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Cheap Signals, Costly Consequences: How International Relations Affect Civil Conflict

Clayton Lynn Thyne
University of Iowa

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CHEAP SIGNALS, COSTLY CONSEQUENCES:

HOW INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AFFECT CIVIL CONFLICT

by

Clayton Lynn Thyne

<u>An Abstract</u>

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Political Science in
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July 2007

Thesis Supervisors:　　Associate Professor Sara McLaughlin Mitchell
　　　　　　　　　　　　Assistant Professor Brian Lai

ABSTRACT

Given the appalling consequences of civil wars, why are the competing actors within a state unable to come to a settlement to avoid the costs of conflict? How might external parties affect the likelihood that a civil war begins? How do their actions affect the duration and outcome of civil conflicts that are already underway? This project draws on three main approaches—bargaining theory, signaling theory, and rational expectations—to examine how external actors might affect the onset, duration and outcome of civil wars.

Signals from external actors are important because they represent a potential increase (or decrease) in fighting capabilities for the government or the opposition if a war were to begin. Costly signals should not affect the probability of civil war onset because they are readily observable *ex ante*, which allows the government and opposition to peacefully adjust their bargaining positions based on changes in relative capabilities. In contrast, cheap hostile signals make civil war more likely by increasing the risk that an opposition group overestimates its ability to stage a successful rebellion with external support. Cheap supportive signals work in the opposite manner because they represent increased fighting capabilities for the government.

Furthermore, signals sent in the pre-war period have important implications for the duration and outcome of civil conflicts because competing intrastate actors develop expectations for future interventions prior to deciding to fight. Expected interventions should have little consequence for the duration and outcome of the conflict because they are endogenous to the pre-war bargaining positions. In contrast, unexpected

interventions should drastically reduce the fighting time as one side finds itself far weaker than expected when the war began.

This theory is tested by examining the likelihood of civil war onset, the duration and the outcome of all civil wars since 1945. Empirical tests provide strong support for each component of this theory. I conclude by offering specific advice to US policy-makers to prevent the outbreak of civil conflict in states most at-risk for civil war, and to help end those that are currently underway.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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To Megan

Peace cannot be kept by force.
It can only be achieved by understanding.

Albert Einstein (1979-1955)

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learning, and gave me the confidence to succeed.

ABSTRACT

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses
> of peace must be constructed.
>
> UNESCO Constitution

1.1 The Puzzle and Purpose

Like most countries in Latin American, Nicaragua's history teems with instability.

The 1800s saw continuous turnover of rule in the country, ranging from early domination

under the Mexican Empire to a brief (and bizarre) period of rule by American William

Walker in the 1850s. After thirty years of relative tranquility, the century ended under

the rule of José Santos Zelaya, who came to power in 1893 after staging a successful

revolt. Meanwhile, the United States was getting its feet wet as the dominant regional

power. Its victory in the Spanish-American War (1898) gave it domain over the

previously-held Spanish territories. As Roosevelt's (1904) famous Corollary to the

Monroe Doctrine claimed, the United States might under certain circumstances, exercise

an "international police power" in the Western Hemisphere. Zeyala was one of the

earliest victims of this policy. His resistance to a plan to build a canal through Nicaragua

antagonized the new power, who quickly engineered his overthrow in 1909 with the

support of the US Marines.[1]

US forces were commonplace in Nicaragua for the next three decades. After

quelling a rebellion in 1912, they remained in the country until 1925 to maintain stability.

Their return home in 1925 was short-lived as they were recalled to put down another

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[1] See Kamman (1968), Diederich (1981), Kimmens (1987), Lake (1989), Lafaber (1993), and Morley
(1994) for excellent reviews of the history of Nicaragua and its relationship with the United States.

rebellion in 1926, and again stayed in the country to maintain stability for the next seven years. The departure of the Marines in 1933 marked the end of direct US military intervention in Nicaragua for the next five decades. To maintain future stability in the country, they left behind a well-trained and well-equipped armed unit known as the National Guard, which was led by Anastasio Somozo García. Within 3 years, Somoza consolidated control over the National Guard and the country as a whole. The Somoza family spent the following 42 years ruling over Nicaragua, while amassing a great personal fortune.

After four decades in power, the Somoza reign came to an abrupt end in the late 1970s with a successful rebellion by the FSLN (*Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional* – commonly known as the *Sandanistas*). This was a shocking development for two reasons. First, the Somoza family had enjoyed a period of stability unparalleled in the region with a complete absence of coups or civil wars.[2] Second, while opposition to the government had always existed, these groups had been largely splintered and ineffectual. During the early and mid-1970s, for instance, the FLSN mounted only sporadic attacks in the periphery of the country. In the year prior to the rebellion, a US Foreign Service publication (1977) noted, "During 1976, the government inflicted heavy blows on the local guerrilla organization and now faces no serious threat from that quarter." Only months prior to the rebellion, an unnamed diplomat claimed that "there are probably only about twenty or so guerrillas left in the hills and they have only been sporadically active in urban areas" (Riding 1977).

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[2] Of the 20 states in Latin America, Nicaragua, Mexico and Costa Rica were the only states to avoid a successful coup during the latter half of the twentieth century (Moreno, Lewis-Beck and Amoureux 2004). Seven of these states also experienced at least one civil war during the period leading up to the Nicaraguan civil war (Hegre et al. 2002).

Like so many conflicts, the civil war in Nicaragua was a watershed event in the country's history. It also presents an interesting puzzle for researchers. What changed to drastically cripple a regime that had enjoyed absolute rule over Nicaragua for so long? What allowed a previously ineffective opposition group to challenge, and ultimately defeat, the Somoza regime?

A burgeoning body of literature seeks to answer these questions in a general context by focusing on one of three main explanations for the onset of civil wars.[3] The first examines civil war as the result of social divisions in a state. The *primordialist* view of civil conflict claims that ethnic groups satisfy an individual's primal need to belong to a group in an anarchic "Hobbesian" world (Frye 1992: 607). These divisions can lead to civil war, especially when a large ethnic minority is discriminated against (Horowitz 1985; Connor 1994), or when a single group suffers disproportionately from economic woes (Russett 1964; Muller 1985). The danger is compounded when there is a large minority that could potentially overthrow the majority (Deutsche 1953; Andersen 1983; Gellner 1983). According to this body of literature, we should expect some change in ethnic divisions, income status, or repression/discrimination to explain the onset of civil war in Nicaragua.

A second body of literature examines the psychological and political causes of civil war. Gurr (1970) argues that social discontent is a result of the discrepancy between the conditions in life that people inherently expect (value expectations), and the social conditions that limit what they are actually capable of achieving (value capabilities).

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[3] The literature is broken down into three categories for the purpose of presenting a concise and coherent review of the literature. One should note, however, that many of these arguments and variables cut across the main categories.

This division, which Gurr calls "relative deprivation," is often blamed on the party in power and can provoke civil war. A plethora of scholars have extended Gurr's work by focusing on the roles of democratic versus authoritarian regimes in providing both adequate social conditions and peaceful means by which people can express discontent (Powell 1982; Muller and Weede 1990; Krain and Myers 1997; Henderson and Singer 2000; Hegre et al. 2001). According to this second body of literature, we should expect a change in income inequalities or political rights to precede the rebellion against Somoza.

A third body of work explains the onset of civil wars in a rationalist framework. Hirshliefer (1995) claims that civil war is an interaction of preferences, opportunities and perceptions, while DeNardo (1985), Grossman (1991, 1999), and Collier and Hoeffler (2004) model rebels as rent-seeking entrepreneurs who are driven more by greed than as victims of a repressive state or "out group" discrimination. Meanwhile, Fearon and Laitin (2003) focus on indicators of state strength to explain rebellion. Scholars from this body of work would expect the onset of civil war in Nicaragua to follow some change in natural resource rents or, perhaps, a change in the military strength of the government.

Unfortunately, each of these explanations fails to explain the fall of the Somoza regime. Figure 1.1 displays several of the variables mentioned above in the years preceding the FSLN rebellion.[4] As we can see, past research provides little help in explaining why civil war broke out in 1978, rather than in any previous time period. The first body of literature mentioned above would expect a change in ethnic fractionalization or GDP during this time period. The second group would expect a similar change in

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[4] Data for GDP/capita and population come from Gleditsch (2002). Data for oil exporter, percent mountainous, and ethnic fractionalization from from Fearon and Laitin (2003). The polity variable comes from Marshall and Jagger's (2000) Polity IV index. Data for military personnel come from Bennett and Stam (2000). The onset of civil war in Nicaragua is defined by Hegre et al. (2002).

GDP, or at least some change in the Polity indicator. The third group might expect a change in oil resources, mountainous terrain, or the size of the military. None of these expectations hold true.

The situation in Nicaragua in the 1970s is, of course, only one of many cases that provide a puzzle for scholars studying the onset of civil conflicts. The purpose of this project is to shed light on these puzzles by expanding the current literature in three ways. First, while the vast majority of scholars have focused exclusively on variables within the state to explain the onset of civil conflicts, I extend this work by claiming that signals from external actors should have a tremendous impact on the likelihood of civil war onset. As I explain with a case study in Chapter 4, for example, the Nicaraguan puzzle is easily solved by considering the dynamic changes in Nicaragua's relationship with the United States.

Second, by more carefully considering the role that international relations plays prior to the onset of civil conflict, I am able to extend previous work that examines how external interventions affect a war once it begins. Scholars currently examine interventions during a war in isolation of pre-war activities, which has led to a handful of puzzling and inconsistent conclusions from work examining the duration and outcome of civil conflicts. I expand this work by explaining that the pre-war and intra-war phases are inter-related processes. In other words, what happens during a civil war is best understood in the context of pre-war conditions. In Chapter 7, I highlight this argument with a case study of the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions in Iraq following the first Gulf War.

Third, I am able to significantly extend the policy recommendations coming from the academic literature by more carefully considering the role of external actors in civil conflicts. Because scholars have paid little attention to the role of international relations in their explanations of civil war onset, the academic literature can say very little about how actors such as the United States should behave towards states at risk for civil conflicts. Likewise, the failure to consider pre-war conditions in past analyses of civil war duration and outcome has resulted in confusing and inconsistent policy advice. I seek to clear up these problems in Chapter 8 by making specific recommendations for policy-makers in the United States.

In the remainder of this chapter, I develop the specific research questions that will be tackled in this project. This is followed by a brief review of the literature that incorporates a role for external actors in the study of civil conflict. Third, I motivate the need for this project by focusing on the deleterious consequences of civil conflicts for the states experiencing civil conflicts, their neighbors, and the world as a whole. Finally, I provide a preview to the theoretical argument, empirical tests, and policy implications that are developed in the pages to come.

1.2 Research Questions

I seek to expand the current literature on civil conflicts by asking three sets of questions. First, how might relations between states affect internal stability within each state's borders? For states at peace, how might signals received from other states affect

the likelihood that peace continues, or violence erupts?[5] What types of signals should affect the likelihood of civil war onset? How do the characteristics of the signaling state matter? Second, how might interventions from external states affect the duration and outcome of conflicts that are currently underway? Are the effects of interstate signals distinct to each phase of the conflict, or is there some underlying process relating signals sent during each phase of the war with previous events? In short, what can we learn by considering how international relations affect the likelihood that a civil war begins, how long they last, and how they end? Finally, what can the current leaders, particularly those in the United States, learn from this study to help them reach their foreign policy goals?

Of course, this is not the first project to have asked similar questions. In the following section, I place my research questions in the context of previous literature on the subject to give the reader a foundation for understanding the argument and empirical tests presented in later chapters.

1.3 <u>Previous Literature Examining the Role of External</u>

<u>Actors in Civil Wars</u>

Research on civil wars has grown tremendously in the past decade. Scholars have focused on understanding why civil wars start, endure and end. The vast majority of this work focuses on internal factors, such as the role of resources, grievances and state strength (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). A team of scholars led by Paul Collier (2003) provide an excellent review of the current literature on civil conflicts.

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[5] At this point, "signals" can simply be thought of as another term for any relations between states, ranging from a full-scale military attack to a peaceful walk in the woods at Camp David. A more thorough description of signals can be found in Section 2.1.c in Chapter 2.

Rather than replicate their work, I focus here on the literature that incorporates external actors into the analyses.

An early body of work developed among scholars who sought to understand the relationship between internal and external conflict. The majority of this early work began with arguments from Coser (1956) and Simmel (1956), who suggested that leaders may react to internal difficulties by starting external conflicts (known as the "scapegoat hypothesis"). These external conflicts should thereby induce internal cohesion, decreasing the likelihood of civil violence (known as the "rally-round-the-flag" phenomenon). This process was studied heavily during the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Rummel 1963; Polsby 1964; Tanter 1966; Waltz 1967; Haas 1968; Wilkenfeld 1968, 1972, 1973; Zinnes and Wilkenfeld 1971; Burrowes and Spector 1973; Hazelwood 1973; Mueller 1973; Zinnes 1976; Stohl 1980). Levy (1989: 263) provides an excellent review of this literature, claiming that it suffered heavily from methodological problems and insufficient theoretical development. He concludes that, "It is generally agreed that a decade and a half of quantitative research on the relationship between the internal and external conflict behavior of states has failed to produce any cumulative results."

A handful of scholars during this period also examined the inverse of "rally" relationship, typically arguing that external conflict has an important impact on the likelihood of internal violence. For example, Laqueur (1968), Tilly (1975), Eisenstadt (1978), and Skocpol (1979) examined the role of external actors in large-scale revolutions.[6] Skocpol's (1979) classical work argued that the failure of old regimes to withstand foreign threats impacted the onset and outcome of the revolutions in Russia,

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[6] See Goldstone (1980, 2001) and Levy (1989) for excellent reviews of the early literature on revolutions and civil conflicts.

China and France. Though these scholars clearly made long-lasting contributions to our understanding of interstate conflict, this body of work also suffered from over-reliance on a limited number of cases, contradictory findings, and neglect of demographic data (Goldstone 1980: 450-3). An attempt to rectify these weaknesses spurred the most recent generation of civil conflict scholars, many of who also sought to incorporate a role of external actors into theoretical explanations for rebellion.

With respect to civil war onset, Moore (1995) provides one of the first tests of the transnational dimensions of civil war in his analysis of the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean civil conflict. He finds a three-way pattern of monitoring, action, and reaction between the international community, the Rhodesian government, and the nationalist rebels. Gleditsch (2005) extends this work with a broader analysis of the international dimensions of civil war by focusing on all states as potential civil war states. His findings indicate that increased trade and regional democratization have a pacifying effect on the probability of civil war onset, while transborder groups and adjacent conflicts have the opposite effect. This work is supported by Gleditsch and Beardsley (2004), who find that actions by the United States and other regional countries altered the level of cooperation among groups engaged in civil conflicts in Central America during the 1980s and 1990s. Additionally, work by Salehyan (2005) suggests that bordering states provide opposition groups with enhanced opportunity to stage rebellions. Centinyan (2002) provides a broader theoretical argument to explain the potential effects of interstate relations on civil war onset. He claims that third party interactions are likely to have an unobservable effect on the onset of civil war because they are endogenous to the pre-war negotiation process between the opposition and the government. While these

studies are an important first step, we currently lack a comprehensive and empirically-supported theory to explain how the large body of foreign policy tools used by states might affect the likelihood that a civil war begins.

Beyond studies of civil war onset, several scholars have attempted to explain how third party interventions may affect the duration of an ongoing conflict. Licklider (1993, 1995) argues that the decision to negotiate a settlement during a civil war is a function of the warring parties' internal capabilities, which can be influenced by external interventions. In a more refined argument, Elbadawi and Sambanis (2002) argue that because rebel groups are likely to be weaker than the governments at the onset of civil war, biased interventions on their behalf are likely to lead to the longest conflicts. This argument contrasts with empirical work from Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000), who find that third party support for the government leads to longer civil wars, while balanced interventions have the opposite effect. At this point, the most comprehensive work examining interventions and civil war duration comes from Regan (2002), who presents strong findings indicating that interventions, no matter how they are conceived (economic, military, biased or unbiased), lead to longer civil wars. Two characteristics of this literature are worth noting. First, as Fearon (2004) explains, findings in the duration literature are extremely inconsistent, which makes it difficult to identify baseline variables strongly associated with civil war duration. Second, some of the most consistent findings reveal that interventions lead to longer duration, which is presumably counter to their purpose. These puzzles motivate the need for a more refined theory and revised empirical tests to better understand how international actors affect a civil war once it begins.

A third body of research examines how third parties affect the outcome of civil conflicts. Mason and Fett (1996) and Mason, Weingarten and Fett (1999) provide a rationalist-based argument to explain the decision to stop fighting, which includes the probability of victory and costs of fighting. Building on this work, DeRouen and Sobek (2004) examine civil war outcomes, such as government victory, rebel victory, truce, and treaty. They find that UN interventions increase the probability that civil wars end in either truce or treaties. While this piece represents an important step in the literature, the variable for intervention receives very little theoretical attention, and does not include the role of states as external actors. Thus, a more direct focus on how third party actors might affect the outcome of a civil war is needed to better understand and predict civil war outcomes.

While the literature reviewed above provides a solid foundation for understanding how external actors affect civil conflicts, disconnects in the theoretical logic combined with inconsistent and puzzling empirical findings motivate the need for continued study. Before previewing my theoretical contribution to this literature, I motivate this project with a brief explanation of the deleterious consequences of civil conflicts.

1.4 Why Should We Care?

The devastating nature of civil conflicts for states experiencing civil wars, their neighbors, and the entire global community best motivate this study. Collier and his colleagues (2003) provide an excellent review of the consequences of civil wars by referring to three "ripples," which represent the geographic spread of the damaging effects of civil conflicts. As shown in Figure 1.2, the first ripple includes the states that

are directly experiencing civil wars. Indicators of social wellness, especially combatant and civilian deaths, provide the clearest harmful effects for civil war states. Civil wars have caused over 16.2 million deaths from 1945 through 1999 and have lasted over six years on average.[7] The vast majority of casualties resulting from civil wars are civilian, with estimates as high as ninety percent (Cairns 1997). This is due in part to the heinous nature of civil conflicts, in which both rebel forces and the government's military have been known to use tactics that deliberately target civilians (Azam and Hoeffler 2002). Recent research has disaggregated these casualties both during and following civil conflict, finding that civil war increases adult mortality (Guha-Spair and Van Panhuis 2002), infant mortality (Hoeffler and Reynal-Querol 2003), and reduces years of healthy life due to long-term disability (Ghobarah, Huth and Russett 2003). The use of rape as a tool of warfare has also recently received the attention of conflict scholars. Carballo and Solby (2001) estimate that at least 200,000 women refugees were raped during the Rwandan civil war alone. They suggest that rape has been used not only as a form of intimidation, but also as a means to transmit deadly diseases, such as HIV. Beyond physical injury, civil wars have been found to disrupt society by causing massive flights of refugees (Collier et al 2003: 18), and by interrupting social programs such as education (Lai and Thyne 2007).

In addition to social indicators, scholars have recently shown that civil wars have a devastating effect on a country's economy (Collier 1999; Stewart, Huang and Wang 2001). Collier (1999) shows that economic growth for civil war states is around 2.2

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[7] These statistics stand in start contrast to the negative effects of interstate wars (3.33 million deaths with an average duration of 3 months in the same time period), which have received far more attention in the conflict literature (Singer and Small 1994; Fearon and Laitin 2003: 75).

percentage points lower than states not experiencing civil wars. One reason for this decline is that governments often divert resources from social programs to military expenditures, which creates what Russett (1969) calls a "Guns for Butter effect."[8] Additionally, civil war has a negative impact on a country's infrastructure as rebels work to disrupt the normal flow of economic goods (Canning 1998; Bruck 2001; Collier et. al. 2003). Finally, wealth is often pushed abroad as frightened residents try to protect their assets (Collier, Hoeffler and Patillo 2002). These problems are compounded by a severe drop in foreign investment (FDI) for states experiencing civil wars (Murdoch and Sandler 2002). Unfortunately, the negative effects of civil wars rarely end once the fighting stops, but continue long into the future. This creates a "legacy effect" of civil violence, which increases the likelihood that the state experiences renewed violence (Collier et al. 2003).

While scholars generally consider the negative effects of civil wars on the states directly experiencing the violence, Collier and his colleagues (2003) provide compelling evidence to suggest that all states are negatively affected by civil violence, which they refer to as the outer "ripple" effects of civil wars. The second ripple includes the countries adjacent to a state experiencing a civil conflict. The most direct problem for these states is the flood of refugees fleeing the violence (Holl 1993; Siverson and Starr 1991; Gleditsch 2005). In 2004, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated the total number of refugees to be just over 9 million. By the start of 2007, for instance, already 2 million people have fled the Iraqi civil war. Syria and Jordan have each absorbed over 700 thousand of these refugees, which places a heavy burden on their

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[8] Also see DeGrasse (1983), Dixon and Moon (1986), Huang and Mintz (1990), Looney (1990), Adeola (1996), Raheem and Akinroye (2002), and Collier et al. (2003: 14).

ability to provide public services (Younes and Garcia 2006). Refugees also advance the spread of infectious diseases, such as HIV and malaria, which provides secondary consequences for neighboring states (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2002; Collier et al. 2003). Beyond the problems associated with refugee flows, evidence suggests that having a neighboring state at war severely disrupts a state's economy. Murdoch and Sandler (2002) provide a comprehensive look at this issue. They find that having a neighbor at war reduces a state's economic growth by around 0.5 percentage points. This decline is often due to disrupted trade flows and decreases in FDI. Ultimately, both the strain on public services and a decline in economic growth work to destabilize neighboring states, which often results in a contagion effect of civil conflicts.

The final set of consequences from civil wars is global, which is represented by the outer ripple examined by Collier and his colleagues (2003). As noted earlier, the spread of HIV and other infectious diseases is strongly associated with civil conflicts. These diseases rarely remain confined to the borders of the state experiencing the civil conflict. In fact, Smallman-Raynor and Cliff (1991) trace the global epidemic of HIV to the Ugandan civil war in 1979, where rape and refugee flows allowed the disease to spread throughout the globe. Though most of this problem is absorbed by neighboring states (the second ripple), refugees can also find themselves moving to distant lands.[9] The spread of infectious diseases is a likely consequence of the mass movement of peoples. Civil wars are also associated with the global spread of illegal narcotics because they provide territory outside the government's control, which enables the production and

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[9] A group of boys fleeing the violence in Sudan, for instance, were permanently resettled in US cities such as Omaha, Seattle, Richmond and Grand Rapids in a collaborated effort by the UN Refugee Agency and the US Department of State (Crawley 2000).

distribution of drugs. Around 95 percent of the global production of opium, for instance, is in civil war countries (Collier et al. 2003). Even today, with around 35 thousand NATO troops stationed in the country, Afghanistan produced 90 percent of the world's opium (Martinez 2006; Associated Press 2007). Likewise, the ongoing violence in Colombia has transformed over time to become less about class struggles and more about the production of cocaine (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). As we know, these drugs most often end up in the hands of youth living in Europe and the United States. Finally, scholars are beginning to explore the links between civil wars and international terrorism. Civil wars promote terrorism by providing a safe haven for people to organize outside the government's control. Illegal products from the conflicts, such as alluvial diamonds, also provide revenue for terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda (Farah 2002; Collier et al. 2003). Overall, whether it is a focus on the spread of diseases, drugs, or terrorism, there is a strong reason for all people to better understand how civil wars begin, continue, and end.

In the final chapter, I provide a more in-depth explanation of how the negative consequences of civil conflict should influence policy-makers. At this point, it should be clear that civil wars are terrible, and their negative effects extend far beyond the countries at war. Improving our understanding of how international actors can affect the onset, duration and outcome of civil conflicts should put policy-makers in a better position to limit these negative effects. As Moore (1995: 130) urges, "Given the consequences [civil] conflicts produce, it is incumbent on social scientists to provide a better understanding of these conflicts so that we may put policy makers in a better position to minimize them and, thereby, improve the human condition." Heeding Moore's advice is a primary motivation behind this project.

1.5 What to Expect

This project is divided into seven main sections. In Chapter 2, I develop a three-part theory of how international actors affect civil conflicts. First, I consider how signals sent from external actors affect an opposition group's decision to violently challenge the government. Drawing on frameworks known as "bargaining theory" and "rational expectations," I argue that signals that are readily observable and relatively easy to predict, which I refer to as "costly signals," will have little effect on the onset of conflict because they simply alter the peaceful bargaining range between the government and the opposition. In contrast, unpredictable signals, which I refer to as "cheap signals," can introduce uncertainty into the bargaining process, which increases the likelihood of internal violence. This is particularly true when the signals are cheap and hostile because they increase the likelihood that the opposition will make unacceptable demands to the government. Secondary factors are also brought into the analyses, such as the consistency of signals over time and the characteristics of the signaling state.

The second part of my theory examines how international actors affect the duration of conflict once a civil war begins. Departing from past research examining this subject, I attempt to unify the three stages of civil conflict—onset, duration and outcome—into a single theoretical framework. I argue that third party interventions are best understood in the context of pre-war signals from external actors. This is because many interventions are readily predictable prior to the onset of violence and are, therefore, already incorporated into both the government's and opposition's original decision to fight. In contrast, actions that are inconsistent with pre-war signals should have a dramatic effect on the duration of the conflict because one side finds itself in a

much weaker position than it expected, which forces it to either settle quickly or face a rapid defeat. The final part of my theory extends the duration argument to the outcome phase. Similar to my expectations for duration, I argue that third party support that is consistent with pre-war signals will have little effect on which side wins the civil war. In contrast, unexpected third party support will provide a preferable outcome to the side receiving the unexpected support.

In Chapter 3, I provide empirical tests of the hypotheses developed for the effect of external actors on the onset of civil conflict with a large-N analysis of all states from 1949 to 1999. As expected, the results show that cheap signals have the strongest impact on the likelihood of civil war onset, while costly signals have no effect. As cheap signals become more supportive, the probability of civil war onset decreases; as they become more hostile, it increases. Consistency of signals over time is also found to be of great importance. When signals remain consistent, they have little impact on the probability of civil war onset because they are readily predictable based on past activity. Signals that exhibit volatility over time, in contrast, dramatically increase the probability of civil war onset. Analyses focusing on the signaler's characteristics show that the signaler's level of democracy, regime similarities, and cultural similarities play little role in enhancing the credibility of the signal. In contrast, the signaler's military strength and the consistency of its signals over time are found to significantly decrease the effect that cheap signals have on the probability of civil war onset.

In Chapter 4, I examine how cheap hostile signals sent from the United States affected the onset of the FLSN's rebellion in Nicaragua in 1978. This is the first of two extended case studies presented in this project. The purpose of these case studies is

twofold. First, they provide a clear picture of the theory and expected results, which are presented in more general terms in Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6. This allows us to better see the mechanisms identified by my theory, and draws out the causal processes that remain largely hidden with a large N analyis. Second, they highlight alternative explanations to my primary theoretical argument, which yield potentially fruitful theoretical and empirical modifications for future research.

Chapter 5 provides tests for the duration hypotheses. The independent variables are constructed to capture the level of consistency between the pre-war signals and interventions by external actors after the war begins. As predicted, the empirical results suggest that expected interventions have no significant effect on the duration of the conflict, while unexpected interventions and failures to intervene dramatically reduce the time fighting. The duration analyses are extended in Chapter 6 by using a competing risk model to examine the outcome of civil wars. This approach allows for an explicit test of the dynamic and interconnected relationships between the onset, duration and outcome of civil conflicts. The empirical analyses suggest overall support for my theory. Interventions during the conflict that are consistent with pre-war signals have little effect on the outcome of civil conflicts, while unexpected interventions dramatically reduce the time to victory for the side that receives the unexpected support.

In Chapter 7, I highlight the empirical results from Chapters 5 and 6 with the second case study. This chapter explains how Bush's inconsistent policies following the Gulf War in Iraq (1991) affected the duration and outcomes of the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions. I conclude the analytical part of this project in Chapter 8 by applying the lessons learned in the empirical analyses to the current foreign policy goals of the United

States. Though I provide general policy advice in the conclusion of previous empirical chapters, in this chapter I am able to provide a more focused discussion by connecting my theoretical argument and empirical findings with two of the primary goals laid out by President George W. Bush: (1) to improve the condition of all peoples in the world and (2) to fight terrorism. Each of these goals is strongly linked to civil conflict, which suggests that the Bush administration should be concerned with decreasing the likelihood that civil wars erupt in states at high risk for civil conflict, while attempting to end conflicts that are currently underway. I am able to give specific policy advice for doing this by forecasting expectations for how the most recent signals sent by the United States will affect the likelihood of rebellion in the thirty-one states most at risk for civil war onset. Next, I examine how American actions are affecting the twenty-one states currently involved in civil wars, which allows me to provide an explanation for how potential policy changes should be expected to affect the duration and termination of the wars we see today. In the final chapter, I highlight weaknesses of this project, and provide several avenues for future researchers.

Ultimately, the theory and analyses presented in subsequent chapters have the potential to greatly expand our understanding of how international actors affect the likelihood that a civil conflict begins, a conflict's duration, and the eventual outcome of a conflict. It is my hope that this increased understanding will help put both scholars and policy-makers in a better position to create a more peaceful world by preventing future conflicts and by ending those that are currently underway.

Figure 1.1. Predictors of Civil War Onset in Nicaragua, 1970-78
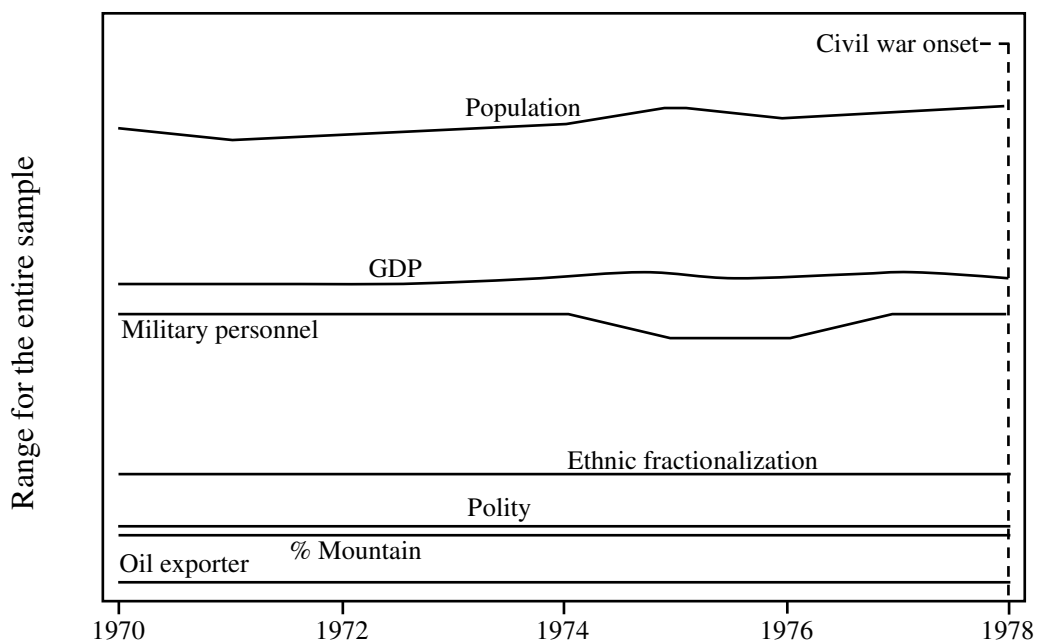
	All States		Nicaragua	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Population (log)	1.79	5.99	3.28	3.44
GDP (log)	-1.32	1.82	0.23	0.44
Military personnel (log)	0.00	3.65	1.61	3.18
Ethnic fractionalization	0.01	0.93	0.18	0.18
Polity	-10.00	10.00	-8.00	-8.00
% Mountain	0.00	94.30	9.30	9.30
Oil exporter	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00

3rd Ripple:
Global community
- Spread of diseases –
- Manufacture and spread of narcotics –
- Spread of international terrorism -

2nd Ripple:
Neighboring states
- Flood of refugees -
- Spread of diseases –
- Slowed economic growth -

1st Ripple:
States experiencing civil conflicts
- Civilian deaths, rape -
- Spread of diseases -
- Slowed economic growth -

Figure 1.2. The "Ripple Effects" of Civil Wars

CHAPTER 2

HOW INTERSTATE SIGNALS AFFECT THE ONSET, DURATION AND OUTCOME OF CIVIL CONFLICTS

> We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril.
> John F. Kennedy, 1962

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theory to explain how external actors affect the onset, duration and outcome of civil wars. I begin by explaining bargaining theory from the interstate war literature in general terms. This work is then linked with existing work on civil war by drawing on an economic theory known as "rational expectations," which allows for clear predictions of how different types of interstate signals should affect the onset of civil war. The entire argument is represented in Figure 2.1. This figure allows us to see how actions from external actors have important implications for the three phases of civil war as well as the linkages across these phases. Each of the three phases indicated on the left side of the figure corresponds to the three main sections of the theory, which provides a map of the argument. This figure is updated in later chapters after a discussion of empirical findings for each phase.

2.1.1 The Bargaining Approach: An Overview

The study of conflict has occupied scholars of international relations for decades. A large body of research examines this question in a bargaining context.[10] According to

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[10] Competing theories include cognitive psychology, organization theory, domestic politics and constructivism. See Reiter (2003) for a review of these theories and their relationship with bargaining models of war.

the bargaining model, the source of conflict is a disagreement among two or more parties over resource allocation and/or policy choice (Reiter 2003: 28). This literature is rooted in work from Schelling (1960), Kecskemeti (1970), Rosen (1972), Blainey (1988) and Iklé (1991), who introduced the idea that conflict may occur due to disagreements about levels of strength or resolve. An important extension of this work comes from Fearon (1995), who suggests that bargaining failures can be attributed to three factors: disagreement over the likely outcome of war, inability to credibly commit to not fight in the future, and issue indivisibilities. In this context, war reveals information about the capabilities and resolve of each party and, therefore, the future end result of an absolute war. As this information is revealed, the two sides are often able to find a mutually agreeable settlement (Wagner 2000; Filson and Werner 2002; Smith and Stam 2002).

Two recent extensions of the basic bargaining framework are critical to the theory presented in this section. First, while the majority of work examining conflict in a bargaining context limits the actors to two players, some scholars have pushed the models to include a third player—who may or may not be critical to the dispute. For instance, Morrow (1994) and Smith (1995) incorporate a potential intervener in a bargaining game in order to examine the effects of alliances on one actor's decision to threaten another. Similarly, Zagare and Kilgour (2003) incorporate a third party into their deterrence model to examine how the outcome of a crisis between two actors might be affected by a defender's decision whether or not to support its protégé. As we will see, existing models incorporating a role for third parties in otherwise bilateral negotiations provide substantial leverage on our ability to explain the onset of civil wars.

A second important extension from recent bargaining work treats war as a costly process during which states can continue to bargain while fighting (Smith 1998a; Wagner 2000; Filson and Werner 2002; Kim 2002; Slantchev 2002, 2003; Smith and Stam 2003). This extension contrasts with earlier work, which viewed the decision to escalate to war as a game-ending move. Efforts in this vein focused on understanding the pre-war crisis phase. Powell (2004: 345) refers to this literature as a "second wave" of formal work on war. He highlights several major improvements made by this generation of scholars. Most importantly, by assuming that actors can continue bargaining while fighting, we can build some form of learning into the process because demands can be based on information gathered from each side's performance during the war.[11] Additionally, inferences regarding the expected duration of conflict can be made from second wave models by examining sources of the informational asymmetry both before and during the conflict. As we will see in the second and third parts of this chapter, the second extension of the bargaining literature is useful in explaining the duration and outcome of civil wars because it allows us to understand moves made during the war in the context of what happened in the past.

While the bargaining model of conflict has provided substantial leverage in explaining interstate conflicts, few scholars have attempted to extend the same logic to the study of civil conflicts.[12] The dominant approaches to explaining civil war focuses on contextual factors, such as state strength (Fearon and Laitin 2003), poor economic and

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[11] Rather than examining each side's performance directly, I focus on third party actions that may enhance either the government's or opposition's fighting abilities.

[12] Notable exceptions include Pillar (1983), Wagner (1993), Cetinyan (2002), Walter (2002), Regan and Aydin (2005), and Werner and Yuen (2005).

social environments (Gurr 1970), and economic incentives to rebel (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Though valuable, more work is needed to adequately address the specific causal processes that cause an opposition group to challenge a government violently (Sambanis 2004a). This is puzzling given that the important characteristics of interstate struggles are also present in civil conflicts. At its basic level, the source of conflict in both contexts is a disagreement over resource allocation and/or policy choice. The factors identified by Fearon (1995), including incentives to misrepresent, inability to make credible commitments, and issue indivisibilities, are also present in civil conflicts.[13] By drawing on bargaining theories of interstate war, scholars studying intrastate conflicts should be better able to develop theoretical expectations regarding the onset, duration, and outcome of civil wars. Importantly, the recent developments from the second wave of bargaining theories allow one to examine all three phases of the civil war process— pre-war negotiations, civil war duration and civil war outcome—in a unified context. That is, we can explain characteristics of a civil war, such as the duration and outcome, by referencing the characteristics of the pre-war environment. With these tools in hand, in the remainder of this chapter I use a bargaining approach to examine how the relationship between the government, opposition, and external actors affect the onset, duration and outcome of civil wars.

2.1.2 The Intrastate Bargaining Environment

The argument begins by assuming that some level of opposition to the government exists in all states at all times. This opposition may be open, such as public

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[13] There is reason to believe that these three factors are actually more acute in the intrastate context. For instance, Walter (2002) argues that the inability of the government and the opposition to credibly commit to negotiated settlements explains the high failure rate of peace agreements.

protests against minority discrimination in the United States, or covert, such as secret

meetings held in highly-repressive regimes. The opposition may be very weak relative to

the government, such as student movements in China during the late 1980s, or may

represent real threats to the government, such as the Tamil Tiger separatist movement in

Sri Lanka. In the vast majority of situations, there is very little chance of the opposition

group attempting to violently overthrow the government for a handful of reasons. First,

in many countries the situation of the opposition group is not sufficiently bad for people

to risk their lives for their cause. Many Québécois in Canada want independence, for

instance, but few are willing to sacrifice their lives in a violent rebellion. Second, the

government may be so repressive that opposition groups have few opportunities to openly

express their discontent. Governments in repressive regimes, such as Saudi Arabia, are

quick to repress any semblance of opposition.[14] Third, the government and opposition

may be able to come to mutually-agreeable settlements to avoid fighting. A plethora of

literature examines the first two explanations. Gurr's (1970) "relative deprivation"

theory explains that people in satisfactory situations like Quebec are unlikely to violently

challenge the government. Similarly, Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue that the strength of

states like Saudi Arabia will stall rebel attempts. The third explanation, which is directly

related to the bargaining framework, has received far less attention.

As explained earlier, scholars studying interstate disputes have generally noted

that some level of uncertainty must be involved in order for two states to resort to violent

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[14] For instance, in September 2003 the Saudi government arrested and retained Abd al-'Aziz al-Tavyar, the former public relations director at Riyadh Chamber of Commerce, for criticizing the government on television broadcast (Amnesty International Report 2004).

means to settle a dispute.[15] The same is true for intrastate disputes. If the government

and the opposition have perfect (or near-perfect) information regarding the strength,

resolve and demands of the other side, they should be able to peacefully settle problems

without resorting to war, which the bargaining approach assumes to be costly for both

sides (Powell 2004). This notion is captured in Figure 2.2. In this figure, the solid line

represents the preferred bargaining position of the two sides, with the government's ideal

position at the extreme right and the opposition's at the extreme left. Each side prefers to

move the status quo environment towards its side. Each side also has expectations

regarding the future position were a war to break out (G_{exp} and O_{exp}), which may be

preferable to the status quo.[16] Because war is costly, each side will accept a settlement

less than its ideal point, and less than that which it may expect to achieve through violent

means (G_{acc} and O_{acc}). This creates an overlapping "settlement zone" that both actors

will accept. Because war is costly, neither side wishes to pursue a rapid change in its

bargaining position, which results in a stable and peaceful equilibrium. Fortunately, this

figure represents the status quo in the vast majority of states.

Despite the clear predictions of the basic bargaining framework, civil wars exist

and have devastating consequences for both the combatants and civilians. Examining

sources of uncertainty provides a key to understanding why civil wars are so prevalent in

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[15] Several scholars have argued that war is possible even under perfect information. For instance, Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman (1992) examine domestic political forces that may contribute to conflict, while Garfinkel and Skaperdas (2000) argue that the salience of the future may have the same effect. These arguments can safely be considered as exceptions to the dominant explanation for conflict in the bargaining literature, which relies on some level of uncertainty (Stantchev 2003; Powell 2004).

[16] The expectations of both the government and opposition are removed from subsequent figures for simplicity. Because war is costly, we can assume that expectations for the government (G_{exp}) are somewhere to the right of the settlement position it will accept (G_{acc}). Similarly, we can assume that expectations for the opposition (O_{exp}) are somewhere to the left of what it will accept (O_{acc}).

today's world. With few exceptions, civil war studies have exclusively examined intrastate factors to explain the interaction between the government and opposition.[17] This is extremely problematic because states do not exist in a vacuum, but are influenced by external actors.[18] Therefore, the next step is to explain how external actors might affect the basic bargaining framework between the government and the opposition in order to better understand the onset, duration and outcomes of civil wars.

2.1.3 Interstate Signals and Intrastate Bargaining

States are constantly interacting with each other. These interactions have both direct and indirect consequences for bargaining between the government and opposition, even though their original intent may have had little to do with inciting a civil war in the other country. Most importantly, interstate interactions act as *signals* to both the government and the opposition, which affect their estimation of a future military victory if war were to begin.[19] According to Gartzke (2003: 1), "Signaling involves actions or statements that potentially allow an actor to infer something about unobservable, but salient, properties of another actor." Using this definition, signals may directly or indirectly affect the bargaining process within another state. President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address sends an *indirect* signal in support of regime change, "States like [Iran, Iraq and North Korea], and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to

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[17] Exceptions include Moore (1995), Sambanis (2001), Cetinyan (2002), Gleditsch and Beardsley (2004), Gleditsch (2005), and Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006).

[18] A secondary problem is the static nature of intrastate variables, such as ethnic fractionalization, population and terrain. In contrast to interstate signals, the vast majority of intrastate variables change very little over time, making it difficult to explain the mechanisms that trigger the outbreak of civil conflict. This is clear in Figure 1.1 (presented in Chapter 1), which shows several intrastate variables used to predict the onset of civil war in Nicaragua in 1978.

[19] The origins of signaling theory can be traced to the economics literature (Veblen 1899; Spence 1973) and evolutionary biology (Zahavi 1975; Grafen 1990).

threaten the peace of the world."[20] Though this statement does not immediately address opposition groups in these three countries, we might expect it to weigh heavily in the minds of such groups because they may expect support from the United States if they attempted to overthrow the government. Bush's 2005 State of the Union address sends a more *direct* signal in support of opposition groups in Iran, "And to the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you."[21] Here, the President is directly appealing to the Iranian opposition in an effort to signal future support if they were to begin a rebellion.

The key point is that interactions between two states, whether directly or indirectly addressing opposition groups in the other state, reveal some level of information about the outside actor's probability of aiding either the opposition or the government if a civil war were to begin. In this regard, the use of signaling in my argument departs from the majority of studies examining signaling in the interstate environment. Most of these arguments study the actor that sends the signal by focusing on its ability to send credible signals or their incentives to bluff. For instance, authors in the deterrence literature have examined how international actors use signals to bluff or show resolve (Schelling 1966; Jervis 1970; Powell 1990; Nalebuff 1991; Fearon 1994b, 1997). In contrast, no specific argument is made here in regards to an outside actor's incentives to send signals (though this issue is addressed tangentially later in this chapter). In fact, we can safely assume that most interstate signals are not meant to affect the receiving state's domestic stability without undermining the forthcoming argument.

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[20] See http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html for a full text of this speech.

[21] See http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050202-11.html for a full text of this speech.

The point is simply this: states interact, and these interactions have consequences for both the inter- and intra-state bargaining environments regardless of their original objective.[22]

The information revealed through interstate communication is important to the bargaining position of both parties of an internal dispute because it represents a potential increase or decrease in fighting capabilities if a war were to begin. Following both of Bush's addresses, for example, the opposition in Iran was likely emboldened in its stance because it expected support from the United States if it was to begin a war.[23] Of course, we cannot assume that all signals are sent with the same purpose; nor can we assume that all signals are interpreted by the government and opposition in the same manner. Thus, examining the effect of a variety of signals should help us better understand how interstate interactions might affect civil war.

Signals provide two pieces of information that are relevant to the bargaining positions of a government and an opposition group. First, they foreshadow support for one side or the other, and suggest that this support will continue if a civil war were to begin. Second, they reveal information in regards to the extent of the support that each side may expect to receive.[24] I extend this notion in the following section by providing a

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[22] Given the norm of sovereignty, it may also be very difficult to capture the efforts of a state to foment rebellion in another state. Even though states may truly want to see a civil war begin in another country, they are very unlikely to openly support an opposition group. This issue is addressed later on in this chapter.

[23] There is some evidence to suggest that the hostile signals from the United States to Iran have already had a strengthening effect on Iranian opposition efforts. For example, Iranian opposition groups, such as the Mujahedeen-e Khalq (MEK), were blamed for bomb blasts only days before the June 2005 elections (Associated Press 2005; BBC 2005). This same group's political wing, the National Council of Resistance, recently held a conference in Washington drawing hundreds of sympathizers, including several retired US diplomats and military personnel. These moves are seen by many as efforts to gain strength by building alliances with the United States (Moran 2005; Collier 2005).

[24] These two types of uncertainty are also presented later in this Chapter in Table 2.2, where they help predict variation in the duration of civil wars.

more nuanced understanding of signals, and by developing expectations about how they
may or may not affect a state's internal stability.

2.2 Interstate Signals and the Onset of Civil Wars

2.2.1 Costly signals and Intrastate Bargaining

Scholars studying interstate disputes have recently examined the credibility of
signals, which provides a useful literature to draw on in answering the puzzle posed
above. According to Morrow (1999: 484), "Credible signals…require the signaling state
to suffer some cost for sending the signal."[25] Fearon (1997: 69-70) clarifies this notion
by explaining that actors have two choices by which they can send credible signals. The
first is to create *ex post* audience costs for bluffing (usually in the form of public
statements), which he refers to as "tying hands." The second is to create financially
costly moves, which he refers to as "sunk costs." For simplicity, we can group signals
into two categories based on Fearon's argument: costly and cheap. *Costly signals* are
those that come with high levels of "tying hands" and/or "sunk costs," which enhances
their credibility. Costly signals generally represent clear and direct positions from an
external actor that are costly to establish and maintained in a consistent and transparent
manner. These relations are apt to change slowly and transparently.[26] Examples of
costly supportive relations may include military alliances and trade ties. Hostile

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[25] Many other scholars have argued that signals must be costly if they are to credibly communicate one's
resolve, including Schelling (1966), Jervis (1970), Powell (1990), Nalebuff (1991), Fearon (1994a, 1994b,
1997) and Huth (1999).

[26] Though it is most often the case, costly signals do not necessarily have to be more transparent or stable
than cheap signals. The focus here is on the real costs of establishing and maintaining the signal in terms of
financial and political costs, and the credibility derived from these costs.

examples include mobilization of troops and economic sanctions.[27] Each of these is

costly and credible. For example, when the United States placed sanctions on South

Africa in 1986 (a costly hostile signal), it was after years of public debate over the subject

and an open discussion in Congress. Likewise, the establishment of costly trade ties

between the United States and Mexico (a costly supportive signal) progressed over

decades. Both moves were costly to the United States because they were forced to find

alternative trade partners in the case of South Africa, or develop a trading infrastructure

with Mexico. Table 2.1 provides a summary of how signals are to be understood in this

context, and includes information that will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Given this definition, what is the expected effect of costly signals on the

bargaining process between the opposition and the government? Theory rooted in the

economics literature known as *rational expectations* provides a great deal of leverage on

our ability to answer this question.[28] According to McGinnis and Williams (2001: 53),

"Rational expectations refers to the aggregate result of private economic actors utilizing

relevant information in forming unbiased expectations of the future behavior of the

economy as a whole." Like these authors, my argument extends the rational expectations

framework beyond economics by using it to understand intrastate bargaining. In this

context, actors in competition respond not only to current conditions, but to expectations

of future events. Under complete information, in which the competing parties have an

accurate assessment of the other's preferences, capabilities, and beliefs, the two sides

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[27] The words "supportive" and "hostile" are used throughout in reference to relations between governments (not government-opposition relations).

[28] The theory of rational expectations can be traced to Muth (1961), who argued that actors respond not only to current information, but to expectations of future events.

should be able to peacefully negotiate a settlement because the actors can perfectly

predict the outcome of some potential future conflict. For example, McGinnis and

Williams (2001) explain that the stability of the super-power rivalry during the Cold War

was maintained primarily because each power was sufficiently well-informed about the

capabilities of the other side. This allowed the United States and the Soviet Union to

readily forecast the other's future behavior and adjust its current policies accordingly.[29]

The logic of this argument closely parallels arguments made in the deterrence

literature, particularly among scholars who address a state's ability to influence threats

made to its protégé (extended deterrence).[30] Early work suggested that defenders have

been unsuccessful overall in deterring challenges to their protégés (Lebow 1981).

Similarly, early work in the alliance literature suggested that allied states failed to come

to each other's aid more often than not (Sabrosky 1980). Recently, several scholars have

attempted to explain these counter-intuitive findings by focusing on the strength or

credibility of the third party prior to the onset of the dispute. Smith (1995, 1996) argues

that potential attackers develop rational expectations about the reliability of a target's

alliance partner. Once these expectations are developed, attackers will only threaten

states that have alliance ties when they think that the defender is unreliable. In the case

of immediate deterrence, a defender can signal reliability through costly behavior, such as

mobilizing troops, when an attack of their protégé seems likely (Leng 1984, 1993; Huth

1988; Gelpi 1997). In the case of general deterrence, a defender might establish long-

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[29] Others have used the rational expectations framework to explain interstate trade (Morrow 1999; Li and Sacko 2002), diversionary theory (Fordham 2005), and both interstate and intrastate disputes (Blainey 1988; Moore 1995; Walter 1997; Lake and Rothchild 1998; Gartzke 1999; Wagner 2000; Moore and Lanoue 2003).

[30] See Huth (1999) for an excellent review of the deterrence literature.

term commitments with their protégés, such as establishing formal alliances or economic

ties (Huth and Russett 1984; Huth 1988). These costly signals tell the potential attacker

that its target will likely have support if attacked, which makes it less likely that an attack

will happen in the first place (Fearon 1994b; Danilovic 2001).

Extending this approach to the study of intrastate disputes, we should expect

costly signals to allow both the government and opposition plenty of time to alter their

bargaining positions to avoid violent conflict because they credibly relate information

about who would likely receive aid and the extent of this aid if a civil war were to begin.

This situation is represented in Figure 2.3. In this figure, a costly hostile signal causes

the acceptable positions for both the government (G_{acc}) and the opposition (O_{acc}) to shift

in favor of the opposition.

By comparing Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3, we can see that the net effect of costly

signals is to adjust the bargaining range of both actors, while maintaining the relative

distance between acceptable settlements and predictions of the outcome of a future civil

war. This is the expected result of US sanctions placed on South Africa, for example.

Because the position of the United States prior to the implementation of sanctions was

signaled in a credible manner, the final decision came as a shock to no one. This gave the

government of South Africa plenty of time to appease the opposition's demands to

prevent an all-out rebellion.[31] Similarly, the establishment of governmental support in

the form of trade ties with Mexico sent a costly signal to the opposition, which depressed

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[31] In 1990, the National Party Government embarked upon a program of radical reform that led to South
Africa's first fully democratic election in April 1994. As Manby (1992: 217) explains, "Although sanctions
were not the only factor in the South African government's decision to initiate a process of negotiation with
the black liberation movements and to repeal the major apartheid legislation, such international economic
isolation made it impossible to repress the internal demand for political change indefinitely."

its predicted outcome of a future civil conflict, and ultimately forced it to adjust its

bargaining position. In both the South Africa and Mexico cases, the costly signals

allowed change within the countries to come slowly and relatively peacefully.[32]

Consistent with the rational expectations argument made by McGinnis and

Williams (2001), and the arguments made about costly signaling in the deterrence

literature, the argument presented here suggests that costly signals should force the

government and the opposition to adjust their bargaining positions based on the

likelihood that the other side has reliable support from an outside actor. Because costly

signals are credible, they are easy to interpret by both sides. Thus, there is no reason to

expect a divergence in the mutually-acceptable bargaining range. This expectation leads

to the first hypothesis:

H1:   Costly signals sent from external actors (whether supportive or hostile) should
       have little effect on the probability of civil war onset.

2.2.2 Cheap Signals and Intrastate Bargaining

Having established the argument that costly signals from external actors should

have little effect on the probability of civil war onset, the next step is to examine how

cheap signals might affect the bargaining process.[33] Cheap signals include day-to-day

communications across borders that come with little costs to the signaling state. As

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[32] This is not to say that these changes came without any violence. Protests following the most recent elections in Mexico, for instance, suggest that there is still a viable opposition group in the country (Agren 2006). The key point is that these activities are weak relative to a full-scale civil conflict.

[33] "Cheap signals" are similar to the more common term used in the literature: "cheap talk." Farrell and Rabin (1996: 116) define cheap talk as "costless, nonbinding, nonverifiable messages that may affect the listener's beliefs." The key difference here is that cheap signals are allowed to have some level of costs to the signaler, and are able to change payoffs among the potential combatants. For instance, the signaler may suffer some cost in terms of influence for withdrawing aid from another country, or breaking off diplomatic relations. The key difference is that cheap signals come with significantly less costs to the signaler than do costly signals.

presented earlier in Table 2.1, these include statements of condemnation or threats to sanction on the hostile side, while cheap supportive relations include statements of support or offers of foreign aid. President Bush's offer to support the Iranian opposition (presented earlier) represents an example of a cheap/hostile signal. The following joint statement by President Bush and Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin provides an example of a cheap/supportive signal:

> "Finally, we reaffirm the importance of continued cooperation between the United States and Moldova in promoting regional security, including through our common efforts at combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; transnational crime; and trafficking of persons. We will deepen our cooperation to combat international terrorist threats to world peace both in our own countries and internationally. The United States appreciates Moldova's support in the global war on terrorism" (December 17, 2002).

In Fearon's (1997) terms, these activities have low levels of "tying hands" and "sunk costs" because they do not require the signaler (the United States in this case) to make any significant investment to reinforce its position. While the signaler might suffer some level of *ex post* audience costs from switching policy positions, they will be far less than those for costly signals, such as wasting time and money invested in developing a trading infrastructure, negotiating an alliance, or mobilizing troops. The overall effect of cheap signals, therefore, is to introduce a great deal of uncertainty into the bargaining process between the government and the opposition because they fail to credibly communicate which side should expect external support, and the extent of this support, if a civil war were to begin.

