

# Order & Violence



# Some general tips for evaluating purported paths to peace

- What is the problem to which this path is the solution?
  - What's the theoretical basis for the change or intervention?
- What is this path affecting?
  - Relative bargaining power?
  - The size of the pie?
  - The width of the bargaining range?
- How effective is this likely to be on the margin?

Shortly (and we can continue next class):  
How should we think about paths to peace in these scenarios?

- Post-US Afghanistan
- Israelis—Palestinians

## But first, continued from last day: Discussion

What are the conceptual strengths and weaknesses of the following peace-building efforts?

1. Broad-based job creation program for violence-prone areas of a big city
2. UN-administered elections within a few years of a civil war peace agreement
3. Social contact programs to promote interaction between youths from different ethnic/religious groups
4. Including more women in peace processes
5. A post-war truth and reconciliation commission
6. A national firearm buyback program, plus a ban on private ownership of weapons

# Broad-based job creation for violence-prone areas of a big city

## Pros

- Circumstances in which this might affect violence
  - Would it make "soldiers" more difficult to recruit, and shrink the optimal size of armed groups?
    - Maybe
  - If targeted to the most violence-prone members of society
    - A kind of "incapacitation" argument
    - Or perhaps violence not a byproduct of this new job
    - But can they hold down a job?
    - Does it change their underlying incentives for violence?

## Cons

- May not be connected to the production of violence in all circumstances
  - e.g. Feuds between armed organizations (mixture of vengeance, rational reputation)
  - Is there an underlying demand for criminal, violent labor that would be unaffected?
- Not very targeted at most violent individuals
  - Highly cost-ineffective way to reduce violence?
  - Perhaps worth it only if passes a cost-benefit test from economic development benefits alone

# UN-administered elections within a few years of a civil war peace agreement

## Pros

- Will transfer some degree of mobilizational power to the disenfranchised, and compel leaders to be somewhat accountable to them
  - Question is if they have de facto power
- Competitive, representative institutions are a basis for making credible commitments
  - If it works as intended, makes power more divisible
  - Could conceivably reduce commitment problems
- Legitimate state and norms of democracy could be stabilizing in long run

## Cons

- Could create a mismatch between de jure and de facto power
  - Will simply result in patronage?
  - Not clear this is a much more checked system if de facto military and material and mobilizational power highly unequal
- Creates a politically competitive atmosphere at a very high-stakes moment
- Especially if this is a contest for the top office – winner take all centralized systems
- If officeholder has ability to rewrite the rules, could generate commitment problem

# Social contact programs to promote interaction between youths from different ethnic/religious groups

## Pros

- In principle could create social bonds and mutual understanding
  - A kind of interdependence through other-regarding preferences
- May also reduce information asymmetries and misperceptions
  - Of course, this relies on empirical question that familiarity reduces these misperceptions, does not backfire, etc
  - E.g. the Indonesia example

## Cons

- There are questions about efficiency of simple contact
  - E.g. Could result in further polarization
- In practical terms, unclear whether this is scalable
  - Maybe it is an illustration in miniature of the ways that fostering actual social integration is beneficial
    - Intermingled housing, workplaces
    - Costs of separation (e.g. walls in Israel and Palestine, or in N Ireland)

# Including more women in peace processes

## Pros

- Enfranchising more people generally should be pacifying
  - Increasing mobilizational power of a more victimized group
- Different preferences: May be true that women are less aggressive and more conciliatory than men
- Perhaps increases the perceived legitimacy of a peace agreement
  - To the extent norms and legitimacy help overcome anarchy and increase commitment

## Cons

- Unclear how participation in peace processes will meaningfully change accountability of armed groups
- Unclear that women in positions of leadership are more passive or peaceful
  - Preferences may not be all that different than men, especially in slow-thinking circumstances
  - Any leaders who are faithful agents of de facto powerful interests will come to same decision?
  - Women may be subject to misperceptions by prejudiced rivals



