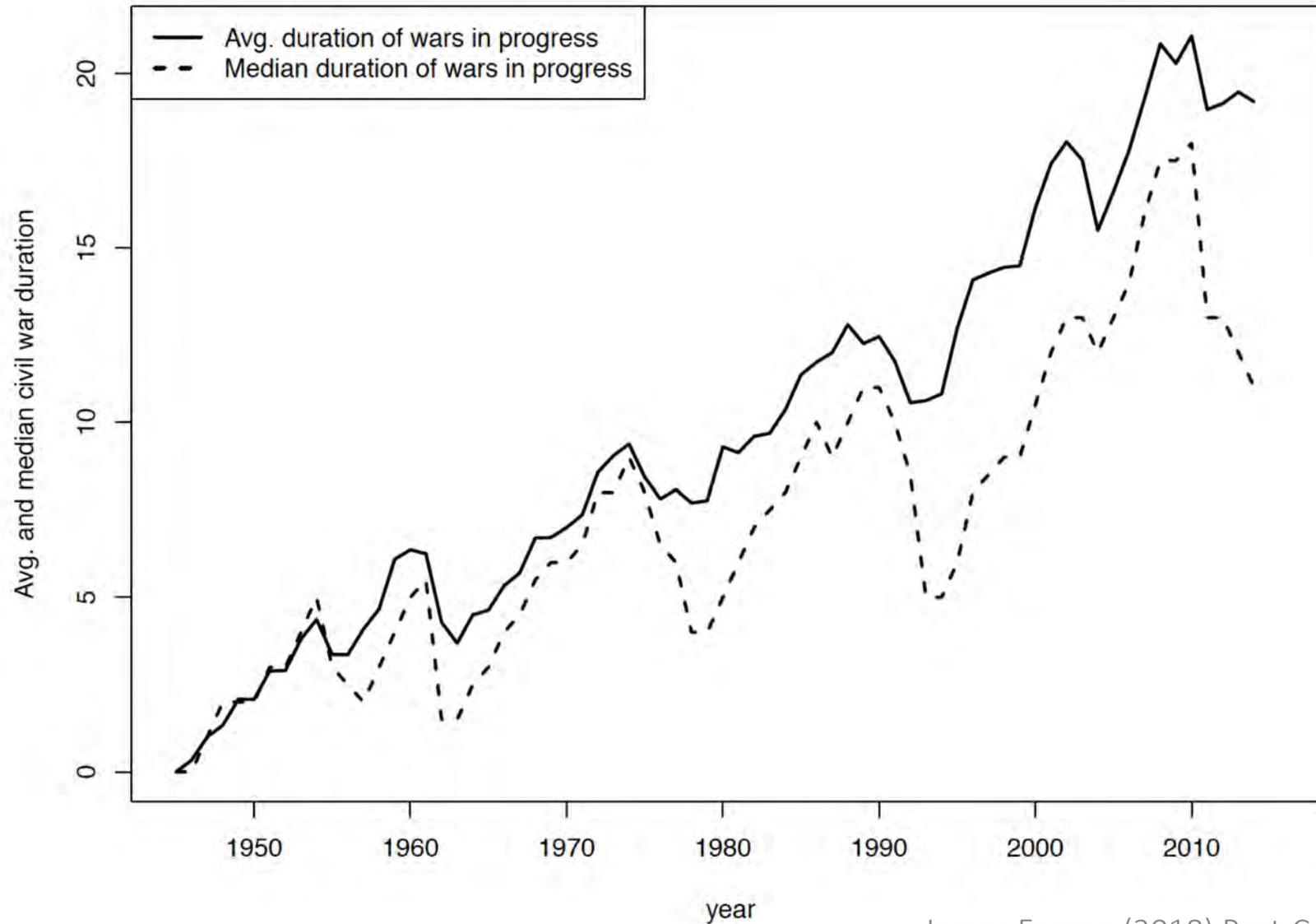


# Political development & policy

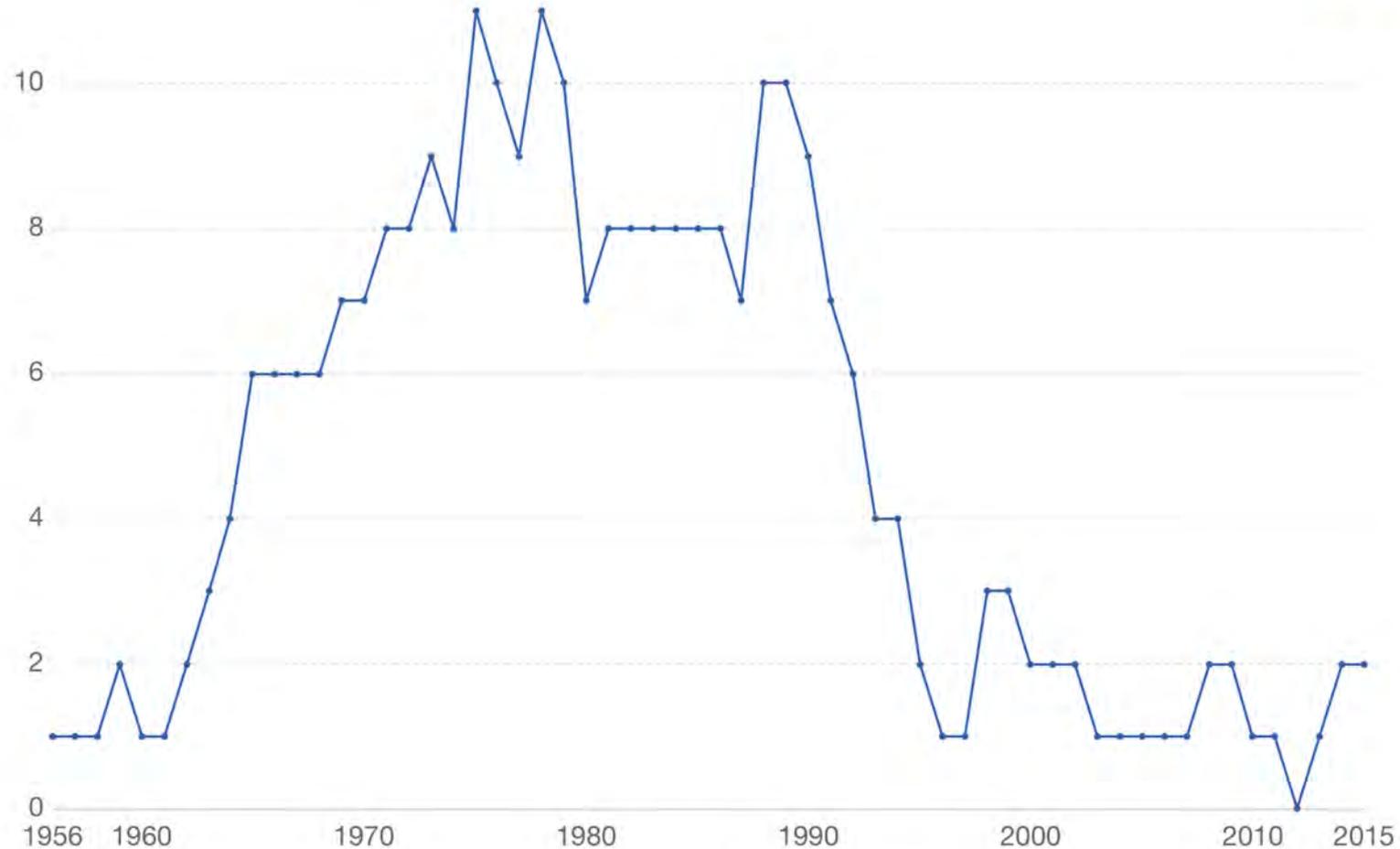


# What can and should be done about conflicts, especially long-running ones?



# What are the available policy responses to civil wars, mass killings, etc? What (if anything) works?

Number of active genocides and politicides around the world

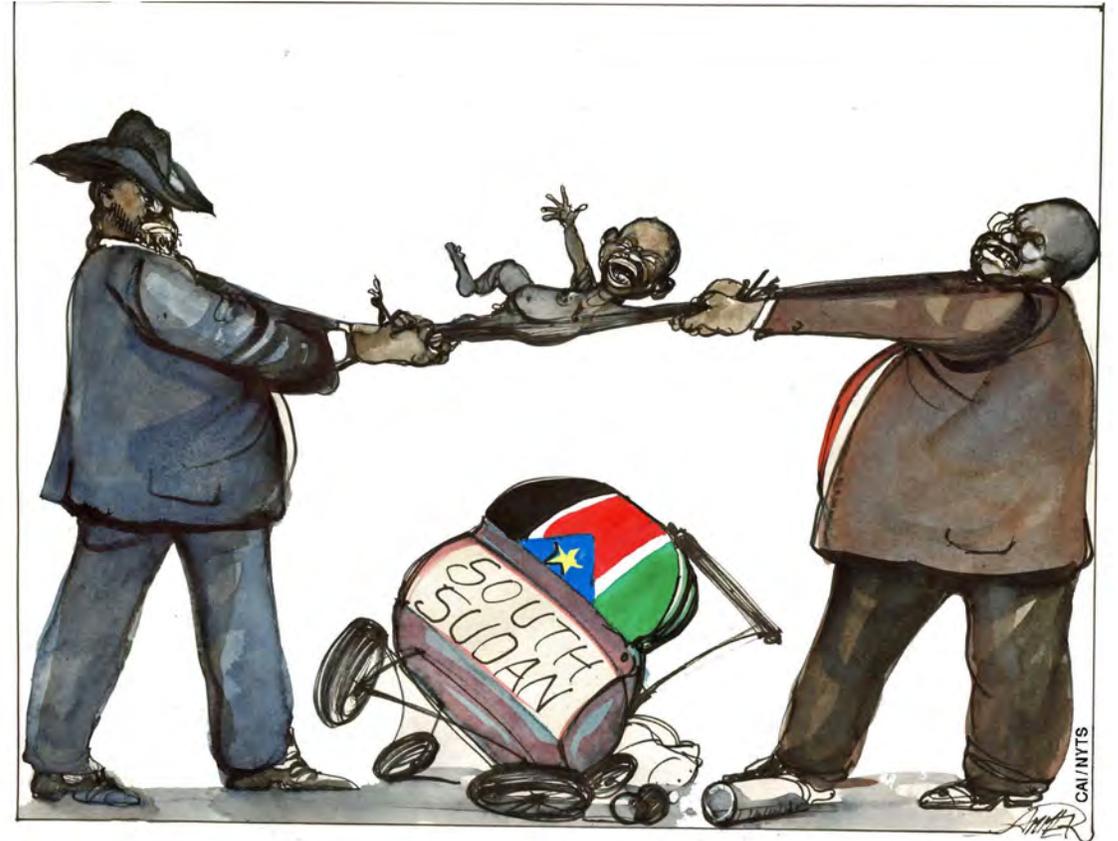


Source: State Failure Problem Set, 1955-2014 - Political Instability Task Force (PITF)

OurWorldInData.org/genocides/ • CC BY

## These terrible events provoke some of the most difficult questions in the world, and answers are limited

- Ought neighbors, military allies, aid donors, and responsible governments respond to civil wars or atrocities?
- This moral question is affected by a very practical questions:
  - Do any strategies work, under what circumstances, and why?
  - What are the unintended consequences?
- And what can be done after wars end?
  - Is the usual template working?



Over the next few weeks, we will be talking about how various interventions can foster order (or not)

1. Mediation
2. Making peace pay
3. Trusteeships
4. Peacekeeping missions
5. Humanitarian intervention
6. Decentralization
7. Foreign aid
8. State building assistance
9. Democracy promotion

Today & next day



- I. Diagnosing the problem: Roots of post-colonial conflict (continued)
- II. Examining solutions: International interventions to address conflict
  - A. Mediation
  - B. Making peace pay
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## Recall our taxonomy of reasons for conflict

1. **Unchecked elites.** Groups are more likely to fight when decision-makers ignore the costs of war or receive personal benefits (and no one holds them to account)
2. **Violent values.** Sometimes the act of violence is its own reward, in terms of status, emotion, or principle. These are non-material incentives for war
3. **Systematic mistakes.** Competition is a complex set of decisions, and humans tend to systematic mistakes when evaluating costs or chances of victory
4. **Uncertainty.** When the opposing group's strength or intentions are ambiguous, taking a chance by fighting can be the best way to resolve the uncertainty, so that war is the result of a risky gamble
5. **Impossible bargains / Commitment problems.** Some circumstances give one side an irresistible incentive to risk war. Even if there is a peaceful deal that makes both sides better off, that deal is non-credible, as at least once side has incentives to renege