In the rational expectations framework, the introduction of cheap signals may mean that the two actors are unable to predict an external actor's likelihood of future support in the same manner. This may ultimately lead to a divergence in acceptable

settlement positions. In order to clarify how cheap signals might eventually lead to civil war, I extend this argument in the following section by focusing on specific causal mechanisms to explain an opposition group's decision whether or not to challenge the government.

2.2.3 Cheap Signals, Shocks, and the Decision to Rebel

As explained in the first chapter, understanding an actor's decision to rebel has occupied scholars for decades. The most common line of civil war research today draws on a rationalist framework to understand an individual's decision to rebel. The most important factors affecting this decision include the status quo environment, probability of victory, expected benefits of a future victory, and costs of fighting (Mason and Fett 1996; Grossman 1999). Among these factors, many scholars have argued that the *probability of victory* is of primary importance (Gottschalk 1944; Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: 46-47; Hoffer 1951; Johnson 1964; Klandermans 1984; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Opp 1989; Macy 1990, 1991; Oberschall 1994; Lichbach 1995; Van Belle 1996). As Ginkel and Smith (1999: 293, 301) explain, "One of the key factors affecting the mob's decision to rebel is the probability of success…The mob must be convinced that a revolution is likely to succeed."

Many authors have extended this argument by explaining that actions from outside groups, such as external states, can dramatically affect peoples' predicted probability of victory if they were to stage a rebellion (Goldstone 2001). When support for states in the Soviet Union's sphere of influence declined in the late 1980s, for example, governments such as Czechoslovakia were on their own when confronting opponents (Ginkel and Smith 1999: 305). This lack of support emboldened oppositions

groups, which caused them to increase their demands of the government. Returning to the bargaining framework, however, we recall that some divergence in expectations between the opposition and the government is needed for a change in the probability of victory to lead to civil war. While a hostile signal from external actors may change the opposition's probability of victory, this will not necessarily lead to a violent rebellion if both the government and opposition interpret the signals in the same manner. Some shock is necessary for a divergence in expectations between the opposition and government, which then may result in the onset of civil war.[34] These shocks may come from within the state, such as the emergence of a charismatic and influential leader (Frolich and Oppenheimer 1970; LeVan 1999; Collier et al. 2003: 69), or the discovery of resources with which a group may fund a rebellion (Collier et al. 2004). Another source of uncertainty can come from the actions of external actors. We can clearly identify at least four causal mechanisms to explain why cheap signals from external actors—especially those showing hostilities towards the government—can introduce uncertainty into the bargaining process.

2.2.4 Causal Mechanism #1: Informational Asymmetries

Variation in the manner in which the opposition and the government interpret new information provides the first mechanism by which we can understand how cheap signals from external actors may act as shocks, which should increase the likelihood of rebellion. It is likely that the government is better informed than the opposition about the probability and extent of support (or hostility) from external actors if a civil war were to begin. This is because interstate relations happen almost exclusively between the

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[34] This argument is especially rich in the interstate war context (Morrow 1989; Kilgour and Zagare 1991; Gartzke 1999; Powell 1999, 2004).

governments of states due to internationally-recognized norms of sovereignty (Ruggie 1983; Bartkus 1999; Regan 2002; Lake 2003; Gurr and Harff 2004). Because international actors recognize a government's right to control the situation within its borders, efforts by external actors to deal directly with opposition groups are infrequent, often covert, and generally frowned upon by the international community.

Given that the vast majority of interstate interactions happen between the governments of states, it is reasonable to assume that governments have a better understanding than the opposition of the true positions of outside actors if a civil war were to begin. Two scenarios are likely in this context. First, a government will correctly predict future support for the opposition, while the opposition underestimates the likelihood of receiving external support if it was to begin a rebellion. This would not change the likelihood that a civil war begins because the opposition fails to take advantage of its external support by making no additional demands of the government. Of course, there will be no reason for the government to adjust its position if no demands are made, which should result in no shift in either group's acceptable bargaining position (G_{acc} and O_{acc}). In the second scenario, civil war may become more likely if the government correctly identifies external signals in support for the opposition as disingenuous, while the opposition views them as credible. The government will have no need to alter its bargaining position (G_{acc}) in this case because it is certain that the opposition will not have external support for its cause, which would make it easy to defeat a rebellion if one is attempted. In contrast, the opposition will demand more from the government (O_{acc} moves left) if it overestimates the likelihood of receiving external support. This would decrease or eliminate the zone of mutually-acceptable bargaining

positions and making civil war onset more likely. Ultimately, the asymmetry in information between the government and the opposition may lead to a divergence in acceptable policy positions because the opposition is ill-equipped to make accurate predictions about future assistance if they were to begin a rebellion.

2.2.5 Causal Mechanism #2: Bureaucratic (in)efficiency

Even if we assume that the opposition and the government have identical levels of information, the manner in which they translate new information into policy positions may result in a divergence in the range of mutually-acceptable positions. As McGinnis and Williams (2001: 61) explain, changing new information into an actual policy change is costly. A pronounced asymmetry in the time necessary for two competing states to adjust their positions may lead to a divergence in their respective positions. Their theory expects no major differences between the United States' and Soviet Union's abilities to translate new information into policy positions. The same expectation is likely not true for the intrastate environment. Opposition groups rarely have a complex bureaucracy or decision-making structure, which allows the leader(s) to rapidly change policy positions based on new information (Collier et al. 2003). Governments rarely act as efficiently as opposition groups in changing policy positions based on new information.[35] Even highly authoritarian governments have some group allowing them to retain power, which forces them to refer potential policy changes to another body before changing the government's official position (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). When cheap hostile signals are sent

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[35] Scholars examining how the level of democracy affects the probability of rebellion have touched upon this idea by comparing different types of governments. For instance, Goodwin and Skocpol (1989), Elbadawi and Sambanis (2002) and Collier and Hoeffler (2004) argue that civil war may be less likely in democratic states as grievances are better addressed because the government is more efficient. Empirical results suggest a far more complex relationship (Hegre et al. 2001).

from external actors, the opposition may rapidly demand concessions from the government because it is quicker to update its bargaining position based on the new information. If the government is too slow to respond due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, the opposition may take this as an implicit rejection of their demands and begin a violent rebellion.

2.2.6   Causal Mechanism #3: Incentives for Leaders to Manufacture' a Rebellion

Examining the motives of opposition leaders offers a third way to explain how cheap hostile signals sent from external actors may lead to the onset of civil war. There are two arguments to suggest that the leaders of an opposition group have different payoff structures for staging a rebellion than do the low-level combatants. First, leaders of a successful rebellion are likely to end up much better off than the low-level fighters because they often obtain positions of leadership in the new government (Van Belle 1996: 111-2). For example, the successful overthrow of the Batista government in Cuba by the "26th of July Movement" (1959) left Fidel Castro as the dictator of the country, while other leaders, such as "Che" Guevara, obtained high-level posts. This may also be true in the case of a rebellion ending in a negotiated settlement. Following the settlement of the recent Sudanese civil war (1983—2005), for example, SPLA rebel leader John Garang obtained the post of vice-president as part of the deal. Even more telling is the moves of Foday Sankoh, the rebel leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, who refused to accept a peace settlement in which he would become vice president of the country, preferring instead to obtain control over the country's diamond trade (Collier et al. 2003: 62-3).

In contrast to the dramatic improvements for the lives of opposition leaders, the lives of the low-level combatants change very little or worsen even after a successful rebellion. As Isima (2004: 4) explains, ex-combatants face immediate financial crisis due to a loss of income from fighting, while the process of income generation during the reintegration period often comes slowly or not at all. Other empirical evidence suggests negative "legacy effects" of civil wars, which affect both ex-combatants and the population in general. These range from a continued decline in per capita wealth, capital flight, expectations of corruption, social inequalities, and low levels of political participation (Kelley and Klein 1977; Lapidus 1978; Skocpol 1979; Eckstein 1982, 1986; Cole 1994; Weede and Muller 1997; Katz 1999; Goldstone 2001: 168; Collier et al. 2003). Overall, the vast majority of post-conflict countries revert approximately to their situation before the war began, no matter how the war ends or how long it lasts (Collier 1999; Sambanis 2000; Matovu and Stewart 2001). Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that opposition leaders stand to gain far more from a rebellion than the low-level combatants, regardless of the outcome.

Second, rebel leaders do not face the same consequences for losing a rebellion as do the low-level combatants. This is because rebel leaders have the resources and connections to safely flee the area if defeat becomes inevitable, while the low-level combatants are at the mercy of the victors. For instance, after the failed rebellion in Zaire (1964), the two key rebel leaders, Gbenye and Soumialot, went into exile in Cairo, while the low-level members of the failed insurgency were left at the mercy of the victorious government forces (Kinder and Hilgemann 1978: 268). Compared to low-level

combatants, therefore, opposition leaders are likely to receive greater benefits for staging

a successful rebellion and suffer less severe consequences for a failed rebellion.[36]

If it is true that opposition leaders have a greater incentive to begin a rebellion

than low-level opposition members in terms of expected costs and benefits, then the

actions taken by these leaders provides a potential explanation for the divergence in

acceptable policy positions between the government and the opposition. Building on

Ginkel and Smith's (1999) model, we can simplify the intrastate environment into three

actors: the government, the insurgent leader(s), and the people. According to Kuran

(1989: 42), the leadership of the opposition is expected to "detect and to help expose the

incumbent regime's vulnerability" in an effort to garner the population's support. To do

this, leaders can attempt to alter the perceived value of the status quo, while struggling to

redefine the success thresholds (Van Belle 1996: 128). External threats offer an

opportunity for opposition leaders to rally support for their cause because the leaders can

point to a potential ally if a violent rebellion were to begin—intentionally overestimating

the probability and extent of future support. This will ultimately increase the people's

probability of staging a successful rebellion, which makes them more likely to join the

opposition in fighting against the government. Skocpol (1979) provides many examples

of this happening throughout history, including revolutions in France (1792), Russia

(1918) and Iran (1980). In this case, the shock from external actors is manufactured by

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[36] While these two claims are similar to those recently made in the interstate context (Chiozza and
Goemans 2004), the second is perhaps counterintuitive given that we might expect rebel leaders to be killed
for their crimes (rather than fleeing safely), while low-level combatants are allowed to reintegrate into
society. Ultimately, this is an empirical question that has yet to be addressed by the literature. Further, the
empirical reality regarding the consequences of defeat is not as important as the pre-war *belief* of these
consequences, which may be impossible to capture in a model. For this argument to hold, one only needs
to accept the notion that the predicted benefits of victory for the leaders minus the predicted costs of defeat
for the leaders outweighs the same factors for the low-level combatants.

the opposition elite, who expect to derive greater benefits from a victory and fewer costs of defeat than the low-level combatants. This will ultimately increase the chance that the opposition will make a demand that is unacceptable to the government, which increases the probability of civil war onset.

2.2.7 Causal Mechanism #4: A 'Glimmer of Hope'

The final causal mechanism suggests that the dire nature of the people will make them likely to overestimate the probability and extent of future external support for a rebellion. A cheap hostile signal sent from a foreign government may provide a glimmer of hope to opposition groups, which cause them to dramatically overestimate the likelihood of a future victory if they were to begin a rebellion. Hirschleifer (2001) explains this as the "winner's curse," in which one party overestimates its military prospects, both before and during a war.[37] Signals from external actors may exacerbate these misperceptions by causing an opposition group to overestimate the probability that an external actor will provide them with aid for a future rebellion, or the extent of the aid that may be provided. This may be especially true when considering the environment in which most rebel groups emerge. Empirical work examining this environment consistently finds a positive relationship between the onset of civil war, and factors such as poverty, excess populations, inequality, and poor education (e.g., Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Thyne 2006a). Given this poor environment, prospect theory provides some leverage in helping us understand a rebel group's decision to rebel.

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[37] See also Lebow (1981), Stein (1985) and Paul (1994).

According to prospect theory, people in poor situations (the domain of losses) are apt to be risk acceptant (Kahneman and Tversky 1979, 1984).[38] When an external power signals hostilities towards a state, a risk-acceptant opposition group is very likely to view the external power as a potential ally if it were to begin a rebellion. This will increase the likelihood that the group makes the risky decision to challenge the government. Relating this argument to the bargaining framework, we should expect a risk acceptant opposition group to adjust its bargaining position (O_{acc}) towards its optimal position (to the left), which decreases the size of the mutually-acceptable bargaining zone. If the group makes a demand outside of this zone (demanding more than the government is willing to accept), it is likely that the government will reject the opposition's demands, which would result in the onset of civil war. By the nature of their situation, therefore, opposition groups are likely to overestimate their probability of success in a future civil war, which ultimately increases the prospect for a civil conflict.

The argument made in the paragraphs above posits four causal mechanisms to connect unpredictable hostile signals sent from external actors to the onset of civil war. Returning to the rational expectations framework, we can expect each of these mechanisms to lead to a divergence between positions that are mutually acceptable to both the government and opposition. This expectation is demonstrated in Figure 2.4.

Comparing Figures 2.2 and 2.4, we can see that signals from external actors can cause an opposition group to extend their demands (O_{acc}) beyond that which is acceptable

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[38] In contrast to expected utility theory, prospect theory predicts that the framing of a problem will affect one's preferences. If the reference point is viewed with a positive outcome (e.g., 95% survival rate), decision-makers will be risk averse. If the reference point is defined as a loss (e.g., 5 percent mortality rate), the subject will be risk acceptant (Mercer 2005). Prospect theory is growing in acceptance among scholars of international relations (for reviews, see Levy 1992, 1997; McDermott 2004).

to the government (G_{acc}). If the government is unwilling (or unable) to adjust to these demands, it is likely that the opposition will stage a rebellion.

Before moving to a discussion of cheap supportive signals, a note should be made about the previous two causal mechanisms and their relation to costly hostile signals. That is, if opposition leaders are able to use *cheap* hostile signals to encourage people to rebel, why would they be unable to do the same with *costly* hostile signals? Likewise, if people are more apt to rebel when they are in the domain of losses, why would they be more likely to rebel following a *cheap* hostile signal, rather than a *costly* hostile signal? The answer to each of these questions comes from a more careful consideration of information provided by each type of signal, and the sequence of moves made by the government and the opposition. Considering the first question, we recall that costly signals provide credible information in regards to the likelihood and extent of support for a rebellion. This information is provided to the government, the opposition leaders, and the people. When this information is credible, it becomes more difficult for the opposition leaders to "sell" the people on an artificially high likelihood of receiving future support for their cause because the people have ample information in regards to the true likelihood and extent of future support. Considering the second question, we recall that people may be more likely to rebel because of their poor situation (i.e., they are in the domain of losses). According to my theory for costly signals, we should expect the government to yield to the opposition's demands when they receive costly hostile signals (settlement zone shifts left). This means that the people's lives should improve immediately, which should either remove them from the domain of losses, or at least make them less deep in the domain of losses. According to prospect theory, either should

make them less apt to make risky decisions. Thus, it is safe to argue that hostile signals must be cheap to derive the expectations for each of the four causal mechanisms described above. To be sure, I examine both cheap and costly signals in the same empirical model in the following chapter, which provides a test of how cheap hostile signals affect the probability of civil war onset while controlling for costly hostile signals.

2.2.8 Cheap Supportive Signals and Civil War Onset

The final type of signal to discuss is those that are cheap and supportive towards the government. While these signals may introduce uncertainty into the intrastate negotiating process, they should work in the opposite manner as cheap hostile signals. From the government's point of view, supportive signals indicate to the leaders that they have a potential ally in the case of rebellion. When Bush declared support for the Moldovan government, for instance, he signaled an interest in maintaining the internal stability of his partner. If a rebellion is begun in this context, the threatened government can either expect help from the external partner, or can at least assume that the partner will not aid the opposition. These supportive relations allow each partner to devote more resources to controlling the population within its borders. For example, informal US support for the Pinochet regime in Chile (1973—1989) aided the government's efforts to brutally repress any semblance of opposition in the country. This ultimately prevented oppositional efforts to overthrow the government (Dinges 2004; Kornbluh 2004).

From an opposition group's point of view, cheap supportive relations signal that its government will likely have external aid if a rebellion is attempted. At the very least, the opposition group will not expect support on its behalf if it was to begin a rebellion. In either case, supportive signals will work to lower the opposition group's predicted

probability of staging a successful rebellion due to the increased capability of the government. This will confound the opposition leaders' efforts to rally support from the masses, which makes civil war an unlikely prospect. In the context of the bargaining figures, cheap signals that are supportive of the government will cause the opposition to shift their acceptable position (O_{acc}) towards the government's side. This results in a larger zone of mutually-acceptable bargaining positions, which is presented in Figure 2.5.

Overall, cheap signals should have an important effect on a state's internal stability. Cheap hostile signals should increase the likelihood that a civil war begins, while cheap supportive signals should have a pacifying effect. These expectations lead to the second hypothesis:

H2:   *The probability of civil war onset given a cheap signal from an external actor is a positive function of the external actor's hostility towards the government.*

A reasonable counter-argument to the above expectation should be addressed. If cheap hostile signals cause an opposition group to make excessive demands, why would cheap supportive signals not have the same effect for the government? It may be reasonable to suggest that cheap supportive signals would cause the government to overestimate the strength it has over the people, which may cause it to make objectionable demands to the opposition. If this were true, both cheap hostile and cheap supportive signals would increase the probability of rebellion. There are a handful of reasons to suggest that this would not be the case for the latter type.

First, governments do not necessarily make demands of the opposition. Because they already hold power, they are able to alter the status quo without notice. When a government receives a supportive signal from a foreign power, it is able to further repress

a population because the external actor has signaled support for the government.[39] For

example, the support from the United States to the ruling regime in Pakistan has been

integral in this regard to Musharraf's primary goal of ensuring a dominant role for the

military through heavy-handed tactics (Freedom House 2005; Human Rights Watch

World Report 2005: 321).[40] When the government becomes more repressive, a group

seeking to challenge the government must now face a new, more challenging, status quo.

A more repressive status quo can dampen the prospects for civil war, especially in

authoritarian regimes. One of the most consistent findings from the civil war literature

suggests an inverted-U relationship between regime type and the probability of civil war

(DeNardo 1985; Muller and Weede 1990; Francisco 1995; Ellingsen and Gleditsch 1997;

Hegre et al. 2001). A simplified figure of this finding is presented in Figure 2.6. For the

states to the right of the line marked "b" (the highly authoritarian states), increased

repression should decrease the probability of civil war onset. This is because

authoritarian regimes can repress dissent to stymie anti-government movement (Muller

and Weede 1990; Hegre et al. 2001), such as the case in Pakistan. Therefore, supportive

signals sent from outside actors to authoritarian regimes will allow for increased

repression of the population, making rebellion less likely.

Next, if we assume that a leader's primary goal is to retain their hold on power,

we can remove democracies (those to the left of "a" in Figure 2.6) from the set of cases

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[39] The potential policy choices for the government following costly signals from external actors present a handful of testable hypotheses. For instance, my theory suggests that repression may follow a costly supportive signal, while democratization is likely to follow a costly hostile signal. I leave these questions for future research in order to remain focused on the onset, duration and outcome of civil conflicts as the primary dependent variables.

[40] For example, the leader of the ARD opposition alliance, Javed Hashmi, was sentenced to 23 years in prison in April 2004 for reading an anti-Musharraf letter at a news conference (Mansood 2004).

where increased demands of the people would be beneficial.[41] Bueno de Mesquita and

his colleagues (2003) offer a compelling argument to support this claim. When the group

to which the leader is beholden to for power (winning coalition) is large, the leader has a

strong incentive to provide public goods that benefit the entire population. This is

because providing public goods increases a leader's favor among those who will vote for

him or her in the next election cycle. Thus, leaders in a democracy should not make

excessive demands of the population, regardless of their expectations for future external

support in the face of a rebellion. Many others have made similar arguments by

suggesting that democratic states are more efficient and better able to address grievances

than authoritarian states (Goodwin and Skocpol 1989; Collier and Hoeffler 1999, 2004;

Elbadawi and Sambanis 2002). Based on these claims, we can remove states left of the

line marked "a" in Figure 2.6 from those that might increase demands of the population

when they receive supportive signals from external actors.

Having removed the states to the left of "a" and those to the right of "b" in Figure

2.6 from the set that might respond to external support with excessive demands, there is

still reason to suggest that those between these two lines would still not make excessive

demands of the people when receiving cheap supportive signals. Given that the

government is already in control over the country, it is very unlikely to intentionally

implement policies that are likely to cause a violent reaction. Returning to prospect

theory, we recall that decision-makers in the domain of gains are unlikely to make risky

decisions (Kahneman and Tversky 1979, 1984). It is reasonable to assume that most

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[41] The assumption that a leader's primary goal is to win office and retain their hold on power is a long-standing assumption in the political science literature (Downs 1957; Riker 1962; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003).

leaders are in the domain of gains because of their positions of power and influence, which should make them risk averse. This suggests that they are likely to be conservative in the ways in which they implement policies in order to avoid losing their seats of power through a violent rebellion. When they receive a supportive signal from a foreign power, therefore, they are unlikely to make an immediate shift in policy against the population.

Relating this argument to the bargaining context, we should expect an opposition group to decrease its demands when its government receives cheap signals of support from external actors because it expects the government to be stronger with external support. In the majority of cases, this shift should not be met with a proportional shift from the government because further repression is costly in authoritarian regimes (right of b in Figure 2.6), leaders have little incentive to repress in democratic regimes (left of a in Figure 2.6), or leaders want to avoid a potential rebellion in mixed regimes (between a and b in Figure 2.6). A shift towards the government's side by the opposition without a corresponding shift from the government should result in a larger settlement zone (as shown earlier in Figure 2.5). A larger settlement zone increases the likelihood that the government and the opposition will be able to find mutually agreeable bargaining positions, which decreases the probability of civil war onset.

Having stated the primary claims for the onset argument, the following paragraphs complete this section by drawing out a handful of secondary hypotheses. I focus here on the volatility of signals, the characteristics of the signaling state, and the similarities between the signaler and the recipient of the signal.

2.2.9 Noisy Signals

Thus far, predictions have been made for the four types of signals mentioned in Table 2.1 (costly/supportive, costly/hostile, cheap/supportive, and cheap/hostile). An issue that has been addressed only tangentially in this discussion is that signals may be *noisy*, which makes it difficult to place them in any of the four categories. Noisy signals come from two sources. First, there may be cross-sectional noise if many countries send contradictory signals at the same time, or if a single state sends inconsistent signals. Cuban relations with the two super powers during the Cold War provide an example of the former, with the United States consistently sending hostile signals to Cuba and the Soviet Union consistently supporting the Cuban government (Aguila 1994). Cross-sectional noise can also come from a single state, especially when power is divided. Moshiri's (1991: 129-30) explanation of the overthrow of the Shah in Iran in 1979 provides such an example. According to this account, the US State Department and the National Security Council (NSC) sent contradictory signals to the Iranian government. The former agency pushed US and Western interests, while the latter agency pushed for human rights and a transition to democracy. These contradictory policies ultimately weakened the Shah's support and emboldened the Khomeini-led Islamic revolution.

Returning to the bargaining framework, we should expected noisy signals from external actors to introduce a large amount of uncertainty into intrastate bargaining because they fail to credibly communicate the external actor's position if a civil war were to begin. Thus, it becomes more likely that the competing actors will listen to different signals in developing their bargaining positions. Had both the Shah and the Khomeini-led opposition listened to the same signals in developing their expectations, for example,

it is likely that the revolution could have been avoided through concessions. Instead, the Shah developed expectations for continued foreign support, while the opposition saw a weakening of foreign support. This ultimately caused a divergence in the settlement positions mutually-acceptable to each side. In a broader context, it becomes increasingly unlikely that the government and the opposition will be able to reach a mutually-agreeable settlement position when neither party can develop a coherent understanding of potential aid if a rebellion were to begin. This expectation leads to the third hypothesis:

H3: *The probability of civil war onset given a cheap signal from an external actor is a positive function of the volatility in the signal.*

The second type of noise is temporal noise, or switches in signals over time. Signals that are consistent over time likely behave like costly signals because they are easy to predict based on past signals. For example, over the last several decades the United States has consistently sent cheap hostile signals to Cuba and cheap supportive signals to Canada.[42] It is unlikely that these signals act as shocks to the intrastate bargaining framework because they can be readily predicted based on past signals. In contrast, dramatic switches in cheap signals over time should have a significant impact on the likelihood of civil war. The inconsistent US foreign policy with Nicaragua provides an example.[43] Like many countries in Latin America, Nicaragua has historically been heavily influenced by US policy. After directly influencing the country from 1912 with the presence of Marines, the United States withdrew from Nicaragua in 1933, leaving power to anti-communist Anastasio Somoza García. For the next 24 years, the Somoza

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[42] The World Events Interaction Survey (WEIS) dataset records 156 of 187 (83%) hostile relations between Cuba and the United States and 74 of 97 (76%) supportive relations between Canada and the United States from 1980 to 1993 (McClelland 1978).

[43] This example is explained more in-depth with a case study of Nicaragua in Chapter 4.

dynasty relied on two pillars of support: the National Guard and the backing of the United States, who worked to prevent the spread of communism throughout the region (Booth 1985). The invariant support of the United States changed rapidly in 1977 when President Carter—anxious to unveil his new human rights policy—chose to punish the Somoza regime for human rights violations by threatening to withdraw aid (LeoGrande 1979). Though the signals were cheap, this change in policy had a dramatic impact. As Grynspan (1991: 98) notes, "After 1977, the US government refused to support Somoza and slowly joined Somoza's opposition and regional leaders in demanding his resignation. This withdrawal of US support weakened Somoza's regime and encouraged his opponents." Ultimately, this shock helped spur a rebellion by the FSLN opposition group in January 1978. This resulted in a regime change the following year (1979) in which the FSLN gained power (Williamson 1999: 60).

Two types of shocks are possible in this context: negative and positive. Carter's change in policies towards Nicaragua is an example of a negative shock, where relations quickly changed from being supportive to hostile. Remaining consistent with the logic of the cheap signaling argument, we should expect negative shocks to increase the likelihood of civil war due to informational asymmetries, bureaucratic inefficiencies, incentives for opposition leaders to manufacture a rebellion, or by providing a 'glimmer of hope' to the opposition. The expectation here differs from the cheap signaling argument by dropping the assumption that cheap signals inherently have low credibility, preferring instead to examine how changes in signals over time may reduce the credibility of the signal. This expectation leads to the fourth hypothesis:

H4:   *When signals sent from external actors switch from supportive to hostile*

        (negative shock), the probability of civil war onset increases.

A positive shock is when an external actor switches from being hostile to supportive of the government. Consistent with the cheap signaling argument, positive shocks provide the government with unexpected support, which should depress the opposition's probability of staging a successful rebellion. This will ultimately force the opposition to lower its demands, thus making civil war onset less likely. Support from a variety of international actors following the devastating civil war in Sierra Leone (1991—2000) provides an example. After years of condemning the government for atrocities committed during the war, actors such as the United States and UN invested billions of dollars to support the government in an effort to assure post-war peace. Walter (2002) provides a similar theoretical argument by explaining that governmental support from external actors is integral to forcing ex-combatants to commit to post-civil war settlements. Thus, even in post-war societies (where the risk of civil war is extremely high), positive shocks can prevent the opposition from making excessive demands of the government. This expectation leads to the fifth hypothesis:

H5:   *When signals sent from external actors switch from hostile to supportive (positive*

        shock), the probability of civil war onset decreases.

2.2.10 The Signaler's Attributes

To this point, the theory has assumed that all third parties are equal when considering the strength and credibility of their signals (when holding the type of signal constant). There are a handful of reasons to suggest that variations among third parties should have important implications for how their signals will affect the bargaining

positions of the government and the opposition. Most importantly, any characteristic of an outside party that enhances the credibility of its signal should weaken the effect that the signal has on the probability of civil war onset.[44] This is because even cheap signals from credible third parties are easy to interpret by both the government and the opposition, which makes it unlikely that either side will make demands that are unacceptable to the other side. In essence, a cheap signal can be thought of as a costly signal when it comes from a very credible source. This suggests an important interactive effect between the signaler's type and the signal itself. The following paragraphs suggest a handful of characteristics that might enhance the credibility of a signal, which should force the government and opposition to take even cheap signals more seriously than they would have otherwise.

First, it is possible that *high levels of democracy* enhance a signaler's credibility. The literature examining alliances provides some leverage on this argument. Like formal alliances, a signal conveys information about the likelihood that a third party will intervene on its partner's behalf. Several authors have argued that democracies make more credible alliance partners. For instance, Cowhey (1993), Gaubatz (1996), Schultz (1998, 1999) and Lipson (2003) argue that institutional structures and behaviors in democratic states help bind them to their commitments. Similarly, Fearon (1994a) and Smith (1998b) argue that domestic political audiences are able to impose costs on a leader who fails to honor her commitments by voting her out of office. This argument

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[44] In the deterrence literature, Huth (1999: 29) defines a threat as credible if "the defender possesses the military capabilities to inflict substantial costs on an attacker in an armed conflict and if the attacker believes that the defender is resolved to use its available military forces." I use a similar definition here, though I extend this by drawing on the audience cost literature and the notion of shared norms and values to define characteristics that should enhance the credibility of a signal.

has also been applied in the democratic peace literature and signaling arguments, where scholars explain that the transparent character of liberal institutions in democracies makes it difficult for democracies to bluff or hide their true intentions (Guisinger and Smith 2002; Ramsay 2004). This has led many to suggest that democracies are more peaceful in general, which has come to be known as the monadic democratic peace (Bremer 1992; Benoit 1996; Rousseau et al. 1996; Henderson 1998; Ray 1998; Rioux 1998; Leeds and Davis 1999; Russett and Oneal 2001; Kinsella and Russett 2002; Chiozza and Goemans 2003).

Overall, these arguments suggest that both costly and cheap signals sent by democracies should be more credible than those sent by non-democracies. When President Bush signaled support for the Iranian opposition in his 2005 State of the Union address, for example, he subjected himself to high audience costs for any future decisions to fail to back the Iranian opposition in an eventual rebellion. In contrast, there should be more uncertainty with Syrian Prime Minister Mohammad Naji Otris's competing claim that "[Syria and Iran] should form a 'united front' to counter threats against them" (Mabardi 2005). This is because the Syrian government lacks a democratic institutional structure that would allow citizens to punish their leader for reneging on her commitments. Because a state's level of democracy is well-known, both the government and opposition are expected to respond to signals from a democracy in the same manner. This expectation leads to the following hypotheses:

H6:   *The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset*

        should be weaker for signalers with high levels of democracy relative to signalers

        with low levels of democracy.

It is possible that credibility extends beyond democracies, especially when two states with similar regimes communicate with each other. Peceny et al. (2002) provide a useful extension of the democratic peace literature in this regard. According to these authors, factors such as shared values or similar institutions may make conflict less likely, regardless of whether the two states are democratic or authoritarian. Others have found empirical support for this theory (Gleditsch and Hegre 1997; Oneal and Russett 1997; Raknerud and Hegre 1997). If factors such as a shared system of values have an important impact on interstate disputes, then they are also likely to have an impact on intrastate disputes. Specifically, signals sent between states with similar regime types are likely to be more credible than signals sent between dissimilar regime types. This expectation leads to the seventh hypothesis:

H7:   *The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset should be weaker when the signaler and recipient states have similar regime types relative to states with dissimilar regime types.*

Like regime similarities, it is likely that *culturally similar states* are better able to send credible signals than dissimilar states. At the individual level, Comor (2001: 394) suggests that "those involved [in effective communication] must share similar references and associations or must, at the very least, have some preexisting familiarity with what is being conveyed." Crawford and Sobel (1982) model the same notion in a bargaining context, showing that cheap signals sent in bargaining situations are more effective in promoting cooperation if the two parties have similar interests. Others have argued that cultural similarities and convergent interests should facilitate effective communication, which makes misunderstandings and conflict less frequent (Cederman 2001; Johnston

2001). Like levels of democracy, and regime type similarity, signals sent from culturally similar states should be more informative than those sent from dissimilar states. This expectation leads to the eighth onset hypothesis:

H8: *The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset should be weaker when the signaler and recipient states have strong cultural similarities relative to culturally dissimilar states.*

Another important characteristic of the third party signaler is its *military strength*. Like the level of democracy, there are several reasons to suggest that states with high military capabilities are able to send more credible signals than are states with low military capabilities. Drawing on the extended deterrence literature, Huth (1999: 29) suggests that threats are more credible when the defender possesses the military capabilities to back up its signals with military force if its protégé is challenged. The recent elections in Palestine, for instance, have unleashed a wave of both supportive and hostile signals from nearly all states (Youngs 2006). However, only a handful of these signals seem to be relevant to either Hamas or the media. President Bush's condemnation of Hamas for its policies of terrorism likely carries more weight than the same signals sent from Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, for example. This variation is almost certainly because the United States has a military easily capable of affecting the internal stability of Israel, which forces both the Israeli government and the Hamas opposition take signals from United States seriously.

If signals from powerful states are deemed more credible by the opposition and the government, it is likely that each group will adjust their policy positions in a similar manner following a signal from a strong power. This will ultimately cause an adjustment

of the mutually-acceptable bargaining zone, but should decrease the likelihood that there is a divergence in expectations given the enhanced credibility of the signals. This potential interactive effect leads to the following hypothesis:

H9:   *The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset should be weaker for signalers with high military capabilities relative to signalers with low military capabilities.*

An outside actor's *past behavior* provides a final characteristic that might enhance its ability to send credible signals.[45] Drawing again on the deterrence literature, Schelling (1966) notes that, "a defender's past behavior in international disputes and crises creates strong beliefs in a potential attacker about the defender's expected behavior in future conflicts." By consistently coming to the aid of one's protégé, a defender is able to establish a reputation for credibility, which makes it less likely that its allies will be attacked. In contrast, past retreats are associated with subsequent attacks by the same challengers on the defender's protégé (Huth 1999: 42-3). Sartori (2005) presents a similar argument for diplomatic signals, arguing that states have a disincentive to send false signals (i.e., bluff) in order to maintain a reputation for credibility in future interactions.

Based on this literature, there is strong reason to suggest that the (in)consistency of signals in past situations strongly influences a state's ability to send credible signals in the future. We should expect the same to be true in the intrastate context. For instance, Gurr and Harff (2004: 158-9) explain that the failure of the Chinese to support

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[45] This argument is similar to the expectations for the positive shock and negative shock arguments (H4 and H5). However, here the focus is on individual states as signalers, rather than on the aggregate signal sent by many states. The empirical tests presented in Chapter 3 remain consistent with this distinction.

insurgencies in Cambodia and Vietnam reduced their ability to credibly signal support for

potential rebellions elsewhere. In contrast, Uganda's support for the Sudanese rebels

(after sending pre-war signals in support of a rebellion) likely strengthened the credibility

of its signals for similar situations in the future (Bartkus 1999: 153). Like levels of

democracy and military capabilities, a reputation for interventions consistent with pre-

war support should make signals more credible, making it less likely that the government

and opposition will react to them in an inconsistent manner. This expectation leads to the

final onset hypothesis:

H10: The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset

should be weaker for signalers that have practiced consistent policies in the past

relative to inconsistent signalers.

Having developed expectations regarding the effect of interstate signals on the

probability of civil war onset, the next step is to ask how these same pre-war signals

might affect a civil war once it has begun. As I demonstrated earlier in Figure 2.1, the

main contribution here is to consider third party actions as interrelated processes for the

onset, duration and outcome of civil conflicts. These topics are examined in the

following sections.

2.3 Interstate Signals and the Duration of Civil Wars

2.3.1 Introduction

While the effect of international relations on the *onset* of civil war has been

understudied, the literature is rich with studies examining the effect of international

actors on the *duration* of civil war. The purpose of this section is to extend this work by

explaining how external actors affect the duration of a conflict once it has begun in the context of signals sent in the pre-war period. Empirical results have shown quite consistently that third party interventions in civil conflicts are associated with civil wars of longer durations (e.g., Pearson, 1974; Mason, Weingarten and Fett, 1999; Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000; Regan 2002).[46] Regan (2002: 72) writes, "Regardless of how the intervention is conceived—or empirically operationalized—there seems to be no mix of strategies that leads to shorter expected durations." This peculiar finding offers an interesting puzzle for both researchers and policy-makers because the purpose of most interventions, presumably, is to lessen the harmful consequences of the fighting.

The most common explanation for this finding is that third parties exacerbate the tensions in an ongoing civil war, which causes it drag out longer than it would have otherwise (Touval 1994). For example, Doyle (2001: 538) explains that the 1994 UN intervention in Somalia mobilized nationalist opposition, which contributed to a significant growth of support for Aideed's supporters who rallied against UN "colonialism." From this conclusion, for policy-makers it seems that there exists little option to lessen the harmful consequences of civil conflict other than to let the belligerents fight it out. Given the devastating consequences of civil conflicts, it is important that the scholarly community takes a closer look at how interventions may affect civil conflict to ensure the veracity of this argument.

While it may be true that external actors exacerbate tensions during a civil conflict in some cases, there at least two alternative explanations for the finding that third

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[46] Some variation exists when considering more nuanced factors, such as the timing of interventions (Regan 2002) or biased interventions (Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000).

party interventions are associated with civil wars of longer duration. First, it is possible that selection effects have biased past models. This would happen if third parties strategically chose to intervene in certain types of civil conflicts (Regan 2002). For instance, interveners may purposefully select themselves into civil wars that are likely to have long durations because they see a need to intervene only when they expect settlements to be unlikely. Similarly, demand for intervention by the belligerents may increase as the civil war drags on due to war weariness. If this is true, selection effects may be driving the results, which could explain the counter-intuitive findings from previous research. While this is a fruitful area of research that is currently being explored (Thyne 2006c), in the following pages I focus on another explanation.

The second reason that interventions may be associated with civil wars of longer duration lies in a potentially problematic assumption made by past scholars. Current work assumes that the decision to intervene in an ongoing civil war is exogenous to the opposition group's initial decision to challenge the government (Cetinyan 2002: 670-1). Third party interventions, therefore, are assumed to have an immediate and unexpected impact on the conflict. This is an extremely problematic assumption given the argument presented in the previous section, which suggests that cheap signals from external actors should significantly affect the original decision to rebel. If the potential for future support (transmitted via signals) indeed affects the pre-war positions of the government and/or the opposition, then the moves made by external actors during the civil war are best understood in the context of these signals. The following section draws on recent developments in the bargaining literature to provide a more in-depth explanation of this argument.

2.3.2 The Intra-War Bargaining Framework

As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, one of the most useful developments in the interstate bargaining literature is its recent extension into ongoing wars. Rather than assuming that a crisis ends with the onset of conflict, recent models allow bargaining to continue during a war. For instance, Filson and Werner (2002), Smith and Stam (2003) and Slantchev (2003) present models of ongoing interstate conflicts in which the actors update their pre-war positions based on information revealed through fighting. Two pieces of information in particular, beliefs about the strength of the adversary and the current military situation, are integral to each side's position because they define the combatants' expectations for a future military victory. Once expectations about future military victory converge sufficiently, we should expect a termination of war through a negotiated settlement. This expectation is known in the bargaining literature as the "Principle of Convergence" (Slantchev 2003: 815). By allowing actors to update their positions as they learn new information, this approach unifies the two stages of a conflict, crisis and combat, which provides a useful framework for understanding how external actors might affect an ongoing civil war in the context of pre-war signals. This approach is immediately accessible by assuming that expectations of interventions are synonymous with expectations of military capabilities. That is, interventions are important because they increase the fighting capabilities of the side receiving external help. Just as information about each side's ability to wage war is revealed through fighting, so too is information revealed about external actors' decisions to aid either side of the conflict. As we will see, the same information revealed prior to the onset of civil war is useful during the war as actors update their policy stances based

on third party actions. This type of learning allows us to follow past bargaining research in making predictions about the duration and outcome of the war (Slantchev 2004).

2.3.3 Setting up the Puzzle

In order to understand how third party actions during a civil war affect the war's duration, it is helpful to begin by placing them into four categories based on the signals third parties sent prior to the onset of civil war, including those that signaled:

(1) *costly hostilities* towards the government;

(2) *costly support* towards the government;

(3) *cheap hostilities* towards the government;

(4) *cheap support* towards the government;

Given the claims made in the previous section, which suggest that costly signals should have no impact on the probability of civil war onset, the following argument ignores the first two categories (costly signals). However, this does not necessarily mean that costly signals will have no impact on a civil wars duration and outcome. Based on the logic of my theory, we might expect changes in costly signals to have an important impact on the duration and outcome of a civil war. For example, if a civil war is begun against a government that has strong trade ties with another state, we might expect a decrease in these trade ties after a civil war begins to favor the opposition. While examining these types of changes may prove fruitful, I am most interested in exploring how direct interventions affect the duration and outcome of civil conflicts in the context of cheap pre-war signals. I leave future research to examine how costly signals might affect a civil war's duration and outcome.

We recall that cheap signals from external actors can affect the probability of civil war onset by introducing a great amount of uncertainty into the negotiations between the government and the opposition (whether through informational asymmetries, bureaucratic inefficiencies, leader-manufactured optimism, or the "winner's curse"). Given this uncertainty, either the government or the opposition must overestimate their chances of winning a future conflict in order for a civil war to begin.[47] Once a civil war begins, an external actor has the opportunity to affect the conflict through some level of intervention, such as sending aid, troops, or munitions.[48] For simplicity, we can assume that the third party who sent a cheap signal prior to the onset of a rebellion is faced with two choices when deciding what action to take once a civil war begins. They can (1) remain consistent with the pre-war signal or (2) switch sides. These choices are presented in the "Intra-war / Duration phase" section of Figure 2.1.

Given this set-up, how do interstate interactions during a civil war affect the positions of the combatants? Because the root of the conflict is informational uncertainty, a plausible argument might suggest that third party interactions will always reveal information. This should ultimately cause a convergence in the policy positions of the government and the opposition. For example, consider the following sequence of events:

    (1) an outside actor sent a cheap hostile signal towards another government;

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[47] This is a common assumption made in the interstate bargaining literature (Slantchev 2004).

[48] This argument remains consistent with previous research in defining an intervention as any economic or military interference in a foreign state aimed at changing the balance of power between the government and another group. See Rosenau (1968), Feste (1992), and Regan (1998) for similar definitions.

(2) interpreting this signal as a potential source for outside help during a future rebellion (i.e., an increase in its own capabilities), the opposition group in the receiving country challenges the government;

(3) the government disagrees, interpreting the external signal differently than the opposition, and rejects the opposition's demands;

(4) the opposition rebels[49];

(5) the external actor from the first step aids the opposition in their rebellion.

In this example, we would expect the third party's intervention on behalf of the opposition during the civil war in step #5 to reveal information to the combatants. For the opposition, they would learn that their predictions in step #2 were correct, leading to little or no change in their position (O_{acc}). For the government, they would learn that they underestimated the probability that the third party would intervene on behalf of the opposition in step #3. This would ultimately cause the government to update their policy positions by moving both their expectation of the result of the conflict and acceptable settlement positions (G_{acc}) towards the opposition's side. This example is represented in Figure 2.7.

As we can see, the revelation of information causes a convergence in both the government's and opposition's policy positions, which results in a mutually-agreeable settlement to avoid the ongoing costs of fighting. If the third party had chosen to help the government or remain neutral in step five, this would have had the opposite effect to that shown in Figure 2.7. The settlement zone would move towards the government's optimal position. Regardless, the logical conclusion is that any move made by the third party

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[49] Steps 1 through 4 are consistent with Figure 2.5 (presented earlier).

during an ongoing civil war will reveal information, which increases the likelihood that

the combatants will settle the conflict. If this is true, why would we expect variation in

the duration of civil war based on the decisions made by third parties?

2.3.4 Solving the Puzzle

We begin by returning to the original predictions for interstate signals and civil

war onset. For interstate signals to affect the onset of civil war, they were likely to have

been cheap (low costs in terms of "tying hands" or "sunk costs"). Given that these

signals inherently have low levels of credibility, the decision whether or not to follow

through with the pre-war signal may be extremely volatile.[50] As explained above,

external actors have two options once a civil war begins. They can (1) remain consistent

with pre-war signals or (2) switch positions by helping the other side. Each move will

decrease uncertainty and, thus, increase the probability that the two sides come to an

agreement. However, analyzing the reaction of the combatants to the (in)consistency of

the third party's moves provides a way to predict variations in the duration of a civil war.

We can begin by defining the baseline environment as one in which a third party's

intervention during a war is consistent with its pre-war signal. In this context, one actor

was correct in expecting intervention on their behalf, while the other actor is somewhat

surprised by the intervention. Given that information from the pre-war signal was

available to both parties, the surprise should be minimal. For example, if an Iranian

opposition group were to make objectionable demands to the Iranian government, leading

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[50] Examining the decision to intervene is a growing area of research. Scholars have identified factors such as economic leverage, security or humanitarian considerations as motivations for intervention (Suhrke and Noble 1977; Betts 1990; Schaeffer 1990; Cooper and Berdal 1993; Holl 1993; Regan 1998, 2000; Bartkus 1999; Mueller 2003; Gurr and Harff 2004). The motivation for intervention is irrelevant for this argument; rather, the focus here is on the type and strength of the intervention.

to the onset of a civil war, the Iranian government would not be shocked if the United States were to support the opposition's efforts to overthrow the government. The logic of this argument is similar to Fearon (1994a), who suggest that observable capabilities should have little impact on the duration of an interstate conflict because they should have already been incorporated into the combatant's initial decision to fight. While we might expect the moderately-surprised actor to lower their demands, there will be no need to make an immediate adjustment in order to avoid being defeated because the intervention was likely not altogether unexpected.

Beyond the expected minimal reaction, we need to consider two types of uncertainty that can potentially be revealed once a war begins. These include (1) uncertainty in regards to which side the external party will support, and (2) the extent and duration of the support. These two types of uncertainty are represented in Table 2.2.

Support can come in a variety of ways, including military or economic support, providing safe havens for exiles and refugees, or the sharing of intelligence (Gurr and Harff 2004; Regan 2002). Aid during a war that is consistent with pre-war signals will likely include one of these, which will reveal the side that the external actor intends to support (box 1 in Table 2.2). However, uncertainty will still remain in regards to *how much* aid will be supplied, and to the *duration* that a third party is willing to continue support (box 2 in Table 2.2). Third party aid during a civil war is often short-lived as leaders avoid becoming entangled in a Vietnam-like quagmire. Clinton's quick decision to withdraw US support in Somalia for the hunt for Aideed in 1994 after eighteen Army Rangers were killed in a firefight is a telling example of how quickly external support in an ongoing civil war can disappear (Clarke and Herbst 1996). Therefore, while third

party support that is consistent with pre-war signals indeed reveals information, this information will likely have a minimal effect on the duration of the civil war because the combatants will still have uncertainty about the extent to which an external actor will provide the support.

In comparison to the baseline environment described above, consider a situation in which the external actor switched policies. It may have sent a hostile cheap signal in the pre-war phase, and then chosen to remain neutral or to intervene on behalf of the government once the war began. This change in policy provides a dramatic shock to the party that expected external support on its behalf. Instead of receiving external help, the expectant party finds itself far weaker than it had expected when it chose to fight. If the external party aids the other side rather than simply remaining neutral, this shock becomes even more dramatic. This is because the expectant party finds itself even weaker than it was prior to the onset of the civil war because their adversary now has increased military capabilities from the unexpected external support. This will lead to a quick termination of conflict in one of three ways.

First, as shown in Table 2.2, pre-war signals from external actors can introduce two types of uncertainty into the negotiation process between the government and opposition. The first is regarding whose side the third party will potentially intervene, while the second is the extent of the potential intervention. When a third party is consistent with its pre-war signal once a civil war begins, only the first type of uncertainty disappears as the third party reveals that it will remain consistent in its support. The second type of uncertainty—extent of support—still remains, which may make the weaker side willing to continue fighting in hopes that the third party will tire of

supporting the other. In contrast, when a third party is inconsistent, meaning that its support during the war differs from its pre-war signal, both types of uncertainty disappear (boxes 3 and 4 in Table 2.2). For example, if the United States had been consistent in supporting the Shiites in their rebellion following the first Gulf War, it is possible that war would have continued if the Iraqi government expected support for the Shiites to be short-lived. When the United States revealed that it would not support the Shiites, this inconsistent policy dramatically reduced uncertainty because it told the Shiites that they would not receive support, which made any question about the extent of support irrelevant.[51]

Second, because one party is at an extreme disadvantage in military capabilities, it is likely that it will be defeated with a decisive victory by its opponent. The disastrous Shiite rebellion following the first Gulf War provides an example of this expectation. In this case, the opposition perceived strong foreign interests in support for the overthrow of Hussein. Interpreting international signals as signs of imminent support for a rebellion, the Shiites staged a rebellion against the Iraqi government the following month. This rebellion was crushed rapidly when coalition forces failed to support the Shiite fighters. Mobutu's miscalculations in Zaire provide an example of the same process in favor of the rebels. When the opposition staged a rebellion in 1996, in spite of the government's consistently supportive relationship with the West, President Mobutu expected foreign intervention on the government's behalf. The failure of the international community to act was a dramatic shock, which heavily weakened the government's forces and led to a quick and decisive overthrow of Mobutu's regime (McNulty 1999).

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[51] I provide a more in-depth look at this example with an extended case study in Chapter 7.

The possibility of a quick settlement leads to a third mechanism by which a switch in policies from external actors may cause a quick end to hostilities. As Filson and Werner (2002) and Smith and Stam (2002) explain, the disadvantaged side in a conflict seeks to stop fighting before it loses decisively, so it will want to offer a negotiated deal acceptable to the winning side as quickly as possible. As Slantchev (2004: 816) explains, "An unexpected victory (or series of victories) by a country considered weak should make the opponent more pessimistic very quickly, leading to a quick settlement." While these authors are referring to the interstate environment, there is little reason to expect a different process in the intrastate environment. When one side of a conflict finds itself dramatically weaker than it expected prior to the onset of the conflict, it should attempt to settle the conflict quickly to avoid being defeated.

Finally, a slight modification in the expectation developed above may be necessary to improve our prediction of civil war duration. It may be unreasonable to assume that switches in policy from external actors during a civil war have the same effect, regardless of when the switch happened. For example, we might expect a switch in policies during the first year of a rebellion to have a much larger impact than a switch in policies during the sixteenth year of fighting. Regan (2002: 61) previews this expectation, arguing that early interventions should matter the most because rebel groups are "rather fragile and more susceptible to military defeat or early accommodation" in the early stages of conflict.

The expectation may still hold without Regan's assumption of rebel strength. As time progresses during a war, both the government and opposition become more effective in attacking the other and more entrenched in their opposition to the other. As each

group becomes more effective in fighting with its own resources, the impact of a switch in support from external actors should decline. Take the Shiite rebellion as a counterfactual example. It is reasonable to assume that, had the Shiites received support from the United States for their cause early on (consistent with the pre-war signal), they would have been able to develop an infrastructure to support their rebellion, become better organized, and developed effective fighting strategies. If a drop in support from the United States had happened several years into the conflict, it is possible that the rebellion would be able to continue, at least for some period of time. As it were, the switch happened early and the rebellion was quickly crushed. The two expectations developed in this section—inconsistent actions and timing—lead to the following hypothesis:

H11:   *The probability of civil war continuation is a negative function of the deviation between the pre-war signal and the intra-war intervention; the impact of this deviation decreases over time.*

Ultimately, the theory developed in this section should contribute greatly to our understanding of how external actors affect the duration of civil conflicts. This is the first effort to unify the onset and duration stages, which is likely the key to solving the empirical puzzles presented in past findings. The final step is to examine how this support may affect the outcome of the war. As we see in the next section, the same logic for the duration argument is used to develop expectations for how civil wars end.

2.4 Interstate Signals and the Outcome of Civil Wars

Like duration, predictions for the outcomes of civil wars are rooted in signals sent from external actors prior to the onset of civil war. This approach stands in stark contrast to past scholarship, which assumes that the factors affecting the outcome of a civil war are exogenous to the original decision to rebel. For instance, DeRouen and Sobek (2004) examine factors such as the size of the government's army, bureaucratic effectiveness, and ethnicity to predict the outcome of a civil war.[52] This assumption leads to several puzzling findings. For instance, the authors find that the size of the government's army provides no leverage in understanding which side will win, or whether the war will end in a negotiated settlement. This puzzle is easily solved using bargaining theory and rational expectations, which would expect precisely this finding. Because the size of the government's army is known prior to the opposition's decision to challenge the government, it is a critical part of that decision. Once a war begins, the size of the government's army will only matter for the duration and outcome of a conflict if there was a miscalculation by either the opposition or the government in regards to its size or fighting effectiveness. Because the size of a government's army is easily calculated by both the opposition and the government, it should have no effect on the outcome or duration of the war. Therefore, only factors that are difficult to predict, such as interventions from external actors, should affect the outcome of a civil war.

Like the expectations for onset and duration, the bargaining framework is useful in understanding how actions from external actors during an ongoing civil war affect the war's outcome. In fact, developing a theory for the outcome of civil wars is a

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[52] Four outcomes are possible in DeRouen and Sobek's (2004) model: government victory, rebel victory, truce and treaty.

straightforward task given that it is simply an extension of the duration argument. Like duration, the consistency between pre-war signals and intra-war interventions has important results for the outcome of a civil conflict. We recall that an expected condition for the onset of conflict is that one side must have miscalculated the probability of a future victory. Cheap signals from third parties introduce uncertainty, which increases the likelihood of this miscalculation. Further, the side that made the miscalculation prior to the onset of conflict will adjust its bargaining position once information about third party support is learned during a conflict. The extent of this miscalculation is determined by the level of consistency between the external actor's pre-war signal and their intra-war intervention. Examining this level of (in)consistency is the key to understanding how third parties will affect the outcome of a civil war.

Beginning with consistent policies from external actors, where the pre-war policy matches support for the government or opposition during the war, the previous section predicts that such activities will have little impact on the duration of a civil war. Similarly, it is likely that these activities will have little impact on the outcome of civil war. For example, if an external actor sends a cheap hostile signal towards a government in the pre-war phase, and then backs up the signal by aiding the opposition during the war, the actions should ultimately have little effect on the war's outcome. This is because the opposition's decision to challenge the government was based on the (correct) prediction of support or opposition from the external actor. In this case, it is likely that the government miscalculated the opposition's probability of receiving external help during the war, which led to their rejection of opposition demands in the pre-war crises phase. Once the war begins and information is revealed, we should expect the

government to adjust their bargaining position in favor of the opposition (represented in Figure 2.7). In the opposite case, a highly-resolved opposition group may have staged a rebellion in the face of both internal and external opposition in hopes that the government's external supporters would avoid supporting the government once fighting began. If this proves to be a mistake once fighting begins because the third party remained consistent in helping the government, the opposition should adjust its demands in favor of the government.

