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# Foreign Intervention and Global Public Bads

Christopher J. Coyne and Matt E. Ryan\*

## Abstract

A growing literature focuses on the “global public goods” generated by foreign interventions. Global public goods have traditional public good characteristics, but their benefits extend across societies and regions. We analyze how well-intentioned foreign interventions to provide global public goods can also result in global public bads. These bads emerge through the dynamics of unintended consequences resulting from knowledge constraints on policymakers designing interventions. Case studies of foreign interventions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are provided as evidence. The main conclusion is one of humility regarding foreign interventions to provide global public goods.

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**Keywords:** foreign intervention, foreign aid, foreign military intervention, global public goods, global public bads, unintended consequences

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## **1. Introduction**

A growing literature emphasizes the significant benefits associated with the provision of “global public goods” (see Kaul, Grunberg and Stern 1999; Kaul et al. 2003a). Like traditional public goods, global public goods are defined by the characteristics of non-rivalry and non-excludability. However, global public goods have the additional spatial characteristic of extending “across countries and regions, and across rich and poor population groups, and even across generations” (Kaul et al. 1999b: 3). Examples of global public goods include disease prevention; environmental sustainability; information; political, economic and social stability; and international communication and transportation networks. As these examples indicate, global public goods can be both tangible (e.g., infrastructure or the environment) and intangible (e.g., economic, political, and social stability).

A central conclusion of this literature is that the concerted efforts of international organizations (the IMF, regional development banks, NGOs, UN, World Bank, World Trade Organization, etc.) and governments from around the world are required for the adequate provision of global public goods. This includes foreign interventions in the forms of foreign aid and foreign military interventions to correct “global public bads.”

For example, Cook and Sachs (1999) and Jayaraman and Kanbur (1999) explore the role of foreign aid in the provision of global public goods. Ferroni (2000) calls for reforms in delivery of foreign aid to provide global public goods in a more effective manner. Ferguson (2004) and Lal (2004) call for the United States to embrace its role as an empire to ensure global stability. According to these authors, stability requires the provision of global public goods in the form of a stable world monetary order, clear and

enforced rules regarding international trade and finance, and protection against state failure and rogue states. They conclude that the United States is in the best position to create such stability. Mendez (1999) discusses the importance of UN peacekeeping forces in providing the global public good of peace, while Collier (2007) concludes that properly timed foreign military interventions can generate global stability through the prevention of military coups. Mitchener and Weidenmier (2005) and Ferguson and Schularick (2006) analyze historical cases of foreign intervention by the United States and Britain and highlight the resulting global public goods generated by military intervention and the announced willingness to use military force under certain circumstances.

While the existing literature mainly focuses on the benefits of foreign intervention, a complete understanding of intervention requires a consideration of the associated benefits *and* costs. Our central thesis is that interventions intended to generate global public goods can, and often do, generate global public bads. Global public bads have significant negative effects across time and space.

We identify the dynamics of unintended consequences as the mechanism through which global public bads emerge. This dynamic emerges due to the disconnect between the simplicity of interventions and the complexity of the system being regulated. The necessary simplicity of government interventions is due to the knowledge constraint facing policymakers. The context-specific knowledge underpinning the numerous institutions of social and economic interaction is not available to policymakers in a form that can be effectively incorporated into interventions. Relatively simple interventions in a complex system yield unintended, and often undesirable, results in the form of public

bad. As the degree of complexity in the underlying system increases, so too do the unintended consequences of exogenous interventions. These issues are especially relevant in foreign interventions which attempt to manipulate a global system characterized by a complex array of economic, political, cultural, and social forces interacting simultaneously. Given the simplicity of foreign interventions relative to the complexity of the global system being regulated, negative unintended consequences can be expected to be significant.

Foreign intervention entails the use of the power of members of international organizations and governments to address perceived problems in other societies. In addressing these problems, foreign interventions aim to construct a preferable state of affairs from the standpoint of those intervening. To narrow our analysis, we focus on the potential negative unintended consequences of two types of foreign interventions—foreign aid and foreign military interventions. Both types of interventions aim to manipulate outcomes in other societies. Detailed case studies of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, and Pakistan provide evidence of global public bads which may emerge through these types of foreign interventions.

We proceed as follows: The next section discusses the conceptual issues of public goods and public bads. Also discussed is the relationship between foreign interventions and the dynamics of unintended consequences. Section 3 provides empirical evidence in the form of case studies to support and illuminate our central argument. Section 4 concludes with the implications of our analysis.

## 2. Global Public Goods, Global Public Bads, and Unintended Consequences

A public good refers to a good that is non-rivalrous and non-excludable. Nonrivalry indicates that consumption of the good by one individual does not reduce the availability of the good for consumption by others. Nonexcludability means that once a good is provided, individuals cannot be prevented from consuming the good. Theory indicates that public goods will be undersupplied on private markets due to inefficiencies associated with pricing and free riding. Where these inefficiencies exist, the result is a market failure.

