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# Dilemmas of Intervention

Social Science for Stabilization  
and Reconstruction

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Edited by Paul K. Davis

Contributors: Claude Berrebi, Christopher S. Chivvis,  
Paul K. Davis, Sarah Olmstead, Julie E. Taylor,  
Véronique Thelen, Stephen Watts, Elizabeth Wilke

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# Summary

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*Paul K. Davis*

## Introduction

### Objectives and Scope

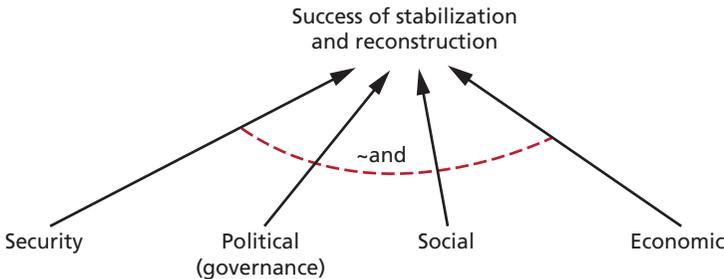
Governments intervening in post-conflict states find themselves beset with numerous challenges and profound dilemmas: It is often unclear how best to proceed because measures that may improve conditions in one respect may undermine them in another. Our study was an integrative review of the scholarly social-science literature relevant to stabilization and reconstruction (S&R). We sought to inform strategic planning at the whole-of-government level. Thus, we deal not only with stability operations—i.e., operations to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, construct emergency infrastructure, and offer humanitarian relief—but also possible activities related to transition, reconstruction, and nation-building.

Our research drew from such subject areas as civil wars, conflict resolution, conflict prevention, developmental economics, political development and political economy, stability operations, peacekeeping, and intervention. This base reflected such disciplines as economics, political science, policy analysis, sociology, psychology, history, and anthropology. We also drew on practitioner-informed works by the U.S. Institute of Peace, the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), foundations, RAND, and other civilian and military organizations.

## Approach

We took a “system view,” attempting to view the entire system rather than just one or another separate component. Figure S.1 is a top-level depiction of the problem space.\* It asserts that S&R success depends on success in *each* of four component domains dealing, respectively, with security, political, social, and economic issues. We treat these as individually critical: Achieving some threshold level of success in each component is *necessary* for overall success. Although this concept is often mentioned informally, we build it into analysis. Just as a military commander knows that he *must* attend to logistics as well as to maneuver, so also intervenors must attend to all of the critical components indicated. Further, to understand a situation or draw conclusions from data, analysts need to address all of the critical components and their nonlinear interactions. More foreign aid to a post-conflict country, for example, should be *expected* to do no good if the security situation is sufficiently abysmal.

**Figure S.1**  
**The Four Top-Level Components and Their Interactions**



NOTE: The factors apply at a snapshot in time.

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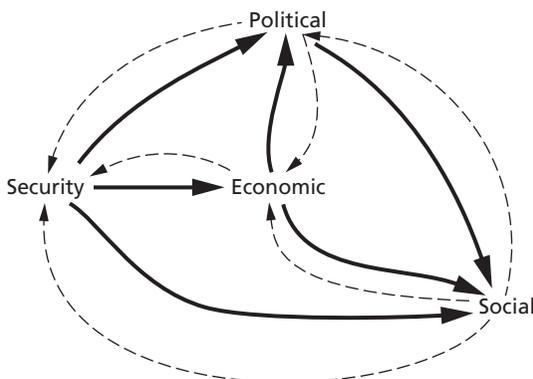
\* Figure S.1 is a “factor tree” depicting the factors that contribute to a phenomenon at a given time. If one factor points to another, then more of the former will tend to increase the latter. The notation “~and” means that, to a first approximation, some threshold values of all of the factors are necessary for overall success. Such factor trees apply at a snapshot in time and do not show feedback effects and other cross-factor interactions over time. Thus, they tell only part of the story.

Figure S.1 provides a static view, but the S&R challenge is dynamic: Over time, “everything is connected to everything,” as depicted in Figure S.2. This interconnectedness makes analytic work difficult, but recognizing it is essential to meaningful communication and good S&R planning. Separating the two perspectives (of Figures S.1 and S.2) allows us to modularize in functionally natural ways and to reason in causal terms at a given time, while recognizing that—over longer periods of time—interconnections are complex and the usual concept of causality is troublesome. Sometimes, interactions are more immediate.

A third element of our system approach is recognizing that the effects of an approach, or of individual factors, depend on the context, i.e., the situation or case. As an example, increasing intervenor troops to stabilize a chaotic situation (a first case) may initially be effective and greeted with enthusiasm, but—if foreign troops become associated with occupation rather than stabilization (a second case)—more of them may worsen a situation rather than improve it.

Alternative courses of action, then, need to be assessed as a function of case, perhaps as illustrated schematically by Table S.1, which imagines four factors. Each row would represent a different case. The table also recognizes (in the last column) that, in the realm of S&R,

**Figure S.2**  
Over Time, Everything Affects Everything



**Table S.1**  
**Notional Decision Aid for Choosing Strategy as Function of Case**

Case	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Approach	Hedges
...(many rows)						

choosing an approach is fraught with uncertainties. Thus, the approach should include hedging actions and monitoring to allow subsequent adaptations. This is consistent with the experience of practitioners.

Against this background, the next four sections discuss the four components of the S&R challenge. They are followed by some analytic observations and a short set of conclusions. The full monograph includes extensive references to the original literature.

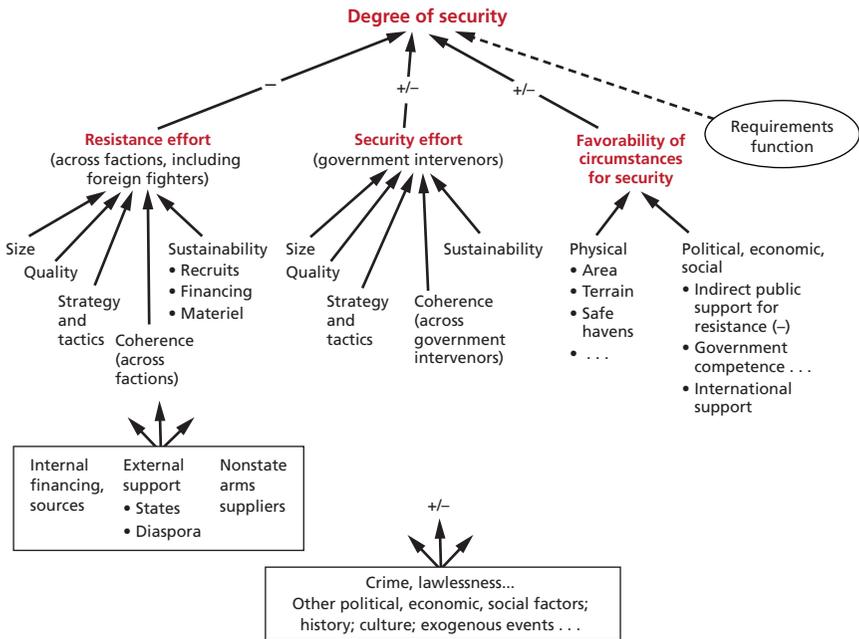
## Establishing Favorable Security Conditions

### An Integrating Conceptual Model

Establishing security is a sine qua non for success in S&R: Without establishing a fair degree of security first, it is nearly impossible to proceed effectively on the other fronts. Subsequently, how quickly the quality of security improves further will depend in part on progress on the other component efforts. Although we focus primarily on what are nominally post-conflict interventions, some level of insurgency (resistance) may continue, and the level may escalate suddenly. Thus, dealing with and deterring increases of resistance is a major part of establishing security.

