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# Constructing and Destructing the Peace: Models of International Engagement in Post-Conflict States

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# Constructing and Destructing the Peace

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Models of International Engagement in Post-  
Conflict States

**Colin Churchill**

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**5/1/2019**

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## Introduction

The immediate post-Cold War decade of 1989 to 1999 was a time of intrastate conflict and mass violence; however, it was also a time defined by conflict resolution. Not only did conflicts that began in this period, such as the Bosnian War, reach a peaceful end, but also conflicts stretching much further back in time, such as the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Lebanese Civil War. Much attention, both in popular media and in scholarship, was paid to the early stages of post-conflict, but each has faded into the background, only being revived around significant anniversaries of the respective peace deals.

This project arose out of an interest in the variable stability of post-conflict states. Why are some post-conflict states more stable than others? I have defined level of stability in this project to have two constituent parts: level of political violence and possibility of major political reforms. I code a state to have high stability if it has a low and dropping level of political violence. This violence would be disconnected from political parties; in fact, when it does occur, it would be widely condemned by all parties and not used to score political points. Furthermore, a state with high stability would have at least one major political or constitutional reform since the peace agreement that has marked a meaningful transition in politics. I code a state to have low stability, however, if it has high political violence, marked by sporadic armed violence conducted with impunity between groups tied to political parties. The level of this violence would be strategically conducted to advance political goals of affiliated parties. States with low stability will have not engaged in any efforts at major political or constitutional reform, despite near universal agreement on the need for it. These states would find it difficult to form governments and even hold elections, leaving no political will or capital for reform.

I operate under the assumption that like any serious breakdown in trust between people, widescale civil conflict and civil war have lasting effects, even centuries later. The United States, as an example, is still fighting cultural battles over the memory of its civil war over 150 years after its conclusion, in a case where military victory rather than negotiated settlement ended the conflict. As such, all post-conflict states have some political violence and are marked by a lack of trust causing political gridlock. However, some states have much higher levels of political violence that is committed with near total impunity and is tied to political parties. In addition, some states are able to break through the gridlock to create meaningful reform, while for other states, the gridlock is utterly paralyzing to all government decisions including the formation of a parliamentary executive and even the holding of elections. This gridlock puts the country in a constant state of anxiety over whether the state will continue to provide the basic functions of government and work to solve the most pressing issues facing society. This anxiety translates to instability as the public wonders whether the state will simply fall apart.

Through my research, I became interested in the long-term roles that international actors play in determining post-conflict stability. This project compares the case studies of Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Northern Ireland to demonstrate the ways that international actors have furthered peace and stability, held it back, and put their own interests above it. The criteria I looked for in examining these cases were the number of main actors engaged with the post-conflict state, the interests of the actor(s), and the degree to which the actor(s) were involved in the state's politics and society. In order to do this, I will provide four general models for international engagement with post-conflict states drawn from the case studies.

The first of these models is the overlord model, exemplified by the Pax Syriana period in Lebanon from 1989-2005. This model places a state, usually an authoritarian one, in de-facto

control of a post-conflict state, exercising military control and actively treating the post-conflict state like a subject or conquered province. There may be democratic elections, but they are gerrymandered and geared towards making sure no political group becomes powerful enough to challenge the power of the overlord. The overlord state pursues its own agenda at the expense of the post-conflict state. This model gives the post-conflict state a moderate level of stability. The peace is maintained, but only because it is in the overlord's interest to preserve stability. Political violence is acceptable only when undertaken by the overlord or in service of the overlord's interests vis-à-vis the post-conflict state or other states. The level of political violence is strongly tied to the level of control the overlord maintains. Major political reforms that solve underlying issues at the root of conflict are not undertaken because they are not in the interest of the overlord.

The second model is the proxy model, which is exemplified by Lebanon since the Cedar Revolution of 2005. This model is the classic continuation of war by means of politics. Two or more states ally themselves with an ideologically or ethnically aligned faction within a post-conflict state. Ostensibly, this is to counter the efforts of another state seeking to exert its influence, but it often involves the state asserting its own influence as well. This is typically undertaken by regional powers seeking regional hegemony or powers competing for global hegemony. These actors rarely get involved in the day to day acts of governance, but use their allied factions to protect their interests and stoke tensions with their rival, at the expense of the stability of the post-conflict state. This furthers entrenched prejudices among factions and gives them further existential fear of a rival faction's ascendancy, now aided by a hostile foreign power. It adds to the zero-sum nature of politics and fuels gridlock in government bodies. The proxy model provides a low level of stability. Political violence is often rampant in this model as

the international actors seek to advance their interests or counter the interests of their rival. They do this by means up to and including political violence by affiliated proxies. The proxy model further politicizes every governmental decision and inhibits all efforts at political reform.

The third model is the liberal intervention model. It is seen in the international community's efforts at post-conflict governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This model sees a multinational actor or group of actors take over post-conflict statebuilding. The liberal intervention model has some similarities with the overlord model, in that the multinational actor gets heavily involved in acts of governance and acts supranationally to run the post-conflict state. The multinational group may also station troops within the post-conflict state's borders as peacekeepers. However, the liberal intervention model differs from the overlord model in its aims. The multinational actor's goal is to extend liberal values, including democracy and the rule of law. It has no territorial aspirations. While in the overlord model, the international actor may play extreme nationalist factions off of one another to reduce the power of them both and has no interest in promoting cross-communal groups, the main aim of the multinational group in the liberal intervention model is to sideline hardline nationalist factions in favor of moderate and cross-communal alternatives. The multinational group may resort to heavy-handed tactics that circumvent the democratic process and are not subject to judicial review in order to achieve this goal. This is often counterproductive, both strengthening hardline factions and creating a cycle of dependency.

The liberal intervention model gives a moderate level of stability. Political violence is strictly forbidden in this model, though it does occur and is generally tied to nationalist parties. It occurs at higher levels than in the overlord model because the multinational actor is not as brutal in suppressing violence outside of its control. However, while this model is not exceptionally

good at bringing about major political and constitutional reforms, it is better at it than the overlord model, simply because it is in the multinational actor's interest. The liberal intervention model is most effective when the multinational actor only intervenes when the peace is directly and imminently threatened and understands that post-conflict situations are inherently unstable and stability cannot be forced, except by the specter of overwhelming violence. The main benefit of the liberal intervention model is that it is generally successful at keeping other international actors from interfering and thus prevents proxies from being established.

The last and most successful model is the united front model, typified by cooperation between the UK and the Republic of Ireland in the case of Northern Ireland. In this model, two or more nations with ideological or ethnic ties to a party to the conflict use coordinated pressure to maintain stability and break through governing impasses. This model requires close contact between the international actors who, despite any private differences over policy, put the peace and stability of the post-conflict state above them and present a united front. The united front model works most effectively when international actors use the leverage they have over domestic allied groups to threaten consequences for intransigence. The international actors in this model never or only very rarely put their own interests above the peace and security of the post-conflict state. This model gives a high level of stability. Political violence is strictly forbidden in the united front model and the connections of the international actors to the former belligerents prove extremely useful for limiting political violence. When violence does occur, it is strongly condemned by all domestic actors. This model is most successful at achieving major political reforms due to the ability of the international actors to provide carrots and sticks in political negotiations.

## Literature Review

The impact of different roles, constructive and destructive, that international actors play in the stability of post-conflict states and these states' ability to work through the myriad lingering issues they face even decades after conflict is a subject without a literature of its own. Thus, I have drawn from several different conceptual literatures and applied their insights to those of my case studies. The first literature that is helpful in understanding this issue is the realist literature of international relations, which provides an overarching focus on states and their interests central to this project. The next literature is that of consociational democracy, which is present in different forms in all of the cases studied here. Finally, this project seeks to expand the time period of the peace agreements literature and respond to many of the assumptions inherent in that literature.

For the purposes of this project, I employ a realist vision of international relations. Realists such as Hans Morgenthau focus on national interests that are defined in terms of power and security.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, states pursue those interests to the best of their strategic and economic capability.<sup>2</sup> Realism is ruled by objectivity and codified laws rather than moral principles, which differ widely across the globe.<sup>3</sup> Realists divide states into status quo powers, for whom the international system enhances their power and security and revisionist powers, who seek to change the international system into one that aligns more closely with their interests.<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Waltz and the neorealists add to this conception by arguing that the

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater, *Theories of International Relations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 69.

international system has a precisely defined structure that is anarchical in character and is a self-help system.<sup>5</sup>

This project employs a realist outlook in its focus on states as the main actors and by specifically focusing on how they pursue their interests on the international stage. Inherent in my analysis is an understanding that status quo powers, such as the United States or the European Union<sup>6</sup> are invested in the stability of post-conflict states because civil warfare is not in their interest. Revisionist powers such as Russia or Iran, however, see instability in post-conflict states as a catalyst for desired regional or global change. There is also a third category of balancers. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Serbia, and Croatia would be considered in this group. This group operates in the middle of status quo powers and revisionist powers. These regional powers are connected to major status quo powers such as the European Union and the United States, but also maintain friendly relations with revisionist powers in order to play the two sides off one another for the greatest benefit to their state. The classic example of this is Egypt during the early stages of the Cold War, balancing the US and Soviet Union.

The next literature relevant for understanding the cases laid out in this project is that of consociational democracy. Arend Lijphart is considered the father of consensus democracy or consociation theory. He argues that majoritarian Anglo-American democracy doesn't work in societies that are deeply divided or where such a system ensures a permanent majority for one group. He outlines the features of a second type of democracy, consociation, as follows: executive power-sharing in broad coalition cabinets, executive-legislative balance of power, a multiparty system, proportional representation, interest group corporatism, federal and

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 84.

<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of this project, the EU is treated like a state in and of itself.

decentralized government, strong bicameralism, constitutional rigidity, judicial review, and central bank independence.<sup>7</sup> Using case studies from central Europe, Lijphart demonstrates that this form of democracy allows stability in states with multiple competing nations. He argues that elites in divided societies move towards this model because they recognize the catastrophic consequences, namely civil war and foreign conquest, that result from disunion.<sup>8</sup> According to Lijphart, time is key for these democracies. The norms of consensus become more ingrained over time, a key note for critics of the consociational model who cite states only a couple years post-conflict.<sup>9</sup>

Lijphart himself delineates the drawbacks to the consociational model. He concedes that consociation does not provide positive peace, but argues that negative peace is preferable to undemocratic peace and unstable democracy.<sup>10</sup> The other main drawback is that consociation can lead to indecisiveness and inefficiency, but such is the cost of keeping the state from returning to violence.<sup>11</sup> In addition, on the economic front, consociation is an expensive model of democracy due to the duplication of government offices and positions and promotes corporate bureaucracy over a meritorious one.<sup>12</sup> Consociation's main critics are constructivists who believe that it cements identities, whether they be ethnic or religious, that are malleable. Because consociational models are based in mandating representation for specific identity groups in the government of a state, it formalizes those identities structurally, making it difficult for national minorities not originally represented to gain and wield power. Also, in ethnic consociations, it

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<sup>7</sup> Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 34–41.

<sup>8</sup> Arend Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," *World Politics* 21, no. 2 (1969): 212.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>10</sup> Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 49.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

makes ethnically mixed people choose between identities in order to vote or seek political office. In addition, because these constitutions are rigid, there is little ability to shift them to reflect changes in proportionality or salience of identity over time. Thus, constructivists, who argue that identity is not fixed, but changeable, and particularly instrumentalists, who focus on the manipulation of identity by elites, believe that consociation simply rewards elites, who constructed these identities and then often weaponized them, with a governmental structure built around the identities they created.

The consociation literature does address the role of third parties, but the discussion is underdeveloped. Lijphart argues that the threat of external actors can make consociation more palatable to divided societies.<sup>13</sup> However, he makes very few other comments on the subject. John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary, who have made the most significant additions to Lijphart’s consociation theory, addressed this oversight in their analysis of their native Northern Ireland and its negotiated settlement. McGarry and O’Leary argue that benign external interventions can facilitate consociation in divided societies, citing the role of cross-border institutions established by the Good Friday Agreement and the impact of the UK and the Republic of Ireland in facilitating consociation in Northern Ireland.<sup>14</sup> Their insights have yet to be applied to other cases and the role of destructive intervention on the formation and function of consociation has yet to be seriously examined.

This project seeks to address gaps in the third parties in peace agreements literature and stake out intellectual ground not addressed by it. This literature focuses on the question of why peace agreements succeed or fail. As such, the literature focuses on generally the first five years

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<sup>13</sup> Lijphart, “Consociational Democracy,” 217.

<sup>14</sup> John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary, *The Northern Ireland Conflict: Consociational Engagements* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2004).

of a post-conflict state, where the cutoff for success is usually defined. This literature also focuses heavily on the positive role of international actors and whether they are present or not. It does not address the negative roles international actors can play. This section will first survey the literature and then examine these oversights vis-à-vis this project.

The subject of the role of third parties in the formation and implementation of peace agreements is a subject of much debate. Roy Licklider focuses on the role of third parties in getting to an agreement arguing “third parties may encourage or inhibit the violence by actions ranging from military assistance to mediation in all its forms.”<sup>15</sup> Barbara Walter argues that civil war combatants almost always return to war without third party enforcement and verification measures.<sup>16</sup> Security guarantees during demobilization are key in Walter’s conception such that former combatants can overcome the credible commitment problem posed by lack of trust in the immediate aftermath of civil wars.<sup>17</sup> Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie expand on this concept. Hartzell and Hoddie do not include third parties in their analysis of the inclusion of power-sharing and power-dividing institutions because they would have to assume that all third parties were in favor of these methods.<sup>18</sup> They make note of the disagreements between international actors over policy. However, Hartzell and Hoddie do include third parties in their discussions of peace agreement implementation. They posit that third parties provide security guarantees and bridge gaps in mistrust between actors.<sup>19</sup> This analysis focuses heavily on the role

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<sup>15</sup> Roy E. Licklider, *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 16.

<sup>16</sup> Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Caroline A. Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie, *Crafting Peace: Power-Sharing Institutions and the Negotiated Settlement of Civil Wars*, 1 online resource (xiv, 194 pages) vols. (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 56.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 88.

of UN peacekeepers as security guarantors.<sup>20</sup> Hartzell and Hoddie also have a normative element to their analysis of third parties, arguing that third parties should not impose institutions on post-conflict states, rather provide institutional options and economic support to these states in their domestic efforts to design power-sharing and power-dividing institutions.<sup>21</sup>

All of these authors focus on getting parties to agree on a negotiated settlement and the immediate post-conflict implementation period. The literature surveyed here does not address third parties beyond this phase. This is unsurprising considering the research questions this literature seeks to answer are centered on what makes peace agreements successful, which is largely determined by a measure of time, generally five years after a peace agreement, and what makes parties return to civil warfare. This project deals with the roles of third parties in a more comprehensive view of post-conflict states, extending two or even three decades after the initial signing of the agreement in an effort to differentiate between the stability of states with “successful” peace agreements.

