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**(De-)escalation? The impact of U.S. military interventions
on conflict intensity in the post-Cold War era.**

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Abstract

This thesis critically evaluates the impact of U.S. military interventions on conflict intensity in the post-Cold War era through the lens of bargaining theory. While such interventions are often framed as tools for peace and stability, they frequently exacerbate violence and disrupt power dynamics. By categorizing interventions into strategic, hostile strategic, economic, territorial, and social protection types, this research identifies stark variations in outcomes. Strategic, hostile strategic, and economic interventions emerge as key drivers of conflict escalation, destabilizing bargaining dynamics and escalating violence. In contrast, territorial interventions show a de-escalatory effect, suggesting that well-defined territorial claims can reduce uncertainty and foster stability. Notably, social protection interventions, often perceived as neutral or humanitarian, paradoxically intensify violence due to perceived bias and unintended shifts in power dynamics. These findings challenge prevailing narratives of U.S. interventions as inherently stabilizing, moral, and successful, revealing their often-counterproductive consequences when looking beyond the U.S. centric metrics. The study underscores the need to rethink U.S. foreign policy by refocussing on the lived realities. Acknowledging methodological limitations, such as reliance on fatalities as a proxy for conflict intensity and the short-term analysis, it calls for further research to refine these insights and inform more effective policy approaches.

Introduction

U.S. foreign military intervention remains a cornerstone of its foreign policy, from the ongoing support of Ukraine in its war with Russia to the withdrawal from Afghanistan that marked the end of a two-decade conflict. While many U.S. presidents have vowed to end such ‘endless wars’, these pledges often ring hollow, with interventions persisting around the globe (Mazzarino, 2021; Petersen, 2021; Toft & Kushi, 2023). Since achieving global dominance after the Cold War, the U.S. military has become deeply embedded in global conflict, with notable recent examples including airstrikes in Syria, operations in Africa aimed at counterterrorism, and its continued involvement in Iraq (Mazzarino, 2021; Petersen, 2021; Toft & Kushi, 2023). These actions are justified as moral imperatives to save vulnerable populations or restore order in regions mired in conflict, and are often deemed successful when looking at the costs and benefits for the U.S. Yet, the actual legacy of such interventions reveals a troubling pattern. Rather than de-escalate conflict, they often escalate violence, deepen divisions, and prolong instability. The current narrative overlooks this critical dimension.

Amid mounting debates about the efficacy and ethics of foreign military intervention, this thesis examines a crucial but underexplored question: how do different types of U.S. military interventions affect conflict intensity in the host nation? Specifically, the thesis explores how different types of military intervention affect the level of fatalities within conflicts. The analysis is underpinned by the bargaining theory of war, which serves as the conceptual framework for understanding how foreign military interventions influence the balance of power within the conflict. The central premise of bargaining theory is that conflicts arise when warring parties fail to negotiate an acceptable agreement, often due to issues like asymmetric information or lack of credible commitments (Anderton, 2017; Lake, 2010; Morgan, 1994). By altering the capabilities, incentives, and perceptions of warring parties, interventions can escalate or de-escalate these bargaining failures, influencing the intensity of

violence. Furthermore, the study distinguishes between strategic, economic protective, territorial, and social protection and order interventions. By analysing their distinct impacts on conflict intensity, the research aims to move beyond the U.S. centric metrics of motivations and success and uncover the broader implications for affected populations. As debates about the role of U.S. in global security intensify, the question of what these interventions truly achieve, particularly in regard to the host nations themselves, remains underexplored (Kydd & Straus, 2013; Lockyer, 2011; Pearson, 1974; Pickering & Kisangani, 2006).

This thesis is organized to systematically explore the effect of different types of U.S. military intervention on conflict intensity in the post-Cold War era. The first section discusses the current research and literature on the topic. Besides highlighting existing debates focussed on U.S. costs and benefits of interventions and showing the extent of existing literature, it pinpoints how the effect of U.S. foreign military interventions on host nations and how the effect of different types of military intervention is under-researched, proving the relevance of this thesis. In the second section the theoretical framework is presented, with the bargaining theory of war as a lens for analysing the impact of U.S. foreign military interventions. U.S. interference has a profound impact on the balance of power between the warring parties, affecting the capabilities, perceptions, and incentives surrounding the conflict. Based on the theory this section also highlights the importance of distinguishing between different types of military intervention. The third section outlines the methodological approach, detailing the dataset, the variables, and the analytical techniques employed. Following this, the fourth section presents the findings of the negative binomial regression model, offering insights into the effects of different types of military intervention on conflict intensity. Finally, the conclusion reflects on the broader implications of these findings, acknowledges their limitations, and provides recommendations for future research and policymaking.

The thesis offers a nuanced examination of U.S. military interventions, moving beyond the traditional focus on U.S. political objectives or success. It sheds light on the immediate and localized impacts of military interventions by looking at their role in shaping the intensity of violence. By differentiating between the different types of military intervention and grounding the analysis in a robust theoretical framework, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how U.S. foreign military interventions influence conflict dynamics and offer valuable insights for policymakers seeking more sustainable and context-sensitive approaches to conflict resolution.

Literature review

Following the end of the Cold War, the global power structure shifted from a bi-polar system dominated by the U.S. and the Soviet Union to a unipolar system with the U.S. as dominant force. This shift was substantiated by the U.S. its vast economic resources, advanced military capabilities, and global influence, solidifying its dominant position in international affairs (Bedford, 2011). As Kushi & Toft (2023) argue, this pattern of military engagement can be understood as ‘kinetic diplomacy’, where diplomacy is solely carried out through the use or threat of use of armed forces. With this dominance, foreign military interventions became a defining feature of U.S. foreign policy, or, as Pickering and Kisangani (2006) state, “a sine qua non of modern statecraft” (p. 363). These foreign military interventions can be understood as the deployment of U.S. troops or forces into another country, typically in response to a political issue or dispute. It encompasses actions involving the threat, display, or direct usage of force by the U.S. against another foreign actor, territory, property, or representatives (Kushi & Toft, 2023; Pickering & Kisangani, 2009; Toft & Kushi, 2023). Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has conducted over one hundred of these interventions, with increasing levels of hostility and intensity. While they are often framed as efforts to promote global democracy, fulfil the

U.S. its perceived obligation as the leader of the free world, maintain international stability, and protect vulnerable populations, scholars argue that such actions are largely driven by the pursuit of national interests, and highlight the unintended consequences such as the escalation of conflicts and destabilization of regions (Bedford, 2011; Toft & Kushi, 2023).

U.S. centric approach

The dominant presence of the U.S. within global affairs and their ‘kinetic diplomacy’ has also translated to a dominance within the study of foreign military interventions. Scholars in this field primarily focus on either the motivations behind these actions or their outcomes in relation to success in terms of U.S. political objectives, driven by the cost-benefit analysis of conducting such operations.

Firstly, the motivations behind conducting foreign military interventions. A vocal strand of literature analyses whether these actions stem from a narrow self-interest, such as securing U.S. interests in the regime targeted or enhancing regional and global U.S. security interests, or a broader self-interest, such as assisting the host nation or population or supporting regional and global norms (Kavanagh et al., 2019). Regan (2002a) provides a detailed analysis of the political and strategic calculations that underpin military interventions, arguing that U.S. interventions are often shaped by a combination of national interests and international security concerns. Toft & Kushi (2023) similarly emphasize the multifaceted nature of U.S. interventions, which are not only motivated by immediate security concerns but also by long-term strategic goals, such as the promotion of democracy and the stabilization of key regions.