The scholarly literature on aspects of establishing security is fragmented, but we constructed a unifying conceptual model that draws on concepts implicit in the various literatures. Figure S.3 is a top-level view of the conceptual model in the form of a factor tree indicating, at a snapshot in time, what factors affect degree of security. The values of those factors can depend on previous values of the other factors.

**Figure S.3**  
**Factors Influencing Degree of Security**



NOTE: The factors apply at a snapshot in time.

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The issue highlighted at the top of Figure S.3 is the *degree* of security. This is shown as depending primarily on the resistance effort, the security effort, favorability of circumstances, and something we call the “requirements function.” The resistance and security efforts depend on the size and quality of forces, their strategy and tactics (e.g., purely kinetic or population-centric), their coherence, and their sustainability. Favorability of circumstances relates to case. For example, an insurgency may be assisted by terrain that provides cover, or by the existence of sanctuary in neighboring countries. As indicated at the bottom left of the figure, both public support and external foreign support for the opposition are also important—not just by providing resources, but through mechanisms such as tolerating the opposition’s presence rather

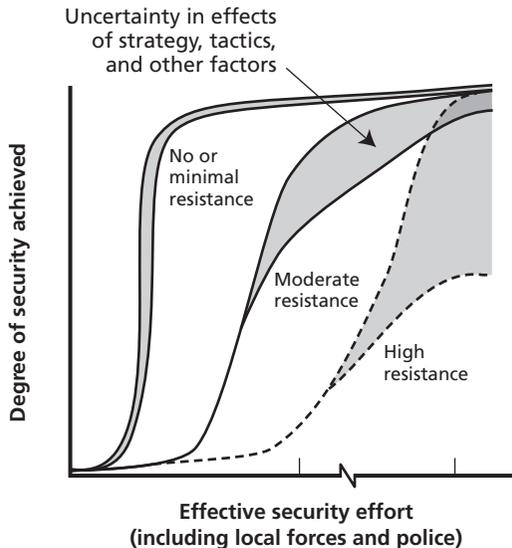
than informing authorities or by arguing the case for the opposition internationally.

We highlight the requirements function because it is currently unclear how much security effort is “enough,” even if we know how to characterize resistance and situation. This can be seen in today’s operations in Afghanistan. Historical experience suggests the need for far more “boots on the ground” than exist currently. However, the new technology-intensive tactics may prove to be a big force multiplier. That history has not yet been written.

Finally, along the bottom of Figure S.3 are boxes indicating factors, such as the level of crime and lawlessness, that have cross-cutting effects on the factors in the tree. Some such effects may be positive or negative, as indicated by a + or – symbol.

Figure S.4 illustrates what an analytic formulation might look like if knowledge were better developed. Three curves are shown for substantially different levels of resistance, but sometimes with large

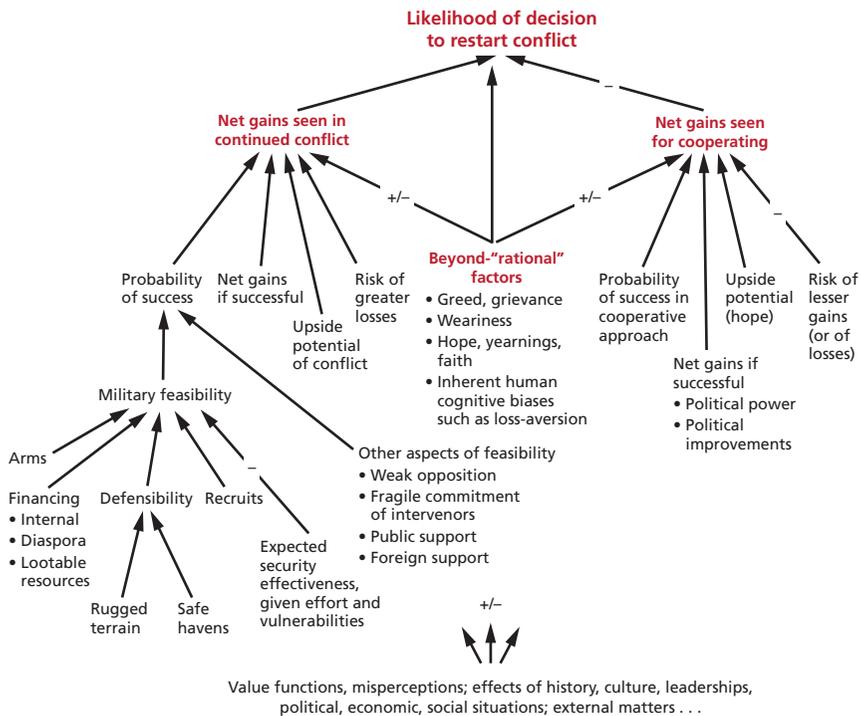
**Figure S.4**  
**Security Achieved as a Function of Effort and Resistance**



uncertainties (the gray areas), reflecting uncertainties in the requirements function for different strategies and tactics.

Figure S.5 addresses the key issue of whether the opposition chooses to resist, i.e., to restart, or escalate, conflict. Figure S.5 reflects both rational-choice modeling and recognition of other factors. If fully rational, the opposition's leaders effectively consider the pros and cons of the alternatives and their probabilities. They consider not just their "best guesses" about what would happen, but also best-case and worst-case variants. For example, they may see the most likely outcome of cooperation (right side) as their participation in government and a degree of rights and services. However, a darker possibility (risk) is that

**Figure S.5**  
**Factors Affecting the Decision to Renew Fighting**



NOTE: The factors apply at a snapshot in time.

the government will renege and repress further opposition brutally once the opposition leaders come out of hiding and lay down arms. Looking to the option to restart conflict (left side), the opposition might expect a long struggle with no clear-cut victory or defeat, but might also see the alluring possibility of decisive victory at some point (upside potential). However, it might see the risk that, if war starts up again, the state would achieve a total victory, with no incentive for accommodation or inclusion; the opposition might be annihilated, not just defeated. Even a highly rational opposition has difficulties making choices given such uncertainties.

Reality is even more complicated because decisions are *not* fully rational, even though most of the literature uses a rational-choice model. The blood may be running so hot that any suggestion of compromise by either side's leadership will be unacceptable to its constituents. Conversely, if a leadership has the desire to fight on (or is more risk-taking in nature), the rank and file may be too war-weary to comply. Both practitioners and scholars refer to windows of opportunity and vulnerability.