The literature on third parties also implicitly only deals with third parties engaged in constructive post-conflict settlement. Hartzell and Hoddie’s focus on UN peacekeepers is indicative of this literature’s audience of policymakers in the West and in multilateral institutions like the UN and the EU. The literature makes assumptions that these actors are the only ones that matter for the success of peace agreements. Absent from this literature is any understanding of the roles that destructive actors play in post-conflict states and the ways that international actors can act as spoilers. This literature has no answer for Syria’s control over Lebanon during the Pax Syriana. In this case, the peace was maintained such that the peace agreement would be

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 156.

considered successful, but the means by which this was achieved were not by any means conducive to the long-term stability of Lebanon or the reconciliation of the former warring parties.

This literature heavily focuses on security roles of third parties, providing a minimum of trust between actors through security guarantees and raising the costs of renewed warfare. However, this focus neglects the other roles that third parties play in post-conflict states. Third parties can also act as mediators, a concept addressed in the literature, but only with respect to a single actor mediating between parties. Multiple actors working together can also influence the position of allied domestic actors towards compromise during an impasse. This is often more effective, as shown by the unified front model in this project.

## Methods and Case Selection

This project seeks to establish a focused theoretical framework for the issue of the role of international actors in post-conflict states. This method seeks to “identify research problems and offer useful conceptualizations, as well as give reason for problem choice and the conceptual identification of relevant factors, shape the analysis of a given set of problems, and are in turn reformulated in light of the results.”<sup>22</sup> By addressing the gaps in the literature discussed above and suggesting a working hypothesis through my models for other scholars to test, I “seek to establish the most fruitful intellectual framework for the investigation” of my research question.<sup>23</sup> This framework allows us to identify “*universal or quite general problems*”<sup>24</sup> and “determine *conceptual equivalences* that cut across... contexts”<sup>25</sup> (emphasis original). To assist

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<sup>22</sup> James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 329.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 330.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 331.

in doing this, I will be using the structured, focused comparison method of case study analysis.<sup>26</sup> This method involves asking the same general question or questions of each case in order to standardize data collection and thus uses the same input and outputs for each case. I will combine within-case analysis and cross-case comparison to provide the strongest means of drawing inferences. By only dealing with certain aspects of each case, the analysis is limited to answering these questions.

In choosing these cases, I looked for resolutions of intrastate conflicts that have met a minimum threshold of 15 years without breaking out into renewed war. This is because I wish to study the variations in post-conflict states with peace agreements that meet a minimum threshold of success beyond the typical definition. I looked for cases whose conflicts ended within a decade of one another, so that I could control for differences in time period. I also found cases in three distinctive regions and that, with the exception of the growing role of the EU in recent years in both Bosnia and Northern Ireland,<sup>27</sup> have different international actors playing leading roles. Having cases that all fall within the same time period, but are in separate regions and have differing actors allows me to take into account differing regional contexts while keeping the same overarching context. All three conflicts were ended by negotiated settlement, rather than military victory and all three peace agreements resulted in consociational models of democracy, albeit ones that differ in significant ways. All three conflicts also primarily were between ethnic and religious groups, rather than state against citizenry. Furthermore, all three conflicts had

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<sup>26</sup> Alexander L George, and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Bcsia Studies in International Security. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005.

<sup>27</sup> The EU has only really become a major actor in Northern Ireland since Brexit and while taking over most of the OHR's responsibilities in Bosnia, did so in a period after many of the events discussed in this project took place.

international parties militarily involved in the conflict; as such, they straddled the divide between civil and international conflict.

# The Overlord Model: Lebanon During the Pax Syriana (1989-2005)

## Introduction

Syria's occupation of Lebanon from the signing of the Ta'if Agreement in 1989 until the Cedar Revolution in 2005 represents the overlord model of international engagement. This model provides a moderate level of stability, but does so using illiberal and authoritarian means anathema to what most people would consider constructive international engagement. The roots of Syrian international engagement go back to its involvement in the Lebanese Civil War and its role in Lebanon was cemented by the Ta'if Agreement, which ended the conflict.

Syria's political project in Lebanon was to de facto make Lebanon a Syrian province. In order to enact this political project, Syria established ties with all of Lebanon's confessional groups and balanced them and factions within them against one another so that no faction became powerful or independent enough to challenge Syrian authority. Syria also became heavily involved in Lebanese elections and integrated intelligence agents and assets in all of Lebanon's main industries and institutions.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Syria continued to use Lebanon to pursue its foreign policy interests, especially regional conflict with Israel.

Overall, political violence was low to moderate during the Pax Syriana. International violence in this period between Israel and Hizballah was heavily controlled and governed by "rules of the game."<sup>29</sup> Domestic political violence, however, was highly correlated to the level of control Syria had over Lebanon. Violence was high in the first two years after the Ta'if Agreement as Syria and the Lebanese state consolidated control, followed by a period of low

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<sup>28</sup> Bassel F Salloukh, Rabie Barakat, Jinan S Al-Habbal, Lara W Khattab, and Shoghig Mikaelian. *Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon*. London: Pluto Press, 2015

<sup>29</sup> Augustus R Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 83.

political violence during the 1990s, as Syria held tight control.<sup>30</sup> However, political violence rose again in the first years of the new millennium, as Syria faced internal and external challenges to its control of the country.<sup>31</sup> In addition, Syria's fostering of disunion within and between political factions made the possibility of major political reforms, which most Lebanese elites and international observers agree are needed, a non-starter during this period.

While Syria acted as the overlord in this case and thus was the main international actor influencing Lebanon as a post-conflict state, Saudi Arabia and Iran also exerted influence in Lebanon during this period. However, neither of those actors ever seriously challenged Syrian hegemony. Saudi Arabia and Iran continued to build the influence that they had gained during Lebanon's civil war. When Syria pulled out in 2005, they filled the vacuum, becoming the dominant international actors, marking the beginning of proxy conflict in Lebanon. This competition will be discussed in the next chapter on the proxy model.

## The Roots of Syria's Political Project

Syria's involvement in Lebanon stretches back to the leadup to the civil war. The Syrian military supported the Palestinian Liberation Organization during the early 1970s, when the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), under pressure from Israel, attacked it on multiple occasions.<sup>32</sup> The Syrians were instrumental in not only ensuring movement of supplies and fighters to the PLO but became militarily involved in the conflicts through artillery bombardment over the border and sending Palestinian units led by Syrian officers to assist in the fight on the ground.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Are Knudsen, "Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?," *Mediterranean Politics* 15, no. 1 (March 2010): 19.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation* (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1993), 165.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

During the war itself, the Syrian army was invited into Lebanon by the Lebanese President, a fact that is often touted by Syrian elites in justifying their conduct during the war and after it.<sup>34</sup>

However, despite its attempts to erect a façade that its role was one of peacekeeping and in support of the Lebanese state, Syria was clearly a military actor in the conflict. Syria acted to ensure that no actor was able to enforce its demands and win the conflict outright.<sup>35</sup> Thus, it was a central player in the conflict's many changes in alliance. Anyone who has studied the Lebanese Civil War will certainly recognize the tactics of the Syrian military in their own civil war. Syria's primary tactic was to bombard population centers with artillery, ostensibly to attack militants hiding there, but very clearly to cow the civilian population into submission.<sup>36</sup> The Syrians won the Lebanese Civil War, not by vanquishing all of their opponents, but outlasting them.

Syria established itself as Lebanon's overlord in the Ta'if Agreement, which ended the Lebanese Civil War. The second and fourth sections<sup>37</sup> of the accord were written in Damascus and imposed upon the members of the Lebanese Parliament at Ta'if, a pattern that would continue throughout this period. The fourth part of the second section (Second IV) reads:

The Syrian forces shall thankfully assist the forces of Lebanese legitimacy to spread the authority of the State of Lebanon within a set period of no more than 2 years, beginning with the ratification of the National Accord document, the election of a President of the Republic, the formation of the National Accord cabinet, and the constitutional approval of the political reforms. At the end of this period, the two governments... shall decide to redeploy the Syrian forces... at points to be determined by a joint Lebanese-Syrian military committee. An agreement shall be also be concluded by the two governments to determine the extent and duration of the presence of Syrian forces in the above-mentioned areas and to define the relation of these forces within the Lebanese State authorities in the places of their deployment.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 210.

<sup>35</sup> Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, 217.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 234.

<sup>37</sup> These sections concerned Lebanese territorial security and Syrian-Lebanese relations.

<sup>38</sup> "The Ta'if Agreement: English Translation," September 1989, [https://www.un.int/lebanon/sites/www.un.int/files/Lebanon/the\\_taif\\_agreement\\_english\\_version\\_.pdf](https://www.un.int/lebanon/sites/www.un.int/files/Lebanon/the_taif_agreement_english_version_.pdf).

The text at first read seems to ensure that Syria will respect Lebanese sovereignty and assist it to control its own borders before withdrawing after two years. However, a close reading finds the language hollow and ripe for exploitation. This section gives no firm withdrawal timetable for Syrian troops, essentially allowing them to stay in Lebanon indefinitely, which is of course what they did. Syria, being the more powerful party, had firm control over the country and the Lebanese government by the time the two years had passed, allowing it to implement the Ta'if Agreement in a way that suited its own interests at the expense of Lebanon and its post-conflict recovery.

### Syria's Overlordship

Syria achieved its interest of the de facto rule of Lebanon maintaining complete control over the country's politics and society. No part of Lebanese society was left unaffected by Syria and its Lebanese allies. Syria ruled by knowing everything that was happening using its large intelligence apparatus and by divide and conquer. It pitted Lebanese confessions against one another while also dividing them internally. Syria's President Hafez al-Assad then acted as monarch, giving a final verdict on all disputes that arose.<sup>39</sup> On top of that, Syria manipulated elections to ensure that favorable candidates were ensured victory and entrance into Parliament.

Syria had a heavy hand in Lebanese politics and society. All major decisions were made with Syrian approval and political leaders of all parties were routinely summoned to Damascus.<sup>40</sup> Syria also insisted on being consulted on cabinet formation and held de facto veto power over the positions of Prime Minister, President, and Speaker of the Parliament.<sup>41</sup> Political success in

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<sup>39</sup> Hanna. Ziadeh, *Sectarianism and Intercommunal Nation-Building in Lebanon* (London: Hurst, 2006), 138.

<sup>40</sup> A. J. Abraham, *The Lebanon War* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996), 198.

<sup>41</sup> Rola El-Husseini, *Pax Syriana: Elite Politics in Postwar Lebanon* (Syracuse University Press, 2012), 17.

Lebanon depended not on being representative of one's constituents, but one's relationship with major Syrian elites, especially Hafez al-Assad and his son Bashar, Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam, and the head of Syrian Military Intelligence in Lebanon General Ghazi Kennan.<sup>42</sup> Lebanese military positions were always appointed with Syrian approval.<sup>43</sup> Lebanese officers also began to train at Syria's military academy at Homs, subjecting them to Syrian political propaganda and integrating them with Syria's occupying military force of 40,000 soldiers.<sup>44</sup> In addition, Syrian intelligence operatives and their Lebanese allies were present in almost all of Lebanon's civil, political, and security institutions and organizations.<sup>45</sup> Syrian agents infiltrated nearly all of Lebanon's media and civil society organizations as well, while the judiciary toed the Syrian line.<sup>46</sup>

Syria's heavy involvement also extended to elections. Syria approved an election law ahead of the 1992 elections that heavily gerrymandered electoral districts to allow for the election of candidates it backed and the defeat of those it opposed.<sup>47</sup> This law also disenfranchised the tens of thousands of Lebanese, mainly Christians, who had fled abroad.<sup>48</sup> It also made most of those who were still internally displaced ineligible to vote.<sup>49</sup> 40 parliamentarians were appointed by Syria through their representatives in the Lebanese government in advance of the 1992 election to fill the seats of those who had died since the most recent election in 1972 and the 29 seats added to Parliament by the Ta'if Agreement. Three times

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>43</sup> Salloukh et al. *Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon*, 26.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 126.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>47</sup> Michael Kerr, *Imposing Power-Sharing: Conflict and Coexistence in Northern Ireland and Lebanon* (Dublin; Irish Academic Press, 2006), 172.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 174.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Syria amended the Lebanese Constitution to make a pro-Syria presidential candidate eligible for the position because it found no other suitable candidates,<sup>50</sup> once to make LAF commander Emile Lahoud eligible, and the other two times to give Elias Hrawi and Lahoud second six-year terms.<sup>51</sup>

Fomenting internal disunion within Lebanon's confessional groups and their political parties was an effective tactic that the Syrians employed to great effect in Lebanon in order to ensure that no faction became powerful enough to challenge Syrian rule. Syria did this by reducing the political power of Lebanese Christian parties and then internally fracturing them between pro and anti-Syrian factions. It also empowered the Shi'a political parties, which had been the least powerful in Lebanon.<sup>52</sup> Rounding out the three major confessions, Syria balanced Sunni factions against one another, supporting one whenever the others became too powerful.

Syria sought to greatly diminish the power of the Christian parties, which had been the most vocal opponents of Syrian rule. In 1992, heavily pro-Syrian candidate lists in Christian districts led Christian political leaders and the Maronite Patriarch to call on Christians to boycott the elections.<sup>53</sup> Their gamble to have the elections postponed due to mass outcry and fear of illegitimacy backfired. Their appeal for the international community's attention and that pressure be put on Syria to delay fell on deaf ears, as the region and the world focused on the Gulf War.<sup>54</sup> The result was between 5% and 20% turnout among Christians in the 1992 election and the almost complete withdrawal of traditional Christian parties from Parliament.<sup>55</sup> Christian parties

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<sup>50</sup> Since the unwritten National Pact of 1943, Lebanon's President has customarily been a Maronite Christian.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 161.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 174.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

had good reason to boycott. The 1992 election law featured not only flagrant gerrymandering in favor of pro-Syrian candidates, but also had an uneven regional distribution, inflating the power of rural areas close to Syria at the expense of cities and heavily populated areas.<sup>56</sup> Christian parties also boycotted the elections in 1996, though this time they were not joined by the Maronite Patriarch.<sup>57</sup>

In addition, Syria managed to create a major split among Christian elites in the early 2000s. After the 2000 legislative elections, Syria and its Lebanese allies held secret negotiations with the Maronite Church, the heads of important Christian political dynasties, and the leadership of former militias in order to create a coalition of Christian leaders willing to abandon their demands for Syrian withdrawal.<sup>58</sup> Syria offered cultural autonomy and protection of Christian political privileges in return.<sup>59</sup> This internally split the Lebanese Forces and Kata'ib parties, pitting pro-Syrian politicians against those arguing for Syrian withdrawal. The pro-Syrian faction engaged in a campaign to control and marginalize this opposition, further fracturing Christian political unity.<sup>60</sup> Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement was left the only staunch opponent to Syrian presence in Lebanon of the three main Christian parties.<sup>61</sup>

Syria also worked to balance Sunni factions off one another. While Rafiq Hariri had close ties to Syria and its backing as the leader of the largest Sunni political party, it balanced him against his main political rivals Salim al-Hoss and Omar Karami.<sup>62</sup> In 1998, with Syrian approval, President Emile Lahoud appoint al-Hoss Prime Minister over Hariri. This was likely

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> El-Husseini, *Pax Syriana: Elite Politics in Postwar Lebanon*, 33.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 98.

the result of the growing influence of Bashar al-Assad, who took over the Lebanon portfolio in the years preceding his father's death.<sup>63</sup> While Hariri maintained close ties with Bashar's father Hafez al-Assad and Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam, Hariri's relationship with Bashar al-Assad was frostier.<sup>64</sup> It is likely that Bashar also wanted to reduce the influence of Saudi Arabia, Hariri's other nationality, in Lebanon. In addition, whenever Syria wished to send a cautionary message to Hariri, an influential Syrian elite would publicly support Karami or appear in public with him. For example, the Syrian Vice President attended the commemoration of Karami's brother's assassination in June of 2000, just before the 2000 elections, at a time when tensions were rising between Hariri and Syria due to Bashar's accession to the Syrian Presidency after the death of his father.<sup>65</sup>

### Lebanese Stability During the Pax Syriana

Political violence in the Pax Syriana must be differentiated between international and domestic political violence. International political violence was closely managed. An acceptable level of violence was set between Israel and Hizballah and was more or less constant, excepting flareups in 1993 and 1996. Domestic political violence, however, was much more closely tied to the control Syria had over the country. The main form of political violence in Lebanon, from the civil war to the modern day, is the assassination of elites, particularly by car bomb.<sup>66</sup> The early period post-Ta'if of 1990-91 involved mass political violence as Syria and the Lebanese state eliminated spoilers and disarmed militias. 1992 and 1993 were incredibly calm for domestic political violence, as Syria cemented control and began repressing activism and dissent,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>66</sup> Knudsen, "Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?," 8.

particularly among Lebanese Christians. This period of relative calm brought on by Syrian repression lasted through the rest of the 1990s Israel's withdrawal from Southern Lebanon and the death of Hafez al-Assad, both in 2000, marked Syria's decline in Lebanon. Violence in this period dramatically increased as repression and power struggles intensified.

