



To Bomb or Not To Bomb:  
The Strength and Weakness of the Anti-Strategic Bombing Norm in Conflicts and  
Wartime

Alexandra Baker

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts in International Studies

Boston College  
International Studies Program  
Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences

April 2023

Advisor: Prof. Jennifer Erickson

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

IS Thesis Coordinator: Prof. Hiroshi Nakazato

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**To Bomb or Not To Bomb:  
The Strength and Weakness of the Anti-Strategic Bombing Norm in Conflicts and  
Wartime**

Alexandra Baker

Advisor: Jennifer Erickson, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT: What explains the changing strength and weakness of the “anti-strategic bombing norm” (ASB) during conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond? The ASB norm encourages states to avoid the use of strategic bombing (targeting civilians to destroy enemy morale) in conflict. Yet these periods of conflict have had an inconsistent effect on the strength/weakness of the ASB norm. What explains this variation? I use qualitative historical cases of “key” conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century to assess the strength/weakness of the ASB norm using the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon (2021) “Indicators of Norm Strength” scale (see Table 1.1). Once I determined norm strength in each case, I then analyzed the norm strength in each case using four hypotheses derived from IR theory and previous ASB research. These hypotheses include (1) high enforcement, strong norm, (2) high enforcement, weak norm, (3) hegemonic leadership, and (4) technology used by states. I find that the “high enforcement, strong norm” hypothesis best explains the rise and fall of the ASB norm- but that sources of enforcement other than the hegemon itself are key. Indeed, contrary to some theories, the hegemon often weakens rather than strengthens the norm in this case.



## **Table of Contents**

Table of Contents.....	i
List of Tables .....	ii
Table of Abbreviations .....	iii
Acknowledgments .....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: The Start of the Anti-Strategic Bombing Norm, 1899-1918 .....	23
Chapter 3: The Interwar Period, a Strange Time, 1918-1939.....	54
Chapter 4: The Bomber Returns in World War II, 1939-1945.....	95
Chapter 5: The Bomber Strikes Back? The Norm Post World War II .....	132
Chapter 6: Wars, Conflicts, and Drones: The Norm in the 1990s/2000s .....	178
Chapter 7: Conclusion .....	215
Bibliography .....	225

## **List of Tables**

<b>Table 1.1 Range of values for indicators of norm strength .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Table 1.2 Hypotheses.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Table 1.3 Strategic Bombing Timeline .....</b>	<b>22</b>

## Table of Abbreviations

ACTS	United States Air Corps and Tactical School
AWPD-1	Air War Plans Division-1
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BBSU	British Bombing Survey Unit
CBU	Cluster Bomb Unit
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
CCW	Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CIU	Allied Central Interpretation Unit
DMZ	Demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam
FEAF	Far Eastern Air Force
DOD	United States Department of Defense
HADPB	High-Altitude Daylight Precision Bombing
Hobo	Homing Bomb System
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
JDAM	Joint Attack Direct Munition
LGB	Laser-Guided Bombs
MiG	Russian Jet Fighter Mikoyan-Gurevich
NAF	New American Foundation
NLF	National Liberation Front
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PGM	Precision-Guided Munition
POL	Petroleum, Oil, Lubricant
PRU	Photo-Reconnaissance Unit
RAF	British Royal Air Force
RGFC	Republican Guard Force Command
ROE	United States Rules of Engagement
SDB	Next Generation Small Diameter Bomb
STARS	Joint Surveillance and Targeting Radar System
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TLAM	Tomahawk Land Attack Missile
USAAF	United States Army Air Force
USSTAF	United States Strategic Air Force
USSBS	United States Strategic Bombing Survey
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction

## **Acknowledgments**

There are too many people to thank along my thesis journey. First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor Erickson, who is the best professor I have had at BC (and an awesome thesis advisor). She not only pushed me to be my best within the thesis but has also been the one to encourage me to apply to things outside of the classroom. She has been the biggest support for this very long journey and has always been honest with feedback while also still encouraging me to not give up. Thank you to my other BC professors who prepared me academically for this huge feat. I want to thank my parents for supporting me throughout my whole academic journey. Thank you to my roommates: Cady, Olivia, and Judy (and previous roommate Amina). You all have seen me working late nights and early mornings to get the thesis in top shape and you all have been an awesome support system. Especially a shout-out and thank you to Judy to being my thesis work buddy when we worked together on our respective theses. Thank you to Ryan for always proofreading my errors and telling me that everything was going to be ok when I would freak out about finishing a 200-page thesis. Thank you to Izzy and Mia for listening to me talk about my thesis crises and being awesome thesis writers, I couldn't ask for better people to work alongside with. To all other people I have ever interacted with or come across, apologies if I did not mention you, but you also made a large impact on my life! It is always the small things that make such a big difference.



## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Introduction

Four years before what would be deemed the “first” aerial bombing by Italian Getulio Gavetti, the Second Hague Peace Conference of 1907 met to discuss the rules of land bombardment from the previous 1899 Conference. This conference defined land warfare as “The attack or bombardment *by whatever means* of towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings which are undefended is prohibited.”<sup>1</sup> After these conferences, this started the anti-strategic bombing norm. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, aerial bombardment has been a means of warfare that is seen as beneficial to states. With the invention of the airplane in 1903, the past 120 years have experienced widespread airplane development, specifically with aerial targeting. But with aerial warfare, there comes a fine line between targeting military targets and targeting civilians.

Today, unmanned aerial vehicles are the technology that states, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel, use to attack targets on the ground. As of 2021, the drone market was valued at about \$10.25 billion per year.<sup>2</sup> Although there has been aerial bombardment taking place for the past century, there is still a lack of further studies about the evolution of strategic bombing and what this entails for the future. In strikes conducted by the United States, such as on Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia, targeting

---

<sup>1</sup> Biddle 2014, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Unmanned Systems, Military Drone Market: <https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/military-drone-market-102181>

senior insurgent leaders is a justified military target.<sup>3</sup> Within these attacks, there are civilian casualties. Civilian casualties do not fit into the anti-strategic bombing norm because these are accidents and not purposeful targeting. However, I analyze when the target is civilian areas. There is a clear change over the past 100 years of what aerial bombing is and specifically a change with the anti-strategic bombing norm.

Historical accounts of strategic bombing, starting in the early 1900s to present day, demonstrates an inconsistent timeline of norm proliferation of anti-strategic bombing. Unlike other norms, such as decolonization, which had a “normative agenda,” strategic bombing does not have a regular norm life cycle, nor does it have a norm death.<sup>4</sup> This thesis explains the changes in norm strength over the past 100 years and analyzes this phenomenon.

**What explains the changing strength and weakness of the “anti-strategic bombing norm” (ASB) during conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond?** For my definition, strategic bombing consists of targeting civilians to destroy enemy morale. Gibbons and Lieber define strategic bombing as “aerial attacks on enemy civilian and industrial infrastructure with the primary purpose of inflicting enough harm on civilians to undermine a society’s morale and compel the government to end a conflict.”<sup>5</sup> For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the strategic bombardment norm content only applied to targeting civilians and civilian areas, whereas infrastructure was not included in the norm until the 1977 Geneva Protocol.

---

<sup>3</sup> Gusterson 2014, 194.

<sup>4</sup> Finnemore & Sikkink 1998, 888.

<sup>5</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019, 39-40.

The anti-strategic bombing norm encourages states to avoid the use of strategic bombing in conflict. Yet these periods have had inconsistent effects on the strength and weakness of the norm. I determine what explains this variation. I use qualitative historical cases of “key” conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century to assess the strength and weakness of the norm by using the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon (2021) “Indicators of Norm Strength” scale (see Table 1.1). Once I determined the norm strength in each case, I then analyzed the norm strength using four hypotheses derived from IR theory and previous anti-strategic bombing research. Overall, I find that the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis best explains the rise and fall of the anti-strategic bombing norm but that sources of enforcement other than the hegemon itself are key. Indeed, contrary to some theories, the hegemon often weakens rather than strengthens the norm in this case.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Overview***

Currently, drone strikes and other air warfare tools that are used to combat state enemies are prominent within the international sphere. Current examples such as Russia using missiles in Ukraine, Israel carrying out air strikes in Gaza, and the United States using drone strikes to kill leaders within al Qaeda all have either had aerial warfare or the usage of strategic bombing.<sup>6</sup> This exemplifies the importance of this topic: it is actively occurring and necessary to find explanations for norm strength to determine this in the future.