Finally, *those making the decisions are often far more concerned with personal or in-group survival and power than with what might be best for the people at large.* Thus, even if "rational," leaders' actions may injure their country.

Clearly, the ability of outsiders to predict what the state or opposition will do in a given post-conflict situation will often be quite limited. Nonetheless, this model identifies the factors and considerations at work.

### **Measuring the Constructs of the Security Model**

The scholarly literature does not define how to measure the constructs described above, but we have suggestions:

- Degree of security can probably be measured by using an index variable of the sort familiar to social scientists. Having a uniform standard would allow semi-quantitative discussion good enough for discussing alternative strategies.

- Security effort could be measured with “equivalent scores” reflecting number of personnel, equipment and modernization, quality, and combined-arms mix. Such scoring has long been used for good-enough calculations in force planning and operational planning.
- Resistance could be measured similarly, but would also need to reflect the differences between, e.g., active and passive support by the population.
- It might prove possible to classify situations and, for each such case, reflect the effects of modern technology and tactics as “multipliers” of the security and resistance efforts.

## Establishing Favorable Political Conditions

### General Observations

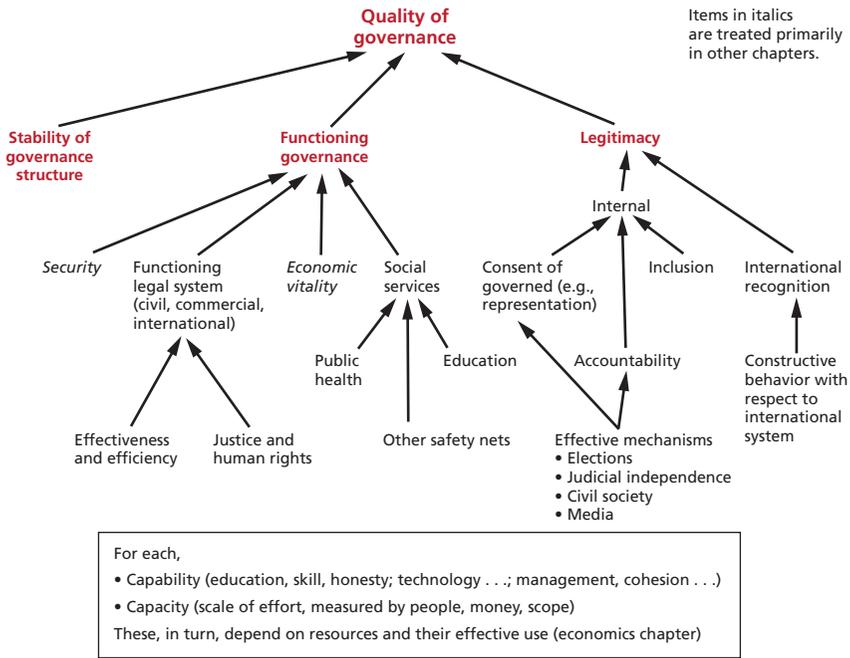
The second component of S&R noted in Figure S.1 is political, dealing with establishing effective governance in a country that is at peace with its neighbors and responsive to the concerns of its citizens. That might be accomplished in innumerable ways, but intervenors often plunge ahead in ways reflecting their own history and ways of doing things, which can be a poor fit for the country in question for reasons of history, culture, and circumstance.

What, then, are the bare essentials? The core requirements? The three most fundamental are that the government is

- *Stable*: Free of internal or external threats to the nation, its constitution, and its governmental system.
- *Functioning*: Able to take and implement effective decisions, providing core services to the nation’s people.
- *Legitimate and Accountable*: Subject to censure or removal if officials violate established rules, laws, and rights; and legitimate internationally.

Figure S.6 summarizes these in the form of a corresponding factor tree identifying general factors contributing to the quality of gover-

**Figure S.6**  
**Factors Determining the Quality of Governance**



NOTES: The factors apply at a snapshot in time. Bulleted items are mere examples.

RAND MG1119-S.6

nance, independent of its precise form. As shown at the bottom, success depends also on capability, capacity, and implementation (e.g., including control of corruption, which can infect all aspects of S&R). Real-world governments may fall short in some factors but still be “adequate” in some sense. In principle, an autocratic government can be high-functioning even if it has little other political legitimacy. A democratic government may have high legitimacy but be dysfunctional.

A considerable degree of scholarly consensus exists on political goals to be emphasized (which relate closely to the factors in Figure S.1), particularly (1) dispersing benefits, (2) assuring that factions participate in governance and decisionmaking, (3) establishing barriers against excessive centralization and exclusion, and (4) creating self-enforcing mechanisms to assure accountability and responsiveness. However,

identifying such general goals is one thing; choosing among *approaches* to governance is another, as is deciding on criteria of adequacy.

Attempting to actually create or enhance a government raises sensitive issues, such as (1) partitioning as an option for a post-conflict situation, (2) different regime types, (3) differing arrangements for power-sharing, (4) connecting the government to the people (i.e., establishing legitimacy), and (5) enforcement of state-society obligations. What is feasible and desirable depends on the situation, including the history of how the war came about in the first place, root problems, and the nature of leaders and parties, who often operate for selfish purposes. Such social-science emphasis on context dependence is sometimes disappointing to those looking for formulas, but the discussion has an important implication for intervenors:

An early *priority* should be understanding: the country's human, economic, and cultural make-up; sources of contention; capacities and objectives of the factions; available state-building options; and an honest assessment of intervenors' commitment and capabilities.

This would be unexceptionable except that intervenors often do not build this base of information early, but rather proceed apace with insufficient knowledge.

### **Political Dilemmas**

Pursuing broad goals is difficult because intervenors almost invariably encounter dilemmas. Not only do they find competing “theories” about how to proceed, they also find that any approach taken is likely to have significant side effects. Table S.2 describes three conflicting paradigms that have been used by U.S. policymakers over the past several decades—all of which are still in play. Controlled state-building sees economic development as the primary engine. Liberal-democratic state-building emphasizes inclusion and democratization. Decentralized S&R suggests minimalist objectives overall (primarily stabilization) and stresses “bottom-up” developments in which local communities and power holders set priorities, in which case governance is more distributed and local.

**Table S.2**  
**Conflicting Paradigms for Thinking About Governance Dilemmas**

Paradigm	Priorities	Economic Concept	Political Concept	Security Concept
Controlled state-building	Economic growth, state capacity	Economics is engine of modernization.	Democratization is the long-term result of growth, but its success depends on preconditions.	A strong state must protect against violent challenges.
Liberal-democratic state-building	Political inclusion, equitable growth	Economic growth improves incentives for peace, but only if equitable and sustainable.	Democratization is crucial to achieving stability and movement toward sound state.	Security is achieved through political inclusion and military transparency.
Decentralized S&R	Minimalist objectives: absence of large-scale violence	Local communities, power-holders should set their own economic priorities.	Political inclusion and accountability are important, but may occur outside the formal state and differ between localities.	Stability is achieved when localities are secure from each other and able to maintain stability within their regions.

