UN Interventions: The Role of Geography

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ABSTRACT

UN Interventions: The Role of Geography[*]

This paper argues that UN military interventions are geographically biased. For every 1,000 kilometers of distance from the three Western permanent UNSC members (France, UK, US), the probability of a UN military intervention decreases by 4 percent. We are able to rule out several alternative explanations for the distance finding, such as differences by continent, colonial origin, bilateral trade relationships, foreign aid flows, political regime forms, or the characteristics of the Cold War. We do not observe this geographical bias for non-military interventions and find evidence that practical considerations could be important factors for UNSC decisions to intervene militarily.

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The whole basis of the United Nations is the right of all nations – great or small – to have weight, to have a vote, to be attended to, to be a part of the twentieth century. Adlai E. Stevenson

1   Introduction

Why does the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) decide to intervene in some conflicts but not in others? For a long time, UN military interventions, and especially non-interventions, have been subject to criticism from the international community. For example, consider the hesitant UN actions surrounding the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Then Secretary General Kofi Annan later admitted that "the international community failed Rwanda."[1] However, other contemporary conflicts, such as the Yugoslav wars, have received much greater attention from the UN. Would the treatment of Rwanda have been different if the country was located in Europe?

This paper tries to shed light on the factors associated with UN military interventions, particularly focusing on the geographical component in relation to the five permanent UNSC members (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US). Previously, numerous observers criticized the predominant role of the five permanent UNSC members (e.g., Childers, 1994, or Rajan, 2006). In theory, the geographical proximity to these powers should not be related to the probability of UN interventions, because one of the main UN guidelines advocates its role of keeping peace *throughout the world*. The following pages suggest otherwise.

Recently, evidence for biased decisions in international organizations has become stronger. Thompson (2006) describes why powerful states may use major international organizations to pursue their interests. Oatley and Yackee (2004) conclude that the US may use its influence in the IMF for its own purposes. As for the United Nations, Dreher et al. (2009a) and Dreher et al. (2009b) show that non-permanent UNSC members tend to receive favorable treatment from the IMF and the World Bank. Kuziemko and Werker (2006) find that UN aid, but also US aid, increases when a country rotates onto the UNSC. Our paper adds to the literature on a potential bias in UNSC decisions by showing that interventions tend to occur in conflicts that are geographically closer to its three permanent Western members.

As for the existing literature on UN intervention determinants, Jakobsen (1996) discusses

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[1]See BBC (2004) and Times (1994).

potential drivers of five particular UN peace enforcement operations. Voeten (2001) provides a game-theoretic approach to explain voting in the UNSC. Stojek and Tir (2011) argue that the economic interests of the five permanent UNSC members play an important role in UN intervention decisions. Some literature has examined third-party interventions in general terms, finding the behavior of other potential intervening countries to matter (Aydin, 2010) along with ideological linkage and geographical proximity (Mullenbach, 2005). Perkins and Neumayer (2008) find that a country's decision to participate in peacekeeping operations can be influenced by its geographical proximity to the conflict nation. However, while geographical proximity may present a justifiable reason for intervention decisions by single countries (or countries participating in an intervention authorized by regional organizations), in theory it should not enter UNSC decisions.

Geographical proximity has been discussed as a determinant for foreign military intervention, both in general (Pearson, 1974, Perkins and Neumayer, 2008) and in the context of the US (Mullenbach and Matthews, 2008). Neack (1995) has hinted that states might participate in UN interventions predominantly for selfish reasons. In fact, selfish reasons for a UNSC member to push for a UN intervention close to home are easy to find. In addition to political and economic ties, the conflict may spread further (like the current conflict in Syria spilling over to Lebanon or the conflict in Kosovo threatening to spark violence in Albania), major immigration waves could result from nearby conflicts (e.g., North African immigration waves to Europe during the Arab Spring, especially to Italy), or it may simply be more expensive to intervene in conflicts located further away. Our findings indicate that neither political nor economic reasons can explain the importance of distance, but we do find some evidence that practical reasons could drive our results. It may simply be that the chances of success are higher and the costs of intervention are lower in conflicts located closer to home.

The paper is organized as follows. Sections 2 and 3 describe the sample and present potential determinants of UN intervention decisions. Section 4 introduces our empirical methodology and section 5 presents our findings. Section 6 discusses and tests alternative explanations and section 8 concludes the paper.

2 Conflicts and Interventions

Between 1950 and 2012, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) notes the beginning of 199 armed conflicts worldwide. We use the conflict identifier in the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, available at `http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets`, going back to Gleditsch et al. (2002). The UCDP defines conflict as

> a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths.

These conflicts are categorized as interstate, internal, and internationalized internal armed conflicts. Interstate conflicts are defined as taking place between two governments, whereas the UCDP defines an internal conflict as being between

> a government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s) without intervention from other states.

Finally, an

> [i]nternationalized internal armed conflict occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s) with intervention from other states (secondary parties) on one or both sides.

Our analysis excludes extrasystemic armed conflicts between a state and a non-state group outside of its own territory, as the UN did not intervene militarily in any of these.

We choose conflicts that began after 1949, because that is when broad comparable data on the country level becomes available. We capture the characteristics of a country at the beginning of the conflict, which will be explained in section 3. Our main sample consists of 174 conflicts for which information on all main variables is available. Table A.1 lists all conflicts and interventions in addition to marking the 25 conflicts for which we do not have data. Most conflicts for which data is unavailable occurred in Asia (17). However, we find no statistically significant difference in terms of intervention probability between the sample conflicts and the remaining 25 conflicts. Notice that there are several double entries, meaning that some countries

incurred various conflicts within a year. However, we were able to match each intervention with the targeted conflict.

In terms of UN interventions, we distinguish between four types of action:[2]

1. Military intervention for peacebuilding,

2. Military intervention for peacekeeping,

3. Sanctions or embargoes, and

4. Demands to cease hostilities or to establish an observer mission.

Throughout the majority of the paper, we define military actions – cases 1 and 2 – as interventions, following previous literature. The remaining two types of action are usually associated with substantially lower commitment levels, in economic, military, and political terms. Therefore, we code these as non-interventions for now. In our final sample of 174 conflicts, the UN conducted military interventions in 40.

Figure 1 shows conflicts and UN interventions, and we notice that the overwhelming majority of conflicts in the second part of the 20th century occurred on the African and Asian continents. The raw intervention probability in Africa stands at a remarkable 31.6 percent rate, whereas Asian conflicts show substantially smaller chances of UN intervention at 12.5 percent. Previously, Bariagaber (2008) documented that there have been more UN interventions in Africa since the late 90s. The formation of the post-Soviet states and the dissolution of Yugoslavia marked a series of European conflicts in the early 1990s.

Figure 2 then displays the relationship between the conflict intensity and the number of UN interventions, showing whether the country had at least one conflict year with over 999 battle-related deaths. This cutoff is provided in the UCDP database to identify particularly violent conflicts. Especially Central and East African, but also Asian and South American conflicts, have been marked by at least one such violent year. In contrast to this basic comparison is the frequency of interventions, however, which appears to suggest a focus on African, Eastern European, and a few Middle Eastern and Asian countries. One should keep in mind, though,

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[2]What the UN means by "intervention" is not entirely clear, as there exists no single definition. Higgins (1995) provides a deeper discussion.

that these maps do not account for other important factors beyond intensity and could therefore be misleading.

3 Potential Determinants of UN Intervention

Our main estimations consider four general categories of potential factors associated with UNSC interventions: The conflict characteristics, but also social and historical, macroeconomic, and geographical factors. Including our robustness checks, the analysis incorporates data from 8 different sources to analyze the factors associated with UN intervention decisions: The UN, the UCDP, PWT version 7.1, Polity IV, the Affinity of Nations index, the Correlates of War, and the Quality of Government data sets. The following sections describe the variables of the main analysis in turn, and table A.2 provides details on all variables used in our analysis with their respective sources.

3.1 Conflict Characteristics

All conflict related variables are taken directly from the UCDP data set. First, we include a binary variable for the intensity of the conflict, coded as one if the conflict had at least one year with over 999 battle-related deaths.[3] We would assume that the intervention probability would increased with a greater number of vistims (see Gilligan et al., 2003). Ideally, we would like to include a more precise and continuous measurement of conflict intensity, but information on the exact number of conflict victims is scarce and usually comes with great uncertainty and large lower and upper boundaries. Thus, we would lose a substantial number of observations if we were to include a more defined measurement for conflict intensity. In addition, we control for the type of conflict, distinguishing between interstate, internal, and internationalized armed conflicts. Jakobsen (1996) discusses both the intensity and the conflict type as potential determinants of UN peace enforcement missions.

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[3]There are, of course, different ways to measure the intensity, such as the fraction of conflict years with over 999 battle-related deaths, etc. Our results are robust to using different measurements.

3.2 Social and Historical Factors

Social components of countries, and especially their historical ties to traditional Western nations, could be important factors in UN intervention decisions. We control for population size, which has the potential for two primary intuitions (see Melander, 2009, for instance). First, a bigger society means a bigger potential human loss in a conflict. Second, the more people live in a country, the more potential soldiers there are, which may lower the chances of success and raise the costs of an intervention. The first argument promotes a positive relationship between population size and the probability of intervention, whereas the second argument suggests a negative effect (see also Alesina and Spolaore, 2005). To facilitate comparability and contain the influence of outliers, we apply the natural logarithm to population size throughout all estimations.

