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MILITARY ASSISTANCE

An Operational Perspective

WILLIAM H. MOTT IV

Foreword by W. Scott Thompson

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Foreword

There is a long line of distinguished soldier-scholars whose ranks Colonel William Mott is in the process of joining. If war is too serious to be left to the military, does the pure scholar have the imagination to handle the writing of the history of strategy and military endeavor? Certainly an opus presents itself to us reminding us that some serious acquaintance with violence and its instruments, that a career acquainted with conflict, its hardware—and the leverage that force ineluctably provides—gives a touch of reality to any serious scholarly undertaking. There is just too much of the experience and the intuitive grasp of the many aspects of war and its associated activities, which an experienced soldier has as his heritage, that lifelong civilians, like myself, find elusive, impossible to call up or feel compelled by.

One thinks particularly of the opus of such thoughtful fighting men as General Dupuy and Colonel Summers, whose analyses of strategic problems, the hard choices and wretched history of war have been invaluable to both the student of history and the wise policymaker. We can go back further, to Colonel George Lincoln, Captain Liddell Hart, General Giulio Douhet—and of course back to the modern codifier of the field, Clausewitz himself, and find much more of the same. It is hard to imagine that any of these could have written as they did without having smelled powder.

But this book stands firstly on its scholarly rigor, which indeed was rightly an ambitious objective. Its case studies open with French assistance to the American revolutionaries, proceed through British assistance to the anti-Napoleonic coalitions, the American attempt to “save” China in the 1940s, and lead ineluctably to the American role in Vietnam and its atten-

dant catastrophes—that familiarity with the first case studies would have made unlikely. The author’s professionally won authority derives from his experience with the subject in a lifetime seeking to make such objectives real in military service to the United States. He knows from the inside where influence, leverage and ascendancy emerge from force, power, energy, compellance, and the worst—open war.

There is a strong case that comparative study is where the fields within international relations can make the most progress today. The rise of the social sciences in the twentieth century has been accompanied, in each of its divisions, by now wearily familiar debates over methodology. We political scientists have “pushed the envelope” as far as the data have allowed in trying to emulate our colleagues in economics and the harder sciences. The point is not that theory isn’t necessary or that eventually our field can’t be as rigorous, indeed scientific, as any other can be, but just that we aren’t there yet. The rise to brief ascendancy and somewhat embarrassing evacuation of the commanding heights by these disciplines over the last century has been accompanied by increasingly acrimonious and increasingly exhausting contests over methodology. In its ability to penetrate to the essence of things, with the retreat from notions of the planned economy to the absolute power of market economies, the utility of examining compatible populations of events steadily asserts itself. At some point we must recognize that our theory can be no better than the range of challenging data that it is sharpened upon. The increasingly rigorous comparative study of politics is helping us get well beyond the rather insecure insights traditionally available from single-case historical or political analysis, without carrying us perilously into a realm where theory so much outnumbers experience as to offer no adequate content, and yields nothing of significance to the policymaker and nothing of nourishment to the civic-minded reader.

Dr. Mott modestly fears that his work may even seem banal to political scientists: but if so it seems the loss is theirs. This book is the first synoptic and rigorous study of military assistance, as a major political mode and historical experience over the centuries and continents; it brings to the task conceptual sophistication, an acute lack of parochialism and an all too hard-won sense of reality: it remarkably succeeds in establishing criteria for how leverage is maximized, for example, of how recipient acquires power over donor, no less than donor over recipient. And how what is seen as a measure of economic distancing all too often becomes the assisting power’s overwhelming primary deficiency.

“Potential lawlike regularities” Colonel Mott calls what he has found. I would not spoil the reader’s satisfaction in discovering, as he proceeds through this wonderful book, how lesson piles up on lesson as to what have

been the circumstances for the successful use of military assistance. In the remarkably, indeed unprecedentedly, analytical approach to his study, Colonel Mott tentatively does discern certain potential lawlike regularities. In the first place by conceptualizing the issue correctly Mott is able to place all military assistance within his purview. It doesn't have to come out of an office, "Foreign Military Sales" in International Security Affairs at the Pentagon. In any case, during the period of the largest American military assistance programs, as it was put by one of the highest officials of the Pentagon, "Henry [Kissinger] is just using military assistance as wampum." Not always successfully, but always intriguingly and politically, as an attempt at—not to put too fine a point on it—bribery.

One encounters a treasury of unanticipated and unintended procedures, precious mettle from the cracks of the well-buried archives in which so many failures and disgraces are concealed. But, under the lens of comparative study, extraordinary resemblances emerge from superficially contrasting experiences. Thus we find Ronald Reagan compared to, in the same toils, Vergennes, Louis XVI's all too ambitious foreign minister and house geopolitical strategist, in their funding wars behind the backs of their adversaries. The comparison is a perceptive one. Both were "leading one superpower against its nemesis," and both were reversing their inherited approaches: Vergennes, the policy of exhausting England generally as opportunities arose to a policy of overt and systematic assistance to the American colonial rebels; Reagan, the policy of containment to a policy of rollback, in Nicaragua, Afghanistan—and elsewhere when the full story is told.

I believe that Colonel Mott has transcended the previous literature on military assistance. He really has made history the servant of philosophy, instead of mere dull annalistic repetition. It at all times sustains its focus on what the purpose of the assistance is for both giver and taker, where the leverage is located, and what lessons can be built on the progression of case studies. He keeps before our eyes that greatest of truths in these matters: that, as Burke said more than two centuries ago, "Seals roll, and months pass between the order and the execution." The best of intentions in the capital are a prophylactic giant squalid ineffectually in the strategic village. One is tempted to conclude, from the chapter on Vietnam, that our policymakers, having not read history, were doomed to make all the mistakes of their predecessors, and being unusually creative, to add a remarkable number of their own. Bismarck said that fools claim to learn from their mistakes; he preferred to learn from the mistakes of others. Had books of the quality of Colonel Mott's been available, would it have happened? At least we can hope that the next time Washington undertakes a major arming of an ally,

the implications of this work will have been thoroughly taken in. We could not do better.

