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Granting Security? U.S. Security Assistance Programs and Political Stability in the Greater Middle East and Africa

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ABSTRACT

U.S. security assistance programs are expected to increase the capabilities of partners in the Middle East and Africa by leveraging the provision of armaments and training through foreign aid. Can policymakers increase their reliance on such programs to achieve foreign policy aims of promoting regional stability while retaining political flexibility? Using multivariate logistic regression of Middle East and African states spanning 1970 to 2015, the empirical findings suggest that U.S. programs geared toward education and training are more positively correlated with stability than programs oriented toward providing hardware.

KEYWORDS

Arms transfers; foreign aid; foreign policy; regional stability; security assistance; United States

Introduction

The regions of the Middle East and Africa occupy a primary position in the U.S. national security discourse. The areas of responsibility for United States Central Command (CENTCOM) and Africa Command (AFRICOM) have been the focal point of operations since 2001, with longstanding involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, more recent interventions in civil wars in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, and expanding counterterrorism efforts in Nigeria and Somalia. Within the last decade, policymakers have sought regional stability in order to end major conflicts, defeat insurgent actors, bolster state capacity, and extricate U.S. forces. The ability to manage such transitions depends heavily on the success of security assistance programs, where the U.S. government provides partner states with articles and services to develop their defense capabilities. Many consider such assistance a flexible and responsive foreign policy tool to help partners resist aggression and maintain political stability. Nevertheless, in a general sense, how effective are these programs in conflict-ridden geographies? Aside from pursuing specific political aims, is increased assistance associated with a reduced incidence of conflict and increased domestic stability in the Middle East and Africa?

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In fact, security assistance is multifaceted, with no two programs being the same in nature or resource allocation. Research into the effectiveness of security assistance necessitates the review of specific program accounts on political stability. It is the central thesis of this article that, all things being equal, assistance programs that target the "software" of a state's security services through training will yield more professionalized forces that will better contribute to regional stability outcomes. Personnel benefit from the content and normalization associated with U.S. professional military education (PME). On the other hand, programs that are oriented toward capital-intensive hardware are more likely to have generally neutral effects on regional stability. They could either enable or incentivize offensive adventurism by political leaderships due to increased capability, or better enable defensively-minded regional deterrence postures. Finally, programs that aim specifically to bolster the political leadership of a government will better allow authorities to weather domestic challenges to sustained rule. In short, the nature of the specific program will in part determine political stability outcomes, depending on the dimension of stability examined, but programs geared toward professional development are likely to have a greater effect than those oriented toward the provision of equipment.

This research proceeds within the following framework. First, this study distinguishes the strategic logic of security assistance from formal and informal security relationships. Next, it contextualizes security assistance using overviews of the leading programs in operation today, as well as examples of each in practice in the Middle East, before outlining an empirical research design of a systematic assessment of security assistance data. The article concludes with a review of the results and a discussion of the policy and scholastic implications.

The strategic logic of security assistance

The strategic logic of security assistance for great powers entails a middle ground between formal alliance frameworks and the transfer of arms.[1] The strengths and limitations of each help outline the nexus of security assistance policies, and so are addressed in turn.

Many analysts purport that alliances have greater transaction, reputation, and sunk costs as a foreign policy tool for a great power. A government must persuade its citizens that the alliance is beneficial to the national interest and that the ally is worth protecting. The state must further cultivate this sense throughout the duration of negotiations and implementation. Consequently, alliances appear to be a firmer security guarantee to potential aggressors

[1]Keren Yarhi-Milo, Alexander Lanoszka, and Zack Cooper, "To Arm or to Ally? The Patron's Dilemma and the Strategic Logic of Arms Transfers and Alliances," *International Security* 41, no. 2 (2016): 93–98.

because they entail greater sunk costs on behalf of the patron. Even so, alliances can introduce problems with the credibility of commitment. In short, the two extremes range from moral hazard to insufficient credibility. On the one hand, an alliance posture that is too strong may risk a weaker ally seeking regional policies for its own benefit, but that are contrary to the interests of its superpower patron. Tersely put, "the tail wags the dog," and it is the ally rather than the superpower that is in the driver's seat. Conversely, if the alliance commitment is not considered credible, then the posture is hollow and the threat will not be deterred. Two states may have a formal treaty that is not institutionalized with the regular interaction of military forces and joint exercises, and the physical realities of unpreparedness supersede the agreement. An illustration of the former occurred with the Battle of Suez at the termination of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, when Israel had surrounded Egypt's Third Army, but diplomatic intervention by the U.S. secured the Israeli withdrawal.[2] The Israeli objective of defeating its adversary's forces clashed with the U.S. aim of preventing direct Soviet intervention in the conflict, as well as its long-term interest to flip Cairo's alignment away from Moscow. Similarly, the 1925 revision to the 1921 Franco-Polish alliance is an example of the latter, where French forces later assumed a defensive posture against Nazi Germany after Poland was attacked in September 1939.[3]

In comparison to alliances, the transfer of conventional armaments to a state is an additional security policy tool that offers more flexibility to the supplier. States may not prefer or be able to enter into an alliance with another state, yet they can still maintain common security interests. Unlike alliances, arms transfers allow a state to retain a degree of independence. By not "nailing one's own banner to the post" of another state, defensive means can still be provided to help deter conflict without large sunk costs. The consequence is that the relationship does not entail the automatic response of a mutual defense treaty, and so deterrence relative to an alliance is limited.

[2]This example is illustrative of the logic of moral hazard. Although Israel was not in a declared alliance with the United States, the October 1973 emergency airlift of U.S. military equipment to Israel in Operation Nickel Grass sustained the state's initial equipment losses in battle. That such aid included operational U.S. assets is testament to the practical security guarantee, despite the absence of a formal mutual defense treaty. Weaponry included frontline fighter and attack aircraft, as one journalist notes that "In addition to the airlift, the United States sent replacement F-4 Phantom fighters, taken from the Air Force wing at Seymour-Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina and from the Navy's Sixth Fleet. Training at the Navy's fighter weapons school at Miramar, Calif., was almost halted when A-4 Skyhawks were provided to Israel." John T. Correll, "The Yom Kippur Airlift," *Air Force Magazine* 99, no. 7 (July 2016): 61. Scholar Lewis Sorley quotes a member of the U.S. Department of Defense task force overseeing the operation, who said that, "A lot had to come from army units because there wasn't enough equipment in supply." Sorley notes that U.S. equipment "was taken from war reserve stocks in Germany and from the hands of troops." Lewis Sorley, *Arms Transfers under Nixon* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 94–95.

[3]While France did maintain a military mission to Poland, the extent of the mission did not extend beyond officer training. In this manner, it is illustrative of a limited security assistance relationship and not an alliance of mutual defense. For a discussion of the treaty and its 1925 revision, see George Sakwa, "The Franco-Polish Alliance and the Remilitarization of the Rhineland," *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 1 (1973): 126.

An example is the contemporary American foreign policy approach toward Taiwan, where Washington has used arms sales in lieu of making alliance guarantees after the U.S. shifted diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1979 and withdrew from its mutual defense treaty with Taiwan in 1980. The U.S. preserves the option and some stake to defend Taiwan from forceful reunification with PRC, even as it meanwhile discourages a Taiwanese declaration of independence that the PRC sees as an act of war. Washington is not bound to intervene in the event of an armed conflict between the two states.[4]

Whereas these two approaches to alliance formation and arms transfers comprise the bulk of the discussion, security assistance is a third policy tool that straddles the two. These policies require a relationship to provide a partner state with weapons, training, and aid, yet do so without incurring the political costs of an alliance. This allows the provision of security for shared interests without the moral hazard of a firm alliance guarantee. Providing arms can be a part of this strategic approach; however, the cooperative nature of assistance, including training, entails a greater commitment than a simple arms relationship. U.S. assistance to Pakistan is one such illustration. The United States maintains no formal alliance with that government, and so is not bound to intervene in the event of war between it and its neighbors. All the same, the U.S. provided security assistance during the Cold War as a means of blocking Soviet expansion, and again ramped up military aid and training to Pakistan after 2001 to help support operations in Afghanistan. Washington just as quickly reduced its assistance to Islamabad starting in 2012. The flexibility of the assistance approach allowed American policymakers to support policy objectives on an ad hoc basis without entrenching the relationship.[5]

A promise of security assistance?