Moving to the opposite context, we should expect support for the government or opposition that is inconsistent with pre-war signals to have the greatest impact on the outcome of the rebellion. In the first situation, where pre-war signals indicate support for the government, while actions during the war are supportive of the opposition, we should expect the opposition to receive unexpected support for their cause. This extra support will increase the opposition's probability of victory relative to their pre-war predictions, while decreasing their costs of fighting. This will have two possible consequences for the outcome of a civil war, which were alluded to in the duration section.

First, we should expect the government to radically shift their policy position in favor of the opposition in the pursuit of a negotiated settlement that would allow them to retain at least some level of power. Prior to the onset of civil war in Sudan, for example, the Islamic-based government passed heavily discriminatory laws against the non-Muslim population in the south. These laws led to a long and costly civil conflict (Woodward 1990; Langewiesche 1994; Thyne 2007). When the government received

unexpected hostile signals from Western states in the early 2000s[53], the government

lowered its demands. This led to a negotiated settlement in 2005 that provided a great

deal of autonomy and political power to the non-Muslim southern population.

Second, if the government is too slow to respond to this new information or still

too staunch in their demands, the opposition should be able to defeat the government with

its unexpected outside support. Bartkus' (1999) explanation of the successful Bengali

secessionist movement provides a clear example of this expectation. According to

Bartkus, the possibility of Indian intervention played little role in the Bengali decision to

secede from Pakistan. Early in the rebellion, the Pakistani army easily handled the weak

resistance. Responding to a flood of refugees, India provided unexpected support for the

secessionist movement, effectively starting a proxy war with direct military involvement

on behalf of the insurgents. This led to a quick and decisive victory for the Bengali

movement, which allowed them to establish an independent state with less than a year of

fighting. The expectations highlighted by the Sudanese and Bengali cases lead to the

following hypothesis:

H12:   *Victory by the opposition or a settlement favorable to the opposition is a positive*

   function of the magnitude of switch from a pro-government signal.

Of course, we should expect the opposite outcome when the situation is reversed.

Consider a situation in which the opposition expected support during a civil war based on

hostile cheap signals prior to the onset of conflict. If the external actor switches sides

once fighting begins by unexpectedly aiding the government or remaining neutral, the

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[53] For example, following the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration placed Sudan on the list of state
sponsors of terrorism, making them susceptible to the same US military intervention experienced by other
states including Afghanistan and Iraq (Matheson 2005).

opposition will find itself in a dramatically weakened state. When a communist insurgency rose up in British-controlled Malaya, for example, the insurgents expected strong support based on pre-war signals from China and the Soviet Union. The failure of these countries to provide the expected support allowed the British to quickly put down the rebellion (Gurr and Harff 2004: 157-8). Like the government in the previous situation, the disadvantaged opposition should either radically alter their policy position in favor of the government, or be quickly defeated by the government. Each situation leads to the following expectation:

H13:   *Victory by the government or a settlement favorable to the government is a positive function of the magnitude of switch from a pro-opposition signal.*

Overall, this chapter suggests that interstate signals should have important consequences for the onset, duration and outcome of civil wars. Unlike past scholarship on civil wars, the argument here is built within a bargaining framework, and by drawing on a rational expectations argument to make predictions. By unifying the three phases of civil war in a single theoretical context, this argument suggests a parsimonious theory to clear up several puzzles in the current literature. The next step in this project is to evaluate these hypotheses empirically.

External Actor's Signal to the Government

Pre-war / Onset phase

Hostile

Supportive

Costly signal
*little effect
on CW onset (H1)*

Cheap signal
*increase probability
of CW onset (H2)*

Costly signal
*little effect
on CW onset (H1)*

Cheap signal
*decrease probability
of CW onset (H2)*

Intra-war / Duration phase

Become supportive –
switch policies
decrease duration (H11)

Remain hostile –
no switch
little effect on duration (H11)

Remain supportive –
no switch
little effect on duration (H11)

Become hostile –
switch policies
decrease duration (H11)

Intra-war / Outcome phase

*victory/settlement favorable
to the government (H12)*

little effect on outcome (H12)

little effect on outcome (H13)

*victory/settlement favorable
to the opposition (H13)*

Secondary hypotheses:
H3: Noisy signals should *increase* the probability of civil war onset.
H4: Negative shocks should *increase* the probability of civil war onset.
H5: Positive shocks should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset.
H6: Democracy × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset.
H7: Regime type similarities × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset.
H8: Sender's military power × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset.
H9: Consistency of past signals × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset.
H10: Cultural similarities × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset.

Figure 2.1. Summary of the Argument and Hypotheses
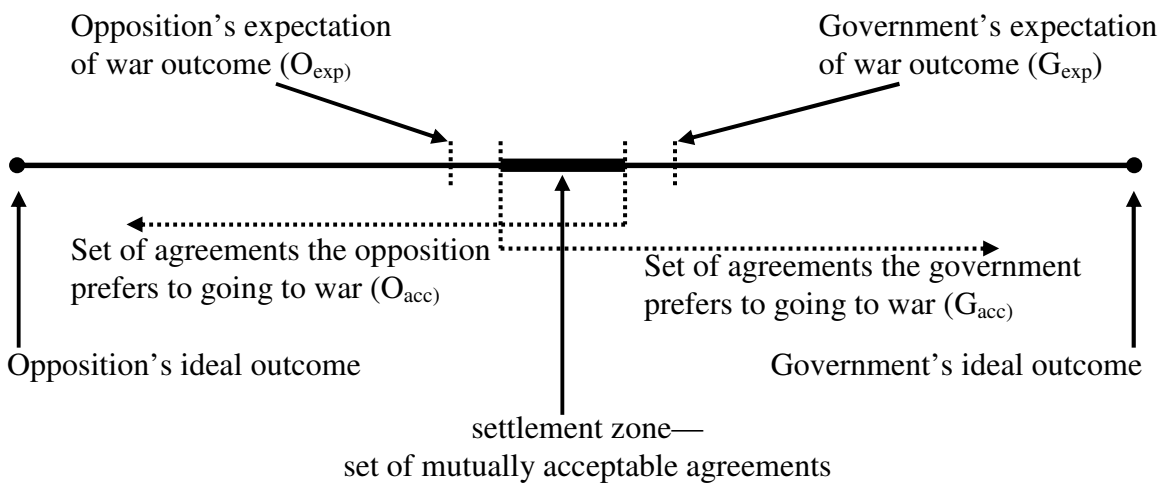
Figure 2.2. Intrastate Bargaining Positions without Considering Interstate Signals

Table 2.1. Types of Interstate Signals

		Credibility	
		Costly	Cheap
Orientation	Supportive of the government	Trade ties, alliance	Statements of support, offers for aid
	Hostile towards the government	Sanctions, mobilization of troops	Statements of condemnation, withdrawal of foreign aid
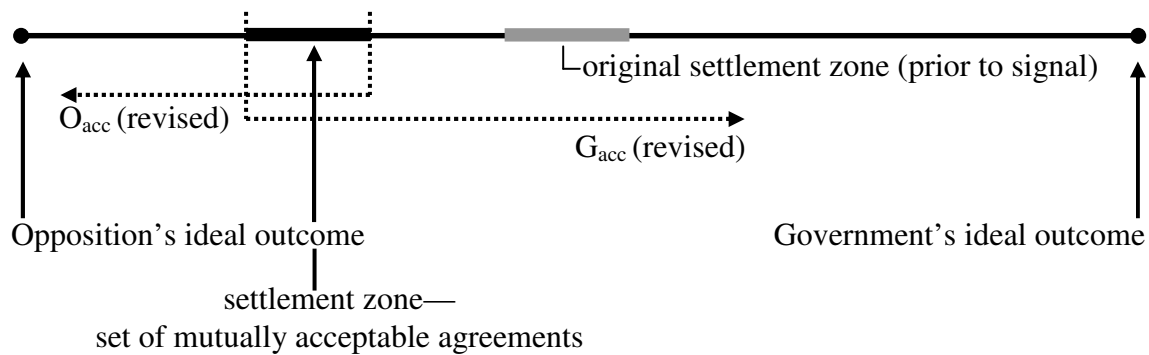
Figure 2.3. Intrastate Bargaining Positions Following a Costly Hostile Signal
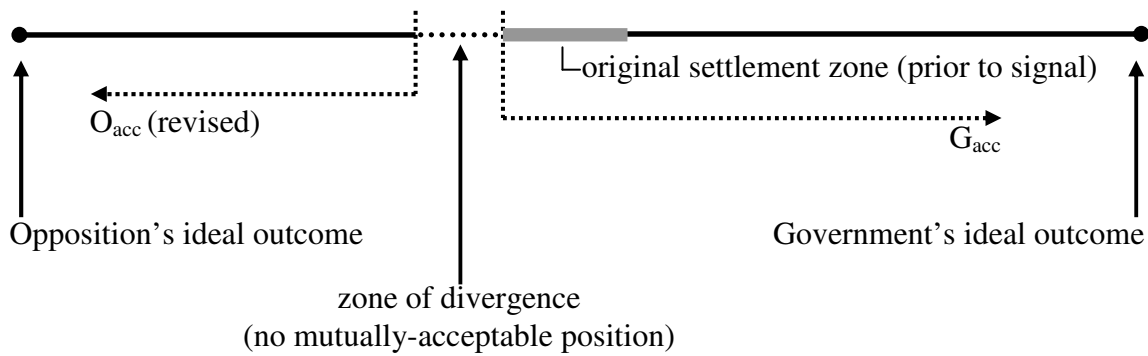
Figure 2.4. Intrastate Bargaining Positions Following a Cheap Hostile Signal
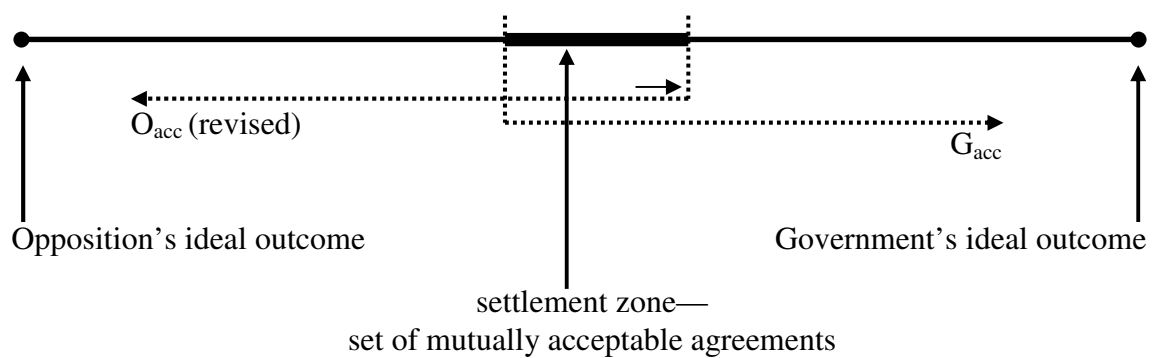
Figure 2.5. Intrastate Bargaining Positions Following a Cheap Supportive Signal
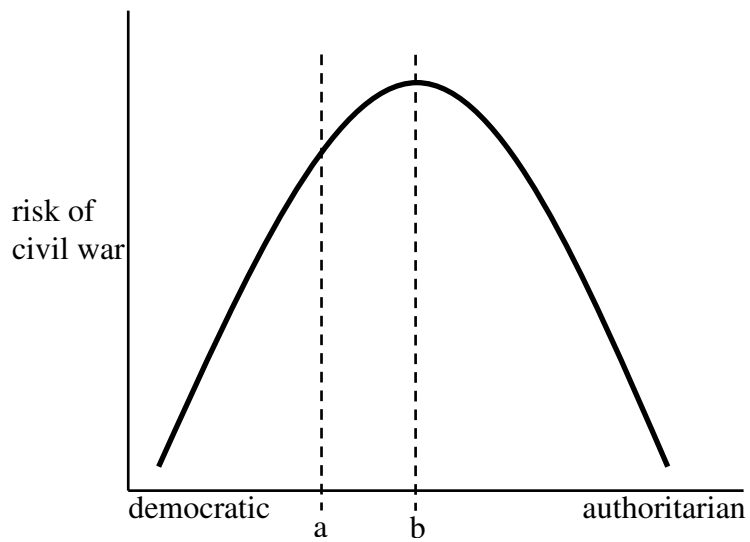
Figure 2.6. Risk of Civil War by Regime Type

Note: This figure is a simplified version of the findings from Hegre et al. (2001).
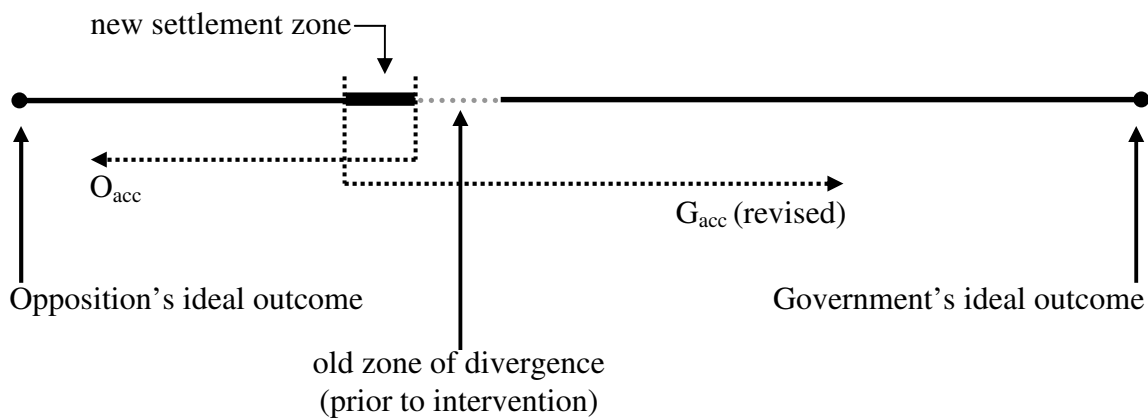
Figure 2.7. Intrastate Bargaining Positions Following an Intervention on Behalf of the Opposition

Table 2.2. Types of Uncertainty Before and After 3rd Party Interventions

	Type of uncertainty	
	On whose side will the 3rd party intervene?	How much support will be provided? For how long?

Consistent policy	1 Pre-war: uncertain
	   Intra-war: revealed
		2 Pre-war: uncertain
		   Intra-war: uncertain

Inconsistent policy	3 Pre-war: uncertain
	   Intra-war: revealed
		4 Pre-war: uncertain
		   Intra-war: revealed

CHAPTER 3

INTERSTATE SIGNALS AND CIVIL WAR ONSET:

EMPIRICAL TESTS

> We should seek by all means in our power to avoid war, by analyzing possible causes, by trying to remove them, by discussion in a spirit of collaboration and good will.
>
> Neville Chamberlain, 1938

3.1 Introduction and Review of Onset Theory

The purpose of this chapter is to provide empirical tests of the onset hypotheses that were developed in Section 2.2 of the previous chapter.[54] The primary argument drew on bargaining theory and rational expectations to suggest that costly signals from external actors should have little effect on the probability of civil war onset.[55] In contrast, cheap signals that are hostile to the government may introduce uncertainty into intrastate bargaining, which makes it likely that there will be a divergence in mutually acceptable positions. This should ultimately increase the likelihood that a civil war begins. Finally, a cheap supportive signal should depress an opposition group's probability of staging a successful rebellion, while allowing the government to either repress dissent or provide a preferable environment so people have little reason to rebel. This should decrease the likelihood that a civil war begins. More formally, the two primary hypotheses developed in the previous chapter include:

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[54] See Figure 2.1 in the previous chapter for a summary.

[55] We recall from Chapter 2 (Section 2.2) that costly signals are defined as interstate interactions that are financially or politically costly, which increases their credibility. Cheap signals come with low levels of cost, which decreases their credibility.

H1:   *Costly signals sent from external actors (whether supportive or hostile) should*

        have little effect on the probability of civil war onset.

H2:   *The probability of civil war onset given a cheap signal from an external actor is a*

        positive function of the external actor's hostility towards the government.

A handful of secondary hypotheses were also developed in an attempt to better

understand how international actors might affect the likelihood that a civil war begins.

The first three considered the cross-sectional and temporal consistency of signals. Noisy

signals, which are signals that show extreme volatility within and between signalers,

should make civil war onset more likely by introducing uncertainty into intrastate

bargaining. Also, changes in support over time should either increase (negative shock) or

decrease the likelihood of civil war onset (positive shock). These expectations led to the

first set of secondary hypotheses:

H3:   *The probability of civil war onset given a cheap signal from an external actor is a*

        positive function of the volatility in the signal.

H4:   *When signals sent from external actors switch from supportive to hostile*

        (negative shock), the probability of civil war onset increases.

H5:   *When signals sent from external actors switch from hostile to supportive (positive*

        shock), the probability of civil war onset decreases.

Next, it was argued that several characteristics of the signaling state should

increase the credibility of its signal, which should thereby decrease the likelihood that the

signal will cause a divergence in mutually-acceptable bargaining positions. These

characteristics include the external actor's level of democracy, regime similarities

between the signaler and the target state, cultural similarities between the signaler and the

target state, the signaler's military strength, and the consistency of its past signals. More

formally, the final set of secondary hypotheses developed in the previous chapter make

the following predictions:

H6:   *The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset*

should be weaker for signalers with high levels of democracy relative to signalers

with low levels of democracy.

H7:   *The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset*

should be weaker when the signaler and recipient states have similar regime

types relative to states with dissimilar regime types.

H8:   *The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset*

should be weaker when the signaler and recipient states have strong cultural

similarities relative to culturally dissimilar states.

H9:   *The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset*

should be weaker for signalers with high military capabilities relative to

signalers with low military capabilities.

H10:   *The effect of both cheap and costly signals on the probability of civil war onset*

should be weaker for signalers that have practiced consistent policies in the past

relative to inconsistent signalers.

The following paragraphs operationalize indicators to best capture these

theoretical concepts. I begin by explaining the case selection and unit of analysis.

Second, the dependent variable (civil war onset) is operationalized. This is followed by

explanations of the primary and secondary independent variables used to capture the

concepts referred to in the hypotheses. Fourth, I return to past empirical work to develop

a list of control variables that have been found to be important in quantitative models of civil war onset. The fifth section explains the methods that will be used to test the hypotheses. Next, I provide empirical tests of the hypotheses, which is followed by a handful of diagnostic tests to assure the robustness of the results. Finally, I summarize the findings, provide conclusions for other scholars studying civil war, and present implications for policy-makers.

3.2 Cases, Unit of Analysis, and Methods

Cases used to test the onset hypotheses include all countries recognized by the Correlates of War dataset from 1945 to 1999.[56] The unit of analysis used to test the two primary hypothesis and the first set of secondary hypotheses is the state-year, with each observation being the state at risk for a civil war for each year under study (6,610 possible cases). The second set of secondary hypotheses (H6 to H10) focus on the attributes of the signaling state, which requires a disaggregated unit of analysis.[57] The unit of analysis used to test the secondary hypotheses is the dyad-year for all possible pairs of states (dyads). Each dyadic observation consists of the signaling state, target state, and year from 1945 to 1999 (1,155,596 possible cases).[58] Logistic regression is used for the tests because the dependent variable is dichotomous. All independent

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[56] To be defined as a state by COW in the post-1920 period, "The entity must be a member of the United Nations or League of Nations, or have population greater than 500,000 and receive diplomatic missions from two major powers" (Correlates of War Project 2005: 4).

[57] Issues with data aggregation are dealt with in more detail in the description of the primary independent variables in Section 3.2.3.

[58] Results limited to politically relevant dyads—those including only contiguous states and major powers— yield substantively identical results to those reported here.

variables are lagged one year to avoid problems with endogeneity. The samples in the

dyadic dataset are clustered by dyad to deal with potential heterogeneity in the data.

3.2.1 Dependent Variable

For scholars, policy-makers, and politicians, agreeing on an operational definition

for "civil war onset" is a difficult task. A debate among policy-makers is currently raging

over defining the situation in Iraq, for instance, which provides several contrasting

viewpoints among policy-makers. The following quotes each came on the same day from

highly influential leaders dealing with the Iraqi situation. The wide range of opinions

highlights the uncertainty in developing an operational definition of civil war:

- "We are losing each day as an average 50 to 60 people throughout the country, if
  not more. If this is not civil war, then God knows what civil war is."
  --Former Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi (BBC 2006).

- "What we've seen is a serious effort by [the insurgents] to foment a civil war, but
  I don't think they've been successful."
  --US Vice President Dick Cheney (CBS 2006).

- "I think we have had a low-grade civil war going on in Iraq, certainly the last six
  months, maybe the last year."
  --US Senator Chuck Hagel, Foreign Relations Committee member (ABC 2006).

- "There is no civil war here."
  --Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Chalabi (CNN 2006).

Fortunately, scholars have been able to reach a much stronger consensus on an

operational definition of civil wars than have policy-makers. Gates (2002) provides a

general definition of civil war that is common to the majority of civil war datasets. He

explains that a civil war is "an armed conflict between representatives of the state and

another organized domestic party over a contested political incompatibility resulting in a

number of causalities exceeding a certain threshold for both parties." Gates (2004) and

Sambanis (2004b) explore a number of ambiguities that come from this definition. These

include difficult cases, such as fighting in colonies or occupied territories, differentiating

interstate wars from intrastate wars with external interventions, defining the types of

actors, defining a death threshold, and a host of other problems. While the debate among

scholars in regards to the operational definition of civil war is useful, the discussion is left

for other researchers. Instead, I use a common definition of civil war onset from the

Uppsala University Conflict Data Project, which defines armed conflict at a "contested

incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force

between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least

25 battle-related deaths" (Gleditsch et al. 2002). These data include 172 cases of civil

war onset from 1945 to 1999 (2.65 percent of country-years).[59]

3.2.2 Measures for Costly Signals

The first hypothesis suggests that costly signals, whether friendly or hostile, will

have little impact on the likelihood that a civil war begins. This expectation is tested with

four independent variables, two of which are supportive of the government and two that

are hostile towards the government.

Beginning with costly hostile signals, *economic sanctions* and *militarized*

interstate disputes (MIDs) provide adequate measures to capture this concept. A MID is

an international interaction involving the threat, display, use of military force, or war.

These actions are explicit, overt and authorized by the government (Gochman and Maoz,

1984; Jones et al. 1996). Data for the MID variable come from the Correlates of War

(COW) database. Two variations of the MID variable are used here. The first MID

variable records the total number of MIDs received by any state during each state-year.

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[59] Results were also run using an alternative definition of "civil war onset" from Fearon and Laitin (2003), which includes 110 cases of civil war onset during the same time period.

The second version of this variable limits the indicator to neighbors only. Data for the sanctions variable come from Drury (1998), who codes a dummy variable for any year in which a state had a sanction placed on it by any other state (1 if present, 0 otherwise). Drury follows Hufbauer et al. (1990) in defining economic sanctions as financial or trade restrictions used by a state in order to change another nation's policies in some pre-specified manner. These data include 105 decisions to place sanctions from 1944 through 1990.

Both sanctions and MIDs reasonably capture costly hostile signals because they force the signaler to make a real financial and political investment to credibly signal its position. Recent events in the Middle East provide examples of these characteristics. Over the last several months, international actors have openly debated whether or not to apply sanctions on Iran for its development of nuclear technology. According to my argument, rebellion in Iran is most likely to happen in its current phase, where signals are cheap and few actors have made costly investments to reform Iranian policies. By the time the signals become costly (e.g., the United States applies sanctions or mobilizes troops against Iran), either a rebellion would have already begun, or the Iranian government would be forced to make concessions to the opposition to avoid rebellion.

Indicators for *trade ties* and *alliances* are used to capture costly supportive signals. The first variable, trade ties, is a monadic indicator of total trade for each country-year to capture trading relationships with all countries. For neighbors, I include the mean total trade (imports plus exports) for all contiguous dyads. Monadic and dyadic trade data come from Barbieri (2002) and Gleditsch (2002), respectively. The second set of indicators for costly supportive signals are formal alliances, which are operationalized

as a count of the number of alliances (defense pact, neutrality, or entente) each state has

with any other country in a given year. For neighbors, I include the percentage of

neighbors with which each state has a formal alliance in each state-year.[60] Alliance data

come from the COW dataset (Gibler and Sarkees 2002). Like the hostile indicators

(MIDs and sanctions), these variables are considered costly because they force the

signaler to make a substantial investment to credibly signal its position. For example,

Gartzke, Li and Boehmer (2001) argue that trade interdependence imposes a high price

on two states for engaging in hostilities with each other. Trade ties between the United

States and China, for instance, have been growing for decades. While the United States

likely agrees with the opposition's efforts to promote democracy in China, its costly ties

with the current government credibly signal that it would not support a rebellion if one

were to begin. Similarly, alliances are costly signals that indicate that the allied partners

have an interest in aiding each other when threatened. The peacetime costs imposed on

the allied members enhance the credibility of the signal (Morrow 1994). Each of the

costly variables—MIDs, sanctions, trade ties, and alliances—should yield insignificant

results if the first hypothesis is to be supported.[61]

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[60] Leeds (2003) argues that scholars should disaggregate alliances based on the specific characteristic of the alliance. This is because some alliances call for extreme commitment (e.g., require that allies intervene on behalf of potential target states), while others call for less of a commitment (e.g., promise non-intervention in the event of a crisis). Though I agree with this argument in the context of interstate disputes, I do not take this approach here because few (if any) alliance pacts explicitly call for intervention in the event of a civil dispute. Thus, it would be difficult to disaggregate alliances to predict variation in actions from external actors for my dependent variable of interest. For this decision to be reasonable, one only needs to accept the notion that alliances, no matter how they are conceived, are costly measures that clearly convey support for the allied partner.

[61] A hypothesis predicting the null requires a threshold higher than the conventional $p<.05$ threshold used for hypothesis predicting a rejection of the null. I was unable to find a conventional standard in the literature for such a threshold. The minimum standard in the literature for significance is $p<.10$, which is the standard I use to test these hypotheses.

3.2.3 Measure for Cheap Signals

Two event data sets are used to operationalize *cheap signals*. Events data code newsworthy intrastate and interstate interactions into categories in order to capture their level of conflict or cooperation. For instance, when Carter threatened to withhold the sale of arms due to human rights violations in Nicaragua (July 17, 1977), the day, month and year of the event was recorded, along with a number indicating that it is a conflictual event.[62] The first event dataset used is the Conflict and Peace Data Bank (COPDAB), which codes daily interactions between states on an intensity scale ranging from –92 (most conflictual) to +102 (most supportive) from 1948 to 1978 (Azar 1980). These data include over 20,000 dyadic events for 135 states. The second dataset is the World Events Interaction Survey (WEIS), which codes over 100,000 dyadic events into 63 nominal categories from 1966 to 1992 (McClelland 1978). These nominal categories are recoded following Goldstein (1992), who places the WEIS codes on a conflict/cooperation continuum ranging from –10 (most conflictual) to +8.3 (most supportive).[63] Because the scale for COPDAB uses larger values than WEIS, I follow Reuveny and Kang (1996: 299) by splicing the two datasets in the overlapping periods (1966—1978) with the following formula:

$$WEIS_t = C_0 + C_1 * COPDAB_t + e_t$$

---

[62] See Figure 4.2 in Chapter 4 for this and other examples.

[63] See Howell (1983) and Reuveny and Kang (1996) for a more thorough explanation of the COPDAB and WEIS datasets.

After splicing the dyadic measure, I then aggregate the data annually. This results in the mean yearly level of conflict/cooperation between all dyads.[64] At this point, the unit of analysis is directed-dyad year. Because civil war happens within a single state and covariates (explained later) are at the state level, I follow previous scholars such as Davis and Ward (1990), Leeds and Davis (1997), and Moore and Lanoue (2003) in collapsing all interstate interactions from dyads by target-year. Further, given that the vast majority of dyads have few (if any) interactions in a given year, I limit the data to interactions between politically relevant dyads (PRDs), which consist of all contiguous states and major powers.[65] This aggregation allows me to delete obscure dyads, such as Nigeria/Nicaragua, from the dataset while including relevant dyads, such as United States/Nicaragua, which have many interactions due to the expansive foreign policy of the United States. This decision rule is demonstrated in Figure 3.1, where signals from the states in bold are used to capture the cheap signals sent to Nicaragua.

After collapsing the data by mean/target/year and lagging it one year, the result is a single yearly value ranging from –10 (most conflictual) to +8.3 (most supportive) for the mean event received by each state from PRDs from 1949 through 1993. As a final step, this measure is broken down into two categories. The first includes the entire continuum. The second limits the events to values that capture the theoretical definition of cheap signals, which is produced after dropping events that have high *ex ante* or *ex*

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[64] Though smaller aggregation periods would be more ideal for this analysis, the other covariates in the model are available only in yearly aggregations, which forces me to aggregate these data on a yearly basis as well. See Shellman (2004) for an excellent discussion of temporal aggregation of event data.

[65] This categorization is nearly identical to Maoz's (1996, 1997) conceptualization of the "politically relevant international environment" (PRIE), which includes each state's neighbors and regional or global major powers. Enterline (1998) uses a similar specification. The definition of "major powers" follows Small and Singer (1982), which includes the United States, United Kingdom, Russia and France from 1945 to 1999. Germany and Japan are included from 1991 to 1999.

post costs. Dropped events include "military attack" and "armed force mobilization" on the hostile side, and "make substantive agreement" and "extend military assistance" on the supportive side.[66] This break-down avoids potential bias that would arise if extreme events at the end of the conflict/cooperation continuum were driving the results, rather than cheap signals. The cut-off points for the cheap/costly distinction are presented in Table 3.1.

The final measures provide a reasonably accurate account of how costly and cheap signals might affect a potential rebel group's decision to rebel. A negative coefficient for the cheap signal variable would indicate that the probability of civil war onset is a positive function of the hostility level of the cheap signal, which is what we should see to support the second hypothesis.[67]

3.2.4 Measures for the Secondary Hypotheses

The third hypothesis predicts that the probability of civil war onset will increase as the volatility of the cheap signals increase. As noted in the previous chapter, two types of volatility are potentially relevant. The first is inconsistency across PRDs. For instance, states such as Cuba that were caught in the Cold War rivalry received a wide range of both hostile and supportive signals from the United States and Soviet Union. This volatility is captured by using the absolute value of the standard deviation (SD) of the cheap signal variable from all PRDs to create a variable called *across state volatility*. A value of zero for this measure would indicate that the signals sent from PRDs are perfectly consistent, while increasing values indicate higher levels of volatility. Second,

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[66] See Goldstein (1992: 376-7) for a complete list of events.

[67] In this case, a negative coefficient relates a positive function of hostility because hostile events are on the negative side of the conflict/cooperation continuum.

inconsistency within each signaling state may also be important. As discussed in the previous chapter, the inconsistent signals sent to Iran from two US agencies (the State Department and the NSA) helped spur the Iranian Revolution in 1979. This notion is captured by taking the absolute value of the SD of signals within each state at the dyadic level to create a measure called *within state volatility*. The mean of these values are then aggregated to develop a single value to capture inconsistencies for each country-year.[68] We should expect each of these measures to be positive and significant to support the third hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis predicts that the probability of civil war onset should increase when cheap signals change from being supportive to hostile (negative shock). The fifth hypothesis predicts the opposite effect when cheap signals switch from being hostile to supportive (positive shock). Three measures are used to capture these concepts. To create the first measure, *temporal volatility*, I subtract the cheap signals variable in time t-1 from the value in t to capture increases in levels of support or hostilities. An example of how this measure is constructed is presented in Figure 3.2. The signals on the left side represent a relationship of low volatility, such as the signals sent from the United States to Cuba during Castro's regime. The line on the right suggests a much more volatile relationship, such as the signals sent from the United States to Nicaragua during the 1980s.

Using this measure, positive values indicate increased support for the government (positive shock), while negative values indicate increased hostilities (negative shock). A

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[68] An alternative specification of this variable takes a dyad-year approach by taking the SD of signals sent from each PRD (as above), but not aggregating the data by mean/target. I take this approach later in this chapter when I focus on the characteristics of the signaling states.

negative and significant coefficient for this variable would indicate support for both H4

and H5. One problem with this measure is that a move from a highly supportive signal

(e.g., "promise material support") to a moderately supportive signal (e.g., "endorse

other's policy or position") would be counted as a negative shock. This may be

unrealistic given that both events are supportive of the government. A single measure

also makes it difficult to parse out potential differences between positive and negative

shocks. Therefore, I use two dummy variables that indicate when the signal crosses over

"neutral" from year to year. The first, *negative shock*, is coded 1 if the cheap signals

variable in time t-1 is positive while the value in time t is negative (0 otherwise). For

example, the point marked "A" in Figure 3.2 would be coded as a negative shock in t-5

because the signal crosses the "neutral" line. The second, *positive shock*, is coded 1 if the

cheap signals variable in time t-1 is negative while the value in time t is positive (0

otherwise). We should expect the variable for negative shock to be positive and

significant to support the fourth hypothesis. The variable for positive shock should be

negative and significant to support the fifth hypothesis.

The final onset hypotheses (H6 through H10) focus on the characteristics of the

signaling state. In contrast to the measures described above, I take a dyad-year approach

to test these hypotheses. Instead of aggregating the signals from PRDs in each state-year

(as in Figure 3.1), I examine the dyadic interactions without cross-sectional aggregation.

This approach is preferable for tests of the final hypotheses because it allows for a more

nuanced measure of the signal based on the signalers' characteristics, rather than

assuming that all signalers are the same type. A disadvantage is that the data are

expanded greatly, which means that the state-level control variables (described in the

next section) are repeated for each dyad-year without variance. This makes it difficult to find significance with the primary explanatory (signaling) variables, which vary for each dyad-year. An alternative approach might take the mean of the characteristics from each signaler, but the variation in these characteristics would likely be washed out by taking this approach. Given these considerations, it is clear that the dyad-year approach is preferable to test the hypotheses that focus primarily on the characteristics of the signaling state.

Several characteristics of the signaler are predicted to dampen the effect that both costly and cheap signals will have on the probability of civil war onset. These characteristics include the signaler's level of democracy (H6), regime similarities with the target state (H7), cultural similarities with the target state (H8), military capabilities (H9), and consistency of signals over time (H10). These hypotheses are tested by splitting the signalers into two groups for each characteristic, and then interacting one of the groups with the signaling variables.[69] The first characteristic to be examined is the signaler's level of democracy. The first sample, *democratic signalers*, includes all states that receive a score of at least +6 on the Polity IV democ-autoc scale.[70] The second group, *non-democratic signalers*, includes all other states. The second group is split between those where the signaler and the target have similar regime types, *similar regime*, and those that do not, *different regime*. Two states are considered to have similar regimes if both are democracies, anocracies, or authoritarian. The distinctions between

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[69] This method is explained more thoroughly in Section 3.4 (Data Analysis: Part II). Though several of these variables could be examined as continuous measures, I convert them to dichotomous variables to make the analyses as straight-forward as possible.

[70] Polity IV is a measure of a state's regime type, in the form of their autocracy score subtracted from their democracy score to produce a variable that ranges from –10 (very autocratic) to 10 (very democratic) (Marshall and Jaggers 2000).

each regime type are based on the Polity IV scale, and are defined according to the following rules:

Joint democracies: $+10 \geq \text{Polity} \geq +6$

Joint anocracies: $-6 < \text{Polity} < +6$

Joint authoritarian: $-6 \geq \text{Polity} \geq -10$

The next group is split between signalers that have similar cultural similarities as the target state, *similar culture*, and those that do not, *different culture*. Two states are coded as having a similar culture if they have the same dominant ethnic group as defined by Ellingsen (2000).[71] The fourth characteristic is the military strength of the signaler. The first sample, *strong signalers*, includes all signalers that have a CINC score higher than the median CINC for each year.[72] The second sample, *weak signalers*, includes all other signalers. The final group is split between those that have a continued pattern of signals over time, *consistent signalers*, and those that show volatility in signals over time, *inconsistent signalers*. A signaler is coded as consistent if it sends either hostile or supportive signals for at least three consecutive years, whereas an inconsistent signaler mixes hostile and negative signals during the same time period. The mean signal for the year is used to define it as either hostile or supportive.

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[71] Ellingsen (2000) provides annual estimates of name and proportional size of the largest and second largest religious, linguistic and ethnic groups for each state from 1945 to 2000. These estimates are based on averaging values from *The CIA World Factbook*, *Britannica Book of the Year* and the *Demographic Yearbook* and interpolating missing years. See Gartzke and Gleditsch (2006: 80) for a discussion of the advantages of Ellingsen's data versus other commonly used indicators of cultural similarity.

[72] The CINC score is an index including measures for total population, urban population, iron and steel production, energy consumption, military personnel, and military expenditure used as a common measure of state strength in international relations literature (Singer 1988). Countries near the median CINC score in 1990 include Bolivia, Ghana, Nepal and New Zealand. An alternative approach would be to code *strong signalers* according to Singer and Small's (1982) definition of "major powers," while *weak signalers* would be all other states. This approach yields substantively identical results as the approach taken here.

3.2.5 Control Variables

Over the last several years, scholars have experimented with as many as 93 variables to predict the onset of civil war (Hegre and Sambanis 2005). The variables found to have a consistently strong impact on civil war models are included here as control variables. First, *GDP per capita* is included based on Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation argument, which suggests that poverty increases the likelihood that people will challenge the government. Fearon and Laitin (2003) also include this measure as a proxy for state strength. Second, countries with *large populations* should be more susceptible to civil wars because of the high costs for controlling a large population. Large populations also widen the pool of potential fighters, which makes rebel recruitment easier for opposition leaders. Likewise, *mountainous terrain* will further weaken the government due to the difficulty in reaching potential rebel organizations. Fourth, Fearon and Laitin (2003: 81) explain that states deriving their revenues primarily from *oil exports* tend to have weak state apparatuses because the leaders have "less need for a socially intrusive and elaborate bureaucratic system to raise revenues." The potential easy wealth also raises the value of the "prize" of controlling state power. I include a dummy variable for country-years in which oil exports exceeded one-third of export revenues. Fifth, *unstable regimes* are likely to be disorganized and weak, which raises the opportunity for separatism or attempts to overthrow the state. I include a dummy variable indicating whether the country had a three-or-greater change on the Polity IV regime index within a three year time span to capture this concept. Sixth, the state's level of democracy has been found to have a mixed effect on the probability of civil war in past research. Some argue that democratic states have more peaceful means

of resolving conflicts, such as a fair judicial system (Powell 1982; Krain and Myers

1997). Other authors explain that democracy might have an inverted U relationship

(Hegre et al. 2001) due to a decreased willingness to rebel in a democracy, and a

decreased opportunity to rebel in strong authoritarian regimes (inverted U relationship). I

capture these concepts with a dummy variable for *democracies* and *anocracies*.[73]

Democracies are defined as those states scored 6 or greater on the Polity IV scale, while

anocracies are scored between -5 and +5. Authoritarian regimes, scored -6 and below,

are the excluded category.[74]

The final control in the model, *peace years*, is meant to correct for possible

temporal dependence in the dependent variable. We cannot reasonably assume that each

civil war onset is unrelated to previous civil wars. According to Beck et al. (1998),

assuming temporal independence in binary cross-sectional time-series data risks

underestimating the variability in the coefficients, which leads to inflated t-values and

possible type I error. Their solution is to include a series of dummy variables in the logit

model that mark the number of periods (years in this case) since the start of the sample

period or the previous occurrence of an "event" (civil war onset in this case).[75]

Therefore, I include a control for temporal dependence labeled "peace year," which is

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[73] An alternative way to capture this inverted U relationship is to include both the Polity IV measure and Polity IV^2 in the model. This approach yields substantively identical results as including dummy variables for *democracies* and *anocracies*. I opt for the latter approach because it has a more straight-forward interpretation.

[74] Data for wealth (GDP/capita) and population come from Gleditsch (2002). These values are logged to eliminate skewness in the data. Data for all other variables come from Fearon and Laitin (2003), except for the Polity measures, which come from Marshall and Jaggers (2000).

[75] This method also includes natural cubic splines in the model to be used for testing hypotheses regarding duration dependence. These variables are best suited for tests of hypotheses about duration dependence. I have no such hypotheses, so I do not report them in the tables to save room.

generated using Tucker's (1999) "Binary Time-Series—Cross-Section Data Analysis Utility."[76]

3.3 Data Analysis Part I: Costly Signals, Cheap Signals,
   ## and Civil War Onset

The first hypothesis predicts that costly signals should have little effect on the probability that a civil war begins. This hypothesis is tested in Table 3.2. Each costly variable is run separately to avoid potential problems with collinearity, and then combined in Model 5 (relationship with all states) and Model 9 (relationship with neighbors only). These results provide strong support for the first hypothesis. The p values for all costly variables (except total trade) lay beyond the .10 level of significance. Total trade is significant in Model 4 at the .10 level, though this variable is likely acting as a proxy for wealth given that the GDP/capita measure drops from significance in the same model. Trade was also found to be an insignificant predictor of civil war onset from Barbieri and Reuveny (2005: 1241), which provides further evidence that this variable does little to predict the onset of civil war.[77]

The second hypothesis predicts that the probability of civil war onset will decrease as cheap signals become more supportive. This expectation is tested in Table 3.3 with the variable for *cheap signals*. The first model presents the entire variable, ranging from -10 to +8.3, which produces an insignificant coefficient. This result is

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[76] See Sambanis (2001) for an example of the usage of "peace year" dummies in a model of civil war onset. I also experimented with the inclusion of a lagged war year dummy (e.g., Fearon and Laitin 2003: 82-3) and a dummy variable indicating whether or not there was a war within the last ten years (e.g., Elbadawi and Sambanis 2002). Neither method made an important difference in the results.

[77] The control variables in all tables remain largely consistent with past findings (e.g., Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Hegre and Sambanis 2005).

unsurprising because the entire range of cheap signals includes many signals that are considered to be costly at the extreme ends of the continuum. We find the expected result in Model 2 when the costly events are removed. The results remain strong when the costly signaling variables for all states are included as controls in Model 3, which allows us to see how the new information provided by cheap signals affects the likelihood of civil war onset when holding the costly signals constant. Overall, these results provide strong support for the second hypothesis. Not only is the variable for cheap signals significant, substantively it provides a fair amount of leverage in explaining the onset of civil war. A move from the minimum value (-7) to the maximum value (+4.5) in Model 3 accounts for an 89 percent decrease in the probability of civil war onset (.066 to .007). The effect is nearly as strong as a move from the minimum to maximum values for GDP/capita (-86 percent), which scholars have consistently argued to be one of the primary determinants of civil war onset (e.g., Fearon and Laitin 2003).

Figure 3.3 shows the marginal effect of the cheap signals variable, which provides a couple of interesting observations beyond those given by the coefficients alone. First, these results show that cheap supportive signals have a pacifying effect on civil conflict, which has not been examined in previous research. If cheap supportive signals had no effect, we would expect the marginal effect to flatten out along the path indicated by line *A*. As we can see, the effect of cheap supportive signals continues to decrease the probability of civil war beyond what current evidence shows. Second, the marginal effect seems to flatten out in a convex shape as relations become more supportive. This suggests that while both supportive and hostile signals matter, hostile

signals are likely to have a greater effect in inciting rebellion than friendly signals will have in preventing rebellion.

The third hypothesis predicts that higher levels of volatility in cheap signals should increase the likelihood of civil war onset. This hypothesis is tested in Table 3.4 (Models 1, 2 and 6). The first measure, *across state volatility*, captures the variance between PRDs. The second, *within state volatility*, captures the variance within each of the PRDs. Each of these measures is insignificant in the model. Therefore, when noisy signals are sent by either outside actors or by the same actor, they have little effect on the probability of civil war onset. I return to a discussion of consistent signals later in the analysis with a more direct dyadic test of the signaler's volatility (Table 3.5, Models 10-11).

The next two hypotheses expect that changes over time can provide shocks to intrastate bargaining, which should increase the probability of civil war onset. These hypotheses are also tested in Table 3.4 (Models 3-6). The fourth hypothesis predicts that negative shocks will increase the probability of civil war onset. The first indicator for this variable, *temporal volatility*, captures changes in signals from the previous year (Models 3 and 6). This measure is insignificant, which indicates that yearly changes alone do not affect the likelihood that a civil war begins. As noted earlier, this finding is not altogether unexpected because a change in signals from highly supportive to moderately supportive are counted as a negative change, though both are signals of support for the government. The opposite is true for changes in hostilities. A more valid measure of this concept, *negative shock*, is included in Models 4 and 6. This variable captures dynamic changes from a positive signal in t-1 to a negative signal in t. As

expected, this variable is positive and significant in both models, which indicates strong support for the third hypothesis. The substantive effect for this variable is substantial, with a 159 percent increase in the probability of civil war onset when a negative shock is present (.012 to .031).[78]

The fifth hypothesis predicts that positive shocks will decrease the probability of civil war onset. This expectation is tested alongside the variable for negative shock in Table 3.4 (Models 5 and 6). Surprisingly, this measure is positive and significant, with a large substantive effect. This finding runs contrary to the theory developed in the previous chapter, which expects the likelihood of civil war onset to decrease when the government receives unexpected support. A return to the bargaining model helps clear up these findings. In the theoretical section, four causal mechanisms were presented to explain why the opposition might make excessive demands of the government when cheap hostile signals are sent. The same logic can be used to explain why cheap supportive signals might also increase the likelihood that a civil war begins. Instead of simply allowing the government to maintain the status quo, these results indicate that cheap supportive signals cause the government to make demands of the opposition. If these demands are excessive, it is likely that the opposition will rebel in spite of the external support for the government.

The finding for the positive shock variable should also be reconciled with the findings for the cheap signals variable. The results for the cheap signals variable indicate that cheap supportive signals decrease the likelihood that a civil war begins, while the results for the positive shock variable indicate the opposite. As suggested earlier in my

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[78] In the following chapter, I provide a more tangible example of these findings with a case study of Nicaragua during the 1970s.

discussion of Figure 3.3, hostile signals seem to be driving most of the effect that we see for cheap signals, which is why the line flattens out as signals become more supportive. Because this measure assumes some level of consistency over time, it misses the effect of sudden changes picked up with the shock variables. This means that cheap signals of support will generally decrease the likelihood that a civil war begins when we ignore how these signals might vary over time. However, when the cheap supportive signals make a dramatic switch, the probability of civil war increases because the government is more likely to make objectionable demands of the opposition. The most recent civil war in Sudan (1983—2005) provides an example.

After granting extensive concessions to the non-Islamic opposition following the first Sudanese civil war (1956-1972), the government reneged on many of its promises and imposed Islamic law on the whole country a decade later (GlobalSecurity.org 2005). One factor pushing this change was the dramatic increase in support coming from Egypt in the months prior to the reforms. In an attempt to reinforce its security and reestablish itself as a leader among Arab states, Egypt reached out to Sudan in an effort to establish close ties between the two countries. As Egyptian President Mubarak noted, "Sudan's security [is] Egypt's security" (BBC 1983). These events stand in stark contrast to earlier relations between the two countries, in which President Sadat's signing of a peace agreement with Israel (1979) caused tension between Egypt and its Arab neighbors. Consistent with bargaining logic, the positive shock coming from Egypt caused the Sudanese government to make objectionable demands of the opposition. Though the opposition had little chance of successfully overthrowing the government, the repressive policies left them to choose between the lesser of two evils: either endure escalating

religious and cultural persecution or fight (Bartkus 1999: 137). They chose to fight. In the empirical model, the positive shock coming from Egypt caused the probability in civil war onset in Sudan to increase by 86 percent (.031 to .058) in the year prior to the onset of civil war.

3.4 <u>Data Analysis Part II: Characteristics of the Signaler</u>

     <u>and Civil War Onset</u>

     The final set of hypotheses examine the characteristics of the signaling states (H6—H10). As argued in the previous chapter, any characteristic that increases the credibility of the signal should dampen the effect that cheap signals have on the probability of civil war onset. When credibility is high, both the government and the opposition will be forced to take even cheap signals seriously. This will make them more likely to adjust their bargaining positions in a similar manner, which should decrease the likelihood that a divergence will develop in the intrastate bargaining range. Characteristics increasing the credibility of the signals may include the signaler's level of democracy (H6), regime type similarities (H7), cultural similarities (H8), military strength (H9), and consistency of past signals (H10).

     These hypotheses are tested by interacting each characteristic of the signaling state with the variable for cheap signals. As Brambor, Clark and Golder (2006: 64) explain, interaction terms are the best way to test conditional hypotheses where the effect of one variable X (cheap signals in this case) depends on the value of one or more other variables Z (the signaler's characteristic in this case). These authors criticize past work for misuse of interaction terms. One common mistake is to interpret the constitutive term

X as the average effect of a change in X on Y when X is interacted with some other variable Z.[79] Instead of the "average effect," the constitutive term X only captures the effect of X on Y when the conditional variable Z is zero. To avoid this mistake, I run two analyses for each hypothesis. The first model includes the constitutive term for the variable that is supposed to increase the credibility of the signal, along with an interaction between this variable and the variable for cheap signals. When these elements are included in the model, the effect of the variable for cheap signals is for cases in which the modifying variable equals zero. These effects are captured in the first row of Tables 3.5. For example, Model 2 in Table 3.5 includes a dummy variable coded 1 if the signaler is a democracy (coeff = 0.104), along with an interaction between this variable and the variable for cheap signals (coeff = -0.015). With these elements included in the model, we can interpret the variable for cheap signals (coeff = -0.123) as the effect of cheap signals when democracy equals zero (i.e., only for non-democracies). In the second model (Table 3.5, Model 3), I simply switch the signs of the conditional variable (democracy in this case) to capture the effect of cheap signals when non-democracy equals zero (i.e., only for democracies). To be clear, the title for each column indicates the type of signaler represented by the coefficient for cheap signals.

A second common mistake identified by Brambor, Clark and Golder (2006) is the interpretation of the significance of the interaction term. They show that it is possible for the marginal effect of X on Y to be significant for relevant values of the conditioning variable Z, even if the coefficient on the interaction term is insignificant. Therefore, we cannot simply look at the coefficient and standard error of the interaction term to

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[79] The "constitutive terms" are the variables that are multiplied together to derive the interaction term.

understand whether the type of signaler has an impact on how cheap signals affect the

probability of civil war onset. One way to analyze these effects in a meaningful manner

is to report the marginal effect of the variable of interest for each model, and then

compare this effect across models.[80] I include the marginal effect for cheap signals in

italics below the standard error. By comparing the marginal effect for cheap signals in

Models 2 and 3 in Table 3.5, for example, we see a stronger effect for democratic

signalers (-78.7%) than for non-democratic signalers (-75.1%), which is contrary to the

sixth hypothesis. Though we can certainly conclude with these findings that the sixth

hypothesis lacks support, with these results alone there is no way to tell whether or not

this difference is statistically significant. In other words, we cannot say that signals from

democracies are necessarily more credibly than those from non-democracies. As

suggested by Brambor, Clark and Golder (2006), one way to test this is to plot the

predicted probability of civil war onset (along with the confidence interval) across the

range of cheap signals for the two models being compared. If the confidence intervals for

these predicted probabilities merge, we cannot safely say that there is a difference

between the ways in which cheap signals affect the probability of civil war onset for the

two types of signalers being compared. In Figure 3.4.a, for example, we see that the

confidence intervals for non-democracies and democracies overlap greatly. Therefore,

we cannot conclude that signals sent from democracies are more credible than those sent

from non-democracies.

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[80] The marginal effects are estimated by holding all control variables at their means for continuous variables, the mode of dichotomous variables, and zero for both the constitutive term and the interaction. Cheap signals are allowed to vary in increments of 1. The *Clarify* program was used to estimated predicted values based on these settings (King, Tomz and Wittenberg 2000; Tomz, Wittenberg and King 2003).

I begin the analysis by replicating the main findings from the monadic analyses in order to assure that the dyadic approach is consistent with the earlier approach. By comparing Table 3.3, Model 2 (monadic) with Table 3.5, Model 1 (dyadic), we see that the dyadic findings are largely consistent with the monadic findings. The coefficients are all in the same direction. The only difference is that the variables for mountainous terrain and democracy become significant using the dyadic approach, which is due to the increased sample size. Overall, there is no reason to suspect any bias from taking a dyadic approach for the remaining tests.

The sixth hypothesis predicts that signals from democracies should be more credible than those from non-democracies, which should result in a weaker effect for the cheap signals variable on the probability of civil war onset. As discussed in the example above, we find no support for this hypothesis. This suggests that cheap signals sent from democracies carry no more credibility than those sent from non-democracies. Though this finding runs against similar analyses in the interstate context, specifically those that argue for increased credibility for democracies in the alliance literature (Cowhey 1993; Gaubatz 1996; Schultz 1998, 1999; Lipson 2003), there are many examples of democratic signalers not following through on their cheap signals. As discussed in the previous chapter, the first Bush administration sent a series of cheap hostile signals to the Hussein regime in Iraq following the first Gulf War in order to foment rebellion. The failure of the United States to support the rebellion once it began shows that democracies are no more credible in their signals than non-democracies (at least in this case). It is also possible that the public views the support of a rebellion as illegitimate, no matter what signals are sent prior to the war (Schulzinger 1990). Reagan's support of the *contra*

revolucionarios in Nicaragua, for example, produced a large public outcry against the actions of the administration. These examples show why the null findings for the sixth hypothesis are not altogether surprising.

The seventh hypothesis predicts that signals between states with similar regime types should be more credible than those between dissimilar states. Like the previous findings, the coefficients and marginal effects seem to suggest the opposite. Among similar regime, the marginal effect is -86.1%, which drops to -77.8% for dissimilar regimes. As we can see in Figure 3.4.b, however, the confidence intervals for similar and dissimilar regimes overlaps, which means that we cannot conclude that a statistically significant difference exists between the effect of cheap signals for signalers of the same regime type versus those of different regime types. To be sure, analyses were run with interactions for joint democracy, joint non-democracy and mixed dyads. None of these interactions suggested a statistically significant difference, which suggests that regime type plays little role in enhancing the credibility of cheap signals. Just as the finding for H6 cast doubt upon any increased credibility of signals for democracies, these findings cast doubt upon recent arguments that regime similarity should enhance credibility, even among non-democracies (Peceny, Beer and Sanchez-Terry 2002).

The eighth onset hypothesis predicts that signals sent from culturally similar states will be more credible, which should lessen their impact on the probability of civil war onset. Like the interactions for democracy and regime similarity, we find no support for this hypothesis in Table 3.5, Models 6 and 7. In fact, the marginal effect for cheap signals from similar cultural groups is higher (-86.2%) than that for different cultural groups (-70.0%). However, we cannot conclude that this difference is statistically

significant given the overlap between the confidence intervals shown in Figure 3.4.c.