Until recently, the analysis of public goods did not consider the geographic aspects of the issue. This has changed as “global public goods” have become an important part of the broader discussions of public goods (Kaul, Grunberg, and Stein 1999; Sandler 1997; Kaul et al. 2003a). Conceptually, global public goods have the same defining characteristics as traditional public goods. However, the concept of global public goods also includes a consideration of spatial aspects by recognizing that public goods often have benefits across geographic borders. For example, the prevention of communicable disease in one country has benefits which positively impact those living in other countries.

Closely connected to the notion of global public goods is the concept of global public bads. A bad reduces utility, so *ceteris paribus*, individuals would prefer to have less of a bad as compared to more. Like public goods, public bads are nonexcludable and nonrivalrous and therefore can adversely impact a significant number of people. Similarly, public bads, like public goods, can also have a global aspect, meaning that they

can impact individuals across geographic borders. Where global public bads exist there is an argument for external intervention to remedy the situation through the provision of global public goods. For example, the public bad of political or social conflict in one society can impose significant costs on other societies, leading to regional instability. In such an instance, foreign interventions resulting in peace and stability would be a global public good since it would benefit an entire region.

As in the case of traditional public goods, theory indicates that global public goods will be undersupplied, leaving room for external intervention to correct for the failure. Within nation states, the task of providing what are determined to be public goods often falls to the state. However, the issue of global public goods provision presents a problem because of the absence of universal agreement on a sovereign world government to coordinate the provision of such goods. Given this, the literature on the topic concludes that the concerted efforts of international organizations and governments from around the world are required to provide global public goods. These global efforts entail foreign interventions through monetary and humanitarian aid, as well as a commitment to the use of military force when necessary, to ensure that global public goods are adequately provided.

We recognize that international interventions can generate benefits. However, we also recognize that interventions intended to do good can fail or generate significant bads. Interventions have unintended consequences and those consequences can have real negative effects. As such, when considering foreign interventions to provide global public goods, the negative unintended consequences of those interventions must be considered.

How can interventions motivated by good intentions generate bad outcomes? Global public bads can emerge from interventions intended to provide global public goods due to the dynamics of unintended consequences. Merton (1936) identified “ignorance” and “error” as two of the main causes of unintended consequences. Ignorance refers to the fact that individuals act based on only partial knowledge of a complex world. Limited knowledge results in a wide array of unintended outcomes because individuals are unable to fully anticipate the consequences of their actions. Closely connected is the prevalence of error which entails misjudging the facts or incorrectly forecasting the future. As an example of error, Merton provides the common assumption that “actions which have in the past led to the desired outcome will continue to do so” (1936: 901). This indicates that we must consider the decision making processes through which interventions emerge, including the ignorance of policymakers and likelihood of error.

Interventions emerge in the context of the political decision making process. Public choice scholars have made clear that political decisions do not take place in neutral settings. Instead, political systems suffer from issues of rational ignorance, perverse incentives, poor feedback mechanisms, and misaligned time horizons. In addition to the issues of incentives and information, a related strand of literature considers how the political decision-making process deals with context specific knowledge that is dispersed among millions of individuals across an array of economic and social relationships and processes (see Sowell 1980: 114-149, 167-228, 305-384; Ikeda 1997: 55-89; Boettke, Coyne, Leeson 2007; MacKenzie 2008). Knowledge is broader than the notion of information because in addition to those things that can be

articulated (i.e., “book knowledge”) knowledge also entails an understanding “of the particular circumstances of time and place” (Hayek 1945; Boettke 2002). Knowledge is the result of experience and practice and therefore cannot be easily articulated, whereas information can be readily communicated across time and space.

A specific example will help to illuminate the concept of knowledge. Bernstein (1992) demonstrates how diamond traders are able to successfully operate using a complex set of signals, cues, bonding mechanisms, and informal rules which facilitate cooperation. The specifics of the social and economic processes within which these diamond traders operate are an example of context-specific knowledge. The diamond trade would not function nearly as well if random outside traders were placed in the same setting. We can observe cooperation between traders and identify general mechanisms that facilitate coordination, but being able to successfully participate in the diamond trade would require context specific knowledge.

Since contextual knowledge of time and place cannot be easily articulated, it cannot be obtained or incorporated by those working within political institutions to design policy. The result is that context specific knowledge must be excluded from government interventions. As Sowell (1980) indicates, when government intervenes in economic and social interactions it “substitutes its own decisions in the form of more explicitly articulated knowledge, in either words or statistics. Articulation, however, can lose great amounts of knowledge” (171-2).

The ultimate result of the political decision-making process is policies that are simple relative to the underlying system they aim to influence. Since policymakers must abstract from reality, the policies they produce cannot reflect the underlying complexity

of the processes they attempt to manipulate. Negative unintended consequences emerge due to this disconnect between the simplicity of policy and the complexity of reality.

Unintended consequences can emerge in a number of ways. For example, unintended consequences may emerge in areas unrelated to the target of the intervention. In this case, even where an intervention is successful in one area it may generate unintended consequences in other areas of the broader system. Under an alternative scenario, the emergence of unintended consequences may completely undermine the goal of the initial intervention or even make the initial situation worse than before the intervention.

