

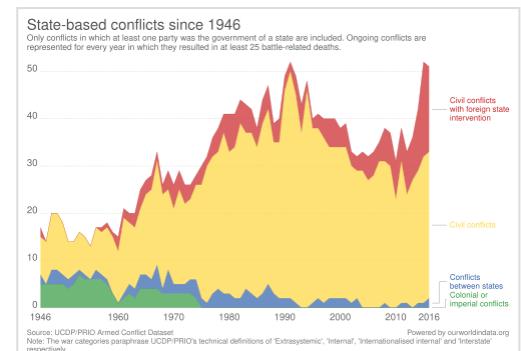
## Since 1945

In the 1990s, about twenty civil wars were occurring concurrently during an average year, a rate about ten times the historical average since the 19th century. However, the rate of new civil wars had not increased appreciably; the drastic rise in the number of ongoing wars after World War II was a result of the tripling of the average duration of civil wars to over four years.<sup>[46]</sup> This increase was a result of the increased number of states, the fragility of states formed after 1945, the decline in interstate war, and the Cold War rivalry.<sup>[47]</sup>

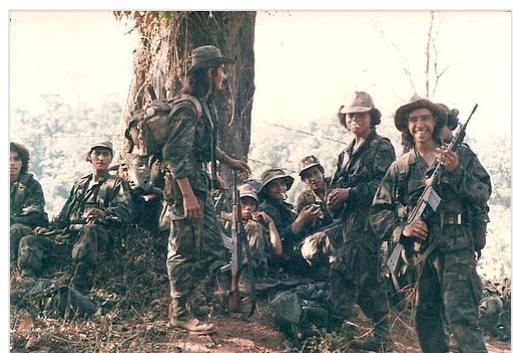
Following World War II, the major European powers divested themselves of their colonies at an increasing rate: the number of ex-colonial states jumped from about 30 to almost 120 after the war. The rate of state formation leveled off in the 1980s, at which point few colonies remained.<sup>[48]</sup> More states also meant more states in which to have long civil wars. Hironaka statistically measures the impact of the increased number of ex-colonial states as increasing the post-World War II incidence of civil wars by +165% over the pre-1945 number.<sup>[49]</sup>

While the new ex-colonial states appeared to follow the blueprint of the idealized state—centralized government, territory enclosed by defined borders, and citizenry with defined rights—as well as accessories such as a national flag, an anthem, a seat at the United Nations and an official economic policy, they were in actuality far weaker than the Western states they were modeled after.<sup>[50]</sup> In Western states, the structure of governments closely matched states' actual capabilities, which had been arduously developed over centuries. The development of strong administrative structures, in particular those related to extraction of taxes, is closely associated with the intense warfare between predatory European states in the 17th and 18th centuries, or in Charles Tilly's famous formulation: "War made the state and the state made war".<sup>[51]</sup> For example, the formation of the modern states of Germany and Italy in the 19th century is closely associated with the wars of expansion and consolidation led by Prussia and Sardinia-Piedmont, respectively.<sup>[51]</sup> The Western process of forming effective and impersonal bureaucracies, developing efficient tax systems, and integrating national territory continued into the 20th century. Nevertheless, Western states that survived into the latter half of the 20th century were considered "strong" by simple reason that they had managed to develop the institutional structures and military capability required to survive predation by their fellow states.

In sharp contrast, decolonization was an entirely different process of state formation. Most imperial powers had not foreseen a need to prepare their colonies for independence; for example, Britain had given limited self-rule to India and Sri Lanka, while treating British Somaliland as little more than a trading post, while all major decisions for French colonies were made in Paris and Belgium prohibited any self-government up until it suddenly granted independence to its colonies in 1960. Like Western states of previous centuries, the new ex-colonies lacked autonomous bureaucracies, which would make decisions based on the benefit to society as a whole, rather than respond to corruption and nepotism to favor a particular interest group. In such a situation,



Civil conflicts vs other conflicts 1946 to 2016



Members of ARDE Frente Sur during the Nicaraguan Revolution



An American Cadillac Gage Light Armored Reconnaissance Vehicle and Italian Fiat-OTO Melara Type 6614 Armored Personnel Carrier guard an intersection during the [Somali Civil War](#) (1993).

factions manipulate the state to benefit themselves or, alternatively, state leaders use the bureaucracy to further their own self-interest. The lack of credible governance was compounded by the fact that most colonies were economic loss-makers at independence, lacking both a productive economic base and a taxation system to effectively extract resources from economic activity. Among the rare states profitable at decolonization was India, to which scholars credibly argue that [Uganda](#), [Malaysia](#) and [Angola](#) may be included. Neither did imperial powers make territorial integration a priority, and may have discouraged nascent nationalism as a danger to their rule. Many newly independent states thus found themselves impoverished, with minimal administrative capacity in a fragmented society, while faced with the expectation of immediately

meeting the demands of a modern state.<sup>[52]</sup> Such states are considered "weak" or "[fragile](#)". The "strong"- "weak" categorization is not the same as "Western"- "non-Western", as some Latin American states like [Argentina](#) and [Brazil](#) and Middle Eastern states like [Egypt](#) and [Israel](#) are considered to have "strong" administrative structures and economic infrastructure.<sup>[53]</sup>

