

# PEACE SCIENCE DIGEST

A PROJECT BY THE WAR PREVENTION INITIATIVE



## IN THIS ISSUE

How Domestic Protests Influence Coups

Oil, Terrorism and Insurgency in the Middle East and North Africa

Motives for U.S. Intervention: Democracy, Human Rights and Terrorism

Casualty Inequity, Politics, and Public Support for Israel

Nonviolent Resistance Creates Strong Democracies



Our vision is a world beyond war by 2030 and humanity united by a global system of peace with justice.

Our mission is to advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society.

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Demonstration in solidarity of the Standing Rock Sioux  
Reservation in Philadelphia.

# NEED AND ROLE OF THE DIGEST

Peace and Conflict Studies (henceforth: Peace Science) has emerged as an academic discipline with its own graduate programs, handbooks, research tools, theories, associations, journals and conferences. As with most scientific communities, the slow migration of academic knowledge into practical application becomes a limiting factor of a field's growth, impact and overall effectiveness of its practitioners.

The expanding academic field of Peace Science continues to produce high volumes of significant research that often goes unnoticed by practitioners, the media, activists, public policy-makers, and other possible beneficiaries. This is unfortunate, because Peace Science ultimately should inform the practice on how to bring about peace.

*The research and theory needed to guide peace workers to produce more enduring and positive peace, not only more peace studies, have come to stay. Bridging the gap between the peace movement moralism and foreign policy pragmatism is a major challenge facing everyone who seeks to achieve peace on Earth. (Johan Galtung and Charles Webel)*

To address this issue, the War Prevention Initiative has created the Peace Science Digest as a way to disseminate top selections of research and findings from the field's academic community to the many beneficiaries.

The Peace Science Digest is formulated to enhance awareness of literature addressing the key issues of our time by making available an organized, condensed and comprehensible summary of this important research as a resource for the practical application of the field's current academic knowledge.

## Disclaimer

Research featured in the *Peace Science Digest* is selected based on its contribution to the field of Peace Science, and authenticated by the scientific integrity derived from the peer-review process. Peer-reviewed journals evaluate the quality and validity of a scientific study, giving us the freedom to focus on the articles' relevance and potential contribution to the field and beyond.

The editors of the *Peace Science Digest* do not claim their analysis is, or should be, the only way to approach any given issue. Our aim is to provide a responsible and ethical analysis of the research conducted by Peace and Conflict Studies academics through the operational lens of the War Prevention Initiative.

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

It is our pleasure to introduce Volume 1, Issue 5 of the Peace Science Digest.

As we near the end of our first year of publication, we continue identifying important research into the causes and consequences of violent conflict, public opinion on war and peace, and the opportunities for nonviolent movements.

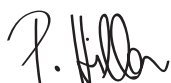
At the time of this writing, the Dakota Access Pipeline has given the world another example of the power of nonviolence in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. Backed by the support of some of the world's largest banks, oil companies, militarized security forces and a powerful government, the nonviolent action of a relatively small group of indigenous 'land protectors' and their supporters have momentarily stopped the production route of a major oil pipeline<sup>1</sup>. As of November, 1st, due to the success of the nonviolent protest, the United States government is examining alternate routes for the pipeline. Just imagine for a moment how the already violent response to the 'land protectors' would look in the face of an armed resistance. Nonviolent resistance is an effective form of social struggle.

As always, we hope you can connect the enclosed research analysis to your own practice, studies and/or social networks. We believe that access to useful, understandable, and reliable research can contribute to the understanding of local and international events and aid in the construction of knowledge-based worldviewing that challenges the institutions and systems generating large-scale violence and war.

Inside this issue, we provide relevant research examining multiple lenses of war prevention and the viable nonviolent alternatives: how domestic protests influence coups; oil, terrorism and insurgency in the Middle East and North Africa; democracy, human rights and terrorism as possible motives for U.S. military intervention; the uneven distribution of civilian casualties, politics, and public support for Israel; and how nonviolent resistance contributes to strong democracies.

As always, featured research remains relevant to ongoing political and public debates. We hope that the Peace Science Digest continues to be a resource for you and your work and that each issue provides further evidence and understanding into the positive contribution of Peace Science.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/11/02/500363689/obama-army-corps-examining-possible-rerouting-of-dakota-access-pipeline>



Patrick Hiller



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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How Domestic Protests Influence Coups	6
Oil, Terrorism and Insurgency in the Middle East and North Africa	10
Motives for U.S. Intervention: Democracy, Human Rights and Terrorism	14
Casualty Inequity, Politics, and Public Support for Israel	18
Nonviolent Resistance Creates Strong Democracies	22

# How Domestic Protests Influence Coups

Source | Johnson, J. & Thyne, C. (2016) Squeaky Wheels and Troop Loyalty: How Domestic Protests Influence Coups d'état, 1951–2005. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 10.1177/0022002716654742

## Key words

military coup  
nonviolent protest

This study examines the effect of domestic protests before and during a coup attempt. The researchers gained new insights regarding the importance of the location of protests, the choice of nonviolence over violence and the role of outside actors in the protests' success.

