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John A. Tures

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Phone +49 (3 31) 70 19-210
Fax +49 (3 31) 70 19-216
libinst@fnst.org
www.fnst.org

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A Variety of Visions For The Post-9/11 State: Which Is Most Capable Of Reducing Internal Conflict?”

By John A. Tures

*Assistant Professor of Political Science
LaGrange College*

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Reality Show: Visions For Post-9/11 States

On April 23, 2003, the humor newspaper *The Onion* ran the headline „New Fox reality TV show to determine ruler of Iraq.“ The faux news report claimed „Describing the new show as 'American Idol meets the reconstruction of Afghanistan,' (Fox reality-programming chief Mike) Darnell said 'Appointed by America' will feature contestants squaring off in a variety of challenges, including a democracy quiz, a talent competition, and nation-building activities that will demonstrate their ability to lead a bombed-out war-ravaged Mideast country.“

Several theories also compete to be the governing vision for Iraq, Afghanistan, and all other post-9/11 states. Each has a separate view for how a state can produce the most stability, or the least amount of internal conflict. One vision, backed by the Bush Administration and ideological idealists, calls for an expansion of democracy and political rights that would enable the people to have full participation in elections and the right to take power through institutions selected by popular sovereignty. A second vision contends that a strong state is needed to control the political and economic spheres, in order to curb violence and provide for the basic needs of that country's people. A third vision claims that governments which respect the civil liberties and economic freedoms of their country's citizens will be able to provide the best way to reduce violence. To determine the best approach for the post-9/11 state, each vision will be examined based upon data from preceding decades to determine which factors have provided the greatest reduction in conflict within a country.

Competing Visions For The Post 9/11 State

The Case For A Participatory State

The export of elections has become a cornerstone of the Bush Administration's policy. The chief executive of the United States cites success in Afghanistan's election as a reason to pursue a plebiscite in Iraq (White House, 2004b; National Security Council, 2005). And even President Bush's critics, like Senator Ted Kennedy (2005) contend that holding elections could represent a „fresh approach.“

But there is some recognition among democracy supporters, even in the Bush Administration, that more may be needed than simply a vote. Haass (2003) and the National Security Council (2005) contend that democracies should be constructed based upon the development of a series of checks and balances.

Several supporters of the participatory vision go on to articulate the need to spread such policies to the rest of the Middle East (Kengor, 2004). The National Security Council (2005) cites goals of bringing democracy to Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, Kuwait, Morocco, Jordan and Egypt.

Why would elections and democratization be desirable in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the rest of the Middle East? First, members of the Bush Administration (White House, 2004a) believe that democracy is an anti-terror weapon. They are convinced that Iraqi elections will help defeat the insurgency (White House, 2004b). Those of the participatory vision believe in one of the most debated theories of international relations scholarship: the Democratic Peace. This argument contends that no two democracies have ever gone to war with each other (Gartzke, 2005). While critics might point out that this deals with external conflict, and not internal conflict, United States Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice (2005) claims „Democracy is the only assurance of lasting peace and security between states, because it is the only guarantee of freedom and justice within states.“

Supporters of the democracy promotion plan contend that societies become more peaceful when there is a greater chance for the public to participate in the institutions that govern them. This is for several reasons, many of which are provided by the democratic peace theory. First, the people are the ones who suffer the greatest when war occurs, whether it is domestic or not. Therefore, if given the chance, most people will not opt for the policies that would allow their country to be engulfed in a war (Kant, 1795), even an internal war, since they will pay for the costs with blood and taxes. Undemocratic leaders, who are the least likely to suffer, have no similar compunctions about internal conflict, and will wage conflict to strengthen their own position, at home or abroad. Second, democracies are bound by norms of non-conflict, and peaceful means of resolving disputes (Maoz and Russett, 1993). The people of a democracy have more than simply the violence option; they can petition the parliament, take their opponent to court, campaign to put one's own policies in power, etc. Third, democracies have relatively cumbersome structures (Maoz and Russett, 1993). With so many hurdles to circumvent before war can emerge within one's borders, there is more than ample time to find for a nonviolent resolution to possible hostilities.

Participatory Theory: The more a country allows for public participation, the more stable its state and society are.

Political participation can be conceptualized in several different ways. First, how much are the citizens of the state allowed to act in the political arena? Can they vote? Can they run for office? Can they cast ballots in a referendum? Can they contribute to candidates? Can they determine the nominees for political office?

These freedoms are called political rights. The fewer the restrictions on political rights, the less likely it is that instability will occur. With more avenues open to the population to get involved, choose a candidate that matches their preferences, vote on issues affecting them, as well as actually become a part of the governing process, support for attacking such a system is likely to diminish. Such a participatory system would have greater legitimacy than one selected by means other than the will of the people in a free and fair competition.

Political Rights Hypothesis: An increase in a country's political rights is more likely to lead to a decrease in internal conflict.

But participation is not just about increased access to the political system. The input must be meaningful, not a token amount. In other words, a government that allows open participation, but does not enable the participants a realistic chance of accomplishing policy objectives is unlikely to curb instability. This means that a single leader cannot dominate the political process; governing institutions must be relatively decentralized to allow those who participate to have a greater say. It also means that there must be checks and balances, so that more institutions open to the public exist. The elected officials are not thwarted by an army of political appointees who carry out the wishes of someone else. A politically mobilized public that cannot realize their goals because they lack control over meaningful institutions is dangerous for a country's stability. Furthermore, a system where public power is somewhat dispersed is less likely to maintain the means by which an internal war may be waged.

Democracy Hypothesis: An increase in a country's public control over governing institutions is more likely to lead to a decrease in internal conflict.