Secondly, the outcome of foreign military interventions as a measure of success for U.S. political objectives. Pearson et al. (2013) explore this relationship, examining how factors from within the conflict can influence the outcomes for the U.S. political objectives. Additionally, there is ongoing debate about the outcome of U.S. military interventions within

the affected countries, with scholars exploring the effectiveness of interventions in achieving their stated goals. Goals such as the democratization effects of U.S. interventions or the promotion of peace are questioned, and it is revealed that such interventions are more effective on the short-term rather than actually fostering long-term solutions (Bedford, 2011; Olson Lounsbery et al., 2011). Research in this area frequently seeks to identify the specific factors that increase the likelihood of intervention success, with analyses pointing towards a cost-benefit analysis for the U.S. Key variables found are number of troops deployed to conflict, the alliances the U.S. holds with the host nations, and funding spent on conducting the interventions (Bedford, 2011; Pearson et al., 2013; Regan, 2002a).

Only a small strand of research looks beyond the cost-benefit analysis of the U.S. and focuses on the broader implications of U.S. interventions or the success relative to the intended objectives. For instance, while Kavanagh et al. (2019) investigate the conditions under which U.S. interventions achieve their goals, they also highlight that while U.S. military interventions are often portrayed as deliberate and calculated actions, their outcomes go beyond the political objectives assigned instead. The tactical dominance the U.S. enjoys frequently fails to translate into the realization of their political objectives, sometimes even increasing insecurity on the ground (Kavanagh et al., 2019; Mayer, 2019). This aligns with a broader historical trend of declining success rates in conflicts involving major powers, as seen in protracted and unresolved interventions like Vietnam and Afghanistan (Stephenson, 2023). Moreover, critical studies, such as Hultman & Peksen (2017) shed light on the unintended consequences of military interventions, including the potential to escalate violence or prolong civil conflicts. While this literature tries to go beyond emphasizing U.S. political objectives and strategic considerations, there is still relatively little focus on the direct intensity of these interventions or the long-term consequences for the affected regions.

With much of the existing literature on U.S. military interventions focussing on the political objectives, emphasizing tactical successes, the fulfilment of strategic objectives, or the implications for U.S. global dominance, behind these interventions, rather than their broader implications and unintended consequences within the affected regions, there is a growing need to critically examine beyond this. The current field of study is disproportionately driven by the interests of the intervener instead of focussing on the actual effect foreign military interventions have on the nation intervened on. The cost-benefit analysis for the U.S. seems to outweigh the the actual effect of such interventions for the host nation. Although such analyses are important for understanding the broader geopolitical consequences of U.S. foreign policy for the U.S. itself, they remain to neglect the direct and localized impacts on host nations. The effect of foreign military interventions is currently being understood and analysed as the effects it has on the intervener rather than the effect on those that are being intervened on. While some literature reaches a bit further, touching upon the unintended consequences of interventions, or the prolonging or escalating violence as denoted above, the effect interventions have on those stuck in the conflict is largely ignored.

Rethinking interventions

The predominant focus on U.S. political objectives and the long-term success or failure of interventions as perceived by the intervening power leaves critical questions unanswered regarding the lived realities and security implications for the populations in the areas targeted by such actions. This prevents a deeper understanding of how different types of military intervention contribute to changes in the broader trajectory of violence in host nations (Plettner, 2019; Sambanis et al., 2020). Specifically, how third-party intervention affects the immediate escalation or de-escalation of conflict. While the U.S. are very fond of their justification of interventions as acts of global guardianship, the lack of research on the immediate effect on

conflict intensity across the different types of interventions begs the question if this justification is true. It is important to rethink and deepen the understanding of foreign military interventions by analysing how they influence ongoing disputes and the effect they have on the host nation.

Central to understanding the influence of third-party interference and the influence of U.S. foreign military interventions on the trajectory of the conflict is the bargaining theory and the balance of power between warring parties. Military and political dynamics within a conflict are often fragile, with even small shifts in resources or support tipping the bargaining range between government forces and opposing forces. When external interventions occur, they inevitably touch upon the bargaining range. Although it is not their bargain to drive, U.S. interference has the ability to change the bargain driven between warring parties by changing the military capabilities, power perceptions, or incentives, and so affect the balance of power (Frederick et al., 2021; Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Lockyer, 2011; Morgan, 1994).

Additionally, much of the current research adopts a broad approach, failing to differentiate between the different types of military intervention that can be conducted. With the current research being primarily focussed on the motivations and success behind U.S. intervention, this distinction might seem less important. After all, it is more about the totality of resources and funds spent when looking at the costs and benefits. However, when looking at the actual conflicts and those involved, this approach overlooks the fact that different types of military intervention may have different type of effects on the balance of power within the host nation, and therefore on the trajectories of the conflict. There are many differences to be found within 'actions involving the threat, display, or direct usage of force by the U.S. against another foreign actor, territory, property, or representatives. But besides that, each type of intervention touches upon the balance of power in a different way. Thus, the specific nature of U.S. military interventions and how they affect the balance of power have profound implications for the effects they have within the host nation (Frederick et al., 2021; Hultman &

Peksen, 2017; Lockyer, 2011; Morgan, 1994). Building on the work of Kushi and Toft (2023), a distinction is made between strategic interventions, economic protective interventions, territorial interventions, and social protection and order interventions, based on how they touch upon the strategic calculation by the warring parties.

Strategic interventions aim to influence the balance of power at the highest level by supporting either the reigning government or the opposing forces through military or strategic support aimed at enhancing military capabilities or the strategic position during an armed conflict (Olson Lounsbery, 2016; Pearson et al., 2013; Regan, 2002b; Pickering & Kisangani, 2009). A prime example of strategic intervention is U.S. involvement in Afghanistan post-9/11. By providing significant support to the Afghan government and directly engaging in combat operations against the Taliban, the U.S. aimed to shift the balance of power against the opposing forces. The deployment of military technology, training for Afghan forces, and strategic uses of force were all aimed at supporting the Afghan government its positions in the conflict and undermining that of the Taliban (Lake, 2010; Snider, 2022).

Economic protective interventions touch less upon the immediate enhancement of capabilities, and more upon the incentives and perceptions linked to the balance of power by attempting to protect economic or resource interests of self or others within the conflict, mostly recognized within the protection of important economic assets (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Kavanagh et al., 2019; Lemke & Regan, 2004; Sambanis et al., 2020). The U.S. intervention in Iraq during the Gulf War in 1991 was driven largely by the need to protect vital economic interests, particularly oil resources in the region. The military campaign to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait was justified not only as a response to aggression but also as a means of ensuring the continued stability of global oil markets. By preventing Saddam Hussein his regime from controlling a significant share of the world its oil supply, the intervention shifted the economic incentives and power dynamics in the Middle East (Gruenbaum, 2004; Lock-Pullan, 2004).

Territorial interventions fit this indirect influence as well. Aimed at attempting to control or manage territory within conflict zones through direct or indirect involvement, such as military occupations, supporting territorial claims, or establishing buffer zones, it is not directly the capabilities that get reinforced, but rather the incentives and perceptions (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Kavanagh et al., 2019; Regan, 2002a, 2002b). The U.S. involvement in Kosovo during the NATO-led campaign in 1999 highlights a territorial intervention. By engaging militarily to stop the Serbian government's campaign in Kosovo, the U.S. and its allies supported the creation of a buffer zone and later the establishment of an independent Kosovo. While not directly enhancing military capabilities, the intervention altered territorial claims and perceptions of control, reshaping the conflict its trajectory (Arkin, 2001; Rust, 2022).

