NATIONAL WILL to FIGHT

Why Some States Keep Fighting and Others Don’t

Appendixes

Michael J. McNerney
Ben Connable
S. Rebecca Zimmerman
Natasha Lander
Marek N. Posard
Jasen J. Castillo
Dan Madden
Ilana Blum
Aaron Frank
Benjamin J. Fernandes
In Hyo Seol
Christopher Paul
Andrew Parasiliti

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To help gain insights into national will to fight, we reviewed more than 100 books, articles, and reports. In particular, we performed this literature review to identify a wide range of variables relevant to will and understand how these variables relate to each other. In this appendix, we describe the coding scheme and variables that were not explicitly called out in our model. In addition, we review the nine most relevant works of literature and then review the literature as seen through the variables from our will to fight model.

Coding Scheme and Variables

As we described in Chapter Two, our study team used a multidimensional approach to coding variables. Our goal was to tease out the interactions among these variables that were particularly relevant to developing a nuanced understanding of national will to fight. Our literature review helped us identify 42 variables for further examination, which are presented in the tables in this section.

A multidisciplinary team of six RAND researchers coded 103 pieces of literature over several months. Of those 103 pieces, 53 were peer-reviewed journals or reports and 50 were book chapters. The majority of sources examined were from the post–Cold War era, and 50 percent of all sources were published from 2000 to 2017, although this does not necessarily imply that those sources were primarily focused on contemporaneous cases. Despite efforts to draw from a diverse body of literature, the sources were heavily weighted toward Western authors (American and British, primarily) because of our need for English-language sources. However, these authors did look at a diverse group of countries and military groups, including India, Israel, Russia, South Korea, the Soviet Union, Venezuela, and North and South Vietnam.

For our analysis, we focused on literature that was most relevant to a collective understanding of will to fight that would help us uncover useful and interesting insights for Army leaders and policymakers. Some sources were included for their broad theoretical value, others for the value of the historical cases they examined, and some as strong exemplars of one particular characteristic. We purposely included pieces that would not typically fall within the standard canon of military studies literature. For example, research on nonviolent civil resistance was included because it spoke to the internal institutional levers that influence a government’s use of military power. Although that power was not applied to warfare in the traditional sense, similar decisions for when to engage or not engage in conflict were relevant to our analysis because they demonstrated military decisionmaking processes. Another noncanonical piece worthy of inclusion was Paul Stern’s article on what motivates citizens to sacrifice for their
countries. Although Stern does not focus on the military, he examines the commitment that individuals have to an “imagined community” that can be created and manipulated by their governments to stir up popular support for military action.¹

Other works were included because they directly address issues of will to fight. Among these are some of the seminal pieces that define a nation’s will to fight through history—for example, Jenkins’ pivotal piece, based on interviews and open-source information, assessing the North Vietnamese Army’s continued combat presence in the Vietnam War.² We incorporated a third category of sources—those that were indirectly relevant to will to fight but seminal in their own right. In this category, Stanislav Andreski’s work on military dictatorships was included because it spoke to how democracies and dictatorships conduct themselves differently in war.³

Where pieces of literature met at the intersection of academically relevant and useful for policymakers, they also tended to speak directly to the aforementioned factors and subfactors used by our team to describe the facets of a nation’s will to fight. Our literature review identified several themes that are both useful and relevant to the development of a model of a nation’s will to fight, which we describe in detail later.

Each team member received a random sample of literature that he or she then coded in a shared database. The codes were developed by our project leadership team and are described in the tables in this section. We used three categories for sorting our variables, developed from a modified DIME (diplomacy, information, military, and economics) structure, which is a conceptual approach used by the U.S. military to talk about national power from a whole-of-government perspective. As described in Chapter Two, we limited our search to three consolidated categories:

- **Political** variables address characteristics of the government and the government’s changing perceptions, relationships, assessments, and ideological motivations during a conflict.
- **Economic** variables address characteristics of the country’s economy and the changing influences on the economy (pressures and assistance) during a conflict.
- **Military** variables address characteristics of the military and the changing military factors that influence government decisionmaking during a conflict.

In addition to defining state interest and power across three dimensions, we used three additional descriptive categories to demonstrate considerations that inform government decisions around will to fight and enable or limit their action:

- **Factors** shape a country’s will to fight; in other words, they are the considerations that drive government decisions.
- **Contexts** represent those background conditions in a country within which particular factors are likely to be more or less relevant. They do not change quickly and can rarely be influenced in the near or medium term.
- **Mechanisms** are used by governments to strengthen or weaken a country’s will to fight.

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Whereas factors and contexts should help us design tools for Army leaders to better understand will to fight, mechanisms should help Army leaders identify ways to influence will to fight.

The team derived a set of characteristics from its initial literature review and interviews. Once we identified variables that fit within this framework of political, economic, and military characteristics and factors, contexts, and mechanisms, we created a coding scheme to guide the team through the more extensive literature review. Tables A.1, A.2, and A.3 explain our coding scheme and the definitions collectively agreed upon for each coded variable. Team members used a binary 1/0 coding system to identify when variables were present and influential on national will to fight in each piece of literature on a shared database. The tables present all of the variables we coded in our literature review. Through this coding effort and subsequent discussions with experts, we added, combined, and eliminated variables, eventually determining which variables would be most valuable for our model and for further exploration through case studies.

From our coding scheme, we identified several frequently occurring and co-occurring variables, as well as those seen less frequently either separately or together. The support of the population, the dynamics of civil-military relations, the particular military characteristics of a country, and government style appeared most frequently. On the opposite side, economic support or pressure from partners, economy post-conflict, and perceived economic pressure on adversaries were seen least frequently in the literature. The literature we examined was thin on the interactions between will to fight and economic variables. Several variables that are intuitively believed to be connected to each other also appeared connected within our coding; these included ideological motivation with support of the population, government style with government cohesion, government style with room for society, perceived threat to national interest with nationalism of the military, and historical experiences of war and peace with government cohesion. We explored these and other relationships between the variables in our model throughout our analysis, as described in Chapter Two.
### Table A.1
#### Coding for Political Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALI_STRNG</td>
<td>Strength of alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIV_SOC</td>
<td>Room for civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULT_TERR</td>
<td>Perceived cultural value of territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC_FORC</td>
<td>Strength of key assumptions leading to the decision to use force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO_TERR</td>
<td>Geography or terrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOVT_STYL</td>
<td>Governance style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST_WARP</td>
<td>Historical experiences of war and peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COH_GOV</td>
<td>Cohesion of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUL_PERS</td>
<td>Cultural value of perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>END_FIGHT</td>
<td>Government perceptions of the consequences of ending fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPC_VIC</td>
<td>Government expectation of victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEO_MOTV</td>
<td>Strength of ideological motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAD_CON</td>
<td>Identity of leadership defined by conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCON_POWD</td>
<td>Government assessment of post-conflict domestic power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCON_POWI</td>
<td>Government assessment of post-conflict regional or international power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC_NATR</td>
<td>Societal perceptions of nation's role in the region or internationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC_WARP</td>
<td>Societal perceptions of war and peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC_WRONG</td>
<td>Government and societal perceptions of perceived wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAKE_CON</td>
<td>Stakes in a conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUP_POP</td>
<td>Support of the population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUP_ELITE</td>
<td>Support of elites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUP_PART</td>
<td>Support of partners (including multinational institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THR_NATL</td>
<td>Government and societal perceptions of the threat to national interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIS_PCON</td>
<td>Vision for nation post conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIL_ADV</td>
<td>How government views will of adversary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table A.2
**Coding for Economic Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECON_CHAR</strong></td>
<td>Economic characteristics of a country (e.g., economic livelihood from agriculture, trade, industry, energy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECON_COND</strong></td>
<td>Economic conditions of a country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECON_PCON</strong></td>
<td>Vision for national economy, post conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRES_ADV</strong></td>
<td>Perceived economic pressure on adversary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRES_ELITE</strong></td>
<td>Economic pressure on elites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRES_PART</strong></td>
<td>Economic support or pressure from partners (e.g., China on North Korea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRES_POP</strong></td>
<td>Economic pressure on population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table A.3
**Coding for Military Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MIL_CHAR</strong></td>
<td>Military characteristics of a country (e.g., historical nationalism, professionalism, civilian oversight of the military)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASUALTIES</strong></td>
<td>Casualties inflicted on military forces or on civilian population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIVL_MIL</strong></td>
<td>Civil-military relations of a country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DUR_MIL</strong></td>
<td>Duration of military successes, stalemates, losses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATL_MIL</strong></td>
<td>Nationalism of military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROF_MIL</strong></td>
<td>Professionalism of military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POST_CON</strong></td>
<td>Vision for military, post conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOC_MIL</strong></td>
<td>Societal perceptions of the military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TACT_CAP</strong></td>
<td>Government assessment of tactical will to fight and capabilities of national and partner forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TACT_CAPAV</strong></td>
<td>Government assessment of tactical will to fight and capabilities of adversary forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASUALTIES</strong></td>
<td>Casualties inflicted on military forces or on civilian population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foundations for Understanding National Will to Fight

Although comprehensive studies specifically focused on the concept of national will to fight are rare, broader issues relevant to will—such as war termination, motivation, cohesion, and government decisionmaking in wartime—are extensive. Scholars, especially in history and the social sciences, want to explain why some countries fight harder than others. Practitioners, especially military planners, want to anticipate which national opponents may fight to the death and which ones will fold quickly when battlefield conditions turn against them. For this reason, national will to fight seems an important factor in any net assessment of national power. Such assessments are clearly incomplete if they do not incorporate the nonmaterial, or human, dimension of conflict.

Because there is such a large amount of relevant literature, we tried to narrow the scope of our project to make it both analytically manageable and tractable while also relevant for policymakers. To that end, we searched for sources that would help us understand the motivation and decisionmaking of a government during war. Specifically, we looked at conditions under which a nation’s policymakers decide to continue fighting or to terminate a conflict.

