Democratic Intervention: U.S. Involvement in Small Wars

Elizabeth A. Palmer
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Introduction

Immanuel Kant first recognized that a republican form of government, one that is founded on the principles of liberty, dependence on a single common legislative body, and equality among members of society, is more peaceful than other forms of government. Kant’s theories were largely ignored because the number of democracies worldwide made statistical analysis relatively insignificant. After World War II, as democracies flourished, scholars picked up on the idea of a correlation between government structure and a nation’s tendencies towards war.

The earliest of these scholars sought to prove that democracies do not enter into major wars with one another. Numerous others undertook

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2. See, e.g., Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-
statistical analysis to prove this hypothesis, and concluded that since the early 1800s, no democracies have fought each other in a major international war.\textsuperscript{3} This fundamental concept came to be known as the "democratic peace." As this proposition gained acceptance,\textsuperscript{4} other scholars expanded on this research, finding that democracies were not violent toward each other.\textsuperscript{5} Where democracies are found to dispute one another, one party or both is likely to have recently transitioned to democratic, is subject to violent domestic challenge, or is toward the center of a democratic to non-democratic continuum.\textsuperscript{6}

By the early 1990s, research focused on determining which facets of democracies might explain why the correlation between government structure and aggression is so strong.\textsuperscript{7} In other words, scholars shifted their attention from the question of whether democracies fight each other to the question of why they do not.\textsuperscript{8}

The bulk of the research to date has focused on democracies' levels of aggression toward one another. Many scholars believe that democracies are just as war-prone as other regimes, but not towards each other.\textsuperscript{9} A few scholars have undertaken an analysis of this hypothesis and found to the contrary that democracies have demonstrated less violence overall (in terms of degree of violence rather than frequency of violence), not just towards one another.\textsuperscript{10} Further, democracies are less likely than non-democracies to escalate a conflict to war.\textsuperscript{11}

Along these same lines, some scholars have found evidence that democratic states are difficult to defeat.\textsuperscript{12} In fact, democracies tend to
win more frequently than other forms of government. One might draw the conclusion that democracies engage in wars that they believe they will likely win. If true, this may be a distinction in the current-day United States' ("U.S.") treatment of Iraq versus its treatment of North Korea. Because Iraq is not yet a nuclear power, the U.S. has a significant military advantage in any conflict with Iraq. North Korea, however, already possesses nuclear weapons, which makes the U.S. military advantage significantly less than its advantage over Iraq. Thus, it makes more sense for the U.S. to pursue diplomatic resolution with North Korea, while it feels freer to pursue military resolution in conflict with Iraq.

We now have overwhelming evidence that democracies are less war-prone and indeed less violent than non-democracies, but merely knowing this fact does not provide us with a framework for using this new-found knowledge to promote world peace. We know that democracies are less prone to violence, but we also know that they do engage in some conflicts. Focusing on the frequencies of wars engaged in by democracies and the level of violence attained, some studies have attempted to identify why democracies avoid wars and minimize the degree of violence. Increasingly, scholars have sought to identify why democracies become involved in the conflicts in which they do participate.

One of the scholars involved in this line of research is Professor J. N. Moore. In a recent study, Moore indicated that since the United Nations Charter ("UN Charter" or "Charter") was implemented, "clear aggression by a democratic government in a major interstate war setting has been limited to a single instance out of approximately twenty-eight major wars." Additionally, even in those cases marginally arguable as instances of democratic aggression, none of the post-Charter interstate wars was motivated by democratic nation value extension as opposed to value conservation.

14. Moore, supra note 3, at 31-32. The one instance of democratic aggression was the Suez War in 1956, in which the UK, France and Israel jointly attacked Egypt in response to its attempts to nationalize the Suez Canal. Id.
15. Id at 33. According to Professor Moore's study, the 1971 Bangladesh War and the actions of Turkey in the 1974 Cyprus intervention are arguable cases of democratic aggression. Id. However, the former could be justified as humanitarian intervention and the latter was in response to a coup against the Government of Cyprus and could be considered collective defense.
16. Actions motivated by value conservation are those actions taken to prevent the coercive unilateral modification of major value systems. To objectively classify each
At the same time, evidence indicates that the more unstable the country, the more likely democracies were to intervene. Whether this is because democracies are hoping to instill democratic values in a new regime or not remains to be seen.

The majority of work to date on the democratic peace has focused on major interstate wars involving greater than one thousand battle deaths. This cutoff point is used to eliminate those instances of violence attributable to accidents, unauthorized incursions, limited military actions designed for deterrence, and military actions by a strong military against a weaker adversary not anticipated to resist. While this distinction was useful for early research on the democratic peace proposition, in order to fully understand the ramifications of government structure on levels of violence and aggression, we must also understand the democratic peace proposition as it applies to smaller war settings. Admittedly, some scholars have examined democracies’ tendencies toward violence using militarized interstate disputes rather than major interstate wars. But these scholars have not gone so far as to identify why democracies became involved in the conflicts in which they did. Acknowledging this gap in research, I have analyzed small international wars with this purpose in mind. In attempting to manage the scope of this article, I opted to focus on small wars involving the U.S. since its inception. By doing so, I have ensured the integrity of the democratic participant component in each of the conflicts analyzed. While this data set does not lend itself to comparison of involvement by democracies and non-democracies in small wars, it does lend itself to analysis of why and how democracies have become involved in the small wars in which they did participate, providing one accepts the underlying assumption that the U.S. is representative of democracies in general.

This paper is organized around three distinct data sets: interstate conflicts, civil conflicts, and interventions for protection. Each data set contains information on small wars in which the U.S. participated in some form or fashion. I have defined “small wars” loosely, to include interstate conflicts with less than 1,000 total battle deaths. I included civil conflicts and interventions for protection even where total battle deaths may have been greater than 1,000, but where U.S. participation did not involve a significant number of battle deaths.

“Interstate conflicts” are conflicts in which opposing belligerents are both State governments. I have broadly interpreted “State action in one of two mutually exclusive categories, actions motivated by value extension include all actions not motivated by value conservation.

18. Russett, Principles, supra note 2, at 12.
19. Id.
government” to include tribal governments where no other organized form of government existed. This category includes conflicts that were interstate in nature prior to U.S. involvement, or that are two-party conflicts (e.g. the U.S. against the government of another country). While several of the conflicts in this category could also be placed in the “civil conflicts” category, I have chosen to include as “interstate conflicts” all incidents where motivation for U.S. involvement was based on an actual or perceived wrongdoing directed by the opposing State against the U.S.

“Civil conflicts” are conflicts that were primarily domestic in nature prior to U.S. involvement, but became interstate in nature by virtue of U.S. involvement. These conflicts are struggles for control of government structure by competing factions located within the State. Unlike the interstate conflicts, opposing belligerents are not both State governments, and often it is difficult to determine which side represents the existing State government. In all cases in this category, the U.S. military actively engaged in the conflict. Usually, the U.S. fought on the side of one belligerent or another, though sometimes it remained neutral to the outcome. More often than not, the U.S. remained involved in the rebuilding of government structure following the end of the conflict.