The Pax Syriana was characterized by controlled international political violence. Hizballah and Israel established what came to be known as the "rules of the game" via oral agreement 1993 after Israel launched Operation Accountability aimed at curtailing Hizballah.<sup>67</sup> The rules of the game were that Israel would not attack civilian targets and Hizballah would limit their attacks to Israeli controlled Southern Lebanon.<sup>68</sup> While Hizballah did not coordinate with Syria or act on Syrian orders to attack Israel, there is some indication that they notified Syria of impending attacks.<sup>69</sup> In addition, Syria made no move to disarm the group and Hizballah resisted all Syrian efforts to reign them in.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, Syria along with Iran armed Hizballah. Most conflict between Hizballah and Israel was actually conducted between Hizballah and Israel's militia, the South Lebanese Army (SLA), which occupied a strip of Southern Lebanon and acted as a buffer force. Thus, the rules of the game were adhered to.

During the Lebanese Civil War, a Christian unit of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) attempted to establish a buffer zone on the Israeli-Lebanese border to prevent attacks by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and reprisals by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), thereby protecting Lebanese citizens, particularly Lebanese Christians, from these attacks.<sup>71</sup> The

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<sup>67</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 84.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 83.

<sup>69</sup> Abbas William Samii, "A Stable Structure on Shifting Sands: Assessing the Hizballah-Iran-Syria Relationship," *The Middle East Journal* 62, no. 1 (January 15, 2008): 43.

<sup>70</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 72.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 230.

LAF eventually disbanded this unit, but the Israelis began to supply it as a buffer force and thus the SLA was born and became one of the many foreign supplied militias fighting in Lebanon's civil war.<sup>72</sup> Following the Ta'if Agreement, Israel prevented the LAF from disarming the SLA in light of continuing attacks from Hizballah.<sup>73</sup> The SLA remained until 2000 when Israel unilaterally withdrew its support for the militia and its territory was quickly overrun by Hizballah fighters.

While the SLA was an Israeli proxy, it is not accurate to characterize Lebanon at this time as part of the proxy model due to two important factors. The first of these is that the SLA's primary role was that of a buffer force between the Israeli border and Hizballah in Southern Lebanon. It might be more accurate to call Israel the overlord of the small strip of land that the SLA, later supplemented by IDF troops, controlled. Thus, the SLA had no impact on Lebanese society or politics outside of the area it controlled and was treated by the rest of the country as an area under enemy occupation. The SLA was not a proxy dedicated to expanding the influence of its benefactor at the expense of another state and made no effort to expand the territory it controlled. The second reason is the sheer control that the Syrian state had over Lebanon and its depth of influence in all sectors of society means that there was no space for overt proxies.

Both Hizballah and Israel routinely broke the rules of the game and in 1996 it resulted in large-scale Israeli military action.<sup>74</sup> The IDF launched Operation Grapes of Wrath after Israel mistakenly launched a missile that killed two civilians and Hizballah responded by launching missiles into Northern Israel.<sup>75</sup> Israel's goal, as it had been with previous invasions against the

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 242.

<sup>73</sup> Abraham, *The Lebanon War*, 196.

<sup>74</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 85.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 84.

PLO in Lebanon, was to get Syria to reign in Hizballah and undermine their public support.<sup>76</sup> This backfired completely for the Israelis, as it resulted in a massacre at the ancient village of Qana and the bombing of a UN base, killing 106 civilians.<sup>77</sup> Israel claimed the latter was unintentional; however, the UN, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch all challenge that claim strongly.<sup>78</sup> The seventeen day conflict resulted in 170 deaths.<sup>79</sup> The resolution of Operation Grapes of Wrath involved the parties again agreeing to the rules of the game, this time on an unsigned piece of paper and provisions for a group of the US, France, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria to monitor violations.<sup>80</sup>

Domestic political violence in Lebanon was heavily correlated with Syria's level of control. Political violence was higher at the beginning and end of the Pax Syriana when Syria was still cementing its control over the country and when it began to lose control than in the middle period where it had more or less full control over Lebanon. Culpability for acts of political violence in Lebanon is difficult to establish due to the vast majority of assassinations remaining unsolved.<sup>81</sup> This also makes it difficult to differentiate between those committed by state actors, Lebanese, Syrian, and Israeli, and those committed by domestic political factions. All attributions of responsibility in this section are presumed, but not confirmed.

The immediate aftermath of the Ta'if Agreement from 1989-1991 contained high levels of political violence, to the point that this period is sometimes included as part of the civil war. Commander of the LAF Michel Aoun rejected the Ta'if Agreement over concerns about the lack

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Knudsen, "Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?," 12.

<sup>80</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 85.

<sup>81</sup> Knudsen, "Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?," 18.

of timetable for Syrian withdrawal, seized the Presidential Palace, dissolved Parliament, and named himself President.<sup>82</sup> The members of Parliament, who signed the Ta'if Agreement and did not recognize Aoun's move, elected Rene Moawad president.<sup>83</sup> An uneasy standoff ensued for the next several months, until Moawad was assassinated by car bomb in November 1989.<sup>84</sup> Moawad was one of five Lebanese elites assassinated in this three-year period, while there were attempts on two others.<sup>85</sup> Elias Hrawi was soon appointed President and agreed to a military offensive against Aoun and his supporters in 1990, causing him to seek refuge in the French Embassy and eventually exile in France.<sup>86</sup> The LAF proceeded to fight small skirmishes with heavily depleted and war-weary Palestinian groups and reduced their territory to the Palestinian refugee camps.<sup>87</sup> These actions cemented the Lebanese state's rule over the vast majority of Lebanon's territory and with it Syria's control over Lebanon.

The rest of the 1990s had low levels of political violence. Syria instituted state repression, especially of Maronite Christian activists. Hundreds of people were arrested and tortured.<sup>88</sup> In 1993, the LAF was called in against student demonstrators.<sup>89</sup> The mid-1990's marked a slight increase in sectarian violence including the bombing of a church in a village near Beirut in 1994 that killed 10 people.<sup>90</sup> There were also several instances of fighting between rival Islamist groups.<sup>91</sup> There were seven assassinations of elites in this eight-year period including four judges

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<sup>82</sup> Abraham, *The Lebanon War*, 165.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 167.

<sup>85</sup> Knudsen, "Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?," 4.

<sup>86</sup> Abraham, *The Lebanon War*, 181.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 194.

<sup>88</sup> Ane Knudsen and Nasser Yassin "Political Violence in post-Civil War Lebanon" in Mats R Berdal, and Astri Suhrke. *The Peace in Between: Post-War Violence and Peacebuilding*. Studies in Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding. London: Routledge, 2012, 122.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Knudsen, "Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?," 12.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

gunned down in a courtroom in 1999, marking only four distinct assassination attempts.<sup>92</sup> This is a marked decrease from the early period, with just over half as many attempts in a period almost twice as long.

The turn of the millennium was also a turning point for Syrian control in Lebanon. The Israelis withdrew from Southern Lebanon, putting a spotlight on Syrian military presence. In addition, longtime Syrian ruler Hafez al-Assad died, leaving power to his son Bashar. This led to a short period of instability within Syria as Bashar consolidated power, taking it away from the old guard. This had ramifications in Lebanon. There were six assassinations and one attempt in this five-year period, not counting Rafiq Hariri's.<sup>93</sup> Syria began cracking down hard on activists urging withdrawal as Lebanese and international pressure grew. Reconciliation between the Maronite Patriarch and Walid Jumblatt, head of the majority Druze Progressive Socialist Party led to a mass crackdown on anti-Syrian opposition in 2002.<sup>94</sup> This was also the year that five of the assassinations in this period took place.<sup>95</sup> In 2002 and 2004, two Maronite Christian student activists were tortured and killed, sparking protests.<sup>96</sup> These killings are likely to have been committed by the Syrian government. There was also an assassination attempt on a Druze MP who voted against the constitutional amendment allowing Emile Lahoud to stay on as President.<sup>97</sup> Assassinations likely committed by foreign actors also came back in this period. Former Maronite MP, minister, and militia leader Elie Hobeika and one of his associates were assassinated in separate incidents in 2002, as Hobeika had declared his intention to speak about his role in the Sabra and Shatila massacres, widely considered the worst of the civil war, as part

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>94</sup> Knudsen and Yassin "Political Violence in post-Civil War Lebanon," 123.

<sup>95</sup> Knudsen, "Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?," 4-5.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 14.

of a war crimes lawsuit against former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.<sup>98</sup> While these assassinations, like the vast majority of those described here are unsolved, the Israelis are suspected. All of this violence culminated in the assassination of Former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005, sparking the Cedar Revolution, which will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Syria controlled Lebanese politics to the degree that if they had wished, they could have forced through major constitutional reforms. However, the Lebanese constitutional system with its multiple appointed executive positions and complex election procedures made it easier for Syria to manipulate through gerrymandering and exerting its influence. Furthermore, as has been shown, Syria benefitted from controlled tension between Lebanon's confessional groups. Syria had no incentive to reform Lebanon's gridlocked consociational government. As such, there were no major attempts at constitutional reform during this period, with the exception of Syria amending the constitution thrice to allow its preferred candidate to hold the position of President. Options for major constitutional reform have remained essentially the same since the Ta'if Agreement and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

## The Rise of Proxies

Several events of the first years of the new millennium marked the decline of Syria's control over Lebanon. As this happened, Saudi Arabia and Iran, which had been building up their influence since the civil war, were in prime position to fill the vacuum left by Syria's withdrawal. The first blows to Syria's legitimacy and control in Lebanon came in the year 2000. As discussed in the previous section, the death of Hafez al-Assad and Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon were serious blows to Syria. These two events meant that while Bashar al-Assad was

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 13.

focused on consolidating power around his new rule on the home front, Israeli withdrawal brought increasing pressure to withdraw from the US and the UN. In addition, the events of 9/11 further constrained Syria by bringing US and Western attention back firmly to the Middle East and the creation of the “state sponsor of terror” designation significantly impacted Syria’s material and diplomatic support to Hizballah.<sup>99</sup>

Saudi Arabia, ever since the Ta’if Agreement has seen its role in Lebanon to be the protector of Sunni interests. As such, the Kingdom has given monetary, political, and diplomatic support to the Sunni-majority Future Movement led by Rafiq Hariri. Gulf investors were central to Hariri’s project of rebuilding downtown Beirut after the civil war.<sup>100</sup> In addition, Hariri pegged the Lebanese currency to the US dollar in 1999, which meant that Lebanon began to take on massive debt levels. This was maintained by foreign investment, largely from Gulf states including primarily Saudi Arabia.<sup>101</sup> The Saudis have long been wary of rising Iranian influence in Lebanon. Before 2005, Saudi Arabia had reasonable relations with Syria and played an important role in mediating between the US and Syria in the early 2000s over Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon.<sup>102</sup> It attempted to work out a deal where Syria would withdraw its troops from Lebanon in exchange for a reduction in US pressure.<sup>103</sup>

Connection between Iran and Hizballah goes back to the foundation of the latter in the early 1980s. Iran was Hizballah’s main financial and military backer all through the latter half of

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<sup>99</sup> Samii, “A Stable Structure on Shifting Sands,” 45.

<sup>100</sup> “Analysis | Lebanon’s Economic Dependence on Saudi Arabia Is Dangerous,” *Washington Post*, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/12/07/hariri-is-back-as-lebanons-prime-minister-heres-how-saudi-economic-influence-still-shapes-lebanese-politics/>.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Banafsheh Keynoush, *Saudi Arabia And Iran: Friends or Foes?*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 204.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

the civil war.<sup>104</sup> Iranian pressure on Syria prevented the LAF from disarming Hizballah in 1990.<sup>105</sup> In the meantime, Iran continued to supply arms, including heavy weapons to Hizballah, such that it is now a stronger military force than the LAF.<sup>106</sup> Iranian was also the main driver behind Hizballah's non-disarmament after Israel's withdrawal from Southern Lebanon.<sup>107</sup> In the aftermath of Israeli withdrawal, pro-Syrian and pro-Iranian factions emerged within the organization. The pro-Iranian faction advocated further hostilities with Israel, focusing on the Shebaa Farms disputed border area.<sup>108</sup> The pro-Syrian faction meanwhile urged restraint within the group. This reflected Syrian pullback from anti-Israeli activities post-9/11 for fear of being labeled a state sponsor of terror.<sup>109</sup> The pro-Iranian faction prevailed in that struggle and Hizballah began attacks on the Shebaa Farms region; however, they did not notify Syria of these attacks for fear that the Syrians would betray them to the Israelis.<sup>110</sup>

Saudi Arabia and Iran had established strong relations with the Future Movement and Hizballah going back to the end of the civil war and continued to build those relationships over the course of the Pax Syriana. However, these relationships and any rivalry between the two states was under Syria's overarching occupation. When the Syrians withdrew from Lebanon and their grip of the country went away, Saudi Arabia and Iran filled in the vacuum. Now instead of a dominant overlord, international influence was split between two ideologically opposed powers, which already had significant influence over rival domestic factions.

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<sup>104</sup> Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, 281.

<sup>105</sup> Abraham, *The Lebanon War*, 191.

<sup>106</sup> Lina Khatib and Maxwell Gardiner, "Lebanon: Situation Report" (Carnegie Middle East Center, April 17, 2005), <https://carnegie-mec.org/2015/04/17/lebanon-situation-report-pub-59832>.