## Last time: How might we think of these conflicts through the lens of elite bargaining?

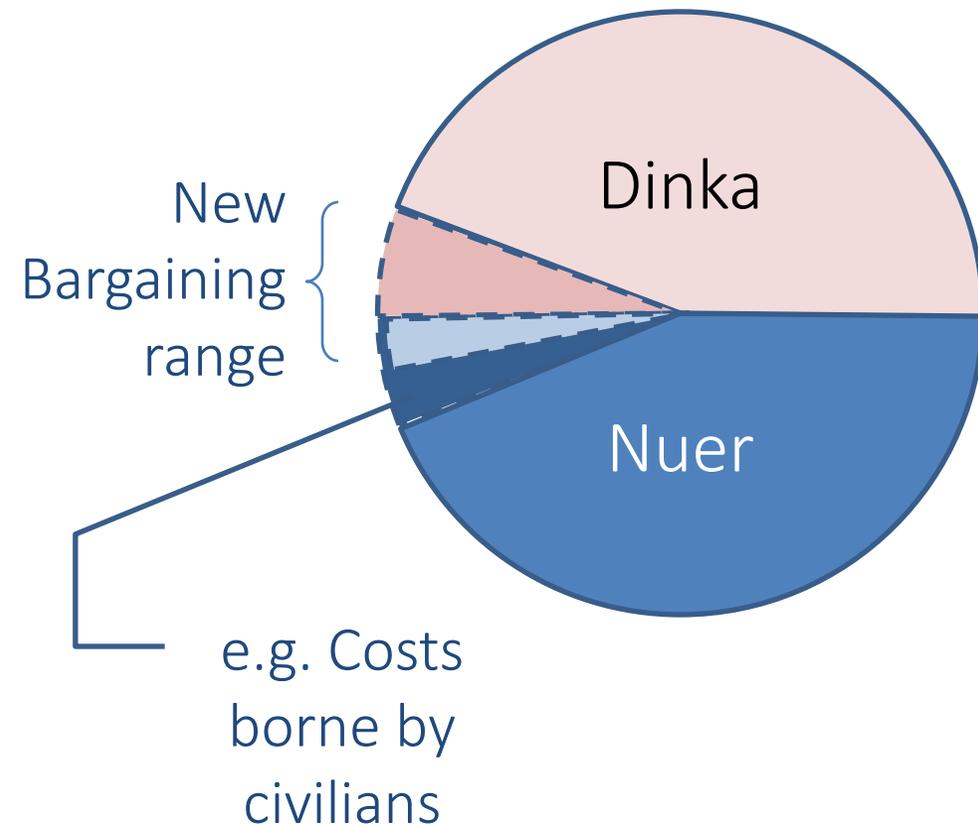
- Ex-colonies are largely limited access orders with elites who control the military, material and mobilizational power
- Newly independent elites must strike bargains to divide power and rents in society
- High stakes bargains: The rules and organizations developed will shape who holds power and controls rents now and also into the future
- Beset by shocks and other changes in power, forcing renewed bargaining
- Considerable uncertainty about each sides' power, amplified by changing environment and shocks
- Risks of war amplified by private incentives for conflict among domestic elites and superpowers

Amos Sawyer was most concerned about the centralization of power in post-colonial states like Liberia. Why?



## If leaders ignore the costs of war, costly war is less puzzling

- To the extent that leaders ignore costs, this shrinks the bargaining range
  - Sometimes called an “agency problem”
- But if a bargaining range still exists, war still remains a “puzzle”
  - But narrower ranges can accentuate asymmetric information and commitment problems and other causes of war
- In the extreme, leaders can actually have economic incentives for war
  - Some groups are enriched by war, and have an interest in perpetuating it



## Peaceful bargains can be difficult in highly centralized political systems

- A possible **commitment problem**: A highly centralized Presidency is inherently difficult to divide
- Colonial systems, as well as post-Independence institutional choices, means that many countries are highly centralized Presidential systems
- The post-WWII international system gives groups strong incentives to try to capture the central state
  - Principles of territorial sovereignty and fixed borders
  - *“The three hundred years between 1648 and 1945 constituted an era of war between states; the last sixty years appear to be an age of war within states.”* —David Armitage, “Civil Wars” (2017)
- Thus, in weakly institutionalized systems, the Presidency is a high stakes prize to be captured

Most of the time, regimes look like peaceful elite bargains

- Francois et al show how the division of cabinets by ethnic group in Africa are nearly proportional to a proxy for political power: share of population
- What makes power easier to share in this way in some regimes over others?