Finally, “interventions for protection” are conflicts in which the U.S. sent troops not to engage in the conflict on the side of one belligerent or another, but rather to serve as a deterrent to a hostile attack against U.S. nationals and property or to evacuate U.S. nationals from a zone of conflict. At all times, the U.S. troops remained neutral and avoided the use of force except when necessary for self-defense.

Summary of the Findings

After analysis of thirty-two interstate conflicts and eighteen civil conflicts in which the U.S. actively engaged, as well as eighty-eight interventions for protection, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Throughout its history, the U.S. has neither threatened nor used force against another democracy in a small war setting.
- The U.S. was more than twice as likely to be the object of aggression in small interstate conflicts than it was to be the aggressor.
- When the U.S. was the aggressor in several small interstate conflicts, it was significantly more likely to be motivated by value conservation than by value extension.
- In small interstate conflicts, non-democracies were as likely to commit aggression for purposes of value extension as for purposes of value conservation.
- While on numerous occasions the U.S. actions would have been
considered to be illegal according to post-Charter international standards, most of the actions would have been legal under customary international law at the time of the occurrence.

- In each of the small interstate conflicts in which the U.S. became engaged, the U.S. was acting against an actual or perceived wrongdoing by the other State.
- Where the U.S. acted illegally according to modern standards, it was unlikely that the conflict would escalate to war.
- In civil conflicts, the U.S. was just as likely to intervene in a manner inconsistent with modern legal standards as it was to intervene legally.
- The U.S. was more likely to intervene in a civil conflict in countries in which the government was in turmoil than in countries with an established government.
- Throughout history, the U.S. has been far more likely to send forces when it did not anticipate armed aggression than when it did anticipate armed aggression.

These findings support and expand upon the general democratic peace proposition that democracies do not engage in armed conflict (whether the war is major or minor) against one another. They also support the proposition that democracies are less violent overall, but without comparison to the levels of violence attributed to non-democracies. The U.S. was most likely to engage in conflicts in which it believed the use of armed force could be kept to a minimum. While the data also support the theory that democracies are less aggressive than are non-democracies, they also provide evidence for the proposition that democracies are more aggressive in small war settings than in major interstate conflicts. This is especially apparent in light of the frequency with which the U.S. has intervened in the civil conflicts of another State with seeming disregard to the legality of the intervention. These findings will be discussed in greater detail below.

The Data Sets

In my analysis of small international wars, I have divided the data into three categories: interstate conflicts, civil conflicts (which are nevertheless international by virtue of U.S. intervention), and interventions for protection. Each category remains focused on small wars, which I have defined as international military disputes involving fewer than 1,000 battle deaths. This definition excludes peaceful landings, covert action, disaster relief, terrorist acts, transportation of military personnel or supplies, and actions in conjunction with drug trafficking. It also excludes some minor conflicts that are more properly
thought of as extensions of, or precursors to, a major interstate war, but which occurred outside the official dates of the major conflict. Rather than embarking upon an exhaustive study of small international wars, I limited the scope of my analysis to include only those small wars in which the U.S. was a participant abroad. Excluded from this analysis are conflicts on land that ultimately became part of the continental United States. While analysis of these conflicts would certainly be a useful and interesting exercise, I believe such analysis of conflicts over contested land and boundary disputes would skew the data otherwise dedicated to purely international settings.

Data sets for each category can be found in the Appendices.

Interstate Conflicts

The data set for this category includes:
- The year(s) of the conflict;
- A brief description of the conflict;
- An identification of the State(s) in opposition to the U.S. during the conflict;
- The regime category of the State(s) opposing the U.S. during the year(s) of the conflict, according to the Polity IV data set;
- The regime category of the U.S. during the year(s) of the conflict, according to the Polity IV data set;
- An identification, where applicable, of which party was the aggressor;
- An indication of whether the aggressor acted for value extension or value conservation; and
- A determination of whether each party’s actions were legal according to post-Charter standards of international law.

Basic conflict information (the dates of the conflict, a description of the conflict, the parties involved) was derived from a Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report on the use of U.S. armed forces abroad. That report summarizes hundreds of instances in which the U.S. sent troops abroad, beginning in 1798 and running through 1999. From that list, I determined which instances met my narrower definition of small interstate wars.

In compiling this data, I also consulted with the Militarized Interstate Dispute data set available through the Correlates of War
The Correlates of War project recently revised the Militarized Interstate Dispute data, but the updated version was not available when I commenced my research. The older data set largely corresponded with the CRS Report, but alone did not provide sufficient information on each militarized interstate dispute to allow for a more thorough analysis of each conflict.

Having identified the conflicts and the parties involved in each conflict, I used the Polity IV data set to characterize each regime. The Polity IV data set is the latest update from the continuing Polity Project, which collects data about regime and authority characteristics from 1800 to 1999, in order to assess the degree of democracy or autocracy represented in each country's government on a year-by-year basis. The Polity data set only analyzes the regimes of independent states with total populations of greater than 500,000, thus some smaller regimes or non-independent regimes are not represented in the Polity data set, and are therefore coded as "N/A" in my own data set.

The Polity Project identified three indicators of a democratic form of government: the competitiveness of political participation, the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment, and constraints on the chief executive. Each government was analyzed using these factors to come up with a polity score ranging from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic).

The data set next identifies which party was the aggressor in the conflict at issue. In order to determine this, I used the definition of aggression as set forth in the 1974 United Nations Resolution on the Definition of Aggression (the "Definition of Aggression Resolution" or "Resolution"). That resolution defines aggression as "the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political

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25. Id.

26. Id.

27. Id.

independence of another State." I view this definition as imperfect, but have opted to use it for reasons stated below.

The nature of this study is such that it requires retrospective analysis of conflicts. Such retroactive analysis is not conducive to using the Resolution's definition, especially when the conflict occurred prior to the existence of the United Nations ("UN") and its Security Council. The definition in the Resolution is designed to be a guideline for the Security Council in determining the existence of an act of aggression. Additionally, the Resolution states that "the question whether an act of aggression has been committed must be considered in the light of all the circumstances of each particular case." Thus, the definition is not complete on its face, as other factors need to be considered.

In spite of its imperfection, I have opted to use this definition in my analysis of the small war data for two reasons. First, the definition is conservative when used as though it is complete on its face, because it views the first use of armed force as prima facie evidence of an act of aggression. Thus, the definition will identify the U.S. as more aggressive in small wars than a judgment by the modern-day Security Council may indicate after considering all the facts and circumstances. Second, while the U.S. does not regard this definition as completely authoritative, it agrees with the essential concepts utilized in the Resolution's definition.

Finally, the data set identifies whether each belligerent's actions were lawful during each conflict. In establishing whether a particular action was legal, I looked to the current UN Charter framework in conjunction with current customary international law and applied these norms retroactively to the conflict at issue. Again, such retroactive application of modern-day standards can create duplicity where the action taken was legal under customary international law at the time taken, but would not be legal if taken today. In the analysis that follows, I have attempted to identify these duplicitous situations as applicable. Because the Definition of Aggression Resolution characterizes an initial aggression as illegal, every conflict in the data set will indicate at least one illegal action. This is true even in instances where customary international law may indicate that the initial act of aggression was not

29. See id. Article 1.
31. See id.
32. See id. Article 2.
34. U.N. Resolution, supra note 28.
illegal. Frequently, the aggression was prompted by an illegal action by the opposing State, or the opposing State responded in an unlawful manner. In these instances, the data set will indicate that both parties acted illegally.