Therefore, these findings suggest that signals are no more credible when they come from

culturally similar states. To be sure, I also ran analyses with interactions for religious

similarity and linguistic similarity from Ellingsen (2000). Again, these tests produced

insignificant results. Given that culturally similar states are most often grouped

geographically (e.g., nearly 77 percent of people in Latin America are Catholic), it is

possible that the frequent interactions between these states provides the opportunity to

build both trust and mistrust, which ultimately cancels out any overall effect.[81]

The ninth hypothesis predicts that signals sent from strong states will be viewed

as more credible than those sent from weak states, which should decrease the impact that

these signals have on the probability of civil war onset. This hypothesis receives strong

support in Models 8 and 9 in Table 3.5. The coefficient for cheap signals for all weak

states is -0.250. The coefficient drops to -0.082 when strong states are tested in the

adjacent model. In substantive terms, the marginal effect of cheap signals (minimum to

maximum values) drops from -94.0% in Model 8 to -60.7% in Model 9, which suggests a

large decrease in the effect of cheap signals when the signaler is a strong state. This

finding is confirmed in Figure 3.4.d. As expected, states are far more likely to experience

a civil war when hostile signals are sent from weak states. Similarly, states are less likely

to experience a civil war when supportive signals are sent from weak states. Therefore,

both the government and opposition take note of cheap signals sent from strong parties

and adjust their bargaining positions accordingly. In contrast, cheap signals sent from

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[81] This suggestion is supported by the consistent finding from interstate war scholars that geographic proximity leads to an increased risk of interstate conflict (e.g., Russett and Oneal 2001).

weak parties are more apt to cause a divergence in the competing actors' mutually-acceptable bargaining zone, which makes the onset of civil war more likely.

The tenth hypothesis predicts that signals sent from consistent states will have less of an impact on the probability of civil war onset than those sent from inconsistent states. This hypothesis receives strong support in Table 3.5, Models 10 and 11. The coefficient for cheap signals for all inconsistent states is -0.262. This drops to -0.019 and becomes insignificant (p=.60) when consistent states are tested in the adjacent model. In substantive terms, the marginal effect of cheap signals (minimum to maximum values) from inconsistent states is 94.6%, which is the highest of all interactions. This effect is demonstrated in Figure 3.4.e, though a comparison between the effects of cheap signals for inconsistent states versus those of consistent states is difficult given the insignificant finding for the latter group. We can safely conclude, however, that cheap hostile signals that are inconsistent over time increase the likelihood of civil war onset, which highlights the importance of maintaining a consistent foreign policy. These findings concur with the findings for negative and positive shocks (H4 and H5). Overall, cheap signals in themselves have an important impact on the probability of civil war onset. The effect is increased substantially when the signals change rapidly over time.

While many efforts have been made to assure that the empirical results are robust, a few issues should be addressed. First, the model may suffer from endogeneity if a country experiences a civil war in the same year that it receives cheap hostile signals. For example, hostile signals may be a result (rather than a cause) of the civil war as states condemn the atrocities that are common to civil conflict. This is dealt with in the models by lagging the independent variables. However, it is possible that interstate relationships

prior to t-1 influence the domestic stability of a state. Following Smith and Blundell (1986), I ran a two stage model to test for endogeneity. This test predicts the potential endogenous variables (signaling variables) in the first stage, and then includes the residuals from the first stage into the second stage models (those presented in Table 2).[82] Results from this test indicate that endogeneity is not a problem with p values ranging from 0.14 to 0.95.

Second, one might suggest that the rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War is driving the results (Tellema 1990). The current analysis averages signals from these two countries with other politically relevant states, which potentially washes out any special effects that these signals might have. To examine this possibility, I ran the models after dropping the United States and Soviet Union as possible signalers. The results remain largely consistent with those presented in Tables 3.3 and 3.4, which suggests that the effects of cheap signals are not simply a function of Cold War rivalries.[83] The only exception is that the indicator for positive shock becomes insignificant when signals from the United States and Soviet Union are withheld from the analysis. This may indicate that governments were more likely to make excessive demands of the people during the Cold War when they expected support from one of the two superpowers if a civil war were to begin. Overall, these results concur with past

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[82] The follow model is used to predict interstate signals: Interstate interactions = total trade + income per capita + number of alliances with any country + oil exporter + new state + democracy dummy + anocracy dummy + number of state borders + e. These results are presented in Table A1 in the Appendix. Endogeneity was also examined by estimating a series of lags for both the dependent and independent variables analogous to tests of Granger causality with panel data. These results are presented in Table A2 in the Appendix.

[83] See Table A3 in the Appendix for results after dropping the United States and Soviet Union as potential signalers.

research that finds that the Cold War has little effect on the probability of civil war onset

(Sambanis 2001: 274-5; Fearon and Laitin 2003: 77).

Finally, the models themselves produce a strong fit overall. First, the Chi square

values are all significant at the <.001 level. Second, the values for the area beneath the

ROC (Receiver Operating Characteristic) curve range from .69 to .71, which indicates

that the models produce a fair model fit.[84] More important than the fit for the entire

model, however, is the potential improvement of fit after adding the variables for

interstate signals. This is done with a Chi square test comparing the difference between

the baseline model (excluding all variables for interstate relations) with the models

including interstate signals. None of the models in Table 3.2 (costly signals) significantly

improve the model fit. In contrast, the final two models in Table 3.3, which add the

measures for cheap signals, significantly improve upon the model's predictive power.

This suggests that these variables should be strong candidates for future researchers

attempting to predict the onset of civil war.

3.5 Summary, Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the effect of interstate relations on the

probability of civil war onset empirically. Drawing on bargaining theory and rational

expectations as frameworks for analysis, in the second chapter I argued that intrastate

relations between the government and opposition will remain peacefully stable in the vast

majority of situations due to the high costs of conflict. Some shock is necessary for a

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[84] ROC curve is a plot of the true positive rate against the false positive rate for the different possible cutpoints of a diagnostic test. The traditional academic system rates ROC curves on the following scale: .90-1 = excellent; .80-.90 = good; .70-.80 = fair; .60-.70 = poor; .50-.60 = fail. See Tape (2005) for an excellent elementary discussion of the ROC curve.

divergence in acceptable bargaining positions. Interstate signals can provide such a shock by affecting the opposition's and the government's bargaining positions. Costly signals will cause each actor to shift their position to adjust for changes in capabilities due to external support or hostilities. Because these signals are readily observable by both parties, there is no reason to expect a divergence in mutually acceptable bargaining positions. In contrast, cheap signals can introduce uncertainty into intrastate bargaining, which should increase the likelihood of civil war onset. A second argument suggested that volatility in the signals should also increase the probability of civil war onset. Volatility may be due to inconsistencies between signalers, inconsistencies from the same signaler, or inconsistencies in signals over time. Finally, it was argued that any characteristic of the signaling state that enhanced the credibility of the signal, such as the signaler's level of democracy or military strength, should dampen the effect that interstate signals will have on the probability of civil war onset.

The primary argument was tested in this chapter using data for MIDs, sanctions, alliances and trade as indicators of costly signals. As expected, all of these variables were found to be insignificant predictors of civil war onset. COPDAB and WEIS events data were used to operationalize cheap signals. These measures provided strong support for the cheap signaling argument. As cheap signals become more supportive, the probability of civil war onset decreases. Changes in cheap signals over time were also found to have an important effect. When cheap signals switch from being supportive to hostile (negative shock), the probability of civil war increases. Surprisingly, the probability of civil war also increases when signals switch from being hostile to supportive (positive shock). This suggests that the government may make excessive

demands of the opposition when it receives unexpected support. When cheap supportive

signals are consistent with those in years past, however, the likelihood of civil war onset

remains low.

The analyses focusing on the conditional effect of the signaler's characteristics on

the interstate signals also provided some interesting conclusions. The results showed that

the signaler's level of democracy, regime similarities, and cultural similarities between

the signaling state and the target state play little role in enhancing the credibility of the

signal. In contrast, the signaler's military strength and the consistency of its signals over

time were found to significantly decrease the effect that cheap signals have on the

probability of civil war onset. This suggests that very powerful states like the United

States should be able to play an important role in decreasing the likelihood of civil war

onset in the future by maintaining a consistent policy of support for foreign government.

The findings addressed in this chapter are summarized in Figure 3.5.

Several important implications and avenues for future research can be drawn

from this study. For researchers, this study has shown how the bargaining framework

common to the interstate war literature can help generate accurate predictions in the

intrastate environment. Future research might examine how other factors much provide

shocks to the intrastate environment. These factors may include natural disasters, the

emergence of an influential leader, technological changes, the discovery (or loss) of

natural resources, or shifts in the international power structure. The policy community

can also find important implications in this study. Leaders should understand that both

threats and statements of support can have a profound impact on violence in another

country. Even seemingly cheap rhetoric likely plays a significant role in an opposition's

decision to stage a rebellion. Similarly, statements of support have the potential to help a government maintain stability in the face of an otherwise imminent threat. If change is to come peacefully, states must make real investments to credibly signal their support for change. Cheap signals are apt to turn a poor peaceful environment into a violent conflict.[85]

Most importantly for this project, the analyses presented in this chapter provide sound evidence that signals sent from external actors prior to the onset of civil war have an important impact on the likelihood that a civil war begins. This has important theoretical and empirical implications for studies examining how external actors affect the duration and outcomes of civil wars. Past research assumes that interventions during a civil war are exogenous to the original decision to rebel (e.g., Regan 2002; DeRouen and Sobek 2004). However, the analyses presented in this chapter provide strong evidence that both the government and opposition incorporate expectations for external aid or hostilities into their pre-war decisions. Therefore, the effect of interventions on the duration and outcome of an ongoing war can be best understood in the context of that actor's pre-war signal. Before moving to empirical tests of this argument, in the following chapter I highlight the primary findings from the analyses presented thus far by focusing on the civil war onset in Nicaragua (1978).

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[85] I return to these policy implications in Chapter 8 with a more thorough discussion of policy choices for the United States towards the states currently at the highest risk for civil war onset.
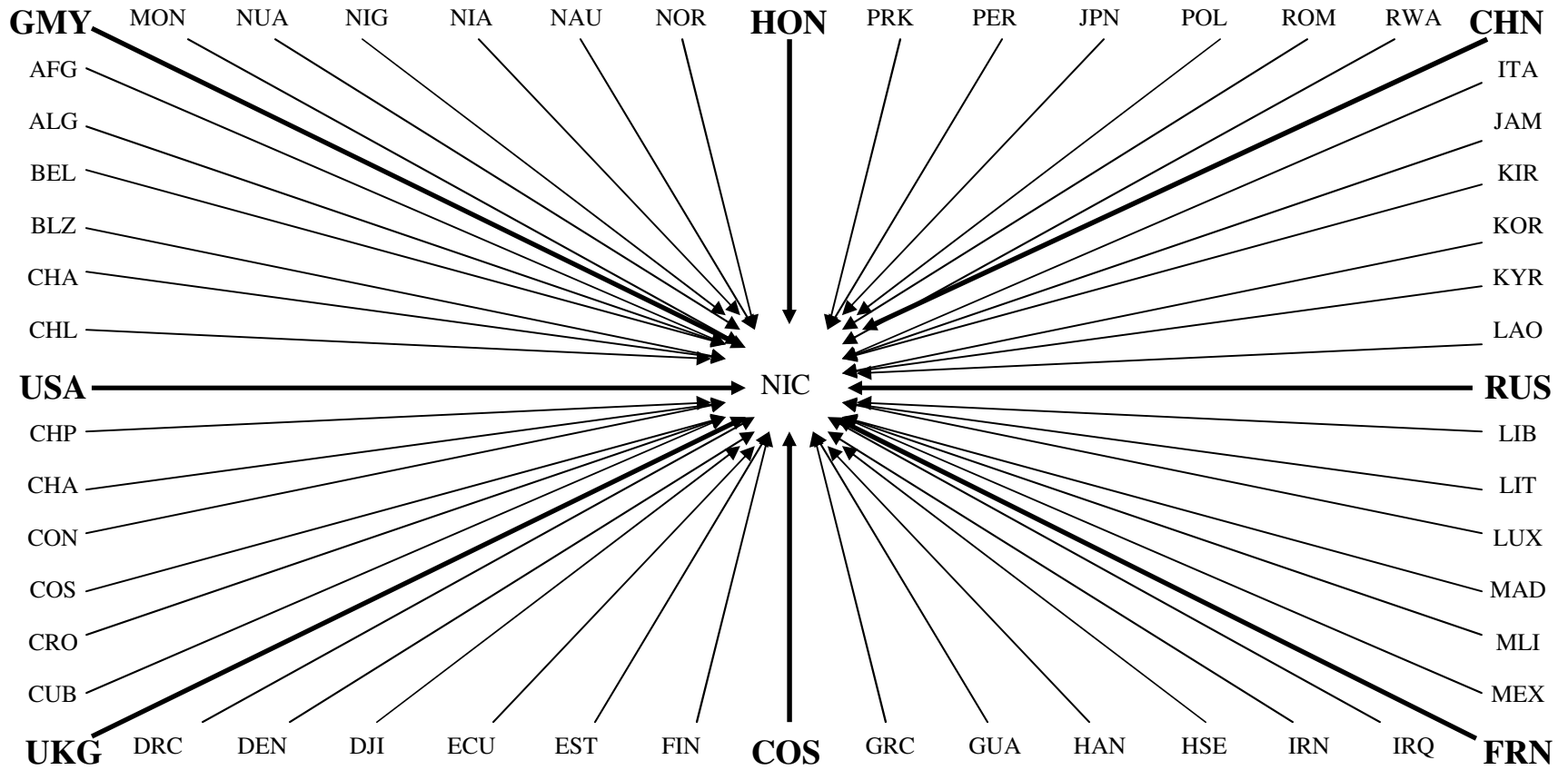
Figure 3.1. Nicaragua's Politically Relevant Signalers

Table 3.1. Cut-off Points for the Cheap/Costly Continuum

	Event	Weight
Costly/hostile	Military attack; clash; assault	-10
	Seize position or possessions	-9.2
	Nonmilitary destruction/injury	-8.7
	Non-injury destructive action	-8.3
	Armed force mobilization, military buildup	-7.6
Cheap/hostile	Break diplomatic relations	-7.0
	Threat with force specified	-7.0
	Ultimatum; threat with negative sanction	-6.9
	Threat w/ specific neg nonmilitary sanction	-5.8
	Reduce or cut off aid or assistance	-5.6
	Nonmilitary demonstration, walk out on	-5.2
	Order person or personnel out of country	-5.0
	Expel organization or group	-4.9
	Issue order/command, insist, demand	-4.9
	•	•
	•	•
	•	•
Neutral	Explain or state policy; explain future position	0
	•	•
	•	•
	•	•
Cheap/supportive	Suspend sanctions, call truce	+2.9
	Agree to future action or procedure	+3.0
	Ask for policy assistance	+3.4
	Ask for material assistance	+3.4
	Praise, hail, applaud, extend condolences	+3.4
	Endorse policy/position; verbal support	+3.6
	Promise other future support	+4.5
	Promise own policy support	+4.5
Costly/supportive	Promise material support	+5.2
	Grant privilege; diplomatic recognition	+5.4
	Give other assistance	+6.5
	Make substantive agreement	+6.5
	Extend economic aid	+7.4
	Extend military assistance	+8.3

| High conflict | Neutral | High cooperation |
| (-7) | (0) | (+4.5) |

low volatility   high volatility

t
t-1
t-2
t-3
t-4
t-5
t-6
t-7
t-8

A
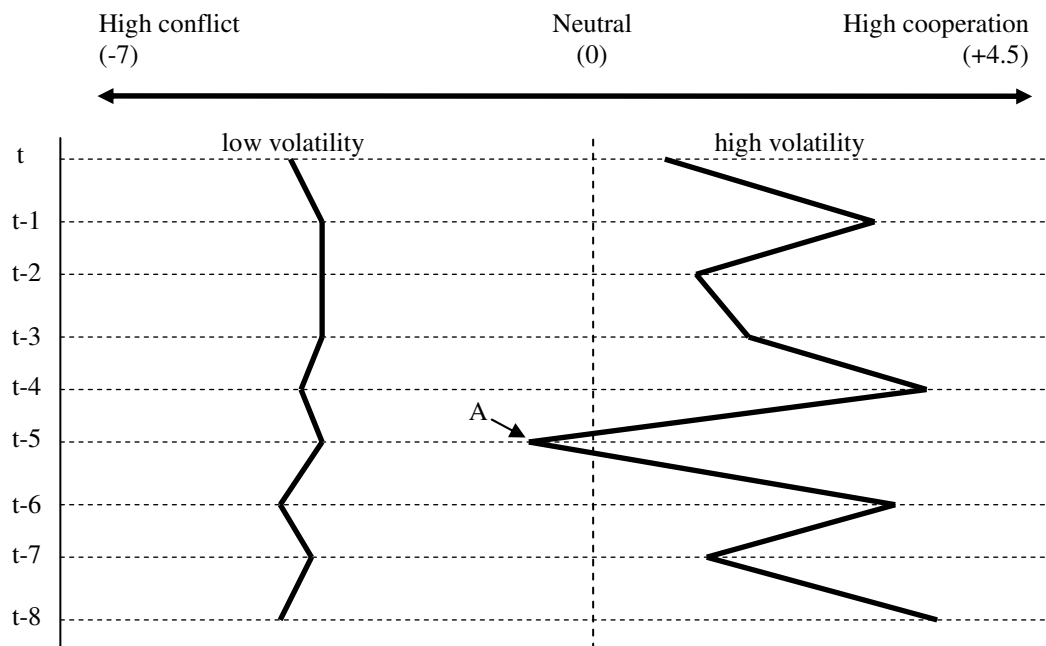
Figure 3.2. Example of the Construction of the Volatility Measures

Table 3.2. Costly Signals and the Probability of Civil War Onset

	All states					Neighbors only			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Militarized dispute	-0.095				-0.179	0.083			0.073
	(0.085)				(0.110)	(0.144)			(0.146)
Trade		-1.200			-1.261		-0.042		-0.039
		(0.674)			(0.763)		(0.069)		(0.069)
Alliances			0.007		0.018			-0.074	-0.045
			(0.009)		(0.011)			(0.220)	(0.223)
Sanctions				0.114	0.226				
				(0.278)	(0.282)				
GDP/capita	-0.389	-0.420	-0.429*	-0.694**	-0.605	-0.338	-0.307	-0.332	-0.298
	(0.201)	(0.283)	(0.209)	(0.266)	(0.313)	(0.207)	(0.214)	(0.209)	(0.216)
Population	0.604**	0.717**	0.561**	0.546**	0.810**	0.501**	0.535**	0.508**	0.516**
	(0.140)	(0.163)	(0.133)	(0.156)	(0.182)	(0.138)	(0.138)	(0.137)	(0.142)
Oil exporter	0.509*	0.679**	0.500*	0.569*	0.487	0.430	0.421	0.438	0.425
	(0.220)	(0.237)	(0.221)	(0.254)	(0.256)	(0.233)	(0.233)	(0.234)	(0.234)
% Mountainous	0.052	0.010	0.045	0.030	0.014	0.064	0.066	0.066	0.065
	(0.065)	(0.073)	(0.066)	(0.076)	(0.076)	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.066)
Instability	0.509*	0.554*	0.505*	0.611**	0.528*	0.457*	0.458*	0.461*	0.453*
	(0.201)	(0.228)	(0.201)	(0.235)	(0.237)	(0.209)	(0.209)	(0.209)	(0.209)
Anocracy	0.555**	0.446*	0.559**	0.417	0.320	0.537**	0.538**	0.538**	0.541**
	(0.197)	(0.224)	(0.197)	(0.231)	(0.233)	(0.204)	(0.204)	(0.204)	(0.204)
Democracy	-0.135	0.117	-0.141	0.008	0.020	-0.119	-0.110	-0.127	-0.105
	(0.239)	(0.254)	(0.240)	(0.273)	(0.268)	(0.251)	(0.250)	(0.251)	(0.251)
Observations	6022	5017	6022	4812	4765	5438	5438	5438	5438

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%; *** significant at .1% (two-tailed). Peace Years and Splines not shown. All independent variables are lagged at t-1.

Table 3.3. Cheap Signals and the Probability of Civil War Onset

	(1)	(2)	(3)	% Δ
Cheap signals	-0.092	-0.137*	-0.189**	-89
	(0.058)	(0.067)	(0.071)	
MIDs-all states			-0.213	--
			(0.114)	
Sanctions-all states			0.179	--
			(0.286)	
Total trade-all states			-1.220	--
			(0.762)	
Ally w/ all			0.019	--
			(0.011)	
GDP/capita	-0.661**	-0.690**	-0.734*	-86
	(0.245)	(0.249)	(0.320)	
Population	0.523**	0.541**	0.870**	+2079
	(0.143)	(0.145)	(0.186)	
Oil exporter	0.704**	0.744**	0.541*	+74
	(0.233)	(0.234)	(0.257)	
% Mountainous	0.021	0.004	-0.011	--
	(0.072)	(0.073)	(0.078)	
Instability	0.604**	0.577**	0.486*	+65
	(0.221)	(0.224)	(0.241)	
Anocracy	0.558*	0.618**	0.392	--
	(0.217)	(0.219)	(0.236)	
Democracy	0.086	0.112	0.085	--
	(0.259)	(0.264)	(0.275)	
Observations	5101	5021	4690	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%; ***
significant at .1% (two-tailed). Peace Years and Splines not shown. All independent
variables are lagged at t-1. % Δ is the percent change in the probability of civil war
onset when moving the variable from the minimum to maximum value while holding all
other variables constant. Only significant variables for Model 3 are shown.
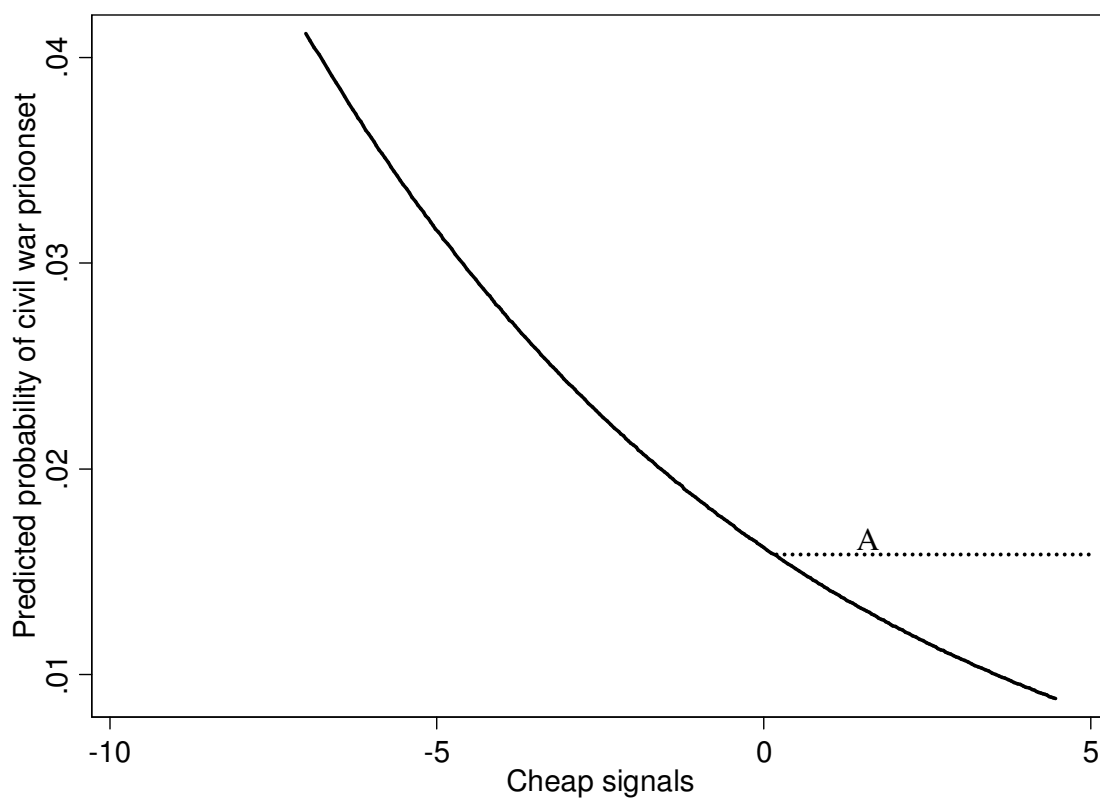
Figure 3.3. Marginal Effect of Cheap Signals on the Probability of Civil War Onset

Note: This figure is produced from the findings in Table 3.2, Model 3.

Table 3.4. Cheap Signals and the Probability of Civil War Onset: Volatility Tests

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	% Δ
Across state volatility	-0.047 (0.243)					-0.013 (0.262)	--
Within state volatility		-0.926 (0.813)				-0.775 (0.898)	--
Temporal volatility			-0.000 (0.060)			-0.015 (0.075)	--
Negative shock				0.666* (0.299)		0.907* (0.375)	+159
Positive shock					0.681* (0.300)	0.980** (0.377)	+182
MIDs-all states						-0.181 (0.113)	--
Total trade-all states						-1.345 (0.806)	--
Alliances-all states						0.020 (0.012)	--
Sanctions-all states						0.210 (0.288)	--
GDP/capita	-0.606* (0.247)	-0.566* (0.248)	-0.663** (0.250)	-0.670** (0.248)	-0.667** (0.247)	-0.724* (0.321)	-85
Population	0.542** (0.147)	0.605** (0.157)	0.569** (0.146)	0.535** (0.146)	0.532** (0.146)	0.917** (0.193)	+2441
Oil exporter	0.724** (0.234)	0.713** (0.234)	0.754** (0.235)	0.728** (0.234)	0.733** (0.234)	0.521* (0.259)	+71
% Mountainous	0.012 (0.073)	0.018 (0.073)	-0.010 (0.074)	0.001 (0.074)	0.005 (0.073)	-0.022 (0.079)	--
Instability	0.584** (0.224)	0.597** (0.224)	0.585** (0.226)	0.569* (0.224)	0.584** (0.224)	0.496* (0.242)	+65
Anocracy	0.609** (0.219)	0.610** (0.219)	0.575** (0.222)	0.627** (0.220)	0.602** (0.219)	0.390 (0.236)	--
Democracy	0.057 (0.262)	0.061 (0.262)	0.075 (0.263)	0.090 (0.263)	0.086 (0.263)	0.096 (0.276)	--
Observations	5021	5021	5005	5021	5021	4684	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%; *** significant at .1% (two-tailed). Peace Years and Splines not shown. All independent variables are lagged at t-1. Only significant variables for Model 6 are shown for % Δ.

Table 3.5. Cheap Signals and the Probability of Civil War Onset:
Signaler's Characteristics

	(1) all obs	(2) non-democracies	(3) democracies	(4) different regime	(5) same regime
Cheap signals	-0.129***	-0.123***	-0.138***	-0.133***	-0.176***
	(0.016)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.022)
marginal effect	*-76.6%*	*-75.1%*	*-78.7%*	*-77.8%*	*-86.1%*
Signal*Democratic signaler		-0.015			
		(0.032)			
Democratic signaler		0.104***			
		(0.017)			
Signal*Non-democratic signaler			0.015		
			(0.032)		
Non-democratic signaler			-0.104***		
			(0.017)		
Signal*Same regime				-0.043	
				(0.034)	
Same regime				0.020	
				(0.019)	
Signal*different regime					0.043
					(0.034)
Different regime					-0.020
					(0.019)
GDP/capita	-0.636***	-0.639***	-0.639***	-0.640***	-0.640***
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Population	0.455***	0.474***	0.474***	0.508***	0.508***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Oil exporter	0.708***	0.705***	0.705***	0.691***	0.691***
	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
% Mountainous	0.026***	0.026***	0.026***	0.030***	0.030***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Instability	0.611***	0.605***	0.605***	0.598***	0.598***
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Anocracy	0.518***	0.534***	0.534***	0.469***	0.469***
	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Democracy	0.076***	0.085***	0.085***	0.051**	0.051**
	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Observations	706925	636841	636841	627148	627148

Note: The column titles indicate the type of signaler represented by the coefficient for *cheap signals*. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%; *** significant at .1% (one tailed). Peace Years and Splines not shown. All independent variables are lagged at t-1. Analyses are clustered by dyad.

Table 3.5 (continued)

	(6) different culture	(7) similar culture	(8) weak signaler	(9) strong signaler	(10) inconsistent signaler	(11) consistent signaler
Cheap signals	-0.107***	-0.169*	-0.250***	-0.082***	-0.262***	0.019
	(0.023)	(0.093)	(0.027)	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.036)
marginal effect	*-70.0%*	*-86.2%*	*-94.0%*	*-60.7%*	*-94.6%*	*-16.5%*
Signal*Same culture	-0.062					
	(0.096)					
Same culture	0.017					
	(0.063)					
Signal*Different culture		0.062				
		(0.096)				
Different culture		-0.017				
		(0.063)				
Signal*Strong signaler			0.168***			
			(0.033)			
Strong signaler			-0.005			
			(0.015)			
Signal*Weak signaler				-0.168***		
				(0.033)		
Weak signaler				0.005		
				(0.015)		
Signal*Consistent signaler					0.281***	
					(0.040)	
Consistent signaler					-0.614***	
					(0.018)	
Signal*Inconsistent signaler						-0.281***
						(0.040)
Inconsistent signaler						0.614***
						(0.018)
GDP/capita	-0.637***	-0.637***	-0.952***	-0.952***	-0.790***	-0.790***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Population	0.454***	0.454***	0.454***	0.454***	0.531***	0.531***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Oil exporter	0.708***	0.708***	0.761***	0.761***	0.900***	0.900***
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.028)	(0.028)
% Mountainous	0.026***	0.026***	0.022***	0.022***	0.009	0.009
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Instability	0.612***	0.612***	0.602***	0.602***	0.251***	0.251***
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Anocracy	0.516***	0.516***	0.479***	0.479***	0.639***	0.639***
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Democracy	0.075***	0.075***	0.215***	0.215***	0.323***	0.323***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Observations	706925	706925	672554	672554	335316	335316

The column titles indicate the type of signaler represented by the coefficient for *cheap signals*. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%; *** significant at .1% (one tailed). Peace Years and Splines not shown. All independent variables are lagged at t-1. Analyses are clustered by dyad.

Figure 3.4.a   Democratic vs Non-democratic Signalers

Figure 3.4.b   Same vs Different Regimes

Figure 3.4.c   Different vs. Same Ethnicity

Figure 3.4.d   Weak vs Strong Signalers

Figure 3.4.e   Inconsistent vs Consistent Signalers

Figure 3.4. Cheap Signals and the Probability of Civil War Onset: Signaler's Characteristics

External Actor's Signal to the Government

Hostile

Supportive

Costly signal
little effect
on CW onset (H1)
supported

Cheap signal
increase probability
of CW onset (H2)
supported

Costly signal
little effect
on CW onset (H1)
supported

Cheap signal
decrease probability
of CW onset (H2)
supported

Intra-war / Duration phase

Become supportive –
switch policies
decrease duration (H11)

Remain hostile –
no switch
little effect on duration (H11)

Remain supportive –
no switch
little effect on duration (H11)

Become hostile –
switch policies
decrease duration (H11)

Intra-war / Outcome phase

victory/settlement favorable
to the government (H12)

little effect on outcome (H12)

little effect on outcome (H13)

victory/settlement favorable
to the opposition (H13)

Secondary hypotheses:
H3: Noisy signals should *increase* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***
H4: Negative shocks should *increase* the probability of civil war onset ***supported***
H5: Positive shocks should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset * **opposite supported***
H6: Democracy × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***
H7: Regime type similarities × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***
H8: Sender's military power × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***supported***
H9: Consistency of past signals × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***supported***
H10: Cultural similarities × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***

Figure 3.5. Summary of the Argument and Hypotheses with Findings for Onset Empirical Chapter

CHAPTER 4

INTERSTATE SIGNALS AND CIVIL WAR ONSET

IN NICARAGUA

Somoza may be a sonofabitch, but he's our sonofabitch.
Franklin D. Roosevelt

4.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the 1970s, life could not have seemed better for the leader of

Nicaragua. With the staunchly anti-communist Nixon in office, support from the United

States was as strong as ever. Henry Kissinger (Nixon's National Security Council

Advisor from 1969 to 1975) announced that US foreign policy would not be distracted by

issues of morality, which gave Somoza free reign to crush opponents (Schoultz 1981:

112).[86] One recently active opposition group, the FSLN (*Sandinista* National Liberation

Front), was declared dead in the previous year (July 1969) after Somoza's National

Guard trapped and killed five of its key leaders (Lafeber 1993: 225; Morley 1994: 62).

This left little viable opposition to Somoza's continued reign as the leader of Nicaragua.

As Lafaber (1993: 225) notes, "With the exception of Costa Rica, no Central American

nation in 1970 had seemed more safe from upheaval." The decade could not have ended

in a more contrasting manner. In July 1979, Somoza was forced to flee his home country

---

[86] Kissinger's stance was actually a continuation of a long-standing foreign policy towards Nicaragua. In 1950, George Kennan, a US foreign policy leader during the middle of the century, noted that "It is better to have a strong regime in power than a liberal government if it is indulgent and relaxed and penetrated by Communists" (Lake 1989: 16). From the mid-1940s, Somoza was considered a key US ally against communism (Morley 1994: 35).

as his defeat at the hands of the FSLN became inevitable. His term officially ended months later, when he was shredded by bazooka shells in Paraguay (LaFaber 1993: 236).

This case presents several questions for researchers. What changed to drastically cripple a regime that had enjoyed absolute rule over Nicaragua for so long? What allowed a previously ineffective opposition group to challenge, and ultimately defeat, the Somoza regime? In this chapter, I seek to answer these questions by taking a closer look at the environment in Nicaragua during the 1970s. I begin by analyzing the foremost causal mechanisms used to explain the onset of civil war presented by past research. Second, I examine the validity of my primary theoretical argument by tracing the process by which signals sent from the United States to Nicaragua affected the collapse of the Somoza regime. Last, I examine two potentially confounding developments during the 1970s: the Managua Earthquake in 1972 and the assassination of Somoza's key political rival in 1978.

4.2 The "Usual Suspects"

We begin with the variables common to studies of civil war onset—the "usual suspects." These include the variables that were used as controls in the previous quantitative analyses. In the introduction of this study (Chapter 1, Section 1.1), I considered these variables as the potential primary causal mechanisms leading to the onset of civil war in Nicaragua. As I demonstrated in Figure 1.1, the unchanging nature of these variables offer very little evidence to suggest that variations in the usual suspects led to Somoza's collapse. Nicaragua's level of ethnic fractionalization was below the mean for the entire sample during this time period, and its regime type placed it in the

staunchly authoritarian category. As in previous periods, Nicaragua was not a major oil

exporter. Although the percentage of Nicaragua covered by mountains is slightly above

the mean for all states during this time period, no mountains were created or destroyed in

Nicaragua during the 1970s. None of these variables changed in Nicaragua from 1970 to

1978.[87] Considering wealth, there is some evidence suggesting that the onset of civil war

in Nicaragua should have been less likely in the late 1970s than in previous periods. In

1976, for instance, Nicaragua had a 46 million dollar trade surplus, a low inflation rate of

3 percent, and a GNP (Gross National Product) growing at 8 percent (LaFaber 1993:

226).

Though the static nature of the "usual suspects" makes it very difficult to

understand why civil war began in 1978 rather than in any previous time period, we

should avoid quickly concluding that these variables had no effect on the probability of

civil war onset in Nicaragua. Several of these indicators are significant in the previous

models, which suggest that they likely had some impact on Somoza's ouster. This brings

us to a distinction between the underlying "structural" characteristics of countries

experiencing a civil war, versus the specific causal mechanisms that spark rebellion.

Structural characteristics are the underlying characteristics of states that make them more

or less apt to experience civil wars (Sambanis 2004a; Sambanis and Collier 2005). In

empirical models, these structural characteristics are generally captured with macro-level

---

[87] Using Fearon and Laitin's (2003) measures, Nicaragua's ethnic fractionalization score was .179 during this time period with no variation. The entire sample ranges from .001 to .925 (mean = .399, standard deviation = .290). Like the majority of states during this time period (86.25%), Nicaragua failed to reach the cut-off point to be considered a major oil exporter. Fearon and Laitin (2003) report the log of the percent mountainous terrain for all states. During the 1970s, Nicaragua is scored 2.33 with no variation. All states range from 0 to 4.56 (mean = 2.10, standard deviation = 1.43). Using Marshall and Jaggers' (2000) Polity IV scale, Nicaragua scored a -8 from 1970 to 1978. The entire sample for this variable ranged from -10 to +10 (mean = -2.33, standard deviation = 7.35).

indicators, such as GDP or population. Examining the structural characteristics in Nicaragua versus other states may provide some leverage in a more general explanation of the onset of civil war in Nicaragua, though their static nature clearly makes them ill-equipped to predict the exact year in which the civil war began.

Unfortunately, there is still very little evidence to suggest that the variables common to civil war models helps explain the onset of civil war in Nicaragua. Using the control variables from the previous analyses as a baseline model, in Figure 4.1, I plot the mean probability of civil war onset from all states during the 1970s versus the probability of civil war onset in Nicaragua during the same time period.[88] As we can see, Nicaragua has a lower baseline probability of civil war onset than the mean for all states. Given that civil wars are an extremely rare event, even for states most susceptible to internal violence, it is safe to conclude that we must look beyond the structural characteristics in Nicaragua to understand why civil war broke out in 1978.

4.3 Carter's Cheap Signals and the Onset of Civil War
in Nicaragua

Having dispensed with the "usual suspects" as the potential causal mechanism to explain the onset of civil war in Nicaragua, we can now move to examine how the signals sent from the United States may have contributed to the onset of rebellion. Using the full quantitative model, there is ample evidence to suggest that some change in cheap signals at the beginning of the Carter administration (January, 1977) had a tremendous effect on

---

[88] A more direct way to test this would be to run quantitative analyses of the baseline model on Nicaragua alone during the 1970s, and then see which variables significantly predicted the onset of civil conflict in 1978. Unfortunately, there are insufficient degrees of freedom (too many variables and not enough cases) to run such an analysis.

the likelihood of civil war onset in Nicaragua. Figure 4.2 shows the signals received by

Nicaragua from the United States in the decade leading up to the onset of civil war. The

dashed line represents the probability of civil war based on the predictions without

interstate variables included in the model (baseline model). The solid line represents the

prediction after adding the variable for cheap signals. In the period from 1970 through

1976, Nicaragua consistently received friendly signals from the United States, which is

represented by a lower predicted value of civil war onset compared to the baseline model.

In 1977, Nicaragua received a series of cheap hostile signals, which dramatically

increased its probability of civil war by 87 percent in a single year (.012 to .022). From

this evidence, it is clear that the cheap hostile signals sent from the United States

contributed to the onset of rebellion.

Though the data visibly support my argument in Nicaragua, we still lack a clear

understanding of the process by which the cheap hostile signals affected the opposition's

ability to mount a full-scale attack on Somoza's government. I attempt to provide this

explanation in the following pages.

To support my primary theory, we should see evidence that foreign policy signals

sent from the United States led to two outcomes in Nicaragua. First, they should have

emboldened the opposition, who should have either expected future support from the

United States if a civil war were to begin, or should have developed the expectation that

the United States would not come to the aid of the Somoza regime. Second, there should

have been a divergence between the ways in which the opposition and the government

responded to the cheap hostile signals. This divergence should have been related to at

least one of the causal mechanisms described in Chapter 2, Section 2.2. The developments in Nicaragua in the late 1970s provided evidence for both.

We begin by looking more closely at cheap signals sent from the United States to Nicaragua in the decade preceding the onset of civil war. These signals changed very little during the early- and mid-1970s. Both the Nixon (1969-74) and Ford (1974-77) administrations viewed Somoza as a strongly anti-communist dictator who promoted the permanent interests of the United States (Morley 1994: 62). They showed their support with massive economic assistance, which totaled $280 million between 1962 and 1978 (U.S. Agency for International Development, 1982). Somoza also built strong ties in the US Congress throughout his lifetime.[89] This support allowed Somoza to solidify his political power in Nicaragua by stifling the opposition. As late as 1977, a US Foreign Service publication noted, "During 1976, the government inflicted heavy blows on the local guerrilla organization and now faces no serious threat from that quarter" (US Foreign Service 1977).

Signals from the United States to Nicaragua changed once Jimmy Carter was sworn into office in January, 1977. Carter and his administration placed the international promotion of human rights among the top of their foreign policy objectives (Lake 1989: 21). In his inaugural address, Carter proclaimed that the United States' "commitment to human rights" must be "a fundamental tenet of our foreign policy" (Lafaber 1993: 210). Though Carter's goal was clear, he did not pursue it in Nicaragua with costly measures (e.g., sanctions or military invasion) for three reasons. First, Carter's primary foreign policy focus was on problems outside of Central America, which included continued

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[89] Among these were representatives John Murphy and Charles Wilson, who worked to continue aid to Somoza even after the civil conflict began (Diederich 1981: 130-1).

normalization of relations with China and the cessation of hostilities in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Somoza's long history of supporting US interests, while maintaining stability in his country, left little need for a drastic change in US policy (Morley 1994: 88, 96). Second, there was a bureaucratic "tug-of-war" within the Carter administration in regards to the measures to be used to pursue the new foreign policy goals. Within the State Department, for instance, there were those who wanted to continue to work with Somoza to encourage democratic reforms, while others pushed to move away from the regime. Third, Carter did not want his administration to be "tagged with the interventionist label" (Morley 1994: 97). The pursuit of US foreign policy goals, therefore, were to be done primarily with policy statements and, if necessary, a reduction in foreign aid. In other words, cheap signals would be the primary tool by which Carter would pursue his foreign policy agenda in Nicaragua.

Ultimately, the change in US foreign policy towards Nicaragua was subtle. Lafaber (1993: 144) explains that officials in the State Department and National Security Council came to regard this as a policy of neutrality. While signals from Washington were often critical of Somoza's government, the US officials in Nicaragua were not to aid opposition groups in any way. On the one hand, the Carter administration supported Somoza by voting in favor of three World Bank and IADB (Inter-American Development Bank) loans totaling more than $62 million. On the other hand, its anti-Somoza rhetoric consisted primarily of threats to withdraw aid and statements against human rights violations. For instance, in April 1977 the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs told a House subcommittee that "the Carter Administration would not sign a new security assistance agreement with Nicaragua unless there was an

improvement in the human rights situation in that country" (New York Times, 1977a).[90]

At first thought, one may be quick to conclude that this minor change in US foreign

policy should have had a very small impact on the internal stability of Nicaragua. In the

context of my theory, however, it is exactly these sorts of changes that should have the

largest impact in inciting rebellion in the country because they fail to credibly signal the

United States' level of support for the Somoza government.

Though inconsistent at times, Carter's changes in US foreign policy goals made

one thing abundantly clear to the opposition in Nicaragua: Somoza no longer had the

automatic support of the United States to continue his hold on power.[91] This viewpoint

was widely-held among opposition leaders throughout Nicaragua. Xavier Chamorro

Cardenal, co-owner of a newspaper that had long been critical of Somoza (*La Prensa*),

remarked, "People have arrived at a consensus. Somoza must go and this time

Washington will not come to his rescue" (Diederich 1981: 150). The Nicaraguan

Institute for Economic Development (INDE), which represented a broad segment of the

private sector in Nicaragua, agreed with this viewpoint: "The private sector has turned

against the [Somoza] regime and more importantly, the United States under President

Carter's human rights program has removed American support" (Diederich 1981: 150).

Though the opposition did not necessarily expect support for their cause once the civil

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[90] Similar threats were made throughout 1977. For instance, in September 1977, the State Department informed Somoza that a $3.1 million military assistance package would be withheld until his government could produce hard evidence of continued human rights improvements (Morley 1994: 103).

[91] Several scholars have come to the same conclusion. Leogrande (1979: 31) writes, "Reductions in U.S. military assistance to Nicaragua on human rights grounds emboldened Somoza's moderate opponents, who had historically been immobilized by the unflagging U.S. support which the dynasty enjoyed." Grynspan (1991: 98) concurs, "After 1977, the US government refused to support Somoza…this withdrawal of US support weakened Somoza's regime and encouraged his opponents." Morley (1994: 104) is of the same mind, "The civilian opposition was both encouraged and energized by the implications of Washington's action: Somoza could no longer automatically expect U.S. support to consolidate his political rule."

war began, the cheap hostile signals sent from the Carter administration were sufficient evidence that Somoza was now on his own in confronting the opposition. Ultimately, the newly perceived weakness in Somoza's hold on power caused the previously splintered and weak opposition groups to galvanize around the FSLN to ignite a full-fledged rebellion in the following year.

Returning to my theory, we recall that the additional demands made by the opposition following Carter's change in policy should only lead to civil conflict if the government is unwilling (or unable) to adjust its policies to adjust for its diminished fighting capabilities. This part of the story is less clear because Somoza, in fact, made concessions to the opposition between the time Carter entered office and the onset of the civil war. A report released by Amnesty International in August 1977 blasted Somoza for human rights abuses between 1974 and January 1977. However, following Carter's inauguration, officials from the Catholic Church and the United States noted that conditions had become far better for the people in Nicaragua (Riding 1977e; Diederich 1981: 141). In September 1977, Somoza lifted censorship of the press and ended the "state of siege" that had given him maximum authoritarian powers over the country (Lake 1989: 22). Two factors led to this change in policy. First, the pressure applied by the Carter administration forced Somoza to clean up his act in order to maintain the continued support of the United States (Riding 1977c). Second, Somoza was confident that the previous five years of harsh policies had decimated any viable opposition in his country (Riding 1977e). While he was likely correct about the former, he could not have been more mistaken about the latter. In October 1977, the FSLN launched a full-scale assault against Somoza's government (Diederich 1981: 145-6). In the following section,

I return to the primary components of my theory to explain why the opposition rebelled

in spite of Somoza's concessions.

4.4 Causal Mechanisms and Civil War Onset

in Nicaragua

The onset of civil war in late-1977 and early-1978 is a bit puzzling in the context

of the bargaining model. We should expect the opposition to be less apt to pursue violent

measures following Somoza's concessions. Instead, we see the eruption of a full-scale

civil war. My theory provides four potential explanations to solve this puzzle (Chapter 2,

Section 2.2). Causal mechanism #1 suggests the possibility that the opposition and the

government in Nicaragua had different levels of information in regards to Carter's

policies towards Nicaragua, which could have led to a divergence in their bargaining

positions. This does not seem to be the case. Carter's human rights-based approach to

foreign policy made a tremendous splash across the entire world, so opposition leaders

and authoritarian governments alike knew that human rights abuses were apt to draw the

ire of the new administration (de Onis 1977). Causal mechanism #4 suggests that the

opposition groups in Nicaragua may have been prone to consider Carter's cheap hostile

signals as signs of imminent support due to their poor environment. There is little

evidence in Nicaragua to support this argument. The opposition groups in Nicaragua did

not expect support from the United States; they simply expected non-intervention from

the United States once the civil war began.

The final two causal mechanisms presented by my theory provide a compelling

explanation for the events in Nicaragua. Causal mechanism #2 explains that the civil war

may have broken out because the government was too slow to respond to the cheap

hostile signals sent from the United States. This expectation is clearly born out in the

events in Nicaragua during 1977. Though Somoza made an obvious effort to appeal to

the opposition in September 1977, his efforts failed to placate the opposition. He was

simply too slow to respond to the new threat. We can attribute this failure to two reasons.

First, Somoza underestimated the impact that Carter's policies would have on the

opposition. Though Carter's emphasis on human rights was well-known even before he

was elected, Somoza's long history of being supported by the United States seemingly

provided little need for him to make rapid changes. When asked by a friend about the

impending change in relations with the United States after Carter's inauguration, Somoza

replied, "Aw, you think I have no friends in Washington. I can take care of Carter"

(Christian 1985: 36). Somoza's failure to understand the impact of Carter's signals

continued even after the FSLN began its October offensive. In response to this new

threat, Somoza remarked, "This is not a government crisis…My Government may not be

as strong as ever, but it's still strong. It's only a tiny minority that is against my

Government" (Riding 1978). By underestimating the impact of Carter's signals, Somoza

assured that his response to the opposition would be too little, too late.

Second, Somoza faced a problem common to many semi-authoritarian leaders.

When confronted with a threat to their regime, these leaders can choose to mount a

campaign of repression against their enemies, or they can assuage them by offering some

degree of concessions. In the past, Somoza had always preferred the former. His harsh

policies from 1974 to 1977, for instance, were a response to an embarrassing attack led

by the FSLN in December, 1974 (Diederich 1981: 106-8; Lake 1989:20; Lafaber 1993:

228). This policy had been possible in the past because his continued support from the United States was not contingent upon his human rights record. Carter's policies left him in a dilemma. He could continue his traditional response to the opposition by responding with heavy-handed tactics, but this risked further alienation from the United States. In contrast, he could yield concessions to the opposition, but this might show weakness—a trait the people in Nicaragua had rarely seen from their leader.[92] In the end, Somoza took a middle ground. He gave in to some of the opposition's demands by allowing a free press and reigning in the abuses of the Guard, but he failed to implement any meaningful political reform and made little effort to improve the living conditions of his people. Somoza's slow and weak response to Carter's pressure set the stage for the onset of civil war.

We can also explain the onset of civil war in Nicaragua with causal mechanism #3, which suggests that the leaders in the opposition should have attempted to use a cheap hostile signal as a tool to attract support for their efforts. Before Carter, the primary opposition groups were splintered, and consisted mainly of anti-regime radicals who had fought a losing battle against Somoza since 1962. Following Carter's inauguration, however, the opposition leaders used the cheap hostile signals to attract a much wider following. As Riding (1977c) reported, "The guerrillas, whose previous strategy was aimed at slowly building support in the country, are now trying to provoke a popular insurrection backed by groups with divergent ideological positions but united in their opposition to the regime." This new group included people from wealthy families, the

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[92] As Rider (1977b) explained, "Until now, General Somoza has been unwilling to make [concessions to the opposition]. His difficulty is therefore whether to risk appearing weak by giving into outside pressure or to risk further alienating key groups by remaining inflexible."

business class, and the Church (Riding 1977a; Diederich 1981: 125, 148-150).

Ultimately, the opposition in Nicaragua developed on two main fronts. The FSLN

guerillas led the military offensive, while a coalition of academics, business leaders, and

the clergy led a political campaign against Somoza (Riding 1977b). Thus, there is ample

evidence to suggest that opposition leaders used cheap hostile signals from the United

States to elicit support for their cause.

Ultimately, there is a clear link between the cheap hostile signals sent from the

United States in the late 1970s and the onset of civil war in Nicaragua. Somoza himself

explained that most Nicaraguans believed that "the decision about the survival or

disappearance of 'Somocismo' would be made in Washington" (Gilbert 1988: 161).

Carter's cheap hostile signals symbolized the end of four decades of unflagging support,

which encouraged widespread opposition to the regime. For my theory, this case clearly

demonstrates how a seemingly innocuous change in policies can have a dramatic effect

on a state's internal stability.

4.5 Alternative Explanations

Beyond the changing signals sent from the Carter administration, two other rather

shocking events in Nicaragua during the 1970s provide competing explanations to the

story told above. The first was an earthquake in December 1972 that destroyed much of

Nicaragua's capital. The official death toll from this earthquake was set at 10,000, with

another 20,000 injured. With only a few well-built structures left standing, the

earthquake left three-quarters of the population homeless (Diederich 1981: 93). Anarchy

reigned in the period immediately following the earthquake, with Somoza's Guard among

those joining in the looting. The government's response to this tragedy was abysmal. Though the international community was quick to respond with a massive outpouring of aid, for example, it took four days for food to be distributed. Worse yet, Somoza and his Guard profited heavily during the reconstruction period as large reconstruction projects were pushed towards land owned by Somoza (Riding 1977d; Diederich 1981: 238-9; Lake 1989: 19; Morley 1994: 57). The people were quick to blame their leader for both the insufficient immediate response, and the long-term profiteering. Opposition to Somoza grew rapidly during the post-earthquake period. The FSLN became more active by drawing members from the lower and middle classes who had lost faith in Somoza. In the following months, the people showed their widespread contempt with massive strikes in the textile, construction, and metal industries. From this point forward, it was clear that Somoza had lost any widespread support that he enjoyed in previous periods (Diederich 1981: 90, 100-2; Lake 1989: 20).

From this evidence, one might conclude that the Managua earthquake was the primary cause of the civil war. However, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this is likely not the case. There was simply too much time between the earthquake in 1972 and the onset of civil war in 1978 to easily link the two events. While opposition groups grew in strength immediately following the earthquake, Somoza's heavy-handed response to their growth caused the group to return to its weakened state. Following major defeats by the Guard in 1974, the FSLN fractured into three groups (Diederich 1981: 118; Morley 1994: 58). These groups had nearly been eliminated by the time Carter came into office (Riding 1977e). Though Somoza's bungled response to the recovery effort certainly garnered widespread resentment among the population, the

rebellion would have had to come much earlier for it to be clearly linked to the onset of civil war.

The second competing explanation comes much closer to the events preceding the onset of civil war: the assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro on January 10, 1978. The Chamorro family had played a prominent role in Nicaragua since it gained independence. Three early family members had occupied the presidency of the country, including Pedro Joaquín (1875-79), Emiliano (1917-21, 1926) and Diego (1921-23). When Anastasio Somoza García gained his hold on power in 1933, Emiliano Chamorro became a primary leader against the regime, and led several failed revolts against the dictator. This rivalry spread to their sons, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal and Tacho Somoza, who began fighting in the elementary school they both attended at the age of eight (Diederich 1981: 153). The rivalry intensified as the boys aged. Tacho Somoza replaced his father as the president of Nicaragua in 1967, while Pedro Joaquín Chamorro continued to oppose the Somoza regime as the director of *La Prensa* after his father's death in 1952.

As a member of one of the country's most prominent families, and a publisher of the main opposition paper in the country, Chamorro became one of the central political figures in opposing Somoza. This all came to an abrupt end in January 1978, when he was ambushed and killed by unknown assailants while driving to work (Diederich 1981: 155). Though no evidence was ever found linking him to the assassination, the people quickly turned on Somoza as the culprit.[93] Chamorro's death sparked outrage across the

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[93] Somoza publicly defended his innocence, explaining that "I've had Chamorro under custody in many cases when he could have lost his life. It has come as a complete surprise to me and all of Nicaragua" (New York Times 1978b).

country. Massive strikes unfolded across the public and private sectors. As never before, Chamorro's assassination unified the opposition, and brought politicians and the business community into the struggle against Somoza (Diederich 1981: 157; Lake 1989: 9; Morley 1994: 57, 90, 106-8).