To capture variation in a nation’s will to fight, we rely on three distinctions: unconditional, conditional, and weak. When a country possesses an unconditional will to fight, we expect its decisionmakers to stay in the conflict regardless of the strategic circumstances. Think of Germany’s resistance in World War (WW) II. By conditional will to fight, we mean a country whose determination depends on events on the battlefield. For example, in WW I, German elites and the general population began to pressure the government in Berlin to end the war when they concluded that the army no longer stood a chance of winning. Lastly, we describe countries with a weak will to fight as those who are most likely to abandon the fight as soon as events on the battlefield become negative. Take, for instance, the quick capitulation of the Argentine government during the Falklands War. The junta in Buenos Aires ended the war after a few sharp defeats in a short period.

Key Works on National Will to Fight

In canvassing the literature, we sought research that would describe the key factors influencing a government’s decisionmaking in war. We also looked for works isolating the mecha-
nisms that motivated a nation’s population and military to fight. To that end, we identified nine important works in the social science literature that provided the analytical foundation for our study.

A classic work on the role of national cohesion on a country’s wartime performance is Arthur Stein’s *The Nation at War*. Stein argues that a nation at war can be motivated by many factors, including national unity and the government’s ability to extract, control, and produce resources. Instead of a simple theory, the book presents a comprehensive list and an empirical assessment of all the factors that keep a nation fighting. Think of it as a comprehensive survey of factors influencing a nation’s decisionmaking in war. For Stein, two key forces shape a country’s will in war. First, the presence of an outside enemy threatens something the nation greatly values, like its territory, which relates to stakes, one of our political factors. Second, the capacity of a country’s national leaders to manage both the economy and income inequality, which relates to our economic variables, shapes a nation’s will to fight. Figure A.1 shows the cover of this influential source.

Figure A.1
*Arthur A. Stein, The Nation at War*

Stein reviews the sources of national will


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In our second key work, Andrew Mack argues that stakes in a conflict are among the many factors that motivate a country to endure the costs of war.\textsuperscript{11} What is a population fighting to obtain, and do the benefits outweigh the costs of war? Mack argues that when defending their homelands, weaker countries will endure wars against stronger states because they have more at stake (for example, in the Soviet-Afghan War, the Israel-Lebanon War, and the Vietnam War).\textsuperscript{12} The subject in dispute, and not military power, becomes the decisive asymmetry that determines winners and losers in war. Mack looks at several conflicts, the Vietnam War in particular, to provide evidence for his argument. Figure A.2 depicts two of the images from this important journal article.

\textbf{Figure A.2}

\begin{quote}
Stakes of a conflict motivate national will
\end{quote}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Andrew Mack, “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict”}
\end{figure}

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{SOURCE}: Mack, 1975 (page from journal); Erwin Franzen via Flickr (CC BY-SA 3.0) (top photograph); Ya’akov Sa’ar, Israel Government Press Office, showing soldiers from the Israeli Defense Forces, Beirut, 1982 (bottom photograph).
\end{flushright}


Our third key work discusses how national motivation in war can also reflect the overall cohesion of society. Sociologist Michael Hechter argues that groups retain their cohesion, or solidarity, when they have strong common interests and can enforce cooperation with threats of coercion.\textsuperscript{13} The notion that groups overcome the collective action problem to pursue joint interests has long been understood in the social sciences.\textsuperscript{14} Hechter takes this observation a step forward by incorporating the role of coercion, or the threat of punishment, to keep a group united under stressful conditions. The coercive threat can refer to actual sanctions, as well as the role of social pressure in maintaining group loyalty. Hechter’s argument seems applicable to groups of various sizes, including primary groups, militaries, and nations. For example, the Soviet Red Army in WW II relied on commissars to motivate soldiers (Figure A.3). In our model, we capture these ideas in two of our political factors: cohesion and popular support or acquiescence. Without popular support, a government may need to coerce its population to support the war or least attempt to mute their dissent. That coercion may not be so easily achieved if the government and elites in charge are not well aligned.

\textbf{Figure A.3}
\textit{Michael Hechter, Principles of Group Solidarity}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{group-solidarity.png}
\caption{Group solidarity depends on common interests and coercion}
\end{figure}


Our fourth key work, Jasen Castillo’s *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion*, points to the importance of ideology and coercion as determinants of a country’s will to fight.\(^{15}\) The aim of his work (Figure A.4) is to address will to fight across all three levels of military analysis: national, operational, and tactical. It may be the only effort to explain will to fight at all three levels with an interrelated, cross-cutting unitary theory. Basing his findings on seven cases (all U.S. or European), Castillo argues that a nation’s will to fight depends on two variables: the degree to which a regime controls society and the autonomy that military organizations possess to train for warfighting (Table A.4). Regime control refers to the ability of a government to promulgate an ideology that argues that individuals serve the nation. Castillo points to nationalism, communism, and fascism as ideologies that make this demand on citizens. In liberal societies, like the United States, the relationship is reversed: The state serves individuals. We capture this idea in our model in the government type and national identity contexts. Promoting an ambitious and demanding ideology is not enough for strong regime control, however. A government must also co-opt, or control, civil society. Under these circumstances, a government has no opposition when promoting its demanding ideology. This last characteristic separated Italy and Germany in WW II. Like Nazi Germany, Benito Mussolini’s Italy promoted a demanding ideology. However, he lacked the control over civil society

that Hitler had in Germany, which ensured that Hitler’s ideology was embraced by the country’s elites, military, and general population. With strong regime control, Hitler could motivate German society and the armed forces to fight to the bitter end.

With the autonomy to train, military organizations develop the bonds of trust and cohesion that enable their units to fight with great battlefield determination. This tenacity, in turn, bolsters a nation’s will to fight because the population sees its armed forces display staying power in combat. When military units begin to lose battles, the home front takes these defeats as a sign that victory in war is becoming increasingly unlikely, which could undermine national will to fight. This idea is captured in our model through the cohesion and popular support factors.

Table A.4
Variables That Determine a Military’s Will to Fight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1: Type of Regime</th>
<th>2: Type of Military</th>
<th>Will to Fight Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High control</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Strong but inflexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High control</td>
<td>Messianic</td>
<td>Strong and flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low control</td>
<td>Apathetic</td>
<td>Weak and fragile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low control</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Conditionally strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In our fifth key work, building on another ideological argument, Margaret Levi argues that democracies mobilize best for war when their constituents believe that the government and fellow citizens fairly share in the burden of war. Levi seeks to understand why individuals in a democracy would volunteer for military service or to endure higher economic costs to support their country in time of war (Figure A.5). She contends that democracies can elicit support by creating mechanisms that spread the costs of war across society. An equitable conscription system represents one such mechanism. To support her claim, she uses evidence from U.S. wars in the 20th century. In our model, these ideas are represented through government type, national identity, and popular support or acquiescence.

**Figure A.5**
*Margaret Levi, Consent, Dissent, and Patriotism*

Democracies mobilize best for war when citizens perceive fair sharing of burdens

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Sixth, Fred Charles Iklé’s *Every War Must End* remains the seminal text on war termination. In it, Iklé offers two general factors that prevent wars from ending sooner. First, wars continue when they should rationally end because civilian and military leaders cannot correctly interpret battlefield events. Their judgment is clouded by an emotional desire to win and, therefore, justify the costs of war already suffered. Second, politics on the home front, where hawks and doves struggle to gain advantages during war, prevent a rational end to a war already lost (Figure A.6). These more emotional reasons for maintaining the will to fight serve as a reminder that developing the will to stop fighting may be even more challenging and important for leaders. We capture these ideas in our model through our government and elite cohesion factor.

**Figure A.6**
Fred Charles Iklé, *Every War Must End*

Iklé explains the obstacles to ending wars

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Seventh, building on Iklé and using cases from WW I, Hein Goemans argues in *War and Punishment* that democracies and authoritarian states are best at motivating their countries and ending wars.18 Democracies can motivate their populations by increasing political rights or providing more public goods. Authoritarian states, led on by one ruler, tend to repress domestic opposition. Countries ruled by oligarchies cannot end wars without victory. Constantly worried about domestic opposition, they fear that defeat will end their rule. To motivate their populations, they promise increasingly greater war aims. This tendency leads them to prolong the war and to take risks on the battlefield. This was the disastrous course followed by Wilhelmine Germany in 1918 (see Figure A.7). We explore these ideas in our model by examining various government types.

Figure A.7
H. E. Goemans, *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination in the First World War*

Why do states vary in their ability to end wars?

In our eighth key work, another study focusing on national decisionmaking in war, Risa Brooks focuses on civil-military relations, which we determined in our model to be a key factor influencing a government’s national will to fight. In her book *Shaping Strategy*, she argues that poor communication between civilian and military leaders can lead to terrible strategic decisionmaking. Good strategic assessments, in her view, require clear, honest communication between policymakers and the leaders of the armed forces about their country’s military capabilities. To illustrate her point, she compares Egypt’s planning and poor battlefield performance in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War with Egypt’s improved performance in the 1973 Yom Kippur War (Figure A.8).

