



(Cover) Taken by Kate Klinger, June 27, 2023, as the sun is setting on the Stari Most (The Old Bridge) in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina. After its destruction in the Yugoslav Wars, the 16th-century Ottoman bridge was rebuilt. Locals and tourists are often seen diving from the crest of the bridge into the Neretva River during the summer.

(Above) Sunset at Seiryō-ji temple: October 2023, Kyoto, Japan. Taken by Jacob Palmer during a study abroad semester in Nagoya, Japan.

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ABOUT THE CAROLINA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

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The Islamic Revolution and the Modern Middle East

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PWAD 490 taught by Noor Ghazi is an depth look not only at Iraqi history since the formation of the modern Iraqi state in the 1920s but also at how Islam and religion as a whole can be used to catalyze and justify political violence, especially in unstable regions. Professor Ghazi's firsthand experience in Iraq and Syria with such violence allowed her students to receive a unique understanding of the history, dynamics, and current events in the MENA.

Islamic radicalism has long plagued the Western world and Muslim-populated countries. This paper will explore the effect the Iranian Islamic Revolution had on future Islamic movements. Using the historical struggle between Islam and Modernism, it will analyze how the Revolution led to the sectarianism and violence that plague the Middle East today.

Historical Tension Between Islam and Governance

Before Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, anti-establishment movements in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) were based both on secularism and religion. The secularist movements largely emerged out of anti-colonial sentiment and a desire to industrialize and eventually westernize in hopes of increased economic stability

and prosperity. Such movements can be traced back to the Ottoman Empire's Tanzimat Reforms from 1839-78, in which Ottoman leaders attempted to reconcile an increased need for modernization with the religious characteristics of its empire.¹ The struggle the Ottomans faced in balancing Western-based reform, including a French-based law code, while maintaining its traditional Islamic characteristics is emblem-

atic of what many Muslim states face today.² This balancing act often becomes violent as it is viewed by some Muslims as the forced imposition of a foreign, Western system onto Islamic societies. In short, it is viewed as another form of oppression.³ The symbolic tug-of-war that characterized Ottoman decline is a primary culprit of MENA instability. This paper will explore the Islamic world pre-revolution, the impact of the 1979 Islamic Revolution on this struggle, and what the future holds for the region.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922, the legacy of the Tanzimat Reforms appeared with Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Ataturk, a pioneering reformist, westernized the newborn Turkey in various ways, including adopting a Latin alphabet over the historic Arabic and eliminating all religious institutions of the former empire.⁴ Ironically, the domination of the MENA by European powers was a catalyst for both secularism and religion. Ataturk's reforms, similar to those pushed by Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran, were influenced largely by European dominance of the region. Both leaders, Ataturk more so than the Shah, looked to reorient their nations to a new status quo vis-à-vis Europe in the hopes of improving their industries, economies, and geopolitical standing.⁵ Their secular reforms, with Reza going so far as to ban the hijab, highlight the historical struggle of MENA countries to

balance Islamic influence with modernization.⁶ This conflict, inherent to Islamic governance since Islam's creation, continues today.

The control European powers had over the MENA between World War I and II gave more freedom to secular groups in voicing their views as the Europeans began to secularize systems of governance.⁷ The proliferation of secular ideas paired with anti-European sentiment led to the development of Arab Nationalism and eventually pan-Arabism, a largely secular ideology that all Arab peoples should unite to form one powerful state, harkening back to the days of the Abbasid caliphate. During this interwar period, Sati Al-Husri, a former Ottoman official, originally promulgated the idea that the Arabic language and ethnicity must supersede religious and sectarian differences.⁸ Here, the idea of an Arab nation was born. This transformation in thought regarding Arab self-determination and the role of religion in future Arab governments laid the basis for many MENA countries' secular post-World War II resistance against European powers. The conflict against the newly created Israel in 1948 was another unifying force for many Arab states.⁹ Eventually, backlash against secular thought and governance would appear, a development explored later in this paper.

The Secular Wave 1948-

1979

Once Arab states began win-

ning independence in the mid to late 20th century, secular Arab governments began to materialize. In 1952, Gamel Abdel Nasser's Free Officers Society took power in Egypt.¹⁰ The Pan-Arabist Ba'ath party took control in Syria and Iraq in 1963 and 1968 respectively. The Ba'ath had an explicit mission to unify Arabs, with the slogan "One Arab Nation with an Immortal Mission" appearing on party propaganda.¹¹ This direct post-colonial transition in the Islamic world can be viewed as the peak of secularism in the region. Not long after, religious backlash occurred, largely as a response to what was widely viewed in the region as heretical and ineffective governments. This backlash was fueled by Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution and the failure of pan-Arabism with the breakup of the short-lived United Arab Republic, Arab losses in the 6-Day and Yom Kippur wars with Israel, a split between the Syrian and Iraqi Ba'ath parties, and the 1978 Camp David Accords.¹² Saddam Hussein's eight-year war with revolutionary Iran sealed the coffin.¹³ His actions split the Arab world, and his emphasis on Iraqi nationalism—born out of Ba'ath-style Arab nationalism—solidified the individual national identities that Arab countries had formed.¹⁴ Secularism and nationalism had failed to unite the Arab states. When the Islamic Revolution occurred, religious dissidents, those fed up with oppressive Arab regimes, and those

seeking democracy began seeking change in the region.

Islamic Resurgence 1979-2003

Iran's Revolution created a religious resurgence in the MENA. Directly, Iran created a web of militias to project power far beyond Iran's borders and combat Iraqi influence. Indirectly, many Muslims, both Sunni and Shia, were inspired by Khomeini's new Islamic government. They sought to create similar systems, combining Islam and the state to fix what they considered a broken status quo. Believing Islamic governments would bring prosperity to their nations and fellow Muslims, Islamic groups began mobilizing and calling for change. These groups, enchanted by the Revolution, lay the foundation for future Islamist militias.

Khomeini's new regime built upon the religious fervor his revolution had ignited and exploited long-brewing anger among many Muslims against secularism and the West. Many supporters of the revolution carried photos of Mohammed Mossadegh—Iran's only democratically elected Prime Minister against whom the US and Britain engineered a coup in 1953. Although Mossadegh was secular, Khomeini and the Jomhouri-Islami today use the coup as historical justification for their animosity toward the US.¹⁵ After the 1953 coup, the US installed Mohammed Reza Pahlavi as the Shah (King) of Iran.

The US backed Pahlavi because he was firmly pro-Western, anti-Communist, and secular. He was also a brutal dictator who used state institutions such as SAVAK, Iran's secret police, to silence dissent and spread fear. Highlighting the tug-of-war between Islamic societies and governance, the Shah, like his father Reza Pahlavi, moved to Westernize Iranian society, sparking anti-government sentiment that eventually led to Khomeini's 1979 revolution and Pahlavi's downfall. Not unlike many Arab regimes, the Pahlavi's secularism, coupled with the repression of civil liberties, created widespread animosity among their constituencies. This animosity was enlivened by Islam, which naturally became extreme when used in violent struggles against secular governments. When religion is used to justify violence, there is no limit to how far that violence can go.

The use of historical grievances to justify religion-based violence is a common theme in the MENA. As discussed in the first section of this paper, many Muslims view the imposition of Western-based systems as another form of oppression—a continuation of past imperialism and colonialism. The antithesis to secular, Western government systems is theocracy, as the Iranian Revolution proved. Just as Iran used its past exploitation by Western powers to energize its revolution, Sunni radical groups use nostalgia about past Islamic glory and Islam-

ic prophecies predicting the rise of a new caliphate, to outline their vision.¹⁶ Although they eventually broke with Iran, the Islamic Revolution gave such groups the inspiration and big-picture approach that allowed them to expand and gain power.¹⁷ Their use of history and religion to mobilize Islamists allows them to paint Western forces in the MENA as Christian "crusaders," continuing an eternal battle between Muslims and Christians until the prophesied end of days.¹⁸ Such tactics are easy to implement, when the population subjected to them is in economic turmoil, oppressed, or has existed in general instability.

Hezbollah, meaning "party of God" in Arabic, is the best-known product of Iran's revolution. Formed by Iran during the Lebanese Civil War in 1982, this Shia militant group was formed to project Iranian power to the Mediterranean, act as a buffer against Israel and the US, and spread Iran's brand of revolutionary Islam. Iran created Hezbollah by exploiting long-standing political tensions with lower-class Shias against Maronite Christians and Sunnis.¹⁹ Similar to the mobilization of oppressed Iranians under Khomeini, religious duty was used as a catalyst against what many Muslims viewed as oppressive, inefficient, and un-Islamic governments. Iran's revolution inspired radical action across the MENA. Pakistani students' attack on the US Embassy in Islamabad and an attack by the self-pro-

claimed “Mahdi” in Saudi Arabia are two well-known examples, both occurring the same year as the revolution.²⁰ Additionally, Iran’s revolution threatened the largely Sunni governments of Arab states. Sunni groups began vying for greater power and influence, taking inspiration from the Islamic Revolution—intentionally named to avoid sectarianism—and leading to a rise in Salafi and Wahhabist groups. Sunni Saudi Arabia funded such groups as a way to counter Shia Iran’s growing influence in the region and to legitimize its own rule as religious fervor spread through the region.²¹ Ironically, many of these groups became hostile to the Sunni governments that originally funded them, condemning them as not being Islamic enough and creating another layer of sectarian violence in the MENA that would resurface after 2003.²²

Iran’s revolution and the subsequent funding and spread of both Sunni and Shia militias is what characterizes today’s MENA. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980 complemented the Islamic Revolution’s effect. Now, the individuals and groups who sought change in the region had an ideologically atheist enemy attacking fellow Muslims. The Soviet Jihad built upon the effect of the Islamic Revolution, allowing for the creation of anti-Soviet networks that would later be used against the Americans. However, without the Revolution having already lit the spark, it would have

been difficult for Islamists to mobilize as quickly and as largely as they did. The Revolution gave Islamists motivation, the Soviet invasion gave them cohesion.

These two parallel events, both running through the 1980s, are the origins of the rise of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and eventually the Islamic State. Both conflicts reflect the power of Islam to mobilize large numbers of Muslims and foreign fighters²³ to combat invaders and “defend Islam.” This mobilization of radical Islamists and the formation of transnational networks during the Soviet Jihad²⁴ led to the formation of the Jihadist groups mentioned above along with various others. Only three years after the resolution of both the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia, near Islam’s holiest sites, gave these groups a new, Western-focused purpose. US neglect of Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal, ignorance of Saudi policy toward Wahhabi and Salafi Islamist groups, and perceived meddling in MENA affairs for economic benefit created anti-US sentiment in the region.²⁵ Additionally, many in the MENA viewed US policy as hypocritical: explicitly opposing Saddam Hussein’s regime on the basis of human rights and democracy while actively supporting Gulf regimes that have appalling records with both.²⁶ This view is still prevalent among many Muslims and even Americans

today, as energy and economic security are the clear US priorities in the MENA.²⁷ Thus, by the time Operation Iraqi Freedom began in 2003, new radical Islamist groups had been formed through the anti-Soviet Jihad and the Iranian Revolution, Operations Desert Shield and Storm had increased anti-Western views among Jihadists and laypeople, and the invasion would create an ideal breeding ground for increased extremism.

New Forms of Islamism 2003-Present

The United States’ gaffes in its 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq are well-documented. So this section will focus on how US policy and mismanagement led to the rise of violent Islamist groups, including and beyond the Islamic State, and how this would not have been possible without the Iranian Revolution.

The US invasion created a power vacuum in Iraq and upset the long-standing Sunni dominance of the majority Shia country.²⁸ This development, combined with a lack of planning on the US part to rebuild a newly sectarian Iraq and the movement of post-1979 Jihadist groups into Iraq to combat US forces, created a perfect storm for the insurgency and civil war that followed.²⁹ Beginning in 2006 with the bombing of the Al-Askari shrine, a holy Shia site by Sunni insurgents,³⁰ the impact of this sectarianism is still widespread in Iraq today.³¹ The Sunni minority, who had traditionally

held power in Iraq, felt disenfranchised with a Kurdish president and Shia Prime Minister, leaving them with the position of speaker of Parliament. The idea that Sunnis would “retake their rightful place” was widespread among insurgent groups and motivated severe sectarian violence. This sectarian violence was not only the product of the new American-backed form of government. It had its roots in the Iranian Revolution, with the Iranians founding and funding Shia groups such as Hezbollah and then Gulf states, primarily Saudi Arabia, countering them by funding Sunni groups to “contain” the Shia revolution.³² This, along with long-festered resentment by Shia Muslims in Iraq, made the region fertile for sectarian violence.³³ The new US-installed government brought these sectarian tensions to the surface. Al-Qaeda and other jihadists exploited this sectarianism and anarchy to flourish. They also used incidents of US violence against civilians in Iraq, including the rape of a 14-year old Iraqi girl by US soldiers³⁴ and the Abu Ghraib scandal, to create greater anti-US sentiment.³⁵ Their primary long-term goal was to establish an official “Islamic” caliphate with their radical Salafi interpretation of Islam. The Islamic State was born out of this idea, splitting with Al-Qaeda over its desire to establish such a state immediately rather than wait for public opinion to be on its side.³⁶

ISIS is the best example of how the tug-of-war between Islam and modernization inherently creates conflict. The group seeks to take its followers and force “citizens” back to the days of Mohammad and interprets the Quran and other Muslim texts literally.³⁷ Similar to Hezbollah,³⁸ it strives to create legitimacy by providing traditional state services to those living under its flag, including education, security, and infrastructure.³⁹ It differs from Al-Qaeda by focusing inward, killing Shia Muslims and others it considers to be heretics,⁴⁰ including the Wahhabi Saudi state.⁴¹

ISIS’ roots also lay in the Iranian Revolution. Khomeini’s Revolution created a new paradigm in which Iran redefined the use of religious symbols and rhetoric to align with and justify its policies.⁴² Given its effectiveness during the war, this paradigm is still used today among Muslim governments to legitimize their policies, especially if some Muslims consider that government to have questionable religious credentials. The entire organizational structure of ISIS is based upon this paradigm, using strict interpretations of Islam and the idea that ISIS’s Islam is the only “right” Islam to justify its actions. Additionally, further groundwork was laid by the Iraqi and Saudi regimes. In response to Iran’s increased religiosity during the war, Saddam Hussein emphatically used religion to legitimize his government and ensure public sup-

port.⁴³ If he hadn’t portrayed himself as a pious leader and sponsored projects, mosques, and religious education to prove so, his religious credentials would have come into question. Similar to Saudi Arabia after the Revolution, Hussein found himself losing legitimacy because of Iran’s religious fervor, and thus he sought to prove his dedication to the faith.⁴⁴ As the Saudi monarchy sought to contain Iran by funding radical religious groups that would eventually turn against it, Saddam Hussein did the same. The rise of ISIS and other Jihadist groups can be traced back to his religious revival, originally sparked by the Islamic Revolution.