---

<sup>6</sup> See Kershner & Kingsley, *The New York Times* August 6, 2022

There is a division and contestation of norm acceptance on when it is “okay” to use strategic bombing and if certain aerial campaigns are against military infrastructure or civilians. I focused on this topic specifically because in constructivism, strategic bombing, and civilian targeting literatures there are little to no direct explanations of the changes in the anti-strategic bombing norm. Theorists such as Alexander Downes explain **why civilian victimization in war** happens: (1) desperation to achieve victory and lower costs or (2) appetite for territorial conquest.<sup>7</sup> This however does not explain changes in the norm strength of civilian targeting. Other texts, like *The American Way of Bombing*, describe the **historical background** of strategic bombing. Authors who contributed to this such as Biddle, Conway-Lanz, and Crawford, do not conducted the same analysis as I, with norm strength changes, specifically with anti-strategic bombing.

Jeffrey Legro and Gibbons and Lieber conducted in-depth **research on norms of strategic bombing**, but they do not answer my question of what changes the norm strength. Legro looks at how the international community stigmatized certain types of warfare, including strategic bombing, but focuses more on cases between the 1920s and the 1930s whereas I analyze the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond.<sup>8</sup> Gibbons and Lieber try to determine strategic bombing compliance based on collateral damage, strategic consequences, the identity of norm violations, and the international response to bombings, but they fall short on not looking at the overall norm, and instead looking at compliance.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the most prominent example of analyzing the anti-strategic

---

<sup>7</sup> Downes 2012, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Legro 1997, 32.

<sup>9</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019.

bombing norm is Mazanec's "**Norm Evolution for Strategic Bombing.**" Mazanec conducts similar case studies but does not conduct norm strength changes alongside a hypothesis analysis. This thesis also conducts more in-depth research on each case study and on cases into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in comparison to Mazanec.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from literature gaps on not answering the changes in norm strength of the anti-strategic bombing norm, theories itself within international relations also have a puzzling approach to explaining levels of the anti-strategic bombing norm. By looking at anti-strategic bombing norms and the inconsistency of them, this could lead to finding explanations for other inconsistent norms within the international sphere as well as applying this to norms of emerging-technology.

### *Norms*

Before I determined the measurement of the norm and the approach to the hypotheses, I collected information on norm strength and proliferation to determine how the anti-strategic bombing norm was different.

### *Norm Life*

The definition of a norm is a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity. For the anti-strategic bombing norm, this "appropriate behavior for actors" is when states do not use strategic bombing to deteriorate civilian morale. This norm

---

<sup>10</sup> Mazanec 2015.

fluctuates without a consistent norm life cycle.<sup>11</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink utilize the “Norm Life Cycle” to describe the changes of each stage of a norm with different actors, motives, and mechanisms of influence.<sup>12</sup> This life cycle consists of “norm emergence” (i.e., building the norm), “norm cascade” (socializing the norm), and “internalization” (setting the norm as legitimate). The issue here is that this shows a linear progression of a norm which fails to acknowledge these changes in strength and weakness of a norm. Therefore, the puzzle of the anti-strategic bombing norm: why does strategic bombing not fit into the Finnemore and Sikkink mold? Some norms do not reach the internalization stage of this linear progression but would then rest in one of the earlier stages. This would still mean that there is a linear progression of norms. To Finnemore and Sikkink, the progression of a norm would be seen as a norm getting stronger and stronger until it is the baseline for a concept, therefore with anti-strategic bombing, there would be a linear progression of anti-strategic bombing norms.

Many scholars use this baseline of how a norm is created through this life cycle process which does not have a norm death. On the other extreme, Panke and Petersohn propose the idea of a norm death, in response to norm challenges and norm contestation, touching on how there are more norm challenges than norm deaths. Challenges and contestation to a norm are based on (1) re-negotiations in international organizations, (2) a group having more relative power to facilitate a position, and (3) if a norm is precise. If these characteristics occur on a norm, it will more likely be abolished than weakened and

---

<sup>11</sup> Finnemore & Sikkink 1998, 894; Gusterson 2014, 890.

<sup>12</sup> Finnemore & Sikkink 1998, 894.

if a norm is vague, it will more likely be weakened.<sup>13</sup> For Panke and Petersohn, once the strategic bombing norm strength began to deteriorate, due to the list of determining challenges, they predict this will ultimately lead to norm death. When the norm of strategic bombing non-use was at one of its weakest points, such as in World War I or II, this would be qualified as a near death of the norm, but instead of following the prediction of Panke and Petersohn, the anti-strategic bombing norm did not die.

### *Norm Compliance*

Other literature focuses on compliance to a norm once the norm is established. Norm compliance does not necessarily mean a norm is strong because it is less about the amount to which states comply, and more about how states conceptualize and institutionalize a norm. Because norm compliance is not in correlation with the norm strength based on the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon scale, this means that norm compliance and norm violations do not determine norm strength.

Mitchell focuses on the importance of regime design within democracies, meaning how a treaty geared toward compliance is executed. This theory looks at how regime design could contribute to compliance. This “compliance system” described, based on Oran Young’s theory, is that these regime arrangement and punishment cost mechanisms can raise the costs of noncompliance and lower the costs of enforcement. Mitchell shows that it is better to restrict actions altogether instead of waiting for an actor

---

<sup>13</sup> Panke & Petersohn 2016, 6.

to break the law and face consequences.<sup>14</sup> This theory, however, does not directly apply to the anti-strategic bombing norm changes in strength and weakness and instead focuses on norm compliance by state actors.

Chayes and Chayes focus on the normative obligation of actors by treaties. They state that non-compliance occurs due to unintentional conditions: (1) ambiguity and indeterminacy of treaty language, (2) limitations on the capacity of parties to carry out their undertakings, and (3) the temporal dimension of the social and economic changes contemplated by regulatory treaties.<sup>15</sup> This theory of non-compliance with the anti-strategic bombing norm ultimately proves difficult. For half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the norm was low but existed without a treaty or agreement. After the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the prohibition of targeting civilians is very clear.

Downs, Rocke, and Barsoom's (realist) theory of the rarity of deep cooperation occurs because states do not want to deeply cooperate to not face fears of large enforcement if they do violate the cooperation.<sup>16</sup> To them, there is a level of high compliance because treaties already have in them what states would be doing anyways. Therefore, a treaty is not what defines the state's actions, but it is what is in the state's best interest (what benefits them the most) to determine if it decides to cooperate or not. Downs, Rocke, and Barsoom would therefore see strategic bombing non-use compliance as something that was already exercised by states, not because a treaty newly enforces these actions. This proves wrong with norm strength after the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

---

<sup>14</sup> Mitchell 1994, 457.

<sup>15</sup> Chayes & Chayes 1993, 189-195.

<sup>16</sup> Downs, Rocke, & Barsoom 1996, 388.



### **Determining the Strength of the Norm for Anti-Strategic Bombing**

The above literature does not exemplify a way to measure norm strength in this case. Whether some theories do not align with the anti-strategic bombing norm timeline (Panke & Petersohn- no norm death and inconsistent norm strengthening) and some theories focusing on norm compliance instead of norm strength, this shows a need to measure the ASB norm differently. Therefore, I determined that defining the strength and weakness of the anti-strategic bombing norm is dependent on the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon “Indicators of norm strength” scale.<sup>17</sup> When concordance and institutionalization are high, this is the result of a strong norm, whereas when concordance and institutional levels are low this means a norm is weak.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

**Table 1.1 Range of values for indicators of norm strength<sup>19</sup>**

	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Concordance</b>	<p>-Few or sporadic references in IO and INGO reports and resolutions</p> <p>-No or very low rhetorical support from relevant INGOs and IOS</p> <p>-Violations not noted by IOs, INGOs, and states</p>	<p>-Regular, positive references in IO and INGO reports and resolutions</p> <p>-Adoption and/or compliance rhetorically supported by some INGOs and IOS</p> <p>-Violations inconsistently criticized by IOs, INGOs, and states</p>	<p>-Frequent, positive references in IO and INGO reports and resolutions</p> <p>-Adoption and/or compliance strongly rhetorically supported by relevant INGOs and IOS</p> <p>-Violations strongly criticized by IOs, INGOs, and states</p>
<b>Institutionalization</b>	<p>-May be extrapolated from international law(s)</p> <p>-IOs either do not or only sporadically promote adoption or monitor compliance</p>	<p>-May be affirmed and codified in international and/or regional court decisions</p> <p>-May be codified in international law, but not yet widely ratified</p> <p>-IOs formally promote adoption and implementation of idea</p>	<p>-Explicitly codified in international law and ratified by a majority of eligible states</p> <p>-IOs formally promote adoption and implementation, monitor or evaluate compliance, and/or sanction violation</p>

<sup>19</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

There are two parts of the analysis for *concordance* which will be taken for strategic bombing: (1) the frequency and nature of references to the principal idea, in this instance being strategic bombing, with reports or resolutions issued by international organizations and international nongovernmental organizations and (2) an analysis of the frequency of actors' responses to violations to relevant behavior.<sup>20</sup> Based on the scale, for each case study I determine if a period has a low, moderate, or high level of concordance.<sup>21</sup>

After determining periods of concordance, I then determined the institutionalization strength. Institutionalization incorporates (1) the existence of international treaties, conventions, and judicial precedents for the principled idea in international law, and (2) the existence of international bodies to promote the norm.<sup>22</sup>

## **Hypotheses**

After determining the norm strength for each period, I then conducted hypotheses analyses. The four hypotheses are: high enforcement, strong norm; high enforcement, weak norm; hegemonic leadership; and technology. After conducting a hypothesis analysis for each case study, I determined that the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis works best for this thesis as an explanation for the changes in norm strength.