Coups are high stakes endeavors to overthrow existing governments. If the coup fails, its leaders face long prison sentences, exile or death. However, if successful, coup leaders have the opportunity to shape a new government. Therefore, it is important for 'coup plotters' to accurately judge political and social climates to insure the best chance of successfully unseating the government. One of the largest indicators of a coup-ripe environment is perceived legitimacy – or lack thereof - of the current government in the eyes of the public. If grassroots anti-government protests involving common citizens are already underway, then a coup has a much higher chance of success. The authors also believe the geographical location and method of protests are important, leading to the following hypotheses:

- Protests centered near a capital city should have a stronger effect on the likelihood of coups.
- Nonviolent protests should have a stronger effect on the likelihood of coups.

The authors' analysis of 403 coup attempts in 150 different countries between 1951 and 2005 provided insights into previously unknown factors behind successful coups. First, this research showed that 'coup plotters' have a higher likelihood of success and a favorable post-coup environment when the coup is planned during a period of public distrust or discontent towards the government, especially if there is public protest.

Second, the location of civilian protests is very important to the likelihood of a coup. When analyzing civilian protests, the research team found the likelihood of a coup increased by nearly 250% when the protest was near a capital city, compared to only a slight increase when protests took place away from capital cities.



Lastly, the methods used during civilian protest were found to be an important influence on the likelihood of coup attempts. Although the presence of both violent and nonviolent protests proves to be a catalyst for coup attempts, nonviolent protests hold a much more significant influence on the likelihood of a coup. This research shows that the presence of nonviolent protests increases the likelihood of a coup by nearly 75% compared to a 13% rise when protests are violent, suggesting that nonviolence is nearly six times more effective at bringing about change than the use of violence.

### Coup:

The authors define coup as “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive” (Powell & Thyne, 2011, p.252).

Photo Credit: Michael Fleshman

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Activists demonstrating against the Turkish government in the wake of the 2016 coup attempt.





# CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

Since 1990, one in four countries have seen a coup attempt, making coups the world's most common form of unconstitutional regime change (One Earth Future – Coup-Cast). Examining coups and their potential consequences in the global political context is important with regard to processes of democratization, but also civil wars and genocide. Coups inspired by nonviolent protests can support democratic transitions, but also undermine social movements. The findings of this research mirror the important work by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan who, among other arguments on the effectiveness of nonviolence, highlight the importance of Egypt's adherence to nonviolence during the overthrow of Mubarak: *"had the Tahrir Square protests turned violent, the situation in Egypt might well have been far worse than it is today. Armed uprisings tend to reinforce the power of the military even more quickly, discouraging defections. Moreover, they tend to initiate mass atrocities against civilians on a scale much larger than nonviolent action does. Armed revolts rarely succeed, and when they do, they almost never bring about greater stability."*

Continued Reading:

**Drop Your Weapons When and Why Civil Resistance Works** by Erica Chenoweth & Maria J. Stephan.

([foreignaffairs.com/articles/libya/2014-06-16/drop-your-weapons](http://foreignaffairs.com/articles/libya/2014-06-16/drop-your-weapons))

**Nonviolent Action and Pro-Democracy Struggles** by Stephen Zunes.

([http://fpif.org/nonviolent\\_action\\_and\\_pro-democracy\\_struggles](http://fpif.org/nonviolent_action_and_pro-democracy_struggles))

**CoupCast** by One Earth Future Foundation

(<http://www.oefresearch.org/activities/coup-cast>)

