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Neutralization as a Sustainable Approach to Afghanistan

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Developing a sustainable security policy for future US policy toward Afghanistan requires dispassionately weighing American interests within the context of competing global and domestic challenges. Since Al Qaeda's attacks in 2001, the top American priority has been to prevent future threats against the United States and its allies emanating from Afghan territory. Related, a viable and legitimate Afghan government serves American interests. After a vast investment of American lives and treasure, US credibility would be damaged if Afghanistan again reverted to being a failed state. Establishment of a second Afghan Taliban regime could reverse all the post-2001 development gains and provide a further breeding ground for anti-West Islamist violence. Finally, at the heart of the famous Silk Road that ran from the Eastern Roman Empire to China (300 BCE to 200 AD), Afghanistan plays a key role in Eurasia's changing geopolitical picture now. Chinese President Xi Jinping's Silk Road Initiative, announced in 2013, seeks to cut China-Europe transport from four to six weeks by sea to fourteen days by road or rail. This may or may not accord with US interests, depending upon whether it benefits Afghanistan economically and increases China's incentives to pressure Pakistan not to export Islamist radicalism. Above all else, then, American interests are served by an Afghanistan that is stable, autonomous, economically developing, unthreatening to others, and constructively committed to by its neighbors.

Afghanistan's neutralization is the best way to ensure a stable state that cannot threaten itself, the region, or the United States. It also accords with Afghan tradition by echoing the most peaceful, prosperous periods of Afghan history. While Afghanistan is by no means a developed country, it has been at the crossroads of civilizations for centuries, with archaeological roots rivaling those of Egypt and a trading culture that dates back to at least 2,000 B.C.E. The great conquerors of history, including Genghis Kahn and Alexander the Great, passed through the

area, helping to establish a warrior tradition. Afghan statesmen have built a legacy of balancing off the interests of rival empires, achieving stability only when they have kept themselves politically separate and independent of them all. In the last two hundred years, Afghanistan has been at the crossroads of Tsarist Russia, British India, the Soviet Union, the United States, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Al Qaeda, and now NATO and the United States again—with Pakistan, Iran, and China waiting in the wings. As US troops draw down, the Afghan government is resuming its role as geopolitical pivot: the United States should shape that process by helping to build a sturdy regional framework that discourages meddling neighbors and reduces the threat to itself.

Afghanistan has been most dangerous to itself and others when it has drawn too close to any one power or group, and most stable when it has acted as a political buffer and economic crossroads between two or more. The key to the most peaceful period in recent history—what the Afghans call the “Era of Tranquility” between 1929 and 1978—was a strict policy of neutrality and nonalignment. That is also the most promising approach today, but with a regional accord to back it up.

Neutralization is a reciprocal agreement, usually between a weak state and two or more external powers, in which the state agrees to be perpetually neutral and the external powers guarantee that neutrality. Neutralization agreements are designed to guard a state’s territorial integrity and independence while keeping external actors at bay. Like any other tool of statecraft, these agreements do not always work; but when they do, they can change regional dynamics in ways that serve inhabitants and stabilize the entire global system. There are many examples of disadvantaged, strategically important states gaining leverage against stronger powers by crafting a regional solution: the conditions under which they have succeeded or failed are readily apparent. Intelligently crafted, a neutralization agreement could provide an overarching diplomatic and legal framework for Afghanistan that counterbalances competitive regional powers externally, and shores up the national interests of the Afghans internally, to lay the groundwork for the stability and independence of the state into the 21st century and beyond.

Many argue that the key question for Afghanistan is not whether or not it allies with external powers, but whether the Afghans will dissolve into further internal conflict and re-establish safe havens for terrorists committed to attacking the United States. That perspective is backwards: the country has best avoided internal strife when acting as a buffer state, evading all alliances and external interference. The civil wars of the late 20th century grew out of Russian, Saudi, US, Iranian and Pakistani intervention, picking winners and losers and carrying out their proxy battles via Afghan warlords and government leaders on Afghan soil. Moving forward, the goal must be to break this pattern by establishing a political framework where the major powers collectively agree to stay out and give Afghan nationalism and institutions the space in which to work. Instead, the current trajectory is to increase Pakistan's intervention in Afghanistan as the United States draws down, a risky scenario for the United States because the groups that threaten US and allied territory come mainly from Pakistan, not Afghanistan (e.g., Lashkar-e-Taiba, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan). To prevent a future safe haven for terrorists, the critical objective must be to keep *all* of the external powers out of Afghanistan. That is exactly what a neutralization agreement does.

Neutralization is complicated, and only a fool would argue that a 21st century neutralization of Afghanistan would be easy. The most successful instances of neutralization have involved states, cities, and principalities in Europe. But looking at the history of the practice, successfully neutralized states have had consistent strategic, structural, economic, and political conditions that may be relevant to Afghanistan. Strategically, the neutralized states or territories have been of limited intrinsic importance to any one other state, thus important enough to deny to a neighbor but not worth the sacrifice of a risky occupation. Structurally, they have had challenging geographical characteristics, such as mountainous terrain or landlocked borders, making them difficult to conquer and occupy. Economically, they have been important to broader regions as hubs of trade, with multilateral access to resources or markets, offering neighbors a pay-off for respecting the arrangement. And politically, they have had external affirmation of their neutralized status—by the Church, an international body, or through

covenant by more than one major military power—adding legitimacy and potential force to the arrangement.

Afghanistan’s current situation does not perfectly fit *all* conditions of successful neutralization, but there are enough promising factors to make the approach worth trying. States have been successfully neutralized even when they lacked perfectly clear borders, suffered occasional violations of their neutrality, or even experienced domestic conflicts. The method is chosen after other options have failed. The Afghans have been at war for more than thirty years. They are looking for a new approach that avoids the tired pattern of instability, civil war and invasion of the recent past. And from the American perspective, neutralization is a solution whose costs are low and potential benefits—of even a short-term success—high.

This chapter proceeds in four sections. First it explains and defines neutralization, distinguishing it from other related concepts. Second, it carries out a structured comparison of all historical cases of neutralization over the past 500 years. Third, it explains the conditions under which neutralization succeeds or fails. Fourth, it tests those conditions against this case, while also considering alternative pathways for post-ISAF Afghanistan. Close study of the historical record indicates that Afghanistan can be neutralized if classic pitfalls are avoided. Neutralization represents the best available option for the future of Afghanistan and the broader region.

I. “NEUTRALIZATION”: DEFINING THE CONCEPT

Neutralization is a multilateral arrangement designed to advance regional and domestic stability where the goals of competing military powers intersect. It discourages enemies from clashing over a territory whose strategic significance affects them all. The purpose of a neutralization accord is to discourage military intervention by one power that might be met by counter intervention by another power, ultimately catalyzing a war where everyone would lose. The small state commits to remain perpetually neutral and to prevent force projection from its territory, and the external powers guarantee the political independence and territorial integrity of that state. In a sense, then, the actors being “neutralized” are not just the state but also the major powers vying to invade, intimidate, or control it.

Neutralization is often confused with related, similar-sounding concepts.¹ “Neutrality,” the oldest of these, was first used by the Swiss in 1536 to refer to a state’s deliberate policy to stay out of a particular war.² The term has often been used incorrectly in political discourse (especially during the Cold War) but its meaning is clear: there is no formal legal neutrality *except* in time of war.³ Neutralization is a more long-lasting status that exists in war or peace and cannot be declared unilaterally. Unlike neutrality, neutralization requires both a state declaration and an external guarantee on the part of neighboring powers.

“Nonalignment” and “neutralism” are political (not legal) terms made popular following the Second World War.⁴ In the postwar wave of decolonization, both concepts maximized a new state’s maneuverability and independence by keeping it out of the bipolar contest between the Soviet Union and the United States. In 1961, the nonaligned states paradoxically aligned themselves in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), led initially by Yugoslavia, India, Indonesia, Egypt, and Ghana. The movement was dedicated to peace, territorial integrity, independence, anti-colonialism and other activist policies. NAM members made no promise to be nonbelligerents in wartime: there were scores of conflicts among members, notably India/Pakistan, Iran/Iraq, Ecuador/Peru, and Libya/Chad. After the Cold War ended, the movement struggled to redefine itself. Its present *raison d’être* is to support the rights of developing states, reform the structure of the United Nations (especially the Security Council), and criticize the policies of the traditional powers (especially the United States). Afghanistan is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose August 2012 meeting was held in Teheran, Iran.

Unlike any of these other arrangements—neutrality, nonalignment, neutralism, and so forth—there is both an internal and an external dimension to a neutralization agreement. “Permanent neutrality” is the internal dimension, declared by the state, involving a promise not to participate in or prejudice the outcome of any current or future war.⁵ While “permanent neutrality” or “enduring neutrality” may be self-declared, neutralization must involve an external recognition or guarantee of that status. The external angle is crucial. It is difficult for a state to be

neutralized by only one major power: while major powers have collected buffer states (or “satellites”) around them for centuries, those arrangements amount to protectorates, placing the weaker state at risk vis-à-vis its stronger neighbor.⁶ The key is to neutralize not only the weak state (the internal dimension), but also the stronger powers whose interests clash over it (the external dimension). Without at least two outside powers agreeing to the arrangement, there can be no “neutralizing” the interests of competing major powers.

In a neutralization accord, the external guarantee may vary from an explicit enforcement agreement with control machinery to a more ambiguous multilateral recognition of the state’s permanent neutrality. Historically, the formal mechanisms have been diverse, from that of Belgium, whose nineteenth century neutralization by the European powers came closest to a classic model, to that of Austria, first neutralized under a 1955 bilateral agreement with the Soviet Union then recognized by France, Britain, and the United States.⁷ (More on these cases below.) The way to establish whether a state has been neutralized is to determine whether outside powers would be militarily involved if its territory were violated. A “neutralized” state must defend its territorial integrity if it is to avoid triggering competitive intervention. In short, neutralization carries risks for both the state and neighboring powers. So why consider it?

Under certain conditions, neutralization serves the interests of the weak state, major powers, and the broader international system. From the viewpoint of the inhabitants of a neutralized state, the costs of alliance exceed the benefits.⁸ Neutralization can increase a country’s security and independence without enlarging the risk and burden of defense expenditures. Indeed, some neutralization agreements have called for the elimination of military assets that could be used for external aggression so that a government may focus its army on internal order and territorial defense. Neutralization can also aid in unifying a country divided between two or more major powers (permanent neutrality is better than partition) or two or more domestic factions associated with different outside sponsors (neutral unity beats civil war). The reduction of the threat of military intervention by bigger states can increase the political maneuverability of the neutralized state, giving it a larger role in international politics than it otherwise would have.

