

Special Conference 2

The question of stabilising conflict zones via military interventions



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Introduction

In today's world, many regions are struggling with conflicts that threaten the safety and stability of their people. The persistence of these conflict zones pose a significant challenge towards international peace and security and therefore it is of paramount importance to alleviate the tensions and threats within these respective regions. Conflict zones arise due to a variety of reasons, including historical disagreements, ethnic tensions, economic inequality, and political turmoil. Military interventions, whether conducted by individual countries, coalitions, or under the authorization of international organisations like the United Nations, are often seen as necessary actions to stop violence, protect civilians, and restore order. However, military interventions can lead to various detrimental consequences for example that they can stimulate further violence, cause civilian casualties and that they can also create tensions within the region which can make peace negotiations even more difficult. As a result of the potential consequences of military interventions in order to stabilise conflict zones, it is often extremely difficult to identify an effective but safe solution to enact in order achieve the goal of stabilising these respective regions.

There have been many instances in the past where the military have intervened in conflict zones with the aim of stabilising the region however they have often have mixed impacts. The mixed impacts pose a great ethical debate as it is often unclear what the justifiable causes of military interventions are. The trade-off of using alternative measures is usually the increased time period that these methods take in order to actually be effective. One key example of this was Apartheid in South Africa which lasted over 40 years. This was eventually brought to an end through extensive political negotiations however it brings up the question whether military intervention may have achieved the same outcome in a much shorter time frame. This once again emphasises the importance of the question of stabilising conflict zones via military interventions and why it should be debated thoroughly in order to formulate an opinion on this pressing issue.



Definition of Key Terms

Conflict Zones

Conflict zones refer to war or political instability that disrupts essential services such as housing, transportation, communication, sanitation, water and health care which require the response of people outside of the community affected.

Military Interventions

Military intervention refers to the use of military force by a third party to interfere in an ongoing war/conflict in order to change its course or outcome in favour of the intervening party's interest or to alleviate the inhabitants of the zone from different forms of struggle.

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO)

Special department of peacekeeping operations within the United Nations that focus on the planning, preparation, management and direction of UN peacekeeping operations.

North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO was originally founded in 1949 by the United States in order to provide collective security against the Soviet Union, however now the organisation is recognized as one of the most influential peacekeeping military alliances in the world.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

A non-profit organisation that operates independently of any government, typically one whose purpose is to address a social or political issue.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the authority of a state to govern itself or another state.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

A global political commitment which was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 in order to address its four key concerns to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.



General Overview

The stabilisation of conflict zones through military intervention remains a highly contentious issue in international relations. Military interventions are often justified by the need to halt atrocities, protect civilians, and restore peace, yet they are equally criticized for undermining sovereignty, causing collateral damage, and potentially exacerbating conflicts. This report explores the complex dynamics of military interventions, examining their effectiveness, ethical considerations, and long-term impacts on global stability.

A prominent example of repeated military interventions, is the United States' long history of interfering within other nations. This, spanning for hundreds of years, has been driven by a range of motivations from protecting national interests to promoting democracy and human rights. These interventions are clearly depicted in Figure 1 as it shows the frequency as well as locations of the U.S's military interventions.