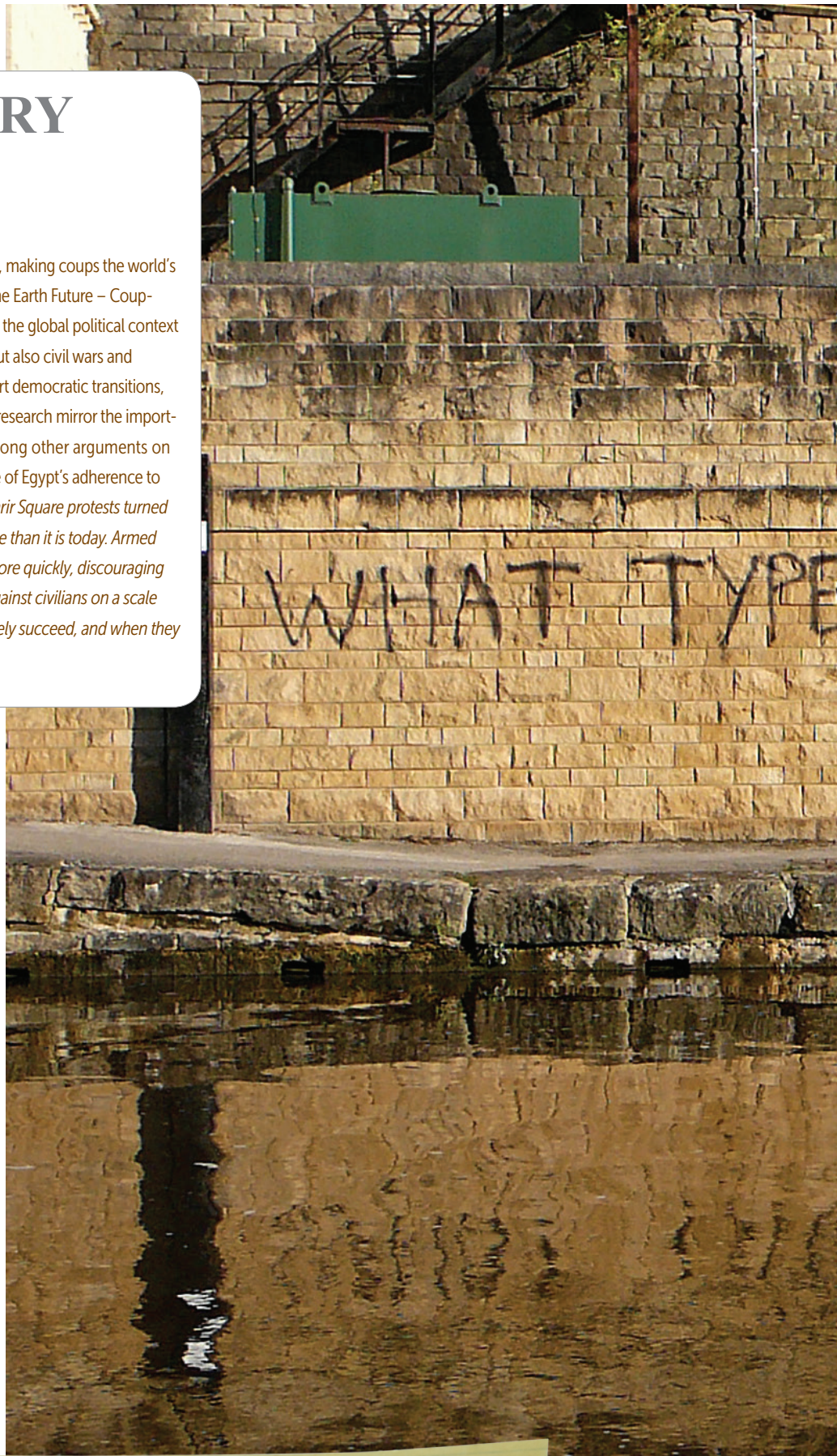


Photo Credit: Tim Green  
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## TALKING POINTS

- Nonviolent protests are six times more effective at bringing about a coup than violent protests.
- When protests are nonviolent, post-coup restructuring is less likely to succumb to outside influence and more likely to bring about democratization.
- Protests centered near a capital city have a higher chance of leading to a coup than protests elsewhere.
- Nonviolent protests can push the military to intervene.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research point to a valuable predictor of when a coup may occur. By monitoring the level of domestic protest within a state, especially when the protests are concentrated around the capitol, practitioners and academics can predict with increased certainty the likelihood of an impending coup attempt. This research also illustrates the power common citizens hold to affect change. While coups are most often orchestrated by military and government elites or outside actors, citizens play a large role in the overall success of the coup and can drastically influence the creation of the proceeding government.



# Oil, Terrorism and Insurgency in the Middle East and North Africa

Source | Dreher, A., & Kreibaum, M. (2016). Weapons of choice The effect of natural resources on terror and insurgencies. *Journal of Peace Research*, 0022343316634418.

Key  
words  
oil  
terrorism  
resource curse  
civil war  
insurgency



Continued Reading:

**Peace Science Digest Special Issue: Resources and Conflict.**

[communication.warpreventioninitiative.org/?p=104](http://communication.warpreventioninitiative.org/?p=104)

**Why Groups Use Terrorism: A Reassessment of the Conventional Wisdom by Max Abrahms.**

<https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2015/04/22/why-groups-use-terrorism-a-reassessment-of-the-conventional-wisdom>

**David Cortright on PeaceVoiceTV: The Causes of War and the Conditions for Peace** ([https://youtu.be/UI\\_qXILGX8k](https://youtu.be/UI_qXILGX8k))

Natural resources can be an important factor in contributing to violence. Our Special Issue on *Resources & Conflict* highlights some major arguments. In many countries, an abundance of natural resources is often a disadvantage to local populations who do not directly benefit from the resource revenue, leading to high unemployment rates, mass migration and distrust or resentment of the government. A common term for this phenomenon is “resource curse”. This research examines how access to oil can influence a non-state ethno-political group’s choice between violent and nonviolent action. The authors theorize that groups will weigh the risks and benefits of political action based on their goals, the strength of the state, and their regional autonomy.