Conceptually, the negative unintended consequences of intervention can be both internal and external. Internal unintended consequences take place within the area targeted by the intervention. For example, Friedman (2000: 10) shows how the negative unintended consequence of the “nonwaiverable warranty of habitability” is to make both tenants and landlords worse off. This law, which requires that landlords include certain features (e.g., heating, hot water, etc.) on their properties, is intended to benefit tenants. However, the unintended consequence of the law is that it leads to an increase in rent which ultimately harms the poorest tenants. In this example, unintended consequences adversely impact those who are supposed to be made better off by the initial intervention.

In contrast, external unintended consequences occur outside the area targeted by the intervention. An example would be the era of prohibition in the United States. In shifting the incentives of those in the alcohol industry, prohibition had negative unintended consequences on the broader society in the form of increased organized crime.

It is important to note that negative unintended consequences are different from the traditional notion of “negative externalities” discussed by economists. A key aspect of negative externalities involves the calculation of the deadweight loss caused by the externality. This calculation allows one to compare the suboptimal outcome to the equilibrium outcome. In contrast, the negative unintended consequences of intervention cannot be measured since it would require the measurement of a counterfactual involving the comparison of potential actual events to what may have happened absent the intervention (see Ikeda 2003: 101-2). The inability to engage in this calculation means that unintended consequences will not be factored into the decision calculus of those designing the intervention.

The logic of unintended consequences has important implications for the analysis of foreign interventions to provide global public goods. While foreign interventions are intended to generate a preferable state of affairs, they are based on relatively simple plans compared to the complexity of the system being manipulated. Further, these interventions take place in a global system characterized by a myriad of independent and overlapping social, economic, legal, and political processes. These processes are grounded in context specific knowledge which cannot be understood in a manner that can effectively inform the design and implementation of foreign interventions. We should expect this disconnect between policy and reality will result in significant negative unintended consequences.

### **3. Evidence of the Negative Unintended Consequences of Foreign Intervention**

#### *3.1 Method and Case Selection*

Our core contention is that the foreign interventions aimed at providing global public goods can also generate global public bads. The following case studies serve to illuminate this process as well as some of the resulting bads. The case method is preferable given our focus on understanding and illuminating the causal processes through which interventions generate negative unintended consequences. The case studies were selected because they entail an array of foreign interventions by various international parties and governments to provide global public goods. They also illuminate several of the negative unintended consequences of foreign interventions.

The first case focuses on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The history of the Congo involves interventions by the United Nations and several foreign governments including Belgium, France, and the United States. According to Martelli (1966: 8) these interventions were an “experiment in world government” which set a precedent for future interventions of a similar nature. From this standpoint, the interventions in the Congo represent a concerted effort to provide global public goods in the form of stability and peace. As such, this case can provide valuable insight into present calls for foreign interventions to provide similar global public goods.

The cases of Afghanistan and Pakistan are considered jointly. Our analysis of Afghanistan begins right before the Soviet invasion of 1979. The U.S. responded by intervening in Afghanistan indirectly through the Pakistani government. The stated goal was to provide the global public good of stability by preventing the spread of Soviet power and ideology. These interventions had lasting negative unintended consequences for both Afghanistan and Pakistan that are still evident on a global scale today. As such, this joint case illustrates how interventions in one country can have significant negative

unintended consequences in other countries and also how these bads can persist over time.

In each case we focus on tracing the process through which negative unintended consequences emerged as a result of foreign intervention. In doing so, we refrain from making normative judgments about the motivations behind the decision to intervene and instead focus on outcomes of those interventions.

### *3.2 Democratic Republic of the Congo*

Present day Democratic Republic of the Congo has experienced conflict for well over a century. European exploration of territory began in 1870s and it was acquired by King Leopold II of Belgium in 1885 (Gondola 2002: 45-76). Leopold profited from the Congo's rubber industry, which included brutalizing the local population with violence to meet specific rubber quotas (Hochschild 1998). Leopold's reign ended in 1920 when the Belgian government took control of the territory. Although the Belgian government did make investments in infrastructure, it reinforced many of Leopold's paternalistic policies, including the withholding of political rights and other freedoms for Congolese citizens. This treatment of the Congolese underpinned the violent backlash that occurred following independence (Gordon 1962: 8-9; Wrong 2001; Gondola 2002: 98-106).

Following the independence of the Republic of the Congo from Belgium in 1960, a coalition government was formed with the election of Patrice Lumumba as prime minister and Joseph Kasa-Vubu as president. Despite the efforts to create a stable government, conflict soon emerged. In the absence of a trained and effective indigenous police force, Belgian military officers remained in the country after independence. This

seemed logical given the need for law and order in the Congo. However, the Congolese army's resentment about the continued Belgian presence led to violence against Belgian soldiers and citizens. The violence was reinforced by the return of additional Belgian troops sent to quell the violence, provide order, and protect Belgian citizens (Gordon 1962: 13-16; Martelli 1966: 20-1; Weissman 1972: 55-63).