W.Scott Thompson
Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
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Medford, Massachusetts
June 1998

Preface

When I began the work that has led to this book, I suspected that policy analysis, polemic political tracts, and emotional moral critiques reflected a broad misunderstanding of military assistance. Some policy analysts dealt with it as a tool of foreign policy, just another “diplomatic” ploy, others as little more than interstate bribery. Political scientists dealt with it as a technique of industrial policy, while economists made it a specialized area of trade policy. Soldiers deemed military assistance a convenient “economy of force” tactic. Populists have seen it in moral terms, while for those who have managed U.S. Security Assistance programs it is simply a job to be done.

Far more than a column of numbers in annual government budgets, military assistance is a massive, complex, and controversial—and hence impossible—subject. With a few notable exceptions, scholars have understandably avoided the multidisciplinary morass that authentic scholarship requires of any rigorous treatment of military assistance. Analyses have tended to splinter into a single discipline’s perspective surrounded by a halo of *ceteris paribus* assumptions about the rest of the world. With each focused “policy-relevant” discussion, the impacts of military assistance as a coherent type of international relations, as a prototype of the donor-recipient relationship, collapse into a single perspective—economic, strategic, political, commercial, or moral. The complex, powerful, and reciprocal links between economic growth and international conflict, between trade and war, between technology transfer and humanitarian intervention fade into the exogenous.

The premise of this book is that military assistance is a discrete, coherent, type or mode of international relations, not simply an obsolescent “policy tool.” Not confined to a single discipline, the donor-recipient relationship may legitimately claim a decisive place in states’ strategies for dealing with the rest of the world—whether as donors or as recipients.

The proposition that military assistance is more than an inert policy tool requires the donor-recipient relationship to be sufficiently explicit to possess a set of defining features that influence achievement of the purposes and policies of states—particularly donors. Success of donor policies would, thus, depend less on donor actions than on the donor-recipient relationship—or perhaps a set of necessary conditions to allow donor success. In such a donor-recipient relationship, success of recipient policies would be either the converse—when goals diverge—or in parallel—when their goals converge—with donor success.

Clearly any promotion of military assistance from policy tool to a definitive mode of interstate relations is not without presumption. The donor-recipient relationship—like those between trading partners, allies, or military enemies—demands theory, doctrine, practitioners, and scholarship. Soldier-scholars have studied war and developed military doctrines, and learned diplomats have mastered the skills and theory of their craft through study and experience. They and the policymakers who guide them—with economists, political scientists, psychologists, strategists, and politicians—must recognize military assistance for what it is: a powerful system of international relations in some not unusual predicaments that have repeatedly faced governments for at least two-and-a-half millennia.

For the donor-recipient relationship of military assistance creates its own worldview, its own structural and behavioral norms, and its own sets of rewards, punishments, values, and incentives. It involves the laws, canons, ideologies, and institutions of both donor and recipient. Military assistance reflects their approaches to technology transfer, arms proliferation and control, economic and humanitarian aid, commercial market shares, both military and commercial advantage, as well as foreign intervention and even subversion of national sovereignty. Military assistance is intimately related to trends, policies, and aspirations surrounding economic growth and international conflict. When states decide to enter the donor-recipient relationship, they create a new state of national existence and international relations that did not exist before. Although policy may lead to the decision, policy does not determine the effects of the relationship.

This book is an initial effort to build a foundation for appreciation of the donor-recipient relationship as a mode of international relations. My own dissatisfaction with treating military assistance as a simple policy tool

emerged in the early 1970s as a part-time monitor of U.S. Security Assistance in the Khmer Republic (Cambodia). My duties as an Army officer in Phnom Penh—and subsequently in Europe—involved ensuring that U.S. military assistance promoted U.S. policy goals. As I gained experience across countries, I eventually recognized that U.S. policy *was not the determining factor in producing results*. Something else was happening. This book is the first coherent result of my efforts to discover that “something else.”

This book does not propose ways of using military assistance to achieve donor purposes. It leads to a hypothesis about the donor-recipient relationship, as it operated in several separate situations over two centuries. As in my earlier study of the “growth-conflict relationship,” my method for developing the hypothesis is the concept of “lawlike regularity.”¹

While the book’s concluding hypothesis may strike some readers as banal, trivial, or self-evident, it not only provides a new appreciation of old facts and ideas, but offers some real new thoughts. The book develops its focus on the donor-recipient relationship—necessarily in the languages of political science, economics, international relations, diplomacy, and military science—into a testable hypothesis. Not intuitively false, the book’s conclusions may be able to provide both some explanation of why things happened as they did, and how to face analogous predicaments and opportunities in the future.

Since any approach to a theme of such scope and breadth involves a good bit of presumption, I invite the cooperation of readers through comment or criticism. Especially fruitful might be contributions of relevant materials, experiences, examples, or thoughts. This book is merely a single chapter in the continuing process of describing international relations, and trying to explain how states behave. Beyond my intent to make some small contribution to bringing some order to it all, I will be gratified if my exploratory impressions of military assistance generate more profound thoughts about the donor-recipient relationship.

This manuscript was begun in 1973 and tentatively completed in 1997. No alterations or additions have been made to account for the many political, economic, and military events that have occurred since.

NOTE

1. William H. Mott, IV, *The Economic Basis of Peace* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), esp. ch. 4 and app. N.

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Acknowledgments

While the weaknesses or omissions that readers may find in my perceptions, presentation, or conclusions have arisen through my own faults, the major themes, and indeed the book's conclusion, have been inspired by many other scholars, soldiers, and diplomats. Over the more than twenty years spent in developing the book, the patience, kindness, help, and understanding of my mentors, family, and friends have been invaluable. Most recently, Scott Thompson has read and reread the entire manuscript, while Richard Shultz and Jeswald Salacuse have read—and corrected—individual chapters. Many colleagues—diplomatic and military—scholars, and students have heard and read my papers on the studies in the book, and have provided additional references and ideas, as well as much-needed criticism and focus.

The libraries and staffs of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, have been of immeasurable assistance.

My family tolerated for many years my endless papers, notes, musings, and reference books as I tried to organize my impressions around some coherent meaning. One product of a very special relationship with a very special person throughout my life, this book is dedicated to my wife, Donna, who has given me so much more than I have deserved.