Indeed, it is often in the interests of neutralized states to demonstrate independence of their guarantors so as to reinforce the image of impartiality. States that choose neutralization prefer strong affordable defense, intact survival, maneuverability, and independence over external military alliances.

Major powers also have specific reasons to consider neutralization. In the simplest terms, major powers have three options with respect to contested weaker powers: (1) to acquire a weaker state as a client or ally; (2) to allow the state to be neutral; or (3) to yield the weaker state as a client or ally of a rival. Situations that are ripe for neutralization often follow in the wake of unsuccessful attempts to invade or acquire a weaker power (option one), where major powers settle for option two so as to avoid option three.⁹ Through diplomatic means, neutralization agreements remove small states from the threat of attack or annexation by rival stronger powers, by denying the state to any one of them. Unable to control the state unilaterally, competing powers hedge their bets.

Neutralization accords also play a broader role in the stability of the collective international system. Both guaranteed and guarantor states enter into this kind of diplomatic agreement to diffuse international tensions in a region that is vulnerable to war and potentially destabilizing to the international system. The framework deters conflict and enhances predictability. A weak state can act as a power vacuum, inviting the meddling of stronger states that prolong civil wars and might precipitate an international crisis. Neutralization decreases the chance of a conflict that could escalate to major war.¹⁰ Whatever its design, neutralization cannot *remove* the possibility of external intervention, but it raises the cost to the intervener by heightening the risk that another major power will counteract it. It also weakens the intervener's legitimacy by forcing it to violate an international agreement, making it more likely that other states will counter attack. At its heart, then, neutralization strengthens the deterrent capability of a militarily weak state that is an object of strategic interest by major powers.

Neutralization protects a contested state's self-determination by ensuring its autonomy. In return it places obligations upon it. By the terms of most agreements, the country may not go

to war except in self defense, may not influence the course of any international hostilities that do occur, and may not take any actions that could lead to involvement in those hostilities.¹¹ The state's principal duty is to protect its impartiality and territorial integrity, and the guarantors threaten to intervene if it aligns with one of them. These obligations and restrictions are weighed against alternative pathways for contested states, including partition, satellite status, occupation by one or more external powers, or civil war aggravated by meddling powers. For contested states, neutralization is the least unattractive of the available options.

II. NEUTRALIZATION IN PRACTICE: THE UNIVERSE OF CASES

The following considers the thirteen historical cases of neutralization and is confined to neutralization cases: myriad other historical cases of protectorates,¹² satellites,¹³ buffer states,¹⁴ nonalignment,¹⁵ or customary neutrality¹⁶ are not included here. In each neutralization case study, there are seven key variables examined: geographic features, clarity of borders, level of economic value to neighbors, nature of the external guarantee, level of defenses within the state, and the degree of indigenous support for the agreement, as summarized in Table 13.1.

Origins of the Concept (15th-18th Centuries)

Beginning in the fifteenth century, major European powers tried to isolate territories because they were important to commerce or might be a catalyst for war. The earliest recorded example is the neutralization of the Channel Islands during the late fifteenth century. The English and French Kings drew up the arrangement and then asked for the protection of the Pope, who in 1483 issued a bull stating that anyone who violated it would be excommunicated.¹⁷ The inhabitants sought the 1492 neutralization of Liege, then a loosely federated state commanding French access to the Rhine. France and the Netherlands kept it out of their bloody conflicts until 1518, when Liege entered into a mutual defense treaty with the Netherlands.¹⁸

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were numerous examples of *imposed* neutrality, but none with reciprocal agreements that characterize neutralization. Most were part of the barrier system against France.¹⁹ Under the first barrier treaty of October 29,

1709, for example, the Dutch were allowed to maintain a line of forts along the French border in the Austrian Netherlands (now Belgium), as a “dyke, rampart and barrier against France,” in the common interests of Austria, Holland and England.²⁰ This boundary line in the middle of Europe foreshadowed the neutralizations of Belgium and Luxembourg a century later. In 1802, under the Treaty of Amiens, France (with her allies) and England provided for the neutralization of Malta, an island with a prior tradition of self-declared neutrality, but it soon fell to Great Britain in the war of the Third Coalition.²¹

The Congress of Vienna refined the concept of a grand framework reciprocally agreed by both the state and the major powers. With the growth of universal suffrage, emphasis shifted from the responsibility of the guarantors toward that of the inhabitants of the state. Key variables for each case included the geographical features, the clarity of borders, the existence of domestic conflict, the level of economic value to the region, the nature of the legal guarantee, the level of defenses, and the degree of indigenous support for neutralization. (See Table 13.1.)

The Congress of Vienna, 1815

The end of the Napoleonic Wars and the attempt to establish a new European order resulted in the first far-reaching neutralization accords at the Congress of Vienna. Switzerland was the greatest success of the Congress and will be treated in detail below. But the 1815 settlement also neutralized upper Savoy (on the Swiss border), Moresnet (between Prussia and the Netherlands), and the city of Cracow (Poland), three small territories whose fates yield insights into how the concept was applied both well and badly.

Upper Savoy

The neutralization of Upper Savoy was an attempt to build a buffer around the borders of Switzerland. It was neutralized under the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna, as well as Article 3 of the Treaty of Paris (November 1815). Upper Savoy provided a territorial cushion for the Swiss Cantons of Valais and Geneva by cutting off access to a key mountain pass (Simplon) that might be used by the French to invade Switzerland. Switzerland was even permitted to place

Table 13.1: Summary of Neutralization Cases

Territory or State Neut. Period	Negotiating Parties	Key Geographic Features	Contested Borders?	History of Domestic Conflict?	Economic Value to the Region	Binding Guarantee? Guarantor	Demilitarized?	Broad Indigenous Support?	Outcome*
Channel Islands 1483-1689	English and French Kings	Islands in key waterway	No. Islands (under English sovereignty)	No	High	Yes The Pope	Yes	No, imposed	Success
Liege 1492-1518	Liege inhabitants, France, the Netherlands	Flat lowland, valley of the Meuse River	No. City-state	Yes, civil war with outside intervention	High	No	No (defensive forces only)	Yes Initiated by the inhabitants	Success
Malta 1802-1814 (<i>de facto</i> much earlier)	Mainly Britain and France Divided Maltese participants (incomplete)	Island with excellent fortresses, dramatic natural cliffs	No. Island	No (passed betw external powers)	High (maritime way- station to the colonies)	No	No (defensive forces only)	No, imposed	Failure
Upper Savoy 1815-1919	Austria, Great Britain, Portugal, Prussia, Russia France, Sweden and Spain	Controlling access to a key Mountain Pass	Yes. (Small territory on the border of Switzerland; in 1919 it became part of France.)	No	Low	Yes All the signatory powers	No	No, imposed	Success
Cracow 1815-1846	Austria, Great Britain, Portugal, Prussia, Russia France, Sweden and Spain	On the Vistula River, in a key mountain pass	No. City	No	High (economic hub; coal reserves, later steel center)	Yes Austria, Russia, Prussia	Yes, completely	No, imposed	Failure

Territory or State	Negotiating Parties	Key Geographic Features	Contested Borders?	History of Domestic Conflict?	Economic Value to the Region	Binding Guarantee? Guarantor	Demilitarized ?	Indigenous Support?	Outcome*
Switzerland 1815-pres. (<i>de facto</i> much earlier)	Austria, Great Britain, Portugal, Prussia, Russia France, Sweden and Spain	Landlocked, formidable mountains, control over key Alpine passes	Yes. (Settled during negots.)	Yes, centuries of conflict between Cantons; external border disputes	High Long tradition of open access to commerce.	Yes All the signatory powers	No. Strong territorial defenses	Yes. Initiated by the Swiss	Success
Moresnet 1815-1914	Netherlands, Prussia (and to a lesser extent, all Congress of Vienna signatories)	Forested, mines, near borders of Germany and Belgium	Yes. (Settled during negots.)	No	High One of two Zinc mines in Europe at the time.	Yes Netherlands, Prussia	Yes.	No. Product of a tense compromise between the Dutch and Prussians for the mine	Failure. Germany invades at the start of World War I
Belgium 1831-1914	1831: Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia and Russia; 1839: Holland.	Flat, lowlands. No natural barriers.	Yes. (Settled during negots.)	Yes, revolution to secede from Holland	High. Steel and coal, key transportation hub (roads, ports, canals, rail)	Yes Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia and Russia (individual guarantees)	Yes. Ancient forts destroyed; v. ltd defensive forces retained	No, imposed	Mixed; ultimately Failure
Luxembourg 1867-1914	Great Britain, Austria, Belgium France, Italy, Netherlands, Prussia and Russia	Landlocked citadel, transformed into an "open city"	No.	No; but lost territory in the Belgian Revolution	High. Iron and steel; banking	Yes Great Britain, Austria, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Prussia and Russia (collective guarantee)	Yes, completely	No, imposed	Failure

Territory or State	Negotiating Parties	Key Geographic Features	Contested Borders?	History of Domestic Conflict?	Economic Value to the Region	Binding Guarantee? Guarantor	Demilitarized?	Indigenous Support?	Outcome*
Congo 1885-1914	US, UK, Austria, FR, Germany, Italy, Russia, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, Sweden, Norway, Turkey	Coastal plain, large arable river basin	No. Corporate state/colony, under Belgian control	No	High. (Rubber, copper, other minerals)	No. A 'garantie restreinte': individual commitment to respect the neutrality of the Congo Basin.	No, but weak defenses	No, imposed	Failure
Austria 1955-pres.	Great Britain, United States, France, and USSR, along with Austria	Landlocked; plain and mountains; border disputes w Italy	Yes. (post-WWII southern border disputes; resolved during negots.)	Yes (two attempted coups; riots, unrest, border skirmishes)	High. Long tradition of trade through Vienna	Yes UK, USSR, US, France	No. Strong territorial defenses	Yes; initiated by the Austrians	Success
Laos 1962 (almost immediately violated)	Burma, Cambodia, Canada, PRC, both Vietnam, France, India, Poland, Thailand, USSR, US, UK and Laos	Landlocked; mountainous, elongated, with historically fluid borders	Yes.	Yes (civil war, Pathet Lao vs. Royal Lao Army)	Low, not a major trading center	No Just an agreement by the parties to "consult" if there is a violation	No, but weak defenses	Yes. (Laotian government participated but did not initiate)	Failure
Turkmenistan 1995-pres.	None. Unilaterally declared; codified in the Constitution	Mainly flat; desert; borders Caspian sea.	No. (Borders were settled in 1924, but under Soviet control.)	No (but highly repressive regime; human and drug trafficking)	Extensive oil and natural gas reserves; on historic silk road trade route	No. Recognized by UN General Assembly.	No. Conscript-based armed forces.	No. Unilateral, with UN recognition	?
Afghanistan ?	<i>Min.: Pakistan, China, Iran, India, Saudi Arabia, Russia, US. Max: also NATO, Central Asian republics</i>	<i>Landlocked; mainly mountainous; plains in north and southwest; fluid eastern border</i>	<i>Yes. Durand Line with Pakistan. (To be addressed during negotiations?)</i>	<i>Yes, repeated civil wars</i>	<i>High. mineral wealth, key trade routes</i>	<i>Yes. Multilateral; China, Iran, Pakistan India, Saudi Arabia, Russia, US</i>	<i>No. Strong national army required, probably with technical assistance re the border and monitoring air space</i>	<i>Must be initiated by the Afghan government, strongly supported by the US</i>	<i>?</i> To be determined

troops there to defend her neutrality.²² The Versailles Treaty abrogated the neutralized status in June 1919, and Upper Savoy became a normal part of France (Haute-Savoie).²³

Moresnet

The neutrality of Moresnet lasted for almost a century and kept the European powers from dragging the continent into a war over resources. Moresnet was a tiny territory now within the city of Kelmis, Belgium that in 1815 was caught between the Prussians and the Dutch. The Congress of Vienna had settled the main outline of the border between the Kingdoms of Prussia and the Netherlands, but Moresnet held a valuable zinc spar mine that both sides wanted. So the European powers neutralized and demilitarized the territory, barring both Kingdoms from occupying it and putting it under the jurisdiction of a combined royal commission. This was the situation until the Germans invaded in 1914. Under the Versailles treaty Belgium formally annexed it in 1920.

