



Editor's Picks

Military Intervention in Africa: French and US Approaches Compared; Leadership Revised; Rethinking Liberal Democracy; The Crime-Conflict Nexus and the Civil War in Syria; Reversing the Stabilization Paradigm; and Prescription for an Affordable Full Spectrum Defense Policy

The level of interests, level of resources, and strategic culture all factor into explaining the differences and similarities between military operations by France and the United States in Africa, contends Professor Stephen Burgess in “Military Intervention in Africa: French and US Approaches Compared.” While both constructivist and realist perspectives are necessary for comparative analysis, the argument in this article is that strategic culture and attitudes towards risk as well as differences in perceived spheres of influence are more insightful than the realist perspective in explaining the different ways that France and the United States chose to intervene in Africa. The Powell Doctrine and casualty and risk aversion explain why the United States is less willing to intervene directly militarily in Africa; however, the relatively lower level of US interests in Africa as compared with Southwest Asia must also be taken into account. In addition, the US military has an organizational culture of winning, while the French military is accustomed to messy outcomes, which also explains the differences in interventionism. Prepositioning of French forces in Northwest Africa increases the likelihood that they will be used in operations. The prepositioning of US forces in Djibouti has not led to direct military intervention in Somalia, even as the capital and country were on the verge of falling to violent extremists. However, the extensive use of US special forces in Somalia and Northwest Africa has begun a process of convergence with the French military posture.

The recent string of existential crises in Europe—the Euro crisis, Russia’s aggression in Ukraine, and the refugee crisis of 2015—have resulted in new dynamics within the European Union, posits Wolfgang Koeth in “Leadership Revised: How Did the Ukraine Crisis and the Annexation of Crimea Affirm Germany’s Leading Role in EU Foreign Policy?” In Brussels, Germany has emerged as the hardly contested nexus of decision making. It was

in particular through the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 that Germany found itself assuming a leadership role also in the EU's foreign policy, a role it has shunned in the past. However, for Berlin this new role is far from obvious—it is only gradually that Germany grew comfortable with its enhanced role, which is due more to external circumstances than by its own design of its own image abroad and, due to the still prevalent feeling of historical guilt, the fear of being perceived as a dominating power has so far prevented Germany from occupying the forefront of the stage, preferring to pull strings from behind and presenting itself as the EU's "Chief Facilitation Officer." This article analyzes how Germany, in particular through the Ukraine crisis starting in 2014, affirmed itself—albeit reluctantly—as a nexus of decision making in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and became the de facto leading nation for defining the EU's response towards Russia. The article points out the internal and external consequences of this new role and, in particular, its impact on the Baltic States.

In the long course of human evolution and political experimentation, liberal democracy, especially after the events of 1989, has come to be seen as the best political system, asserts Dr. Isabel David in "Rethinking Liberal Democracy: Prelude to totalitarianism." In fact, she pursued, "we seemed to have reached the only system compatible with liberty, after the dreadful experiences of Communist and Nazi totalitarianism, and its twin in the economic realm - capitalism." But is liberalism really conducive to freedom? Or totalitarianism arises from the combination of both the Platonic and Augustinian views: ignorance of values and the pursuit of one's egotistic desires. Evil has an essentially private nature. In this sense, totalitarianism may arise from a utilitarian culture that sees people—or some forms of knowledge—as worthless and disposable objects.

Dr. Christina Steenkamp, in "The Crime-Conflict Nexus and the Civil War in Syria," postulates that there is a strong relationship between organized crime and civil war. This article contributes to the crime-conflict nexus literature by providing a consideration of the role of organized crime in the Syrian conflict. It provides an overview of pre- and post-war organized crime in Syria. The article then builds the argument that war provides opportunities for organized crime through the state's diminished law enforcement ability; the economic hardship which civilians face during war; and the abundance of armed groups who all need to generate revenue. Secondly, the paper argues that organized crime also affects the intensity and duration of war by enabling militants to reproduce themselves materially and to build institutions amongst the communities where they are active. The relationships between armed groups and local populations emerge as a central theme in understanding the crime-conflict nexus.

In "Reversing the Stabilization Paradigm: Towards an Alternative Approach," Mr. Mark Knight examines the dialogue concerning Stabilization that illuminates a paradigm based on the ideas of the so-called 'liberal peace'—defined minimally as democracy and free markets. This model proposes that if the liberal peace is delivered at the sub-national level via Stabilization interventions, then the desired outcome would be 'stability.' However, com-

mentators of Stabilization generally agree that the liberal peace is an unachievable objective that inhibits the desired outcome of 'stability.' This Practice Note contests this analysis and instead argues that 'stability' is an unachievable objective that inhibits the desired outcome of a liberal democratic functioning state. Therefore, Stabilization's desired outcome becomes the protection and enjoyment of human rights, rather than 'stability.' This practice note continues its examination of Stabilization and comes to the conclusion that Stabilization can be understood as political actions in support of an ideological outcome. This understanding of Stabilization is compatible with existing international engagements in support of national transition processes and can be applied across the spectrum from consent to coercion, concludes Mr. Knight.

In his essay "Prescription for an Affordable Full Spectrum Defense Policy," Professor Jan Muczyk affirms that as an indispensable nation the United States needs to pursue a full spectrum defense policy, which happens to be very expensive and in competition with domestic priorities. Therefore, the Defense Department must come up with an affordable strategy for crafting such a defense policy or lose out to high priority domestic exigencies. This undertaking offers proven suggestions based on lessons learned from wars and previous arms races for funding such a policy.

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