The Case For A Strong State

Critics of democracy have pointed out that a system of competitive elections carries over the competition from society, especially if the country is divided along sectarian fault lines and has little experience in democracy-building. In budding democratic systems, people often have group ties. So politicians attempt to harness votes by playing on the basic characteristics of society, exacerbating sectarian tensions (Zakaria, 2002; Garmong, 2003)¹. Mansfield and Snyder (2005) offer the example of

1 Critics of the Democratic Peace have argued that democratizing states, or semidemocracies, are more war prone than democracies or autocracies (Mansfield and Snyder, 2005; Owen, 2005). Gartzke (2005) points out that not only are democracies just as likely to fight (just not with each other), but also their developing counterparts are just as likely to fight as developing dictatorships are.

Central Africa, where Rwanda and Burundi experienced electoral competition, then genocide, after being pressured to democratize by international agencies.

In addition to the divisive sectarian campaigns in democratizing societies, there is an added component of the majoritarian outcomes of such elections, which produces an „all-or-nothing“ result (Zakaria, 1997; Garmong, 2003). Numerous examples exist from Adolf Hitler to Hugo Chavez, Vladimir Putin and Aleksander Lukashenko of Belarus) of democratically elected leaders who behaved in an undemocratic fashion (Zakaria, 1997; 2002; 2003; 2005). Signs are becoming evident that Iraq is rapidly heading toward sectarian politics (Basham, 2003) as well as majoritarianism (Diamond, 2005).

Even the Bush Administration may be tiring of their democratic experiment in the Middle East. Democratic societies do not seem to be providing the anti-terrorist outcomes the Americans had expected, souring their earlier optimism on democratization policies in the Middle East (Haass, 2003; Slaviv, 2005; Loven, 2006). According to a report (Pelofsky, 2006) „The *New York Times* . . . quoted an unnamed military affairs expert who was briefed at the White House last month as saying senior administration officials acknowledged that they are 'considering alternatives other than democracy' in Iraq, which the White House denied.”²

The Need For A Strongman

It may seem paradoxical for a coalition of democratic countries, led by one so committed to democracy promotion, to consider the possibility of installing an authoritarian system. But concerns about stability in the Middle East have prompted even some idealists in government, the media, academia and party politics to press for a stronger government, capable of defeating the insurgency while providing for the basic needs of the people.

The statist policy begins with the antithesis of idealism: a realist theory of international politics. Of primary importance to the realist theory is the notion that the state is the primary actor in politics. This is based on the concept of state sovereignty, established in the Peace of Westphalia, which means the government wields control within its boundaries. Nobody else can tell a state how to run its internal affairs. United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (2005) writes „The modern state system has always rested on the concept of sovereignty. It was assumed that states were the primary international actors.“ But now Ms. Rice claims

2 This is the theory held by many American conservative Republicans (Will, 2004b) once raised on realism, and is now being embraced by Bush's opposition party (Kennedy, 2005) and members of the media (*Boston Globe*, 2005).

that it is a lack of state power which has resulted in threats to world peace. „Today, however, we have seen that these assumptions (about sovereignty) no longer hold, and as a result, the greatest threats to our security are defined more by the dynamics within weak and failing states.“³

Despite the decision to oust an authoritarian leader in Iraq, many seem to clamor for the return of someone like Saddam Hussein (Viorst, 2004; Niskanen, 2006). Others call for „the Egyptian Model,“ where a pro-West leader uses authoritarian tactics to stabilize Iraq (White, 2003; Karon, 2004). Some see the former prime minister of Iraq, Iyad Allawi, as the type of strongman who would be a new Hosni Mubarak (Clift, 2004; Karon, 2004, Moubayed, 2005). Eventually, some statist supporters hope that the strongman will impose liberal values such as property rights and the rule of law (Pipes, 2003; Karon, 2004; Boot, 2005; Moubayed, 2005).⁴

Not all strongman government policies involve support for imposing a free market policy on a country. Some call for the state to provide a series of public goods, ranging from law and order and protection to basic services such as utilities and employment (National Security Council, 2005; Kennedy, 2005). Other options seek a bigger role for the government in the economy, often using the term „effective institutions“ to buttress their argument (Rodrik, 2004) These institutions allow a greater control over the economy by the government (Rodrik, 2004). Al-Saadi (2004) criticizes economic liberalization plans for Iraq, calling for increased taxes from private businesses, rather than sole reliance on oil revenues, to finance government policies such as a welfare state.

Supporters of the „Strong State Theory“ would clearly disagree with the notion of opening institutions to the public, or weakening state power vis-à-vis its citizenry. For them, too much participation in a regime can overload a state's capacity to handle all of these demands, particularly if it is a new regime. Instead, a government must prove to its population that can provide a steady hand, dominating a country's politics and economics. The former is important, especially in a country beset by societal divisions, for left to their own devices, the result might involve sectarian violence. The latter is key because any government, especially a young one, must provide for the needs of its people. With a weak state incapable of developing much in the way of revenue via taxation or delivering the basic needs to its people, will dissolve into chaos and war.

3 This is interesting, given that two of the remaining „Axis of Evil“ members, North Korea and Iran, are countries run by powerful governments.

4 How will Iraqis respond? Laith Kubba of the National Endowment for Democracy claims „By and large, Iraqis are accustomed to a strong state (PBS Online News Hour, 2004).“

Strong State Theory: The more a country's government controls its population, the more stable its state and society are.

There are two means of shoring up government control of a country. The first is to clamp down on divisiveness that is generated through political activity, where groups attempt to control the process to further their own selfish ends. But a well-regulated political arena forestalls the ability of factions to hijack the political process, otherwise plunging the country into chaos. Strong leadership is needed to produce an orderly society, to clamp down when a rebellion seems to be in the making. A leader's firm handle on the reins of power also provides unity in a country's political mission, facilitating ease in policymaking, as opposed to the gridlock that might exist if relatively coequal branches of power tug in different directions, or if locals refuse to implement the national government's mission. Furthermore, by controlling who may run for office and how successors are chosen, a country can manage to keep leadership in competent hands, as opposed to those who merely seek office for purposes other than the national interest.