Cracow

The 1815 attempt to neutralize the city of Cracow is a classic example of what *not* to do. The Congress of Vienna made it an independent republic, with Austria, Russia, and Prussia guaranteeing perpetual neutrality. All three powers wanted control of the city, which had become vulnerable after the Grand Duchy of Warsaw dissolved. The treaty of June 9, 1815 made Cracow a free, independent and neutral city, then denuded it of self-defense or restrictions on external intervention. All three then freely violated its borders, giving it all the drawbacks and none of the advantages of neutralization. In 1846, the city was incorporated into the Austrian Empire, with Prussia and Russia trading it for compensation elsewhere and the British and the French protesting in vain.

Switzerland

Switzerland would not have survived as an independent, unified state without building a tradition of neutrality. Characterized from the outset by internal fractiousness, a strong warrior

culture, and repeated conquest of (and by) its neighbors, Switzerland found permanent neutrality essential to its welfare—not least because every other policy had proven disastrous.

The Swiss confederation emerged during the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, when strong central power devolved to feudal lords, local authorities, monasteries, and cities. During a complicated process of confederation, including a civil war (1436–50), the Swiss developed a reputation for military prowess. They conquered new territories in the north and east, enlarging their borders at the expense of Austria, and defeated the Emperor and South German princes in the Swabian War (1499). Especially after the Swiss defeated Charles the Bold of Burgundy (1477), European leaders vigorously sought Swiss mercenary soldiers. By the start of the sixteenth century, the Swiss had unparalleled military prestige and were at the forefront of political power on the continent.²⁴

Defeat at the battle of Marignano, September 13–14, 1515, marked the reversal of Swiss military fortunes. The goal had been to drive the French from northern Italy but the Swiss lost and sued for peace. Under the peace agreement that followed, they retained crucial Alpine passes and received a subsidy in return for the French government’s right to enlist Swiss mercenaries, marking the last time the Swiss launched a military conquest in their own name. On May 5, 1521, shortly after the peace accord, the Swiss entered an offensive and defensive alliance with France that was renewed in 1663, 1715 and 1777.²⁵

The Swiss first officially used the term “neutrality” in 1536, but it did not characterize their foreign policy until the Thirty Years War (1618–48). Divided between Catholic and Protestant cantons, the Swiss confederation remained neutral to avoid being torn apart. Switzerland’s governing body, the Diet, issued a 1638 order forbidding the passage of foreign troops through Swiss territory. By 1647, the Diet organized a federal army of 36,000 men to protect the common frontier, establishing the principle of territorial defense.²⁶ In the 1648 treaties of Westphalia, the European powers recognized the thirteen cantons as an independent state, acknowledging the collective stance they had adopted during the war.²⁷

Although now recognized as one state, the cantons were bitterly divided over religious issues and maintained the loosest possible unity. Although they were no longer launching their own military campaigns, the Swiss continued to send tens of thousands of mercenary soldiers to fight under foreign flags, especially the French tricolor. By the end of the seventeenth century, yearly pensions paid Swiss soldiers abroad amounted to some 1.5 million francs.²⁸ The religious ties on the one hand between the Protestant cantons and the Dutch and the English, and on the other hand between the Catholic cantons and the French and the Spanish, led to a supply of Swiss mercenaries for each of these powers. Tragically, in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14), thousands of Swiss soldiers confronted each other on the battlefield as a result. Irrespective of the activities of Swiss soldiers and the weaknesses of the federal structure—indeed, partly *because* of the latter—the state continued to maintain a policy of neutrality in all European conflicts.

In addition to its warrior tradition, geography and economics have been crucial to Swiss neutrality. Switzerland is both a vital strategic gateway and a fortified enclave from attack. Largely through its jurisdiction over key mountain passes, the state has been central to the interests of each of the major European powers during wartime. Otherwise, isolated from the rest of Europe by mountain barriers, lacking in raw materials, with limited amounts of arable land, Switzerland has been a peripheral concern. This odd combination of qualities ultimately benefited the Swiss, as no power wanted to see Switzerland's routes controlled by rivals, yet few sought to control Swiss territory itself. Switzerland's economic vitality was likewise crucial. Swiss free trade policies and the abundance of their markets gave seventeenth and eighteenth century belligerents strong motives to respect Swiss neutrality.

The French Revolution catalyzed the emergence of modern Switzerland. Revolutionary ideology found eager adherents in Switzerland, making the state vulnerable to Napoleon's armies. In 1798, Napoleon and his armies invaded, annexing Geneva to France and proclaiming the establishment of the "Helvetic Republic," modeled after republican France. It had a strong central government consisting of an elected chamber of deputies, a senate, and a directory of five

men at the top. Under Napoleon's oversight, the Helvetic constitution eliminated the original cantons, reallocating territory to twenty-three smaller units. The two republics entered an offensive and defensive alliance, where France guaranteed the independence and unity of the Helvetic Republic and Switzerland supplied 12,000 men for the French armies. Being now essentially a vassal state of Napoleon's France, Switzerland forfeited any claim to neutrality, and most of the wars of the second coalition (1798–1802) were fought on Swiss soil.²⁹

With the treaty of Amiens (27 March 1802), French troops withdrew and the state seemed to regain its autonomy. But the Swiss so resisted Napoleon's centralized constitution that by the end of the year he was forced to send 30,000 French troops back again.³⁰ Summoning Swiss leaders to Paris, Napoleon forced the writing of a "mediation constitution," completed on 19 February 1803. Dividing the state into nineteen cantons, it better reflected Swiss political traditions but remained a product of French domination. Soon they were supplying 20,000 men for Napoleon's armies.³¹

Napoleon's defeat in the battle of Leipzig (16–19 October 1813) had powerful implications for Switzerland. With allied armies approaching the Swiss frontier, the central government declared its neutrality; but the allies barreled through in pursuit of the French. A small defensive contingent of about 12,000 Swiss soldiers fell to overwhelming force.³² The outcome was removal of French dominance and the establishment of a multi-power allied protectorate over Switzerland.³³

Switzerland's future was a major agenda item at the Congress of Vienna, 1814–1815. Subject to the approval of the Swiss government, on March 20, 1815, the powers announced their intention to neutralize Switzerland. For its part, Switzerland wanted clarification of its territorial dimensions, as France had annexed Geneva, Neuchatel, and several other territories during the war. Deliberations were abruptly interrupted by the return of Napoleon to Paris. Having solemnly promised to respect the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland, the allied powers asked the Swiss to allow allied armies to pass across Swiss soil again. Under the circumstances the Swiss could hardly refuse. Meanwhile, the Swiss Diet acceded to the March declaration of

the powers, signifying satisfaction with the territorial adjustments and political arrangements. Delayed by Napoleon's campaign of a hundred days, final signature was part of the second Peace of Paris, November 20, 1815. In the treaty Austria, Great Britain, Portugal, Prussia, Russia and France acknowledged Switzerland's permanent neutrality and provided a formal guarantee of the "integrity and inviolability" of Swiss territory. Shortly thereafter, Sweden and Spain also acceded to the declaration.³⁴

Since 1815, the military readiness of the Swiss to defend their borders and to prevent foreign use of their territory has been crucial to the success of neutralization. In 1870, Switzerland was almost drawn into war when the French army, fleeing the Prussians, passed into Swiss territory; the Swiss disarmed and interned the French soldiers for the remainder of the war. Before the First World War, the German general staff considered sweeping through Switzerland to outflank the French defensive line at the southern end but decided that an invasion would be too costly.³⁵ The Swiss mobilized their entire army on July 31, 1914 and were poised to make life difficult for any invading force. The Swiss also successfully deterred invasion of their territory during the Second World War, mobilizing some 430,000 men for defense of the frontiers. The Swiss define and enforce their own permanent neutrality, and since 1815 have never called upon the guarantors to intervene on their behalf.

Following Switzerland's neutralization, the European powers tried to duplicate the formula just north, in Belgium and Luxembourg.

Belgium, 1831

Following the Napoleonic wars, the Congress of Vienna agreed to unite the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) and Holland to form the Kingdom of the Netherlands; but the Belgians opposed the arrangement and grew steadily unhappy over the next 15 years. On October 4, 1830, Belgium declared its independence, and the European powers hastily called a conference in London. On January 20, 1831, the European powers agreed in principle that the state of Belgium would be independent and, so as to preserve the "balance of Europe," neutralized. The

neutralization of Belgium fully satisfied no one (including the Belgians); however, it seemed the best solution to a destabilizing threat.

Several months passed before the European representatives could agree on the terms of a peace accord, the outlines of the final settlement had been sketched in London. On June 24, 1831, they prepared a preliminary treaty of eighteen articles, designed formally to separate Belgium from Holland and to recognize the independence, territorial integrity and permanent guaranteed neutrality of the new state. The Belgians had not even been consulted, and opposition was initially strong.³⁶ Eventually, they accepted it. But Dutch King William angrily disagreed. On August 2, 1831, he broke off the armistice and sent the Dutch army into Belgium. In response, the Belgian Congress, taking just the action that the major powers had hoped to avert, asked the French for assistance; an army of 50,000 Frenchmen was soon advancing toward Brussels. In a short time, the French forced the Dutch to withdraw from all occupied areas except the port of Antwerp, where Dutch troops barricaded themselves against attack.