In terms of historical relationships to the colonial powers, we also add information about the former colony status of the conflict nation. Specifically, we incorporate dummies for French, Portuguese, and Dutch colonies (Gilligan et al., 2003). Including binary variables for British or Spanish colonies never returned significance, and their inclusion does not affect our conclusions.

3.3 Macroeconomic Factors

The economic environment of a conflict nation may play an important role in the UN's decision to intervene militarily. First, we include GDP per capita at the inception of the conflict to capture the basic development level of the country. The humanitarian aspect of including GDP per capita states that the UN may be more inclined to protect those people who are unable to protect themselves, which many times includes the poor. In this context, we also refer to the "R2P" (Responsibility to Protect) initiative, formalized by the UN in 2005. Further, the opportunity cost of joining an army could be smaller when general income possibilities in a country are low. Thus, potential fatalities could be higher in poorer nations, everything else equal. Finally, there may be a practical argument for considering income levels in UNSC decisions: An intervention could be both cheaper and more likely to succeed in poorer nations because military and technical resources are likely to be less developed.

Second, we consider a country's openness to international trade, measured as the share of exports plus imports in GDP. Theoretically, conflict countries with stronger international economic ties could be prioritized by the UN, as other countries may be economically affected

by the conflict (also consider Martin et al., 2012, in this context). Thus, there could be a stronger international interest in intervening in more open countries. Section 4 also considers bilateral trade flows between the five permanent members and the conflict nation.

For both GDP per capita and trade openness, we use values at the starting year of the conflict to allow for better data availability, as opposed to one year prior to the conflict. Further, we apply the natural logarithm to both variables, as is common in the macroeconomics literature. All findings are robust to using lagged values or to refraining from applying logarithms. The data for both income levels and trade openness come from the PWT 7.1 and is supplemented by the World Bank, if the PWT 7.1 does not contain information (see tables A.1 and A.2 for details).

3.4 Geographical Factors

In terms of geography, we include the geographical distance of the conflicts to the five permanent UNSC members: China ($chidist$), France ($fradist$), Russia ($rusdist$), the UK ($ukdist$), and the US ($usdist$). These nations have been shown to possess overwhelming power in UNSC decisions, both directly through their veto power and indirectly through their dominant political and economic roles, e.g., by O'Neill (1996).

All distances are calculated as the minimum distance between the border of the conflict country and the reference nation in 1,000 kilometers. Therefore, countries that share a common border receive a value of zero, for instance in the case of Afghanistan and its distance to China. It is important to mention that we use the distance to the former Soviet Union before 1991 and then Russia thereafter. However, using the distance to today's Russia for the entire time period does not change our conclusions. Similarly, we choose the distance to Taiwan for $chidist$ until 1971, as the official government of China was located on the island until then. Here also, our conclusions regarding $chidist$ do not change if we use the distance to Mainland China throughout the entire time period.

We then condense these five distance measures to two variables: $westdist$, capturing the distance of the closest Western UNSC permanent member (France, the UK, or the US), and $eastdist$, calculated as the minimum distance to the Eastern permanent members of the UNSC (China or Russia). However, all derived results are robust to using the individual distance

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variables.

Finally, we follow Gilligan et al. (2003) by considering continental fixed effects for Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Using other geographical aspects, such as binary variables for landlocked and island countries, never reach conventional significance levels; including them does not change our conclusions and these results are available upon request.

4 Methodology

Throughout the paper, we apply a logit regression framework to estimate the probability p_i of a UN military intervention in conflict i by

$$logit(p)_i = \alpha_0 + \boldsymbol{X'_i}\alpha_1 + \boldsymbol{Z'_i}\alpha_2 + \boldsymbol{GEO'_i}\alpha_3 + \delta_i. \tag{1}$$

$\boldsymbol{X_i}$ incorporates the intensity ($intense$) and form ($interstate$ and $internal$, with $internationalized$ as the reference) of the conflict. $\boldsymbol{Z_i}$ contains population size ($lnpop$), GDP per capita ($lngdp$), and openness to trade ($lnopen$) in the starting year of the conflict, in addition to colony fixed effects. All derived results are robust to using values one year before the conflict beginning for the time-varying components of $\boldsymbol{Z_i}$. $\boldsymbol{GEO_i}$ contains one of the five distances to the permanent UNSC members or $westdist$ and $eastdist$, in addition to continental fixed effects. Finally, δ_i captures the usual error term.

Section 6 considers alternative explanations for the main results, adding to equation 1 accordingly. All derived results are robust to using a probit framework.

5 The Probability of Intervention

Table 1 shows the main results from estimating equation 1, where we include the distance to each of the five permanent UNSC members in turn. The final column includes distances to the closest Western ($westdist$) and Eastern ($eastdist$) permanent UNSC members. Table 1 and all following tables display marginal effects, log-likelihood values, and Chi-squared values. Further, figures 3 to 6 visualize the derived results in terms of predicted probabilities.

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5.1 Results from Logit Estimations

Starting with the conflict characteristics, we find that having at least one year with over 999 battle-related deaths raises the probability of intervention by approximately 14 to 16 percent (*intense*). This finding remains consistent throughout the paper. The form of conflict, however, appears to matter less, although internationalized conflicts (the omitted category) are weakly suggested to receive priority.

Further, interventions are more likely in smaller and poorer nations. Regarding a quantitative interpretation, our most complete specification displayed in column (6) proposes an 8.2 percentage point decrease in the intervention probability once GDP per capita is doubled. Openness to trade, however, does not appear to matter, as the suggested coefficient is negative but not significant. Considering continental effects, we find no evidence for a preference across continents and this result remains consistent throughout all our estimations.

Moving to geographical distances, proximity to the West appears to play a significant role. Distances to France, the UK, and the US are statistically significant predictors of intervention. The negative sign suggests that the probability of a military intervention by the UN decreases with distance. The coefficients for the distances to China or Russia, however, are never close to conventional significance levels. Column (6) then includes the minimum distances to the Western (*westdist*) and Eastern powers (*eastdist*). Confirming the importance of the individual distance measurements, every 1,000 kilometers of distance from the West reduce the chances of a UN intervention by 4 percent. This result means that the probability of intervention is suggested to be 42 − 43 percentage points lower in a country like Malaysia or Indonesia as opposed to any country bordering France, the UK, or the US, such as Mexico or Spain. The regressions displayed in table 1 also show that the distance finding cannot be explained by continental preferences, as Gilligan et al. (2003) previously suggested a regional bias of UN interventions against Asian conflicts.

5.2 Predicting UN Interventions

Figures 3 − 5 provide estimated probabilities relative to *westdist* for different conflict scenarios, where other explanatory variables are assumed at their sample means. These figures also display the two-sided 95 percent confidence interval. In the case of an intense internal conflict, the

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estimated probability of intervention reaches over 50 percent for any country adjoining France, the UK, or the US. For a country with over 10,000 kilometers of distance however, like Malaysia or Indonesia, the probability approaches zero. Results for interstate and internationalized conflicts are similar.

In terms of predicting the probability of interventions, we now use data from PWT 7.1 for *all* available countries for the year 2010 and not only our sample countries. Assuming a hypothetical intense (over 999 battle-related deaths) internal conflict, we use our primary results from table 1, column (6), to calculate the predicted probability of a military intervention by the UN.[4] Note that African countries generally appear to enjoy higher odds of intervention than Asian or even European countries. Angola, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Somalia stand out with probabilities over 85 percent. In these cases, poverty and population size are the driving factors. Similarly, the small nations in the Northeast of South America (Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana) also receive a high likelihood. Especially the Eastern European nations from Estonia in the North to Greece in the South display stronger probabilities – a result that is partially driven by their geographical proximity to Western Europe. Although this exercise is, of course, speculative, these results shed some interesting light on the predicted patterns of intervention.

6 Alternative Explanations

This importance of *westdist* in the probability for a military intervention by the UN is startling. However, it may well be possible that these findings are spurious and the result of an omitted variable bias. In this case, the lack of a clear theoretical framework that could provide guidance for the true model leaves room for additional hypotheses. One could think of various explanations, and the following list is surely not complete, as the real reasons for UNSC resolution decisions are difficult to retract. This difficulty is true in intervention cases, but even more so in non-intervention decisions. The real motivations behind political decisions, especially on the global stage, are sometimes only identified decades later, if ever. Overall, we distinguish between three broad alternative explanations for these distance findings: Political, economic,

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[4]The predicted probabilities are calculated as $probiv = \frac{1}{1+e^{-logit(p)_i}}$ following Greene (2003).

and practical considerations. However, some theories, such as the importance of foreign aid for instance, may fit in several categories. Naturally, we are not only interested in explaining the distance finding, but also in the individual effect of these variables on intervention decisions. Although we proceed with using *westdist* and *eastdist*, all conclusions are closely replicable using the individual distances to the five permanent member states.

6.1   Political Factors

Tables 2 and 3 show a variety of extensions, taking into account the various political circumstances after 1949 and the UN voting habits of the conflict nations in relation to the five permanent UNSC members.

First, the period from 1950 to 2012 was marked by major political disputes between the five permanent UNSC members as well as within each of these nations. We focus on three major aspects of these relationships that existed throughout this time period. First, the Cold War period clearly shaped global political decisions, especially between the Soviet Union and the US. For instance, Gilligan et al. (2003) and Wallensteen (2011) suggest that UN interventions were generally less likely during the Cold War period. Second, some conflicts stand out in relation to the five permanent members, such as the Yugoslav wars in the heart of Europe, the conflicts associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union, or conflicts in the member states themselves. We want to make sure that these special conflicts do not drive our results. Third, following Andersson (2000) and Melander (2009), we include the political regime form of the conflict country using the Polity IV variable, which ranges from -10 (total autocracy) to $+10$ (total democracy). Because the UN focuses particularly on protecting those who cannot protect themselves, this philosophy may well apply to non-democratic oppressive regime systems. Table 2 considers each of these events, using column (6) of table 1 as the reference point and the most complete specification.