**Civil Conflicts**

The data set for this category includes:
- The year(s) of the conflict;
- A brief description of the conflict;
- An identification of the opponent to the U.S. in the conflict;
- The regime category of the existing host government during the year(s) of the conflict, according to the Polity IV data set;
- The regime category of the U.S. during the year(s) of the conflict, according to the Polity IV data set;
- The status of the existing host government in terms of its stability;
- An indication whether the U.S. received an invitation or consent to its actions within the host country; and
- A determination whether the U.S. involvement was legal.

Most of the information depicted in this data set is derived from the same sources and using the same definitions as that used in the Interstate Conflicts data set. Additional categories in this data set include the status of the existing government and an indication of whether consent was granted by the host country.

The status of the existing government is identified as being in one of four conditions: established, equilibrium, factions or collapse. These categories are suggested and used by Professor Wippman in his paper on host-State consent.\(^{35}\) I have identified as “established” those governments in which the executive authority has clear control over government structures. An “equilibrium” exists when the existing government is being challenged such that a significant amount of control over the country’s land or its resources has been ceded to the challenger. A government is considered to consist of “factions” when multiple factions are vying for control of the country, and no one is clearly in complete control. Finally, a country is considered in “collapse” once no clear internal authority exists.

To determine the status of the existing government structure, and to determine whether the host country offered consent to the interventions in each conflict, I utilized the source data listed in Appendix B.

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Interventions for Protection

The data set for this category includes:

- The year(s) of the conflict;
- A brief description of the conflict;
- The location of the conflict; and
- The regime category of the host country, according to the Polity IV data set.

This information was compiled from the same sources and using the same definitions as used in the Interstate Conflicts and Civil Conflicts data sets.

Discussion of the Findings

Interstate Conflicts

The data set for interstate conflicts depicts a total of thirty-two distinct interstate conflicts throughout U.S. history in which the U.S. was involved as a belligerent. Of those, not a single one pitted the U.S. against another democracy.

In order to validate this claim, the term "democracy" should be clarified. The Polity IV database scores government regimes on a continuum from autocracy (-10) to democracy (+10). An overall score is determined after analysis of several component variables. One presumes that a score greater than zero indicates that a government regime is a democracy, and that a score less than zero indicates an autocracy. Such a presumption deserves closer analysis.

The leading scholars on the democratic peace proposition have identified the following characteristics as inherent in democracies: the right to vote for a substantial fraction of citizens, contested elections, an executive popularly elected or responsible to an elected legislature, and some minimum level of civil liberties. Fair and competitive elections seem to be a common theme. The component variable in the Polity IV score that measures the competitiveness of elections is referred to as "XRCOMP." An "XRCOMP" score of "3" indicates that executives are chosen through competitive elections. Thus, in the analysis that follows, a "democracy" is considered to be a regime with an overall

36. MARSHALL & JAGGERS, supra note 24.
37. Id.
38. RUSSETT, PRINCIPLES, supra note 2, at 14. Cf. RAY, supra note 4, at 1-2; RUMMEL, supra note 4, at 40.
39. RUSSETT, PRINCIPLES, supra note 2, at 14. Cf. RAY, supra note 4 at 2; RUMMEL, supra note 4, at 40.
40. MARSHALL & JAGGERS, supra note 24.
Polity IV score greater than zero, as well as an XRCOMP component score equal to three.

Several U.S. opponents were not scored by the Polity Project, or were scored as governments in transition or "interregnum" periods,\textsuperscript{41} thus, they cannot be conclusively labeled as "democracies" or "non-democracies".\textsuperscript{42} In order to determine whether these governments may be considered democracies, they must be examined individually.

Two regimes, those of Cambodia in 1975 and Somalia in 1992-1994, were classified as "interregnum", meaning authority structures had completely collapsed.\textsuperscript{43} Intuitively, "interregnum" governments cannot be considered democracies.

The tribal governments of the Marquesas in 1813 and Johanns Island in 1851 were too small to be scored by the Polity Project. They may well have employed some democratic structures, but the information available is insufficient to thoroughly analyze them for purposes of classification as either autocracies or democracies. Neither was likely a true democracy in the sense of having contested elections and civil liberties.\textsuperscript{44}

During the two Barbary Wars in 1801-1805 and again in 1815, Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis were part of the Ottoman Empire. While the regimes in these cities had significant control over their small regions, these regimes were ultimately responsible to the greater Ottoman Empire, which was not a democracy at the time. Likewise, in 1867, Formosa was formally a part of China, though China was not exerting full control. Formosa certainly had some government structures of its own, but being by and large beholden to China, it cannot be considered a democracy.

Serbia was in a state of transition in 1919. Prior to World War I, Serbia scored a "4" on the Polity index;\textsuperscript{45} following World War I Serbia became part of Yugoslavia, which scored a "0" on the Polity index.\textsuperscript{46}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{41} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{42} The U.S. opponents that did not receive a conclusive Polity score include: the governments of Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis during the Barbary Wars; the tribal government of the Marquesas in 1813; the government of Johanns Island in 1851; the government of Formosa in 1867; the government of Serbia in 1919; Mexico in 1914; Cambodia in 1975; the PLO in 1982-84; and Somalia in 1992-94.
\item \textsuperscript{43} MARSHALL & JAGGERS, supra note 24.
\item \textsuperscript{44} I base this contention on the premise that tribalism as a government structure is primitive and simple, in the sense that the central authority and the community are more closely linked than in more complex polities. See I S.E. FINER, THE HISTORY OF GOVERNMENT 61 (1997). On the contrary, liberal democratic policies are highly complex in their requirement of the right to vote, contested elections, an executive accountable to an elected legislature, etc. as defined previously in this paper.
\item \textsuperscript{45} MARSHALL & JAGGERS, supra note 24.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Id.
\end{itemize}
Thus, Serbia in 1919 cannot be considered a democracy.

Finally, the Palestinian Liberation Organization ("PLO") was not considered an "independent state" from 1982 to 1984, so it did not receive a Polity IV score. Certainly the PLO employed some democratic institutions, including providing its "citizens" with the right to vote. But, were the elections fair and competitive? One scholar of the democratic peace proposition, James Lee Ray, observed that the competitiveness of elections is demonstrated in practice by the actual replacement of government leaders.47 Under this standard, the PLO cannot properly be considered to have competitive elections, as Yasser Arafat has been the chief executive since 1969. And while he remains responsible to the people, any restrictions on his decisions are much more based on the need to maintain a political base and international backing than any formalized government structures. Thus the PLO cannot be considered a true democracy.

The U.S. used force against two regimes that received an overall Polity IV score greater than zero. These regimes were Korea in 1871, which received an overall Polity IV score of "1," and Germany in 1899, which also received an overall Polity IV score of "1." Neither of these governments scored a "3" on the XRCOMP component, which indicates that neither government was considered to have competitive elections.