Finally, social protection and order interventions aim to de-escalate conflict environments by providing basic needs and security to civilians, all while holding a neutral stance within the dispute (Olson Lounsbury et al., 2011; Olson Lounsbury, 2016; Pearson et al., 2013). The U.S. involvement in Liberia in 2003 as part of humanitarian support during the Second Liberian Civil War represents a social protection and order intervention. The deployment of U.S. Marines to support humanitarian efforts and stabilize the environment amidst a deteriorating security situation was pointed at providing immediate relief to civilians (Kuperman, 2023).

In conclusion, the literature indicates that research on the effect of U.S. military interventions within host nations is lacking, highlighting the need to delve deeper into the effects of U.S. military interventions. While most of the existing literature focuses on U.S. political objectives and the perceived success of interventions in achieving strategic or geopolitical goals, driven by the costs and benefit analysis for the U.S., there is a growing need to address how they affect the balance of power with the host nation and what the broader

implications of these actions are. By distinguishing between the most common types of intervention and their individual effects, this study seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of U.S. interventions. This approach, grounded in the previously mentioned the bargaining theory of war, examines the profound effects on the trajectory of conflicts and the lived realities of host nations.

Theoretical framework

The bargaining theory of war provides a foundation for understanding how U.S. military interventions influence the balance of power between warring factions and on conflict intensity. The bargaining theory argues that conflicts arise from failures in bargaining rather than just because of incompatible objectives between the parties (Lake, 2010; Morgan, 1994). U.S. military interventions act as external forces that can directly impact the bargaining that occurs by reshaping the capabilities, incentives, and perceptions of the parties involved in the conflict. This framework emphasizes that the specific type of interventions the U.S. employs play a decisive role in determining the effect it has within the host nations, based on how they influence the capabilities, incentives, or perceptions that accompany the bargaining range and balance of power.

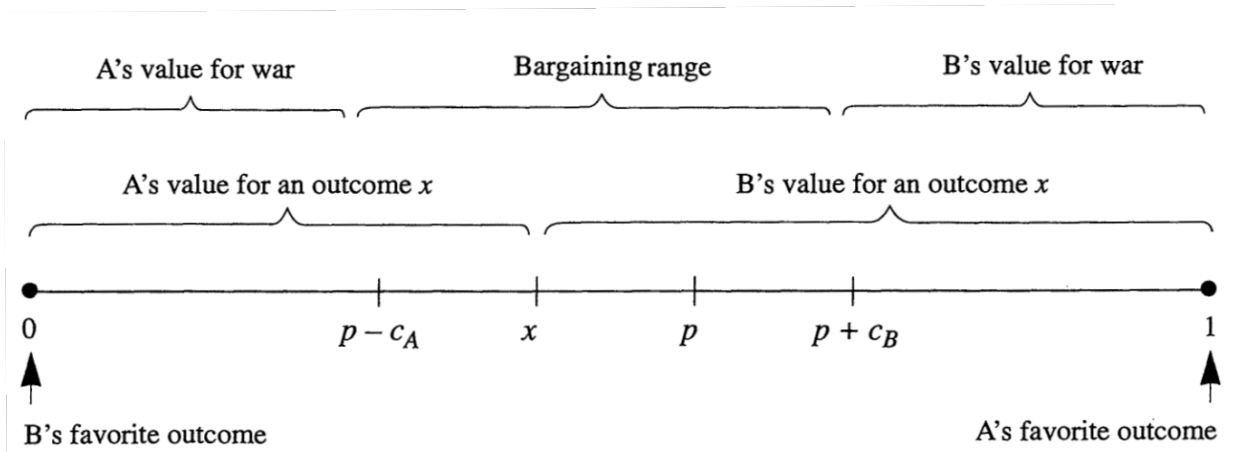
The bargaining theory of war

Brought to prominence by Fearon (1995), the bargaining theory of war is regarded as the dominant framework used for analysing why wars occur and why peace efforts sometimes fail. At its core, the theory suggests that conflicts arise when parties attempt to resolve crises but fail to reach an acceptable agreement, often stemming from barriers such as lack of credible commitment, asymmetric information, or uncertainty of the possibility to achieve victory (Lake, 2010; Morgan, 1994). The theory is built on two central propositions. The first is that

war is costly, involving not just the financial expenses of military campaigns but also the loss of life, destruction of infrastructure, economic disruption, and displacement of people. Given these high costs, it would seem rational for actors to avoid war whenever possible. The second proposition is that peaceful resolution offers potential for mutual gains. If conflicting parties can find a way to negotiate a settlement, they can avoid the costs of war and divide the benefits of avoiding conflict (Fearon, 1995; Kydd & Straus, 2013; Lake, 2010; Morgan, 1994). By resolving differences without fighting, both sides of the conflict have the opportunity to preserve resources, maintain stability, and continue economic and social activities, which would otherwise be disrupted by war. The theory assumes that all parties involved would prefer a peaceful resolution because it allows them to achieve better outcomes than they would through conflict (Anderton, 2017). Despite these propositions, wars still occur. As Fearon (1995) argues, war represents a failure in bargaining. It is a situation in which parties are unable to reach an agreement due to issues such as credible commitment problems, misaligned incentives, and uncertainty of the chances of victory (Fearon, 1995; Lake, 2010).

Figure 1 illustrates the bargaining theory of war as described by Fearon (1995). The horizontal line represents the continuum of possible outcomes between Player B's ideal point (0) and Player A's ideal point (1). Settlements within the bargaining range ($p - c_A$ to $p + c_B$) are mutually preferable to war and would thus de-escalate violence. Values outside this range represent scenarios where either Player A or Player B prefers fighting to an agreement, and escalation of violence would be expected (Fearon, 1995, p. 387 – 388).

Figure 1. Fearon's (1995) bargaining theory of war



Capabilities, perceptions, and incentives are central to the bargaining process in conflict, as all three influence the strategies and decisions of the parties involved. Firstly, capabilities refer to a party's direct tangible capabilities, such as armed forces, which can be used to impose costs on the opponent. As Morgan (1994) argues, the stronger a regime's military force, the more it can influence the outcome of the bargaining process, whether by imposing costs on the opponent or threatening military escalation. Secondly, the perceptions, how each side views its own strength relative to the other, can also inherently change the bargaining range. A party that perceives itself as stronger may negotiate more aggressively, having more incentive to push towards favourable terms or intimidate the opponent into concessions because they see a larger chance of victory. Similarly, a weaker party has incentives to either accept a settlement or escalate the conflict to shift the balance of power, perceiving its chances of victory diminishes within the current range of bargaining (Fearon, 1995; Kydd & Straus, 2013; Lake, 2010; Morgan, 1994). Thirdly, the influences on the incentives to either escalate or de-escalate violence. Leaders may be unable or unwilling to settle upon a negotiated settlement because of asymmetric information regarding capabilities, changed perceptions regarding the chances of victory, or changes in incentives to commit to stop fighting. They build upon specific these changes for further strategic calculations and

ensuing actions (Fearon, 1995). Capabilities, perceptions, and incentives are inherently intertwined, influencing both the willingness to commitment, the potential for escalation, and the chances of victory. As these perceptions evolve, the bargaining range can shift, which can either facilitate a settlement or lead to further conflict (Fearon, 1995; Kydd & Straus, 2013; Lake, 2010; Morgan, 1994).