**Figure A.8**
*Risa A. Brooks, Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment*

Civil-military tensions can undermine strategy
Finally, to help us analyze the influence of government types on national will to fight, we collected many insights from the selectorate theory as outlined in Bueno de Mesquita and colleagues’ *The Logic of Political Survival* (Figure A.9)\(^{20}\) and amended by Bueno de Mesquita and Smith in 2009.\(^{21}\)

The essence of the selectorate theory is that political leaders are, first and foremost, concerned with staying in office in order to be able to accomplish any political goal. To do so, every leader must rely on the support from a group, called the winning coalition, that controls the essential features of political power in the system. In democracies, a winning coalition comprises the group of voters who elect the leader, while in autocracies and totalitarian systems, winning coalitions are formed by the people who control enough power to retain the leader in office. In all systems, leaders choose a tax rate that generates revenue, decide how to spend

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the revenue in a manner designed to keep incumbents in office, and provide a mix of public and private goods. Private benefits are distributed only to members of the winning coalition and diminish as the size of the winning coalition expands, such that large-coalition leaders are forced to shift their effort to the provision of public goods that benefit the whole society.22

According to the selectorate theory, all states can be mapped in a two-dimensional institutional space characterized by the size of the “selectorate” and the winning coalition. Under this framework, democracies are characterized by a large selectorate and a large winning coalition, which means that democratic leaders must produce public goods, have little discretion to deviate from the interests of the voters, and may be easily replaced by political rivals.23 During war, realization of victory is treated like a public good separate from any other benefits acquired during the conflict.24 As a result, democracies tend to invest more resources in warfighting and often have strong will to fight during military conflicts, especially when extra effort makes victory more likely and stakes are perceived as high. Democracies also tend to invest in protecting all those serving in the military (not just senior leaders) because military personnel usually represent large population groups and, therefore, are important for the political survival of the incumbent leader.

Autocracies and totalitarian regimes are on the opposite end of this spectrum. Autocracies have small winning coalitions and small selectorates,25 and they tend to spend money on private rewards to key supporters by promoting cronyism and corruption. Totalitarian regimes are more survivable because they have large selectorates and small winning coalitions, making elites easily replaceable and assuring a high degree of loyalty from key constituencies. For example, in the former Soviet Union, Stalin had no difficulty repeatedly replacing the party and military elites during the regular purges in the 1930s26 while maintaining a high degree of loyalty within both the party and the broader population by relying on coercion, ideology, and provision of public goods.27

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22 Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005, p. 8.
25 A small number of people rule the country. These people are usually selected from a relatively small group of the population, such as the military, civil servants, and aristocrats.
27 As Robert Grigor Suny explains,

The belief that they were building socialism motivated party and state leaders with a sincere concern to construct towns, build roads and schools, to introduce scientific methods of farming, to modernise industries and to uplift culture. This same belief allowed leaders to destroy churches, synagogues and mosques, move populations wholesale, impoverish and work the population to the point of starvation and to imprison and shoot massive numbers of people. (Ronald Grigor Suny, The Cambridge History of Russia, Vol. 3: The Twentieth Century, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 193)
An In-Depth Review of the Scholarship on National Will to Fight

The works highlighted in the previous section provide a snapshot of the literature on national will to fight and associated topics. This section delves deeper into the body of literature we read for the study. It is structured by the factors, contexts, and mechanisms from our model. As discussed earlier, our literature review helped us identify, organize, and analyze our will to fight variables. Here, we discuss each of the variables from our model in the context of examples from our literature review.

Factors

Stakes

What a nation is fighting for, which can also be interpreted as what its people believe the nation is fighting for, may play a significant role in the will of a nation to initiate or continue a conflict. In his book on the Civil War, *What They Fought For, 1861–1865*, James McPherson analyzes the letters and diaries of 1,000 Confederate and Union soldiers and concludes that they spoke of an ideological commitment to the cause based on the preservation of their state, which compelled them to continue fighting against daunting odds.28 The desire to fight against a perceived existential threat may even convince leaders to act against their own best interests. Richard B. Frank demonstrates in *Downfall: The End of the Japanese Empire* that the Japanese government at the end of WW II was willing to risk complete annihilation to preserve the nation’s existing order. Thus, to defend against an existential threat to their nation, government leaders were willing to sacrifice a staggering number of the people that made up that nation.29

Democracies may be less willing to sustain a war for interests that are less than vital to their survival. Such governments may use an existential threat, or may create the appearance of an existential threat, to generate national-level will to fight. Eric Larson found that the American publics’ historical tolerance for casualties during conflicts and interventions followed the perceived stakes of the conflict: Where interests were not vital, tolerance for casualties was low, and vice versa.30 Roger R. Reese describes how Hitler’s violation of the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 1939 created an existential threat to the Russian motherland that was particularly motivating for ethnic Russians in the Soviet Union, strengthening their will to fight.31 An existential threat, however, may not be enough to garner national support across all ethnic groups, as Stalin discovered. Therefore, the threat is often paired with the rhetoric of nationalism to motivate a larger segment of the population that may not view themselves as affected by a threat to a specific territory but, rather, by a threat to the idea of a homeland. Similarly, in the Vietnam War, South Vietnam recognized that its military was not motivated to protect the government. Instead, the military was motivated by a perceived existential threat posed by the Viet Cong and its allies.

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**Cohesion**

Internal government cohesion may influence how dedicated a nation is to a conflict and whether it has expectations of victory. Absent other mitigating factors, it may also determine how long a government feels comfortable committing forces to a conflict. There is mixed evidence to support the hypothesis that external conflict creates higher levels of internal government cohesion in response, according to Stein’s work. Indeed, while leaders may think that continuing to wage war against a common threat or enemy will create a bulwark of support within their own political faction, it very often has the opposite effect, depending on the success or failure of that military endeavor.\(^\text{32}\) The degree to which elites in a country agree or diverge on a decision to go to war may also have an effect on the general populace’s willingness to engage. Adam Berinsky finds that, when political elites disagree over the wisdom of an intervention, the public is similarly divided; however, when elites come to a common understanding of the political stakes in a conflict, the public is generally more willing to give the government greater freedom to wage war.\(^\text{33}\)

**Civil-Military Relations**

Civil-military relations describe how civilian and military institutions interact. This relationship impacts the effectiveness of a country’s military and how the country uses its military capabilities. Peter Feaver articulates the key civil-military conundrum that “the very institution created to protect the polity is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity.”\(^\text{34}\) Effective or dysfunctional relationships between a nation’s civilian and military leaders can influence will at all levels. Writing on the practice of coup-proofing in Middle Eastern regimes, for example, RAND’s James T. Quinlivan explains how actions taken by autocratic regimes to strengthen their internal control over the military may inevitably weaken the state’s ability to wage war with external enemies.\(^\text{35}\) Quinlivan finds that such practices as prioritizing personal loyalty, creating parallel military units, and overlapping internal security agencies reduce a country’s overall military capability. This example of poor civil-military relations (which Quinlivan notes one would expect to find in countries susceptible to coups) demonstrates how a failure to align military and government leadership affects internal stability and outward strength, which could weaken a nation’s overall will to fight. Caitlin Talmadge’s study builds on Quinlivan’s conclusions by examining differences in the combat capabilities of different units in the same country, as well as between countries. In her Iran-Iraq and Vietnam cases, she shows how coup-proofing military units led to dramatically different combat capabilities and will to fight.\(^\text{36}\)

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Popular Support or Acquiescence

Popular support can be thought of as support for the government’s participation in a conflict or support for the government despite its participation in a conflict (acquiescence). Popular support, in conjunction with regime type, can influence a government’s will to fight and its expectations of victory. For example, Lindsey A. Hines and colleagues reviewed and evaluated research and public opinion poll data on attitudes toward the military in the United Kingdom. The authors concluded that, although there were low levels of support for British involvement in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts from 2010–2014, there were still high overall levels of support for the UK armed forces. Such a discrepancy between support for an institution overall versus an ongoing military operation can have varied effects on a government’s desire to remain in a conflict that has low levels of public support.

Closely tied to popular support is public morale, which can influence military outcomes and can be bolstered or diminished by the actions of a government while under duress. In “From Depression to Victory: A Record of Growing British Determination During the Battle of Britain,” Adam Thomas writes that Churchill’s frequent and powerful speeches to the British public created a bulwark of public morale against the economic pressures and fractured communities during WW II.  

Popular support and its influence on national will to fight is intimately related to legitimacy. Jonathan Waskan notes that, “in the context of political theorizing, ‘legitimacy’ is roughly synonymous with ‘justified’ or ‘acceptable.’” He goes on to assert, “If a people holds the belief that existing institutions are ‘appropriate’ or ‘morally proper,’ then these institutions are legitimate.” In this construction, legitimacy is dependent on the views of “the people” and whether they accept the system of authority and the actions it takes as justified, acceptable, and appropriate. The work of Morris Zelditch and his various collaborators draws on S. M. Dornbusch and W. R. Scott’s notions of propriety and validity to distinguish an individual’s judgment about the appropriateness of an act (propriety) from the apparent consensual view of the larger society (validity). This work is important, because it both elaborates legitimacy as a fundamentally social process and explains how an individual who personally


38 Adam Thomas, “From Depression to Victory: A Record of Growing British Determination During the Battle of Britain,” Air Power History, Spring 2016.


40 There is an interesting strand of research on legitimacy that focuses on the difference between acceptance of and passive consent to (pragmatic acceptance of) governance, finding a difference between behavior and belief to be worthy of consideration, particularly on the fringes when legitimacy starts to break down (see, for example, Arthur J. Vidich and Ronald M. Glassman, “Introduction,” in Arthur J. Vidich and Ronald M. Glassman, eds., Conflict and Control: Challenge to Legitimacy of Modern Governments, London: Sage, 1979).


believes that an act is wrong (lacks propriety) can nonetheless accept it as legitimate because he or she perceives it as valid (accepted by the community). This distinction becomes particularly important when considering the role of indoctrination in strengthening will to fight: If censorship and other internal controls suppress dissenting voices, a dissenting majority may remain acquiescent and hesitate to call for an end to fighting, because the dissenters believe themselves to be in the minority. Thus, popular acquiescence can substitute for popular support as a means of strengthening will to fight because governments have less fear of negative political repercussions for their decision to continue engaging in a conflict.

