



LESSONS FROM CONTEMPORARY ARMED CONFLICT

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“Lessons from Contemporary Armed Conflict”

World War I and Contemporary Policy on War and Peace

Canadian War Museum, Sept 26-28, 2014



DEFINING “ARMED CONFLICT” OR WAR

Fighting is political

Engages security forces of a state

At least 1,000 cumulative combat deaths

At least 25 combat deaths per year

<http://ploughshares.ca/programs/armed-conflict/>

ARMED CONFLICTS 1989 - 2014

35 wars underway in 1989

64 new wars begun since end of Cold War (2.5 per year)

99 Wars (six inter-state, 93 intra-state)

70 of which ended during the same period

29 wars today (all intra-state) - a 17% decline from 1989

HOW CONTEMPORARY ARMED CONFLICTS END

...post-Cold War military actions have been a succession of campaigns “that have in one way or another spectacularly failed to achieve the results intended, namely a decisive military victory which would in turn deliver a solution to the original problem, which is usually political.”

General Sir Rupert Smith: *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*. London, 2006, p. 4.

HOW 64 INTRA-STATE WARS ENDED

AFTER COLD WAR

14% **militarily decisive** (9)

- 6% government prevails (4)
- 8% insurgents prevail (5)

50% **negotiated** (32)

36% **dissolved** (23)

HOW INTRA-STATE WARS ENDED

SINCE WW II

HUMAN SECURITY REPORT 2012, FIGURE 6.4, P. 176

	Victories %	Negotiations %	Other %
1950s	68	05	27
1960s	52	11	27
1970s	50	20	30
1980s	35	08	57
1990s	17	36	47
2000-04	11	38	51
PP (1989-2014)	14	50	36

HOW INTRA-STATE WARS END

BY TYPE

State Control/State Formation

17% militarily decisive

60% negotiated

23% dissolved

Failed State and Hybrid

0% militarily decisive

15% negotiated

85% dissolved

MULTILATERAL WARS

-seven of the 99 wars (6 inter-state, 93 intra-state) were multilateralized

-of which 2 were **militarily decisive**

-Iraq/Kuwait

-Haiti

-Bosnia

-Kosovo

-Afghanistan

-Iraq

-Libya

-Syria

-of the seven, one inter-state and six intra-state wars were multilateralized.



HOW WARS START

Grievance

Identity

Capacity

Lack of alternatives



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CONTEXT FOR COLLECTIVE FORCE