In column (1), we include a dummy variable for conflicts that started during the Cold War period, whereas in column (2) we re-estimate our main regression excluding conflicts that began after the Cold War ended. Columns (3) and (4) repeat these exercises excluding conflicts on the European continent and within the five permanent members. Column (5) includes a dummy

for conflicts in which any of the five permanent members participated individually.[5] Finally, column (6) controls for the democracy level of the conflict country in the beginning year of the conflict.[6]

We find several noteworthy results from these extensions. First, the distance to the Western powers remains important. In fact, significance levels and magnitudes mostly even increase compared to our baseline estimation from table 1. Distance to the East, however, remains a non-factor. The remaining coefficients confirm the baseline findings throughout all extensions. Finally, UN interventions appear to be more likely in non-democratic countries, confirming findings by Stojek and Tir (2011), and nations in which one of the five permanent members also intervened independently of the UN. Although the Polity score represents a crude measurement of the citizens' opportunity to participate politically, these results confirm the UN's "Responsibility to Protect" initiative.

Another measurement of the political relationship between conflict countries and the five permanent members comes from the "Affinity of Nations" data set (Voeten and Merdzanovic, 2013). Following Fortna (2008) and Stojek and Tir (2011), this data set allows us to include a voting similarity index between the conflict nation and each of the five permanent UNSC members in UN resolutions, ranging from 0 to 1 (variable *agree3un* in data set). Table 3 shows the results when including each of these scores in turn. Column (6) then includes the maximum affinity score with the Western (*affwest*) and the Eastern permanent UNSC members (*affeast*). The main takeaway from these regressions is that none of the affinity scores has an impact on the intervention probability. With respect to the distance findings, *westdist* remains significant throughout table 3. Only in column (3) does the magnitude drop to 0.32, potentially due to the loss of 43 observations when including the affinity score to the Russian UN voting behavior. The coefficients of the remaining control variables are not displayed from here on, as their significance and magnitudes confirm the main results from table 1.

In summary, the political explanations presented in this section are unlikely to drive the importance of the geographical distance to the West in UN military intervention decisions.

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[5]We use the list of participating nations in the UCDP data set to identify conflicts in which the permanent members participated.

[6]As with other time-varying variables, using values from one year prior to the conflict does not affect our conclusions.

However, some political aspects do have an independent relationship with UNSC decisions, such as the democracy level of the regime in general or the Cold War period in particular. In additional estimations, we also incorporated the possibility of several other political attributes, such as membership in the Warsaw Pact, being a nuclear power, and membership in regional associations (e.g., the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, SAARC). None of these appear to be important in their own right or to affect the importance of *westdist*.

6.2 Economic Factors: Bilateral Trade, Foreign Aid, and Distance to Oil Suppliers

Turning to economic characteristics, we now consider bilateral trade relationships, foreign aid flows, and the geographical distance of the conflict nation to major oil supplying countries. Here again, we are both interested in the individual connection between these variables and the probability of UN interventions, but also whether their inclusion is able to explain the importance of *westdist*.

First, we take a closer look at international trade aspects. Although our primary analysis incorporates overall trade openness, the specific trade relationship with the five permanent members could be of particular importance, leading us to include bilateral trade flows.[7] Previously, Stojek and Tir (2011) suggested that the economic interests of major powers play a decisive role in UN peacekeeping decisions, although Perkins and Neumayer (2008) finds no importance for the participation of individual nations in international peacekeeping operations. From an individual country's perspective, it would be understandable if the inclination to promote an intervention was stronger for countries with which it maintains strong trade relationships. Similarly, foreign aid flows to developing nations (which the majority of the conflict countries are) provide a measure of increased interest and concern from the West about the specific country.

Table 4 considers these variables in turn. Specifically, we include the natural logarithm of exports to (and imports from) the US in the beginning year of the conflict, adjusted by the US price level at the time. We then add the total exports to (and imports from) France, the UK, and the US in columns (3) and (4). Interestingly, we find weak evidence of stronger trade

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[7]Bilateral trade data comes from the Correlates of War data set (see Barbieri et al., 2009, and Barbieri and Keshk, 2012).

relationships *decreasing* the odds of intervention – a somewhat counterintuitive result. Moving to the final two columns of table 4, we include the natural logarithm of net foreign aid received by the conflict country at the beginning of the conflict, first in overall terms and then from the US only. Similar to bilateral trade flows, we see no change in our main results, suggesting that the distance findings are not driven by foreign aid flows. In this case however, it is important to note that we are losing up to 56 observations due to the unavailability of data. The findings presented in table 4 are virtually identical if we use trade (foreign aid) relative to population or GDP.

Finally, we also consider the extraordinary importance of oil in the world economy, especially for the Western powers. As numerous conflicts in the second half of the twentieth century have been fought in or close to major oil supplying nations, one could suspect these concerns may enter UNSC discussions, at least behind closed doors. Thus, we also test whether the distance of the conflict to major oil suppliers plays a role in determining the intervention probability.[8] Table 5 shows these results, adding distances to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, and Venezuela to our baseline regression. Interestingly, none of these distances matters and *westdist* remains a powerful predictor of UN interventions. Finally, column (6) of table 5 introduces the distance to Israel, given the country's importance in world politics ever since its foundation. However, we find no importance for *isrdist* either.

In summary, it appears unlikely that economic factors are driving the importance of *westdist*. Neither bilateral trade flows nor foreign aid nor distances to major oil suppliers are able to account for the importance of the geographical distance to the West in UN intervention decisions. As a last category of possible explanations, we now turn to practical aspects.

6.3   Practical Considerations: Chances of Success, Costs, and Feasibility

Beyond political and economic explanations for the distance finding, we further consider practical reasons as a third option. It could simply be less expensive and more convenient to intervene in a conflict nearby as opposed to a conflict located thousands of kilometers away. Unfortunately, it proves to be difficult to test this alternative hypothesis directly: Even though we may observe the expected costs and circumstances of a realized UN intervention at the beginning, we cannot

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[8]Table A.3 provides correlations between all distance measures used.

observe these considerations in the case of non-interventions.

Another practical reason for the importance of *westdist* may be given by the chances of success. The likelihood of an operation being successful could be higher in conflicts closer to home (see Jakobsen, 1996) because, for example, it is easier and quicker to move troops. In fact, one possible interpretation of why the UN is more likely to intervene in poorer and smaller countries is that the chances for success are higher and the expected costs are lower. With a poorer society comes potentially inferior weapon technologies and generally fewer resources for resistance. Similarly, a smaller population signals a conflict that is easier to oversee and shows less room for expansion, all else being equal.

In the following, we discuss several alternative estimations, attempting to filter out whether practical considerations may be responsible for the importance of *westdist*.

6.3.1 Redefining Intervention

To get an idea as to whether costs or success probability could play a role in UNSC decisions, we first take advantage of other forms of UN interventions beyond military operations. It may be understandable that costs and the success chances of a *military* intervention change with geographical distance, but these considerations should not apply when considering other types of interventions, such as imposing economic sanctions, embargoes, calling for an end of hostilities, or sending observer missions. None of these weaker forms of intervention are associated with a substantial commitment of resources. Thus, if *westdist* does not play a role in nonmilitary interventions, this would signal that geographical distance matters solely for military interventions, which are associated with a much larger commitment of resources.

Table 6 replicates table 1, this time including the non-military forms of intervention in the intervention definition (*anyIV*). We notice that the distance findings are substantially weakened, as *ukdist* and *usdist* are no longer significant at conventional levels. Only *westdist* remains significant at the ten percent level. Thus, geographical proximity may not matter for non-military UN interventions. Another sign that practical considerations may be less important is that *lngdp* loses significance in these estimations.

However, categorizing a military peacekeeping intervention in the same way as a call to end hostilities may oversimplify the concept of a UN intervention. It is difficult to relate these

types of interventions. For instance, it is impossible to generalize that two, three, or four sanctions represent the equivalent of one military intervention. Although imperfect, table 7 then ignores military interventions for a moment and solely considers those conflicts in which the UN never intervened militarily. For these cases, we code non-military operations by the UN ($nonmilitaryIV$) as an intervention, and all conflicts where the UN did not intervene in any form are coded as zeros. In fact, nonmilitary and military interventions show no statistically significant difference in terms of $westdist$. Using the usual control variables then shows that distances completely lose their importance, both in terms of significance and magnitude. One interpretation of this finding is that the practical considerations in terms of costs and the probability of success could indeed explain the importance of $westdist$ for military interventions by the UN. Another indication for the importance of practical considerations can be found in the remaining coefficients throughout table 7: Population size does not matter for non-military interventions and the sign corresponding to GDP per capita is, in fact, reversed. The weaker types of intervention appear to be more likely in richer states. The signs on $lngdp$ are positive throughout and reach conventional significance levels in three out of six regressions.

From an econometric perspective, of course, the danger of a selection bias exists in table 7 because it excludes those conflicts that received military interventions by the UN. Thus, the results displayed in tables 6 and 7 should be interpreted with care. The upcoming section will now include other aspects in our main estimation that might be related to practical considerations.