U.S. foreign military interventions

The involvement of third parties can significantly alter the dynamics of a conflict by shifting the balance of power between the disputing parties from the outside. While they are not necessarily engaged in the bargaining process itself, their interference can change the capabilities, perceptions, and incentives it builds upon, and as result the conflict intensity (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Kydd & Straus, 2013; Morgan, 1994). As mentioned earlier, the effect that different types of interventions can have, has been highlighted by the distinction between strategic interventions, economic protective interventions, territorial interventions, and social protection and order interventions. Besides that, within strategic interventions it is also important to highlight which side of the conflict is supported by the interventions. This because strategic interventions touch upon the direct capabilities of the warring parties, thus influencing the balance of power directly, which is not necessarily the case with the other three types of intervention.

Strategic Interventions

Strategic interventions refer to the provision of military or strategic support aimed at enhancing military capabilities or the strategic position during an armed conflict. This could be as direct military aid, intelligence sharing, training, or the provision of weapons (Regan, 2002b; Pickering & Kisangani, 2009). Strategic interventions affect the bargaining process by directly

shifting the capabilities between the conflicting parties. This gives incentive to both sides of the conflict to alter their strategic calculation within the bargaining range, as the power dynamics and the perception of these are changed. This alteration in capabilities can shift the balance of power within the conflict, and can fuel a cycle of violence, as both sides intensify their efforts in an attempt to assert dominance. The intensity of conflict is inherently connected to the ability to mobilize, access to resources and availability of support structures; three elements that increase with U.S. strategic interventions (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Lockyer, 2011; Plettner, 2019; Regan, 2002a).

H1: Strategic interventions increase conflict intensity.

Supportive and Hostile Strategic Intervention

With strategic interventions touching upon the most direct form of capabilities, the directionality of these interventions is highly important when looking at the effects. U.S. strategic interventions have the ability to tip the scale in favour of one of the sides of the conflict, and by doing so influence the conflict intensity. The expectations build upon the assumption that the government is the more equipped side of the conflict, even though they might not have the capabilities to diminish the conflict on their own, and that the conflict is one fighting against the status quo (Lemke & Regan, 2004; Regan, 2002a). In the case of supportive strategic interventions, when the intervention is in favour of the government, the interventions can decrease the likelihood of continued fighting, as opposing forces face diminishing chances of success. On one hand, this could be because increasing government capacity deters the opposing forces from continuing their fight. On the other hand, this could occur because of the increased capacity the government has to capture or kill opposing forces (Hultman & Peksen, 2017a; Sullivan & Karreth, 2015). In the case of interventions on behalf of opposing forces, also known as hostile interventions, a clearcut effect is shown within the

literature. By levelling the playing field or tipping it in favour of the opposing forces, such interventions escalate conflict by encouraging the opposing forces to continue their campaigns in the belief that victory is attainable (Olson Lounsbery, 2016; Pearson et al., 2013; Seybolt, 2008). Plettner (2019) highlights that support to the opposing forces significantly boosts their military capacity, building again on the assumption that the government is the stronger party during conflict, making them more likely to escalate violence. Opposing forces, when receiving external support, are often motivated to escalate their attacks in an effort to demonstrate their effectiveness to external sponsors, prolonging the conflict. This creates an ‘escalation trap’, where the interventions themselves fuel a cycle of heightened violence, with both sides responding to shifting power dynamics. As the opposing forces gain increased military capabilities, they are better equipped to launch more aggressive campaigns against government forces (Frederick et al., 2021; Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Lockyer, 2011; Plettner, 2019; Regan, 2002a, 2002b).

H2: Hostile strategic interventions increase conflict intensity more than supportive strategic interventions.

Economic Interventions

Economic protective interventions refer to the attempt to protect economic or resource interests of self or others within the conflict, mostly recognized within the protection of important economic assets (Kavanagh et al., 2019). They have the ability to shift power dynamics in favour of one party, or at least perceived as one side of the party, either by providing additional resources through access to resources, or by creating the perception of doing so when protecting such resources. Either way, this intervention disrupts the bargaining process by altering the actual or perceived balance of war between the conflict parties (Olson Lounsbery, 2016; Regan, 2002a). As denoted in the bargaining theory of war, a party that views itself as stronger might

negotiate more aggressively, seeing the chances of victory become more feasible. The weaker party either accepts defeat and undergoes this escalated violence or retaliates to shift the balance of power in their favour again by trying to regain access to resources through escalating the conflict. Either way, the interventions disrupt the bargaining process by altering the actual or perceived balance of war between the conflict parties (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Lemke & Regan, 2004; Sambanis et al., 2020). This results in a higher likelihood of intensified conflict, as both sides adjust their strategies based on the altered balance of power. This contributes to a cycle of escalating violence, as both sides respond to the shifts in power dynamics induced by economic protective interventions support.

H3: Economic protective interventions increase conflict intensity.

Territorial Interventions

Territorial interventions fit the indirect influence as seen within the economic protective interventions as well. Territorial interventions involve the direct or indirect involvement of an external actor in the control or management of territory in a conflict zone. This may include military occupations, support for territorial claims, or the establishment of buffer zones (Kavanagh et al., 2019). It is not directly the capabilities that get reinforced, but rather the incentives and perceptions by changing the stakes of the bargaining range (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Kavanagh et al., 2019; Regan, 2002a, 2002b). Access to resources and strategic points can become limited, and claims to territorial sovereignty are affected (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Regan, 2002a, 2002b). This can lead to a breakdown in the bargaining process, as each side feels that its strategic position is threatened, and that military victory may be the only path to securing favourable terms. Thus, territorial interventions tend to escalate conflict by changing the territorial stakes and increasing the perceived costs of continued bargaining or compromise.

H4: Territorial interventions increase conflict intensity.

Social Protection and Order Interventions

Social protection and order interventions entail the use of military force, or the threat of it, to protect civilians from violence or abuses, to restore social order in situations of unrest or to suppress violence between armed parties. Such interventions include actions like humanitarian relief aimed at addressing crises, protecting vulnerable populations through measures such as safe zones or civilian escorts, and safeguarding diplomatic and strategic interests, such as ensuring the security of personnel or property (Kavanagh et al., 2019; Kushi & Toft, 2023). These actions are not intended to shift the power dynamics among warring factions because of their neutral stance. The capabilities, perceptions, and incentives underlying the balance of power are not touched upon, and the bargaining range does not shift. Rather, these interventions have the ability to mitigate immediate violence by addressing grievances that fuel continued conflict. For instance, providing food aid during a famine may alleviate tensions among civilian populations, reducing their dependence on armed groups for resources (Olson Lounsbury et al., 2011; Olson Lounsbury, 2016; Pearson et al., 2013).

H5: Social protection and order interventions decreases conflict intensity.