In addition to the violence of the rebellion, the crisis also had the impact of weakening the already fragile credibility of the new government and its ability to effectively govern the country. This caused problems because various leaders and groups throughout the country saw the conflict as an opportunity to secure rents by challenging government leaders for positions of power and leadership. For example, only a few days after the violent conflict began, the southeast province of Katanga, under the leadership of Moise Tshombe, seceded from the Congo (Gordon 1962: 32-36; Martelli 1966: 35-46). This placed additional pressures on Lumumba's government because the Katanga province was one of the most developed in the country and included a significant portion of the country's natural resources (Gondola 2002: 119-123).

Attempting to overcome the violence and credibility crisis, Lumumba requested the assistance of the United Nations. The UN responded by establishing the United Nations Operation in the Congo (UNOC) (Martelli 1966: 47-52). Similar to the earlier Belgian intervention, the UN operation aimed to stabilize the country. It is interesting to note that the justification for the UN intervention sounded similar to more recent calls for foreign intervention to provide global public goods. Along these lines, UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld stated that "new countries often have to make basic decisions which are likely to determine for many years the pattern of their national life as

well as their relations to the rest of the world.” Because of this, Hammarskjold noted that aid from the international community “is likely to yield high returns and reduce the cost of the transition to the countries concerned, as well as to the world economy” (quoted in Gordon 1962: 7). In other words, the intervention by the UN aimed to provide global stability through peaceful integration into the world system.

As part of the UN resolution, Belgian forces were requested to leave the country while the UN committed to provide the needed military support to the Congolese government. While the UN mission did reduce violence in the short run, it did not succeed in creating long-term stability or in peacefully integrating the Congo into the global system. A key reason the UN intervention failed was because “difficulties arose out of the complexities of a situation disintegrating rapidly from causes beyond the control of the authorities” (Gordon 1962: 64). In other words, the relative simplicity of the UN intervention could not anticipate, or effectively deal with, the complexity of the actual situation.

Tensions soon emerged between Lumumba and UN officials. The UN refused to use force against Katanga to end its secession, stating it was not part of the UN resolution. Lumumba wanted the UN forces to actively end the Katanga secession and unify the country (Martelli 1966: 54-5). With an ineffective domestic army and the refusal of the UN to support the invasion of Katanga, Lumumba turned to the Soviet Union for assistance.

The Lumumba-Soviet partnership concerned the U.S., which feared the spread of Soviet power and ideology (Schatzberg 1991: 14-15). As a result of this concern, the U.S. shifted its support from Lumumba to President Kasa-Vubu and Mobutu Sese Seko, a

military leader and political aid to Lumumba (Gordon 1962: 52-55; Weissman 1974: 85-99). The resulting power struggle between the three men, partially fueled by the proxy fight between the Soviet Union and United States, led to the further deterioration of the already weak Congolese central government. Kasa-Vubu publically dismissed Lumumba as the country's prime minister. Lumumba quickly followed by publically dismissing Kasa-Vubu as president and calling for army to rise against him. The result was chaos, with no clear national leader (Martelli 1966: 65-71).

The country's army fractured and Lumumba was eventually captured by soldiers loyal to Mobutu. Following Lumumba's assassination, the UN moved to ensure the power vacuum would not lead to further chaos (Martelli 1966: 80-84). A subsequent UN resolution (Security Resolution 146) granted the UN the right to use force to end the secession of Katanga and restore peace to the country. After approximately two years of UN-led military operations, Katanga was finally brought under the control of the UN and reunified. In 1964, with the battle for Katanga over, the UN withdrew its troops and officially ended its mission in the Congo.

The UN initially intervened in the Congo to provide the global public goods of stability and peaceful integration. It was unable to remain neutral and, contrary to its charter and the resolutions regarding the Congo, became involved in influencing internal affairs. In doing so, "the United Nations helped to prolong the state of instability in the Congo and made the settlement of its internal conflicts more difficult, thus defeating its own purpose of building a strong and united country" (Martelli 1966: 237-238). This instability continues to the present day and has negatively impacted the broader region. As such, in its effort to provide global public goods, the UN unintentionally generated

global public bads. Despite the UN's disengagement from the Congo, the U.S. would remain involved for several decades.

Following the exit of the UN, Moise Tshombe, the former leader of Katanga, assumed the position of Prime Minister and Kasa-Vubu remained president. However, his reign as prime minister would be short lived. In 1965, with the backing of the CIA, Mobutu seized power from Kasa-Vubu through a bloodless coup. Tshombe fled the country after being charged with mutiny for his role in the succession of Katanga. The U.S. saw Mobutu as a source of stability for the country and also as a key ally in preventing the spread of communism in the broader region. From the standpoint of the U.S., a Mobutu-led Congo could serve as a central hub for U.S. initiatives and interests in region. Mobutu's regime, which ruled from 1965-1997, did create a semblance of stability in the Congo. However, the means through which order was maintained was brutality and violence against Congolese citizens. While the U.S. intervention did provide the "good" of stability, the unintended consequence was the enforcement of the status quo which included violence against the country's citizens.