United States national security policy encompasses a range of policy tools to protect American interests abroad and foster regional stability. These most notably involve elements of direct "kinetic" action, typically the military force evident in the Global War on Terror. For the most part, this direct action necessitates considerable defense outlays, given that the capability to deploy such force requires an expensive logistical "tail" to support the "tooth." Moreover, there are political sensibilities at stake regarding transit channels and basing points to allow Washington the ability to project power abroad. Security assistance policies not only serve to preserve this access, they are also

[4]Brett V. Benson and Emerson M.S. Niou, "Comprehending Strategic Ambiguity: U.S. Security Commitment to Taiwan," November 12, 2001. http://people.duke.edu/~niou/teaching/strategic%20ambiguity.pdf.

[5]Ahmed Waqas Waheed, "Pakistan's Dependence and U.S. Patronage: The Politics of 'Limited Influence,'" *Journal of Asian Security* 4, no. 1 (2017): 80.

geared toward assisting partner nations to deter rival states and defeat violent non-state actors. Despite the emphasis on efficiencies in the "hard" security apparatus of the Department of Defense, additional programs are worth exploring, given their potential to contribute to global and regional stabilities. Specifically, "softer" security assistance programs have been in effect that train and equip partner nations in efforts to enhance their security sectors and national capabilities.[6] As threats proliferate and defense resources become scarce, there is a clear need for efficiency in security policy as part of a broader budgetary reform.[7]

Although much scholarship has looked at the nature of these programs and their effects in specific locales, few have evaluated policies at a systematic or formal, cross-national-time-series level.[8] Whereas the literature on the performance of security assistance programs and security sector reform is considerable, relatively little systemic analysis accompanies the "softer" side of security influence versus direct military force.[9] Moreover, the use of metrics to assess foreign aid success lags behind the regular administration of the programs, and it is only relatively recently that agencies have begun to plan for regular performance assessments of their initiatives.[10] Consequently, the following research serves as an initial exploration, and the overall research agenda would benefit from qualitative comparative country assessments of specific portfolios.

If there is a strong, systematic empirical association between reduced instability with increasing assistance, then one can view such aid as part of increased efficiencies in a comprehensive national security policy

[6]For a summary of these programs as well as recent account allocations, see Political-Military Bureau, Office of Policy, Planning, and Analysis, "Security Assistance Team," *U.S. State Department*, https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/sat/index.htm.

[7]See Michael O'Hanlon, "A moderate plan for additional defense budget cuts," (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Policy Paper #30, February 2013); Andrew Krepinevich Jr., "Strategy in a Time of Austerity: Why the Pentagon Should Focus on Assuring Access," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2012); Todd Harrison and Mark Gunzinger, *Strategic Choices: Navigating Austerity* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2012); and David W. Barno, Nora Bensahel, and Travis Sharp, *Hard Choices: Responsible Defense in an Age of Austerity* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, October 2011).

[8]Notable exceptions include Carol Atkinson, "Does Soft Power Matter? A Comparative Analysis of Student Exchange Programs 1980–2006," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6, no. 1 (January, 2010): 1–22; Michael J. McNerney et al., *Assessing Security Cooperation as a Preventive Tool* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), 93; and Jesse D. Savage and Jonathan D. Caverley, "When Human Capital Threatens the Capitol: Foreign Aid in the Form of Military Training and Coups," *Journal of Peace Research* 5, no. 4 (2017): 542–557. Despite the approach taken in these studies, the dependent variables have ranged from state fragility to human rights abuse to coup d'états. Little quantitative work exists on general measures of conflict.

[9]Although not systematic, excellent case study research designs with broad scope include Christopher Paul et al., *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and Under What Circumstances?* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation Report MG1253z1, 2013), http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/MG1200/MG1253z1/RAND_MG1253z1.pdf; and Seth G. Jones et al., *Securing Tyrants or Fostering Reform?: U.S. Internal Security Assistance to Repressive and Transitioning Regimes* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation Report MG550, 2006), http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG550.pdf.

[10]See Marian Leonardo Lawson, *Does Foreign Aid Work? Efforts to Evaluate U.S. Foreign Assistance* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service Report R42827, 2016), https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc855801/m2/1/high_res_d/R42827_2016Jun23.pdf.

beyond the scope of more immediate foreign policy rationales. An increased reliance on these policies at a strategic rather than programmatic level would offer substantial benefits in the form of a sustained presence with a partner, but with a much-reduced risk of entrapment. This was essentially the aim of the Nixon Doctrine, which sought to reduce the direct use of American military power while still providing partners with the means to resist Communism.[11] Similar to the rationale behind the Nixon Doctrine, scarce resources amid future austerity measures would call for the examination of security solutions. Opening this inquiry through initial data analysis might yield important insights as to the viability of such an approach. The logic is akin to the force multiplication dynamic of the U.S. Army Special Forces, where instead of directing all energy to combat power outright, the country utilizes skilled combatants to equip and train host government entities to stand on their own. An infantry battalion may not be necessary if a local partner can be found to provide the same general capability.[12]

Such a notion fits with a return to the past. In 2009, Leslie Gelb thus argued that U.S. policy should consider "situations of strength" from the Truman, Marshall, and Acheson era of the Cold War.[13] This policy model did not seek directly to counter Communist power in China, Eastern Europe, or its influence in the broader decolonization movement. Rather, the emphasis was on shoring up allies in East Asia and Western Europe, an idea very much in line with George Kennan's admonition that containment emphasizes retaining possession of three of what he considered the five "centers of world power" (i.e., the United States, Great Britain, and Japan), while denying a fourth (a united Germany) to the Soviet Union, which comprised the last center.[14] Alternatively, if assistance policies see no substantial benefit in a large-scale manner or are identified with instability, then this option would be limited or precluded. In an increasingly diffuse global system, it is worth formally assessing the degree to which the same approach could apply to building capacity with lesser-developed countries.[15]

[11]Duncan L. Clarke, Daniel B. O'Connor, and Jason D. Ellis, *Send Guns and Money: Security Assistance and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 53–54.

[12]In some ways, this parallels the logic outlined in the "Afghan model" of force employment. The "Afghan model" envisions a light use of specialized ground forces working with indigenous allies and backed by airpower. See Richard Andres, Craig Willis, and Thomas E. Griffith Jr., "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005/2006): 124–60.

[13]Leslie H. Gelb, "It's Time to 'Go to Strength' on Foreign Policy," *Wall Street Journal*, March 21, 2009.

[14]See John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2005), 29.

[15]See Robert M. Gates, "Helping Others Defend Themselves: The Future of U.S. Security Assistance," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2010).

U.S. security assistance in the Middle East and Africa

Among the many active security assistance cases in the Middle East and Africa, Iraq is noteworthy. The United States formally ended military operations in the country in December 2011, following the failure of the two governments to reach a status of forces agreement. Washington would return to the country three years later after the rise of the Islamic State from the near defeat of Al Qaeda in Iraq, which followed the troop "Surge" and Anbar Awakening some three years earlier.[16] In June 2014, Islamic State militants began a series of offensives that overcame the Iraqi Army, and led to the eventual capture of the major cities of Mosul, Tal Afar, Tikrit, and Ramadi. At various stages of this summer campaign, Islamic State militants managed to reach the cities of Kirkuk, Samarra, and even the capital of Baghdad before being repulsed. Observers were shocked to see images of Islamic State militants using captured Iraqi tanks and Humvees in their operations, as the vehicles had originally been supplied by the United States as part of a security assistance package to rebuild the Iraqi Army.[17] Despite investments in resources and training, the 2nd Division of the Iraqi Army, which was deployed in the country's north, evaporated when faced with organized resistance from maneuvering Islamic State fighters. Many of the latter combatants were operating in armed pickup trucks, and had coordinated their conventional attacks with suicide bombers in their ranks.[18] The net result was a wholesale collapse of the ranks as the 2nd Division's soldiers deserted in droves in one of the most lopsided military victories in the Middle East since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.[19]

From the start of military operations in Iraq in 2003 until 2015, the United States had delivered nearly $17 billion in military equipment purchased by Iraq, and had given Baghdad $992.3 million in security assistance for additional equipment and training. As part of this grant aid, Washington had trained 812 Iraqi military officers. At the same time that the Americans were providing this security aid, the United States gave $7.6 billion in economic

[16]The withdrawal of U.S. forces at the time was not anticipated, as there had been plans to maintain a residual force of thousands of military advisers in country. See Joseph Logan, "Last U.S. Troops Leave Iraq, Ending War," *Reuters World News*, December 17, 2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-withdrawal/last-u-s-troops-leave-iraq-ending-war-idUSTRE7BH03320111218. For a discussion of the failure of negotiations to reach a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that would have permitted U.S. soldiers to remain, see Tim Arango and Michael S. Schmidt, "Despite Difficult Tasks, U.S. and Iraq Had Expected Some American Troops to Stay," *New York Times*, October 21, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/22/world/middleeast/united-states-and-iraq-had-not-expected-troops-would-have-to-leave.html.