# A post-war truth and reconciliation commission

## Pros

- Could conceivably address a desire for justice and for punishing wrongdoing
  - Nonviolent way to seek atonement, agree collectively on justice
- Could be an opportunity for perspective-taking
- Could be an opportunity for identifying a common historical narrative
  - Reducing misperceptions
  - Reducing capacity for elites to manipulate and misrepresent
- May have other benefits, in terms of easing social integration

## Cons

- Unclear to what extent anger and vengeance are actually drivers of continued conflict
  - In how many cases is this true
- Unclear whether these grievances and concerns are addressed by the TRC process
  - Will the aggrieved recognize the process as legitimate and sufficient?
- Hinges on the efficacy and legitimacy of the process

# A national firearm buyback program, plus a ban on private ownership of weapons

## Pros

- Strengthens the bargaining power of the state vis a vis potential militias and rebels
  - May not change the probability of violence, but limiting the bargaining power of violent actors may be a desired end in itself
  - i.e. this is principally designed to shift p
- Might reduce violence if a lot of violence is reactive, emotional, in the moment
  - If violence has more rational roots, unclear if it changes incentives
- Conditional on violence breaking out, might reduce lethality

## Cons

- Could it lead to a security dilemma
  - One side worried about disarming because of ability of other side to obtain arms
  - In principle could lead to commitment problems
- If it reduces the costliness of conflict, is violence more likely to happen?
  - More frequent but less serious violent disputes?

# Israel—Palestine: What did we discuss was the problem?

- After a provocative event, or before an election, politicians have a short term political incentive to use violence
  - i.e. a relatively low intensity conflict, with recurring spikes in violence, and the continual erosion of political options
- An ideological indivisibility (an unwillingness to accept a non-Jewish government, an unfavorable division of land)
  - Perhaps due to different reference points of a just distribution
  - Perhaps due to a willingness to incur extreme costs for a larger share of land/power
- Fragmented organization, on Israeli or Palestinian side, with spoilers who are prone to
- Public inattention to the costs of war
- Previous rounds of violence have diminished integration/intertwined interests and augmented antipathy and misperceptions
- Anticipated shift in power that arises from a growing Palestinian population
  - And from opportunities posed by changing US administrations

- Could view some American policy as trying to reduce likelihood of violence
  - Trying to create a common reference point for what is a realistic division of territory and political power
    - Is recognizing de facto division of land doing so, or is this simply an attempt to affect p?
  - Obama arguably tried to find a reference point that was considered more just by Palestinian side, but this ran up against Israeli and US right wing and failed to gain political support
- And some American policy as trying to shape p
  - Possible examples (with Trump and Obama administrations pushing for different p)
    - Recognizing/not recognizing certain annexations, Jerusalem as capital, etc
    - Limiting/allowing movements and recognition of Palestinian leaders
    - Limit/permit ability of other nations and international organizations to hold Israel to account
  - Is this an attempt to put in place a two-state solution only after one side has solidified its control over territory? Or a de facto two-state solution (state minus)
    - Potential limitations: Popular mobilization of Arab-Israelis and other Palestinians Israel, and more extremist violence
- Other approaches
  - Trying to strengthen Palestinian political institutions/coherency

- Husam Zomlot, Head of the Palestinian Mission to the UK and Strategic Affairs Advisor to the Palestinian President, 2019 [Pearson annual lecture](#)
- Ambassador Hesham Youssef, Egyptian diplomat, [2020 USIP](#)
- [Crisis group reports](#)

# Post-US exit Afghanistan: What is the problem

- Two big possible rivalries
  - Between Taliban and other domestic actors (warlords, modernist parties, other tribes)
  - Between Taliban-dominated government and Islamic extremists (e.g. ISIS-K)
- Taliban intransigence — unwilling to compromise and share power with modernist parties
- Potential commitment problems
  - Taliban are unusually and temporarily strong now. Compromise with other parties would undermine Taliban bargaining power in longer run
  - Risk that political institutions become hyper-centralized, making power harder to divide in future
  - Taliban calculates that killing or mass out-migration of modernists would cement their control of the country
- Agency problems – Taliban and warlords will not internalize full costs of war

# Tools available

## To international community

- Modest ability to reward/sanction
  - Release of national reserves
  - Humanitarian aid
  - Sovereign recognition

## To domestic civil society