Upon reviewing these conflicting paradigms and a long list of common political dilemmas, we identified three composite dilemmas that are common in S&R:

- *Inclusion*: Should the approach emphasize short-term political order, which might translate into military solutions followed by autocracy and repression, or should it emphasize negotiated solutions that may be more inclusive and less repressive, but might also be fragile and even ineffective?
- *State Capacity*: Should the approach favor a strong and efficient central state, which will probably require high cost and extended commitments, or should it emphasize achieving more informal governance quickly and at lower cost, but with the resulting government quite possibly being unable to provide services effectively?

- *Transition*: Should the approach emphasize institutions and practices good for securing an end to war, or institutions better suited to the long term, with the dilemma being that power relationships created to promote an end to war tend to resist subsequent transitions?

The dilemmas are real and no formulaic solutions exist. Nonetheless, we can offer admonitions and suggestions, as summarized in Table S.3. If a relatively inclusive and legitimate state exists that external intervenors are willing to support, then one of the most important tools for stabilization is to reduce state vulnerability by reducing resources available to the opposition. This may require regional security arrangements, especially when neighboring states support insurgency or other mischief or are part of a solution. Other mechanisms include buyer cartels and neotrusteeships (i.e., governance that includes significant multilateral external control, as occurred in Bosnia and East

**Table S.3**  
**Dealing with Political Dilemmas**

Admonition	Examples of Mechanisms for Intervenors to Use or Encourage
1. Reduce state vulnerability by reducing opposition's resources.	Regional security arrangements Buyers' cartels? Neotrusteeship?
2. Arrange for appropriate power balance.	Countervailing mechanisms, such as constitutional inclusiveness, peacekeepers, guarantees, costs
3. Shape negotiations and operations based on reality of power balances.	Avoiding incentives to change "facts on ground" Avoiding disconnects between <i>de jure</i> and actual practices unless means and will to enforce compliance exist
4. Protect vulnerable groups (moral imperative and pragmatic necessity).	Developing and using institutions Using carrots and sticks to influence competing factions
5. Plan for evolution of parties' bases of power.	Anticipation of transitions Incentives drawing people into formal institutions and rule of law
6. Work through or around governments.	Base strategy on circumstances, i.e., the governance quality and the governance capacity

Timor, among many other cases). These are especially useful when insurgents are using “lootable resources,” such as oil or diamonds, to fund their activities.

Achieving an appropriate power balance is often difficult (as in today’s Iraq), but mechanisms include constitutional guarantees, international peacekeepers, and carrots and sticks to influence leaders. Early on, power-balance issues can be crucial. The literature warns against creating incentives to change facts on the ground (e.g., seizures of territory) during negotiations. It also suggests that any incongruence between legal/constitutional dictates and those that actually apply on the ground will have to be enforced by external parties, which suggests that negotiators limit their aspirations in what will be enforceable later. Planning transitions is another aspect of S&R, since power bases change and incentives are needed to encourage leaders, and the people more generally, to join in developing institutions and activities under the rule of law.

Table S.4 suggests how strategy, including positive and negative inducements, might vary across cases differing in whether the external circumstances for negotiated peace are favorable (e.g., are third parties willing to provide guarantees; are neighboring countries supportive of or hostile to peace), whether the opposition is judged to be ultimately reconcilable, and whether the opposition enjoys broad popular support. Table S.4 lists eight cases, defined according to these factors in the leftmost four columns. In the more unfavorable cases (e.g., case 8), the strategy (column 5) should focus on *weakening the opponent*, as indicated in later columns by, e.g., cutting off resources and seeking to work with other regional states. It might also include (not shown) looking for ways to improve reconcilability (e.g., wait for a change of leaders or objective realities as seen by the opposition leader). In more favorable cases, some aspects of the intervenor’s approach may be straightforward, but others less so. For example (cases 5 and 6, in which regional circumstances may not be favorable), it may be necessary to provide “physical” guarantees by maintaining international peacemakers or guaranteeing intervention to enforce the protections that are essential in enticing the opposition to pursue peace. We see Table S.4 as the sketch of a tentative framework for making distinctions and commu-

**Table S.4**  
**A First Attempt to Suggest Political Strategies by Case Characteristics**

Case	Favorable Environment	Reconcilable Opposition	Broad Support of Opposition	Strategy	Inducements					
					Positive			Negative		
					Inclusion	Protections	Economic	Resources	Military	Faction Engineering
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Find accommodative solution	Cooptation with soft guarantees					
2	Yes	Yes	No	Find solution; include reasonable incentives		Transparency; political mechanisms	Some side payments	Squeeze		
3	Yes	No	Yes	Weaken opposition; separate from its base				Cut off		
4	Yes	No	No	Weaken opposition				Cut off	Defeat via security cooperation	
5	No	Yes	Yes	Improve environment; find solution	Structural guarantees	Physical	Some side payments (not personal)	Cut off	Defeat	
6	No	Yes	No	Improve environment; find solution	Structural guarantees	Physical	Some side payments	Squeeze		
7	No	No	Yes	Improve environment; weaken opposition				Cut off		
8	No	No	No	Improve environment; weaken opposition				Cut off	Defeat via security cooperation	

nicating, although it will often be very difficult even to know which case applies. Is the opposition *really* irreconcilable as it claims? Are the promises of a neighboring state credible or mere deviousness? Such problems are visible today in Afghanistan and related negotiations with Pakistan and Iran. In any case, constructs such as a more fleshed-out version of Table S.4 could be helpful in guiding discussion, although they would at best sharpen issues rather than resolve them.

Looking back to Table S.3, its last item deals with another cross-cutting dilemma, whether to encourage and work through a centralized government or instead deal with decentralized elements of governance, including relatively informal versions where local customs and processes are a part of governance. Choices must be case-specific. In Afghanistan, for example, the central government has always been weak, with most governance being local and sometimes informal. Working with local leaders has many advantages, such as reduced costs and encouraging a bottom-up development of leaders and governance that can bring with it legitimacy. However, it is more difficult to deal with multiple leaderships; there are reasons for favoring a strong state, such as improving ability to defend against neighbors and economies of scale; and local governance may seem less desirable and benign if it comes with a tradition of discrimination or abuse of minorities or women, criminal control, or highly intolerant religious interpretations (as with the Taliban). Thus, the dilemma is nontrivial. Table S.5 summarizes some of the pros and cons of working through informal governance mechanisms.