[17]Gopal Ratnam and Kate Brannen, "Iraq Needs Weapons But Can it Keep Them?" *Foreign Policy*, November 20, 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/20/iraq-needs-weapons-but-can-it-keep-them/.

[18]David Kilcullen, *Blood Year: The Unraveling of Western Counterterrorism* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2016), 77–82.

[19]Much of the collapse was due to a weak officer corps and rampant corruption. Various accounts depict low morale and moves by Prime Minister Maliki to "coup-proof" his forces. See Yasir Abbas and Dan Trombly, "Inside the Collapse of the Iraqi Army's 2nd Division," *War on the Rocks*, July 1, 2014, https://warontherocks.com/2014/07/inside-the-collapse-of-the-iraqi-armys-2nd-division/ and Kilcullen, *Blood Year*, 83–84.

aid to Iraq. How could such a longstanding engagement with a key partner nation translate into such a resounding defeat in battle? Why did a nation with nearly 300,000 men at arms and modern equipment perform so dismally against combatants using pickup trucks and who had just three years prior been all but defeated?

During the same period, in the neighboring Kingdom of Jordan, the United States had supplied $3.2 billion worth of purchased equipment and services, along with nearly $4.5 billion in military aid, for the 111,000 men in the Jordanian armed forces. Part of these grant monies led to the education of 3,561 Jordanian military officers. Washington also provided Amman with $6.3 billion in economic assistance. Jordan does not face the same acute threat that Iraq did when clashing with the Islamic State, but the Kingdom does have a host of security challenges, including ongoing conflict with the Islamic State in both neighboring Syria and Iraq, a substantial refugee population on its border, an increasing, politically active, Islamist political bloc calling for political reforms, and generally limited domestic economic growth opportunities.[20] Despite its share of challenges, Jordan has maintained a generally stable security environment amid the wider regional unrest that surrounds it.

There are certainly clear differences between the two cases that in part account for the differential outcome of the two states. Iraq has a new regime since the end of the war that is fractionalized along ethno-sectarian lines, with consequential effects on social cohesion and its constitutional order.[21] Besides these obstacles, Iraq has yet to establish institutionalized channels for security aid. In comparison, Jordan is a hereditary kingdom with its monarch's legitimacy verified through a direct bloodline to Muhammad, and that is supported by an active and heavily institutionalized security sector. Despite these important differences, it is not only the magnitude of security assistance provided that affects outcomes of overall political stability, but the nature and effects of that aid. The magnitude of aid provision alone can only partially explain the varying performance outcomes of states. In particular, this empirical research argues that allocations for security education and training will better support peaceful outcomes and lead to greater stability in a country than outright expenditures on weaponry.

Overview of U.S. security assistance programs

Security assistance programs broadly conceived are those that encompass all transfers of security equipment or services to foreign nations. In the United States, the specific definition "refers to a group of programs by which the

[20]Osama Al Sharif, "Jordan's Islamists Win Big in Local Polls Amid Voter Apathy," *Al-Monitor*, August 22, 2017, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/08/jordan-local-elections-low-turnout-islamists-win.html.

[21]I am appreciative of an anonymous reviewer for raising these points.

United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services to foreign nations by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in futherance of national policies and objectives."[22] Section 622 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 specifies that although the aid may have a military dimension, the foreign relations aspect of the assistance gives the U.S. State Department responsibility for managing the programs.[23] In practice, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) of the Department of Defense administers the programs. The DSCA works closely with the individual armed services to implement its policies. The United States government manages and administers a plethora of security assistance programs, including those that range from the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction to international law enforcement and counterdrug operations, as well as peacekeeping operations. Though the scope of such programs is wide-ranging, this research examines three established programs that have a direct security dimension.[24] These are Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and International Military Education and Training (IMET). An additional program that has indirect security implications is the Economic Support Fund (ESF), which the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) administers. The Defense Department names these four accounts as examples of security assistance.[25]

FMS is fiscally the largest of the policy tools under review. This system deals with the export of conventional armaments and related services to nations through a managed system of review, financing, and delivery. The aims of the program are to enhance the security capabilities of partner states and to secure commercial contracts for U.S. economic interests. In FMS, the U.S. government is effectively the "middle man" between the American

[22]U.S. Department of Defense. *Joint Operations*. Joint Publication 3–0 (Sept. 17, 2006 Incorporating Change 1, February 13, 2008), VII6-VII7.

[23]House Office of the Legislative Council, *Foreign Assistance Act of 1961* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), https://legcounsel.house.gov/Comps/Foreign%20Assistance%20Act%20Of%201961.pdf.

[24]Clarke, *Send Guns and Money*, 11–22. An additional program concerns the Defense Department in its need to engage foreign nations as part of combat operations. Specific to this category is Section 1206 funding based on the National Defense Authorization Act of 2006, which uses Defense Department monies to support counter-terrorism (CT) operations abroad. See Nina M. Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: 'Section 1206' Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service Report RS22855, 2014), https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22855.pdf. The nature of the program is contentious, since Section 622 of the Foreign Assistance Act dictates that supervisory responsibilities rest with the U.S. State Department. This raised a conundrum in that the State Department process was more programmatic in nature, where at any given point in time the administration must manage last year's allocations, justify the current year, and begin requesting for next year. Some officials saw the slower, more deliberate pace of the fiscal year calendar as inadequate to meet the immediate needs of the Defense Department. In the interim, a "dual-key" option was adopted where Defense Department monies and administration continued with State's permission. There are added concerns that the program was a means for the Defense Department to encroach on State's prerogative per the Foreign Assistance Act. See Cindy Williams and Gordon Adams, *Strengthening Statecraft and Security: Reforming U.S. Planning and Resource Allocation* (MIT Security Studies Program Occasional Paper, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, June 2008), 21.

[25]U.S. Department of Defense. *Joint Operations*. Joint Publication 3–0 (Sept. 17, 2006 Incorporating Change 1, February 13, 2008), VII-7.

defense contractor and the foreign government, and it charges a small percentage fee to administer the program. The FMS account includes sales of weaponry, munitions, training, maintenance, and construction costs. The benefit of having Washington involved in the process is a guarantee and assurance of the deliverables to the importer. Deals are less likely to fall through or move to arbitration, since it is the federal government and not the contractor that acts as the guarantor and assumes the risk. In the 2015 fiscal year, FMS sales totaled over $40.5 billion, with deliveries totaling over $17 billion.[26] American authorities announced the largest planned set of FMS acquisitions in May 2017, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeking to purchase nearly $110 billion worth of weaponry and services in the subsequent years.[27] FMS programs must obtain approval from the Department of State to ensure that the deals are consistent with U.S. foreign policy objectives, and Congress must be notified of sales.

While FMS is a prevalent system for foreign states to purchase American arms, an alternative option that is not security assistance is via Direct Commercial Sales (DCS). Here, the U.S. contractors and the purchasing nations deal directly with one another to conduct the sale. Sales are regulated by the State Department to ensure consistency with Washington's foreign policy objectives and that they adhere to U.S. export laws in the defense trade. Beyond this licensing and approval, the transfer is conducted between the American vendor and the purchasing state.

The next substantial program, Foreign Military Financing, is distinct from FMS in that it is a grant-based security assistance program.[28] FMF monies are provided to states that align with American policy objectives and have less economic means to purchase defense articles or services. The aim of the program is to modernize the capabilities of the partner nation, increase interoperability with U.S. forces, and reward states for participating in Washington's initiatives. All funds for the purchase of equipment and services are borne by the U.S. government, with the stipulation that goods and services will be purchased from American vendors. Although most of the countries that receive FMF assistance are considered discretionary and there is some leeway to reallocate funds, the governments of Israel and Egypt are earmarked by law to receive substantial amounts. The aggregate FMF account reached $5.2 billion in 2015, yet typically 70–80 percent of the funds in a fiscal year are set aside for Israel and Egypt as a reward for the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty that followed the 1978 Camp David Agreement. In

[26]Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Construction Sales and Other Security Cooperation Historical Facts as of September 30, 2015* (Washington, DC: Financial Policy and Analysis Business Operations, 2017), 3, http://www.dsca.mil/sites/default/files/fiscal_year_series_-_30_september_2015.pdf.

