so they would open up to us and tell us what was going on."[106]

At the same time as its information sources were increasing, the Reagan administration told the press it lacked the ability to monitor,[107] since advisors could not accompany Salvadoran troops into combat. Some of the academic literature makes a similar claim.[108] But this was a half-truth. It was true that the United States could not fully monitor the activities of Salvadoran military units that did not have embedded advisors, such as the Batallones de Infantería de Reacción Inmediata (BIRI) units, which were immediate reaction infantry battalions that conducted many of the military raids against guerillas and were responsible for most human rights violations. But wherever there were US advisors in the brigades, the United States could mostly monitor events on the ground (with some caveats on which I elaborate later in the chapter). OPATT advisors described easy access to information from

[103] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 22. Mar. 18, 2020.
[104] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 12. Feb. 1, 2020.
[105] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 13. Feb. 6, 2020.
[106] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 16. Mar. 2, 2020.
[107] Memo from Oliver L. North to Robert C. McFarlane, March 28, 1984, Folder " El Salvador 11/1/83-3/31/84, Box 30, Executive Secretariat, NSC, Ronald Reagan Library.
[108] Ryan T. Baker. "El Salvador, 1979-92: Revisiting Success". In: *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents.* Ed. by Eli Berman and David A. Lake. Cornell University Press, Mar. 15, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-5017-3309-3, p. 142.

a wide variety of sources:

> . . . As you're moving around and traveling around, you're talking to real people. Everybody that's out there from all levels, you find yourself meeting with the governor of San Miguel, the mayor of San Miguel, the zone commander in the morning and in the afternoon, you're out there talking to some campesino guy who's at the civil defense of San Alfonso or something. . . . You're talking to the privates, the colonels. . . . *Never before or since have I felt I had more of a finger on the pulse than when we were out there in those locations.*[109]

Advisors provided specific kinds of information that complemented intelligence sources. Through their working relationships with their counterparts they could provide specific information about the perpetrators of atrocities. One advisor told me about how during the 1989 guerilla offensive, he was able to serve as an alibi for his counterpart, thus helping the Embassy determine who did not commit the Jesuit murders.[110] As I mention later in the chapter, another advisor provided the information that helped the Embassy determine who was responsible for the murders. Advisors were also able to provide information about the military operations which their counterparts conducted, which ensured more accountability for them. One advisor described the process of taking and accounting for prisoners later in the war (before 1983 the Salvadoran military rarely took prisoners):

> So when we took prisoners I went and looked at them. I made sure the Red Cross came in when they were evacuated to the prison in the city. I'd call up and tell our intel guys, the Americans in the city, 'Hey, we've got six prisoners coming in, make sure they get to the prison,' and they would. So they knew that kind of follow up would take place. Again, just being embedded, it does everything.[111]

Advisors also provided specific information about their counterparts so that US diplomats could suggest who the Salvadoran government should promote and who should be sidelined. A US advisor to El Salvador put it this way:

[109] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 18. Feb. 19, 2020, Emphasis mine.
[110] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 5. Jan. 15, 2020.
[111] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 17. Feb. 3, 2020.

> What we were tasked to do is to look for officers, primarily officers, that were more moderate to see if we could curry their favor and groom them to take on positions of authority.... We were just looking for those people that we saw had the ability and that we would do our best to encourage. And in some cases, that encouragement would eventually manifest itself in an offer to the Salvadoran military to send these officers and these noncommissioned officers to these training programs in the United States or places like Fort Gulick in Panama....
>
> We made a point of identifying those elements, each of those individuals and those groups that we knew were corrupt. And we got the satisfaction of hearing specific names being read into Congressional Record as being someone who was hindering the growth of decent progress in El Salvador.[112]

Because policymakers made US aid conditional to some extent on the actions of the Salvadoran government, the information advisors provided actually had consequences. A US advisor to Salvadoran officers described how one of his counterparts wanted to "go out and do terrible things." He complained to his chain of command in the MILGP and "they put the pressure on and he was relieved." The replacement was "super" and much more receptive to the advice of his advisors.[113] The combination of diplomatic pressure and information from the advisors deterred human rights abuses. As on advisor described it:

> I think the presence of US soldiers on most of the cuartels was a deterrent in terms of human rights violations. I think that they knew that the Americans would report violations and if violations were reported, they would lose support in terms of materiel, in terms of advisors, in terms of equipment and ammunition.... I know that during the [1989] offensive, at some of the cuartels, the U.S. advisors were asked to leave just due to the fact that they were seen as rats, so to speak.[114]

Advisors provided important information as monitors, but the real work to "guide and correct the behavior of the Salvadoran military," as one of my interviewees stated, came through personal relationships and their influence on the ground. Advisors were supposed to use their position to advocate for change. As one advisor put it: "...We had three talking points: you must respect human rights, you must support democracy, you must

[112] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 2. Jan. 15, 2020.
[113] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 16. Mar. 2, 2020.
[114] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 11. Mar. 9, 2020.

Figure 6.2: US military advisor to El Salvador (1991-1992), Gregory T. Banner
Gregory T. Banner

subordinate yourself to civilian leadership, and you're supposed to say that to every Latin American military you ran into."[115] While at the strategic level the United States could use carrots or sticks to incentivize better behavior, at the advisor level using the stick made it "really easy to generate an unproductive relationship."[116] So advisors had to delicately build relationships with their counterparts, focusing on creating a positive bond instead of telling their counterpart what to do. Salvadorans, one advisor said, were "very proud so you had to be careful how you provided advice. You had to have a soft touch, because they wanted to do it themselves sort of thing."[117]

The four criteria laid out in Chapter 3 for a positive interaction where the advisor can generate influence over his counterpart—face-to-face interaction, barriers to outsiders, mutual focus of attention, and shared mood—were often present in the advising mission in El

[115] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 20. Jan. 9, 2020.
[116] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 22. Mar. 18, 2020.
[117] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.*

Salvador. Advisors had to begin by providing value for their counterparts: "We worked ourselves into a job. . . instead of just being a pain in the ass, we were adding value and that helped."[118] This capacity-building mission provided the basis for face-to-face interaction with the local counterpart.

Advisors further demonstrated their credibility as skilled warriors, and members of a community with barriers to outsiders, if they came under fire. Though advisors were ordered to stay out of combat, they often could not avoid participating in it. They were posted to dangerous and isolated cuartels and some engaged in fierce combat inside the cuartel when it was overrun.[119] The first advisor casualty, SFC Gregory Fronius, died in an attack on the 4th Brigade in El Paraiso; other Americans were killed elsewhere in the country.[120] Later in the war, advisors were permitted to accompany the leadership of a brigade when it went on an operation. Advisors also routinely came under fire when conducting training operations out in the countryside with their counterparts.[121] By the mid-1980s, the advisors were receiving combat pay and were armed with M-16s for self-defense. So advisors often had an opportunity to demonstrate their skill under combat, which improved their influence over their counterparts. But the restriction on US advisors accompanying their counterparts on patrols or situations where they were expected to engage in combat made influence more difficult. A US advisor summed it up: "Even to influence them, to improve their behavior, we would have had a lot more credibility if we'd been able to go with them. We all kind of wanted that, but that wasn't the deal."[122]

Despite these restrictions, as advisors and their counterparts worked shoulder-to-shoulder on the daily business of war, they generated what I described in Chapter 3 as a mutual focus of attention on the same tasks. Once advisors initiated a professional relationship, they took advantage of consistent professional and informal interactions to build influence with

[118] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020.
[119] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 11. Mar. 9, 2020.
[120] Greg Walker. *At the Hurricane's Eye: U.S. Special Forces from Vietnam to Desert Storm.* Ivy Books, 1994, pp. 100–103.
[121] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 11. Mar. 9, 2020.
[122] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 16. Mar. 2, 2020.

their counterparts. They inserted themselves into everything from the brigade's operations to discussions about civil-military relations and human rights with their counterparts. One advisor described influence as the following:

> . . . I can't give orders, but what I can give is suggestion after suggestion after suggestion, or really just circulate ideas. That's the cultural part. I'm a pretty gregarious guy. Most of the advisors, they're not introverts. . . And so I know these guys. I live with them. I'm in the field with them. I hang out with them and watch TV with them at night. So you could say things like, 'Well, do you think we could get away with this? Do you think we could try this? Do we have enough money to do this?' How do you influence people? That is how we did things.[123]

As part of working with the Salvadoran armed forces on war planning, advisors were able to remind their counterparts to plan the mission carefully to prevent civilian casualties. One advisor to the Salvadoran armed forces stated that he would put his counterpart on the spot when planning an operation, asking questions about the target and the actionable intelligence that prompted it. He would ask them not to use artillery, aircraft, rockets, etc. against civilians, telling them he would make the case to the US Embassy why they should not get any more foreign aid if they planned bad operations that broke these rules.[124] Yet another advisor described having a conversation with his counterpart during social engagements – "Of course it was easy because he was a drunk" – about human rights abuses that the brigade had committed the other day, trying to persuade him to recognize "that just makes more guerillas."[125]

Advisors also were able to directly discuss the politics of civil-military relations with their counterparts. An advisor, who served as commander of the Military Group in El Salvador, described conversations near the end of the war with high-level Salvadoran military officers to make sure they understood that they would have to stand aside and not conduct a coup in order to reach a peace agreement in El Salvador.[126] Another advisor told me how he was

[123] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020.
[124] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 21. Feb. 26, 2020.
[125] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 16. Mar. 2, 2020.
[126] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 19. Mar. 3, 2020.

asked to reach out to a counterpart to let him know that the United States wouldn't stand for a coup and he communicated back to the Embassy that the Salvadoran had changed his mind.[127]

Advisors cultivated influence by drawing attention to the interests they shared with their counterpart—what I described in Chapter 3 as a shared mood. Both wanted fewer guerilla attacks against the brigade or the Salvadoran economy, and the advisor was there to teach his counterpart more effective ways than repression to reach this goal. One advisor described how he had to be selective about when to use his influence, but on certain issues he took a stand:

> ...I felt that it was in the best interest of the cause, to try to get them to change the way they did interrogation....If you were smart about it, you can get intelligence that will end up being very beneficial, and would undermine the insurgent movement. So, these are just little techniques that we used to reduce the level of violence on the part of the Salvadoran Military, and increase effectiveness through a degree of benevolence, versus ruthless conduct.[128]

Advisors told me that they didn't just prompt self-interested changes in behavior in their counterparts, they encouraged them to change their beliefs about appropriate use of force during war. Refraining from human rights abuses because of the consequences and refraining because it is appropriate both lead to the same outcome but are different from one another (Table 1).[129] One advisor distinguished between these two reasons for changed behavior: "...Some of the people who probably were bad apples, became very good people, who are operating in a right way. And this I think is a direct result of the advisory effort and the fact that we were able to *impart a sense of values to them*, and indirectly letting them know *it was better for successful military operations* to not abuse both civilians and members of the FMLN."[130]

[127] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 15. Mar. 2, 2020.
[128] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 13. Feb. 6, 2020.
[129] 1948- Binford Leigh. *The El Mozote massacre : human rights and global implications.* Revised and expanded edition. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2016. 377 pp., p. 158.
[130] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 13. Feb. 6, 2020, Emphasis mine.

One of these "bad apples" (to put it mildly), Lt. Col. Domingo Monterrosa Barrios, who committed one of the largest atrocities of the war at El Mozote in 1981, later became a convert to the new "heart and minds" approach to counterinsurgency.[131] Was it remorse or self-interest that led him to change his behavior? We'll never know because Monterrosa died during the war. Another advisor said that he became good friends with a counterpart that was accused of committing a major atrocity early in the war and who he believes changed his mind over time (quoted in Table 1). It is particularly difficult to measure whether respect for human rights actually increased or whether behavior merely improved, especially without talking to the counterparts themselves. Advisors claimed both happened.

Advisors believed that over time they shifted the identity of the Salvadoran military from an unprofessional force to a professional one that understood the importance of military restraint in a democratic society. As a military advisor who served near the end of the war told me:

> These advisors in only several years, three or four, changed the nature of the [Salvadoran Armed Forces]. They taught them skills, of course, and that sort of thing, but far more importantly they talked to them about the need for the military to be the supporters of the people as well as the Constitution. That there were certain requirements to be a soldier in a democratic country, that there were expectations that cannot be modified for military subordination to civilian authority. And they over time, *changed the expectation for a soldier.*[132]

To bring about this shift in the Salvadoran military's identity, advisors modeled proper behavior for their counterparts in the brigades, who would emulate their behavior when they found it useful for being good soldiers.[133] John Waghlstein, a MILGP commander in El Salvador, stated that "constant pressure and example" was the source of US influence in working with the Salvadoran military.[134] Another advisor used much the same language to describe the US role:

[131] Crandall, *The Salvador Option*, pp. 230–231.
[132] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 19. Mar. 3, 2020.
[133] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020.
[134] Waghelstein, "Ruminations of a wooly mammoth, or training and advising in counterinsurgency and elsewhere during the Cold War".

Table 6.2: Effects of influence

Mechanism	Effect	Examples from interviews
Teaching and Advising	Self-interested changes in behavior	"So I don't think we suddenly converted the people to being wonderful people. But what we did was we forced all human rights abuses to have a gringo range because they knew if the gringos heard any stuff they were going to lose what they were getting." — US advisor to El Salvador, Interviewee 14
Persuasion, loyalty, emotion	Change in attitudes	"Interviewee: . . . When I went back in [the mid 1980s], I had a wonderful relationship with the brigade commander then. He would still be a friend today, were I to see him. He was a wonderful guy. He came to see the war sort of the way I did, that you got to win the hearts and minds, and I believe he made some big changes in his own life there, in regard to the performance of his guys. . . . The commander I became good friends with in that Brigade was a guy named *witheld*, and he was accused of ordering a major war crime. Chinchilla: Do you think he did it? Interviewee: I don't know. I don't know. I'd like to think he wasn't, but if he were, I guess I could accept that. I could accept that he had done that. I don't think he would have done it after the year I arrived. Chinchilla: Got it. Okay. So he did change, you think, at least in terms of what he would have been willing to support when you were there? Interviewee: Yeah." — US advisor to El Salvador, Interviewee 16

> . . . In order to change as we did, I think in Salvador, the complexion and nature of a military, it takes *constant supervision, interaction,* and not just saying, we can't work with you, we're going to totally disavow you and never work with you again. I think that's the worst thing we can do if we want to implement values and our ideals on foreign armies, *we need to maintain contact, we need to be the examples.*[135]

Advisors were guided by a firm conviction that although they may have been working with former or current violators of human rights, engagement was the best strategy to reform the local military.