Not incidentally, U.S. involvement in both of these incidents should be characterized as defensive. In 1871, Korean forts opened fire on a U.S. naval ship in Korean waters while a negotiating team was pursuing a diplomatic resolution to a prior incident in which Koreans burned a U.S. merchant ship and killed its crew. Under armed attack, the U.S. returned fire on the Korean forts. Similarly, the 1899 Samoan conflict was preceded by an earlier conflict in 1888-1889, during which Germany (then scoring a "-4" on the Polity IV scale) was battling to extend control over the entirety of Samoa. The Samoans revolted, and the U.S. and Britain went to aid in their defense. A hurricane destroyed most of the fleets of Germany, Britain, and the U.S., and the dispute was settled with the 1889 Treaty of Berlin.48 In 1899, Samoa was embroiled in a civil war following the death of its king. Germany chose sides in the civil war and attempted to assert its authority over Samoa, this time in violation of the 1889 treaty. Once again, the U.S. and Britain landed to defend Samoa from the Germans and their Samoan allies.

47. RUMMEL, supra note 4, at 40.
Thus, during the history of small interstate conflicts, the U.S has not opposed another democracy as a belligerent. The basic democratic peace proposition that democracies do not engage in armed conflict against other democracies still holds true when analyzed in a small war setting. The next step is to determine how and why the U.S. became involved in these small interstate conflicts. Factors examined include whether the U.S. was the aggressor in each conflict, and if so, whether its actions were motivated by value extension or value conservation. I also assess whether the actions taken by the U.S. were legal according to post-Charter international standards. Finally, I analyze such factors as balance of power and likelihood of escalation of the conflict.

Of the thirty-two small wars identified in the data set, six did not rise to the level of aggression, but rather were demonstrations or displays of force in which the U.S. threatened but did not actually use military force. For these six instances, it is not possible to accurately determine which party to the conflict was the initiator, since neither party was the aggressor according to the definition used. That leaves twenty-six incidents in which an aggressor could be clearly identified. The U.S. was the aggressor in seven of the conflicts. A non-democracy was the aggressor in eighteen of the conflicts. One conflict has been identified as a case of mutual aggression. Thus, the U.S. was more than twice as likely to be the object of aggression than to be the aggressor.

Of the twenty-six small interstate wars in which an aggressor could be identified, the aggression was for purposes of value extension ten times and for purposes of value conservation seventeen times. The U.S. was aggressive for purposes of value extension only once. That instance was in 1914 against Mexico regarding Veracruz, discussed at length below. That means the U.S. aggression was for purposes of value conservation seven times, including the case of mutual aggression. Thus, when the U.S. was the aggressor, it was much more likely to be

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49. These six incidents include: the 1851 and 1858-59 Turkey demonstrations following the use of force against foreigners; the display of force in Paraguay in 1859 following an attack on a naval vessel in the Parana River; the 1864 show of force to compel Japan to comply with existing trade agreements; the display of force in Haiti in 1888 to persuade the Haitian government to give up a seized American steamer; and a demonstration in Morocco in 1904 to secure the release of a kidnapped American.

50. These seven instances in which the U.S. was the aggressor include: the Falkland Islands attack in 1831-32; the conflict with Nicaragua in 1854; the Arrow War in China in 1856; the Veracruz incident in 1866; the Formosa reparations in 1871; the Mayaguez incident in Cambodia in 1975, and the Libyan missile exchange in 1989.

51. The case of mutual aggression was in 1918 Mexico, along the U.S.-Mexico border at Nogales.

52. I have scored the case of mutual aggression as for purposes of value conservation, and have counted it twice—once for U.S. aggression and once for Mexican aggression.
motivated by value conservation than by value extension. On the other hand, non-democracies were aggressive for purposes of value extension nine times, and were aggressive for purposes of value conservation ten times. Thus it seems that non-democracies were just as likely to commit aggression for purposes of value extension as they were for purposes of value conservation.

The lone instance of U.S. aggression for purposes of value extension was when the U.S. took Veracruz and held it for seven months. Outraged at the brutal methods employed by Huerta to oust Madera, the U.S. wanted to prevent a German shipment from reaching the Hueristas. Rather than intercept the ship on the high seas, the U.S. decided to seize the destination port of Veracruz. In the ensuing battle, twenty-two Americans and at least 126 Mexicans were killed. The U.S. was clearly the aggressor in this conflict. The aggression could be considered to have been for purposes of value extension, since the ultimate goal of the U.S. was to overthrow a dictator and extend democratic institutions to the Mexican people. Of course it should be noted that the U.S. was responding to outrageous behavior by Huerta, and was thus responding to a perceived wrongdoing by the Mexican government.

It is now useful to examine whether the U.S. acted in a method that would be considered legal according to post-Charter standards of international law. The data set indicates that in thirteen of thirty-two instances, the U.S. actions were illegal. Six of those instances were the demonstrations or displays of force mentioned above, six were the instances of U.S. aggression, and one was an instance of mutual aggression. In one conflict, Libya in 1989, the U.S. was identified as the aggressor, but its actions have been coded as legal. Each of these is discussed in greater detail below.

Section 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations prohibits "the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." A display of force is, by its nature, a threat of force against the territorial integrity of another state. In each of the six demonstrations by the U.S., the U.S. was responding to an illegal (though not necessarily aggressive) action by the other state. One of the displays of force was to urge Japan in 1864 to comply with existing trade agreements. Twice the U.S. demonstrated against Turkey's massacre of foreigners (including Americans), in 1851 and again in 1858-59. Paraguay attacked a U.S. (non-military) naval vessel in the Parana River in 1859, Haiti had seized an American steamer in 1888, and Morocco had kidnapped an American citizen in 1904. Each of these incidents

53. BOOT, supra note 17, at 150-155.
54. U.N. CHARTER art. 2, para. 4.
occurred prior to the existence of the UN Charter, at a period in time when customary international law allowed the use of force by a state to protect the lives and property of its citizens abroad.\textsuperscript{55} These incidents did not even involve the use of force, but rather the mere threat of the use of force. By today's standards the demonstrations of force would be considered to be illegal; at the time the U.S. was acting fully within the law.

As previously noted, the U.S. was the aggressor in seven of the small wars identified in the data set. Five of these incidents are properly classified as reprisals. A reprisal is the use of force against another state that has violated international law, with the purpose to encourage that state to conform to the law.\textsuperscript{56} Most scholars believe that the UN Charter prohibits reprisals.\textsuperscript{57} But many scholars believe otherwise, and more are beginning to rethink this view.\textsuperscript{58} Reprisals were legal under customary international law, provided three requirements were met: the state against whom the reprisal is directed acted illegally, the state performing the reprisal has given the other state an opportunity to make reparations, and the ultimate response is proportionate to the illegal act originally committed.\textsuperscript{59} I have coded each reprisal as illegal according to post-Charter international standards since the U.S. has been identified as the aggressor. This warrants further consideration, though.

