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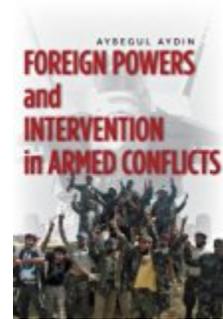
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Aysegul Aydin. *Foreign Powers and Intervention in Armed Conflicts*. Stanford Security Studies Series. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012. viii + 202 pp. \$45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8047-8281-4.

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Intervention in War: Economic Liberalism and the Desire to Maintain Peace in the Name of Trade

In *Foreign Powers and Intervention in Armed Conflicts*, Aysegul Aydin seeks to update and reinterpret the vast body of scholarship on foreign intervention. This project is based on a number of new studies and reports and a great deal of original reinterpretation of existing research. Aydin is concerned with all kinds of intervention (save humanitarian which raises independent concerns), from diplomatic engagement in civil wars to military participation in history's most notorious wars. Writing from the perspective of someone who deals with humanitarian intervention, I found this book to be challenging but very rewarding, since it ultimately offers a strong and clear understanding of the broad legal, political, and practical motivations for and implications of foreign intervention as well as a thorough review of present literature on the subject. This book is therefore a genuinely useful guide for scholars.

Intervention is a wide-ranging subject, one that is of fundamental importance because of its pervasive nature in international politics. This makes it a challenging and adamantly unacademic topic of study, and Aydin's work is all the more important in making a solid contribution to helping new and established scholars understand present thought on the subject. What Aydin has produced is a thorough exploration of when and why intervention has occurred, and this takes the form of a review of scholarship on the topic and key suggestions on where research in this area should be headed. More than this, she also proposes a theory of why intervention oc-

curs.

The first chapter of the book deals with the technical notions of intervention. Here Aydin analyzes the problems and theoretical issues brought about by the study of intervention and its practice. The key historiographical arguments discussed are the realist, liberalist, constructivist, and institutionalist viewpoints. These perspectives give different interpretations of the motivations and outcomes of intervention. Starting logically, Aydin first aims to explain what "intervention" is. However, she offers no conclusive definition of "intervention," although she makes a good attempt. Bravely, Aydin settles for a ubiquitously vague description of intervention as a means to point out the weakness of current scholarly definitions on the subject. She proposes that intervention should be thought of as a response to aggression between and within states elsewhere and actions that external actors take inside these conflicts. The use of such a broad definition is relatively successful. Current definitions pitch intervention as a response to a conflict, which the author believes limits the study to interventions that take place inside a conflict and only considers ideal interventions. Instead we should also think about intervention in the pre- and post-conflict stages, which is more reflective of trending practice, with the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) report making the same recommendations. While it would have been more comforting to have a solid base from which to work, in this respect Aydin makes a good point. She resolves

that intervention should be looked at from a broader perspective than traditional studies, which generally focus on intervention in wars between states; we should widen the lens to include intervention in civil wars, interventions via economic sanctions, interventions as covert operations, and the international context in which they all take place.

Aydin then considers the legal condition of intervention. While some forms of intervention can work within the present international legal framework (international mediations, economic sanctions, etc.), military intervention is at odds with the rule of law. She presents the United Nations (UN) as a body whose role in intervention in internal conflict has expired (save for some extreme humanitarian crises) as the international system has changed since the end of the Cold War from one based on states to one based on people and movements. As such, the UN has a role in stopping only wars that take place between states. Interventions generally occur in conflicts that are of a lower scale than full-blown war, like civil wars, and this means that the UN and international law are not equipped to deal with the current flourish of low-scale conflicts occurring as they are relics from an older system that cannot be applied to how the world works today. A vast amount of scholarship is called on to support this argument Aydin's quite convincing central thrust is that the UN and much of what we recognize as international law were created to deal with violence from an age now past, when wars were between states and not within them or between groups. Aydin goes on to explore this on a practical policy level and summarizes that intervention is legal, pending that a long list of circumstances, requirements, and authorizations are fulfilled. However, these are rarely met and most interventions are unilateral or coalitional and therefore at odds with both the UN and present law regarding intervention. Essentially this is a discussion of who intervenes and when, and it concludes that these are basic unanswered questions, both in theory and policy. Aydin also points out that an equally important area to explore is the motivation behind intervention. Although there is little revelation in this chapter, it is an excellent review of the legal status of interventions that have occurred in recent history.