To avert disaster, including another major war in Europe, the powers framed a second treaty more favorable to Holland that defined Belgian frontiers virtually as they are today. The treaty of independence and neutralization of Belgium was signed in London on November 15, 1831 by the five major European powers, accepted by the Belgian congress, but rejected, as before, by Holland. On 14 December, the Dutch government formally protested it to the major powers. The protest received unexpected support from Austria, Prussia and Russia, who began to fear that they had gone too far in appeasing revolutionaries; but the remaining powers moved immediately to protect the treaty.³⁷ Britain and France made arrangements to blockade the coast of Holland, to seize Dutch ships in British and French ports, and to send French forces into Antwerp, where Dutch troops remained in occupation.³⁸ On May 21, 1833, the Dutch yielded and agreed to an armistice on the basis of the status quo; but they still refused to become a party to the treaty separating Belgium from Holland.

Eight years after the initial treaty's signing, the Dutch finally gave in, acceding to the neutralization of an independent Belgium. On April 19, 1839 a further Treaty of London was

signed, incorporating the terms of the 1831 treaty. Supplementary treaties were concluded on the same day between the European powers and Holland, and between Belgium and Holland. The five principal signatory powers each separately guaranteed all terms of the 1839 treaty, including Belgium's independence and neutralization. Holland undertook only an obligation to recognize and respect Belgium's permanent neutrality, not guarantee it. Thus, with the reluctant approval of the Dutch, Belgium was formally neutralized and guaranteed by the major European powers. Under the terms of the agreement, they stripped Belgium of her permanent defenses (including a vast line of fortresses built to contain the French), while still permitting Belgium to maintain defensive armed forces.³⁹ Later with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, the Gladstone government signed an additional treaty between Britain and Prussia, on the one hand, and then Britain and France, on the other, designed to shore up the 1839 agreement on Belgian neutrality and defuse the crisis on the Continent.

Luxembourg, 1867

Like its Belgian neighbor, Luxembourg was pinched between the dominance of France and emerging Germany. After Louis XIV captured Luxembourg in 1684, the great strategist of sieges, Marquis de Vauban, strengthened Luxembourg's capital into a formidable fortress. Again like Belgium, Luxembourg was part of a barrier treaty against France, a failed effort as Napoleon's France overran and annexed it completely in 1795.⁴⁰ At the Congress of Vienna the European powers, trying again to restrain France, decided to place Luxembourg under the sovereignty of the Dutch king; but it was also to be permanently garrisoned against the French by Prussian troops. The elaborate arrangement called for three-quarters of the troops in Luxembourg to be Prussian the remainder Dutch.

In 1866, at the start of the Austro-Prussian War, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg demanded the withdrawal of the Prussian garrison of about 4,000 men. The Prussian government, led by Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck, flatly refused. Jealous of Prussia's territorial gains in the war, Napoleon III then insisted that France be compensated for Prussia's growing strength by the acquisition of Belgium and Luxembourg. Again, Bismarck refused.

Convinced that it would cost him nothing, however, Bismarck whet the French appetite: England would never tolerate the annexation of Belgium, he observed. But as for Luxembourg, why didn't the emperor of France approach Dutch king William III himself? Bismarck was sure, he said, that the King would be only too pleased to sell the Luxembourgers and their territory for an appropriate sum.⁴¹

Following Bismarck's advice, during the winter of 1866–1867 Napoleon III pressured the King of the Netherlands to sell Luxembourg to France. To ensure French forbearance as he united the German confederation, Bismarck encouraged him. Writing to his representative in Paris, Bismarck said that the French “must be induced to go on hoping and, above all, to retain their faith in our good will without being given any definite commitment.”⁴²

This subterfuge lasted until March 1867, when Bismarck abruptly double-crossed and humiliated Napoleon. As Bismarck had predicted, the Dutch King agreed to sell Luxembourg to France for 5 million guilders, but only on the condition that the King of Prussia explicitly approve the sale. When Napoleon approached him to seek it, Bismarck now sharply protested that Prussia could not sanction the giving away of any German soil and that the views of all the major European powers must be sought. The Dutch king hastily withdrew his consent; but the affair leaked to the press, exposing Napoleon's scheme and provoking nationalist hysteria among the Germans. The result was an acute European crisis.⁴³ To deter the outbreak of war, the major European powers hastily gathered in London on 7 May and decided that Luxembourg should be neutralized.

Although modeled after Belgium, Luxembourg's neutralization differed in three key respects. First, while Belgium was allowed to maintain armed forces for her own defense, Luxembourg was not. The European powers disarmed Luxembourg, mandating the destruction of all fortresses and permitting only the minimum number of troops necessary to maintain order. In one stroke, they transformed the city of Luxembourg from one of the greatest fortresses in Europe to an “open city.”⁴⁴ Second, under the 1867 agreement Luxembourg remained within the customs union of the German federation, as the major powers thought it was not economically

viable on its own.⁴⁵ Finally, Luxembourg's guarantee contrasted with Belgium's. Belgium's permanent neutrality and territorial independence had been guaranteed severally by the signatory states, meaning that each of the major European powers individually committed to uphold the arrangement.⁴⁶ For Luxembourg, the major powers provided only a *collective* guarantee, a weaker formulation that meant the Luxembourg guarantee was ambiguous from the start.

Effectiveness of the Neutralizations of Belgium and Luxembourg?

Determining whether the neutralizations of Belgium and Luxembourg were effective is not straightforward. While Belgian neutrality played a role in stabilizing the continent for decades, especially during the crisis of the 1870 Franco-Prussian war, in 1914 it helped precipitate the bloody catastrophe of the First World War.

Executing their notorious Schlieffen Plan in August 1914, the Germans invaded both Luxembourg and Belgium as their opening gambit in the West. Luxembourg complained but, having been demilitarized, provided no resistance. The Belgians were not so cooperative. On 3 August 1914, the Germans sent Brussels an ultimatum promising a guarantee of Belgium's territorial integrity if the Belgians would allow German troops to pass through their territory on the way to France. The Belgians refused, and on 4 August the German army invaded Belgium. On the same day, Great Britain declared war on Germany and the entire continent was at war.

Five years and nine million soldiers' deaths later, both neutralizations were abrogated in the 1919 Versailles treaty. The Belgians welcomed the move.⁴⁷ Luxembourg's status was more complicated. The German occupation, being primarily with about free passage of troops and supplies across Luxembourg territory, had been less oppressive than Belgium's. The Germans controlled the rail lines but did not interfere in the activities of the civilian government. So Luxembourg did not declare war on Germany, was not a belligerent and did not participate in the peace conference. So Luxembourg did not accept the termination of its neutralized status, considering the 1867 treaty to remain in force—until the second German invasion at the start of the Second World War.

The Belgian Congo, 1885

Although called a “neutralization” at the time, this agreement had nothing to do with protecting the independence, stability and territorial integrity of the Congo Basin. Belgium’s King Leopold II wanted to exploit Congo’s resources—a problem since a neutralized state presumably should not have colonies. To accommodate him, the European powers declared its neutrality at the 1885 Congress of Berlin. They also gave King Leopold personal financial control over the territory and named it the Congo Free State. There were fifteen signatories, and for the first time even the Americans endorsed it. Each pledged to respect the “free state’s” neutral status, but there was neither a binding guarantee nor any right for the Congolese to protect themselves. Like Cracow, it had all of the drawbacks and none of the benefits of neutralization. In any case, Congo’s legal status proved virtually meaningless, as the British, Germans and Belgians ignored it in the brutal East African campaign of the First World War.⁴⁸

Austria, 1955

Without neutralization, Austria would have been partitioned between East and West throughout the Cold War. The agreement under the Austrian State Treaty was the outcome of years of fractious negotiations between France, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union the four occupying powers after the Second World War. Looking at this prosperous country today it is difficult to envision ten years of allied occupation with bitter disputes over Austria’s borders, dangerous riots, internal unrest, and two attempted coups (1947 and 1950). Yet, in 1955, the four powers suddenly came to an understanding and agreed to withdraw their armies. Austria’s neutral, unified status stood as an intriguing exception to Europe’s partition, and the state remains permanently neutral today.

Like the Swiss, the Austrians played a crucial role in pursuing their own interests and in the country’s eventual neutralization.⁴⁹ Only three months after the allied occupation began, the Austrians held their first postwar election and established a provisional national government. This government doggedly rebuilt Austria’s institutions and sense of national identity during the occupation. With the death of Stalin in March 1953 and evidence of a Kremlin leadership

struggle, the Austrians took the initiative to approach the Soviet government and propose military neutrality. Molotov told the Austrians that a declaration of neutrality was mere words.⁵⁰ The Western powers were not much more enthusiastic, especially at first. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Arthur Radford, privately expressed concern about the strategic implications of signing any treaty that would make Austria a neutral state—especially if neutrality precluded the use of Austrian territory by the newly established North Atlantic Treaty Organization.⁵¹ Meanwhile, to the dismay of Pentagon analysts, the British and the French confided that they could no longer bear the economic burden of the occupation and would have to withdraw two-thirds of their troops even without a treaty.⁵²

Meanwhile Soviet policy was moving in the opposite direction, toward long-term occupation. At the Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers, January–February 1954, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov insisted that allied troops remain in Austria until a German peace treaty was signed. In other words, with or without an Austrian treaty, the Red Army would stay in Austria until the fate of Germany was settled to Soviet satisfaction. The proposal was unacceptable to the Western powers as well as to the Austrians, so the four-power talks collapsed again. For the remainder of 1954, Austria’s fate was eclipsed by an international fixation on West German rearmament. The Soviet Union warned repeatedly that the fates of Germany and Austria were intertwined; plans to rearm Germany would result in “new impediments for the final settlement of the Austrian question.” The implication was that Moscow would partition Austria if West Germany were rearmed.⁵³ As the debate over West German rearmament continued into the early days of 1955, Austria’s future looked bleak.