---

<sup>20</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 525.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 527.

<sup>22</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 526.

### ***Hypothesis 1: Norm Enforcement***

Enforcement is defined as “the act of compelling compliance” such as self-defense, reprisals, retorsion, embargos, and the overall involvement of formal judicial courts such as the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court.<sup>23</sup> In enforcement literature, there are theories where enforcement is a way to encourage the strength of norms, and there are theories where a lack of enforcement encourages the strength of a norm, therefore it is necessary to separate norm enforcement into 1A and 1B.

#### ***Hypothesis 1A: High Enforcement, Strong Norm***

Downs (1998) focuses on the **Political Economy Theory of Enforcement**. This theory determines that enforcement is a strategy of a State to establish certain expectations on state leaders and bureaucrats to show what negative consequences there are when there is noncompliance with a law or treaty.<sup>24</sup> This theory of enforcement describes when there is a high level of enforcement this forces actor to comply. However, my hypothesis describes how the high enforcement is what determines the overall strength of the norm instead of the compliance to the norm.

Coleman outlines the general reason as to why actors enforce a norm, which is to benefit from the sanctioning that will be produced.<sup>25</sup> A norm is determined as effective

---

<sup>23</sup> Brunnée 2006, 5-8.

<sup>24</sup> Downs 1998, 321.

<sup>25</sup> Coleman 1990, 243.

based on the conditions that a norm can be enforced.<sup>26</sup> According to Coleman and to Finnemore and Sikkink, a norm is embedded into the social system when it is internalized, meaning actors conform to the norms, and laws and bureaucracy follow the norm.<sup>27</sup> To Coleman, sanctioning is defined as “indicating by either an action on the part of a beneficiary which has some effect in moving the focal action in the direction intended by the sanctioner” which results in a stronger norm.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, an “effective norm” (strong norm) and “effective sanctions” are a result from strong enforcement because of actors’ desires to enforce a norm, whereas compliance is merely a result from the application of the enforcement.<sup>29</sup>

There are also different variations of enforcement, such as “lighter” enforcement (verbal condemnation), “middle” enforcement (sanctions), and “heavier” (physical action). As described by Posner and Rasmusen, there are *automatic sanctions* (the violator’s action carries its own penalty), *guilt* (the violator feels bad about the violation), *shame* (the violator feels like the action has lowered themselves), *informational sanctions* (the actor has the community now know more information about themselves), *bilateral costly sanctions* (the violator is punished by the actions of and at the expense of just one other person), and *multilateral costly sanctions* (where the violator is punished by the actions and at the expense of many others).<sup>30</sup> Whereas these sanctions are more on a small scale level, these can be applied to the international community. Others such as

---

<sup>26</sup> Coleman 1990, 243.

<sup>27</sup> Coleman 1990, 244; Finnemore & Sikkink 1998, 896.

<sup>28</sup> Coleman 1990, 248.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 266 & 286.

<sup>30</sup> Posner & Rasmusen 2000, 371.

Erickson describe the three main tools of norm enforcement in the international system as (1) social sanctions (removal of social status and targets embarrassment, rhetorical condemnation, diplomatic isolation), (2) economic sanctions (deliberate government inspired withdrawal or threat to withdrawal trade and financial relations), and (3) military action.<sup>31</sup> As she describes, state actors are the one who employ economic sanctions and military action, whereas non-state actors carry out social sanctions more often as she cites it “naming and shaming.”<sup>32</sup>

It is important to note the amount of power and enforcement a certain state can perform; therefore, if a small actor condemns an action that is non-compliant with a norm, the actor will most likely be limited with the actions it can take to enforce norm strength. This is on the individual level of state enforcement, but there are also broader enforcement mechanisms such as collective sanctioning among international powers as well as sanctions from international actors, for example the United Nations. Based on the levels of enforcement, there is a possibility that high enforcement is an indicator of a strong norm and low enforcement is an indicator of a weak norm.

*IV/DV:* I hypothesize that when (IV) enforcement against strategic bombing is high, a high enforcement level would result in a strong norm and when there is a low enforcement level this would result in a weak norm. The enforcement level is measured by how often sanctions are imposed on violators, and how serious the sanctions are, meaning how heavily the violator is impacted by the sanctions which are determined by

---

<sup>31</sup> Erickson 2020, 100 & 101.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

other international actors. A comparison would be “naming and shaming” as a light sanction and military action as a heavy act of enforcement. The ultimate outcome (DV) of these different levels of enforcement is the strength and weakness of the anti-strategic bombing norm.

**High Enforcement, Strong Norm Hypothesis: Norms will be weak when there are low enforcement mechanisms by state actors; norms will be strong when there are high enforcement mechanisms by state actors.**

***Hypothesis 1B: High Enforcement, Weak Norm***

The high enforcement, weak norm hypothesis is run to counteract the high enforcement, strong hypothesis. This hypothesis spurs from the transformationalist theory, however, is not in direct correlation with what the theory presents. The **transformationalist theory** proposes that in an agreement provision, which heightens enforcement, this results in a negative impact on compliance because it reduces the willingness of states to agree. It fosters a hostile environment against the states who do not join which leads to a shift in non-compliance.<sup>33</sup> This theory sees a decrease in norm compliance with the increase of enforcement provisions in an agreement. Based on the idea of the transformationalist theory, this hypothesis focuses more on the lack of enforcement to directly strengthen the norm. This hypothesis predicts that when there are

---

<sup>33</sup> Downs 1998, 319.

little enforcement mechanisms with the anti-strategic bombing norm, this will result in a strong norm.

*IV/DV:* I hypothesize that when (IV) there are high enforcement mechanisms, the norm will be weak, and when there are low enforcement mechanisms the norm will be strong. The ultimate outcome (DV) of these different levels of enforcement is the strength and weakness of the anti-strategic bombing norm.

**High Enforcement, Weak Norm Hypothesis: Norms will be weak when there are high enforcement mechanisms in place; norms will be strong when there are low enforcement mechanisms in place.**

### ***Hypothesis 2: Hegemonic Leadership***

The second theory and hypothesis spurs from a field of hegemonic leadership and the realist concept of hegemony. Leadership is defined as the ability to foster cooperation and commonality of social purpose among states.<sup>34</sup> Gilpin's model of **structural leadership** refers to the underlying distribution of material capabilities giving a state the ability to shape the world political order through its natural resources, capital, technology, military force, and economic size. Gilpin theorizes that international order is based on material capabilities of individual states and the more capable a state is, the closer it is to an ultimate leader in the international system.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, to Gilpin, the rise

---

<sup>34</sup> Ikenberry 1996, 386

<sup>35</sup> Gilpin 1981, 186-210; Ikenberry 1996, 389



of the hegemonic state is one that has these attributes and has “control over” the overall international system.

With the rise and fall of the anti-strategic bombing norm, this can be explained through hegemonic ideals. When there is a strong and powerful hegemon in place and it has self-interest in a strong anti-strategic bombing norm, this results in the hegemon setting the norm strength. When there is a strong hegemon in place and it has less self-interest in a norm, this result in the norm overall being weak, and sets the example for other actors to dissent from a norm.

*IV/DV:* I hypothesize that when (IV) the hegemon (and other strong powers) has a self-interest in a strong anti-strategic bombing norm, this results in a strong norm and when the hegemon has less self-interest in the anti-strategic bombing norm this results in a weak norm. The ultimate outcome (DV) of the different enforcement levels of the hegemon is the strength and weakness of the anti-strategic bombing norm.