[27]Aaron Mehta, "Revealed: Trump's $110 Billion Weapons List for the Saudis," *Defense News*, June 8, 2017, http://www.defensenews.com/breaking-news/2017/06/08/revealed-trump-s-110-billion-weapons-list-for-the-saudis/.

[28]The Arms Export Control Act of 1976 authorizes the FMF program. See U.S. Department of State, *The Arms Export Control Act* (Washington, DC: Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, 2016), http://pmddtc.state.gov/regulations_laws/aeca.html.

2015, Israel accounted for $3.1 billion and Egypt $1.3 billion.[29] These figures combined come to approximately 81 percent of that year's total FMF budget.

The third major security assistance account is International Military and Education Training. Like FMF, IMET is a grant program. In contrast to FMF, IMET's main purpose is to expose foreign military officers to the American defense establishment, as well as to foster improved relations at the upper echelons of their command structure. This is accomplished by funding the training and education of military officers at American staff, war, and regional colleges.[30] Students are exposed to the same professional military education and curriculum as their American classmates. Typically, the officers selected for the program by the host governments are their top performers and are destined for advancement in their respective defense establishments.[31] IMET was a particular favorite of former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who described its value as "allowing other nations to see our [the United States'] process, warts and all."[32] Whereas the majority of funding is directed to these efforts, approximately 11 percent a year goes specifically to technical training rather than war college coursework.[33] By virtue of the fact that the expenses to cover travel and education are considerably less than those required to purchase arms, IMET's total allocation is modest in comparison to the other programs. In 2015, the program's budget was $104.2 million.[34]

As with FMF, IMET is also implemented by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency in close cooperation with the armed services. Despite its smaller budget, it is the most widely supported program due to its impact. In 1995, John Cope of the Institute for National Strategic Studies at National Defense University argued that IMET nets significant returns for relatively minor fiscal investment, particularly in the long term.[35] Prior quantitative research of security cooperation, including education, notes a higher correlation than other forms of foreign assistance with reductions in fragility.[36] There is also strong evidence to consider that such policies alter the perception of participants to embrace professionalization. In one study, scholars determined that increasing the numbers of officers who undergo professional military education in the United States correlates with reduced probabilities of coup d'états.[37]

[29]Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Historical Facts*, 3.

[30]Respective examples of each are the U.S. Air University, the U.S. Air War College, and the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies.

[31]Carol Atkinson, *Military Soft Power: Public Diplomacy through Military Educational Exchanges* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 94–102.

[32]Conversation with former Security Assistance Team Manager, U.S. Department of State, July 2008.

[33]Carol Atkinson, *Military Soft Power*, 61.

[34]Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Historical Facts*, 5.

[35]John A. Cope, *International Military Education and Training: An Assessment* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, October 1995), 63.

[36]Michael J. McNerney et al., *Assessing Security Cooperation as a Preventive Tool* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), 93. Specifically, the authors find that "…security cooperation expenditures on education have the strongest correlation with improvements in countries' fragility …."

[37]Douglas Gibler and Tomislav Z. Ruby, "U.S. Professional Military Education and Democratization Abroad," *European Journal of International Relations* 16, no. 3 (2010): 339–64.

Research by Carol Atkinson examines the soft power benefits that accrue through the IMET program. Atkinson posits the mechanism as contributing to the socialization of officers, while also noting its value in networking opportunities. Simply put, IMET allows American officers to develop personal military-to-military contacts with foreign counterparts. Atkinson's research related to IMET determined that 98 percent of surveyed participants expected the program to further their own career advancement.[38] As an example of the impact of the program, she cites that officers from Middle Eastern countries reported returning to command over 1,500 subordinates on average, the highest of all regions in the sample. In the 2015 fiscal year, over 6,000 students were trained worldwide with 1,410 of this number coming from the Middle East and 767 from Africa.[39]

Similar in style, but directed to states specifically dealing with counterterrorism, is the Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) with a budget allocation of $23.3 million in 2015. That program trained nearly 3,000 students the same year, of whom 256 were from countries in the greater Middle East and over 400 from Africa.[40]

The final category of assistance surveyed is an account of economic aid. The Economic Support Fund primarily takes the form of cash transfers to nations, but also includes limited development and commodity import assistance. Despite being economic in nature, its distribution has strong foreign policy rationales, and it is notably distinct from most development assistance programs for this reason.[41] The total ESF distribution for 2015 was approximately $5.1 billion.[42] Historically, Washington has used ESF both to reward states for supporting its policies, such as securing access to bases, and to shore up economically weak allies in order to prevent their collapse. An example of the former was ESF assistance to Egypt to make peace with Israel. A case of the latter is Jordan, where ESF allocation for 2015 was $594.7 million and increased to $812.4 billion the following year in order to help manage Syrian refugees, who had fled to Jordan amid their civil war.[43] Analysts estimate that approximately half of these ESF funds service the country's debt.[44]

[38]Carol Atkinson, *Military Soft Power*, 94.

[39]Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Historical Facts*, 7.

[40]Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Historical Facts*, 5–7; U.S. Department of Defense, *Regional Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program Report to Congress, Fiscal Year 2015* (Arlington, VA: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict [OASD-SO/LIC], 2015), 2.

[41]Clarke, *Send Guns and Money*, 18–20.

[42]United States Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants: Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945–September 30, 2015* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 12, https://explorer.usaid.gov/reports.html.

[43]Jeremy M. Sharp, *Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service Report RL33546, 2017), 15, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33546.pdf. Also see "U.S. Plans to Boost Aid to Jordan to $1 Billion per Year," *Reuters Politics*, February 3, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-jordan-aid/u-s-plans-to-boost-aid-to-jordan-to-1-billion-per-year-idUSKBN0L72ET20150203.

[44]Sharp, *Jordan*, 16.

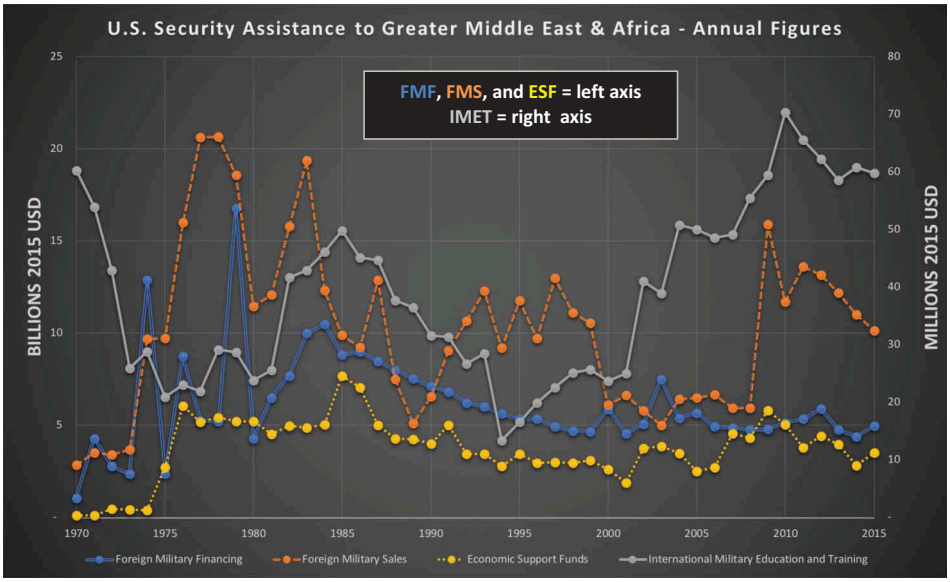

Figure 1. U.S. security assistance to the Greater Middle East and Africa.[45]

Figure 1 depicts an overview of assistance provided to Middle Eastern and African countries. Notable trends in the aid include an increase in material assistance to the region from after the 1973 Arab-Israeli War until the U.S. intervention in and withdrawal from Lebanon in 1983. Afterwards, general grant aid levels declined until after the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and the onset of the "Global War on Terrorism." At this point, aid levels remained relatively static, with the exception of IMET, which grew considerably as part of general counter-terrorism policies. Aid levels then gradually declined after 2011 and the initial U.S. drawdown from Iraq. These data offer a broad overview of security assistance levels; however, the highly aggregated nature of the data does not allow for assessing the specific effects at the country level, as certain states, such as Egypt and Israel, account for the bulk of overall grant assistance.