Yet in February 1955 Soviet policy suddenly changed, paving the way for the final agreement. In a February 8 speech before the Supreme Soviet, Molotov announced that the USSR might countenance an Austrian State Treaty independent of a German peace treaty. Two months later, invited by Molotov, the Austrians sent another delegation to Moscow for bilateral discussions. There the Austrian government agreed to declare Austria a permanently neutral state, adhering to “neutrality after the Swiss model” following the signing of a treaty among the

major powers and the withdrawal of foreign troops. In a few days the Austrians and the Russians settled all the outstanding disagreements.⁵⁴ The final treaty was much more favorable to the Austrians than the draft treaty had been. The Russians agreed, for instance, to drop limitations on the size of the Austrian army, and they accepted economic terms more liberal to Austria than any they had previously considered. Khrushchev, in a state of buoyant good humor, advised Austrian Chancellor Raab: “Follow my example and turn Communist . . . But if I really can’t convince you then for God’s sake stay as you are!”⁵⁵

The decision to sign the Austrian State Treaty directly resulted from the failure of the Soviet government’s efforts to use Austria as a bargaining chip against the rearmament of West Germany, and Soviet desire to see a neutral corridor on its western frontier, from Finland and Sweden through Germany, Austria, and Switzerland down to Italy and Yugoslavia.⁵⁶ A vigorous Soviet attempt to improve relations with neutral or “uncommitted” states in Europe followed the signing of the accord, including a Soviet delegation’s trip to Yugoslavia, the return of the Porkkala naval base to Finland, and an invitation to West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to visit Moscow. More important, Khrushchev anticipated that the new Soviet attitude toward neutrality would be favorably received in the developing world. By the end of 1955, Khrushchev and his followers had affected a dramatic demarche, including state visits to India, Burma and Afghanistan, flamboyant denunciations of Western “colonialism,” and offers of assistance to any underdeveloped Arab or Asian country.

After giving varying degrees of support over the years to the diplomatic effort, France, Britain and the United States also reached consensus on terms both proposed and desired by the Austrian government. The Americans had worried that Austria’s neutrality would tempt the West Germans, but Chancellor Konrad Adenauer gave US Secretary of State Dulles assurances to the contrary.⁵⁷ In short, there were no losers in the signing of the Austrian State Treaty. Permanent neutrality became a part of the Austrian Constitution on October 26, 1955, and that status continues today.

Of course, the Austrian case differs from the current situation in Afghanistan. Although the European state was under four-power occupation in the wake of the Second World War, it elected a strong central government three months after hostilities ended. The Austrian government played a key role in breaking the deadlock between the major powers, with leaders traveling to Moscow to negotiate with the Soviet government. They sought a permanently neutral status and by 1955 had developed a territorial army to defend their frontiers. On the other hand, there were serious disputes over Austria's southern border and considerable domestic unrest, including two attempted Communist coups. Without clever diplomacy and dogged persistence, Austria would have been partitioned rather than neutralized.

Laos, 1962

Like Austria, the neutralization of Laos had an impressive lineage of high-powered negotiations by smart diplomats; yet it was a failure before it even began. It is a cautionary tale about the pitfalls of neutralizing a peninsular territory, geographically unsuitable and ensnared in a neighbor's civil war.

In the wake of the defeat of French colonial forces at the battle of Dien Bien Phu, the 1954 Geneva Conference sought to end the war in Vietnam and establish peace in the Indochina peninsula. Being a French protectorate, Laos' future was already entangled with Vietnam's. The 1954 Geneva Conference participants (UK, US, USSR, France, PRC, North and South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) divided Vietnam along the 17th parallel, affirmed the independence of Laos, mandated the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, and called for democratic elections. Immediately upon his election, the Laotian Prime Minister declared the state's policy of "peace and neutrality," but at this point there was no external guarantee. By 1959, Laos was already infiltrated by the North Vietnamese (aligned with the Communist Pathet Lao) and aided by the United States (aligned with the Royal Lao Government). A Laotian civil war prevailed along the Eastern border, a dividing line that ran the entire length of the country.

In May 1961 the Second Geneva Conference began, including the participants of the first conference along with Canada, Poland, India, Burma and Thailand. By now there were

three warring factions within Laos: the Communist Pathet Lao, the centrist Laotian government, and the right-wing military anti-Communists. The second Geneva conference produced an agreement formally neutralizing Laos, with thirteen states pledging to guarantee the status, and a tripartite Laotian government also officially committed to its own neutrality. According to the Geneva Accord (23 July 1962), the government of Laos agreed to not to participate in any alliances or allow “the establishment of any foreign military bases on Laotian territory, nor allow any country to use Laotian territory for military purposes or for the purposes of interference in the internal affairs of other countries . . .” while the 13 other signatories agreed to respect the neutrality and territorial integrity of Laos. The agreement contained no provision for consequences (other than consultation) in the event of violation. But it did establish an International Control Commission comprised of Canada, India and Poland, who were to supervise the observance of the ceasefire and Laotian neutrality.

In the long term, the neutralization of Laos had little chance to succeed. Although on paper it had the essential internal and external dimensions of a good neutralization accord, the Laotians were too weak to protect their own territorial integrity and the external actors never meant to do so. The Canadians, Poles and Indians could not enforce a status that was secretly being violated by their own allies and co-signatories. The North Vietnamese had already established the Ho Chi Minh trail, a robust supply line that was merely masked by the 1962 neutralization three years later. The United States then provided robust aid to the Hmong, an indigenous tribe living in the mountains along the long border with Vietnam, and from 1965–73 dropped some two million tons of bombs on neutral Laotian territory. Even without the Vietnam War drawing it in, however, Laos’ geographical position on the northwest portion of the Indo-Chinese peninsula would have doomed any neutralization effort. Although there have been various proposals through the years, including in Southeast Asia (Malaysian Proposal, 1970) and on the Korean Peninsula, there has never been a case of successful neutralization along a peninsula.

Although it did not end the fighting or result in long term protection for the state, the neutralization of Laos did accomplish key short- and medium-term aims for US policy. The agreement detached the country from the larger bipolar contest between the United States and the Soviet Union, sidestepping another proxy war there between the superpowers. Following the agreement, the Laotian Prime Minister, Souvanna Phouma, took a far more conciliatory approach toward the West. It also eliminated the possibility of US troop commitments in Laos, a policy option supported by some of President John F. Kennedy's advisors. And there were important domestic political benefits for President Kennedy, demonstrating his earnest desire to end the conflict and act as a peacemaker in the region. While the neutralization accord was a clear failure in the long term, it did yield valuable results and a measure of stability for a time.⁵⁸

This case has both similarities and differences with the situation in Afghanistan. Similarities include the presence of an internal civil war fed by the ideology of its neighboring state, a weak central government, and the powerful interests of combatants in a neighboring conflict that easily overwhelmed any legal or moral commitment to respect Laotian neutrality. Neutralization accords cannot create a confluence of interests that does not exist. On the other hand, there are key differences between the Laotian and Afghan cases. The geography of Laos is narrow, land-locked, mountainous, accessible, and difficult to defend, and the inhabitants lacked a tradition of territorial defense in any case. Neutral Laotian territory provided a key, protected logistical pathway for supplying the insurgency in Vietnam. Afghanistan, although it provides important strategic depth vis-à-vis Pakistan and India, is not the direct access point for the conflict between its regional neighbors. And the Afghans have a strong tradition of successfully repelling foreigners; indeed, it is one of the few things that have united them in the past.

Turkmenistan, 1995

Turkmenistan, a highly autocratic republic of the Soviet Union, declared its independence in 1991 and continued single-party rule into the post-Soviet era. It is one of the world's most repressive countries.⁵⁹ The state, which is mainly flat desert, borders the Caspian Sea and has important oil and natural gas reserves. Its national army acts as a territorial defense

force and is forbidden to operate outside the borders of the country. In 1995, the government asked the U.N. General Assembly to pass a resolution recognizing Turkmenistan's permanently neutral status, and the government then enshrined that status in the national Constitution. The resolution was cosponsored by major powers including the US, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, but there was no enforceable guarantee. With a vague collective external endorsement, the neutralization accord parallels Luxembourg's 1867 neutralization and has yet to be seriously tested.

III. BUILDING A THEORY OF NEUTRALIZATION

The foregoing provides an overview of neutralization attempts (summarized in Table 13.1). Comparative analysis highlights the following:

- 1. Key Geographic features:** There has never been a successful neutralization along a peninsula, and flat areas such as coastal plains or open lowlands are also unpromising. Landlocked countries with mountainous features are well suited for neutralization, a concept heavily dependent upon traditional geopolitical factors.
- 2. Contested Borders:** The existence of a border dispute in the territory of the state does not reduce the likelihood of successful neutralization, especially because the negotiations often provide a forum for their resolution. Neutralized countries or territories with contested borders include Switzerland, Moresnet, Belgium, Upper Savoy, Austria and Laos. The neutralization of Switzerland included ambiguity about the sovereign status of neighboring provinces such as Upper Savoy (also neutralized), where the Swiss could send troops to protect their own neutrality. Belgium's borders disputed for years after the neutralization. Although the great powers agreed that the main outlines of Austria would be the pre-Anschluss territory, Yugoslav partisans engaged in violent incursions in the south; those claims were not resolved until 1949. The Soviet delegation refused to sign an Austrian treaty until the port of Trieste was finally divided between Italy and

Yugoslavia in 1954. The only case in which there was no attempt to clarify the status of disputed borders was Laos—also the only case to quickly fail.

3. **History of Domestic Conflict:** There is no apparent relationship between domestic conflict and whether or not neutralization succeeded. This counterintuitive finding is clearly born out by comparative examination of the thirteen cases presented here. Switzerland's history of civil war is virtually unparalleled in the history of modern Europe. Indeed, the Swiss decision to become a neutral state was elemental to its emergence and survival as a political entity. With the revolution to secede from Holland, Belgium's unrest was a key reason for neutralizing it to contain the revolutionary contagion. Austria's domestic unrest in the aftermath of the Second World War was in part a result of foreign occupation and the desperate economic circumstances of the domestic population; however it included two attempted coups and serious border skirmishes in the south. States or territories without domestic conflict included Moresnet, Luxembourg, Cracow, Malta, and Congo—all failures.
4. **Economic Value to the Region:** High economic value to the surrounding region is a necessary but not sufficient condition for successful neutralization. There is no case of successful neutralization in the absence of economic assets of interest to the neighbors, especially control of key trade routes. The only example of a successfully neutralized territory in the *absence* of commercial value was Upper Savoy, which had proximity to key mountain passes.
5. **Enforceable Guarantee:** Neutralization accords formally recognize stalemates between major powers and all those with the ability to intervene must acquiesce. Acquiescence to the *status quo* often follows costly and unsuccessful attempts to alter it unilaterally. Napoleon's France tried fruitlessly to conquer Switzerland. The Soviet Union tried and failed to execute two Communist overthrows in Eastern Austria. If any party holds out hopes of unilateral victory, the agreement will fail. The neutralizations of Belgium and Luxembourg yielded decades of stability but failed when Germany invaded. Related to

this, the major powers must commit to an enforceable guarantee, meaning that they police each other if there is a violation of the state's neutrality. Agreeing to "respect" the neutrality of the state is not sufficient: the individual commitment to respect the neutrality of the Congo basin failed, as did the agreement to "consult" if Laos' neutrality was violated. It remains to be seen whether the 1995 UN recognition of Turkmenistan's neutrality will suffice.