**Hegemonic Leadership Hypothesis: Norms will be weak when the hegemonic leader determines it is less in its self-interest to have an anti-strategic bombing norm; norms will be strong when the hegemonic leader determines it is in its self-interest to have an anti-strategic bombing norm.**

### ***Hypothesis 3: Technology***

Zehfuss outlines the “new” idea of the expectation that “fighting with such weapons [of precision] reduces the extent of destruction and, crucially, that it is therefore

becoming increasingly possible to protect non-combatants during war.”<sup>36</sup> The precision does not mean a lack of non-combatant casualties but instead, an overall decrease in it.<sup>37</sup> She recognizes that ‘smart bombs’ have a positive reputation because when the precision of these bombs is advertised to decrease civilian casualties, this increases the idea of ethics of using aerial bombing in conflict zones.<sup>38</sup> I apply this theory to the anti-strategic bombing norm, instead of to civilian casualties. While looking at technological progress with the norm, Zehfuss mentions Thomas’ theory that with improvements in technology, such as navigation and weapon delivery, there is a better protection of non-combatants during war, conflict, and attacks.<sup>39</sup> Other technology used to solidify this norm where actions such as selecting particular times of attack, using specific types of weaponry, and making calculations to ensure schools, hospitals, or mosques were outside a six-mile radius.<sup>40</sup> Wheeler argues a similar aspect that with more technology there is a way to maximize the protection of civilians. His theory spurs from two factors: (1) “the close involvement of military lawyers in the targeting process,” and (2) “the use of precision-guided munitions (PGMs) which had increased to 35 percent from 8 percent in the 1991 Gulf War.”<sup>41</sup> Finally, Thomas and Bacevich also acknowledge that with technological change also came changes in attitudes towards performance within bombing, this

---

<sup>36</sup> Zehfuss 2010, 543.

<sup>37</sup> Zehfuss 2010, 561.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 543-544.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas 2001, 151-158.

<sup>40</sup> Zehfuss 2010, 546; Thomas 2001, 158.

<sup>41</sup> Zehfuss 2010, 546; Wheeler 2004, 197.

encouraged the norm of anti-strategic bombing to become stronger with higher expectations of not bombing large groups of civilians.<sup>42</sup>

In altering these perspectives to the usage of strategic bombing, the technology hypothesis is not necessarily a linear approach. If the hypothesis was a linear approach, this would result in a linear progression of norm strength. Instead, this hypothesis represents when states use the best technology available to avoid targeting civilians. If a state conducts blind bombing raids despite having available technology to conduct more precise raids, this shows low norm strength.

*IV/DV:* I hypothesize that when (IV) more precise technology is available, such as navigation, weapon delivery, and bombing precision, and state actors use this, then the norm is stronger. When there is less precision used within bombing techniques of technology available at the moment, such as carpet bombing (large area bombardment), this results in a weak norm. The ultimate outcome (DV), based on different levels of technological precision, is the strength and weakness of the anti-strategic bombing norm.

**Technology Hypothesis: Norms will be weak when state actors use less precise technology available (targeting a civilian area); norms will be strong when there is higher precision (targeting only specific targets) of available military weapons and employment of such technology.**

---

<sup>42</sup> Zehfuss 2010, 547.

**Table 1.2 Hypotheses**

	<b>IV/Mechanism</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>
<b>1A: High Enforcement, Strong Norm</b>	Increased enforcement/ level of enforcement	High enforcement, strong norm. Low enforcement, weak norm.
<b>1B: High Enforcement, Weak Norm</b>	Decreased enforcement/ level of enforcement	Low enforcement, strong norm. High enforcement, weak norm.
<b>2: Hegemonic Leadership</b>	Structural leadership of hegemon driving strength/weakness; “what the hegemon says goes”	Beneficial to the hegemon to be weak results in weak norm; beneficial for the hegemon to be strong, results in strong norm.
<b>3: Available Technology/Precision Employment</b>	Precision and technology	More employment of available precise bombing techniques, stronger norm; non-use of available precise bombing techniques, results in weaker norm

<b>DV/Outcome</b>	Strength and weakness of norm against strategic bombing spectrum → Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon for measurement
-------------------	---

## **Case Selection and Methodology**

### *Thesis Layout*

I focus on the evolution of anti-strategic bombing norms from the early 1900s to the 2000s. The chapters are broken into sections with multiple cases in each chapter: (Chapter 2) Pre-World War I and World War I, (Chapter 3) the Interwar Period, (Chapter 4) World War II, (Chapter 5) Post-World War II including the Korean War, the Vietnam

War, and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, (Chapter 6) the 1990s and 2000s including the Gulf War, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The case studies are conducted using a qualitative historical case during “key” conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century in assessing the norm strength. The assessment of the norm strength is based on the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon “Indicators of Norm Strength” scale (Table 1.1). The cases start with the nascent norm in 1899 with the Hague Conventions. When the Wright Brothers invented the airplane 1903, this began the development of the airplane and aerial bombardment.<sup>43</sup> Case studies were selected either because it was a war, conflict, or intervention to reflect the norm strength in these times. Table 1.3 overall reflects the progression of the anti-strategic bombing norm in wartime and shows the need for the analysis of norm strength with the case studies.

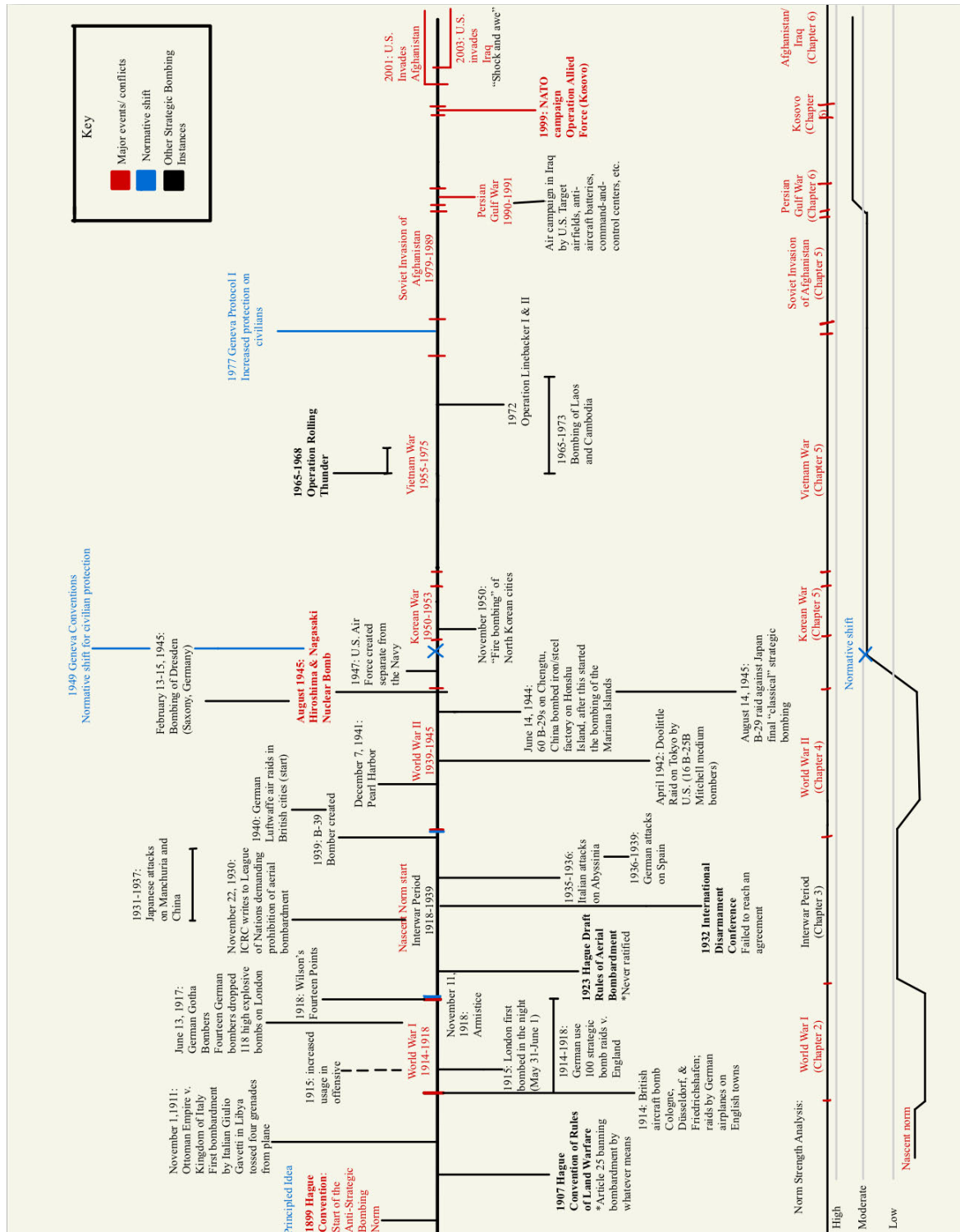
## **Conclusion**

This research is to use in future cases and conflicts to determine how to strengthen the anti-strategic bombing norm in conflicts and wartime. When looking at only news reports, it is hard to determine the state at which the world is at today because there is a “selection bias” as well as a “world is ending” feeling to reading the news. By systematically approaching each case, I determine that the best explanation for the strengthening of the anti-strategic bombing norm is based on the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis.

---

<sup>43</sup> Biddle 2014, 24.