Without the Islamic Revolution, it is difficult to predict how the MENA would have developed. The religious and anti-western nature of the Revolution characterized the feelings of many of those living in the region and provided a playbook for those who might not otherwise have acted. Secular, oppressive rule created religious backlash. Predictably, the result of oppressive religious rule has created a new desire for secular rule in Iran. Widespread oppressive rule, often characterized by secularism, had the opposite effect, producing sectarian religious revivals that mingled with the post-Revolution spread of Islamism. Thus, the tug-of-war between religion and modernism that characterized the end of Ottoman rule and the post-colonial era continues.

There is no clear-cut solution to the problem, but one thing policymakers can be sure of is that economic instability, oppressive governments, climate change, poverty, insufficient education, and corruption make the MENA an ideal breeding ground for terrorists and radical Islamists. If

the West continues to intervene in MENA affairs, it must pursue its security goals by considering the condition of the region's inhabitants. Continuing to neglect the well-being of the people who live there, whether by supporting oppressive monarchies or inadvertently cre-

ating terrorist organizations, will only cost the West while ensuring that the over 500 million people living there continue to live with their breath held, waiting to see which group will seize power next.

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Photos from Asilah, Morocco. Taken by Arman Karbassian, June 2023.

Asilah is a small city 46 km south of Tangier, a popular beach destination in Morocco. A new highway has diverted tourism away from Asilah, but the city maintains its natural and historical beauty.

1999 NATO Air Campaign in Kosovo: Can Air Power Alone be Attributed to its Success?

Kate Klinger

Kate Klinger is a second-year student double majoring in Peace, War, and Defense and Russian Language and Culture, with a minor in Geographic Information Sciences. The course, Air Power, examines air power history, theory, and implementation from 1914 to the present. The course focuses on the different applications of air power as a mechanism of war, the effectiveness of that application, and the cultural impact sparked by various aircraft. The course, HIST 213, was taught by Professor Joe Caddell.

Between March 24 and June 9, 1999, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) conducted an air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to end Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's campaign of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.¹ The 78-day 'Operation Allied Force' military campaign became NATO's second combat operation in the Balkans in four years.² Initially, NATO leaders agreed to a two-day air strike, convinced that Milosevic would yield just as he had in Bosnia-Herzegovina.³ The NATO member states' idealistic assumption of Milosevic's surrender dissolved following Milosevic's refusal to quit and his ultimate extension of the campaign.⁴ Operation Allied Force was the largest air war by scope and magnitude in NATO's history and

represented the "third largest strategic application of air power by the United States since World War II," exceeded in scale and intensity only in the Vietnam War and Operation Desert Storm.⁵ With minimal casualties from member states, this campaign established NATO's authority in the international system and the United States' modern attitude towards the future application of air power.⁶ To what extent can air power be attributed to the success of the 1999 air campaign in Kosovo?

Success, in the instance of the air campaign, can be defined as maintaining an efficient balance of planning, leadership, and execution to accomplish objectives.⁷ NATO's objectives through the use of air power included ending Milosevic's ethnic cleansing campaign and government rule, the withdrawal from Kosovo of military person-

nel, police, and paramilitary forces, and the establishment of a political agreement for Kosovo under international law and the United Nations Charter.⁸ Academics such as Dr. Andrew L. Stigler believe that air power alone, independent of ground forces, achieved the aforementioned objectives through strategic air power. However, opponents disagree with Stigler's strategic air power perspective. The alternative 'tactical air power' view portrays air power as a supplement to support ground forces to produce success. Moreover, the air campaign's success could also be attributed to outside factors, including Kosovo's geography, political considerations, Milosevic's intentions, NATO leadership, operational doctrine, strategy, and implementation.⁹ Former public practitioners and academics, namely Dr. Benjamin S. Lambeth, is a proponent of this alternative view.

Dr. Stigler challenges the conventional view that the threat of ground invasion led to NATO's ultimate success, asserting that coercive air power alone determined NATO's strategy. Dr. Stigler is an Associate Professor of National Security Affairs at the United States Naval War College. He is published in various scholarly journals—International Security, Joint Force Quarterly, and the Naval War College Review. Dr. Stigler argues that President Bill Clinton's administration and NATO had weak political and military indications towards a shift to a ground operation that only "appear credible in hindsight."¹⁰ Dr. Stigler makes three main points. First, he argues that the threat of a ground invasion surfaced only toward the end of the conflict, and, unlike Dr. Lambeth, believes that factors other than the ground threat and the "promise of further airstrikes did not play a role in the war's conclusion."¹¹ His second set of points consists of obstacles to the ground threat and its resulting weaknesses – elevating the role of air power.

Third, Stigler argues that Milosevic surrendered because of the credible threat of continued and intensified bombing that increased Serbian domestic repercussions and the loss of Russia's support.¹²

For much of the conflict, NATO chose not to prepare for a ground war because member states believed decisive military action was unnecessary.¹³ Regarding the timing of a ground invasion, Stigler cites historian and author John Keegan's editorial in the London Daily

Telegraph. Dr. Stigler capitalizes on Keegan's claims that the deployment of a large ground force would take weeks to accomplish when Milosevic accepted NATO demands.¹⁴ Due to this timing, Dr. Stigler opposes revisionist claims – stating that Operation Allied Force was a victory through air power.¹⁵ Moreover, in an interview with Special Envoy to the Balkans Richard Holbrooke and Milosevic, Dr. Lambeth claims Milosevic seemed to understand the coercive nature of NATO air power, asserting NATO "would bomb [us]" if Milosevic did not "change his position" on his ethnic cleansing campaign.¹⁶ Dr. Lambeth also argues that outside factors, such as the Kosovo Liberation Army's (KLA) campaign against Serbian forces and NATO's limited damage to the Yugoslav military, did not significantly influence Milosevic's decision to withdraw from Kosovo.¹⁷ With a lack of evidence supporting the KLA's claim that its fighters had killed hundreds of Serbs in the battle, the KLA was "not a factor" in Milosevic's surrender.¹⁸ Moreover, NATO dealt minor damage to the Serbs' military ability to control Kosovo. Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO, General Clark, led a Munitions Effectiveness Assessment Team (MEAT).¹⁹ MEAT ruled that NATO had not destroyed nearly as much equipment as it had claimed (e.g., NATO reported 120 tanks destroyed versus 14 actual tanks destroyed after further investigation).²⁰ Therefore, NATO's strategy relied on coercive air power, as understood by Milosevic.²¹

Dr. Stigler argues that the obstacles NATO faced resulted in a weak, indecisive ground threat and a decisive victory for air power.²² He claims NATO faced many obstacles, including a limited timeframe for mobilization (before the Balkan winter) and a lack of consensus on a ground operation.²³ These factors led to a weak ground threat, consisting of NATO's undercutting of the threat itself, lack of public agreement among U.S. officials, poor threat signaling, NATO's aversion to casualties and "risk-taking," and the media's failure to recognize a shift in U.S. policy.²⁴

Dr. Stigler also claims that Milosevic's primary reasons for surrender directly relied on his desire to avoid further bombing.²⁵ Milosevic lacked credible military options, such as conducting a successful military campaign against NATO, alongside his newfound lack of Russian allyship.²⁶ Dissatisfaction with Milosevic's regime was apparent among political elites and regular citizenry, groups with an increased focus on survival.²⁷ Moreover, Dr. Stigler asserts that because of Serb inflexibility on the foreign occupation of Kosovo, NATO developed harsher international occupation terms during the Rambouillet conference (Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo) than had been initially intended.²⁸

On the other hand, Dr. Lambeth challenges the viewpoint of Kosovo as a "watershed" for air power and characterizes it as a reluctant success.²⁹ Dr. Lambeth is a Senior

Fellow with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.³⁰ Previously, he worked for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Institute for Defense Analyses, the RAND Corporation, and the Central Intelligence Agency.³¹

Dr. Lambeth asserts that the overconfident assumptions made by NATO leadership resulted in the suboptimal application of air power in Kosovo, including the lack of initial ground threat, NATO's operational problems, and lapses in its strategy and implementation.³² Yet, the air campaign's most significant successes exist on the strategic level rather than on the tactical level.³³

There are two main strategic victories. The first—NATO's victory over Milosevic and the Serbian operational failure. NATO's air strikes failed to prevent Milosevic's ethnic cleansing campaign entirely.³⁴ However, the strikes succeeded in preventing its continuation and reversing its effects shortly after the ceasefire.³⁵ This victory was due to Milosevic's acceptance of NATO's demands, including the stationing of an international military presence in Kosovo and the safe return of refugees and displaced Kosovo citizens.³⁶ Moreover, Serbia was on the brink of economic collapse due to NATO bombing of critical infrastructure, already weakened by nearly four years of international sanctions from previous Serbian involvement in the Bosnian war.³⁷ The bombing convinced Milosevic that NATO would not relent, and the member states possessed the technical and political capabilities to over-

throw his regime.³⁸

The second strategic victory—NATO's ability to operate as a functional alliance under pressure, despite internal political tensions.³⁹ NATO carried out a successful air campaign – something that it had been “neither created nor configured to do.”⁴⁰ With an initial reluctance of political leaders to conduct a more aggressive air campaign through targeting, towards the very end of the campaign, this changed.⁴¹ NATO's political leaders finally gave Secretary General Solana clear authority for a “much more diverse target list, a more intensive pace of operations, and an expanded geographical zone.”⁴² However, this reluctance, combined with the lack of uniform mission planning and air tasking, inhibited the air campaign from reaching its full potential, and ground forces were necessary to supplement such inadequacies.⁴³

Ultimately, Dr. Lambeth believes that air power alone was not the only factor that contributed to the Kosovo air campaign's success. Operation Allied Force reconfirmed that friendly ground forces should not be operational preemptively.⁴⁴ It also reinforced that air power usually necessitates ground forces as a crucial element in an overarching strategy.⁴⁵ Dr. Lambeth attributes the reluctant success of Operation Allied Force to other factors outside of air power, like Serbian economic and leadership vulnerabilities, alongside NATO's adaptability and resilience.⁴⁶

Dr. Stigler includes 147 footnotes in his journal article. He relies

on scholarly journals like Armed Forces Journal International and news articles from sources such as The New York Times and Balkan Insight.⁴⁷ He also derives information from think tank publications, namely the Brookings Institution and the RAND Corporation.⁴⁸ Dr. Stigler also utilizes primary sources, such as transcripts of NATO briefings and interviews with prominent U.S. government officials.⁴⁹

Dr. Lambeth has over 200 footnotes for each chapter in his report. These are from scholarly journals like Armed Forces Journal International and news articles, mainly from The New York Times and The Washington Post.⁵⁰ He divides his bibliography into multiple sections: official publications, congressional testimonies, books, journal and periodical articles, newspaper articles, and briefings.⁵¹ Most of Dr. Lambeth's sources are journal and periodical articles from magazines like Aviation Week and Space Technology and Time and scholarly journals like World Air Power Journal.⁵² He also includes a variety of graphs and data visualizations, such as U.S. Air Force Sortie Breakdown by Aircraft Type and munitions data.⁵³ Additionally, Dr. Lambeth includes historical images and aerial photographs, such as images of night refueling and pre/post-strike imagery.⁵⁴

Both authors include sources that have the potential for bias. However, in contrast to Dr. Stigler, Dr. Lambeth uses a wider variety of sources as a solution to combat this issue. Although it is a longer, more

substantial report than a journal article, Dr. Lambeth utilizes various news publications, books, primary sources, secondary sources, and scholarly publications. While some of these sources most likely contain their own biases, the number and diversity of sources significantly reduce the risk of such biases synthesizing into Dr. Lambeth's argument(s). This variety is a departure from Dr. Stigler's argument. Although he does include 147 footnotes in his journal article and an array of sources, his synthesis primarily relies on three main sources to support his argument: Hanlon's *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*, Posen's "The War for Kosovo," and Hosmer's *Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did*.⁵⁵ Therefore, the greater number and variety of sources make Dr. Lambeth's arguments more persuasive than Dr. Stigler's.