Autocracy Hypothesis: An increase in a country's government control over the political system is more likely to lead to a decrease in internal conflict.

Controlling a country's political processes may not be enough; after all, it takes money to run a powerful government. A state which cannot raise the necessary funds to provide such control will soon face unmet demands from the population. To justify limited participation in politics, the basic needs of the citizenry must be realized. This is especially important when a new government is being formed. During the rough transition from the status quo ante, the turmoil is likely to produce economic dislocations. As a result, supply lines may well be disrupted. Many people will lack the incomes necessary to provide for themselves and their families, in terms of food, fuel, and funds for other purchases. A strong state control over the economy is needed to take the extra amounts from the haves, in order to meet the needs of the have nots. In addition to meeting the economic necessities of the people, a strong government must wield its power to plan for the future development of its country. Such long-term economic decisions involve determining what a country should produce, where people's energies must be directed, how stable its currency must be, etc.

Socialism Hypothesis: An increase in a country's government control over the economic system is more likely to lead to a decrease in internal conflict.

Opponents of the statist theory claim that such a vision only provides the appearance of control (Zakaria, 1997; Haass, 2003). These states fail to deliver upon stability, despite their projection of power. Rummel (1984) contends that in a coercive society, most of what one does is controlled by government run by elites.

An individual's life is determined by what side he or she is on. There is the elite class and obey-class. Any demands for change among the obey class are harshly dealt with by the elites. Elites also jockey for power, creating additional sources of instability (Rummel, 1984).

This „class warfare“ in the Middle East has played itself out in a battle between the government and religion. As the authoritarian state banned all forms of political activity, save the mosque, resistance to the regime became injected with religious zeal (Zakaria, 2003). The result was less stability in the Middle East, with jihad as the norm. Eland (2006) points out that such authoritarianism has failed in Iraq as well, blaming government policies for the problems.

Critics of the statist approach also highlight problems with government domination of the economy. Rummel (1984) argues that dictatorial domination of economic freedom is just as bad as political authoritarianism. Gartzke (2005) contends that strategies whereby governments attempt to control territory by force may have worked when the land had value (agriculture and early manufacturing), but modern wealth is not always based upon real estate. Capital can flee adverse policies, while policing territory is more likely to drain a state's coffers than fill them.

Though the Bush Administration may be tilting toward a political authoritarian, his National Security Council (2005) issued many criticisms of Saddam's fiscal policies. And Looney (2005) found Saddam's policies not so much controlling as they were ineffective. The heavy infusion of both oil wealth and the American government's foreign aid into the state treasury after Saddam's rule has not seemed to make the new Iraqi regime more effective (Zakaria, 2005).

The Case For A Libertarian State

Though freedom is frequently mentioned by other visions, neither provides much in the way of restrictions on how a government (however chosen) treats its citizens. Zakaria (1997) labels this „constitutional liberalism“ and focuses on state outputs, not inputs. He focuses on the legal elements of a state's obligations, restricting its actions towards its governed (Zakaria, 2005).⁵ There is also an economic component to the liberties provided and protected by the state, according to Zakaria (2002).

5 In fact, the term „rule of law“ is often bandied about by all three visions. But there is a misunderstanding about the relationship between legal obligations and their implementation. A government that passes laws and imposes them on society is engaging in „rule by law.“ But when a government is subject to the same laws it develops, limited in its actions by these hurdles, as well as its ability to rewrite the law, then „rule of law“ is said to exist (Tamahana, 2004). Furthermore, an independent judiciary must be able to hold the state accountable, with its decisions respected, not ignored (Tamahana, 2004).

How does libertarianism contribute to peace? According to Gwartney and Lawson (2005), economic freedom and civil liberties share a bond, as well as a positive correlation with political stability. These measures of liberty are related to a wide variety of positive measures of prosperity and quality of life measures (Tures, 2005a). Gartzke (2005) finds that economic liberty is associated with a reduction in international violence. He contends that free markets encourage cooperation and provide another venue for competition. They also act as a sounding board for political activity, while actions that depress the market and investment are avoided by regimes (Gartzke, 2005). Rummel (1984) finds a link between freedom (in terms of civil liberties, political rights, and economic freedom) and a reduction in internal violence. This is because a free society is relatively pluralistic. This leads to cross-pressure interests and wills. In other words, people don't fight, but bargain with each other, in a free society (Rummel, 1984).

According to those who subscribe to the libertarian theory, it is ironic that the United States would support the spread of democracy around the world, when so much of the American constitution is „undemocratic (Zakaria, 1997; Garmong, 2003; Eland, 2005).“ Such arguments in favor of granting civil and economic liberties are also relevant for the Iraqi case. In explaining Iraq's instability, Eland (2006) claims „Minimizing or eliminating the central government would eliminate the fear by Iraqi groups that the central government would be taken over by one group and used to oppress all others.“⁶ As Zakaria (2003) points out „we want to bring to Iraq not just democracy, but liberal democracy.“⁷

Despite their differences, both the participatory and strong state theories share a common factor: both offer a prominent position for government. The former seeks to enhance public control over the state to further the ability for elected leaders to accomplish their goals. And the latter seeks a powerful, though more insular, government, capable of controlling the political and economic spheres.

6 These have application elsewhere in the Middle East. Haass (2003) cites the need to prepare the citizenry for election via civil liberties, citing the recent example of Bahrain. On the other hand, Algeria rushed elections in 1991 before liberalization, producing a sad outcome.