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Military Assistance

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1 Introduction

Of the apparent innovations that various countries have used in the modern practices of foreign policy and war fighting, one that has generated controversy, violent opposition, and passionate support is military assistance. Most contemporary governments have ceased to use military assistance as a distinct element of policy or strategy, and only the United States continues to operate a formal, annually budgeted, military assistance program through a dedicated government agency. Even so, military assistance remains a legitimate and viable policy option, especially during wartime. Indeed, the emergence of a new post-Cold War set of relationships among the major donor nations of the world may create a new set of potential recipients that truly need some sort of relationship with a donor.

No less confusing than the bureaucratic intricacies and political nuances of the U.S. Security Assistance Program, the use of “forgiven loans” as a form of pseudo-assistance or even the selective licensing of arms sales are the various justifications for, and condemnations of, military assistance in general. Policymakers too often can find little more than polemics, rhetoric, and carefully selected examples of military assistance to use as a basis for their own decisions on policy options. Many policymakers, as well as scholars and policy analysts, simply ignore military assistance as a viable policy option, while theorists handily subsume it in aggregate foreign aid, resource flows, or force structures. Other commentators may consider it an adjunct of foreign policy or military strategy or a component of foreign aid, and they may rely on personal experience, assumptions, political fashion, or whatever seems intuitively obvious for guidance in policy-making or analysis.

What can a government expect military assistance to accomplish? What levels and kinds of relationships must, or should, exist between recipient and donor? Can a donor relinquish control of equipment or operations and still expect positive results? Can military assistance be used as a substitute for donor military forces? Can it be an independent, primary instrument of policy and strategy? Under what circumstances can military assistance be expected to promote the attainment of donor goals? Obviously germane to prudent and effective policy and strategy, the answers to these, and many other, relevant questions cannot be found in any coherent theory of military assistance that goes beyond situational contexts or unique cases. Neither do most theories of foreign aid address the differences between economic aid and military assistance with much credibility. Nor do either fashionable policy analysis or arms transfer arguments address such questions in any depth beyond the journalistic coverage of specific current issues.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN HISTORY

Military assistance has been used, in various guises, as an element of foreign policy since the beginnings of history and throughout the world. In some situations it has been a primary instrument for promoting the donor's interests; in others it has been the primary purpose of a recipient's foreign policy. In the modern world, military assistance emerged in the concepts of mercenary soldiers hired by feudal nobility. Subsidies were a later innovation to support a foreign army in fighting a state's wars—epitomized in England's Coalition Wars against France. In the eighteenth century, military assistance expanded into naval privateering as European governments fitted, armed, and paid crews of foreign ships to harass the maritime commerce of their enemies. Indeed, early U.S. Navy cruises in the North Sea were funded by French military assistance. After lying concealed in imperial responsibilities for colonial security, military assistance reemerged in diplomacy and strategy with the American Lend-Lease programs of World War II. Through these innovative, bilateral programs, the United States used military assistance as a supplement to major Allied military efforts.

In some contrast, immediately after the war, the United States used military assistance—as well as the new concept of economic aid—as a primary instrument of peacetime foreign policy and military strategy to reestablish political and military order throughout the world. Cold War aid programs reflected new broad assumptions—by both Americans and Soviets, who began providing military assistance in 1954—and expanded beyond simply filling gaps in the recipients' military capabilities. Americans expected military assistance to create recipient military forces that could literally re-

place American forces in containing and opposing communist expansion. The basic and ultimate objectives of U.S. military assistance, which would end when the communist threat had been defeated, were “to insure the internal security of countries where this consideration is a paramount problem; and to create military forces in being, sufficiently effective to deter aggression and, if possible, repel an invader.”¹

Soviet—and later, Chinese—donors, in some contrast, seemed to see military assistance as a technique not only for expanding communism, but also for precluding U.S. or capitalist influence. Other donors (Britain, France, Canada, Sweden) used military assistance either as one of a battery of postcolonial relationships or as an adjunct to other foreign policy (but not military or strategic) initiatives. By the mid-1960s all major governments of the world were operating military assistance programs—some very sophisticated and effective, and others ill-conceived and sometimes counterproductive.

Until late in the 1960s, Americans had assumed a continuous spectrum of warfare with various levels of conflict. Washington saw military assistance as a policy instrument able to create indigenous forces anywhere to act as American military proxies, applicable at all levels except nuclear war. Washington’s global strategy divorced military assistance and its results from times, places, threats, and countries. The American approach allowed a comfortable American ideological unity across diverse donor-recipient relationships. Based on a different strategy, Soviet military assistance focused on a few major recipients, but retained an opportunistic tendency to respond to U.S. initiatives. China emerged as a possible third major donor for uncommitted nations seeking economic aid and military assistance for their own purposes. Most secondary donors had become disillusioned with military assistance as a policy instrument and terminated most of their smaller programs.

As America left Vietnam, the Nixon Doctrine re-emphasized Washington’s reluctance to commit U.S. troops, even as the Soviet Union was committing troops to support its military assistance programs in Afghanistan. Instead of creating surrogate forces, American military assistance was now provided to support major recipient military efforts and justified only by explicit U.S. national interest in particular countries or regions, rather than ideology. Washington made a few tentative essays at “total force planning” in the 1970s through use of military assistance to coordinate recipient military forces with American long-term strategic requirements. By the mid-1980s, Washington had shifted emphasis in its remaining donor-recipient relationships from grants to credits and loan guarantees, and most governments had turned their attention to other matters. Even for the superpowers, military assistance had become little more than a political instrument of

opportunism used by each in their Cold War confrontations throughout the world. As relationships changed and foreign countries became markets and developing countries instead of dependent allies, donors lost control and military assistance seemed less relevant to current concerns than either arms exports or development aid. Since the Cold War, military assistance has survived only as a minor line item in the largest national defense budgets.

Over the course of history, governments have devoted vast sums of money and incalculable other resources to military assistance as an instrument of foreign policy and military strategy. They have not usually had, however, the benefit of anything beyond political insight and the pressures of current events as bases for their actions. The inevitable complications of accounting, perceptions, economics, and politics, embedded in the confusion of war, have compounded the inadequacies of both theory and doctrine. The pressing urgencies of economic issues have brought most policymakers prudently to ignore in military assistance the strategic and political features that can, and have, made it an effective policy option when well applied and deliberately managed.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN THEORY

Americans, Russians, Europeans, Chinese, and others have been providing military assistance throughout the world for the last half-century in the midst of controversy, publicity, and scandal. Serious analytical thought peered through the narrow lens of the Cold War and saw the U.S. experience in Vietnam and Soviet efforts in Africa as both novel prototypes and convincing examples of the disutility of military assistance. Absorbed in the urgency of forward-looking policy analysis, many theorists may have forgotten that military assistance has been used as an instrument of foreign policy since at least the Punic Wars.