Dr. Lambeth and Dr. Stigler's reports have a clear structure and organization conducive to logical arguments, such as headings and subheadings. They begin with background information on Kosovo and Operation Allied Force, define all necessary terms, clearly state their arguments, and then outline various sections dedicated to the evidence used to support those arguments. Evidence and logic support the majority of both arguments and analyses. However, Dr. Stigler writes in broad terms throughout his prose without immediate evidence. For example, he states Milosevic did not change his mind about NATO's strategy because "there are no strong

indications that he did, there are many reasons and some evidence that suggest that he did not, and NATO's ground threat remained weak."⁵⁶ He evaluates a ground invasion or aerial bombardment as absolutes—a logical fallacy—to coerce Milosevic to accept NATO's terms.⁵⁷ Moreover, Dr. Stigler utilizes the logic of absolutes to justify the Kosovo air campaign's success because of coercive air power alone but makes contradictory claims. Early in his article, he claims that "the promise of further airstrikes did not play a role in the war's conclusion," but then states one of the main reasons for Milosevic's surrender was the airstrikes.⁵⁸ Indeed, Milosevic's surrender is a significant factor that contributed to the end of the war.⁵⁹ In contrast, Dr. Lambeth lacks significant logical fallacies because of his nuanced argument, accounting for more than air power in the success of the air campaign. He explores air power's most critical accomplishments—and operational problems—in the planning and execution of Operation Allied Force.⁶⁰ Most importantly, Dr. Lambeth incorporates counterarguments into his synthesis, such as the timing of a ground invasion, rather than merely addressing them as Dr. Stigler does. Assessing Operation Allied Force from a political and strategic perspective, he provides a more substantial analysis than Dr. Stigler on the future of the Kosovo-Serbia relationship, NATO doctrine, U.S. foreign policy, and the Balkans in the wake of Operation Allied Force.⁶¹

Supporters of strategic air

power like Dr. Stigler believe that air power alone contributed to NATO's air campaign success. However, proponents of tactical air power like Dr. Lambeth criticize this view. Dr. Lambeth purports that air power was not the absolute determinant of success in Kosovo but was used to support ground forces to produce success alongside other factors outside of air power's influence.

Dr. Stigler and Dr. Lambeth begin with background information, shift to main ideas and arguments, and finally develop the logic, analysis, and evidence to support their claims. The strengths supporting strategic air power lie in the timing, planning, and execution of a potential ground invasion – making coercive air power the main reason for the air campaign's success. However, the weaknesses exist in the strengths of Dr. Stigler's argument. Dr. Stigler often falls into patterns of confirmation bias, as seen in his logic of absolutes and selective choice of sources. His rebuttals to the counterargument are introduced at the beginning of his article but lack sufficient supporting examples and analysis into how other factors – other than the threat of ground invasion – made air power the decisive factor in the air campaign's success.⁶² Moreover, the quantity and diversity of sources form the basis of his article, mainly on three individuals' previous arguments, further decreasing his credibility. Unlike Dr. Stigler, Dr. Lambeth includes many sources, bolstering his credibility and reducing the risk of bias in his analysis and claims. The strength of

Dr. Lambeth's argument lies in its nuances. Dr. Lambeth's in-depth explanation of the campaign's success in terms of air power, exemplified by the combat debut of the B-2 and UAV employment, provides a strong foundation for the argument in support of tactical air power.⁶³

Through his careful analysis and well-organized source material, Dr.

Lambeth proves that tactical air power, alongside other factors, can be attributed to the success of NATO's 1999 air campaign in Kosovo.⁶⁴ These additional factors include Milosevic's intentions or fear of a NATO ground invasion.⁶⁵ They also included NATO strategy, implementation, and operational problems.⁶⁶ Ultimately, he asserts that the air

campaign was a strategic success with tactical shortcomings regarding air power. These conclusions could only be reached through close examination and selection of sources, comprehensive analysis, and nuanced arguments rather than employing absolute logic to challenge conventional wisdom.

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Photographed by Kate Klinger, July 3, 2023.

This unfinished Serbian orthodox church sits next to the National Library of Kosovo in Prishtina.

An Examination of the Term “Proxy War” and Potential Application to Ukraine

Alica Lenartova

Alica Lenartova is an Economics and Peace, War, and Defense double major, graduating in the spring of 2025. She wrote this research paper for POLI 459, which explores the development of Euro-Atlantic security institutions (NATO, EU) and compares security policy in the United States and Europe. Professor Robert Jenkins taught POLI 459. She took this course while studying abroad in Brussels, Belgium, in the fall semester of 2023.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the ongoing war has been the subject of much discussion in the international community. The invasion was unexpected by the majority of the world and spurred global dialogues about Ukraine and Russia, as well as raising questions about the implications of the invasion. Was the invasion a response to NATO enlargement and the potential membership of Ukraine or a result of Putin's personal beliefs and increased autocratic power? Was it a response to the perceived cultural and political threat of the West or perhaps an attempt to keep Ukraine in Russia's sphere of influence?¹ The answer is likely a combination of theories.

These questions regarding Russia's motivation raise another altogether: who is Russia fighting? The obvious answer to this question

is Ukraine, but historical conflicts and contemporary geo-political dialogues suggest that the true answer may be more complicated. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov speaking to Russian media in April 2022, claimed that Western support of Ukraine created a proxy war through which NATO is advancing its own agenda.² Mr. Lavrov did not provide an extensive definition of what he meant by the term “proxy war,” simply stating that “NATO... is engaged in a war with Russia through a proxy and is arming that proxy...”³. As governments and think tanks continue searching for triggers of the conflict, further analysis is required. This research paper will examine the definition of a proxy war and whether Russia's war in Ukraine constitutes one.

What is a Proxy War?

In order to find a comprehensive definition of what a proxy

war is, it is helpful to break down the term into its components. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines proxy as “authority or power to act for another” or “a person authorized to act for another.”⁴ War is defined as “a state of usually open and declared hostile conflict between states or nations” or a “state of hostility, conflict, or antagonism.”⁵ Putting those terms back together, a proxy war is usually a state of open and declared hostile conflict between states or nations, in which a state or nation has the power or authority to act for another. However, this compiled dictionary definition does not provide enough detail. Do both states need to act for another? How much authority or power is required to act? Is it at the request of the outside state?

Daniel Byman, in an article for The Brookings Institution, claims that a proxy war “occurs

when a major power instigates or plays a major role in supporting and directing a party to a conflict, but does only a small portion of the actual fighting itself.” He distinguishes traditional war from proxy war by claiming that “major and minor powers work together with each making significant contributions according to their means.”⁶ While still holding some subjectivity (exactly how much military support is too much for a war to be considered a proxy war), this definition suggests that, overall, a war with minimal direct involvement, primarily in the form of military aid, is a proxy war. However, this definition rests upon a strict definition of an alliance and focuses primarily on the level of military involvement on the battlefield itself. Thus, military alliances in which one ally takes the lead and the other primarily provides covert or indirect support would qualify as a proxy war, regardless of the intention and level of control within the alliance. Such a strict definition also gives major powers in the world little leeway when supporting smaller powers. Even if there is no major involvement on the battlefield, by this definition, major powers could be constantly fighting proxy wars whenever they provide military aid.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations fills in a few of the gaps left by the definition from Brookings and defines proxy wars as “conflicts in which a third party intervenes

indirectly in a pre-existing war to influence the strategic outcome in favor of its preferred faction.”⁷ This definition focuses more on the intent behind military aid and intervention instead of active participation on the battlefield. Indirect intervention can come through the form of weapons, training, and funding, allowing the third-party actor to further its cause without direct involvement.⁸ However, this definition removes the possibility of the third party contributing to instigating the war in the first place and the qualification of the third party as a major world power. It does not stipulate any prior alliance or relationship between the third party and the side it supports, or any sort of authority or power given to the side supported, thus omitting the “proxy” portion of a proxy war.” By this definition, any minor power or third party offering military aid to its preferred side in a conflict would qualify that conflict as a proxy war. Any third party rarely offers aid to a side in a conflict without potential benefit for themselves. This relationship is not unique to a war by proxy, making the Concise Oxford Dictionary’s definition too broad.

In “The Strategy of War by Proxy,” Yaakov Bar-Siman-Tov introduces a broad definition of a proxy war: “war between regional states that may be regarded as a substitute for direct confrontation between the superpowers.”⁹ This basic definition offers a starting point

through which to analyze the complexities of what a proxy war truly is. Bar-Siman-Tov goes on to offer up a more specific definition which assumes no direct military intervention: “a war between regional states behind each of which – or behind only one – stands a superpower who supplies the state by indirect military intervention, i.e., without its own forces becoming involved in the war.”¹⁰ While this definition is similar to the one offered by Brookings in that it specifies the role of a superpower in a smaller state and is more specific than what is offered by Oxford—as it stipulates a superpower as the third party—it again fails to account for the complexities inherent to alliances. According to this definition, every local war that does not directly involve a superpower qualifies as a war by proxy, provided that there is some relationship between local adversaries and the superpower.¹¹

Another explanation that Bar-Siman-Tov references is that of Karl Deutsch. Deutsch terms proxy wars “an international conflict between two foreign powers, fought out on the soil of a third country; disguised as a conflict over an internal issue of that country; and using some of that country’s manpower, resources and territory as a means for achieving preponderantly foreign goals and foreign strategies.”¹² Allowing the goals of the superpower involved to appear wholly compatible with those of the smaller state, Deutsch’s

definition also does not exclude direct involvement of the superpower in the conflict and would incorporate conflicts such as the Vietnam War. In this case, the external power's intervention focuses not only on avoiding the defeat of the local state but also on accomplishing another goal beyond that of the local state's victory.¹³ However, this definition is very state-centric, ignoring actors such as in-state insurgency groups and the role that existing local tensions may play. By focusing on states, Deutsch also necessitates that proxy wars must occur on an international scale, ignoring the potential for small-scale proxy wars within a singular state.¹⁴

Lastly, I will examine Bar-Siman Tov's final definition. For the sake of clarity, I will adopt Bar-Siman-Tov's language when referring to proxy wars by referring to the party that bestows the authority as the activator, and the one who is asked to act as the proxy.¹⁵ Going back to the meaning of the word proxy, "the authority or power to act for another," the primary characteristic of a proxy war is that the proxy has been given the power or authority to act in war on behalf of the activator¹⁶. The act of bestowing this authority or power also implies a call to action from the activator, without which the proxy would not act. The non-intervention of a supporting party in a conflict is not enough for the war to be considered a proxy war, as the key request of

activation is not present. Similarly, the fact that an external party may benefit from the war does not alone qualify it as a proxy war, as there is no indication of the proxy acting on behalf of or with the authorization of an external party. In conclusion, the defining condition of a proxy war is the activator's request and the bestowal of authority to the proxy, without which the proxy would not have necessarily gone to war.

After examining this range of definitions for a proxy war, only the last two sufficiently integrate the true meaning of the word proxy. Deutsch focuses on a more state-centric model and emphasizes the underlying foreign goals of the "activator" in the conflict purportedly over an internal issue in the proxy state. Bar-Siman-Tov centers his definition on the activator's request to the proxy, claiming that the external state benefiting from the war is not enough for the war to be considered a war by proxy. Both of these definitions are less focused on restrictions surrounding what aid is being given to the "proxy" of the situation and more on the goals behind the conflict. I will use both of these definitions to examine the war in Ukraine.

History of Russia's War in Ukraine:

Since declaring independence in 1991, shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukraine has struggled to establish itself as a country fully separate from Russia and Russian influence. With great

overlap in their cultures and languages, a clean break was near impossible. Several Russian government officials claimed that parts of Ukraine should remain Russian and did not belong to Ukraine based on ethnic and historical background.¹⁷ Clear divisions formed as it struggled to form a solid national identity, economic stability, and democracy. Much of western Ukraine, which is overwhelmingly ethnically Ukrainian and Ukrainian-speaking, supported the solidification of a Ukrainian national identity and drove the independence movement. Southern and eastern Ukraine, with a population that was more ethnically Russian and more commonly Russian-speaking, were more hesitant to commit. Despite this, only one serious case of separatism occurred in Crimea, the only region in Ukraine with an ethnic Russian majority and was the region that only barely (54%) voted in favor of independence in 1991.¹⁸ The separatist movement and sentiments were unsuccessful, mainly presenting themselves through voting behavior patterns.

Over the course of the 1990s, Ukraine began to establish closer ties to the West, particularly NATO and the EU as they joined several peace and cooperation agreements throughout the 1990s. Western countries welcomed this outreach as Ukraine provided a strategic partnership as a buffer zone from Russia. However, as those partnerships

stalled without clear steps forward, Ukraine reverted to closer ties with Russia.¹⁹ This political shift led to an increasingly authoritarian government and public opinion backlash against pro-Russian politicians. After notable election fraud in the 2004 presidential elections, the citizens of Ukraine rose up in a series of protests later called the Orange Revolution. That year's election results were overturned.²⁰ Despite this singular victory, the Ukrainian government remained marked by corruption and dissent, and their bid to join the EU continued to stall.