6.5 Effectiveness of military advising

At this point in the chapter, I have argued that policymakers thought about the political role of military advisors in monitoring and influencing the Salvadoran military and weighed this against the cost of sending advisors. I have also argued that advisors understood their role of monitoring and influencing. But were advisors actually effective at improving the human rights situation and imparting professional norms to the military in El Salvador? While my research question is focused on what policymakers and advisors thought they were doing while involved in El Salvador, evidence does suggest that the monitoring and influencing roles of advisors were not just the perceptions of policymakers or of advisors contending with the cognitive dissonance of working with known abusers of human rights. Advisors may have had positive effects on the ground.

The first piece of suggestive evidence is the measurable and significant decline in human rights abuses during which the Salvadoran government, under American pressure, partially cleaned up the war. Second, the units that committed the most human rights abuses were never under effective US control and did not have American advisors working with them. I then discuss some of the challenges to monitoring and influencing that the Salvadoran case illustrates.

[135] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 11. Mar. 9, 2020, Emphasis mine.

Determining causality is difficult given the many factors contributing to civil-military relations and repression. The right way to think about the impact of advisors is to judge them against the counterfactual: would repression and civil-military relations have been worse had US advisors not been present? It is universally acknowledged that human rights abuses declined substantially after 1983, though they continued throughout the war.[136] The Salvadoran government's levels of repression as estimated by Fariss (2014) also decreased over time, although they remained quite high.[137] As one advisor told me, things changed (repression went down) but they also stayed the same (repression never stopped).[138] At least part of the decline resulted from US pressure on the Salvadoran government to reform. As described previously, the United States conditioned aid on improvements in human rights and civil-military relations as well as pressed for leadership change in the military, National Guard, and Police.[139] The United States also reinforced reform by supporting officers who upheld the norm of civilian control of the Salvadoran government, and who were competent and willing to work with the United States.

Military advisors, in conjunction with intelligence and Embassy sources, directly contributed to aid conditionality by providing specific information not only on the atrocities that were committed but on the identity of the perpetrators so the United States could hold them accountable. The formal model outlined in Chapter 2 specifically shows us the counterfactual: without monitoring, levels of compliance will be lower. I provided first-hand evidence from advisors who said that they reported human rights abuses and abusers to their chain of command, which resulted in actual changes on the ground. The resistance of some Salvadoran officers to advisors in the brigades as well as their attempt to evict some advisors during the 1989 offensive further shows that advisors were seen as monitors, and effective ones at that. But perhaps the most surprising evidence in favor of advisors as monitors came

[136]Wood, *Insurgent collective action and civil war in El Salvador*; Green and Ball, "Civilian killings and disappearances during civil war in El Salvador (1980–1992)".

[137]Fariss, "Respect for human rights has improved over time: Modeling the changing standard of accountability".

[138]*Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 10. Feb. 26, 2020.

[139]Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*.

from the FMLN itself, which asked advisors to stay in the brigades to ensure the government upheld the peace agreement.[140]

US advisors also directly contributed to the US effort to reform the leadership of the Salvadoran military by identifying and fast-tracking honorable and competent officers, as the first-hand quotes from advisors who participated in this process made clear. Real changes came when advisors got more sympathetic Salvadoran counterparts that were actually amenable to US influence: "...There were some brigade commanders that were very open to the Americans and some guys that were a little bit more closed, and there's guys that became more open, came into power in these brigades. That's when you really saw big change because the advisors were giving them good advice."[141]

Advisors also provided support and training in military tactics that increased the military's capacity to fight a cleaner counterinsurgency war. Advisors, including those that served multiple tours in country during different points in the war, told me how their training "made a huge difference" and resulted in a tangible increase in the Salvadoran military's effectiveness.[142] I also provided evidence from advisors about other specific accomplishments in the area of human rights (such as reforming interrogation practices) and how they used influence to persuade their counterparts to enact these reforms. In making this assessment, I privileged interviews that featured specific information from advisors based on their first-hand observation rather than sweeping generalizations or hearsay.

One counterargument is that the Salvadoran government merely switched from repression to a brutal low-intensity conflict where civilians were killed in airstrikes and during military operations against insurgents; the US goal was not reducing human rights violations per se but making them tolerable.[143] It is true that civilian casualties from airstrikes continued (perhaps unsurprising given how the United States uses air power in counterinsurgency wars today) but advisors did try to teach the Salvadorans how to conduct military operations

[140] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 13. Feb. 6, 2020.
[141] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 15. Mar. 2, 2020.
[142] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 18. Feb. 19, 2020.
[143] Binford, *The El Mozote massacre : human rights and global implications*, pp. 172–174.

that minimized collateral damage. One advisor who was in a supervisory position in the US MILGP (and thus knowledgeable about military operations across the whole country) at the end of the war described the restraints on the Salvadoran military:

> I was fortunate enough, along with maybe one or two other guys, to basically see this thing from the very beginning of it to the very end of it, and you could really see the difference in the army from the first time we had contact with these guys until we basically turned everything over at the end of the war. It was a significant change, whereas before, you didn't have anybody talking to anything about human rights to, at the end, we actually have a battalion, that was in contact in a place called Chalatenango. . . and they were calling for artillery support and the government would not give them artillery support for fear of collateral civilian damage.
>
> They basically got their butts kicked and had to retreat into Honduras, where they were disarmed by the Honduran army and then repatriated, which was a real bitter pill for them to swallow [because El Salvador and Honduras fought a war in 1969], but they wouldn't give them artillery support because of the human rights aspect of it.[144]

Another counterargument is that repression decreased because of its success rather than anything the United States did.[145] By 1984, when advisors were in the brigades and finally in a position to more fully monitor the proxy, the guerillas were in a weaker position, partly because many of their leaders had been killed. And abuses continued throughout the war, with an uptick around the 1989 guerilla offensive, which does indicate that repression was at least partially tied to the government's vulnerability. While I do not dispute that repression was both severe and perhaps even effective, the timing of decreases in repression around periods of US aid conditionality, along with the Salvadoran effort to hide human rights abuses when they did occur, indicates that US efforts contributed to the decline. I have described above how advisors on the ground directly supported these US strategic-level efforts. And the specific reforms that advisors recounted during their tenure are hard to explain away, especially since advisors were generally forthcoming with me when they thought they had

[144] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 15. Mar. 2, 2020.

[145] Hazelton, "The "hearts and minds" fallacy: Violence, coercion, and success in counterinsurgency warfare".

little influence or impact during their tour. For example, two advisors that served back-to-back at the same brigade both independently told me how they struggled to get anything done during their tour because their counterpart was not interested in working with an American.[146]

While the above results suggest that advisors could have actually had the effect that interveners and advisors thought they had, future research designed to carefully address the problem of causal inference could better evaluate the causal effect of advisors on repression in the Salvadoran civil war. As I described at the beginning of this chapter, significant spatial and temporal variation exists in the deployment of military advisors during the war. Future research could leverage this variation to estimate the causal effect of advisors on human rights in the places and times when they were deployed with local units. In the meantime, my findings should be taken as suggestive evidence rather than an estimate of the causal effects of advisors.

6.5.1 Limitations of monitoring

Due to the gaps in coverage of advisors and variation in their influence over their counterparts, the impact of advisors must have been local, often varied, and could not make up for mistakes made at the strategic level of US intervention. Monitoring was often less than perfect and advisors sometimes failed to influence their counterparts or even influenced them negatively. In the following section, I describe the limitations of both monitoring and influencing.

Monitoring and influencing are inherently in tension. If an advisor submits a negative report, that report could lead to punishment for his counterpart, which would obviously damage his relationship with his advisor. Therefore, to continue to have the trust of their counterparts, advisors often were selective about when to report misbehavior. One advisor stated he was quite confident there were no large-scale human rights abuses because he had

[146] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 28. Feb. 16, 2021; *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 12. Feb. 1, 2020.

sufficient access to all areas of the base and would have come across such abuses if they were occurring. However, he purposely did not look into some issues too closely.[147] Advisors, then, were caught in this dilemma: if they were too slow to report human rights abuses they would fail to fulfill their moral obligation and their explicit orders, but if they were too quick to report abuses they could irreparably damage their relationships with their counterparts and therefore lose any influence they had. A former MILGP commander in El Salvador emphasized how advisors had to be careful to report based on evidence: "... You can't just obviously be a rat down there. On the other hand, because we talked about it constantly, you may not ignore [human rights abuses]."[148]

Advisors also did not always monitor perfectly, and the restriction on advisors accompanying their counterparts into combat made obfuscation easier. For example, advisors were present at both the operational planning stage and the debrief after a Salvadoran military operation in Arcatao on April 8, 1986. They saw no evidence that human rights abuses, which nongovernmental organizations later carefully documented, took place during the operation.[149] Similarly, US advisors were assigned to the Salvadoran officer who ordered the Jesuit murders, but they were not privy to the plan to murder the Jesuits (for obvious reasons) and were asleep when the operation took place.[150] Even when advisors did report information, senior Embassy officials sometimes looked the other way on human rights abuses. The biases of the US government blinded them to the evidence of some atrocities (eg. Ursultan, El Mozote) and led them to believe Salvadoran dismissals of atrocity reports as insurgent propaganda, even though US officials noted that the Salvadoran military was an unreliable source.[151]

Another problem with monitoring was that the most highly skilled units of the war,

[147] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 5. Jan. 15, 2020.
[148] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 19. Mar. 3, 2020.
[149] Cable from San Salvador to SecState, San Salvador 06511, May 12, 1986, "HEADS UP: SEVEN MURDERED BY ESAF IN ARCATAO, - SAYS TUTELA LEGAL," El Salvador collections, DNSA.
[150] Draft testimony of US Army officers in the Jesuit murder case, July 26, 1991, El Salvador collections, DNSA.
[151] Binford, *The El Mozote massacre : human rights and global implications*, Cite the tranche of State Department documents on this.

the aforementioned BIRIs, were sporadically trained by the United States but did not have advisors attached to them on a permanent basis.[152] The Atlacatl Battalion, which committed the massacre of over 1,000 civilians near El Mozote in 1981 had been trained by US advisors early in the war.[153] After the initial training, however, the Atlacatl had no advisors on the ground to work with them. In the months after US training, the Atlacatl was not an elite unit and actually did poorly in combat.[154] As a result, its commander, Lt. Col. Domingo Monterrosa Barrios, rebuilt the unit with new personnel and trained it his way, without US influence.[155] By dissociating itself from the units that were most likely to commit human rights abuses, the United States kept its hands clean on paper but gave up any chance of influencing them. And US policy was contradictory because advisors periodically conducted short training exercises with these units, infusing them with capability, but were not present to monitor or influence them over the long term.[156]

6.5.2 Limitations of influence

Like monitoring, the influencing role of advisors also faced limitations, like political restrictions on what advisors could do. The restrictions on advisors could have been useful to prevent escalation. As I described earlier in the chapter, the Reagan administration considered increasing the size of the advising mission, and absent political constraints likely would have done so. But El Salvador probably wouldn't have turned out like Vietnam; the insurgents, for one, were much weaker so fears of escalation may have been overblown. The limit on advisors did have one substantial benefit: it encouraged the Salvadoran military to take ownership of the war and not rely on US troops, since deploying them was out of the question and never seriously considered. As one advisor put it: "I think the tendency is if we deploy with a bigger unit there, they may decide to sit off in the corner and watch us

[152]Bailey, "Counterinsurgency in El Salvador: What Was The Model?"
[153]Binford, *The El Mozote massacre : human rights and global implications*.
[154]Crandall, *The Salvador Option*, p. 224.
[155]*Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 10. Feb. 26, 2020.
[156]Bailey similarly notes how the US would probably have gotten better outcomes if advisors had been embedded with the BIRIs.

flail away there."[157]

It is also possible that it wouldn't have been feasible to expand the advising mission much more. Archival documents when the Reagan administration was considering intervention make clear that there were actually very few US Army members with the right rank, training, and language qualifications to serve in El Salvador. Advisors told me that by the end of the war, the advising pool was nearly exhausted. So having a larger advising mission would have required bringing in advisors "without the advisory mindset," magnifying the risks that the US mission of restraint and influence would have gotten lost in the confusion of unqualified advisors.[158] In El Salvador, there was a careful (informal) system for selecting advisors to be sure they were responsible and qualified. Most advisors were quite competent in Spanish, some were translator-level fluent. Without these language skills, advisors would have struggled to monitor and influence their counterparts. Advisors with weaker language skills told me how they were sidelined and didn't socialize as much with their counterparts, weakening their impact.[159]

Advisors had a lot of agency to determine their role in El Salvador. This was generally positive; without initiative, US advisors probably wouldn't have been embedded in the brigades or been able to choose their replacements. But agency could be negative because not all advisors agreed that their mission was to restrain the proxy military. Some advisors believed "... the central issue was teaching them military doctrine and the military way to do things" and decided to focus solely on building military capacity, eroding their influence.[160] Others believed that their mission was to "develop a different social context"[161] where "the single most important thing we did was enforce human rights."[162] When advisors place information gathering and influencing at the center of their mission, the dynamics I describe

[157] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 18. Feb. 19, 2020.
[158] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 22. Mar. 18, 2020; *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 5. Jan. 15, 2020.
[159] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 12. Feb. 1, 2020; *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 2. Jan. 15, 2020.
[160] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020.
[161] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 14. Mar. 8, 2020.
[162] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 12. Feb. 1, 2020.

in this chapter are more likely to emerge.

Advisors also sometimes "went native." Major Eric Buckland, US advisor assigned as a National Staff Advisor to the Salvadoran Armed Forces, showed clear signs of identifying too closely with his counterpart, Colonel Carlos Armando Aviles, head of Civil-Military Operations for the Salvadoran Armed Forces. After the Salvadoran Army murdered Jesuit priests of the Central American University in 1989, Buckland learned the identity of the perpetrators from his counterpart. The "extremely close professional and personal rapport" between Buckland and his counterpart made Aviles willing to confide, leading him to "relay information to [Buckland] not as an El Salvadoran military officer to an American military officer but from 'Carlos to Eric.'"[163] Buckland chose not to report this information for several weeks because it would be "betraying [his] trust and friendship" with his counterpart – even though the US government needed this information to press the Salvadoran government to investigate the atrocity.[164] In further testimony, Buckland indicated that he identified far too closely with his counterpart, feeling both ambivalence about potential human rights abuses as well as a strong sense of loyalty to El Salvador that outweighed his identity as a US advisor.[165]

A few months after Buckland's actions came to light, the US Military Group Commander issued a memo to all advisors. Advisors, he wrote, must "attempt to stop violations of customs and laws of land warfare, and if unable to stop then, to disassociate yourself and report the violation." The memo closes with an oblique reference to Buckland's statements under FBI interrogation: "Let me give you a blunt example: A reference to a human rights violation which describes it as 'unfortunate' or 'coming at a poor time' is insufficient. Violations of human rights are 'unprofessional' and 'unacceptable.' Never leave any room for

[163]"U.S. Major Eric Buckland's statement (typed) of prior knowledge of Jesuit murders, addendum, polygraph report, and retraction of original prior knowledge statement." Document. January 1990. Digital Commonwealth, https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth-oai:xw42ng911 (accessed February 01, 2021)

[164]Ibid.