6.3.2   Military Opposition, Year of Conflict, and Other Interventions

Columns (1) – (3) of table 9 consider three additional tests for the importance of practical considerations in UNSC decisions. First, we include the Composite Index of National Capability score ($cinc$) from the Correlates of War data set (version 4.0 built on Singer et al., 1972, and Singer, 1988). The military strengths and capabilities of the conflict country may well influence the chances of success for a potential UN intervention. Thus, it is important to test whether military strength is an important intervention determinant in itself, but also whether $cinc$ can explain the distance finding. Indeed, military strength proves to affect the chances of intervention negatively, although this finding is not significant. Beyond that, the coefficient on $westdist$ remains virtually unchanged.

Second, column (2) includes a basic time trend in our main estimation, incorporating the beginning year of the conflict. As both weapons' and information technology advanced rapidly over the past decades, a potential intervention today could be cheaper and easier to plan, but it may also be easier to foresee the chances of success. However, column (2) shows that *year* remains firmly insignificant. Similarly, including a squared time trend does not appear to matter (results not displayed, but available upon request).

Finally, considerations regarding costs and success probabilities may be reflected in both the number of ongoing interventions by the UN at the beginning of the conflict (*currentivs*) and whether the conflict country was subject to a previous military intervention (*ivprev*). With more military commitments already in progress, budget constraints may become more important, therefore lowering the chances of starting a new operation. Interestingly, the number of current interventions appears to have a *positive* effect on intervention decisions.

In terms of success probability, a previous intervention may be helpful for knowing the country and the specific conflict at stake. In addition, previously installed facilities could be used or local contacts from the previous operations could be utilized. However, *ivprev* has no significant impact. Also, the importance of *westdist* remains once again robust to these extensions.

7 Robustness Checks

Beyond the possible explanations of the importance for distance from the West, we now consider several robustness checks for our main estimation of table 1, column (6). Table 8 then asks whether additional spatial aspects should be included in our baseline model. Finally, table 9 addresses the relationship between the conflict country and the UN, but also the conflict duration and the religious composition of the conflict country.

7.1 Additional Spatial Components

In our main estimations, the spatial components consist of the distance to the five permanent UNSC members and continental dummies. However, it may well be possible that other spatial aspects of the conflict nation play a role in determining UNSC intervention decisions. To test

for any further spatial characteristics that might be present in the data, we first create a spatial cross-section in which each observation unit is a country. There is therefore one observation for every country that had at least one conflict since 1950 (*IV spatial*). Consequently, we also collapse the explanatory variables. As for the intensity of the conflict, we code this variable as equal to one if the country experienced at least one year with more than 999 deaths in any of its conflicts (*maxintense*). Regarding the conflict form, we count the number of internal and interstate conflicts (*ninternal* and *ninterstate*) and include both of these variables in the regression. As for population size, GDP per capita, and trade openness, we calculate the average of these values for every conflict country at the beginning of their conflict (*lnpopavg*, *lngdpavg*, and *lnopenavg*). This pure cross-sectional data set then consists of 94 entries, i.e., 94 countries.[9]

The question we are asking in this extension is whether the probability of military intervention by the UN in a conflict country is affected by intervention decisions in neighboring countries.[10] We run a classic non-spatial Probit model and assess the presence of spatial error autocorrelation, with the results displayed in table 8. If we found such evidence, then spatial Probit models should be preferred over our logit estimations because ignoring spatial error autocorrelation in the error term would result in inefficiency and inconsistency of the maximum likelihood estimator (Amaral et al., 2012). The literature on tests for spatial error autocorrelation exhibits three main versions after Pinkse and Slade (1998), Kelejian and Prucha (2001), and Pinkse (2004). However, these tests have crucial differences regarding the sample size. Amaral et al. (2012) shows that the generalized Moran's I statistic (MI) devised by Kelejian and Prucha (2001) achieves its asymptotic distribution in sample sizes as small as N=49 and is not affected by spatial correlation in the regressors. The other two statistics require large sample sizes, in the order of thousands, to achieve their asymptotic distributions and are slightly affected by spatial correlation in the regressors.[11] Thus, we opt for the generalized Moran's I statistic (MI).

Specifically, we use the module *spreg.probit* in the PySAL library (Rey and Anselin, 2010) to run the classic non-spatial Probit and the MI test using the spatial version of our data described above. The results from these estimations are reported in table 8, displaying marginal effects. First, we note that the distance findings from table 1 receive strong support, both in terms

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[9]Data set is available upon request.

[10]By neighbors, we mean countries that share a common border with the conflict nation.

[11]See Amaral et al. (2012) for a complete description.

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of significance and magnitudes, which are even greater for the Western permanent members. As before, conflict intensity matters, whereas conflict form remains an insignificant predictor. Also, the previous conclusions for the remaining variables are generally confirmed. Finally, the MI test results then show no clear evidence for the presence of spatial error autocorrelation.[12] Thus, the probability of military intervention by the UN does not appear to depend on previous interventions in neighboring countries.

7.2   Relationship to the UN, Conflict Duration, and Religious Orientation

Columns (4) – (7) of table 9 consider other attributes of the country and its conflict. First, we include a binary variable for conflict countries that were members of the UN at the inception of the conflict (*unmember*). We then add a dummy variable for conflict countries that formed part of the UNSC as a non-permanent member at any time during the conflict. Both of these variables reflect the basic relationship between the conflict country and the UN and may therefore enter the decision-making process at the UNSC. Interestingly, the probability of intervention is reduced by over 15 percentage points if a conflict country was a member of the UNSC at any time during the conflict. However, this finding does not explain the importance of geographical distance.

Further, column (6) includes the total duration of the conflict in months (see Gilligan et al., 2003, and Fortna, 2004). Even though this estimation may raise endogeneity issues in the form of reverse causality (not only could the conflict duration affect the probability of UN intervention, but a UN intervention could also affect the conflict duration), the conflict duration does not appear to matter. Finally, column (7) turns to the religious composition of the conflict country. We use the fractions of Catholic, Muslim, and Protestant citizens in society, as measured in 1980, to see whether religion is associated with the intervention probability. However, the results reject this idea and once again leave the coefficient associated with *westdist* virtually unchanged.

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[12] A significant p-value for the MI test indicates that the residuals of the regression are spatially autocorrelated, but the test does not discriminate between the error or lag dependence.

8   Concluding Remarks

Political decisions are often made behind closed doors, and many times their true intentions are difficult to expose. This quality also holds for the United Nations Security Council's decisions about military interventions. This paper builds on an insightful stream of research by trying to discover the true aspects associated with these interventions. Our findings indicate that military interventions are more likely in countries that are located closer to the three Western permanent UNSC members (France, the UK, and the US) but also in poorer and smaller countries.

In theory, the geographical distance to the deciding powers in the Council should not be a significant factor behind UNSC intervention decisions. Distance may well be justifiable for intervention decisions by single countries or regional organizations because their focus lies on protecting domestic borders. However, the United Nations emphasizes its equal commitment to all 193 member states. Our most complete estimations suggest that for every $1,000$ kilometers of distance to the closest Western permanent member, the probability of a military UNSC intervention decreases by approximately 4 percent. In the case of Malaysia or Indonesia, this represents a reduction of almost $42-43$ percentage points, compared to a country bordering one of the three Western powers (e.g., Mexico or Spain). Interestingly, the distance to the Eastern permanent members (China and Russia) does not matter. It is also noteworthy that we do not find any intervention preferences along the lines of continents.

There are, of course, numerous alternative explanations, and the paper tests for a variety of them. Among these, we generally distinguish between political, economic, and practical aspects. In terms of politics, we take into account the Cold War period, the extraordinary role of the European conflicts (the Yugoslavian Wars and the formation of the post-Soviet Union states), the regime form, and the affinity scores in UN voting behavior. None of these are able to explain the distance finding. As for independent effects, we find that interventions are more likely in less democratic regimes – a finding that confirms the "R2P" initiative (Responsibility to Protect), as recently formalized by the UN. Regarding economic reasons, we incorporate bilateral trade relationships between the conflict country and the permanent members, foreign aid flows, and the distance to major oil suppliers. Again, none of these aspects are able to account for the importance of geographical distance.

However, we find evidence for the importance of practical considerations from additional es-

timations, where we broaden the intervention definition to non-military actions (e.g., embargoes, sanctions, or establishing observer missions). Beyond the difference in the severity of an intervention, which is difficult to quantify, these weaker forms of intervention have in common their substantially lower level of commitment, both in terms of personnel and of general resources. Indeed, we find that once we define intervention more broadly, the distance finding weakens. In fact, a hypothetical exercise in disregarding those conflicts that received military interventions by the UNSC produces different results. In these estimations, neither the geographical distance to the West nor country size nor GDP per capita decrease the intervention probability. If anything, it appears as if these weaker intervention forms are more likely to happen in *richer* nations. These results add to the notion that it is only *military* intervention decisions by the UNSC that are driven by practical considerations.

Of course, these final estimations must be interpreted with caution. Whether the UN sends military troops for peacekeeping or imposes an embargo constitutes a major difference in commitment level. Thus, pooling these actions may oversimplify the question and wash out these important differences. Similarly, disregarding the conflicts that were subject to UN military interventions at some points could introduce a selection bias.