## Establishing Favorable Social Conditions

### Initial Observations

The third component of our system structure deals with social matters. The social component is dismayingly broad and notoriously difficult to affect, especially for intervenors. Regrettably, we were unable in our study to deal in depth with such issues as the implications of tribal competition, corruption, or organized crime. Instead, we focused on the important but more humble challenge of achieving *a degree* of trust

**Table S.5**  
**Working Through Informal Institutions of Governance**

Strengths of Informal Institutions	Weaknesses of Informal Institutions	Challenges Faced by Foreigners
Adapted to local realities	Inefficiencies of scale	Variation between localities
Inexpensive, immediately available	Weaknesses in regulating inter-communal conflict	Visibility
Strong and resilient	Inequality	Training, experience of international personnel
Can be part of bottom-up legitimization of leaders and institutions	Degradation of traditional authority over years of fighting	Scale, personnel required for decentralized operations
		Potential incongruence with policy goals
		Potential incongruence with human rights standards

and cooperation among disputing factions in a culturally appropriate manner. As noted repeatedly in the scholarly literature, achieving a degree of trust and cooperation is *essential* for success (not just a nice-to-have objective pursued by idealists)—and can be feasible despite past history. A great deal is known from social science about how to proceed, and—significantly—about pitfalls and naivetés to avoid.

A starting point is recognizing the different types of trust, as summarized in Table S.6, which fall into two broad categories: “calculation-based trust” and “relationship-based trust.” The former requires only that each party concludes that the other can be trusted on a specific matter because it is in its interests to cooperate. Relationship-based trust is different, and grows with improved understanding and the discovery of some common concerns and goals. Both kinds of trust improve over time with *positive* experiences and, of course, suffer from negative experiences.

Distrust is more than the lack of trust. Not trusting someone has a passive connotation. Active distrust is characterized by fear, skepticism, and vigilance. Even if the level of trust is low, if the more active sense of *distrust* can be reduced, then dealings among people may include formal courtesies and arms-length interactions, whereas if the level of

**Table S.6**  
**Types of Trust**

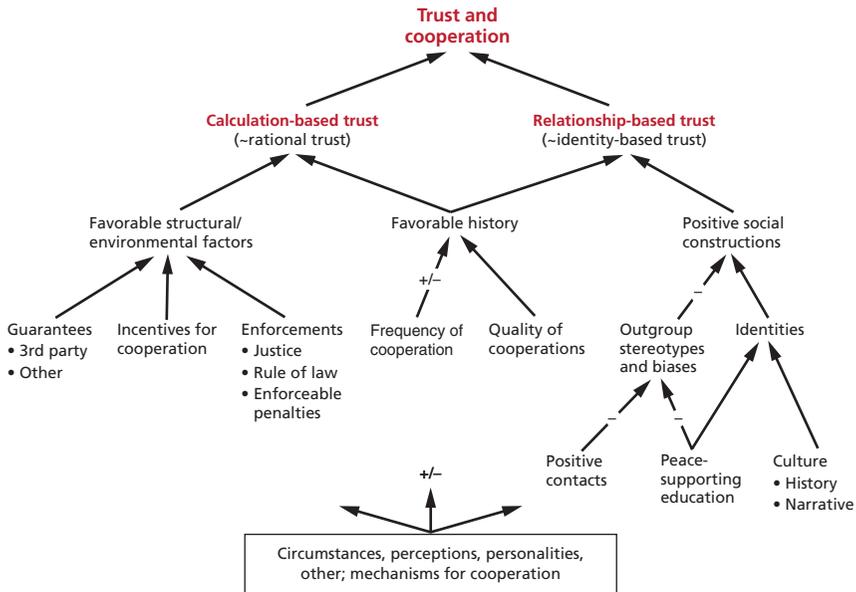
	Calculation-Based Trust	Relationship-Based Trust
Source of trust	Intendedly rational calculations of others' self-interest Experiential history of interactions	Identification with others by relationship and association Some emotional attachment, even empathy
Actors' focus	Behavior control with incentives and enforcement mechanisms Information-gathering about motives and actions	Identifying common goals Building positive familiarities Engaging in emotional reciprocity; encouraging empathy
Ways to develop	Education Clear, consistent communication Credible commitments Repeated, equal-status interactions with appropriate incentive structures	Collaborative projects Emphasizing commonly held identities, values, and goals Education about each others' histories, narratives, and travails (empathy-building)

distrust is high, there may be active fear, paranoia, and the perceived need to attack preemptively.

### Prescriptions for Trust-Building

Figure S.7 summarizes a great deal of social science on how to build degrees of trust and cooperation. Doing so includes orchestrating successful contacts and joint activities, building familiarity with each other's concerns and narratives, creating structural and other incentives for at least limited cooperation, and providing education that encourages understanding and toleration while undercutting hatred and negative stereotypes. Even modest progress on these matters can have large effects well before trust is deep and enduring. This said, much can go wrong with poorly designed efforts. Contact and the experience of trying to work together can, for example, *deepen* hostilities and reinforce prejudices.

**Figure S.7**  
**Factors Affecting Intergroup Trust and Cooperation**



NOTE: The factors apply at a snapshot in time.

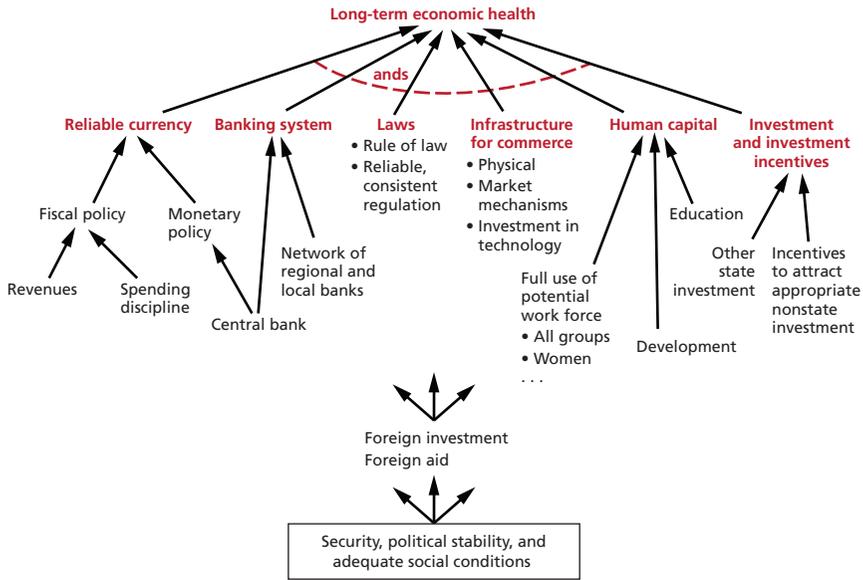
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## Establishing Favorable Economic Conditions

### Why Post-Conflict Economics Is Different

The last of our four components (from Figure S.1) is economic. The economic dimensions of S&R are numerous, complex, and ridden with what are or often appear to be dilemmas. Figure S.8 is a general factor-tree depiction of what contributes to a healthy economy. As indicated at the bottom, economic health also depends on security, governance, and social conditions. This depiction could apply to either post-conflict or normal development settings, but with differences relating to the relative intensity of effort on different factors, the sequencing of those efforts, the type of aid employed, and the type of market system used. For a given country, some of the branches will be much more problematic than others. Thus, Figure S.8 is useful for seeing the whole, but not for deciding what approach to take.