While it is clear that Chamorro's assassination contributed greatly to Somoza's ouster, the timing of this event suggests that Carter's cheap signals played a greater role in inciting rebellion. Chamorro's assassination happened two months after the FSLN had begun its large-scale offensive against Somoza's government. Many groups, including much of the business sector, had already fallen behind the FSLN by this point (Diederich 1981: 146-150). Ironically, Chamorro provided the best evidence for this conclusion prior to his assassination: "I am very optimistic. I see the end of the Somoza dynasty. The majority of the people are against Somoza, except for the government workers. Somoza's regime is near the end because he lost support of the U.S. administration and public opinion in America and Europe" (Diederich 1981: 156). Thus, while Chamorro's assassination certainly enlarged the opposition against Somoza, perhaps contributing greatly to the overall success of the movement, the wide-scale offensive had already begun by the time he was killed.

4.6 Conclusion

Overall, the events in Nicaragua during the 1970s provide strong support for the onset argument. Prior to Carter's inauguration, the Somoza regime had presided over one of the most stable governments in Latin America. Support from the United States was a key factor in Somoza's ability to maintain this stability. This stability came to an abrupt

end when Carter came into office and began pushing his human rights agenda with cheap hostile signals. These signals emboldened the traditional opposition groups, and caused many other groups to join in the fight against Somoza. Though Somoza responded to the increased pressure from the Carter administration and the opposition by offering concessions, he moves were ultimately too little, too late.

The alternative explanations to my argument, including the Managua earthquake in 1972 and the Chamorro assassination in 1978, clearly contributed to the peoples' resentment against Somoza's rule. However, there is sufficient evidence that these were secondary causal mechanisms, falling behind Carter's cheap hostile signals as primary causes for the onset of civil war in Nicaragua. Culling these alternative causal mechanisms from the history of Nicaragua provides an important topic for future research. A central theme of the theoretical argument presented in Chapter 2 is that unexpected events should have the strongest observable impact on the onset, duration and outcome of civil wars. The evidence presented in this case study suggests that researchers should look beyond cheap signals as shocks that may spur rebellion. For example, the Managua earthquake in 1972 and Chamorro's assassination in 1978 suggest that natural disasters and assassinations of key political figures may be equally fruitful avenues to explore in future research. Leaving these topics aside, I now move to analyze how external actors affect the duration and outcomes of civil conflicts.
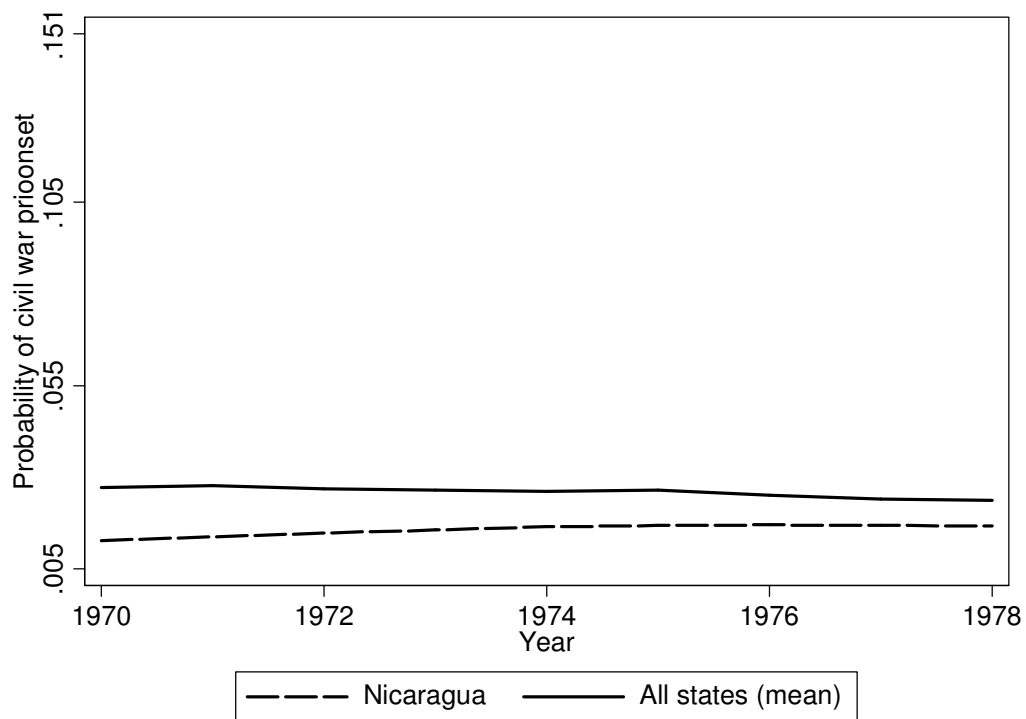
Figure 4.1. Structural Variables and the Probability of Civil War Onset in Nicaragua, 1970-1978

Note: The Y-axis is the range for the baseline probability of civil war onset for all states during the 1970s.
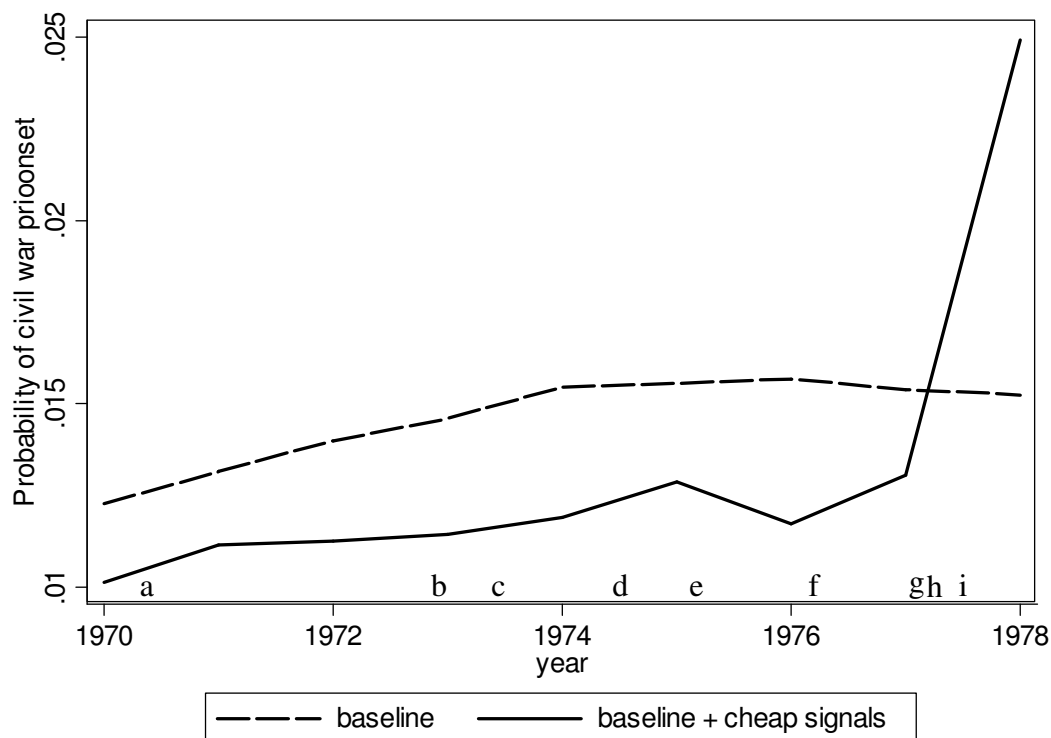
Code	Event	Value[*]
a	New OAS charter established (02/27/1970)	+2.4
b	Aid sent to Nicaraguan earthquake victims (12/25/1972)	+2.4
c	OAS general assembly meets in Washington (04/16/1973)	+1.2
d	US gives Nicaragua $15 million for disaster relief (05/15/1974)	+4.6
e	OAS meets in a special session to discuss US trade act (01/20/1975)	+2.4
f	Under Secretary of State Rogers meets with Somoza (02/06/1976)	+1.2
g	US accuses Nicaragua government of profiting from relief aid (03/23/1977)	-1.6
h	US demands human rights improvements to receive relief aid (04/06/1977)	-1.6
i	US withholds sale of arms due to human rights violations (07/17/1977)	-2.8

[*]Rescaled COPDAB values using Goldstein's (1992) scale: +8.3 = most supportive; 0 = neutral event; -10 = most conflictual.

Figure 4.2. The Probability of Civil War Onset in Nicaragua, 1970-1978

CHAPTER 5

INTERSTATE SIGNALS AND CIVIL WAR DURATION:

EMPIRICAL TESTS

Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind.
                                        John F. Kennedy, 1961

5.1 Introduction and Review of Duration Theory

One of the largest puzzles in the civil war literature comes from those attempting to explain the effect of external interventions on the duration of civil wars. Several scholars have found that interventions often lead to civil wars with longer durations (Pearson, 1974; Mason, Weingarten and Fett, 1999; Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000; Regan 2002). As one leading scholar suggests, "If the objective of an intervention is to shorten the length of a civil conflict, then an outside military or economic intervention is not a terribly effective strategy to do so" (Regan 2002: 72). This finding is puzzling because most interventions are presumably meant to lessen the harmful consequences of these wars. If it is true that interventions (while perhaps well intentioned) exacerbate the tensions in a civil conflict, then policy-makers should accept this conclusion and be content with watching a country destroy itself on CNN. Before settling on this policy advice, however, scholars must be certain that every possible alternative is explored.

Two explanations help us understand why interventions by external actors might be associated with civil wars of longer duration. First, states and international organizations may intentionally choose to intervene in the most difficult to solve cases (Regan 2002; Thyne 2006c). If this is true, then a civil war attracting an intervention

would have been long with or without the intervention. This explanation was previewed in the second chapter, but left for another project in order to focus on the second explanation. According to the second explanation, past researchers may have presented problematic conclusions because they have assumed that interventions during a civil war are exogenous to the opposition's original decision to rebel.[94] The empirical evidence presented in the previous chapter shows that cheap signals sent from external actors during peaceful periods have a profound effect on the probability that a civil war begins. This is because signals allow the opposition and the government to develop expectations for what external actors would do once fighting erupted. Therefore, the effect of interventions during a civil war can be best understood in the context of the intervener's pre-war signal. Expected interventions (those that are consistent with pre-war signals) should have little effect on the duration of the conflict because they were signaled before the war began, which allowed them to play a role in each side's pre-war evaluations of their capability vis-à-vis their potential opponent. In contrast, unexpected interventions (those that contrast with the third party's pre-war signal) should have a dramatic impact on the duration of violence because they are exogenous to pre-war expectations.

Drawing on bargaining theory, this argument is developed by examining the information revealed by consistent policies vis-à-vis inconsistent policies.[95] We should

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[94] This theory is only summarized here. See Section 2 in Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion.

[95] A "consistent" policy is one in which the external actor's intervention during a civil war is consistent with its pre-war signal. For example, Libya was consistently hostile to the Sudanese government prior to the second Sudanese civil war (1983-2005). It remained consistent by providing material support to the SPLM rebel group during the early years of the conflict. An "inconsistent" policy is the opposite. For example, the United States was consistently hostile to the Hussein regime in Iraq prior to the Shiite rebellion in 1991. Once the rebellion began, however, the United States failed to continue these hostilities by aiding the rebellions in any meaningful way. I provide a more thorough discussion of this case in Chapter 7.

expect any type of intervention to reveal information, which should make a settlement of a conflict more likely. However, unexpected interventions should reveal more information, and at a quicker rate. We need to consider two types of uncertainty in the minds of the combatants once a civil war begins: (1) On whose side will the external actor intervene? and (2) To what extent will the external actor provide support?[96] When an external actor remains consistent with its pre-war signal (e.g., the signal was hostile and the intervention is for the opposition), only the first type of uncertainty goes away. The combatants are left wondering to what extent the external actor will provide aid in terms of both the duration of aid and material investment.

In contrast to consistent interventions, when an external actor switches policies (e.g., the signal was hostile and the intervention is for the government), both types of uncertainty are eliminated. The second type of uncertainty—extent of support—becomes irrelevant because the party that expected support knows that it will receive nothing when the third party chose to switch policies and help the other side. Because more information is revealed with an inconsistent policy than a consistent policy, we should expect the war to end more quickly as the unexpectedly weakened party is either defeated by its opponent, or quickly updates its bargaining position in favor of its opponent to settle the conflict to avoid annihilation. Further, as time goes on, the two sides become more capable and entrenched in their conflict. Thus, these policies should matter most during the initial stages of the conflict. A single hypothesis was presented in the second chapter based on this theory:

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[96] The two types of uncertainty were presented earlier in Chapter 2, Table 2.2.

H11:   The probability of civil war continuation is a negative function of the

deviation between the pre-war signal and the intra-war intervention; the impact

of this deviation should decrease over time.

The remainder of this chapter provides an empirical test of this theory. I begin by explaining the cases, unit of analysis, and methods. Next, I operationalize the primary independent variables, which are meant to capture various degrees of consistent and inconsistent policies. Third, I explain several control variables that have been found to impact the duration of civil wars in past research. The data are then analyzed, and followed by a discussion of general conclusions and implications of this chapter.

5.2 Cases, Dependent Variable, and Methods

The dependent variable is the duration in years of each civil war recorded by the Correlates of War (COW) database from 1948 to 1993.[97] A civil war is defined as "any armed conflict that involves (a) military action internal to the metropole, (b) the active participation of the national government, and (c) effective resistance by both sides." At least 1,000 people must die over the course of the war (Small and Singer 1982: 210; Sarkees 2000). Though COW has provided a benchmark for several researchers defining civil war (e.g., Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Enterline and Balch-Lindsay 2002; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004), this definition varies somewhat from the Uppsala/PRIO definition used in the previous chapter, which requires only 25 battle deaths over the course of the war (Gleditsch et al.

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[97] I also ran the analysis using months (rather than years) as the unit of analysis, which yielded substantively identical results to those presented here. I prefer using years here because most of the control variables (e.g., population and GDP/capita) are available only on a yearly basis.

2002). The reason that the COW data are used here is that they also include information on third party interventions in the civil wars (explained below).

The unit of analysis is the conflict-year, with the dependent variable for each observation coded 0 until the civil war ends, or until the dataset ends (1 otherwise). Using the conflict-year with time-varying covariates as the unit of analysis is preferable to simply using each conflict because I expect the effect of my primary independent variables on the duration of the conflict to decrease over time. The duration of each conflict is examined by observing whether or not the conflict ended in each year using a hazard model. Hazard analyses allow us to predict the likelihood that an event (civil war in this case) has ended in each time period, given that it has survived to that time period. Past scholars have generally used either the Cox or Weibull models to test the factors explaining the duration of civil wars. The Cox model is a semi-parametric model, which does not require the researcher to make assumptions about the distribution of the survival times (Cox 1972). This is preferable if we have no a priori expectations as to whether civil wars are more likely to end in their early stages than after they have endured for some time (i.e., time dependence). The Weibull model allows us to test for the possibility of time dependence, but requires that the hazard function be specified correctly.[98] Past research has consistently found that civil wars are more likely to end after they have lasted for many years, which is likely due to war weariness (e.g., Regan 2002, Fearon 2004). This provides a basis for using the Weibull model, which I take here. Analyses run using a Cox model yield substantively identical results to those presented later in this chapter.

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[98] See Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (2004: 25-31) for a more technical description of the Cox and Weibull models.

5.2.1 Independent Variables

Two sets of analyses are used to test how the (in)consistency of interventions during a civil war vis-à-vis the pre-war signal affect the war's duration. The first relies exclusively on the variable for cheap signals, which was operationalized in the previous chapter.[99] The assumption here is that interveners do not necessarily need to intervene in order to affect the duration of conflict. Rather, they can affect the intra-war bargaining positions between the government and opposition by merely signaling what they will do if the war were to continue. A large deviation between the pre-war signal and the signal sent during each period of fighting should reveal a great amount of information, which should increase the likelihood that the civil war ends. This concept is operationalized by subtracting the pre-war signal in each time period from the signal sent in the year before the war began. Because switches in favor of both the government and the opposition have the same prediction (shorter duration), I take the absolute value of this measure. The result is a single measure where large values indicate a dramatic difference between the pre-war and intra-war signals, while small (or zero) values indicate consistent signals of support for either the government or the opposition. As a final step, this measure is allowed to decay over time by dividing it by the year of the conflict.

To clarify how this measure is operationalized, hypothetical values are shown in Table 5.1. The values on the left half of the table indicate an inconsistent policy, with major variation between the pre-war and intra-war signals. While the pre-war signal was hostile to the government (-4), the signal sent after the war began was very supportive of

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[99] Cheap signals are operationalized using COPDAB and WEIS events data, which range from -10 (most hostile towards the government) to +8.3 (most supportive of the government) (McClelland 1978; Azar 1980; Goldstein 1992). See chapter 3 (Section 3.2.3) for a more thorough explanation of how the measure for cheap signals is operationalized.

the government (+2 to +5). The column marked "Change" picks up the absolute value of the deviation between the pre-war and intra-war signals, while the column marked "Measure 1" captures the same deviation after allowing the values to decay over time. In contrast, the right half of Table 5.1 shows a very consistent policy that is hostile towards the government, which is exhibited by the low values for "Change" and "Measure 1." We should expect the coefficient for Measure 1 (labeled "Signal deviation" in Table 5.3) to be negative and significant, which would indicate that large deviations between the pre-war and intra-war signals decrease the duration of the conflict.[100]

The second set of independent variables provides more nuanced indicators of the decision by external actors to intervene (or not to intervene) in ongoing civil conflicts. I rely here on the measure for cheap signals developed in Section 3.2.3 of the previous chapter, and the variables for intervention coded by COW. I explain only the latter here. COW defines an intervention as "direct military participation of such a magnitude that either 1,000 troops are committed to the combat zone or, if the force is smaller or the size unknown, 100 deaths are sustained" (Small and Singer 1982: 219). While this excludes other types of interventions, such as economic aid, it provides a reasonable standard for evaluating the effects of interventions that are likely to have an impact on the tenure of

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[100] One potential problem with this measure is that it picks up deviations from "hostile" to "more hostile" (e.g., -4 to -6) as if it were switches in policy. The same would be true for "supportive" to "more supportive" (e.g., +2 to +4). This is problematic because these changes would represent a strengthening of the same policy, and not a switch in policies that the measure seeks to capture. However, the results for "signal deviation" remain consistent (insignificant) with the values displayed in Table 5.3 when the value for these cases are changed to zero, or when a dummy variable is included in the model to control for these cases. Another way to capture this deviation is to multiply the signal in time t by the pre-war signal, which results in positive values for consistent signals and negative values for switches. Again, the coefficient is insignificant using the values for this measure or dummy variables for negative (switches) and positive (consistent) values.

fighting. Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2002) use the same measure in their analysis of

civil war durations and outcomes.[101]

While COW's data collection effort is impressive and has provided a baseline

definition for the vast majority of large-N empirical studies on civil war, it fails to

account for the signal sent by the intervener prior to the onset of conflict. Therefore, I

recode these variables by examining how the intervention during the war (COW

intervention) deviates from the pre-war signal ("cheap signals" variable from Chapter 3).

We recall that external actors have three choices once a civil war begins. They

can (1) remain consistent with the pre-war signal, (2) switch sides, or (3) do nothing.

Each of these decisions is captured with the four variables displayed in italics in the

bottom row of Figure 5.1. The first pair captures consistent policies. *Expected

government intervention* is coded 1 if the pre-war signal was positive and the third party

remained consistent by aiding the government during the war. Similarly, *expected

opposition intervention* is coded 1 if the pre-war signal was negative and the third party

remained consistent by aiding the opposition. These variables are also combined in a

single measure, *Expected intervention-all states*, to capture all expected third party

behavior.

The second pair of variables captures switches in policies. These are coded 1 if

the third party signaled support for either the government or the opposition, and then

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[101] Another excellent source of data for interventions comes from Regan (2000, 2002), who defines an intervention as, "Convention breaking military and/or economic activities in the internal affairs of a foreign country targeted at the authority structures of the government with the aim of affecting the balance of power between the government and opposition forces." I prefer the COW definition for this test because the "convention breaking" requirement used by Regan likely picks up some of the variation between the pre-war signal and in the intra-war support that I seek to test, but fails to use the pre-war signal as a standard baseline. To be sure, I also ran the data using Regan's (2002) data as a baseline with variables for intervention coded in the same manner explained here. Results were substantively identical to those presented in this chapter.

chose to support neither side once fighting began. Likewise, they are coded 1 if the third party signaled support, and then chose to aid the opposite side.[102] *Government unexpectedly weak* is coded 1 when the government expected support based on a positive pre-war signal, and then either received none or was forced to fight the opposition with unexpected third party support after the war began. Similarly, *opposition unexpectedly weak* is coded 1 when the opposition expected support based on a negative pre-war signal, and then either received no support, or was forced to fight the government with unexpected third party support. These variables are also combined in a single measure, *Surprise intervention-all states*, to capture all unexpected third party behavior. As a final step, each of these variables is allowed to decay over time by dividing each dummy variable by the year of the conflict.[103]

To clarify how these measures are operationalized, hypothetical values for interventions following a pre-war hostile signal are shown in Table 5.2. As we can see in the fourth and sixth columns, the variables for *Expected government interventions* and *Government unexpectedly weak* are coded zero for the duration of the war because the government should not expect an intervention on its behalf following a hostile pre-war

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[102] Though it is rare, it is possible for a single conflict-year to be coded 1 for more than one independent variable (i.e., the independent variables are not mutually exclusive). For example, from 1983 to 1988 the government in Chad received an expected intervention on their behalf, while the opposition received unexpected support. In this case, both "Expected intervention-government" and "Government unexpectedly weak" are coded 1 during this time period. See Table A4 in the Appendix for a distribution of these cases.

[103] Regan and Aydin (2005) include a similar decay function in their model, though their decay begins after the intervention, whereas mine begins at the beginning of the war. I am concerned with the deviation between interventions and the pre-war signal, while they do not consider expectations based on pre-war signals. I ran the variables without the decay function, which resulted in substantively identical results to those presented here. Though neither of the variables (with or without the decay function) violates the assumption of proportional hazards, I employ the variables with the decay function because I expect the fighting parties to adapt to unexpected acts as the war progresses, which should decrease the impact of unexpected actions by external states as the war continues.

signal. In contrast, we see in the fifth column that the opposition receives an expected

intervention in the fifth year of the war. As the values in parentheses indicate, the effect

of this intervention has decayed considerably because the intervention came much later

than expected. The values in the final column indicate that the opposition found itself

weaker than expected in the early stages of the war because it was forced to fight without

the support it expected until the fifth year of the war. Again, this effect decays over time

as the opposition was able to adjust to the unexpected lack of support to maintain itself as

a viable fighting force. According to my theory, this hypothetical civil war was most

likely to end during the first years of fighting when the opposition found itself weaker

than expected. The expected intervention that came during the fifth and sixth years of

fighting should have a minimal impact on the duration of the conflict because it was

already incorporated into the opposition's pre-war decision to rebel.

While separating these four variables into six categories based on the decisions

shown in Figure 5.1 would be preferable, there are few cases in which third parties

signaled support for one side, and then drastically altered their support by helping the

other.[104] In most cases, the third party failed to support the side that expected aid. For

example, the Shiites fought for independence following the first Gulf War after

interpreting the anti-Hussein rhetoric from the United States as a signal of imminent

future support. The rebellion ended quickly, however, when they received no support

after beginning a rebellion (Harff and Gurr 2004). A similar process happened with the

communist insurgency in British-controlled Malaya when the Chinese and Soviets failed

to provide the rebels with meaningful support (Harff and Gurr 2004). A drop in external

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[104] For instance, there are only four cases of interventions on behalf of the government following a hostile
pre-war signal.

support should also matter for more established revolutions. Doyle and Sambanis (2000) explain that the drop in support for the warring factions in Cambodia (1970-75) by China, the Soviet Union, Vietnam and other Western powers made peace a more attractive option, which led to a cessation of hostilities. Failure to aid a government expecting support should yield a similar outcome. The consistent Western support for Mobutu's regime in Zaire, including two past interventions from France on the government's behalf, made Mobutu expect unwavering foreign support. His regime quickly crumbled when the West failed to support a rebellion against his regime in 1996 (McNulty 1999). These examples suggest that an external actor does not necessarily need to switch sides in order to affect the duration of the war. Rather, failure to aid a party expecting support may be just as important for the duration of the conflict.

As noted by the horizontal arrows at the bottom of Figure 5.1, we should expect the duration of the civil war to decrease as the deviation between the pre-war signal and the intra-war intervention increases. Specifically, we should expect to see a minimal (or insignificant) coefficient for the three variables capturing expected third party interventions (*Expected intervention-all states*, *Exp intervention-government*, and *Expected intervention-opposition*). In contrast, we should expect to see negative and significant coefficients when third parties intervene, or fail to intervene, in contrast with their pre-war signal (*Surprise intervention-all states*, *Government unexpectedly weak*, and *Opposition unexpectedly weak*).

5.2.2 Control Variables

Several control variables are included in the model to help isolate the effects of the intervention variables. The first, *cheap signals*, is the same measure used to predict

civil war onset in the previous chapter. It is possible that combatants during a war react to both deviations from pre-war signals and signals of future support or hostility. This variable captures the latter, with each observation revealing what third parties are likely to do if the war continues. This variable should also help capture non-military aid sent to either side of the conflict because it captures more minor acts, such as sending relief supplies or condemning actions verbally.

Second, I include a variable indicating whether or not the fighting was for control of the central government (*Fight for the government*) as defined by the COW. Kaufmann (1996) argues that other types of conflict, particularly those that are ethnically-based, are more difficult to resolve than wars where one party simply seeks to overthrow the government. Several scholars have found the type of civil war to be an important determinant of its duration in empirical models. For instance, Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000), Regan (2002), and Fearon (2004) find that ethnically-driven wars or wars of succession are generally longer than those seeking overthrow of the central government. As Licklider (1993) argues, this is likely because secession is perceived as a non-divisible good, which makes a negotiated settlement an unlikely option for cessation of hostilities.

Third, I control for the severity of the civil war by including the total number of deaths divided by the years of the conflict (*Deaths/year*). As casualties mount, we might expect the combatants to be more apt to settle the war. While this is admittedly an *ex post* measure of costs given that the total number of deaths is unknown until the fighting ends, it is the best available measure given that annual deaths counts currently do not exist. Data for deaths come from COW and are measured in 100,000s. A similar

measure has been used in past research (Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Regan 2002; Fearon 2004).

The fourth control variable is a dummy variable for *democracy*. We might expect democracies to be better equipped to quell internal violence with established institutions and norms allowing for more peaceful means to express discontent. Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom (2004) and Fearon (2004) use a similar measure to predict the duration of civil wars. This variable is coded 1 if the state experiencing the civil war was ranked +6 or higher on the Polity IV index (Marshall and Jaggers 2000).

The next two control variables account for the level of fragmentation in the society. It is possible that rebel leaders may have an easier time recruiting fighters when they can appeal to a specific sector of the population (Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000). This concept is operationalized by using the ethno-linguistic fractionalization (ELF) index, called *Ethnic fractionalization*, and a similar measure for *Religious fractionalization*. These variables are constructed by Fearon and Laitin (2003), who relied on information from the CIA Factbook and other sources. The indices give the probability that two randomly drawn individuals in a state are from different ethno-linguistic or religious groups.

Next, I control for the percentage of the country that is covered by mountains (*% Mountainous*). Rebel groups, such as the FARC in Colombia, are often able to maintain long-term insurgencies by using rough terrain as cover. The final two control variables include *GDP/capita* and *Population* from Gleditsch (2002). Past research has shown that wars in states with high populations and low incomes tend to last longer than other civil wars (Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom 2004). This is likely due to the lowered costs of

rebel recruitment when rebel leaders have a large and/or impoverished population from

which to recruit. Having defined the full model, I now turn to an analysis of the data.

5.3 Data Analysis

The results presented in Tables 5.3 are for an accelerated time failure metric,

which identifies the effect of each independent variable on the expected duration of the

civil war when controlling for all other variables in the model. Positive values indicate

that the variable increases the duration of the war, while negative values indicate a

shortened duration. The marginal effect of each variable can be calculated by

exponentiating each coefficient, which tells us the percentage longer (or shorter) than we

can expect the conflict to continue. For example, the presence of any intervention (*Old

intervention*) in Table 5.3, Model 1 will increase the duration of the conflict by $1-e^{.571}$ or

about 77%.

We begin with the variable for *Old intervention* in Model 1. This variable

captures the standard operationalization of interventions used in past research, which

assumes that interventions during the war are exogenous to any signals sent by external

actors prior to the war's onset. I include it here to show that the model is consistent with

past research. As expected, this variable is positive and significant, which indicates that

interventions increase the duration of civil wars—at least when we neglect the

expectations developed by the combatants prior to the onset of fighting. Of course, this is

the main puzzle I seek to solve in this chapter.

We now move to the first measure used to capture deviations between the pre-war

signals and intra-war interventions, *Signal deviation*, which relies exclusively on the

measure for cheap signals. This variable is positive and insignificant, which suggests that the combatants do not respond to deviations in cheap signals alone. This is not altogether unexpected because once combatants have committed to fighting, the actual balance in capabilities—rather than expectations for future capabilities—is likely to define the duration of the fighting (Licklider 1993, 1995). Bennett and Stam (1996) make a similar argument for interstate wars, claiming that the balance in fighting capabilities should be one of the strongest determinants of the duration of a conflict. These findings concur with their empirical work, which suggests that a true rise or fall of military capabilities that comes with external interventions, rather than signals of future support or hostilities, are likely to have the greatest impact on the duration of civil wars.

Moving to the measures for consistent interventions, we see insignificant findings for expected interventions on behalf of the government (*Expected intervention-government*), the opposition (*Expected intervention-opposition*), and in the combined measure (*Expected intervention-all states*). This finding is consistent with my theory because both sides likely developed expectations for these interventions prior to the onset of fighting. When the government of Uganda supported the rebels in the second Sudanese civil war (1983-2005), for instance, it had little impact on the duration of the conflict because it was anticipated by the combatants based on past hostilities between the two governments. In light of this, the Sudanese government's support of the LRA rebel group during the ongoing civil war in Uganda (1988-present) should have been a shock to none (Uppsala Conflict Database 2007). Similarly, Milosevic's support for the Serbian secession in Bosnia (1992-1995) could only have been expected by the

competing sides in the conflict. Therefore, when the pre-war estimates are accurate, the effect during the war is minimal or nonexistent.

We now move to the measures used to capture unexpected interventions in Models 4-6. Here, we see results strongly supporting the duration hypothesis. The sign for each coefficient is negative and significant, which indicates that parties either hastily seek to settle the war or are quickly defeated when they fail to receive expected aid. Whether it benefits the opposition or the government (*Surprise intervention-all states*), inconsistency between the third party's pre-war signal and its intra-war support should decrease the duration of the conflict. The effect remains strong when considering interventions in which the government finds itself weaker than expected (*Government unexpectedly weak*), with the duration of the war decreasing by 79 percent. The effect is somewhat larger when the opposition finds itself weaker than expected (*Opposition unexpectedly weak*), with an 89 percent decrease in the duration of the war.

To help clarify these findings, in Figure 5.2 I plot the predicted survival rates of the civil wars from Table 5.3, Model 5, while holding all variables at their means except for the measure for all surprise interventions (*Surprise intervention-all states*).[105] As we can see, civil wars experiencing a surprise intervention die off much more rapidly than those with expected interventions. Switches made in the first year of the war result in a drastic decrease in the duration of the conflict, resulting in wars lasting an average of 1.8 years, as compared to a mean duration of 10 years for wars that have no surprise interventions. The effect remains strong as the war continues. Wars with surprise interventions between the second and fifth years last on average at least 5 years less than

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[105] The dummy variable for unexpected interventions without the decay is used for Figure 5.2 because it allows for a single value for comparison.

those with no surprise interventions. As expected, this effect tapers off as the war continues. These results provide strong support for the eleventh hypothesis. Expected interventions have little effect on the duration of civil wars, while unexpected interventions drastically reduce the duration of fighting.

Looking beyond the primary independent variables, we see several interesting results for the control variables. The variable for *cheap signals* is negative and significant in each model, which suggests that wars are shorter when external actors are supportive of the government. This finding supports a common claim in the civil war literature that the opposition faces an uphill battle in fighting the government because rebel groups often have much weaker capabilities, especially in the early stages of conflict (e.g., Mason and Fett 1996; Mason, Weingarten and Fett 1999; Regan 2002).[106] According to these data, signaling support for the government once a civil war begins likely dampens a rebel group's ability to continue fighting. We might expect rebel leaders to have a harder time recruiting people to fight when they see resistance from both the government and external actors. While the earlier results showed that the combatants at the early stages of the conflict likely developed expectations for outside support, the result for cheap signals indicates that opposition groups systematically overestimate their likelihood of receiving external support when developing expectations in the pre-war stage. This finding is consistent with the theory presented to explain the onset of civil war, which suggested that opposition leaders may "manufacture" future external support to rally the opposition to fight, or that their poor environment makes

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[106] These findings contrast somewhat from previous analyses, which found that interventions on behalf of the opposition and the government lead to civil wars with longer durations (e.g., Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Regan 2002). However, these authors use direct interventions as independent variables for their tests, while I rely on the measure for cheap signals.

them more apt to make risky decisions. Thus, when cheap signals are supportive of the government once a war begins, the conflict will be shorter as fewer new fighters will be willing to join the opposition in the face of external hostilities. Deviations from the pre-war signal only matter when the deviation is backed up with an actual military intervention.

Next, the variable capturing opposition groups seeking to overthrow the government (*Fight for the government*) is negative in each model, though significant in Model 5 only. This provides weak support for the argument that direct challenges to the central state apparatus are likely to end quickly, while fights for secession or ethnically-based wars are apt to be drawn out processes because they are more difficult to resolve (Licklider 1995; Kaufmann 1996; Sambanis 2001). The variable for *wealth* (GDP/capita) provides a somewhat surprising result. According to these results, wealthy countries are likely to experience wars with longer durations, which is contrary to what we might expect. Once a rebellion gets started, it is possible that the opposition is better able to convert this wealth into fighting capabilities than is the government. There may also be a selection effect driving this finding. If we consider wealth to be a proxy for state strength, as suggested by Fearon and Laitin (2003), then it is likely that only highly resolved opposition groups will rebel against a powerful government. This resolve should make the opposition less likely to quit fighting, leading to civil wars with longer durations. More nuanced indicators of economic performance, such as variations in export revenues and income inequality examined by Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom (2004), may better capture the effect of economic indicators on the duration of civil wars.

The final control variables—*deaths/year*, *democracy, population, ethnic fractionalization, religious fractionalization and mountainous terrain*—are all insignificant in each model. These findings are unsurprising given the contradictory findings for similar variables in past models. For instance, Regan (2002) finds that severity leads to longer civil wars, Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000) find the opposite, and Fearon (2004) presents an insignificant finding. Similarly, Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom (2004) find that ethnic fractionalization leads to longer civil wars, while Regan (2002) and Fearon (2004) present insignificant findings. Similarly, population size has been found to increase the duration of fighting (Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom 2004), and have no effect on the war's duration (Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000; Fearon 2004). Democracy was found to be an insignificant indicator of civil war duration by Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom (2004) and Fearon (2004). Ultimately, all of the control variables indicate that civil war scholars have yet to define a set of indicators that perform consistently across various specifications of civil war duration.

Another reason that several control variables are insignificant is the decision to use conflict-year as the unit of analysis, rather than a shorter time interval used in past models of civil war duration, such as the conflict-month or the conflict-day (e.g., Enterline and Balch-Lindsay 2002; Regan 2002; Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2003). Given that the vast majority of the covariates in these models are available for country-years only, using a smaller temporal unit of analysis artificially deflates the size of the standard error. I avoid this approach here.

Finally, the estimate of the duration dependence parameter (ρ) is greater than 1, which suggests that civil wars have positive duration dependence. This means that civil

wars are more likely to end the longer they have lasted, which supports the argument that war weariness among the combatants often ends fighting. This finding is consistent with past research from Mason and Fett (1996), Regan (2002), and Fearon (2004).

5.4 Summary, Conclusions and Implications

This chapter began by returning to one of the foremost puzzles facing civil war researchers today. Given that external interventions during a civil war are usually meant to end the violence, why do civil wars with interventions last longer than those without interventions? Two possible explanations were put forth to explain this puzzle. First, third parties may chose to intervene in civil wars that are most difficult to solve, which means that the duration would have been long with or without the intervention. Second, past research fails to consider the conditions under which the opposition initially decided to rebel. Some interventions are expected based on signals sent from external actors prior to the onset of rebellion, while other interventions come as a shock. Another shock may come from third parties' failure to intervene after signaling pre-war support for either the government or opposition. Given the findings from the previous chapter, which provided strong evidence that signals from external actors affect the likelihood of civil war onset, the second explanation was examined in this chapter.

A straight-forward theory based on information was explained thoroughly in the second chapter, and then reviewed briefly in this one. Third parties have three choices once a civil war begins: (1) remain consistent with their pre-war signal; (2) aid the other side; or (3) do nothing. Information is revealed no matter what a third party does once a war begins, but more information is revealed when the actor chooses to aid the other side

or do nothing. When a third party remains consistent, the combatants may still be uncertain as to the extent of third party support. The weaker party may choose to continue fighting in hopes that the external actor will soon become war-weary and depart. In contrast, when an external actor switches policies, the extent of support becomes irrelevant as the third party reveals that the side that expected support will receive no aid. In this situation, the war should end quickly as the weakened party is either defeated, or is forced to make major concessions to avoid annihilation.

Two sets of measures were constructed to test this theory. First, I examined the deviation in signals in wartime (t and t+k) versus the pre-war signal (t-1). According to the theory, larger variations should lead to a decrease in the duration of civil wars. The second set of measures was constructed by modifying the intervention variables commonly used to test the effect of third party interventions on the duration of civil wars. I recoded the single intervention variable into four categories based on their similarity or deviation with the intervener's pre-war signal: consistent intervention for the (1) government or (2) opposition, and switch in favor of the (3) government or (4) opposition. Additionally, I coded failures to intervene after signaling support for the (5) government or (6) opposition, which has never been done in past research. The theory predicts that categories 3-6 (switches) will decrease the duration of the conflict because they capture deviations between the external actor's pre-war signal and its actions once the war begins, while categories 1 and 2 (consistency) will have a minimal effect because they were already incorporated into the initial decision to rebel.

The first set of measures produced insignificant results, which was not altogether unexpected because the measure generally captures signals of future support, rather than

actual interventions that could affect the balance of capabilities. The second set of measures showed strong support for the theory. Expected interventions were found to have an insignificant effect on the duration of the conflict, while unexpected interventions and failures to intervene dramatically reduce the time fighting. The findings from the previous chapters are updated with the findings from this chapter in Figure 5.3.

This chapter has produced a handful of interesting conclusions and implications for both the research and policy communities. For the former group, the theory and evidence presented here goes a long way in solving one of the most interesting puzzles from the civil war literature. Interventions have been found to increase the duration of civil wars in past research not because they exacerbate the tensions of the conflict, but because they have been studied in isolation of the conditions that precipitated rebellion. Each phase of the civil war process—the pre-war conditions, the onset of rebellion, the duration of fighting, and the termination of hostilities—must be studied in light of what happened in past phases. Researchers would be wise to consider this same set-up when analyzing other variables, such as the level of democracy or economic strength. Rather than using a variable for the current level of democracy during a civil war, for example, researchers should examine how the current level of democracy differs from the pre-war condition. Similar calculations could be made for other continuous variables, such as measures for wealth, population, and the size of the government forces. A more sophisticated approach would be to use the pre-war values to forecast expectations for these variables, and then examine how these forecasts differ from the actual conditions during the conflict. Ultimately, the failure to consider how pre-war expectations compare

to the conditions during the conflict is likely one of the foremost reasons that scholars have failed to develop a set of variables that performs consistently across various studies of civil war duration.

For the policy community, this study casts serious doubt on past policy advice coming from the academic literature. Intervention in civil wars does not necessarily exacerbate the consequences of these conflicts. Rather, the effect of interventions is conditioned on the pre-war signal. When interventions are consistent with past signals, they have little effect on the duration of fighting. When actions (either interventions or failures to intervene) are inconsistent, they can dramatically reduce the duration of fighting. This finding reveals three important implications for policy-makers. First, one should not conclude that interventions in civil wars will either do no good or make things worse. Widespread adoption of this point of view would absolve actors of any moral dilemma in sitting back and watching the widespread destruction and mass killings that accompany civil wars. It would also provide a foundation for those who think problems "over there" should be of no concern.[107]

Second, policy-makers cannot allow external interveners with a past history in the conflict to be the only ones attempting to settle the dispute. This is too often the case in Africa, in which neighboring states and former colonizers are often the only Western actors to get involved in a civil war. For example, French support of Tombalbaye's government in Chad during the 1980s did little to quell the violence in its former colony

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[107] At this point, I am implicitly assuming that at least some policy makers want civil wars to end quickly, regardless of the outcome. This may be unrealistic in some cases if a continued civil war is preferable to a quick defeat for the preferred side. For example, the United States would likely rather see a continued civil war in Iraq than a quick defeat for the government. I address this topic more thoroughly in Chapter 8, Section 8.5.

because the rebels likely expected the intervention when they decided to challenge the

government in the first place. For internal disputes to be resolved, interventions need to

come from third parties that have traditionally been isolated from the dispute. The end of

the Cold War provides an excellent opportunity for both states and international

organizations to help quell ongoing civil conflicts. During the Cold War, states within

either the US or Soviet sphere of influence were likely to receive interventions because

either of these parties viewed the warring state's internal security as strategically

important to the world power's overall security regime (Yoon 1997: 597). The decline of

this rivalry should allow these states to look beyond their traditional spheres of influence

to affect global stability.

Another promising source of unexpected interveners comes from international

organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization (NATO). The end of the Cold War led to a more supportive approach in

US and Soviet policies towards multilateral peacemaking efforts. This has allowed the

UN to intervene in situations where either the United States or the Soviet Union would

have exercised their veto power in the Security Council in earlier years (Weiss, Forsythe

and Coate 1994: 53-65; Vertzberger 1998; Betts 2001: 285).[108] The decline in the Cold

War rivalry has also allowed NATO to reinvent itself.[109] The original purpose of this

organization was to deter a Soviet military attack in Western Europe and to defend

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[108] This change has increasingly put the UN under pressure to respond to large-scale humanitarian crises, which has led to a large increase in interventions from the UN during the post cold war period (Heraclides 1990; Kohut and Toth 1994; Regan 2000). For example, in DeRouen and Sobek's (2004: 310) data, the UN intervened in 27 percent of civil wars prior to 1989, and 73 percent of civil wars after the Cold War ended (these data were derived from Doyle and Sambanis, 2000).

[109] See Wallander (2000: 717-723) for an excellent discussion of the evolution of NATO following the end of the Cold War.

Europe if deterrence failed. In 1990, the London Declaration claimed that the Soviet

Union was no longer an adversary, which allowed NATO to focus on more diverse

threats to regional stability. Support of the UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) in the

former Yugoslavia in 1994 and 1995 marked the organization's first direct military

involvement in a civil conflict. This mission brought a quick end to the fighting, and led

to the Dayton Agreement in November 1995. Based on its past goals and military action,

NATO's involvement in this conflict would have been nearly impossible to predict in the

pre-war phase. According to my theory, it is precisely these types of interventions that

are likely to upset the balance of power to lead to a resolution of the conflict.

Finally, these results show that the failure to get involved in a dispute may be just

as important as an intervention. When an international actor signals support for the

overthrow of the government, it should realize that its failure to act once the war begins

will have devastating consequences for the opposition. For example, in 1991 the United

States called on the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam Hussein. By doing this, the United

States became largely responsible for the onset of rebellion. Its failure to support the

opposition movements led to the murder of thousands. Therefore, if cheap signals are

sent haphazardly, with no real intent to support the opposition once a war begins, they

can result in dreadful consequences. I return to this example in Chapter 7.

Table 5.1. Example of Measure #1 (hypothetical values)

Phase	Major Variation			Minor variation		
	Signal	Change[a]	Measure 1[b]	Signal	Change[a]	Measure 1[b]
Pre-war, t-1	-4	-	-	-4	-	-
Onset, t	+2	6	6	-3	1	1
Intra-war, t+1	+2	6	3	-4	0	0
Intra-war, t+2	+3	7	2.3	-3	1	.33
Intra-war, t+3	+2	6	1.5	-5	1	.25
Intra-war, t+4	+5	9	1.8	-2	2	.4

[a] "Change" is calculated by subtracting the signal sent in the pre-war time period from the current signal, and then taking the absolute value of the difference.

[b] "Measure 1" is the same as "change", but allowed to decay by dividing by the year of the conflict.

External Actor's Pre-War Signal

Future aid for the opposition
(hostile pre-war signal)

Future aid for the government
(supportive pre-war signal)

Remain hostile
(*Expected intervention-
opposition*)

Do nothing
(*Opposition
unexpectedly weak*)

Become supportive
(*Opposition
unexpectedly weak*)

Remain supportive
(*Expected intervention-
government*)

Do nothing
(*Government
unexpectedly weak*)

Become hostile
(*Government
unexpectedly weak*)

Prediction: decreased duration

Prediction: decreased duration

Figure 5.1. Expectations for Civil War Duration

Note: See Table A4 in the Appendix for the distribution of civil wars in each of the six categories listed in the bottom row.

Table 5.2. Examples of Measure #2
(hypothetical values following a hostile pre-war signal)

Phase	Time	Intervention for…	*Expected interv-gov*	*Expected interv-opp*	*Gov weaker than exp.*	*Opp weaker than exp.*
Pre-war	t-1	-	-	-	-	-
Onset	t	none	0	0	0	1
			(0)	(0)	(0)	(1)
Intra-war	t+1	gov	0	0	0	1
			(0)	(0)	(0)	(0.5)
Intra-war	t+2	gov	0	0	0	1
			(0)	(0)	(0)	(0.3)
Intra-war	t+3	gov	0	0	0	1
			(0)	(0)	(0)	(0.25)
Intra-war	t+4	none	0	0	0	1
			(0)	(0)	(0)	(0.2)
Intra-war	t+5	Opp	0	1	0	0
			(0)	(0.2)	(0)	(0)
Intra-war	t+6	Opp	0	1	0	0
			(0)	(0.16)	(0)	(0)
Intra-war	t+7	none	0	0	0	1
			(0)	(0)	(0)	(0.13)
termination	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Values in parentheses include the decay function, which is calculated by dividing the intervention by the year of the war (time t = 1st year).

Table 5.3. Duration of Civil Wars and External Interventions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Old intervention	0.571**					
	(0.285)					
Signal deviation		0.149				
		(0.354)				
Expected intervention -all states			0.111			
			(0.907)			
Expected intervention -government				0.432		
				(1.204)		
Expected intervention -opposition				-1.346		
				(1.005)		
Surprise intervention -all states					-1.752***	
					(0.274)	
Government unexpect. weak						-1.600***
						(0.309)
Opposition unexpect. weak						-2.236***
						(0.229)
Cheap signals	-0.086**	-0.082**	-0.082**	-0.081**	-0.045**	-0.077***
	(0.037)	(0.041)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.022)	(0.025)
Fight for the government	-0.404	-0.306	-0.310	-0.353	-0.245*	-0.220
	(0.274)	(0.271)	(0.269)	(0.264)	(0.145)	(0.145)
Death/year	-0.133	-0.068	-0.071	-0.084	-0.041	-0.063
	(0.505)	(0.634)	(0.639)	(0.614)	(0.211)	(0.207)
Democracy	0.136	0.046	0.043	0.031	0.103	0.099
	(0.351)	(0.367)	(0.367)	(0.361)	(0.166)	(0.165)
Population	0.297	0.324	0.304	0.290	0.196	0.190
	(0.253)	(0.279)	(0.272)	(0.260)	(0.131)	(0.132)
Wealth	0.664**	0.637**	0.649**	0.711**	0.423**	0.450***
	(0.309)	(0.319)	(0.318)	(0.320)	(0.174)	(0.168)
Ethnic fract.	0.074	-0.074	-0.044	-0.017	0.008	0.038
	(0.398)	(0.433)	(0.442)	(0.428)	(0.225)	(0.217)
Religious fract.	-0.520	-0.243	-0.277	-0.299	-0.308	-0.290
	(0.610)	(0.629)	(0.623)	(0.609)	(0.347)	(0.341)
% Mountainous	0.035	-0.005	-0.003	-0.009	0.006	-0.009
	(0.085)	(0.090)	(0.088)	(0.087)	(0.048)	(0.046)
ρ	1.175	1.132	1.123	1.290	2.115	2.122
se(ρ)	.081	.072	.074	.067	.374	.375
Wars	83	83	83	83	83	83
Wars ended	76	76	76	76	76	76
Observations	482	482	482	482	482	482
Wald χ^2	23.17**	13.61	14.26	16.17	166.71***	242.9***

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%; ***
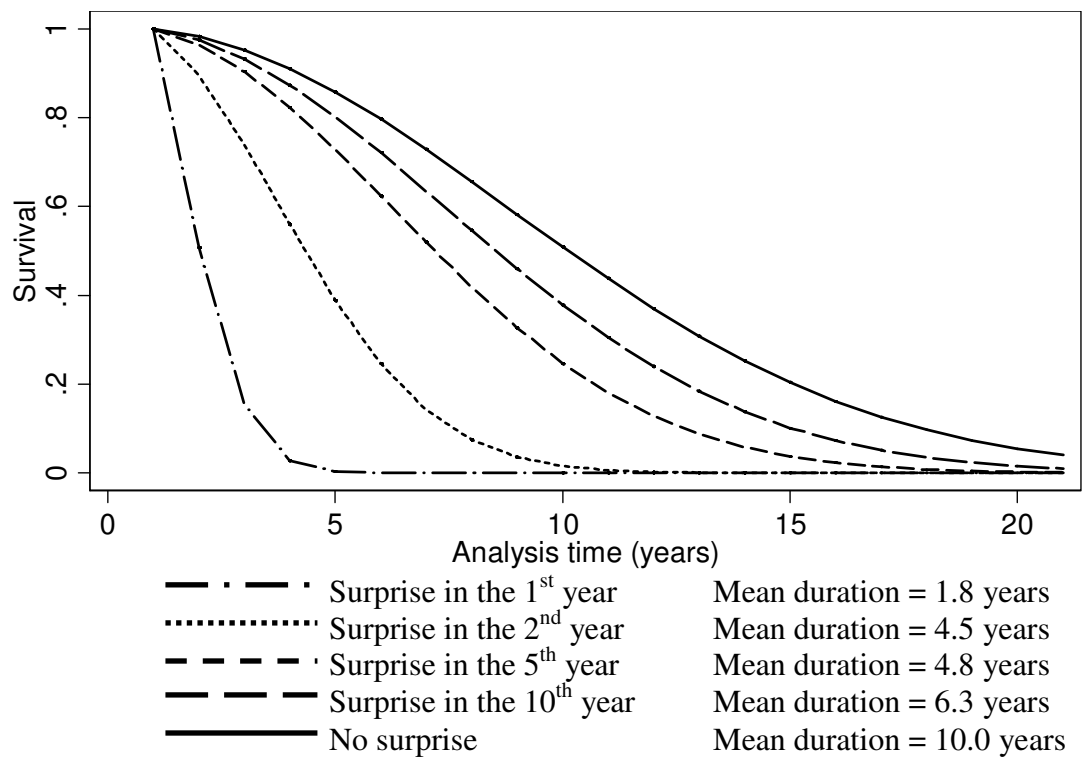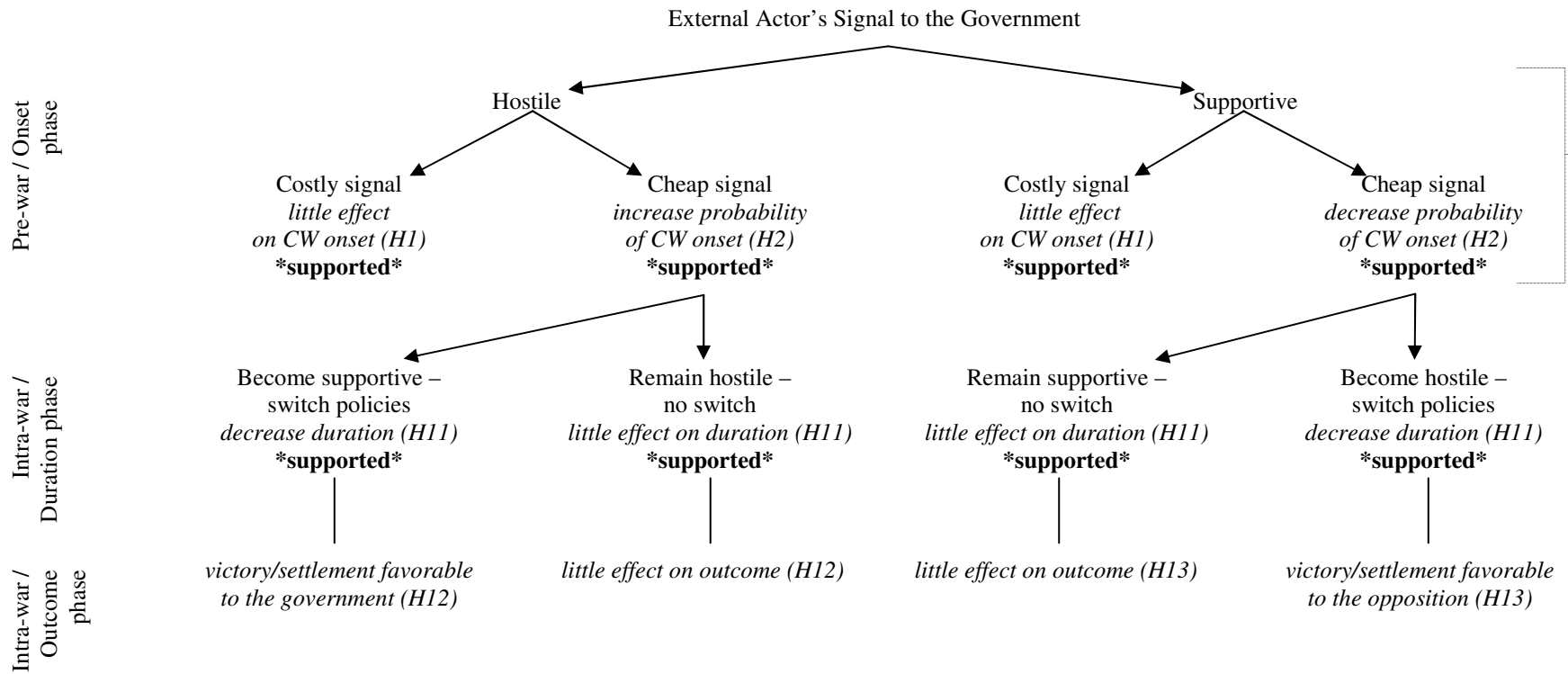significant at .1% (one tailed).