Each of the five reprisals was directed against states that illegally targeted private U.S. citizens or merchant interests. As such, they cannot be strictly construed as "the use of armed force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence" of the U.S.\textsuperscript{60} Certainly this interpretation is debatable, but to simplify my analysis, I have opted for a strict interpretation. Therefore, the U.S. was the aggressor in each instance. It is a worthwhile exercise, though, to determine whether each reprisal would have been illegal when undertaken.

The first U.S. reprisal occurred against Argentina in the Falkland Islands in 1831-1832. At the time, Argentina laid claim to and established a settlement on the Falkland Islands. The Falkland Islands settlers were committing piracy and had illegally captured three U.S. merchant ships. The crew of the \textit{USS Lexington} was sent to investigate

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Id.} at 133.
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Id.} at 134-36.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Id.} at 131.
\textsuperscript{60} U.N. Resolution, \textit{supra} note 28.
the charges of piracy. After finding what he considered to be proof of the piracy, the commander of the *USS Lexington* made prisoners of essentially the entire population (some forty persons) of the Falkland Islands, as all were considered to be engaged in piracy. The piracy was clearly illegal, and the settlers were given the opportunity to release the ships and make reparations. The detainees were later handed over to the Argentine government in Buenos Aires. The U.S. response does not seem disproportionate, so the reprisal was likely legal under customary international law.

The second reprisal by the U.S. was against Johanns Island in 1851. I have been unable to find significant information on this incident, other than the fact that U.S. forces exacted redress for the unlawful imprisonment of an American whaling ship. Thus, the actions of Johanns Island were illegal. I am unaware of any specific opportunity afforded to Johanns Island to apologize or make repairs for any injury. The final requirement for a reprisal to be legal under customary international law is that it be proportionate to the initial illegal action. After several U.S. reprisals, including the Falkland Islands incident discussed above and the Nicaraguan incident discussed next, public outcry ensued, a likely indication of a disproportionate response. There is no record of public outcry following the Johanns Island reprisal, indicating that the response by the U.S. was likely proportional. Thus, this reprisal would have been legal under customary international law.

In 1854, the U.S. exacted reprisal against Nicaragua. A band of Nicaraguans took charge of a neighboring town, and soon began harassing a U.S. trading post, committing violence against American citizens and destroying property. They even assaulted a U.S. Minister visiting the town. Their actions were clearly illegal. The U.S. provided several opportunities for the Nicaraguans to apologize and repair the injuries. Ultimately, the sloop of war *Cyane* fired upon the town, but only after providing a warning to the townspeople so they would have the opportunity to safely escape harm. Such a response seems proportional, and, therefore, legal under customary international law.

The next reprisal occurred in 1867 against Formosa after the crew of a wrecked American merchant vessel was murdered there. Such action was clearly illegal. I was unable to find sufficient information to determine whether ample opportunity was afforded Formosa to make amends. The U.S. ultimately responded by landing crews from the *USS Hartford* and the *USS Wyoming*, who proceeded to burn some of the natives' huts. This response may or may not have been proportional, depending on the diplomatic efforts employed to secure appropriate apologies and assurances that similar events would not occur in the future. As with the Johanns Island reprisal, the actions against Formosa
were likely proportional, since no public outrage was recorded, and very little information is available regarding the reprisal. Thus, this use of force was also likely legal under customary international law.

One hundred years passed before the next (and last) reprisal discussed. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge seized the U.S. merchant ship SS Mayaguez. Cambodia’s arrest of the SS Mayaguez was illegal because it was passing through international waters en route to Thailand from Hong Kong. Diplomatic efforts to secure the safe return of the ship and its crew were unsuccessful. Cambodia was given ample opportunity to make reparations, but failed to do so. U.S. marines were sent to rescue the ship, but as they landed on Cambodian soil, the Cambodians fired upon them. The response by the U.S. of sending marines to rescue the ship and its crew was proportional. Combat ensued only after the Cambodians opened fire.

This incident was the most difficult to code. Cambodia’s arrest of the Mayaguez was not strictly aggression, since the Mayaguez was a merchant ship. Certainly, Cambodia fired first against the U.S., but I opted to code the U.S. landing on Cambodian soil as the first act of aggression. The landing of U.S. marines constitutes the use of force against the territorial integrity of another state. This characterization is definitely debatable, but I believe it is conservative. My overall findings indicate that the U.S. is less aggressive than non-democracies in small war settings, so any questionable incidents coded as U.S. aggression will not undermine my conclusion.

It is worth pointing out that the Mayaguez incident is the first U.S. reprisal in the post-Charter era. The Mayaguez incident has been coded as an illegal reprisal under UN Charter standards, but could also be viewed as defensive. U.S. marines entered Cambodian territory not to engage in armed conflict, but to secure the safe return of U.S. property and citizens. The episode did not turn into armed conflict until the Cambodians fired upon the marines. As a defensive action, the Mayaguez incident could feasibly be scored as legal under post-Charter standards. I have chosen not to code this reprisal as legal, though, as all evidence indicates that the U.S. was prepared to exact redress against Cambodia, but was fired upon before it had the chance.

Each of the reprisals engaged in by the U.S., viewed strictly, could be considered illegal under current-day standards of international law. The first four of the five reprisals occurred prior to the adoption of the UN Charter, and would have been viewed as legal at the time under customary international law. The only post-Charter reprisal (The Mayaguez incident) could be analyzed under the alternate legal concept of defense, but it is still likely illegal according to post-Charter standards.

The Veracruz conflict in 1914 is the sixth incidence of U.S.
aggression. This conflict was discussed above.

The final incidence of U.S. aggression, which was not coded as illegal, occurred in 1989 against Libya. Over the previous decade, the U.S. and Libya had exchanged hostile fire on several occasions. On each prior occasion, Libya fired first against U.S. jets, creating an armed attack that justified a return of fire under UN Charter Article 51 self-defense provisions. On the 1989 occasion, though, Libyan jets had merely demonstrated hostile intentions when the U.S. responded with hostile fire. Libya's threats were illegal according to UN Charter Article 2, which prohibits "the threat or use of force" against another State. But the Definition of Aggression Resolution identifies as the aggressor the State that first uses armed force against another. A demonstration of hostile intentions does not involve the use of force, so the U.S. response of firing upon the Libyan jet constituted the first use of force. Thus, the U.S. is properly characterized as the aggressor.

The Libyan incident could also be analyzed in the context of anticipatory self-defense. Customary international law provides for the right of defense when danger is imminent. Scholars have mixed views as to whether a right of anticipatory self-defense is encompassed under UN Charter Article 51. The general view, though, is that some situations of "anticipated" or "imminent" or "impending" attack can realistically be regarded as an "armed attack" for purposes of UN Charter Article 51. Libya's demonstration of hostile intent, combined with the ongoing nature of the attacks over the previous decade provided sufficient reason to believe that Libya would make good on its threats. If any situations could be viewed as so imminent as to be regarded as an "armed attack" for purposes of Article 51, surely this incident could. So, while aggression is viewed as violating the UN Charter, the Libyan incident is quite likely legal not only under customary international law, but also as a proper, legal defensive action under Article 51.