U.S. Interventions by Era and Region, 1776 - 2017

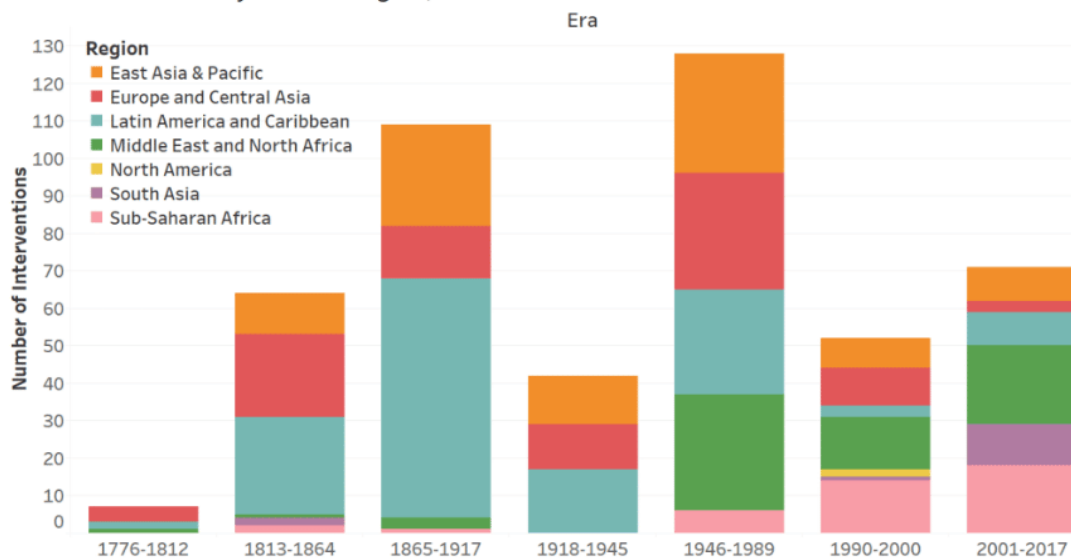


Figure 1 - Graph depicting U.S Interventions by Era and Region, 1776-2017

U.S. interventions have been both praised for preventing greater humanitarian disasters and criticised for their unintended consequences, including prolonged conflicts and instability. By analysing these interventions, this report aims to provide a balanced overview of the role military action plays in stabilising conflict zones, considering both historical precedents and contemporary debates.



Additionally, there was NATO's involvement in Kosovo in 1999. Faced with severe ethnic violence and human rights abuses against ethnic Albanians by Yugoslav and Serbian forces, NATO launched Operation Allied Force. This was a comprehensive aerial bombardment campaign. This intervention successfully ended hostilities and paved the way for peacekeeping and administrative efforts under the United Nations, significantly contributing to the stabilization of Kosovo.

NATO intervention in Kosovo (1999)

NATO engaged in the Kosovo conflict in 1999, as part of the larger Yugoslav Wars, which featured serious ethnic tensions between Kosovo's primarily Albanian population and the Serbian government. The conflict saw widespread human rights violations and ethnic cleansing, prompting NATO to undertake Operation Allied Force, a military mission aimed at neutralising the unrest and averting further crimes. The operation included significant aerial bombardments on Yugoslav military infrastructure, with the primary goals of halting the humanitarian crisis, restoring peace and stability, and facilitating the return of displaced people.

The intervention halted hostilities after 78 days of bombing, with Yugoslav forces agreeing to withdraw from Kosovo. The United Nations then established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to monitor the region's administration and promote local self-government. NATO-led peacekeeping forces (KFOR) were deployed to ensure security. The intervention permitted the return of hundreds of thousands of displaced ethnic Albanians, paving the way for Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008. Despite its success in stabilising the region, the intervention sparked debate over sovereignty, the legality of unilateral military action, and the ethical implications of collateral damage from the bombing campaign.

Major Parties Involved

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO, founded in 1949, is a military alliance comprising of 30 countries from North America and Europe dedicated to collective defence and international security. NATO engages in military actions to handle global conflicts, crises, and humanitarian situations, which frequently involve multinational forces and coordinated efforts to stabilise conflict areas. A significant example is NATO's 1999 intervention in Kosovo as previously mentioned.



International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC plays a crucial humanitarian role in military interventions aimed at stabilizing conflict zones. Established in 1863, the ICRC operates globally to protect and assist victims of armed conflict and violence, guided by principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence. During military interventions, the ICRC provides critical humanitarian aid, including medical care, food, water, and shelter to affected populations. It also visits prisoners of war and detainees to ensure humane treatment and promotes adherence to international humanitarian law (IHL). The ICRC's presence and actions help mitigate the impact of conflicts on civilians, support post-conflict recovery, and foster an environment conducive to peace and stability.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

ASEAN plays a vital role in fostering regional stability and addressing conflicts through diplomatic and, occasionally, military interventions. Founded in 1967, ASEAN promotes political and security cooperation among its ten member states to ensure peace and stability in Southeast Asia. While primarily focused on diplomatic measures, ASEAN has also engaged in collective security efforts and conflict resolution. Through mechanisms like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the organization facilitates dialogue, confidence-building measures, and coordinated actions to address security threats. In conflict situations, ASEAN works to mediate disputes, deploy observer missions, and support peacekeeping initiatives, thereby contributing to the stabilization of conflict zones and the promotion of long-term regional harmony.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

The UNSC is arguably the most influential party in terms of the question of stabilising conflict zones via military interventions. As one of the principle organs of the United Nations, the security council is responsible for maintaining international peace and security. It has the authority to make legally binding contract which could be to deploy peacekeeping missions, impose sanctions, or to authorise military action to address threats to global and local stability within regions across the globe. Through resolutions the UNSC can mandate multinational forces to intervene in crises, providing a legal and coordinated system for international military efforts.