Data analysis

Data and model specification

In order to test the effects of U.S. security assistance in reducing political instability in the Middle East and Africa, an empirical model was constructed using cross-sectional time-series multivariate logistic regression. The units of

[45]Figures are derived from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Historical Facts*, 5–7; U.S. Department of Defense, *Regional Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program Report to Congress, Fiscal Year 2015* (Arlington, VA: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict [OASD-SO/LIC], 2015). The measures are converted from current to constant 2015 dollars using the average urban consumer price index for each year. See Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Price Index–All Urban Consumers (Current Series)," https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CUUR0000SA0.

observation are country-years (e.g., "Iraq 2008"), and the standard errors are clustered by each country.[46] The full model specification includes a sample of seventy-one states of the expanded Middle East and Africa regions in the period from 1970 to 2015. Table 1 lists the countries in the sample.[47] The full model specification is defined by the following dependent and independent variables, which are described in the next sections.

Dependent variables

The concept of political instability is wide-ranging and multidimensional. This research adopts a narrow definition of security to include immediate threats to life and status quo governance, and this analysis assesses three separate measures to capture different dimensions of international and domestic violence. The data come from the Center for Systemic Peace's Political Instability Task Force. Consistent with the task force's earlier work, the data are operationalized in binary format such that a 1 indicates the presence of an incidence in a country-year and 0 marks the absence of any such event.[48] The first dependent variable captures the incidence of international conflict, and is derived from the Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) dataset for interstate conflict.[49] The data codes cases of interstate violence or war, with

[46]Nathaniel Beck, Jonathan Katz, and Richard Tucker, "Taking Time Seriously: Time-Series-Cross-Section Analysis with a Binary Dependent Variable," *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 4 (1998): 1264–74. Cubic splines are used in conjunction with the grouped duration data to correct for the interdependence of the observations across time and space.

[47]This expanded concept of the Middle East includes the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Pakistan. It was adopted in order to incorporate greater geographic variation using these sub-regions.

[48]See Jack A. Goldstone, Robert H. Bates, David L. Epstein, Ted Robert Gurr, Michael B. Lustik, Monty G. Marshall, Jay Ufelder, and Mark Woodward, "A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability," *American Journal of Political Science* 54, no. 1 (2010): 190–208. These scholars incorporate case-control techniques to predict rare events such as coups. Such corrections are unnecessary for this data, given that the geographic sampling includes the Greater Middle East and Africa. What is a rare event in a global model is not so in this restricted set. There are 2,795 country-years in the data for interstate conflict and 2,750 for civil conflict and coups. Of these, there are 122 cases of interstate conflict (4.4 percent), 900 cases of domestic conflict (32.7 percent), and 281 coup events (10.2 percent). In writing about the need for rare events corrections, methodologists Gary King and Langche Zeng note that, "The effects of these methods will be largest when the number of observations is small (under 5 percent or so)." See "Logistic Regression in Rare Events Data," *Political Analysis* 9, no. 2 (2001): 157. Based on King and Zeng's criteria, only the international conflict variable might require rare events corrections. A robustness check for this model using King and Zeng's Rare Events Logit determined that the coefficients and levels of significance were unchanged, only the dummy variable coding for Egypt changed from statistically significant to insignificant. The results from this model can be provided upon request. In addition to allowing controls for interdependence, a binary coding scheme further allows for more direct comparisons between the first two dependent variables of interstate and domestic conflict, and the third of coup activity. Tables A.2 and A.3 in the Appendix list the ordered regression models that maintain the original data coding for the severity of conflict, albeit without statistical controls for interdependence. Despite this, the results are largely unchanged, with the exception of military expenditure and per capita GDP becoming statistically significant in the interstate conflict model.

[49]Monty G. Marshall and Gabrielle Elzinga-Marshall, *Global Report 2017: Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility* (Vienna, Austria: Center for Systemic Peace, August 27, 2017), 25–28; 52. The data may be accessed online at http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html.

Table 1. Data sample, 1970–2015.

Countries in Sample and Number of Country-Year Events (Interstate Conflict, Domestic Conflict, Coup Activity)			
Cape Verde (0, 0, 1)	Cntrl. Afr. Rep. (0, 15, 8)	Lesotho (0, 0, 9)	Iraq (26, 35, 7)
Guinea Bissau (0, 2, 12)	Chad (0, 31, 12)	Botswana (0, 0, 0)	Egypt (2, 13, 2)
Equatorial Guinea (0, 10, 6)	Repub. Congo (0, 6, 6)	Eswatini (0, 0, 2)	Syria (3, 10, 2)
Gambia (0, 1, 7)	Dem. Rep. Congo (2, 33, 2)	Madagascar (0, 0, 5)	Lebanon (11, 19, 1)
Mali (0, 11, 6)	Uganda (9, 34, 5)	Comoros (0, 0, 11)	Jordan (1, 1, 0)
Senegal (1, 8, 0)	Kenya (0, 7, 1)	Mauritius (0, 0, 0)	Israel (12, 45, 0)
Benin (0, 0, 8)	Tanzania (2, 0, 2)	Morocco (0, 15, 2)	Saudi Arabia (0, 5, 0)
Mauritania (1, 5, 11)	Burundi (0, 19, 8)	Algeria (0, 14, 0)	Yemen (0, 14, 0)
Niger (0, 8, 8)	Rwanda (7, 10, 1)	Tunisia (0, 0, 1)	Kuwait (2, 0, 0)
Ivory Coast (0, 7, 6)	Djibouti (0, 4, 2)	Sudan (0, 38, 13)	Bahrain (0, 0, 0)
Guinea (0, 2, 9)	Ethiopia (3, 34, 3)	Iran (11, 16, 2)	Qatar (0, 0, 3)
Burkina Faso (0, 0, 5)	Angola (2, 31, 1)	Turkey (0, 39, 3)	U.A.E. (0, 0, 1)
Liberia (0, 13, 4)	Zambia (0, 0, 4)	Cyprus (0, 1, 1)	Oman (0, 5, 2)
Sierra Leone (0, 11, 7)	Zimbabwe (5, 15, 0)	Armenia (4, 0, 2)	Turkmenistan (0, 0, 0)
Ghana (0, 2, 7)	Malawi (0, 0, 2)	Georgia (1, 4, 2)	Tajikistan (0, 7, 1)
Togo (0, 0 6)	South Africa (0, 15, 2)	Azerbaijan (4, 7, 2)	Kyrgyzstan (0, 1, 1)
Cameroon (0, 3, 5)	Namibia (0, 0, 0)		Uzbekistan (0, 0, 0)
Nigeria (0, 35, 10)			Kazakhstan (0, 0, 0)
Gabon (0, 0, 0)			Pakistan (2, 38, 4)

each of the two categories set to magnitude scales that range from 1 to 10.[50] These scores are comparable across time, and an incident is coded as political instability if either of the two scores is greater than zero. This indicates that the state experienced any level of violence or warfare in the year, and the range covers 1970 through 2015. The second dependent variable captures the incidence of domestic conflict, and is also derived from MEPV. The coding is based on cases of violence or warfare, be it civil or ethnic in nature. The scale for each of these four categories runs from 1–10. Scores are comparable across time, and an incident is coded as political instability if any of the four scores is greater than zero. The third dependent variable is drawn from the Coup d'État Events dataset.[51] The dataset accounts for coup activity and this research design codes any thwarted, failed, or successful coups as an incident for the country-year.

[50]Monty G. Marshall, *Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) and Conflict Regions, 1946–2016* (Vienna, Austria: Center for Systemic Peace, July 25, 2017), 3–11. A score of 0 reflects no significant violence in the year. A score of 1 on this measure includes "sporadic or expressive political violence," with deaths usually less than two thousand. An example of a "1" coding is the 1999 Kargil Conflict between India and Pakistan in Kashmir. The data webpage notes that, "Major episodes of political violence" involve at least 500 "directly-related" fatalities and reach a level of intensity in which political violence is both systematic and sustained (a base rate of 100 "directly-related deaths per annum"). See Monty G. Marshall, "Major Episodes of Political Violence 1946–2016," Center for Systemic Peace, https://www.systemicpeace.org/warlist/warlist.htm (accessed June 15, 2017). A score of 10 would reflect nuclear annihilation in an interstate conflict, and genocide in a domestic setting. Examples of the highest values of international conflict in the data used for this sample are 6 for Iran and Iraq during their war from 1980–1988, and 10 for domestic conflict for Rwanda during the 1994 genocide.

[51]Marshall Marshall, *Coup D'état Events*, 1–3. The data may be accessed online at http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html.