### Table 1.3 Strategic Bombing Timeline



## Chapter 2: The Start of the Anti-Strategic Bombing Norm, 1899-1918

### Introduction

The invention of the airplane in 1903 opened a new opportunity for warfare over the next 120 years. As Tami Davis Biddle says, “human flight opened up the prospect of warfare raining down from the skies, making all those below vulnerable.”<sup>1</sup> Although she meant the beginning of flight from the Wright Brothers in 1903, her point applies to before airplanes, with balloons. The first hot air balloon went up into the skies in Paris on 21 November 1783 and by 1849 Austrian troops deployed balloons on Venice.<sup>2</sup> This siege included hot air balloons carrying bombs which exploded on impact.<sup>3</sup> Although this attack made little to no damage on the population below, this still opened the opportunity to a new threat from the sky: strategic bombing. Literature such as Jules Verne’s *Clipper of the Clouds* (1873) and Ignatius Donnelly’s *Caesar’s Column* (1890), put the imagery of the future of the airplane into public view.<sup>4</sup>

Although strategic bombing started in the mid-1800s, I follow Gibbons and Lieber to argue that the anti-strategic bombing norm started in 1899 at the Hague Conventions, prior to World War I.<sup>5</sup> Although, the language of “strategic bombing” was not used prior to World War I nor during the war itself, sentiments against strategic

---

<sup>1</sup> Biddle 2014, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Kennett 1982, 1 & 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>4</sup> Kennett 1982, 8; Sherry 1987, 3.

Also see *Clipper of the Clouds* by Jules Verne (1873) and *Caesar’s Column* by Ignatius Donnelly (1890).

<sup>5</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019, 41.

bombing were present.<sup>6</sup> According to Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon's measurement, 1899 marks the start of the anti-strategic bombing norm.<sup>7</sup> Concordance of international organizations and state actors rhetorically supported the anti-strategic bombing norm in 1899. It is difficult to analyze concordance when there are not strong IOs and INGOs set in place before World War I, and so in this case the proceedings and rhetoric leading up to the 1899 Hague Conventions reflects concordance. This is shown when Russia called for an international peace conference to regulate arms in warfare, resulting in the 1899 Hague Conventions.<sup>8</sup> Because the anti-strategic bombing norm was new in the international realm, this validates the nascent start to the norm.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the content of the norm in the early stages of norm growth shows that it only is a prohibition of targeting civilians in "undefended" areas, which includes city areas. The 1899 and 1907 Conventions reflect this in forbidding the dropping of projectiles on cities and towns and where these areas include civilians.

The purpose of this chapter is to set up the background on aerial flight, including zeppelins and balloons, and establish when the nascent norm of anti-strategic bombing started. I then analyze what explains the norm strength in wartime. Although there was the nascent anti-strategic bombing norm Pre-World War I, during World War I the norm

---

<sup>6</sup> See *Proceedings of Hague Convention 1899*, specifically Article 25: "It is forbidden to attack or bombard towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings that are not defended" and Article 27: "In sieges of bombardments all necessary steps must be taken to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to religion, art, science, or charitable purposes, hospitals, and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not being used at the time for military purposes. It is the duty of the besieged to indicate the presence of such buildings or places by distinctive and visible signs, which shall be notified to the enemy beforehand" (p. 73)

<sup>7</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>8</sup> Kennett 1982, 9; Scott 1915, xiv-xv.

<sup>9</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.



was near death and continued to decline in popularity as the war progressed. Although there was a near death of the norm, it did not fully die. This can be explained through the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis and the technology hypothesis. The lack of enforcement during World War I explains the weak norm for the first hypothesis. The technology hypothesis is explained through not only the lack of technological development but also through purposeful blind bombing during the time.

### **Norm Strength Analysis: World War I and Exiting the War**

Referencing Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon's "indicators of norm strength" (Table 1.1), this determines the near "death" of the anti-strategic bombing norm. The 1899 Hague Conventions created the norm of anti-strategic bombing but resulted in low levels of concordance and institutionalization of the norm because (1) it was hard to focus on the norm when bombarding cities from balloons was not common and (2) the law was institutionalized in the 1899 Conventions, but later not ratified from multiple actors at the 1907 Conventions.

On 12 August 1898, Count Mikhail Nikolayevich Muravyov of Russia wrote the "Russian Circular Note Proposing the First Peace Conference," describing how "in the course of the last twenty years the longings for a general state of peace have become especially pronounced."<sup>10</sup> This proposal, which became the 1899 Hague Conference, was called to revise the 1874 Conference of Brussels to determine laws and customs of war

---

<sup>10</sup> Scott 1915, xiv-xv, Quoted the letter of Count Muravyov "Russian Circular Note Proposing the First Peace Conference" (August 12, 1898).

and demonstrated the overall lack of laws and customs on bombardment from balloons onto civilian areas.<sup>11</sup> Although the 1868 St. Petersburg Declaration Renouncing the Use, in Time of War, of Explosive Projectiles under 400 Grammes Weight existed, it did not encompass all terms of aerial bombardment that the 1899 Hague Conference did.<sup>12</sup> In 1868, Prussia advocated for the declaration to be broadened to new scientific discoveries which pertained to armed conflict and projectiles, but the United Kingdom and France opposed the general consideration because these actors did not want to be constrained by conventions on new technological discoveries.<sup>13</sup> Due to the lack of anti-strategic bombing rhetoric on a concept that did not exist yet, 1868 proves not to be the start of the anti-strategic bombing norm. In 1874 at the Brussels Conference, this meeting resulted in an agreement on banning the attack and shelling of undefended cities.<sup>14</sup> All of these conferences and discussions show the nascent anti-strategic bombing norm, and specifically show the beginning of institutionalization during this time.

The development of balloons, dirigibles, and aircrafts in the later part of the nineteenth century shows a need for a new conference in 1899 to discuss aerial bombardment, among other issues.<sup>15</sup> The concordance aspect of “few or sporadic” references in reports and resolutions are seen to start the nascent norm. Because this was

---

<sup>11</sup> Kennett 1982, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 29.

1868 St. Petersburg Renouncing the Use, in Times of War, of Explosive Projectiles Under 400 Grammes Weight (29 November 1868) was “the first major international agreement which prohibited the use of a particular weapon in warfare. The prohibition followed the development of a bullet which exploded upon contact with a hard surface”

<sup>13</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 29.

<sup>14</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019, 42.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

before the establishment of the League of Nations, this conference is seen as international actors coming together to establish the conventions. Arguments from participants, such as Colonel Gross von Schwarzhoff of Germany, determined the language of what should or should not be included in the conventions. For example, “Respecting the prohibition of bombarding towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings...the prohibition certainly ought not to be taken to prohibit the destruction of any buildings... when military operations rendered it necessary.”<sup>16</sup> Other arguments persisted among attendees such as adding the word “ports” to Article 25 and applying bombardments directed to land by naval forces. The latter concern, which Mr. Rolin (the Siamese Consul General in Belgium) objected to, was because “a naval force may be led to bombard towns or ports of compelling them to furnish its provisions, coal or other supplies which it has demanded of them... whereas a land force has the resource of occupation, and bombards only for the purpose of enforcing surrender.”<sup>17</sup> Although “air force” is not a category mentioned by Mr. Rolin because airplanes had yet to be invented, the idea of bombardment “for the purpose of enforcing surrender” introduces the idea of strategic bombing on the ground and the purpose it serves. These rhetorical debates on what to include within the 1899 Convention shows low levels of rhetorical support for concordance, but also represents the nascent norm.

---

<sup>16</sup> James Brown Scott, *Proceedings of the Hague Conventions*, p. 45, Fifth Meeting, July 5, 1899.

<sup>17</sup> This was largely a debate between Count Nigra and Mr. Rolin during the Fourth Meeting of the 1899 Hague Conventions on July 5, 1899 (*Proceedings of the Hague Conventions* p. 409-410)

In other instances at the Hague, actors debated the agreement's wording, especially in determining which buildings could be bombed.<sup>18</sup> The agreement finally stating “(Article 15) towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings which are not defended can neither be attacked nor bombarded [and] (Article 16) but if a town or fortress, agglomeration of dwellings or village, is defended, the officer in command of an attacking force must, before commencing a bombardment, except in assault, do all in his power to warn the authorities.”<sup>19</sup> The institutional importance of this, is that if an actor signs on to this agreement, they are not allowed to bomb civilian areas, and if it plans to do so, the head officer must notify those in the area. This is the first institutionalization of the anti-strategic bombing norm. It defines what an “undefended” area entails, although the definition of “undefended” is vague, and gives a duty to commanding officers to not blind bomb areas without the enemy knowing.