Figure 5.2. The Duration of Civil Wars with Unexpected Interventions

External Actor's Signal to the Government

Pre-war / Onset phase

Hostile

Supportive

Costly signal
*little effect
on CW onset (H1)*
supported

Cheap signal
*increase probability
of CW onset (H2)*
supported

Costly signal
*little effect
on CW onset (H1)*
supported

Cheap signal
*decrease probability
of CW onset (H2)*
supported

Intra-war / Duration phase

Become supportive –
switch policies
decrease duration (H11)
supported

Remain hostile –
no switch
little effect on duration (H11)
supported

Remain supportive –
no switch
little effect on duration (H11)
supported

Become hostile –
switch policies
decrease duration (H11)
supported

Intra-war / Outcome phase

*victory/settlement favorable
to the government (H12)*

little effect on outcome (H12)

little effect on outcome (H13)

*victory/settlement favorable
to the opposition (H13)*

Secondary hypotheses:
H3: Noisy signals should *increase* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***
H4: Negative shocks should *increase* the probability of civil war onset ***supported***
H5: Positive shocks should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset * **opposite supported***
H6: Democracy × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***
H7: Regime type similarities × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***
H8: Sender's military power × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***supported***
H9: Consistency of past signals × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***supported***
H10: Cultural similarities × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***

Figure 5.3. Summary of the Argument and Hypotheses with Findings for Onset and Duration Empirical Chapters

CHAPTER 6

INTERSTATE SIGNALS AND CIVIL WAR OUTCOMES:

EMPIRICAL TESTS

> I cannot believe that war is the best solution. No one won the last war and no one will win the next.
>
> Eleanor Roosevelt

6.1 Introduction and Review of Outcome Theory

This chapter examines the final phase of civil conflicts studied in this project: civil war outcome. As I explained in the second chapter, the outcome of civil wars is closely linked to expectations developed prior to the onset of rebellion (the pre-war phase).[110] According to bargaining theory, one side must miscalculate its likelihood of a future victory in the pre-war phase for the war to begin. Cheap signals from third parties in the pre-war phase may increase the likelihood of this miscalculation by introducing uncertainty. The third chapter provided empirical evidence in support of this theory. Once the war begins, the side that made the miscalculation prior to the onset of conflict should adjust its bargaining position as information about third party support is learned during a conflict. The extent of this miscalculation is determined by the level of (in)consistency between the external actor's pre-war signal and its actions once the war begins. The previous chapter provided evidence suggesting that the level of (in)consistency is integral to our understanding about how third parties will affect the duration of civil wars. Consistent interventions (those where the third party follows through with its pre-war signal) were found to have little effect on the duration of

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[110] See Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2 for a map linking these theoretical expectations.

fighting because they are endogenous to the competing actor's pre-war bargaining positions. In contrast, inconsistent interventions were found to greatly reduce the time fighting as the unexpectedly weakened party is either defeated, or quickly seeks to negotiate a settlement to avoid annihilation. Thus, to this point this project has clearly linked the first two phases of civil war, onset and duration, both theoretically and empirically. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the next link in the chain: civil war outcome.[111]

Like duration, the consistency between pre-war signals and actions during a civil war has important consequences for the outcome of a civil conflict. This is because both the government and opposition develop expectations for future interventions in their pre-war bargaining positions. When a third party acts in contrast to its pre-war signal by either aiding the other side or failing to intervene on one side's behalf, we should expect a poor outcome for the side that finds itself unexpectedly weak. When interventions during the war are consistent with pre-war signals, they should have a much smaller effect on the outcome of the fighting because both sides should have already developed at least a minimal expectation for these interventions. While updating will occur no matter what a third party does once the war begins, we should expect inconsistent policies to have the greatest impact on the outcome of the conflict. This is because more information is revealed when a third party switches sides. When a third party is consistent, the intrastate combatants might still be uncertain as to the extent of the intervention in terms of the duration and extent of the support. When a third party

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[111] For this project, civil wars can end in one of four ways: (1) victory or favorable settlement for the government; (2) victory or favorable settlement for the opposition; (3) balanced agreement; and (4) ongoing.

switches sides, this uncertainty is eliminated because the party that expected support now knows that it will receive nothing from the third party. [112] These expectations are presented in the bottom row of Figure 6.1. [113]

The right half of Figure 6.1 shows the expectations following a pre-war signal that was supportive of the government. When the third party remains consistent by helping the government once a war begins, little information is revealed because both the opposition and government should have developed some expectation for this intervention based on the pre-war signal. In contrast, if the external actor signals support for the government in the pre-war phase, and then either supports the opposition or fails to intervene on behalf of the government once the war begins, the move should have a dramatic impact on the outcome of the conflict. We should expect either an outright victory for the opposition or a negotiated settlement in their favor in this case because the government finds itself unexpectedly weak. When Kabila's AFDL rebel group launched an attack on Mobutu's government in Zaire (1996-97), for example, Mobutu expected support from the West, who had worked to put him in power and sustain his regimes for decades (McNulty 1999). When the war began, however, Mobutu found only weak external support coming mostly from rebel groups in neighboring countries. The failure of the West to support Mobutu led to a decisive victory by Kabila's forces. This expectation leads to the first outcome hypothesis:

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[112] The theory supporting the two outcome hypotheses is reviewed very briefly here. See Section 2.3 in Chapter 2 for a more thorough explanation.

[113] See Table A4 in the Appendix for the distribution of civil wars in each of the six categories listed in the bottom row of Figure 6.1.

H12:   Victory by the opposition or a settlement favorable to the opposition is a positive

function of the magnitude of switch from a pro-government signal.

The left half of Figure 6.1 shows instances in which the external actor signals

support for the opposition in the pre-war phase. Again, consistent interventions on behalf

of the opposition should have little impact on the outcome of the civil war in this scenario

because they were signaled prior to the onset of rebellion. In contrast, the outcome

should be affected greatly as the third party deviates from the pre-war signal by either

failing to act, or by supporting the government. Following the first Gulf War, for

example, the United States sent a series of cheap signals in support of the Shiite and

Kurdish opposition groups, who sought to end decades of repression under the Hussein

regime. Interpreting these signals as imminent support for their cause, the Shiite and

Kurds rebelled against the government. The Shiite opposition group was quickly

defeated when the United States failed to remain consistent with its pre-war signal,

providing very little support for either opposition group (Gurr and Harff 2004). In

contrast, the Kurds gained significant freedom and autonomy when Western powers came

to their aid.[114] This expectation leads to the final hypothesis:

H13:   Victory by the government or a settlement favorable to the government is a

positive function of the magnitude of switch from a pro-opposition signal.

The link between the onset, duration and outcome of civil wars is clear.

Competing intrastate actors develop expectations for interventions before the war begins

(pre-war phase). When one side finds that its pre-war expectations were wrong, the war

should be short (duration phase) because the weakened side is either defeated or makes

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[114] I provide an in-depth look at this case in the following chapter.

drastic concessions to settle the war to avoid annihilation (outcome phase). Despite this clear link, scholars continue to study the effect of external actors on the duration and outcome of civil conflicts in isolation of the previous phases, while rarely considering the role of external actors in the onset phase.[115] For example, Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom (1999), Balch-Linsay and Enterline (2000), Elbadawi and Sambanis (2001), and Regan (2002) examine the effect of external actors on the duration of civil wars in isolation of expectations developed in the pre-war phase. Similarly, Mason and Fett (1996), Mason, Fett and Weingarten (1999) and Walter (2002) study the outcome of civil wars with little consideration of either the pre-war conditions or the dynamic relationship between duration and outcome (Enterline and Balch-Lindsay 2002).

These approaches may lead to flawed conclusions, especially when we consider conflict in a bargaining context. As explained in the second chapter, recent theoretical work from scholars in the interstate war literature explains that war is simply a costly part of the same bargaining process that began in the pre-war phase (Smith 1998a; Wagner 2000; Filson and Werner 2002; Kim 2002; Slantchev 2002, 2003; Smith and Stam 2003).[116] If this is true, empirical tests must be constructed in a way that links each phase of the conflict. In the previous chapter, I linked the pre-war phase and the duration phase by examining how deviations from signals sent in the pre-war phase affect the war's duration. I extend this same approach to study the outcome of civil wars by examining the probabilities of civil war outcomes as "competing risks."

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[115] Notable exceptions for onset include Moore (1995), Sambanis (2001), Cetinyan (2002), Gleditsch and Beardsley (2004), Gleditsch (2005), and Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006). Exceptions for duration and outcome include Enterline and Balch-Lindsay (2002), Regan (2002), DeRouen and Sobek (2004), and Brandt et al. (2005).

[116] See Powell (2004) for an excellent review of the recent developments in the bargaining literature.

6.2 Methods, Cases and Variables

Competing risk models are a subset of hazard models that allow us to examine

how a conflict ends (Allison 1984; Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). These models

are especially useful when we expect our explanatory variables to predict different

outcomes. In the example of the Shiite rebellion mentioned earlier, we should expect

either a government victory or a settlement in favor of the government because the

rebellion was not support by the United States. This expectation is tested with a

competing risk model by recoding the dichotomous war termination variable used in the

previous chapter into the various types of mutually exclusive civil war outcomes

(explained below). Separate hazards are then estimated for each outcome, while all other

outcomes are censored. This allows us to estimate the effects of the independent

variables on the different types of civil war termination. I remain consistent with the

previous chapter in using a Weibull model to estimate the competing risk duration model,

which allows me to estimate the shape of the baseline hazard.[117]

An alternative approach to the competing risk model would be to use a

multinomial logit model to predict civil war outcomes (e.g., DeRouen and Sobek 2004).

Unfortunately, this approach is not suited well for considering how changes during the

war affect the war's termination because each civil war is coded as a single case. This is

problematic because its usage would ignore recent theoretical developments in the

bargaining literature, which expect the combatants to update their positions based on the

revelation of new information. This would be particularly troublesome for my theory

because I make predictions based on the deviations from the pre-war signal and

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[117] Results run using the Cox model produce substantively identical results to those presented in this chapter.

interventions once the war begins, which are likely not to have a proportional effect as the war continues. For instance, the failure of an external actor to support an opposition group during the war after signaling support in the pre-war phase should matter most early in the conflict as the fledgling rebel army seeks to match the established government forces. This theory can only be tested by allowing the independent variable for interventions to change as the war progresses. In other words, time varying covariates are absolutely necessary for an adequate test of the theory. The multinomial approach is also problematic for the control variables because the researcher is forced to choose a value of each variable for a single year of the war. Most researchers choose the first year of the conflict, which may provide flawed results if the war lasts many years (e.g., Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000; Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom 2004; DeRouen and Sobek 2004). The GDP per capita value in Sudan at the start of the civil war in 1983, for instance, may have very little to do with how the war ended twenty-three years later. Therefore, I use a competing risk hazard model to provide a test of the interrelated and dynamic causal mechanisms identified by my theory.[118]

6.2.1 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is split into four categories: (1) victory or negotiated settlement favorable to the government; (2) victory or negotiated settlement favorable to the opposition; (3) balanced agreement; and (4) ongoing civil wars. This categorization improves upon previous work by incorporating Doyle and Sambanis' (2000) "truce and

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[118] The expected problems with the multinomial logit model are confirmed in Table A5 in the Appendix. In this table, I replicate the results from Models 3 and 6 from Table 6.2 (presented in the following section). As we can see, there are major inconsistencies between the results using the competing risk approach versus the multinomial logit approach. Of the primary independent variables, only "Government unexpectedly weak" has the expected result (increases the likelihood of victory or favorable settlement for the opposition).

treaty" categories into the "government victory" and "opposition victory" categories coded by Correlates of War (Sarkees 2000). They are combined based on which side exacted more concessions relative to the pre-war state. This is an important advancement of the outcome codes used by past researchers, who implicitly assume that agreements ending in a truce or treaty are balanced. As I suggested in Chapter 2, agreements are likely to come about when one side makes drastic concessions to avoid annihilation. These agreements are more likely to resemble decisive victories than truly balanced settlements. For example, the opposition exacted major concessions from the government in the negotiations ending the most recent Sudanese civil war (1983—2005). These concessions include religious freedom for the South and a power-sharing agreement placing former rebel leader John Garang as vice president (Crilly 2005). This agreement stands in stark contrast to the situation preceding the civil war, in which the Islamic government forced Islamic law (Shar'ia) across the entire country and severely repressed the non-Islamic population in the south (Woodward 1990; Langewiesche 1994). Instead of following past researchers by coding this outcome as an "agreement," I combine it and similar cases with "opposition victory." The result is a new category: "opposition victory or agreements favoring the opposition." Similarly, government victories are combined with settlements favoring the government, resulting in the second outcome: "government victories or agreements favoring the opposition." Ultimately, these new categories provide a tighter linkage between my theoretical expectations and the empirical tests than would less nuanced categories used by previous researchers because they capture both decisive victories and favorable negotiated settlements (e.g.,

Pillar 1983; Mason and Fett 1996; Mason, Weingarten and Fett 1999; DeRouen and

Sobek 2004).[119]

The remaining outcomes include "balanced settlements" and "ongoing civil

wars." Both categories are censored in the forthcoming analyses. Though analyzing

balanced settlements may provide interesting conclusions, I do not examine them because

only five civil wars end in balanced settlements, so there is not enough variation between

these variables and the primary independent variables to make meaningful conclusions.

This is not a problem for this project because my theory says very little about balanced

settlements. Table 6.1 presents the descriptive statistics for each type of civil war

outcome.

As we can see, there are roughly twice as many outcomes in favor of the

government than those in favor of the opposition. This is exactly what we should expect

based on the argument I presented to explain the onset of civil war. We recall that four

factors (or "causal mechanisms" as they were referred to in Chapter 2) should make the

onset of civil war more likely.[120] Three of these mechanisms suggest that opposition

groups are likely to begin a rebellion at a disadvantage. Causal mechanism #1 implies

that opposition groups are less informed than the government about the true likelihood of

future external support; causal mechanism #3 suggests that leaders will intentionally

attempt to overestimate their likelihood of victory in order to rally the population behind

their cause; and causal mechanism #4 suggests that being in the domain of losses makes

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[119] Ultimately, the results are very similar whether using my revised coding scheme or the original COW codes, which are presented in Table A6 in the Appendix. The main difference for the primary independent variables is that "Government unexpectedly weak" drops from significance in Models 5 and 6 using the original codes (P = .129 in Model 5 and .360 in Model 6).

[120] See Section 2.2 in Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion of these causal mechanisms.

opposition groups more likely to overestimate their likelihood of winning a civil war.[121]

Given that I found strong support for these mechanisms in Chapter 3, it is unsurprising

that the opposition often ends up on the losing side of civil wars.

6.2.2 Independent Variables

The primary independent variables and control variables are identical to those

presented in the previous chapter. These are meant to capture the level of consistency

between the pre-war signal and interventions during the war.[122] *Expected intervention –*

government is coded 1 if the pre-war signal was positive, and the third party remained

consistent by aiding the government during the war. Similarly, *Expected intervention –*

opposition is coded 1 if the pre-war signal was negative, and the third party remained

consistent by aiding the opposition. Because these variables capture interventions that

were signaled with pre-war signals, neither should provide substantial leverage in

explaining the outcome of civil wars. This is not to say that these interventions should

have been entirely expected, which would contradict the theoretical expectations

developed in Chapter 2 and the empirical findings presented in Chapter 3. Because they

are cheap, it is likely that one side miscalculated the true intent of the signal, so updating

will occur once the war begins and the third party acts. The argument is simply that less

updating will be needed when the intervention is consistent with the pre-war signal

because there should be less of a shock when a third party remains consistent.

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[121] Causal mechanism #2 predicts that the onset of civil war will become more likely if the government is too slow to respond with concessions following a cheap hostile signal, even if both the government and the opposition have identical levels of information. This causal mechanism is excluded above because it does not imply that opposition groups will be more likely to overestimate their likelihood of winning a civil war.

[122] See Section 3.2 in Chapter 3 for an explanation of how the pre-war signals are operationalized. See Section 5.2 in Chapter 5 for an explanation of how intra-war interventions are operationalized. The primary independent variables are also listed in Figure 6.1.

The second pair of independent variables captures switches in policies. These are coded 1 under three conditions: (1) if the third party signaled support for either the government or the opposition, and then chose to support neither side once fighting began; (2) if the third party signaled support, and then chose to aid the opposite side; and (3) if the third party sent a neutral signal, and then chose to aid one side or the other. *Government unexpectedly weak* is coded 1 when the government expected support based on the pre-war signal or expected no intervention based on a neutral pre-war signal, and then either received no support or was forced to fight the opposition with unexpected third party support after the war began. As shown in the right half of Figure 6.1, a civil war is likely to end in either an opposition victory or a settlement favoring the opposition when the government finds itself unexpectedly weak (H12). Similarly, *opposition unexpectedly weak* is coded 1 when the opposition expected support or expected no intervention, and then either received no support or was forced to fight the government with unexpected third party support. As shown in the left half of Figure 6.1, we should expect the civil war to end in either government victory or a settlement favoring the government when the opposition finds itself unexpectedly weak (H13). As a final step, each of these variables is allowed to decay over time by dividing each dummy variable by the year of the conflict. The measures are allowed to decay because as time goes on, the two sides become more capable and entrenched in their conflict. Thus, these policies should matter most during the initial stages of the conflict. Control variables include *cheap signals*, *fight for the government*, *deaths per year*, *democracy*, *population*, *wealth*, *ethnic fractionalization*, *religious fractionalization*, and *mountainous terrain*.[123] The unit

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[123] See Section 5.2.b in Chapter 5 for theoretical justification for including these variables in the model and an explanation of how these variables are operationalized.

of analysis is conflict-year for all conflicts coded by the Correlates of War (COW)

database form 1948 to 1993, which includes 83 civil wars comprising 482 conflict

years.[124]

6.3 Data Analysis

The results presented in Tables 6.2 are for an accelerated time failure metric,

which identifies the effect of each independent variable on the expected time to each civil

war outcome when controlling for all other variables in the model. Positive values

indicate that the variable increases the time to each outcome, while negative values

indicate a shortened time to each outcome.

We begin by looking at the models predicting the time to government victory

(Models 1-3). According to my theory (left half of Figure 6.1), we should expect the

outcome of the conflict to be more favorable to the government as deviations from a

hostile pre-war signal become more supportive of the government (H13). This

expectation receives strong support. The coefficients for *Expected intervention –*

opposition in Models 1 and 3 are insignificant (P=.678 and .407, respectively), whereas

the coefficients for failure to act and switches for the government (*Opposition*

unexpectedly weak) are negative and significant in Models 2 and 3. Based on these

finding, we can expect the time to government victory to be about 80% quicker when the

opposition finds itself unexpectedly weak.[125] These findings provide generalizable

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[124] See Section 5.2 in Chapter 5 for a more complete explanation of the COW database, including comparisons with other datasets used to study civil war.

[125] The marginal effect of each variable can be calculated by exponentiating each coefficient, which tells us the percentage longer (or shorter) to each outcome. For example, the presence of an unexpectedly weak

support for the Iraqi example presented earlier, in which the Shiite rebellion was quickly

defeated when the United States failed to provide the rebels with support. For policy-

makers, this finding highlights the danger in using cheap signals as a way to punish

another state. If these acts are interpreted by the opposition as signals for imminent

support, they are likely to lead to a rebellion. If these rebellions go unsupported by

external actors, they are likely to have disastrous consequences for those seeking a

violent overthrow of the government.

The results testing hypothesis 12 also receive strong support. As indicated in the

right half of Figure 6.1, we should expect deviations for a supportive pre-war signal to

benefit the opposition, whereas support for the government that is consistent with the pre-

war signal should have a minimal effect. *Expected intervention – government* is

insignificant in Models 4 and 6 (P=.156 and .253, respectively), which supports the

argument that the opposition incorporates at least some likelihood for these interventions

into their pre-war calculations. In contrast, we see that quick victory for the opposition is

significantly more likely when the government finds itself weaker than expected in

Models 5 and 6. In fact, we should expect the time to opposition victory to be between

65% (Model 6) to 68% (Model 5) quicker based on these results.

The successful Bengali secessionist movement (1971) provides a clear example of

this finding. According to Bartkus (1999), future support from India played little role in

the Bengali decision to secede from Pakistan, especially given the positive cheap signals

received by Pakistan in the years prior to the onset of the rebellion. Early in the

rebellion, the Pakistani army easily handled the weak resistance. However, India

opposition (*Opp weak*) in Model 2 should decrease the time to government victory by $1-e^{.1.589}$ or about 80%.

switched positions by providing unexpected support for the secessionist movement after a flood of refugees spilled into their country, effectively starting a proxy war with direct military involvement on behalf of the insurgents. This led to a quick and decisive victory for the Bengali movement, which allowed them to establish an independent state within less than a year of fighting.

We now move to an analysis of the control variables in Table 6.2. Here, we see that the competing risk models provide more refined results than those presented in the previous chapter. The variable for *cheap signals* captures signals sent to the government, which range from supportive (positive values) to hostile (negative values). As these signals become more supportive of the government, quick government victories become more likely (Models 1-3). The same measure has an insignificant effect on the time to rebel victory (Models 4-6). These findings support the conclusions from the previous chapter, which suggested that government victories are more likely when the government receives external help, regardless of whether or not that help is consistent with pre-war signals. This is because rebel groups often have much weaker capabilities, especially in the early stages of conflict (e.g., Mason and Fett 1996; Mason, Weingarten and Fett 1999; Regan 2002). According to these data, signaling support for the government once a civil war begins increases the government's ability to quickly defeat the rebellion.

The variable meant to capture the intensity of the war, *Deaths/year*, significantly lengthens the time to government victory, while decreasing the time to opposition victory. Using a competing risk model, Enterline and Balch-Lindsay (2003) found a similar variable to decrease the duration to military victory. However, they do not separate military victories based on who won the war (the government or the opposition),

which likely explains why they found different results than those I show here. Using a multinomial logit model, other researchers found that similar war costs measures had an insignificant effect on the probability of settlement (Mason and Fett 1996), and either the probability of government victory or the probability of opposition victory (Mason, Weingarten and Fett 1999). Likewise, I found this variable was found to be insignificant in the standard duration model used in the previous chapter. By using a competing risk model, however, we find much more sensible results. It is reasonable to consider deaths per year to be a proxy for the strength of the opposition, given that only strong and viable opposition movements will be able to produce and withstand a high death count. Governments should have a difficult time overcoming a strong opposition group, which explains their increased time to victory. Meanwhile, the opposition should be able to quickly defeat a government or obtain a favorable settlement when it can mount attacks with high death thresholds.

The variable for wealth also produces an interesting finding with a positive coefficient for time to government victory in Models 1 to 3. The selection effect mentioned in the previous chapter helps explain why time to government victory should be longer when rebellions are started in wealthy countries. If we consider wealth to be a proxy for state strength, as suggested by Fearon and Laitin (2003), then it is likely that only highly resolved opposition groups will rebel against a powerful government. This resolve should make the opposition less likely to quit fighting, which should lead to civil wars with longer durations. Because the government is stronger, however, it is likely to ultimately win the conflict. This finding is consistent with past researchers, who find that

government strength increases the likelihood of government victory (Mason, Weingarten and Fett 1999; DeRouen and Sobek 2004).

All other control variables are insignificant in the model, which is largely unsurprising given the inconsistent findings for these variables presented in past research (Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000; Regan 2002; Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom 2004; Fearon 2004). The variables for *democracy* and *population* are found to have an insignificant effect on the time to either government victory or rebel victory. DeRouen and Sobek (2004) present similar findings for these outcomes. The variables for *religious fractionalization*, *ethnic fractionalization*, and *mountainous terrain* are also insignificant in my models. This contrasts somewhat from DeRouen and Sobek's (2004) results, which find that ethnic fractionalization decreases the probability of opposition victory, and has an insignificant effect on government victory. They also find that mountainous terrain decreases the probability of government victory, while increasing the probability of opposition victory. However, their use of a multinomial logit model rather than a competing risk model ignores temporal dynamics, which likely influence their results. More importantly, the research cited above fails to consider each phase of the civil war process—the pre-war conditions, the onset of rebellion, the duration of fighting, and the termination of hostilities—in light of what happened in past phases.

Finally, the estimate of the duration dependence parameter (ρ) is greater than 1 regardless of the civil war outcome. This finding is unsurprising given that negotiated settlements are combined with decisive victories, which we might expect to be more likely early on in the war. In fact, the ρ value drops below 1 (and remains significant)

when biased negotiated settlements are excluded from the analyses. This suggests that

the positive duration dependence reported in Table 6.2 is being driven by some level of

war weariness among the combatants, which should make them more likely to accept

even unfavorable negotiated settlements after the war has persisted for many years. This

conclusion is supported by Mason and Fett (1996), who find that longer civil wars

increase the probability of settlements.

6.4 Summary, Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this chapter was to examine how the actions (or inaction) of

external actors affect the outcomes of civil wars. To this point, researchers have paid

little attention to the role of third parties in influencing the likelihood that a civil war ends

in government victory, rebel victory, or negotiated settlements. Instead, most research

has focused on intrastate factors, such as bureaucratic strength or the size of the

government's forces to explain civil war outcomes (e.g., DeRouen and Sobek 2004).

This project has made two major contributions to this literature. First, in Chapter

2, Section 2.3, I drew on bargaining theory and rational expectations to provide a more

refined argument to explain how external actors should affect how civil wars end. Where

past researchers have viewed the outcome of civil wars in isolation of the preceding

phases, I argued that the role of third parties in affecting the outcome of civil conflicts is

inextricably linked to the signals sent before the war began (onset phase), and the actions

taken by the third parties during the war (duration phase). Interventions by external

actors should have little effect on the outcome of conflicts when they are consistent with

their pre-war signals because they should have already been incorporated into the

combatants' pre-war calculations. In contrast, third party actions during a civil war that are inconsistent with pre-war signals should have a dramatic effect on how the conflict ends because they unexpectedly alter the intrastate balance of power. The unexpectedly weakened party should either be defeated by its opponent, or provide massive concessions to its opponent in a negotiated settlement to avoid annihilation.

The second contribution to the outcome literature was the focus of this chapter. I remain consistent with the duration analyses presented in the previous chapter by constructing the independent variables to capture the level of consistency between the external actors' pre-war signals and their actions during the war. In this chapter, I build upon the previous analyses by using a competing risk model to examine how civil wars end. This approach allows for an explicit test of the dynamic and interconnected relationship between the onset, duration and outcome of civil conflicts.

The empirical analyses suggest overall support for my theory. As expected, interventions during the conflict that are consistent with pre-war signals have little effect on the outcome of civil conflicts. For unexpected interventions, I find that the time to victory or settlements favorable to the opposition is significantly shorter when third parties signal pre-war support for the government, and then either remain neutral or aid the opposition once the war begins. This finding provides strong support for hypothesis 12, which expects a quick victory or favorable negotiated settlement for the opposition in these cases. Similarly, I find that time to victory or a settlement favoring the government is significantly shorter when the opposition finds itself unexpectedly weak, which provides strong support for hypothesis 13. The findings from the previous two chapters are updated with the findings from this chapter in Figure 6.2.

This chapter had provided several interesting conclusions and implications for both the research and policy communities. For the former group, the analyses provide robust evidence supporting the relationship between all three phases of civil conflict: onset, duration and outcome. Examining these phases in isolation of the previous phases is likely to lead to faulty theories and inconsistent conclusions. My analyses suggest that the effect of third parties on the outcome of civil wars must be viewed in the context of their moves in previous phases. Theoretical expectations for all other variables should be reconsidered in the same light. For instance, DeRouen and Sobek (2004) draw on past arguments from Goodwin and Skocpol (1989), Schock (1996), Gurr (2000) and Li (2002) to suggest that variables capturing "state capacity" (e.g., bureaucratic effectiveness, democracy and military strength) should make it easier for a government to prevent civil wars and quell those that do begin. The empirical evidence presented in their multinomial logit model suggests a far more perplexing relationship. For example, they find that the size of the government's army increases the likelihood of government victory, opposition victory, truce and treaty. These findings make little sense when the outcomes of civil wars are viewed in isolation of previous phases. When we consider that both the government and opposition should have developed expectations for state capacity in the pre-war phases, however, it is unsurprising that they present these findings. Only very strong and highly resolved opposition groups would choose to rebel against a strong government, which would explain why strong government armies are no more apt to win civil conflicts than are the opposition groups. A reconstructed theory considering rational expectations might suggest that only strong and highly resolved opposition movements will choose to turn violent against a strong state, which would

explain why they are no more or less likely to lose the war. Empirically, measures used to test this revised theory should capture unexpected changes in the size of the government's forces as the war progresses.

To be fair, researchers have made great gains recently in examining the duration and outcome of civil conflicts as inter-related and dynamic processes. For instance, DeRouen and Sobek (2004) move beyond the multinomial logit model to examine the outcome of civil conflicts in a competing risk framework. Working papers from Enterline and Balch-Lindsay (2002) and Brandt et al. (2005) urge researchers to continue examining the duration and outcome of civil conflicts in this light. While I certainly agree with this advancement, I would urge researchers to push the theoretical expectations and empirical analyses one step further by considering the pre-war environment that led to civil wars. If actors develop expectations during peaceful periods for how a number of factors might progress once a war begins, then these pre-war factors must be present in developing theoretical expectations and empirical tests.

For policy-makers, the analyses presented in this chapter further confirm and extend those presented in the previous chapter. The seemingly innocuous statements (i.e., "cheap signals") made during peaceful periods have important implications for whether or not a civil war begins. If a civil war does break out, the decision whether or not to follow through with these signals will have a significant impact on how the war ends. One consequence of sending cheap hostile signals may be the quick defeat of rebel groups that expected and needed external support to effectively challenge the government. I provide a detailed analysis of this argument in the following chapter by focusing on the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions that followed the first Gulf War (1991). A

less intuitive consequence may be the quick defeat of a government when a long-standing ally signals that it can no longer count on the third party's imminent support. Carter's seemingly innocuous condemnation of Somoza's regime ultimately led to the removal of a government that was strongly supportive of the United States, which was replaced by a Leftist government with close ties to the Soviet Union (Nolan 1984; Scott 1996). The possibility of either consequence should lead policy-makers to consider not only the likelihood of civil war outbreak, but the potential outcomes of their decisions if a civil war were to begin.
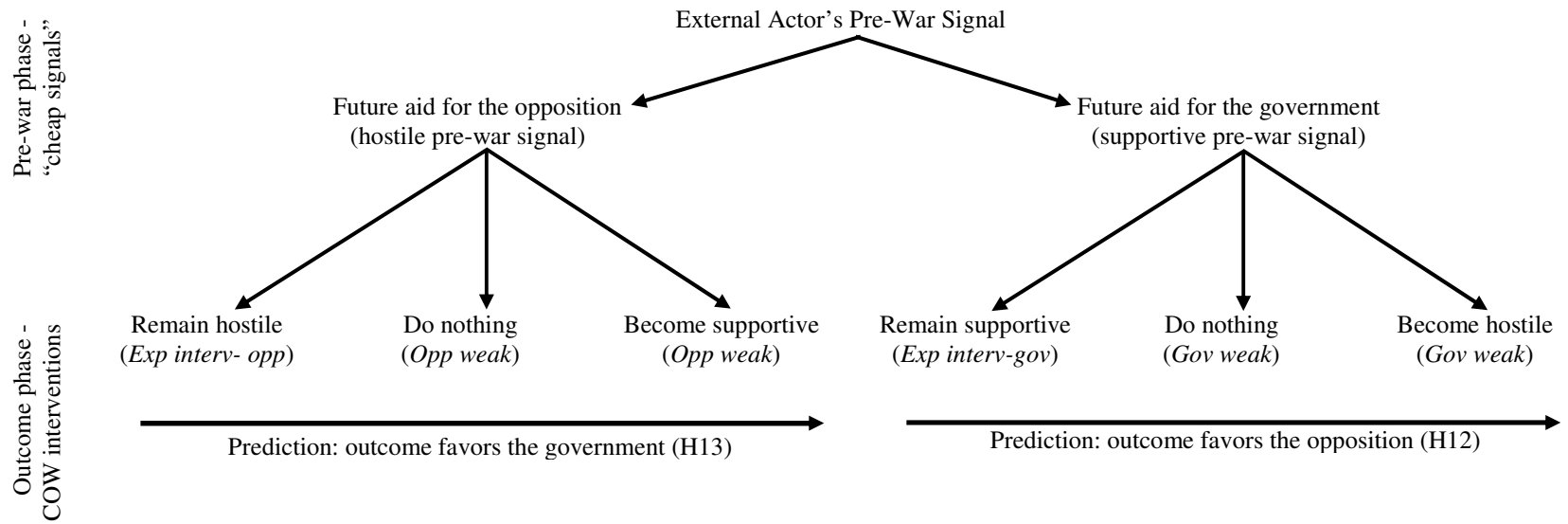
External Actor's Pre-War Signal

Future aid for the opposition
(hostile pre-war signal)

Future aid for the government
(supportive pre-war signal)

Remain hostile
(*Exp interv- opp*)

Do nothing
(*Opp weak*)

Become supportive
(*Opp weak*)

Remain supportive
(*Exp interv-gov*)

Do nothing
(*Gov weak*)

Become hostile
(*Gov weak*)

Prediction: outcome favors the government (H13)

Prediction: outcome favors the opposition (H12)

Figure 6.1. Expectations for Civil War Outcomes

Note: See Table A4 in the Appendix for the distribution of civil wars in each of the six categories listed in the bottom row.
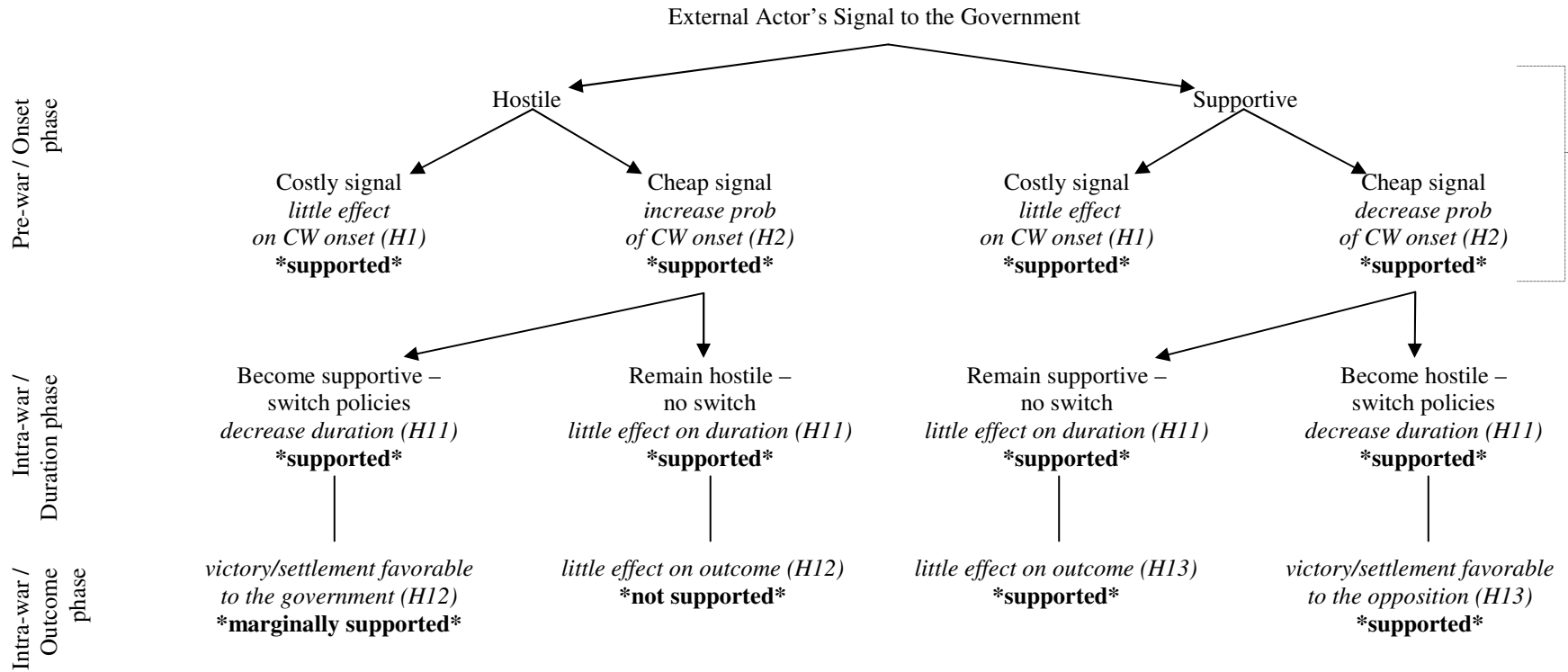
Table 6.1. Type and Frequency of Civil War Outcomes

Outcome	Observations
Government victory or agreement favoring the government	46
Opposition victory or agreement favoring the opposition	25
Balanced agreement	5
Ongoing civil wars	7
Total wars	83

Table 6.2. External Interventions and the Outcomes of Civil Wars

	Time to government victory or favorable settlement			Time to opposition victory or favorable settlement		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Expected intervention -opposition	-0.682 (1.642)		-1.162 (1.401)			
Opposition unexpect. weak		-1.589*** (0.428)	-1.605*** (0.426)			
Expected intervention -government				3.354 (2.363)		2.330 (2.039)
Government unexpect. weak					-1.138* (0.618)	-1.064* (0.655)
Cheap signals	-0.120* (0.060)	-0.159** (0.054)	-0.159** (0.054)	-0.004 (0.054)	0.034 (0.041)	0.034 (0.040)
Fight for the government	-0.378 (0.355)	-0.297 (0.335)	-0.314 (0.326)	-0.531 (0.490)	-0.432 (0.361)	-0.482 (0.388)
Deaths/year	2.896* (1.345)	2.811* (1.335)	2.799* (1.332)	-0.667*** (0.144)	-0.467** (0.176)	-0.477** (0.173)
Democracy	-0.268 (0.446)	-0.230 (0.406)	-0.239 (0.404)	1.097 (0.948)	0.867 (0.793)	0.915 (0.808)
Population	0.056 (0.290)	0.064 (0.280)	0.056 (0.276)	0.863 (0.666)	0.742 (0.510)	0.730 (0.512)
Wealth	1.200** (0.425)	1.181** (0.398)	1.200*** (0.393)	0.219 (0.641)	0.115 (0.524)	0.216 (0.524)
Ethnic fract.	0.048 (0.523)	0.148 (0.474)	0.143 (0.470)	-0.341 (0.865)	-0.395 (0.599)	-0.274 (0.651)
Religious fract.	-0.968 (0.820)	-0.783 (0.744)	-0.781 (0.735)	0.757 (1.041)	0.602 (0.703)	0.538 (0.753)
% Mountainous	-0.038 (0.143)	-0.076 (0.123)	-0.081 (0.124)	-0.036 (0.172)	-0.007 (0.120)	-0.007 (0.132)
Constant	-.793 (2.02)	-.710 (1.90)	-.703 (1.88)	-1.00 (3.80)	-.119 (2.93)	-.426 (3.00)
Observations	482	482	482	482	482	482
ρ	1.121 (.093)	1.223 (.113)	1.231 (.116)	1.167 (.176)	1.488 (.402)	1.463 (.390)
se(ρ)	(.093)	(.113)	(.116)	(.176)	(.402)	(.390)
Wars	83	83	83	83	83	83
Wars ended	46	46	46	25	25	25
Observations	482	482	482	482	482	482
Wald χ^2	30.42***	48.63***	50.64***	46.37***	77.56***	91.21***

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%; *** significant at .1% (one tailed).

External Actor's Signal to the Government

Pre-war / Onset phase

Hostile

Supportive

Costly signal
*little effect
on CW onset (H1)*
supported

Cheap signal
*increase prob
of CW onset (H2)*
supported

Costly signal
*little effect
on CW onset (H1)*
supported

Cheap signal
*decrease prob
of CW onset (H2)*
supported

Intra-war / Duration phase

Become supportive –
switch policies
decrease duration (H11)
supported

Remain hostile –
no switch
little effect on duration (H11)
supported

Remain supportive –
no switch
little effect on duration (H11)
supported

Become hostile –
switch policies
decrease duration (H11)
supported

Intra-war / Outcome phase

*victory/settlement favorable
to the government (H12)*
marginally supported

little effect on outcome (H12)
not supported

little effect on outcome (H13)
supported

*victory/settlement favorable
to the opposition (H13)*
supported

Secondary hypotheses:
H3: Noisy signals should *increase* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***
H4: Negative shocks should *increase* the probability of civil war onset ***supported***
H5: Positive shocks should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset *** opposite supported***
H6: Democracy × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***
H7: Regime type similarities × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***
H8: Sender's military power × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***supported***
H9: Consistency of past signals × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***supported***
H10: Cultural similarities × pre-war signal (interaction) should *decrease* the probability of civil war onset ***not supported***

Figure 6.2. Summary of the Argument and Hypotheses with Findings for Onset, Duration and Outcome Empirical Chapters

CHAPTER 7

INTERSTATE SIGNALS, CIVIL WAR DURATION

AND OUTCOME IN IRAQ

President Bush called for the people to revolt to overthrow the Saddam
dictatorship…Since we started, there were no signs of support. On the contrary,
there have been some statements of compromise with the dictatorship.
Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan,
March 31, 1991

7.1 Introduction

Discrimination and repression have been staples of government policy in Iraq

since it gained independence in 1932. The Shiite and Kurdish communities have taken

the brunt of this policy, especially since the Sunni-dominated Ba'ath party seized power

in 1968.[126] The repression intensified when Saddam Hussein became president in

1979.[127] His early efforts against the Kurds included execution of political prisoners,

Arabization of Kurdish areas, and the use of poisonous gas against civilians (Vulpe 1991;

Minorities at Risk 2007a). For the Shiites, Hussein's repression began with mass

expulsions of up to 250 thousand civilians in the 1980s, and was followed by a military

campaign resulting in 10,000 casualties upon the termination of Iraq's war with Iran

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[126] The Kurds are an ethno-linguistic (non-Arab speaking Muslims) group numbering around 15 million
who have lived in the Mesopotamian region for millennia. Without a home country to call home, small
numbers of Kurds are spread throughout Armenia, Syria and Lebanon. The majority of Kurds live in Iraq,
Iran, and Turkey – an area often referred to as "Kurdistan" (Leroux 1991). Kurds represent 15-20 percent
of Iraq's population. The Muslim faith split between the Sunnis and Shiites in the 7th century. Today,
Shiites represent around 10 percent of the world's Muslim population. They are the majority population in
two states, including Iraq (60-65 percent) and Iran (89 percent) (Momen 1985; Fuller and Francke 2001;
CIA Factbook 2007).

[127] Though only about 2 percent of the Iraqi population attained full membership in the Ba'ath party, the
party controlled every function of society prior to the US-led invasion of 2003. Behavior deemed disloyal
to the party resulted in expulsion, imprisonment, or execution (Leroux 1991).

(1980-88) (Faleh 'Abd al-Jabbar 1994: 98; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett 2001: 300; Minorities at Risk 2007b). Though both groups launched a handful of skirmishes against Hussein over the years, they never managed to meaningfully disrupt his grip on power.

The ineffectual Shiite and Kurdish opposition movements suddenly became very powerful early in 1991. After his invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Hussein's army was beaten badly by a US-led coalition force. By the time major operations ended on February 27, 1991, some 100 thousand of Iraqi's military and civilian population had lost their lives, 2.5 million were displaced, and over $170 billion in property was damaged or destroyed (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett 2001: 288). Immediately following Iraqi's defeat, the population rose up in defiance of Saddam Hussein.[128] Across the country, retreating soldiers and masses of civilians attacked Ba'ath government buildings and gathered in the streets in protest of Hussein's rule (Reuters 1991c; Abdullah 2003: 194-5; Mitchell 2003: 70). The revolts began in the Sunni towns of Abu'l-Khasib and Subair in late February, and quickly spread to other southern cities such as Basra, Najaf, and Karbala in early March. Similar uprising spread throughout the Kurdish areas of the north in towns such as Halabja, Zakho, and Kirkuk. Attracting an estimated 75 percent of the Iraqi population, these rebellions where phenomenally successful early on, and represented the greatest threat to the Iraqi ruling regime since the 1930s (Tyler 1991a; Bengio 1993: 53; Faleh 'Abd al-Jabbar 1994: 97, 106). At the peak of the uprising, the government had lost control of 14 of the 18 Iraqi provinces. Only Baghdad and a small

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[128] The major opposition groups included the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in the north, and the al-Da'wa, Munazzamat al-'Amal al-Islami (Islamic Action Organization), and the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iran (SAIRI) in the south (Bengio 1993: 54).

area north of the capital remained in the government's control (Abdullah 2003: 195; Mitchell 2003: 70).

The insurgencies could not have looked differently one month later. Though sporadic skirmishes between the government and rebel forces continued for several years, Hussein had brutally crushed the Shiite rebellion by mid-March, 1991. Major fighting with Kurds ended in April (Reuters 1991d; Abdullah 2003: 194-6; Faleh 'Abd al-Jabbar 1994: 97).[129] While both the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions were quickly ended, we see a remarkable contrast between the two groups in the months and years following their failed revolts. By the end of April, Hussein had granted amnesty to all Kurds, and opposition leaders had negotiated an agreement with Hussein that gave the Kurds considerable autonomy. In June, all Iraqi forces were forced to leave the Kurdish region (Minorities at Risk 2007a). Within a year of the rebellion, the Kurds had gained autonomy and freedom exceeding the other 70 percent of the population in Iraq (Sachs 1992). They controlled a large area of northern Iraq, held their first ever elections, and operated a free press, schools, and a police force (Dyer 1992; Hepburn 1992; Human Rights Watch 1992; Minorities at Risk 2007a).

The outcome of the revolts could not have been more different in the south. Instead of autonomy, the rebellions led to massive persecution of the Shiites. Government troops killed some 100 Shiite clerics, including four senior ayatollahs, and

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[129] Hussein's brutality in defeating the rebellions has been well-documented. In the south, his forces carried out indiscriminate mass executions, fired rocket-propelled grenades at civilians, dropped mustard gas and napalm on civilians, and destroyed Shiite shrines and mosques in Najf and Kerbala. By some estimates, as many as 300 thousand people were killed in these attacks (Donovan 1991; Field and Tucker 1991; Hotton 1991; Reuters 1991f; Toronto Star 1991c; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett 2001: 289). Fearing chemical attacks, more than 3 million Kurds in the north quickly fled to the mountain towards Iran and Turkey, where thousands of civilians lost their lives from lack of food and sub-zero temperatures (Toronto Star 1991a). The government "extermination" of the Kurdish civilians killed an estimated 182 thousand civilians (Boston Globe 1991).

destroyed Shiite institutions (Human Rights Watch 1992). Civilians were driven from

their homelands and denied much-needed food and medical aid. Government troops

systematically destroyed their villages and planted mines to assure they would not return

(Lewis 1992; Reuters 1992a; Mitchell 2003: 73; Minorities at Risk 2007b). In what was

both a humanitarian and ecological disaster, Hussein poisoned and drained the once-

plentiful marshlands in southern Iraq, and then spent the next three years systematically

exterminating the hundreds of thousands Shiites who were trapped there by government

forces (P. Lewis 1991c; Reuters 1991a, 1991c, 1991g; Independent 1992; Mashek 1992;

United Press International 1992; Associated Press 1993; Hedges 1993; Minorities at Risk

2007b). By the time the marshes were completely drained in April 1994, Hussein had

displaced 400 thousand people and caused irreparable harm to one of the world's oldest

cultures (Lewis 1992; Hedges 1993; Abdullah 2003: 196; Galbraith 2003). Massive

repression against the Shiites continued for the next decade (Minorities at Risk 2007b).

While the Kurds enjoyed significant autonomy following their revolt, the persecution of

Shiites continued until the US-led invasion in 2003.

The Shiite and Kurdish rebellions in Iraq present several interesting questions for

researchers. Why did the rebellions, which had incredible momentum early on, fall so

quickly to the government forces? Why did the northern rebellion end with

unprecedented autonomy for the Kurds, while the southern rebellion had disastrous

consequences for the Shiites? In this chapter, I seek to answer these questions by

considering my primary theoretical argument for the duration and outcome of civil

conflicts.   I consider how US actions during the civil war correspond with their pre-war

signals, and how the (in)consistency between pre-war signals and intra-war support

affected the duration and outcomes of the rebellions in Iraq.

7.2 Bush's Hostile Pre-War Signals

Throughout this project, I have argued that the onset, duration, and outcome of

civil conflicts are inter-related processes.[130] To understand how external actors affected

the duration and outcome of the revolts in Iraq, we must first examine their role prior to

the onset of the rebellions. Hussein received two hostile signals in the months prior to

the rebellion. As I mentioned above, the first was a devastating defeat at the hands of the

US-led coalition from January to February, 1991, who responded to Iraqi's invasion of

Kuwait in August 1990. Though the theory presented in Chapter 2 and the empirical tests

presented in Chapter 3 suggest that this costly signal should have had no effect on the

likelihood of civil war onset in Iraq, I am clearly wrong in this case. According to my

theory, we should expect Hussein to make concessions to the opposition in reaction to the

US-led invasion in order to prevent a rebellion. However, we see little evidence of this.

The most likely explanation for why the costly hostile signals had a significant impact on

the onset of rebellion in Iraq is that Iraqi's war with the coalition ended up being a quick

and devastating rout. The coalition forces began the assault from the air, running over

116 thousand sorties over the course of a month that destroyed almost the entire

infrastructure and killed thousands of Iraqi soldiers. Hussein's army put up little fight

one month later when the ground forces advanced through Kuwait (Farouk-Sluglett and

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[130] See Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2 for a graphical presentation of this argument.

Sluglett 2001: 283; Abdullah 2003: 194).[131] The coalition's quick victory was a shock to

Hussein, who still did not believe that the US would attack as late as January 15, 2001

(Baram 1993: 28).[132] When retreating soldiers and civilians challenged Iraq's

government immediately following the coalition's rout, therefore, Hussein was

completely unprepared to offer concessions to appease the opposition. This contrasts

greatly with Saddam's efforts to appeal to the opposition during the drawn-out war with

Iran (1980-88), where he deftly bought off leaders and inspired patriotism to assuage the

opposition (Faleh 'Abd al-Jabbar 1994: 98-99).

The second set of signals that contributed to civil war in Iraq aligns much more

closely to my theory. These included a series of cheap hostile signals sent from the Bush

administration that demonized Hussein and called for his overthrow (Financial Post

1991a, 1991b; Kranish 1991b; Wicker 1991). For example, in the middle of a rousing

speech on February 15, 1991 (less than two weeks before the rebellions broke out)

President Bush claimed, "There's another way for the bloodshed to stop, and this is for

the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands and force

Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside" (Sinai 1991a; Galbraith 2003). Meanwhile,

coalition planes dropped leaflets in Iraq, declaring "O you soldier and civilian, young

man and old, O you women and men, let's fill the streets and alleys and bring down

Saddam Hussein and his aids" (Pollack 2002). Radio signals from Voice of Free Iraq, a

Saudi-based station with probable ties to the CIA, called for the "formation of the unified

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[131] As many as 60 thousand Iraqi soldiers surrendered to the coalition troops without putting up a fight (Abdullah 2003: 194).

[132] Hussein's miscalculations were many. The United States' previous failure in Vietnam, ambiguous signals from France and the Soviet Union, anti-war demonstrations in the US and United Kingdom, and positive signals of support from Arab states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, led him to believe that he would not be attacked. If attacked, he was certain of victory (Baram 1993: 28).

field command of all sides of the patriotic opposition movement…to swoop in on the

regime of the Saddam Hussein gang and destroy it" (Economist 1991a; Krauss 1991;

Mathews et al. 1991).

As predicted by my theory, these signals had a significant impact in encouraging

the people to rebel. Shiite Ayatollah Abul Quasem Khoi made this clear in late March,

imploring Bush to aid his rebellion, "Mr. President, the people of Iraq were urged to rise

up against their leader. They have done so…A tragedy is in the making. Would you as

the leader of the allied forces let it happen?" (Hotton 1991). Kurdish leader Jalal

Talabani made a similar claim: "President Bush called for the people to revolt to

overthrow the Saddam dictatorship…Since we started, there were no signs of support.

On the contrary, there have been some statements of compromise with the dictatorship"

(Jerusalem Post 1991b). A handful of other sources also claimed that Bush's signals had

a decisive impact on the people's decision to rebel.[133]

While it is impossible to tell in this case whether the costly hostile signals (the

coalition invasion of Iraq) or the cheap hostile signals (the statements, leaflets, and radio

signals from the Bush administration), contributed most to the onset of the civil war in

Iraq, it is clear that the cheap hostile signals had the effect predicted by the first part of

my theory.[134] Thus, we can now move to examine how the (in)consistency of Bush's

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[133] These accusations came from politicians, such as Democratic Representative Melvin Levine and Senator Al Gore, and from Republicans, such as Senator Alfonse D'Amato (Drinkard 1991b; Feinsilber 1991). Claims from the media came from a variety of sources, including Bilski, Wallace and Phillips (1991) and A. Lewis (1991). Academic sources include Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett (2001: 289) and Abdullah (2003: 194). President Bush and his closest aids seem to be the only ones who denied this claim. According to Bush, "I don't think the Shiites in the south, those who are unhappy with Saddam in Baghdad, or the Kurds in the north ever felt that the United States would come to their assistance to overthrow this man" (Feinsilber 1991; Goshko 1991).

[134] There is some evidence to suggest that the cheap hostile signals had the stronger effect, at least for the Kurdish uprising. In a meeting with a US State Department official, one Kurdish leader claimed, "The

policies during the war with these pre-war signals affected the duration and outcome of the rebellion in Iraq.

7.3 Theoretical Expectations

We recall from Chapter 2 that third party actions during a civil conflict should have an important impact on the duration and outcome of civil conflicts.[135] When the actions during the war are consistent with pre-war signals, they should have little effect on the war's duration and outcome because they reveal little information. In contrast, the duration of the conflict should be much shorter when actions during the war differ from pre-war signals. For the outcome, the side that was abandoned after expecting external support should either be defeated by the unexpectedly stronger opponent, or it should quickly reduce its demands to avoid annihilation. I found strong empirical support for this argument in Chapter 5 (duration) and Chapter 6 (outcome) by examining all civil conflicts from 1949 to 1999.