[165]Buckland, Eric W., "Transcript of interview with U.S. Major Eric Buckland regarding Jesuit murders," Moakley Archive & Institute, accessed January 31, 2021, https://moakleyarchive.omeka.net/items/show/3893.

interpretation of your stance."[166]

6.6 Conclusion

I have argued that policymakers were aware of the potential of military advisors to influence the Salvadoran military and thought carefully about whether to deploy them as part of the overall intervention. Both Carter and Reagan decided to deploy advisors because of the Salvadoran military's low military capacity and low preference alignment with the United States. The political costs to sending advisors were high for both the Carter and Reagan administrations, who cautiously considered ways to limit public visibility even though these restrictions lowered the overall effectiveness of the mission. I also demonstrated that advisors were aware of their roles of monitoring and influencing, and the interview and archival data I collected show their ability to fulfill these roles. While the conflict in El Salvador was still a "dirty war" until the end, relative to the counterfactual without their presence, evidence suggests that advisors improved the situation through monitoring and influencing their counterparts.

The monitoring and influencing roles of advisors, however, were limited. Policymakers did not embed US advisors in the brigades until 1984, and US advisors were not allowed to accompany Salvadoran soldiers into combat. US advisors had to rely on information gleaned in the pre- and post- operational stages instead of first-hand observation. Sometimes US advisors did not learn about human rights abuses during operations when they should have, but the evidence indicates that the US government still knew plenty about the actions of the Salvadoran military and security services. Advisors described "having a finger on the pulse" where little could be kept from them. When monitoring failed, it was not because of a lack of information but the reluctance of the US government to actually follow through on withholding aid when the Salvadoran military committed human rights abuses.

[166] United States Southern Command, "Reporting Human Rights Violations," 1990, El Salvador Collections, DNSA.

Similarly, the inability of advisors to accompany their counterparts into combat and the strong aversion that some Salvadoran officers had to being watched and advised by an American sometimes limited the influence of advisors. Nonetheless, many US advisors felt they forged close relationships with their counterparts and influenced them over time. Some evidence suggests that their Salvadoran counterparts became attune to the logic of consequences, if not the logic of appropriateness, and reformed their actions. But reform was tenuous and frequently reversed throughout the entire war, and US advisors worked with the most troublesome units on only an ad hoc basis. Further, some advisors that worked with these units "went native" and no longer represented US interests when interacting with their counterparts.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

> *You can do things with what you would call an advisory effort that Americans don't care about, will never see, are easy to explain. If something goes wrong, there's always somebody lower down you can blame. And people aren't watching caskets come home from Dover and watching funerals at Arlington because it doesn't impact them.*
>
> — US military advisor to El Salvador, Interviewee 13

This dissertation examines why great powers send military advisors to work with local militaries during conflict and the circumstances in which this form of intervention is likely to occur. When intervening in a civil war, how can great powers induce their weaker local partners to do what they want? Existing literature uses principal-agent theory to argue that principals can gain their agents' compliance by consistently rewarding them for good behavior and punishing them for bad behavior.[1] I argue that intervening states frequently rely on a different, overlooked tool to manage local partners: sending military advisors to directly shape their militaries. Advisors don't just build military capacity. They also play an important political role by monitoring and influencing the local military. Advisors first gain access to their local counterparts by providing value as military capacity-builders, which

[1] Berman and Lake, *Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence through Local Agents*; Ladwig III, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency*.

creates the proximity needed to monitor. Over time, they develop and leverage their personal relationships with local counterparts, shaping local approaches to issues such as human rights and civil-military relations.

The dissertation also suggests a different framework to view great power influence over weaker actors in general. My research shows how powerful states can influence weaker actors not only through carrots or sticks but also through personal relationships on the ground. Influence is not exclusively bought at the level of strategic incentives; it is also a local process carried out by individuals. I provide a theoretical contribution by theorizing how powerful states use training and advising as a conduit of influence at the local level over other militaries. This furthers our understanding of when great powers have leverage over weaker partners – a persistent problem in proxy war and alliance relationships alike.

It is equally important to be clear about what this dissertation does not attempt to do. It is not a general theory of when states resort to proxy war and the goals they hope to accomplish. The point of my formal model is to highlight why great powers, due to the interests they construct for themselves, will often choose to work with proxies with whom they have serious disagreements. These disagreements run the gamut from questions of military strategy to the treatment of civilians or captured opponents, though disagreements vary in each case of proxy war depending on the unique relationship between the intervener and its proxy. This dissertation advances a new argument about how advisors can help interveners gain more influence over their proxies after they have already decided to intervene.

This dissertation is also not a general theory of great power influence over proxies or proxy compliance. Proxies have a myriad of reasons when and why they comply with specific intervener requests. Great powers have additional tools besides advisors to influence their proxies' behavior, aid conditionality being one of the chief alternatives. I view advisors as a tool that complements these other forms of influence over proxies. Advisors also remedy the informational asymmetry that is a key obstacle to implementing better policies of aid conditionality.

This chapter first summarizes key findings and assesses overall support for the theory. The second section address implications for other forms of advising, including alliance building under great power competition. The third section examines the implications of my findings for intervener responsibility during conflict and democratic accountability of the use of force. The fourth section provides implications for policy. The fifth section provides implications for scholarship and the final section concludes.

7.1 Summary of main findings

Military advisors are usually thought of as mere technical experts that build military capacity, but they do much more. I first theorize the role of military advisors as a means for principals to monitor their local agents. Using a formal model of delegation, I show that principals will often invest in costly monitoring to learn more about their local agents, which is common in principal-agent theory from economics but not in the literature on proxy war. Principals are particularly likely to invest in monitoring when they lack alternatives to working with a poor quality agent. Monitoring, though costly, increases the proxy's overall level of compliance, generating better results than even the perfect and complete information case. Through monitoring, advisors provide high-quality information that makes it possible for the intervener to condition rewards and punishments on the local partner's behavior, to select better officers to lead the local military, and to identify and address issues of defense reform at the strategic level.

Second, I theorize military advisors as a key means of influence over other militaries, expanding the role of advisors from a static to a dynamic setting. Since formal modeling has limitations in this dynamic setting, I develop the theory without a model, drawing on literature from sociology. States send military advisors to act as conduits of influence over a local military. Over time, advisors develop personal relationships with their local counterparts, setting the stages for advisors to exert influence over topics from the conduct

of military operations to human rights and civil-military relations. While their influence operates within the constraints of the overall strategic relationship between the intervener and proxy, advisors can play the same role for the proxy's military as diplomats do for its government, nudging it toward better outcomes. Archival evidence on US intervention in Vietnam, and interviews with 28 current and former US military advisors, show that both policymakers and advisors themselves concur that advisors play this political role.

I test empirical implications from my theory using an original quantitative dataset of interventions with military advisors in civil wars by the United States, China, France, the United Kingdom, or the Soviet Union/Russia between 1946 and 2019. I find strong evidence that advisors are sent more often when the proxy's military capacity is low (unless the proxy is a rebel group, in which case interveners tend to prefer working with stronger rebel groups). I also find some evidence that interveners send advisors more often when the proxy's preference alignment is low, although the off-the-shelf data I use to measure preference alignment captures the overall affinity between intervener and proxy rather than the specific issues that they disagree over in the conflict itself. I also find evidence that interventions with military advisors last longer than those with other kinds of assistance, and are especially likely to last longer when the intervener has a formal alliance with the government side in the civil war. These findings suggest that interveners are more committed to a proxy when they intervene with military advisors than with other forms of assistance.

Although my theory is focused on why interveners send advisors and what they ask them to do, I also use the quantitative data I collected to evaluate how advisors affect conflict duration, human rights, and civil-military relations when they are part of an intervention. I first highlight how it is difficult to fully evaluate the monitoring implication of my theory using cross-national data on intervention, since interveners vary widely across conflicts and across time in terms of what they ask their proxies to do.[2] Democratic interveners, for

[2]Eric Rittinger. "Arming the Other: American Small Wars, Local Proxies, and the Social Construction of the Principal-Agent Problem". In: *International Studies Quarterly* 61.2 (June 1, 2017), pp. 396–409. ISSN: 0020-8833. DOI: 10.1093/isq/sqx021. URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqx021 (visited on 03/15/2021), See the following for more on how interveners' concept of agency problem is constructed and

instance, are more likely than autocratic interveners to be concerned about human rights when they intervene in a conflict. But I find that democratic interveners are associated with a decrease in human rights when they intervene with advisors, suggesting that qualitative research on how human rights often takes a back seat to other US priorities, especially during the Cold War, is correct.[3] I do find some evidence that when interveners face a human rights lobby they are more likely to prioritize human rights in their interventions. In general, advisors sent to support governments decrease human rights; advisors sent to the rebels have no such effect. I also examine the effect of advisor deployments on conflict duration and civil-military relations during conflict. I find that conflicts are longer when advisors intervene, perhaps because they tend to be sent to strengthen weak governments that otherwise would have sued for peace. The most positive findings about the effects of advisors are that they seem to slightly decrease the probability of coups or coup attempts when working with a local government, although the effect of advisors seems little different from the overall stabilizing effect of pro-government support from interveners.

A qualitative case study on US intervention in El Salvador (1979-89) explores in greater detail the causes and mechanisms of intervention with military advisors. It also provides archival evidence to evaluate the theory's predictions about how interveners manage war with local agents. I find that policymakers were aware of the potential of military advisors to influence the Salvadoran military and thought carefully about whether to deploy them as part of the overall intervention. The political costs to sending advisors were high for both the Carter and Reagan administrations, who cautiously considered ways to limit public visibility even though these restrictions lowered the overall effectiveness of the mission. I also demonstrate that most advisors thought their key role was to restrain the Salvadoran military from committing human rights abuses through monitoring and influencing their counterparts on the ground. While the conflict in El Salvador was still a "dirty war" until the end, relative to the counterfactual without their presence, evidence suggests that advisors improved the

changes over time:

[3]See, for example: Sikkink, *Mixed Signals*.

situation through monitoring and influencing their counterparts. These findings suggest that the effects of advisors on repression and civil-military relations will highly depend on how interveners use them.

7.2 Implications for other kinds of advising

How might my theory apply to other forms of training and advising? In this section, I examine implications of my theory for three additional kinds of training and advising: intervention by regional powers, military coalitions, and training and advising for alliances and conventional deterrence.

7.2.1 Regional powers

Although I did not collect data on interventions by regional powers in my dataset,[4] data from the UCDP External Support dataset (1975-2009)[5] shows that regional powers frequently provide training to combatants in a civil war. Pakistan, for example, trained combatants in 12 different conflicts during the period covered in the dataset, while Libya and India provided training in 11 and 7 conflicts, respectively. Cuba, despite its lack of regional power status, also intervened quite extensively with training during the Cold War, providing support in 15 different conflicts according to UCDP data. I expect interventions by regional powers with military advisors to follow a similar logic to those conducted by great powers. Regional interveners will still have their own interests to uphold in an intervention, will often be more powerful than other state proxies or non-state actors, and will be interested in managing the conflict instead of simply providing aid or arms without conditions. Whenever a power

[4]However, some of the 5 countries in my dataset were regional powers instead of great powers for some of the years between 1946-2019. During the Cold War when China actually conducted interventions with military advisors, it was without a doubt only a regional power rather than a great power. In the 1990s, Russia was most appropriately classified as a regional power, as well. I also collected some data on interventions by Cuba and Egypt when they were closely linked to Soviet interventions with military advisors, although I do not include those observations in my dataset.

[5]Högbladh, Pettersson, and Themnér, "External support in armed conflict 1975–2009: Presenting new data".

differential between the supporter and proxy exists, along with a desire to manage the conflict, interveners will often resort to deploying military advisors to both build military capacity and guide and direct the proxy.

Two such cases of training and advising by regional powers – South Africa's intervention in Angola and India's support of the Liberation Tamil Tiger of Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka – are discussed by Groh (2019).[6] When intervening in Angola, South Africa sent a team of military volunteers headed by a lieutenant colonel to train and advise UNITA. The objectives given to the advisors were to "train two UNITA brigades, provide strategic and operational guidance, stop MPLA and Cuban forces from taking Huambo, avoid casualties, and ensure that South Africa's assistance remained plausibly deniable."[7] These objectives show some of the same themes from intervention by great powers with military advisors: a recognition of advisors as a means to provide operational guidance to a proxy force as well as a sensitivity to the costs of advisor casualties or the intervention itself becoming public knowledge. In the latter case, India used training camps across the border for Tamil militant groups but did not send advisors to train, advise, or accompany the LTTE in combat. Perhaps unsurprisingly given its lack of on-the-ground presence, India struggled to manage the LTTE. When the LTTE refused to disarm when India sought to broker a peace settlement, India had to deploy a large peacekeeping force to Sri Lanka, bypassing the proxy in favor of direct intervention.[8]

7.2.2 Coalitions and alliance politics

Advisors are also commonly deployed in the context of an intervention involving coalitions of interveners, usually between a more powerful intervener and several less powerful states. In Afghanistan and Iraq, for instance, the NATO allies, like Poland or Canada, contributed military advisors as part of their contribution to the overall coalition. During the Cold War, members of the Warsaw Pact intervened together in this way, with the Soviet Union

[6]Groh, *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option*, pp. 157–200.
[7]Groh, *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option*, p. 171.
[8]Groh, *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option*, pp. 193–197.

providing the majority of the financial support and East Germany providing military advisors (UCDP data shows that East Germany provided training support in 11 different conflicts, all of these interventions alongside the Soviet Union). Why do states send advisors as part of military coalitions? Unlike deployments of advisors by great powers, the reason smaller states send advisors as part of coalitions seems rooted in alliance politics. Powerful states use diplomacy to craft military coalitions with contributions from other states.[9] Smaller allies get side payments for their participation as well as the opportunity to curry favor with the stronger members of the alliance who actually provide the majority of the alliance's military capability. States are particularly likely to engage in cooperative alliance activities when they want the alliance relationship to be closer than it already is.[10] When a great power intervenes with advisors or other forms of intervention, the decisions of smaller states to enter as well depend on their relationships with the great power "first mover." I expect the considerations of alliance politics to determine the decisions of smaller states to send advisors as part of coalitions, rather than the theory I have advanced in this dissertation.