Methodology

The effect of U.S. military interventions on conflict intensity can be analysed using data from the Military Intervention Project, made by the Center of Strategic Studies (CSS). The dataset is an extension of previous, more limited datasets, and builds largely on the coding and definitions adopted by the International Military Intervention dataset (Kisangani & Pickering, 2008; Kushi & Toft, 2023). It includes all foreign military interventions conducted by the U.S. from 1776 until 2019, measuring the costs, benefits, and unintended consequences of such interventions (Kushi & Toft, 2023). While the available range of the data is much broader, the

research will be limited to conflicts where U.S. military interventions occurred in the post-Cold War era from 1989 until 2019. This scope allows for a broad examination of various conflict settings, while also remaining within the political order and modes of warfare that are relevant for policy recommendations and future scholars. The data is recorded at the dyadic level, with each observation representing an armed conflict where one U.S. intervention or multiple interventions occurred. While a distinction within the data to only analyse conflicts with singular interventions would strengthen the analysis, this is not possible due to data constraints and the already limited scope.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable in this study is conflict intensity, defined as the degree of fighting between armed actors. Following the work of Frederick et al. (2021), Plettner (2019), Hultman & Peksen (2017), and others, conflict intensity is operationalized using the number of battle-related deaths that occur within a specific period of armed conflict. It reflects the immediate human cost of conflict, offering a tangible indicator of the degree of violence between armed actors (Frederick et al., 2021). However, this approach is not without limitations. The reliance on reported fatalities may lead to underestimations or inaccuracies due to incomplete or biased reporting, especially in areas with limited media access or government restrictions. Additionally, fatalities alone may not fully capture the broader societal, economic, and psychological impacts of conflict, potentially oversimplifying the complexity of conflict intensity. Despite these limitations, fatalities remain a widely accepted and empirically validated proxy for conflict intensity, and in relation to data constraints the best reflection of conflict intensity for this research (Frederick et al., 2021; Plettner, 2019; Hultman & Peksen, 2017). Within the dataset, it is represented by the variable *Fatalities*. This variable, recorded as a count variable in the dataset, captures fatalities directly attributable to armed conflict and

is measured at the dyadic level, representing the number of deaths directly attributable to each individual armed conflict involving U.S. military interventions (Kushi & Toft, 2023).

Independent variables

Strategic interventions are not found as one variable within the Military Intervention Project. However, within the International Military Intervention dataset, it is defined as “regional power balances, stability, or ideological issues mentioned by the intervener” (Kisangani & Pickering, 2008, p. 9). Variables from the Military Intervention Project that fit within this definition are (1) Remove Foreign Regime, *ForeignReg*: intention of overthrowing a foreign regime from power, (2) Policy Change, *Policy*: attempt to coerce the incumbent regime into changing specific policies, (3) Maintain/Build Foreign Regime Authority, *BuildReg*: attempt to preserve the governing authority of an incumbent regime or the existing political structures, (4) Maintain Empire, *Empire*: attempt to reassert or maintain the regimes own authority over territory claimed (Kushi & Toft, 2023, p. 165). Using these available variables, the definition given by Kisangani and Pickering (2008), and the expectations from the directionality of strategic interventions, two variables are made. The first is *Hostile Strategic Interventions*, *Strat_Host*, made up of ‘Remove Foreign Regime’ and ‘Policy Change’. The second is *Supportive Strategic Interventions*, *Strat_Supp*, made up of ‘Maintain/Build Foreign Regime Authority’ and ‘Maintain Empire’. Both are recoded into binary variables, with 0 meaning the intervention did not occur, and 1 meaning it did occur.

The second independent variable is economic protective interventions, found directly in the Military Intervention Project dataset. *Economic Protective Interventions*, *Economic*, are defined as the “attempt to protect economic or resource interests of self or others” (Kushi & Toft, 2023, p. 165). It is coded as a binary variable: 0 meaning the intervention did not occur, 1 meaning it did occur.

The third independent variable is territorial interventions, also found directly in the Military Intervention Project dataset. *Territorial Interventions*, *Territory*, are defined as the “acquisition or retention of territory, delineation of frontiers, or specification of sovereign status” (Kushi & Toft, 2023, p. 165). Both are coded as binary variables: 0 meaning the intervention did not occur, 1 meaning it did occur.

Finally, the fourth independent variable is social protection and order interventions, also found directly in the Military Intervention Project dataset. *Social Protection and Order Interventions*, *SocialProt*, are defined as an intervention “to protect a socio-ethnic faction or minority of the target country” (Kushi & Toft, 2023, p. 165). It is coded as a binary variable: 0 meaning the intervention did not occur, 1 meaning it did occur.

Control variables

Recognizing that conflicts and their intensity are influenced by a wide range of factors, it is important to control for the most persistent of these factors to isolate the effect that U.S. interventions have on conflict intensity. The following variables can be of relevance and are found in both models and directly found within the Military Intervention Project dataset. The first control variable is *Cumulative duration (in days)*, as longer conflicts could result in war-fatigue and thus give lower intensity either way. The second control variable is *Population (in thousands)*, as it can influence the number of fatalities, as well as the ability for a regime to ensue in armed conflict (Hultman, 2010; Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Plettner, 2019). The third and final control variable is *Host Nation GDP*. A higher degree of economic development is often recognized as facilitating less violence because of higher opportunity costs. Besides that, it is often used as a measure for the institutional capacity of a regime (Bedford, 2011; Kavanagh et al., 2019; Plettner, 2019).

Negative binomial regression

The study adopts a negative binomial regression to model the relationship between U.S. military interventions and conflict intensity. This statistical method is particularly suited to handling over count variables, as in the case for the dependent variable *Fatalities*. While a Poisson model is also frequently used for count variables, negative binomial regression is more suited for a high level of over-dispersion because it includes an extra parameter. In Appendix B the tests to confirm this necessity are added.

Two models are fitted, one without control variables and one with variables, both included in Table 1. The coefficients of a negative binomial regression represent the log change in the expected count for a one-unit change in the predictor variable, holding all other variables constant. To provide a more intuitive and interpretable way of understanding the relationship between the independent variables and *Fatalities*, the Incidence Rate Ratio (IRR) scores are also calculated and discussed in-text. Incidence Rate Ratio scores are the exponentiated coefficients of the negative binomial regression and show how the count outcome changes in percentage terms for a one-unit increase in the predictor variable. The full results can be found in Appendix A.

Analysis and discussion

Model 1 shows the negative binomial regression without any control variables. It shows significance for the independent variables *Hostile Strategic Intervention* (4.211, $p < 0.001$), *Economic Protective Intervention* (5.676, $p < 0.01$), *Territorial Intervention* (-6.203, $p < 0.001$), and *Social Protection and Order Intervention* (3.815, $p < 0.001$). It fails to show significance for *Supportive Strategic Intervention* (0.331).

In Model 2 the control variables are added, and the model shows significance for *Hostile Strategic Intervention* (3.823, $p < 0.05$), *Supportive Strategic Intervention* (1.677, $p <$

0.01), *Economic Protective Intervention* (4.477, $p < 0.01$), *Territorial Intervention* (-6.128, $p < 0.001$), and *Social Protection and Order Intervention* (3.703, $p < 0.001$). Besides that, it also shows significance for the control variables *Cumulative Duration (in days)* (2.004, $p < 0.05$) and *Host Nation GDP* (-3.244, $p < 0.05$). It fails to show significance for *Population (in thousands)* (0.052).