With insufficient economic growth going into the next presidential election in 2008, the pro-Russian opposition managed to form a coalition in the government, and Ukrainian policy again turned towards Russia. The corruption had alienated much of the public, and surveys show that the majority of Ukrainians believed the country was headed in the wrong direction. As the pro-Russian government drew away from the EU, with President Yanukovych's decision not to sign a political association and free trade agreement with the EU, the public reached its limit. It began a new wave of demonstrations and protests. The Euromaidan protests, unlike the Orange Revolution, were characterized by violence and threats, and after months of demonstrations, the parties created a unity government.²¹

While this seemingly resolved

some of Ukraine's post-communist problems, new ones quickly arose. Shortly before the end of Euromaidan, Russian-backed separatists (along with Russian military forces, as later confirmed by Putin) rose up against the government in Sevastopol, the largest city in Crimea, and the newly Russian-backed government declared with a vote of 97% that Crimea would be rejoining Russia. Putin later revealed that he had approved plans to annex Crimea as far as a month in advance, proving the Russian machinations involved behind the scenes of the annexation. This annexation led to an international backlash as countries all over the world sanctioned Russia and reaffirmed their backing of Ukraine's territorial integrity. Russia further encouraged other separatist uprisings in Donetsk and Luhansk, but they were put down by Ukrainian forces who received support from various citizen militias in the areas. The area settled into a stalemate with sporadic fighting until Russia's invasion in 2022.²² It was in this political climate that Volodymyr Zelensky, a Jewish, Russian-speaking comedian, ran for and won the Ukrainian presidency. Zelensky campaigned on combating corruption and building closer ties to the EU—a much welcome sentiment following the pro-Russian regime.

Perhaps feeling threatened by the pro-European and pro-Western trend in Zelensky's administration, or perhaps in an attempt to solidi-

fy Ukraine under Russian power, Putin invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022.²³ However, the initial invasion attempt, which Putin claimed would establish control over Ukraine within 10 days, failed. Due to a combination of tactical incompetence by the Russian Military and an unexpectedly strong Ukrainian defense, the initial invasion attempt was repelled, and the war continues today.²⁴ Currently foreign governments have given approximately 241 billion euros of aid to Ukraine in order for them to be able to continue fighting against Russia. However, Ukraine is still running out of the military resources necessary to push back Russian forces effectively.²⁵

Ukraine: A Proxy War?

Shortly after the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov told Russian state media that NATO is engaging in a war with Russia through the arming of their "proxy," Ukraine.²⁶ He did not expand on his definition of a proxy war, but similar sentiments regarding the status of the war have been expressed by other academics and journalists throughout the world. The continued military and humanitarian support provided by the United States and its NATO partners, without which Ukraine would not have been able to fend off the Russian invasion, is held up as proof of NATO's use of Ukraine as a proxy to fight Russia.²⁷ But does this continued support of Ukraine necessitate that Ukraine

is a proxy for NATO? Using the definitions agreed upon in the first section, I will examine the war in Ukraine to see if it fits the criteria necessary for it to be declared a war by proxy.

Deutsch's definition of a proxy war is "an international conflict between two foreign powers, fought out on the soil of a third country; disguised as a conflict over an internal issue of that country; and using some of that country's manpower, resources and territory as a means for achieving preponderantly foreign goals and foreign strategies."²⁸ The war in Ukraine is an international conflict being fought in Ukraine (the third country in this scenario) and using some of Ukraine's manpower, resources, and territory. However, the rest of Deutsch's conditions are not applicable. As discussed in the earlier section on Ukraine's history, Russia has consistently tried to regain control over Ukraine over the last

thirty years through political control, economic incentives, and military insurgencies. The invasion in 2022 seems to be a culmination of the past thirty years' efforts. Perhaps the invasion was spurred on by the threat of Ukraine's closer ties with NATO and the EU, but Russia is not trying to fight NATO through this invasion. It is likely that he invaded because he did not expect such strong global support for Ukraine, particularly from the US, and believed that he would be able to cut Ukraine off from Western influence successfully.

In Bar-Siman-Tov's final definition, "the defining condition of a proxy war is the activator's request/bestowal of authority to the proxy, without which the proxy would not have necessarily gone to war."²⁹ There is no indication of any request from NATO that Ukraine goes to war against Russia, and Ukrainian resistance in the first few days of the war was done without

any aid from NATO. Thus, Bar-Siman-Tov's definition of a proxy war does not hold in this case, as Ukraine fought Russia even without any "authority" from Western allies. Indeed, Ukraine would not have been able to put up as much of a fight as they have without aid from NATO, but that does not entail their meeting of the remaining conditions outlined.

Conclusion:

Russia's war in Ukraine does not meet either of the definitions of proxy war in this essay. While it might meet some of the other definitions mentioned, those definitions fall short in integrating the meaning of the word proxy and are thus insufficient. The Russo-Ukrainian war is centered around Ukrainian independence and is not a proxy war between Russia and NATO, despite NATO providing military and humanitarian support to Ukraine.

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Photograph by Daniela Paris

Along the river in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the Kostel Fortress. The city is the capital of Republika Srpska, one of the two entities in the country.

Unraveling the Oslo Accords: Lessons from Thirty Years of Stagnation

Luke Morton

Luke Morton is a Junior in the honors college majoring in Peace, War, and Defense (Security and Intelligence Concentration) as well as Classics, with a minor in English. The paper “Unraveling the Oslo Accords: Lessons From Thirty Years of Stagnation” was written for PWAD 490: Peacebuilding, taught by Ambassador Bisa Williams. Morton chose to pursue his interest in Middle Eastern Politics by writing this case study on the U.S.-mediated Oslo Accords. It reviews the flawed implementation architecture outlined in the document’s language in order to understand how this faulty attempt at peacebuilding played a role in the current conflict.

It has long been stated that the conflict between Israel and Palestine is key to creating broader peace in the Middle East. With the current war between Israel and Hamas, there may have never been a time when the need to work toward a peaceful solution was so critical. In the early 1990s, the Oslo Accords rekindled the hope sparked by the Madrid Peace Conference that broader peace in the Middle East was possible. Still, the optimism of the historic handshake between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin currently lies in ruin. This case study will center on the Oslo Accords. To break free from the rhetoric that this conflict is an ancient and religious one, it will begin by tracing the origins of the Oslo process to the current state of the Oslo Accords’ implementation rather than discussing Jewish

archeology or whether the Palestinians are truly descendants of the biblical Philistines. This is not to say the religio-cultural histories of the two sides should not be incorporated into any modern peacebuilding attempts but rather to state that this case study will be grounded in an analysis of recent socio-political relations between the groups in connection to the Accords. This will be followed by a discussion of the Accords’ implementation architecture and implementation process. Finally, the case study will conclude by analyzing the key elements of the processes’ failure to properly acknowledge the concepts of religion and peacebuilding, civil society in peacebuilding, and the international community’s role in peacebuilding.

Dr. Mohammed S. Dajani can still recall first hearing of the Oslo Accords when teaching at the Applied Science University in Jordan. He maintains it was a dream

come true for the Palestinian people—though they received the Accords with mixed emotions—to have their own state and a process that showed both the peoples and the governments, along with the international community, were invested in peace.(1) Though the Accords opened the doors for diplomacy and dialogue, they were marked by a series of crises and poor execution that swung sentiments between despair and hope on both sides. Periodic eruptions of violence, including Hamas suicide bombings and the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin by a Jewish extremist, undermined both peace camps and paved the way for Hamas’ control of Gaza and the current far-right Israeli government. This has created a culture of hopelessness, contrasting with the initial optimism Dajani spoke about. On an individual level, both Palestinians and Israelis consistently desire a peaceful solution but have

been limited to spectatorship in a process marred by faulty leadership and violence. Palestinians, in particular, have become trapped by a *status quo* that favors those in control of the limited political power that was highly centralized in the newly created Palestinian Authority (PA).

Although significant obstacles remain on the path to peace, the opportunity to restart the process is not lost. A poll conducted just days before the tragic events of October 7th showed that the majority of Gazans were untrusting of Hamas' governance; this poll further showed that an impressive 73% preferred a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, support for Hamas' governance has increased by 5% since taking control of the Gaza Strip in 2007, and young Gazans, participants aged 18-29, said that they trusted Hamas "a great deal" and supported armed resistance¹ at the highest rates.⁽²⁾ If you slightly extend that age group to 15-29, it makes up 55.8% of the Palestinian population, further emphasizing the current need to learn from how the Accords failed as older populations age out and these rightfully frustrated youth continue to come of age under the Oslo paradigm.⁽³⁾

Historical Context

This portion of the case study

1. Footnote from JFAC: the US has designated Hamas as a foreign terrorist organization since 1997. Source: Bureau of Counterterrorism. (n.d.). Foreign Terrorist Organizations. United States Department of State. Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>

will provide the context necessary to understand the current state of the Oslo Accords' implementation and the roles of major stakeholders on the Israeli and Palestine sides. In 1979, Yasser Arafat took a new approach to the conflict by seeking to use Norway's assistance as a secret negotiation channel for dialogue with Israel. Israel was initially hesitant to engage directly with the PLO. However, they were pushed to the negotiating table after the PLO accepted UN Resolutions 242 and 338 in 1988, which called for secure and recognized boundaries, and after international condemnation of Israeli treatment of Palestinian demonstrators occurred at the time of the resolutions' passing. Thus, the secret negotiations began in 1993 with the Norwegian labor think-tank, FAFO, serving as their discreet platform. Unlike in the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, these negotiations and later the Oslo Declaration of Principles chose not to focus on final status issues, such as the status of settlements in the West Bank and the status of Jerusalem's accessibility, in favor of creating an interim government to facilitate final negotiations on these issues.⁽⁴⁾ On September 13, 1993, Oslo I was signed on the White House lawn with Israel and Palestinians finally acknowledging each other's right to exist after decades of conflict. Rabin and Arafat were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize just a year later, showing the international community's support for the ideas behind the Accords.⁽⁵⁾ The PA's creation was detailed in Oslo I and officially formed in 1994

as an interim body.

On September 28, 1995, Oslo II was signed in Washington D.C.; notably, it provided for Palestinian self-rule in parts of the West Bank and set a framework for Palestinian elections. The division of the West Bank consisted of three areas: Area A, which comprises 18% of the West Bank and would be entirely under PA control, Area B, which comprises 22% and would be under joint Israeli-Palestinian control, and Area C, which comprises 60% and would be under Israeli control.⁽⁶⁾ In November of the same year, Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated by the Jewish extremist and law student Yigal Amir. Rabin was succeeded by the serving Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres, who met with Arafat in December to reaffirm Israel's commitment to the Accords by releasing 1,000 Palestinian prisoners and withdrawing troops from five Palestinian cities.⁽⁷⁾ Nonetheless, Israelis opposed to the Accords—largely from the newly-elected right-wing Likud party led by Benjamin Netanyahu – argued such concessions were strategic mistakes in the wake of Rabin's assassination.⁽⁸⁾ In accordance with Oslo II, the PA held its first elections in 1996, and, despite calls by Hamas to boycott the event, the Palestinian people strongly supported the peace process by giving Arafat a landslide victory. In the months following the inaugural elections, Hamas launched a series of suicide bombings in civilian areas, including the Tel Aviv Mall. Arafat rapidly ordered Palestinian security forces

to apprehend the Islamic militants, leading to over 2,000 arrests, but the Oslo Accords and Peres, as their primary Israeli advocates, came under further criticism by Palestinians after the arrests.(9)

As the Israeli opposition rallied around Netanyahu in preparation for the 1996 Israeli elections, Egypt and the United States held a meeting of world leaders, the “Summit of Peacemakers,” in hopes of putting international pressure on the Israeli electorate to keep Peres in power. To their dismay, following conflict with the radical Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah, which shares Hamas’ opposition to peace, Israel mistakenly launched artillery at a United Nations compound in the village of Kana. This resulted in the deaths of over 100 civilians and caused many Israeli Arabs who previously supported Peres and his Labor Party to abstain from the coming elections. Their withdrawal of support gave Netanyahu a meager margin of half a percent needed to become Israel’s youngest Prime Minister at 47. In a highly controversial move that his security advisors warned against, Netanyahu opened up an ancient tunnel that runs along the Western Wall in September of 1996. The tunnel was opened in the area of the Wall where the Al Aqsa mosque sits on the Temple Mount, a spot extremely sensitive to both Muslims and Jews. Palestinian demonstrations were quickly organized, and demonstrators were fired upon by the Israeli army, resulting in Palestinian police fighting against Israeli forces for the first time since

the Accords were signed. The incident left 59 Palestinians and 16 Israelis dead, with hundreds more wounded.(10)

The following month President Clinton urged Arafat and Netanyahu to meet in Washington D.C. to prevent further violence and reinitiate peace talks with King Hussein of Jordan. The meeting was followed by months of intense negotiation before Israel withdrew from the last major city in the West Bank, Hebron, in 1997, deepening Palestinian enthusiasm but leaving Israeli settlers angered with Netanyahu. In the same year, Netanyahu capitalized on the Oslo Accords’ lack of an explicit mention of settlements to greenlight the construction of one near the sacred city of Jerusalem, regardless of Rabin’s promise that no additional settlements would be built. Similar to his decision on the Western Wall tunnel, there was a rapid response to this move, with Palestinian extremists launching a series of suicide bombings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem that were met with strict curfews and restrictions on access to Palestinian territory by Israel. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made her first trip to Israel in an attempt to overcome the increasingly onerous obstacles to the success of the Accords. Just two days after Secretary Albright’s visit, Netanyahu gave approval for Israeli citizens to move into occupied homes in the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem. However, demonstrations in opposition to this decision consisted of both Palestinians and Israelis who opposed Netanyahu’s

policies, demonstrating how members of both communities opposed such aggressive decisions.(8)