Independent variables

The research emphasizes a set of U.S. security assistance figures as the primary independent variables.[52] The data were compiled from published Defense Security Cooperation Agency figures in the period from 1970 to 2015. The data are coded in panel data format for each country-year, and the figures are converted from current to constant 2015 dollars in order to facilitate comparison across time. The operational variables list the grant spending for both Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training, and also delivery figures for Foreign Military Sales.[53] Delivery figures are used over the sales figures, as there are instances where monies allocated in a fiscal year are not delivered until subsequent years. The data account for these multi-year deliveries, and reflect the actual movement of the deliveries in a year. The delivery variables are distinct from the grant accounts, and account for the overall volume of military trade between the U.S. and each country. Data for the Economic Support Fund are included to account for the amount of general foreign aid received by a state.[54] The natural log is used for this continuous data as it transforms the uneven distribution of the data into a useable symmetric distribution for regression analysis.[55] This is because the data are highly skewed, and the descriptive statistics of the untransformed data are located in Table A.1 of the Appendix. There are strong reasons to expect that a state will behave significantly differently in its security policies based upon the different orders of magnitudes of assistance received. For example, states such as Egypt and Israel receive billions in assistance each year, whereas states such as Lesotho only receive $14,000. All independent variables were lagged two years to minimize the impact of endogeneity, where political instability would in turn lead to an increase in allocated security

[52]None of these aid or military variables indicated multicollinearity. The highest pairwise correlations were Foreign Military Financing and Economic Support Fund (0.66), Foreign Military Sales and military expenditure (0.65), and military expenditure with military sales (0.41). The highest variance inflation factor (VIF) was 4.46 for military personnel, below the critical threshold of 10.

[53]The data were derived from Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Historical Facts*. Military Assistance Program monies predate Foreign Military Financing, and were added to the FMF data as grant-based military assistance in constructing that variable. Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) monies were added to the International Military Education and Training figures for the coding of the IMET variable as both program entailed training foreign officers. Supplemental spending programs were added to their appropriate country accounts. These included monies from Iraq war supplementals, Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF), Iraqi Train and Equip Funding (ITEF), Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund (PCCF), and the 2003 Uzbekistan supplemental. All figures were converted from current to constant 2015 dollars using the average urban consumer price index for each year. See Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Price Index–All Urban Consumers (Current Series)," available online at https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CUUR0000SA0.

[54]United States Agency for International Development, "U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants," https://explorer.usaid.gov/reports.html.

[55]Lewis W. Snider, "Do Arms Exports Contribute to Savings in Defense Spending?" in *Marketing Security Assistance*, eds. David Louscher and Michael Salomone. (Lexington, KY: Lexington Books, 1987), 48. Dr. Snider notes that, "Possible distortions may be introduced by highly skewed variables and extreme values. Such distortions can be even more serious when magnitudes of the variables for some subjects (here, countries) are far higher than for others. The problem can be minimized by using logarithmic transformations of the variables to be used in the data analysis… the result is a more symmetrical distribution." A value of 1 is added to observations with zero before taking the natural log, since the log of 1 is zero. This preserves the rank of the data as well as the zero observations.

Table 2. Aggregated security assistance on instability.

Pooled Logit Regression	Interstate Conflict (MEPV) 1	Domestic Conflict (MEPV) 2	Coup Activity 3
ln(Security Assistance) t-2	1.040*	1.078***	0.987
	(0.027)	(0.018)	(0.014)
Number of Peace Years	0.355***	0.303***	0.676***
	(0.033)	(0.020)	(0.053)
Constant	0.808	2.774***	0.278***
	(0.289)	(0.472)	(0.042)
Observations	3,197	3,197	3,523
Countries	77	77	79
Pseudo R-Squared	0.46	0.60	0.07
Psuedo Log-Likelihood	−267.78	−708.75	−846.72
Correctly Predicted	97%	94%	93%

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
Constant estimates baseline odds.
Log odds ratio reported instead of coefficients.
Spline odds ratios unlisted.
Robust standard errors clustered on country.

assistance. This also ensures that there is a time lag to allow aid monies and deliveries to manifest in the security forces of each state. The dependent variables are regressed on the aggregated sum of each country's FMS, FMF, IMET, and ESF accounts, with a control for the number of peace years of each country. These results appear in Table 2, where the odds ratio for each independent variable is reported rather than coefficients in order to ease interpretation. Because the logistic function is nonlinear and sigmoidal, coefficients do not represent a baseline slope as per a linear regression. For variables that have been transformed using the natural log (ln), the odds ratio should be read as a multiplier of the odds of the event happening from baseline, for each 1 percent increase in the variable. Figures greater than 1 indicate greater odds of the event happening and figures less than 1 demonstrate reduced odds. In model 1 of Table 2, each 1 percent increase in assistance monies correlates to a 4 percent rise in the probability of interstate conflict two years later. Model 2 demonstrates that the increase in probability for domestic conflict is nearly 8 percent, and there is no statistically significant relationship for coup activity in model 3.

Control variables

The research design for the full model incorporates measures that influence the dependent variables of political instability. These control variables account for significant traits that affect a state's capacity to provide for its own security and ensure general political stability. The variables include the number of U.S. military personnel deployed,[56] the size of the government's armed forces, and the level of

[56]Tim Kane, *Global U.S. Troop Deployment, 1950–2005* (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation Center for Data Analysis Report 06–02, 2006), http://www.heritage.org/defense/report/global-us-troop-deployment-1950-2005. Data for 2008 through 2015 were derived from "Military and Civilian Personnel by Service/Agency by State/Country," *DoD Personnel, Workforce Reports & Publications,* U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center, https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_reports.jsp (accessed September 19, 2017). Data for the years 2006 and 2007 were imputed.

the state's military expenditure.[57] These variables additionally use log transformation, given the highly skewed nature of the data. There are cases such as Iraq and Afghanistan where many thousands of American forces are in country at any given time, and there are others such as Tunisia with only thirty-five U.S. troops in country. The same logic further applies to the country's level of defense spending and its total number of personnel. The level of economic development of the state is measured by the natural log of a state's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and is obtained from the Penn World Tables version 9.0 dataset. The data are in purchasing power parity for real GDP 2011 U.S. dollars. As a result, they are comparable across both time (inflation) and space (exchange rates).[58] The measure serves as a proxy for economic development, and the sample ranges from 1970 to 2014. The level of political freedom in the country is measured by the Polity data project's 20-point scale that runs from full autocracy to full democracy. These control variables are lagged two years to minimize the effects of reverse causality, and all of these control variables, save the Polity index score, are logged.[59]

Additional controls are implemented using dummy variables. This includes a measure to track the number of states bordering the country, as well as effects for notable sub-regions and cases. Israel and Egypt are highlighted, since these two countries have accounted for the bulk of the FMF and ESF budgets since the early 1980s, following the Egypt-Israel Peace Agreement.[60] Dummies are also coded for Iraq and Pakistan, since both have been significant recipients of assistance in recent decades. Finally, dummies are coded for former Soviet Union states, sub-Saharan African countries, and monarchies. The descriptive statistics for the data sample can be found in Table A.1 of the Appendix.

Results

The pooled logit regression results for each event type are listed in Table 3.[61] Across the models, over 90 percent of the empirical cases are correctly

[57]The military expenditure and military personnel data covers 1970 to 2012 and is derived from the Correlates of War Project, "National Material Capabilities Dataset Version 5.0," http://www.correlatesofwar.org/. For the companion publication, see David Singer, "Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States," *International Interactions* 14 no. 2 (1988): 115–132. For consistency, military expenditure and personnel data for 2013 through 2015 were acquired from editions of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance* (London, England: Routledge, 2016), as this was the source data for National Materials Capabilities dataset.

[58]Robert C. Feenstra, Robert Inklaar, and Marcel P. Timmer, "The Next Generation of the Penn World Table," *American Economic Review* 105, no. 10 (2015): 3150–82. http://www.rug.nl/ggdc/productivity/pwt/.

[59]Moreover, the lag ensures that the effects of the monies are realized in-country, since the assistance figures are for each fiscal year, and the federal fiscal year differs from the calendar year of the rest of the data by three months.

[60]Clarke, *Send Guns and Money*, 169–187.

[61]The empirical results are robust when using an alternate model specification of random effects panel regression. In this technique, the differences within and between countries are assessed, and the results are interpreted as the average effect of a change in the variable both across time and between countries. The model assumes that omitted variables (relevant factors that have not been accounted for) are independent of the included variables. The technique allows categorical variables to be included in the analysis. For details of this method, see Paul D. Allison, *Fixed Effects Regression Models* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), 28–48.

Table 3. Disaggregated security assistance on instability.