**Figure S.8**  
**Factors Contributing to Economic Health**



NOTE: The factors apply at a snapshot in time.

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Indeed, perhaps the most important conclusion from our review is, bluntly,

Economists seeking to advise in post-conflict circumstances must adjust their thinking substantially: The usual paradigms of “good economics” are counterproductive.

The differences between normal and post-conflict economics have been at the heart of bitter disagreements over the years between some development economists on the one hand and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the other. Often, policies have included immediate and unremitting fiscal and monetary austerity—including not printing money, cutting public spending, setting high interest rates, and constraining credit—all of which can keep inflation down and decrease debt. For a post-conflict situation, however, interve-

nors must worry first about the short run; they want to see that people have incomes so that money can start flowing through the system. The actions may seem to be “political” and be perceived negatively by some, but the principle is that *the best economics in a post-conflict situation is heavily political and social*. Jump-starting the economy is the primary objective, although laying the foundations for sound longer-term economics is also essential. Table S.7 summarizes differences between economics for normal development and for post-conflict settings. Theory and data agree on these matters, and consensus is emerging among development economists even though battles continue more broadly. In recent times, even the World Bank and IMF have relaxed their stringent austerity policies in some post-conflict situations.

### Economic Practices for the Post-Conflict Situation

Economic strategy must reflect country-specific circumstances and history, but the literature supports some overarching themes, which are meaningful because so much past practice has violated the corresponding principles:

**Table S.7**  
**Economic Planning in Normal Versus Post-Conflict Development**

Economic Planning in Normal Development	Economic Planning in Post-Conflict Circumstances
Focus is on medium- and long-term goals.	Focus must often be on short-term (potentially distortionary) emergency programs.
Choices are largely merit-based, without regard to group affiliations.	Choices must often include preferential efforts to assist groups affected by conflict and by social inclusion policies.
Foreign assistance is low and stable.	Foreign assistance spikes immediately after conflict, varying thereafter.
Government institutions establish and carry out rule of law.	Foreign troops support or possibly replace weak or nonexistent government institutions (e.g. police, army, judiciary) to promote rule of law.
International community need not involve itself in the country's politics.	International involvement in country politics is often intrusive and intense.

**Expectations.** Expectations are a problem. Too often, those involved in S&R set high goals, not realizing that doing so undercuts political support and diminishes the government. The more realistic description for the short term would be *jump-starting*. What is needed most is to get the engine started and to establish attitudes of responsible local ownership.

**Measures.** An important element of action should be collecting and analyzing data to help assess whether progress is greater where jump-starting actions are employed. This can help both in management and in building support for the activities, individuals, and institutions responsible. When the actions are not making a positive difference, adaptations may be needed. Metrics are important, of course, but should be developed within a system framework because more narrow metrics will often have very troublesome side effects.

**Simplicity and Flexibility.** The need for “simplicity” is often mentioned, almost as a cliché. However, the admonition has substantial content. Strategy should not have too many components and, certainly, should not try to drive too many factors or be sensitive to intricate interconnections and subordinate controls. “Moving in the right direction” along several lines of effort and “doing essential coordination” conveys the idea. Complex orchestration, as is common and necessary for efficiency in modern commercial settings, is the opposite. Simplicity can also improve transparency and increase buy-in and support by local stakeholders. Finally, plans need to be flexible, so that if activities are not working (as will often be the case), this fact will be recognized and adaptations can be made. Measures to identify failure and enable smooth changes need to be planned and agreed on in advance. This is easier when plans are simple. Interestingly, these themes will all be familiar to military commanders who deal with analogous issues in their traditional domain.

Figure S.9 summarizes how priorities and intensity of effort might reasonably change between the short, mid, and long terms. We see this structuring of priorities over time as resolving some of the apparent dilemmas in the economic component of S&R: Some issues are not so much true dilemmas as conflicts of competing theories due to failures to distinguish sharply among time periods.

**Figure S.9**  
**Summary of Priorities Over Time**

		Timing		
		Early	Mid-Term	Later
Intensity	High	Security Good use of post-conflict security aid	Human-capital development Revenue collection	Incentives to attract investment
	Medium	Physical infrastructure Education Rule of law	Rebuilding central bank	Network of regional banks
	Low	Full assessment of available workforce	Fiscal policy	Monetary policy

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### Special Issues of Foreign Aid

Special economic issues arise with respect to foreign aid because of numerous tensions:

- short-term versus longer-term objectives
- traditional versus more stabilization-specific objectives
- strengthening government by funneling aid through it and allowing the related buildup of patronage systems versus improving the efficiency of aid by delivering directly to the population
- strengthening central government and improving some kinds of efficiency by working through that central government versus emphasizing bottom-up developments at the local and province levels
- imposing conditionalities to improve national performance versus attending quickly to urgent needs.

Table S.8 is our effort to resolve the tensions. The conflict between short-term and long-term issues is less of a dilemma than a matter of diagnosing problems and recognizing what is feasible for the particular country at the particular time: It matters, for example, whether the

**Table S.8**  
**Reconciling Tensions**

Tension	Resolution
Short term versus long term	Base relative emphasis on starting conditions.
Traditional versus stabilization-specific objectives	Improve the collaboration and the integration of the different development aid agencies.
Strengthening government from the bottom up by building patronage systems versus strengthening central government	Build the credibility and the legitimacy of the government, e.g., encourage concrete and observable actions.
Imposing conditionalities or not doing so in the interest of speed	Focus conditionalities on matters uniquely important to leaders, while not putting at risk matters important to the population at large, e.g., exclude conditionality on humanitarian activities. Include institution-building in the conditions.
Working through or around governments	Base strategy on circumstances, i.e., the governance quality and the governance capacity.

country has suffered grievous damage and whether it had or still has a substantial base of human capital.

The tension between traditional development and stabilization-specific objectives is sometimes very troublesome, but one element of mitigating the tensions is to improve the way in which different organs of government and different agencies relate to each other and to non-government organizations (NGOs). Military-style “command and control” is most unlikely, but much more coordination, collaboration, and even integration may be possible.

A fundamental issue—sometimes a dilemma and sometimes just a difficult issue to diagnose and deal with—is whether to support and strengthen the central government (a natural tendency for the United States and other developed-country intervenors) or to take the approach of strengthening governance from the bottom up by working through local leaders. Which approach is better will depend on the specific case, but a cross-cutting principle is that

Whichever strategy is adopted, implementation should support leaders at all levels who actually provide services to their people.

It should help to strengthen their reputations and base of support and power and to improve the legitimacy of the governance system. Such leaders will use or build networks of people that they trust to get things done. Such leaders should be chosen by the people, however, not by the intervenor.

Interestingly, this approach might be seen as building “patronage networks” in a pejorative sense, with elements that might be seen as cronyism. However, it should also be seen positively as establishing patronage networks with bottom-up “emergence” of talented, dedicated, networked people strengthening the core of the nation. Intervenors should influence leaders to be inclusive as they build their networks.