A year later President Clinton invited leaders from both sides to revive the peace process, leading to the creation of the Wye River Memorandum. This memorandum had four main components: the creation of an airport in Gaza, a 13% decrease of Israeli troops from the West Bank, the release of 750 prisoners, and a PA agreement to combat terrorist organizations and activities. However, little to none of these came to fruition: the airport was created but shut down by Israel during the Second Intifada in 2000. (9)(10) Clinton then made an enormous gesture by visiting Gaza in December of 1998, causing the Palestinian National Council to take a monumental step towards peace by voting to rescind its charter’s clause that calls for the destruction of Israel. In 1999, Netanyahu was rebuked by over two-thirds of the Knesset from across the political spectrum. He was swiftly replaced by the military hero Ehud Barak who ran on a platform of peace with the Palestinians. Despite Barak’s campaign promises, little was done to advance negotiations. Thus, while under fire for his recent decision to pull troops out of Lebanon and the lack of progress on the Palestinian front, he urged Clinton to call the Camp David Summit. The summit was held at the end of the interim period in 2000, and final status issues, such as Jerusalem, statehood, and boundaries, were finally discussed at a senior level for the first time.(11)

The issue of Jerusalem's status, including problems around residency and holy sites, was a critical sticking point and had Arafat refused the final proposal over concerns about the new Palestinian entity's sovereignty, the new state would have lost significant amounts of water and viable land while being nearly cleaved in half by Israel's annexation of the West Bank. Another series of secret talks was set up in response. Nonetheless, after Ariel Sharon—then the leader of the Likud—visited Jerusalem's Temple Mount against Arafat's request, the week-long Al Aqsa Intifada erupted and left fifty Palestinians and five Israelis dead. The violence made Barak's pro-peace position increasingly hard to defend, leading to his resignation and replacement with Sharon, who campaigned on a policy of increased security in 2001.(12) Final status issues still remained unsettled amidst stalled peace talks and a prolonged interim period when Sharon pulled Israeli settlers and forces completely out of Gaza and small portions of the West Bank in 2005, citing disengagement rather than increased negotiation as Israel's best path forward for removing itself from further conflict.(13) After the withdrawal, President Bush used the opportunity to encourage Palestinian legislative elections in 2006, which were won by Hamas. The Carter Centre and National Democratic Institution believe the elections were in accordance with international standards and that they reflected popular sentiment.(14) In protest of the terrorist group's victo-

ry and as urged by Western backers, Fatah—the political party which had dominated the PA up to this point—and other political factions refused to join the new Hamas-led government and attempted to overthrow their control in 2007.(15)

A poll from the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research conducted two months after Hamas' electoral victory revealed that it was frustration with the PA's corruption and ineffective governance rather than widespread agreement with the group's strategy of armed resistance, which they owed their victory to. 75% of respondents were in favor of Hamas negotiating with Israel for peace, and a majority supported mutual recognition between a new Palestinian State and Israel in a two-state solution.(16) Since then, Palestinian politics has been defined by the duopoly of power that the authoritarian governments of Hamas and the Fatah-dominated PA wield over the Gaza Strip and West Bank, respectively. In the following years, sporadic violence, and floundering attempts at new peace talks, such as the 2016 French Initiative and President Trump's "Peace to Prosperity Plan," in conjunction with failed Palestinian unity governments allowed the Oslo status quo of stagnation to set in.(17)

Implementation Architecture

This section will discuss the inherent weaknesses present in the implementation architecture of Oslo I and II. Oslo I was meant to provide a set of principles for gradually in-

creasing Palestinian self-governance and Israel-Palestine relations during a transition period of no longer than five years. The first Article states that the aim of the negotiations is to establish an interim Palestinian government authority and recognize both sides' rights in hopes of lasting peace. However, the glaring hole that is apparent from the document's outset is a lack of tangible end goals for the interim period. The delaying of adjudication over key issues such as Jerusalem, borders, and settlements diminished the incentives for each side to actualize a peaceful resolution. On top of this, the lack of oversight and the ambiguity of the language used to outline the interim principles of implementation have been conducive to stagnation and imbalances of power. This section will demonstrate how these faults were baked into the implementation architecture presented for both the principles on self-governance and Israel-Palestine relations.(18)

Beginning with elections, Article III says little more than that just "direct, free, and general political elections" should be held under some level of supervision and international oversight while monitored by the Palestinian police at a date no later than nine months after the signing of Oslo I.(19) The Annex connected to the Article is meant to provide additional structure for these future elections, but it largely repeats the language of the Article, simply stating that an agreement should be reached covering key factors like the system of elections, the mode of supervision

and international observation, and campaign rules— with no guidelines or regulations to negate even basic spoilers, those who believe negotiations threaten their interest and use violence to undermine them. Political dissidents using violence to prevent voting is a common example. The Palestinian police were listed as the sole authority for keeping the peace during elections, but their security capabilities in an inaugural state became another clear concern in the framework. The lack of clarity that the document provides for electoral oversight also creates an incentive for negative actors both to negotiate toward and to implement electoral policies that serve their personal ends despite undermining the Article’s goal of representing the Palestinian people democratically. This Article encapsulates how the authors of Oslo I prioritized short-term progress over long-term success through the absence of explicitly defined structure and implementation guidelines for how these elections should be either held or enforced and through the inclusion only of a basic timeline.(20)

Article IV, which was dedicated to the jurisdiction of the Council, referred to as the PA after Oslo II, bears many of the same inherent faults as its counterpart with regard to elections. The Article is a mere two sentences and reads, “Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations. The two sides view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single

territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved during the interim period”.(21) Again, the document’s language provides no specific guidelines as to how this jurisdiction will be maintained or enforced beyond simple language about the creation of a “strong” Palestinian police force, without even an Annex to refer to for additional information in this case. Questions about the Article’s particulars which immediately come to mind include: how would this jurisdiction be equally enforced in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, what are the performance metrics of a capable police force, what mechanisms will facilitate the “smooth and peaceful transfer of authority,” and other important concerns arising from language in the document’s treatment of an interim period. The pervasiveness of vague descriptors in the text, such as “strong” and “smooth,” greatly detracted from the political weight of Oslo I by blurring what could be considered successful implementation. This weak language gave spoilers the opportunity to restrict the use of power under the Accords based on their loose interpretation of the language. For example, the vagueness of a “strong” police force in Article VIII could allow Palestinian spoilers to argue that an authoritarian police force that is dominated by one group is strong, and on the other hand, Israeli spoilers could argue that an incapable police force is the very same in order to rationalize a return to increased security presence when that force fails. The interconnectivity of these ambiguous Articles also high-

lights the weakness of the Accord’s architecture and their facilitation of potential power imbalances. For example, the lack of clarity in Article VII on how civil authority will be transferred limits the Council’s jurisdiction in Article IV.(22) The shaky foundation for implementation created by both Articles resulted in a domino effect in which the practical concerns of reality were lost.

When Oslo II was signed in 1995, it failed to mark a significant improvement in architectural weaknesses, further entrenching a fragile political status quo in the form of the interim administration for which Oslo I advocated. There were improvements in the specificity of the second Accords’ language, yet the damage was done in how and where that specificity was applied. The expanded focus on the authority of the PA was a departure from the vague detailing of its jurisdiction and powers in Oslo I. However, it centralized political power in the PA and its executive council, which lacked parliamentary and budgetary oversight, thus limiting the Palestinian political class to those willing to enforce the Oslo status quo of stagnation to maintain limited power.(23) The Executive Council’s complete autonomy over decision-making processes without oversight and limited public access to Council meetings moved the body away from the Accords’ original goal of establishing an easily dissolvable interim authority that could be held accountable for its efforts to work towards the popular desire for peace. This

misalignment between the PA's incentive structure and the goal of its dissolution came off as an obvious risk when considering the pre-existing conflict between Palestinian factions like Fatah and Hamas. Oslo II's decreased ambiguity would have been better used for defining some longer-term checks and balances on the executive branch rather than creating a single, central interim authority for the intended transition period.

Article XIII, dedicated to security, further separated the PA as described in Oslo II from the Accords' fundamental goal of a two-state solution. The separation of the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C inherently opposed Oslo I's desire for a united Palestinian state by providing differing levels of authority and freedom of movement for PA forces in the area. Furthermore, the creation of Joint District Coordination Offices (DCOs) under the Joint Security Committee required Palestinian policemen to provide intricate plans and gain approval from the Israeli side of the DCO to move through the West Bank properly.⁽²⁴⁾ Thus, it can be argued that an independent security authority would provide confidence in viable peace. The dependence upon Israeli support for adequate security structure in the PA's designated areas of the West Bank was present within the text of this Article. It was conducive to popular narratives from spoilers that the PA would be a security tool of Israel if cooperation were not implemented carefully. These arguments further evidenced how

the language of the Oslo Accords propagated power imbalances between the Palestinian general population and political class, as well as between the PA and Israel. Despite Western desires for progress in conflict resolution, Oslo I and II differ in clarity of language but share a poor outlook on long-term consequences. The lack of foresight in Oslo II was apparent in the simultaneous centralization of political power in the PA and its subsequent result in the administration's approval by Israel.

Implementation Process

This portion of the case study will be focused on detailing the implementation and rapid breakdown of the Oslo Accords. As suggested in the previous two sections, leadership on both sides was not ready to come to the negotiating table without final status issues being met. These sentiments were reflected following Oslo I's ratification in 1994. Israel expanded restrictions both on Palestinian movement and settlement activity shortly after ratification. During the 1994-2000 ratification and interim periods, settlement activity increased by roughly 58%.⁽²⁵⁾ Violent outbreaks from both sides and the transfer of power between pro-two-state solution Israeli administrations and administrations less amenable to talks, such as Rabin's Labor Party and Likud, stifled meaningful negotiations and implementation of the transfer of civil administration. Three of the transition period's crucial five years took place under Netanyahu's leadership. His decision to ignore securi-

ty advisors, as mentioned previously, and his broad definition of what the Accords considered a "military zone" delayed further withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian territories that were needed for a legitimate transfer of authority to the PA.⁽²⁶⁾

After the deadline for the end of the interim period expired in 1999, Barak openly declared his intention to increase negotiations. However, the Labor Party leader approved more settlements than his Likud predecessor.⁽²⁷⁾ As the trend of failed talks, such as the Taba Summit and Annapolis Conference, and violent episodes continued into the 2000s, the most meaningful attempt at implementing the Accords' principles was the 2005 PA presidential and 2006 legislative elections. Hamas' refusal to engage in peaceful negotiations and proper implementations of the Accords, exemplified by the Palestinian civil war, illustrated reluctance to accept Western influence and intended results. In 2009, the Executive Council indefinitely extended the presidential mandate of Mahmoud Abbas, a Fatah member and successor of Arafat.⁽²⁸⁾ Up until the breakout of the most recent conflict on October 7th, a split political system has defined Palestinian politics and the relationship with Israel, effectively marking a failure in the implementation of the Accords' goal of unifying the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The policies put forth by political leadership stalled progress in implementation areas like Israeli troop redeployment and democratic elec-

tions, which prevented the proper transfer of authority to Palestinians needed to facilitate negotiations on final status agreements.

Key Elements of Failure

This penultimate section will be geared towards examining the failure of the Oslo Accords to properly address the roles of religion, civil society, and the international community as parts of their peacebuilding process. One major element of the Oslo Accords' failure was the lack of recognition of the religio-cultural factors that underlie both societies. The final status issue regarding Jerusalem delayed settlement of the interim period. Additionally, the lack of acknowledgment of general religious concerns played a large role in its implementation. Access to holy sites such as the Temple Mount was a key negotiating piece for both parties, so the failure of the Accords to address these concerns outside of final status issues paved the way for the exclusion of religion from the peacebuilding process. The increased use of armed resistance by Hamas since 1993, as well as popular media in the West, implanted the common narrative that Islam was inherently violent into the Oslo Process, resulting in the lack of roles for religious conceptions of peace and faith leaders in the Accord's language.⁽²⁹⁾ In the Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding, Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana refers to ontological violence as "denying legitimacy to alternative worldviews, epistemologies, and practices." This silencing of alternate conceptions

arguably fits the exclusion of Palestinian religious leaders and, more generally, non-PA members, from the peacebuilding process.⁽³⁰⁾ Despite the Accords' failure to address the role of religious or traditional factors, common misconceptions about religion and peacebuilding have been refuted in similarly divided societies. For example, the Muslim-Christian Interfaith Mediation Center in Nigeria's religiously divided Kaduna region utilized religious concepts of peace in their reconciliation efforts.⁽³¹⁾ Considering these failures in the Accords and lessons from similar stories is crucial to increasing the chances of diplomatic dialogue between Israel and Palestine in the future.