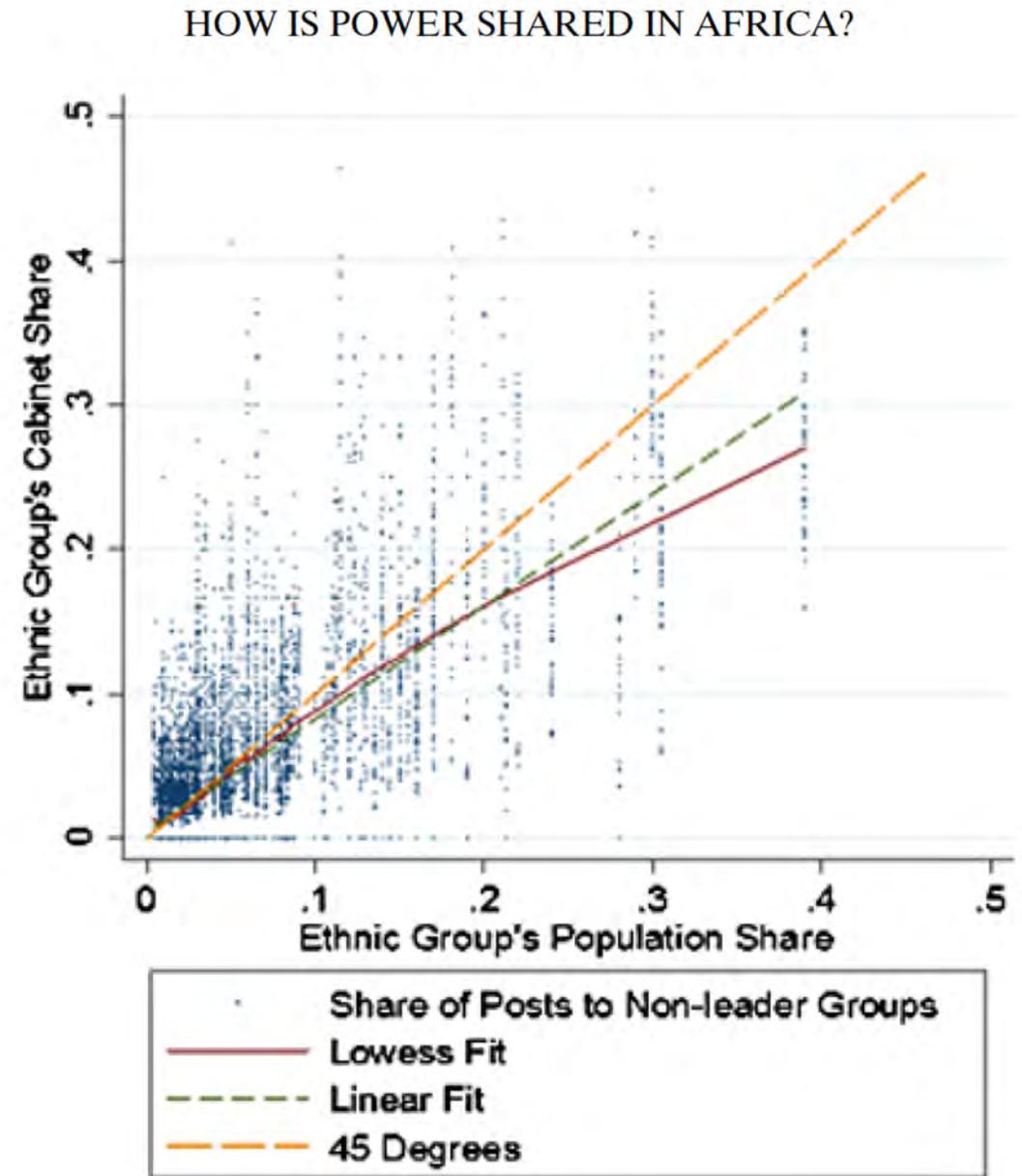


FIGURE 2.—Allocation of cabinet shares and population shares, full sample, 1960–2004.

## How might we think of these conflicts through the lens of elite bargaining?

Ex-colonies are largely limited access orders with elites who control the military, material and mobilizational power. Newly independent elites must strike bargains to divide power and rents in society.

- **Uncertainty:** Considerable uncertainty about each sides' power
- **Unchecked elites:** Highly centralized political systems with private internal and external incentives for war
- **Violent values:** External ideological incentives help drive war
- **Commitment problems** grow with high-stakes bargains
  - The rules and organizations developed will shape who holds power and controls rents now and also into the future
  - Difficult to construct the institutions—the systems of rules and organizations—that will enable bargaining to take place credible commitments to be made

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## Summary: Interventions can end violence and create basic order if they help develop self-enforcing bargains or externally enforce bargains