7 The plan for victory in Iraq developed by the National Security Council (2005) does not ignore the role of civil liberties and economic freedoms. As noted earlier, planners called for „rule of law“ (however imperfectly evaluated). The National Security Council (2005) did call for measuring the number of businesses opened, commercial law reforms, and changes in the bureaucracy. They recommend opening a stock market and developing a stable currency (though one is unsure whether 1,475 dinars to the dollar is „stable.“ But most of these indicators are macroeconomic factors, ranging from GDP to oil production. These factors do not explain how free the economy operates apart from government policies, nor do they cover how accountable the regime will be in ensuring it will not meddle in commercial affairs.

Not all believe that so much power should be handed to a government. This school of thought assumes that state power is the source of conflict, not the cure. Whether chosen by election or selection, a government is more likely to take power from individuals, breeding resentment at this outside intrusion into people's personal lives. A state also wields coercive power, which is frequently brought to bear upon the population in order to produce compliance with its wishes. Citizens often respond to the presence of legitimated violence with their own brand of hostility, generating instability in a power struggle between the government and the governed.

Libertarians argue that it is the state power that is the source of conflict. Whether chosen by voters or other means, the winners use the political office to reward themselves and their supporters, as a means of staying in power. This means the political in-group raises taxes on the rest of the population to pay for the winning coalition's pet projects, or even personal gain. In a similar manner, laws are passed on the population, empowering the political „haves“ over the political „have-nots.“ In order to keep a grip on power, some of the revenue is allocated toward a military and police to enforce the laws and forestall dissent with such policies. The political out-group faces higher taxes, more regulation, and unfair laws enforced by coercive elements. Facing the whim of a state's arbitrary actions, the political losers seem to have little option other than rebelling against the government apparatus or fighting the political winning group.

Libertarian Theory: The freer a country's citizenry is, the more stable its state and society is.

Typically, when a new government is formed, especially one implemented by a Western power such as the United States, freedom is noted as a defining characteristic. But a closer examination of how the term is implemented reveals that liberty is couched in terms of political rights and electoral freedoms: the ability to choose one's leaders and possibly vote on a series of policies. Supporters of such freedoms label these as „positive rights,“ noting that these provide people with something they can do. Other rights are often designated with the pejorative „negative rights“ label (implying that they do not play a constructive role in society). These deal with restrictions or what cannot be done in a society.

But supporters of civil liberties might note that these „negative“ rights are not counterproductive at all. Rather, they forestall the government from encroaching upon the basic freedoms of individuals. Governments are held accountable for depriving individuals of their liberties. But this means that people can speak freely, assemble, write what they want, worship who they want and own what they want,

which hardly seems like a pessimistic connotation for the average citizen. Only the government is limited in what it can do. In such a „positive“ world, citizens have no quarrel with their respective regime, and therefore have less incentive to wage a domestic conflict with their government.

Civil Liberties Hypothesis: An increase in a country's respect for civil liberties is more likely to lead to a decrease in internal conflict.

Just as a libertarian government is blocked from taking the civil liberties of the public, it is equally checked from taking the economic freedoms from the population. In such a society, people can own property which cannot be taken by the government. They can trade with whomever they want, buy and sell whatever they want, hire and fire whoever they want, and set their own wages for their workers. Similarly workers can determine where they want to work and negotiate a fair price for their labor. A greater level of economic competition is apt to produce lower prices. Supporters of this theory claim that their system is more efficient because the government extracts fewer resources from the population to serve its own selfish or corrupt needs. Furthermore, a more economically free society has fewer regulations that serve either non-economic needs or the purposes of those with a political motivation for their economic laws. Not only is a more economically productive system less likely to have a need to resort to violence (people are making too much money to fight), but there is a greater feeling that the citizen's economy is „theirs.“ Destroying an item one owns seems relatively counterproductive. There is also less of a need to expend the expensive resources necessary to acquire goods by force if they can be purchased more cheaply on an open marketplace of goods, to borrow an idea from Joseph Schumpeter (1919).

Capitalism Hypothesis: An increase in a country's respect for economic freedoms is more likely to lead to a decrease in internal conflict.

This theory is not without its critics. Foes of the libertarian theory believe that if people with sharp differences are allowed to publicly express themselves and their opinions, a war of words over these variations of beliefs will spill over into violence. If governments are restrained from heavily regulating personal behavior, terrorists and insurgents may be able to take advantage of such rights to carry out their campaign of violence. The fears are that a weakened government will not be effective enough to defeat a determined insurgency (Zakaria, 1997; Will, 2004a), which can hide behind protections of civil liberties that limit state power.

In a capitalist society, two groups could emerge: the „haves“ and the „have-nots.“ The economic „losers,“ deprived of government transfers of wealth, are likely

to fight the „winners“ for commercial resources and markets. And a government with a smaller tax revenue is less likely to muster the military and police forces necessary to protect the private property of individuals. Less state funds also means fewer courts capable of resolving disputes between private individuals, or even between citizens and their governments.

Libertarian theory supporters have also been assailed by defenders of democracy for being too critical of free and fair elections, as well as attempts to replace nasty authoritarians with well-intentioned systems that provide political rights (White House, 2004b; Rummel 2005a; 2005b; Zakaria, 2005).

Three separate notions for the provision of stability offer a variety of choices for the policymaker. But which do the best job of mitigating the internal violence that might tear a country apart? The ability to test these arguments needs greater specification.

Research Design

In order to examine these hypotheses, additional details on the factors to be analyzed must be incorporated. This means further specifying the independent and dependent variables, control variables, the spatial-temporal domain, and method of empirical analysis.

Dependent Variable: Internal Conflict

If the goal for a country is to produce stability, it helps to examine those cases where instability is the greatest, which serve as the dependent variable or variable to be explained in our analysis. When armed resistance threatens the very existence of the country, producing the greatest loss of life and destruction of property, instability is at its peak. This disrupts the political and economic fabric of society in a way that lower forms of instability (political gridlock and economic recessions) are clearly subordinate.