Advisor deployments by the great powers also are sometimes driven by the politics of an intervener-proxy alliance. As I discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, great powers might send advisors to demonstrate commitment to an ally or partner. Since advisors are costly to send and imply greater cooperation between the proxy's military and the great power's military, they can send a signal of reassurance. Advisors I interviewed repeatedly stated they thought their counterparts viewed their presence as a "demonstration of our commitment to the country"[11] and "a defined commitment to help them achieve success."[12] As valuable signals of support to the proxy, advisors may risk getting the intervener further entrapped when preference alignment is low, since they reveal the proxy's importance to the intervener and

[9]Marina E Henke. "The politics of diplomacy: How the United States builds multilateral military coalitions". In: *International Studies Quarterly* 61.2 (2017), pp. 410–424.

[10]J Andrés Gannon and Daniel Kent. "Keeping Your Friends Close, but Acquaintances Closer: Why Weakly Allied States Make Committed Coalition Partners". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65.5 (2021), pp. 889–918.

[11]*Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.*

[12]*Interview with US military advisor to Ukraine.* In collab. with Interviewee 4. Nov. 2, 2020.

perhaps decrease its leverage. On the other hand, when preference alignment is high, advisors could strengthen the relationship between intervener and proxy by serving as a signal of the intervener's willingness to keep working with the proxy and compensate it for its effort.

7.2.3 Peacetime training and advising

My work on advisors also has implications for peacetime training and advising between great powers and other states. Great powers may choose to train and advise other militaries during peacetime as a form of public diplomacy,[13] to build defense institutions in partner states for the purposes of capability aggregation,[14] but also to further overall political and security goals, such as support for democracy, good governance, and human rights.[15] This logic for why great powers conduct training and advising during peacetime overlaps to some extent with the purpose of military advisors when deployed during conflict. When allocating scarce resources for defense diplomacy and security assistance, states often choose to strengthen the capacity of the weakest states to prevent against internal conflict,[16] much as they do during conflict, even though stronger states build military capacity much more easily.[17] Advisors sent during peacetime are therefore also tasked with building military capacity under challenging circumstances and will encounter political problems similar to those of proxy war, such as corruption, human rights abuses, and undemocratic civil-military relations. Advisors must also rely on personal relationships with their counterparts to influence them as part of defense cooperation during peacetime. I expect the sending of advisors, their tasks, and methods of influence to be similar during peacetime deployments to what I have described in this dissertation.

[13] Atkinson, *Military soft power*.

[14] Chinchilla and Poast, "Defense Institution Building from Above? Lessons from the Baltic Experience".

[15] Andrew Cottey. *Reshaping defence diplomacy: New roles for military cooperation and assistance*. Routledge, 2013.

[16] See the wide range of literature on the problem of building military capacity in weak states.Kathleen J McInnis and Nathan J Lucas. "What is building partner capacity issues for congress". In: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.. 2015

[17] Christopher Paul et al. *What works best when building partner capacity in challenging contexts*. Rand Corporation, 2015.

My theory, then, has implications for how advisors can influence their counterparts and the design of future peacetime advising missions. For advisors to maximize their influence over their counterparts, they should be embedded at every level of a proxy military for a sufficiently long time to establish and develop close personal relationships. I expect that military exercises, while useful for focusing the attention of advisors and their counterparts on the same task, will be too short to build a meaningful connection. Advisors will have a more challenging time building connections in the first place during peacetime because they cannot participate in combat with their counterpart, which I argued focuses the attention of both parties and helps them bond. If great powers want to actually shape local militaries using peacetime deployments of military advisors, prolonged and consistent engagement through face-to-face interactions will be needed.

7.3 Implications for the ethics of proxy war

This dissertation described a form of proxy war in which interveners take a "hands-on approach" to working with a local proxy, placing advisors in a position where they can intimately observe and potentially influence the proxy's day-to-day prosecution of the war. This immediately raises questions about the ethics of providing such support to proxies, many of whom commit serious crimes against humanity or other acts of repression against civilians. The ethics of proxy war is a broad topic, so I address potential implications of my dissertation for one area: intervener culpability for the proxy's conduct of war. I do not address more generally questions of *jus ad bellum*, or whether it is ethical to use proxies in the first place.[18] Next, I examine the implications of the "hands-on" nature yet limited public visibility of interventions with military advisors for debates about democratic accountability of the use of force in the United States.

[18]For a discussion of proxy war ethics more broadly, see: C Anthony Pfaff. "Proxy war ethics". In: *J. Nat'l Sec. L. & Pol'y* 9 (2017), p. 305.

7.3.1 Intervener culpability

Are interveners responsible for the human rights abuses or crimes against humanity that their proxies commit? Existing scholarship provides a complicated set of answers. It is important to first differentiate between moral and legal responsibility for the proxy's actions. Pfaff argues for an intuitive understanding of intervener culpability that is a lower bar than some of the legal standards. According to Pfaff, an intervener would be morally responsible for the proxy's actions if it had a causal effect on their commission, even if it did not intend the harm caused by the proxy.[19] While acknowledging the difference between a moral and a legal definition of intervener responsibility, I focus on the potential legal responsibility of interveners, before circling back to the moral implications of these legal standards.

To be responsible for a non-state proxy's actions, the intervener must have some degree of control over them, what is known as effective control.[20] There are multiple competing standards for what constitutes effective control. The doctrine of effective control as outlined by the International Court of Justice in the case of US support for the Contras is a rather high bar for intervener culpability; to be responsible for the war crimes of the Contras, a US source would have had to give orders before a specific operation and have "operational or tactical control" over the proxy.[21] The International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY), in contrast, applied a lower bar for effective control to Yugoslavia's use of Serbian proxies: Yugoslavia had "overall control" over proxy forces, "organizing, coordinating, and planning of surrogate operations without having direct control over particular surrogate tactical action."[22] However, the Court explicitly rejected the "overall control" test for the purposes of attributing states' responsibility for non-state proxies.[23]

[19]Pfaff, "Proxy war ethics".

[20]Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate warfare: the transformation of war in the twenty-first century*.

[21]Pfaff, "Proxy war ethics"; Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate warfare: the transformation of war in the twenty-first century*, p. 157.

[22]Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate warfare: the transformation of war in the twenty-first century*, p. 158.

[23]The American Bar Association. *The Legal Framework Regulating Proxy Warfare*. Dec. 2019. URL: https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/human_rights/chr-proxy-warfare-report-2019.pdf.

When the intervener's special operations forces (SOF) are partnered with local forces, the effective control test for responsibility for proxy actions requires the existence of a superior/ subordinate relationship, which can be either *de jure* or *de facto*, between members of the intervener's military and the local proxy force. Previous international court rulings have suggested that influence through force of personality alone is insufficient to constitute *de facto* control over local forces. Military advisors may have a lot of influence over proxy forces but few means to stop them from disobeying their requests or orders, indicating they usually do not have a superior/subordinate relationship with proxy forces.[24] My findings generally support this argument. Recall the military advisor that claimed he was the "de facto company commander" of a proxy unit.[25] Despite exercising substantial influence over the day-to-day operations of the proxy military unit (the actual commander chose to allow it), he was unable to stop them from carrying out an ill-advised mission[26] since he was not the actual commander of the unit. The only option he had was to report the planned mission to his US chain of command. In other cases, however, where military advisors actually command proxy units as British advisors did when intervening in Oman during the Cold War[27] it is possible the effective control standard could be met.

Moreover, effective control is not the only standard that could apply to advisors with significant influence over proxy units. One could also argue it is far too high a bar. Other standards such as aiding and abetting crimes could apply. Advisors "have a general legal duty to detach and withdraw further military aid from surrogates if the team has actual knowledge that the surrogates have a criminal purpose to commit war crimes. If it does not do so, then a team might be held criminally liable under aiding and abetting type theories for any war crimes later committed by the surrogates."[28] Advisors may well develop actual

[24]Gregory Raymond Bart. "Special Operations Forces and Responsibility for Surrogates' War Crimes". In: *Harv. Nat'l Sec. J.* 5 (2014), p. 513.

[25]*Interview with US advisor to Iraq.*

[26]Just to clarify – my interlocutor did not claim the proxy force intended to commit a war crime, just that he thought the mission was unnecessary and unlikely to be successful.

[27]Ladwig III, "Supporting allies in counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion:"

[28]Bart, "Special Operations Forces and Responsibility for Surrogates' War Crimes".

knowledge while executing their orders to monitor the local military.

Other international legal standards besides effective control can also be applied to intervening states. States have treaty obligations under Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions to "ensure respect" for the Conventions, which requires them "to both refrain from assisting or encouraging others to violate international humanitarian law and a requirement to take steps, to the degree possible, to prevent violations of the Conventions."[29] If the proxy is a state, interveners also face responsibility for aiding and abetting the wrongful actions of another state. A state may be responsible for another state's wrongful act when: "(1) the state aids or assists another state in the commission of an internationally wrongful act; (2) such aid or assistance contributes to the commission of that act; (3) the assisting state has the intention to facilitate and/or knowledge of the circumstances of the internationally wrongful act; and (4) the recipient state's act would also be wrongful if committed by the assisting state."[30] The ambiguity centers around the second and third criteria, particularly what constitutes knowledge of the circumstances and the propensity for the recipient state to commit such acts in the future.

I do not intend to adjudicate between conflicting standards of what it means to have knowledge that the proxy committed illegal acts. Nevertheless, my work on the monitoring role of embedded advisors implies that interveners often receive good information about the proxy's past war crimes or even their future intentions to commit war crimes. When advisors are present in large numbers and accompany local forces into combat, the intervener's knowledge about the proxy's actions will be extensive. Therefore, my work suggests that interveners could be more likely to be legally responsible for a proxy's actions when they have a large number of embedded advisors on the ground.

[29]The American Bar Association, *The Legal Framework Regulating Proxy Warfare*.
[30]The American Bar Association, *The Legal Framework Regulating Proxy Warfare*.

7.3.2 The culpability/effectiveness trade-off

Having outlined the potential legal responsibility of the intervener for the proxy's actions, the question arises: how might interveners alter their behavior based on potential legal culpability? If the intervener takes steps to reduce its culpability, what effect might that have on the proxy's propensity to violate human rights? My findings show that in order to restrain a proxy from violating international human rights law, an intervener must become deeply involved in the proxy military's affairs with embedded advisors. However, this risks implicating the intervener in the proxy's human rights abuses in popular opinion and potentially also legally under effective control.

In popular opinion, interveners with advisors present on the ground appear more responsible for what their proxies do than they would if they merely funded the conflict. Faced with public disapproval of their proxy's human rights abuses, interveners may try to hide their culpability by removing military advisors and providing aid and arms only, rather than actually withdrawing from the conflict. But, in doing so, they lose a key means to influence the proxy's behavior. This is what I call the trade-off between culpability and effectiveness: the only way to intervene yet improve the situation is to become more culpable by embedding advisors. Effective control standards thus "establish perverse incentives that encourage states to employ proxies while discouraging them from moderating proxy behavior, since any attempt at moderation could imply effective control."[31]

As individuals working with proxy forces, advisors often struggle with this culpability/ effectiveness trade-off and the ethics of their involvement. When they uncover evidence of past war crimes that indicate the proxy could commit similar crimes in the future, should they stop working with the proxy or attempt to change its behavior? I previously quoted an advisor to El Salvador who learned that the proxy force he was working with committed a war crime:

[31] Pfaff, "Proxy war ethics".

> I became aware of an atrocity out in the Sonsonate area and thought that I should probably pull my guys out of there. I went to the MILGP and ended up talking with the MILGP ops officer, a Lieutenant Colonel at the time. He was a special forces officer, an old Vietnam guy. And he said, let's go talk about this. And we went over to British club and had some fish and chips and a beer. And essentially what he said is 'You can pull your guys out of there, but then who's going to change how they act'?[32]

In other words, when the potential proxy is a human rights violator, interventions that require advisors to work closely with the local military could be more likely to reduce overall levels of violations than those that merely fund the conflict. Intervention could be an opportunity to restrain the proxy, if the intervener makes it a priority. But if the intervener enters the conflict and sends military advisors to monitor and influence the proxy, it becomes more morally and potentially legally culpable for any future crimes the proxy commits because it has both knowledge and some degree of control over its proxy.

7.3.3 Democratic accountability of the use of force

My work also has implications for ongoing debates about democratic accountability of the use of force in the United States. The first implication is that advisors are easy to deploy with limited input from the public. The degree to which the public will support the intervention is a critical factor in whether a great power decides to intervene and how they intervene. This is especially true in democracies. US presidents, for example, often choose proxy support with military advisors when they know the American public will not support deploying combat troops. Sending combat troops invokes the War Powers Act, which allows Congress to limit when American troops are deployed into hostilities. In contrast, as the recent US support for Saudi intervention in Yemen shows,[33] presidents have typically interpreted the War Powers Act to mean that they can provide aid, arms, and advisors to a party in a conflict without seeking the approval of Congress.

[32] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.*

[33] Scott R. Anderson and Molly E. Reynolds. *Putting the Yemen Resolution in Procedural Context.* 2018. URL: `https://www.lawfareblog.com/putting-yemen-resolution-procedural-context`.

During US intervention in El Salvador, the Reagan administration decided that sending military advisors to El Salvador did not count as an imminent involvement of US personnel in hostilities, particularly because US advisors would not accompany Salvadoran forces into combat.[34] From my interviews with US military advisors who served in El Salvador, it is clear that US personnel frequently came under fire as part of their advising role and did, in fact, sometimes accompany Salvadoran units into combat. By designating military advisors as "trainers" and tightly controlling information about their true role, the Reagan administration was able to maintain support for the intervention despite intense public interest in further limiting the extent of US involvement. US intervention in El Salvador shows that even under the best of circumstances, when the public is interested in reining in an intervention, military advisors present a way for presidents to increase their involvement in conflict abroad with less democratic accountability. Congress can exert more influence in defining the scope of the intervention by controlling and limiting its funding. However, Congress to date has largely supported interventions with advisors, SOF, or air power because they have very low public visibility (see the epigraph to this chapter).