Through most of human history, however, military assistance has remained either uninteresting or unnoticed. Herodotus and Thucydides noted the ancient Greek use of military assistance in conjunction with political alliances in the face of an enemy. Imperial Roman patron-client relationships of the Julio-Claudian period included military assistance in the form of both subsidies to client kings and development of client *auxilia* forces to complement the Roman legions. Medieval feudalism refined and reversed the Roman patron-client relationship to rest on provision of military services and resources by vassals in exchange for the military and political protection of their suzerains. In contrast to the Roman relationship, feudalism generally excluded military assistance or subsidies to a vassal. Indeed, some feudal

vassals were required to advise their lords on military issues, and to pay fees reminiscent of ancient tribute. By the time of the Renaissance merchant princes, feudal pensions had merged with mercenary armies in a donor-recipient relationship built around monetary subsidies that allowed war fighting without going to war.

For post-Renaissance thinkers who were plumbing the depths of the human condition and politicians who dealt with the urgent issues of the day the donor-recipient relationship of military assistance was not particularly interesting or even important. As reporting gained statistical sophistication, such things as trade, flows of capital, sizes and inventories of armies and navies, battle casualties, and military budgets gained prominence as convenient data, and it became possible to quantify both military assistance and the results of foreign policy in some way. Even as military assistance expenditures and receipts became line items in national budgets during World War II, however, theoretical foundations for both policy decisionmaking and critical assessment remained weak.

Modern Theorizing

The development of modern theories about military assistance has been closely related to the evolutionary phases of U.S. foreign assistance programs and policy since World War II. Most modern theories explicitly stress military assistance in periods of peace, and neglect the strategic use of military assistance in wartime. Foreign aid has involved both military assistance and economic aid, and theorists strove to keep them scrupulously separated, even to the extent of inventing additional legislative and budgetary categories for situations that seemed to be neither or both. Policy (particularly U.S. military assistance policy) has tended to be “a series of practical responses to current difficulties [that] do not conform to well-defined patterns of consistent goals and actions.” Jacob Kaplan attributed this to “the absence of a compelling philosophy [for aid policy and] the lack of a rallying point in the form of either a set of tenets or a record of accomplishment.”² Theoretical interest in military assistance in wartime disappeared as policymakers and scholars focused on keeping the world at peace.

The first phase—Truman Doctrine and Mutual Security, 1947–1955—reflected an American sense of responsibility for helping people in recovering from the war and in making new political, social, and economic arrangements; humanitarianism and war relief were strong motives for early postwar aid programs, which were dominated by economic aid. The defeat of Chiang Kai-shek, wars in Korea and Indochina, and Soviet atomic power intensified the communist threat, which began to appear as lasting and

global. Dominated by the strategic concerns of the United States and Europe in facing the emerging communist threat, policy and theory rested on two basic principles: containment and collective security. It was military assistance that made both possible. “It also laid the basis for sharing the burden of collective defense, as foreign nations provided base rights, military personnel, and political support for the effort.”³

The European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan) provided the theoretical and policy precedent for connecting economic aid to military, strategic purposes. The U.S. Mutual Defense Act of 1949 institutionalized both military assistance and economic aid and converted them from opportunistic policy instruments reserved for abnormal conditions, such as war, to continuous, deliberate policies. President Truman’s “Point Four” program of technical assistance formally introduced “the idea that economic development in less developed countries (LDCs) could be fostered through financial flows,”⁴ in the guise of a weapon to stop the Communists.⁵

The second period of theoretical focus—economic development and counterinsurgency, 1955–late 1960s—reflected the shift in U.S. strategy toward winning friends and allies, in competition with the Soviet Union. Even though the immediate military threats were diminishing, popular support shifted dramatically toward military assistance and away from relief aid: Europeans and Asians had recovered from the war and seemed able to meet the communist menace with local forces. The predominant premise behind military assistance and economic aid saw both—collectively known as foreign aid—as supplements to recipients’ “indigenous efforts to support their own economic and security requirements” without going to war.⁶ The initial premise of early theories of this period reflected the success of the Marshall Plan, which “showed that large scale infusions of money and commodities could, under the right circumstances, produce growth and, it seemed, retard the spread of communism,” without the necessity of either military assistance or any commitment of donor military forces.⁷

Theoretical interest followed politics as the Communists switched from military confrontation to economic aid competition, and Washington accepted the premise that poverty and discontent were natural allies of communism; thus, aid must pursue not only military, but also political and economic, goals as foundations for economic development. By 1960, America’s principal policy instrument was money, primarily as foreign aid—both economic and military—applied in reluctant reactions to awkward situations created by the Communists. Theorists discovered the problem of substitutability between military assistance and economic aid in the annual U.S. foreign assistance budget debate.

The success of communist insurgency in Vietnam discredited the Trumanesque concept of military assistance to create surrogate forces to fight conventional wars, and hypotheses emerged to confirm the role of military assistance in resisting insurgency and subversion to support economic growth. In what some recognized as a “full-cycle” return to the Truman Doctrine, policy diverged from theory and tried to serve both politics and economics. Post-Vietnam Washington recognized the importance of internal security but continued to focus military assistance along the Sino-Soviet periphery “to provide a deterrent to aggression and an initial ability to resist it.”⁸ The objective was to develop conventional, indigenous military forces as parts of the U.S. Forward Defense Strategy. Elsewhere, military assistance emphasized paramilitary forces for internal security, and support for economic development through “civic action” programs. The Nixon Doctrine (1969) reintroduced the hypothesis that military assistance could obviate commitment of donor troops through “burden-sharing,” as the war in Vietnam shattered any consensus on the utility of military assistance to contain communism.