**Allied Strength and Support**

The degree to which a state can depend on alliances with other countries—particularly strong countries—during conflict may affect that state’s willingness to continue or terminate the war effort. In some instances, governments rely on their alliances to support their strategic objectives without devoting too much blood and treasure in the process. When a government has the support of allies, either through diplomatic machinations (i.e., providing international legitimacy for a conflict) or operational relationships (i.e., serving as a force multiplier by providing additional troops or material resources), a country may be bolstered to continue fighting and have greater expectations of victory because it is buoyed by a greater support base. Paul Kecskemeti writes in *Strategic Surrender* that the Italians, led by Mussolini in WW II, aligned themselves with the Axis not because of some inherent connection but because they imagined that the alliance “promised considerable profit without total effort.” However, such an arrangement ultimately weakened the alliance, as Italy relied on Germany to do the heavy lifting in the war effort, and, when that failed, domestic pressure and division within the Italian military quickly turned the country into an unwilling ally for Germany. In some circumstances, alliance perceptions, regardless of their reality, can substantially influence national will to fight. Pakistan’s president agreed to the 1965 offensive actions against Indian-held Kashmir, at least in part, because he believed that the United States would intervene or, at a minimum, continue providing military assistance. When U.S. support ceased and sufficient alternative allies could not be found, Pakistan reluctantly agreed to cease fighting.

**Economic Leverage**

Stein’s *The Nation at War* argues that a government’s ability to control distribution and production of resources can influence will to fight. Stein also showed that a country’s share of world GDP can predict its ability to mobilize for war. When analyzing national will to fight through the lens of Stein’s theory, one could argue that this ability to control economic resources and exert economic power could be used to influence the will to fight of allies and adversaries by sending a message about how they might be rewarded or punished economically in the course of a conflict. For example, the United States’ promises and ability to support its allies (particularly the United Kingdom) economically in WW II and—later in the conflict—to weaken its adversaries’ economic capacity through its ability to conduct strategic bombing strengthened Allied will.

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43 Kecskemeti, 1958, p. 72.


45 Stein, 1980.
Military Capabilities

A government’s assessment of its own and its adversary’s capabilities can have decisive consequences for how long it engages in a conflict. A government that believes it has greater capabilities than its adversary will likely stay engaged in conflict longer because it may believe that it has a greater chance of winning. For example, in “Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power,” Posen wrote that states seeking to retain their autonomy use their military capabilities to “compete” for security. In this sense, a country that believes it is competing well in terms of its capabilities may be more willing to sustain the fight. A government’s assessment of the strength of its military capabilities can also influence its will to fight, because better equipped and better resourced countries have a stronger expectation of victory. Quinlivan explored this idea in his 1999 article “Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequence in the Middle East.” Through an examination of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Syria, Quinlivan found that the availability of forces, combined with advanced planning and competent leadership, made operations more successful. When a government has the military capabilities it needs to execute a timely, decisive operation, its confidence and expectations of victory grow, which (as we have discussed elsewhere) thus strengthens will to fight.

On the other hand, a government’s failure to adequately assess the effectiveness of its capabilities could create an artificially high will to fight, based on false optimism, to be followed by a collapse in will once the fallacy becomes clear. As Gregory A. Daddis argues, the U.S. military struggled to identify metrics that adequately captured success or failure during the Vietnam War. This also applies to governments that underestimate adversary military capabilities and thus think that victory will come with minimal sacrifice. Farooq Bajwa’s book From Kutch to Tashkent, for example, makes clear that Pakistan underestimated Indian capabilities and overestimated its own during the 1965 war, which made Pakistan more willing to keep fighting.

Contexts

Government Type

A government’s willingness to engage in and sustain a conflict may relate to government type. A segment of political science in the early 1990s, called democratic peace (or liberal peace) theory, claimed to show that democracies were generally less willing to go to war than autocratic regimes and are even more reluctant to go to war with other democracies, in part, because of the commonalities they share. A corollary argument, as presented in Dan Reiter and Allan Stam’s book, Democracies at War, is that democracies are more likely to be successful in wars because elected leaders in democracies are conscious of how popular support affects war efforts and, therefore, choose to engage only in wars they are likely to win. Reiter and Stam also suggest that soldiers in a democracy feel more individual ownership in conflicts and are therefore more likely to demonstrate greater initiative and benefit from better leadership. Gil

46 Posen, 1993, p. 82.
47 Quinlivan, 1999.
49 Bajwa, 2013.
50 Reiter and Stam, 2002.
Merom adds that the same reticence that democratic leaders feel in entering possibly unwinnable wars makes them particularly vulnerable to losing wars of insurgency, which tend to be smaller but may require a greater investment of time, resources, and a general willingness to accept a higher casualty rate.51

**National Identity**
National identities represent a basic form of self-identification that carries both social and cultural significance for people.52 The function of these identities is to generate a sense of sameness among some people while highlighting differences with other groups. This self-identification represents more than mere patriotism; it typically combines the meaning of one’s ethnicity and religion with his or her view of the nation or state. The result is a collective sense of “what one is.” The state may leverage this sense of self in the service of strengthening national will to fight by bolstering government and elite cohesion; strengthening civil-military relations; strengthening popular support; and perhaps even enlisting ethnically, religiously, or ideologically similar allies for war against adversaries.

**Economic Resilience**
The extent to which a nation’s economy is dependent on foreign ties or is resilient may have an influence on its ability to muster and maintain the will to fight during both internal and external conflicts. Countries with strong economies and educated workforces tend to benefit more significantly from industrial advances, particularly in the military sphere. Thus, Uk Heo and Seongyi Yun argue that economic prosperity not only influences a country’s ability to fund external conflict but also dictates the capacity that a country’s military and civilian workforce has to continue supporting the war effort.53 If war is good for the economy, citizens may be more prone to support it, which could positively affect national will to fight.

**Duration of Conflict**
Conventional wisdom might lead one to assume that the longer a conflict continues, the greater the chances that a nation’s will to fight is diminished. However, duration itself may not be a strong indicator of will to fight separate from other dimensions, such as nationalist or ideological motivation, or the type of regime waging war. Jenkins’ assessment of the North Vietnamese’s willingness to continue fighting in 1967 hinged largely on the fact that arguments for staying in the fight remained stronger than the arguments for withdrawal or ceasefire. In the North Vietnamese case, those arguments included the political risk involved with withdrawal and China’s continued involvement in the war.54 Jeffrey Pickering showed in his research that a country’s track record in past wars heavily influences a nation’s decision to pursue future wars, implying that a conflict that continues for multiple years might be more palatable if the nation in question already has a winning record in previous conflict.55

54 Jenkins, 1972.
In many cases, duration may be a proxy for another underlying variable: war weariness. When a country’s people are exhausted by war and tired of a conflict, they have historically been more willing to support settlement negotiations, especially when prospects for outright victory appear slim (e.g., the conflict is in a stalemate).\textsuperscript{56} War weariness increases over time and can also increase willingness for settlement as it erodes will to fight.

**Mechanisms**

**Engagement**

Engagement with allies is a primary way to establish support between nations. When this support is strong, it can increase a nation’s expectation of victory because the nation believes that it will be backed by a coalition upon whose support it can rely on for legitimacy, resources, and greater or improved capabilities. In wartime, these engagements may be thought of primarily across three dimensions:

- the strength of the alliances between countries, which either are formed during wartime or carry through from peacetime into wartime
- the kind of military or political support offered to partners during conflict
- the extent of an ally’s economic support that bolsters the recipient government’s ability to sustain fighting.

In each instance, the support offered to a partner may have the effect of bolstering a nation’s will to fight or, occasionally, causing a state to evaluate its war plans in light of future diplomatic relationships. In her work on nonviolent civil resistance, Maria Stephan writes that internal resistance is more effective when the populace can convince external actors to exert diplomatic or political pressure on a nation, thereby diminishing its will to continue fighting.\textsuperscript{57} Fred Iklé considers the effect that diplomatic relations have on the will to fight in several case studies across the 20th century, concluding that alliances may in fact create negative incentives for states to extricate themselves from conflicts.\textsuperscript{58}

**Indoctrination and Messaging**

Examinations of how governments foster will to fight among their people often consider the role of ideology as a motivator. While there is disagreement about the extent to which ideology—separate from other factors—can motivate a soldier to remain in the fight, there is evidence to suggest a strong connection between successful government indoctrination and ideology as a motivating factor. In the cases of two communist groups, the Russian government under the Soviet Union and the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War, political indoctrination, in concert with strong national identity, proved critical to maintaining control over soldiers. In his studies of the Viet Cong, J. J. Zasloff found that party leaders were more successful than their adversary, the U.S. military, in indoctrinating their soldiers on the importance of continuing the

\textsuperscript{56} Colin P. Clarke and Christopher Paul, From Stalemate to Settlement: Lessons for Afghanistan from Historical Insurgencies That Have Been Resolved Through Negotiations, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-469-OSD, 2014.


\textsuperscript{58} Iklé, 1971.
war effort and defeating an invading force. John Donnell comes to a similar conclusion that the Viet Cong’s indoctrination efforts deepened the revolutionary commitment of those who were previously politically inactive. Edward Brea examines army barracks of Imperial Japan and finds that Japanese forces were extremely effective in creating loyal soldiers because of the heavily nationalized curriculum imposed in their training. Indoctrinated soldiers treated their barracks as an extended family unit.

Indoctrination (through propaganda and other less manipulative efforts to inform, influence, and persuade) can affect citizen perceptions of the values of other factors and thus affect will to fight by altering perceptions of reality. Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews’ work on Russian propaganda reveals that propaganda based on or containing significant falsehoods can be surprisingly persuasive. Although we found little research directly connecting propaganda and national will to fight, propaganda studies remain a potentially rich field.

Also related to indoctrination are national leaders’ claims about a conflict and their efforts to legitimate it. Claims made and justifications offered can cause a policy (or a war) to be perceived as more or less legitimate—and thus receive more or less popular support. Max Weber discusses these claims to legitimacy:

> What is important is the fact that in a given case the particular claim to legitimacy is to a significant degree and according to its type treated as “valid”; that this fact confirms the position of the persons claiming authority and that it helps to determine the choice of means of its exercise.