Pooled Logit Regression	Interstate Conflict (MEPV) 3	Domestic Conflict (MEPV) 4	Coup Activity 5
ln(Foreign Military Sales) t-2	1.150***	1.055	1.082**
	(0.056)	(0.039)	(0.033)
ln(Foreign Military Finance) t-2	1.023	1.105***	1.011
	(0.041)	(0.035)	(0.027)
ln(Int. Mil. Educ. & Train.) t-2	0.960	0.892***	0.985
	(0.103)	(0.039)	(0.035)
ln(Economic Support Fund) t-2	0.998	1.008	0.936***
	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.020)
ln(U.S. Troops Deployed) t-2	0.757***	1.058	0.840**
	(0.073)	(0.066)	(0.063)
Democracy t-2	0.993	1.006	0.998
	(0.032)	(0.020)	(0.015)
ln(Military Personnel) t-2	1.148	0.936	1.058
	(0.258)	(0.125)	(0.103)
ln(Military Expenditure) t-2	1.289	1.323***	1.010
	(0.216)	(0.134)	(0.046)
ln(per Capita GDP) t-2	0.658	0.615***	0.810**
	(0.182)	(0.081)	(0.084)
Sub-Sahara Africa	0.934	0.918	3.073***
	(0.563)	(0.307)	(1.051)
Former Soviet Union	0.584	0.340***	1.642
	(0.253)	(0.136)	(0.621)
Monarchy	0.355	0.246***	0.931
	(0.266)	(0.108)	(0.239)
Egypt	0.231**	0.190***	1.354
	(0.153)	(0.080)	(0.433)
Israel	0.595		
	(0.686)		
Pakistan	0.106***	0.909	2.070*
	(0.056)	(0.286)	(0.784)
Iraq	2.420***	1.805**	3.389***
	(0.631)	(0.472)	(1.045)
Number of Bordering States	0.899	1.051	1.007
	(0.076)	(0.054)	(0.038)
Number of Peace Years	0.416***	0.338***	0.704***
	(0.039)	(0.025)	(0.067)
Constant	0.850	4.347	0.387
	(2.032)	(4.975)	(0.352)
Observations	2,795	2,750	2,750
Countries	72	71	71
Pseudo R-Squared	0.51	0.63	0.11
Psuedo Log-Likelihood	−201.36	−546.45	−682.98
Correctly Predicted	98%	94%	92%

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
Constant estimates baseline odds.
Standard errors clustered on country.
Spline odds ratios unlisted to save space.
Log odds ratio reported instead of coefficients.

predicted. Model 3 depicts a highly significant 15 percent increase in the odds of interstate conflict two years after each 1 percent increase in U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS). This was a surprising finding, as the expected

effect of such a hardware-intensive account was to have no positive or negative effect overall. None of the grant-based assistance programs had any effect. Looking to U.S. troops deployed in the country, every 1 percent increase in U.S. troops deployed corresponds to a 24 percent decrease in the odds of interstate conflict, and the relationship is highly significant. Interestingly, the level of military expenditure, the number of men at arms, and the state's level of economic development had no effect on its conflict propensity with other states. Moving to the categorical coding, the results should be interpreted as shifting from a baseline category of all states to the specific category of the variable. For instance, Egypt compared to other countries sees its odds of interstate conflict reduced by 77 percent, capturing President Sadat's 1972 ejection of Soviet forces and the shift in alignment toward the United States. As well, Pakistan saw a reduced probability of interstate conflict compared to the other countries in the sample. The opposite effect is evident with Iraq, where much of the country's history included Saddam Hussein's conflicts with neighboring Iran, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Iraq saw a 142 percent increase in the odds of conflict since 1970 when compared to other countries. Each additional year of peace after any event corresponds to a 58 percent reduction in the odds of conflict.

Returning to the 15 percent increase in interstate conflict identified with FMS, it is likely an indirect accident of FMS rather than the direct aim of the U.S. to support proxy war. States that seek weapons through the FMS system tend to be regional powers with greater means to finance their purchases.[62] This logic indicates that greater sales of weapons (FMS) allow states to have a more independent and assertive foreign policy regarding their own international relations, even though this can go against stated U.S. government aims of desiring overall regional stability. A historical example is Israel, which received over $3.3 billion in FMS deliveries in 1977 and then launched Operation Litani to invade the south of Lebanon in 1978. The objective was to prevent the Palestinian Liberation Organization from using Lebanese territory to stage attacks against Israel. A more contemporary example is in the United Arab Emirates' 2014 airstrikes against Islamist fighters in Libya, and Saudi and Emirati 2015 airstrikes against Iranian-backed Houthi targets in the Yemeni Civil War.[63] Warplanes and munitions acquired through FMS enabled the kingdoms in their war against the Houthis. Arguably, FMS sales were not made for the purpose of enabling Saudi and Emirati offensive actions, but

[62]This finding may in part be driven by the Shah of Iran, whose country received close to $7 billion in arms sales in the year of the revolution (1979) that was followed by the Iran-Iraq War. It is also likely that Israel and Lebanon's purchase of American arms through FMS during the 1982 Lebanon War played a role.

[63]"Egypt, UAE Carried out Tripoli Air Strikes: U.S. Officials," *Reuters World News*, August 25, 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-airstrikes/egypt-uae-carried-out-tripoli-air-strikes-u-s-officials-idUSKBN0GP1VJ20140825 and "Factbox: Saudi-led Coalition against Yemen's Houthis." *Reuters World News*, April 10, 2015, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-coalition-factbox/factbox-saudi-led-coalition-against-yemens-houthis-idUSKBN0N11F220150410.

rather to deter Iran from direct action. The forty-five-year sample period from 1970 to 2015 and the lack of Saudi and Emirati involvement in interstate conflict during many decades imply that FMS in these cases was not designed as a means to wage war by proxy, but rather to focus on maintaining a regional balance.

Continued examination of the other stability categories points to mixed effects, depending on the dimension of political instability. When looking to the effects on domestic conflict (model 4), two U.S. programs had countervailing results. The grant aid of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) featured an 11 percent increase in the odds of civil conflict; however, the grant aid of the International Military Education and Training (IMET) account had an 11 percent reduction in these odds. What is especially noteworthy is the overall fiscal difference in these programs, with FMF costing millions of dollars per country, whereas IMET accounts are measured in thousands. Grant-based programs tend to direct funds to states that cannot afford the capability, but have a need. Subsequently, FMF recipient states are more likely to find themselves involved in managing local security threats that manifest in civil conflict. Historical examples are apparent in Lebanon in the early stages of its civil war and Turkey in its insurgency campaign against the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK). In the long run, increased FMF expenditures did not see reductions in violence, as purported by the program. IMET, on the other hand, saw such a decline.[64] Further disparities in the odds of civil conflict are seen in military expenditures (32 percent increase) and economic development (38 percent decrease). The categorical measures pointed to the reduced odds in former Soviet countries (66 percent), monarchies (75 percent), and Egypt (81 percent), but an 81 percent increase with Iraq. No results were obtained for Israel, since every year of its sample was marked by domestic conflict with various Palestinian militant groups, primarily the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Hamas. Without variation, it was impossible to calculate results.

Shifting to assessing the effects on coup propensity in a country (model 5), each 1 percent increase in FMS was associated with an 8 percent increase in the odds of such activity. Notably, this was the only U.S. program that had this type of negative effect on adverse regime transfer, and could be an artifact of a strengthened military officer corps that is emboldened to take extra-constitutional action against its national leadership. Conversely, U.S. Economic Support Fund (ESF) monies actually reduced coup propensity by 6 percent, as did U.S. troops deployments (16 percent reduction). The geographic areas that were most coup-prone relative to the other countries in the sample were sub-Saharan Africa, Pakistan, and Iraq.

[64]This finding supports the work of Atkinson, Military Soft Power, 2014; and is contrary to the findings of Jesse D. Savage and Jonathan D. Caverley, "When Human Capital Threatens the Capitol: Foreign Aid in the Form of Military Training and Coups," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 4 (2017): 542–57.

Discussion

This article has noted how Iraq's 2014 experience implied that its security assistance enterprise was an abject failure. How could a state that had spent nearly $18 billion on security perform so dismally? The model coefficients indicate that, with respect to security assistance, Iraq's failure was not so much the lack of equipment but an overemphasis on military hardware at the expense of software.[65] A direct comparison of the two states shows that while Iraq was larger and better funded on the FMS accounts, Jordan's IMET allocation was notably higher than that of Iraq. Despite only having one-third of the same military personnel as Iraq, Jordan had over four times its number of officers trained within the same time period. In terms of assistance spending, Jordan's FMF allocation was substantially higher than Iraq's ($4.5 billion for Jordan compared to $1 billion for Iraq), whereas Iraq's FMS allocation dwarfed Jordan's (Iraq's $17 billion to Jordan's $3.2 billion).