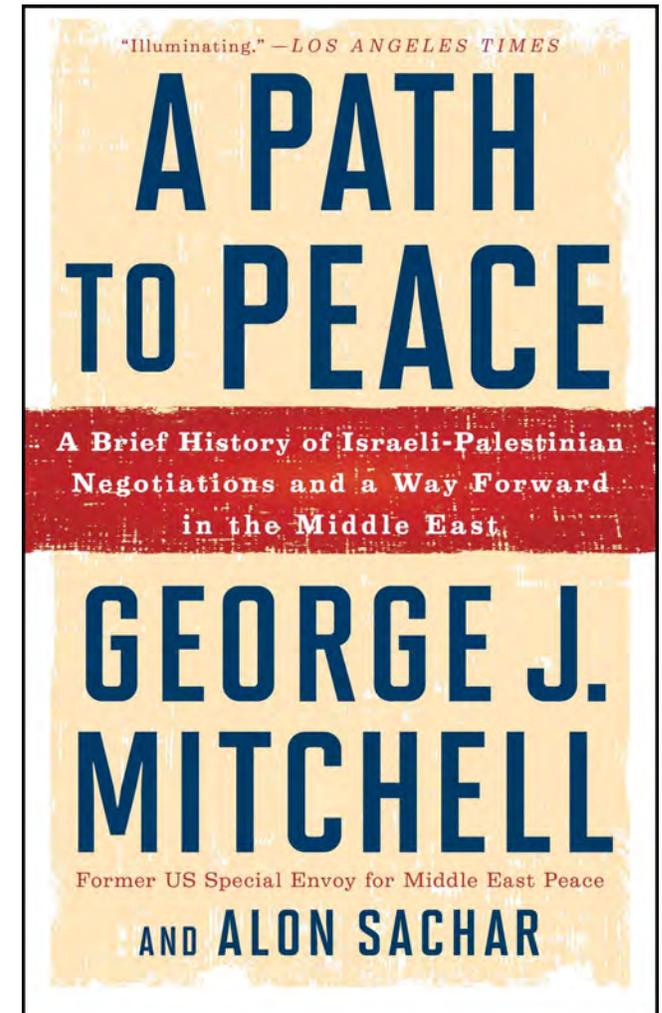
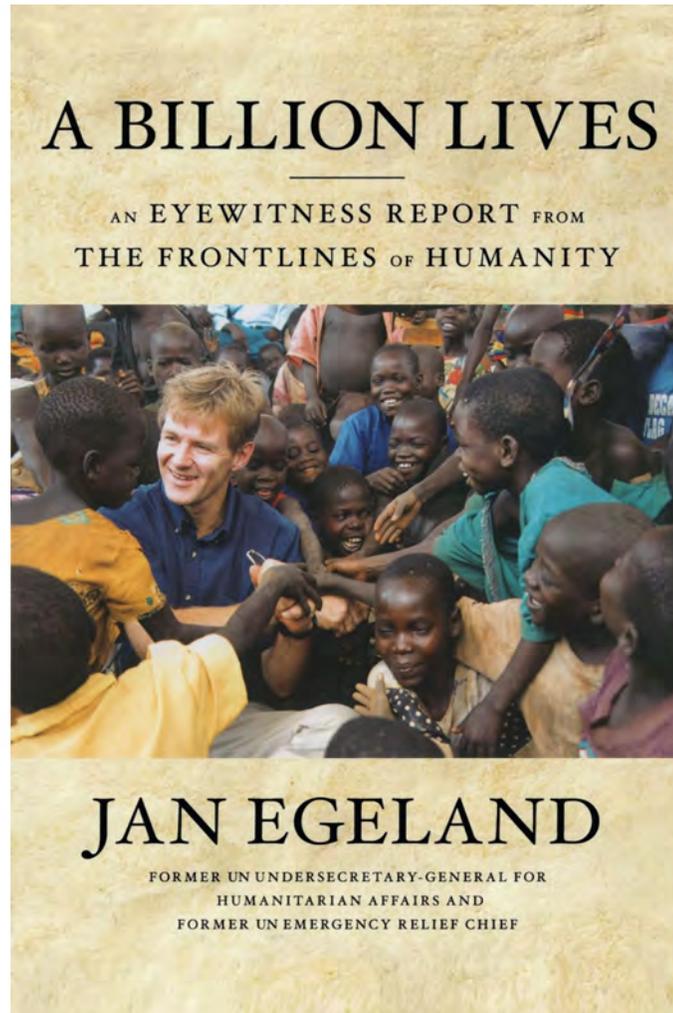
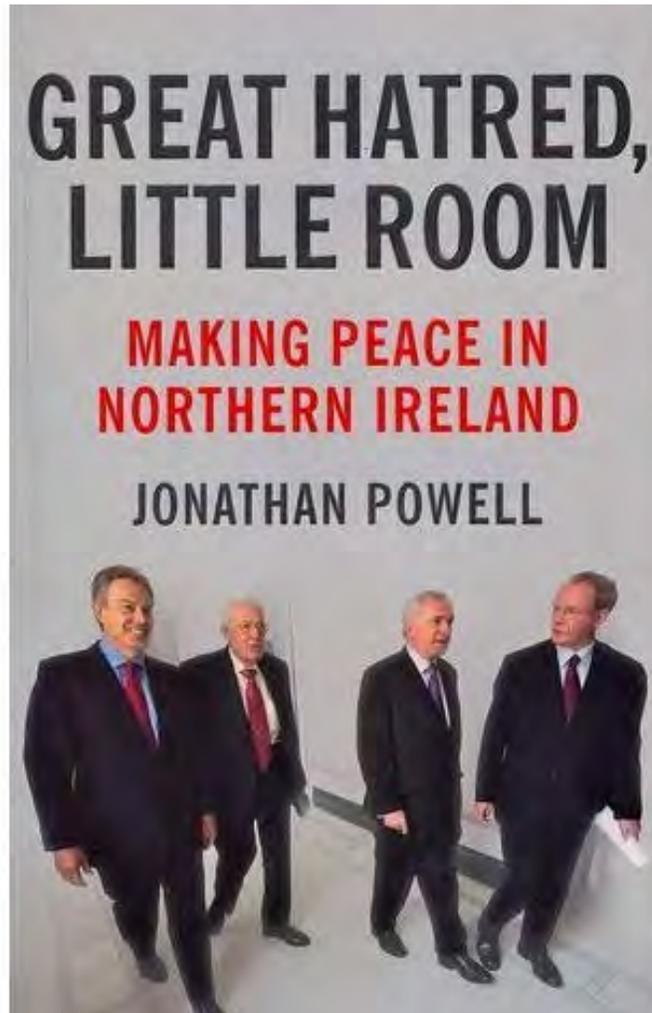
- Violence, however barbaric seeming, often has a logic
  - Civil wars are political bargaining by violent means
  - Even mass atrocities as an attempt by the powerful to improve bargaining positions permanently
- We can understand interventions through their ability to solve the five problems of conflict
  - Negotiation and mediation as facilitating elite bargains
  - The “corrupt” use of aid as an incentive for peace
  - Peacekeeping as information provision and external enforcement
  - Trusteeship as a temporary form of external enforcement
  - Sanctions or military intervention as a means to increase the costs of atrocities
- In many (though not all) situations, stopping violence is something the international community knows how to do

## Summary: At the same time, these interventions have limitations

- Interveners tend to make some consistent mistakes
  - Leaping to solutions without understanding the problem
  - Seeking out a template and “best practices” that can be applied everywhere
  - Failing to understand who holds de facto political power, and work from there
  - Underestimating the power of elites and the difficulty of changing the balance
  - Misreading the situation and their own abilities to plan and implement change
- Most of all, external actors tend to underestimate the time that state and institutional development takes, and overestimate their own role

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# What do mediators do? Do they matter?



## Mediation: One of the most common features of post WWII war settlements

- Aim is to facilitate bargaining
- Does not promise rewards or threaten punishment
- Does not employ force to suppress or guarantee the settlement of a conflict

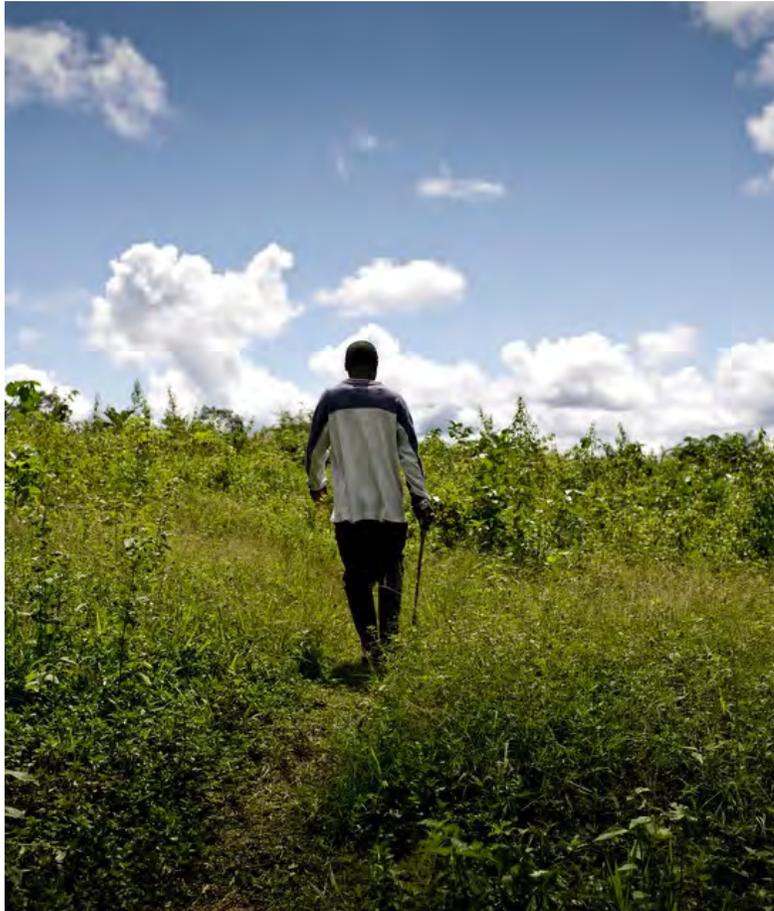


## Mediators shape the information available and the bargaining environment to minimize breakdowns

- Structure how disputants interact in a bargaining situation
- Provide a procedural framework for discussions
- Ascertain facts
- Relay information to either side
- Facilitate communications
- Recommend concessions and propose possible settlements or compromises