Basically, for a leader’s legitimation efforts to increase will to fight, the legitimation must be accepted both as true and as a valid reason to continue fighting. Research on specific legitimations has found them to be effective. For example, claims of “crisis” can lend a situation gravity, urgency, and legitimacy. Clearly stating (or overstating) the stakes of a conflict can create a “rally to the flag” effect in defense of the nation.

Recent RAND research by Paul and colleagues found that several state actors of concern focus their efforts on maintaining the support of their populations by any means necessary.

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These state actors show no compunction about using falsehoods in their internal propaganda and make use of censorship and other forms of information control.68

**Economic Pressures**

The military does not fight in an economic vacuum; in fact, the reverse is true. Governments provide economic carrots (e.g., financial assistance) to allies and employ economic sticks (e.g., sanctions) against adversaries to influence their will to fight. Economic policies and national will to fight often go hand in hand, with economic pressures either enabling or impeding action. The U.S. military’s DIME (diplomacy, information, military, and economics) model accounts for these interdependencies between the exertion of economic and military power, as Jason Torgerson writes in his analysis of the British during the Revolutionary War.69 Phillip Kao suggests in “Future Approaches to the Economic Instrument of Power” that militaries, as a forward-deployed arm of their governments, can enforce economic policies (e.g., sanctions) on the government’s behalf.70

**Casualties**

The number of casualties inflicted on the adversary’s military and civilian population is a common measure that a government uses to assess its likelihood of victory. But it is also an important—and complex—mechanism for influencing national will. For example, casualties may affect the amount of popular support that a conflict receives, particularly in a protracted conflict. However, in “What Costs Will Democracies Bear? A Review of Popular Theories of Casualty Aversion,” Hugh Smith writes that popular opinion with respect to casualty aversion is a flexible notion, which may be altered by other variables, including what a population perceives to be in the national interest.71 Under one set of circumstances, a handful of casualties could ignite tremendous backlash, like the United States experienced in Somalia in 1993. In different circumstances, a similar number of casualties could inspire greater public commitment to the combat mission. As noted by Eric Larson, historical U.S. tolerance for casualties has varied directly with the perceived stakes of the conflict.72

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72 Larson, 1996.
Many cases illustrating will to fight—both positive and negative—emerged as our research team examined more than 100 articles, books, and other publications during the literature review. The depth and breadth of information necessitated a systematic approach to selecting cases that would enable us to achieve our analytic objectives. To that end, the team began with the Correlates of War project’s List of Wars from 1816 to 2007. Correlates of War defines a war as “sustained combat, involving organized armed forces, resulting in a minimum of 1,000 battle-related fatalities within a twelve month period.”1 This database contains 654 distinct wars categorized by the following four types:

- **extra-state war** (163 wars): an inter-state system member engaged in war with a political entity that is not a system member
- **inter-state war** (95 wars): a territorial state that qualifies as a member of the inter-state system engaged in a war with another system member
- **intra-state war** (334 wars):
  - **civil**: wars for central control or over local issues
  - **regional-internal**: wars between or among non-state actors that occur within the territory of a state where a local or regional government is one party to the war
  - **inter-communal**: between or among non-state actors that take place within the territory of a state and that involve at least two parties, none of which is a government
- **non-state war** (62 wars): wars conducted by nonsystem member actors that take place beyond the confines of one state in a non-state territory or across state borders.2

To winnow the Correlates of War list to a more manageable number of cases, our research team decided on a few key discriminators. First, we excluded any wars prior to the start of WWI in 1914 to focus on the era of modern warfare. Doing so eliminated 339 wars from consideration. Second, we chose to exclude non-state wars because the absence of formal governance structures means that those actors operate outside state-based rules of order, presenting an additional complication when attempting to compare them with legitimate states. Excluding non-state wars from our pool of cases eliminated another 62 wars.

Left with 253 potential wars, we then decided to focus on conflicts with an abundance of literature to enable comprehensive assessments. Native language sources would have been beneficial, but cost and time constraints made it more feasible to focus primarily on English-

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language material. We strove to include conflicts that demonstrated multiple governance styles, Eastern and Western cultures, militaries with coercive and normative organizational types, and instances of high and low will to fight among adversaries and partners.

As we developed our criteria, we recognized that one way to analyze national will is to examine multiple points during the same conflict. In some cases, we found it useful to analyze the same countries over time (e.g., participants in both WW I and WW II) and with differing outcomes. For some cases, this approach also enabled us to study one conflict from multiple perspectives, thereby helping to optimize our review of available literature by allowing us to apply what we learned to the winning and losing sides.

**Applying the Methodology**

Once the final cases were selected, our research team examined additional, case-specific literature to answer 87 questions across three levels of will: national, tactical, and operational. These questions were based on the foundational questions that informed our literature review to ensure consistency throughout our study methodology. At the national level, our questions were divided across the factors, contexts, and mechanisms defined in Chapter Two and explained in greater detail later in this appendix. We recognized that the significance of the effects of some of these variables on will to fight could change over the course of a war. To account for these potential changes, we analyzed each variable at the beginning, middle, and end of the conflict. For many cases, there was no change in the prevalence or importance of a particular variable across the span of a conflict. For example, the government type did not change mid-conflict during the wars we analyzed. However, analyzing each variable over time illuminated how, for example, perceived changes in the stakes during the Korean and Iran-Iraq Wars influenced will to fight and ultimately led to stalemates.3

The study team produced individual reports on the 15 cases we analyzed at both the national and the tactical-operational levels. Each case study report described the most relevant variables that explained will to fight based on the additional research we did for each case. Those reports are not included in the study, but Table 3.2 contains their key takeaways. Examples from each of these case studies are interspersed in the proceeding detailed explanations of our variables. Recognizing that different analysts could have had different interpretations of the variables based on how they read the literature, we designed our case study coding analysis to be illustrative rather than authoritative.

**Additional Details from the Cases Summarized in Chapter Three**

In Chapter Three, we provided brief discussions of each variable, as well as a chart featuring examples of how each variable influenced will to fight in particular cases. We provide additional details about those examples in this section. The sources that informed each case are provided at the end of this appendix.

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Stakes

The Austro-Hungarian government believed that WWI was essential to avenge the assassination of its heir, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, by a Serb. The political elites were largely disconnected from the population and could not let the assassination go unpunished because it would demonstrate weakness. Because the military was the glue that held together the Austro-Hungarian society, the country’s government believed that the sanctity of its empire rested on its ability to send a strong military message that such an act would not be tolerated. Despite the relative fragmentation of the nationalities that made up the Austro-Hungarian Empire, people rallied to war to do their duty to uphold national pride and preserve the empire. Given the historical context of WWI—and the salience of a national identity during this time—many Austro-Hungarians perceived the assassination of Ferdinand as a vital threat. These perceptions of the threat provided a collective sense of meaning for citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which increased its will to fight.

In the Soviet Union in WWII, the citizenry perceived the stakes of war as existential. Strategic defeat in the face of Nazi Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 would likely have ended the Soviet society’s entire way of life and resulted in ruin for elites. The Soviet state was young and relatively fragile. As noted in Chapter Five, between 1917 and 1945, the Soviet Union spent almost half of its existence in a revolution, a civil war, or a fight with foreign states. If the brutal Nazi regime proved successful with its invasion of the Soviet Union, the result would lead not only to collapse of the Soviet state but also to the fall of Russia as an entity within the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviets perceived that surrendering to Nazi Germany would result in the end of the Soviet Union and Russian national identity. Similar to our Austria-Hungary example, the stakes for the Soviet Union generated a collective sense of meaning for its citizenry that bolstered the country’s overall will to fight the Germans.

The third example in Chapter Three is from the Iran-Iraq War. Although Saddam Hussein initiated the war, the momentum, if one could call it that, had shifted to Iran by 1982, when Iranian forces reversed Iraq’s early gains and took the war to Iraqi territory. In June of that year, Saddam declared a unilateral ceasefire and accepted Iran’s conditions for a ceasefire—except his departure. Iran had upped the ante by making the war about the Iraqi dictator’s removal from power. Iran’s maximalist aims inspired Iraqis to fight to defend their territory, not wanting to be overrun by Iran’s human waves. The fear of Iran, more than Iraq’s leadership, compelled Iraqis to hold their ground; therefore, vital stakes, from the Iraqi perspective, created a strong incentive to fight.

In Iran, the war against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq became the defining and unifying focus of the revolutionary regime, which was beset by internal conflict when Iraqi troops invaded. But by the final year of the war, Iranians seemed to question the utility of their leadership’s maximalist ambitions, providing the context for Iran’s eventual decision to accept a ceasefire leaving Saddam in power. The stakes for Iran shifted from existential (national survival)

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when Iranians were defending their homeland to merely important (punishment of a clear aggressor) as the Iranians pushed Iraqi forces out of their territory and questions arose about whether the costs of the conflict were commensurate with the war aims of the government. In the case of Iran and Iraq, we see an interplay of forces that generated a collective sense of will to fight in both countries that was stronger when the stakes were perceived as existential (defending territory).

Finally, the most salient factor from our Chechen case study was Russia’s perceptions of the stakes for these wars. In the First Chechen War, the stakes were low for Russia, and this was how the Russian people perceived these stakes. These perceptions began to change after the First Chechen War, as concerns about the militancy of Chechens began to increase inside Russia. President Vladimir Putin leveraged these fears to gain support for Russian involvement in the Second Chechen War. Specifically, he used the media to frame this second war as vital to the national security of the Russian state. For the Second Chechen War, views of terrorism as a threat to vital interests became a unifying force shaping a collective sense about the stakes of war for Russians. This collective sense about stakes, in turn, influenced a national sense of will to fight within the Russian Federation.

Cohesion

On the eve of WW I, the French government made an effort to unify the country before the start of a confrontation with Germany. French politicians decided to set aside their political differences in a drive to bolster societal unity before war. They formed the union sacrée, or sacred union—a pledge to come together to defend France against German aggression. This pact did not resolve the country’s political disputes but merely put them aside until the threat of invasion subsided. Historian Hew Strachan suggests that this agreement “reflected not a nationalism that suppressed political divergences, but one that embraced the full range of a liberal society. . . . The Union Sacrée was thus an entirely utilitarian formulation, with the single objective of defending France.” Thus, the French government was able to present itself as unified during WW I. This presentation likely shaped how its citizenry viewed the war, which, in turn, influenced national will to fight.