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Figures
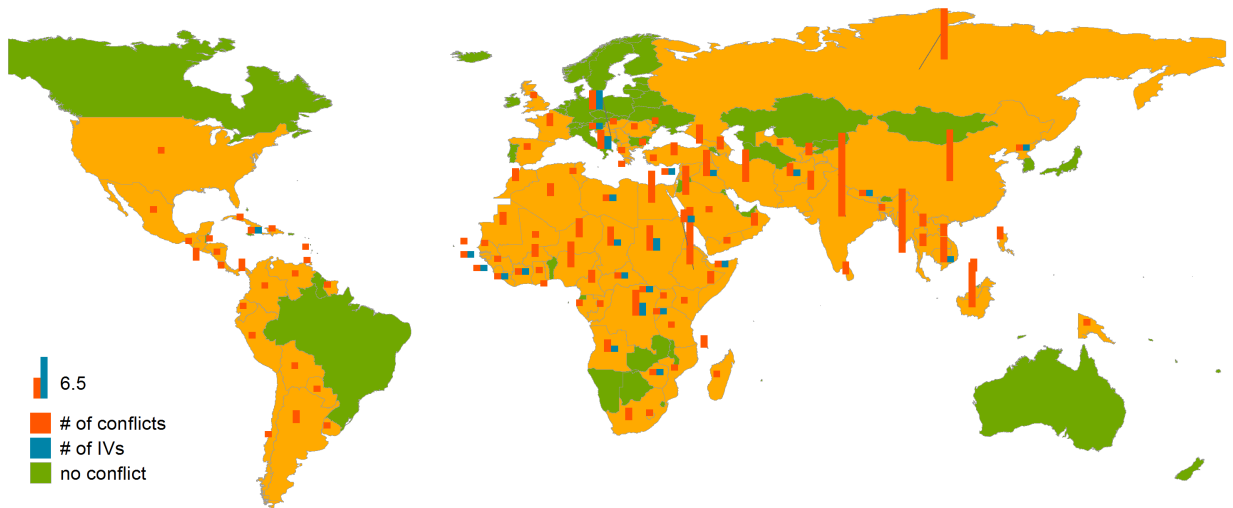
Figure 1: Conflicts and interventions
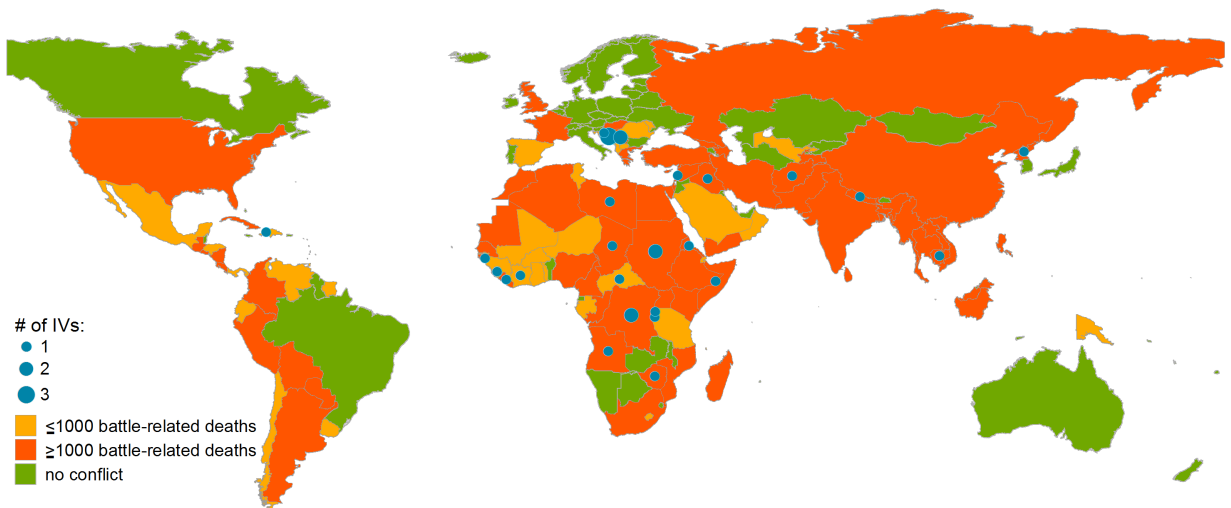
Figure 2: Interventions and intensity
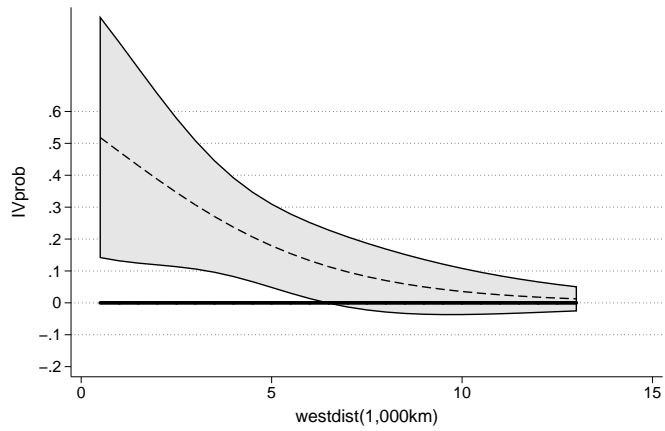
Figure 3: Predicted probability of UN military intervention in intense internal conflict, at means
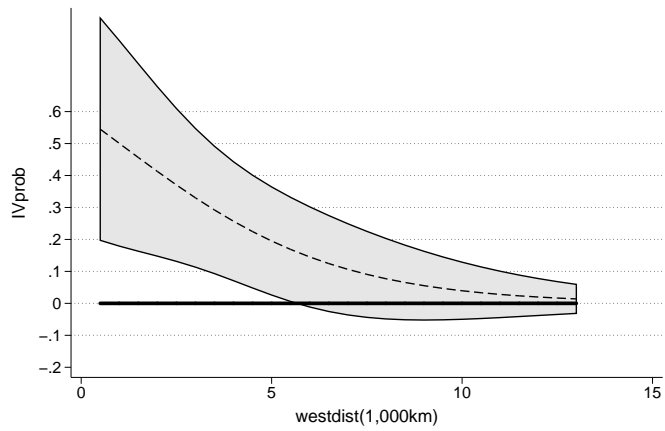
Figure 4: Predicted probability of UN military intervention in intense interstate conflict, at means
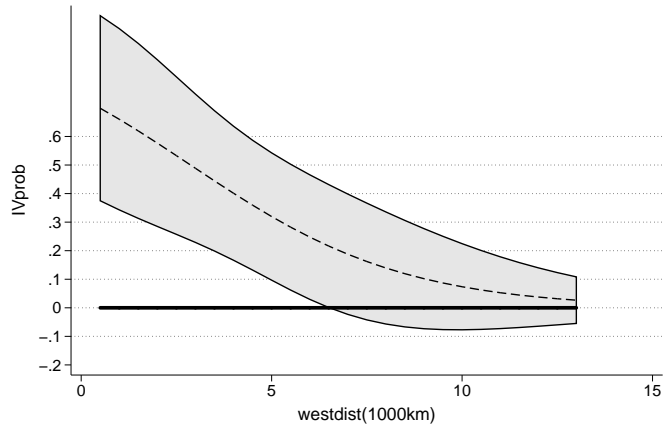
Figure 5: Predicted probability of UN military intervention in intense internationalized conflict, at means
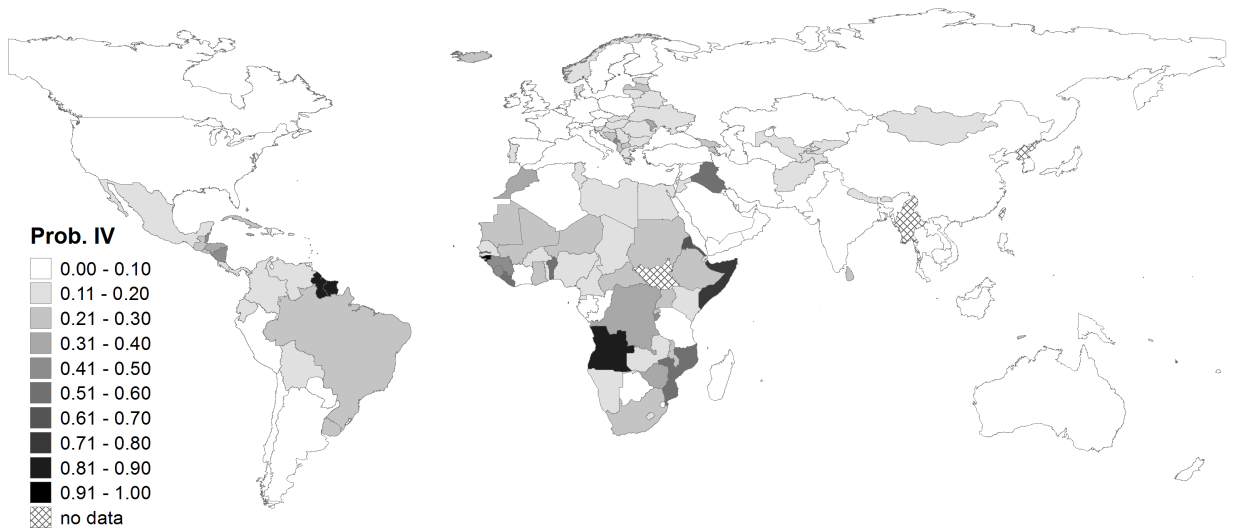
Figure 6: Predicted Probability of Intervention (using Table 1, Column 6)