After assuming power, Mobutu moved quickly to consolidate his position. He abolished political parties and centralized the state by reducing the number of provinces. Over his thirty-two year reign, Mobutu would become known as one of the world's most corrupt and brutal dictators. Mobutu's government nationalized the country's industries as well as the workers' union and media. Mobutu coercively squashed all potential threats to his position of power through arrests and public hangings. In 1971, as part of a broader campaign of cultural awareness, Mobutu renamed the country "Zaire." In the late 1970s, rebels from Angola twice tried to overtake Mobutu's regime. However, both rebellions

were suppressed with military and logistical support from Belgium, France, and the United States. In both cases, the only reason Mobutu was able to stay in power was because of external military and financial support.

In addition to the brutal violence of his regime, Zaire plummeted into economic ruin under Mobutu's leadership. There were few, if any, infrastructure investments and the national currency was largely destroyed through inflation. Starvation was a widespread problem. As of 1997, Zaire was in debt at a level equivalent to 200% of its annual GDP. Further, Zaire's GDP in 1997 was the equivalent of its 1958 GDP level. During the same period the country's population tripled (Adelman and Rao 2004: 4).

In the absence of a domestic tax base, Mobutu had to rely on other sources of income. One source was Zaire's rich stock of natural resources, which included cobalt, coltan, copper, diamonds, and gold. Along the lines of the well-known "natural resource curse," these assets provided Mobutu with a readily available source of income without having to provide basic services and infrastructure to Zaire's citizens.

Mobutu's second source of income was foreign aid from the international community. Despite the fact that the violent and corrupt nature of Mobutu's regime was well known to the international community, he was able to secure significant foreign aid throughout his rule. At one point President George H. Bush described Mobutu as "our [the U.S.'s] best friend in Africa" (quoted in Boustany 1997). Indeed, Zaire spent 74 percent of the 1976-1989 period in IMF programs (Easterly 2006: 149). It is estimated that during his reign Mobutu received \$20 billion in foreign aid from the international community and governments around the world (Easterly 2006: 150). Little, if any, of this aid was used to improve the country or the position of Zaire's citizens. Instead, Mobutu

used it to fund his vast network of bribes and to increase his personal assets, which were estimated to be worth \$4 billion in the mid 1980s and even greater at the time of his death (Burns, Huband, and Holman 1997).

Following the end of the Cold War, the usefulness of Mobutu to the west diminished. After decades of support, the international community, including Belgium, France, the U.S., the IMF, and the World Bank severed its connections with the regime. Without external support to prop up his regime, Mobutu's control of Zaire eroded. In 1997 he was displaced as president and forced to flee country.

Like the United Nations, the U.S. initially became involved in the Congo to provide "global public goods." A 1963 U.S. government document listed the objectives of U.S. involvement in the country, which included the "establishment of a unified and independent state" that was capable of "political stability" and "economic and social development" as well as the "prevention of Soviet penetration and extension" (USAID 1963: 71). Over two decades later, in 1987, another government document noted that continued U.S. involvement in the country was necessary to "promote regional stability" and "encourage continued economic reform and growth" (USAID 1987: 258). Despite these motivations, the interventions in the Congo generated significant global public bads. John Stockwell, a CIA official who served in the Congo summed up the U.S. intervention in the Congo as follows:

The CIA intervention there was an unmitigated disaster. The United States subverted democracy in the Congo. We participated in the assassination of a prime minister that was democratically elected, Patrice Lumumba. Then we installed in power Joseph Mobuto [sic], who is still the dictator. We have run the country into a debt of \$6.2 billion . . . In the Congo today 25 percent of the people

are starving, while Joe Mobuto has a personal fortune of about \$4.5 billion (quoted in Schatzberg 1991: 4).

Today the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains one of the most corrupt, violent, and economically underdeveloped countries in the world. The country has been plagued by civil war and numerous attempted coups against political leaders. To the extent that earlier foreign interventions were successful in achieving short-term stability, the long-term result has been political and social instability for the country and broader region.

The conflicts in the Congo have spilled over to bordering countries, leading to regional instability. For example, in 1998 war broke out between the Congo and Rwanda. The conflict lasted until 2004, and during the course of the conflict Zimbabwe, Angola, Uganda, and Namibia all became involved. The death toll of the conflict is estimated to be 5.4 million (Coghlan et al. 2008). The UN and international community have intervened numerous times to establish some semblance of peace. To date, these efforts, like those that preceded them, have failed to achieve the desired ends. The stability of the Congo and neighboring countries remains extremely fragile.