Before the war the public accepted the rationale that security assistance was a way to prepare our allies and friends to handle local and even regional conflicts without the need for direct U.S. involvement. After Vietnam security assistance came to be perceived as entangling the United States with countries that would not always be able to cope with the threats to their security, with the risk that U.S. forces might well be required to honor our commitments, expressed or implied.⁹

In the third period of theoretical development—basic human needs and détente, 1970–1981—the fall of Vietnam to communism discredited both military assistance and developmental economic aid as useful instruments of policy. The “basic human needs approach,” initially popularized in President Lyndon B. Johnson’s domestic antipoverty programs, saw poverty as the cause of instability and vulnerability to communism.¹⁰ In confirming Washington’s policy focus on basic human needs, Congress focused military assistance clearly on economic support, while theorists investigated the “behavioral” aspects of military assistance.

In parallel with the spread of a cynical “aid fatigue,” commercial considerations penetrated the *magisteria* of both economic aid and military assistance. By the mid-1970s, most donors had converted many military assistance recipients to buyers of military equipment, drastically reduced military assistance grants, and formally separated any residual military programs from the more productive and politically popular economic develop-

ment aid. Scholars turned their attention to arms transfers, whether through donor grants or commercial sales, as military assistance reached its nadir during the Jimmy Carter administration (1976–1980).

The decade of the 1980s was dominated by the reforms of President Ronald Reagan, which restored both military assistance and economic aid as instruments of American foreign policy and also affirmed arms sales as a legitimate policy instrument. In parallel with the administration's new focus on American business as the “engine of growth,” the rediscovered Schumpeter-Friedman tradition refocused American theories of development and economic aid on recipient private enterprise. More effective than massive grants of money and goods were investments in recipient infra-structures that could support expansion of entrepreneurial business in a market economy. In the same spirit, military assistance regained its strategic utility as an alternative to donor troop commitment—the Nixon Doctrine was not forgotten—especially in the form of grant aid. The inherent tension between military assistance and economic aid emerged in the 1980s as the problem of substitutability in “the continuing debate over the balance between economic and security assistance [which] is sterile or even damaging to U.S. interests.”¹¹ Although the Americans were not able to achieve it, theorists accepted the need for a cohesive—or at least coordinated—approach to managing foreign aid (both military assistance and economic aid) not only within a donor government, but among competing or cooperating donors.

Modern Criticizing

Analysts of interstate relations and foreign policy have too easily subsumed military assistance in lists of alternative policy tools or military techniques. In hopeful desperation, policy makers have turned to military assistance only when nothing else worked. Neither political science nor economics—nor even military science or diplomacy—has produced a coherent theory that provides standards, criteria, models, or even clear guidance for practitioners or administrators, whether for particular issues or the entire concept of providing or accepting military assistance. The absence of any theoretically sound, historically demonstrable tenets, any conventional wisdom, or even much rigorous analysis forces theoretical critiques to rely on selected examples that “prove” a point. The same lacuna leads public discussion, legislative—and even scholarly—debate, and bureaucratic pronouncements toward either the historically trivial or the morally sublime. Decisionmakers, analysts, and scholars polarize their pronouncements fashionably around two extremes: moral positions and fiscal issues.

One group is concerned with the broadest principles of national policy, the morality of military assistance, assertion and repetition of dogmatic philosophical aphorisms, and moral values. Questions about intentions and results—especially during the Cold War—brought responses in global, ideological terms. Among the most sublime were “defense of the free world,” “the domino theory,” and “support for the struggles of captive peoples.” Ideological criteria let U.S. military assistance policies in Vietnam, French aid in Africa, Soviet aid everywhere, and all Chinese aid become heavily doctrinaire. Emotional reactions to the “China Lesson,” the “Korea Lesson,” and the “European Experience” led to vague idealistic rhetoric as policy guidance and obscured any critical judgments of the results and effects of military assistance that might have suggested some inherent limitations. From idealists came reassurances that military assistance was a low-risk substitute for sending our own troops to fight other people’s wars, that using foreign armies to fight our wars was cost-effective, or that the intrinsic “military-to-military” contacts of a military assistance program were the foundations of security and peace. In the glare of post-Cold War attention to economic issues, realists broadcast dire warnings about regional arms races, disruptions of the balance of power, and destabilization. Liberals deplore uncontrollable diversions of recipients from the hazy, glowing paths toward economic development. Both liberals and realists urge policy shifts from military assistance and arms transfers to arms control and commercial sales.

A second, pragmatic group searches for, and finds, specific administrative discrepancies and fiscal deficiencies, which critics generalize to a judgment of an entire military assistance program or policy. A functional fixation on possible collateral effects for economic development, technology transfer, diplomatic support, and humanitarian programs can readily ignore the inherent functions of military assistance—to increase and expand the recipient’s indigenous military capabilities—and disregard the critical donor-recipient relationship and the necessary recipient mediation between donor resources and policy results. Supporters of military assistance usually defend it on broad moral, ethical, or ideological principles, whereas opponents attack it on specific administrative and fiscal points or generalize from particularly egregious failures.

Any resultant debate, while emotional and sincere, is just as often inconclusive, unrewarding, devoid of guidance for politicians and officials, and contains little new knowledge for scholars. Neither critics nor supporters can offer objective guidance for policy decisions, or unequivocal criteria for managing a donor-recipient relationship that can be expected to lead to achievement of the donor’s purposes. None can adduce a prototypically

successful donor-recipient relationship, although examples of successful and failed relationships abound. Even the basic issues of what can reasonably be expected from military assistance remain unresolved. Still wanting is a coherent body of theory that offers a frame of reference for explaining success and failure and allows some level of credible prediction, that allows military assistance to fit into some model of modern, pluralistic government as a legitimate instrument of national power, and that provides guidance to politicians or administrators and establishes a reasonable basis for criticism of policy.

THEORETICAL LITERATURE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Modern theory has often seen military assistance as a special type of foreign aid, as a form of intervention, or as a form of arms transfer, but has considered it sufficiently unique to be excluded both from critiques of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and from portrayals of direct military operations. The former have emphasized economic theories; the latter have taken the perspective of security studies. For many such theorists, the donor-recipient relationship behind military assistance has generally served as an example of something, as an included type, or as an exogenous parameter of minor interest. Even in their own disciplines theoretical treatments of military assistance have been inadequate or even incidental.