Separately, the concern of throwing projectiles from balloons, an observation by Captain Crozier (USA), was that “To-day the projectiles discharged from a balloon may make victims among the non-combatants; But the use of more perfect balloons may become practical and lawful means of waging war. It would therefore be suitable to limit the prohibition to some definite period of time, for instance, five years or even more.”<sup>20</sup> In this case, the issue of strategic bombing by means of land, sea, and (later) air, were

---

<sup>18</sup> Decisions and agreements were made by determining what was most important at the time to include in this agreement, see the discussion between Count Nigra and Mr. Rolin during the Fourth Meeting (mentioned above)

<sup>19</sup> Fifth Meeting, June 3, 1899: Colonel Gross von Schwarzhoff of Germany argued that the wording of “fortified places are liable to be besieged” should be taken out and only leave the places “which may neither be attacked nor bombarded are designated” is sufficient for the definition in Article 15 (*Proceedings of the Hague Conventions*, p. 494-495)

<sup>20</sup> Third Meeting, June 22, 1899 (*Proceedings of the Hague Conventions* p. 280)

issues that state actors cared about. At the same time, the language of limiting the restrictions on time (“five years or even more”) shows that if there was a means of bombardment from the air, the actors would not necessarily want to comply with the rules of aerial bombardment if it was something that could benefit them in future wars.

Ultimately the 1899 Hague Convention resulted in Convention II, Article 25, declaring “the attack or bombardment of towns, villages, habitations or buildings which are not defended, is prohibited” and Article 26 “The commander of an attacking force, before commencing a bombardment, except in the case of an assault, should do all he can to warn the authorities” and Declaration 1 “prohibited the launching of projectiles and explosives from balloons and other methods of similar nature.”<sup>21</sup> The signatories of this doctrine included France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, but this declaration only lasted for five years, therefore institutionalizing the nascent norm for only a brief amount of time before the airplane even existed.<sup>22</sup>

After the expiration of the 1899 Hague Conventions, there was a need for state actors to meet again, therefore meeting in 1907 to discuss the rules of the Hague Convention. With the flight of the airplane, the convention reevaluated the agreements of 1899, specifically in defining what constituted an aerial method of dropping bombs. The 1907 Declaration (XIV) replaced the 1899 Declaration prohibiting the launch of explosives from balloons, leaving the new declaration to read: “[the] Contracting Powers

---

<sup>21</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 121. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/hague-conv-ii-1899>.

<sup>22</sup> All signatories: Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Denmark, Germany, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, the Ottoman Empire, Persia, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Siam, Spain, Sweden and Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States

agree to prohibit...the discharge of projectiles and explosives from balloons or by other new methods of similar nature.”<sup>23</sup> The 1907 Declaration appears to be norm strengthening during this time, but that was not the case. Key states such as France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Russia never signed the agreement because these actors did not want to limit themselves with aerial development. Therefore, the lack of signatures significantly limited the value of the 1907 Hague Conventions and the limits that it put on air bombardment.<sup>24</sup>

The invention of the airplane also led to the rise of its popularity in the media and popular culture, specifically of the predictions of what an airplane could do to shift the balance of power in a war. The novel *The War in the Air*, by H.G. Wells (1908), predicted bombers inflicting physical and psychological damage on enemy combatants.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the article “Bomb Dropping in the Balkans,” in *Scientific American* 1912-1913, described the “importance of aeroplane bombs [which] lies in their moral effect-in the impression created that the machine in the sky is a real source of danger.”<sup>26</sup> Media perspectives were what actors thought about before the ratification of the 1907 Hague Conventions: the airplane had potential to change the way states fought in war, therefore states did not want to limit themselves on aerial development by signing on to strict rules of aerial bombardment. These publications, however, are not indicators of the low level of concordance during the period by actors, but instead reflect public opinion of aerial

---

<sup>23</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 121; Declaration (XIV) 1907  
1907 Hague Conventions: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/hague-decl-xiv-1907/declaration>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Biddle 2002, 13 and *The War in the Air*, H.G. Wells, 1908 published by Grosset & Dunlap.

<sup>26</sup> Biddle 2002, 19, (fn 44).

bombardment. The publications do reflect limited positive thoughts of the anti-strategic bombing norm, and more of an encouragement for strategic bombing.

In addition, “state practice reduced the significance” of the 1907 Conventions, especially with the 1911-1912 Turco-Italian War, where Italians used balloons to drop projectiles on enemy troops.<sup>27</sup> During the Turco-Italian War, strategic bombing from airplanes became a reality. Italy, who was not a part of the 1907 Hague Conventions, and therefore not bound to the prohibition of dropping projectiles on protected targets, used balloons to drop projectiles.<sup>28</sup> On 1 November 1911, Lt. Giulio Gavotti dropped the first small projectile as an aerial bombardment on Ain Zara and three other bombs on Taguira.<sup>29</sup> In 1912, the Italians performed a night bombing raid on the Turks with no lights on the planes.<sup>30</sup> Although these missions were small and highly inaccurate, due to blind bombing, this event acknowledges a new sense of “horror” that could come from the sky and a lack of compliance to the efforts of institutionalization of the anti-strategic bombing norm. Specifically with the nascent norm of anti-strategic bombing in place, this is a sign of the weak norm because of the lack of criticism from the violator and the lack of institutionalization limiting strategic bombing in combat.

Besides not ratifying the 1907 Convention, the vague wording which first appeared in the 1899 Hague Convention of “undefended” towns and domains and the

---

<sup>27</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 121.

<sup>28</sup> Garraway 2014, 90; Kennett 1982, 13.

<sup>29</sup> Kennett 1982, 12: As well, the Italians sent airplanes (nine) and dirigibles (two) mainly to Libya, whereas the Turks had little airpower.

<sup>30</sup> Kennett 1982, 13.

This attack was on 8 May 1912, where Italian airmen dropped bombs over Libya; because the planes were so small, few bombs were able to be carried and these air raids were very ineffective

dropping of projectiles from balloons and “other new methods of similar nature” was difficult to interpret.<sup>31</sup> Unresolved questions included: what qualified as an “undefended” versus a “defended” town or city? What is a “method of similar nature” to the balloon? Due to the vague language and states not ratifying the 1907 Conventions, specifically with the new arrival of the airplane, this shows the anti-strategic bombing norm weak prior to World War I. With institutionalization, the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions appeared more as guidelines once the 1907 Conventions were not ratified. Because the Conventions were not ratified, this goes into the category of *low*: actors “either do not or only sporadically promote adoption or monitor compliance.”<sup>32</sup> The wording of preventing projectiles being dropped from aerial machines existed in theory, but bad actors were not held accountable.

The near-death experience of the norm did not fully take place until World War I. Although France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Russia did not ratify the 1907 Conventions, these actors did not perform consistent violations pre-War. The Conventions were something put into international law, just not widely ratified, therefore making the pre-War, nascent norm level of strength low for institutionalization and low for concordance.

With the onset of World War I, the nascent norm decreased in strength relative to the low strength already in place. Concordance levels were at a low during World War I because there was rarely any reference to anti-strategic bombing as well as no propositions to create a resolution. Many quotes from international actors reference the

---

<sup>31</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 121; Garner 1932, 104.

<sup>32</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.



opposite of the anti-strategic bombing norm and instead encourage strategic bombing benefits. An example of this is a quote from a superior to British officer Hugh Trenchard: “I would very much like if you could start up a really big fire in one of the German towns...I would not be too exacting as regards to accuracy in bombing railway stations... The German is susceptible to bloodiness, and I would not mind a few accidents due to inaccuracy.”<sup>33</sup> This quote does not exemplify concordance because it is from a representative of the state, however this reflects overall international opinion. With the lack of an IO or INGO to show norm concordance, this shows the very low level of norm strength. Violations of the norm were not noted by actors because when actors noted the attacks, it was not condemning the violation of the norm, but rather condemning the actions that were performed against its own state.

Although the German military was ready and prepared to bomb London in 1914, Kaiser Wilhelm II resisted, not due to ethical standards of the anti-strategic bombing norm but instead to save his royal relatives in London and to save Germany’s reputation in the international community.<sup>34</sup> The British Foreign Office questioned the legality of the German night raids on Antwerp on 24 and 25 August 1914, seeing if Germany complied with the set laws.<sup>35</sup> Of course, the 1907 Conventions did not apply to those who did not ratify it and so the rules of bombardment<sup>36</sup> were useless, making the German

---

<sup>33</sup> Sherry 1987, 14, (fn 29).

<sup>34</sup> Morrow 1993, 107; Kennett 1982, 23.

<sup>35</sup> Hull 2014, 225, (fn 51: Sir F. Villiers to Foreign Office, Antwerp, Nr. 128, Aug. 25, 1914, FO 372/495, no. 42977, file 38720).

<sup>36</sup> Article 25: The attack or bombardment of towns, villages, habitations or buildings which are not defended, is prohibited.