The authors investigate how the availability of oil in a region determines whether groups choose to pursue their social or political goals using nonviolent means, resort to terrorism, or start insurgencies. Previous studies have shown oil rich states face a higher risk of civil war and an increased chance of foreign interference during a civil war.<sup>2</sup> The authors also state that the influence of oil reserves on violence is largely dependent on group characteristics and the state’s reaction or willingness to negotiate with a conflicting political group seeking change.

This study uses data from 118 non-state ethno-political groups from 13 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, ranging from 1980-2004. The following hypotheses were developed:

- Terrorism and insurgencies will increase with oil revenues.
- This violence is mitigated when common citizens benefit from the distribution of wealth from oil revenue.
- Participation in power reduces the extent of terrorism.
- Resource related terrorist violence increases with discrimination.
- Resource related violent insurgencies increase with discrimination.
- Terrorism is driven more by political factors, insurgencies by economic factors.
- Oil strengthens the motivation to violently strive for secession when limited autonomy already exists.

2. See Peace Science Digest analysis “Fueling Conflict: The Link Between Oil and Foreign Military Intervention in Civil Wars”



- Resource abundance and economic discrimination have a larger impact on terrorist activities than on civil war.
- The stronger a state is relative to dissenting groups, the higher the probability that they will turn to terrorism.

Results showed that ethno-political groups in oil-rich regions are more likely to resort to insurgencies rather than using nonviolent means or terrorism. This is especially true where groups already hold a certain amount of political autonomy or are supported by an outside government. When the presence of oil is compared to both options of violence – insurgency and terrorism – the former is more likely to occur, leading to a higher chance of civil war. When groups already participate in power, they are more likely to choose nonviolence over violence. When groups already have regional autonomy in combination with oil reserves, terrorism is less likely, but the probability of violent conflict increases due to financial incentives. Economic discrimination increases the probability for terrorism twofold, but is not related to insurgencies. Insurgency, but not terrorism, is more likely in the presence of oil reserves, when groups are backed by foreign states.

Overall, the findings show that the presence of oil leads to an increase in insurgencies but not terrorism. Insurgencies also are a mobilizing factor for civil war. Political and economic discrimination leads to a greater chance of terrorism, but is not related to the presence of oil resources. Greed is more important than grievance as a motive for ethno-political groups to turn to civil wars in oil-rich regions of their own ethnic groups.

Photo Credit: Edenpictures; Eden, Janine and Jim  
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# CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

Warfare has changed and is not limited to states. Approximately 90% of all wars in the post-Cold War period were intrastate wars, that is they took place within nations. The current global landscape of political violence is made up of so-called 'new wars' – a concept described by Mary Kaldor – where war, organized crime, large-scale human rights violations and global networks that fuel war become blurry. This study needs to be placed into this context, given the violent conflicts in the Middle East and the presence of oil in the region. As the authors suggest in their conclusion, countries affected by terrorism should provide regional autonomy, whereas countries affected by insurgencies should share political power. The role of external states in escalating violence when supporting political groups where oil is present also needs to be challenged.

For the purpose of this analysis, **terrorism** is defined as violence or the threat of violence against non-combatants by non-state actors.

**Insurgency** is defined as violent conflict between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group uses political resources and violence (often terrorism) to reach their goals.



## TALKING POINTS

- When groups are included in political participation they are more likely to choose nonviolence over violence when voicing their grievances.
- Political and economic discrimination leads to a greater chance of terrorism.
- Natural resources are an essential factor in the mobilization for civil war.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Economic opportunities and inclusive political systems are considered key structural war prevention measures in the peace science community. The study shows that when states include ethno-political groups in political participation and avoid economic discrimination, the countries are less likely to experience terrorism and more likely to face nonviolent means when grievances are aired. So-called ethnic conflict is not so much about the ethnic differences, but about how exclusion and denial of opportunities from one ethnic group to another lead to armed conflict. Deep/structural prevention aims at creating inclusive and participatory governance mechanisms for all ethnicities. That means addressing the root causes to transform the context conducive to terrorism and insurgencies.