In addition to serious scholars, most national politicians, many involved officials, and some professional soldiers have advanced opinions, propositions, observations, and anecdotes about foreign aid generally, and even analyses of military assistance specifically. Analysis has tended to take one of three narrow approaches—historical, economic, or instrumental—even while recognizing any others and assuming them away. The result is a small literature with a few inadequate econometric models, some hazy political concepts, and unfocused historical records that reflect the historians' individual perspectives.

Hans Morgenthau attacked the problem of inadequate theory in an article aptly entitled "A Political Theory of Foreign Aid." After lamenting the absence of any real theory, he notes "The first prerequisite for the development of a viable foreign policy is the recognition of the diversity of policies that go by that name."¹² He lists six, of which military assistance is one, and concludes:

When all available facts have been ascertained, duly analyzed, and conclusions drawn, the final judgments and decisions can be derived only from subtle and sophisticated hunches. The best the formulator and executor of

foreign aid can do is to maximize the chances that his hunches turn out to be right.¹³

Historical Approaches

W.A. Brown and Redvers Opie, in their excellent historical treatment of foreign aid, *American Foreign Assistance*, devote a few words to a basic theory that refers to military assistance.¹⁴ They posit enlightened national interest as the only significant basis of foreign aid policy: successful use of foreign aid, including military assistance, must rest primarily on mutuality of interest between donor and recipient. They present military assistance as a cheap technique for obtaining security while not committing donor forces. The clear implication is that military assistance can be used as a substitute for donor forces. Their focus is ultimately economic, and they foresee an ultimate end to all foreign aid as both donors and recipients liberalize their trade policies. Although its theoretical content (and intent) is minimal, Brown and Opie's book is an interesting, if dated, historical treatment of the subject.

Of more portent was the political scientific approach of George Liska's *The New Statecraft*.¹⁵ He analyzes past U.S. experience with foreign aid and military assistance to deduce some primary structure and elemental principles. He discovers a good deal of fumbling and general degeneration from the clear contracts of Louis XIV, and he draws some basic similarities that establish a weak consistency of military assistance practice over time. Observing some patterns in the extension and receipt of aid that reflect donor policy, Liska infers from these patterns some broad political theoretical conclusions.

Liska emphasizes the problem of donor control, and discusses methods of maximizing some effective—but not direct or active—control of recipient actions through wise and proper extension of aid (presumably to recipients that share donor aims). He suggests that donor anonymity and exorcism of ideology from the donor-recipient relationship are positive control factors. His idealistic approach seems almost obsolete in the modern post-Cold War world, with its suggestion of personal contractual relationships between national leaders, much in the ways that Henry VIII and Louis XIV conducted their affairs.

Professor Liska argues convincingly for consistency in military assistance policies and approaches to foreign aid over time and across countries. He feels that coherence between military assistance and foreign aid (and all other donor policies), as well as congruence with the current state of international society, is essential for success with either military assistance or

economic aid. He notes, almost in passing, that any provision of aid must have a real, sound purpose in policy; responsive or preventive aid cannot support a viable foreign policy.

Liska's loose exercise in model building leads to an almost commercial, business-like military assistance transaction in much the style of a great corporate merger. While his mechanistic approach overlooks some of the dynamics of the donor-recipient relationship, in depth and scope, it is undoubtedly the most heuristic of the early political-scientific approaches.

Instrumental Approaches

Charles Wolf, Jr., in *Foreign Aid in Theory and Practice in Southeast Asia*, presents economic hypotheses about allocating donor resources between recipients, and balancing resources between economic aid and military assistance.¹⁶ Using a single set of dubious, incomplete country data, he develops a weak econometric model of the donor-recipient relationship. He assumes political stability in a recipient as the aim of donor (specifically U.S.) foreign aid and measures stability by the absence of political extremism, which he links quantitatively to economic aspirations, expectations, and reality. His "economic index of political vulnerability" becomes an econometric surrogate for quantifying some tenuous political relationships. Some of his assumptions about the linearity and discreteness of political-economic-military relationships seem to simplify them to a point of hopeful speculation. As he recognizes, Wolf's models have little substantive theoretical value. They derive their worth as examples and heuristic concepts of the econometric approach to theory building:

The models are incomplete, and too ruthless in their simplifications, for this [providing answers] to be their purpose. Rather they are intended to stimulate further research and to help focus judgment where it is needed if better allocative decisions are to be made.¹⁷

Colonel Amos A. Jordan's work, *Foreign Aid and the Defense of South East Asia*, is written at a practical level and makes no pretension at theorizing. He analyzes military assistance at the country level from the perspective of the administrator, rather than the planner, legislator, or theorist. After presenting some of the first real research and analysis of modern postwar military assistance (which is invaluable to the theorist), he concludes that a basic theory is needed to deal with the objectives, means, administration, and limits of both economic aid and military assistance.

Robert Walters' venerable work, *American and Soviet Aid: A Comparative Analysis*, provides a good political-economic exposition of donor aims and motivations, although the primary focus is on economic aid. He deals briefly with the donor-recipient relationship as a source of several problems, including any lack of donor influence on the recipient, differences in donor and recipient motivations, and inconsistency with other donor positions, especially trade policies. Like Liska, Professor Walters approaches military assistance from the perspective of political science, and he notes that foreign aid is essentially a weak instrument of policy. Although as a historian, he does not explicitly attempt to develop theory, the insight that he offers goes far toward building the foundation for a viable theory.

Robert Pranger and Dale Tahtinen have begun to formulate a viable political-scientific theory. In their study, *Toward a Realistic Military Assistance Program*, they recognize the inherent weakness of military assistance as a primary policy instrument and focus on mediation by the recipient between donor and the ultimate effect as the primary constraint on success.¹⁸ After considering any convergence of interests, donor strategy and policy, and options for active intervention, they conclude that a donor must have some direct, active method of influencing recipient mediation to be successful. They develop a conceptual model of mediation, which generally operates between policymakers and military executors of a military assistance program. Policymakers must consider politics, economics, and strategy in both donor and recipient and must cause recipient mediation to be additive to donor resources and efforts, while military executives must develop and exploit congruence between donor strategy and recipient military behaviors.