The centralized power and incentive structure of the PA caused Fatah to view the sharing of authority with civil society as a threat to the limited authority granted to it by the Accords. Popular mobilization outside of Hamas and PA lines in Gaza and the West Bank resulted in harsh crackdowns from both groups and Israeli Security Forces in the West Bank. This ranged from throwing thousands of politically active students in jail, including the president of the student council of Birzeit University, to committing violence against an individual after monitoring their social media or internet activity.⁽³²⁾⁽³³⁾ The lack of oversight assigned over the PA's executive branch in Oslo II allowed for the situation to unfold. The PA's continuation past the interim period with steady dominance over Palestinian Politics in the West Bank

and the 2007 split with Hamas created a distinct lack of opportunities for robust political discussion and ideological pluralism. Both of which will be required to overcome the existing Oslo status quo of PA and Hamas division. The lack of youth opportunities for political involvement outside of traditional parties was particularly notable. A Gallup poll reported a lack of faith in a two-state solution and support for armed resistance was highest in the demographic of fifteen to twenty-nine years old who grew up under the Accords.⁽³⁴⁾

The role of the international community, namely the United States as the Accords' primary mediator, has been lightly touched upon up to this point. Unlike the other areas of this section the issue was not failing to incorporate the international community; rather, it was how the international community was incorporated. Signatures by the permanent representatives of two UN Security Council Members, the U.S. and Russia, provided international legitimacy to the process. Still, the Accords did not provide the mechanisms to sustain their support. The critical issue was the lack of staying power for international actors that severely limited the international community's role to that of donors. The Accords should have made clear pathways for international actors like the U.S. and Saudi Arabia to provide resources beyond funding, including experts in relevant fields, security assistance to the PA during the transition, and a variety of other roles over the tran-

sition period. The push for Fatah to overthrow Hamas in 2006 from the West is important to note when considering the heavy influence the international community played on the Accords' implementation.(35) However, those attempts at exerting influence outside of the Oslo structure demonstrate the necessity of learning from failures to plan a consequential role for the international community beyond mediation and providing initial legitimacy in future peace processes.

Conclusion

The Oslo Accords offered an initial promise for peace between Israel and Palestine, but the implementation architecture and process' prioritization of short-term progress and centralized power structure, as well as the Accords' poor consider-

ation of religion, civil society, and the international community's role, stifled the popular desire for peace. The failures can largely be attributed to the Accords' weak implementation architecture, stagnated implementation process, and neglected key sociopolitical factors such as the role of religion, civil society, and the international community. The lack of clarity, tangible end goals, and oversight measures in the Accords led to a scarcity of incentives for either party to work toward peace, resulting in authoritarian politics in Palestine and abuse of power imbalances by Israel. Oslo II's centralization of power within the PA fell short of overcoming the failures of its predecessor through the creation of another negative incentive structure to maintain power in Palestinian poli-

tics. The results were a violation of the Accords' goal of an independent Palestinian state and peace. Additionally, the Oslo Accords' inability to address religio-cultural factors like religion and civilian society, as well as the improper attention given to the international community, underscored the importance of specific language in regard to implementation mechanisms in peacebuilding. More broadly, the sum of the lessons learned from the Oslo Accords highlights the significance of clear, comprehensive agreements that acknowledge the cultural nuances and opinions of the societies for which they are meant, despite preferences from Security Council Members and donor nations.

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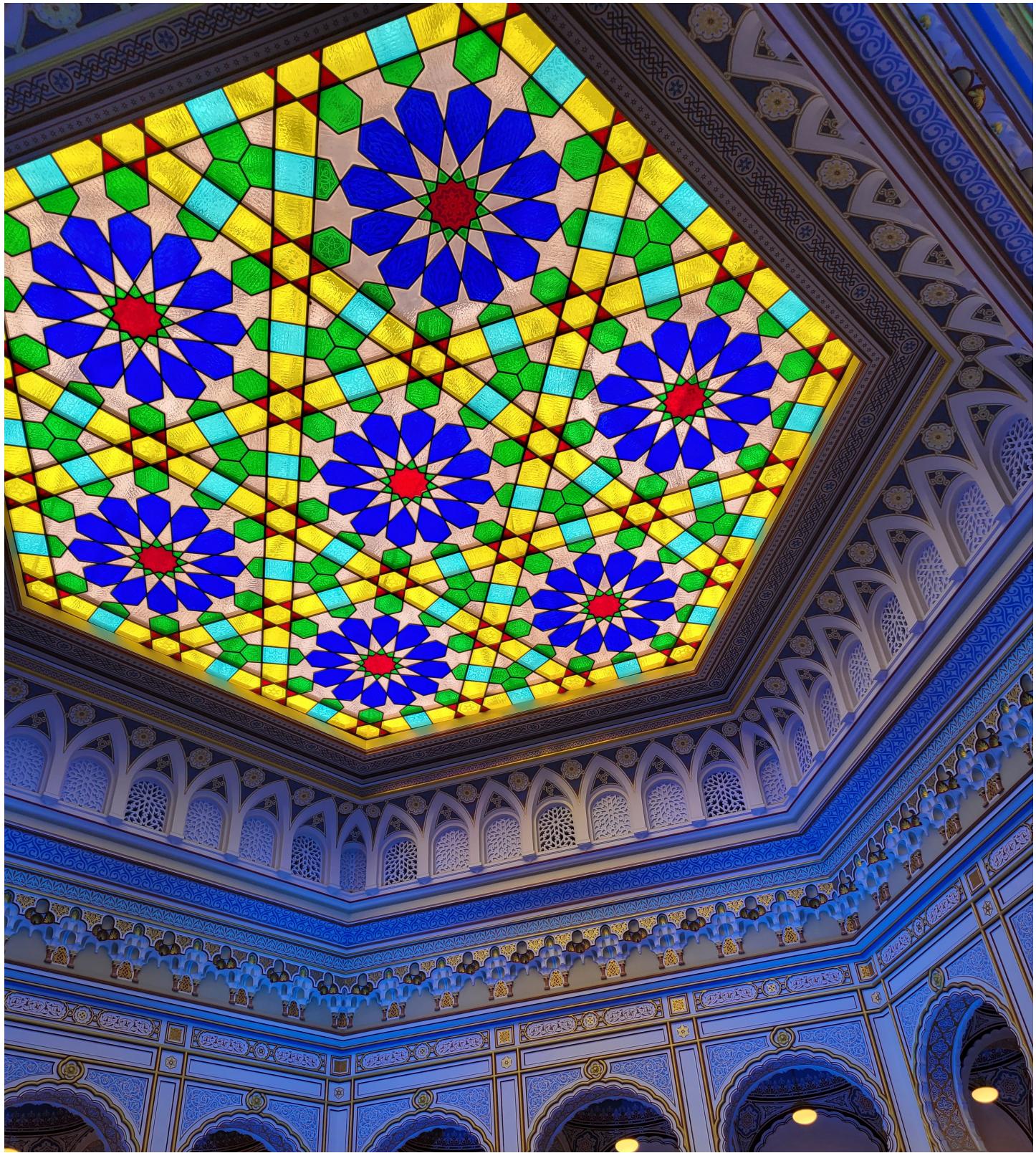
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(Bottom left) photo by Daniela Paris.

The hills of Sarajevo on a hot June day in 2024. Many reside on the outskirts of the city, where the roads are steep and the streets are lined with nature.



The town hall of Sarajevo, while being a modern building, has a beautiful glass window ceiling that is reminiscent of the mix of cultures native to the region. Photo taken by Daniela Paris in summer 2024.

Agenda 2063: The Enforcement of Soft Law

Corey Reichert

Corey Reichert was raised in North Carolina and attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to pursue a bachelor's degree in political science and PWAD. During his first year at UNC-CH, he authored the following essay, 'Agenda 2063: The Enforcement of Soft Law', for AAAD316: Public Policy in Africa, which discusses the failures of the agenda in its implementation and the need for reform so that the document may enforce the Africa that its inhabitants want. This would follow the course's agenda of examining multiple case studies of African-led policies and the future of their impacts. Professor Eunice Sahle teaches AAAD 316.

The future of the African continent and its subsequent rise is in the fate of a singular plan. That plan is the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. The project is packed with multiple initiatives to allow the African continent to blossom into a unified geopolitical superpower. Some projects are as ambitious as the "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020" plan, which calls for ending conflict on the continent by 2020. However, seeing that 2020 has already passed and the African continent is still rife with conflict, it is apparent that the agenda altogether is gradually failing. While its current role as a soft law initiator is doing tremendous work, this limit allows remarkably central pursuits and objectives not to be implemented. All hope is not lost, as there have been numerous cases in which soft law instruments have developed into thoroughly enforced hard law. By using prior examples and changes within the system of the African Union's main organizations, such as the Pan-African Parliament, Agenda 2063 could potentially rise into the document that can develop Af-

rica into the future.

Introduction

The modern world is one dominated by global powers and geopolitical influence. The most famous example of this trend is the ongoing conflict of influence between a rising Chinese dragon and an established American eagle, both of which wish to hold the title of world hegemon. Though, as with most things, this world is not bipolar. According to the "World Population Review," the current superpowers on Earth are the United States, China, the European Union, India, and Russia.¹ While these are all undisputed major players on the global stage, the lack of inclusion of an African state is notable. Furthermore, it lacks the inclusion of the African Union even though it is an influential actor on the global stage, and another body, the European Union, is included while representing an entire continent. This relegation of Africa to an uninvolved participant on the global stage and as only a battleground of influence leaves it in its colonial-era position. This arrangement is one the African

Union wishes to break with its implementation of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. The agenda is a blueprint that will establish Pan-African unity across the continent and allow for the combined influence of the continent to make the continent a global superpower, similar to that of the European Union. This goal is shown within the African Union's description of the document as "Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into [a] global powerhouse."² The African Union also notes that the agenda represents "its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and...a concrete manifestation of the Pan-African drive for unity."³ This document will provide hope that the future of the African continent will be peaceful and prosperous. However, this hope relies on implementation. The lack of institutional power within African Union organizations has been on display as multiple instrumental program deadlines have already passed. Most notable is the 'Silencing the Guns by 2020' which was a program to help make Africa a conflict-free area but has now been "working

towards a better definition of what ‘silencing the guns’ means in the context of the Agenda 2063 goals and specific milestones that should be achieved between now and 2030”.⁴ Agenda 2063, titled “The Africa We Want,” is a landmark blueprint for transforming the continent into a global player. The document is a champion of soft law and is one of “the core documents of present-day and future African regional integration.”⁵ However, its relegation to this role as a soft law instrument has left it vulnerable to failure due to converging national interests, underwhelming participation, overreliance on international norms, and lack of institutional development.

Description of Agenda 2063

Before proceeding with the argument, it is necessary to define and understand the inner workings and programs of Agenda 2063. The implementation of the agenda comes in ten-year waves, with the first planned implementation lasting from 2013-2023. Though there are multiple implementation plans, the current one is most relevant as its purpose is to set a precedent for future ten-year plans and identify the agenda’s shortcomings. This importance is demonstrated by the fact that “the African Peer Review Mechanism has been given a wider role …with monitoring and evaluation role for the AU Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda 2030,” and that one of the plan’s purposes is to “Identify priority areas, set specific targets, define strategies and policy measures required to implement the FTYIP.”⁶⁷ The enactment of measures that allow the agenda to be more fluid in

implementation will help with the potential defects currently plaguing the plan’s execution. Additionally, shortcomings within previous plans can become the focus of forthcoming plans, thus making certain no aspiration falls behind. The primary goals that direct Agenda 2063 are its seven different aspirations for the continent and the sub-goals that follow those aspirations. These aspirations are sustainable development, an integrated continent based on Pan-Africanism, good governance, peace and safety, common values, equality, and empowerment of all spheres of life, and an influential Africa on the global stage.⁸ These aspirations are fundamental in origin as values and goals that are wanted worldwide. This desire is shown by the fact that the African Union overlays the goals present within Agenda 2063 with those in the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, revealing how they overlap.⁹¹⁰ This overlap of global and continental obligations, as all 193 countries did sign the SDGs, should benefit the African Union as it shows both the world and Africa that the Union’s leaders are dedicated to similar goals and the general development of humanity.¹¹ However, there has been a significant deficiency in action when looking at the progress made towards achieving these goals. Not a single key project of Agenda 2063 has been completed, though some have had more development, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area. The project is about destroying the trade barriers currently separating the continent and allowing for the increase of inter-continental trade.¹² This project, in particular, has had one

of the best ratification rates out of all of the other flagship projects, as “54 AU Member States have signed the AfCFTA Agreement, [and] 42 Member States have ratified it.”¹³ This by itself is a monumental movement towards the continent’s economic integration. The progress made and political motivation is a benchmark for what Agenda 2063 can do if properly executed. However, the rest of the ‘Second Continental Report on The Implementation of Agenda 2063’ does not show the same enthusiasm or progress of implementation. Flagship projects such as the AfCFTA agreement require little capital investment and political motivation but, in return, yield economic connection and thus have been much more successful in their ratification. However, other programs may infringe more on the sovereignty of a state and therefore “have registered slow progress.”¹⁴ One notable project that failed to meet its deadline was Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. This project, while having made some progress on funding with the AU Peace Fund, gaining 77% of the required contributions, has failed to end all conflicts within Africa, and fourteen still ravage the continent.¹⁵¹⁶ This failure is not without notice. As stated before, the APRM, the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), and the African Multidimensional Regional Integration Index (AMRII) are all used to monitor the progress of the flagship projects.¹⁷ The PAP, in particular, can draft and advise towards future implementation of the agenda.¹⁸ With all of these administrative appointments for Agenda 2063, the true problem of initiative and enforcement is demonstrated. The

agenda's relegation to essentially a guideline for the future will always leave it to the responsibility of those who want to see change on the continent. However, they can only do so much for an initiative that requires numerous government bodies to act. If other nations don't ratify or finance the projects that the Agenda 2063 outlines (and most of them have not), then the impacts of the aspirations will be meager at best. Thus, one of the critical issues with Agenda 2063 is its relegation to nothing more than an outline, rather than something that all African nations are obligated to achieve.

