

Competitive Intervention, Proxy War, and Military Assistance: Anderson, Eyre, and Kuhlman

Description

Episode 146 examines the impact of external military assistance on civil wars.

Summary

This conversation delves into the complexities of competitive intervention in civil wars, exploring the types of military aid provided, how external support influences conflict dynamics, and implications for practitioners and policymakers. The discussion highlights the prevalence of external interventions, the escalation dynamics involved, and the moral dilemmas faced by intervening states. Our guests emphasize the need for a nuanced understanding of these interventions, particularly in the context of an increasingly multipolar world where we anticipate competitive intervention and proxy wars will increase.

Takeaways

- Competitive intervention is characterized by opposing military assistance from different states.
- 75% of civil wars since WWII have experienced external military assistance. This is very common.
- Weapons transfers are the most common form of external support in conflicts.
- External aid significantly impacts the duration and dynamics of civil wars.
- Competitive interventions are associated with a 50% decline in the likelihood of conflict termination.
- Ethnic dynamics can complicate civil war outcomes but do not universally determine conflict duration.
- Non-state actors are increasingly involved in providing support in civil conflicts.
- The rise of multipolarity may lead to increased competitive interventions.
- Escalation dynamics complicate the nature of military support in conflicts. Specifically escalation concerns will lead donors to give enough support to keep the conflict going, but not enough to enable a decisive victory.
- Policymakers should consider the moral implications of prolonging conflicts through intervention.

- Future conflicts will require a diverse range of military capabilities and strategies.

General (retired) Wayne Eyre served as Chief of the Defence Staff in the Canadian Armed Forces from 2021 to 2024, Canada's highest-ranking military officer. With more than 40 years of service, he commanded at multiple levels, including operational deployments in Afghanistan and Bosnia. He is currently a Senior Fellow and Visiting Professor at the University of Ottawa.

Dr. Noel Anderson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto and author of [*Wars Without End: Competitive Intervention, Escalation Control, and Protracted Conflict*](#). The book examines why contemporary wars so often resist clear endings. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Lieutenant Colonel (Dr.) Matthew Kuhlman is a U.S. Army officer, military scholar, and the current Managing Editor at the Irregular Warfare Initiative where he helps curate written practitioner and scholar insights for the irregular warfare community.

Kyle Atwell is the host for episode 146. Please reach out to him with any questions about the episode or IWI.

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Outro music: "Launch" by Ketsa

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