Having reviewed the effects of U.S. security assistance programs on various measures of political stability in the Middle East and Africa, some general observations are apparent. First, not all programs are equal or have equal effects. In a programmatic sense, increased Foreign Military Sales do not have a stabilizing effect in any of the measures. In fact, it tracks with a heightened risk of interstate conflict as well as coup propensity. Similarly, increased grant assistance in the form of Foreign Military Financing has no identifiable reductions in the measures of political violence, and is correlated with increased domestic conflict. That the more expensive and hardware-intensive programs are identified with reduced stability in the regions is a surprising finding. Moreover, short-term emergency programs of direct cash transfers via Economic Support Funds demonstrably help shield regimes from coups. In this initial macro-level assessment of U.S. security assistance programs, the most promising of the portfolios is the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. By specifically targeting foreign military officers for professional military education, IMET fosters interoperability between the U.S. government and future military leaders in these nations. Within the host government, the best and the brightest are often selected for the program, and per this data analysis, IMET appears to provide a significant cost-effective policy means of helping to domestically stabilize partner states. The analysis suggests that investment in personnel through education in the defense sector is the most critical of the varying assistance accounts.

Second, it is worth considering that the major and institutionalized aid recipient Egypt has notably reduced odds of instability overall.[66] Although not

[65]This finding concurs with scholars who examined the conditions associated with victory on the modern battlefield and determined it was force employment more than a numerical or technological advantage. See Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[66]Although Egypt has seen sustained low-level conflict with insurgency in the Sinai after the 2011 Arab Uprising, U.S. foreign assistance to Egypt was reduced after the 2013 military coup that deposed Muslim Brotherhood President Muhammad Mursi. The overall level of assistance corresponds to reductions during the sample period of 1975 to 2015.

institutionalized, Pakistan tracks with its tamed propensity for interstate war compared to other states, but not for its propensity for coup activity. The clear case of Egypt as a country with longstanding histories of receiving aid in large volumes does track with lower levels of conflict initiation than other states in the forty-five-year sample. This is less so for high-volume, but less-institutionalized, recipients such as Iraq and Pakistan.

Third, control variables in the analysis are telling about the effects they have on political stability in general. One of the most interesting findings is that the greater the number of U.S. troops deployed in a country, the less international conflict a state is involved in, and the less coup activity it sees. The figure is not associated with any adverse effects on civil conflict. That troop levels could play a stabilizing role is contrary to the common assumption held by many that see deployments of U.S. troops in these regions as inherently destabilizing. Democratization has no such effects. Economic development, on the other hand, does bolster the domestic position of the state. More developed states are significantly less likely to be involved in domestic conflict or coup activity. The relative size of the armed forces of a state has no appreciable effect at all, although states with larger budgets and more of a capital-intensive orientation have a greater likelihood of being engaged in domestic conflict and terrorism. This last point tracks with the overall finding of the U.S. assistance policies described earlier, and emphasizes that hardware alone is not conducive to general peace. In conclusion, programs targeting a state's security services through training will yield more professionalized forces that better contribute to regional stability than hardware. This finding should be tempered by the macro-level nature of the analysis, including the aid and political stability variables. By coding political instability as the dependent variable, the impression is given that security assistance programs are only meant to combat significant, macro-level events. In fact, U.S. security interests can be promoted by aid that targets lower-level issues of high salience, issues that are not captured in the current coding. An example would be border and maritime security, important capabilities but ones that do not show up when looking to adverse regime change, ethnic or revolutionary wars, or major events of politicized violence. It is worth recalling that the examination of these means to promote wider regional stability was studied as a potential cost-effective substitute for certain defense programs. The data presented here are aggregated on spending per account, and do not consider individual deliverables covered by the accounts. In that sense, the data are abstract, and policy planning must still take account of specific and tailored aims regarding a country of focus.

Further model development should emphasize an economic development indicator that allows wider data collection for lesser-developed nations. The Penn World Tables GDP data are valuable, but do not cover the full scope of states like Afghanistan, Libya, and Somalia that are critical to policymakers as failed or near-failed states. Measures such as the infant mortality rate could potentially fill in these types of data gaps by proxying for development level. Moreover, data that

include information about the ethnic composition of the states would likely serve to increase forecasting accuracy. Such data would be a good prospect for accounting for greater variance in the samples. Finally, assessing all global regions beyond the Middle East and Africa, to include Latin America, Europe, and Asia, would offer better generalized estimators, while still accounting for regional variation using categorical variable coding.

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Appendix

Table A.1. Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Interstate Conflict	0.11	0.67	0.0	6	0.45	7.04	54.60
Domestic Conflict	0.78	1.71	0.0	10	2.92	2.32	7.69
Coup Activity	0.08	0.27	0.0	1	0.08	3.05	10.29
* Foreign Military Sales ($)	153,689.30	754,134.70	0.0	13,800,000	569,000,000,000.00	8.78	99.78
* Foreign Military Financing ($)	98,951.60	553,858.80	0.0	11,900,000	307,000,000,000.00	9.83	146.19
* Int. Mil. Educ. & Train. ($)	574.11	1,219.31	0.0	17,746	1,486,726.00	5.30	48.41
* Economic Support Fund ($)	52,067.39	270,075.40	0.0	3,761,153	72,900,000,000.00	7.33	64.58
U.S. Troops Deployed	404.15	3,034.48	0.0	58,192	9,208,060.00	13.44	205.68
Democracy (Polity Score)	7.57	6.28	0.0	20	39.40	0.60	1.90
* Military Personnel	77.04	147.06	0.0	1,390	21,627.07	3.09	13.71
* Military Expenditure ($)	2,091,063.00	5,774,724.00	0.0	81,900,000	33,300,000,000,000.00	5.88	48.81
* per capita GDP ($)	8.86	22.02	0.2	265	484.80	6.29	53.93
Number Bordering States	4.02	2.10	0.0	9	4.41	0.19	2.58
							n = 2,795

* denotes figures are in thousands

Table A.2. Aggregated security assistance on instability (ordered).

Ordered Logit Regression	Interstate Conflict (MEPV) A1	Domestic Conflict (MEPV) A2
ln(Security Assistance) t-2	1.054*	1.013
	(0.030)	(0.021)
Number of Peace Years	0.708***	0.647***
	(0.049)	(0.032)
Observations	3,197	3,197
Countries	77	77
Pseudo R-Squared	0.25	0.25
Psuedo Log-Likelihood	−519.02	−2,493.60

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
Log odds ratio reported instead of coefficients.
Robust standard errors clustered on country.
Cut points unlisted.

Table A.3. Disaggregated security assistance on instability (ordered).

Ordered Logit Regression	Interstate Conflict (MEPV) A3	Domestic Conflict (MEPV) A4
ln(Foreign Military Sales) t-2	1.160***	1.042
	(0.067)	(0.033)
ln(Foreign Military Finance) t-2	0.995	1.069**
	(0.039)	(0.030)
ln(Int. Mil. Educ. & Train.) t-2	0.996	0.887***
	(0.091)	(0.038)
ln(Economic Support Fund) t-2	1.010	1.020
	(0.031)	(0.022)
ln(U.S. Troops Deployed) t-2	0.718***	0.965
	(0.068)	(0.066)
Democracy t-2	1.004	0.984
	(0.042)	(0.027)
ln(Military Personnel) t-2	1.105	1.080
	(0.272)	(0.191)
ln(Military Expenditure) t-2	1.706***	1.440***
	(0.328)	(0.194)
ln(per Capita GDP) t-2	0.541*	0.582***
	(0.178)	(0.114)
Sub-Sahara Africa	0.857	1.157
	(0.611)	(0.593)
Former Soviet Union	0.530	0.410*
	(0.285)	(0.209)
Monarchy	0.290	0.276*
	(0.253)	(0.189)
Egypt	0.079***	0.102***
	(0.076)	(0.048)
Israel	0.612	0.217***
	(0.669)	(0.110)
Pakistan	0.059***	0.431**
	(0.036)	(0.165)
Iraq	2.597**	6.494***
	(0.036)	(2.645)
Number of Bordering States	0.864	1.013
	(0.099)	(0.087)
Number of Peace Years	0.778***	0.685***
	(0.042)	(0.033)
Observations	2,795	2,795
Countries	72	72
Pseudo R-Squared	0.32	0.30
Psuedo Log-Likelihood	−380.57	−1,951.57

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
Standard errors clustered on country.
Log odds ratio reported instead of coefficients.