Article 26: the commander of an attacking force, before commencing a bombardment, except in a case of an assault, should do all he can to warn the authorities.

bombardment campaign not illegal.<sup>37</sup> In December 1914, the debate among German officials on whether or not London was a defended or undefended city determined if it was a valid bombing target. Erich von Falkenhayn ultimately claimed that London was “occupied by troops and equipped with extensive defensive measures.”<sup>38</sup> Fitting into the basic rules of attack, if the city was “defended” by armies and/or troops, enemies were “allowed” to attack. In the end, because the “warnings” were not precise enough to do any good and save civilians, the German military determined that warnings of bombardment were not necessary.<sup>39</sup> The conversation about bombing legitimate targets indicates a sign that the anti-strategic bombing norm was somewhat present, but the execution of the norm was incredibly weak.

Going into 1915, France bombed several German cities as reprisal attacks, including Freiburg. This led Kaiser Wilhelm II to allow the bombardment of the English coast (such as the Norfolk coast), docks, and military establishments on the lower Thames, which were previously banned due to the Kaiser’s attachment to England.<sup>40</sup> This first allowance of the restricted target bombing in England continued to fit into the cadre of legally bombing military areas. Slowly, Kaiser Wilhelm allowed larger areas to be bombarded, therefore norm strength weakening, first in February allowing the bombing of London with the exception of residential areas and palaces.<sup>41</sup> Finally in May, Wilhelm

---

Article 27: In sieges and bombardments all necessary steps should be taken to spare as far as possible edifices devoted to religion, art, science, and charity, hospitals, and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not used at the same time for military purposes...

<sup>37</sup> Hull 2014, 225.

<sup>38</sup> Hull 2014, 227, (fn 63).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>40</sup> Morrow 1993, 107; Kennett 1982, 23; Hull 2014, 228.

<sup>41</sup> Kennett 1982, 23.

allowed the total bombing of London east of the Tower of London, with the instruction of zeppelins to aim at “legitimate military targets,” although the imprecision of the period shows that the bombs could still hit anywhere near the area.<sup>42</sup> By the time almost all of London was allowed to be bombed, the actions of the German military were specifically to cause “material destruction, demoralization of the population and consequent damage to war production, and diversion of British aircraft[s].”<sup>43</sup> This example shows how the remote institutionalization of the anti-strategic bombing norm slowly deteriorated over time, leading to near-norm death.

In 1916, France’s GB1 and GB2 bombed economic targets near Malzéville as well as railroad stations near Metz and factories in the Saar to try and hurt the German manufacturing industry.<sup>44</sup> The tactics France used to target the production industry was to deteriorate the capabilities of the German military. The actions of France are an aspect of bombing for military gain and less of strategic bombing on a civilian population.<sup>45</sup> It is noted that France was “allowed” to raid factories, railroad stations, and military installations, not only outside of city centers, but also inside of them.<sup>46</sup> During the Battle of the Somme from July to November, France continued to attack the railroad stations, camps, and airfields.<sup>47</sup> Towards the end of 1916, France placed restrictions on military targets, having to justify attacking areas within Luxembourg, Alsace, Belgium, and near

---

<sup>42</sup> Kennett 1982, 23.

<sup>43</sup> Morrow 1993, 108.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>45</sup> Biddle 2014, 25.

<sup>46</sup> Barros 2009, 421.

<sup>47</sup> Morrow 1993, 138.

the Swiss border, specifically having to make the distinction between military targets and civilians.<sup>48</sup>

Contrary to Germany's tactic of using strategic bombing, in 1917 France's incoming war minister, Paul Painlevé, reversed the policy of bombing German urban centers and only allowed certain reprisal cases on top of the restrictions that were in place at the end of 1916.<sup>49</sup> Also France started to decrease its aerial attacks on Germany overall because of its diminishing resources during the war. Yet France still managed to execute 39 reprisal attacks on Germany between January 1916 and November 1917.<sup>50</sup>

Concordance and institutionalization were at a low level, but the anti-strategic bombing norm was not necessarily "dead," due to some promotion of the norm from the 1907 Hague Conventions. Usually, this promotion would be by an international organization, but in this case the promotion is by a state actor. The best example of this is France's restrictive bombing on "points sensibles": enemy columns, depots, and artillery positions.<sup>51</sup> This level of restraint and rejection of strategic bombing that France exercised ensured that the anti-strategic bombing norm was not fully dead with international actors.<sup>52</sup> Germany targeted France, mainly focusing on targeting railroads, railway stations, convoys, hangars, and depots, but France stayed within the lines of anti-strategic bombing compliance. Even when France did target military objectives near cities, it never specifically targeted civilians.<sup>53</sup> Although France did not purposefully aim

---

<sup>48</sup> Barros 2009, 421, (fn 26).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 421, (fn 25).

<sup>50</sup> Biddle 2014, 25.

<sup>51</sup> Kennett 1982, 27.

<sup>52</sup> Barros 2009, 414; Hull 2014, 284.

<sup>53</sup> Hull 2014, 284.

at civilians<sup>54</sup>, but instead relied on the collapsing of moral from the military with civilian deaths being part of the collateral damage.<sup>55</sup>

Although France did not ratify the 1907 Hague Conventions, it still mildly complied with the Conventions by only bombing “defended” areas or military areas, which means this period is on the *low* scale of institutionalization where the norm “may be extrapolated from international law.” Also, according to Hull, France’s raids were deemed genuine legal reprisals<sup>56</sup> because France dropped leaflets on the area it bombarded, which is another part of the Hague Conventions which France extrapolated: Article 26, the commander of an attacking force, before commencing a bombardment, except in a case of an assault, should do all he can to warn the authorities.<sup>57</sup> Some factors of French bombing purposes are slightly unclear because it exercised restraint on bombing areas close to the war front, more for fear of bombing its own citizens and less for military reasons. France was also hesitant of bombing Alsace-Lorraine, a coal and steel industry area, with fear of bombing civilians.<sup>58</sup> The overall important note with France is the fact that some of the efforts made during the war to only perform reprisal bombings and targeting military facilities, is one of the main factors that kept the anti-strategic bombing norm alive as a promotion to the norm.

---

<sup>54</sup> See Hull 2014, 284 for description.

<sup>55</sup> Hull 2014, 284.

<sup>56</sup> Reprisal: the use of illegal means to combat illegal means was specifically underscored that targeting civilians violated international law, Hull 2014, 284.

<sup>57</sup> Hull 2014, 284; Article 26: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/hague-conv-ii-1899>.

<sup>58</sup> Barros 2009, 419.

## Hypotheses Analysis

The anti-strategic bombing norm slightly appeared before World War I, but it is important to analyze this first dip in the weakening of the anti-strategic bombing norm during the war. What explains the waning of the norm in wartime? I argue that the higher enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis and the technology hypothesis both function as explanations to the weak anti-strategic bombing norm during World War I.

### *Hypothesis 1A: High Enforcement, Strong Norm*

This hypothesis: norms in wartime will be weak when there is low enforcement by state actors; norms will be strong when there is high enforcement by state actors explains this case. Types of enforcement, according to Erickson, look at the (1) social sanctions (removal of social status and targets embarrassment, rhetorical condemnation, diplomatic isolation), (2) economic sanctions (deliberate government inspired withdrawal or threat to withdrawal trade and financial relations), and (3) military action.<sup>59</sup>

The first city bombings of World War I were in August 1914 starting with the German bombardment by zeppelin of Antwerp on August 25.<sup>60</sup> Germany dropped six shrapnel bombs on Antwerp resulting in the death of twelve civilians. Sir F. Villiers of Britain said, “This atrocious act has intensified bitter indignation which brutality of Germans has aroused,” displaying the outrage by the United Kingdom of strategic bombing actions. Yet, later in the war, the United Kingdom goes against these claims

---

<sup>59</sup> Erickson 2020, 100-101.

<sup>60</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019, 43; Hull 2004, 53.

when it benefited from bombing within the war.<sup>61</sup> In November and December 1914, the British Royal Navy Air Service planes conducted air raids on Friedrichshafen and Cuxhaven, Germany. On December 4 and 19, a France GB1 attacked Freiburg with the aim to hit the local railroad, resulting in several civilian casualties.<sup>62</sup> This demonstrates the condemnation of the United Kingdom on Germany, but also using air raid attacks as retaliation. The condemnation by the United Kingdom was a weak form of enforcement. Similarly, the attacks and military action of the United Kingdom do not demonstrate enforcement but instead the attacks by the United Kingdom and France were in self-defense.