Timeline of Key Events

Seeing as this is a broad issue that focuses on general conflict zones, a timeline of key international events which sparked the question of stabilizing conflict zones via military intervention as a whole has been created rather than focusing on events within one particular nation or zone.

Date	Description of event
June 25 th , 1950	UNSC lead multinational coalition to repel North Korean forces from South Korea
December 1 st , 1992	UN and NATO implement peacekeeping forces to end ethnic conflict in Bosnia & Herzegovina
June 12 th , 1999	NATO launch Operation Allied Force to stop ethnic cleansing by Yugoslav forces and stabilise the region
March, 2002	UNSC establish United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)
March 23 rd , 2011	NATO executes Operation Unified Protector to protect civilians and support anti-Gaddafi forces in Libya
February, 2014 → Present	NATO and EU provide military aid, training, and sanctions against Russia to support Ukraine's sovereignty and stabilise the region
March 26 th , 2015 → Present	Saudi-led coalition and UN intervene to support Yemeni Government against Houthi rebels.



Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The Oslo Accords represent a significant diplomatic effort to resolve the continued Israeli-Palestinian conflict through peaceful negotiations. Mediated by Norway, these accords marked the first direct, face-to-face agreement between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The process began with secret negotiations in Oslo, ending with the eventual signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP) in Washington, D.C., in 1993. The agreement established a plan for the gradual transfer of power from Israel to a newly created Palestinian Authority, which would grant Palestinians limited self-governance in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Oslo Accords also outlined the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO, setting an example for further negotiations on other issues, including borders, refugees, and Jerusalem. Despite its limitations and the subsequent challenges in implementation, the Oslo Accords were a groundbreaking step towards a two-state solution and demonstrated the potential of diplomacy in stabilising conflict zones rather than resorting to military intervention.

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), established in 1996, was a ground-breaking initiative aimed at addressing the human rights abuses committed during the apartheid era. Chaired by Desmond Tutu, the TRC sought to promote national healing and reconciliation by uncovering the truth about past atrocities and providing a platform for victims to share their stories. The commission took a restorative justice approach, focusing on forgiveness and reconciliation rather than retribution. It held public hearings where victims could recount their experiences, and perpetrators could apply for a pardon in exchange for full disclosure of their actions. This process was designed to foster a collective understanding of the past and pave the way for a more inclusive and peaceful society. While the TRC faced criticisms and challenges, such as perceived leniency and incomplete justice, it significantly contributed to South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. By promoting dialogue and understanding, the TRC demonstrated the power of community engagement and reconciliation in stabilizing conflict zones and preventing future violence.



Possible Solutions

Seeing as this issue is a current and ongoing one, there are many possible solutions to this ever-changing issue. Conflicts will always cause disruptions within nations affecting essential sectors like agriculture and healthcare. Wars can also lead to an increase in the number of refugees who are forced out of their country due to the poor living conditions and their inability to access basic human needs. Although all conflicts zones are different, there are a number of potential ways in which they can be stabilised in alternative methods to military intervention . In previous years many international organizations have offered aid to these zones that have been subjected to conflict for many years. Although these organizations and their efforts are often helpful, they do not completely solve the issue meaning that the issue still looms, making it difficult to identify the most effective solution to this problem. Taking more precautionary means, often result in a greater period of suffering within the conflict zone whereas military intervention would have a shorter time period of suffering. Despite the shorter time period the consequences of an intervention of this fashion are plentiful and potentially far more dangerous than they would have been without a military intervention within the zone. This is why it is once again as previously mentioned, extremely difficult to find effective solutions to this problem. Different conflicts will naturally have different solutions for stabilising the areas affected, however, some alternative ideas that could be applicable in most scenarios include:

- Diplomatic negotiations via peace talks or arbitration
- Economic sanctions and incentives
- Humanitarian Aid and Development Assistance
- Strengthening local governance and institutions
- Regional and International cooperation
- Disarmament, demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)

There are many more potential ways of solving this issue however due to the fact that this problem is ongoing and has been for decades in certain zones, there is no definitive idea and answer for which direction to focus on with regards to the question of stabilising conflict zones via military interventions or via other methods.



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