Photo Credit: karmacamilleon  
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Anti-hate speech demon

# Motives for U.S. Intervention: Democracy, Human Rights and Terrorism

Choi, S. W., & James, P. (2016). Why Does the United States Intervene Abroad? Democracy, Human Rights Violations, and Terrorism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

## Key words

military intervention  
human rights  
democracy  
terrorism  
U.S. foreign policy



Continued Reading:

**Escalating U.S. Role in Reckless Intervention, U.S. Launches First Direct Strikes Against Rebel Targets in Yemen** by Gabe Murphy.

<https://peaceblog.wordpress.com/2016/10/13/escalating-u-s-role-in-reckless-intervention-u-s-launches-first-direct-strikes-against-rebel-targets-in-yemen>

**Humanitarian Intervention: The Gift That Keeps on Giving to U.S.**

**Imperialism** by Ajamu Baraka. (<http://fpif.org/humanitarian-intervention-gift-keeps-giving-u-s-imperialism>)

**Alternatives to military intervention in Syria** by David Cortright. (<http://www.peacevoice.info/2016/08/25/alternatives-to-military-intervention-in-syria>)

This study analyzes the degree to which the United States uses its military to respond to threats to democracy, human rights abuses and terrorist activity in foreign countries. The researchers evaluated the relative importance U.S. foreign policy pays to the respective threats.

Democracy, human rights and terrorism are popular topics in American foreign policy, but do political leaders care about one more than others when considering sending the military to respond to a threat? By analyzing how the United States prioritizes these issues, this study provides an assessment of the nation's intervention policy agendas.

The authors provide three hypotheses characterized by common theories in Political Science:

- **Realist Hypothesis:** Higher terrorist activity in a country should make U.S. military intervention more likely.
- **Liberal Hypothesis:** Higher human rights abuses in a country should make U.S. military intervention more likely.
- **Hybrid Hypothesis:** A lower level of democracy in a country should make U.S. military intervention more likely.

The study conducted an international data analysis of 164 countries between 1981-2005 to compare the reasons used in U.S. interventions based on threats to democracy, human rights abuses and terrorist activity in foreign countries. Since military interventions vary by definition and scope, the study classifies military intervention as “the movement of regular troops, or the forces of one country into the territory or territorial waters of another country, or forceful military exploits by troops already stationed by one country inside another” (Pearson & Baumann, 1993). To differentiate major military interventions from minor border encounters, this definition's use of ‘regular troops’ does not include paramilitary forces and ‘military exploits’ does not include actions by border guards or police.



The analysis showed the U.S. has intervened in response to all three of the above threats, but the protection of human rights was the incentive that stood out the most. In general, nations base their decision to intervene not only on an observed threat but also on the implications to their foreign and domestic policy. As an example, a country will be more likely to intervene if its military ally is at risk or if there is a threat to an economic resource such as oil. Even with these factors considered, the study found that the United States is most likely to engage in a military campaign for humanitarian reasons that focus on the protection of human rights, as opposed to security reasons such as threats to democracy or terrorist activity.

This study is a slight revelation into U.S. decision making behind military intervention. Understanding the motivating principles driving political leaders to make the decision of sending armed troops will provide their constituents, and the global community, with a better lens through which to evaluate their decision.

Photo Credit: Michael Fleshman

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Protestors demonstrating against US military intervention in Syria at the US Army recruiting station in Times Square, New York





## CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

This study is an important contribution of data-based research efforts to understand U.S. military intervention. It finds that the United States is more likely to engage in a military campaign to protect human rights than for threats to democracy or terrorist activity. This is an important finding, but equally important to consider is the difference between official narratives behind U.S. intervention and the underlining motivations that may not be available to the public. As an example, the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq was based largely under the pretense of the threat of weapons of mass destruction. These claims have since been heavily scrutinized by national and international actors, most claiming that the threat of weapons of mass destruction was an excuse to justify a U.S. invasion, not the motivating factor behind the decision. As the authors acknowledge, such "real" motivations are hard to measure, but over time measurable data connected to historical and more in-depth narrative data on motivations for military intervention will provide a clearer picture.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The United States preference to intervene militarily for humanitarian reasons provides an opportunity to evaluate what a constructive and effective humanitarian intervention looks like. The so-called Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a global commitment to address the most severe crimes against humanity. While R2P primarily relies on non-military measures, it also allows for the use of military force to protect those facing atrocities. Since this research suggests the abuse of human rights as a prerequisite motive for military intervention, it is very important that the short and long-term impact and outcomes of these interventions be closely examined. Too often do the debates around responding to atrocities include only military intervention or complete inaction. Instead, practitioners should compare the human, social, political and economic costs of military interventions for the sake of protecting human rights to the many viable nonviolent alternatives.