### *3.3 Afghanistan and Pakistan*

In July 1973, former Prime Minister Mohammad Sardar Daoud Khan overthrew Zahir Shah via military coup. Daoud quickly moved to abolish the monarchy and constitution and named himself president and prime minister of the new republic. Daoud's rule was characterized by widespread corruption and he used force against citizens when necessary to maintain stability and his position of power (Maley 2002: 15-17). As Prime Minister from 1953 to 1963, Daoud had established relations with key

leaders in the Soviet Union. Once president, he was able to utilize these preexisting relationships to secure funding and aid from the Soviets. In addition to aid from the Soviets, Daoud also received aid from the United States. It is important to remember that during this time the Soviet Union and United States were involved in the Cold War. Only within this context can one understand the delivery of aid to Afghanistan. From the standpoint of the Soviet Union and United States, the purpose of this aid was to influence Daoud in their favor. As such, Afghanistan was a proxy war for the broader Cold War that was taking place. Indeed, this desire to influence political outcomes would ultimately lead to subsequent military interventions in the region.

Daoud's rule was short lived. Five years after he took office he was overthrown by an opposition party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Nur Mohammad Taraki, a leader of the PDPA, assumed the position of president and prime minister and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Taraki made a number of drastic reforms aimed at secularizing the country. He also maintained a close relationship with the Soviet Union, which was the main external supporter of the Taraki regime. In addition to the provision of monetary aid, the Soviets sent resources to aid in the development of infrastructure and for the exploration of natural resources.

Ultimately, the Taraki regime was unable to consolidate its power due to the unpopularity of its reforms and its public relationship with the Soviet Union, both of which many Afghans viewed as being anti-Muslim. Protests, some violent, were met with strong resistance by Taraki and his Soviet supporters. Pockets of resistance continued to push back against the government leading to an increasing number of

violent incidents. The growing violence culminated in the assassination of Taraki in 1979. (Bradsher 1993; Kakar 1995: 1-21; Maley 2002: 31-33; Vogelsang 2002: 303-320).

Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin, who had also been a leader in the PDPA against Daoud, assumed power after Taraki's assassination. However, the Soviet Union quickly became disillusioned with Amin. The KGB became aware of secret meetings between Amin and American diplomats and became concerned with a potential Amin-U.S. alliance (Coll 2004: 47). Fear of U.S. influence and control of the region led to the Soviet's decision to invade and replace Amin. The Soviet invasion began in December 1979 and soon Amin had been assassinated and replaced with Babrak Karmal, who was sympathetic to the Soviet agenda (Bradsher 1993; Kakar 1995; Coll 2004: 49-52).

The United States watched closely as events unfolded in Afghanistan. U.S. officials saw the growing conflict in Afghanistan as a unique opportunity to damage their Cold War adversary. Further, precedent for U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf was well established. In the early 1940s, President Franklin Roosevelt had publicly stated that the stability and protection of Saudi Arabia was critical for American interests and world peace. In 1947, President Harry Truman put forth the "Truman Doctrine," which indicated that the U.S. would provide military support to countries to prevent the spread of communism. The willingness of U.S. political leaders to engage in foreign military interventions to prevent the spread of communism was reiterated in the "Eisenhower Doctrine" in 1957 and the "Nixon Doctrine" of 1969.

This precedent served as the foundation for the "Carter Doctrine" put forth by President Jimmy Carter in 1980 following the Soviet invasion. The Carter doctrine restated the commitment of the U.S. government to use military force to protect its

interests in the Persian Gulf while ensuring regional stability. It was this doctrine that provided the foundation of U.S. interventions in the region during the Soviet invasion (Leffler 1983; Klare 2004: 3-6; 45-47).

At least rhetorically, the U.S. justification for intervening in Afghanistan following the Soviet invasion was grounded in the logic of global public goods. The U.S. viewed its efforts against the Soviet Union as providing a global public good through world stability and the end of communist power and ideology. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was one element of that broader war effort. Along these lines, President Jimmy Carter noted that “the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is the greatest threat to [world] peace since the Second World War” (quoted in Urban 1988: 56). The U.S. sought to overcome this global public bad by intervening to provide the global public good of world peace and stability.

Despite their desire to intervene in Afghanistan, U.S. political leaders wanted to avoid direct military intervention if possible. The main reason for this hesitation was that the U.S. was preoccupied with the Iranian revolution as well as the humiliation from the takeover of its Tehran Embassy (Maley 2002: 32-33). In order to avoid direct intervention, the United States was forced to ally with another military dictator and Islamic fundamentalist, General Zia-ul-Huq.

In 1977, Zia had assumed power from Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto through a bloodless coup, although he later had Bhutto executed. Zia ruled through a combination of fear and force, establishing military courts and having opposition leaders and supports tortured and imprisoned. The United States entered into an agreement with Zia whereby the United States would funnel money and weaponry through Pakistan’s Inter-Services

Intelligence Agency (ISI), which would then distribute the aid and weapons directly to the Afghani rebels (the mujahedeen) (Coll 2004: 60-63; Kinzer 2006: 265-8).<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet war in Afghanistan lasted until 1989. The United States continued to support the mujahedeen through the ISI with monetary aid and weaponry for the duration of the conflict. To provide some concrete figures, in 1984 the United States sent the mujahedeen \$200 million in aid. This number increased to \$470 million in 1986 and \$630 million in 1987 (Kinzer 2006: 267, 269). In addition to the United States, Saudi Arabia also played a key role in financing the mujahedeen. The United States sought Saudi assistance in the war against the Soviets and they agreed to match each dollar of U.S. funding. Zia was also rewarded for assisting the United States. In the 1980s, the United States provided Zia's regime with \$6 billion for its assistance in the effort against the Soviets (Coll 2004: 65).