Table 1. *Interventions and Conflict Intensity*

	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	6.292*** (0.713)	1.831 (1.484)
Hostile Strategic Interventions	4.211*** (1.239)	3.823** (1.233)
Supportive Strategic Interventions	0.331 (1.008)	1.677* (1.009)
Economic Protective Interventions	5.676* (2.247)	4.477* (2.190)
Territorial Interventions	-6.203*** (1.600)	-6.128*** (1.658)
Social Protection and Order Interventions	3.815*** (0.913)	3.703*** (0.911)
Cumulative Duration (in days)		2.004** (0.409)
Population (in thousands)		0.052 (0.406)
Host Nation GDP		-3.221**

	Model 1	Model 2 (0.677)
Num.Obs.	150	150
R2	0.387	0.711
Log. Lik.	-547.659	-544.744

Notes: Negative binomial regression with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Strategic Interventions

Both *Hostile Strategic Interventions* and *Supportive Strategic Interventions* show a positive significant relationship, supporting Hypothesis 1 that Strategic Interventions increase conflict intensity. *Hostile Strategic Interventions* demonstrates the strongest effect of the two (3.823, $p < 0.01$), with conflict intensity being 45 times higher if the intervention did occur, compared to when it did not occur (IRR = 45.733). This effect is slightly smaller for *Supportive Strategic Interventions*, although still significant (1.677, $p < 0.05$), with conflict intensity only being 5 times higher (IRR = 5.348).

These findings underscore the escalatory nature of strategic interventions that shifts the balance of power within a conflict, whether by supporting the opposing forces or by supporting the government. Strategic interventions amplify the ability to mobilize, the access to resources, and the availability of support structures, influencing the balance of power and the bargaining range available (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Lockyer, 2011; Plettner, 2019; Regan, 2002a). Strategic interventions amplify the perceived strength of the supported side, prompting escalating in violence. From a broader perspective, these findings emphasize that such interventions inevitably undermine opportunities for peaceful bargaining and often contribute to prolonged or intensified violence.

Hostile and Supportive Strategic Interventions

When separating the effects of *Hostile Strategic Interventions* and *Supportive Strategic Interventions*, the results show strong support for Hypothesis 2, as *Hostile Strategic Interventions* coefficients (3.823, $p < 0.01$, IRR = 45.733) significantly exceed those of *Supportive Strategic Interventions* (1.677, $p < 0.05$, IRR = 5.348). This indicates that interventions aimed at actively opposing the government or altering the balance of power in favour of opposing forces have a more substantial impact on escalating conflict than those designed to reinforce the existing power structures. The difference in effect aligns with the bargaining theory, which suggests that hostile interventions, such as those attempting to overthrow the government or drastically shift policies, heighten incentives for both sides to escalate violence. On the other hand, supportive strategic interventions were theorized to have a less extensive effect because these interventions support the status quo and the current government, presumed to be the stronger warring party (Olson Lounsbury, 2016; Pearson et al., 2013; Seybolt, 2008). For opposing forces, external support emboldens efforts to achieve their goals through force, while regimes often increase repressive measures to counter the threat. This dynamic results in heightened conflict and increased fatalities, especially when the balance of power is perceived to shift significantly.

Economic Protective Interventions

The relationship between *Economic Protective Interventions* and conflict intensity reveals a significant positive relationship (4.477, $p < 0.05$), with conflict intensity being 88 times higher when *Economic Protective Interventions* occurred, compared to when they did not occur (IRR = 88.010). This provides support for Hypothesis 3, indicating that interventions aimed at securing economic assets or resources indeed increase conflict intensity. These interventions intensify competition among the actors in conflict for control over valuable resources,

escalating conflicts and increasing the likelihood of fatalities. According to the bargaining theory, economic protective interventions alter the perceived bargaining range by providing one side of the conflict with significant material advantages, or at least the perception of the other party having it (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Lemke & Regan, 2004; Sambanis et al., 2020). This shift incentivizes parties to escalate the conflict rather than seek peaceful resolutions. This dynamic perpetuates cycles of violence, particularly when resource competition underlies the conflict.

Territorial Interventions

The relationship between *Territorial Interventions* and conflict intensity (-6.128, $p < 0.001$, IRR = 0.002) reveals a significant negative relationship. Although Hypothesis 4 posited that Territorial Interventions would increase conflict intensity, the results reveal the opposite, namely that territorial interventions reduce conflict intensity. This unexpected outcome challenges the assumption that external control or boundary impositions inherently exacerbate conflicts (Hultman & Peksen, 2017; Regan, 2002a, 2002b). Territorial interventions appear to have a de-escalatory effect by reducing uncertainty over territorial claims. A possible explanation could be that the interventions shift the balance of power and bargaining range so heavily that the actors recognize intensifying conflict is futile, there are no chances for victory or to regain the territory. By clearly defining boundaries or establishing buffer zones, these interventions could lower the stakes of territorial disputes and encourage peaceful bargaining or settlements (Gent & Shannon, 2013; Hultman & Peksen, 2017). Another explanation could be that the bargaining process is more resilient than previously thought, or that the chances of victory are not reliant on one specific territorial area (Ge, 2024; Kohama, 2018). If this is the case, territorial interventions could stabilize contested regions and contribute to conflict resolution rather than escalation of violence. These findings highlight the potential of territorial

interventions, when impartially designed and executed, to offer peaceful solutions in regions where sovereignty or boundary disputes drive violence. However, such interventions must involve international support and be carefully implemented to maintain legitimacy and foster long-term stability.

Social Protection and Order Interventions

The relationship between Social Protection and Order Interventions and conflict intensity (-6.128, $p < 0.001$) reveal a significant positive relationship. Although Hypothesis 5 posited that Social Protection and Order Interventions would decrease conflict intensity, the results reveal the opposite, namely that conflict intensity is 40 times higher when such interventions occur (IRR = 40.568). While such interventions may provide immediate humanitarian relief, it does not substantially influence the broader dynamics of conflict or reduce levels of violence because of its neutral stance (Olson Lounsbury et al., 2011; Olson Lounsbury, 2016; Pearson et al., 2013). Still, they can be perceived as partial or partisan, favouring one side over the other. If this occurs, these interventions align with the broader notion of the bargaining theory, where U.S. military interventions that appear to shift the balance of power provoke retaliation and resistance from opposing factions, resulting in escalated violence (Pearson, 1974; Plettner, 2019). These findings underscore the complexities of interventions for social protection and order. Thus, while interventions for social protection and order are critical for protecting civilians and addressing immediate grievances, their impact is shaped by the perceptions and incentives they create among warring factions. Neutral interventions perceived as fair and balanced can help de-escalate violence, but those seen as favouring one side of the conflict risk disrupting the balance of power, incentivizing violence, and escalating the conflict (Hultman, 2010; Kydd & Straus, 2013; Olson Lounsbury, 2016; Pearson et al., 2013). This could occur when aid is directed towards specific civilians, safe zones are established in areas

predominantly inhabited by one side of the warring parties, or groups are being protected that form one side of the ensuing conflict. The warring parties can view these interventions as threats to their political goals, prompting intensified resistance and increased hostilities, although the interventions might be completely neutral (Kydd & Straus, 2013; Olson Lounsbery, 2016; Pearson et al., 2013). Violence may be escalated to reassert control and neutralize the perceived advantage, with an accompanied retaliation. The interventions alter the perceptions of power, even if the impact in terms of actual capabilities is relatively small, illustrating the unintended consequences of interventions that fail to account for the broader conflict environment.

Control variables

Two of the control variables show significant relationships. A longer conflict duration, *Cumulative Duration (in days)* (2.004, $p < 0.001$, IRR = 7.421), increases conflict intensity, which suggests that entrenched conflicts are more intense and entail more fatalities. A higher GDP of the host nation, *Host Nation GDP* (-3.221, $p < 0.05$, IRR = 0.040), is associated with lower conflict intensity, implying that wealthier regimes may have more resources to address underlying causes of conflict or prevent conflict escalation. *Population (in thousands)* shows no significant relation.