<sup>107</sup> Abbas William Samii, "A Stable Structure on Shifting Sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria Relationship," *The Middle East Journal* 62, no. 1 (January 15, 2008): 43.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

## The Proxy Model: Lebanon After the Cedar Revolution (2005-)

### Introduction

The Cedar Revolution, following the dramatic assassination of Rafik Hariri by massive car bomb on February 14, 2005, resulted in Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon. Hariri's assassination brought tens of thousands of people into the streets first on March 8<sup>th</sup> in a pro-Syria demonstration led by Hizballah and Amal and then a much larger demonstration on March 14<sup>th</sup> telling the Syrians it was time for them to leave Lebanon. While Syria continued to exert some influence in the country, Saudi Arabia and Iran became the main foreign influencers in Lebanon. These two nations have been locked in a regional rivalry that has intensified since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and again following the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), otherwise known as the Iran Nuclear Deal. This rivalry has resulted in several proxy wars, the most prominent examples of which are the Syrian Civil War and the war in Yemen. Continuing conflict in Iraq since the 2003 invasion has also taken on characteristics of proxy warfare.

Lebanon has not been immune from this type of proxy conflict; however, it has not resulted in all out warfare thus far. The Saudi relationship with the Sunni Future Movement, now led by Rafiq Hariri's son Saad, has only increased in this period. The same is true of Iranian support for Hizballah. Saudi Arabia and Iran have clearly put their own interests in the rivalry for regional hegemony over the interests of peace and stability in Lebanon. Both states have undertaken major destabilizing actions in Lebanon that have raised tensions and fears and even brought Lebanon to the brink of renewed civil warfare. External benefaction has brought fresh divisions between the two sides and have made efforts at unity nearly impossible. That being said, Saudi Arabia and Iran have seldom resorted to direct interference in Lebanese society and

politics of the kind that Syria engaged in, preferring to act through their proxies. The proxy model in Lebanon has resulted in a low level of stability marked by a high level of political violence and continuing non-viability of major political reforms. Basic governing has been inhibited by this model as well. The end of Syria's overlordship removed the final arbiter of all disputes and the past 14 years have been characterized by infrequent elections, long periods of unelected shadow governments, and frequent gridlock. It is remarkable that Lebanon has not succumbed to renewed warfare under these conditions.

## Regional Hegemony in the Middle East

In the aftermath of the Cedar Revolution, new political power blocs were created. Two alliances, the pro-Syrian March 8 alliance and the anti-Syrian March 14 alliance grew out of the two major protests in Lebanon following Rafiq Hariri's assassination. The March 8 alliance is primarily made up of the Shi'a parties Hizballah and Amal and in a strange turn of events the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) led by a returned Michel Aoun<sup>111</sup>. The FPM entered into an electoral alliance with Hizballah in the late 2000s and has represented the pro-Syrian Christian wing. The March 14 alliance is primarily made up of the Future Movement, as well as the Christian parties of Kata'ib and Lebanese Forces, which morphed into political parties following their disarmament as militias. While initially these alliances were centered around Lebanon's relationship with Syria, the largest parties within them, the Future Movement and Hizballah, have increasingly become proxies in the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran in recent years.

The greatly diminished power of Lebanon's Christians is a testament to the power of outside actors in Lebanese politics. Defined by opposition to Syria and political boycotts,

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<sup>111</sup> Michel Aoun was exiled from Lebanon to France after violently resisting the Ta'if Agreement because of the strong role it provided for Syria and the lack of timetable for Syrian withdrawal.

Lebanese Christians found themselves without an external benefactor as Saudi and Iranian patronage of Sunni and Shi'a respectively dramatically increased. The division between Christian parties orchestrated by the Syrians during the Pax Syriana has continued in the division of Christian parties between the March 8 and March 14 alliance and has been unaffected by the transition of the alliances along the Saudi-Iranian axis. As such, Christians continue to be politically divided and subordinated under Sunni and Shi'a parties.

Since 2005, Saudi Arabia and Israel's interests in Lebanon have grown closer together. Both states are invested in countering the influence of Iran, especially through its proxy, Hizballah. For Israel, the concern is security, as Iran increasingly seeks to become the new champion of the Palestinian cause and is increasingly aggressive towards Israel. Iran has begun shipping weapons and aid to Hamas in Gaza and fomenting militant action among Palestinians against Israel, in addition to its support for Hizballah on Israel's northern border.<sup>112</sup> Countering Iran and Hizballah is a paramount security issue for Israel. In the last few years, Saudi Arabia and Israel have increased ties, holding friendly bilateral ties and opening Saudi airspace to planes with Israeli destinations.<sup>113</sup> The two states have created an informal alliance firmly aimed at Iran, partly due to US withdrawal from the region and increasing wariness towards its alliances with both states.<sup>114</sup>

Syria's interests in this period have become much closer to those of Iran. As the region has increasingly been split along sectarian lines at the political level, Syria's Alawite Shi'a

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<sup>112</sup> "Iran and the Palestinians | The Iran Primer," accessed April 11, 2019, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-palestinians>.

<sup>113</sup> Oliver Holmes, "Israel-Bound Plane Flies over Saudi Arabia for First Time," *The Guardian*, March 23, 2018, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/23/israel-bound-flight-crosses-saudi-arabia-airspace-first-time>.

<sup>114</sup> Jonathan Marcus, "Saudi Remarks on Israel Signal Key Shift," April 3, 2018, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43632905>.

government has become much closer tied to Iran. Also, while in previous years Syria has eyed Iran warily, the Syrian Civil War has made the two allies of necessity. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps has been active in the conflict and Iranian bases in Syria have been the subject of several Israeli airstrikes.<sup>115</sup> As the Syrian government has framed the conflict in more and more sectarian terms, aid from their fellow Shi'a state has increased. Syrian actions towards Lebanon in this period have been aimed at two main goals. The first is to ensure that the country is never implicated for any of the crimes and abuses it committed both during the Lebanese Civil War and the Pax Syriana, especially the assassination of Rafiq Hariri. The second is to politically aid Hizballah and other Shi'a groups against the Future Movement and the other members of the March 14 Alliance.

Saudi Arabia, Israel, Hizballah as Iran's proxy, and Syria have all taken major destabilizing actions in Lebanon that have threatened the state and its stability over the last 14 years in order to combat a threat to its interests or put pressure on the other side. Most recently, in 2017, the Saudis asserted their influence in Lebanon by essentially kidnapping Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri. In a truly bizarre incident, Hariri, on a visit to Saudi Arabia was summoned to the Saudi royal offices, stripped of his cell phone, separated from his bodyguards and given a prewritten resignation speech to read on Saudi television, blaming Iran for the sudden move.<sup>116</sup> Hariri rescinded his resignation upon returning to Lebanon after diplomatic pressure from the West released him from Saudi Arabia.<sup>117</sup> This brazen move backfired on the

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<sup>115</sup> Raf Sanchez, "11 Killed in Israeli Airstrikes against Iranian Bases in Syria," *The Telegraph*, January 21, 2019, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/01/21/israeli-military-strikes-iranian-targets-syria/>.

<sup>116</sup> Anne Barnard and Maria Abi-Habib, "Why Saad Hariri Had That Strange Sojourn in Saudi Arabia," *New York Times*, December 24, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/24/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-saad-hariri-mohammed-bin-salman-lebanon.html>.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

Kingdom and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, but it serves as an example of Saudi Arabia's willingness to violate Lebanese sovereignty for its own regional interests.

The 2006 Israeli invasion, while a defeat for Israel, showed that they were willing to sacrifice Lebanese stability to combat Iranian control by proxy of southern Lebanon. The conflict was sparked when a Hizballah cross border raid killed three IDF soldiers and captured two more.<sup>118</sup> The response took a familiar pattern. The Israelis responded by invading southern Lebanon and bombing both military and civilian targets including Rafiq Hariri International Airport.<sup>119</sup> They also established a naval and air blockade. The conflict was fought over 33 days and resulted in a stalemate. The conflict killed an estimated 1100-1300 Lebanese and destroyed much of Lebanon's infrastructure which was still being rebuilt from the civil war.<sup>120</sup> The bombing campaign destroyed 400 miles of road, 73 bridges, utilities stations, including power plants and water treatment centers, 25 fuel stations, 350 schools, two hospitals, and some 15,000 homes.<sup>121</sup> The invasion backfired not only because Hizballah held out against the numerically and technologically superior IDF, but Hizballah gained legitimacy in its role as a check on Israeli aggression with the Lebanese public, despite instigating the conflict.

Hizballah has been the most destabilizing actor in Lebanon. Since Syrian withdrawal, Hizballah has been much more aggressive in challenging the Lebanese state. It is widely believed that Hizballah carried out the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005 on the orders of Syria, sparking the Cedar Revolution that forced Syrian withdrawal. In 2008, it turned its guns directly against the state, following the government's declaration of

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<sup>118</sup> Knudsen, "Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?," 15.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> "Mideast War, by the Numbers," accessed November 13, 2018, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/17/AR2006081700909\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/17/AR2006081700909_pf.html).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

Hizballah's parallel communication network to be illegal.<sup>122</sup> In response, it occupied West Beirut and fought street battles with Sunni militiamen tied to the Future Movement who were in power at the time. This return to militia-based fighting in Beirut brought back stark memories of the Lebanese Civil War and is the closest Lebanon has come to a return to full-fledged civil warfare. The fighting lasted roughly one week before the LAF intervened and forced a ceasefire. In that time, it killed 65 people and wounded more than 200.<sup>123</sup> The parties signed the Doha Agreement, in which the government backed down from its earlier declaration. There is little indication that Iran played a role in starting the conflict, but its weapons shipments to Hizballah were central to having the capability to engage in this conflict. Despite getting the government to back down, Hizballah came out negatively from this conflict. By challenging the state, it lost more legitimacy than it had gained during the Israeli invasion and turned many Lebanese Sunni firmly against the group.

The Syrians and Iranians have again played a direct role in undermining Lebanese sovereignty in recent years. Most recently, in 2012, the head of the Intelligence branch of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces was assassinated by car bomb. This attack had remarkable similarities to the one that killed Hariri and almost sent Lebanon into a new round of sectarian warfare. It is suspected that Syrian intelligence carried out the assassination, aided by Iran, in order to drag Lebanon into civil conflict that would mirror the Syrian Civil War.<sup>124</sup> Hizballah came out and strongly condemned the assassination.<sup>125</sup> It is believed that the assassination of the ISF Intelligence branch head was done without the involvement of Hizballah.

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<sup>122</sup> Khatib and Gardiner, "Lebanon: Situation Report."

<sup>123</sup> Knudsen, "Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?," 17.

<sup>124</sup> "Beirut Blast Kills Top Official," October 19, 2012, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20008827>.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

In 2012, Hizballah entered the Syrian Civil War on the side of the Syrian government. Militiamen have been seen fighting alongside regular units of the Syrian Army against rebel forces. Initially, it appeared that Hizballah had limited its engagement to holding strategically located villages with significant Shi'a population of Lebanese citizenship.<sup>126</sup> However, by 2013, Hizballah was fully enmeshed in the conflict, undertaking military operations in full coordination with the regime, including sending 2000 fighters to the battle for Aleppo.<sup>127</sup> Hizballah has declared that it is in Syria to protect against the rise of Islamic extremists.<sup>128</sup> However, it is hard to believe that Hizballah would do this without some pressure from Tehran, since relations between Hizballah and Syria have never been particularly close. The two have been referred to as allies of convenience.<sup>129</sup> Military involvement in the Syrian conflict has opened Lebanon up as a target for attacks from Sunni militant groups, which will be developed further in the next section.

### Lebanese Instability After the Cedar Revolution

This period in Lebanese history has been referred to as a “cold civil war.”<sup>130</sup> Including Rafiq Hariri's, there were 16 assassinations of Lebanese elites and four attempted assassinations just between 2005 and 2009, marking a substantial increase from any period during the Pax Syriana.<sup>131</sup> In addition, militias have rearsen, closely linked to political parties and their leaders. At times, these militias have fought street battles in Beirut and Tripoli, marking a new type of sectarian conflict. Several of the events described in the previous paragraph included heavy

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<sup>126</sup> “Hezbollah Chief Says Group Is Fighting in Syria,” accessed April 11, 2019, <https://news.yahoo.com/hezbollah-chief-says-group-fighting-syria-162721809.html>.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Samii, “A Stable Structure on Shifting Sands,” 39.

<sup>130</sup> Knudsen, “Acquiescence to Assassinations in Post-Civil War Lebanon?,” 16.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 5.

incidents of political violence. It is difficult to separate instances of foreign interference in Lebanon over the last fourteen years from the political violence that has accompanied it.

Following the end of the Israeli invasion, domestic political violence broke out in full force in 2007. After Hizballah and Amal withdrew their cabinet ministers in October 2006 over disagreements having to do with the ratification of the international tribunal into the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, Pierre Gemayel Jr. was assassinated in a drive-by shooting.<sup>132</sup> He represented the third member of his family to be assassinated in the preceding 25 years. Violence soon turned sectarian as young men were killed in demonstrations, student clashes, and street brawls.<sup>133</sup> A bus bombing in February 2007, killing four Maronite commuters, added to the tension.<sup>134</sup> In May of that year, fighting broke out between the LAF and Fatah al-Islam, a Salafi-Jihadist group that had taken over a Palestinian refugee camp outside Tripoli.<sup>135</sup> After three months of fighting, the camp was destroyed and 500 people were dead, including 250 militants, 169 LAF troops, and 47 Palestinians. Another two assassinations of MPs took place in 2007, both heavily linked to political aims.<sup>136</sup> In this environment, militias rearose and symbols and habits from the civil war reappeared.<sup>137</sup>

Hizballah has been both a perpetrator and a target of political violence in Lebanon. It is strongly believed that Hizballah carried about the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005, a belief supported by the fact that Hizballah is also suspected in the assassinations of multiple heads of the investigation into Hariri's death. Hizballah has been active in the Syrian

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

conflict since 2012 and has made Lebanon a party to the conflict. In response, Salafi-jihadist groups such as al Nusra Front have attacked Hizballah offices and assassinated Hizballah military figures in Lebanon.<sup>138</sup> These attacks have also killed and wounded numerous civilians, uninvolved in the conflict. There have been at least ten major attacks targeting Hizballah, Lebanese Shi'a, or the Lebanese government perpetrated by Salafi Jihadist groups since 2013.<sup>139</sup>

In addition, fighting has broken out at various times over the last decade in Tripoli between the poor Sunni neighborhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh and the wealthier hilltop neighborhood of Jabal Mohsen inhabited by the Alawite<sup>140</sup> Shi'a minority.<sup>141</sup> The violence has killed 141 people between 2008 and 2013.<sup>142</sup> This conflict has mirrored the Syrian Civil War due to Tripoli's proximity to the Syrian border and the close religious makeup of the city to nearby Syrian towns.<sup>143</sup> The fighting has been marked by the reemergence of militias, bringing concern to those who remember the civil war. Both the Arab Alawite Democratic Party (ADP), with its Red Knights militia and former Sunni Prime Minister Nijab Mikati, who is close to the Assad family, have funneled weapons and money into the conflict.<sup>144</sup> On the other side, former LAF officers close to the Future Movement have armed and funded assassinations and attacks on local pro-Assad leaders and political parties.<sup>145</sup> Violence targeting Alawite citizens has also been rampant. The burning and destruction of Alawite shops is common.<sup>146</sup> Twin bombings of Sunni

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<sup>138</sup> Lina Khatib, "Regional Spillover: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://carnegie-mec.org/2014/06/09/regional-spillover-lebanon-and-syrian-conflict-pub-55829>.