Transformation from Soft Law Towards Hard Law Through Norm Creation

This obligation could be from Agenda 2063's potential transformation from a soft law instrument to one with the authority to enforce its initiatives across national lines as a hard law. This transition would be overambitious, though it would match the overambitious nature of Agenda 2063. The difference between a hard law and a soft law is that of enforcement. Soft law involves "Co-operation based on instruments that are not legally binding, or whose binding force is somewhat "weaker" than that of traditional law."¹⁹ Though soft law and hard law can be multiple different things, they must influence the implementation of policy creation in either binding or non-binding ways. The transition can also be remarkably fluid, unlike the conflict and debate that might arise when trying to make something non-binding into something binding. The previously mentioned ratification of AfCFTA shows

one form of soft law transition. That transition is norm creation, where the influence of Agenda 2063 allowed for the transition of the AfCFTA from simply part of a blueprint to a binding agreement enforced by every state that ratified it. The AfCFTA will not only help with trade but also regional integration, illustrated by its primary goals, which state, "By removing tariffs...member states intend to... facilitate intra-African trade [and] promote regional value chains to foster the integration of the African continent."²⁰ If the AfCFTA succeeds, then it does have the potential to influence African actors to implement further flagship projects due to policymakers hoping to replicate the success that comes with further African integration. However, speed and implementation are the main problems with this form of law transition. The AfCFTA only advanced as fast as it did because of the "net gains overall" even though "there will be winners and losers"²¹ and because of the economic uncertainty that comes with trade agreements. Usually, the impacts can only be hypothesized and realized upon completion. With this, it is in nearly every nation's vested interest to be part of the agreement as it is the world's largest trade agreement with fifty-four nations and 1.3 billion people, even if it is a gamble.²² Thus, access to a market of this scale would be beneficial in some way to any nation taking part in it. However, take away the obvious benefits and the existing precedent of trade agreements within Africa with the multiple economic blocs present on the continent, and the speed demonstrated in this initiative would have been just as stalled

by political convolution as the rest of the flagship initiatives.²³ Thus, norm creation wouldn't be the most efficient form of policy creation for the agenda, mainly because there are specific deadlines and goals that each initiative is supposed to hit. While it can be effective at times, its need for willing participants does not coincide with the fact that it would require multiple African leaders, whose views will be more selfish towards the immediate prosperity of their nation than that of the entire continent, to agree on the same details for hundreds of projects within ten years periods.

The Transition from Soft Law to Hard Law through International Measures

International influence on the African continent is no surprise. From direct control by colonialism to the neo-colonialist agenda present within neo-liberalism, there has been and will always be an outside influence on the continent. However, the influence can be one for good and not for greed. This fact was mentioned through international measures, such as the SDGs, that help obligate African governments to conform to the aspirations of Agenda 2063. A more prominent example of a shift of international soft law into a hard law within the African Union would be that of Article 4(h) and the Constitutive Act of the African Union. This article provides the African Union the right to "intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity."²⁴ While this right gives the African Union incredible power to protect prin-

ples of human rights through intervention, the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan originally constructed the right rather than the African Union. His annual report calls for “a real and sustained commitment to help end their cycles of violence and launch them on a safe passage to prosperity.”²⁵ This isn’t a direct guideline for any future implementation, but simply a call to action towards future and ongoing atrocities that were occurring worldwide. International actors, such as Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien would answer this call to arms by helping to create reports such as the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.²⁶ These soft laws would coagulate into the modern Responsibility to Protect doctrine (R2P), which formed a guideline for intervention in future atrocities.²⁷ This doctrine is still a soft law mechanism as no nation within the UN has to follow it or abide by it by any means. It’s simply a guide in case of future atrocities. However, on the African continent, that would change. By some bizarre chance, the early 2000s also saw a period of change as the Organisation of African Unity transformed into the African Union.²⁸ Any institutional changes leave an opportunity to implement new ideas, which happened to be the R2P doctrine. This change would be especially critical for Africa as it just suffered through the Rwandan Genocide and the ongoing Congo Wars. It had lived and was continuing to live through the failures of the UN’s inability to enforce the soft law, which was R2P. Thus, it only made sense for Africa to enforce it. This enforcement came with the

previously mentioned Article 4(h). This process of an international figure influencing the creation of a doctrine for a global organization used to empower the African continent through the hard law of its constitution is nothing less than an incredible example of how soft law can translate to concrete effect. However, this outcome is not all admissible. The main problem that stems from having international influence create such momentous laws is the relegation of those laws to follow soft law. The problem came in the form of the Pretoria Principles. The Pretoria Principles was a conference of policymakers and academics set to enhance the African Union’s role in article 4(h) as it had never used it before.²⁹ Lack of legitimacy plagued the conference due to the lack of authority on the matter, and lack of public participation forced it to seek other means of legitimacy.³⁰ The Pretoria Principles was coherent with other forms of a doctrine similar to Article 4(h), which is the R2P doctrine. Coherence is the method in which legitimacy is built by previous documentation, especially previous hard law implementation, to help set a precedent and build legitimacy for future uses.³¹ Thus, to gain legitimacy, the Pretoria Principles stated, “the AU requires the authorization of the UN Security Council for article 4(h) intervention” and that ‘the UN Security Council has the responsibility to authorize the use of force in the implementation of article 4(h) intervention.’³² The requirement of UN Security Council authorization diminished the power previously exclusively held by the AU. Thus, in a bid to overlap the article with international

norms, it eradicated the element of African agency, which was initially championed in Article 4(h). While international influence is valuable and can help boost the development of norms and laws, like R2P, it can be used against the wishes of the African Union. This arrangement would be unacceptable for something as pivotal as Agenda 2063. This blueprint is for “The Africa We Want,” not the Africa the world wants.³³

Institutional Transition from Soft to Hard Law

Previous sections have delved into individual cases of soft law transition into hard law, though this is fitting toward the truth of its transition. Without true institutional organisms or radical change, as seen with Article 4(h), soft law will only become enforced when conditions permit it to. While this can still lead to change and further integration towards Pan-Africanism, it achieves it at a much slower rate than necessary for the strict deadlines of Agenda 2063. Thus, this requires institutional changes to help with pursuing the soft-law planning of Agenda 2063 into hard-law implementation while meeting the strict deadlines of the various aspirations and flagship projects. The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) has the potential to fill this role due to its existing administrative deficits and current role as a monitor of Agenda 2063. The deficits are shown with the PAP never passing a single law and “the combination of its deliberative and recommendation power and significantly the power to propose model laws that give PAP its quasi-legislative role, as such model laws constitute a soft-law instrument of the AU.”³⁴³⁵ How-

ever, before giving authority to any organization, it is necessary to see if it has the legitimacy to accept it. The PAP excels in one form of legitimacy, which is democratic participation. Including non-state actors and state actors allows more people to believe and work in the system, creating trust in its operations.³⁶

This trust gives the PAP legitimacy as embodying the purpose of the parliament, as laid out by Article 17(1) of the Constitutive Act, which states, “The Parliament is intended as a platform for people from all African states to be involved in discussions and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing the continent.”³⁷ Thus, enshrined within the document that birthed the parliament is the motive for its use to be universal around the continent and for the furtherment of Pan-Africanism pursuits, which not only give the parliament its name but also align it with issues such as Agenda 2063. However, the depth of legitimacy does not end with participation but also needs coherence. As previously mentioned, coherence builds legitimacy based on the precedent of previous legislation.³⁸ This precedent of legitimacy for expanded powers comes in the form of the African Union stating, “The ultimate aim is for the Parliament to be an institution with full legislative powers, whose members are elected by universal suffrage.”³⁹ The PAP’s cohesive purpose was to be a legislative body that gained its direct legitimacy from the fact that it served all Africans with the ideals

of Pan-Africanism, which guided this continental-wide organization. That purpose, whenever its hour arrives, will lead to the necessary developments to allow the organization to enhance the role of Agenda 2063’s soft-law brilliance into implementation by the African people.

Conclusion

Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want is truly for the Africa of its inhabitants, shown rigorously through the process of designing the document, as “a plethora of stakeholders including civil society groups, women, children, private sector, think tanks, Africans in the diaspora, and the regional economic communities (RECs) were involved and consulted during the development of the Agenda 2063.”⁴⁰ An organization with the same values must assist it in its Pan-African implementation. That organization body would, of course, be the Pan-African Parliament. The institutional deficits that already plague the legislative assembly and lead to it being called “toothless” can be fixed in this bid also to save the enormous potential of Agenda 2063⁴¹. Without this change, the agenda will be another documentation that attempts to guide Africa into the light of a more promising tomorrow. Yet, the process of sharpening the teeth of the parliament will take some time. The European Parliament (EP), for which the PAP is quite similar in goal and supranational coverage, took around twenty-nine years to

gain significant powers.⁴² The EU powers came through multiple treaties, such as the Maastricht Treaty and the Amsterdam Treaty, which mimic the current progress of administrative development that the PAP is going through. The 2014 PAP Protocol, which gave the PAP the power to “draft model laws to the Assembly,” is an example of this development.⁴³ Thus, with similar purposes on similar paths, the EP can act as a roadmap for the PAP in its journey to reach its destiny as an institution with complete legislative powers. As previously mentioned, this will take time, but actions of African state leaders could impede the process. While the developmental potential does have the opportunity to help quell continental disputes that could impact sustainable development, such as the dispute over the Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia, this would also mean the relegation of power away from heads of state who reside in the AU’s Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which currently hold the true power of the AU. The hindrance that follows would delay the agenda further and potentially perpetually. Nonetheless, the enrichment of the PAP is the only way to ensure the survival and continual success of Agenda 2063 while keeping it in control of African actors. The legitimacy is present, the backing of the people is present, and the precedent of former parliaments is present. All that is left is for African actors to empower themselves to make Africa the place they want.

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The view from Cavehill in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Taken by Elsa Mitchell, June 2023.

Firebombing of Dresden: Justified or Irrational?

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The historic city of Dresden, Germany, during the Second World War, was one of the most unlikely locations for strategic targeting in the eyes of the public. At the time, Dresden was home to over 600,000 individuals and was a European melting pot of cultures, art, and architecture. Dresden remained unscathed primarily in terms of bombardment up until mid-February 1945. On the night of the firebombing attack, the city housed over 700,000 additional individuals to amass upwards of 1.2 million people in total.¹ A combination of explosive and incendiary weapons forced the city's casualties to soar throughout two long nights. Death, destruction, and terror rocked the foundations of the historical German city, and dread exuded from its remaining inhabitants.

With the Germans seemingly in a chokehold—lacking allies and the resources to carry on the fight—why would the RAF and United States Air Corps continue high-magnitude bombing campaigns? Further, were the firebombings of mid-February justified, or were they an unethical attack that

could have been replaced with a less harmful alternative? Frederick Taylor, a prominent scholar of Germany during the Second World War, supports the fact that the firebombings were a legitimate action, while others like A.C. Grayling, a long-time professor of history in London, argue that such an event was an avoidable atrocity. Both of these individuals have had illustrious and long careers in research of World War II, economics, and strategic action, therefore their insight, though opposing each other, provides solid ground for discussion. This essay will weigh in on both sides of this debate and discuss the opinions of various scholars as they take on the Allied firebombings of Dresden in 1945.

The first argument presents the idea that Dresden was seen as one of the last German holdings that impeded Nazi surrender, so attacking it in such a manner was justified. Dresden was one of the largest and, therefore most industrially prominent cities in Germany, posing a prime target. The abundant railway lines and communication centers would also

be a valuable target. The Red Army coming from the east also required assistance, which the RAF and US Air Corps provided, for a smoother entrance into other German cities in the region. These core defenses further the argument that the attacks on Dresden were justified.

Dresden by Frederick Taylor suggests that the city was one of the last standing industrial centers in Germany and that it had been one of the most extensive military armament and war-related production sites since 1939.² Taylor included that, since 1944, interest in Dresden increased as Germans sought to transport manufacturing sites to areas that were not subject to current. Before 1944, Dresden was not seen as a military threat. However, these changes shifted its perception to a manufacturing stronghold. Dresden was far from its western neighbors Leipzig and Chemnitz in terms of tank and aircraft production, but it soon garnered enough attention to warrant enemy targeting.³ The subsequent bombings attempted to create chaos and subsequently slow down the manufacturing role that Dresden

had adopted. In this sense, Dresden states that the city was a legitimate target.⁴

Taylor further argues that railway lines and transportation capabilities based in Dresden presented a problem for the Allies as they focused on accelerating the conclusion of the war through area bombardment. The railways and routes in Dresden and its surrounding areas were too quickly repairable, and the complete paralyzation of the German movement of goods, arms, and equipment in the region was nearly impossible ahead of the firebombing.⁵ When the Allies hit their targets, communication systems, and railways struggled to continue at their previous pace. Taylor specifically recounts the destruction of barracks, military hospitals, and other targets along the way, highlighting the destruction of the “administrative apparatus of the railways” and the vital “north-south line connecting the Neustadt station and Hauptbahnhof.”⁶ He suggests that the death and chaos that followed the bombardment was collateral damage that made the hopes of a continued war effort even less likely.⁷ Though these areas were not the only targets, the fact that Dresden was one of the last footholds for such infrastructure made this a justified success for the Allies.