Scholars from the Centre for the Study of Civil War at the International Peace Research Institute at Oslo (PRIO) and the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at Uppsala University have collected data on a number of cases where internal fighting occurs (Gleditsch et.al., 2002). This dataset, called the Armed Conflict Database, 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 (Gleditsch et.al., 2002).“ The PRIO-Uppsala dataset has even classified several levels of violence within a country’s borders. These range from the lowest levels of combat (internal minor conflicts) to the highest levels of hostility (internal war), with an intermediate level of internal conflict incorporated as well.⁸ This dataset is employed in our analysis of the internal instability of a country.

In addition to several levels of violence, there are also quantifiable differences in the characteristics of insurgencies or domestic conflicts. For example, a country may experience several conflicts within their boundaries at a given time, and these may vary in the level of intensity. To satisfy those who claim that the overall level of violence matters, versus those who point out that a diverse array of internal conflicts is „more taxing“ for a country, two sets of internal conflicts are analyzed.

The first set of measures, which is dichotomous, simply notes whether the country in question is the victim of an internal conflict for a given year. It also focuses on whether any internal conflict has occurred in that country for that year. Separate variables code whether or not an internal war has occurred in that country in a particular year, whether or not an internal intermediate conflict has occurred in that country for that time period, and whether or not an internal minor conflict emerges in that particular country-year. The second set of measure is a continuous number, which counts how many internal wars a country suffers in a given year, how many internal intermediate conflicts happen in a country’s particular year, and how many internal minor conflicts may pop up in a country for the year in question. In addition to these separate variables, a measure which counts all internal conflicts inflicted upon a country for a certain year is incorporated into this analysis as a separate variable.

Independent Variables

In our analysis, a set of independent (or explanatory) variables are to be incorporated in our model. These are based upon concepts from the various hypotheses derived from the participatory, statist and libertarian theories articulated in the previous section. Two variables from each theory will be incorporated into our analyses of internal conflict.

⁸ Conflict intensity is regarded as a function of casualties in the internal instability. Internal minor conflicts have at least 25 battle-dead per year. Intermediate internal conflicts have more than 25 battle-dead per year and a total history of 1000 battle-related deaths, but fewer than 1,000 per year. Internal wars have at least 1,000 battle dead annually (Gleditsch et.al., 2002).

Participation Theory

The first hypothesis derived from the participatory theory contends that an increase in a country's political rights will reduce the level of internal conflict a country experiences. These political rights measure how much input the public has in the selection of its leaders, policies, its right to form parties, minority self-determination, and otherwise stay active in the political process. Such data is provided by the Freedom House measure of political rights. It is measured on a scale of 1 through 7, with the former involving a greater level of political rights, while scores closer to a seven indicate great restrictions on the ability of people to participate in politics within that country for a particular year. So as the score for political rights „increases“ to a seven, we should expect a higher level of internal violence, according to the hypothesis.⁹

As for the democracy hypothesis, it is argued by supporters that if the public has a greater control over the government institutions, instability within a country should be reduced. This concept of public penetration of government is best provided by the democracy scale collected by the researcher for Polity IVd (Beardsley and Gleditsch, 2003).¹⁰ This variable assigns a score determined on the following factors: (a) the regulation of executive recruitment (institutionalized procedures regarding the transfer of executive power), (b) the competitiveness of executive recruitment (the extent to which executives are chosen through competitive elections), (c) openness of executive recruitment (opportunity for non-elites to attain executive office), (d) executive constraints (operational or de facto independence of the chief executive), (e) regulation of participation (development of institutional structures for political expression), and (f) competitiveness of participation (the extent to which non-elites are able to access institutional structures for political expression). The more decentralized political systems have higher democracy scores on a scale of 0–10, while lower scores reflect less control of political institutions by the citizenry. If the democracy hypothesis is supported by the evidence, then higher democracy scores will lead to less internal conflict.

9 The Freedom House data is based upon a survey methodology by Raymond Gastil using a checklist and point system. „To answer the political questions, Freedom House considers to what extent the system offers voters the opportunity to choose freely from among candidates, and to what extent the candidates are chosen independently of the state (Freedom House, 2003).“

10 Polity IVd differs slightly from Polity IV in that Beardsley and Gleditsch converted the Marshall and Jaggers (2003) data from the country-year format to the polity case format.

Strong State Theory

Polity IVd is also employed in our analysis of the statist theory, which contends a strong government is needed for stability. Another measure provided by the researchers, dubbed „autocracy,“ involves coder input on how much control a chief executive has over the political process (can they select their own successor, can they control who gets on the ballot, are they constrained by a constitution, can they regulate participation, can they direct local governments). It should be noted that while the democracy and autocracy variables collect similar information, they are not pure inverses of each other. They measure slightly different (yet related) factors, and assign different weights. Like the democracy variable, however, autocracy is measured by an eleven-point scale. Higher autocracy scores will generate less internal conflict, on average, if the autocracy hypothesis is supported.

But control over the political process is only one method of state control to ensure stability. The other, as noted in the socialist hypothesis, contends that a greater level of government control over the economy is more likely to reduce internal conflict. The Fraser Institute's dataset Economic Freedom of the World (EFW) collects data on many countries, including the size of government, the country's court system, access to sound money, regulations on foreign exchange, and regulations on credit, labor and business. The EFW dataset summarizes the data in a 0-10 scale. Countries with higher scores are more economically free. Countries with lower EFW scores have greater levels of state control over the economy, and therefore have lower levels of internal conflict, according to the socialist hypothesis.