Of the thirty-two small wars analyzed, there was one conflict coded as mutual aggression. It occurred at Nogales, Mexico, along the U.S.-Mexico border in 1918. At that time, intelligence reports indicated a significant threat of attack on the U.S. by Mexicans instigated by German agents. Many U.S. troops were moving out for war in Europe,

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61. U.N. CHARTER art. 2, para. 4.
64. Id.
but a few were left behind to defend against a border attack. Mexican troops appeared to be gathering at the border, digging trenches and moving supplies into town. On August 27th, a man attempted to walk through the guarded international gate. When the U.S. Customs official tried to stop him, the man kept moving. U.S. personnel followed the man across the border, and were immediately fired upon by Mexican troops. This started the Battle of Nogales. While the Mexican troops fired the first shot, the rising tensions over the weeks preceding the battle and the hostile movements by the U.S. troops provide for a more difficult identification of aggressor. For this reason, I have labeled this conflict as a case of mutual aggression.

In every case of U.S. aggression, the U.S. had significantly greater military strength and experience than its opponent. To lower the likelihood that the conflict would escalate into war, many conflicts, such as the reprisals and demonstrations, were intentionally at a low level of intensity. In no situation did the U.S. have cause for serious doubts regarding the outcome of its aggression.

In the remaining eighteen small wars, the U.S. participation was legal by today’s standards. Nine were for purposes of self-defense, and six were for purposes of collective defense. Three were sanctioned by the United Nations.

66. These nine include: the quasi-war with France between 1789 and 1800 in which French pirates and, indeed, the French government were committing acts of piracy and aggression against U.S. interests; the Barbary Wars of 1801-1805, in which the governments of Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis directed acts of piracy against U.S. ships; the Barbary War of 1815, which began when Algiers declared war on the United States; the Arrow War in China in 1856, which commenced when China fired upon a U.S. naval ship; the Japan conflict of 1863 when Japan attacked a U.S. naval ship; conflict in China in 1866 which began when China assaulted an American consul at Newchwang; the 1871 conflict with Korea discussed previously; the first Libyan missile exchange in 1981, when Libya fired a heat-seeking missile; and the Libyan missile exchange in 1986, when Libya again fired at U.S. jets.

67. The six incidents of collective defense include: the conflict in the Marquesas in 1813, in which a neighboring tribe attacked a tribe that was assisting in the repair of a U.S. naval vessel; the 1888 conflict in Samoa, in which the U.S. embarked to assist Samoa in its revolt against German aggression; the 1899 conflict in Samoa, when the U.S. again assisted Samoa in its battle against German aggression; the 1919 Italy/Serb border dispute, in which the U.S. assisted Italy in defending against Serb attacks during a border dispute; Operation Golden Pheasant in Honduras between 1983 and 1989, during which U.S. troops stood ready to fight against Nicaraguan incursions into Honduras; and the Tanker War of 1987-88, during which the U.S. military protected Kuwaiti oil tankers.

68. The three conflicts sanctioned by the UN include: Lebanon in 1982-1984, when troops sent to act as a deterrent while Syrian, Israeli and Palestinian forces withdrew from Lebanon were fired upon by Palestinian and Syrian factions; Operation Restore Hope in 1992-1994 Somalia, when troops intervened for humanitarian purposes and were later fired upon; and the Bosnian conflict of 1985, when troops were attacked after the U.S. and E.C. recognized Bosnia’s independence.
In the data set for civil conflicts, I have identified eighteen distinct conflicts that were primarily domestic in nature prior to U.S. involvement. The UN Charter prohibits intervention in civil wars, since aid to one side might violate the political independence of the State and the right of its people to determine their own political future.\(^6\) UN Charter 2(4) prohibits the threat or use of force against the political independence of any State, but there are instances in which a State’s intervention in the domestic activities of another State is not directed against the political independence of that State, and thus does not violate the UN Charter. The existence of such circumstances is most apparent when the host country consents to the other State’s intervention.\(^7\)

To determine whether the U.S. has acted in accordance with post-Charter international legal standards, it is useful to determine whether the U.S. in fact received consent to intervene in another country’s domestic conflicts. But who has the authority to provide such consent, and is that authority diminished once the regime is embroiled in a domestic power struggle? The status of the existing government structure indicated in the data sets is a useful factor in determining whether a particular regime has sufficient authority to provide consent to foreign intervention in a domestic conflict.

Aside from the question of consent, most States view as permissible military aid to an incumbent government, but view aid to insurgents as a violation of the Charter’s non-intervention principle, even where the insurgents portray themselves as freedom fighters.\(^8\) This is to be distinguished from a “national liberation movement” that is aimed at toppling colonial or foreign government rule, discussed below.\(^9\)

Turning to the analysis of the eighteen conflicts, I first note that in no instance was the U.S. opposing another democracy. On three occasions (Lebanon in 1958, the Philippines in 1989 and Haiti in 1994-95), the U.S. intervened to assist a democracy in power. In six of the eighteen incidents, the U.S. did not choose sides, but rather intervened for the purpose of establishing order in a country rife with civil strife.\(^10\)

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70. *Id.*
71. *Id.* at 213.
73. The six conflicts in which the U.S. intervened, but not as a belligerent on one side or the other include: Matamoras in 1866; the Cuban revolution from 1906-1909; insurrection in Haiti from 1915-1934 (though ultimately the U.S. defended itself against rebel attacks, the initial involvement was not in support of either side); the revolution in Honduras in 1919 (it has been argued that the U.S. provided tacit approval for the
The U.S. received consent in ten of the eighteen conflicts. In an additional situation, consent was provided, then withdrawn prior to the commencement of military activities. In seven of the conflicts, no consent was offered. In order to determine whether the U.S. was acting within the legal limits, we must examine the consent question to identify whether the party offering consent had sufficient authority to do so. Even where consent was not provided, the U.S. did not necessarily violate international law, as noted in more detail below.

An established government provided consent in three of the eighteen conflicts. An established government clearly has authority to authorize foreign intervention in a domestic dispute. Thus, U.S. intervention in the domestic upheaval in these countries was legal under the Charter framework based upon this consent.

The U.S. received consent to intervene from regimes in equilibrium with their adversaries in four of the eighteen identified conflicts. In practice, States are slow to withdraw recognition from an incumbent government. As a result, States tend to afford the incumbent government broad rights to seek assistance from third parties in suppressing threats to its authority. This is especially true where the incumbent government does not appear to be in imminent danger of collapse, and where the government may plausibly allege that significant external assistance has been provided to its opposition.

In 1906, the Cuban government was in equilibrium. The then governor, Tomás Estrada Palmer, asked the U.S. for assistance in repelling a coup, thus granting consent for U.S. intervention. Rather than provide military support, the U.S. sent a mediator to broker a settlement between the opposing factions. Before a deal could be reached, though, Estrada Palmer resigned from office. The U.S. then felt compelled to intervene until a new government could be established, and at that point sent military troops who were able to advance unopposed. The mediation attempt by the U.S. was certainly legal, as the U.S. had removal of the government leader, but the U.S. was not insistent on its chosen leader gaining control; the revolution in Nicaragua from 1926-1933 (as in Haiti from 1915-1934, the U.S. ultimately defended itself against rebel attacks, but the initial involvement was not in support of one belligerent or another); and in Macedonia from 1993-94.