<sup>139</sup> This is a count by the author taken from various sources.

<sup>140</sup> The Assad ruling family in Syria is also Alawite and the religious structure of Tripoli mirrors that of Syria.

<sup>141</sup> Rafael Lefevre, "The Roots of Crisis in Northern Lebanon" (Carnegie Middle East Center, April 15, 2014), <http://carnegie-mec.org/2014/04/15/roots-of-crisis-in-northern-lebanon/h9yc>.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: Sectarian Attacks in Tripoli," Human Rights Watch, December 19, 2013, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/19/lebanon-sectarian-attacks-tripoli>.

mosques killed over 40 people in November of 2013 and wounded over 400.<sup>147</sup> The leader of the ADP, which has close ties to Syria, was charged with smuggling a suspect in the bombing out of Tripoli. Violence and intimidation by militants have gone unimpeded by security forces, even in administrative buildings.<sup>148</sup> Armed clashes in late May and early June 2013 killed over 40 people.<sup>149</sup> Violence in Tripoli typifies the violence occurring in Lebanon over the last decade and a half.

Recent developments in Lebanon are worrying for the state's ability to solve these issues. Lebanon held parliamentary elections in May of 2018 after having postponed them three times since they were originally scheduled in 2013. In the meantime, Lebanon was run by a shadow government as the two alliances failed to agree on an election law.<sup>150</sup> The March 8 Alliance did very well in the 2018 elections with the Christian Free Patriotic Movement headed by Michel Aoun, who is currently serving as Lebanese President, Hizballah, and Amal all gaining seats, while Saad Hariri's Future Movement lost over a third of its seats. However, talks over forming a cabinet lasted nine months with Hariri refusing to allow any politicians from Hizballah's lists into the cabinet.<sup>151</sup> A new government was finally announced at the end of January 2019, with Hizballah able to choose the new Minister of Education, as long as he is not one of Hizballah's candidates.<sup>152</sup>

The regional dynamic has undermined domestic efforts to reform Lebanon's politics. There is a broad consensus among elites that it would be ideal to move to a non-confessional

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Khatib and Gardiner, "Lebanon: Situation Report."

<sup>151</sup> "Lebanon Agrees New Government, PM Vows Bold Reforms," *Reuters*, January 31, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-government-idUSKCN1PP26I>.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

system, where seats and ministerial positions are not given based confessional proportionality, albeit large confessional groups are more supportive than small ones.<sup>153</sup> The Shi'a are most supportive of rapid deconfessionalization as they are most disadvantaged by the current system. Sunnis and Christians are supportive of more gradual deconfessionalization with robust guarantees of minority rights.<sup>154</sup> The Druze and Armenian minorities are completely against the idea, as the confessional system allows them disproportionate power to their size.<sup>155</sup> The Ta'if Agreement also speaks of a Senate to be created when the parliament is deconfessionalized that would still contain sectarian confessionalism, but would only rule on existential and humanitarian questions. The Druze are in favor of this idea especially, since under the Ta'if Agreement, a member of the Druze community would lead this body.<sup>156</sup> However, as long as the desired reforms such as deconfessionalization and the disarmament of Hizballah are seen in the eyes of Saudi Arabia and Iran to benefit their rival, political, economic, and diplomatic pressure will enforce the status quo.

Lebanese elites would also like to see a number of reforms passed aimed at peacebuilding and transitional justice. They put strong emphasis on education reform, especially pertaining to national civil education and the establishment of a Lebanese national identity.<sup>157</sup> They would also like to establish an independent judiciary that would remove sectarian influence on court proceedings.<sup>158</sup> The establishment of new cross-confessional political parties is another goal.<sup>159</sup> In addition, the memory of the civil war must be dealt with in order to move onto a new better

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<sup>153</sup> El-Husseini, *Pax Syriana: Elite Politics in Postwar Lebanon*.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 210.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 211.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

system. The general amnesia about the events of the civil war has been detrimental to Lebanese society. There has been little to no effort put into addressing the wounds of war and bringing coexistence and individual reconciliation to a country that lost over 150,000 souls to brutal, chaotic civil war.<sup>160</sup> However, as both sides remain in an uneasy standoff between regional powers, these hopes and aspirations remain pipe dreams only expressed in interviews without any real momentum towards actually achieving them.

## Lebanon's Future

Lebanon, of the three cases discussed here, appears to be the closest to a return to civil war. All three cases are currently typified by large constitutional and political problems and political gridlock; however, Lebanon has the highest level of political violence and the most potential for a rapid increase in political violence. Regional dynamics and the roles and relative power of international actors would not have to shift in Lebanon for renewed large scale civil violence to occur. It is also the only case studied here to have no separation between political parties and political violence. With the exception of violence from international militant groups and foreign states, all political violence in Lebanon has been undertaken by groups tied to political parties. So long as Lebanon's neighborhood is as violent as it has become and Saudi Arabia and Iran are locked in fierce rivalry over regional hegemony, Lebanon will remain profoundly unstable and be a prime candidate for renewed violence.

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 212.

# The Liberal Intervention Model: Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Introduction

The Bosnian War was the worst conflict on European soil since World War II. The Dayton Peace Accords, which ended the conflict, provided the basis for a massive statebuilding project led by the international community. The results of this unprecedented endeavor have been mixed. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has not returned to the brutal violence of the early 1990s. However, the first year of implementation was chaotic, uncoordinated, and unproductive. In the years that followed, all progress towards implementing the Dayton Accords and addressing myriad issues of running a government has been made either by intense international pressure or by international fiat. The international community and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) have acted supranationally, pushing through policies aimed at overcoming sectarian division and promoting reconciliation over the objections of democratically elected politicians. This practice has reinforced intransigence among Bosnia's political parties and has trampled Bosnian sovereignty and Bosnians' democratic rights.

The OHR has acted with what the international community believes to be Bosnia's interest and its efforts have been aimed at promoting human rights, conflict resolution, peace, and stability in Bosnia. It has attempted to foster unity among Bosnia's ethnic groups, but for the most part, its actions have been counterproductive. The OHR has been heavily involved in all levels of Bosnian politics from the national parliament to municipal governments, passing legislation and removing elected officials.<sup>161</sup> Much like the overlord model drawn from Lebanon under Syrian rule, Bosnia has had a moderate level of stability due to low levels of political

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<sup>161</sup> David Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton* (London; Pluto Press, 1999), 78.

violence, but very little possibility of major political reforms. Compared to Pax Syriana era Lebanon, which also had a moderate level of stability, Bosnia has had slightly more political violence, but also shows somewhat more potential for reform. The biggest success of the international community and OHR as liberal intervention has been to keep other actors that may seek to advance their own interests in Bosnia from doing so. They have limited the ability of Serbia, Croatia, Russia, and Turkey from pursuing political agendas in Bosnia. The role and motivations of these states is of great concern as the OHR winds down its mandate and gradually withdraws from the country.

### The Statebuilding Project of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Dayton Peace Accords was a unique peace agreement in the sheer number of international organizations it provided explicit roles for. The implementation of the Dayton Accords required the international community to undertake a massive statebuilding project in Bosnia, one unlike any previous project in the breadth of different actors. The most prominent of these actors in the early years of implementation were NATO, which oversaw the Implementation Force (IFOR) of 60,000 troops, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which was in charge of Bosnia's elections, and the Office of the High Representative (OHR), headed at first by former Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt. The OHR was meant to be the coordinator of the implementation process and has played the most important role in the implementation process. Dayton also provided the European Court of Human Rights the role of overseeing Bosnia's Constitutional Court and control of refugees and displaced persons.<sup>162</sup> Dayton gave oversight of the Bosnian Central Bank to the International

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 45.

Monetary Fund (IMF).<sup>163</sup> In addition, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the International Police Task Force (IPTF) run by the UN were also given roles to play.<sup>164</sup> These are only the organizations that were explicitly given roles at Dayton; many others have also played roles since that time.

The sheer number of groups involved in implementation has meant that the process has been incredibly decentralized and has lacked a central message. Each organization has its domain and approach to statebuilding, which has led to squabbling over turf both between non-governmental and state actors.<sup>165</sup> This decentralization and lack of coordination between implementing actors seriously hindered the initial implementation process.<sup>166</sup> The OHR, which is the only body that could have undertaken coordination and messaging, began the implementation process with no staff, no office, and no money to rectify these problems.<sup>167</sup> In a situation that was incredibly time-sensitive, the delay in establishing the Office of the High Representative was inexcusable. The uncoordinated opening year of the implementation effort reinforced the message that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been getting throughout the war: the international community was incredibly incompetent and unwilling or unable to help them. This message played right into the hands of and was duly exploited by nationalists who wished to undermine the peace process. These nationalists included Radovan Karadzic, who was not only still at large, but regularly appeared on Serb media due to another failure of implementation.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Elizabeth M. Cousens and Charles K. Cater, *Toward Peace in Bosnia: Implementing the Dayton Accords*, International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 15.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Richard C. Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1998), 324.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 339.

In 1997, the Office of the High Representative was given sweeping powers to introduce legislation by fiat and to dismiss democratically elected politicians for going against Dayton or corruption.<sup>169</sup> The High Representative used these powers some 900 times between 1997 and 2010, a significant percentage coming during the term of Lord Paddy Ashdown as High Representative.<sup>170</sup> While it is true that progress was made during this time, it was made only by using the Bonn Powers and has not created the impetus for future reforms. In fact, it has done the opposite. Overuse of the Bonn Powers has allowed nationalist party leaders to garner support with their constituents by railing against reforms that they know are necessary, since the OHR will simply impose them, costing the politicians nothing.<sup>171</sup> The cycle of dependency that has arisen is troubling for Bosnia's future.

The OHR, which was set up to implement Dayton, has routinely invoked the "spirit of Dayton" in order to move beyond the provisions outlined in the text. Members of all three nationalist parties have criticized the OHR for stepping beyond its authority and failing to respect the ethnic autonomy provisions of the Dayton Accords.<sup>172</sup> Especially in the first few years of international implementation, little policy was actually developed by elected representatives themselves either at the level of the central government or in the entities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Federation) and the Republika Srpska (RS).<sup>173</sup> The heaviest foreign interference was in the RS, but the US and OHR collaborated to write much of the Federation's policy as well. Any opposition to these policies has been construed as obstruction to the

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<sup>169</sup> These powers are commonly referred to as the Bonn Powers.

<sup>170</sup> Eric Gordy, "Dayton's Annex 4 Constitution at 20: Political Stalemate, Public Dissatisfaction and the Rebirth of Self-Organisation," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 15, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 615.

<sup>171</sup> Roberto Belloni, "Bosnia: Dayton Is Dead! Long Live Dayton!," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 15, no. 3-4 (December 17, 2009): 365.

<sup>172</sup> Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*, 71.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, 78

implementation of Dayton and has been sanctioned accordingly.<sup>174</sup> Much of the opposition is correctly identified as obstruction; however, the OHR in its response has utterly failed to undermine support for obstructionist policy and politicians. In fact, it has most likely strengthened its appeal.<sup>175</sup>

International statebuilding in BiH violated Bosnian sovereignty and self-governance, especially in the first decade of implementation. The way the international community has gone about the implementation process has been paternalistic and even neo-imperialistic. The rhetoric coming from successive High Representatives and other leaders of international organizations has regarded Bosnians as ‘not ready for democracy’ and Bosnia has continually been held to higher standards than other nations in areas such as corruption and political disfunction.<sup>176</sup> The Office of the High Representative and OSCE especially have instead of decentralizing power in the manner that Dayton calls for, recentralized it in the hands of their own organizations.<sup>177</sup> The international community has preferred top-down solutions to bottom-up and involves Bosnians very little in its decision making.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, the decisions of the OHR are not subject to judicial review or legislative veto, thus forcing through democratization measures by undemocratic means.<sup>179</sup> The international community has funneled money into cross-ethnic political parties and opposition media sources. However, the result has been an overabundance of these entities, such that their impact is severely diluted.<sup>180</sup> None of them has found a core

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 127-128.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>178</sup> Belloni, “Bosnia,” 356–57.

<sup>179</sup> M. Weller and Stefan Wolff, *International State-Building after Violent Conflict: Bosnia Ten Years after Dayton* (London: Routledge, 2008), 40.

<sup>180</sup> Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*, 129.

sustainable audience and thus have folded without international support. Efforts in this regard have been counterproductive at best.

The international community has operated on the extremes with regard to elections as well. They held elections to show the world an artificial benchmark of democratization and then imposed legislation and basically ignored the authority of the officials that were elected. The 1996 elections are the best example of this. The OSCE on the ground wanted to show progress to the US and the EU.<sup>181</sup> Few people who had settled in a new locality after being internally displaced or those who had sought refuge outside the country were able to register for the 1996 elections.<sup>182</sup> The premature date resulted in voters being subjected to harassment and intimidation at polling places and the election of the three nationalist parties that had overseen the war.<sup>183</sup> After the elections and after the Bonn powers were granted, the international actors used the legitimacy of those elections to put in place policies that they wanted. David Chandler, writing about municipal elections in Mostar, says: “The beauty of the externally-administered electoral process was that the people living in Mostar could have an election in which the parties supporting the international community received only marginal support yet could have their policies implemented under the guise of ethnic equality and consensus politics. The elections were considered a success not because of the results, but because they provided a mechanism for enforcing the will of the international community.”<sup>184</sup> The international community made lemonade from the lemons of the 1996 election and the democratic rights of Bosnians were squeezed.

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<sup>181</sup> Cousens and Cater, *Toward Peace in Bosnia: Implementing the Dayton Accords*, 113.

<sup>182</sup> Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*, 123.

<sup>183</sup> Cousens and Cater, *Toward Peace in Bosnia: Implementing the Dayton Accords*, 113.

<sup>184</sup> Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*, 81.

## The Stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Much like Lebanon during the Pax Syriana, Bosnia's stability has been a mixed bag. The country has experienced low levels of political violence that have continued to decrease over time. However, Bosnia has made very little progress on the myriad of issues that plague its government. The most important of these is major constitutional reform that will be required if the country is to join the EU. The Annex 4 Constitution from the Dayton Accords was only meant to be temporary and yet it is still Bosnia's constitution after almost 25 years.