My work has related implications for civil-military relations in the intervening state. It shows that the intervener's military is essential to influence a local military, since the capacity-building role of advisors opens the door for the possibility of influence. The use of the military in a central soldier-diplomat role in contemporary conflict with local proxies perhaps contributes to what some have observed is the ongoing dominance of the military in contemporary US decision-making about intervention.[35]

7.4 Policy implications

My work provides four main implications for the foreign policy and grand strategy of great powers. First, optimism around proxy war as a cheap and effective means of conflict

[34]Michael J Garcia. "War Powers Litigation Initiated by Members of Congress Since the Enactment of the War Powers Resolution". In: Congressional Research Service. 2012.

[35]Risa Brooks, Jim Golby, and Heidi Urben. "Crisis of Command". In: *Foreign Aff.* 100 (2021), p. 64.

is unwarranted. Great powers should be aware of how they typically tend to craft interventions with military advisors, choosing the weakest proxies for intensive intervention when other options are off the table – the exact conditions when they have the least leverage. Even modest increases in influence over such proxies requires substantial commitments from interveners in terms of time and military advisors. As my case study on US intervention in El Salvador shows, the US effort to restrain the Salvadoran military while simultaneously building lethal capacity was long, difficult, and led to comparatively modest payoffs in the end. It required targeted application of aid conditionality as well as embedding advisors in the brigades, which increased the political cost of intervention.

Second, when an intervener is willing to commit the time and effort, advisors can be a useful tool of influence over other militaries. They are most successful when embedded throughout a local military with the specific mandate to advocate for painful reforms and are supported by diplomatic efforts from the sending state. My research speaks directly to how the design and execution of potential interventions can be improved, as well as when they are likely to fail. My case study on El Salvador suggests that when interveners seek to limit human rights abuses against civilians, proxy war with military advisors can make the conduct of war more humane. But my analysis of cross-national data shows that these positive improvements in human welfare are the exception rather than the rule. Conflicts with advisors deployed last longer and have higher levels of repression, although advisors do seem to have a small positive effect on civil-military relations by decreasing the probability of coups and coup attempts. For the design of future interventions, El Salvador shows us that the interveners interested in restraining a proxy should refrain from building capacity without assigning embedded advisors throughout the proxy military. These advisors should have explicit instructions to monitor and influence their counterparts. Embedding advisors throughout a local military and permitting them to accompany local forces in combat will increase the political costs of any intervention that is highly visible to the public, but it is necessary to improve control over local forces. Policymakers must also follow up on informa-

tion received through monitoring and actually enforce consequences for human rights abuses or other misbehavior, though states will struggle to do this consistently whenever they can't walk away.

Third, advisors are still needed to manage conflict despite modern military technology, such as precision-guided munitions and drones. The data I collected show that great power involvement in proxy wars has accelerated in the past two decades as new technology offers more control over direct combat operations without requiring states to commit ground combat troops. Yet my work shows that without advisors on the ground and diplomatic pressure on the proxy, great powers cannot influence the political conditions that determine whether proxy war is ultimately successful. Despite modern air power, military advisors are still needed on the ground to manage the proxy and help it interface with technology.

Finally, advisors as a mechanism of influence over other militaries can be be useful for building connections and increasing capability for conventional deterrence as part of a traditional alliance relationship. As the United States competes with China, military advising will be at the forefront of efforts to build the militaries of key US allies throughout Asia and strengthen their ties to the United States. My research speaks directly to how the design and execution of future interventions with military advisors, as well as military advising during peacetime, can be improved. First, the United States will need to embed advisors at every level of a local military for a sufficiently long time to establish and develop close personal relationships. Advising should focus on reforms at the strategic level instead of merely training at the tactical level, and advisor rotations should last for years, not weeks or months.[36] Second, the selection of countries for defense cooperation should be improved, reorienting from the weakest states to stronger states that are the most willing and able to build capacity. In conventional deterrence, it will be the strongest allies that count. Furthermore, since building meaningful influence over local militaries is time and resource-intensive, defense cooperation would have better effects if it were more selective and concentrated rather than

[36]See the following for more details on how such an intensive approach to advising could work: Nance, *Getting advising right: the Army needs a fundamentally different approach to building partner forces.*

geared toward increasing the size of the United States' proverbial Rolodex.

7.5 Implications for scholarship

My research provides three main contributions to political science literature. First, I provide a contribution by theorizing how powerful states use training and advising as a conduit of influence over other militaries. This furthers our understanding of when great powers have leverage over weaker partners – a persistent problem in proxy war and alliance relationships alike. My research shows how powerful states can influence weaker actors not only through carrots or sticks but also through personal relationships on the ground. By conceptualizing military advisors as a certain kind of defense diplomacy where face-to-face interaction and personal relationships are crucial, I also add to an increasing literature on the effects of individuals, personal relationships, and emotions in international politics and diplomacy.[37]

Second, my work provides untapped empirical evidence on advisors. I do that using a unique set of interviews with 28 US military advisors who served in conflicts from Vietnam to Afghanistan (1970-2018) and 1 civilian policymaker, and archival documents on military advisors during US intervention in El Salvador collected from the Reagan and Carter Presidential Libraries and the National Security Archive, as well as on US military advisors in Vietnam collected from the National Archives and Records Administration. I also provide a quantitative empirical contribution with an original dataset of great power intervention in civil wars with military advisors from 1946-2019. I significantly expand the temporal scope of data from Regan (2002) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2009) as well as collect additional disaggregated data on in-country military advising during civil wars. My work thus provides empirical evidence to evaluate both policymaker intentions and what advisors

[37]Hall and Yarhi-Milo, "The personal touch: Leaders' impressions, costly signaling, and assessments of sincerity in international affairs"; Holmes, *Face-to-face diplomacy: Social neuroscience and international relations*; Keys and Yorke, "Personal and Political Emotions in the Mind of the Diplomat"; Barkawi, ""Defence diplomacy" in north-south relations", See for example:

experience on the ground. My research extends beyond the US-centric approach of the current literature on proxy wars and military advising with the quantitative data I collected on intervention by other great powers such Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom.

Third, my work speaks to ongoing research agendas on the effects of third party intervention on conflict. Although my research is focused on the causes and mechanisms of intervention with military advisors, my empirical results suggest advisors can actually have a negative effect on conflict, increasing its duration and the levels of repression by supported governments. This contributes to the literature's increasing focus on understanding the consequences of different kinds of support for proxies on outcomes such as repression. I also contribute to a growing literature on the link between civil conflict and coups, showing that intervention in support of the government during a civil war may contribute to regime stability just like positive signals of support during peacetime do. Furthermore, my research suggests that intervention with advisors need not always have these negative effects: they can improve human rights and civil-military relations when deployed if interveners make this a priority, especially when combined with persistent diplomatic pressure on the local partner.

7.6 Conclusion

This dissertation by necessity left a number of important, related topics unaddressed and many opportunities remain for future research. A fruitful area for future research is on the effects of advisors on conflict. For example, future research could examine the causal effect of advisors on human rights and civil-military relations by taking advantage of sub-national and temporal variation in advisor deployments. It could also examine why interveners tend to care about human rights and civil-military relations in some interventions more than others, and when advisors can be most effective as a tool of influence when interveners seek to rein in a proxy who violates human rights. In addition, it is important to study whether reforms

made in response to intervener pressure persist after conflict ends. The data I collected suggest that they might, as interveners often maintain their presence in countries long after conflict ends.

This dissertation sought to examine the difficult problem of how great powers gain influence over a local military who fights as proxy on their behalf. Often the proxy abuses human rights, wastes aid, and opposes direction from the intervener. I argue that intervening states frequently rely on military advisors as a key tool to shape a local military by monitoring and influencing it. While interveners send advisors to play these roles, advisors could have (un)intended consequences on conflict outcomes. On average, advisors are associated with longer conflicts and more government repression – even if the intervener is a democracy. While this negative effect was strongest during the Cold War, it remains today, although this dissertation suggests advisors can reduce repression when interveners make that a priority. Advisors are deployed all over the world conducting "foreign policy at the very tip of the spear," as one of my interviewees put it.[38] Above all, this dissertation asks us to consider the local and personal means of influence and how states should use them.

[38] *Interview with US military advisor to El Salvador.* In collab. with Interviewee 15. Mar. 2, 2020.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix to Chapter 2

A.1 Formal proofs

A.1.1 Assumption 1: Need for delegation

Assumption 1. ***Need for delegation:*** *Combat is sufficiently costly; otherwise, any strategy involving direct intervention or escalation would strictly dominate proxy support. That is, given strategies $s_i, s_i' \in S_i$, let $s_i = (\textit{Direct intervention}, a_2)$ and let $s_i' = (\textit{Proxy support}, a_2)$. If the cost of combat $c < (1-\pi)\beta$, then $u_I(s_i, s_{-i}) > u_I(s_i', s_{-i})$ for all $s_{-i} \in S_{-i}$.*

Proof. Assume not.

1. For the Intervener to choose proxy support if $c < (1-\pi)\beta$, then it must be the case that I's expected utility from proxy support is higher than I's expected utility from direction intervention (that is, any of I's strategies involving $a_I^1 = \textit{Directintervention}$), $EU_I(DI, *) \leq EU_I(DI, PS, PS)$, or $\beta - c \leq \beta\pi - x$.

2. $\beta - c \leq \beta\pi - x \implies (1-\pi)\beta + x \leq c$. Given that $x \geq 0$, this is a contradiction.

3. Therefore, it must be the case that if the cost of combat $c < (1-\pi)\beta$, then $u_I(s_i, s_{-i}) > u_I(s_i', s_{-i})$ for all $s_{-i} \in S_{-i}$.

□

A.1.2 Assumption 2: Proxy prefers autonomy

Assumption 2. ***Proxy prefers autonomy:*** *The Proxy prefers autonomy in warfighting: it will always be weakly worse off if the Intervener sends in combat troops than if it chose some other strategy. That is, for $s_{-i}, s_{-i}' \in S_{-i}$, let $s_{-i} = (\textit{Direct intervention}, a_2, a_3)$. If $R \leq \gamma + s$, then $u_P(s_i, s_{-i}) \leq u_P(s_i, s_{-i}')$ for all $s_i \in S_i$.*

Proof. Assume not.

1. If $R \leq \gamma + s$, for the Proxy to be weakly better off if the Intervener sends in combat troops than if it chose some other strategy it must be the case that, for $s_{-i}, s_{-i}' \in S_{-i}$, let $s_{-i} = (\text{Direct intervention}, a_2)$ then $u_P(s_i, s_{-i}) \geq u_P(s_i, s_{-i}')$ for all $s_i \in S_i$.

2. This implies $\gamma + s - x - t \leq R$. Let $-x - t = 0$. This implies $\gamma + s \leq R$ for some $s_i \in S_i$, a contradiction.

□

A.1.3 Lemma 1

Lemma 1. *In equilibrium, the Proxy sets x equal to its ideal point, $s_P^* = \{t\}$, if the Intervener chooses not to monitor.*

Proof. The solution concept is subgame perfect equilibrium, therefore, both players must in equilibrium play a Nash equilibrium in every subgame. Suppose the Proxy chooses some $s_P^* \neq \{t\}$. For this to be an equilibrium in the subgame without monitoring, it must be the case that $u_i(s_P^*) \geq u_i(s_P, s_I^*)$. However, if the Proxy were to deviate to $s'_P = \{t\}$. $u_i(s'_P, s_I^*)$ would be greater than if $s_P^* \neq \{t\}$. Therefore, $s_P^* \neq \{t\}$ cannot be a strategy profile in equilibrium. □

A.1.4 Lemma 2

Lemma 2. *1. If $c \leq \beta + N$, then*

$$s_I^* = \begin{cases} \textit{PS, Monitor, PS, Escalate} & \textit{if } x \leq x^* \ \& \ x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, Monitor, Escalate, Escalate} & \textit{if } x > x^* \ \& \ x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, } \neg \textit{ Monitor, PS, PS} & \textit{if } x \leq x^* \ \& \ x^{**} < x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, } \neg \textit{ Monitor, Escalate, PS} & \textit{if } x > x^* \ \& \ x^{**} < x^* + m \end{cases}$$

and $x^* \equiv (\pi - 1)\beta + c - m$ is the equilibrium value of x in the subgame with monitoring and $x^{**} = t$ is the equilibrium value of x in the subgame without monitoring.

2. If $c > \beta + N + r$, then

$$s_I^* = \begin{cases} \textit{PS, Monitor, PS, Withdraw} & \textit{if } x \leq x^* \ \& \ x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{No intervention, Monitor, PS, Withdraw} & \textit{if } x^* < x \leq x^* + r \ \& \\ & x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{No intervention, Monitor, Withdraw, Withdraw} & \textit{if } x > x^* + r \ \& \\ & x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, } \neg \textit{ Monitor, PS, PS} & \textit{if } x \leq x^* + r \ \& \ x^{**} < x^* + m \\ \textit{PS, } \neg \textit{ Monitor, Withdraw, PS} & \textit{if } x > x^* + r \ \& \ x^{**} < x^* + m \end{cases}$$

and $x^* \equiv \beta\pi + N - m$ is the equilibrium value of x in the subgame with monitoring and $x^{**} = t$ is the equilibrium value of x in the subgame without monitoring.

Proof. Let x^* be the equilibrium value of x in the subgame with monitoring, and x^{**} be the equilibrium value of x in the subgame without monitoring. If $c \leq \beta + N$, then I will never play a strategy profile where it withdraws in either subgame, because its expected utility will be higher from any profile where it escalates, because $c \leq \beta + N \implies c \leq \beta + N + r$. Therefore:

1. In the subgame with monitoring, $EU_I(\textit{Proxy support}, x^*) \geq EU_I(\textit{Escalate}, x^*)$ if $x^* = (\pi - 1)\beta + c - m$. Therefore, if $x \leq x^*$, I will play the action *Proxy support* in the monitoring subgame, and will *Escalate* if $x > x^*$.

2. In the subgame without monitoring, $EU_I(\textit{Proxy support}, x^{**}) \geq EU_I(Escalate, x^{**})$ if $x^{**} = (\pi - 1)\beta + c$, that is, if $x^{**} = x^* + m$. Therefore, if $x \leq x^{**}$, I will play the action *Proxy support* in the subgame without monitoring, and will *Escalate* if $x > x^{**}$.