Historically, the international community would have targeted weak states for territorial absorption or colonial domination or, alternatively, such states would fragment into pieces small enough to be effectively administered and secured by a local power. However, international norms towards sovereignty changed in the wake of World War II in ways that support and maintain the existence of weak states. Weak states are given *de jure* sovereignty equal to that of other states, even when they do not have *de facto* sovereignty or control of their own territory, including the privileges of international diplomatic recognition and an equal vote in the United Nations. Further, the international community offers [development aid](#) to weak states, which helps maintain the facade of a functioning modern state by giving the appearance that the state is capable of fulfilling its implied responsibilities of control and order.<sup>[51]</sup> The formation of a strong [international law](#) regime and norms against territorial aggression is strongly associated with the dramatic drop in the number of interstate wars, though it has also been attributed to the effect of the Cold War or to the changing nature of economic development. Consequently, military aggression that results in territorial annexation became increasingly likely to prompt international condemnation, diplomatic censure, a reduction in international aid or the introduction of economic sanction, or, as in the case of 1990 [invasion of Kuwait by Iraq](#), international military intervention to reverse the territorial aggression.<sup>[54]</sup> Similarly, the international community has largely refused to recognize secessionist regions, while keeping some secessionist self-declared states such as [Somaliland](#) in diplomatic recognition limbo. While there is not a large body of academic work examining the relationship, Hironaka's statistical study found a correlation that suggests that every major international anti-secessionist declaration increased the number of ongoing civil wars by +10%, or a total +114% from 1945 to 1997.<sup>[55]</sup> The diplomatic and



A checkpoint manned by the [Lebanese army](#) and [US Marines](#), 1982. The [Lebanese Civil War](#) (1975–1990) was characterized by multiple foreign interventions.

legal protection given by the international community, as well as economic support to weak governments and discouragement of secession, thus had the unintended effect of encouraging civil wars.



A fast attack boat of the [rebel LTTE](#) in Sri Lanka in 2003 passes the hulk of an LTTE supply ship that had been sunk by government aircraft, [Sri Lankan Civil War](#) (1983–2009).

## Interventions by outside powers

There has been an enormous amount of international intervention in civil wars since 1945 that some have argued served to extend wars. According to [Patrick M. Regan](#) in his book *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers* (2000) about 2/3rds of the 138 intrastate conflicts between the end of World War II and 2000 saw international intervention, with the United States intervening in 35 of these conflicts.<sup>[4]</sup> While intervention has been practiced since the international system has existed, its nature changed substantially. It became common for both the state and opposition group to receive foreign support, allowing wars to continue well past the point when domestic resources had been exhausted. Superpowers, such as the European [great powers](#), had always felt no compunction in

intervening in civil wars that affected their interests, while distant regional powers such as the United States could declare the interventionist [Monroe Doctrine](#) of 1821 for events in its Central American "backyard". However, the large population of weak states after 1945 allowed intervention by former colonial powers, regional powers and neighboring states who themselves often had scarce resources.

## Effectiveness of intervention

The effectiveness of intervention is widely debated, in part because the data suffers from selection bias; as Fortna has argued, peacekeepers select themselves into difficult cases.<sup>[56]</sup> When controlling for this effect, Fortna holds that peacekeeping is resoundingly successful in shortening wars. However, other scholars disagree. Knaus and Stewart are extremely skeptical as to the effectiveness of interventions, holding that they can only work when they are performed with extreme caution and sensitivity to context, a strategy they label 'principled incrementalism'. Few interventions, for them, have demonstrated such an approach.<sup>[57]</sup> Other scholars offer more specific criticisms; Dube and Naidu, for instance, show that US military aid, a less conventional form of intervention, seems to be siphoned off to paramilitaries thus exacerbating violence.<sup>[58]</sup> Weinstein holds more generally that interventions might disrupt processes of 'autonomous recovery' whereby civil war contributes to state-building.<sup>[59]</sup>

On average, a civil war with interstate intervention was 300% longer than those without. When disaggregated, a civil war with intervention on only one side is 156% longer, while when intervention occurs on both sides the average civil war is longer by an additional 92%. If one of the intervening states was a superpower, a civil war is a further 72% longer; a conflict such as the [Angolan Civil War](#), in which there is two-sided foreign intervention, including by a superpower (actually, two superpowers in the case of Angola), would be 538% longer on average than a civil war without any international intervention.<sup>[60]</sup>