Political violence in Bosnia has been characterized by heavily controlled, low-level attacks meant not to disrupt the peace agreement, but to impede parts of the multicultural aspects of its implementation. Bosnia only experienced 42 deaths from political violence in the first five years after the Dayton.<sup>185</sup> Most of these deaths came in the immediate aftermath of Dayton before IFOR and the International Police Task Force (IPTF) had taken full control of security in the country.<sup>186</sup> Out of 199 instances of violence between 1995 and 1999, over 199 people were wounded in addition to the 42 who were killed.<sup>187</sup> 24% of these attacks were classified as reprisals<sup>188</sup> and 39% as a pattern of attacks<sup>189</sup>.<sup>190</sup>

Two major factors kept political violence in Bosnia low in the first few years post-Dayton. The first of these is the presence of IFOR/SFOR and UNPT. These two bodies have been remarkably successful. Neither IFOR, not SFOR suffered a single casualty in Bosnia. In the first two years of implementation, there were attacks aimed at IFOR and SFOR in order to test

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<sup>185</sup> Michael J. Boyle, *Violence after War: Explaining Instability in Post-Conflict States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 101.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>188</sup> "Acts clearly linked in retaliation to a previous act of violence"

<sup>189</sup> When the same type of crime happens repeatedly in a specific area.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*.

the resolve of the force. These included periodic shootings at helicopters that forced landings and grenade attacks at NATO vehicles.<sup>191</sup> Up until July 1996, Bosnian Serb leaders were threatening to shoot down NATO helicopters.<sup>192</sup> There were also attacks in Sarajevo and Mostar including sniper fire at streetcars and NATO troops and mortar attacks.<sup>193</sup> These types of attacks ceased by 1997, but rock-throwing at NATO buses and convoys escorting minorities continued until at least 2002.<sup>194</sup>

The second factor is that the major political parties kept control of their military and police forces after the Dayton Agreement was signed. The majority Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ-BiH), and the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) have kept control over even demobilized soldiers through pensions, disability benefits, tax breaks, and veterans' organizations.<sup>195</sup> The interests of these parties are geared towards not undermining the agreement while impeding the implementation of the multicultural provisions of it, as the agreement provides significant clientelist opportunities for them to give followers and cronies positions of political and economic power.<sup>196</sup> Thus, deadly political violence has been kept to a minimum while other forms of political violence plagued Bosnia in the early years of implementation. While the tight control of political violence by political parties kept deaths low and managed violence, it has negative effects upon Bosnia's level of stability.

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid, 130.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, 117.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 101.

Non-deadly political violence such as recurring riots aimed at minority returns, clear and regular patterns of assault and arson, and harassment of minority returnees were rampant in Bosnia from in the latter half of the 1990s. There is reasonable evidence for Bosnian political parties being behind this type of violence in order to undermine implementation, especially the starting of riots.<sup>197</sup> From 1995 to 1997, there were 1191 assaults, 986 incidents of harassment, 138 incidents of the interruption of free movement, 1060 explosions, 78 instances of sniper fire, 396 acts of arson, and 4675 evictions.<sup>198</sup> These acts of political violence were almost evenly split between the Republika Srpska and the Federation.<sup>199</sup> In the city of Doboj, over 1000 Serbs charged NATO troops who were escorting Bosniaks back to their homes. The mayor of Doboj is highly suspected of organizing the riot as local radio stations played Serb leaders calling on people to prevent Muslims from entering the city.<sup>200</sup> In another attack, a violent mob of 250 Serbs attacked a convoy of women in Prijedor visiting a former detention center. This attack was orchestrated by the Bosnian Serb leadership.<sup>201</sup>

The single greatest example of political violence was in the largely Serb eastern suburbs of Sarajevo. Shortly after Dayton, Bosnian Serb media began instructing Serbs in Sarajevo to burn their apartments and leave the city as the Serb section of the city was handed back to the Federation. Thugs and gangs began to harass Serbs into leaving the city. IFOR stayed in its barracks, not even sending its firefighting equipment as the Serb section of Sarajevo burned and people were forced from their homes.<sup>202</sup> All of this was captured by international media and played into the same narrative of helplessness and a toothless international force that would not

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 355.

protect Bosnian citizens. This was the single largest blow to implementation efforts seen in Bosnia. The resulting anger and distrust of the implementing actors in addition to the continuation of violence between ethnic groups were blows to the reconciliation process and further entrenched ordinary people in their hatred of the other ethnic groups.

The vast majority of political violence has been directed at minorities who return to ethnic enclaves. These attacks can sometimes spark cycles of reprisals. In April 1998, Croat extremists shot and killed two elderly Serbs and burned their houses to the ground. In response, hundreds of Serbs blocked Croats from entering Sunday mass. Afterwards 1500 Croats attacked the municipal offices, beat the mayor nearly to death, and assaulted IPTF staff.<sup>203</sup> In August 1997, 700 families in the city of Jajce were threatened by mobs and expelled in a single weekend.<sup>204</sup> In Mostar, there were over 70 attacks on Bosniak refugees in one year, ranging from confrontation by mobs to rockets fired into or near homes.<sup>205</sup> Including non-violent attacks, such as verbal harassment, there were 358 attacks on minorities between 2000 and 2002.<sup>206</sup> There were 277 in 2003, only 38 of which were violent, and 135 in 2004.<sup>207</sup>

Dayton's Annex 4 Constitution was intended as a temporary document. At some point in the future, Bosnia will come to the point that it requires a new one. At that time, all of the peoples of the country will have to come together and hammer out the most existential issues of the state. It is my supreme hope that this can be done without it descending into violence, but in any case, the international community should not play a role in this. The international community has not been able to decide what future it sees for Bosnia and the last thing Bosnians

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<sup>203</sup> Boyle, *Violence after War: Explaining Instability in Post-Conflict States*, 125.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

need in making the difficult sacrifices necessary for a new constitution is a muddled and confusing international insertion or worse different states aligning with domestic factions.<sup>208</sup> This is a decision that Bosnians must make among themselves, first through their representatives and then by a direct vote of the Bosnian people.

Between 2005 and 2006 there was a brief window of opportunity for meaningful political reforms in Bosnia. In response to a growing desire for EU accession, Bosnia's legislature asked for a report on its status with regards to joining the EU. The Venice Commission report laid out where Bosnia falls short in its political system and gives recommendations for ways to solve those issues. The biggest concern was the weakness of the Bosnian central government vis-à-vis the power of the RS and the Federation and its capacity and authority to enforce EU law.<sup>209</sup> It recommended reducing the power of the Vital National Interest veto<sup>210</sup>. The Venice Commission also recommended eliminating the House of Peoples, which is Bosnia's equivalent of the US Senate and move its tripartite presidency to a single indirectly elected president with power centralized in a council of ministers.<sup>211</sup> It raised concerns over Bosnia's lack of national identity and argued that the composition and method of Bosnia's elections would be inconsistent with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Court of Human Rights.<sup>212</sup>

In response, a working group was convened of all of Bosnia's political parties and led by a former deputy OHR. Over the course of a year, the working group settled on a package of reforms that was significantly different from those the Venice Commission recommended, but

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<sup>208</sup> Belloni, "Bosnia," 370.

<sup>209</sup> Don Hays and Jason Crosby, "From Dayton to Brussels: Constitutional Preparations for Bosnia's EU Accession," 2006, 12.

<sup>210</sup> This allows any of Bosnia's constituent peoples (Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs) to veto any bill deemed of vital national interest. It was included to prevent heavily discriminatory laws from over the objections of a particular group, but has been invoked for everything a party does not support.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

would have brought Bosnia into to line with EU standards.<sup>213</sup> However, the majority Bosniak Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH), concerned about upcoming elections dropped its support of the package at the last moment and it failed to meet the 2/3 majority required for constitutional change by a vote of 26-16.<sup>214</sup> The reform package has not been brought back up for discussion since it failed in 2006.

## Two Paths for Bosnia

Bosnia is very much at a crossroads for its future. The international community is in the process of backing away from its strong role in Bosnian statebuilding, while transitioning many of its responsibilities to the European Union. One path for Bosnia is all about gaining EU membership. The EU continues to work with Bosnia on political reforms in a way similar to other EU candidate states. This path is buoyed by the rise of some cross-confessional grassroots organizing over the past several years. At the same time, the diminishing role of the international community and the OHR in particular has allowed for the reengagement of other regional and world powers, namely, Serbia, Croatia, Turkey, and Russia. There is a strong possibility that international engagement shifts more towards a proxy model in the coming years with Serbia, Croatia, and Turkey each vying to advance nationalistic interests at the expense of Bosnian stability. In addition, increasing Russian influence in Bosnia at a time of increasing Russian assertiveness across Eastern Europe is worrying due to the possibility of the addition of a layer of struggle for global hegemony between the United States and Russia on top of a struggle for regional hegemony. This would resemble the dynamics currently ongoing in Syria, where the US and Russia are competing for global hegemony on top of a struggle for regional hegemony

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It is impossible to predict which of these scenarios will play out in Bosnia in the coming years, but the former will certainly be much more favorable for Bosnian stability.

In recent years, the role of the OHR has declined. In 2008 and several times since, there has been discussion in the international community around closing the OHR and transferring some of the responsibilities to the EU Special Representative. This is in line with the EU's growing role in Bosnia as the country seeks accession to the bloc. In 2004, the European Union Force (EUFOR) replaced SFOR as the military implementing actor in Bosnia. The force now comprises only about 600 troops from 17 different EU nations and has a much smaller role.

Bosnia has seen some cross-confessional grassroots organizing in the last five years, which is promising for the country. Because of a stalemate between political forces over identification numbers leading to the suspension of new passports, a baby in the RS died due to not being able to cross into Serbia for surgery.<sup>215</sup> This prompted mass protests in Bosnia, called the “baby revolution” with parents of all ethnic groups surrounding the parliament building and linked arms, symbolically trapping the deputies inside until they could break the impasse.<sup>216</sup> There have been multiple other protests over the condition of the economy and political disfunction in the last five years. In addition, over the objections of school leaders and politicians, students at Bosnia's “two schools under one roof” system of schools are objecting to the strict division between ethnic groups. Students are meeting students from the other side at cafes after school in the face of discouragement from teachers and administrators.<sup>217</sup> Students

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<sup>215</sup> Gordy, “Dayton's Annex 4 Constitution at 20,” 618.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Barbara Surk, “In a Divided Bosnia, Segregated Schools Persist,” *The New York Times*, December 2, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/01/world/europe/bosnia-schools-segregated-ethnic.html>.

have also protested the segregation of already integrated schools in the city of Jajce.<sup>218</sup> Younger politicians are also speaking out against the policy, which has allowed for ethnically biased history to be taught under the guise of protecting the culture of each ethnic group.<sup>219</sup>

However, at the same time, as the US and Europe have paid less attention to Bosnia and moved towards other priorities,<sup>220</sup> not only have Serbia and Croatia reentered Bosnian politics, but Russia and Turkey have also increased their influence in Bosnia. At a time where Turkish campaign events are banned from much of Europe, Turkey's ruling party, the AKP, has found a sister party in the main Bosniak party, the SDA. This is despite Turkish arrogance and patronizing attitude towards Bosnian Muslims. When Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held a rally in Sarajevo ahead of the last Turkish elections, the Turks handled security and it was reported that the Bosnian government only found out about the event when Erdogan announced it to the public.<sup>221</sup> Furthermore, there is a sense among Bosnians that Turks have romantic notions of Ottoman Bosnia and pay no attention to Bosnian language, culture, and traditions.<sup>222</sup> Bosnians repeat stories of Turkish students not wanting to learn the language and there has been a rise in Turkish Muslim traditions in Bosnia. Bosnians feel that Turks see them only as Ottomans with no culture of their own. Turkey has asserted itself as the defender of Bosnian Muslims and uses this as a nationalist element to protect Muslims in Europe, especially within former Ottoman territories.<sup>223</sup> Turkey also controls almost all of Bosnia's Islamic media and has

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> For the US, attention shifted to the Middle East following 9/11 and hasn't returned. For Europe, Brexit and the Syrian Refugee Crisis have taken their attention from the region.

<sup>221</sup> "In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Fears Are Growing That the Carefully Constructed Peace Is Starting to Unravel," accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-in-bosnia-serb-nationalists-see-putin-and-trump-as-their-tickets-to/>.

<sup>222</sup> Dino Mujadžević, *Asserting Turkey in Bosnia Turkish Foreign Policy and Pro-Turkish Activism in Bosnia. Actors, Discourses and Textual Corpora (2002-2014)*, 1st ed, Interdisziplinäre Studien Zum Östlichen Europa v. 4 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018), 88.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 240.

made an impact on Bosnian media more generally, but its influence is largely limited to areas with significant Bosniak populations.<sup>224</sup>

Russia has heavily invested in its relationship with the Republika Srpska government in Banja Luka. It has also been accused of training nationalist Serb paramilitary groups made up of veterans of the Bosnian War, who have also begun fighting on the Russian side in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>225</sup> This is in addition to its formal military support for the RS, which has included anti-aircraft missiles that are meant to be mounted on helicopters.<sup>226</sup> Russia along with Serbia has also supplied the RS police with 4000 automatic rifles.<sup>227</sup> This is only the official number, but more may have not been reported. In addition, the Russian Ministry of the Interior and the Moscow Police have entered into a contract to train the RS Police.<sup>228</sup> As with much of the rest of Eastern Europe, Russia's aim has been to halt increases in the size of both NATO and the EU. Russia has stepped up its financial support to the RS as well in recent years and has made inroads with Bosnian Croats as well. Russian foreign investment in Bosnia doubled between 2008 and 2016.<sup>229</sup> Furthermore, Russia is Bosnia's sole gas supplier and Russian firms control all of Bosnia's oil refineries.<sup>230</sup> The Russian state oil company Gazprom, through subsidiaries, owns Bosnia's sole port and its largest aluminum processor located in Mostar.<sup>231</sup> Russia has used its economic interests in Croat areas of Bosnia to strengthen their relationship on political issues with Croatia.

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Jasmin Mujanovic, "Russia's Bosnia Gambit," *Foreign Affairs*, September 6, 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/bosnia-herzegovina/2017-09-06/russias-bosnia-gambit>.

<sup>226</sup> Reuf Bajrović, Richard Kraemer, and Emir Suljagić, "Bosnia on the Chopping Block;" n.d., 14.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

The EU's retreat has made Croatia in particular more bullish in interfering in Bosnian politics. The dominant Bosnian Croat Party the HDZ is closely linked to the largest party in Croatia of the same name. In the last election for the Croat member of Bosnia's tripartite presidency, the HDZ's candidate Dragan Covic lost, which prompted the Croatian parliament to take up debate on a resolution declaring the election to be illegitimate due to the fact that Bosniaks can vote in the Croat presidential elections.<sup>232</sup> This move was condemned by the OHR and the Bosniak parties as well as the international community as a violation of Bosnian sovereignty.<sup>233</sup>

The RS and its president Milorad Dodik have threatened to hold a referendum on secession from Bosnia several times in the last few years. This is seen as the most probable catalyst for a return to civil war, as Bosniaks would never allow the RS to declare independence and would prevent it by force of arms.<sup>234</sup> However, the likelihood that an independent RS would be functional is extremely unlikely. The Serbians are not likely to absorb the RS or even recognize it as an independent state due to its bid for EU membership and the complications it would cause for Serbia in Kosovo.<sup>235</sup> If Serbia did not recognize the RS' independence, it is likely that no other state would due to extreme Western opposition and the international norm against unilateral declarations of independence. Furthermore, the sanctions that the US and EU would levy upon the RS would cripple it economically, putting even more doubt on its sustainability as a sovereign state.<sup>236</sup> However, the lack of viability for an independent RS does

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<sup>232</sup> "Croatian Declaration on Bosnian Croats' Rights Vexes Sarajevo," *Balkan Insight* (blog), December 12, 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/12/12/croatia-to-adopt-declaration-on-croats-rights-in-bosnia-12-11-2018/>.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> James Ker-Lindsay, "The Hollow Threat of Secession in Bosnia and Herzegovina:," n.d., 56.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

not preclude the possibility of a very bloody and savage war that would undue all of the slow progress made towards repairing the wounds of the civil war.<sup>237</sup>

Only time will tell which path Bosnia will embark on. Despite its risks, Bosnia's path to the EU would result in much higher stability even than it currently possesses. As such, the EU should continue to encourage Bosnia to continue along this path, for if that door closes or Bosnia feels that EU accession is unachievable, the consequences could be truly catastrophic. A return to civil warfare in Bosnia, this time with even more international involvement and proxy warfare than the first time would result in a conflict resembling that in Syria, which has raged for eight years and has seen unspeakable violence. Renewed conflict in Bosnia is certainly not in the interest of the European Union, which is still dealing with the effects of the Syrian refugee crisis. The prevention of another one is fully in the EU's hands.