Tables

Table 1: Logit regression results, displaying marginal effects. Dependent variable is probability of military intervention by the UN (IV).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dependent variable: IV						
chidist	0.002					
	(0.012)					
fradist		-0.035*				
		(0.019)				
rusdist			-0.028			
			(0.021)			
ukdist				-0.035*		
				(0.018)		
usdist					-0.040***	
					(0.015)	
westdist						-0.040**
						(0.019)
eastdist						-0.007
						(0.027)
intense	0.163***	0.150**	0.157***	0.150**	0.157***	0.141**
	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.056)	(0.059)	(0.056)	(0.058)
internal	-0.090	-0.089	-0.084	-0.090	-0.097	-0.087
	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.072)
interstate	-0.057	-0.080	-0.076	-0.080	-0.084	-0.091
	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.084)	(0.085)	(0.088)	(0.084)
lnpop	-0.043**	-0.049**	-0.051**	-0.050**	-0.059**	-0.054**
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.023)
lngdp	-0.057	-0.083**	-0.057	-0.084**	-0.085**	-0.085**
	(0.044)	(0.042)	(0.039)	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.041)
lnopen	-0.023	-0.037	-0.031	-0.037	-0.043	-0.046
	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.041)
africa	0.041	-0.151	-0.118	-0.122	0.247*	0.009
	(0.151)	(0.184)	(0.183)	(0.174)	(0.149)	(0.204)
asia	-0.081	-0.227	-0.315	-0.212	0.155	-0.080
	(0.190)	(0.165)	(0.213)	(0.160)	(0.159)	(0.280)
europe	0.043	-0.208	-0.208	-0.194	0.190	-0.077
	(0.151)	(0.187)	(0.215)	(0.179)	(0.122)	(0.255)
Colony fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	174	174	174	174	174	174
Log lik.	-72.14	-70.18	-71.29	-70.14	-69.45	-69.11
Chi-squared	37.25	41.63	40.61	41.71	41.41	44.11

Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 2: Political explanations. Logit regression results, displaying marginal effects. Dependent variable is probability of military intervention by the UN (IV).

	(1)	Only Cold War Period (2)	Excl. Europe (3)	Excl. Conflicts in 5 PMs (4)	(5)	(6)
Dependent variable: IV						
westdist	-0.036*	-0.056**	-0.043**	-0.049**	-0.041**	-0.050***
	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.019)
eastdist	-0.010	0.000	-0.002	0.003	-0.007	0.003
	(0.025)	(0.037)	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.025)	(0.029)
coldwar	-0.111*					
	(0.065)					
ownint					0.207**	
					(0.090)	
polityIV						-0.010*
						(0.006)
intense	0.165***	0.161**	0.128**	0.153**	0.163***	0.092*
	(0.059)	(0.067)	(0.058)	(0.062)	(0.059)	(0.055)
internal	-0.071	-0.056	-0.073	-0.093	-0.023	-0.107
	(0.070)	(0.080)	(0.073)	(0.078)	(0.083)	(0.068)
interstate	-0.064	-0.039	-0.051	-0.062	-0.029	-0.076
	(0.082)	(0.096)	(0.092)	(0.097)	(0.090)	(0.081)
lnpop	-0.056**	-0.059**	-0.057**	-0.040	-0.048**	-0.077***
	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.023)
lngdp	-0.079*	-0.105**	-0.099**	-0.084*	-0.091**	-0.089**
	(0.041)	(0.053)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.041)	(0.040)
lnopen	-0.065	-0.050	-0.062	-0.069	-0.038	-0.055
	(0.043)	(0.048)	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.041)	(0.042)
africa	-0.011	0.026	0.031	0.075	0.006	-0.015
	(0.193)	(0.256)	(0.223)	(0.233)	(0.191)	(0.216)
asia	-0.130	0.022	-0.030	0.020	-0.110	-0.008
	(0.257)	(0.377)	(0.307)	(0.326)	(0.260)	(0.308)
europe	-0.129	-0.110		0.041	-0.073	-0.099
	(0.235)	(0.353)		(0.303)	(0.233)	(0.271)
Colony fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	174	132	154	160	174	164
Log lik.	-67.94	-48.12	-59.14	-67.34	-67.24	-57.95
Chi-squared	43.51	38.79	40.57	40.11	42.73	42.50

Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 3: Political explanations continued, considering the affinity to UN voting. Logit regression results, displaying marginal effects. Dependent variable is probability of military intervention by the UN (IV).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dependent variable: IV						
$westdist$	-0.051**	-0.059***	-0.032*	-0.059***	-0.057***	-0.059***
	(0.026)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.023)
$eastdist$	0.046	0.026	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.040
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.037)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
$affchina$	-0.150					
	(0.419)					
$afffrance$		-0.048				
		(0.322)				
$affrussia$			0.273			
			(0.213)			
$affuk$				-0.067		
				(0.305)		
$affus$					-0.143	
					(0.188)	
$affwest$						0.013
						(0.363)
$affeast$						-0.079
						(0.204)
Control variables^{a}	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Colony fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	112	150	131	150	149	140
Log lik.	-34.93	-57.89	-43.45	-57.88	-57.48	-51.42
Chi-squared	31.47	38.17	233.11	37.88	36.88	39.74

Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$
^{a}Incorporates $intense$, $internal$, $interstate$, $lnpop$, $lngdp$, $lnopen$, $africa$, $asia$, and $europe$.

Table 4: Economic explanations. Logit regression results, displaying marginal effects. Dependent variable is probability of military intervention by the UN (IV).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dependent variable: IV						
westdist	-0.038**	-0.039**	-0.044**	-0.045**	-0.037*	-0.043**
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.021)
eastdist	0.006	0.009	0.014	0.014	-0.003	0.018
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.028)
lnexportstous	0.011					
	(0.020)					
lnimportsfromus		0.005				
		(0.025)				
lnexportstowest			-0.036			
			(0.026)			
lnimportsfromwest				-0.056		
				(0.036)		
lntotalaid					0.036*	
					(0.020)	
lnaidus						-0.026
						(0.024)
Control variables^a	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Colony fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	158	158	154	154	145	118
Log lik.	-57.45	-57.59	-56.18	-55.99	-54.40	-46.22
Chi-squared	43.71	42.17	39.12	42.33	38.73	32.68

Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.
^{a}Incorporates *intense*, *internal*, *interstate*, *lnpop*, *lngdp*, *lnopen*,
africa, and *asia*. *europe* omitted because it predicts failure perfectly.

Table 5: Economic explanations continued, considering the geographical distance to major oil suppliers. Logit regression results, displaying marginal effects. Dependent variable is probability of military intervention by the UN (IV).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dependent variable: IV						
westdist	-0.044***	-0.045***	-0.042**	-0.043***	-0.103**	-0.045**
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.052)	(0.018)
eastdist	-0.021	-0.020	-0.023	-0.021	0.044	-0.014
	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.030)	(0.046)	(0.029)
saudidist	0.019					
	(0.024)					
iraqdist		0.017				
		(0.026)				
irandist			0.019			
			(0.029)			
kuwaitdist				0.017		
				(0.024)		
venezueladist					0.052	
					(0.039)	
isrdist						0.011
						(0.025)
Control variables[a]	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Colony fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	174	174	174	174	174	174
Log lik.	-68.79	-68.89	-68.89	-68.86	-68.32	-69.02
Chi-squared	43.66	44.13	44.23	43.97	45.97	44.16

Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$
[a]Incorporates *intense*, *internal*, *interstate*, *lnpop*, *lngdp*, *lnopen*, *africa*, *asia*, and *europe*.

Table 6: Logit regression results, displaying marginal effects. Dependent variable is probability of *any* form of intervention by the UN ($anyIV$), including sanctions, embargoes, and observer missions.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dependent variable: $anyIV$						
$chidist$	-0.004					
	(0.011)					
$fradist$		-0.030				
		(0.019)				
$rusdist$			-0.020			
			(0.022)			
$ukdist$				-0.028		
				(0.019)		
$usdist$					-0.017	
					(0.018)	
$westdist$						-0.035*
						(0.021)
$eastdist$						0.014
						(0.032)
$intense$	0.304***	0.279***	0.292***	0.280***	0.293***	0.274***
	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.049)	(0.050)
$internal$	-0.146**	-0.153**	-0.144**	-0.153**	-0.155**	-0.160**
	(0.066)	(0.067)	(0.066)	(0.067)	(0.068)	(0.067)
$interstate$	0.004	-0.025	-0.011	-0.024	-0.013	-0.026
	(0.085)	(0.090)	(0.086)	(0.090)	(0.089)	(0.092)
$lnpop$	-0.053**	-0.055**	-0.058**	-0.056**	-0.057**	-0.053**
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.024)
$lngdp$	0.037	0.003	0.030	0.005	0.018	0.002
	(0.037)	(0.043)	(0.035)	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.044)
$lnopen$	-0.013	-0.018	-0.016	-0.018	-0.018	-0.023
	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.045)
$africa$	0.010	-0.133	-0.075	-0.096	0.112	0.100
	(0.138)	(0.180)	(0.179)	(0.168)	(0.149)	(0.209)
$asia$	-0.106	-0.170	-0.208	-0.148	0.044	0.109
	(0.155)	(0.147)	(0.204)	(0.141)	(0.152)	(0.304)
$europe$	0.088	-0.081	-0.040	-0.054	0.188	0.186
	(0.142)	(0.173)	(0.213)	(0.165)	(0.127)	(0.284)
Colony fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	174	174	174	174	174	174
Log lik.	-77.75	-76.47	-77.41	-76.65	-77.34	-76.27
Chi-squared	39.81	46.08	40.06	45.41	41.77	48.77

Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 7: Logit regression results, displaying marginal effects. Dependent variable is probability of *non-military* form of intervention by the UN (*nonmilitaryIV*). These include sanctions, embargoes, and observer missions.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dependent variable: *nonmilitaryIV*						
chidist	-0.005					
	(0.009)					
fradist		-0.000				
		(0.013)				
rusdist			0.011			
			(0.018)			
ukdist				0.003		
				(0.014)		
usdist					0.021	
					(0.019)	
westdist						-0.004
						(0.017)
eastdist						0.030
						(0.028)
intense	0.175***	0.167***	0.171***	0.170***	0.180***	0.164***
	(0.059)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.058)	(0.056)	(0.050)
internal	-0.131**	-0.137**	-0.142**	-0.135**	-0.128**	-0.161**
	(0.058)	(0.055)	(0.059)	(0.055)	(0.053)	(0.068)
interstate	0.024	0.017	0.021	0.022	0.045	0.008
	(0.070)	(0.074)	(0.070)	(0.074)	(0.071)	(0.096)
lnpop	-0.021	-0.016	-0.012	-0.016	-0.008	-0.006
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.016)
lngdp	0.054*	0.052	0.057**	0.056	0.070**	0.055
	(0.028)	(0.037)	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.032)	(0.034)
lnopen	0.015	0.023	0.026	0.024	0.033	0.029
	(0.032)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.037)
africa	-0.042	-0.019	0.035	-0.004	-0.125	0.120
	(0.098)	(0.147)	(0.136)	(0.133)	(0.120)	(0.147)
asia	-0.032	0.023	0.108	0.034	-0.101	0.289
	(0.103)	(0.100)	(0.167)	(0.094)	(0.125)	(0.270)
europe	0.078	0.116	0.210	0.139	0.050	0.372
	(0.097)	(0.120)	(0.180)	(0.118)	(0.090)	(0.249)
Colony fixed effects[a]	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	134	134	134	134	134	134
Log lik.	-31.59	-31.71	-31.53	-31.69	-30.74	-30.70
Chi-squared	44.38	43.74	46.80	41.74	39.95	47.89

Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$
[a]The dummy for Portuguese colonies is excluded as it predicts failure perfectly.

Table 8: Classic non-spatial Probit and spatial diagnostics. Dependent variable is probability to intervene ($IV\,spatial$), replicating table 1. Displaying marginal effects.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$chidist$	-0.006					
	(0.017)					
$fradist$		-0.062**				
		(0.028)				
$rusdist$			-0.046			
			(0.032)			
$ukdist$				-0.062**		
				(0.028)		
$usdist$					-0.049**	
					(0.025)	
$westdist$						-0.073**
						(0.032)
$eastdist$						-0.005
						(0.042)
$maxintense$	0.296***	0.259***	0.264***	0.261***	0.283***	0.236**
	(0.103)	(0.098)	(0.101)	(0.098)	(0.099)	(0.097)
$ninternal$	0.019	0.018	0.014	0.018	0.021	0.02
	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.04)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)
$ninterstate$	0.059	0.045	0.038	0.045	0.043	0.04
	(0.06)	(0.059)	(0.06)	(0.059)	(0.058)	(0.06)
$lnpopavg$	-0.059	-0.063	-0.062	-0.064	-0.078*	-0.07*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.039)	(0.04)	(0.041)	(0.04)
$lngdpavg$	-0.114*	-0.176***	-0.123**	-0.175***	-0.155**	-0.176***
	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.058)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.061)
$lnopenavg$	-0.004	-0.015	-0.008	-0.015	-0.026	-0.033
	(0.068)	(0.07)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.07)
$africa$	-0.049	-0.31	-0.231	-0.253	0.249	0.035
	(0.169)	(0.197)	(0.204)	(0.179)	(0.202)	(0.267)
$asia$	-0.234	-0.368*	-0.501*	-0.334*	0.175	-0.026
	(0.253)	(0.191)	(0.285)	(0.182)	(0.236)	(0.422)
$europe$	0.02	-0.321	-0.297	-0.287	0.287	-0.024
	-0.227	(0.23)	(0.298)	(0.218)	(0.191)	(0.379)
Colony fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	94	94	94	94	94	94
Diagnostic for spatial dependence						
Kelejian-Prucha MI test	1.835*	1.193	1.584	1.246	1.798*	1.193

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 9: Additional robustness checks from logit regressions, displaying marginal effects. Dependent variable is probability of military intervention by the UN (IV).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Dependent variable: *anyIV*							
westdist	-0.041**	-0.038**	-0.036**	-0.040**	-0.036*	-0.039**	-0.042**
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.021)
eastdist	0.004	-0.008	-0.009	-0.007	-0.009	-0.008	-0.010
	(0.029)	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.033)
cinc	-5.167						
	(3.502)						
year		0.002					
		(0.003)					
currentivs			0.008*				
			(0.005)				
ivprev			0.083				
			(0.087)				
unmember				0.008			
				(0.152)			
member					-0.151**		
					(0.068)		
dur						-0.000	
						(0.000)	
catholic							0.189
							(0.138)
muslim							-0.077
							(0.129)
protestant							0.114
							(0.414)
Control variables[a]	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Colony fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	166	174	174	174	174	174	131
Log lik.	-62.78	-68.74	-67.50	-69.11	-66.95	-68.99	-46.22
Chi-squared	56.86	43.10	44.32	44.28	39.17	43.78	34.79

Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$
[a]Incorporates *intense, internal, interstate, lnpop, lngdp, lnopen,*
africa, asia, and *europe.*

Appendix

Table A.1: Conflicts since 1945. *IV* stands for UN military intervention.

Country	Year	IV	Country	Year	IV	Country	Year	IV
Africa								
Egypt	1951	yes	Tanzania	1978		Centra Afr. Rep.	2001	yes
Egypt	1956	yes	South Africa	1978		Cote d'Ivoire	2002	yes
Cameroon	1960		Tunisia	1980		Nigeria	2003	
Ethiopia	1960		Liberia	1980	yes	Nigeria	2004	
Congo (DR)	1960		Gambia	1981		Djibouti	2008	
Congo (DR)	1960	yes	Egypt	1981		Mauritania	2008	
Ethiopia	1961	yes	Kenya	1982		Libya (NA)	2011	yes
Algeria	1963		Somalia	1982	yes	(Sudan)	2011	yes
Sudan (NA)	1963		Ethiopia	1982		(Sudan)	2011	
Congo (DR)	1964	yes	Chad	1983		South Sudan (NA)	2012	yes
Ethiopia	1964		Burkina Faso	1985		South Sudan (NA)	2012	
Gabon	1964		Togo	1986		Mali (NA)	2012	
Ethiopia	1964		Burkina Faso	1987				
Burundi	1965	yes	Chad	1987		**Asia**		
Ghana	1966		Senegal	1988		China (NA)	1950	
Chad	1966	yes	Comoros	1989		Indonesia (NA)	1950	
Zimbabwe	1966		Rwanda	1990	yes	Thailand	1951	
South Africa	1966	yes	Mali	1990		Indonesia (NA)	1953	
Nigeria	1966		Algeria	1990		India	1955	
Egypt	1967	yes	Sierra Leone	1991	yes	Vietnam (NA)	1955	
Nigeria	1967		Djibouti	1991		Oman (NA)	1957	
Cambodia (NA)	1967	yes	Angola	1991	yes	Malaysia	1957	
Sudan	1971	yes	Ethiopia	1991		Myanmar (NA)	1957	
Morocco	1971		Niger	1991		Iraq (NA)	1958	yes
Madagascar	1971		Congo, Rep.	1993		Lebanon (NA)	1958	yes
Uganda	1971		Eritrea	1993		China	1959	
Ethiopia	1974		Niger	1994		Myanmar (NA)	1959	
Cambodia	1975		Cameroon	1994		Lao PDR (NA)	1959	
Morocco	1975	yes	Niger	1995		Nepal	1960	yes
Angola	1975	yes	Comoros	1997		Iraq (NA)	1961	
Cambodia	1975		Lesotho	1998		Indonesia	1962	
Ethiopia	1975		Guinea-Bissau	1998	yes	Indonesia	1962	yes
Mauritania	1975		Eritrea	1998	yes	Malaysia	1963	
Ethiopia	1977		Congo (DR)	1998	yes	Thailand	1965	
Mozambique	1977	yes	Guinea	2000		Vietnam (NA)	1965	

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), using conflicts since 1950.
Exculding extrasystemic armed conflicts.
NA = data not available and conflict not included in sample.
Conflicts in parentheses use data from the World Bank for *lngdp* and *lnopen*.

Table A.1 cont.: Conflicts since 1945. *IV* stands for UN military intervention.