With the UN firmly disregarded as the arbiter of intervention and international law discounted as a motivation for intervention, Aydin's next chapter explores the notion of defending foreign interests abroad. This section is all about the shadier side of intervention, that of interests and power rather than the noble rhetoric that usually surrounds military intervention into conflict. Aydin de-

scribes economic security as a vital motivation for intervention. She then creates a strong framework in which the decision to intervene can be analyzed. She points out that motivations are at odds with constraints, which are the factors that restrict the decision to intervene. The overriding narrative here is the play off between political and economic phenomena in the willingness of international bodies and individual states to intervene. This narrative is framed around liberal theories of international relations and economic liberalism. What follows is a prolonged discussion of liberal international relations theory, how it works with intervention, and how realist ideas fit in. This is all a little jaded and appears confusing to someone who is not extremely familiar with the nuances of these ideas. Still, the author's point does emerge strongly in this chapter. Aydin successfully argues here that a risk to a state's economic security in the form of foreign conflict brings about intervention with the intention of returning to peace in order to secure said state's economic security. This is a somewhat questionable argument, and one that is a little too nihilistic when one considers other proposals for motivations behind intervention, such as defending the weak or maintaining nuclear dominance. Still, Aydin does accept that economic liberalism and the defense of trade is not the sole arbiter of peace and war and that other forces maintain, for example, peace, political dominance, and strategic interdependence. Somewhat confounding her argument, Aydin is at pains to point out that conflict is not always an impediment to trade. Trade does not necessarily mean peace, nor does war mean the cessation of trade. Aydin also gives some historical basis for her theory, exploring where this decision to intervene in the name of defending economic interests has historically come from, and one of the most interesting points she makes in her book is that we must take into consideration the domestic component of foreign and security policy insofar as domestic powers (like corporations, lobbyists, and political movements) have in influencing the foreign policy of a state. She gives a solid consideration of the domestic component of policy and decision making and security policy in general and this does strengthen her argument somewhat. Again this chapter identifies a key gap in the field and suggests that economic motivations are an area for future scholars to investigate. The core argument here, central to the entire work, is centered on an economic theory of intervention, but this is somewhat undermined by Aydin. While she presents this as a primary motivation for intervention, perhaps it would be more useful to think of it as a partial explanation for why the decision to intervene was taken.

Aydin then empirically tests her economic theory of intervention against a series of example case studies in chapters 4, 5, and 6. Drawn against liberal and realist frameworks, her theory of economic security as the motivation for intervention does appear to stand up, although admittedly the theory works less reliably in more democratic states. Stability is the key theme here, and many of the examples do not relate to interventions to gain resources, but rather to maintain a steady trade environment which conflict would otherwise threaten, and indeed Aydin's broad definition of intervention incorporates intervention to prevent conflict from happening as well as to resolve it when it has already started. Examples used include the Iraq-Iran war and U.S. involvement in Albania and Croatia. Aydin proposes some bold hypotheses in this chapter, but also examines challenges to her theory and adjusts it accordingly. The first proposal explored is that the motivation to intervene functions in proportion to the trade volume at stake. As Aydin points out, such a proposition is full of riddles. Indeed, trade is not the economic activity that is most affected by conflict and states at war still continue to trade. What is more, most trade is conducted privately and the impact conflict has on private firms is of less interest to intervening states. Thus Aydin goes on to suggest that intervention is motivated by the economic interests of nationals, who have business interests in or partnerships with belligerents. Again Aydin dismisses this as it obscures the future dimension of her definition of intervention and is soon replaced by the idea that states are motivated to intervene in order to defend their access to a marketplace. This seems the most solid hypothesis, although it does vary by regime/government types with democratic states less likely to intervene. She offers other similar theories relevant to the constraints on the decision to intervene, and backs them all up with a great deal of statistical evidence from a variety of sources. While this does prove to be an interesting section of the book and a strong augmentation to Aydin's theory, it also feels like something of a watered down theory of why interventions occur. Still, perhaps this is emblematic of the true nature of intervention in the real world. The way in which Aydin examines her argument in these chapters feels like a sort of methodological development of her theory, rather than a presentation of findings. Although she should be credited for critically considering her own hypothesis, this does detract from the persuasiveness of the theory.