6. **Strong Defenses:** There must be international agreement about the defensive military posture of the state, and the neutralized state must be able to fulfill its commitments. Foreign actors must not be able to use the neutralized state's territory for their own military purposes. Will the state be armed or unarmed? Will there be limits on armaments? This aspect has evolved in the past two centuries away from the emphasis upon external military guarantors toward stronger emphasis on internal territorial defenses. A key reason for the eventual failures in Belgium and Luxembourg was the demilitarization of both territories. As in the case of Laos, belligerent foreign powers can drag the neutralized state unwillingly into a conflict even if intervention occurs without permission. All parties wanted both Switzerland and Austria armed. Switzerland had a storied and unparalleled tradition of territorial defense, which was a deterrent to potential meddlers for centuries. Austria stayed out of military alliances (most notably NATO) and developed a territorial army to deter the actions of any stronger power.
7. **Indigenous support:** The state and its people must be dedicated to their own permanent neutrality. The concept of neutralization has evolved along with modern international law and the nation-state itself. It has shifted emphasis over the centuries, especially the relative importance of the external vs. the internal dimensions. The degree to which the neutralized state's inhabitants accept and, better yet, initiate the accord is more important than the strength, nature and form of the external guarantee. The neutralization must be initiated by the state in question, as was the case in Austria and Switzerland, rather than imposed by external powers, as in the Belgian Congo and Cracow. Austria had a

provisional national government from the earliest months of the postwar occupation and that leadership steadily gained strength, helped by the Western powers (especially the United States). But a centralized form of government is not critical: Switzerland's loose federation of cantons fought for control over the mountainous territory for centuries, organically developing a tradition of neutrality as a way to keep the state from breaking apart. National identity is more important than type of government. With the exception of the 1962 neutralization of Laos, every example of failure has been a case of imposed or reluctantly accepted neutrality, without the support of the government and its people. The role of the state has gradually overshadowed that of its guarantors.

IV. AFGHANISTAN AS A CASE STUDY

Historical Background

Seeing the Afghans merely as victims of neighborly aggression is ahistorical and counterproductive. Had Afghan leaders not been wily diplomats and warriors, independent Afghanistan would have disappeared long ago.

In the nineteenth century, the state was caught in the expansion of European empires, with the Russians pushing their boundaries southward into Central Asia and the British reaching northward from India. The British, anxious to protect against tsarist encroachment into British India, twice invaded Afghanistan (1839–42 and 1878–79) and twice found themselves forced by fierce local resistance to withdraw. Although they were repulsed, after the second Anglo-Afghan war the British gained the right to occupy the Khyber Pass and to control Afghan foreign policy. To counter British influence, the Afghans approached the Russians and, through complicated diplomatic maneuvers, successfully played one power against the other while protecting the autonomy of the state. Eventually the imperial powers colluded; in 1907, they entered into an entente, which among other things formally established Afghanistan as a buffer state between the two empires and again ceded Afghanistan's foreign policy to the British. The Afghans had

no say in the accord, but gradually accepted it and found satisfaction in the preservation of their independence.

Independence from outside control was more important in Afghanistan's emergence as a state than was internal unity. The martial tradition of the Afghan tribes was directed against not only outside invaders but also those attempting to impose centralized rule. Apart from the campaigns against the British, much of nineteenth century Afghanistan was characterized by civil struggle between rival tribal leaders, vying for local control with varying sources of power and authority. The only focus of legitimate national authority was the monarchy, and that was weak: the title of amir passed from ruler to ruler, as leaders were overthrown, murdered or militarily defeated.

Afghanistan's policy of neutrality and nonalignment between rival international powers was a rallying point for nationhood. Despite strong pressure from the Germans and domestic agitation in favor of alliance with the Turks, Afghanistan remained neutral in both world wars. Between the wars, the Afghans took advantage of the war-weariness of the British and tried to incite the Muslims of India to revolt. In 1919, looking for both a diversion from internal strife and potential political gains, the Afghan Amir, Amanullah, proclaimed a religious war, called upon the tribes, and began to invade British India (now Pakistan). But Afghan forces were repulsed by a larger and more technologically advanced British force, relying upon Royal Air Force raids against Kabul. The two sides signed a peace treaty in August 1919 that included reaffirmation of the Durand Line. But the British also stopped paying the Afghan government an annual subsidy, and the Afghans regained control of their own foreign policy. This is arguably when Afghanistan emerged as a truly independent state. Again to offset the British, the Afghans turned to the Russians, concluding treaties of friendship and nonaggression with the Bolshevik regime. This pattern of playing one power against the other is ingrained in Afghan statecraft, which, although not always successful in fending off invasions, has been neither passive nor naive.

After the 1947 partition of India and British withdrawal, the Afghan government's rivalry was transferred to Pakistan. Two years later, in 1949, Kabul and Karachi began a border dispute that continues today. The crux of the dispute is the status of the peoples of the Pashtun tribes who were divided from Afghanistan by the British-drawn Durand Line. For more than 50 years, Afghanistan pursued a policy of trying to reclaim the Pashtun areas first from the British and then from the Pakistanis.

Meanwhile, the Afghan elite sought aid and loans for the economic development of the country. With the British no longer a major factor in the region (and no longer providing a lucrative subsidy), the government approached the United States for aid, receiving some \$524 million between 1949 and 1979.⁶⁰ Following their foreign policy tradition, the Afghans openly tried to gain leverage by playing the United States off the Soviet Union, just as they had for decades balanced the Russians off against the British. But this time the policy failed; unlike the British, American policy makers considered Afghanistan distant and unimportant.

By the mid-1950s, the United States had decided to arm Afghanistan's rival, Pakistan, and to encourage participation in anti-Communist alliances. The Eisenhower Administration aligned itself with the position that the Durand Line was a fixed border, thus opposing Afghan claims and alienating the leadership. The Afghan government turned increasingly to the Soviet Union. Between 1954 and 1978, Afghanistan slowly came under Soviet influence, receiving more than twice the aid received from the United States (c. \$1.3m), and approximately the same amount again in Soviet military aid. Numerous other Soviet-Afghan agreements, such as those providing for the training of Afghan military personnel in the Soviet Union, followed.⁶¹

By walking a fine line between rival powers in the region for centuries, Afghanistan succeeded in its primary aim: independence. This pattern abruptly ended in 1973 with the overthrow of the monarchy, which increased still further the country's vulnerability to external influences. President Mohammed Daoud's rise to power signaled the end of a short-lived flirtation with constitutional monarchy and resulted in the exile of the king. Military power had been directly responsible for bringing Daoud to power, but the disaffected social and economic

forces that had facilitated the coup began to undermine his government almost as soon as it was established.

Again the answer was to try to balance the interests of neighboring powers off each other. In foreign affairs, Daoud began to move the country away from its Russian oriented policy and search for new sources of foreign support, accepting aid from the Shah of Iran, seeking more aid from the United States, travelling to India, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and even improving relations with Pakistan. None of this was viewed favorably in Moscow. Daoud was attempting to reduce Afghanistan's dependence upon the Soviet Union at a time when the superpower to the north was growing stronger than ever before, the United States and Britain had withdrawn, and there was no equivalent power in the region to offset that strength.⁶²

Meanwhile, in the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union began a serious effort to provide support to the Afghan communists, who were split between rival Khalq and Parcham factions. When a communist coup occurred in April 1978, Nur Mohammed Taraki became president and prime minister, and Hafizullah Amin became foreign minister. Both were in the Khalq faction of the Afghan communist party, the more ideologically pure and less pro-Soviet faction. Amin, a military strong man, had been largely responsible for organizing the coup. His control of the military and the secret police gave him a formidable base for consolidating his internal power. Seven months after the coup, Taraki had become little more than a figurehead, with Amin wielding most of the power within Afghanistan. In Soviet eyes, Taraki was a benign, malleable Marxist, but Amin clashed repeatedly with Moscow. In September 1979, a Soviet plot to kill Amin failed: Taraki was killed instead and Amin rose to the Presidency.

Amin was a nationalistic, strong-willed leader, determined to resist Soviet control even as he pressured the Russians to provide more aid to the faltering communist regime. Domestically, he attempted widespread modernization, including land reform and a literacy campaign that defied Islamic traditions. He was ruthless and cruel, ordering the execution of thousands of his political opponents. These actions alienated much of the population and eliminated whatever chance there might have been to gain broad support for the Kabul regime. With the fall of the

shah and the radicalization of neighboring Iran, Soviet leaders were doubly determined to remove Amin so as to stabilize the fledgling Communist state and prevent the spread of Islamist extremism on their border. In December 1979, Soviet troops invaded. Soviet leaders installed Babrak Karmal, a leader from the Parcham faction of the Afghan Communist Party who was much more amenable to their interests, and began an occupation and war against the mujahideen resistance force that ended in the deaths of some 13,833 Soviet troops (469,685 sick or wounded), the defeat of the Communist government, the withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989, and the end of the Soviet Union itself a few years after that.⁶³

The story of the rise of the mujahideen during the 1990s, the 9/11 attacks on the United States, and the 2001 invasion is well known. Parallels with the Soviet military experience are thin: the initial cause of the invasion, the multinational nature of the ISAF force, and the much greater amount of US aid are all sharp contrasts. But the tradition of playing major powers against one another persists, with US troops targeted by insurgents supported by Pakistan and Iran. The violent interplay between major powers, and Kabul's active role in the geopolitical drama, are nothing new.

Neutralization for Afghanistan?

While it is obviously not Switzerland or Austria, Afghanistan does meet most of the seven criteria for successful neutralization. The first three are straightforward. Geographically Afghanistan is mountainous and landlocked. While the state is not inclined toward centralized government, neither was Switzerland. ISAF's well-meaning efforts to encourage Afghan centralization are reminiscent of Napoleon's folly two centuries earlier: it is possible that the optimal government for 21st century Afghanistan is a loosely-aligned confederation. Second, the borders of Afghanistan are clear, with the important exception of the Durand Line. But the cases of Switzerland, Belgium, and Austria demonstrate that this is not an insurmountable obstacle. Establishing a process for finalizing the borders during the framework negotiations would be crucial. Third, the notorious record of domestic conflict in Afghanistan, following the Soviet invasion of 1979 and now with the resurgence of the Taliban, is not a disqualifier. Neutralization

could help the inhabitants coalesce around the common aim of protecting Afghan territory against foreign interveners instead of killing fellow Afghans.

Afghanistan has important economic value to the region—the fourth criterion. Drug trafficking and illicit trade are serious concerns; however, strengthening border controls and developing the Afghan security forces could enhance state control at the expense of nonstate actors and warlords. The Chinese are especially motivated to protect the investments they have made in Afghan minerals and resources, and the Iranians, whose population suffers from the highest levels of drug addiction in the world,⁶⁴ would support Afghan efforts to reduce the flow of heroin. Responsibly developing the resources and mineral wealth of Afghanistan would serve the entire region and contribute to the long-term stability and development of the country, as well as its neighbors.