Photo Credit: US Army Africa  
Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)A  
Members of the U.S. and Kenyan military



## TALKING POINTS

- ▶ The U.S. military is more likely to engage in a campaign to protect human rights than for security reasons, such as threats to democracy or terrorist activity.
- ▶ The U.S. military is less likely to intervene in democratic countries.





# Casualty Inequity, Politics, and Public Support for Israel

Leep, M., & Coen, A. (2016). Civilian casualty inequity, partisanship, and American public support for Israel. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 28(2), 157-176.

## Key words

Public Opinion  
Israel  
Palestine  
civilian casualties  
U.S. foreign policy



Continued Reading:  
**When Bibi Came to Town**  
by Peter Certo.

[\(http://otherwords.org/when-bibi-came-to-town/\)](http://otherwords.org/when-bibi-came-to-town/)

**Support for Palestinians Triples among US Youth, Survey Finds**  
by Ali Abunimah.

[\(https://www.transcend.org/tms/2016/05/support-for-palestinians-triples-among-us-youth-survey-finds/\)](https://www.transcend.org/tms/2016/05/support-for-palestinians-triples-among-us-youth-survey-finds/)

This research examines whether disproportionate civilian casualties in foreign violent conflicts influence public support towards the more forceful actor. The article looks at whether the awareness of a skewed ratio of civilian fatalities in Israel and Palestine alters United States public support for Israel, and if so, whether American political cues provide additional influence to public support.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most publicly present and dividing ongoing conflicts of our time. United States foreign policy has traditionally sided with Israel, but the pressures of public opinion and voices from the international community challenge the seemingly unconditional support. The summer of 2014 saw a major surge in violence when Israel conducted an air campaign in Gaza, leading to protests all around the world and divided public opinion in the United States. A major concern from the 2014 Gaza conflict was the issue of severe civilian casualty inequality. Five Israeli civilians compared to over 1,500 Palestinian civilians were killed. This casualty ratio reflects the history of the larger Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Using the 2014 Gaza conflict as a case study, the researchers explored if individuals in the U.S. are inclined to oppose an unequal proportion of civilian casualties in war and reduce support for the more forceful side of the conflict when casualty ratios are skewed. They also consider how partisan (Democratic and Republican) messages about the more forceful side of the conflict affects civilian casualty information and public opinion. These questions lead to the following hypotheses:

- Support for the more forceful actor will decrease if civilian casualty inequity information is known.
- In-party criticism of the forceful actor will further decrease public support.
- Out-party criticism of the forceful actor won't provide any additional change to public support.



The research team conducted a survey of 584 Americans over the age of 18. They provided a summary of the 2014 Gaza conflict including the skewed casualty figures, and targeted political statements from both democrats and republicans condoning Israel's hardline stance to measure if the survey respondents' opinion of the conflict was effected by their party's disapproval of Israel.

**Casualty Inequity:**  
The uneven distribution of civilian casualties across two sides in a conflict.

The results showed that civilian casualty inequity information is very relevant in shaping U.S. public opinion towards Israel, especial for voters in the Independent political party. Interestingly, Republican and Democrat respondents were not notably influenced by their party's or their opposing party's criticism of Israel. This finding shows that even though most U.S. politicians are generally reluctant to voice an opinion regarding Israel, their criticism doesn't matter as much to public opinion as actual casualty inequity information reported in the media. The authors acknowledge that although this study advances what is known about influences to public opinion, their findings are based on a single experiment with a relatively small sample of U.S. voters. A larger survey of the public is needed to confirm their conclusions on how civilian casualty inequity may impact public opinion.



Photo Credit: blhphotography  
Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)A  
Gaza City: A Red Crescent ambulance taking away casualties while a crowd watches from the rubble



# CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

The Israel-Palestine conflict is one of the most contentious issues in modern global politics. As the single-biggest supporter of military security for Israel, the U.S. is not an impartial party to the conflict. Therefore, understanding U.S. public opinion becomes a significant variable, as policy decisions can be impacted by public expressions of support or rejection of the U.S. role in the conflict. Reducing civilian casualties is not a partisan issue, but one that should be at the forefront of a larger foreign policy agenda. Findings from this research may help the international community apply pressure on the Israeli government to stop military escalations and pursue diplomatic approaches when civilian casualties begin to rise.



Photo Credit: Marius Arnesen  
Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC 2.0)A  
Destroyed apartment building in Gaza



## TALKING POINTS

- Reporting of disproportionate civilian casualties during the 2014 Gaza conflict lowered U.S. public opinion of Israel.
- Criticism of Israel from U.S. political leadership did not provide any additional influence on U.S. public opinion.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

These results demonstrate the relevance of civilian casualty information in shaping opinion. Although this study is specific to the Israeli-Palestine conflict, it provides an important foundation to public opinion research. Previous research has shown that the more the public knows about alternatives to war, and now about war's casualties, the less it will support war or warring states.<sup>3</sup> Previously, elected officials may have disregarded the effects of information regarding civilian casualty inequity, which may be due to the lack of media attention that would otherwise make these figures public. If the media includes accurate casualty information, it would be likely to see a decline of popular opinion towards violent conflict.