With the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, it appeared that the United States intervention had succeeded in its goals. Indeed, the funding from the United States, as well as that from Saudi Arabia, played a central role in the success of the mujahedeen against the Soviets. However, there were several negative unintended consequences that would not become apparent for several years after the end of the war.

Following the exit of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan was left with a fragile government. Mohammad Najibullah was elected president in 1986 and remained in the position after the Soviet withdrawal. However, his government was weak and eventually collapsed. Despite the fact that the United States government was aware of the weakness of the Najibullah government, it turned its attention away from Afghanistan to other

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed history of the mujahedeen, see Nojumi 2002.

aspects of combating the Soviet Union which were deemed to be more important for U.S. interests and global stability (Coll 2004: 173; Bhutto 2008: 114-119).

With Soviet troops no longer in the country, the Afghani rebels turned against the Najibullah government. Najibullah was able to survive for three years with the financial support of the Soviet Union, but eventually he was forced to resign in 1992. His resignation left a power vacuum in the country as the various warlords turned against each other seeking to gain control of the capital of Kabul. After several years of civil war, the Taliban emerged as the dominant force in Afghanistan in 1996. The Taliban created a space for the training and development of al-Qaeda, which was responsible for carrying out the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks against America. Subsequently, the Taliban government was overthrown with the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan (Nojumi 2002: 117-124; Cole 2004: 189-196; Kinzer 2006: 271-5). Given this background, we can identify at least two significant negative unintended consequences from the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan.

The first was the creation of a power vacuum in Afghanistan, resulting in a weak and failed state which threatened global stability many years after the initial intervention. Although not the intention, the actions of the United States created the environment for the emergence of a brutal regime in the Taliban. This generated numerous public bads. On the one hand the Taliban generated significant internal public bads within Afghanistan. The brutal methods of the regime against Afghani citizens have been well documented (see for instance United Nations General Assembly 1999 and Bhutto 2008: 116). Simultaneously, the rise of the Taliban created global public bads as well. One manifestation of this global public bad was the Taliban's provision of a safe haven to the

al-Qaeda organization, which allowed them the freedom to train and also plot various attacks around the world (Katzman 2008: 4-5). This global public bad became evident with al-Qaeda terrorist attacks around the world, culminating in the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. This led to the subsequent intervention by the United States in Afghanistan that same year.

A second negative unintended consequence was the proliferation of weapons both within Afghanistan and beyond. As noted, the U.S. provided significant weaponry to the mujahedeen in the war against the Soviets. Among these weapons were assault rifles, grenade launchers, mines and other explosives, and anti-aircraft weaponry. When the war ended, the weapons not only remained in Afghanistan, but were dispersed around the world.

As one example of this, consider the global proliferation of Stinger missiles following the Soviet invasion. The Stinger is a portable surface-to-air anti-aircraft missile which the U.S. provided to the mujahedeen to combat Soviet aircraft. While the Stingers were effective in the war against the Soviets, at war's end they remained dispersed throughout Afghanistan (Bhutto 2008: 114). Since then they have spread around the world. Since the end of the war, U.S. issued Stinger missiles have been either found or used in attacks in Bosnia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Qatar, Tajikistan, North Korea, and Zambia. Further, international authorities have stopped plans by the Irish Republican Army, the Medellin Cartel, Croatian rebels, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Chechen secessionists to purchase the missiles on the black market (Kuperman 1999: 253-4). Imperfect estimates of missing Stinger missiles range from 300-600 and U.S. government reports have indicated that there may be over 300 still in Afghanistan alone (Kuperman

1999: 254-5). As the proliferation of Stinger missiles indicates, the supply of weaponry by the United States generated a global public bad by unintentionally providing weapons that have contributed to global conflict.

The use of Pakistan as a means of indirect intervention by the United States against the Soviets also had negative unintended consequences. For one, the U.S. intervention contributed to the internal political instability that exists to this day. U.S. monetary aid allowed Zia, a military dictator, to consolidate and solidify his position of power. As Bhutto notes, “The United States, fixated on defeating and humiliating the Soviets in Afghanistan, embraced Zia and the ISI as surrogates; the United States’ attention was riveted exclusively on Afghanistan, disregarding the war’s impact on internal political factors in Pakistan” (2008: 193).