Pranger and Tahtinen's brief, but insightful, study develops an innovative concept that posits military assistance as an instrument of mutual donor-recipient policy whose effect depends on the set of patiently developed diplomatic and military donor-recipient partnership relationships that must be in place to support it. Military assistance in the Pranger-Tahtinen model becomes a powerful instrument of mutuality and partnership between independent, sovereign nations in the arenas of military strategy, defense policy, and protection of their national interests. Outcomes, however, will be indeterminate precisely because decisions with respect to policy, outcomes, and assessments will be shared, and not simply "transferred as the defense burdens of one are shifted to surrogates. Yet, militarily speaking, a genuine partnership may be much stronger than a dependency relationship."¹⁹

Economic Approaches

Martin McGuire takes the econometric approach to theory. He has expanded his early work, on U.S. federal grants to states and municipalities,

into a set of econometric, statistical, quantitative models to measure how effectively foreign aid (economic and military) is used to achieve donor aims. Based on the donor-recipient relationship between the United States and Israel, McGuire's model measures recipient mediation of donor resources among the military, civil, and private sectors of the recipient economy. Professor McGuire expands basic economic supply-demand models by using donor aid and external threat (represented by an enemy's defense expenditures) as supply functions and recipient requirements for defense (the recipient's total defense budget) as a demand function; he uses total recipient defense outlays as the dependent variable. McGuire measures mediation as a "fungibility" problem, and dismisses any effect of the political process by presuming the recipient government's behavior to maximize the "representative citizen's utility." After some sophisticated statistical processing and multiple regressions, the models generate a broad picture of the recipient's resource allocation process and the effects of recipient mediation. Like Wolf, Professor McGuire recognizes the weaknesses of econometric modelling of political-economic situations.

Econometric analysis such as this necessarily has important limitations. The usefulness of the work is greatest when the statistical insights gained for Israel are used as a tool to explore actual, real-time defense planning, budgeting, and financial planning processes within that country, and how these interact with the U.S. decision-making.²⁰

Arms Transfer Approaches

Theories of this recent *genre* focus on determining the causes and effects of arms transfers between suppliers and receivers and rely on second-order or third-order data "to be correlated with other time-series data in the faith that in high correlation lies truth."²¹ These theories dismiss the method of transfer—sale, theft, grant, loan, covert, or open—as secondary to the primary interest in causes and effects. "Regardless of whether weapons are shipped to LDCs [less developed countries] on concessional or market terms, their effects in the internal government of recipients—on their prospects for sustained and equitable economic development, domestic order, and regional stability—are identical."²² Analyses tend to be quantitative, comparative—over time or across countries—and based on numbers of weapons or systems transferred.

Arms transfer data—often limited to numbers of high-value weapon systems—are commonly used to describe trends, priorities, and patterns, which then provide arguments to suit various polemic, rhetorical, or organizational goals. Theoretical research often tries to correlate arms trans-

fers—expressed as aggregate monetary values—with economic development, political influence, military aggression, receivers’ internal stability, democracy, suppliers’ economic growth, arms races, or some other interesting recipient behavior. Some specialized theories develop hypotheses about the functional military utilities of particular weapons²³ or focus on a global system or pattern of traffic or commerce in arms.²⁴

Arms transfer theories that attempt to explain something are heavily burdened with case-specificity and *caveats* about incomplete data, methodology, causality, and generality. Usually based on a statistical, econometric, or multivariate technique, these explanatory theories and analyses have dissolved many of the myths of arms transfers. Rigorous analysis has shown that such assertions as “arms transfers create donor political influence,” “arms transfers cause *coups d’état*,” or “arms transfers cause, or prevent, wars,” are not generally true.²⁵

Stephanie Neuman’s interesting comparative studies of arms transfers have had little theoretical intent. They have, however, exposed the many disparities between any orthodox theoretical concepts of military assistance and the contemporary practices of both recipients and donors in dealing with each other. Her survey of the role of military assistance in several recent wars extended the historic concept of military assistance as bilateral “grant aid” to include the recent tendency of donors to convert recipients of military assistance to purchasers—either commercial or concessionary. In this context, military assistance refers to transfers of military equipment, provision of training, “and other related services to another country, whether this is in the form of a sale, offset arrangement, or grant.”²⁶ In another recognition of modern practices, Neuman differentiated between direct bilateral donor-recipient relationships and indirect arms transfers through another country. The former are based on “legally binding understandings between the governments of sovereign states for the sale of gift of military equipment and related services.”²⁷ The latter include subsequent transfers by a recipient to yet another recipient or purchaser, as well as transfers from a donor through an intermediate to the designated recipient. She also introduces as “negative transfers” several forms of donor control: “embargoes, political restrictions, and the inability or unwillingness of a supplier to provide certain military technologies or services to a combatant.”²⁸

The decreasing power of numbers and quality of weapons transferred to predict a recipient’s performance in battle seems attributable to Neuman’s “human factor,” which includes troop morale, command structure, logistics, training in the operation and maintenance of transferred equipment, and “a poor grasp of the tactics and strategy of the war for which they were designed.”²⁹ Recognizing that “resupply and training from varied, often in-

direct, donors has become the dominant mode of military assistance during conflict,”³⁰ Neuman finds an increasing salience of qualitative factors and dependence in the donor-recipient relationship.

In sum, a constellation of factors has served to foster the dependency of most of the world’s states on the economic and technological capabilities of the superpowers.... Both [superpower donors] have continued to dominate the arms trade, using military assistance both to enhance their position in the world and to limit each other’s expansion.... In effect, the superpowers have retained control over the quality if not the quantity of the arms trade, and ultimately, therefore, over the level of technological sophistication at which wars can be fought in the Third World.³¹

Weaknesses and Difficulties

Some of the basic difficulties in developing any viable theoretical approach to military assistance reflect its triple nature—military, economic, and political—and dual functions: war fighting and war prevention. Theorists and analysts have dealt with individual bits or aspects of military assistance, and have developed specific models and concepts that are viable and useful, but lack generality and depth across several disciplines. Soldiers, bureaucrats, politicians, and diplomats have learned to use and exploit military assistance in specific international relationships. Although situations can be described and explained either economically or politically, the narrow models presented in the literature have little broad predictive power and cannot provide sound multidisciplinary policy guidance.