Conditionalities are another common source of dispute. Concerns such as fears of corruption or exclusion lead donor countries to set requirements to assure that their assistance is well used. However, these conditionalities often have bad effects on the people. The primary admonition is that conditionalities should be focused on influencing leaders while not interfering with immediate humanitarian efforts. Conditions should often be tied to institution-building.

The last of Table S.8’s issues has to do with the tension mentioned in earlier paragraphs, whether to work through the government or act more directly. We conclude that the issue is one of correct diagnosis, i.e., in identifying the relevant case. As indicated in Table S.9, very different approaches are suggested merely by recognizing the quality and capacity of the government. If both are lacking (case 1), direct delivery makes sense, especially for short-term humanitarian relief. At the other extreme (a government with relatively high quality and capacity, as in case 4), every effort should be made to work through the government rather than undercutting and delegitimizing it, and rather than setting up ad hoc processes without the benefit of local knowledge and expertise. For in-between cases, hybrid strategies are appropriate, along with adaptation. Intervenor resources may supplement government forces but be clearly in an assistance role. In the event of rank incompetence or total corruption, however, a more direct role is called for. This typol-

**Table S.9**  
**Relating Donor Strategy to Quality and Capacity of Governance**

Circumstances			Response		
Case	Governance Quality	Governance Capacity	Donor Strategy's Relative Emphasis		Nature of Donor Actions
			Short-Term	Long-Term	
1	Low	Low	•••	•	Direct to people
2	High	Low	••	••	Direct to people; but government presence and guidance
3	Low	High	••	••	Through government if possible; direct if necessary
4	High	High	•	•••	Through government

NOTE: Number of bullets indicates weight of emphasis.

ogy is simple but nontrivial, because intuition is often wrong and pressures are often mischievous.

### Analytic Observations

Most of our study was organized around the four components of S&R from Figure S.1, but in addressing those we reviewed a great deal of analytical literature and, in the course of doing so and making our own assessments, we reached a number of conclusions significant in their own right.

We drew heavily on the empirical literature. Empirical evidence, however, comes in many forms, such as case histories, more-than-anecdotal practitioner accounts, and statistical-empirical analysis. Each has strengths and weaknesses. We usually found case histories to be the most useful because they provide rich contextual information and identify “real” factors rather than the variables that happen to be convenient for data analysis. Ultimately, as illustrated in recent years by prominent researchers, there is great opportunity to combine case-history information and quantitative analysis in research, but that is quite demanding.

It is appropriate to comment specifically on statistical-empirical work because of a common misperception that it is more rigorous and policy-relevant than is the case. Some even equate it with “evidence-based research.” In fact, we (and the strongest articles of the literature) are especially reluctant to draw policy conclusions from the past statistical-empirical work relating to S&R. The reasons are many. First, much of the work has been overly “macro” in nature and dependent on historical data that did not stem from the controlled experiments to which the methods apply. After a decade of study and counterstudy, it is clear that much of the analysis has been afflicted by hidden variables, endogeneity, “coding issues,” and a sensitivity of results to the detailed form of equations used for the statistical analysis (the so-called “specification problem”). We find that very few results about the relative importance of factors have held up well across analyses. Where a factor has been shown to correlate with past results, the correlation has often not been truly causal. Further, where a factor has not correlated with past results, we find that has not necessarily meant much. For example, foreign aid has often not had hoped-for effects, but the aid may have been wasted because of poor security, governance, or implementation that precluded its usefulness. In summary, the rich back-and-forth in the quantitative-analysis literature has been very helpful and insightful in identifying factors, influences, and issues, but not very useful in assessing the relationships among factors or their strengths.

Despite these cautions, past “negative” empirical results from quantitative analysis (i.e., an instrument didn’t seem to help) should be extremely sobering to those advocating the use of a particular instrument. If the instrument has not been effective previously, then why should it be more valuable this time? What will be different—and even if there are differences (and there always are), why should they be thought to be so important as to lead to different results? The salience of this admonition was illustrated in the Iraq war and its aftermath.

### **Illustrative Results**

As noted above, many factors have been studied for their potential value in statistical prediction of war occurring or, given a cessation of war, of peace persisting. Most conclusions have proven soft after suc-

cessive studies and critiques, but much has been learned. Table S.10 is our selected abstraction from the literature that illustrates some of the issues. Looking at the first row of the table, an early conclusion was that prospects for peace have been best when the previous war ended decisively, an intuitively sensible conclusion with troublesome policy implications. Further study, however, has shown that “decisiveness” is too aggregated. Some analyses indicate that when rebels have won decisively, prospects have been better than if the government won (perhaps because the governments in question had problems that persisted). Other studies find a different result (using a wider set of cases, including cases with fewer casualties and less destruction), so the only conclusion is probably that who wins matters. Significantly, analysis indicates that intervention by external peacekeepers can trump the sig-

**Table S.10**  
**What Affects Prospects for Enduring Peace? (illustrative)**

<b>Theory/Hypothesis</b>	<b>Statistical Evidence</b>	<b>Illustrative Complications</b>
Decisive conclusion to war	Yes, but	Not necessary. Also, decisive for government or for rebels? Details matter. Further, interventions by an external power can trump this factor.
Mobilization along ethnic lines	Yes, perhaps, but	Ethnicity is probably not “root cause” but manufactured rallying point; does it matter?
Absolutist objectives	Yes, but	Factions routinely exaggerate their firmness or hide their real intentions, or both.
<b>Intervention and guarantees by external power</b>	Yes (about as strong as it gets), but	Not all guarantees are equally credible, nor all interventions equally well sustained.
<b>Regime type/political institutions (degree of democratization)</b>	Yes	Civil wars has been less likely with more democratic governments, but reoccurrence in a post-war environment has been more likely with a factionalized partial democracy
<b>Cutting off opposition’s resources</b>	Yes, but	Constraints on government can also help.

NOTE: Bold indicates items with persuasive and policy-relevant significance.