74. The three instances when an established government provided consent include: the nationalist revolution in Egypt in 1882; the Philippines coup attempt in 1989; and the instability in Macedonia in 1993-94.

75. The four situations in which the U.S. received consent from a government in equilibrium with its adversaries include: the Cuban revolution in 1906-09; the Nicaraguan revolution from 1912-25; a threatened insurrection in Lebanon in 1958; and Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti from 1994-95.

76. Wippman, supra note 36, at 223.

77. Id.

78. Id.
received consent from an established government not apparently in danger of collapse. But by the time the U.S. sent troops, the government was not in clear control, and was definitely in danger of collapse. There was no allegation that the opposition was receiving external assistance. Thus, the military intervention by the U.S. into the domestic affairs of Cuba was not legal according to post-Charter international standards.

Similarly, the U.S. intervention in the Nicaraguan revolution between 1912 and 1925 was unlawful. President Adolfo Diaz of Nicaragua had not been in power long, and he was threatened by a rebellion. By the time he requested help from the U.S., the rebels held the capital city. There was never an allegation of external assistance to the rebels. Thus, the U.S. had received consent from a government in jeopardy of collapse, with no allegation of a prior unlawful intervention. The U.S. intervention was not legal.

On the other hand, U.S. intervention in Lebanon in 1958 was legal, as was intervention in Haiti in 1994-95. In Lebanon, the existing government was threatened by a growing insurrection allegedly backed by The United Arab Republic. In Haiti, the U.S. received consent from the recognized executive, albeit after he was ousted by a coup. But the legitimacy of the intervention in this instance lies less with the consent than with the UN authorization received pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter.

The U.S. received consent from a government comprised of one or more warring factions in two instances: the revolution of 1919 in Honduras, and the 1965 civil war in the Dominican Republic. In general, when a government is comprised of warring factions, justifications other than consent need to be sought for intervention to be considered legal. Possible justifications include authorization from a regional organization and consent from each of the warring factions.

Between 1911 and 1920, the government of Honduras was unstable, with rival factions vying for control. In 1919, two factions were lining up international support for their causes. The U.S., determined not to let the domestic conflict escalate to the international arena, offered to mediate a settlement. Both sides agreed, fearing that declining the U.S.'s offer would lead to open intervention. An interim government was established, and elections, albeit manipulated elections, were eventually held. This intervention by the U.S. was legal because it had support from each of the warring factions.

In 1965, civil war broke out in the Dominican Republic. Since 1961, the government had been unstable, with rival factions competing...
for power. The U.S., increasingly concerned with the Communist sentiment expressed by several of these factions, was anxious to monitor the situation closely. The U.S. ultimately intervened to restore order, protect American citizens in the Dominican Republic, and prevent the spread of Communism. The Organization of American States (OAS) participated in what came to be known as the Inter-American Peace Force (IAPF). Thus, the U.S. intervention into the Dominican Republic had the approval of a regional organization, and was therefore legal.

In the final conflict in which the U.S. received consent, the government was in a state of complete collapse. That conflict was in Grenada, and the year was 1983. Grenada’s Governor-General Sir Paul Scoon invited U.S. intervention, but consent does not carry much weight when all government structures have essentially collapsed. In instances such as this, authority to approve military intervention falls with regional organizations.\textsuperscript{81} Even with this approval, a temporary absence of government is not likely to be sufficient legal grounds under the U.N. Charter, because the political forces within the country must be given a chance to reestablish order.\textsuperscript{82} External intervention with regional approval is legal only after a prolonged state of anarchy.\textsuperscript{83} In Grenada, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) authorized U.S. intervention, but the anarchy in Grenada was not prolonged. In fact, anarchy had reigned for only twelve days when the U.S. landed in Grenada. Admittedly, the quantification of “prolonged” is debatable, but clearly the political forces within Grenada could not realistically be expected to establish order in only twelve days. Thus, even with OECS approval, the U.S. intervention in Grenada was not legal. The U.N. provides one more justification for legal intervention when government structure is in complete collapse, though. Regional peacekeeping that is not directed against the government but rather that is focused on restoring order and orderly process of self-determination is permissible.\textsuperscript{84} Unfortunately, the U.S. motivation for intervention was to prevent a Marxist faction from gaining control. The U.S. intervention in Grenada was not lawful.

One of the eighteen instances of civil conflict involved a case of withdrawn consent. In a revolution in the Dominican Republic from 1916-1924, President Juan Isidro Jiminez of the Dominican Republic was ousted, and he requested U.S. assistance to restore him to power.

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Id.} at 231.

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Id.} at 233.

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Id.}

When it was determined that the only way to restore his authority was through the use of force, Jiminez resigned, declining to use military force against his people and essentially withdrawing consent. The U.S. proceeded anyway. If an intervention is to be justified by consent of the government, then that intervention must fall within the guidelines of that consent. Any intervening activities outside the scope of the consent cannot be lawfully justified. U.S. intervention would not likely have been lawful even with valid consent since the government was in equilibrium; the President had already lost his stronghold, and there was no allegation of foreign backing to the rebels.

In the remaining seven civil conflicts, the U.S. did not receive consent to its intervention. In five of these seven conflicts, the U.S. actions were considered illegal. But in two of the conflicts, the U.S. interventions were legal despite the absence of host government consent. The first of these was Panama's struggle for independence from Colombia. The Colombian government was an established government, but since the U.S. was siding with the Panamanians, consent clearly was not granted. Nevertheless, such a battle for independence would be considered a national liberation movement, which is deemed permissible by the UN, provided the movement is aimed at liberating a country from colonial domination or occupation by foreign forces. Such was the case in the struggle for Panama's independence. Thus the U.S. intervention was legal despite the lack of consent from the Colombian authorities.

The second conflict in which consent was not granted yet intervention was lawful was in Kosovo in 1998. The Kosovars, too, were fighting for independence. Their fight was against Yugoslavia. The basis for lawful intervention could be the national liberation movement argument, but an even stronger basis here is the authorization and participation by NATO forces, as regional peacekeeper.

It should be remembered that, while half of the interventions could not be scored as legal interventions according to post-Charter standards of international law, most of them occurred in the pre-Charter era. While the UN reserves the right to intervene whenever there is a threat to or breach of international peace, that body did not exist prior to 1945.

85. Wippman, supra note 36, at 234.
86. The five conflicts in which consent was not provided and therefore U.S. intervention was not lawful include: the holding of Matamoras, Mexico for three days in 1866; U.S. assistance to rebels in Nicaragua in 1909-1910; U.S. asserting control over Haiti from 1915-1934; U.S. asserting control over Nicaragua from 1926-1933; and Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1988-89, during which the U.S. intervened to oust Noriega.
87. Dean, supra note 73, at 184-85.
88. U.N. CHARTER Chapter VII.
Prior to establishment of the UN, individual States felt an obligation to unilaterally assume the role of international peacekeeper. As a result, some of the conflicts scored in the data set as illegal action by the U.S. may have been legal had a regional organization or the UN itself been given the opportunity to analyze the situation and determine whether intervention was justified to restore international peace. Examples of potentially lawful interventions include the instances of Matamoras in 1866, Haiti in 1915-1934, and Nicaragua in 1926-1933, when the U.S. intervened to restore order rather than to participate as a belligerent.