Libertarian Theory

The final theory in our analysis contends that an increase in political and economic freedom is the best route to stability for a country. The former hypothesis contends that a country which does a better job of respecting the civil liberties of its citizens fares better in reducing internal conflict. To gauge restrictions on the ability of a government to deprive its citizens of the freedoms, Freedom House's civil liberties index is employed. Like their political rights measure, it is coded on a seven-point scale. The higher the number, the more likely a state will encroach on the rights of the people, ranging from freedoms of assembly, speech, press, movement, as well as protections against arbitrary search and seizures by the government. It also deals with the rule of law, not only gauged by the presence of an independent judiciary, but equal treatment of the population under the law, a police under civilian con-

trol, and „protection from police terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile or torture (Freedom House, 2003).“¹¹ Lower scores indicate more restrictions on a regime's ability to deprive the public of its rights.

Like the socialist hypothesis, the capitalist hypothesis also uses the ten-point scale adopted by the Fraser Institute. Countries where the citizens have greater protection of their property rights, monetary and commercial freedom, the ability to hire and set wages independent of government intrusion are more likely to have economic freedom, according to the EFW dataset. Countries with scores closer to ten are judged by analysts to have more economic freedom, while lower scores indicate a heavier presence of government control over the economy. The former reduces internal conflict while the latter enhances it, according to the capitalist hypothesis.

Control Variables

Such an analysis should examine whether development plays a more important role in reducing violence. Wealthier states or countries with higher quality of life may have less fighting because the population is more satisfied, irrespective of their regime type.

Two control variables for development are employed. The first is economic development, which is measured by the Penn World Tables (6.1) using the indicator „Real GDP Per Capita, Purchasing Power Parity, in Constant Dollars, using the Chain Index.“ This provides a measure of economic health of a country which is relatively standardized in comparison to that of other countries, controlling for that country's population, and is not as affected by inflation.

The other measure captures a country's „human development,“ by focusing on the quality of life experienced by the citizens. Collected by the United Nations, the Human Development Indicators includes a country's GDP (in terms of a standardized score), the literacy rate of the population, and the life expectancy of individuals. When the populace has a strong market, the people are educated and can expect a longer life, the chances for violence in that country are likely to be greatly reduced.

11 Civil liberties are also gathered by Freedom House. But there is a key difference between it and the Political Rights data. „In answering the civil liberties questions, Freedom House does not equate constitutional guarantees of human rights with the on-the-ground fulfillment of these rights (Freedom House, 2003).“ In other words, these data on civil liberties are based on more than paper guarantees.

Case Selection Mechanism

In this analysis, we look at a pool of countries collected by the EFW dataset (approximately 125 countries). This study uses the country-year as the unit of analysis, such as Honduras for 2001. Data on all of the variables is taken for all of the years available (1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003). Using these standards provides 983 cases.

Empirical Analysis

To test the six hypotheses as well as the impact of the control variables, I use the standard regression model, which examines the impact of the slope coefficients of the independent variables upon the values of the dependent variable. This includes models where internal conflict is a continuous variable, as well as a dichotomous variable. The tables report the direction of the relationship, as well as its statistical significance. This is determined by the t-ratio derived from the division of the slope coefficient by the standard error. A significant relationship is determined by the ability to reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the variables. For example, if we find that the political rights hypothesis is „statistically significant,“ this indicates that we can reject the null hypothesis that a country’s provision of political rights is unrelated to internal conflict. This does not constitute „absolute proof“ that the provision of political rights guarantees an absence of violence, but it rejects the argument that these factors have no connection.

Results

In the examination of the three theories and their ties to instability, the results of the continuous variable measure of internal conflict (counting the number of internal conflicts in a country-year) are reported. If there are any discrepancies between these results and the results of the test using the dichotomous variable of internal conflict (whether or not a conflict has occurred in a country in a given year), they are noted as well.¹²

12 In an exchange with Gartzke (2005), Rummel (2005b) contends that multicollinearity is a problem for regression models. He argues that it is economic freedom would steal democracy’s thunder, given that the two variables tend to be highly correlated. However, it is unclear why one independent variable would remain statistically significant while the other would not, if bias was affecting both measures (in other words, neither would be statistically significant). Furthermore, it does not explain why the civil liberties measure would be statistically significant, even with multicollinearity bias, but political rights and democracy would not be.

When analyzing all cases of internal conflict, there is little support for the Participation Theory. The political freedom measure is not statistically significant. A test of the democracy hypothesis reveals that countries with higher democracy scores are more likely, on average, to experience more internal conflicts. This same measure, however, is not statistically significant when the dependent variable is coded as a dummy variable. A test of the Strong State Theory when all internal conflicts reveals mixed support. Higher scores on the autocracy measures reduce internal conflict. But the socialism variable exacerbates internal conflict. The Libertarian Theory performs quite well in the test involving all internal conflicts. Both the civil liberties and economic freedom variables are found to reduce the amount of internal conflict a country experiences. Neither control variable was found to be statistically significant.

When internal wars, the most severe form of instability, act as the dependent variable, there is still no support for either hypothesis derived from the Participation Theory; neither political freedom nor democracy is found to be statistically significant in their relationship with internal wars. As with all internal conflicts, there is mixed support for the Strong State Theory. Again, autocracy is found to dampen internal wars, while socialism seems to facilitate the presence of an internal war. The Libertarian Theory is strongly supported when internal wars are considered; a government's respect for civil liberties and economic freedom, on average, tends to reduce the most severe forms of internal conflict.

When internal intermediate conflicts are considered as the dependent variable, the results mimic those of internal wars. Neither the Freedom House measure of political rights, nor the Polity IVd measure of democracy is statistically significant. Polity IVd's autocracy measure, however, was negatively related to internal intermediate conflict; a greater government control over the political process tends to produce less internal conflict. A state's domination of the economy was found to have the opposite effect, though. As with internal wars, the Libertarian Theory showed the greatest ability to reduce internal intermediate conflict. Both the Freedom House measure of civil liberties and the Fraser Institute's measure of economic freedoms often kept a lid on moderate levels of internal conflict.