Fifth, the exact nature of the guarantee would be important. Regional actors share the need for Afghan stability but have conflicting national agendas. Those with an interest in the future of the state include Pakistan, India, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, along with the United States and possibly NATO. Neighbors such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan might play a role, although Austria's neutralization demonstrates that contiguous states need not be guarantors. China's role could be crucial, given its ties to Pakistan, its concerns about Uighur radicalization, its interest in avoiding a destabilizing India-Pakistan nuclear conflict, and its desire to avoid a permanent American military presence on its border. Although such ambitious regional diplomacy would present challenges, the neighbors share a strong common interest in a stable Afghan government and preventing the return of a radical Sunni government.

Pakistan's own internal problems have reduced enthusiasm for another Taliban-ruled neighboring state, as well. Preventing radical spillover and further unrest among Pakistani Pashtuns are key objectives in Islamabad. Related, the Pakistan military fears the possibility of Indian influence in Afghanistan, stoking up Pashtun nationalism on the Pakistani side of the border and Baluch nationalism in Baluchistan. A stable, neutralized Afghanistan, removed from

Indian involvement (or that of any other state), would serve Pakistan's interests, especially if the accord resulted, at least eventually, in recognition of the Durand line. This is likewise the case with respect to Iran. Judging by Iran's behavior in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, it could theoretically play a constructive role. Iran does not want a radicalized Sunni regime on its border, and it has a strong interest in protecting trade routes through Afghanistan. Neutralization could return the loosely aligned Afghan provinces to their traditional focus upon controlling local trade routes and ensuring local security. Afghanistan might return to a potpourri of types of governance in the country loosely aligned with Kabul but empowered to provide local security against outsiders. Iranian efforts to encourage Shia identity in Afghanistan would be less threatening if the state were stable and neutralized.

Sixth, the level and quality of defenses would be very important, as only a well-armed Afghanistan could defend itself against both outside intervention and internal unrest. The intense US effort to develop the Afghan national army and police is well targeted to meet this need. During the height of its occupation, the United States built Afghanistan a counterinsurgency army; however, the Afghan Ministry of Defense, arguing that insurgents mainly target western forces, preferred to transition to a conventional army focusing particularly on the threats from Pakistan and Iran. The Afghans would like to be able to control their own air space, with radar and artillery capabilities that could respond to threats across the border. Under a multilateral framework agreement, the United States and NATO could beef up Afghanistan's defensive forces, including increased capabilities to monitor incursions using reconnaissance drones and night-vision capabilities. That kind of Territorial Army would perfectly suit a neutralized state.

Neutralization accords require the withdrawal of foreign forces, at least eventually, and the state's eventual assumption of responsibility for military control of its own territory. Such an outcome could be approached in phases, with the United States engaging in training Afghan security forces for their role as a Territorial Army and helping to monitor Afghan territory in short or medium term. The process of withdrawal need not be precipitous. The 5,500 American

troops projected to be deployed to Afghanistan for some time could play the role of garrison force protecting Kabul in the near term. Also, the United States will want to retain its counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan, as well as the capability to spy on Pakistan, Iran and China. Intelligence cooperation with a neutral government is nothing new: Austria played a vital role in this regard during the Cold War.

An Afghanistan government determined to hew to its own permanent neutrality, defensively armed and supported by a multilateral accord among the neighboring powers, would be stronger and more aligned with American interests than a government that quickly fell under Pakistan's control or influence—an outcome that would only magnify the influence of the Taliban. In this respect, moves by the recently-elected Ashraf Ghani government to draw closer to the Pakistan government are worrisome steps in the wrong direction.

Which leads to the final requirement: indigenous support. The state must be dedicated to its own permanent neutrality. Successful neutralization of Afghanistan would require both the initiative and active involvement of the Afghan people, either through their government in Kabul or through a federated association of more local provincial leaders (parallel to the Swiss Cantons). The Afghans themselves would have to pursue a declaration of permanent neutrality, a move that would serve Afghanistan's broader long-term national interests but could be hard to achieve, given domestic disunity. (Here parallels with Laos come to mind.) Admittedly Afghan elites may prefer to continue to enrich themselves by cutting deals with external powers. Monitoring and enforcing such an agreement would be a challenge. It would require a means of verifying non-interference from outside powers, and spoilers, both external and internal to Afghan territory, could compromise success and spur further intervention. But the key to success would be to make this concept an Afghan initiative.

Alternative Pathways for Afghanistan

There is no denying that neutralization is challenging and could fail. So, what are the alternatives? Apart from neutralization, there are four: partition, satellite status, military occupation, or civil war.

Partition

Senior US officials such as Ambassador Robert Blackwill have argued that partition is the only feasible solution for post-ISAF Afghanistan, ceding the south and east to the Taliban and concentrating on protecting the non-Pashtun areas in the north and west.⁶⁵ But partition is an unpromising means to end the conflict in Afghanistan, not least because the Afghans do not want it. The country has experienced partition twice before, with poor results. The British first brought about *de jure* partition during the late nineteenth century, when they drew the Durand line between Afghanistan and British India. This did not reduce conflict in subsequent decades.⁶⁶ Almost a century later, following the Soviet retreat, Afghanistan entered a period of civil war that led to a division between vast Taliban-controlled Pashtun-dominated areas in the south, center and west, and smaller United Front areas in the north and east. That *de facto* partition enabled Al-Qaeda to use Afghan territory as a launching pad for the September 2001 attacks against the United States. In short, Afghanistan is a textbook case of a country that did not experience greater stability and reduced civil conflict following past partition, and there is no reason to believe that it will do so in the future.⁶⁷

Satellite Status

Afghanistan can be an economic and military satellite of the United States or another major power. Some point to the large amounts of foreign aid provided by one major power—first the British, then the Soviets and finally the United States—as stabilizing factors throughout the 20th century. But clientalism has been a key source of weakness in the past. After losing British subsidies in the 1920s, Afghan elites followed a conscious policy of seeking funds from powerful patrons, becoming so dependent on foreign aid that by 1973, 2/3rds of Afghanistan’s annual revenue came from foreign loans and grants.⁶⁸ This dependency contributed to weak governance and endemic corruption, as successive regimes relied upon external patronage and their own control of the aid. The ability to tax its citizens declined: direct taxation brought in the bulk of government revenue in the 1920s, 30% in the 1950s, and less than 1% in the 1970s.⁶⁹ Foreign aid was effective in securing and enriching government elites, less so building the indigenous

institutions required to strengthen state governance.⁷⁰ Economic dependency upon a single major power would serve neither Afghan interests nor those of the United States.

Military Occupation

Afghanistan has been occupied by the Russians, the British and now (mainly) the Americans. Potential candidates for future military occupation include Pakistan, Iran and China. Pakistan's paranoia about potential Indian military activities at their back door could prompt it to send troops across the border. Likewise, in the absence of effective Afghan security, China and Iran will be tempted to control the areas nearest to them—as is already happening to some degree. But this is a counterproductive strategy for the entire region, not to mention the United States. Historically military occupation has neither reduced the level of conflict in the country nor facilitated the building of a strong, stable and prosperous state within a vibrant region.

Civil War

Civil war is the most likely outcome of continuing on the current path. Recent attempts to transport Afghanistan from its deeply embedded tribal and cultural roots to a modern centralized democratic government ignored the 500-year consolidation needed by other ethnically complex nation-states. Endemic factionalism, sectarianism, corruption, and weak institutions will continue in the short or medium term. ISAF made important strides, especially with the Afghan National Army; but outside powers cannot impose long-term order and unity any more than Napoleon could crush the independent-minded Swiss into a centralized nation-state. Afghanistan is a semi-feudal, developing state that must be built indigenously, with economic support but without further political and military meddling. Yet the current trajectory is for neighboring powers to align themselves with internal factions within Afghanistan, potentially tearing the country apart. In this regard, the Taliban's September 2015 capture of northern Afghan city of Kunduz, after five months of fighting Afghan security forces, was the first time the Taliban had taken control of a major city since 2001. If the current trajectory continues,

the Taliban will grow in strength, forcing Afghanistan to again become a potential sanctuary for violent, anti-US nonstate actors such as the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda.

Of these various possibilities, Afghanistan's neutralization is the best available long term option for American interests. It is the only one that would enable Afghanistan to maintain its independence and sovereignty for any period of time, and the most likely to lead to a stable state that is not a threat to itself or others.

CONCLUSION

Neutralization is not a panacea, but it is the only promising way forward for protecting both American interests and Afghan stability. Neutralization poses few costs and has high potential pay-off for the United States and all the other actors should it succeed. It would commit major powers such as China, Russia, and Iran to the stability and viability of the state, offsetting Pakistan's growing influence. Another radical Sunni Islamist regime would threaten them all. The current trajectory toward renewed internal conflict in Afghanistan is clear: the emergence of a small ISIS-aligned force in Afghanistan and its August 2015 declaration of war against the Afghan Taliban provides insight into the ongoing struggle between local and international radical forces. Oddly, it is more in American interests to support the Afghan government's negotiations with the Afghan Taliban than to increase the incentives for the latter to align with external groups. The current pathway could drive nationalists and global Islamists together, repeating the tired pattern of instability in a region that now includes two nuclear powers, a dangerous radical ideology, and unprecedented potential for power projection.

After fourteen years of war, the American people are no longer willing to spend the lives and treasure needed to stabilize Afghanistan with large numbers of US troops. Neutralization could change the strategic matrix in the region, buying time and staving off the regional and domestic instability that currently looms. Like Belgium, Afghanistan's neutralization need not succeed over the long term to be beneficial: even a short or medium term respite could bring important gains.⁷¹

Neutralization does not necessarily guarantee peace within a state. Instead, it quarantines the state from outside interference so that internal conflicts are not exacerbated and made contagious to the region. It contains the problem. Some will argue that the presence of non-state actors, powerful Taliban, Haqqani network, and other warring factions within Afghanistan make neutralization impossible. In fact, the opposite is true: only a pact of non-interference and verification can remove Afghanistan from an endless cycle of civil war at home and potential projection of violence abroad. In other words, both Afghanistan and the United States will be much better off with a neutralization agreement than without it.

¹ International Law with respect to neutrality will not be comprehensively covered here—e.g., this study does not cover the governing of waterways or short-term demilitarization of a contested territory during a war. See J. H. W. Verzijl, *International Law in Historical Perspective, Part IX-B: The Law of Neutrality* (The Netherlands: Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1979).

