The purpose of this seminar is to examine systematically, and comparatively, great and middle power military interventions, and candidate interventions into civil wars from the 1990’s to the present. These civil wars were high on the policy agenda of western states during the 1990’s. Yet, these interventions were usually not motivated by obvious classical vital interests. Given the extraordinary security enjoyed by the great and middle powers of the west in the Cold War’s aftermath, these activities are puzzling.

The United States played a significant role in most of the cases. The interventions required the employment of significant military power in actual combat operations, and/or sustained peace enforcement operations, which cost real money. They often resulted in modest casualties for the interveners, and sometimes significant casualties for the objects of their intervention. The interventions were controversial, at least in the United States. These civil wars and the interventions they precipitated required considerable attention from policy makers. They were, in short, not “cheap.”

The interventions to be examined are the 1991 effort to protect the Kurds in N. Iraq; the 1993 effort to ameliorate famine in Somalia; the 1995 effort to end the conflict in Bosnia Herzegovina, and the 1999 NATO war to end Serbia’s control of Kosovo. By way of comparison the weak efforts made to slow or stop the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the current murderous conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan will also be examined.

The seminar approaches these interventions with a range of questions:

1.) What were the broad policy arguments in favor of or opposed to these interventions?  
2.) Who were the principal players arguing for intervention?  
3.) What is known, or believed, about the basic nature of these civil wars—their causes, dynamics, and implications?  
4.) What military strategies have outside powers tried to employ to achieve specific results in these civil wars, and which ones have proven most effective?  
5.) What specific kinds of military force have proven particularly useful in the actual interventions?  
6.) In each case, do we judge the intervention a success or failure, and how do we explain the success or failure?

These interventions command attention for both theoretical and policy scientific reasons. Theoretically, an examination of these interventions may tell us something about broad trends in international politics. They may shed light on such questions as the nature of “unipolarity,” or the erosion of sovereignty norms. An examination of these interventions is also necessary in light of the September 11 attack. All security related discussions now focus on the counter terror war. Were the interventions of the 1990’s merely an interlude, while states awaited bigger threats? Or do they tell us something about the future of international politics. From a policy science point of view, these interventions all amounted to “limited wars” for the intervening
powers. What do they tell us about how to conduct limited war? What have they taught us about modern conventional military power? What have they taught us about differences among the military organizations and capabilities of the western powers?

Format: This is a seminar. All who show up for class are expected to participate, whether they are taking the course for credit or not. All should do the reading, or the seminar format cannot work. The Professor will serve as discussion leader. Depending on numbers, one or more students per week will be asked to make a ten-minute presentation outlining the key issues raised in the reading. All students taking the course for credit will present some work during the final class meetings of the semester. Auditors working on related projects are also encouraged to present their work during these final meetings.

Evaluation: Those taking the course for credit can satisfy the requirement for written work in one of two ways: a typical class paper, or, a pair of review essays. The latter requires some explanation. The student will read at least two related books for each of the review essays, for a total of four books. These cannot be the required books on the syllabus.

Suggested Paper and Book Review Topics and Questions:

[Note: related questions are clustered together. This list is suggestive, not exhaustive. Please suggest alternatives.]

- What has been the relative weight of legal, ethical, domestic political, and power political, motives in great power decisions to intervene in civil wars?

- Is Preventive Diplomacy a reasonable policy tool to avoid civil wars, or at least the worst excesses sometimes associated with such wars?
- Can the Early Warning problem for civil wars and their humanitarian excesses be solved?

- How did alliance politics affect decisions to intervene?
- Are there any systematic differences in the ways that different great powers approach civil wars? Why?

- Which types of military force, and what types of military strategy seem to be most useful for intervention into civil wars?
- Is external intervention into civil wars best thought of as a deterrence problem or a coercion problem?

- How well have states integrated the political and military components of their interventions?
- How has the coalition nature of modern interventions affected the conduct or outcome of these interventions?