Turning to a WW II example, France’s elite cohesion was fragile even before hostilities broke out with Nazi Germany in 1939. France’s Third Republic suffered from two significant divides that separated elites and the general population alike. First, the political left and right in France disagreed about the role of the military in society. Second, the entire country felt weary from WW I. No other combatant lost a greater percentage of its population in that conflict. That lack of cohesion, in turn, undermined elite support for continuing to fight in WW II. These cleavages undermined the legitimacy of the government, shaping expectations by the French citizenry that their government would successfully defend the state. These deflated expectations likely reduced the country’s will to fight.

During the Korean War, North Korea had strong support for establishing a communist regime right after the liberation from Japanese colonial occupation by their liberator, the Soviet Union. Kim Il-sung successfully built efficient control over North Korean society. That con-

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trol led to a cohesive set of government elites who supported decisions by Kim to invade South Korea. Much of this cohesion related to the communist government that could eradicate dissent relatively swiftly. When combined with domestic indoctrination—and some popular policies of eradicating collaborators who had helped Japanese occupation—Kim Il-sung achieved widespread elite and public support right before the war, which improved his nation’s will to fight and expectations of victory.9

During the Vietnam War, political factions and debates existed inside the North Vietnamese Politburo, although these divisions were not as publicly apparent as were divisions in South Vietnam, which served as an advantage for the North. Initially, the Politburo contained a dogmatic and hawkish pro-Chinese camp, as well as a more moderate pro-Soviet camp; however, these categories evolved throughout the course of the war. But North Vietnamese officials demonstrated that a shared commitment to the objective of reunification trumped disagreements about the best courses of action to achieve it. The Politburo was also exceptional for its stability and lack of purges when compared with the historical record of other Communist regimes. This suggests a high level of internal cohesion despite the presence of competing views.10 Finally, there were strong internal disagreements over operational planning and speed of execution. Some leaders preferred a cautious, prolonged conflict and others were eager for a general offensive. Vietnam’s centuries-long history of perseverance in war played a major role in strengthening cohesion in the North, which was more traditionalist than South Vietnam. That shared commitment by elites gave elites and nonelites alike in North Vietnam a reason to continue fighting.

**Popular Support or Acquiescence**

Italy’s primary objective in WWI was to reclaim lost territory, which was a priority few Italian citizens supported. But despite their general sense of apathy for the cause, many Italians were still duty-bound to their country to fight if called upon.11 That sense of duty strengthened national will to fight, particularly in the early part of Italy’s involvement in WWI.

In WWII Germany, the Nazi regime wanted to ensure that there would not be a repeat of 1918, when the German populace lost its will to fight. To guarantee a fight to the death, the regime relied on ideology, terror, and propaganda. German ideology created a dedicated base of supporters who believed in the Nazi cause regardless of the strategic circumstances. That strong support drove the people of Nazi Germany to make enormous sacrifices to continue fighting the Allies.

Popular support had a different role in the 1965 India-Pakistan War. This support had a minimal role in conflict initiation, but it made conflict termination more difficult. Popular support grew from historic enmity between India and Pakistan and was burnished by government messaging efforts. Public pressure, overconfidence in Pakistani military capabilities, and an underestimation of Indian military capabilities bolstered Pakistan’s national will to

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A similar interaction occurred in India. As a result, leaders in both nations feared looking weak and continued to fight regardless of any objective cost-benefit-risk analysis about what their country could gain from further war.

**Allies**

During the Vietnam War, China and the Soviet Union were strong and committed allies for North Vietnam. Although neither provided combat troops, their provision of weapons, economic aid, diplomatic support, and—in the case of China—troops to build infrastructure strengthened the confidence and thus will to fight of North Vietnamese leaders. This confidence was further bolstered by increases in aid in the final years of the conflict, at the very time that U.S. aid to South Vietnam (and thus South Vietnamese will) declined dramatically. Chinese support also deterred ground incursions into North Vietnamese territory, lest they trigger China’s insertion of combat forces into the conflict. This support further bolstered North Vietnamese leaders’ will to fight because they felt more secure in their home base.

Pakistan initiated its war with India in 1965 based partly on the assumption that the United States would protect Pakistan and that its improved relations with China and the Soviet Union meant India would have little support from allies. However, Pakistan received little international support during the war, and substantial pressure from the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Nations forced Pakistan to accept a ceasefire despite the desire of many Pakistani leaders and the public to continue fighting. The Pakistan case demonstrates that pressure from allies can overcome a country’s will to fight under the right conditions.

Finally, Iraq had the advantage of international support during the Iran-Iraq War, which bolstered Iraq’s capabilities and will to fight. Iraq’s backers included the Soviet Union, most Arab countries (except Syria and Libya), most European powers, and the United States. To term these relationships as “alliances,” however, would be a stretch. Both the United States and the Soviet Union at times flirted with Iran. The Gulf Cooperation Council countries were wary of Saddam; their financial support was in the form of loans, not grants, which became a source of tension after the war. In contrast, Iran was mostly isolated, except for its alliance with Syria, a key outlier among major Arab countries, which mostly backed Iraq. Damascus cut off Iraq’s land route for oil exports in 1982 (when oil could not be exported through the Gulf), which led to an economic crisis during a difficult early stage in the war, as Iranian troops entered Iraqi territory and Saddam Hussein’s leadership came into question.

**Civil-Military Relations**

In our first example, civil-military relations in the Soviet Union were tense during WW II, as a result of Stalin’s purges, but improved as Stalin and his military found a modus vivendi. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Soviet communist elites viewed standing militaries as a holdover of autocratic oppression. These elites wanted to form self-governed militias of urban workers that would train after their shifts in the factories. That goal changed during the Russian Civil War when elites realized the need for an organized Red Army. Further, Soviet

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elites recognized the importance of the Red Army for preserving its fledgling state and repelling the German invasion on its Western Front. As the Red Army gained importance in the Soviet Union out of necessity, some citizens began to view military service as a means for their own social mobility under Stalin’s reign of power.

Talmadge shows that in South Vietnam, government fears of a military coup significantly impacted the ability to fight for many South Vietnamese army units during the Vietnam War. Some units that presented no threat of coup because of their location far from the capital (e.g., the 1st Division) were better trained, equipped, and empowered and thus demonstrated far greater combat proficiency and will to fight. Separately, the civilian government undercut the effectiveness of units closer to the capital that could potentially threaten the government, thus reducing the will to fight of those units.\(^\text{17}\) This dysfunctional civil-military relationship led to a government that was at times more concerned about the preservation of its own power than about victory in war and a military that was divided and constrained over coup concerns, all of which had significant effects on will to fight at both the operational and national levels.

During the Iran-Iraq War, civil-military relations had a significant effect on both will to fight and military performance. Saddam Hussein distrusted his military officers, as was the custom in Iraq, whose modern history had witnessed numerous military coups. Saddam himself was a civilian party leader, which amplified the distrust. The Ba’ath Party had politicized the Iraqi officer corps by appointing and promoting officers from Tikrit, Saddam’s hometown. The resulting command environment, while perhaps effective in thwarting potential military coups, made the military less combat-effective. By 1982, when Iran had seized Iraqi territory and Saddam faced a leadership crisis within the party, he began purging the worst commanders and professionalized the military. This process took some time but ultimately led to improvements in civil-military relations and decisionmaking, although the course of this war did not change until late in the conflict.\(^\text{18}\)

In Iran, the clerical leadership distrusted the armed forces, which were perceived as loyal to the Shah. Nevertheless, those units were still relatively competent and saw some successes early in the conflict. Over time, however, Iran’s leaders undercut the military. A paramilitary organization, the Pasdaran, later known as the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, worked separately from the military command structure. These units were fanatically loyal and showed extreme tactical will to fight, demonstrated through suicidal wave attacks, but had limited success on the battlefield. Ultimately, Iran failed to adopt practices that promoted military competence over religious and political unity. Although civil-military relations improved out of necessity, the distrust, disjointed command structures, and failure to promote military competence hindered Iran’s military effectiveness.\(^\text{19}\)

**Economic Leverage**

During the Vietnam War, the United States had the ability to destroy large segments of the North Vietnamese economy, particularly its manufacturing sector, through bombing. This leverage strengthened the confidence and thus will to fight of U.S. officials, who felt that the United States would devastate not only North Vietnam’s military but also its war-time econ-

\(^\text{17}\) Talmadge, 2015, pp. 136–137.


\(^\text{19}\) Talmadge, 2015, pp. 156–157.
omy. But the threat (and later reality) of this frightful power did not translate into a reduction in North Vietnamese will to fight. The Soviet Union and China had economic leverage over the North Vietnamese economy through their extensive financial aid to both the military and civilian sectors and thus thought they could shape how North Vietnam fought. Yet North Vietnam proved determined to fight the war on its own terms, regardless of the economic leverage of its allies. In the same way, the United States had leverage over the South Vietnamese government but had mixed results in influencing South Vietnamese will to fight. Thus, we see that while leverage (i.e., potential power) can strengthen will to fight, the results can vary when a nation tries to use that leverage to influence another government.