The support of the United States for military dictators in Pakistan is not limited to Zia. In testimony before the U.S. Congress, Husain Haqqani, the Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, noted that since 1954 the U.S. has given \$21 billion in aid to Pakistan. Of this total, \$17.7 billion supported military dictators (Robinson 2008: 45). While the United States government has been able to purchase the support of these dictators for foreign policy goals, it has also had significant negative unintended consequences. Monetary and military aid creates rents which increase the payoff to consolidating and maintaining positions of power. The continued delivery of this aid has contributed to the corruption in the Pakistani government and military as the elite seek to secure the foreign aid windfall. It has also distorted the evolution of political institutions in Pakistan by solidifying the position of dictators.

The instability created by U.S. interventions in Pakistan has resulted in several global public bads. For example, it is widely recognized that much of the aid the U.S. has provided to Pakistan has been allocated to military programs aimed at India—a nemesis of Pakistan, but an ally of the United States (Robinson 2008: 45). From this standpoint the U.S. has contributed to a global public bad in the form of regional instability against India, which it considers to be a strong ally.

The instability in Pakistan is even more troubling since it possesses a nuclear arsenal. In 1999, Pervez Musharraf seized the presidency through a military coup. The previous governments had attempted to develop nuclear weapons, and as a result the United States imposed strong economic and military sanctions. These sanctions continued after Musharraf assumed power, along with U.S. criticisms for Musharraf's lack of commitment to democracy and human rights.

However, with the beginning of the “war on terror” in 2001, the U.S. shifted its position and became an ardent supporter of Musharraf. Like Zia before him, the U.S. was willing to look the other way regarding the numerous bads generated by Musharraf. Sanctions have been lifted and the United States has again provided significant military and monetary aid to Musharraf's regime. For example, consider that Pakistan was the world's largest recipient of foreign aid in 2002, receiving \$2.1 billion (Easterly 2006: 301). The country's government has received over \$10 billion in aid since 2001 (Robinson 2008: 45). This support has allowed Musharraf's government to maintain its position of power with international legitimacy despite issues of corruption, the suppression of democracy, the rule of law and individual rights, nuclear proliferation, and connection to terrorist networks, including close connections with the Taliban. In their

effort to generate global public goods through the war on terror, the U.S. has generated global public bads by supporting the Pakistani government.

#### **4. Conclusion**

A complete analysis of foreign intervention requires an appreciation of both the associated “goods” and “bads.” Our central contention is that foreign interventions intended to generate global public goods can also generate significant global public bads. These negative unintended consequences emerge due to the dynamics of unintended consequences resulting from the knowledge constraints on policymakers designing the interventions.

The foreign interventions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, and Pakistan illustrate some of these bads. They can be generalized as follows:

1. Foreign intervention often creates a client ruling elite who are oppressive and corrupt. These elite rarely have an interest in economic development because of the potential political competition which would threaten their position of power. As a result, the elite rarely make basic investments in their country and its citizens. As the cases considered illustrate, the continued presence of these elite can create regional instability.
2. The spoils of foreign intervention create rents associated with political power. This increases the payoff to securing and consolidating these political positions. In countries with weak political institutions, this has the effect of increasing violence and corruption as competing groups seek power and those holding power seek to maintain their position. This violence can be internal, but can also spill over to surrounding countries and societies.
3. Foreign interventions distort and prevent the emergence of spontaneous orders by imposing an exogenous plan on indigenous citizens. This often sets a precedent where force and violence become the central means of social and political change. To the extent that this dynamic emerges, the result will be the threat of regional or global instability.

4. Due to the dynamics of unintended consequences, the achievement of short-term stability will often result in long-term instability. This long-term instability is a result of the negative unintended consequences of the initial intervention. Further, instability will often spill over to other societies and may lead to subsequent interventions which will generate further unintended consequences. Consider that the chaos that characterizes many weak, failed, and conflict-torn states is the consequence of previous interventions.
5. Foreign interventions often impose unintended, yet significant costs on ordinary citizens. External support for the ruling elite often leads to violence, brutality, and economic underdevelopment. As such, interventions which achieve success in one area (e.g., stability of the ruling elite) can generate significant costs in other areas (e.g., brutality against citizens, outsiders, and regional instability).

This list is far from complete, but it does highlight some of the global public bads that can result from well-intentioned interventions to provide global public goods.

The dynamics of unintended consequences does not, by itself, lead to the conclusion that international organizations and governments should never engage in foreign interventions. Refraining from intervention can have costs as well. It does, however, lead to the conclusion that those considering foreign interventions should be extremely humble in both the decision to intervene and in the design of interventions. Given the complexity of the global system, compared to the necessary simplicity of foreign interventions, negative unintended consequences are likely to emerge and be significant.

Our analysis also indicates that global public bads are not the result of resource (e.g., monetary resources, planning, and organization) constraints on policymakers. Negative unintended consequences result from the inability of policymakers to obtain and incorporate context-specific knowledge into interventions. As such, additional resources or increased efforts at coordinated planning will not overcome the fundamental problem of negative unintended consequences. The negative consequences of foreign intervention

do not reflect inadequate resources, but instead the fundamental inability of policymakers to possess the knowledge necessary to achieve the ends they ultimately desire.

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