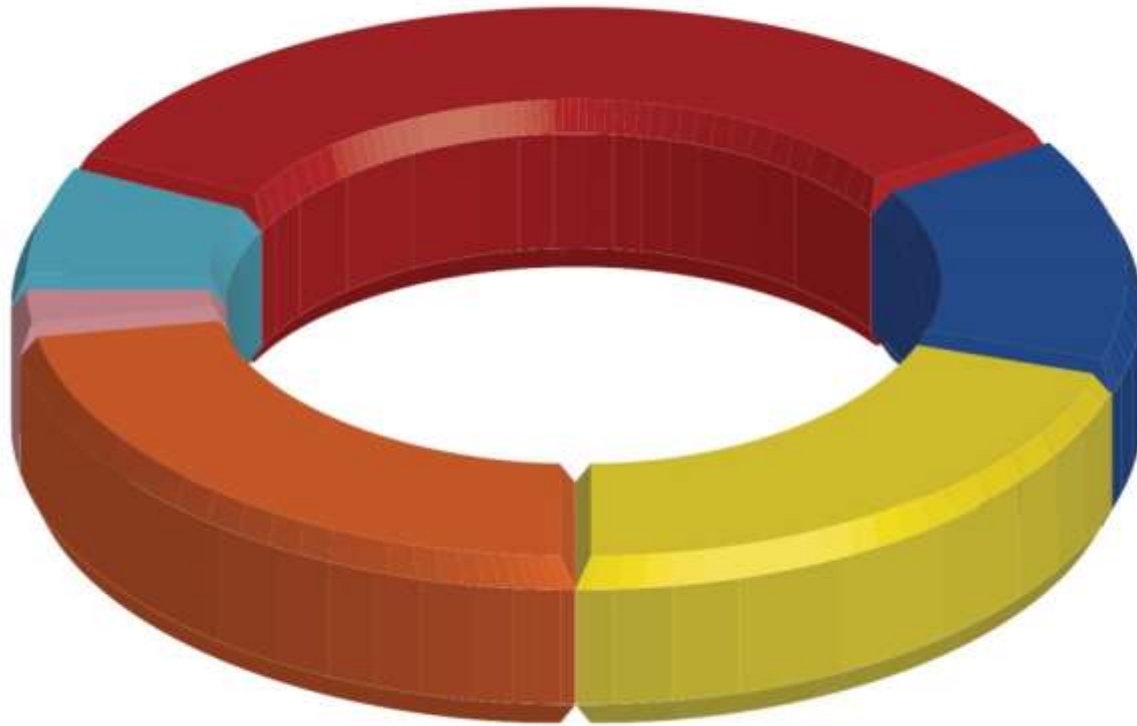
Strategic consent

Legitimacy

Restraint in the resort to force

Regional support

Lives improving



All Intra-State Wars.

34% less than 5 years

14% between 5 and 10 years

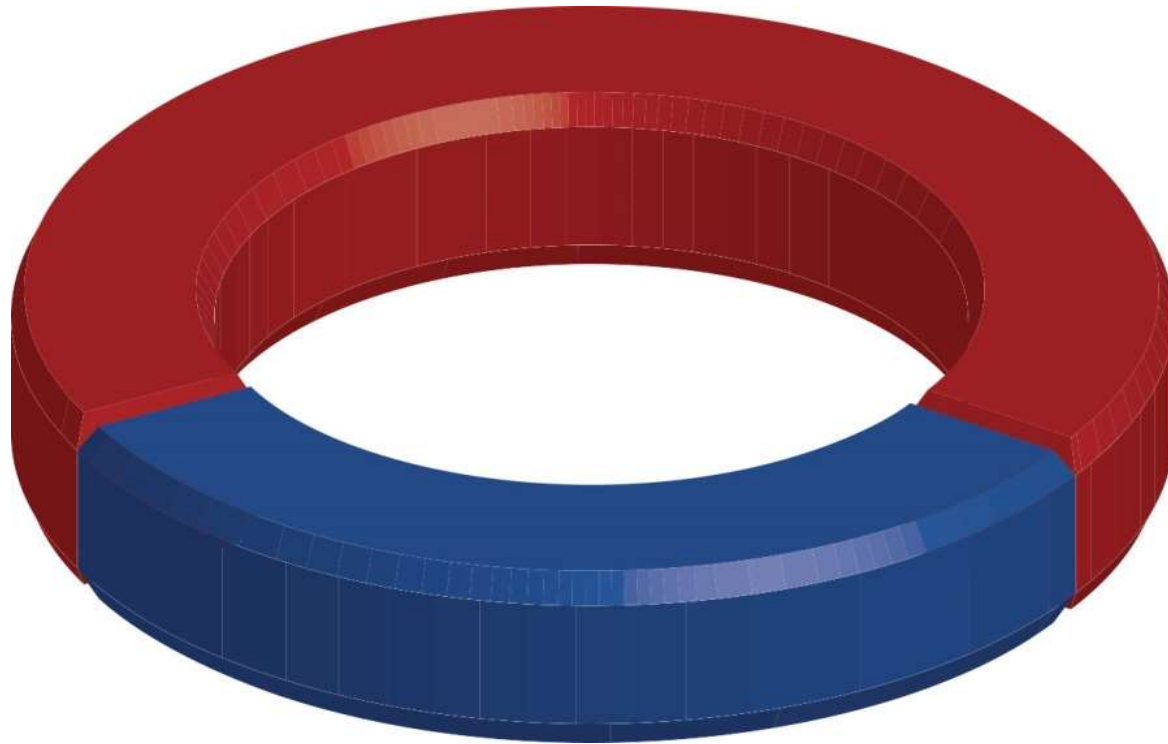
20% between 10 and 20 years

22% between 20 and 30 years

3% between 30 and 40 years

7% more than 40 years

Overall, 50% of intra-state wars have lasted more than 10 years.



All Inter-State Wars.

67% less than 5 years

33% between 5 and 10 years

ARMED CONFLICTS 1989 - 2014

35 wars underway in 1989

54 new wars begun since end of Cold War (just over 2 per year)

89 continuing and new wars

64 of which ended during the same period (72%)

25

10 wars restarted (recidivism rate of 16%)

06 of which subsequently ended (60%)

29 wars (all intra-state) currently underway (a 17% decline from 1989)

99 wars overall, of which **70** ended (6 interstate, 93 intrastate)