3. I will choose to monitor if $x^{**} \geq x^* + m$. This is because if $x^{**} > x^* + m$, I will escalate in the subgame without monitoring, in which case its expected utility will be $\beta - c$, which implies $EU_I(Monitor, x^*) \geq EU_I(\neg Monitor, x^{**})$ given $x \leq x^*$.

4. It follows that I will choose *Proxy support* in the first stage of the game. If $c \leq \beta + N$, then I will never play a strategy profile where it does not intervene, and as the previous step has shown, I prefers proxy support to escalation, which implies I prefers proxy support to direction intervention.

If $c > \beta + N + r$, then I will never play a strategy profile where it escalates in either subgame, because its expected utility will be higher from any profile where it withdraws, because $c > \beta + N + r$:

1. In the subgame with monitoring, $EU_I(\textit{Proxy support}, x \leq x^* + r) \geq EU_I(Withdraw, x > x^* + r)$ if $x^* = \beta\pi + N - m$. Therefore, if $x \leq x^* + r$, I will play the action *Proxy support* in the monitoring subgame, and will *Withdraw* if $x > x^* + r$.

2. In the subgame without monitoring, $EU_I(\textit{Proxy support}, x^{**} + r) \geq EU_I(Withdraw, x^{**} + r)$ if $x^{**} = \beta\pi + N$, that is, if $x^{**} = x^* + m$. Therefore, if $x \leq x^{**} + r$, I will play the action *Proxy support* in the subgame without monitoring, and will *Withdraw* if $x > x^{**} + r$.

3. I will choose to monitor if $x^{**} \geq x^* + m$. This is because $EU_I(Monitor, x^*) \geq EU_I(\neg Monitor, x^{**})$ if $x^{**} > x^* + m$.

4. It is clear that I will never withdraw since not intervening in the first stage will always dominate a strategy profile that involves proxy support and then withdraw. This is because $I's$ payoff for non-intervention, $-N$ is always greater than its payoff for withdrawal, $-N - r$. Therefore, if in the subgame equilibria described previously, $x^* < x < x^* + r$ or $x^{**} > x^* + m$, I will choose not to intervene. Otherwise, contingent on I playing the subgame equilibria described in the previous steps, I will choose proxy support in the first move.

□

A.1.5 Lemma 3

Lemma 3. *Let s_I be as defined in Lemma 2. In equilibrium:*

1. *Let $x_1^* \equiv (\pi - 1)\beta + c - m$. Then $s_P^* = min\{x_1^*, t\}$ implies $R - \gamma - s + t \leq x_1^* \leq t$.*
2. *Let $x_2^* \equiv \beta\pi + N - m$. Then $s_P^* = min\{x_2^*, t\}$ implies $t - s \leq x_2^* \leq t$.*

Proof. It is clear first that in equilibrium, P will never choose an $x > t$. If P were to deviate to $s'_P = \{t\}$, then $u_i(s'_P, s_I^*)$ would be greater than if $s_P^* = \{x > t\}$.

1. Given Assumption 2 and the previous lemmas, if $x_1^* \equiv (\pi - 1)\beta + c - m$, then $s_P^* = min\{x_1^*, t\}$ implies that $EU_P(s_P^*, s_I^*) \geq EU_P(s'_P, s_I^*)$. This implies $\gamma + s - x - t \geq R$, since I is playing a strategy of escalating if $x > x^*$. Therefore, P's movement away from its ideal point is $x - t \leq \gamma + s - R$. Solving, this implies $x \leq t - \gamma - s + R$. Since $x^* < t$, this implies $R - \gamma - s + t \leq x_1^* \leq t$.

2. Given Assumption 2 and the previous lemmas, if $x_2^* \equiv \beta\pi + N - m$, $s_P^* = min\{x_2^*, t\}$ implies that $EU_P(s_P^*, s_I^*) \geq EU_P(s'_P, s_I^*)$. This implies $\gamma + s - x - t \geq \gamma$, since I is playing a strategy of withdrawing (or not intervening) if $x > x^*$. Solving, this implies $x \leq t - s$. Since $x^* < t$, this implies $t - s \leq x_2^* \leq t$.

□

A.1.6 Proposition 1

Proposition 1. *If the cost of combat is high but withdrawal is more costly; the Proxy prefers independence in warfighting; and the Proxy's preferences diverge sufficiently from the Intervener's preferences, there exists an equilibrium where I invests in monitoring and continues proxy support if $x \leq x_1^*$ and escalates after initial proxy support if $x > x_1^*$, and P chooses $min(x_1^*, t)$, provided $x_1^* \geq R - \gamma - s + t$. If the cost of combat is sufficiently high and the Intervener and Proxy divergence sufficiently in preferences, there exists another equilibrium where I invests in monitoring and continues proxy support if $x \leq x_2^*$ and does not support a proxy at all if $x > x_2^*$, and P chooses $min(x_2^*, t)$, provided $x_2^* \geq t - s$.*

Proof. Proposition 1 follows directly from Assumptions 1-2 and Lemmas 1-3. There are two equilibria of this game where monitoring can be sustained.

1. **Monitoring with Escalation as punishment for noncompliance:** If Assumptions 1 & 2 hold and $c \leq \beta + N$, then

$$s_I^* = \begin{cases} \text{Proxy support, Monitor, Proxy support, Escalate} & \text{if } x \leq x^* \ \& \ x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \text{Proxy support, Monitor, Escalate, Escalate} & \text{if } x > x^* \ \& \ x^{**} \geq x^* + m \end{cases}$$

   where s^* is of the form $(a_I^1, a_I^2, a_{Im}^3, a_{I\neg m}^3)$ (where m and $\neg m$ denote the two subgames with or without monitoring), and $x_1^* \equiv (\pi - 1)\beta + c - m$ and $s_P^* = min\{x_1^*, t\}$ if $R - \gamma - s + t \leq x_1^* \leq t$.

2. **Monitoring with Withdrawal as punishment for noncompliance:** If Assumption 1 holds and $c > \beta + N + r$, then

$$s_I^* = \begin{cases} \text{Proxy support, Monitor, Proxy support, Withdraw} & \text{if } x \leq x^* \ \& \ x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \text{No intervention, Monitor, Proxy support, Withdraw} & \text{if } x^* < x \leq x^* + r \ \& \\ & x^{**} \geq x^* + m \\ \text{No intervention, Monitor, Withdraw, Withdraw} & \text{if } x > x^* + r \ \& \\ & x^{**} \geq x^* + m \end{cases}$$

where s^* is of the form $(a_I^1, a_I^2, a_{Im}^3, a_{I\neg m}^3)$ (where m and $\neg m$ denote the two subgames with or without monitoring), and $x_2^* \equiv \beta\pi + N - m$ and $s_P^* = min\{x_2^*, t\}$ if $t - s \leq x_2^* \leq t$.

□

Appendix B

Appendix to Chapter 3

B.1 Interview data

B.1.1 Interview subjects

I interviewed 28 current or retired members of the United States Army who had served as military advisors between 1970-2019, and one civilian who served in a government agency with involvement in US intervention in Afghanistan. Interviewees were selected using snowball sampling: I reached out to my contacts who served in the US military and asked for referrals to colleagues who had served in an advising capacity. In addition to ensuring good coverage of the major US interventions of the past 20 years, I focused specifically on US intervention in El Salvador (1979-1992). I identified people who served as advisors in El Salvador using a list of officers and non-commissioned officers who received a combat decoration for their service in the conflict.[1] I reached out via email or LinkedIn to establish initial contacts across different networks of advisors who had served in different capacities and with different military units/security services in El Salvador, and then used snowball sampling to identify other interviewees. Jacqueline Hazleton also provided crucial assistance in establishing initial contacts with military advisors who served in El Salvador.

16 of my interviewees served in El Salvador, 7 served in Afghanistan, 5 served in Iraq, 2 in Ukraine, and 1 in Syria. The numbers do not add up to 28 due to some advisors serving in multiple conflicts.

After establishing contact with an interviewee, I conducted an interview ranging from 1-4 hours, with the average interview length around 90 minutes. Interviews were semi-structured; I asked a generic set of questions to each interviewee (listed below) and then asked follow-up questions depending on their answers. Most interviews were recorded and on the record, but interviewees were given the option not to record the interview and to keep their identity confidential. If the interview was recorded, transcripts were made using Rev (machine-produced and human-edited) and Trint (machine- produced). I then reviewed and edited the transcripts for accuracy. If the interview was not recorded due to the interviewee's choice or failure of the recording device, I took notes during the interview and then filled them in with my best recollection and impressions immediately after concluding the interview. Using transcripts and notes, I then hand-coded the interviews for major themes related to information gathering and influencing. In this draft, I have decided to keep all interviewees anonymous to protect their privacy.

The generic interview protocol I used for the semi-structured interviews follows below. Subjects either were asked these questions in an interview or filled out the questionnaire via

[1] Nelson Mumma, Jr. "El Salvador vets honored," Sine Pari, August 1998, Vol. 2, No. 4. https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=opSS9Xmsjw4C&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA23

email. For interviews, I would then ask follow up questions based on interviewees' responses to these questions. The interview protocol for advisors who served in El Salvador was slightly different from the generic protocol; questions asked only to advisors who served in El Salvador are in bold. I occasionally asked only a subset of these questions if we ran out of time during the interview.

B.1.2 Question protocol

1. Describe your experience in the US military. What was your training or military qualifications? Your MOS?
2. **When you served in El Salvador, were you part of the 55 advisors in-country or was it a temporary duty assignment?**
3. When you were deployed as an advisor, where were you assigned, specifically what region, department, or province?
4. Role as military advisor: what local forces were you advising? If possible, share specific military units and their capabilities. What size unit (Platoon, Company, Battalion-size element)? Or were you advising a Brigade staff? What is the US equivalent?
5. What training or briefings did you receive before being assigned?
6. What was the capability you were ask to build? Do you know if this capacity was requested by the local partner or as a result of guidance by US leaders?
7. What were your responsibilities as military advisor? What did your day-to-day routine look like?
8. Describe the combat quality of the military force you advised. What were their strengths and weaknesses?
9. Describe your relationship with the leadership of the unit you were advising.
10. What were the main challenges in your role as a military advisor?
11. What limitations did US leadership put in place and what affect did it have on your mission?
12. **If they won combat award: can you tell me how you received your combat award in El Salvador?**
13. Did you engage in combat with the forces you were advising? If so, describe some major operations that you undertook.
14. Do you know if the forces you trained engage in combat operations? If so, how did they perform?
15. Did you witness any human rights abuses or any actions contrary to US interests while acting as an advisor? If so, what did you do?
16. Did you have a formal means of measuring success of your mission? How would you rate the improvement in the local ally over time?
17. When and where should advisors be sent?
18. When your assignment ended, were you replaced by other military advisors?
19. Any other comments you would like to add?
20. Anyone you could refer me to?

B.2 Cited archival collections

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

- Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218
- Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam (MAAG, Vietnam) Adjutant General Division, Security Records of the U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia, RG 472

Jimmy Carter Presidential Library

- Brzezinski, Zbigniew Collection

Appendix C

Appendix to Chapter 4

C.1 Dataset

C.1.1 Summary statistics

Table C.1: Summary statistics for numeric variables

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Conflict ID	82						
ccode	82						
Prior support	79	1.127	0.979	0.000	0.000	2.000	3.000
Exit	60	2.150	0.755	1.000	2.000	3.000	3.000
Regime change	65	0.138	0.348	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
War type	65	1.723	0.944	1.000	1.000	3.000	3.000
Aid	68	0.912	0.286	0.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Arms	72	0.958	0.201	0.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Advisors	82	1.000	0.000	1	1	1	1
Max advisors	82	2.756	1.504	1	1	4	5
Advisors embedded	50	0.660	0.479	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000
Accompany	38	0.395	0.495	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000
Airpower	71	0.634	0.485	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000
Covert	64	0.469	0.503	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000

C.1.2 Conflicts

Table C.2: Conflicts 203-288

Conflict ID	Country	Intervener	Supported party	Dates of Intervention
203	Greece	United Kingdom	Govt of Greece	03/31/1946 - 10/16/1949
203	Greece	United States	Govt of Greece	05/22/1947 - 10/16/1949
209	Philippines	United States	Govt of the Philippines	07/31/1946 - 12/31/1954
222	Myanmar (Burma)	China	CPB	06/26/1967 - 12/31/1988
229	Malaysia	United Kingdom	Govt of United Kingdom	06/19/1948 - 08/31/1957
230	Yemen	Russia	Govt of Yemen (North Yemen)	10/31/1962 - 05/23/1970
230	Yemen (North Yemen)	United States	Govt of Yemen (North Yemen)	12/17/2009 - 03/22/2015
230	Yemen (North Yemen)	United States	Govt of Saudi Arabia	03/25/2015 - 12/31/2019
233	Guatemala	United States	Govt of Guatemala	05/01/1962 - 04/01/1995
249	Vietnam	United States	Govt of South Vietnam	02/12/1955 - 01/27/1973
259	Iraq	United Kingdom	Govt of Iraq	01/18/2004 - 05/22/2011
259	Iraq	United Kingdom	Govt of Iraq	09/01/2014 - 12/31/2019
259	Iraq	United States	Govt of Iraq	01/18/2004 - 12/18/2011
259	Iraq	United States	Govt of Iraq	06/15/2014 - 12/31/2019
262	Laos	China	Pathet Lao	11/12/1959 - 11/01/1973
262	Laos	Russia	Govt of Laos	08/25/1989 - 04/10/1990
262	Laos	United States	Govt of Laos	11/12/1959 - 01/27/1973
262	Laos	United States	Hmong guerillas	01/01/1961 - 09/01/1973
269	Nepal	United Kingdom	Govt of Nepal	01/01/2000 - 01/01/2005
269	Nepal	United States	Govt of Nepal	01/18/2002 - 09/21/2006
271	Iraq	Russia	Govt of Iraq	07/31/1973 - 03/13/1992
283	DR Congo	China	CNL	01/03/1964 - 12/31/1965
283	DR Congo (Zaire)	France	Govt of DR Congo (Zaire)	04/30/1977 - 06/15/1978
283	DR Congo	United States	Govt of DR Congo (Zaire)	01/03/1964 - 06/15/1978
287	Burundi	France	Govt of Burundi	10/18/1994 - 05/26/1996
288	Chad	France	Govt of Chad	07/31/1966 - 11/24/1972