## Recall our village-level example of land disputes

Land boundaries, usage rights,  
inheritance



Market plot ownership,  
evictions, debt collection



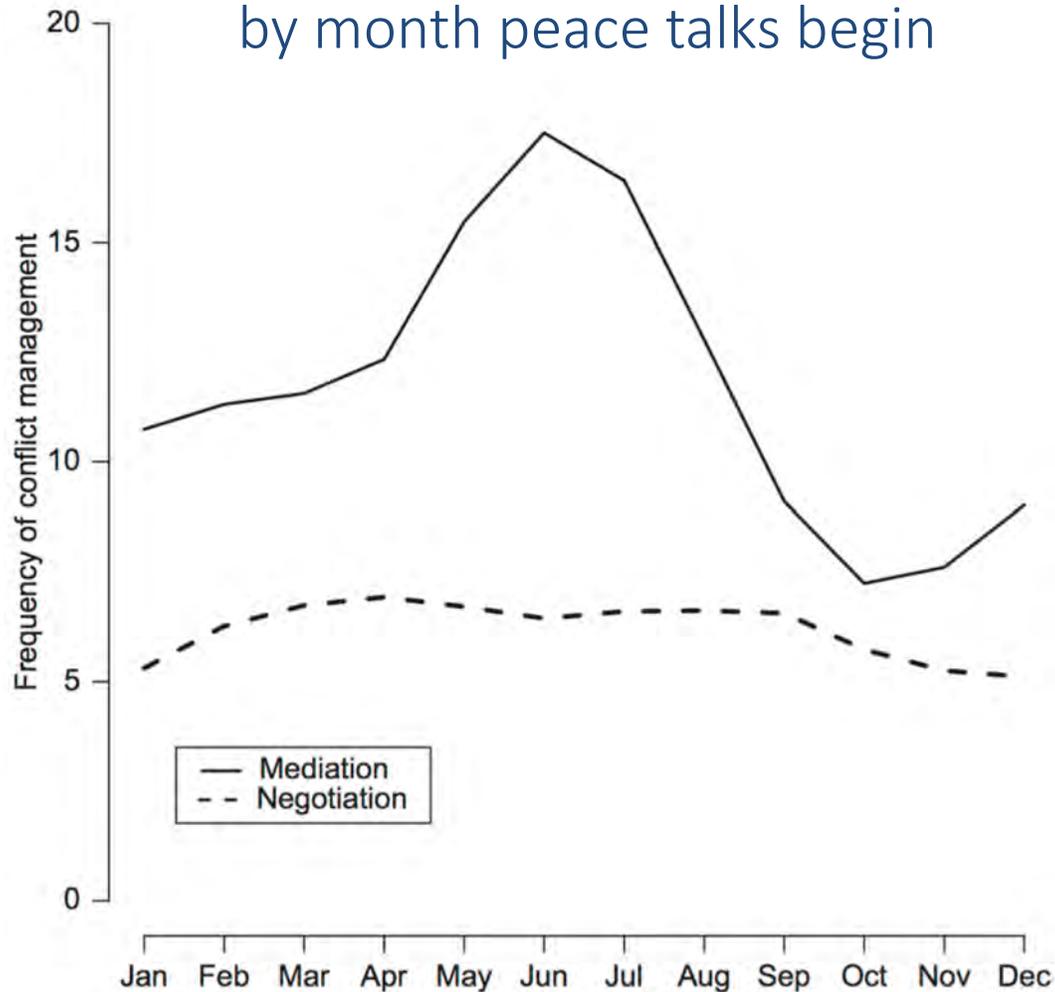


## A government and UN program sought to improve local mediation and negotiation skills and norms

- Norms against defecting from a forum increased commitment
- New practices reduced info asymmetry
  - Mediators taught to actively elicit and share information between parties
  - Taught negotiation skills of keeping communication open, signaling trust
- Techniques to be more rational
  - New techniques for managing emotion:
  - Raised awareness of natural biases
- Conflicts became 40% less likely to be violent

# What about mediation at the level of large conflicts? How do we know if that works?

Likelihood of a foreign mediator  
by month peace talks begin



**Bernd Beber: Notices that external mediation more likely on summer vacations**

- Mediated and non-mediated conflicts resolve at about the same rate
- But there is a selection problem? what if mediators tackle the easier or more difficult conflicts?
- Using summer months to instrument for mediation, Beber (2010) finds that the presence of a mediator raises the likelihood of a settlement

Beber, Bernd. "International mediation, selection effects, and the question of bias." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 29.4 (2012): 397-424.

Are there possible drawbacks to mediated solutions?

We will come back to this with the Weinstein reading on “autonomous recovery”

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## Making peace pay for elites: Can outside actors change elite incentives?

In theory, external enforcement and incentives could smooth bargaining and facilitate enforcement

- Incentives to stay at the bargaining table
  - Cushy locations and expense accounts
- Incentives not to defect from an agreement once made
  - Nobel peace prizes (fame and reputation)
  - External judicial processes
  - Post-conflict reconstruction aid, trade deals
  - Threat of sanctions

Recall Mukhopadhyay's take on Afghan warlords: A patrimonial limited access order as a self-enforcing alternative to conflict

“ *The political center in Kabul was not (and has never been) a collection of formal, bureaucratic institutions working in concert to penetrate the unwieldy periphery of wayward warlords, defiant mullahs, and rebellious tribal chieftains.*

*It was, instead, a political center operating largely in the neopatrimonial image, and, much like many of its predecessors, forging links to the countryside through partnerships with power holders who could sometimes expand the scope of the state by engaging it.*



Jamaluddin Badar, Nuristan governor (prosecuted)  
Lutfullah Mashal, Langham governor (journalist & poet)  
Gul Agha Sherzai, Nangarhar governor (famous Mujahideen commander)