Frederick Taylor’s final point discusses the role of the British and the Americans in assisting the Red Army’s advance into Germany. The Soviets had been drawing closer to Dresden after weeks of travel, causing many Germans to flee to Dresden and other surrounding areas.⁸ Discussions in January of 1945 and the

Yalta Conference in early February weighed in on how the Allies could support the Soviets in achieving a ground counter-offensive in East Germany. The most apparent support appeared to be aerial bombardment. Berlin, Dresden, and Chemnitz were the cities that stood out as targets, but Dresden began to stand out as the war continued. These cities acted as military centers that controlled and communicated the traffic of civilians and military forces, therefore the attack of those locations could limit German reinforcements to defend against a Soviet entrance.⁹ Operation “Thunderclap,” which had been drawn up by the Allies earlier, was seen as a solid option, but as Taylor discusses, a massive strategic bombing campaign on individual big cities would prove to outweigh its effectiveness.¹⁰ This campaign would become the favored method amongst all Allied parties to limit German reinforcements and contribute to the war effort.

To conclude, the view of the firebombing of Dresden being essential to ending the war faster is mainly supported by Dresden being one of the last manufacturing, communication, and railway hubs in Germany, along with the increasing pressure of the Red Army in the east. By no means did Frederick Taylor believe that the bombings of Dresden were necessary to end the war outright, but he entertains that those two nights in February helped advance the overall goals of the Allies. Taylor also does not deny the loss of life and the tragic destruction that destroyed the once astonishing city. But he refers to those circumstances as damages and outcomes of “total war.” Taylor

often turns to the thought that war planners and leaders were intelligent individuals who knew the repercussions of area bombing, but they also had their morals, states, and citizens to uphold. Some things are inevitable when trying to hasten the end of the conflict as a whole. Whether the firebombing of Dresden was a success or not in regards to stripping the will of the German war effort or making the Germans quickly submit, Taylor stands by the fact that it was a just action in terms of total warfare and the scenario presented in 1945.

On the other side of the argument, the antithesis stands for those who believe that the firebombings of Dresden cannot be justified in a military or moral sense. The clear and unavoidable civilian presence in Dresden due to mass immigration and refugees presented another targeting controversy that was reminiscent of other “war crimes” of the time. Uncertainty amongst Allied military leaders and strategic war planners also created issues as to whether the decision was just or if there were other options- many questioned the efficacy of the bombing method and were wary of the German response. Others argue that the war would have been over soon enough thanks to the growing Soviet and Allied presence, the German’s lack of resources, and recent military losses; therefore, what purpose did the bombing serve? These principles are the basis of what many use to prove that the firebombings of Dresden were unjust on multiple levels and should be openly debated.

In his book *Among the Dead Cities, Is the Targeting of*

Civilians in War Ever Justified, A.C. Grayling argues that the defenseless population in Dresden during the bombardments was so prominent that the number of civilians in the city alone should have forced the Allies to turn to alternative options. One of the first points that Grayling defends was that not only did the Allies know that refugees were funneling into Dresden and nearby towns, but they did not acknowledge the humanitarian issue of bombing a city that had recently boasted over 700,000 more innocents than usual.¹¹ Grayling also mentions that while the Allies supported the advance of the Red Army, they also wanted to “prove a point” to the Soviets by displaying the West’s capabilities, hence the strategic bombing campaign of this magnitude.¹² A combination of knowing the situation at hand in Dresden, as intelligence in the area was quite accurate, and knowing the position of the Soviets in pushing refugees into eastern cities, Grayling argues that the Allies should have known better morally than to “viciously” bomb such a densely populated city. Grayling finally touches on the horrors the Germans faced as tens of thousands burned to death, had nowhere to escape, faced asphyxiation, and dealt with a long list of humanitarian crises that raged across the extremely overpopulated city.¹³

The second point that Grayling made against the bombing of Dresden was the regret and moral incoherence of the Allied leaders, especially the British and Churchill. Grayling provides information on the different approaches to bombing that Arthur Harris and Charles Portal, both massive

RAF figureheads in World War II, maintained in the later stages of the war and how they weighed the options of strategic and tactical missions. Harris, who was the acting Commander-In-Chief of the Bomber Command in Britain in 1945, ignored Portal’s worries about targeting cities rather than oil fields and ultimately gave Downing Street a list of German cities to attack.¹⁴ Portal, as the highest-ranking officer in the Royal Air Force, was not alone in questioning the bombing of German cities, as Prime Minister Winston Churchill, too, had doubts about the potential success of bombing Dresden and other locations. Grayling adds that before the campaign began, Churchill and other officers worried about the effectiveness of the future bombing and whether the historic city would react according to their predictions.¹⁵ Even after the bombing, Grayling suggests that Churchill struggled internally with his choice of Dresden and other cities because of concerns about the state of the postwar world with Soviet involvement in the East, along with reconciling and rebuilding such a cultural spectacle as Dresden had been before the war.¹⁶

Drawing on the two arguments discussed above, the final point that Grayling makes is a question: What was the true purpose of the Allied bombing of Dresden? In searching for the answer to this question, Grayling once again explores the point that the Allies were trying to prove to the Red Army as their bombing capabilities were being put to the test. In doing so, the Allies hoped that their bombing showcase would intimidate the Soviets and prevent them from

expanding their influence further eastward, which ultimately failed. He also mentions that the Allies may have had additional ulterior motives, such as hindering the German state and morale to the extent that they would never ignite such a bloody international conflict again.¹⁷ Grayling even raises the idea that the Allies sought ways to maintain a “good image” because they were remorseful in the final moments of the war, which is why they abandoned strategic campaigns in continental Europe.¹⁸ In presenting these points, Grayling suggests that the Allies began to shift their trajectory when it came to goals and focused on how they could benefit, rather than ending the war as soon as possible.¹⁹ This supports Grayling’s argument that the bombing of Dresden was also unjustified in a military sense either, as the Allies were not internally in agreement with what the purpose of Dresden served as a strategic target.

A.C. Grayling presented several ideas that debunk the argument that the firebombing of Dresden was a justifiable decision ethically and militarily. The killing of tens of thousands of civilians would have been inevitable, and Grayling says the Allies knew this but proceeded nonetheless. Indecision and regret also made matters worse as leadership debated whether the bombing was even the path to a swift victory. Finally, the paradigm shift as the war reached its climax presented an unethical approach to decision-making to begin with, as the motivation towards the bombing of Dresden became clouded by visions of a postwar world and Soviet dilemmas.

In the first thesis, Frederick Taylor based his stance on facts about the German state, the strategy and tactics of warfare, and statistics that inform the reader about targets, casualties, and other damages. Taylor's evidence presents an excellent support system behind his belief that the firebombing of Dresden was justified, especially in a military sense. For example, Taylor mentions the significance of cutting off railways or communication lines based on the cities that housed this type of infrastructure at their core. Taylor does well to note the statistics of the "collateral damages" resulting from the bombings of Dresden and highlight the fact that death and destruction will always be an effect of any kind of strategic or operational campaign. Further evidence deriving from German and Allied officers, agencies, and leaders, accompanied by military ideology, doctrine, and known tendencies on both sides of the conflict allowed Taylor to assemble a concise thesis overall. Simultaneously, there were moments when Taylor's argument was clouded by straight military-based theory and not enough ethical discussion, but even his discussion of strategy had small pockets of ambiguity. One example is seen when Taylor referred to the Dresden area bombings as the best and most effective alternative for tactical bombing despite the heavy non-military losses, but the discussion of whether strategic bombing would have such a strong effect in the complete absence of continued (though at a smaller scale) tactical air coordination is not cited.

In the second thesis, A.C. Grayling balanced his evidence to support both his military and

ethical philosophy toward the fire-bombings of Dresden. Similarly to Taylor, Grayling used sources from the front lines such as intelligence reports, but Grayling also mixed in a lot more information from the command and the leaders themselves. This proved very valuable, as Grayling used up-close and discussion-based material, accompanied by well-established national doctrine and historical evidence, to prove many of his points. For example, Grayling used quotations from generals and commanders to allow the reader to have an intimate view of what was being discussed in war conferences, war planning departments, or even media rooms. Using evidence in this way allowed the actions taken on February 13-14 to make more or less sense as formulated, while also giving Grayling a basis to show that he disagreed with the bombings, and other people did too. Grayling's evidence did not appear to be quite as contradictory toward his argument as Frederick Taylor's evidence, but Grayling had a couple of gray areas. There were a few moments when Grayling appeared to be too heavy on the presentation of pro-Dresden rhetoric, which could confuse one into thinking he was arguing in favor of the bombing; however, this was not detrimental to his overall argument.

Frederick Taylor presents a solid argument that is easy to follow. Combined with solid evidence, his discussion about industry in the Dresden area proved to be a defensible point. It is hard to deny the presence of manufacturing in Dresden in the final year of the war, as Taylor mentions industry moved based on previously tar-

geted locations, so why wouldn't the Allies shoot for this particular location? Chasing the industrial locations supplying weapons, planes, and other equipment is a part of the game of war. Still, could tactical missions or more interdiction have solved this issue better than bombing Dresden? Taylor's discussion about railways and communication centers in Dresden and its surrounding areas was a strong supporting detail for justifying the bombing. Similar to the topic of manufacturing and industrial regions in Dresden, these railways and communication centers were prime targets for enemy bombers, as this was a normal facet of war through the air. Once again, could tactical bombing and operational campaigns have cut this off more efficiently than bombing a densely populated city? Finally, Taylor's argument about the Red Army and the Allies' obligation to assist them with entry through the East was possibly the least logical of his three big points, as it could be questioned to some degree. Were the Allies truly obligated to assist the Soviet entrance into the East? It seemed as though the Red Army was doing a decent job of a counter-offensive to that point, so why was speeding things up through area bombing such an obligation? The logic behind this idea of the Red Army requesting assistance makes sense, but to what degree did they need it? At the surface, Taylor's logic is solid, but it does provoke a few questions as to what options the Allies had, but it is easy to dissect the argument he defends.

A.C. Grayling and his thesis against the firebombing of Dresden is faintly more concise and put to-

gether logically. The intelligence the Allies gathered regarding the mass immigration and refugee presence atop the normal 600,000 inhabitants is difficult to deny. Therefore, Grayling is fair to question attacking that city in particular. Knowing not just the typical population, but the new strong presence of life creates a terrible humanitarian dilemma that presents moral questions. The uncertainty of leaders and war planners is also an interesting thing to highlight, as it created a massive amount of difficulty when the decision-making process ensued. To add, if such a renowned figure such as Churchill began to have second thoughts during the process, and regret following the event, no matter the situation, there is a serious ethical issue at hand. This also shows that there had to have been other viable options, otherwise, why would the Allies choose to make such a disastrous decision unless they had other motives, as Grayling says they did? This is a deep and logical loophole to fall under, but logic having a gray area is inevitable. Was speeding toward the end of the war more important than invoking such destruction? Would the losses on the ground during the Soviet and the Allied push into Germany have outweighed the casualties of the bombing of Dresden? Questioning some of the underlying purposes behind the firebombing of Dresden was a great way to look at whether the event was even warranted from a militaristic stance, let alone a moral viewpoint. The Allies showing off capabilities or even looking forward to the post-war world, especially involving the Soviets, in the east is not an outlandish thought.

Why wouldn't these ideas cross the Allies' minds? The world was still a competition despite changes in alliances. The only concern with the logic behind this argument is whether this change in focus justifies the bombing or not, which Grayling believes it doesn't because the war was no longer in mind, thus, future politics became the motivation.

Frederick Taylor and his general view that the firebombing of Dresden was justified might be seen as a controversial opinion, but his thesis proved to have been defensible. Industry and manufacturing hotspots in Germany were targeted quite often, and so were railway and communicative centers. The Soviets put the Allies in a sticky situation, which resulted in assistance being sent to the Red Army in the east, agreements had to be made. A.C. Grayling, in opposition to the firebombings of Dresden in 1945, sits in the moral position that aligns with weighing options. Dresden had long been filled with outsiders and hundreds of thousands of inhabitants within its walls. Leaders and military shot-callers debated the situation and whether it was even worth giving the campaign a shot, some even had instant regret. Lack of confidence and certainty of the bombing leading to the ultimate goal begged questions. The fabric of the ultimate goal itself and the ever-changing motivations of the strategic campaign begged even more questions.

Drawing from both theses, it can be concluded that A.C. Grayling's argument against the justification of the firebombings of Dresden was stronger based on good evidence and very good logic.

The side of the debate that Frederick Taylor presents, justifying the events of February 13-14, highlights the principles of warfare in terms of targeting industry, communication, and transportation centers, but these places were mostly handled using tactical targeting campaigns, not by area bombing a whole city. The number of innocents in the city is unsettling because the Allies knew of the sheer amount of refugees coming in due to the Red Army's position in the east. With this in mind, how could an incendiary bombing mission not be fully intending to unleash terror upon an indescribably dense city in terms of people? The uncertainty, regret, and confusion amongst those who called for the bombing also do not go over well, as this presents an underlying contradiction beyond the gaze of a bystander. To conclude this synthesis, it finally needs to be acknowledged that other options were presented, many of which would likely have been more effective if the goal was to make the war end quicker. Continuing to cut off resources through interdiction and tactical campaigns, not through destroying the will of the people, would have been a great option to continue with as they had done in the past. Once the attention seemed to shift toward the post-war landscape and the international competition, the paradigm shifted as well, leaving an undefined goal that would be accomplished through the terror bombing missions in Germany. All of these contradictions and moral questions, accompanied by the underlying presence of viable options, end this debate by saying that the firebombing of Dresden was not justified by any means.

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Photographed by Campbell McClellan in June 2023.

The sun sets on Lake Yellowstone with a splash of vibrant color. In the distance, you can see the peaks of the Teton Mountain Range in the neighboring Grand Teton National Park.