Tests using internal minor conflicts as the dependent variable show the greatest discrepancies with results from other measures of internal conflict. Again, the participatory theory performs poorly as a means of reducing instability. Not only is political freedom unrelated to the presence of internal minor conflicts, but democracy is actually more likely to generate these conflict cases. The statist theory also underperforms as a method for curbing internal violence. Unlike other measures of the dependent variable, autocracy often increases the number

of internal minor conflicts (the results for the dichotomous version of the internal conflict measure was not statistically significant). The government's control over the economy was unrelated to the presence or absence of internal minor conflict. Only the Libertarian Theory showed any ability to reduce internal minor conflict. Greater respect for civil liberties by authorities reduced levels of internal minor conflict, while economic freedom did not significantly reduce the presence of the internal minor conflicts.

The preceding analysis examines the results for all countries, developed and developing. A legitimate question is whether or not the results apply to cases where only the developing countries are included. Using membership in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development as a criterion for development, showed few differences between samples of all cases, and those countries outside of the OECD. There are no changes in positive or negative relationship among those considered statistically significant. Only one variable „loses“ statistical significance, and then for only one measure of the dependent variable.¹³

Analysis

Interpreting The Findings

Despite the wide variety of case selection mechanisms for developed and developing countries, the different means of measuring internal conflict, and the incorporation of control variables for multiple levels of development, there are some clear lessons for policymakers wishing to determine how to reducing internal instability within a country.

First, the expansion of political participation does not seem to reduce the presence of internal conflict, whether measured as the provision of political rights or public control over government institutions. In fact, the latter is actually associated with a slight increase in the occurrence of internal minor conflict.

13 In examining cases of all types of internal conflicts, the autocracy scale is not significantly related to reductions in internal conflict, unless a dummy dependent variable of conflict/no conflict is employed (when the number of all internal conflicts in a given year are considered, autocracy does not reduce these internal conflicts).

Second, producing a strong state tends to have a mixed impact upon greater stability within a country. Political centralization appears to be effective overall in reducing severe and moderate conflicts, but not the overall amount of conflict (when non-OECD countries are considered), given its positive association with the presence of minor-level conflict (even when all cases are examined). Greater state control over the economic realm actually increases the likelihood of an internal war and intermediate level conflict.

Third, ensuring that the state does not encroach upon the political and economic liberties of its citizens appears to have a positive role in the reduction of domestic disputes. Protecting against the encroachment of civil liberties was the only factor that consistently reduced every form of internal conflict measured, across all forms of case selections. And economic freedom played an important role in reducing the chances for a war or intermediate-level conflict within the country.

Future Directions

Though this research represents a good start in the analysis of the relationship between a regime and stability as measured by internal conflict, but there is room for future studies to be conducted. First, there are a number of countries which have been excluded from the analysis on the basis of data available. Many of these tend to be run by governments with highly centralized control over their internal politics and economics. Should the data become available to analyze these cases, we might find that their incorporation may further weaken the „Strong State Theory.“ The impact of the results is as yet unclear for the Political Participation Theory, given its poor showing in the current analysis, along with the knowledge that some of the omitted countries (such as those excluded East European countries) have mass suffrage. But the incorporation of these missing countries could further strengthen the Libertarian Theory, which already demonstrated an ability to account for a reduction in internal conflict (especially its most severe cases).

But there are other changes that could be included as well in additional research. First, the data was collected for those countries when it was available. Others have chosen to interpolate the data for the gaps as a means of testing the theory upon many more cases. Another change might be in an examination of the „socialist hypothesis.“ Rather than rely upon the same EFW data employed to examine economic freedom, a different measure could be adopted, such as the percentage of a country's gross domestic product devoted to government spending. Though such data does exist, finding reliable consistent data for the years 1970 through 2003, will pose a challenge for future research.

Conclusion

In his goals for stability in the Middle East, the President and his foreign policy team has elected to focus on a strategy of rushing democracy to the conquered countries upon the assumption that such states are more peaceful, supporting this assertion with an analysis of external wars, ignoring internal conflicts. Likewise, critics have harped upon the lack of stability in these nascent regimes, insisting that a stronger state is necessary.

At the same time, both seem wedded to the idea that the solution is more government. The Bush Administration frequently calls for freedom in Iraq, but its interpretation of what that means is nearly exclusively meant to include electoral rights: the right to form a political party, the right to run as a candidate, the right to vote, and the right for the winners to write a constitution that will guarantee future freedoms to vote.¹⁴ Little is said about what goes into the constitution, what policies might be passed, and how to ensure that a government won't deprive citizens of the civil and economic liberties.

Results here confirm the relative shortcomings of fomenting only voting rights as a means of reducing internal conflicts. In fact, democracy is even associated with an increase in lower levels of such fighting. The findings also show that generating a strong government capable of dominating the political process as well as the economy is not always the most effective strategy. While authoritarian regimes seem to have some luck in lowering the incidence of internal war and moderate forms of conflict, they do not significantly reduce all conflicts when developing countries are the sample. And tightening government restraints over the economy seems to facilitate the very civil wars and conflicts that the regime seeks to avoid.

Instead, what may best benefit the people of Iraq and Afghanistan is not the sticky purple dye signifying a vote or a return to Saddam Hussein-type rule for the former or Afghan monarchy in the case of the latter. Ballots alone do not strike down bullets. Holding several rounds of elections in each country has not brought happiness. In fact, they probably only served to underscore the futility of the democratic process, given the greater emphasis on elections then, let's say, electricity.