The weak economies of both countries during the 1965 India-Pakistan War made them susceptible to external pressure and limited their ability to produce what they needed to continue fighting. India and Pakistan had limited economic leverage over each other, but their allies had economic leverage over them. In particular, U.S. economic leverage over Pakistan weakened Pakistan’s will to fight, leading to its acceptance of a ceasefire.20

Military Capabilities

Italy rarely held the advantage of capabilities over Austria-Hungary during WW I, but Italian forces were able to inflict casualties on their Austro-Hungarian combatants over time. Italian capabilities were far lower than those of Austria-Hungary, which was bolstered by its alliance with Germany. Early in the war, Italy underestimated how important allied support would be but eventually learned to rely on its partners for capabilities and economic support. Thus, Italy’s will to fight improved when its capabilities were strengthened through the support of allies.21

In a second example, the Soviet military during WW II struggled with retaining the loyalty of its military leaders. That problem was partly a function of Stalin’s attempts to promote loyalty by purging some of his most-senior military leaders. Further, during the start of WW II, the Soviet Union was still in the process of a rearmament cycle to modernize its equipment. That cycle proved important as the war progressed. For the Soviet Union, the lack of military capabilities early in the war undermined the country’s national will to fight. Over time, however, the improvement of these capabilities improved the Soviets’ will to fight.

During the 1965 India-Pakistan War, the military advantage shifted back and forth as both sides demonstrated numerous tactical deficiencies. However, both publics expected a relatively inexpensive and clear victory, which generated public pressure to fight until success was achieved. Generally, both sides lacked strong offensive capabilities and the ability to conduct combined arms warfare. Both sides made gains, but tactical ineptitude or political constraints prevented either side from achieving large, decisive gains.22 Overall, after accounting for differences in size, geographic limitations, and equipment, both sides had relatively similar capabilities and a limited, uneven will to fight, which matched the limited gains that leaders on both sides sought to achieve. National will from both sides has continued to fuel conflict since the war ended and each returned to the status quo.23

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20 See, for example, Bajwa, 2013.
21 Thompson, 2010.
Government Type
Several of our cases, including Italy and Austria-Hungary in WW I, had monarchies that worked closely with political elites and that tightly controlled government decisionmaking. We classified these governments as autocratic. They had relatively small selectorates defined by lineage and relation to aristocracy and nobility.24 Elites used tools of coercion, terror, or other forms of repression to maintain power instead of relying on wide popular support.25 While all combatants ramped up military spending when the war started in 1914, autocratic governments (e.g., Italy and Austria-Hungary) did not increase their efforts to support their militaries, and thus strengthen national will, after 1915. Their expenditures plateaued as the war dragged on, whereas the democracies (e.g., France) continued to increase their military spending until victory was achieved.26

**Nazi Germany** under Hitler and the **Soviet Union** under Stalin are two examples of totalitarian regimes, and **North Vietnam** fell somewhere between autocratic and totalitarian. Using the terms of the selectorate theory, these regimes were ruled by a relatively small winning coalition that was drawn from a large selectorate. The large set of people with a potential say in choosing the government is a defining feature of totalitarian regimes.27 It means that many members of the selectorate are candidates for entry in the winning coalition, but only a very small subset will actually make it there. Once in the winning coalition, members of the elite get a share of valuable private goods that the leader dispenses, but these members remain easily replaceable because there are many candidates willing to take their place. These characteristics make totalitarian regimes more survivable because elites tend to be loyal to the leader. Thus, the totalitarian regimes strengthened German and Soviet will to fight in WW II because they could more easily manipulate popular support or acquiescence, as well as government and elite cohesion, though their political systems and their ability to indoctrinate and coerce their populations.28

**South Vietnam** wavered between democratic and autocratic forms of government during the Vietnam War, creating chaos and uncertainty among both the selectorates and winning coalitions. Uncertainty about the government’s competence, reliability, and long-term strategy weakened cohesion within the government, reduced the military’s confidence and commitment, and reduced popular willingness to make sacrifices to the cause, all of which seemed to have weakened will to fight based on our reading of the case.

Anthony King, a professor of war studies in Warwick University’s Department of Politics and International Studies, characterized “the authoritarian divide” as an important element

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24 Thompson, 2010.
26 Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2011, Chapter 9.
27 In their book on the logic of political survival, Bueno de Mesquita and colleagues argue that, while keeping the reigns of real power in the hands of a small group, the Bolsheviks pursued an innovation that made their government different structurally from the Romanov monarchy. They produced one of the history’s first universal adult suffrage voting systems when they held an election in December 1917. . . . Of the 41.6 million votes cast, the Bolsheviks received about 25 percent. . . . The set of people with an ostensible say in choosing government had been tiny during the Romanov dynasty. Under the Bolshevik system, it was very large indeed. (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005, p. 6)
of understanding a nation’s will to fight because states with less-democratic governments have more mechanisms at their disposal to compel their forces to fight:

Historically, authoritarian states are more likely to have mass, conscripted forces. They also tend to have been less wealthy. They may lack of economic resources for training, and, often in consequence, the use of corporal and capital punishment for troops has been very high, which is offensive to liberal sensibilities. However, the idea that coercion cannot motivate is questionable. If you look at either the [Soviet Union] or Germany in WW II, it seems to me that their extreme corporal regimes had an effect on the will of their soldiers to fight. If you know you’re going to get shot if you don’t fight, it is likely to focus the mind somewhat.29

This insight is largely explained by the fact that autocracies and totalitarian regimes are more focused on rewarding their key supporters30 and tend to disregard the foot soldiers because they are not important for the political survival of the leader. These regimes spend relatively little on training and protection and compensate by increasing their reliance on ideology and coercion.

National Identity

During WW I, the elites in French society set aside their differences to rally in support of the government and their homeland. A defensive nationalism helped assuage previous cleavages. United, rival factions decided to create a first-class military organization with strong internal bonds. Civilian and military leaders shielded the armed forces from societal cleavages that could sap the will to fight. These efforts created a French Army that proved capable of recovering from the early defeats of 1914 and enduring a war of attrition with Germany, despite difficulties that included a strike by French units in spring 1917. Even though France’s pre-war “national revival” might not have resolved all of the country’s political and military problems, it helped create a national will to fight capable of surviving the challenge of the Great War.

In WW II, the Soviet Union leveraged two forms of nationalism to increase the general public’s national will to fight. The first was Soviet nationalism, which was rooted in the idea that communism was superior to capitalism or fascism. Soviet nationalism was popular among the working class in urban centers of Russia. This ideal framed WW II as a dichotomy in which Soviet victory overlapped with modernity of communism while defeat would result in the anachronism of capitalism. The second form was Russian nationalism, which was based on the ethnic and religious identities that were held by native Russians. The atrocities by Nazi Germany during and after Operation Barbarossa bolstered a sense of defending rodina, the “Russian motherland.” Stalin leveraged this sense of Russian identity to increase the national will to fight, especially as Soviet nationalism proved less effective over time. Specifically, Nazi atrocities activated a sense of Russian identity in the public that generated a sense of “us” (i.e., Russians) versus “them” (i.e., Germans). Stalin leveraged this type of nationalism in propaganda that gave his people a purpose for fighting the Nazis, thus strengthening will to fight.

29 Anthony King, telephone interview with the authors, August 29, 2017.
30 For example, for their loyalty, members of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union were rewarded with access to better housing, paid vacations, and special stores that sold goods not available to common citizens. See Hedrick Smith, The Russians, New York: Times Books, 1982.
Prior to the start of the Second Chechen War, the Russian people were fearful of terrorism, largely because of a series of apartment bombings in Moscow and Dagestan. Russian state media leveraged this fear by appealing to the public's sense of nationalism. The Second Chechen War became a battle over defending the Russian motherland from terror. State and private media bolstered this message by censoring coverage of the war to highlight victories of Russian forces and minimize their defeats in combat. This reframing also generated a sense that war with Chechnya was necessary to defend Russia from external threats.

Economic Resilience

During WW I, Italy had a weak domestic manufacturing capability that was almost exclusively concentrated in a few hundred square kilometers in northwestern Italy, around Milan, Turin, and Genoa. The war reinforced the north-south gap in Italy: Many northern men of military age were assigned to the more technical and safer corps of artillery and engineers or were exempted from service altogether in order to engage in essential manufacturing for war. Southern peasants, on the other hand, were usually assigned to infantry regiments and sent to fight without a clear understanding of why. Unequal sharing of the war burden had a negative influence on Italian troops' cohesion and will to fight. Italy also lacked raw materials and coal, requiring exports from its allies to supplement its stocks. To finance imports, Italy borrowed from the Bank of England and later from the U.S. market. Reliance on external finance reflected dependence on foreign raw materials, as well as an understanding by the government that standards of living could not be strained without breaking the political equilibrium that was necessary for continuing military operations.

To maintain the support of the winning coalition, the Italian government was able to finance only a small share of war expenditures (16 percent) through increased taxation. Italy thus accumulated a public debt of 119 percent of GDP by the end of the war, a quarter of it owed to foreigners. As a result, the Italian lira lost more than 40 percent of its value relative to the British pound over the course of the war. These economic weaknesses and dependencies undermined public confidence and government cohesion, thus weakening national will to fight. Another consequence of Italy's economic weakness is that the government had to rely on inflation (rather than taxation) to pay for military and industrial procurement. Channeling funds to a small number of industrialists weakened social cohesion because there was widespread resentment against government officials, generals, and industrialists, who were believed

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36 Great Britain, for example, financed 50 percent of its war expenditures through taxation.
to be gaining significant private benefits from war. This led to strikes, rioting, political polarization, and mutinies, all of which further weakened will to fight.\textsuperscript{37}

Both India and Pakistan lacked economic resilience, which weakened each country’s will to fight in 1965, despite strong public pressures. Pakistan’s economy was stronger, but it was smaller and highly dependent on the United States and other countries and had limited capacity to produce arms.\textsuperscript{38} India had a weak economy, but it had more indigenous capacity and received assistance from both the United States and the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{39} Even though the war was short, Pakistan suffered from severe ammunition shortages, which helped persuade its leaders to agree to a ceasefire.\textsuperscript{40} India’s leaders also believed they were running low on munitions based on an inaccurate report from the Army chief; in reality, only 14 percent of frontline ammunition was fired.\textsuperscript{41}

Finally, the Russian economy was fragile and lacked resilience during the First Chechen War. At the start of the conflict, then-President Boris Yeltsin hoped to rally support for the Russian government through a quick, easy war, but poverty at home and lack of perceived high stakes in Chechnya weakened national will.\textsuperscript{42} In the Second Chechen War, by contrast, President Putin took advantage of increased antipathy to the Chechens and growing resilience in the economy to build support for war.\textsuperscript{43} Although both Putin and Yeltsin had hoped to rally support through war in Chechnya, Putin was able to take advantage of a shifting economic context to see it through.