Table C.3: Conflicts 288-333

Conflict ID	Country	Intervener	Supported party	Dates of Intervention
288	Chad	France	Govt of Chad	02/18/1976 - 06/07/1982
288	Chad	France	Govt of Chad	06/07/1982 - 12/01/1990
288	Chad	France	Govt of Chad	12/01/1990 - 04/28/2010
288	Chad	United States	FAN	03/01/1981 - 06/07/1982
288	Chad	United States	Govt of Chad	06/07/1982 - 12/01/1990
289	Colombia	United States	Govt of Colombia	12/31/1964 - 12/29/2016
297	Nigeria	United States	Govt of Nigeria	11/01/2011 - 11/01/2014
297	Nigeria	United States	Govt of Nigeria	12/01/2015 - 12/31/2019
298	South Africa	Russia	SWAPO	01/01/1975 - 12/31/1988
299	Syria	Russia	Govt of Syria	09/04/2011 - 12/31/2019
300	Cambodia	China	Govt of Cambodia (Democratic Kampuchea)	04/17/1975 - 01/08/1979
300	Cambodia	China	Khmer Rouge	01/08/1979 - 10/23/1991
300	Cambodia	Russia	Govt of Vietnam	12/30/1978 - 12/25/1991
300	Cambodia	United States	Govt of Cambodia (Khmer Republic)	04/16/1970 - 04/17/1975
300	Cambodia	United States	Govt of Cambodia	05/23/1993 - 07/05/1997
303	Nigeria	Russia	Govt of Nigeria	07/06/1967 01/12/1970
308	Philippines	United States	Govt of the Philippines	01/15/2002 - 02/24/2015
314	Uganda	United Kingdom	Govt of Uganda	02/05/1971 - 09/13/1972
314	Uganda	United Kingdom	Govt of Uganda	11/20/1981 - 01/26/1986
314	Uganda	United States	Govt of Uganda	12/01/2008 - 03/29/2017
316	El Salvador	United States	Govt of El Salvador	11/01/1979 - 11/18/1991
317	Oman	United Kingdom	Govt of Oman	12/31/1969 - 12/11/1975
318	Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)	Russia	PF	07/01/1977 - 12/21/1979
327	Angola	Russia	Govt of Angola	11/11/1975 - 12/25/1991
329	Ethiopia	Russia	Govt of Somalia	10/21/1976 - 12/11/1977
332	Mozambique	Russia	Govt of Mozambique	12/31/1977 - 01/01/1991
332	Mozambique	United Kingdom	Govt of Mozambique	01/01/1984 - 10/19/1992
333	Afghanistan	France	Govt of Afghanistan	11/01/2001 - 12/31/2014
333	Afghanistan	Russia	Govt of Afghanistan	04/27/1978 - 12/25/1991
333	Afghanistan	United Kingdom	Northern Alliance (UIFSA	09/12/2001 - 11/01/2001

Table C.4: Conflicts 333-14333

Conflict ID	Country	Intervener	Supported party	Dates of Intervention
333	Afghanistan	United Kingdom	Govt of Afghanistan	11/01/2001 - 12/31/2019
333	Afghanistan	United States	Northern Alliance (UIFSA	09/26/2001 - 12/06/2001
333	Afghanistan	United States	Govt of Afghanistan	12/06/2001 - 12/31/2019
336	Nicaragua	Russia	Govt of Nicaragua	04/17/1982 - 12/31/1989
336	Nicaragua	United States	Contras	04/17/1982 - 04/15/1990
337	Somalia	United States	Govt of Somalia	01/01/2007 - 12/31/2019
352	Sri Lanka	United States	Govt of Sri Lanka	01/01/2001 - 12/01/2007
353	Cameroon	United States	Govt of Nicaragua	10/14/2015 - 12/03/2017
374	Rwanda	France	Govt of Rwanda	10/01/1990 - 06/22/1994
379	Djibouti	France	Govt of Djibouti	11/12/1991 - 08/31/1999
382	Sierra Leone	United Kingdom	Govt of Sierra Leone	03/01/1998 - 12/20/2001
395	Tajikistan	Russia	Govt of Tajikistan	05/05/1992 - 07/25/2011
404	Pakistan	United States	Govt of Pakistan	07/15/2007 - 09/01/2018
413	Ethiopia	Russia	Govt of Ethiopia	12/31/1977 - 12/25/1991
416	Central African Republic	France	Govt of the CAR	11/01/2006 - 12/01/2013
416	Central African Republic	Russia	Govt of the CAR	05/17/2018 - 12/31/2019
420	Iraq	United States	Kurdistan Regional Govt	03/20/2003 - 04/28/2003
428	Mauritania	France	Govt of Mauritania	09/02/1976 - 12/31/1978
430	Niger	France	Govt of Niger	01/01/2007 - 11/16/2008
11347	Mali	United States	Govt of Mali	05/01/2009 - 03/21/2012
11347	Mali	United States	Govt of Mali	01/14/2013 - 08/21/2020
13306	Ukraine	Russia	DPR, LPR, United Armed Forces of Novorossiya	04/12/2014 - 12/31/2019
13306	Ukraine	United States	Govt of Ukraine	09/18/2014 - 12/31/2019
13604	Syria	United States	Syrian Democratic Forces, YPG	09/22/2014 - 12/31/2019
13639	Niger	United States	Govt of Niger	03/30/2015 - 12/31/2019
14333	Tunisia	United States	Govt of Tunisia	01/01/2016 - 11/09/2016

C.2 Codebook

C.2.1 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the Intervener-Supported Party dyad. For example, the Syrian civil war (2011-present) is coded with one observation with the United States as intervener and Syrian Democratic Forces as the supported party, while another observation has Russia as intervener and the Syrian government as the supported party.

C.2.2 Definition of intervention

Interventions involve two elements: (1) a transfer of aid, arms, advisors to the proxy or the deployment of combat troops and/or airpower and (2) must occur during a conflict episode as defined in the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict dataset version 20.1.

C.2.3 Variables

conflict

Unique identifying number from UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict dataset version 20.1.

ccode

Numeric code for country where conflict is taking place. Correlates of War country code.

country

Text variable for country where conflict is taking place.

side_a

Participant 1 in the conflict. Always the government in an intrastate conflict.

side_a_id

Numeric code for Participant 1 in the conflict from UCDP/PRIO data.

side_b

Participant 2 in the conflict. Always the non-state actor(s) in an intrastate conflict.

side_b_id

Numeric code for Participant 2 in the conflict from UCDP/PRIO data.

start_date

Start date of the entire conflict from UCDP/PRIO data.

end_date

End date of the entire conflict from UCDP/PRIO data. NA if the conflict is still ongoing.

intervener

Name of state intervening in conflict. Text.

intervener_ccode

COW country code of the intervening state.

prior_support

Categorical variable.
0 = No support;
1 = support as part of normal diplomatic relations (the Intervener was involved with aid, arms, advisors, troops, or air power any time in the twelve months immediately before the start of a new conflict or the conflict episode that overlaps with the intervention);
2 = intent to prepare for future conflict or influence developing conflict (Coded as 2 if the intervener provided support in the 12 months prior to the start of the conflict episode because it intended to prepare for future conflict or influence the developing conflict (which will always be true if the proxy is a non-state actor), 3 = previous regime was supported.

prior_support_text

Text variable describing the nature of the prior support.

intervention_start

Start date of the intervention. Coded based on the *prior_support* variable.
If prior support = 1 or 2, the start of intervention is the first day of the conflict episode unless all prior support stopped at or before the start of the conflict episode.
If prior support = 0, the start of the intervention is the first transfer of either aid, arms, or advisors after the conflict episode starts.
If prior support = 3, the start of intervention is the first day of the conflict episode.

exit

Numeric variable that indicates how the intervention ended and the status of the intervener support after the intervention.
1 = the intervener withdrew before the end of the conflict episode due to a break in relations with the supported party;
2 = the intervener believed intervention had served its natural course, the conflict was at or near an end, and consequently withdrew all or nearly all support;
3 = the intervener maintained some support after the conflict episode ended.

exit_text

Text variable explaining coding of the exit variable.

intervention_end

End date of the intervention.

It is the date that either (1) the conflict episode ends, OR (2) intervener exits the conflict completely (*exit* = 1 or 2), whichever is first.

Exception: if troops are present in the country, *intervention_end* is the date combat troops are withdrawn if the withdrawal comes after the end of the conflict episode. Embassy guards or a permanent base do not count as troops staying in country.

regime_change

Indicator variable.

1= The parties to the conflict changed sides, eg. Side A was formerly Side B or vice versa.

military_capacity_opponent

Military ability of the opponent of the supported party prior to the intervention. High, medium, low. See scoresheet in section B.5.

military_capacity_proxy

Military ability of the opponent of the proxy prior to the intervention. High, medium, low. See scoresheet in section B.5.

military_capacity_time

Text variable. Describes how the military capacity of the supported party changed over time, up until the end of the intervention.

war_type

Categorical variable.
1 = Guerrilla war;
2 = Conventional war;
3 = Mixed.

preference_alignment_start

Degree of preference alignment between the supported party and intervener at the start of the intervention. High, medium, low. See scoresheet in section B.4.

preference_alignment_end

Degree of preference alignment between the supported party and intervener at the end of the intervention. High, medium, low. See scoresheet in section B.4.

preference_alignment_time

Text variable. Describe how the preferences of the intervener and proxy changed over time, up until the end of the intervention.

aid

Indicator variable.

1= Intervener provided aid to the supported party at or after the intervention start date. Aid is money, other economic aid, the transfer of civilian equipment, and/or technical assistance.

start_aid

Date of first decision to transfer aid from intervener to the supported party.

If *prior_support* = 0 or 1: Coded as the decision date of first known transfer of aid after the conflict episode starts.

If *prior_support* = 2 or 3 and aid was not included in *prior_support*: Coded as the decision date of first known transfer of aid after the conflict episode starts.

If *prior_support* = 2 or 3 and aid was included in *prior_support*: Coded as start date of the intervention if there wee further transfers after the start of the conflict.

aid_amount

Little support, medium level support, substantial support. Coded as the amount of support at the peak of the intervention.

Little support: The intervener provides largely symbolic transfers of money or material that do not make a significant difference in sustaining or funding the proxy's political and military operations.

Medium level support: The intervener provides enough aid to make a real difference in the war effort but not enough that it is providing the majority of the finances or materials to support the proxy's political and military operations.

Substantial support: The intervener provides a substantial amount of financial aid or materials such that the political and military operations of the supported party are sustained primarily by the intervener's aid.

arms

Indicator variable.

1= Intervener provided arms to the supported party at or after the intervention start date. Arms is military equipment of any sort. Examples include: body armor, tactical gear,

uniforms, rations, language training courses for soldiers, night vision goggles, mortar rounds, helicopters, guns.

start_arms

Date of first decision to transfer arms from intervener to the supported party.

If *prior_support* = 0 or 1: Coded as the decision date of first known transfer of arms after the conflict episode starts.

If *prior_support* = 2 or 3 and arms were not included in *prior_support*: Coded as the decision date of first known transfer of arms after the conflict episode starts.

If *prior_support* = 2 or 3 and arms were included in *prior_support*: Coded as start date of the intervention if there were further transfers after the start of the conflict.

arms_amount

Little support, medium level support, substantial support. Coded as the amount of support at the peak of the intervention.

Little support: The intervener provides small numbers of military equipment that do not make a significant difference in the proxy's ability to fight the war.

Medium levels of support: The intervener provides enough military equipment for the supported party to match the opponent's military capabilities in terms of equipment.

Substantial support: The intervener provides enough for the supported party to surpass its opponent's military capabilities in terms of equipment and/or provides advanced technology/weapons systems.

arms_kind

Text variable. Non-lethal military equipment, lethal military equipment, both.

advisors

Indicator variable.

1 = Intervener provided advisors to the supported party at or after the intervention start date.

Military advisors are personnel in uniform from the intervening country who are deployed to work with the supported party's military but who do not have a combat role. Advisors may accompany local forces in combat when embedded with them, but that cannot be their primary purpose. If they are sent in small numbers in a combat role, then this is coded as *sof* = 1.

Outside of country support and training. Type 1: Great power trains forces at installations belonging to the great power outside of the country in which the intrastate war is taking place (ie. Training forces at the school of the Americas, training El Salvadoran officers at bases in the United States). Type 2: Sending trainers and advisors to guerrilla bases and safe havens just across the border in a neutral or supportive state. Type 2 is coded as *advisors* = 1. Type 1 is coded as *Other* =1.

max_advisors

Categorical variable. Highest number of advisors present in country where conflict is taking place.

100 or less = 1
101 – 499 = 2
500 – 999 = 3
1000 or more = 4
Unknown = NA

role_advisors

Text variable. Description of the role advisors sent to accomplish: Training, Monitoring, War planning, Technical Assistance, or Defense Institution Building. Can be any combination separated by commas.

Advisors that are training are providing tactical advice or training the supported party's military units.

Advisors that are monitoring are engaging in fact-finding missions or are embedded in proxy units. For this role, look for evidence of high-level delegations visiting the front, advisors sent to "assess aid needs" or embedded taking a value of 1. Key part is whether advisors are in a position where they are learning about the proxy's military and its performance in combat.

Advisors that engage in war planning provide operational or strategic level advice about how, when, and whether the host country's units should engage in combat with the enemy. They also advise about the overall conduct of war, such as the best way to fight and what protections should be offered to civilians. They can work with small independent combat units like battalions (operational level) or up to the Ministry of Defense (strategic level) attempting to influence the decisions of the military on war planning.

Advisors engaging in technical assistance either fill technical roles for the supported party's military (such as Joint Tactical Air Controllers that provide targeting instructions to the intervener's air power) or provide training on new equipment provided by the intervener.

Advisors providing defense institution building provide advice at the strategic level (eg. top military leadership or Ministry of Defense) on recruitment, organization, military reform, or leadership of the military.

advisors_embedded

Indicator variable.

1 = Advisors are embedded with the supported party's troops.

To be embedded at the strategic level, advisors must be co-located within the proxy's Ministry of Defense or with top militia leadership. Advisors will either go to work with the proxy every day and either live on their own base or live on the proxy military's bases.

To be embedded at the operational level, advisors must be co-located with a brigade or battalion size element of the proxy military forces (or important but not the highest level of militia members) for a period of several months at a time. Advisors will either go to work

with the proxy every day and either live on their own base or live on the proxy military's bases.

To be embedded at the tactical level, advisors will work with small units (a company or smaller) of the proxy military forces for several months at a time. Advisors will either go to work with the proxy every day and either live on their own base or live on the proxy military's bases.