Implications and limitations

The findings of this study underscore the complex and often counterproductive effects of U.S. military interventions on conflict intensity. Hostile strategic interventions, supportive strategic interventions, and economic protective interventions tend to escalate violence, as they disrupt the balance of power, either directly through capabilities or by perceptions and incentives, and provoke retaliatory measures. On the other hand, the unexpected effect of both territorial

interventions and social protection and order interventions suggests that the full impact is not as clear-cut as often believed. While territorial interventions suggest that clearly defined and impartial strategies can foster peace by reducing uncertainties and fostering bargaining, social protection and order interventions show that the unintended perceptions and the consequences that come from these have a larger effect than one might think. The results amplify the importance of re-evaluating the strategic use of U.S. military interventions, as their intended goals of stabilization or support often yield escalating conflict and increased fatalities.

For U.S. policymakers, these insights stress the need for careful calibration of intervention strategies, emphasizing de-escalatory approaches that address underlying causes of conflict without exacerbating tensions. The findings also underline the broader implications for global peacekeeping, conflict resolution efforts, but also norm-setting and external inference, suggesting that interventions must prioritize neutrality, legitimacy, and long-term conflict management. For future research, these insights stress the need to distinguish between different types of interventions. While the research has a relatively limited scope, the bargaining theory of war is applicable throughout conflicts, and shows how each move is a calculated one.

The findings, while significant, are constrained by several methodological and contextual limitations. Firstly, the relatively small and specific sample size limits the generalizability of the results, as the dynamics observed in this dataset may not apply across diverse conflict scenarios. Secondly, the focus on fatalities as the primary measure of conflict intensity overlooks broader impacts such as displacement, infrastructure destruction, and other effects, which are crucial for a complete understanding of intervention outcomes. Thirdly, the exclusion of mixed interventions and the reliance on quantitative methods limit the study's ability to capture nuanced or context-dependent effects. Contextual factors, such as the political motives or social dynamics within the regime, remain underexplored. Fourthly, the study does

not consider long-term consequences of military interventions. For this specific research, looking at the immediate impact of U.S. military interventions on conflict intensity in the post-Cold War era, these limitations do not hinder the analysis, but for understanding the broader implications of these strategies on peace and stability they are vital. Addressing these limitations in future research, through expanded datasets, qualitative analyses, and more inclusive metrics, would provide a more comprehensive perspective on the effects of U.S. military interventions.

Conclusion

The impact of U.S. military interventions on conflict intensity is an essential area of study, particularly in the post-Cold War era, where debates about the efficacy and unintended consequences of military force persist. This research, situated within the bargaining theory of war, offers a theoretically grounded analysis of how different types of U.S. military interventions alter the dynamics of conflict escalation and de-escalation. This study highlights how interventions shape the capabilities, perceptions, and incentives central to strategic calculation, and how the impact of interventions is central to the decision-making processes of conflicting parties.

Strategic interventions have a most direct influence in shifting the balance of power and altering conflict trajectories by supporting one side of the conflict. Hostile strategic interventions escalate conflict intensity to a larger degree by tilting the balance of power and provoking escalatory responses, although supportive strategic interventions also escalate conflict intensity by providing the government with enough capabilities to defend the status quo. These outcomes align with the bargaining theory its assertion that changes in the balance of power, especially those that increase uncertainty or the stakes of negotiation, can lead to heightened conflict. Similarly, economic protective interventions, by exacerbating competition

over critical resources, intensify the dynamics that the bargaining theory identifies as barriers to peaceful resolution. Even if it is also the perception of the balance of power that is getting tilted, both sides of the conflict alter their calculations and take on more violence because of these interventions. On the other hand, territorial interventions demonstrate how interventions designed to clarify boundaries, reduce uncertainty, or take away the bargaining range as a whole can de-escalate conflict, supporting the theoretical proposition that taking away the bargaining barriers can facilitate peaceful bargaining outcomes. Social protection and order interventions also go against the theoretical expectations of the bargaining theory of war. Although these interventions seemed to have the largest possibility in de-escalating conflict by overcoming the barriers to successful bargaining, their real effect is hidden in how they are perceived rather than what they intend to do. These findings underscore the bargaining theory its emphasis on the role of credible commitments and perceived impartiality in enabling negotiated settlements.

The broader implications of these findings challenge the conventional view of U.S. military interventions as stabilisation tools of foreign policy. Rather than de-escalating conflicts, they often exacerbate violence and destabilization, underscoring the limitations of military force in achieving long-term peace. This aligns with the bargaining theory its caution against interventions that increase power asymmetries or miscalculate the strategic calculation of warring parties. For policymakers, these insights stress the importance of interventions designed to lower the stakes of conflict, reduce uncertainty, and foster cooperative bargaining environments.

This study, while offering valuable theoretical and empirical contributions, also highlights its own limitations. The focus on conflict intensity, primarily measured through fatalities, leaves out critical dimensions such as displacement, long-term socio-political impacts, and infrastructural damage. Furthermore, the exclusion of mixed interventions and the

reliance on quantitative methods limit the ability to fully capture context-specific effects and the intricate dynamics described by the bargaining theory of war. Future research should address these gaps through the integration of broader datasets or modes of qualitative analysis. Such an approach would provide a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between U.S. military interventions and conflict intensity. Besides that, further research would benefit U.S. policymakers in thinking beyond their own costs and benefits and reminding themselves who they are actually affecting.

The findings of this study advocate for a re-evaluation of U.S. military interventions. By recognizing the differentiated impacts of intervention types on the underlying dynamics of conflict escalation, it calls for a more cautious and theoretically informed approach to foreign military engagement. Achieving global stability requires strategies that transcend immediate tactical gains, addressing the fundamental drivers of conflict and fostering durable peace in line with the aspirations of affected populations.

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Appendix A

Table 2. *Incidence Rate Ratio analysis*

	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	540.466	6.237
Hostile Strategic Intervention	67.441	45.733
Supportive Strategic Intervention	1.392	5.348
Economic Protective Intervention	291.826	88.010
Territorial Intervention	0.002	0.002
Social Protection and Order Intervention	45.397	40.568
Cumulative Duration		7.421
Population (in thousands)		1.053
Host Nation GDP		0.040