\textbf{Conflict Duration}

WW I lasted four years for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Germany fought in WW II for six years. The Vietnam War was one of the longest wars in our sample, lasting 20 years. In addition, the First Chechen War occurred from 1994 to 1996, and the Second Chechen War occurred from 1999 to 2000. While the effect of conflict duration on national will to fight varied considerably in our cases, we found that, in general, conflict duration had the capacity to affect expectations of victory and lead to war weariness, which could weaken will to fight—for example, in Germany and Italy during WW I and South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. In some cases, however, such as North Vietnam, expectations of victory remained high despite a long conflict duration, which shaped a nation’s willingness to sustain casualties and economic loss over time.

\textbf{Engagement}

During WW I, Italy realized that external support was critical to its ability to sustain the fight, which ultimately increased Italians’ appreciation for the importance of engagement with allies. Italy could not fend off the Central Powers alone. In a similar way, France concluded

\begin{footnotes}
\item[37] Broadberry and Harrison, 2005.
\item[38] Bajwa, 2013, p. 235.
\item[40] Bajwa, 2013, p. 385.
\item[41] Rohan Joshi, “How India Beat Pakistan 50 Years Ago,” blog, Indian Strategic Studies, September 24, 2015.
\end{footnotes}
decades before WW I that it would not fare well in a war with Germany. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 had taught the French a painful lesson. After that, France relied on pre-war planning and coordination with the United Kingdom and the Russian Empire. Famously, the poorly executed Russian invasion of East Prussia in the summer of 1914 likely contributed to the French victory at the Battle of the Marne, putting pressure on Germany at a critical moment in the war.

Likewise, Austria-Hungary recognized long before preparations for war began that its forces would be ineffective without a strong partner, and it thus forged a military alliance with Germany. The government worried about fighting the Russian colossus without its powerful German ally. Similarly, Germany needed Austria to fend off the coalition aligned against the Central Powers, despite German concerns about the military effectiveness of the Habsburg armed forces. Recent historical work suggests that this alliance benefited both powers, especially their military-to-military contacts and coordination before hostilities. Even though the German–Austro-Hungarian partnership was fraught with mistrust, competing priorities, and poor communication, the partners still managed to combine forces in decisive ways on many fronts, including the Italian campaign. Consequently, these alliances strengthened each government’s will to fight.

During WW II, the Soviet Union shifted its alliances. In the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939, the Soviets forged a guarantee of nonbelligerence with Nazi Germany. In 1941, Germany ended this pact by invading the Soviet Union. This caused the Soviets to shift their alliance by forging relations with the United States and United Kingdom. After pushing the Germans back to Berlin, the Soviet Union continued to support its allies to defeat Nazi Germany. Similar to what we found in our WW I case study with Austria-Hungary, the Soviet alliances were a necessary source of support for their forces to sustain fighting after repelling Nazi Germany back to Eastern Europe.

Both the North and South Vietnamese maintained strong diplomatic relations with countries that were willing to support their military efforts. The North Vietnamese relied on China and the Soviet Union for weapons, economic aid, and diplomatic support to maintain the fight. The South Vietnamese relied on diplomatic relations with the United States and its allies (e.g., Republic of China, South Korea, Australia) to maintain a similar source of support during the Vietnam War. In this case, effective engagement provided both the North and South Vietnamese with resources that allowed them to keep fighting. These resources seem to have shaped the expectations that fighting was a worthwhile endeavor despite losses.

Indoctrination and Messaging
Indoctrination played an important role in France’s will to fight in WW I. France’s defeat at the hands of German forces during the Franco-Prussian War left a searing impression on French policymakers. Accordingly, the new French Republic worked hard to create a strong sense of French patriotism. The first step in this program was crafting a national identity that

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trumped local identities. In summer 1914, the government and military leaders rallied a divided France by calling on this latent sense of patriotism. Marshal Philippe Pétain would stiffen the resolve of the French Army after the mutinies of 1917 with a careful combination of promises of reform and appeals to patriotism.

Armed with a more extreme message, Nazi Germany relied on ideology to motivate its armed forces and civilian population to fight even when defeat was imminent, forcing the Allies to use crushing material superiority to destroy the Wehrmacht forces and occupy the country. Hitler’s political message combined old German desires for territorial expansion and nationalism with a racist discourse demonizing enemies, both foreign and domestic. By dominating civil society and domestic institutions, Hitler could indoctrinate an entire generation of soldiers, motivated to fight and capable of pressuring the less zealous to do the same. Nazi ideology created a highly determined nation that committed countless atrocities, especially in Eastern Europe.

During WW II, the Soviet Union used indoctrination to bolster domestic support for the war. Before Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union, both states signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939. Stalin’s government portrayed Nazi Germany as an ally to his people after signing this agreement. When Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Stalin had to reframe his domestic propaganda to portray the Nazis at enemies to ensure strong will to fight. While some (namely, the commissars) were motivated by Soviet ideology, the Soviets used indoctrination to stoke Russian nationalism, coerce the population, and highlight German brutality. Thus, we see that indoctrination shaped multiple sources of support. Specifically, to coerce their people to fight, the Soviets activated the salience of Russian nationalism and the salience of hatred based on stories of German brutality.

During the Korean War, North Korea’s indoctrination and social control were more successful than South Korea’s. Effectively executing communist doctrine, North Korea indoctrinated its entire society, incorporated political officers into the military, and extended indoctrination activities in occupied territories. However, the brutality and violence of those activities ultimately decreased public support in occupied territories and stimulated South Korea’s will to fight. Again, we see that indoctrination helped the North Koreans frame the reasons for fighting within their country. However, because of the brutality experienced by those in South Korea, the North’s attempt to communicate these reasons in the South (i.e., messaging) was less effective.

Similar to North Korea, North Vietnam’s use of indoctrination and messaging was important to its war strategy. Following classic communist doctrine, the North worked to indoctrinate its entire society and incorporated political officers into several layers across the

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military. The role of North Vietnamese soldiers was viewed as being inherently political. They were trained to be loyal and dedicated to the communist cause, but a key element of their training included preparation to act as effective propaganda agents. Several approaches were used to sustain soldiers’ will to fight. An indoctrination and internalization strategy was developed in which the cadre was responsible for educating, training and transmitting party goals to soldiers. The three-man cell, or “primary group,” was designed as both a support system and a method of surveillance to guard against desertion and defection. It sought to solidify ideological commitment and promote a spirit of solidarity. Rural Vietnamese were indoctrinated by “agit-prop” (agitation-propaganda) teams whose roles were to explain party values and goals simply enough to villagers in order to leverage the masses as a propaganda force and organizational weapon. The North Vietnamese used some of these same techniques in their messaging efforts to weaken will to fight in South Vietnam. Military indoctrination and messaging efforts to strengthen will to fight suffered from some weaknesses but, on the whole, were more extensive, intensive, and successful than efforts by South Vietnam.

In 1965, Pakistan falsely reported military successes and used propaganda to great effect to improve public support for the India-Pakistan War. Pakistan’s control over the media ensured that battlefield losses received little attention and that inconclusive battles became resounding successes. However, the false narratives that Pakistan created led to disbelief and public outrage when Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire and peace treaty that re-established the pre-war boundaries. The inability to meet unrealistic public expectations contributed to the Pakistani president’s declining power and eventual downfall. Thus, we found that failure of indoctrination may backfire and undermine national will to fight within a country.

Economic Pressure

Italy, despite its economic weakness in WW I, inflicted economic pressure on the Austro-Hungarian Empire by blocking exports early in the war. This cut off important food supplies for Austria-Hungary, which weakened the government politically because it had assured the population that everyone would have enough food throughout the war. Domestic food shortages created instability in Austria-Hungary, which eroded popular support for the war and thus weakened will to fight. Of course, as with many of our other cases, there were other variables that were simultaneously strengthening and weakening Austria-Hungary’s will to fight.

Because neither India nor Pakistan was economically self-sufficient, both were susceptible to economic pressures from the Soviet Union, China, and the United States. These pressures influenced the warring nations’ decisions to cease fighting despite domestic pressures to continue. Moreover, Pakistan lacked the industrial capability to produce the military equip-

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56 Pike, 1969, pp. 120–122.
57 Military indoctrination by the North has been criticized for being obtuse, excessively formal, and irrelevant to many audiences. See Pike, 1969, p. 122.
58 Bajwa, 2013, p. 363.
ment and munitions necessary to continue fighting; thus, it was particularly vulnerable to economic pressures.60

Casualties
There was enormous variation in casualty rates among our cases. For example, the Vietnam War lasted from 1955 until 1975, and some estimate that the total number of battle deaths was 2,097,705.61 The Korean War occurred from 1950 until 1953, resulting in 1,254,811 casualties. In comparison, the Iran-Iraq War lasted from 1980 until 1988 and resulted in an estimated 644,500 battle deaths.62 During the Vietnam War, high casualty rates weakened resolve in some quarters of the South Vietnamese and U.S. governments, while the North Vietnamese government showed almost unimaginable resolve in the face of casualties. The effect of casualty infliction on national will to fight varied considerably in our other cases as well. We found that, in some cases—for example, the Soviet Union in WW II—heavy casualties strengthened the perception that stakes of the conflict were existential. In other cases—for example, North and South Korea and several participants in WW I—heavy casualties combined with other variables to lead the parties to the negotiating table.

Sources Consulted, by Case Study
The following sections list the works that informed each case study described in the main chapters and this appendix. Many of these sources are directly cited in the report.

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