15 Furthermore, some scholars (Buono de Mesquita and Downs, 2004) find that the United States does a poor job of implementing democracy abroad when military force is employed. Though my own research (Tures, 2005b; 2006) is more optimistic, the results are relatively mixed.

And only an ignorant member of the media would characterize Saddam Hussein's rule (or the Afghan king's regime) as stable, or even insurgency-free.¹⁵

The Afghans and Iraqis, like so many other people in the world, don't wish for more government, even if they are allowed a small part of it. What the people do seem to appreciate, however, is the ability to manage their lives, free from the interference of others, especially a powerful government.¹⁶ For how free is a society if a democratically-elected government can take away the rights of those who lost the election, or even members of the public who voted for the winning elite group?

Analysis of the data across a number of countries and contexts who have experienced the absence or presence of internal conflict, in a variety of forms, has confirmed that countries which have governments that respect the civil liberties and economic freedoms of its citizens are less likely to have domestic conflict, especially the most severe forms of civil wars and insurgencies. Less support exists for having a highly participatory political system or a strong state. And though it may be difficult for the Bush Administration and its critics to swallow this hard truth, ignoring this lesson could spell disaster for America's attempts to bring stability to the Middle East.

15 Noted democratic peace scholar Rudolph J. Rummel (2005a) offers a more positive appraisal of the situation in both countries, calling Afghanistan as a democracy and Iraq as well on its way to democracy. Freedom House (2006) offers a less supportive assessment of the democratic credentials of both. Afghanistan's 2002 rating changed little from their 2001 rating (a seven on the political rights and civil liberties scale each). This improved by a point on each scale in 2003, and maintained that status for 2004. Afghanistan successfully lowered their political rights score to a five in 2005. But for every year since 2001, the country has maintained an overall rating of „Not Free.“ Like Afghanistan, Iraq began their year of occupation in 2003 with the worst scores for political rights and civil liberties (a seven on each) thanks to the Hussein regime. Civil liberties did improve in the country as this score was revised to a five in 2004. However, not only did Iraq fail to improve their scores the following year, but they received a „downward trend“ arrow for 2005, „due to an increase in violence and a lack of general security (Freedom House, 2006).“ Furthermore, the country received the lowest rating of „Not Free“ for 2003, 2004 and 2005. Other scores from other datasets used in this study do not have data for either country after 2003 at this time.

16 Though there is no official ranking for Iraq in the postwar years, early signs may be troubling. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2004, Iraq is ranked 129th. out of 145 countries, behind Sudan, Yemen, Libya and Lebanon (Transparency International, 2004). Looney's (2005) forecast for the future of corruption in Iraq is not very encouraging as well.

Tables

Table A	Participatory Theory	
	Political Rights	Democracy
All Countries		
Continuous Total Conflicts	No relationship	More conflict
Dichotomous Total Conflicts	No relationship	No relationship
Continuous Internal War	No relationship	No relationship
Dichotomous Internal War	No relationship	No relationship
Continuous Internal Intermediate Conflict	No relationship	No relationship
Dichotomous Internal Intermediate Conflict	No relationship	No relationship
Continuous Internal Minor Conflict	No relationship	More conflict
Dichotomous Internal Minor Conflict	No relationship	More conflict

Table B	Strong State Theory	
	Autocracy	Socialism
All Countries		
Continuous Total Conflicts	Less conflict ¹	More conflict
Dichotomous Total Conflicts	Less conflict	More conflict
Continuous Internal War	Less conflict	More conflict
Dichotomous Internal War	Less conflict	More conflict
Continuous Internal Intermediate Conflict	Less conflict	More conflict
Dichotomous Internal Intermediate Conflict	Less conflict	More conflict
Continuous Internal Minor Conflict	More conflict ²	No relationship
Dichotomous Internal Minor Conflict	No relationship	No relationship

1 = In examining cases of all types of internal conflicts, the autocracy scale is not significantly related to reductions in internal conflict for non-OECD countries, unless a dummy dependent variable of conflict/no conflict is employed.

2 = For non-OECD countries, the positive relationship between autocracy and the increase in internal minor conflicts is only statistically significant at the .10 level.

Table C	Libertarian Theory	
All Countries	Civil Liberties	Capitalism
Continuous Total Conflicts	Less conflict	Less conflict
Dichotomous Total Conflicts	Less conflict	Less conflict
Continuous Internal War	Less conflict	Less conflict
Dichotomous Internal War	Less conflict	Less conflict
Continuous Internal Intermediate Conflict	Less conflict	Less conflict ³
Dichotomous Internal Intermediate Conflict	Less conflict	Less conflict
Continuous Internal Minor Conflict	Less conflict ⁴	No relationship
Dichotomous Internal Minor Conflict	Less conflict ⁵	No relationship

³ = The economic freedom measure still reduces internal intermediate conflicts for non-OECD countries, but the null hypothesis can only be rejected at the .10 level, meaning that we can only be 90% confident that there is a relationship between economic freedom and lower levels of internal intermediate conflict.

^{4&5} = For non-OECD countries the measure of civil liberties is slightly weaker in its ability to account for the reduction of internal minor conflicts.

Table D	Control Variables	
All Countries	Economic Development	Human Development
Continuous Total Conflicts	No relationship	No relationship
Dichotomous Total Conflicts	No relationship	No relationship
Continuous Internal War	No relationship	More conflict
Dichotomous Internal War	No relationship	More conflict
Continuous Internal		
Intermediate Conflict	No relationship	More conflict
Dichotomous Internal Intermediate Conflict	No relationship	More conflict
Continuous Internal Minor Conflict	No relationship	Less conflict
Dichotomous Internal Minor Conflict	No relationship	Less conflict

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John A. Tures is Assistant Professor of Political Science at LaGrange College, Georgia, USA.