We should expect to see two processes in order to find continued support for my theory in Iraq. First, knowing that (1) the pre-war signals were hostile, and (2) the rebellions were short-lived, we should expect to find a major inconsistency between Bush's pre-war signals and his actions once the rebellions began. Bush's policies should either switch in favor of Hussein's government, or, at the very least, we should see a clear policy of non-intervention. Second, this inconsistency must be clearly linked to the

Kurdish leaders were cautious until President Bush called on the people and army to rise up" (Krauss 1991). Assad Khailany, the president of the Kurdish National Congress in North America, and exiled Kurdish leader Firiad Hiwaizi claimed that the radio broadcasts had a decisive impact. According to Khailany, the uprising in northern Iraq "was not a plan by the Kurdish leadership. It was the response to the many calls from that specific radio" (Kranish 1991f; Leeman 1991).

[135] See Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5 for a graphical representation of these expectations.

brevity of fighting, and the disparate outcomes for the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions. As we will see in the following pages, my theory finds strong support for both the duration and outcomes of the rebellions in Iraq. I begin by explaining how Bush's policies affected the duration of the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions, and then move to an explanation of the disparate outcomes of the uprisings.

7.4 Abandonment and Civil War Duration

Following its clear pre-war signals in support of rebellion, the Bush administration quickly changed tunes once the rebellions began. At best, Bush's policies can be described as confused; at worst, the administration's actions were complicit with Hussein's efforts to defeat the rebels. We can clearly delineate three phases of the Bush administration's post-war policies in Iraq, which are presented in Table 7.1. The first two phases had the greatest impact on the duration of both the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions, while the third helps explain the disparate outcomes for the two rebellions. In the first phase, Bush waffled greatly during the first weeks of the rebellion. His policies seemed confused, and he chose to support neither the rebellion, nor Hussein's government. In the second phase, the administration decided that keeping Hussein in office was preferable to other possible outcomes, so the US took an indirect role in supporting the government forces. As predicted by my theory, the inconsistencies in Bush's stance had a dramatic impact on shortening the duration of the rebellions. The third phase of Bush's policies begins after both rebellions had been very nearly terminated by Hussein's army. Pressure from a variety of sources forced Bush to support the Kurds, while his abandonment of the Shiites continued. This final phase, which will be covered in the following section, led to

unprecedented autonomy for the Kurdish population, and massive persecution of the

Shiites.

We begin with the first phase of Bush's policies towards the rebellions, which

lasted from late February to mid March, 1991. During this period, the administration

claimed that the revolts were an "internal matter," and took a somewhat confused and

contradictory policy towards the rebellions (Bierman and Mackenzie 1991; P. Lewis

1991b; McCabe 1991; Thomas et al. 1991; Xinhua 1991c). On one hand, even though

the United States clearly had legal standing to support the rebellions, Bush repeatedly

indicated that he did not intend to support the rebels.[136] As State Department spokesman

Richard Boucher stated, "It's neither our intent nor our purpose to try to choose the future

leadership of Iraq" (Kranish 1991a).[137] On the other hand, even though the policy of

non-intervention was stated repeatedly, several other statements from Bush and White

House officials provided an unclear picture of what the opposition could expect from the

United States (Rosenthal 1991). For example, Bush continued to condemn Hussein's

rule, claiming that it would be "impossible to have normalized relations with Iraq while

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[136] Legal standing to continue attacking Iraqi troops following the Gulf War cease fire (February 27, 1991) comes from a variety of sources. First, Iraqi soldiers fired on US troops in separate incidences on March 1 and 2, which violated the agreement (Facts on File 1991a). Second, the hundreds of thousands of refugees flowing across the Turkish and Iranian borders represented a threat to international peace and security, which legally justifies intervention under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Reuters - Associated Press 1991b). Finally, the US had been successful in steering the UN in its preferred direction in the past, so it would likely have been able to garner UN support if it had wanted to help the rebels overthrow Hussein (Ungar 1991).

[137] Refusal to aid the opposition extended well beyond statements. For example, when Kurdish opposition leaders, including Jalal Talabani, visited Washington in early March, they were granted visits from neither the State Department nor the White House (Korn 1991; Vulpe 1991). The refusal to meet with opposition leaders continued throughout the rebellions, even though several Western states, including France and the United Kingdom, met with exiled opposition leaders during this time period (Friedman 1991).

Saddam Hussein is there" (Barber and Marlowe 1991).[138] Both the Shiite and Kurdish

rebellions made great gains against Hussein's army during this short period of waffling

and uncertainty.

The second phase of Bush's post-war policy, which lasted from late March to mid

April, 1991, had the most severe consequences for the duration of the rebellions. During

this period, Hussein looked for signals from the United States to see what techniques

would be allowed in his efforts to maintain power (Boston Globe 1991). While signals

during the first three weeks of the rebellion were difficult to decipher, the policy stance

from the White House became quite clear. The Bush administration publicly

acknowledged that it supported the continuation of the Iraqi government, and

purposefully allowed Hussein to use brutal means to crush the opposition (Caragata 1991;

Cohen 1991; A. Lewis 1991). In a series of policy statements, Bush laid out two simple

rules for Hussein. First, no chemical weapons were to be used against the opposition

(Economist 1991b; Sandler 1991; Schmitt 1991a; Watson et al. 1991). Second, allied

forces were not to be threatened (Apple 1991). In early April, Bush's support for

Hussein became even more entrenched with the UN resolution for the permanent

ceasefire of the Gulf War. Though this resolution was harsh in many ways, it offered two

carrots to Hussein: (1) it made no call for a change in government, and (2) it gave him a

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[138] The waffling and contradictions coming from the Bush White House did not go unnoticed by the opposition. As Kamal Faud, the principal spokesman for the Kurdistan Front, noted, "The Americans want to close their eyes…The US policy is to weaken the regime of Saddam Hussein and also weaken the Iraqi opposition" (Robinson and Yemma 1991). Even administration officials admitted that the White House followed a confused policy. One unnamed official from the administration noted, "There clearly is a bit of ambiguity in our position…We've talked a lot about getting Saddam out, but the clear priority is to get the troops home. It seems to be a contradiction and if you look at our public statements, the Administration has not been very effective in explaining its position" (Tyler 1991a).

free hand to crush the insurgencies (P. Lewis 1991b; Todd 1991a).[139] As long as he

avoided using chemical weapons and threatening coalition troops, the Bush

administration gave Hussein tacit approval to defeat his opponents.[140] Based on his

spectacular record of past brutality, Hussein's reaction to Bush's policies were easy to

predict. He used the most violent means at his disposal to bring a quick end to the

rebellions.[141]

Above all, the most damaging of Bush's policies was his choice to allow Hussein

to wage war against the rebels through the air. From early March, Hussein was

prohibited from using aircraft as part of the temporary cease fire that ended the Gulf War

(Kranish 1991d; Wicker 1991). This policy changed as the rebellions intensified, and

Bush leaned towards a policy in favor of the Iraqi government.[142] Balancing his support

for Hussein's efforts to defeat the opposition with his need to ensure the safety of the

coalition forces, Bush changed policies and decided to allow Hussein the use of his

helicopters to crush the resistance. His fixed wing aircraft would remain grounded

(Kranish 1991b, 1991g). Though this policy clearly allowed Hussein to violate the terms

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[139] This offer came in spite of growing allegations that Hussein was using chemical weapons against the insurgents (Todd 1991b; Tyler 1991b)

[140] Several opposition leaders noted Bush's newfound allegiance to Hussein, including Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani (see quote at the beginning of this chapter) (Jerusalem Post 1991b). Many other accounts suggest that the insurgents knew they needed US support to defeat Hussein, and they felt stunned and betrayed by Bush's actions (Barber and Marlowe 1991; Drinkard 1991b; Facts on File 1991b; Robinson 1991b).

[141] Morteza Sarmadi, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, condemned the change in US policies and highlighted Hussein's brutality: "In the beginning [of the rebellions], the suppression was more careful." After the US made it clear that it would not aid the rebels, Hussein began using "the most violent methods, including illegal weapons such as napalm and incendiary bombs, to massacre the people and intimidate the rebellion." (Miller 1991a).

[142] In what is both a clear statement of this policy and of the administration's support for Hussein, on March 18, 1991, US Secretary of State James Baker acknowledged that grounding Iraq's aircraft had the "collateral effect" of hindering Hussein's ability to crush the insurgencies (Associated Press-Reuters 1991).

of the cease fire, it was the only option to both support Hussein and provide safety for

coalition troops from the quick-strike airplanes (Facts on File 1991b; P. Lewis 1991b).

When they initially drew up the cease fire, US officials predicted that Hussein's use of

helicopters would have a decisive impact on the duration of fighting (Kranish 1991b).[143]

They were not to be disappointed. With the use of his helicopters, Hussein's gained a

decisive advantage over the opposition, which allowed him to quickly bring a halt to the

Shiite uprising in the south and the Kurdish rebellion in the north (Bengio 1993: 60;

Boston Globe 1991; Feinsilber 1991; Jerusalem Post 1991b; Toronto Star 1991b).[144]

The Bush administration presented a handful of explanations for its support of

Hussein during the first two phases of its policies. First, the administration's policies

were geared towards a "best case scenario," or "wishful thinking" as one government

analyst put it (Sinai 1991b). Many administration officials thought that Hussein would

lose power eventually, even if he defeated the rebellion (Associated Press-Reuters 1991c;

Bilski, Wallace and Phillips 1991). They did not want a quick, large scale rebellion;

rather, they preferred to wait for either a military coup or an assassination, which would

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[143] In early March, US Brigadere General Richard Neal, the deputy director of American military operations, claimed that "With his remaining military power, particularly with his helicopters, [Hussein] can still quiet a town like that" (snapping his fingers) (Schmitt 1991b). Rebel leaders had the same prediction. Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani noted that he "knew he could defeat Saddam Hussein's war-weakened forces in the rugged hills if the U.S. denied the dictator the use of the skies…But that was when George Bush got cold feet" (Feinsilber 1991).

[144] Critics of Bush's policy on Iraq helicopters came from many sources, including two presidential hopefuls. Senator Al Gore noted, "We cannot by our silence or inaction condone this genocide." He claimed that Bush had made a "terribly wrong decision" in allowing Hussein the use of his helicopters (Kranish 1991b). Senator John Kerry claimed that Bush's decision was a "backhanded intervention in support of Saddam Hussein" (Kranish 1991e). Bush's efforts to help Hussein did not go unnoticed by the opposition. Many claimed that there was a conspiracy between Bush and Hussein to defeat the rebellions (Horwitz 1991). In their defense, Bush administration officials claimed that they could do nothing about Hussein's use of the helicopters, while Schwarzkopf claimed that he was "suckered" into permitting Hussein to use his helicopters (Facts on File 1991c). Many officials disagreed (Toronto Star 1991b). As one senior officer noted, "All I'm saying is that the idea that taking on a bunch of Iraqi helicopters posed some kind of big military challenge is bullshit, and whoever says that is playing politics" (Mathews et al. 1991).

change the leadership in Iraq, but would leave a pro-Western dictator in power to provide

stability (Hotton 1991; Kranish 1991a; McCabe 1991; Rosenthal 1991; Tyler 1991a).

Second, as the rebellions intensified, the administration feared the eventual partition of

Iraq into three groups, or the "Lebonization" of Iraq as many officials put it. Though the

opposition repeatedly claimed that they did not want to partition the country, Bush

decided that Hussein's single party rule was the best option to keep the country intact

(Associated Press 1991a; Boston Globe 1991; Friedman 1991; Ungar 1991). Third, Bush

faced strong external pressure to abandon the insurgents from several states in the region,

who feared a strengthening of the Kurdish and Shiite communities. Sunni-dominated

states, such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, feared that a strengthened Shiite population in

Iraq might destabilize the region and promote Iranian influence, while Turkey feared the

creation of an independent Kurdistan (Apple 1991; Associated Press-Reuters 1991b;

Bilski, Wallace and Phillips 1991; Caragata 1991; Friedman 1991; Korn 1991; Kranish

1991a; McCabe 1991; Robinson 1991b; Todd 1991a; Toronto Star 1991d; Ungar 1991;

Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett 2001: 290).

Though the logic behind the first two phases of Bush's post-war policies have

been attacked by many, the effect on the duration of the rebellions is clear. By urging the

people to overthrow their leader, and then refusing to assist the rebellions once they

began, he assured a quick termination of the fighting (Bengio 1993: 55; Faleh 'Abd al-

Jabbar 1994: 113; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett 2001: 289; Abdullah 2003: 194-6). This

is exactly what my theory would predict in this case. We now move to the third phase of

Bush's post war policies, which help explain the eventual outcome of the rebellions for

the Shiite and the Kurds.

7.5 Revised Policies and Disparate Outcomes

While the duration of both rebellions was short, lasting from one to two months, the eventual outcomes of the rebellions differed greatly. As I explained in the introduction of this chapter, the Kurds gained autonomy and freedom from Hussein's regime, while the Shiites faced massive persecution. According to my theory, we should be able to link these disparate outcomes with the level of (in)consistency of pre-war signals with intra-war support from external actors. More specifically, we should see a continuation of the abandonment policy for the Shiites, which would link the quick duration of their rebellion with their eventual crushing defeat at the hands of the victorious government forces. For the Kurds, we should see some change in Bush's policy in their favor, which would explain why they were able to gain significant concessions from Hussein. In this section, we see that each of these expectations is supported with a closer examination of the third phase in Bush's post-war policy. As predicted by my theory, this phase is defined by a marked increase in support for the Kurds, and continued abandonment for the Shiites. I begin by examining Bush's stance towards the Kurdish community, and then focus on the outcome for the Shiites.

7.5.1 Bush's Revised Policies towards the Kurds

We see the first signs of the third phase in Bush's foreign policy with the UN Security Council's approval of Resolution 688 in early April 1991, which condemned the Iraqi government's oppression of the Kurds. Coinciding with this, on April 5th Bush ordered the Air Force to begin dropping food, medicine and other supplies to the 3 million Kurdish refugees who had fled to the mountains to avoid Hussein's wrath (Toronto Star 1991a). This was followed by the establishment of United Kingdom-

proposed, and United Nations-administered, "safe zone" for the Kurds on April 11, which prohibited Hussein's use of any aircraft north of the 36th parallel (Barber et al. 1991; Abdullah 2003: 195). Along with this plan, the US introduced "Operation Provide Comfort" on April 12th, which provided food and shelter to more than 700 thousand Kurdish refugees (Gordon 1991; P. Lewis 1991a; Reuters-Associated Press 1991c; Minorities at Risk 2007a). Efforts to aid the Kurds became more forceful in late April with the introduction of US Marines into northern Iraq to enforce the Kurdish safe zone (Hepburn 1991; Kifner 1991; Minorities at Risk 2007a). At this time, Bush showed his resolve by offering long-term support for the Kurds. He claimed that US troops would stay in northern Iraq as long as necessary to protect the Kurds from the Iraqi government (Cornwell 1991). In June 1991, the US and its allies planned a 5 thousand person rapid-reaction team based in southeastern Turkey to assure the long-term safety of the Kurds. By July 1991, the United States and its allies were able to withdraw from Iraqi territory, leaving the Kurds safe from Hussein's forces (Reuters 1991b, 1992b; Xinhua 1991a). The United States continued to provide support to the Kurds throughout the decade by attacking Iraqi troops who had violated the 36th parallel on a number of occasions (Minorities at Risk 2007a).

We can identify three main reasons that Bush had a change of heart when it came to supporting the Kurds. First, the media provided detailed coverage of the Kurdish rebellion, their abandonment by the United States, and the plight of the Kurdish refugees (Mathews et al. 1991; Toronto Star 1991a; Hepburn 1992; Abdullah 2003: 194).[145]

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[145] Hepburn (1991) provides an excellent reflection of the media's role: "Kurds captured the hearts of television viewers around the world last year as they struggled bravely, frantically, through frozen mountain passes, up steep cliffs and across rushing rivers to safety in Turkey and Iran. Their abortive

Second, the media's coverage sparked outrage within the United States against Bush's policies from both political opponents and allies (Debusmann 1991; Kranish 1991d; Thomas and McDaniel 1991). For example, in early April, allied field commander General Norman Schwarzkopf criticized Bush for deciding against ousting Hussein from power, while conservative columnist William Safire claimed that Bush had a "loss of nerve and a sense of moral purpose" (Bierman and MacKenzie 1991). Third, many international actors pushed the US to support the rebels and end the plight of the Kurdish refugees (Goshko 1991; Bengio 1993: 62). In late March, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa noted his frustration: "The United States criticizes so many countries because they are not democratic, yet when democracy can now come naturally in Iraq, they are not supportive" (Miller 1991b). Turkey also pushed Bush to act against Hussein in order to slow the stream of refugees pouring into its country (Mathews et al. 1991). The strongest international pressure came from two of the United States' key allies, France and the United Kingdom, who originated several of the programs to help the Kurds that Bush came to support (Barber et al. 1991; Cornwell 1991; Economist 1991a; Krauss 1991; Reuters 1991b).[146]

Ultimately, the third phase in Bush's post-war policy was incredibly successful in the north. Iraqi troops were pushed out of the Kurdish area in late April 1991, which allowed the Kurds to safely return to their homes (Raum 1991; Simone 1992). In talks initiated by Hussein, the Kurds used the long-term support from the United States and its

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uprising, at first encouraged by the West, then later ignored, had collapsed. Saddam's armies, humiliated in Kuwait, were hunting them down, killing them by the thousands."

[146] Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom prior to John Major, played a key role in pushing the United Kingdom to act to help the Kurds. In early April, she sent a scathing letter to Major, claiming that "It is not a question of standing on legal niceties. The people need help and they need it now" (Toronto Star 1991a).

allies as leverage to obtain guarantees for freedom and autonomy (Cowell 1991b; P. Lewis 1991d; Williams 1991; Xinhua 1991b; Minorities at Risk 2007a). As predicted by my theory, Bush's change in policy readily explains why the Kurds were able to obtain a preferable settlement over Hussein. We now move to a discussion of how Bush's policies towards the Shiites in the south resulted in a much different outcome.

7.5.2 Continued Abandonment and Shiite Devastation

Like the Kurds in the north, the Shiites in southern Iraq responded to Bush's call to overthrow Hussein, and were then abandoned once they rose up. In fact, there seems to be no difference in Bush's policies towards these two groups during the first two phases of his post-war policy. However, unlike his approach towards the Kurds during the third phase, the Shiites received very little external support (Human Rights Watch 1992; Minorities at Risk 2007b). At the same time the United States was providing humanitarian relief and establishing the safe zone in the north in early April 1991, for example, it was pulling out of the southern marshlands that it had occupied during its attack on Iraq earlier in the year (Cowell 1991a; Faruqi 1991). Worse yet, US officials worked to downplay the plight of the Shiites, who were suffering as badly as the Kurds. For example, Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams first discounted the number of Shiites being persecuted, claiming that "This is a very marshy area…It's not the kind of terrain that could support large numbers of people." He then downplayed Hussein's assault on the people, describing Hussein's assault as "scattered incidents" and "skirmishes" (Faruqi 1991).

After allowing Hussein to pummel the Shiite dissidents and civilians for well over a year, the United States finally decided to provide protection by establishing a no-fly

zone south of the 32nd parallel in August 1992 (Minorities at Risk 2007b). However,

fearing further partitioning of Iraq, administration officials vehemently explained that this

plan was not supposed to provide the Shiites with the same support that they were

providing the Kurds (Curtius 1992). The key difference was that the zone south of the

32nd parallel would not be secured with ground troops. In essence, Hussein had free reign

to defeat the Shiites, as long as he did not attack from the air (Cowell 1991b; Smith 1991;

Facts on File 1992). As could be expected, Hussein responded to this plan by continuing

to drain the marshes, and by unleashing his ground artillery on the people he had trapped

(P. Lewis 1991c; Minorities at Risk 2007b). As one Shiite refugee explained, "We

thought that there was a future after the United Nations decision to prevent aircraft, but

there is no future until you prevent the heavy artillery also" (Smith 1991). Though the

outcome of Hussein's artillery use was obvious, Bush offered him little reason to do

otherwise. When asked about what the US and its allies might do if Hussein used ground

forces against the Shiites in August 1992, Bush responded that Washington would be

"extraordinarily concerned," but that "we just have to wait and see what further action

might be taken" (Inter Press Service 1992a).[147] Ultimately, it was Bush's refusal to

reinforce the no-fly zone with ground support that assured the destruction of the

Shiites.[148]

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[147] The abandonment reached beyond the United States. When the UN negotiated a program to provide relief to the Kurds in Iraq in October 1992, for example, they assured Hussein that they would do nothing to help the Shiites in the south (Katell 1992).

[148] By some accounts, the establishment of the no-fly zone south of the 32nd parallel actually made things worse for the Shiites because it was a signal that Saddam had free reign to use ground artillery. As one Shiite spiritual leader explained, "Terror on the ground had increased since the no-fly zone…It is almost as if it is not right to kill with planes, but it is all right any other way" (Smith 1992).

Given that the plight of the Shiites was equally as bad as the plight of the Kurds, and that both groups adamantly begged for US support, it is puzzling that Bush did not provide a similar level of support for the two groups in the third phase of his post-war policies.[149] There are three main explanations for this puzzle. First, while the media had a frenzy over Hussein's persecution of the Kurds, it provided very little information about what he was doing to the Shiites. This was because the marshy terrain and government violence made entering the area too difficult and too dangerous (Associated Press 1991f; Pertman 1991; Inter Press Service 1992b; Abdullah 2003: 195). Without media attention, there was little outcry to help the Shiites from within the United States, nor from the international community. As one reporter explained, "The Shiites…were totally ignored when Saddam's troops were massacring them for the same reason [as the Kurds] at the same time [in 1991] (for no TV cameras brought pictures of their plight to Western audiences)" (Dyer 1992).

Second, the main supporter of the Shiites was Iran, which fueled fears that Iran was attempting to use the Shiite rebellion to spread its revolutionary Islamic agenda in the region (Apple 1991; Inter Press Service 1992a; Kranish 1991a; McCabe 1991; Robinson and Yemma 1991; Toronto Star 1991d; Uppsala Conflict Database 2007). The vast majority of the information about Hussein's attack on the Shiites came from Iranian-controlled media sources, which the administration was quick to discredit (Associated Press 1991d; Faruqi 1991). For its part, Iran was extremely vocal in urging the

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[149] Several sources indicate a similar level of suffering for the Shiite and Kurdish communities. For example, estimates for both refugee populations were well over a million, the marshy terrain was equally as bad as the mountains for the Kurds, and Hussein's tactics were equally as cruel (Faruqi 1991; P. Lewis 1991c; Hedges 1993; Minorities at Risk 2007b). As French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas explained, "The Baghdad regime has not been any more tender with the Shiite population than it has been with the Kurds…As a result the international community, and especially the allies, are worried about this situation" (United Press International 1992).

international community to act on behalf of the Shiites (Agence France Presse 1991; Associated Press 1991e; Faruqi 1991). However, Iran provided little tangible support for the Shiites in Iraq because they feared angering the United States, and justifying their fears of the potential spread of Iranian influence in the region (Bengio 1993: 59; Mitchell 2003: 70).

Finally, many people claimed that when Bush eventually established the no-fly zone south of the 32nd parallel, it had more to do with garnering votes for the upcoming election than for helping the Shiites (The Independent 1992; United Press International 1992). As one reporter noted, "The 'no-fly' zone below the 32nd parallel in Iraq is a politico-military charade, tailored to provide Bush with a low-risk military confrontation that might bring him votes in November" (Dyer 1992). Though it is impossible to know if this claim is true, it provides a compelling explanation for why Bush's support for the Shiites came so late, and why it was not supported with troops on the ground.

Ultimately, by ignoring the Shiites for well over a year, and then providing very weak support to enforce the 32nd parallel plan, Bush assured the annihilation of the Shiites in the south. Without a safe zone of their own, international actors were unable to bring relief supplies to the Shiite refuges caught in the marshes (Smith 1992). Hussein never felt the need to negotiate with the Shiites because he was allowed to drain the marshes and use his artillery against both the dissidents and the civilians (Uppsala Conflict Database 2007). Bush's decisions also had a more long-term impact on the future of Iraq. After defeating the Shiite revolt, Hussein achieved a stronger grip on power in the south than he had enjoyed in the past (Bakogeorge 1991; Debusmann 1991; Sinai 1991b). He was also able to keep his army "happy and busy" with the persecution

of the Shiites over several years, which reduced the likelihood that he would be overthrown with a coup (Waller 1991). Bush's desertion of the Shiites also has important implications for what we see on the news today. Though his son, President George W. Bush, made an immediate effort to aid the Shiites after the US-led invasion in 2003, the Shiites have not yet forgotten how their were abandoned by his father. This has greatly intensified the problems with his efforts to establish a coherent government. As Galbraith (2003) explained during the second month of the Iraqi occupation in 2003, "The president carries a national and family legacy that many Iraqis associate with deadly betrayal. Overcoming that legacy has only begun. It is one of the critical challenges that lie ahead." Unfortunately, it seems that the damage done in the early 1990s may be too big of a burden for the current administration to overcome.

7.6 Alternative Explanations

Before moving to the next chapter, we should consider alternative explanations to the story presented above as potential explanations for the quick duration and eventual outcomes of the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions. There are two reasons why we might expect the quick durations and eventual outcomes of the fighting, regardless of Bush's post-war policies. First, several people have argued that the insurgencies were doomed from the start because they were unprepared, lacked strong leadership, and were hopelessly divided. Second, Hussein's history of leadership shows that he was particularly adept at putting down rebellions. I consider each of these alternative explanations in the remainder of this chapter, and then provide a brief explanation for why the alternative explanations remain secondary to the argument presented above.

We begin with three crucial internal problems facing the rebellions. First, there were major divisions within the two insurgencies, which confounded efforts to provide a coherent force to overthrow the government (Bengio 1993: 56; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett 2001: 290; Abdulla 2003: 195). One estimate suggests that as many as 60 opposition groups were fighting for control of the government. By some accounts, the opposition seemed united only in their goal to overthrow the Ba'ath party from power (Reuters 1991e). Second, the rebels were completely unprepared to mount a large-scale attack against the government. By many accounts, these were spontaneous, grass-roots rebellions, which lacked the long-term planning and organizational infrastructure needed to withstand the government's reaction (Faleh 'Abd al-Jabbar 1994: 97; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett 2001: 290). This is related to the third main problem faced by the opposition: poor leadership (Diebel 1991; Independent News Service-Reuters 1991; Mallet et al. 1991; Toronto Star 1991d). Many people in the traditional leadership had long-since been exiled to foreign countries, and were convinced that a popular uprising was impossible in Iraq. The leaders had actually supported Hussein in his fight against the US-led coalition, which placed them in an awkward position when rebels rose up to overthrow the government (Bengio 1993: 55, 57; Faleh 'Abd al-Jabbar 1994: 104-5, 113). The leaders that were actually on the ground in Iraq were faced with many difficulties. Foremost among these was a dearth of information about the activities in other areas, which confounded efforts to coordinate the rebellions (Faleh 'Abd al-Jabbar 1994: 101, 106). Based on these accounts, it is possible that problems internal to the rebellions caused them to falter quickly, regardless of Bush's policies.

Next, it is possible that Hussein's adeptness at ending opposition movements provides the best explanation for the brevity of the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions. He drew on many tools to put down the rebellions after the Gulf War. First, the skill and stunning brutality Hussein had shown in past efforts to quell rebellions made many potential rebels too fearful to rise up against Hussein (Financial Post 1991b; Associated Press-Reuter 1991a).[150] Second, there is evidence that Hussein anticipated a rebellion before the allied attack. He left his elite forces in reserve to protect his regime, which left the rebels heavily outgunned (Reuters-Associated Press 1991a; Sinai 1991b; Faleh 'Abd al-Jabbar 1994: 112). Third, Hussein drew on the Iraqi peoples' sense of patriotism, skillfully painting the rebellions in terms of ethnic divisions, and depicting the rebels as traitors, murders and looters (Robinson 1991a; Schmidt 1991; Faleh 'Abd al-Jabbar 1994: 97; Abdullah 2003: 194-6). Fourth, in order to inspire loyalty among his forces, Hussein pardoned deserters (who would normally face execution) early in the rebellions, and increased the pay to soldiers who would remain loyal to his regime (Associated Press 1991b; Associated Press 1991c; Drinkard 1991a, 1991c). Finally, Hussein attempted to appeal to the opposition by promising political reforms, signaling that he would negotiate with the rebels, and by appointing Shiite Saadoun Hammadi as Prime Minister (Associated Press 1991g; Jerusalem Post 1991a; Schmidt 1991). Each of these suggests that Hussein's moves to counter the rebellions may have played a decisive role, regardless of Bush's actions.

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[150] Near the end of Iraq's war with Iran in 1988, for example, Hussein dropped poison gas on the Kurdish city of Halabja, murdering between 5 and 6 thousand civilians in response to Kurdish rebels' efforts to oust the regime (Galbraith and Van Hollen 1988; Middle East Watch 1990: 83-4; Human Rights Watch 1991). In March 1991, Hussein appointed Ali Hassan Majid, the man responsible for ordering the attack on Halabja, as Interior Minister (Associated Press 1991e; Drinkard 1991c).

While it is possible that the problems among the opposition and Hussein's moves marked the quick end to the rebellions, rather than the abandonment of the opposition by President Bush, there are a handful of reasons to suggest that Bush's post-war policies had the greatest impact. First, the initial success of the rebel groups suggests that they could have won with the support that they expected based on Bush's pre-war signals. Within a month, the opposition came to control 14 of Iraq's 18 provinces, and included three-quarters of Iraq's population (Bengio 1993: 53; Abdullah 2003: 195; Mitchell 2003: 70). As Galbraith (2003) explains, "With U.S. help, or even neutrality, the March [1991] uprising could have succeeded." Second, there actually seemed to be a high level of organization and excellent leadership for the opposition groups. In early March 1991, for instance, the rebel leaders from both the Shiite and Kurdish communities formed a 17-party coalition, which operated from Iran and Syria (Economist 1991b; Ziade 1991). Third, and perhaps most importantly, these alternative explanations fail to account for the disparate outcomes of the two rebellions. After quelling both rebellions, why would Hussein eventually decide to grant significant autonomy to the Kurdish population, while continuing to repress the Shiites? Given that the rebellions faced similar internal difficulties, and were fighting against the same government, we should expect a similar outcome for both groups. Thus, it is impossible to fully explain either the short duration of the rebellion and the disparate outcomes without considering Bush's post-war policies.

Table 7.1. The Phases of US Policies in Iraq, 1991 to 2003

	Policy	Effect
Pre-war (Jan to mid-Feb, 1991)	Cheap signals in support of a rebellion	Kurds in north and Shiites in the south rebel
Post-war, Phase 1 (late Feb to mid-March, 1991)	Confusion, support for neither Iraqi government nor the rebels	Rebellion continues
Post-war, Phase 2 (mid-March to mid-April, 1991)	No support for rebels, tacit support for Iraqi government	Iraqi government crushes rebellions
Post-war, Phase 3 (mid-April 1991 to March 2003)[*]	Strong support for Kurds, continued abandonment for Shiites	Kurds attain autonomy and freedom, Shiites suffer massive persecution

[*]Policies from January 20, 1993 to January 19, 2001 are attributed to Bill Clinton's administration. Policies from January 20, 2001 to March 2003 are attributed to George W. Bush's administration.

CHAPTER 8

LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS

FOR UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY

> Given the consequences [civil] conflicts produce, it is incumbent on social scientists to provide a better understanding of these conflicts so that we may put policy makers in a better position to minimize them and, thereby, improve the human condition.
>
> Will H. Moore (1995: 130)

8.1 Introduction

This project has provided a plethora of implications for both researchers and the policy community. The purpose of this chapter is to extend the prescriptions for policy-makers by focusing specifically on the foreign policy goals of the United States. While previous policy implications were explained in general terms, in this chapter I am able to provide a more focused discussion by connecting my theoretical argument and empirical findings with the current foreign policy goals outlined by the Bush administration. Rather than implicitly assuming that all states have the same goals, here I focus on two of the primary goals laid out by President Bush: (1) improving the condition of all peoples in the world and (2) fighting terrorism. My purpose here is not to editorialize on the promises or pitfalls of these policies.[151] Rather, I simply view them as the reality of the world in which we live, and seek to better understand how the goals of the Bush administration can best be reached in the context of the theory and findings presented in this project.

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[151] See Jervis (2003, 2005) for commentaries on the Bush Doctrine.

Two factors make this a worthwhile task. First, the link between terrorism and civil conflicts is clear, which makes this study exceptionally relevant to the Bush Doctrine. A growing body of research has highlighted the notion that civil wars provide breeding grounds for terrorists (Collier et al. 2003). This link is also explicitly acknowledged by the Bush foreign policy statement, and is becoming increasingly clear by the developments in the ongoing Iraqi civil war (Jervis 2005: 353). Given the clear link between civil war and terrorism, a primary facet of US foreign policy must be to prevent the outbreak of civil conflicts and to end those that are currently underway. Second, it is likely that the main elements of the Bush Doctrine will long outlive the current administration, which makes the analysis relevant far into the future. Terrorism is a major threat to the peace and security of the United States and must be dealt with in some manner in the future, no matter who occupies the White House. Likewise, the goal of improving the human condition throughout the globe is certainly not a new concept for US foreign policy, and is not one that will likely fade in the future. While future administrations may use alternative means to achieve their goals, it is unlikely that they will pursue a foreign policy agenda drastically different than the current administration. Therefore, the following discussion should maintain its relevance far into the future.

In the following pages, I begin by explaining the two policy goals that can be best influenced by the argument and findings from the earlier chapters. These include the goal to improve the human condition throughout the globe and the war against terror. Next, I explain how these goals are clearly linked to civil conflict, with the argument that a primary consideration for both goals should be the prevention of future conflicts and the termination of those that are currently underway. Third, I explain the foreign policy tools

that are available to policy-makers and how these tools would be best implemented given both resource constraints and the policy recommendations learned from previous chapters. Finally, I provide a two-part empirical assessment of current US foreign policy. The first part focuses on US policies towards states that are most at risk for civil war in the near future. The second focuses on policies towards states that are currently experiencing civil conflict. By using the most up-to-date data available, I am able to provide support for the maintenance of current policies towards many states, along with suggestions for how the United States should adjust its current relations to best meet its goals.

8.2 US Foreign Policy Goals and their Relation to

Civil Wars

With the fall of the World Trade Center towers on 9/11 came the rise of an ambitious new foreign policy agenda by the United States. In a series of high profile speeches, President Bush laid out the elements of a new approach to global politics, which has come to be known as the "Bush Doctrine." The four key elements of this approach are summarized in the September 2002 "National Security Strategies of the United States." First, the administration contends that freedom and human dignity are universal rights, and that the United States has the responsibility to push for these rights across the globe.

> "The United States must defend liberty and justice because these
> principles are right and true for all people everywhere. No nation owns
> these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them. Fathers and
> mothers in all societies want their children to be educated and to live free
> from poverty and violence. No people on earth yearn to be oppressed,
> aspire to servitude, or eagerly await the midnight knock of the secret

police" (National Security Strategies of the United States 2002).

Second, terror is the foremost threat to the peace and prosperity of the United States and

abroad. It must be dealt with in a strong and decisive manner.

> "In a world that is safe, people will be able to make their own lives better.
> We will defend peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants."

Third, past policies of deterrence are not sufficient to confront terrorists. The United

States must be prepared to take preventive actions, including war, to combat terrorism.

> "The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions
> to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the
> threat, the greater is the risk of inaction—and the more compelling the
> case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty
> remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or
> prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if
> necessary, act preemptively."

Finally, while the United States seeks to build multinational coalitions to confront

terrorism, it is willing and able to confront terrorists in a unilateral manner.

> "While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the
> international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to
> exercise our right of self defense by acting preemptively against such
> terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our
> country."

The four pillars of current US foreign policy are clear. The first two policies deal

primarily with the content of the foreign policy agenda. They suggest that the United

States will combat the war on terror, while seeking to improve the condition for all

peoples.[152] Each has clear links to this project. First, preventing the outbreak of civil

conflicts and ending ongoing conflicts will directly improve the condition of many

people. As noted in Chapter 1, Section 1.4, civil wars are devastating in almost every

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[152] The latter two policies primarily address the process by which the United States intends to pursue these goals, which is only tangentially related to this project. Here I focus on the goals of US foreign policy.

category imaginable, and extend well beyond the borders of the states experiencing civil violence. Given these terrible consequences, it is clear that the US goal to improve the lives of people throughout the world is inextricably linked to the prevention of civil wars and the termination of those that are currently underway.

Second, the link between the American-led war on terror and civil conflict is perhaps less direct, but clear nonetheless. Collier et al. (2003) make this link abundantly clear in their World Bank policy research report, in which they argue that civil wars provide two mechanisms to promote international terrorism. First, they provide lawless areas in a country, which allow terrorist organizations to form and train with impunity. These scholars attribute the rise of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, for instance, to the large sects of land outside of the control of the Taliban. The clustering of new groups in other states experiencing civil conflict, such as Iraq and Somalia, provide strong evidence for this argument. Second, terrorist groups can gain needed revenue from capitalizing on the illicit economic trade from civil conflict areas. Farah (2002) indicates that Al Qaeda gains substantial wealth from trafficking West African conflict diamonds, for instance. While more work can be done to substantiate the causal links between civil wars and terrorism, there is a sufficiently strong connection in the current literature to suggest that efforts should be made to prevent the outbreak of civil wars and end ongoing conflicts in order to combat the spread of terrorism. Therefore, preventing the outbreak of new civil conflicts and helping terminate those that are currently underway are clearly aligned with US foreign policy ambitions.

8.3   Foreign Policy Recommendations for States at Risk

    for Civil Wars

We begin by examining US foreign policy options for dealing with states at risk

for civil conflict. In Chapter 2, Section 2.2, I laid out the central theoretical argument for

how relations between states affect the likelihood of civil war onset. Two primary

hypotheses were presented, followed by eight secondary hypotheses. While the theory

leading up to each hypothesis is relevant to US foreign policy interests, I focus here on

the primary hypotheses in order to limit the scope of the discussion to a reasonable level.

The first argument claims that costly signals sent between states—those that are

generally transparent and come with high financial costs—will have little effect on the

likelihood of civil war onset. This rational expectations argument suggests that rational

actors will choose policies that are informed by both information that they have today,

and their expectations for what will happen in the future. When signals are costly, they

provide both the government and the opposition with credible expectations for how the

external actor would behave if a civil war were to break out. Placing this expectation in

the bargaining context, which is also described in the second chapter, we should expect a

proportional adjustment in the policy positions of both the government and the opposition

when they receive costly signals because these signals are easy to interpret due to their

enhanced credibility. This argument was supported with the empirical findings presented

in Chapter 3, which examined a global sample of states from 1945 to 1999. Neither

costly hostile signals (militarization of forces and sanctions), nor costly supportive

signals (trade ties and alliances) had a significant effect on the likelihood of civil war

onset.

Several potential implications for costly signals can be derived from the earlier analyses. When the United States placed sanctions (a costly hostile signal) on South Africa in 1986, for instance, it forced the government to yield to the opposition by instituting democratic reforms. This suggests that costly hostile signals would be a good policy option for promoting peaceful reforms to benefit the opposition. Costly supportive signals may work in the opposite direction by promoting the government's goals. While these implications may be true, in the previous chapters I provide no empirical tests in this project to substantiate these claims.[153] The only implication for costly signals that have been supported with empirical analyses is that costly signals will not affect the likelihood of civil war onset. Therefore, I leave costly signals largely aside in this chapter. I recommend only that they are preferable to actions that I have shown empirically to increase the likelihood of civil war onset.

The second primary argument presented in Chapter 2 suggests that cheap signals—those that come with little financial burden—should have a dramatic impact on the likelihood of civil war onset. This is because cheap signals have low levels of credibility and, thus, introduce uncertainty into an otherwise bilateral intrastate bargaining environment. When an external actor sends a cheap hostile signal, the likelihood of civil war onset should increase if the opposition views the signal as credible, while the government views it as cheap talk. As I explained in Chapter 4, for instance, Carter's verbal condemnation of Somoza's human rights violations in 1977 caused the Sandinista opposition group to rise up against the regime because they saw that Somoza could no longer count on the unwavering support of the United States. In

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[153] I leave future research to substantiate whether or not these signals will have these potential effects.

contrast, a cheap supportive signal should decrease the likelihood of civil war onset because the opposition will avoid rebelling against a government that has both an established army and an external supporter. Each of these expectations is strongly supported in the empirical analyses in Chapter 3. As cheap signals become more hostile, the likelihood of civil war onset increases; as they become more supportive, the likelihood of civil war onset decreases.

The policy recommendations for cheap signals are clear. First, in order to improve the condition of humans across the globe and reduce the spread of terrorism, the United States should avoid sending cheap hostile signals to states that are at high risk of civil conflict. If hostile signals need to be sent to address security concerns, such as the Iranian or North Korean nuclear programs, then it would be far better to send costly signals than cheap signals. If leaders attempt to rely on cheap hostile signals, such as condemning states with "axis of evil" type statements, they are likely to work against the foreign policy goals by inciting a civil war. This is true even if inciting a civil war leads to an overthrow of the adversary's government because of the high level of human suffering that invariably comes with civil conflict. This leads to the first policy recommendation:

Policy recommendation #1: The United States should avoid sending cheap hostile signals to states at high risk for civil war.

Second, cheap supportive signals should have an important pacifying effect on the likelihood of civil war onset. This is perhaps the most promising policy implication culled from this project. The Bush foreign policy statement is quite clear that the United

States lacks the resources to pursue change everywhere.[154] This fact has been made even clearer recently by the enormous strain on US resources in Iraq.[155] However, the empirical findings for cheap supportive signals suggest that the United States can work towards its policy goals with very few costs by sending cheap supportive signals. Thus, cheap supportive signals should be sent to help maintain the stability of states that are at high risk for civil conflict. This leads to the second recommendation for US foreign policy:

> *Policy recommendation #2*: The United States should send cheap
>
> supportive signals to states at high risk for civil war, especially when
>
> constrained by resources.

A third policy recommendation comes from paying attention to the temporal dynamics associated with cheap signals. One interesting finding from the third chapter is that dramatic switches in signals over time, whether from supportive to hostile or hostile to supportive, dramatically increase the likelihood of civil war onset. Therefore, it is important for the United States to maintain a consistent foreign policy towards states at high risk for civil conflict. Even a policy of consistently cheap hostile signals is preferable to dramatic shifts over time, which suggests that changes need to come gradually. This leads to the final policy recommendation for dealing with states at high risk for civil conflict:

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[154] "No doctrine can anticipate every circumstance in which U.S. action—direct or indirect—is warranted. We have finite political, economic, and military resources to meet our global priorities" (US Foreign Policy Statement 2002).

[155] As the Iraq Study Group reports, "Many military units are under significant strain…The American military has little reserve force to call on if it needs ground forces to respond to other crises around the world" (Baker et al. 2006: 12).

Policy recommendation #3: The United States should avoid dramatic

changes in its signals over time, regardless of whether they are moving

towards sending hostile or supportive signals.

Having defined these suggestions for policy in general terms, the following

section examines how US policies are currently affecting states at risk for civil conflict.

Suggestions are then made for how these policies should be continued or modified to best

meet the current administration's goals.

8.4 Current US Policies towards States at Risk for

Civil War

In order to examine US policies towards states at risk for civil war, we must first

identify the states that are most at risk for internal conflict. This is a straightforward task

because the model used to predict the onset of civil war has already been developed in

Chapter 3. This model was based on the strongest findings from past researchers, who

have experimented with as many as 93 variables to predict the onset of civil war (Hegre

and Sambanis 2005). The variables found to have a consistently strong impact on civil

war models are used here to forecast the likelihood of civil war onset for all states in the

near future. These variables include GDP per capita, population, mountainous terrain, oil

exports, instability, democracy level, and years at peace.[156] As in Chapter 3, I use logistic

regression to predict the civil war onset in all states, where the dependent variable comes

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[156] See Section 3.2 in Chapter 3 for a theoretical justification for using these variables to predict the likelihood of civil war onset.

from the Uppsala University Conflict Data Project.[157] The forecast for the likelihood of

civil war in the future is simply the prediction for the state in the most recent year

available: 2005.[158] The probability of civil war onset based on this model for each

country available is presented in Table 8.1.[159]

The countries listed in Table 8.1 have been grouped into five categories to make

the analysis as simple as possible. The first column includes states that are currently at

war. These countries are ignored at this point because I seek to analyze how US signals

might impact the likelihood that a war begins. Efforts to end current conflicts will be

studied in the next section. Next, we see four columns ranging from "Least risk" to

"High risk." While US signals should impact the likelihood that a war begins in each

state, I focus here on the thirty-one "High risk" states in order to limit the analysis to a

reasonable level. Though relations with the "Least risk" states, such as Norway and

Sweden, should affect the likelihood of civil violence in that state, the baseline

probability of civil war onset is so low that cheap signals are likely to have very little

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[157] This project defines civil war as a "contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths" (Gleditsch et al. 2002). See Section 3.2 in Chapter 3 for a more thorough discussion of the dependent variable.

[158] A handful of minor adjustments to the model were needed to make it as up-to-date as possible. First, the variables for Population and GDP/capita now come from the Penn World Tables (http://pwt.econ.upenn.edu), rather than Gleditsch (2002). This should introduce no bias because Gleditsch relied heavily on the Penn World Tables to complete his dataset. The variables for mountainous terrain and oil exporter were updated by filling down from their previous value: 1999. No bias should be introduced here because these variables are quite stable over time. The variables for instability, democracy and anocracy were updated following Fearon and Laitin's (2003) coding rules, and using the most recent version of the Polity IV dataset (Marshall and Jaggers 2000).

[159] Results for the actual model run to produce the predicted probabilities are included in Table A7 in the Appendix. These results remain consistent with the baseline model used to predict civil war onset in Chapter 3.

effect on the likelihood that a civil war begins.[160] In contrast, the United States must be very cautious in choosing the signals it sends to states like Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which are in much more precarious positions.

Having identified the set of states whose likelihood of civil war onset is most likely to be impacted by US foreign policy, the next step is to analyze whether signals sent from the United States in recent years have worked to increase or decrease the likelihood that a civil war erupts in each state. This will thereby allow me to make specific recommendations for either the continuance or adjustment of current policies. Unfortunately, the COPDAB and WEIS datasets used to operationalize cheap signals in previous chapters do not extend beyond 1993, which forces me to explore an alternative means to capture US signals in the most recent period possible. One promising alternative are "machine-coded" events data. For the remainder of this chapter, I use data compiled by the VRA Reader to operationalize US signals, which include over 10 million events from 1991 to 2005 (after being lagged 1 year).[161] The VRA Reader uses a computer to code data directly from the Reuters Business Briefing (RBB) newswire. Similar to the human coders for COPDAB and WEIS, the basic tasks of the machine coding software is to identify the main actors and the event by examining the subject, verb and object in a sentence describing an event, looking up the appropriate codes, and writing the resulting event record to a file. King and Lowe (2003: 636) have presented the most significant independent test of the VRA Readers performance. They find that

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[160] Even a 100% increase in the likelihood of civil war onset in Norway, for instance, would only bring the probability of civil war onset to 0.6%.

[161] The VRA reader examines the first sentence of RBB articles, and then codes the information into the 157-category IDEA typology (King and Lowe 2003: 619). The IDEA typology is an extension of the WEIS framework, which makes it a reasonable alternative to the data used to operationalize cheap signals in earlier chapters (Bond et al. 2003: 734-5). Data are available at http://gking.harvard.edu/events/.

the machine-coding of data was "approximately equal" to hand-coding of the same

data.[162] Thus, the machine-coded data provide a perfectly reasonable alternative to the

COPDAB and WEIS datasets used earlier to operationalize cheap signals.[163]

Construction of the cheap signals variable follows a similar protocol used to

construct the same variable using the COPDAB and WEIS datasets, which was explained

in Section 3.2 of Chapter 3. The main difference is that I limit the signaler to the United

States only, rather than aggregating signals sent from politically relevant dyads. This

allows me to focus solely on US foreign policy options, rather than assuming that all

states pursue the same goals. I further limit the analysis to the period from 2001 to 2005

because I am interested in how signals sent in the most recent years affect the current

situation in each state. The data for signals sent from the United States are aggregated

yearly by finding the mean signal sent to each "High risk" state. The result is a single

yearly measure ranging from -7.6 (most hostile) to +7.5 (most supportive), which is

nearly identical to the measure used in previous chapters. Temporal dynamics are

captured by examining whether or not signals switched from being supportive/hostile to

hostile/supportive over the last five years. Switches in the manner are called

"inconsistent," while uniform policies are called "consistent." I comment on both the

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[162] Over the past several years, scholars have taken advantage of availability of electronically-coded data to examine world events. Hays and his colleagues (2003) use machine coded data from the IDEA project (Bond et al. 1997) to examine the consequences of financial globalization for democratization in emerging market economies. Goldstein and Pevehouse (1997) and Goldstein et al. (2001) have used KEDS machine-coded data to examine interactions in the Balkans and the Middle East. See also Gerner et al. (1994) and Schrodt, Davis and Weddle (1994).

[163] The reader may wonder why the machine-coded data are not used in previous chapters in order to present the most recent analyses possible. As discussed above, it is reasonable to substitute machine-coded data (VRA) for hand-coded (COPDAB and WEIS) data. However, in a previous analysis I found that the results from each dataset are not sufficiently consistent to be spliced to create a continuous measure (Thyne 2006d). Thus, in previous chapters I chose to use the hand-coded data exclusively because they capture a much longer time period, which provides the most generalizable results possible.

orientation (supportive or hostile) and consistency of the signal for each high risk country.

Policies that are both supportive and consistent are perfectly aligned with my policy recommendations, while all others represent policies that are likely to work against US foreign policy goals. Table 8.2 lists all countries that received positive signals from the United States in the most recent year available. In Figure 8.1 I plot the mean signal sent from the United States to each of these states from 2001 to 2005.[164] The first six countries presented in this table include Bangladesh, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Pakistan and Peru. As I note in the final column of Table 8.2, I suggest no immediate change in the current US signals sent towards these countries. The current policy is likely having a significant impact on maintaining the stability of these countries, and should be continued in order to avoid the outbreak of civil conflict. A similar recommendation is made for Cambodia. However, I note that an effort should be made to avoid an inconsistent drop to a negative signal, which occurred in 2001-02. The final countries listed in Table 8.2 include Liberia, Eritrea, Nigeria and Venezuela. While each of these countries has received a positive signal in 2005, recent policies have been extremely volatile, with inconsistent switches at some point in the previous two years. Given that switches in either direction dramatically increase the likelihood of civil war onset, there is a desperate need for the United States to maintain consistently supportive signals to these states.

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[164] In Figures 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3, I present a dashed line at 0, which indicates a completely neutral signal. Values above this line represent signals supportive of the government (positive), while values below the line show hostilities towards the government (negative).

The second group of countries is listed in Table 8.3, with corresponding figures presented in Figure 8.1. Each of these countries has received hostile signals from the United States in the most recent year, including Syria, China, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Somalia and Uzbekistan. These policies have likely increased the likelihood of civil war onset in each state. Thus, I recommend a gradual change to being supportive of these states to meet US foreign policy goals. If the United States is resolved to show hostilities to these states, as is very likely the case with countries like Syria, then the administration needs to rely on more costly means to express its hostilities, such as applying sanctions, in order to make its stance abundantly clear.[165] The consistency of signals over time is also worrisome. While the United States has been consistently hostile to Syria since 2001-02, it has shown a very inconsistent policy towards all other states in Table 8.3 within the last two years. A switch from being supportive to hostile dramatically increases the likelihood of civil war onset and, therefore, works counter to US foreign policy goals.[166] There is a desperate need for the United States to maintain a consistent policy towards these states, even if it chooses to send hostile signals.

The final set of countries includes those that have not received any signal from the United States in the most recent year. These countries are listed in Table 8.4, with accompanying plots in Figure 8.3. The United States should consider sending positive signals to each of these states in order to avoid the outbreak of civil war. Fortunately, the United States has avoided sending inconsistent signals to the majority of these countries,

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[165] It is important to note that simply accompanying cheap hostile signals with cheap costly signals will not decrease the deleterious effects of the cheap hostile signals, as was shown by including both cheap and costly signals in the same model in Table 3.2.

[166] The marginal effect for these switches, labeled "Negative shock" in Table 3.3, is 152%, making it the worst of all policy options.

including Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Senegal, and Tajikistan. This consistency should continue, even if it means continuing to avoid sending any signal to each state. The final four states include Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Sierra Leone. While the most recent policy has been to avoid dealing with these states, inconsistent signals sent in recent years have likely worked to increase the likelihood of civil war. Sierra Leone, for instance, has seen dramatic shifts in signals sent from the United States over the last five years, which increases the likelihood that either the government or the opposition makes an unacceptable demand to the other based on their view of future US support. While sending positive signals is the best foreign policy option for the United States, at the very least it should maintain a consistent policy of staying out of each state's affairs.

8.5 Foreign Policy Recommendations for States
Currently Experiencing Civil Wars

Having dealt with the states most at risk for the onset of civil conflict, the next step is to examine how the United States should behave towards states that are currently experiencing civil wars. The twenty-one states currently involved in civil conflict are listed in the first column in Table 8.1. We return to the theoretical arguments developed in Chapter 2 (Sections 2.3 and 2.4) and the empirical analyses presented in Chapters 5 and 6 to develop policy recommendations for each state.[167] In Chapter 2, I argue that cheap signals sent from external actors during peaceful periods have a profound effect on the probability that a civil war begins because they allow the opposition and the

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[167] See Figure 6.2 in Chapter 6 for a map outlining this argument, including a summary of empirical findings for each phase of the conflict.

government to develop expectations for what external actors would do once fighting

erupted. Therefore, the effect of interventions during a civil war can be best understood

in the context of the intervener's pre-war signal. We recall that external actors have three

choices once a civil war begins. They can (1) remain consistent with the pre-war signal,

(2) switch sides, or (3) do nothing. Interventions that are consistent with pre-war signals

should have little effect on the duration and outcome of the conflict because they were

signaled before the war began, which allowed them to play a role in each side's pre-war

evaluations of their capability vis-à-vis their potential opponent. In contrast, unexpected

interventions—those that contrast with the third party's pre-war signal—should have a

dramatic impact on the duration and outcome of civil wars because they are exogenous to

pre-war expectations and, therefore, reveal more information than consistent policies. As

information is revealed, it becomes increasingly likely that the competing sides will be

able to see eye-to-eye on a negotiated settlement. Unexpected interventions may also

decrease the duration of fighting by giving one side sufficient military advantage to

defeat the other. The same mechanism should be true for failures to intervene on behalf

of the side that received a favorable pre-war signal. Thus, unexpected interventions

should work to decrease the duration of fighting, while making the time to victory

quicker for the party receiving the unexpected external support. This argument was

supported with empirical analyses presented in Chapter 5 (duration) and Chapter 6

(outcome).