## One option we have already highlighted: targeted sanctioning

*For years, the tool of choice for building leverage against actors undermining peace or human rights has been to impose targeted sanctions. But sanctions have been used sparingly in Africa. They have been applied to only a few individuals at a time, with very little enforcement, and are rarely extended to predatory commercial collaborators, both inside and outside Africa, who facilitate and enable official misdeeds.*

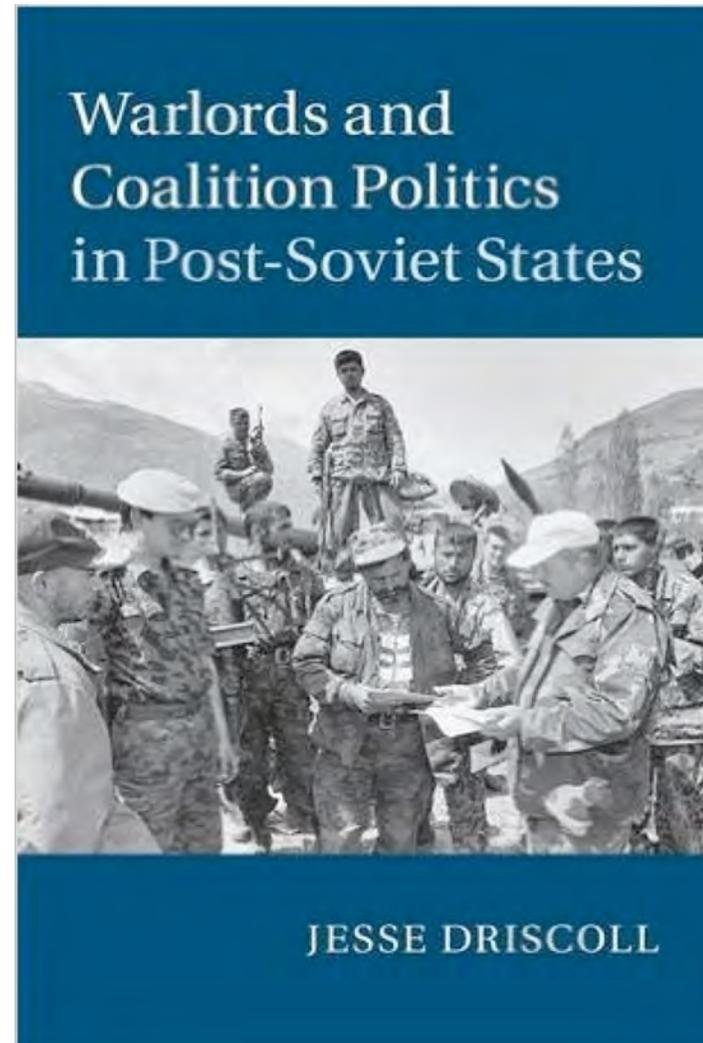
*...This standard but failing approach can change. Serious financial pressure with real bite is not only possible; it has proved effective in the past. As a start, sanctions must be levied against entire networks, not just individuals.*

— John Prendergast & George Clooney,  
Foreign Affairs, March 14, 2018



Another example comes from the former Soviet Republics

“*The central mechanism of civil war settlement is bribery.*”



Unlike African and Latin American decolonization, Soviet decolonization resulted in somewhat fewer wars, and generally much shorter wars



## Driscoll: Negotiated settlements are essentially deals among elites and warlords (i.e. limited access orders)

- Some of the post-Soviet circumstances may have helped them solve the information asymmetries and commitment problems
  - A history of relatively strong states
  - The threat of international intervention by Russian forces, or clandestine Russian deal-making
- Driscoll argues that the post-Soviet governments skilfully built a coalition of violence elites by buying just enough off
  - The state was too weak to disarm all of its opponents
  - Certain warlords were provided with offers to keep their private armies to secure their holdings, giving them the credible threat of voice (a coup) or exit (a return to violence or predation)
  - Warlords were also given spoils, such as ministry appointments and large offshore bank accounts
  - Some of the aid that (indirectly) funded regime came from the West

# What shapes the stability of such patrimonial elite deals?

## Self-enforcing examples

- Will be more likely in environments with fewer shocks to power distribution
- Helpful to have institutions for power sharing that are flexible to changes in de facto power
  - As opposed to winner-take-all personalized Presidential systems
- Competing groups are allowed to maintain their economic or military power
- These enable elites to more credibly split rents

## Externally enforced examples

- Third party polices agreement
- Or enforcement in the shadow of enforcement (i.e. credible threat of policing)
- **Uses sanctions or their threat**
- **Can offer access to privileges, potentially through aid dollars or resource rents**
- **Or offer international recognition and esteem**

## Outsiders often fail (or are reluctant) to see that the most likely (or only) stable arrangement of power is a limited access order

- Donors commit billions to reconstruction
- What's the consequence of failing to understand that this is a limited access order?
  - For local elites, reconstruction is the continuation of war and competition for resources by new means
  - State elites have incentives to manipulate political and economic to recalibrate their power in the new situation
  - Their strategies may have little to do with the building of strong public institutions
- To the extent that outsiders misdiagnose the political problem, they will not see state reconstruction as an opportunity to broaden political power in the country

## Moreover, relatively seldom does this state reconstruction effort consider the formal decentralization of power

- Sometimes there are power-sharing agreements that lead to opposing groups controlling different arms of the government
- And there is typically some support for a free press and civil society organizations
- But more seldom is there an effort to strengthen the independent power and resources of local governments, bureaucracies, legislative and judicial branches of government
- Such a decentralization of power is, in part, an invitation to corruption, which donors detest
- Decentralized decision-making will also interfere with rapid reforms and planned reconstruction, or donor ability to work with a central actor such as a President

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# How to preserve order when the fighting stops?

**The New York Times** | <https://nyti.ms/2jRK6sZ>

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AFRICA

## Quandary in South Sudan: Should It Lose Its Hard-Won Independence?

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN JAN. 23, 2017

NAIROBI, Kenya — Tens of thousands of civilians dead, countless children on the verge of starvation, millions of dollars stolen by officials, oil wells blown up, food aid hijacked and as many as 70 percent of women sheltering in camps raped — mostly by the nation's soldiers and police officers.