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 4: The Unified Front Model

### Introduction

The engagement of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland towards conflict in Northern Ireland has resulted in the most stable post-conflict state studied in this project. The British and Irish governments put pressure on the unionist and nationalist parties respectively and spoke with one voice when it came to public statements about Northern Ireland.<sup>238</sup> Britain and Ireland settled their differences and disagreements behind closed doors, never letting disputes come to the public's attention.<sup>239</sup> They have put forward a unified front towards Northern Ireland. The efforts of the two governments have almost entirely been focused on fostering unity and governance. The UK has not sought to empower the Protestant majority, even when Northern Ireland has been under home rule. Ireland, for its part, has not pushed a nationalist agenda of unification. For the most part, both sides have been incredibly careful not to jeopardize the peace.

These efforts have led to a low level of political violence and an environment where acts of political violence, when they do happen, have unified rather than divided Northern Irish society. In addition, as the direct result of British and Irish pressure, major political reforms have been enacted. Furthermore, in contrast to reforms passed by fiat in Bosnia by the OHR, reforms in Northern Ireland have been sustainable and due to pressure applied by an allied state, have resulted in little backlash against international actors. The revision of the Good Friday Agreement agreed at St. Andrews and the entrance into government of the DUP and Sinn Fein

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<sup>238</sup> Roger Mac Ginty and John Darby, *Guns and Government: The Management of the Northern Ireland Peace Process*, Coming out of Violence Project (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; Palgrave, 2002), 41.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

was a feat thought impossible by many observers. Much still remains to be done in order for the reality of full-time functioning government to exist, but significant progress has been made and all parties have bought into the reforms.

However, Brexit has been incredibly destabilizing to Northern Ireland, as it is an issue of territory and identity, themes that were at the core of the Troubles and had been suppressed since the Good Friday Agreement. Furthermore, Brexit has placed the UK and Ireland in an adversarial relationship, on opposite sides of the negotiations over Britain's leaving of the EU.<sup>240</sup> Thus, not only has open cooperation on Northern Ireland become almost non-existent, Brexit has publicly divided Britain and Ireland over Brexit policy towards Northern Ireland, undermining the unified front and everything that made it so successful.<sup>241</sup>

### The UK and Ireland's United Front

Britain and Ireland's abandoning of their individual political projects towards Northern Ireland is rooted in the Good Friday Agreement itself and even before that in the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. Before this point, Britain had pursued a policy of empowering the Protestant majority, which severely discriminated against the Catholic minority, while the Irish government actively pursued a policy of Irish unification. These two political projects actively fueled the conflict. A major plank of the Good Friday Agreement was that the two states would abandon their political projects and allow Northern Ireland to decide whenever it chose whether it would remain in the United Kingdom or rejoin with the rest of the island of Ireland.<sup>242</sup> The Republic of

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<sup>240</sup> Etain Tannam, "Brexit and British-Irish Relations," *The RUSI Journal* 163, no. 3 (May 4, 2018): 9.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> Mac Ginty and Darby, *Guns and Government: The Management of the Northern Ireland Peace Process*, 41.

Ireland for its part, agreed to change its constitution, removing language centered around a unified Ireland.<sup>243</sup>

From 1985 onward, the British and Irish governments spoke with one voice in public and settled their policy differences behind closed doors.<sup>244</sup> In addition, the British and Irish governments strove to not make Northern Ireland policy a domestic political football and thus when government changed hands, Northern Ireland policy remained relatively continuous.<sup>245</sup> All parties agreed that the peace process was far too important to jeopardize with interparty squabbling. This allowed the governments to focus on the peace process without worrying about its domestic political ramifications. In the negotiations for the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and the St. Andrews Agreement in 2006, the British and Irish governments put significant pressure on unionist and nationalist parties respectively to make a deal, threatening drastic consequences for the party that was seen to be intransigent.<sup>246</sup> After the Good Friday Agreement, the British and Irish governments were heavily involved in agreements on a number of issues regarding implementation, including the number of departments in the power-sharing executive and the responsibilities of the cross-border implementation bodies.<sup>247</sup> John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty argue “the main motors determining the pace, direction, and outcome of the peace process were located in Britain and Ireland.”<sup>248</sup>

Before the Brexit referendum, Britain only took unilateral action towards Northern Ireland and put its own domestic concerns above the peace during Stormontgate in October

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Todd, “Contested Constitutionalism?” 310.

<sup>245</sup> Mac Ginty and Darby, 109–10.

<sup>246</sup> Paul Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke [England]; Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 309.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>248</sup> Mac Ginty and Darby, *Guns and Government: The Management of the Northern Ireland Peace Process*, 106.

2002. The incident took place when police in Northern Ireland raided Sinn Fein offices and leaders. It was alleged that republicans in the Northern Irish Legislative Assembly at Stormont were spying on the British and Irish governments.<sup>249</sup> Details of what exactly the decision-making process behind the raid was are still murky with multiple allegations of interference by members of the British civil service in Northern Ireland who were opposed to Sinn Fein in government played a strong role.<sup>250</sup> The UK realized that it had jeopardized the peace and the charges against those arrested in the raid were eventually dropped in 2005 to avoid further endangering it.<sup>251</sup> Nevertheless, the result was the suspension of devolved government, which would not return until 2007 when the St. Andrew's Agreement came into force.

Even when devolved government failed and direct rule by the UK was reinstated in Northern Ireland, the UK has not interfered in the minutia of Northern Irish politics and society. Westminster has essentially acted as a caretaker government, not overstepping its bounds to become involved in issues it does not have a democratic mandate for. Direct rule has largely been limited to the most basic of government functions, mainly the passing of budgets.<sup>252</sup> Neither the UK nor the Republic of Ireland has shown any desire to use their roles to enact any wide-scale changes without involving the domestic parties.

## Northern Irish Stability

Political violence has steadily and significantly dropped since the Good Friday Agreement was signed. The largest attack was the Omagh bombing in August 1998, only a few

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<sup>249</sup> Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, 300.

<sup>250</sup> Feargal. Cochrane, *Northern Ireland - the Reluctant Peace*. (Yale University Press, 2013), 224.

<sup>251</sup> Cochrane, 224.

<sup>252</sup> This information was collected by the author through a survey of bills passed by the UK parliament during periods of home-rule since the Good Friday Agreement was signed. Information was accessed from <https://archives.parliament.uk>.

months after the Agreement was signed, which killed 29 people. It is also the only act of political violence to kill multiple people since the Agreement.<sup>253</sup> Intracommunal killings are much more prevalent than intercommunal killings; every loyalist paramilitary killed from 1998 to 2017 was killed by another loyalist paramilitary.<sup>254</sup> In addition, deaths of security personnel are down from 27.8% of all deaths by political violence to 5.5%.<sup>255</sup> Northern Ireland's overall crime rates have dropped to 40% of what they were in 1998 and now it has a lower crime rate than England or Scotland in all categories.<sup>256</sup> Murders dropped to their lowest ever levels in 2016/2017.<sup>257</sup> Political violence from attacks on symbolic buildings to political shootings and deaths from political violence have dropped over the past few years.<sup>258</sup> Furthermore, parades, which were a major source of violence during the Troubles, have become less so in recent years. The Parades Commission, which oversees all parades in Northern Ireland and places restrictions on them if necessary, has seen a stark drop in the number of parades deemed "sensitive" and has applied far fewer restrictions recently.<sup>259</sup>

However, both loyalist and republican armed groups still exist and have an interest in undermining the peace. Most of the loyalist militias that have not disbanded have become essentially gangs and are internally fractured.<sup>260</sup> However, a return to violence between nationalists and republicans could unify them and provide an already established staging ground. In addition, low level violence with a sectarian bent is still a common occurrence in segregated

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<sup>253</sup> Paul Nolan, "'Post-Conflict' Northern Ireland Is Still Plagued by Political Violence," *The Irish Times*, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/post-conflict-northern-ireland-is-still-plagued-by-political-violence-1.3470229>.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ann Marie Gray et al., "Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report Number 5," October 2018.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Imren Borsuk, "Violence and Security Concerns in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland," *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 5, no. 2 (2016): 50.

working-class areas in Northern Ireland.<sup>261</sup> Youth unemployment in these areas is 15% for Catholics and 24% for Protestants.<sup>262</sup> Dissidents have perpetrated a recorded 711 violent incidents between 1997 and 2010.<sup>263</sup> This violence has trended downward over that period, but roughly 50-80 attacks per year still occur.<sup>264</sup> Violence is often directed at schools, churches, orange halls, Gaelic Sport Association buildings, and centers around parades, soccer matches, Halloween, bonfires, and Gaelic marches.<sup>265</sup> High unemployment, glorification of the Troubles, segregated housing, and sectarian organizations lay the groundwork for violence.<sup>266</sup>

While no major party in Northern Ireland and neither Britain nor the Republic of Ireland have any interest in a return to violence, both the DUP and Sinn Fein carefully balance promotion of British and Irish national identity respectively with a commitment to non-violence, something that can be incredibly difficult to do especially in times of tension.<sup>267</sup> Mismanagement of this balance occurred in 2012 where an agreement brokered by the Alliance Party to have Belfast City Hall fly the Union Jack during five specified days per year, erupted into violence when the DUP sent out mailers condemning the deal in an effort to win back an East Belfast Legislative Assembly seat lost to the Alliance Party in the last election.<sup>268</sup> The violence resulted in hundreds of injuries to police officers, death threats against politicians, and the burning down of an Alliance Party office.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Cochrane, *Northern Ireland - the Reluctant Peace.*, 302.

<sup>268</sup> John Nagle, "Between Conflict and Peace: An Analysis of the Complex Consequences of the Good Friday Agreement," *Parliamentary Affairs* 71, no. 2 (April 1, 2018): 406.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

However, a highly positive sign for Northern Ireland's stability is that acts of political violence have inspired strong condemnation by all political parties and unity among Catholics and Protestants. Since the Provisional IRA's dissolution in 2005, political violence in Northern Ireland has not even had tangential ties to political parties. The Omagh bombing brought strong condemnation by all political parties, including Sinn Fein, which was the first time that this had happened.<sup>270</sup> Riots in Derry<sup>271</sup> in 2018 brought strong condemnation by all five main political parties, including strong language from Sinn Fein head Mary Lou McDonald, who called the dissident members of the New IRA<sup>272</sup> "warped, negative, regressive, dangerous people."<sup>273</sup> Even more encouraging was the attendance of the children of former Deputy First Minister and Provisional IRA leader Martin McGuinness at an anti-violence rally entitled "Not in our Name."<sup>274</sup>

Pressure by the British and Irish governments has led to significant political reform in Northern Ireland. After "Stormontgate" ended the power-sharing executive in 2003, the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Peter Hain and the Irish Justice Minister put strong pressure on the DUP and Sinn Fein respectively to make a deal that would herald the return of the body.<sup>275</sup> This pressure in part led to the Provisional IRA declaring its armed campaign over in July of 2005.<sup>276</sup> There is some evidence that unlike Hizballah following Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon, the IRA was concerned about the sharp turn against terrorism in the US

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<sup>270</sup> Mac Ginty and Darby, *Guns and Government: The Management of the Northern Ireland Peace Process*, 45.

<sup>271</sup> Also called Londonderry by Protestants.

<sup>272</sup> The New IRA is a splinter group that has no formal affiliation with the Provisional IRA nor with Sinn Fein.

<sup>273</sup> "Northern Ireland Sees Its Worst Riots in Years - Brawl on the Bogside," accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.economist.com/britain/2018/07/19/northern-ireland-sees-its-worst-riots-in-years>.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, 309.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

following 9-11 and that this also impacted their decision to end their campaign.<sup>277</sup> It also led to the St. Andrew's Agreement, which slightly amended the Good Friday Agreement, removing the power of the UK to suspend devolved government and setting a timetable for devolved policing and criminal justice for 2008. Most importantly, it led to the DUP and Sinn Fein heading the power-sharing executive as the two largest parties in Northern Ireland for the first time. The two hardline unionist and nationalist parties, which had moderated over time, joined a government together, something that couldn't have been comprehended even five years earlier.<sup>278</sup>

### Brexit's Effect on Northern Ireland's Stability and the Unified Front Model

British-Irish cooperation and focus were beginning to wain even before the Brexit referendum. The 2008 financial crash and European debt crisis left the Republic of Ireland financially beholden to the EU as it was in danger of defaulting on its debts and more dependent on the UK as its largest trading partner.<sup>279</sup> This meant that the Republic had little appetite for pushing the UK on Northern Ireland and impasses having to do with British austerity measures that hurt Northern Ireland's large state sector especially hard.<sup>280</sup> Over this period, Britain and Ireland focused on economic ties and paid less attention to Northern Ireland, a shift spurred by a change in British Conservative Party policy with the election of David Cameron as Prime Minister, which saw the British government leave Northern Ireland to fix its own problems without outside involvement.<sup>281</sup> The UK played a role in convening talks to work through Northern Irish political impasses in the 2010s, but did not participate in them.<sup>282</sup> At the same

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<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, 311.

<sup>279</sup> Todd, "Contested Constitutionalism?" 314.

<sup>280</sup> Nagle, "Between Conflict and Peace," 406.

<sup>281</sup> Todd, "Contested Constitutionalism?" 315.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

time, the Republic of Ireland stepped up efforts to mediate conflict through its Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, but did not send high level government officials.<sup>283</sup>

The Brexit referendum itself saw little attention paid by either the Remain or Leave camps towards the impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement. The Leave campaign in particular, ignored concerns over where the border would be, arguing little would change, even as they argued everything would change with the rest of the EU.<sup>284</sup> The impact on Northern Ireland was treated as a non-issue or an Irish<sup>285</sup> issue during the campaign.<sup>286</sup> The Brexit referendum largely mapped onto unionist-nationalist divides in Northern Ireland.<sup>287</sup> The DUP was supportive of the Leave campaign, while Sinn Fein and the SDLP supported Remain. The UUP was the only party to cross the divide, supporting Remain by arguing it would strengthen the UK.<sup>288</sup> Although Northern Ireland as a whole voted Remain, the vote also reflected the identity divide with significant majorities of both unionists and loyalists voting Leave and Remain respectively. Immediately following the result, Sinn Fein argued for a referendum on uniting Ireland, again showing how Brexit moved constitutional issues back to the forefront.<sup>289</sup> In addition, turnout in Northern Ireland was ten percentage points lower than the rest of the UK, demonstrating that even in Northern Ireland the campaigns and the associated political parties did not do a good job of convincing voters of its importance.<sup>290</sup> Furthermore, Theresa May's government did not consult with the Northern Irish government or any of the

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Cathy Gormley-Heenan and Arthur Aughey, "Northern Ireland and Brexit: Three Effects on 'the Border in the Mind,'" *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 3 (August 2017): 500.