Appendix B

This appendix provides the full code and, where relevant, the output of the negative binomial regression conducted. It outlines the procedures and statistical methods applied to ensure data integrity, summarize key characteristics of the dataset, assess the reliability of measurements, and specify the assumptions that inform the analytical models.

```
library(nnet)
library(MASS)
library(rio)
library(sjPlot)
library(modelsummary)
library(marginaleffects)
library(tidyverse)
library(performance)
library(broom)
library(exps)
library(car)
library(dplyr)
library(psych)
library(lmtest)

mip <- import("MIP_Dataset_2022.xlsx")

new_mip <- mip |>
  filter(styear > 1988)

view(new_mip)

new_mip <- new_mip |>
  mutate(Fatalities = na_if(Fatalities, -9))
new_mip <- new_mip |>
  mutate(Fatalities = na_if(Fatalities, "N/A"))

new_mip$Fatalities <- as.numeric(new_mip$Fatalities)

new_mip <- new_mip |>
  mutate(Strat_Host = ForeignReg + Policy)

new_mip <- new_mip |>
  mutate(Strat_Host = case_when(
    Strat_Host == 0 ~ 0,
    Strat_Host == 1 ~ 1,
    Strat_Host == 5 ~ 1))

new_mip <- new_mip |>
  mutate(Strat_Supp = BuildReg + Empire)

new_mip <- new_mip |>
  mutate(Strat_Supp = case_when(
```

```

    Strat_Supp == 0 ~ 0,
    Strat_Supp == 1 ~ 1,
    Strat_Supp == 2 ~ 1))

new_mip <- new_mip |>
  mutate(Territory = case_when(
    Territory == 0 ~ 0,
    Territory == 1 ~ 1,
    Territory == 0.0975609756097561 ~ 1))

scale(new_mip$StateBrGDP, center = TRUE, scale = TRUE)

scale(new_mip$`Population (in thousands)`, center = TRUE, scale = TRUE)

scale(new_mip$cumdurat, center = TRUE, scale = TRUE)

new_mip <- new_mip |>
  mutate(across(c(StateBrGDP, `Population (in thousands)`, cumdurat),
scale))

new_mip$`Population (in thousands)` <- as.numeric(new_mip$`Population (in
thousands)`)
new_mip$StateBrGDP <- as.numeric(new_mip$StateBrGDP)

new_mip$cumdurat <- as.numeric(new_mip$cumdurat)

new_mip <- new_mip |>
  mutate(across(
    c(Strat_Host, Strat_Supp, Economic, Territory, SocialProt,
      StateBrGDP, `Population (in thousands)`, cumdurat),
    ~ ifelse(is.na(.), mean(., na.rm = TRUE), .)))

model_vars <- new_mip[,c("Fatalities", "Strat_Host", "Strat_Supp",
" Economic", "Territory", "SocialProt")]

descriptive_stats <- describe(model_vars)

print(descriptive_stats)

##           vars    n      mean      sd median trimmed mad min   max
range skew
## Fatalities      1 150 11974.60 56335.80      0  331.52   0   0 5e+05
5e+05 6.13
## Strat_Host      2 150      0.18    0.35      0   0.10   0   0 1e+00
1e+00 1.83
## Strat_Supp      3 150      0.34    0.43      0   0.30   0   0 1e+00
1e+00 0.73
## Economic        4 150      0.03    0.18      0   0.00   0   0 1e+00
1e+00 5.15
## Territory       5 150      0.10    0.27      0   0.02   0   0 1e+00
1e+00 2.97
## SocialProt      6 150      0.33    0.47      0   0.29   0   0 1e+00
1e+00 0.70
##           kurtosis      se
## Fatalities      42.28 4599.80

```

```
## Strat_Host      1.58      0.03
## Strat_Supp     -1.26      0.04
## Economic       24.66      0.01
## Territory       7.06      0.02
## SocialProt     -1.52      0.04
```

```
model1 <- glm.nb(Fatalities ~ Strat_Host + Strat_Supp + Economic +
Territory + SocialProt, data = new_mip)
summary(model1)
```

```
##
## Call:
## glm.nb(formula = Fatalities ~ Strat_Host + Strat_Supp + Economic +
##      Territory + SocialProt, data = new_mip, init.theta = 0.04228428018,
##      link = log)
##
## Coefficients:
##              Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
## (Intercept)   6.2924      0.7127   8.829 < 2e-16 ***
## Strat_Host     4.2113      1.2394   3.398 0.000679 ***
## Strat_Supp     0.3306      1.0079   0.328 0.742871
## Economic       5.6762      2.2474   2.526 0.011549 *
## Territory     -6.2029      1.5995  -3.878 0.000105 ***
## SocialProt     3.8154      0.9126   4.181 2.9e-05 ***
## ---
## Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
##
## (Dispersion parameter for Negative Binomial(0.0423) family taken to be
1)
##
##      Null deviance: 126.13  on 149  degrees of freedom
## Residual deviance: 108.68  on 144  degrees of freedom
## AIC: 1109.3
##
## Number of Fisher Scoring iterations: 1
##
##
##              Theta:  0.04228
##            Std. Err.: 0.00593
##
## 2 x log-likelihood: -1095.31800
```

```
model2 <- glm.nb(Fatalities ~ Strat_Host + Strat_Supp + Economic +
Territory + SocialProt +
                  `Population (in thousands)` + StateBrGDP +
cumdurat,
                  data = new_mip, control = glm.control(maxit = 200,
epsilon = 1e-6))
summary(model2)
```

```
##
## Call:
## glm.nb(formula = Fatalities ~ Strat_Host + Strat_Supp + Economic +
##      Territory + SocialProt + `Population (in thousands)` + StateBrGDP +
##      cumdurat, data = new_mip, control = glm.control(maxit = 200,
```

```
##      epsilon = 1e-06), init.theta = 0.04466456884, link = log)
##
## Coefficients:
##              Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
## (Intercept)      1.83055    1.48366   1.234  0.21727
## Strat_Host        3.82282    1.23310   3.100  0.00193 **
## Strat_Supp        1.67677    1.00908   1.662  0.09658 *
## Economic          4.47740    2.19017   2.044  0.04092 *
## Territory        -6.12843    1.65842  -3.695  0.00022 ***
## SocialProt        3.70299    0.91055   4.067 4.77e-05 ***
## `Population (in thousands)` 0.05187    0.40570   0.128  0.89826
## StateBrGDP       -3.22106    0.67703  -4.758 1.96e-06 ***
## cumdurat          2.00403    0.40926   4.896  0.00412 **
## ---
## Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
##
## (Dispersion parameter for Negative Binomial(0.0447) family taken to be
1)
##
##      Null deviance: 132.78  on 149  degrees of freedom
## Residual deviance: 108.36  on 141  degrees of freedom
## AIC: 1109.5
##
## Number of Fisher Scoring iterations: 200
##
##              Theta:  0.04466
##              Std. Err.: 0.00628
##
## 2 x log-likelihood: -1089.48900

irr1 <- exp(coef(model1))

irr1

## (Intercept)  Strat_Host  Strat_Supp      Economic  Territory
SocialProt
## 5.404664e+02 6.744129e+01 1.391862e+00 2.918263e+02 2.023635e-03
4.539705e+01

irr2 <- exp(coef(model2))

irr2

##              (Intercept)              Strat_Host
##              6.237339555              45.732938178
##              Strat_Supp              Economic
##              5.348240302              88.005376256
##              Territory              SocialProt
##              0.002180011              40.568354280
## `Population (in thousands)`              StateBrGDP
##              1.053242331              0.039912725
##              cumdurat
##              7.421232843
```

```
summary(new_mip$Fatalities)

##      Min. 1st Qu.  Median    Mean 3rd Qu.    Max.
##         0         0         0  11975     16  500000

var(new_mip$Fatalities, na.rm = TRUE)

## [1] 3173722433

vif(model1)

## Strat_Host Strat_Supp   Economic  Territory SocialProt
##   1.173098   1.186940   1.032241   1.159270   1.173218

vif(model2)

##                Strat_Host                Strat_Supp
##                1.221355                1.223521
##                Economic                Territory
##                1.034722                1.218927
##                SocialProt `Population (in thousands)`
##                1.220328                1.072421
##                StateBrGDP                cumdurat
##                1.043775                1.017756

r2_nagelkerke(model1)

## Nagelkerke's R2
##           0.3871795

r2_nagelkerke(model2)

## Nagelkerke's R2
##           0.7117997
```