As in the interstate conflicts, in each of the eighteen instances of U.S. intervention into the civil conflicts of another State, the U.S. had by far the stronger and more experienced military. The U.S. was not in fear of losing any of the actions it undertook.

**Interventions for Protection**

In addition to the U.S. military involvement in the thirty-two interstate and eighteen domestic conflicts noted above, the U.S. sent troops a total of eighty-eight times throughout its history to protect its citizens or property in foreign lands. The purpose of these interventions was not to engage in conflict or to interfere with the domestic politics of the host country, but rather to serve as a deterrent to military activities aimed at U.S. citizens or property abroad. As such, the U.S. neither threatened nor used force against another State, and certainly did not do so against another democracy.

Under customary international law, a State may legally use force to protect lives and property of citizens abroad; however this right is not granted under the Charter. Some scholars argue that protective action falls under the realm of self-defense, asserting that injury to the nationals of a State constitutes injury to the State itself. However, under both customary international law and the self-defense argument, certain conditions must be met before the protective action is considered lawful. The threat to nationals must be genuine, imminent and substantial. The host country government must have failed to protect those threatened within its borders. The purpose of the military mission must be limited to rescuing or protecting those nationals whose lives are in danger.

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89. Lillich, supra note 56, at 147-48.
92. Id.
93. Id.
Finally, the protective military action must not be directed against the
authority structure of the government. The eighty-eight protection
actions listed in the Interventions for Protection data set meet these
requirements, and may thus be considered lawful.

While the U.S. sent military troops in these eighty-eight conflicts, it
did not anticipate actually using force in any of them. The nature of the
intervention was such that the conflict was not likely to escalate to the
use of force.

Aside from these eighty-eight protective actions, it is interesting to
think of the reprisals mentioned above as interventions for protection. Certainly in each of those instances, a genuine and imminent threat to
U.S. nationals existed, and the host country had failed to protect them.
In only one of the reprisals was the U.S. action limited to rescuing or
protecting its nationals, as opposed to punishing or threatening force in
the event of future harm to its nationals. That reprisal was the Mayaguez
incident. While I believe there is a sound argument to be made for
analyzing the Mayaguez incident as an intervention for protection, I have
opted to analyze it as a reprisal, because, in addition to rescuing the crew
of the Mayaguez, navy jets were instructed to fire upon military
installments on Cambodia’s mainland. In fact, Cambodia fired upon the
U.S. first, but evidence indicates the U.S. intention was reprisal rather
than merely protective action.

Conclusion

Since gaining its independence, the U.S. has sent military troops
abroad to participate in small wars in some form or fashion a total of 138
times. In not one of these conflicts did the U.S. threaten or use force
against another democracy. When force was used or threatened, the U.S.
actions were, more often than not, legal according to post-Charter
standards of international law. Frequently, even when the actions would
not have been considered to be legal according to modern standards, they
had been considered legal at the time they occurred.

In over 60% of the small wars, the U.S. did not threaten force or
anticipate needing to use force. When the U.S. illegally threatened or
used force, it was most likely to do so in low-intensity settings that were
not likely to rouse a call to arms. In all of its aggressive actions, the U.S.
was far more experienced in military matters than its opponent, which
acted as a deterrent to escalation of the conflict. This seeming avoidance

94. Id.
95. As a reminder, those reprisals include the Falkland Islands in 1831-1832,
Johannis Island in 1851, Nicaragua in 1854, Formosa in 1867, and the Mayaguez incident
in 1875.
of an increased use of force may be indicative of the U.S.'s aversion to violence.

That being said, U.S. actions were illegal according to post-Charter international standards in over 15% of the small wars identified. In civil conflicts, the U.S. was just as likely to intervene when such action was considered illegal as when the host-country or an international peacekeeping organization properly authorized it. The U.S. did not seem to think twice about threatening force or using low-level violence to right an actual or perceived wrongdoing.

While this data and analysis supports the broader democratic peace proposition, it also indicates that the U.S. is more prone to violence and aggression in small war settings than in the major war settings described by numerous scholars, especially when confident it can achieve its goals without risking escalation of the conflict.
Appendix A

The Data Sets

Data Set for Interstate Conflicts

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<th>Ending Year</th>
<th>Conflict</th>
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<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
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<th>U.S. Regime</th>
<th>Status of Existing Host Government</th>
<th>Consent</th>
<th>Legality</th>
<th>U.S. Involvement</th>
<th>Total Fatalities</th>
<th>U.S. Involvement for VT or V2</th>
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<td>1950</td>
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<td>8 Factors</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nationalist revolution in Egypt; we assisted the British, who played a much larger role historically and in putting down the revolution. British remained and occupied. Britain had been a controlling influence for a long time.</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Protecting US interests in the canal; prevent Turkish troops from landing.</td>
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<td>Iraq</td>
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<td>10 Equilibrium</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>VC</td>
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<td>US recognized government while Cuba had downed a coup, following the resignation of the president who had just put down a coup.</td>
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<td>VC</td>
<td>After our man was put in charge, they helped him open left rebellion.</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Americans lack control during (continued) power struggle; rebels then attacked US leadership.</td>
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<td>2250</td>
<td>VC</td>
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<td>9 Factors</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>President ousted. US intervened to help, but rebels reorganized rather than take back control by force.</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>1137</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Government overwhelmed with fact US approval; US played the role of mediator, and eventually let the commander of the army (take control (despite their preferring another leader).</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Previous ruler ousted a newly-elected president, led to a civil war; US got involved after Mexico, in order to mediate; it was agreed that US would stay involved until new elections and proper transfer, then Sadat restored.</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>VC</td>
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<td>Marines invited to protect against threatened invasion from the outside.</td>
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<td>10 Factors</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>DAS successfully approved and sent troops; fear of Communist takeover.</td>
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<td>Collapsed</td>
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<td>Outlaw a rebel government and restore representative government; evacuate Americans.</td>
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<td>Unilateral action to oust Noriega.</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Assist government in repelling a coup.</td>
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<td>VC</td>
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<td>UN Peacekeeping Force to maintain stability in former Yugoslavia.</td>
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<td>Renew military leadership and restore democracy.</td>
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<td>Fight for human rights / independence.</td>
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### Data Set for Interventions for Protection

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### Data Set for Interventions for Protection (cont.)

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<td>Evacuate civilians from Mexico</td>
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<td>Evacuation from Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>-77,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Database Bibliography: Bibliography for the Data Sets


[conflict-specific information]

James P. Finley, The Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Huachuca, vol. 2


MONTY G. MARSHALL & KEITH JAGGERS, INTEGRATED NETWORK FOR SOCIETAL CONFLICT RESEARCH PROGRAM, CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, UNIV. OF MD., POLITY IV PROJECT (2002), available at