Country	Year	IV	Country	Year	IV	Country	Year	IV
Asia			Pakistan	1990		Bosnia & Herz.	1993	
Indonesia	1965		Iraq	1990	yes	(Azerbaijan)	1993	
India	1966		Russia	1990		Serbia	1996	yes
Syria	1966		(Tajikistan)	1992	yes	Macedonia, FYR	2000	
Israel	1967		(Tajikistan)	1992				
Israel	1967	yes	India	1993		**North America**		
Oman (NA)	1968		Russia	1993		Cuba (NA)	1953	
China	1969		Yemen, Rep.	1994		Honduras	1957	
China	1969		Russia	1994		Dominican Rep.	1965	yes
Philippines	1970		Myanmar (NA)	1997		El Salvador	1969	
Pakistan	1971		Russia	1999		El Salvador	1972	yes
Sri Lanka	1971		Uzbekistan	1999		Nicaragua	1974	yes
Iran	1972		Iraq	2003		Grenada	1983	
Iran	1972		India	2004		Panama	1989	
Myanmar (NA)	1973		India	2005		Panama	1989	
Pakistan	1973		Russia	2007		Haiti	1989	yes
China	1974		Myanmar (NA)	2009		Trinidad & Tobago	1990	
Indonesia	1975	yes				Mexico	1994	
Bangladesh	1975		**Europe**			United States	2001	
Sri Lanka	1975		Hungary (NA)	1956				
Afghanistan	1978	yes	France	1961		**South America**		
Saudi Arabia (NA)	1979		France	1961		Argentina	1955	
India	1979		Spain	1968		Venezuela	1962	
Iran	1979		United Kingdom	1970		Colombia	1964	
Afghanistan	1979		Cyprus	1974		Peru	1965	
India	1979		Romania	1989		El Salvador	1969	
India	1981		(Georgia)	1991		Uruguay	1970	
Lao PDR	1982		Serbia	1991	yes	El Salvador	1972	yes
India	1983		(Georgia)	1991		Chile	1973	
Turkey	1983		Azerbaijan	1991		Nicaragua	1974	yes
India	1984		(Moldova)	1991		Argentina	1982	
Israel	1986		Serbia	1991		Suriname	1986	
Turkey	1987		(Georgia)	1992	yes	Ecuador	1995	
Indonesia	1989		Bosnia & Herz.	1992				
India	1989		Croatia	1992	yes	**Oceania**		
Russia	1990		Bosnia & Herz.	1992	yes	Papua New G.	1989	

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), using conflicts since 1950.

Exculding extrasystemic armed conflicts.

NA = data not available and conflict not included in sample.

Conflicts in parentheses use data from the World Bank for *lngdp* and *lnopen*.

Table A.2: Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	(Std. Dev.)	N	Source[1]	Description
IV	0.23	(0.42)	174	UN	Dummy = 1 if UN military intervention takes place (peacekeeping or peacebuilding)
chidist	5.64	(4.47)	174		Distance to China in 1,000 km
fradist	4.62	(2.78)	174		Distance to France in 1,000 km
rusdist	3.36	(2.98)	174		Distance to Russia in 1,000 km
ukdist	5.18	(2.67)	174		Distance to the United Kingdom in 1,000 km
usdist	7.85	(3.03)	174		Distance to the United States in 1,000 km
westdist	3.95	(2.58)	174		Distance to the closest border of France, the UK, or the US in 1,000 km
eastdist	3.07	(3.08)	174		Distance to the closest border of China or Russia in 1,000 km
intense	0.45	(0.50)	174	UCDP	Dummy = 1 if over 999 battle-related deaths
internal	0.59	(0.49)	174	UCDP	Dummy = 1 if internal armed conflict
interstate	0.20	(0.40)	174	UCDP	Dummy = 1 if interstate armed conflict
internationalized	0.21	(0.41)	174	UCDP	Dummy = 1 if internationalized internal armed conflict
lnpop	9.69	(1.82)	174	PWT 7.1	Ln(population); variable POP
lngdp	7.48	(1.06)	174	PWT 7.1	Ln[PPP Converted GDP Per Capita (Laspeyres) at 2005 constant prices]; variable $rgdpl$
lnopen	3.67	(0.79)	174	PWT 7.1	Ln(openness at 2005 constant prices in %); variable $openk$
africa	0.44	(0.50)	174		Dummy = 1 if country in Africa
asia	0.32	(0.47)	174		Dummy = 1 if country in Asia
europe	0.11	(0.32)	174		Dummy = 1 if country in Europe
northamerica	0.07	(0.25)	174		Dummy = 1 if country in North America
oceania	0.01	(0.08)	174		Dummy = 1 if country in Oceania
southamerica	0.05	(0.22)	174		Dummy = 1 if country in Latin America
french	0.29	(0.46)	174		Dummy = 1 if (former) French colony
portuguese	0.04	(0.20)	174		Dummy = 1 if (former) Portuguese colony
dutch	0.08	(0.27)	174		Dummy = 1 if (former) Dutch colony
coldwar	0.76	(0.43)	174		Dummy = 1 if the conflict started before 1992
ownint	0.07	(0.26)	174		Dummy = 1 if one of the 5 permanent UNSC members intervened independently in conflict
polityIV	-0.87	(6.35)	164	Polity IV	Level of democracy from -10 (totally autocratic) to +10 (total democracy); variable $polity2$ at beginning year of conflict
affchina	0.89	(0.11)	112	Affinity of Nations	Voting similarity index in UN resolutions between conflict nation and China (beginning year of conflict)
afffrance	0.61	(0.11)	150	Affinity of Nations	Voting similarity index in UN resolutions between conflict nation and France (beginning year of conflict)
affrussia	0.77	(0.14)	131	Affinity of Nations	Voting similarity index in UN resolutions between conflict nation and Russia (beginning year of conflict)
affuk	0.59	(0.12)	150	Affinity of Nations	Voting similarity index in UN resolutions between conflict nation and the UK (beginning year of conflict)

[1]UN = UN Security Council resolutions; UCDP = Uppsala Conflict Data Program; PWT = Penn World Table version 7.1.

Variable	Mean	(Std. Dev.)	N	Source[1]	Description
affus	0.44	(0.20)	149	Affinity of Nations	Voting similarity index in UN resolutions between conflict nation and the US (beginning year of conflict)
affwest	0.63	(0.10)	150	Affinity of Nations	Voting similarity index in UN resolutions between conflict nation and the maximum score from France, the UK, or the US (beginning year of conflict)
affeast	0.84	(0.15)	144	Affinity of Nations	Voting similarity index in UN resolutions between conflict nation and the maximum score from China or Russia (beginning year of conflict)
lnexportstous	0.83	(2.59)	158	Correlates of War	Ln(total exports of conflict country to the US at beginning year of conflict)
lnimportsfromus	0.96	(2.23)	158	Correlates of War	Ln(total imports of conflict country from the US at beginning year of conflict)
lnexportstowest	1.80	(2.23)	154	Correlates of War	Ln(total exports of conflict country to France, the UK, and the US at beginning year of conflict)
lnimportsfromwest	1.91	(1.84)	154	Correlates of War	Ln(total imports of conflict country from France, the UK, and the US at beginning year of conflict)
lntotalaid	18.13	(1.93)	145	World Bank	Ln(total aid received by conflict country at beginning year of conflict)
lnaidus	16.83	(1.73)	118	World Bank	Ln(total aid received by conflict country from the US at beginning year of conflict)
saudidist	3.32	(3.37)	174		Distance to Saudi Arabia in 1,000 km
iraqdist	3.83	(3.38)	174		Distance to Iraq in 1,000 km
irandist	3.68	(3.50)	174		Distance to Iran in 1,000 km
kuwaitdist	4.22	(3.47)	174		Distance to Kuwait in 1,000 km
venezueladist	9.01	(4.25)	174		Distance to Venezuela in 1,000 km
isrdist	3.98	(3.31)	174		Distance to Israel in 1,000 km
cinc	0.01	(0.03)	166	Correlates of War	Composite Index of National Capability score
year	1980.66	(14.08)	174	UCDP	Beginning year of conflict
currentivs	6.51	(5.64)	174	UN	Amount of ongoing military UN interventions at the beginning year of the conflict
ivprev	0.07	(0.25)	174	UN	Dummy = 1 if UN intervened in country before
unmember	0.95	(0.22)	174	UN	Dummy = 1 if conflict country is UN member in the beginning year of the conflict
member	0.28	(0.45)	174	UN	Dummy = 1 if conflict country was a non-permanent member of the UNSC at any time during the conflict
dur	143.02	(170.26)	174	UCDP	Duration of conflict in months (until December 2012)
catholic	23.58	(32.83)	131	QoG	Percentage catholic in society in 1980
muslim	32.59	(36.73)	131	QoG	Percentage muslim in society in 1980
protestant	6.23	(10.77)	131	QoG	Percentage protestant in society in 1980

[1]UCDP = Uppsala Conflict Data Program; QoG = Quality of Government index from Teorell et al. (2011).

Table A.3: Correlation between distances from conflict countries.

Variables	chidist	fradist	rusdist	ukdist	usdist	westdist	eastdist	saudidist	iraqdist	irandist	kuwaitdist	venezueladist	isrdist
chidist	1.00												
fradist	0.05	1.00											
rusdist	0.78	0.55	1.00										
ukdist	0.06	0.99	0.55	1.00									
usdist	-0.54	0.28	-0.32	0.35	1.00								
westdist	-0.38	0.79	0.10	0.82	0.76	1.00							
eastdist	0.87	0.37	0.96	0.37	-0.44	-0.11	1.00						
saudidist	0.59	0.64	0.84	0.59	-0.49	0.11	0.77	1.00					
iraqdist	0.61	0.70	0.89	0.67	-0.38	0.20	0.80	0.99	1.00				
irandist	0.75	0.56	0.94	0.54	-0.48	0.04	0.89	0.96	0.97	1.00			
kuwaitdist	0.64	0.63	0.88	0.60	-0.46	0.11	0.81	0.99	0.99	0.98	1.00		
venezueladist	-0.81	0.30	-0.56	0.32	0.84	0.75	-0.72	-0.45	-0.40	-0.57	-0.47	1.00	
isrdist	0.45	0.80	0.81	0.76	-0.28	0.33	0.69	0.97	0.98	0.91	0.96	-0.25	1.00