² Edgar Bonjour, *Swiss Neutrality: Its History and Meaning*, trans. Mary Hottinger (London: Allen & Unwin, 2nd ed, 1948), 12; A.W. Stargardt, *Problems of Neutrality in Southeast Asia: The Relevance of the European Experience*, Occasional Paper No. 12, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore: The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1972), 1; and Cyril E. Black, Richard A. Falk, Klaus Knorr, and Oran R. Young, *Neutralization in World Politics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 21.

³ This is also called “customary neutrality.” See “Conception officielle Suisse de la neutralité,” *Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für internationales Recht*, XIV (1957), 195 – 199; cited by Black, et al., *Neutralization*, 22n; and Nils Andren, “Sweden: Neutrality, Defense and Disarmament,” in *The European Neutrals in International Affairs*, The Laxenburg Papers, no. 7, edited by Hanspeter Neuhold and Hans Thalberg (Austria: Austrian Institute for International Affairs; and Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), 40.

⁴ Paul F. Power, *Neutrality and Disengagement* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1963), 2; and Marvin C. Ott, *The Neutralization of Southeast Asia: An Analysis of the Malaysian/ASEAN Proposal*, Papers in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series, no. 33 (Ohio University: Center for International Studies, 1974): 2–3.

⁵ The terms “self-neutralization” and “autonomous neutralization” were also used. See, for example, Stewart MacMaster Robinson, “Autonomous Neutralization,” *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (July 1917): 607 – 616.

⁶ Although some write of the neutralization of Finland by a single state (the Soviet Union), that is inaccurate. Finland’s 1948 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was an agreement for limited and conditional military cooperation, aimed against Germany. Neutrality was not a condition for Soviet troop withdrawals from Finnish territory; military cooperation was.

⁷ Black, et al., 20.

⁸ Neutralization aligns with the qualifications for small and weak countries described by Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser, “An Economic Theory of Alliances,” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (August 1966): 271-2.

⁹ I am indebted to Peter Krause for this formulation.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹ Some experts argued that neutralization was an intolerable infringement upon state sovereignty. See F.W. Baumgartner, “The Neutralization of States,” *Bulletin on the Department of History and Political and Economic Science*, No. 25 (October 1917), (Kingston: The Jackson Press, 1917): 25.

¹² E.g. Uganda and The Solomon Islands, under the British.

¹³ E.g. most of the states of Eastern Europe under the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

¹⁴ E.g. Paraguay between Argentina and Brazil, or Afghanistan between Russia and British India.

¹⁵ E.g. members of the nonaligned movement during the Cold War, such as India, Yugoslavia.

¹⁶ E.g. Sweden during the Cold War.

¹⁷ E. Toulmin Nicolle, “Neutrality of the Channel Islands during the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law*, 3rd Series, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1920): 238 – 239.

¹⁸ W.S.M. Knight, “Neutrality and Neutralization in the Sixteenth Century – Liege,” *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law*, 3rd Series, Vol. II, 98 – 104.

¹⁹ Malbone W. Graham Jr., “Neutralization as a Movement in International Law,” *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 1927): 82.

²⁰ James Marshall Cornwall, *Geographic Disarmament*, (London: 1935): 18 – 19.

²¹ Claire Francis Littell, *The Neutralization of States: A Study in Diplomatic History and International Law* (Columbia University, 1921), 16-19; Wicker, 11-12; Graham, 82 and Baumgartner, 20. Malta remained part of the British Empire until its independence in 1964 and declared its own permanent neutrality in 1980. Costa Rica has been neutral since 1983, Sweden since 1812 and Ireland since the 1930s. None of these was an externally guaranteed neutralization.

²² “Letter from the Swiss Federal Council to Dr. Kern,” *Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Italy, Savoy & Switzerland*, Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty (London: Harrison and Sons, 1860), 46-51; and Adda Bruemmer Bozeman, *Regional Conflicts Around Geneva: An Inquiry into the Origin, Nature, and Implications of the Neutralized Zone of Savoy and of the Customs-free Zones of Gex and Upper Savoy* (Stanford University Press, 1949).

²³ See Permanent Court of International Justice, Case of the Free Zones of Upper Savoy and the District of Gex,” 19 August 1929; accessible at http://www.worldcourts.com/pcij/eng/decisions/1929.08.19_savoy_gex.htm.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁵ Gordon E. Sherman, “The Neutrality of Switzerland,” *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (April 1918): 241; and Baumgartner, 12.

²⁶ Baumgartner, 14 – 15; Cornwall, 20.

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- ²⁷ Wicker, 14; Baumgartner, 16; Sherman, “The Neutrality of Switzerland,” 242; Cornwall, 20; and Bonjour, 24 – 25.
- ²⁸ Baumgartner, 17.
- ²⁹ Baumgartner, 18 – 19; Sherman, “The Neutrality of Switzerland, 244 - 245; and Bonjour, 45 – 46.
- ³⁰ Geoffrey Bruun, *Europe and the French Imperium, 1799 – 1814* (New York: Harper, 1938), 58.
- ³¹ Bruun, 137.
- ³² Baumgartner, 20; and Bonjour, 51.
- ³³ Gordon E. Sherman, “The Permanent Neutrality Treaties,” *Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (January 1915): 223.
- ³⁴ See Wicker, 14; Black, et al., 21; and Baumgartner, 26 – 28.
- ³⁵ See William McElwee, *The Art of War: Waterloo to Mons* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1974), 103 – 105.
- ³⁶ Fred Greene, “Neutralization and the Balance of Power,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. XLVII, No. 4 (December 1953):1048.
- ³⁷ Wicker, 25.
- ³⁸ Sherman, “The Permanent Neutrality Treaties,” 236.
- ³⁹ Wicker, 27 – 28; and Cornwall, 25.
- ⁴⁰ Cornwall, 25 – 26.
- ⁴¹ Edward Crankshaw, *Bismarck* (London: Macmillan Papermac ed., 1982), 247 – 248.
- ⁴² *Les origines diplomatique de la guerre de 1870-71 XII* (Paris, 1910 – 32), 200 and 226, and Herman Oncken, *Die Rheinpolitik*, vol. II, 201; cited by Crankshaw, 248.
- ⁴³ Crankshaw, 249 – 253.
- ⁴⁴ Black, et al., p. 26; Cornwall, p. 28; and Harold J. Tobin, “Is Belgium Still Neutralized?” *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (July 1932): 518.
- ⁴⁵ Wicker, 32.
- ⁴⁶ Sherman, “The Permanent Neutrality Treaties,” 239.
- ⁴⁷ Black, et al., 25. See Article 31 of the treaty. Green H. Hackworth, *Digest of International Law*, 8 vols. (Washington, 1940), Vol. 1, 69.
- ⁴⁸ Jonathan E. Helmreich, “The End of Congo Neutrality, 1914,” *The Historian*, Vol., 28, No. 4 (August 1966), 610-624.; William Roger Lewis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez, and Decolonization* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2006), esp Chptr 3: “The Berlin Congo Conference and the (non-) Partition of Africa, 1884-85,” 112-114; Littell, 144-151; and Wicker, 33-36.
- ⁴⁹ Gunter Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).
- ⁵⁰ US Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, Report no. 6403, “Austria Attempts Independent Foreign Policy,” 31 August 1953, and State Department memorandum (from R. B. Knight to Mr. Merchant and Mr. MacArthur), 9 July 1953, R.G. 59, 763.00/6-953; both read in the Diplomatic Documents Division, US National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵¹ Memorandum from Arthur Radford, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the Secretary of Defense, 9 October 1953, R.G. 330, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Modern Military Records Division, NA.

⁵² Memorandum from Vice Admiral A.C. Davis, deputy US representative to the Standing Group of the North Atlantic Military Committee, to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 9 September 1953, and memorandum from the JCS to the Secretary of Defense, 11 September 1953; both in Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Modern Military Records Division, NA.

⁵³ US Department of State, *The Austrian State Treaty: An Account of the Postwar Negotiations Together with the Text of the Treaty and Related Documents*, European and British Commonwealth Series 49, Publication 6437, April 1957; and Sven Alard, *Russia and the Austrian State Treaty: A Case Study of Soviet Policy in Europe* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970), 134 – 135.

⁵⁴ Interview with former Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, Vienna, 2 December 1983.

⁵⁵ Kurt Waldheim, *The Austrian Example*, trans. Ewald Osers (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), 66 – 67.

⁵⁶ William B. Bader, *Austria between East and West, 1945 – 1955* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 206 – 207, and Gerald Stourzh, “The Austrian State Treaty and the Origins of Austrian Neutrality,” part 1 of *Austria and Its Permanent Neutrality* (Vienna: Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, n.d.).

⁵⁷ M.S. Handler, “Bonn Disavows Aim to be Neutral State,” *New York Times*, 30 April 1955, 1.

⁵⁸ I am indebted to Fredrik Logevall for these observations. See *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Los Angeles, CA: Univ. of California Press, 2001), 41.

⁵⁹ Jim Nichol, *Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests*, CRS Report for Congress #RL33458, 9 January 2013, p. 31.

⁶⁰ Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, 2nd edition (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985), 24.

⁶¹ Bradsher, 24-5.

⁶² The Declassified Documents 1979 Collection (Washington, 1979), no. 33A; quoted and cited by Bradsher, 60 - 67.

⁶³ Casualty figures from Lester R. Grau, *The Bear Went over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan* (London: Routledge, 1998; translated from the original Russian version, first published in 1991), XIX; citing the manuscript of Aledsandr Lyakhovskiy, *Tragediya I doblest' Afghan* [The Tragedy and Valor of the Afghan Veterans], Moscow, Iskona, 1995.

⁶⁴ Karl Vick, “Opiates of the Iranian People, Despair Drives World’s Highest Addiction Rate,” *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2005.

⁶⁵ Robert D. Blackwill, “Plan B in Afghanistan: Why De Facto Partition Is the Least Bad Option,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (2011): 42-50.

⁶⁶ Running directly through Pashtun-dominated territory, the partition did not include separation of ethnic groups.

⁶⁷ On whether partition ends civil wars, see Carter Johnson, “Partitioning to Peace: Sovereignty, Demography, and Ethnic Civil Wars,” *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Spring 2008): 140-180; Michael C. Horowitz, Alex Weisiger, and Carter Johnson, “Correspondence: The Limits to Partition,” *International Security*, Vol., 33, No. 4

(Spring 2009): 203-210; and Nicholas Sambanis and Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl, "What's in a Line: Is Partition a Solution to Civil War?" *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Fall 2009): 82-118.

⁶⁸ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 204-5; and Maxwell J. Fry, *The Afghan Economy: Money, Finance, and the Critical Constraints to Economic Development* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), p. 158-60.

⁶⁹ Fry, pp. 155 and 183-86; cited by Barfield, p. 205.

⁷⁰ Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995).

⁷¹ On how to implement a neutralization agreement, see Audrey Kurth Cronin "Thinking Long on Afghanistan: Could it be Neutralized?" *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2012/13, 55-72.