3. Peace Science Digest analysis: Proven Decline in Public Support for War When the Alternatives Come to Light (<http://communication.warpreventioninitiative.org/?p=227>).



# Nonviolent Resistance Creates Strong Democracies

Bayer, M., Bethke, F. S., & Lambach, D. (2016). The Democratic Dividend of Nonviolent Resistance. *Journal of Peace Research*.

## Key words

democratization  
nonviolent resistance  
social movements



Continued Reading:

**Four trends that could put the Democratic Peace at risk**  
by Philip B.K. Potter.

[\(http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/10/14/four-trends-that-could-put-the-democratic-peace-at-risk/\)](http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/10/14/four-trends-that-could-put-the-democratic-peace-at-risk/)

**Improving Democracy**  
by Johan Galtung.

[\(https://www.transcend.org/tms/2016/01/improving-democracy/\)](https://www.transcend.org/tms/2016/01/improving-democracy/)

**After the Coup: Nonviolent Strategic Actions for Brazilians**  
by Robert. J. Burrowes.

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2016/10/nonviolent-strategies-for-brazilians-after-the-coup>

Peace Science has proven the advantage of nonviolence over violence in deposing dictators or oppressive governments. However, a change in government leadership is only the first step to democratization, next comes a transitional period where negotiating issues of power, new leadership and democratic principles can become a tipping point that often causes a slide back into autocratic rule. Past research has given a snapshot of showing the advantage of nonviolent protest in creating democracies. This study goes further in suggesting a long-term advantage, starting from the original nonviolent resistance and extending to the importance of nonviolence throughout the government transition and into a successful democracy.

There are three typical ways democracies can break down after a successful regime change.

- Executive coup, where democratically elected officials extend their rule via unconstitutional means and begin to govern autocratically (autocratic backslide).
- Coup d'état, where members of the government's armed forces overthrow the elected government.
- Popular rebellion, where the elected government is toppled by its constituents.

Part of the reason nonviolent movements can be successful in ensuring the survival of democratic transitions is their organizational culture. Nonviolent movements are more conducive to power sharing and cooperation. This culture carries over from the resistance movement into the formation and philosophy of the new government, thereby creating an environment favorable to a successful democracy. Nonviolent movements also provide an example to the greater public on how to effectively engage their government. If a state has experienced the success of nonviolent protest, then movements are likely to continue to implement nonviolent tactics in the future when voicing grievances to their government, thus increasing the opportunity for a nonviolent, collaborative solution and a longer lasting democratic regime. Finally, nonviolent campaigns are successful largely due to their participation rates compared to any form of violent protest.



Because of the high turnout, as well as their ability to attract participants from different areas of society, nonviolent protests create a foundation an inclusive and involved democracy.

To determine the importance of nonviolent resistance to democratic survival, the authors looked at 112 democratic regimes that succeeded autocratic regimes from 1955-2006 and compared the survival duration of the democracies with the presence of nonviolent and violent resistance during the regime change. Their findings showed that nonviolent resistance reduces the hazard of democratic breakdown by more than 50%. When autocratic regimes are defeated because of nonviolent campaigns, the new regime has a much better chance of survival as a democracy compared to a regime change without a nonviolent movement. On average, regimes with violent resistance campaigns involved in the transition process had the median survival rate of only five years, much lower than when transition periods included nonviolent campaigns, with a median survival rate was 47 years.

This research adds to the growing knowledge on the importance of non-violence in all stages of and areas of society. Nonviolent resistance campaigns not only increase the likelihood of political systems transitioning to democracy, but also the longevity of the democracy once it is in place.



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# CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

While nonviolent campaigns do not guarantee lasting democratic rule, the nature of nonviolent campaigns makes democracies more likely to succeed. Current and popular examples of challenges faced by nonviolent resistance are the various countries involved in the 2011 Arab Spring. The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt remained nonviolent throughout the original resistance and government transition, whereas Libya and Syria's nonviolent movements eventually gave way to violence that have led to the deaths of thousands and the failure to obtain their goal of democratic governance. While Tunisia still stands as a success story for democratic transition, the case of Egypt shows that nonviolent uprisings can also fail to consolidate the gains for a democratic transition. The difference, however, compared to Syria and Libya shows that once violence is added into the equation, the success factors for nonviolence are undermined. Nonviolent methods need to be further examined and supported as the sole method for regime change.