- What would Cold War and earlier history of great power intervention into civil wars have taught us, had we bothered to examine it in 1990?
-What are the relative merits of neutrality vs. choosing sides for outsiders considering intervention?

-How does domestic politics in the intervener’s society affect decisions to intervene?
-Is the notion of an “exit strategy” before one intervenes, sound strategy or fatuous nonsense invented to gull skeptics?

-Do civil wars produce more war crimes or violations of international humanitarian law than other kinds of wars? Are they particularly destructive or vicious?

Readings:

Readings will be available through the Stellar web site for this class, http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/17/sp04/17.952/index.html or in the books recommended for purchase.

Books to Buy:

Tim Judah, Kosovo: War and Revenge (Yale University Press, 2000).


Week 1. September 7 - Introduction

Week 2. September 14 - Key Interveners and Their Policy Preferences

US Intervention During the Cold War


United States and Grand Strategy After the Cold War


**United States**


**Europe**


**Pro-Intervention**


**Anti-Intervention**


**Extent of Internal Conflicts**


**Origin of Internal Conflicts**


Graham E. Fuller, “America’s Uncomfortable Relationship with Nationalism,” The Stanley Foundation Policy Analysis Brief (July 2006)

**Primordial**


**Rotten Elites**


**Thugs**


**Security Dilemma**


**Theory Debate**


**Recommended:**


**Week 4. September 29 - Doctors, Lawyers, and Journalists**

**Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy**


**The Role of the Media**


Steven Livingston, *Clarifying the CNN Effect* (Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, June 1997, 18 pp.)

**The Role of Non Government Organizations (NGOs)**


**International Law**


*Skim the following So that you are familiar with some of the relevant texts*


*The Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949.* URL: [http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/52d68d14de6160e0c12563da005f0db1b/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5?OpenDocument](http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/52d68d14de6160e0c12563da005f0db1b/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5?OpenDocument)


United Nations Charter, Chapters VI and VII
Ethics, Morals and Norms


Week 5. October 5 - Strategy and Intervention

Deterrence and Coercion


Delusions?


Theories for success


http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/21035/Neotrusteeship_and_the_Problem_of_Weak_States.pdf


Week 6. October 12 - External Intervention and the Use of Force

Force Projection Requirements and Capabilities

United States


Recommended: Students Should Visit the Dept. of Defense website, and the CBO website, and familiarize themselves with the kinds of capabilities that the US maintains to project forces at great distances. Britain and France also maintain some useful capabilities.

See for example- Congressional Budget Office, Moving U.S. Forces: Options for Strategic Mobility, February 1997. URL: http://www.cbo.gov/showdoc.cfm?index=11&sequence=0&from=1

Military Perspectives on Intervention


Non-Military Intervention

Sanctions-


Information Warfare-


CASES

**Week 7. October 19 - Northern Iraq and Somalia**

**Iraq:**


**Recommended**


**Somalia:**


*Recommended:*


**Week 8. October 26 – Bosnia/Croatia**


*Other Source Material for the Uncontrollably Curious:*


**Week 9. November 2 - Rwanda**


**Recommended**


**Week 10. November 9 - Kosovo**


**Recommended:**


- Other Source Material for the Uncontrollably Curious:


**Week 11. November 16 - Darfur**


http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?i=20060619&s=editorial061906

http://www.genocideintervention.net/about/press/coverage/index.php/archives/100


http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=5&did=757436931&SrchMode=3&sid=2&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1155222202&clientId=5482&aid=1

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=MImg&_imagekey=B6W5V-4HG7NT-2-3&_cdi=6580&_user=501045&_orig=browse&_coverDate=02%2F28%2F2007&_sk=999499998&view=c&wchp=dGLbVzz-zSkzV&md5=dc5966a87cb0a18379c5f853067d818d&ie=/sdarticle.pdf

**Week 12. November 30 - Student Presentations**

**Week 13. December 7 - Student Presentations**