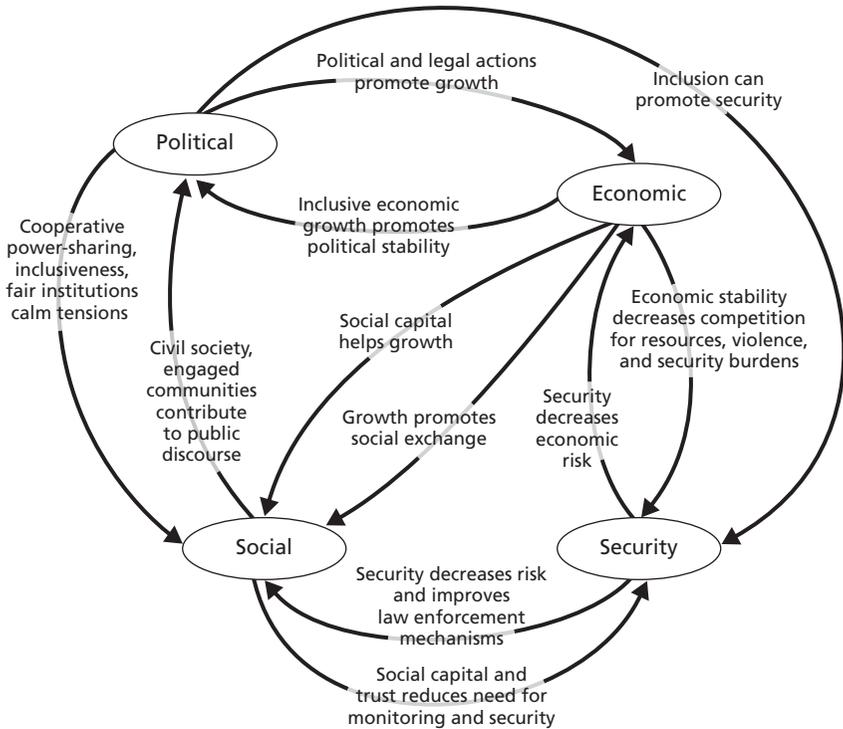
nificance of the previous war's decisiveness. Such scientific back-and-forth is quite valuable for understanding factors and issues.

Looking to the second row, has ethnic hatred been a major factor? By and large, the conclusion from a combination of evidence is that ethnicity has not been a *root* cause, but rather a manufactured rallying point exploited by demagogues. Unfortunately, once a war has been fought with mobilization organized along ethnic lines, the ethnic factors become independently significant. The existence of absolutist objectives has also been studied and found significant. However, it should surprise few readers that factions are sometimes more willing to compromise than their rhetoric suggests and that, other times, peace-seeking language disguises more malevolent intentions. The last three items in Table S.10 (shown in bold) are those that we found had persuasive and policy-relevant significance. Intervention and guarantees by external powers have been correlated in the past with success, which makes sense from theoretical considerations. If a faction is contemplating a negotiated peace, it will be more willing to take risks if there is some *credible* guarantor to step in if necessary and use its influence more generally to protect the faction's interests. Continuing in the table, recent research provides strong evidence that, with a good specification, regime type is a strong statistical indicator of when civil wars occur. Again, that is consistent with theoretical considerations. It is also encouraging because regime type is something that can be influenced. However, another part of the conclusion is that partial, highly factionalized democracies—not uncommon in a post-conflict situation—are especially fragile. Finally, we mention cutting off the opposition's resources. If the intervenor supports the government (perhaps a newly formed government), then a major issue from the literature is that the opposition may well continue fighting if it has the resources to do so. Both logic and statistical data support the idea that cutting off such resources can be valuable.

## Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

We conclude from our work that the “system view” is both necessary and helpful. The potential value of intervenor options depends on baseline values of the security, political, social, and economic components; on the direct ways in which the proposed options can affect them; and on indirect effects (sometimes called second- and third-order effects). Planners can benefit from having concepts of virtuous self-reinforcing loops, as in the illustrative influence diagram in Figure S.10, where progress in each component positively influences developments in another. In the particular example (only one of many that could be

**Figure S.10**  
**Virtuous, Reinforcing Cycles**



drawn), levels of self-reinforcing intergroup cooperation can help establish a norm of cooperation in political circles, which reduces the likelihood of stalemate, thereby increasing government effectiveness. That in turn reduces risk and increases cooperative behavior. Also, effective establishment of transitional justice can legitimize a new government (at the possible cost of exacerbating residual tensions with the society). Civil-society organizations can partner with government to provide human services guided by government to increase social capital via service delivery as well as perceptions of state capacity. Conversely, political corruption decreases trust in all levels of society, both horizontally and vertically. Political structures that encourage nepotism or favoritism create disincentives to cooperation, which in turn decrease economic opportunity, which creates more competition, and so forth.

Regrettably, the possibilities here work in both directions. Failure in one component can undercut progress in others. Side effects are common. Moreover, *most of the virtuous feedback effects do not occur automatically*, but must rather be planned for and enforced. That can be difficult to achieve when the parties in question (e.g., a government and a prime opposition party) are led by individuals or groups of individuals driven more by personal ambitions, greed, and power considerations than by concern for the people at large.

Analytically, we see much value in “influence-diagram” depictions for understanding potential effects and side effects, especially for reasoning and communication. Many authors over the years (primarily in other domains, including policy analysis and business planning) have reached similar conclusions. We emphasize that the greatest value is in “seeing” the relationships, not literally building computer models that generate “predicted” results over time. Such models could be quite valuable for exploratory analysis, which in the future could provide useful analytic insights about prospects for success and about possible side effects to plan against, but for now the more qualitative influence diagrams (and factor trees presented earlier) are the most useful.

### **Operations as Experiments**

Because of the uncertainties and complications discussed above, those developing strategy for S&R will be well advised to think of the chosen

strategy as an experiment, one that will probably have to be adapted to reinforce what is working and to find substitutes for what does not. This requires monitoring developments, which requires signposts of success or failure. Metrics can either help or hurt in this regard, depending on how well they are constructed and how well they reflect the idiosyncratic nature of the particular intervention. We believe that improved metrics can be constructed using the results of our survey and its system depictions (including competing influence diagrams that represent differences of expert opinion).

Interveners are also likely to discover that the problems they are addressing are what theorists call “wicked” problems. At the outset, there is no unique solution to be found by merely applying an algorithm: Antagonists do not yet know what they will, in the end, find satisfactory; objective factors, such as the economy’s development, are not yet realistically predictable; the quality and motives of emergent leaders are yet to be determined; and what intervenors and the world community will find it possible to sustain will be dictated by future and partially unpredictable events. When dealing with wicked problems, process is important so that, if the stars align themselves properly, an adequate solution can emerge in due course.

### **Suggestions for Research**

Research in S&R will continue, and we offer some suggestions:

- Reject narrow approaches to “evidence-based research” that depend strictly on quantitative methods. A mix of methods is a stronger approach to using empirical information. Qualitative methods, particularly case studies and comparative case studies, are often more insightful.
- Within quantitative work, increase emphasis on “micro-level” quantitative analysis in a single country, so as to hold more contextual elements more or less constant.

- Disaggregate to recognize different phases or regions within a single country as substantially different cases.
- Commission experiments in operational theaters large enough to permit using different instruments in different areas or time periods; use people trained in quasi-experimental methods to design meaningful efforts.\*
- Support further work with “agent-based rational-choice decisionmaking models” to anticipate (and in some cases even predict) the maneuverings of political factions competing for influence by forging alliances.
- Encourage quantitative analyses that are more theory-informed in a system-theory sense, rather than based on traditional linear regression and minor variants. Develop a new approach to metrics accordingly.
- Adapt the methods of multiresolution modeling and exploratory analysis to social-science analysis on S&R.

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\* Although adding complexity to their efforts, operational commanders could see this as a portfolio approach to managing risk, one offering an empirical basis for reinforcing successful approaches. Although we recommend such experiments, we caution against high expectations because data will often prove too sparse for the number of factors at play.