The theory is then further evaluated against a critical evaluation of U.S. interventions. This chapter is really the litmus test of Aydin's theories about trade and prosper-

ity being linked to peace, and economic security as the motivation behind intervention. The United States is an ideal-typical example and its size and significance mean that it is in a position to intervene regularly. As such, it forms the perfect case study. There are a few choice quotations from policymakers and academics here that support Aydin's theory very well. However, what also emerges clearly in this chapter is the fact that Aydin considers few other possible motivations for intervention, and this is a criticism that applies equally to the rest of the work. To give but one example, Aydin quotes Curtis D. Wilbur, the U.S. secretary of the navy from 1924 to 1929. This quotation explains that U.S. intervention in the First World War was entirely due to the risk that war posed to American monetary interests and, after explaining how much American money was at stake before the United States entered the war (around thirty-one billion dollars), Wilbur claimed that "we fought not because Germany invaded or threatened to invade America but she struck our commerce on the North Sea" (pp. 93-94). No other consideration is given, for example to American public opinion or the sinking of U.S. merchant ships by the German navy, despite there being a vast body of literature on the subject. That said, this is still an effective test of the book's general theory. There are many case studies examined, including interventions in Central America, the Caribbean, North Africa, and the Middle East. With thirty well-referenced and detailed pages this evaluation is in-depth. If nothing else, it is a thorough evaluation of the United States' intervention history. It is a shame that this book was written before the 2012 intervention in Libya as I am sure this would have added even more fuel to Aydin's argument. However, it would have been more expansive to include further case studies, either of states that intervene but are in less of a position to do so, or states that choose not to intervene despite great risks to their economic wellbeing and their overall capacity to intervene (it being well within their means). With this in mind I do find the argument a little incomplete. It seems that Aydin is trying to argue that the defense of trade routes is the systemic reason for interventions occurring, and I am not sure this is the case.

An interesting challenge to this theory of the defense of trade as the primary motivation for intervention is also exposed. While it is plausible that wars between countries threaten international trade to third parties, it seems that civil wars do less so. Therefore examples of interventions in civil wars stand in affront to the theory already proposed. Aydin aims to address this in the final chapter, and all credit should go to the author for exploring

this chink in her argument. In the period since the Cold War, interventions in civil wars have greatly increased in number, whether for humanitarian purposes or otherwise. The theory proposed is that external states with an economic interest in countries that are engaged in civil war aim to manage the conflict to retain some market equilibrium. Aydin superbly uses statistical information to prove this theory and she further tests it against a large number of case studies: interventions by the United States in Nicaragua and El Salvador and Britain in Nigeria to name but a few. Deep analysis reveals that during the Cold War a lot of intervention in civil war was due to superpower competition. This has changed, and now intervention in civil war reflects a growth in globalization, which results in intervention for economic or security oriented objectives based over areas larger than single states. Aydin ends by claiming that these types of intervention pose the next challenge for intervention scholars.

All in all, this book suffers from trying to do too much

at the same time. It is a mixture of a deeply researched analysis of intervention scholarship to date, a theory of economic motivation for intervention, and a suggestion of where future scholarship should go. Some would say that this is a vital mix in all good scholarship, but I think in this case these three elements are not distinct enough. The summary and evaluation of scholarship is done very well, as is the appraisal of the future direction of intervention scholarship, but the intervention motivation theory is a little less developed and I am skeptical of trade being the ultimate decider of intervention. However, this is an extensively researched and well-written exploration of intervention. Its utility does not lie in its clarity or deep review of the present literature on the subject, but rather on analysis of what is missing from this area of study and policy. While it may have been more interesting and revelatory to have filled more of these gaps, Aydin nonetheless makes a valid and important contribution to the field of intervention studies. Hers is a solid analysis that is to be recommended for anyone researching intervention in an international relations context.

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