High-level short observer missions by officers would count as monitoring but not embedded. If advisors are sent on short rotational training missions (spending a few weeks at a time with each proxy military unit that they are advising) they are not embedded. Advising missions at training centers do not count as being embedded.

embedded_text

Strategic; operational; and/or tactical levels. Separated by commas.

accompany

Indicator variable.

1 = Advisors are allowed to accompany the supported party's troops into combat.

start_advisors

Date of first decision to deploy advisors by the intervener.

If *prior_support* = 0 or 1: Coded as the decision date of first known deployment of advisors after the conflict episode starts.

If *prior_support* = 2 or 3 and advisors were not included in *prior_support*: Coded as the decision date of first known deployment of advisors after the conflict episode starts.

If *prior_support* = 2 or 3 and advisors were included in *prior_support*: Coded as start date of the intervention if advisors remained after the start of the conflict.

sof

Indicator variable.

1 = Special operations forces are present (with or without combat troops), intelligence forces are present, pilots are embedded in the proxy's air force, or small numbers of ground combat troops are present and *troops* = 0.

If the intervener is calling the military forces sent "advisors" but they are really sent in small numbers to augment the proxy's military capability by engaging in combat rather than advising, this variable would have a value of 1.

troops

Indicator variable.

1 = The intervener sent ground combat troops to intervene in the conflict.

To count as combat troops, ground military units must be sent with an independent combat mission and in sufficiently large numbers. If a military advisor is sent to advise and

engages in combat because the unit he is embedded with is attacked, that does not meet the definition. If small teams of special operations troops are operating on their own or alongside proxy forces, this counts as *sof* = 1. If more than 1,000 intervener troops are intervening in the conflict, this counts as *troops* =1.

start_troops

Date of first decision to deploy troops by the intervener.

If *prior_support* = 0 or 1: Coded as the decision date of first known deployment of troopss after the conflict episode starts.

If *prior_support* = 2 or 3 and troops were not included in *prior_support*: Coded as the decision date of first known deployment of troops after the conflict episode starts.

If *prior_support* = 2 or 3 and troops were included in *prior_support*: Coded as start date of the intervention if troops remained after the start of the conflict.

end_troops

Date when troops were withdrawn by the intervener.

airpower

Indicator variable.

1 = Intervener uses air planes or drones in either a surveillance, logistics, or combat role.

airpower_text

Text variable.

Surveillance only, logistics only, surveillance and logistics only, combat, combat and non combat roles, NA.

other

Indicator variable.

1 = Intervener used another form of intervention, such as diplomatic intervention, public statements, and training in the country of the intervener.

covert

Indicator variable.

1 = Intervention was initially or wholly covert, or a covert intervention was run simultaneously alongside an overt one.

C.2.4 Preference alignment scoresheet

Table C.5: Preference alignment scoresheet

Category	Description
Politics	1. Do the intervener and main leadership of the proxy agree on the type of the proxy's regime? Eg. Communist, capitalist, left, right, democracy, autocracy. 2. Do the intervener and proxy agree which political party should be in office? 3. Do the intervener and proxy agree which individuals should be running the military and the government?
Strategy	1. Do the intervener and proxy agree on the main target that the proxy should be fighting? 2. Do the intervener and proxy agree about the main reason for fighting and the desired goals to achieve through the war? Eg. self-determination, reaffirming the government's authority, total elimination of the enemy. 3. Do the intervener and proxy agree about whether the war will be won with political reforms or with military victory and/or the specifics of each? 4. Do the intervener and proxy agree about when to seek peace negotiations?
Conduct of War	1. Do the intervener and proxy agree about whether the proxy is fighting hard enough? 2. Do the intervener and proxy agree about how the war should be fought? 3. Do the intervener and proxy agree about how civilians and captured opponents should be treated during the war?
Scoring	Yes = 0, No = -1 , Unknown = NA **High:** 0 points to -1 point (minimal disagreement present) **Medium:** -2 points to -4 points (some disagreements are present) **Low:** More than -4 points (many disagreements are present)

C.2.5 Military capacity scoresheet

Table C.6: Military capacity scoresheet (Part 1)

Category	Description
Discipline	High (desertion low, soldiers can hold their ground during combat) = 1 pt Low (desertion high or soldiers cannot hold their ground during combat) = 0 pt Unknown = NA
Military equipment	Military is self-sufficient or is lacking only high-end equipment needed to match or exceed opponent's capabilities = 1 pt Military is mostly equipped but is still lacking some materiel = 0.5 pt Military lacks basic supplies (food, ammo, clothing) = 0 pt Unknown = NA
Military size (Personnel)	Sufficient for combat needs (guerrilla forces can harass the government frequently or pose a serious threat to the government) = 1 pt Insufficient for combat needs (guerrilla forces are unable to launch many attacks or do not pose a serious threat to the government) = 0 pt Unknown = NA
Recruitment	Conscripts (low local support for guerrillas) = 0 pt Hybrid (medium support for guerrillas) = 0.5 pt Volunteers (high local support for guerrillas) = 1 pt Unknown = NA
Human capital	Soldiers well-trained = 1 pt Some units are very good but others are not well trained = 0.5 pt Soldiers not well-trained = 0 pt Unknown = NA
Strategy	Military performs well at the operational level and at the tactical level (guerrilla groups use good tactics and/or can successfully fight conventionally) = 1 pt Military performs poorly at the operational level and at the tactical level (guerrilla groups use poor tactics and/or fail when attempting to fight conventionally) = 0 pts

Table C.7: Military capacity scoresheet (Part 2)

Category	Description
Defense institutions	Good - Military is appropriately commanded, not top-heavy, promotion is meritocratic, good decision-making is cultivated and rewarded, military has appropriate force structure to meet political goals of military force. Guerrilla forces coordinate with other guerrilla groups and combine forces for operations. Their leadership is high quality. = 1 pt Medium - Has some elements of good defense institutions but needs significant reform = 0.5 pt Bad - military is poorly commanded, promotion is not meritocratic, good decision-making is ignored or punished, military lacks appropriate force structure to meet political goals of military force. (Guerrilla forces are unable to coordinate with other guerrilla groups and to combine forces for operations. Their leadership is plagued with infighting, with a lack of coordinated command authority) = 0 pts Unknown = NA
Scoring	Max score = 7 points, Min score = 0 pts **High:** 5.5. to 7 points **Medium:** 2.5 to 5 points **Low:** 0 to 2 points After the scoresheet was completed, if the points total was in the top third of available points for questions answered, capacity was coded as high; if in the middle third, medium; in the bottom third, low capacity.

C.3 Quantitative models

C.3.1 Advisor deployment onset - Govt proxy

Table C.8: Advisor deployment onset (govt proxy)

	OLS	*OLS Fixed effects*	*Logistic*
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Affinity score	0.003	-0.005	0.260
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.208)
Total rebel strength	0.062***	0.049*	0.659**
	(0.022)	(0.026)	(0.318)
Other intervener	-0.089***	-0.080**	-1.293***
	(0.025)	(0.035)	(0.468)
Democracy	0.032	0.033	0.551
	(0.026)	(0.032)	(0.490)
Alliance	-0.072***	-0.063	-0.551
	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.513)
Distance	-0.00001**	0.00000	-0.0001*
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.0001)
Colony	0.083***	0.198***	1.216***
	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.436)
GDP	-0.039***	-0.067***	-1.287***
	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.281)
Conflict intensity	-0.021	0.050	-0.267
	(0.026)	(0.031)	(0.438)
Constant	0.307***		4.538**
	(0.095)		(1.817)
Observations	595	595	595
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

C.3.2 Proportional hazard tests – Schoenfeld residuals

Table C.9: Proportional hazard tests for intervention duration models

	(Model 1)	(Model 2)	(Model 3)	(Model 4)	(Model 5)	(Model 6)
Affinity score	0.15	0.17	0.38	0.25	0.22	0.98
Advisors	-	-	-	0.03	0.00	-
Rebel strength	0.00	0.03	-	0.00	0.13	-
Multiple interveners	0.48	0.10	0.60	0.08	0.35	0.93
Democracy	0.41	0.55	0.87	0.26	0.97	0.88
Alliance	0.45	0.90	0.98	0.02	0.10	-
Conflict intensity	0.50	0.087	0.05	0.43	0.79	0.30
Rebel strength × Time	-	0.07	-	-	0.07	-
Advisors ×Time	-	-	-	-	0.00	-
Alliance × Time	-	-	-	-	0.04	-

Note:
Values are Prob. $> \chi^2$

Appendix D

Appendix to Chapter 5

D.1 Proportional hazard tests – Schoenfeld residuals

Table D.1: Proportional hazard tests for conflict duration models – Schoenfeld Residuals

	(Model 1)	(Model 2)	(Model 3)
Advisors	0.29	0.29	0.28
Aid, arms, troops	0.66	0.35	0.37
Rebel strength	0.35	0.43	0.55
Multiple interveners	0.02	0.46	-
Democracy	0.45	0.67	0.64
Alliance	0.62	0.66	0.75
Colony	0.88	0.97	
GDP	0.30	0.40	0.39
Conflict intensity	0.95	0.93	0.94
Multiple interveners × Time	-	0.10	-

Note: Values are Prob. $> \chi^2$

D.2 Human rights

Table D.2: Effect of advisors on human rights (Cases of intervention)

Estimation	*OLS*	*OLS*	*OLS*	*OLS*	*OLS*
Unit-specific effects	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Advisors	−0.075	0.005	−0.060	−0.177**	0.486***
	(0.056)	(0.076)	(0.066)	(0.086)	(0.111)
Govt support					0.131*
					(0.080)
Advisors × Govt support					−0.722***
					(0.120)
Conflict intensity	−0.403***	−0.053*	−0.352***	−0.061	−0.407***
	(0.056)	(0.031)	(0.061)	(0.044)	(0.055)
Cold War	−0.018	−0.083**	−0.143	0.078	−0.0003
	(0.049)	(0.035)	(0.109)	(0.074)	(0.049)
Democratic intervener	−0.170**	−0.401*	0.108	−0.481**	−0.227***
	(0.072)	(0.212)	(0.147)	(0.198)	(0.072)
Human rights organizations			−0.001	0.008	
			(0.002)	(0.006)	
Multiple interveners	0.154***	−0.264***	−0.161**	−0.469***	0.126**
	(0.058)	(0.072)	(0.064)	(0.109)	(0.062)
Total rebel strength	0.053	−0.090**	−0.003	−0.367***	0.018
	(0.050)	(0.037)	(0.058)	(0.088)	(0.049)
Democracy	0.096	0.481***	−0.122*	0.335***	0.097
	(0.062)	(0.044)	(0.066)	(0.080)	(0.061)
GDP	0.141***	0.016	0.097***	0.231***	0.139***
	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.058)	(0.026)
Constant	−2.363***		−1.943***		−2.340***
	(0.218)		(0.221)		(0.233)
Observations	650	650	305	305	650

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

D.3 Coups and coup attempts

Table D.3: Alternative specifications of coup DV

	Dependent variable:				
	Coups (categorical)		Coups (indicator)		
Estimation	*OLS*	*OLS*	*OLS*	*OLS*	*Logistic*
Unit-specific effects	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Govt support - Advisors	−0.033*	−0.011	−0.023	−0.010	−0.340
	(0.019)	(0.033)	(0.017)	(0.031)	(0.245)
Govt support - Aid, Arms, or Troops	−0.015	−0.046	−0.014	−0.042	−0.154
	(0.014)	(0.034)	(0.013)	(0.033)	(0.207)
Rebel strength	0.111***	0.086***	0.087***	0.067***	0.950***
	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.069)
Democracy	−0.029***	−0.004	−0.029***	−0.006	−0.594***
	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.007)	(0.014)	(0.132)
Alliance	0.010	−0.033	0.007	−0.035	0.263
	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.011)	(0.022)	(0.161)
Colony	0.002		0.002		−0.026
	(0.011)		(0.010)		(0.158)
GDP	−0.015***	−0.053***	−0.015***	−0.048***	−0.341***
	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.054)
Conflict intensity	−0.037***	0.009	−0.024***	0.014	−0.184
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.116)
Constant	0.017		0.049**		−1.908***
	(0.024)		(0.022)		(0.366)
Observations	6,251	6,251	6,251	6,251	6,251

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table D.4: The effect of advisors on coups/coup attempts (Cases of intervention)

	Dependent variable:						
	Coups (categorical)		Coups (sum)		Coups (indicator)		
Estimation	*OLS*	*OLS*	*OLS*	*OLS*	*OLS*	*OLS*	*Logistic*
Unit-specific effects	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*	*Fixed*	*None*
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Advisors (govt proxy)	−0.028	0.013	−0.033	0.052	−0.002	0.017	−0.205
	(0.023)	(0.062)	(0.036)	(0.101)	(0.019)	(0.059)	(0.282)
Rebel strength	0.088***	0.062*	0.149***	0.099*	0.060***	0.062*	0.736***
	(0.020)	(0.035)	(0.032)	(0.057)	(0.018)	(0.033)	(0.224)
Democracy	−0.069***	−0.006	−0.111***	−0.046	−0.047**	−0.006	−1.092***
	(0.025)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.065)	(0.022)	(0.038)	(0.423)
Alliance	0.054**	0.105	0.059	0.183*		0.074	0.583**
	(0.023)	(0.065)	(0.037)	(0.107)		(0.062)	(0.283)
Colony	−0.004		−0.034				0.188
	(0.026)		(0.041)				(0.308)
GDP	−0.005	−0.003	−0.009	0.005	−0.008	−0.002	−0.188
	(0.010)	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.032)	(0.009)	(0.018)	(0.153)
Conflict intensity	−0.034	0.043	−0.057		−0.009	0.045*	−0.145
	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.037)		(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.289)
Constant	−0.024		−0.043		0.038		−2.661**
	(0.083)		(0.133)		(0.075)		(1.146)
Observations	887	887	887	887	896	887	887

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix E

Appendix to Chapter 6

E.1 Cited archival collections

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California

- Fontaine, Roger, Files
- Latin America Directorate, National Security Council
- Meese, Edwin, Files
- National Security Council Executive Secretariate: Meeting Files
- North, Oliver, Files
- Tillman, Jacqueline, Files.

Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, Georgia

- Brzezinski, Zbigniew Collection
- Pastor, Robert, Country Files
- RAC Project Files.

National Security Archives, Washington, DC, Digital collections

- El Salvador: the Making of U.S. Policy, 1977-1984 (El Salvador 1977-1984)
- War, Peace, and Human Rights: 1980-1994 (El Salvador 1980-1994).

U.S Department of State, Virtual Reading Room

- El Salvador Declassification Project