Just a few years ago, South Sudan accomplished what seemed impossible: independence. Of all the quixotic rebel armies fighting for freedom in Africa, the South Sudanese actually won. Global powers, including the United States, rallied to their side, helping to create the world's newest country in 2011, a supposed solution to decades of conflict and suffering.

Now, with millions of its people hungry or displaced by civil war, a radical question has emerged: Should South Sudan lose its independence?

There are success stories: The UN Mission in Liberia, 2008



## What is a trusteeship?

- Broader, deeper, and longer-lasting types of state reconstruction efforts
  - Conceived of as an international presence over periods of several years up to several decades
  - Includes the creation of international civilian administrations
- e.g. Liberia 2003-08
  - UN oversaw a 2-year period of transitional rule, a 2005 election, and a 2-3 year transition to self-government
  - Set up parallel international-run bureaucracies for each government bureaucracy, needing approval from both for major decisions and spending, gradually handing off control
  - In late stages subsidized salaries of many government bureaucrats in order to help attract talent
  - At the same time UN peacekeepers substituted for a national police and military as both were reconstructed

We could also consider the U.S. role in Afghanistan a form of trusteeship



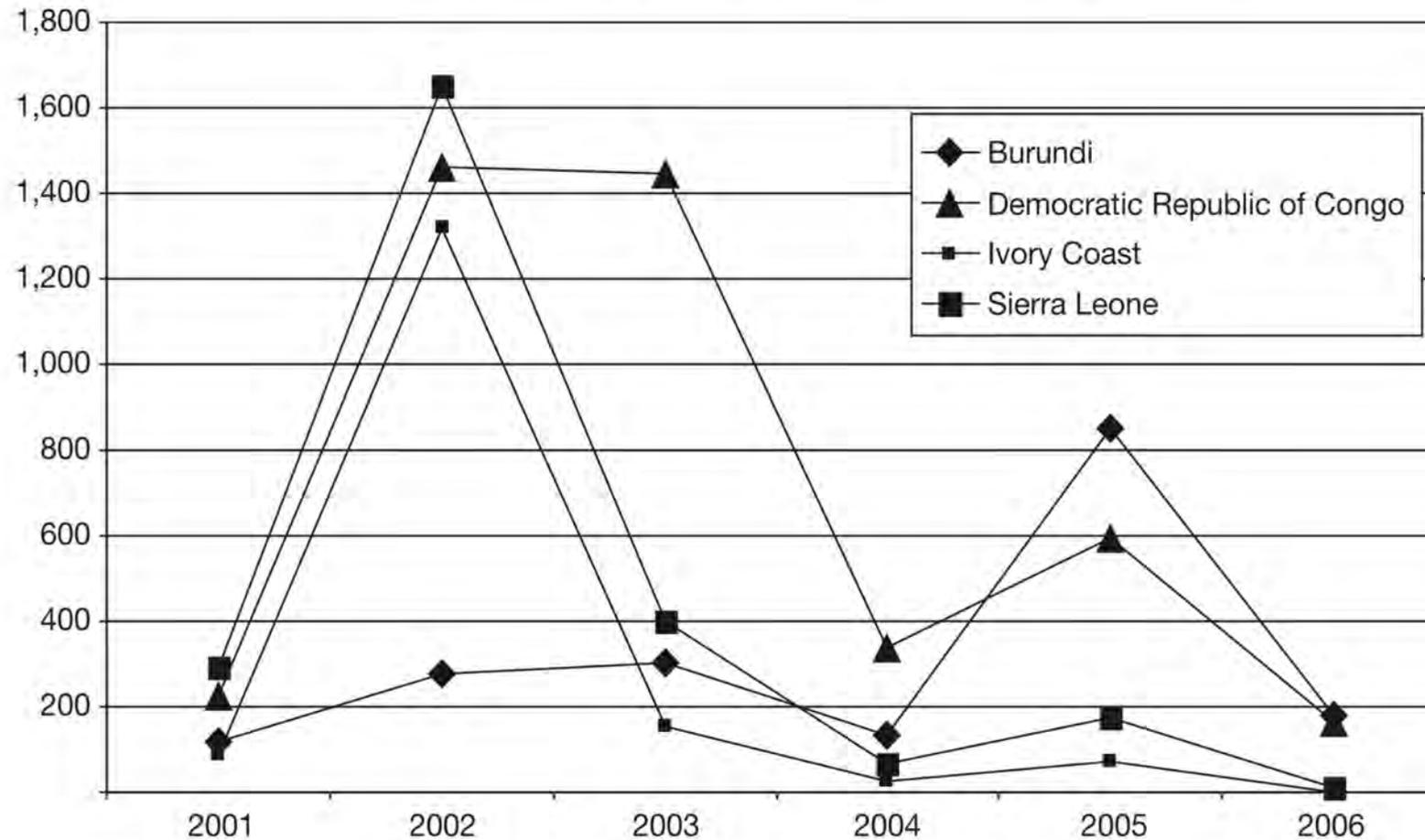
What are the risks and benefits of trusteeships?

## What is the problem for which trusteeships are the solution?

- If elites or society agree to a new set of post-war organizations institutions, in theory they could benefit from protection and encouragement in their infancy, e.g.
  - Independent and task-specific bureaucracies
  - Professionalized military and police force
  - Peaceful elections
  - Actively competing political parties
  - Decentralization of taxation and spending decisions to regions or towns
  - New constitutional divisions of power
  - Free media

Questionable whether international actors have the capacity and will to maintain the commitment to remain more than 3-5 years

Figure 1. Reconstruction Aid Pledges in Four African Countries (\$ millions)



## And worth asking: What separates trusteeship from imperialism?

- They likely require a consensus between local and international actors to succeed
  - Something that does not appear to exist in South Sudan at present, but did exist in Liberia
- This narrows the number of cases where a trusteeship can be successful
- The US Afghan mission illustrates one of the perils of a trusteeship without the consent of all actors
  - Reduced legitimacy
  - Potential to become a target

On balance, there are often reasonable arguments for limited trusteeships,  
at least when most parties are supportive

- e.g. In intervening in Bosnia, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff explained to Congress: “IFOR [the international Implementation Force] will not be responsible for the conduct of humanitarian operations. It will not be a police force. It will not conduct nation-building.”
- In 1996 the National Security Adviser explained: “It is a dangerous hubris to believe we can build other nations. But where our own interests are engaged we can help nations build themselves—and give them time to make a start at it.”

But hard to see how such an arrangement is appealing to a limited access order