<sup>285</sup> Irish here refers to the entire island of Ireland. Brexit's effect on Northern Ireland was treated as an issue for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to solve between themselves without the rest of the UK.

<sup>286</sup> Etain Tannam, "Brexit and British-Irish Relations," *The RUSI Journal* 163, no. 3 (May 4, 2018): 7.

<sup>287</sup> Gormley-Heenan and Aughey, "Northern Ireland and Brexit."

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Tannam, "Brexit and British-Irish Relations," 5.

<sup>290</sup> Katy Hayward and Mary C. Murphy, "The EU's Influence on the Peace Process and Agreement in Northern Ireland in Light of Brexit," *Ethnopolitics* 17, no. 3 (May 27, 2018): 284.

other devolved governments of the UK before triggering the process for the UK to formally leave the European Union.

Brexit raises issues of territory and identity and places those issues over existing fissures in Northern Ireland that had been diminishing in importance since the Good Friday Agreement. Because both the UK and Ireland were in the EU, the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic could be reduced to the softest of soft borders. It allowed for 30,000 people to cross the border for school or work daily and 1.8 million cars to cross it every month.<sup>291</sup> It also allowed for the mass flow of trade between the two countries, including Irish trucking headed for the EU through the UK. Brexit throws this into chaos and undermines the core issues that the Good Friday Agreement resolved. Brexit puts both Northern Ireland's position within the UK under threat for unionists and its position within Ireland under threat for nationalists. This existential threat to territory and identity is what drove the violence of the Troubles. Any type of border checks between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is a red line for nationalists and any type of border checks between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK is a red line for unionists.<sup>292</sup> Such is the debacle that Brexit poses for Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, Brexit's identity debate about being British or European, escalates the British-Irish identity debate in Northern Ireland between unionists and nationalists. This debate had been diminishing in importance as the DUP and Sinn Fein moderated in the early 2000s. This shift was caused largely by the two parties needing to have party platforms that went beyond constitutional and cultural issues to include economic and social issues that any political party in government must contend with.<sup>293</sup> These issues don't easily map out onto existing

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<sup>291</sup> Tannam, "Brexit and British-Irish Relations," 4.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>293</sup> Cochrane, *Northern Ireland - the Reluctant Peace.*, 227.

cultural lines. Thus, the DUP and Sinn Fein could no longer risk alienating voters who were concerned with education or economics or any of the other myriad issues that needed to be addressed.

Brexit has had serious ramifications for British-Irish relations. It put the two countries on adversarial footing for the first time since the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985. It has broken the taboo against criticizing the other in public over Northern Ireland.<sup>294</sup> Britain has also begun to back away from the British-Irish Council created by the Good Friday Agreement. No British Prime Minister has visited since Tony Blair and its last meeting was in September of 2016.<sup>295</sup> Brexit negotiations have meant that the British and Irish Prime Ministers have not been meeting or issuing joint statements.<sup>296</sup> Failing a joint strategy for Brexit from Britain and Ireland, the two governments have looked to the Northern Irish devolved government, whose executive has been dissolved since January 2017, for a unified Brexit strategy, something that is highly unlikely.<sup>297</sup> The parties remain highly divided over Brexit issues as discussed above, and have not seriously planned for the economic effects of Brexit upon Northern Ireland.<sup>298</sup> Furthermore, after the snap elections in 2017, the DUP is now part of Theresa May's government, making the ruling Conservative Party somewhat beholden to the unionist position in any conflict that arises in Northern Ireland.<sup>299</sup>

Brexit throws the ability of Britain and Ireland to broker a political compromise and ensure the cessation of violence into jeopardy. There is a real possibility of two nightmare

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<sup>294</sup> Tannam, "Brexit and British-Irish Relations," 9.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>297</sup> Gormley-Heenan and Aughey, "Northern Ireland and Brexit," 505.

<sup>298</sup> Hayward and Murphy, "The EU's Influence on the Peace Process and Agreement in Northern Ireland in Light of Brexit," 284.

<sup>299</sup> Todd, "Contested Constitutionalism?," 317.

scenarios. The first involves a rise in cultural and territorial anxieties over Brexit, followed by some sort of spark that ignites violent conflict. In this scenario, the British-Irish relationship is so strained by Brexit and constrained by other factors that the two governments are unable to exert the necessary coordinated pressure to put the lid back on. The second is that relations between the UK and Ireland become so strained over Brexit and the implementation of any deal, including a no deal Brexit, that the two states' interactions with Northern Ireland shift towards a proxy model, with each actively putting its own interests and those of its proxy group above peace and stability on their borders. These are the pathways for a return to the violence of the height of the Troubles. At that point all bets are off for what happens next, but the Good Friday Agreement will go up in smoke after 20 relatively successful years and many more people will needlessly die.

## Conclusion

This project set out to expand the study of post-conflict states beyond the success of peace agreements to examine the stability of those states decades in the future. When expanding the range of study in this way, the role of international engagement widens beyond providing of security guarantees or enforcement of a peace agreement. It also goes beyond constructive actions towards post-conflict states to include destructive ones as well. This project has shown that the way in which international actors engage with post-conflict states over a period of a decade-plus has a significant impact on the stability of those states through political violence and possibility of major political reforms.

Lebanon under the overlord model saw Syria occupy the country and use it to achieve its own political interests. Syria used its power and influence to create division between and within political factions to ensure that none of them became powerful enough to challenge Syrian hegemony. It backed this up with exhaustive interference in every facet of Lebanese politics and society, interfering in elections, approving legislation, and placing agents in civil society organizations. These efforts had a moderate effect on stability. Political violence in this period of Lebanese history was closely tied to the amount of control Syria had over the country. Violence was high as Syria established its control in the first two years post-conflict, followed by a period of low violence in the period of total Syrian control in the mid to late 1990s, and high violence again as Syria began losing control in the early 2000s. However, the possibility of major political reform, though desired by most, if not all, Lebanese political parties was impossible during this period due to Syria's approval of the status quo and control over legislation.

The division and distrust that Syria fostered during the Pax Syriana has had a direct impact on the struggles Lebanon has faced since Syrian withdrawal in 2005. The building blocks

of fierce oppositional political and gridlock were placed by Syrian control. During the Pax Syriana, major disagreements were ended by leaders of all feuding parties being summoned to Damascus. This served Syria's interests because renewed civil conflict resulting from political disagreement would invite other foreign actors into Lebanon and obliterate the control Syria had over the country. This mediation also allowed Syria to both demonstrate their power and appear diplomatic at the same time. It served the narrative that the weak political parties needed Syria to solve their disputes and thus legitimized Syrian presence. This process made even the highest executive leaders of the Lebanese state subservient to the Syrian president. Thus, when this mechanism went away following Syrian withdrawal, each faction turned to its own outside actor, the Future Movement and March 14 Alliance to Saudi Arabia and Hizballah and March 8 Alliance to Iran. This new mechanism allowed regional rivals to engage in this rivalry over Lebanese politics.

The proxy model saw Saudi Arabia and Iran emerge to fill the vacuum of Syrian withdrawal and enact their regional rivalry through Lebanese proxies. These actors and states with similar interests such as Israel and Syria undertook major destabilizing actions in Lebanon in order to protect their own interests or counter the influence of the rival faction. These states have continuously put their own interests and regional rivalry above Lebanese stability. However, Saudi Arabia and Iran stayed away from the invasive interference that Syria previously exhibited. There has been no direct interference in Lebanese elections, though the two states have poured massive sums into supporting aligned parties and candidates. This has had a profound negative effect upon Lebanese stability. Political violence has risen dramatically, as militias, a force unseen since the civil war, have begun to re-form. Assassinations and bombings have risen and both Beirut and Tripoli have seen street battles in the last decade. All of this has

put major political reform out of the question with the holding of elections and government formation taking all of Lebanon's political capital.

Lebanon's future is heavily in doubt. The country has managed to survive for nearly 15 years since Syrian withdrawal without return to civil war. However, the rising level of political violence and return of many of the dynamics that surrounded the civil war are worrying for Lebanon's future. The country is certainly a victim of neighborhood effect, with the Syrian Civil War raging right next door and ongoing instability across the region certainly having a significant impact on Lebanon. It will not be able to escape its cycle of instability as long as these conflicts are still ongoing and regional rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran remains unresolved. High levels of political violence and unbreakable political gridlock will continue into at least the near future.

The liberal intervention model in Bosnia saw the Office of the High Representative, backed by the international community and alongside several multinational organizations, de facto take over the country. The international community's goal was to embark on a massive statebuilding project and arrive at a government that would be stable, democratic, and be free from ethnic animosities at a structural and political level. However, it has largely failed in that goal, mainly due to the international community's heavy interference in the process, from the Bonn Powers, which allow the OHR to pass legislation and dismiss elected officials, to mass interference in Bosnian elections and the funding of many competing cross-communal political parties, none of which have gained a foothold in the country. This interference has allowed Bosnia's three main ethnically oriented political parties to drag their heels and blame the OHR and international community for every law passed in order to satisfy their nationalist bases. As such, Bosnia has had a moderate level of stability. Political violence has been low, but it has

largely been organized by political parties at the local level to intimidate and attack minorities. The possibility of major political reform has largely been low as well, with a brief period in the mid-2000s where there was some movement.

Bosnia is at a crossroads. The country can continue to work towards EU membership, a prospect that seems to be riskier and more fleeting by the week, but if achieved would provide meaningful benefits for the country. The other option is to abandon EU accession. This option likely shifts the model from liberal intervention to one of proxy, both on a regional and global level. Croatia, Serbia, and Turkey all have interests in supporting ethnically aligned communities in Bosnia and could attempt to assert more dominance there. At the same time, Bosnia could become another site of US-Russian proxy rivalry as each try to assert dominance globally. In this case, the possibility of renewed warfare dramatically rises, particularly if the Republika Srpska attempts to secede. Bosnia currently holds many similarities to Lebanon in the early 2000s, something that is worrying for the country's future.

The case of Northern Ireland, marked by the unified front model, has been the most successful post-conflict state studied here. The UK and the Republic of Ireland have worked together, ensuring, with few exceptions, that the peace and stability of Northern Ireland is put above all other interests. The two countries have worked with one voice in public, while independently putting pressure on aligned Northern Irish factions to make compromises with the other group. In this way, the UK and Ireland have broken through the deadlock, most notably with the St. Andrews Agreement. Even when the Northern Irish Executive has collapsed and home rule has returned, the UK did not interfere in Northern Irish domestic politics, simply passing budgets and ensuring that government functions continue. This has led to a high level of stability in Northern Ireland. Political violence has been low and has continued to drop over the

15+ years since the Troubles ended. Furthermore, the few major acts of political violence have been condemned in the strongest terms by all political parties and not used to score political points. This is far from the politically controlled violence of Bosnia and violence by political party affiliated militias and international actors in Lebanon. Northern Ireland has also shown the highest possibility of political reform of any of the three cases, with the St. Andrews Agreement and the joining of the DUP and Sinn Fein in government being the shining example.

Brexit has thrown Northern Ireland into a period of instability that threatens the continuation of the unified front model. Brexit negotiations have pitted the UK and Ireland on opposing sides of an issue that has massive implications for Northern Ireland. As such, public cooperation between the two countries has almost entirely diminished including through the institutions set up by the Good Friday Agreement. The Northern Irish Executive has fallen apart and neither country has the political capital or political will to do the type of work that it has taken to restore it. As such, Northern Ireland has been largely unable to prepare for the effects of Brexit, should a deal be agreed or if one is not. Brexit has also placed the domestic interests of both the UK and Ireland above the peace and stability of Northern Ireland. In addition, the identity and territorial questions that Brexit raises closely map onto the issues at the heart of the Northern Irish conflict. These issues had diminished in importance since 2000 and real progress was being made on broadening the range of political issues of importance to Northern Irish political parties.

There are two possibilities for a return to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The first possibility is that a no-deal Brexit, which is looking more and more likely, throws both the UK and Northern Ireland into chaos. This in turn causes an increase in animosity between Northern Irish political parties, such that a spark, like an act of mass political violence brings a return to

the politics of the Troubles and a further increase in violence. Relations between the UK and Ireland are so damaged by Brexit that they are unable to recreate the same dynamic of cooperation that they had previously with any legitimacy. The UK is further hamstrung by the DUP's inclusion in Theresa May's government and is unable to wield enough leverage to get the unionists to return to government and end the violence. The second possibility is a shift to a proxy model state of engagement in Northern Ireland, with each state fully backing its respective faction in rivalry with the opposing one. However, I do not believe either of these scenarios to be particularly likely, even in the chaos of Brexit. The work that Northern Irish political parties have done to condemn violence and work against it will not go away overnight. There is enough resistance to further civil conflict in Northern Ireland to prevent a future outbreak of the kind of violence seen in the Troubles.

This project marks the beginning of an examination of the phenomenon of international engagement in post-conflict states. As such, there are significant opportunities for expansion of this research. I welcome scholars who choose to take up this research question and either add to or modify the models presented in this project through analysis of different cases to prove the generalizability of the models. These models could also be applied to cases of interstate warfare and beyond the regions and time period studied in this project. This research also leaves itself open to a large-n statistical study of this phenomenon. It is my hope that this project has established sufficient correlation between international engagement and post-conflict stability that scholars find it worth engaging with these models and expanding upon them through their own research.

Throughout researching this project, a fundamental question has been on my mind: when does a post-conflict state cease to be a post-conflict state? The answer to this question has

profound domestic and international implications. If a state is treated as a normal state, both internally and internationally, political gridlock and increased tensions, which all states experience from time to time, do not cause panic and overreaction. In post-conflict states, the same events can cause renewed outbreaks of violence and scrambling of international actors in ways that can accelerate rather than assuaging tensions, sending the country closer to renewed outbreak of civil warfare. The process of post-conflict normalization is a phenomenon not studied in the scholarly literature, despite its profound importance. I welcome scholars to take up this question.

Worryingly, from the case studies in this project, shifts in the model of international engagement seem to move in one direction: towards the proxy model. Lebanon officially shifted with the Cedar Revolution and Bosnia and Northern Ireland both show signs of drift towards that model. This shift reflects a reality of contemporary international relations, in contrast to the world in the 1990s. We are in the middle of a time of great power competition once again, with a rising China and a resurgent Russia challenging the United States for global hegemony. At the same time, nationalism is rising around the world fostering regional rivalry and conflict. In an environment where modern weaponry, including nuclear weapons, make all-out war much more costly, proxy rivalry and conflict, including proxy warfare, is a much more attractive option. As happened during the Cold War, the result of this orientation towards proxy conflict can lead to the utter destruction of weaker, more divided states. Lebanon and Bosnia have both seen this type of conflict before. It is too soon to tell whether they will see it again.

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