## TALKING POINTS

- Democratic regimes that experience nonviolent resistance during the government transition phase survive substantially longer than regimes without nonviolent resistance.
- Nonviolent resistance during the transition process reduces the chance of democratic breakdown by more than 50%.
- On average, democratic regimes with nonviolent resistance campaigns during government transitions survive over nine times longer than those with violent resistance during transition.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research provide further evidence of the power of nonviolence and its importance to those seeking to confront their governments. Nonviolent resistance campaigns not only increase the likelihood of political systems transitioning to democracy, but also the longevity of the democracy once it is in place. With this new information, campaign organizers can reassure their participants that the culture and practices they are creating in their nonviolent movement will directly contribute to the strength and longevity of the goals they are trying to reach. Civil society organizations working in countries in a transition phase should prioritize supporting nonviolent actors and practices at the grassroots level.



# TESTIMONIALS



*This Magazine is where the academic field and the practitioners meet. It is the ideal source for the Talkers, the Writers and the Doers who need to inform and educate themselves about the fast growing field of Peace Science for War Prevention Initiatives!*

**John W. McDonald**  
U.S. Ambassador, ret.  
Chairman and CEO, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy



*As a longtime peace activist, I've grown weary of the mainstream perception that "peace is for dreamers." That's why the Peace Science Digest is such a useful tool; it gives me easy access to the data and the science to make the case for peacebuilding and war prevention as both practical and possible. This is a wonderful new resource for all who seek peaceful solutions in the real world.*

**Kelly Campbell**  
Executive Director, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility Co-founder,  
9/11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows



*The Peace Science Digest is the right approach to an ever-present challenge: how do you get cutting-edge peace research that is often hidden in hard-to-access academic journals into the hands of a broader audience? With its attractive on-line format, easy to digest graphics and useful short summaries, the Peace Science Digest is a critically important tool for anyone who cares about peace – as well as a delight to read.*

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Director of Policy Studies at the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at the  
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**Joseph Bock**  
International Conflict Management Program Associate Professor of International Conflict  
Management, Kennesaw State University



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**Michael Nagler**  
Founder of the Metta Center for Nonviolence



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<h2>OUR VISION</h2>	<p>Our vision is a world beyond war by 2030 and humanity united by a global system of peace with justice.</p>
<h2>OUR MISSION</h2>	<p>Our mission is to advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society.</p>
<h2>OUR CORE VALUES</h2>	<p>Nonviolence – We promote strategic and principled nonviolent solutions over any kind of armed conflict.</p> <p>Empathy – We view social problems through the eyes of others and respectfully communicate with each other in the pursuit of mutual understanding.</p> <p>Planetary loyalty – We consider ourselves global citizens, living in harmony with humanity and nature.</p> <p>Moral imagination – We strive for a moral perception of the world in that we: (1) imagine people in a web of relationships including their enemies; (2) foster the understanding of others as an opportunity rather than a threat; (3) pursue the creative process as the wellspring that feeds the building of peace; and (4) risk stepping into the unknown landscape beyond violence</p>
<h2 style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">AREAS OF FOCUS</h2>	<h2>WE SUPPORT</h2> <p>Support Rotary International’s focus on peace by aiding the Rotarian Action Group for Peace with human, logistical and content-related resources.</p> <p>Support development of effective strategies to convince Americans that the United States should not promote war, militarism or weapons proliferation, but rather embrace conflict resolution practices that have been shown to prevent, shorten, and eliminate war as viable alternatives to local, regional and global conflicts.</p> <p>Support building grassroots social movements seeking a world beyond war.</p>
	<h2>WE EDUCATE</h2> <p>Actively contribute to peace science and public scholarship on war prevention issues.</p> <p>Share information and resources with multiple constituencies in an understandable manner.</p> <p>Provide evidence-based information on peace and conflict issues with immediately potential doable policy advice to public policy makers.</p> <p>Advance the understanding and growth of the Global Peace System.</p>
	<h2>WE ENGAGE</h2> <p>Convene national and international experts in ongoing constructive dialog on war prevention issues via our Parkdale Peace Gatherings.</p> <p>Connect likely and unlikely allies to create new opportunities.</p> <p>Participate in peacebuilding networks and membership organizations.</p>
<h2>UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS</h2>	<p>We are at a stage in human history where we can say with confidence that there are better and more effective alternatives to war and violence.</p> <p>A Global Peace System is evolving.</p> <p>Poverty, employment, energy, education, the environment and other social and natural factors are interconnected in peacebuilding.</p> <p>Peace Science and Peace Education provide a path to a more just and peaceful world.</p> <p>Multi-track diplomacy offers a sectoral framework for creating peacebuilding opportunities</p>