A further weakness of most orthodox, realist theoretical approaches to military assistance has been the persistent focus on donor policy and aims, although it is not clear that recipients cannot usefully pursue active military assistance policies. Liberal approaches tend to be equally myopic in their obsession with the economic development of a recipient. A shift of emphasis toward the donor-recipient relationship allows consideration of the distinctive characteristics of successful, or unsuccessful, relationships (rather than simply donor policies or recipient problems). A focus on the donor-recipient relationship also allows military assistance as a policy option for recipients, as well as for donors.

A growing deficiency in theoretical approaches lies in the changing practices of the post-Cold War world as donor-recipient relationships lose their ideological foundations. As arms transfers become market transactions and lose the trappings of diplomacy, it is becoming clear that neither economics nor political science is very good at either explaining or predicting military assistance, in any form.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS POLICY

Military assistance involves providing equipment, funds, training, or leadership to the military forces of a recipient nation. While donors and recipients have had many reasons for establishing a relationship based on military assistance, it is probably indisputable—and integral to the definition used here—that the essence of military assistance is its role in their foreign policies and military strategies. It is clear that granting an export license to a domestic firm for the commercial sale of military items to a foreign government also involves provision of military items to foreign military forces. Thus, any useful definition of military assistance as policy must include an essential provision that the transfer must be intended and used by the donor government as an instrument of foreign policy or national military strategy.³² Such a two-part definition excludes purely commercial arms sales, except insofar as a donor government improves the terms of a sales contract for the buyer beyond current market terms. Whether a particular transfer of military items meets these two criteria can only be determined through analyzing the terms of transfer, and ultimately determining who pays and how much.

Military assistance is, even under the best circumstances, a weak, indirect policy instrument. The recipient government and military forces—and even the population—mediate actively between donor intentions and actual results. Even when exerting active command, as did the Duke of Wellington over all coalition forces in the Iberian campaigns, the donor loses direct control over the progress of events. The most valuable contribution of military assistance to donor policy and strategy may be through “its ability to do something for national defense where other, more direct means would accomplish virtually nothing.”³³ For military assistance to be effective, a donor must fathom the recipient’s polity, economy, and culture and cause the recipient to adopt desired policies, military strategies, or other behaviors. Donor diplomacy must accomplish much of this, while donor military operations must exploit whatever congruency develops between recipient military behaviors and donor strategy.

The fundamental objective of military assistance is to strengthen, expand, or increase the military capabilities of the recipient country, and thereby to achieve whatever other aims are involved. Well-articulated objectives for military assistance involve the specific force development to be accomplished by the military assistance—specific levels of readiness, combat capabilities, force structures and strengths, weapons inventories, or even levels of training and proficiency to be attained in the recipient force.

Force development is not, however, inherently useful either to a donor or to a recipient. Any military force is valuable only insofar as it achieves, or can achieve, something beyond simply existing. Strategic goals are the ends that are to be achieved by developing recipient armed forces or the uses to which those forces are to be put. Historically, strategic goals of donors and recipients have been related either to combat or to deterrence—either to fighting wars or to preventing them. In the twentieth century—particularly since 1945—goals have sometimes included military roles in the political or economic national development of a recipient country.

National purposes are the broad aims of policy and strategy, to whose achievement many instruments, policies and actions contribute. Both recipient and donor military forces may achieve national purposes, although the nature of national purposes does not often allow their achievement without active participation or support by other nonmilitary agencies and efforts. It is clear that a particular episode of military assistance may well be fully successful in developing some desired force structure, which may ultimately be less than effective or even dysfunctional in achieving national goals or purposes. Although policy is often vague about such things, it seems heuristically appropriate to analyze the intent, results, and effects of military assistance on three levels as the national aims of the donor and those of the recipient:

Purposes—broad aims of policy and strategy, to whose achievement many instruments, policies, and actions contribute;

Goals—ends that are to be achieved by developing recipient armed forces and any uses to which those forces are to be put; and

Objectives—the specific force development to be accomplished by the military assistance.

It is only indirectly, through policy purposes and strategic goals—beyond immediate objectives—and through its capability to achieve them, that military assistance attains its unique synergistic blend of political, economic, military, and other elements of national power. This inability to denominate military assistance as specifically military, political, economic, or something else, and its inherently indirect, mediated relationship to ultimate donor intents and results, has important analytical implications. Success cannot be easily determined or measured. The purposes and goals behind policy decisions involving military assistance are often far from clear. Collateral effects may obscure, or even negate, the purposive results of achieving objectives. Indeed success in providing military assistance and

achieving immediate objectives may lead to failure in foreign policy goals or national purposes.

ANALYZING MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Scholars, analysts, diplomats, soldiers, and politicians generally agree that military assistance is probably not effective in all—or even most—international relationships. A basic premise of this work, however, is that it is a valuable and effective policy instrument in many situations that face modern decisionmakers in both peace and war. The intent is not only to validate that premise, but to offer some rationale for considering military assistance as a viable, deliberate policy option and for scholarly analysis. The broad, general questions that it addresses deal with the donor-recipient relationship and the conditions or characteristics of that relationship that are essential to ensure, or enough to prevent, donor success in achieving donor purposes.

While usually focused on particular episodes of foreign aid, pragmatic policy analysis inevitably generates scores of subsidiary questions about military assistance and the donor-recipient relationship in endless levels of detail and with countless assumptions or constraints. Even while recognizing that every case might indeed be unique, most such case-specific issues cannot be responsibly addressed as more than examples of some interesting phenomenon without a coherent logical or theoretical frame of reference. Nor do broad, orthodox doctrines of international politics, economics, military strategy, or political economy provide the cross-disciplinary perspective that military assistance spans. A set of general uniformities about the donor-recipient relationship that holds over time, across polities, in peace and war, and in various geopolitical-economic situations may form a theoretical and logical foundation for useful analyses of military assistance.

The distinction between military assistance and wartime and peacetime reflects more than the obvious intuitive differences. A critical feature of the donor-recipient relationship involves the “commitment” of the donor to the relationship. In wartime this commitment involves deploying donor troops into battle with, or at least complemented by, recipient forces; in peacetime, an alliance or promise to deploy may be sufficient. In wartime, a common donor-recipient focus on victory might overwhelm any divergent interests and purposes that could disrupt such a relationship in peacetime, and even obviate any need for donor control. Similarly, a donor focus on wartime victory may suppress other competing domestic priorities. Although these differences are clear—and may even be trivially obvious—this volume begins with the premise that military assistance can be useful in either peace or