The general argument explained above can be easily transported to a discussion of

US foreign policy goals, especially given that—as the world's sole superpower—the

United States has the economic and military resources to affect each state currently

involved in civil conflicts. Ending these conflicts should be a primary goal of the United

States because their continuance provides a breeding ground for terrorism, while having a

devastating effect on the people in the area. This leads to the following policy

recommendation:

> *Policy recommendation #4*: The United States should provide support for
>
> the opposite party that received its pre-war support in order to end
>
> ongoing conflicts.

While the policy recommendation made above is based on sound reasoning and

empirical support, it assumes that the single consideration for meeting US foreign policy

goals is to end the ongoing conflict, regardless of who wins. While this may be true in

some instances, it is clearly not the case in states such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Israel,

where there is a clear policy in favor of the government. If the United States has a strong

preference for one side in the conflict, then it may prefer to see an ongoing civil war than

to see the opposing side win. For instance, the United States could assure the

opposition's quick victory over the government in the Iraqi civil war by supporting the

Sunni militias or the Shiite insurgents, but this would obviously work against the US goal

to establish a democratic government in the country. Thus, we must expand upon the

previous recommendation by considering who is more or less likely to win a conflict

based on US actions (or inaction). I remain agnostic in regards to who the United States

should favor on each side of the conflict. Rather, I simply seek to provide more general

recommendations that are relevant regardless of whom the United States wants to win.

When the United States has a strong preference for one side of the conflict, the

obvious policy recommendation is that they should support this side. While this

recommendation is hardly ground-breaking, the important contribution from this project is in understanding how the support is likely to affect the outcome of the conflict. In general terms, when interventions during the war are consistent with pre-war signals, they should have a minimal effect on the duration and outcome of the fighting because both sides should have already developed (at least a minimal) expectation for these interventions. When a third party acts in contrast to its pre-war signal by either aiding the other side or failing to intervene on one side's behalf, we should expect a shorter war with a poor outcome for the side that finds itself unexpectedly weak. This presents an interesting dilemma for policy-makers. If they remain consistent with their pre-war signal by supporting their preferred side, then their support is unlikely to affect the duration or outcome of the conflict. It will only decrease the likelihood that the other side enjoys a quick victory. If they switch sides or ignore the situation, then a quick victory for the opposing side becomes much more likely. The question becomes, then, whether it is better to get involved in a potentially drawn-out quagmire with indeterminate results, or allow the opposing side to achieve a quick victory?[168] Fortunately, the answer to this question is the responsibility of the policy-makers themselves. Thus, rather than give specific policy advice, my goal here is simply to shed light on how the different policy choices are likely to affect the wars that we see in the world today.

Placing this issue in the more specific US context, my argument implies that the United States must consider its pre-war stance when deciding how to approach ongoing

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[168] A third option would be to indirectly support the preferred side by providing arms or aid. I have only examined direct interventions in this project, so I leave future research to examine how these actions might affect the duration and outcome of civil conflicts.

conflicts. If it signaled support for the government in the pre-war phase, then victory by the opposition becomes much more likely if it fails to support the government or switches policies by supporting the opposition. However, while support for the government will help it avoid an outright victory by the opposition, it will not change the duration of the conflict or the likelihood that the government wins. The same should be true if it signaled support for the government in the pre-war phase, and then followed a similar route. As I explained in the previous chapter, the United States sent a series of signals in support of the opposition in Iraq following the first Gulf War, which made both the Shiite and Kurdish opposition movements expect US support once they began a rebellion against Hussein's government. Hussein's quick victory over the Shiites was assured when the United States failed to follow through with its pre-war signal, providing no significant support to the rebellion in the south. Had the United States taken a different policy—choosing instead to remain consistent by supporting the Shiites after the war had begun—its support would have had an indeterminate effect on deciding the duration or outcome of the conflict. These expectations are summarized in Table 8.5.

One final concept developed in Chapter 2 needs to be covered before moving to a more detailed examination of US foreign policy options for states experiencing conflicts today. That is, the effect of inconsistent policies towards states experiencing civil wars should not remain constant over time. As time progresses during a war, both the government and opposition become more effective in attacking the other and more entrenched in their opposition to the other. Had the United States provided early support for the Shiite rebellion in Iraq, for instance, it is likely that the insurgency could have withstood counter-attacks from the government forces. A switch from pre-war signals

during the fifth year of the war, therefore, would have had much less of an effect than it did at the onset of the fighting. Thus, the expectations developed above for today's policies should be most relevant for states that are experiencing relatively young civil wars. The variables used to operationalize intra-war interventions in Chapter 5 and 6 are allowed to decay over time to capture this concept. Likewise, in the forthcoming analysis I consider only conflicts that have begun within the last 10 years. I seek to explain both how current US policies are affecting the situation today, and how alternative policy options should affect these conflicts in the future.

8.6. <u>Current US Policies towards States at Risk for Civil War</u>

The states currently experiencing civil conflicts are listed in the first column of Table 8.1. Thirteen of these wars have begun within the last ten years, making them relevant cases to consider in light of the discussion above. The expectations developed above are summarized in general terms in Table 8.5. In Table 8.6, I move these expectations to a more specific context to examine how current policies are affecting the civil wars we see today. In column 3, I list whether the pre-war signal showed future support for the government (positive) or opposition (negative). The next column indicates whether or not the United States is actively providing troop support for each country, which includes support for the governments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Based on the pre-war signal and current support, in the fifth column I provide an expectation for how US policies are currently shaping each war.

A pre-war signal showing support for the government, followed by a failure to support the government, should lead to a shorter war with a quick victory for the opposition. This is the case for wars in Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia, Ethiopia and Nepal. The opposite outcome should be expected with a negative pre-war signal, followed by a failure to support the opposition. Thus, we should expect current US policies to promote a short civil war with a quick victory for the government in Iran, India, Myanmar, Sudan and Thailand. Afghanistan and Iraq are the only countries that have received an intervention consistent with the pre-war signal, both benefiting the government. Because these interventions were signaled prior to the onset of each civil war, they are endogenous to both the government and opposition's pre-war bargaining positions. The duration and outcome of each conflict, therefore, is indeterminate at this point. The final two columns provide expectations for potential changes in US policy in the near future. Again, none of these is a recommendation, *per se*, because I am agnostic as to whether it is preferable for the United States to become involved in a war with an indeterminate result, or simply to allow the other side to win. These expectations should simply act as guidelines to help shape future decisions.

Before concluding, an additional note should be made in regards to the highest-profile situation that the United States finds itself involved in today: Iraq. As I noted above, the eventual effect of current US efforts is indeterminate because these efforts were signaled prior to the onset of the insurgencies. While extending the current campaigns may be able to tip the balance of capabilities towards the government's side in an unexpected way, it is likely that the insurgencies in Iraq are already too entrenched to be easily persuaded. By continuing to rely primarily on its own efforts, therefore, it is

unlikely that either the government or the opposition will enjoy a quick and decisive

victory. An alternative approach would be for the United States to use its diplomatic

weight to encourage more countries to contribute to its efforts, but which countries

should be the focus of this effort?

The theory presented in earlier sections of this paper sheds light on this question.

The most effective interventions during a war are those that are unexpected – those that

are inconsistent with pre-war signals. Iran and Syria are two states that have been

consistently hostile to US-led efforts to establish a secure government in Iraq. Thus,

these states have a unique potential to help stem the current anti-government violence

because their support would be entirely unexpected based on pre-war signals. This

potential has not been overlooked by US policy-makers, including the Iraq Study Group,

who claims,

> "Dealing with Iran and Syria is controversial. Nevertheless, it is our view
> that in diplomacy, a nation can and should engage its adversaries and
> enemies to try to resolve conflicts and differences consistent with its own
> interests. Accordingly, the Support Group should actively engage Iran and
> Syria in its diplomatic dialogue, without preconditions" (Baker et al. 2006:
> 36).

The policy recommendations coming from this project are perfectly aligned with

the recommendation above. An effort should be made to encourage other regional actors

to play a role in Iraq's security, particularly those who we would not traditionally expect

to come to the aid of the United States. Reaching out to states that are traditionally

thought of as adversaries is the best way to achieve victory for the government in Iraq.

8.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I applied the lessons learned from the previous analyses to current US foreign policy goals. Two primary recommendations were made to aid the administration's efforts to recognize two of its foremost foreign policy goals—combating terrorism and improving the human condition throughout the world. First, it is important that policy-makers follow a consistently supportive policy towards states at high risk for civil wars. Negative signals and inconsistent policies over time are apt to increase the volatility in these states, and drastically increase the likelihood of civil war onset. Second, policy-makers must understand that efforts to end current conflicts will be conditioned on signals sent in the pre-war phase. Inconsistent policies are likely to increase the likelihood that the unexpectedly weakened side suffers a quick defeat. Policy-makers should not expect consistent policies to have a decisive effect on either the duration or the outcome of civil conflicts. By analyzing the most current data available in light of these theoretical expectations, I offered a list of specific recommendations for both states at high risk for civil conflicts, and those currently experiencing civil wars. Many of these recommendations could be pursued with very few tangible costs. Ultimately, by providing theoretically-informed and empirically-supported recommendations, it is my hope that policy-makers will be better equipped to make the world a more peaceful place for years to come.

Table 8.1. Risk of Civil Conflict, 2005

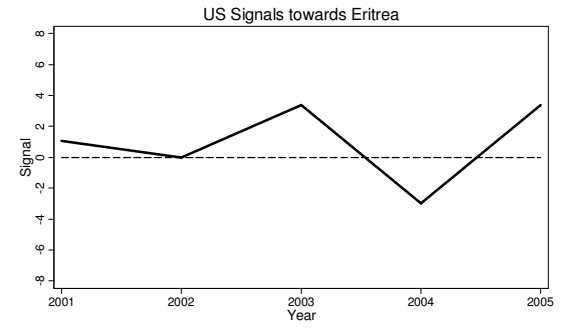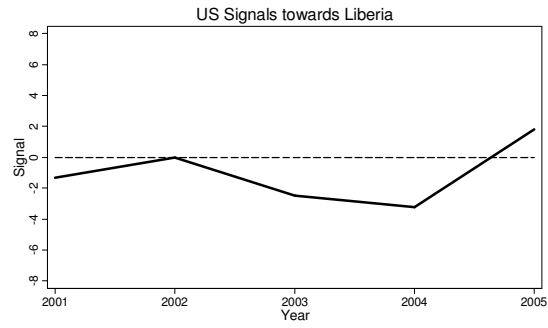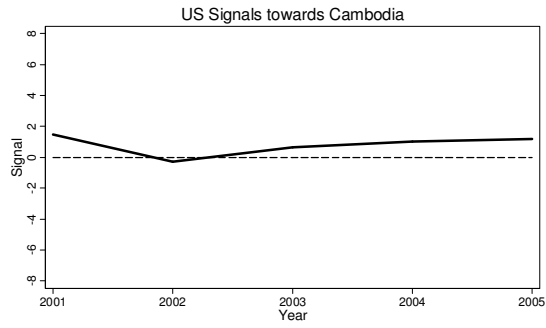| At war	Least risk		Low risk		Some risk		High risk	
Afghanistan	Ireland	0.1%	Latvia	0.5%	Spain	1.3%	Lesotho	2.8%
Algeria	Denmark	0.1%	U. A. Emirates	0.5%	Benin	1.3%	Kazakhstan	2.9%
Azerbaijan	Finland	0.1%	Brazil	0.5%	Domin. Rep.	1.4%	Uzbekistan	2.9%
Burundi	Belgium	0.1%	Lithuania	0.6%	Tunisia	1.5%	Malawi	3.0%
Chad	New Zealand	0.1%	Bhutan	0.6%	Romania	1.5%	Guinea-Bissau	3.2%
Colombia	Sweden	0.1%	Botswana	0.6%	South Africa	1.5%	Senegal	3.2%
Ethiopia	Netherlands	0.1%	North Korea	0.7%	Gambia	1.6%	Bangladesh	3.4%
India	Switzerland	0.2%	Kuwait	0.7%	Georgia	1.6%	Tanzania	3.4%
Indonesia	Austria	0.2%	Panama	0.7%	Malaysia	1.7%	Guinea	3.5%
Iran	Hungary	0.2%	Belarus	0.7%	Ukraine	1.8%	Saudi Arabia	3.7%
Iraq	Australia	0.2%	Trin & Tob.	0.7%	Bos & Herz.	1.9%	Venezuela	3.7%
Israel	Portugal	0.2%	Namibia	0.8%	Togo	1.9%	Mexico	3.8%
Myanmar	Canada	0.2%	Swaziland	0.8%	Oman	1.9%	Cen. Afr. Rep.	3.9%
Nepal	Albania	0.2%	Fiji	0.8%	Macedonia	1.9%	Liberia	4.0%
Philippines	Bulgaria	0.2%	Jamaica	0.8%	Chile	1.9%	Tajikistan	4.2%
Russia	Costa Rica	0.3%	Slovakia	0.8%	Laos	2.0%	Eritrea	4.2%
Sri Lanka	Norway	0.3%	Czech Rep.	0.8%	Turkmenistan	2.0%	Kenya	4.4%
Sudan	Jordan	0.3%	Uruguay	1.0%	Papua New G.	2.0%	Egypt	4.5%
Thailand	Cyprus	0.3%	Armenia	1.0%	U. Kingdom	2.2%	Niger	4.6%
Turkey	Italy	0.3%	Bahrain	1.0%	Burkina Faso	2.2%	China	4.8%
Uganda	Poland	0.3%	Paraguay	1.0%	Morocco	2.2%	Peru	4.9%
	Greece	0.3%	Mauritania	1.0%	Bolivia	2.3%	Rwanda	5.1%
	Taiwan	0.3%	Lebanon	1.0%	Cameroon	2.3%	Sierra Leone	5.1%
	Mongolia	0.3%	Croatia	1.0%	Zambia	2.3%	Madagascar	5.3%
	Japan	0.3%	Moldova	1.1%	Mozambique	2.4%	Somalia	5.8%
	Ecuador	0.4%	Cuba	1.1%	Argentina	2.5%	Congo	5.8%
	Honduras	0.4%	El Salvador	1.2%	Mali	2.5%	Syria	6.0%
	Estonia	0.4%	Nicaragua	1.2%	Zimbabwe	2.5%	Pakistan	6.6%
	South Korea	0.5%	France	1.2%	Guatemala	2.5%	Cambodia	7.6%
	Slovenia	0.5%	Djibouti	1.2%	Ivory Coast	2.6%	D. R. Congo	11.9%
	Mauritius	0.5%	Gabon	1.2%	Ghana	2.7%	Nigeria	13.0%
	Singapore	0.5%						

Table 8.2. States at High Risk for Civil War Onset: Most Recent Signal is Positive

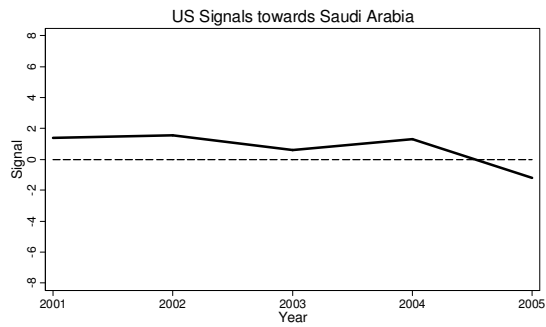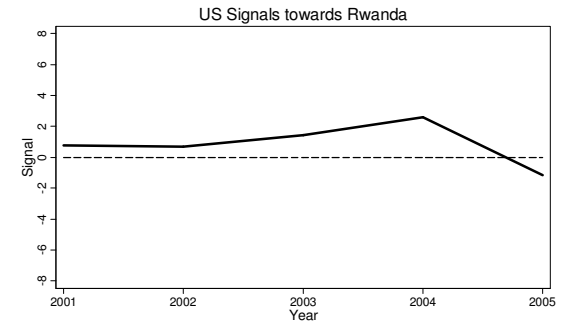| Country	Switches within the last 5 years?	Switches within the last 2 years?	Policy recommendation
Bangladesh	No	No	Maintain the current policy of consistently sending positive signals.
Egypt	No	No	•
Kazakhstan	No	No	•
Mexico	No	No	•
Pakistan	No	No	•
Peru	No	No	•
Cambodia	Yes	No	Maintain the current policy of sending positive signals; avoid inconsistencies of the past.
Liberia	No	Yes	Maintain the current policy of sending positive signals; avoid recent inconsistencies.
Eritrea	No	Yes	•
Nigeria	Yes	Yes	•
Venezuela	Yes	Yes	•
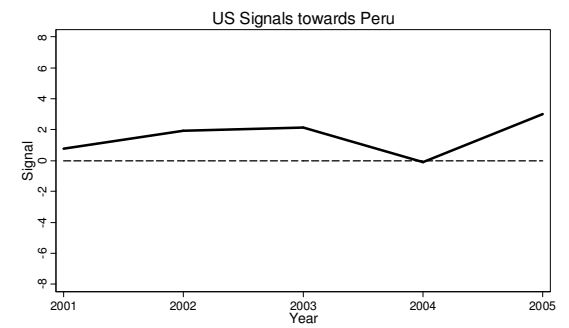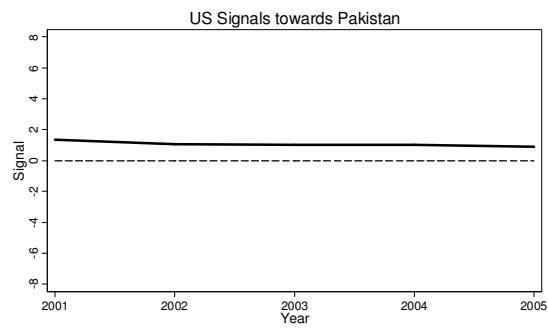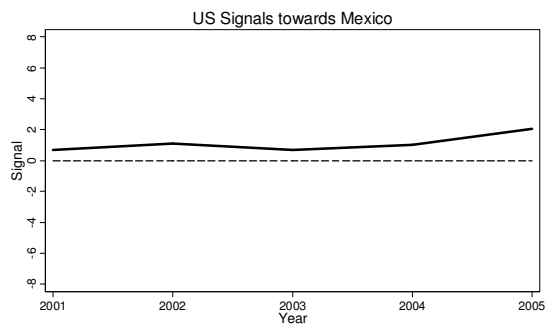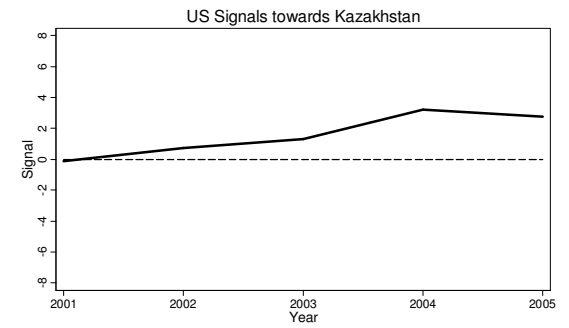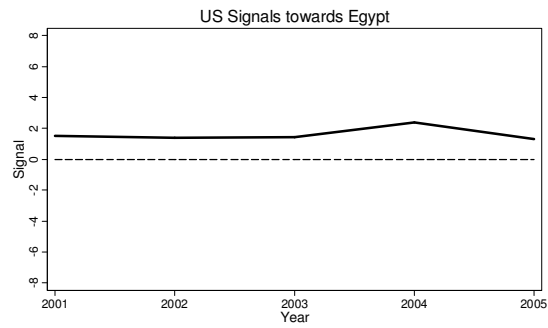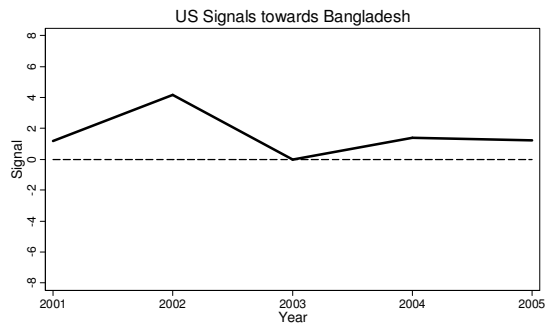
Figure 8.1. US Signals sent to "High Risk" States – *Most Recent Signal is Positive*

US Signals towards Cambodia

US Signals towards Liberia

US Signals towards Eritrea

US Signals towards Nigeria

US Signals towards Venezuela
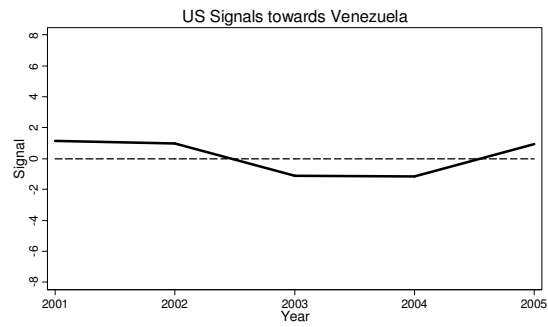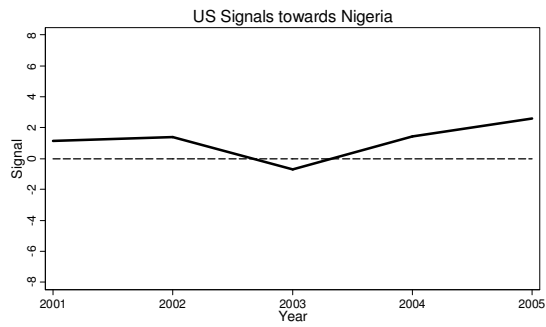
Figure 8.1 (continued).

Table 8.3. States at High Risk for Civil War Onset: Most Recent Signal is Negative

Country	Switches within the last 5 years?	Switches within the last 2 years?	Policy recommendation
Syria	Yes	No	Consider sending positive signals to prevent civil war onset; avoid past inconsistencies.
China	No	Yes	Consider sending positive signals to prevent civil war onset; avoid recent inconsistencies.
Rwanda	No	Yes	•
Saudi Arabia	No	Yes	•
Tanzania	No	Yes	•
Somalia	No	Yes	•
Uzbekistan	Yes	Yes	•
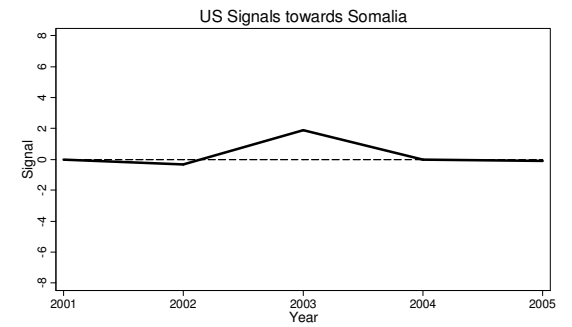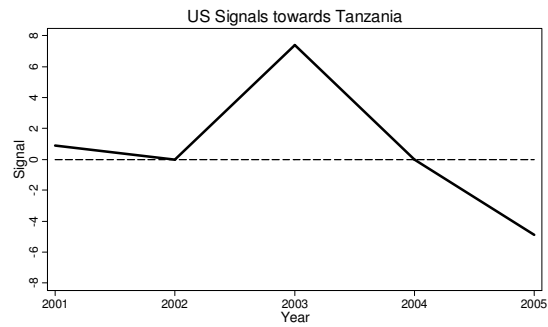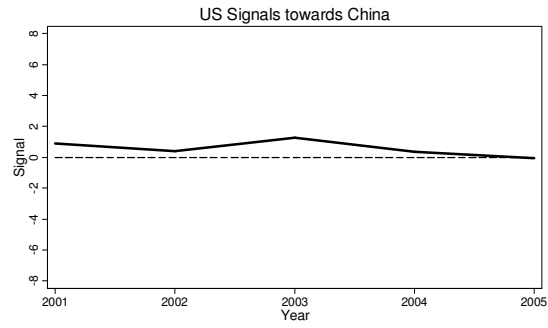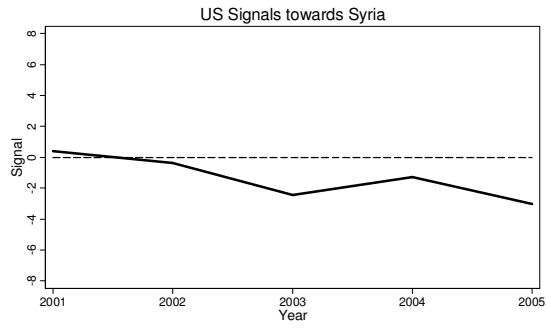
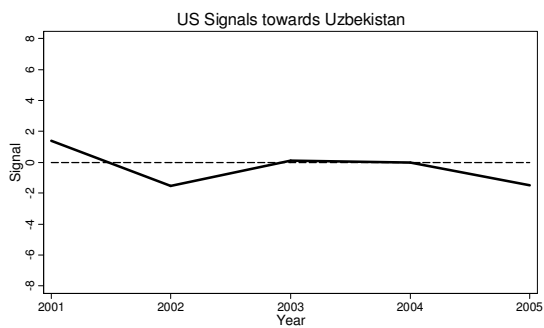Figure 8.2. US Signals sent to "High Risk" States – *Most Recent Signal is Negative*

Figure 8.2 (continued).

Table 8.4. States at High Risk for Civil War Onset:
No Signal Received in the Most Recent Year

| Country	Switches within the last 5 years?	Switches within the last 2 years?	Policy recommendation
Cen. Afr Rep	No	No	Consider sending positive signals. Be sure to maintain recent consistency.
Guinea	No	No	•
Guin-Bissau	No	No	•
Lesotho	No	No	•
Madagascar	No	No	•
Malawi	No	No	•
Niger	No	No	•
Senegal	No	No	•
Tajikistan	No	No	•
Congo	Yes	No	Consider sending positive signals. Avoid past inconsistencies.
D. R. Congo	Yes	No	•
Kenya	Yes	Yes	Consider sending positive signals. There is a desperate need to avoid recent inconsistencies.
Sierra Leone	Yes	Yes	•
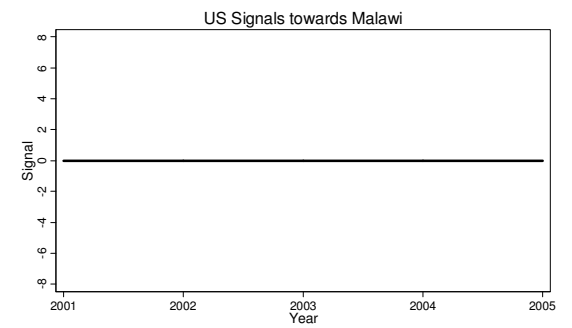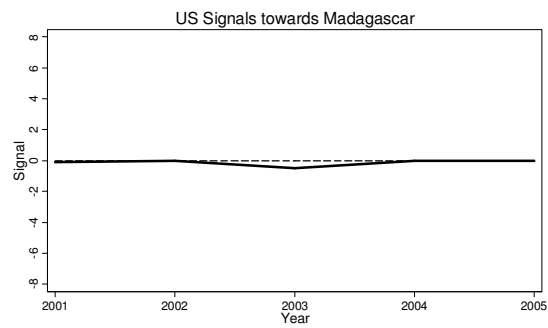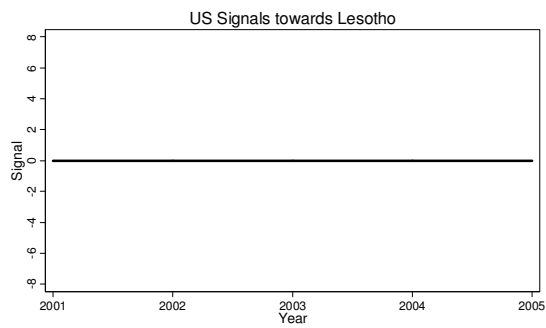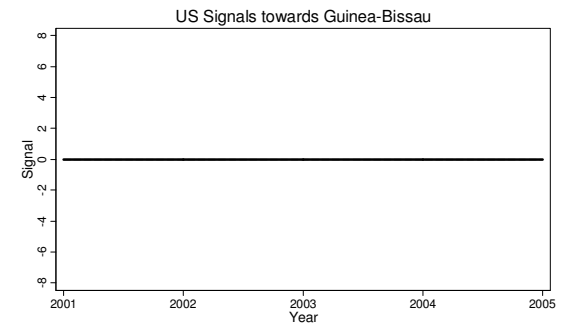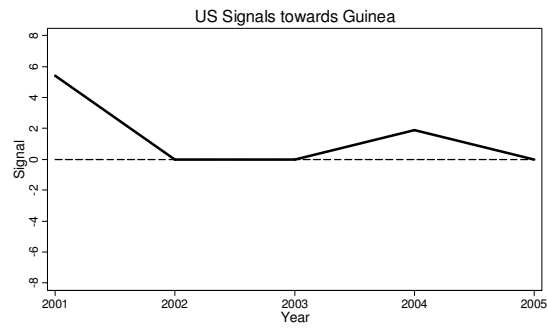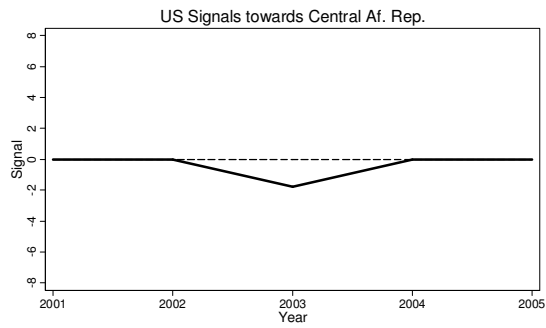
Figure 8.3. US Signals sent to "High Risk" States – *No Signal Sent in the most Recent Year*
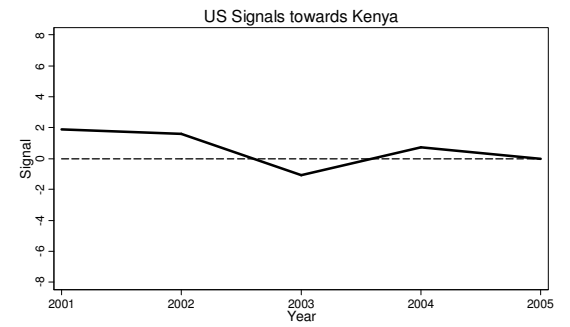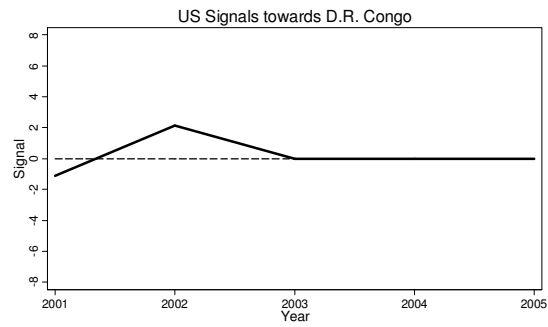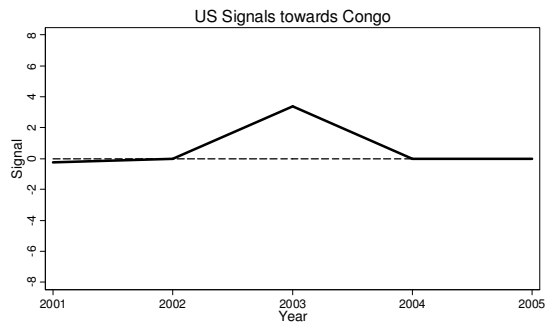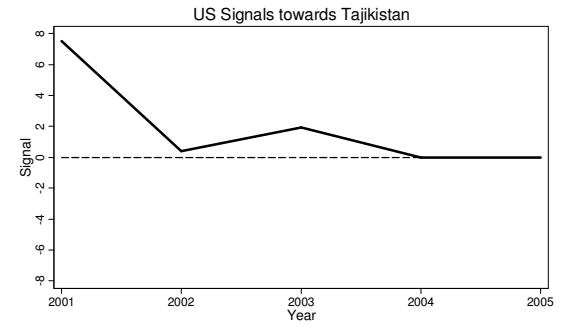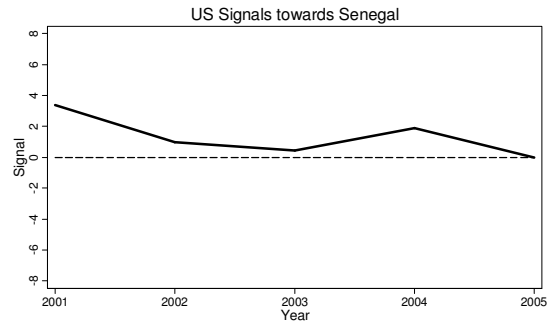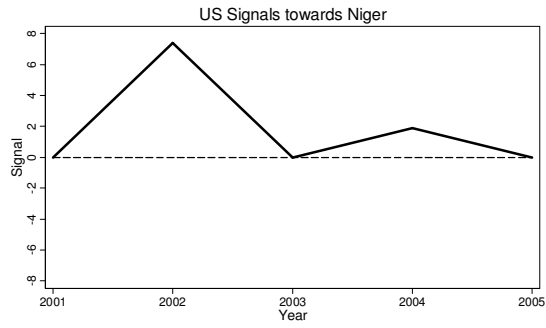
Figure 8.3 (continued).
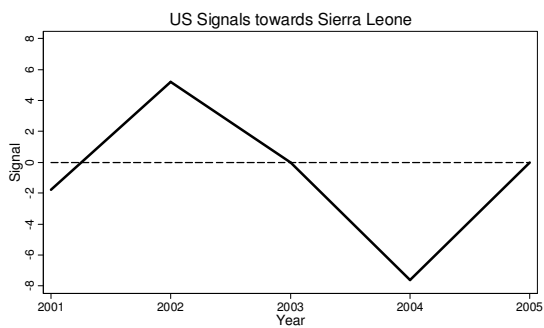
Figure 8.3 (continued).

Table 8.5. General Expectations for US Actions towards States with Ongoing Civil Wars

Pre-war signal	Support for the government	Support for the opposition
Pro-government	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Shorter war, quicker victory for the opposition
Pro-opposition	Shorter war, quicker victor for the government	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome

Table 8.6. Specific Expectations for US Actions towards States with Ongoing Civil Wars

| Country	Year war began	Pre-war signal*	Troop involvement?	Expected effect of current actions	Expected effect of future government support	Expected effect of future opposition support
Azerbaijan	2005	positive	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory
Chad	2005	none	None	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory
Iran	2005	negative	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome
Turkey	2005	positive	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory
India	2005	negative	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome
Myanmar	2005	negative	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome
Iraq	2004	positive	Support for government	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory
Sudan	2003	negative	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome
Afghanistan	2003	positive	Support for government	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory
Thailand	2003	negative	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Decrease duration, quicken time to government victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome
Russia	1999	positive	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory
Ethiopia	1999	positive	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory
Nepal	1996	positive	None	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory	Indeterminate effect on duration and outcome	Decrease duration, quicken time to opposition victory

*Positive pre-war signals indicate future support for the government; negative pre-war signals indicate future support for the opposition.

CHAPTER 9

EPILOGUE

> The real differences around the world today are not between Jews and Arabs;
> Protestants and Catholics; Muslims, Croats, and Serbs. The real differences are
> between those who embrace peace and those who cling to the past; between those
> who open their arms and those who are determined to clench their fists.
> <div align="right">William J. Clinton, 1997</div>

Since the termination of WWII, civil wars have killed nearly 20 million people
and have displaced another 67 million (Collier et al. 2005). Unfortunately, the events we
see on our televisions nightly indicate that this problem is not going away anytime soon,
and may escalate in the future. In this project, I have sought to shed light on how actions
from international actors affect the onset, duration and outcomes of civil wars. I began
by asking two sets of questions. First, how might relations between states affect internal
stability within each state's borders? For states at peace, how might signals received
from other states affect the likelihood that peace continues or violence erupts? Second,
how might interventions from external states affect the duration and outcome of conflicts
that are currently underway? Are the effects of interstate signals distinct to each phase of
the conflict, or is there some underlying process relating signals sent during each phase of
the war with previous events? In short, what can we learn by considering how
international relations affect the likelihood that a civil war begins, how long they last, and
how they end?

I built a three-part theory to answer these questions. In the first phase, I argued
that signals sent during peaceful periods allow both the government and the opposition to
develop expectations for future third party actions if a civil war were to begin. If these

signals are credible, they will have little effect on the likelihood of civil war onset because both the government and the opposition will be able to react to them in a consistent manner. Costly signals, such as sanctions, mobilization of the military, alliances, and trade ties, are the best means to assure that a signal is credible and easily understood. Cheap signals, which consist largely of seemingly innocuous statements, have the largest impact on inciting rebellion. Because they come with few real costs, cheap signals can be easily misunderstood, which increases the likelihood that one side will make unacceptable demands of the other. Empirical tests provided strong support for this argument, as did a close analysis of the onset of the Nicaraguan civil war (1978).

Given that signals mattered in the pre-war phase, the remainder of my theory suggested that the effect of third party actions during a war are conditioned on these signals. Actions that are consistent with pre-war signals will have little effect on the duration and outcome of a conflict because they were already integrated in the combatants' pre-war calculations. In contrast, unexpected actions, such as a failure to intervene on behalf of one's preferred side following a supportive pre-war signal, should have a significant effect on the duration and outcome of the fighting. Empirical tests examining the duration of civil conflicts suggested that unexpected actions dramatically decrease the duration of fighting. Likewise, empirical tests showed that a quick defeat is much more likely for the side that finds itself unexpectedly weak. These conclusions were also supported with an analysis of the Shiite and Kurdish rebellions in Iraq (1991).

At the conclusion of each empirical chapter, I explained the implications of the argument and empirical findings for civil war researchers and the broader research community. The previous chapter was devoted to providing explicit policy

recommendations based on this study. Rather than restate the implications here, in this chapter I take a critical look at this project to consider remaining puzzles that could be extended with future research.

We can begin by considering the main actors in the story. These include the government, the opposition, and external actors. In this project, I built on a large body of previous literature to provide a comprehensive look at the characteristics of the government theoretically and empirically. However, I made potentially problematic simplifying assumptions for both the opposition and the external actors. First, I considered the opposition to be single actor, and did not consider the traits of this group. This simplification was necessary for this project because it allowed me to shape a coherent theoretical argument based on previous bargaining models, which typically limit the arguments to a maximum of three actors. Though this simplification was necessary for this project, it would be useful for future research to more carefully consider the characteristics of opposition movements. As we know from both the case studies of Nicaragua and Iraq, there are often many opposition groups challenging a government at the same time, and these groups might also be fighting with each other. Considering the characteristics of multiple opposition groups within a country might provide important clarifications to my theoretical argument. For example, I argued that four causal mechanisms might lead to civil war onset when a state receives cheap hostile signals from external actors. It is likely that the effect of these mechanisms might vary depending on the characteristics of the opposition group. The first causal mechanism, for example, suggests that governments likely have better information about an external actor's true intentions because they have an infrastructure to collect and analyze

information (e.g., consulates and intelligence agencies). This argument likely holds for small, grass-roots opposition groups, such as the Shiites in Iraq. However, it may fail when considering more established opposition groups, such the Kurds in Iraq, who are likely equally as capable in acquiring information. Similar variations might clarify expectations for the duration and outcome of civil conflicts. For example, Cunningham (2006) argues that multiple rebel organizations operating within the same country might increase a civil war's duration and affect its eventual outcome because there are multiple actors that need to be satisfied in an attempt to settle the conflict. Thus, a better understanding of the size, goals, and fragmentation of the opposition would help us better understand how external actors might affect the duration and outcome of a civil conflict.

Second, future research might also provide a more careful analysis of external actors. In this project, I analyzed how the effect of signals might be conditioned on a variety of characteristics of the external state, such as the signaler's democracy level, military strength, and consistency of signals over time. However, I chose to aggregate these signals into a single conflict/cooperation continuum. This provided for straight-forward empirical analyses, but it may have masked important findings about particular types of signals. Though my theory already predicts that signals should have less of an impact on the likelihood of civil war onset as they become more costly, one could break down the specific signals listed in Table 3.1 into separate categories to better understand which particular strategies might have the largest impact on the likelihood of civil conflict. For example, which cheap hostile signal would have the greatest impact on inciting civil violence: making verbal threats or expelling diplomats from the country?

More careful analyses such as this would lead to more specific policy advice than I was able to present in the previous chapter.

One might also extend the set of potential signalers. In this project, I limited the theory and empirical analyses to states, which ignores a potential role for international organizations (IOs). This decision will become increasingly problematic in future research because IOs such as the UN, NATO, and the African Union (AU) are playing an increasingly important role in war-torn areas (Weiss, Forsythe and Coate 1994; Betts 2001). Thus, an important extension of this research would be to examine how signals and interventions from IOs affect the onset, duration and outcome of civil conflicts.

Potentially troublesome simplifications were also made about the dependent variables: civil war onset, duration and outcome. In this project, I relied on two common sources to define these variables (Uppsala/PRIO and COW). However, past research indicates that it may be unwise to consider all civil conflicts to be the same. For instance, Sambanis (2001) and Buhaug (2006) show that many of the explanatory variables used to explain the onset of civil wars behave differently depending on whether or not the civil conflict is ethnic- or separatist-based. Similarly, Fearon (2004) finds that the duration of civil conflicts can best be explained by examining its type, rather than depending on the usual suspects as primary independent variables.[169] It may also be true that the effect of signals sent from external actors on the onset, duration and outcome of civil conflicts vary depending on the type of civil conflict. Many scholars have argued that ethnically-based opposition movements have higher resolve than non-ethnic movements (Carment

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[169] For example, Fearon (2004) finds that land conflicts between a peripheral ethnic minority and state-sponsored migrants of a dominant ethnic group, which he refers to as "sons of the soil" wars, are long-lived, as are conflicts where the opposition gains substantial revenue from natural resources. In contrast, civil wars emerging from coups or revolutions are much shorter on average.

and James 1996; Kaufman 1996; Davis and Moore 1997; Saideman 1997). If this is true, then one might speculate that signals from third parties would matter less for ethnic-based opposition groups because their resolve would make them challenge the government and fight to the end, regardless of their expectations for third party support.

Like the presence of civil war, it may also be true that the dependent variable masks important differences in considering the absence of civil war. That is, it may not be safe to assume that all peaceful state-years have equal levels of stability. The absence of civil conflict in Norway, for example, may be much different than the absence of civil war in Lebanon. I made this consideration explicit in the previous chapter by ignoring states with very low probabilities of civil conflict when making policy recommendations. Future research could also examine this variation by building a measure of risk into empirical models. For instance, Clark and Regan (2003) examine a split population model to jointly estimate the opportunity and willingness for two states to go to war. A similar technique could be used to examine the opportunity for an opposition group to challenge the state (which would presumably be low in states like Norway and high in states like Lebanon), and the actual initiation of conflict against the state. This technique might help us better understand how the effect of interstate signals might vary based the receiving state's latent propensity for conflict.

Finally, this project has shown the rational expectations approach to be a fruitful path in improving our understanding of civil conflicts. I have focused here on how external signals might provide shocks to these expectations. However, the case studies presented in this project helped highlight alternative mechanisms that could be explored with future research. The Nicaraguan case suggested that natural disasters or political

assassinations may contribute to the onset of civil violence. Likewise, the Iraqi case indicated that variations in media coverage and harsh government policies might affect the duration and outcomes of civil conflicts. Each of these topics might be fertile topics for future research, and they represent only a small piece of what could be learned through more careful analyses of specific civil conflicts.

Despite the deficiencies noted above, this project has provided a useful step in furthering our understanding of how international actors affect the onset, duration and outcome of civil wars. As John F. Kennedy once said, "Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures."[170] It is my hope that this project has made at least a small step in this process.

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[170] To the General Assembly of the United Nations, September 1963.

APPENDIX

Table A1. Smith Blundell (1986) Tests of Exogeneity

Table	Model	Chi-square	p-value
3.2	2	.004	.950
3.2	3	.198	.657
3.3	4	.892	.345
3.3	5	2.13	.144

*Tests use the *probexog* function in Stata 8.0. Only the variables significant in Table 3.2 or Table 3.3 are shown.

Table A2. Granger Causality Tests

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Cheap signals$_{t-1}$	0.18***	-0.08***	-0.10***
	(11.92)	(5.63)	(6.34)
Cheap signals$_{t-2}$	0.12***	0.07***	0.07***
	(7.78)	(4.82)	(4.83)
Cheap signals$_{t-3}$	0.10***	0.08***	0.11***
	(6.09)	(5.39)	(7.41)
Cheap signals$_{t-4}$	0.11***	0.10***	0.11***
	(6.43)	(6.12)	(6.89)
Cheap signals$_{t-5}$	0.05**	0.06***	0.06***
	(2.92)	(0.02)	(4.12)
Civil war onset$_{t-1}$	-.000	0.02	0.02
	(0.00)	(0.83)	(0.89)
Civil war onset$_{t-2}$	0.24	0.02	-0.05
	(1.61)	(0.79)	(1.82)
Civil war onset$_{t-3}$	-0.13	-0.05*	-0.00
	(0.86)	(1.98)	(0.17)
Civil war onset$_{t-4}$	-0.10	0.01	0.00
	(0.61)	(0.24)	(0.11)
Civil war onset$_{t-5}$	0.34***	0.01	0.05*
	(10.40)	(0.49)	(1.85)

Note: Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses. *significant at .05; **significant at .01; ***significant at .001 (one-tailed). Peace Years and Splines not shown. All independent variables are lagged at t-1.

Model 1: Cheap signals = COPDAB/WEIS conflict/cooperation continuum

Model 2: Cheap signals = Switch from negative(t-1) to positive(t) cheap signals (positive shock)

Model 3: Cheap signals = Switch from positive(t-1) to negative(t) cheap signals (negative shock)

Table A3. The Effect of Cheap Signals After
Dropping the United States and Soviet Union as Potential Signalers

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Cheap signals	-0.066	-0.094**	-0.102**			-0.111*
	(1.49)	(2.12)	(2.02)			(1.70)
Volatility				-0.038		0.019
				(0.92)		(0.30)
Negative shock					0.461*	0.192
					(1.87)	(0.59)
Positive shock					-0.016	0.203
					(0.06)	(0.65)
MIDs-all states			-0.244			-0.239
			(1.02)			(1.00)
MIDs-neighbors			0.198			0.177
			(0.70)			(0.62)
Sanctions-all states			-0.142			-0.159
			(0.46)			(0.52)
Total trade-all states			-0.000			-0.000
			(0.43)			(0.47)
Total trade-neighbors			-0.000			-0.000
			(0.87)			(0.84)
Alliances-all states			0.027			0.027
			(1.41)			(1.39)
Alliances-neighbors			-0.383			-0.378
			(0.85)			(0.84)
GDP/capita	-0.700***	-0.711***	-0.677**	-0.682***	-0.690***	-0.679**
	(3.03)	(3.04)	(2.17)	(2.91)	(2.94)	(2.18)
Population	0.435***	0.458***	0.575***	0.460***	0.453***	0.581***
	(3.11)	(3.22)	(3.18)	(3.24)	(3.19)	(3.20)
Oil exporter	0.694***	0.736***	0.602**	0.715***	0.722***	0.608**
	(2.99)	(3.15)	(2.34)	(3.07)	(3.09)	(2.36)
% Mountainous	0.014	-0.003	-0.047	0.008	0.002	-0.051
	(0.19)	(0.04)	(0.58)	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.63)
Instability	0.510**	0.489**	0.281	0.497**	0.477**	0.268
	(2.32)	(2.20)	(1.12)	(2.23)	(2.14)	(1.07)
Anocracy	0.560***	0.617***	0.428*	0.620***	0.616***	0.422*
	(2.60)	(2.84)	(1.77)	(2.84)	(2.82)	(1.74)
Democracy	0.024	0.054	0.037	0.012	0.020	0.041
	(0.09)	(0.21)	(0.13)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.14)
Observations	5108	5021	4041	5021	5021	4041

Note: Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses. *significant at .05; **significant at .01;
***significant at .001 (one-tailed). Peace Years and Splines not shown. All independent variables are
lagged at t-1.

Table A4. Expectations for Civil War Duration and Outcome: Distribution of Cases

Remain hostile (Expected intervention-opposition)	Do nothing (Opposition unexpectedly weak)	Become supportive (*Opposition unexpectedly weak*)	Remain supportive (Expected intervention-government)	Do nothing (Government unexpectedly weak)	Become hostile (Government unexpectedly weak)
Azerbaijan '91-94	Angola '92-94	Cambodia '78-89	Afghanistan '79-89	Afghanistan '78, '90-92	Cambodia '70-75
Iraq '85-88	Burundi '88	Congo DR '60-60, '64	Cambodia '70-73	Algeria '62-63, '92-97	Chad '82-88
Liberia '90	Cambodia. '90-91	Liberia '91-92	Chad '83-88	Argentina '55	Egypt '65-73
	Congo DR '61-63, '65, '93		Dominican Republic '65	Bolivia '52	Ethiopia '76-77
	Guatemala '54		Egypt '64-73	Burundi '72	Iraq '74-75
	Iran '81-82, '89-90, '91-97		Ethiopia '76-77	Cambodia '93-97	Jordan '70
	Liberia '89, '93-95		Lebanon '58, '76-88	Chad '66-71, '80-81	Lebanon '76-88
	Nicaragua '78-79		Sri Lanka '90	Chile '73	
	Nigeria '80-81, '84		Vietnam '61-65	China '56-69, '67-68	
	Romania '89		Yemen '62-67	Colombia '49-62, '84-97	
	Somalia '82-97			Cuba '58-59	
	Uganda '80-88			Egypt '63	
	Yugoslavia. '91-92			El Salvador '79-92	
				Ethiopia '74-75, '78-91	
				Gua. '66-72, '70-1, '78-84	
				India '85-97	
				Indonesia '50, '53, '56-60	
				Iraq '59, '61-63	
				Iran '78-79	
				Laos '60-62	
				Leb. '75, '89-90	
				Myanmar '68-80, '83-95	
				Nicaragua '82-90	
				Nigeria '67-70	
				Pakistan '71, '73-77	
				Peru '82-95	
				Philippines '50-52, '72-92	
				Rwanda '63-64	
				Sri '71, '83-6, '87-9, '91-7	
				Sudan '63-72, '83-97	
				Thailand '70-73	
				Uganda '66	
				Vietnam '60	
				Yemen '68-69	
				Zimbabwe '72-79	

Table A5. External Interventions and the Outcomes
of Civil Wars: Multinomial Logit Analysis

	Government victory	Opposition victory	Government victory	Opposition victory
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Expected intervention -opposition	26.728 (0.000)	24.728*** (2.348)		
Opposition unexpect. weak	-1.743 (1.560)	-1.361 (1.589)		
Expected intervention -government			2.655 (3.535)	4.257 (3.595)
Government unexpect. weak			0.790 (1.322)	2.806* (1.477)
Cheap signals	-0.688 (0.511)	-0.866* (0.517)	-0.589 (0.498)	-1.133** (0.522)
Fight for the government	0.236 (1.130)	0.275 (1.224)	-0.198 (1.017)	0.091 (1.146)
Deaths/year	-3.358* (1.958)	-0.115 (0.630)	-3.104 (1.990)	-0.161 (0.620)
Democracy	-1.424 (1.056)	-1.299 (1.192)	-1.641 (1.047)	-1.828 (1.215)
Population	-0.109 (0.980)	-0.850 (1.078)	-0.236 (0.906)	-0.977 (1.024)
Wealth	-3.083** (1.228)	-2.336* (1.268)	-2.553** (1.182)	-1.558 (1.264)
Ethnic fract.	1.877 (1.778)	2.318 (1.878)	1.737 (1.770)	2.378 (1.903)
Religious fract.	-0.406 (2.783)	-2.482 (2.895)	-0.389 (2.677)	-1.864 (2.838)
% Mountainous	0.608 (0.415)	0.630 (0.438)	0.625 (0.394)	0.814* (0.445)
Observations	83	83	83	83

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%; *** significant at .1% (one tailed). Ongoing wars is the excluded category.

Table A6. External Interventions and the Outcomes of Civil Wars:
Replications of Table 6.2 with Traditional Coding

	Time to government victory or favorable settlement			Time to opposition victory or favorable settlement		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Expected intervention -opposition	-1.039 (1.508)		-1.451 (1.295)			
Opposition unexpect. weak		-1.526*** (0.426)	-1.542*** (0.422)			
Expected intervention -government				2.621 (2.278)		1.810 (1.978)
Government unexpect. weak					-1.136 (0.748)	-1.084 (0.782)
Cheap signals	-0.107* (0.055)	-0.144*** (0.048)	-0.143*** (0.048)	0.001 (0.062)	0.040 (0.047)	0.039 (0.046)
Fight for the government	-0.411 (0.334)	-0.335 (0.325)	-0.354 (0.313)	-0.619 (0.621)	-0.489 (0.469)	-0.537 (0.499)
Deaths/year	3.509*** (1.352)	3.444** (1.373)	3.431** (1.370)	-0.766*** (0.157)	-0.547** (0.217)	-0.553** (0.217)
Democracy	-0.416 (0.365)	-0.385 (0.336)	-0.395 (0.332)	1.176 (1.052)	0.943 (0.899)	0.981 (0.914)
Population	0.154 (0.270)	0.150 (0.264)	0.140 (0.260)	0.628 (0.803)	0.566 (0.611)	0.549 (0.612)
Wealth	1.448*** (0.390)	1.406*** (0.376)	1.426*** (0.367)	-0.227 (0.741)	-0.232 (0.644)	-0.144 (0.636)
Ethnic fract.	0.006 (0.476)	0.097 (0.441)	0.093 (0.436)	0.122 (1.025)	-0.021 (0.747)	0.094 (0.804)
Religious fract.	-0.607 (0.784)	-0.502 (0.722)	-0.503 (0.712)	0.625 (1.159)	0.514 (0.814)	0.442 (0.856)
% Mountainous	-0.095 (0.130)	-0.120 (0.114)	-0.125 (0.114)	0.001 (0.199)	0.013 (0.142)	0.016 (0.153)
Observations	482	482	482	482	482	482
ρ	1.209	1.305	1.316	1.100	1.388	1.370
se(ρ)	0.099	0.119	0.121	0.174	0.408	0.399
Wars	83	83	83	83	83	83
Wars ended	48	48	48	21	21	21
Observations	482	482	482	482	482	482
Wald χ^2	46.69***	66.17***	69.84***	74.22***	128.77***	136.25***

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%; *** significant at .1% (one tailed).

Table A7. Baseline Predictions for Civil War Onset

	(coeff)	(SE)	(P)
GDP/capita	-.894	.202	<.001
Population	.690	.117	<.001
Oil exporter	.815	.206	<.001
% Mountainous	.080	.059	.171
Instability	.045	.208	.828
Anocracy	.318	.198	.108
Democracy	.105	.204	.940
Observations	5998		
LR chi2	122.64		
Pr > chi2	<.001		

Note: Peace Years and Splines not shown. All independent variables are lagged at t-1.

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