On August 30, the German army performed several night raids on Paris, dropping small bombs near Gare de l'Est, resulting in the death of 500 civilians.<sup>63</sup> On November 3, the German military bombed Yarmouth, without informing the chancellor. Due to the lack of information before the raid, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, the chancellor of Germany, alerted Admiral von Pohl of the severe gravity of bombing towns and the consequences that came from aerial bombardment.<sup>64</sup> On November 11, due to the previous events of not informing the chancellor, Erich von Falkenhayn, second Chief of the German General Staff, wanted to warn France and the United Kingdom of German bombardment. This warning seems like somewhat of a compliance to the 1907 Hague Conventions of warning belligerents before bombing, although Germany did not sign

---

<sup>61</sup> Hull 2014, 225, (fn 51- Sir F. Villiers to Foreign Office, Antwerp, Nr. 128, Aug. 25, 1914, FO 372/495, no. 42977, file 38720)

<sup>62</sup> Kennett 1982, 22; Robinson 1961, 135.

<sup>63</sup> Hull 2014, 225, (fn 53- Raymond Poincaré diary, August 30, 1914, in *The Memoirs of Raymond Poincaré, 1914*, (Gaden City, NY, 1929), 119-20); Kennett 1982, 20.

<sup>64</sup> Hull 2014, 226.

onto them.<sup>65</sup> All of this was arguing over whether it was clear to bomb London or not, but there was a long list of “negative consequences” of international-legal sanctions: economics reprisal, loss of neutral support, disadvantageous peace terms, possible reparations, and military reprisals.<sup>66</sup>

Since this period determines a weak part of the anti-strategic bombing norm in wartime, there is weak enforcement for the higher enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis. During World War I there was rarely rhetoric that condemned the actions of norm violators but rather rhetoric that condemned overall actions because belligerents attacked one another. There were some criticisms after the German Taube raids on Paris in 1914 which led President Woodrow Wilson to tell Kaiser Wilhelm II that it was “tarnishing Germany’s image in the United States.”<sup>67</sup> This language does slightly condemn the actions of the Germans, but it was not very effective. Despite the criticisms the Germans increased bombing usage after the Paris raids. Some English clergymen within Britain were against strategic bombing because it “would permanently lower the standard of honourable conduct between nation and nation,” but this language was not among actors from different states, but instead actors within the same state.<sup>68</sup>

Many quotes and citations pulled from the war were from either the United Kingdom or Germany both encouraging strategic bombardment or aerial bombardment as a way of retaliation, instead of using social sanctions and rhetoric to condemn the actions

---

<sup>65</sup> Hull 2014, 226.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 226-227.

<sup>67</sup> Kennett 1982, 23.

<sup>68</sup> Sherry 1987, 15, (fn 32).



from the other side. Advocates for strategic bombing, such as Germany's Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, said, "Single bombs from flying machines are wrong; they are odious when they hit and kill an old woman...[But] if one could set fire to London in thirty places, then what in a small way is odious would retire before something fine and powerful."<sup>69</sup> The United Kingdom also had the goal of fully using strategic bombing as a way to scare and demoralize the population.<sup>70</sup> The only full rhetorical critique of strategic bombing was by France on the actions of Germany. France was persistent in not using strategic bombing methods, as the United Kingdom had. France went to some lengths to show that it would only perform reprisal attacks on military targets, and one lieutenant even dropped leaflets on Berlin to "prove" that France could drop bombs on cities but did not drop bombs on women and children.<sup>71</sup>

The small amount of rhetoric used does not work as a social sanction and it did not encourage the anti-strategic bombing norm. Economic sanctions are a smaller section during World War I for enforcement, and so finally it is important to look at military action. Similarly for rhetoric and social sanctions, it is slightly difficult to separate between what rhetoric and military actions were meant as a way to condemn strategic bombings and which ones were meant as military strategies within the war. An example of military action would be the United Kingdom and France reprisal attacks on Germany. During some periods of the war, France dropped pamphlets on the German areas which

---

<sup>69</sup> Sherry 1987, 16, (fn 3).

<sup>70</sup> See Boyle 1962, 312, quote written to Trenchard "I would very much like if you could start up a really big fire in one of the German towns...If I were you, I would not be too exacting as regards accuracy in bombing railway stations in the middle of towns. The German is susceptible to bloodiness, and I would not mind a few accidents due to inaccuracy."

<sup>71</sup> Barros 2009, 415; Kennett 1982, 34-35.

declared what city had been bombed, therefore resulting in the reprisal attack. With “all efforts...converg[ing] on the essential act: the battle,” this drove France’s military to try with its best efforts with the technology at the time, to only target the “combat zone.”<sup>72</sup> The general strategy does not fit into this hypothesis of military action on anti-strategic bombing norms because this was more of the ethical standpoint of its military tactics. What qualifies as the “military action” attacks to enforce the weak anti-strategic bombing norm were the reprisal attacks that were specifically in retaliation to previous bombings Germany performed on France.<sup>73</sup> France reprisals attacks were where France knew it was wrong, but it justified the actions because Germany bombed its territories first.

In this stage, the anti-strategic bombing norm was weak and almost near death, based on the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon model. During World War I, enforcement was weak, resulting in only few condemnations of strategic bombing and few military actions taken specifically against strategic bombing. The rhetoric from the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions was rarely mentioned or used as a model to stop or slow strategic bombing. Therefore, because there was a low level of enforcement and a weak norm, the norm was low when there was weak enforcement by state actors.

---

<sup>72</sup> Pétain, 'Avis du général commandant en chef, 16 Sept. 1918, Vincennes, département de l'armée de l'air, service historique de la défense (DAA-SHD), dr. 3, 1A165 (quotation from Pétain: citation from Barros 2009, 418.)

<sup>73</sup> Barros 2009, 421: these actions are specifically from March 1917 when the decision of October 1916 (being allowed to raid factories, railway stations, and military installations) was reversed by Paul Panlevé where reprisal attacks were only allowed by approval.

### ***Hypothesis 1B: Heightened Enforcement, Weaker Norm***

The heightened enforcement, weaker norm hypothesis states that norms will be weak when there is higher enforcement; norms will be strong when there is lower enforcement. This hypothesis is interesting in the case of pre-World War I and during World War I because the birth of the anti-strategic bombing norm means that it had to be recognized in laws or agreements. The vagueness and generalizability of the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions can be seen in two ways. First, this could mean that these rules for aerial warfare were something that could apply to warfare generally, therefore heavily restricting actions by belligerents. By stating “the attack or bombardment of towns, villages, habitations or buildings which are not defended, is prohibited” is a statement that is so vague, that it prohibits signatories from attacking any of those locations.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, language such as “the Contracting Powers agree to prohibit, for a period extending to the close of the Third Peace Conference, the discharge of projectiles and explosives from balloons or by other new methods of a similar nature,” also prohibits projectiles, which includes bombs, to be dropped from not only balloons which had been around for the past century, but also from “other new methods of similar nature,” which can be implied as airplanes.<sup>75</sup> Banning the dropping of projectiles from the sky ultimately bans the idea of strategic bombing altogether within this agreement. Therefore, actors who signed on and ratified these restrictions know that a mechanism for enforcement

---

<sup>74</sup> Article 25 of the 1899 Hague Conventions: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/hague-conv-ii-1899>

<sup>75</sup> Declaration XIV 1907 Hague Conventions: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/hague-decl-xiv-1907>

would come to support the norm. However, due to the lack of ratification of the Conventions, this shows minimal enforcement before the war.

Whether it be either too tight of binding for actors to sign, with the birth of the airplane, or not signing because there was no use in signing a document that was easily broken, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Russia did not sign the 1907 Hague Conventions, therefore going into World War I with no binding declaration as to what applied to the rules of strategic bombing as well as enforcement mechanisms if one violated the agreement.<sup>76</sup> For this period, this means that there is no legal doctrine that binds other actors to enforce the norm on violators. During the war, with the example of the heightened enforcement, strong norm hypothesis, there was an overall lack of enforcement, but also a very weak norm. This shows that the heightened enforcement, weaker norm hypothesis does not work due to the low amount of enforcement within the war and low level of norm strength. For this hypothesis, if it were to function as an explanation, there would have to be high enforcement levels before and during the war to result in a low level of norm strength.

### ***Hypothesis 2: Hegemonic Leadership***

The hegemonic leadership hypothesis states that norms in wartime will be weak when the hegemonic leader determines it is weak in its self-interest; norms will be strong when the hegemonic leader determines it is in its best self-interest. This hypothesis is not based on enforcement by the hegemon of ensuring other actors follow-suit of what the

---

<sup>76</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 121.

hegemon deems is acceptable or not, but instead it is the hegemon setting an example in international relations, which shows to other actors that it is “acceptable” to break the norm or “necessary” to comply with the norm. Based on the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon model, pre-World War I and World War I have a *low* level of institutionalization and concordance. With the hegemonic leadership model, this would mean that the anti-strategic bombing norm is weak because the hegemon of the time determines that it is in its best self-interest to break the anti-strategic bombing norm. By the hegemon breaking the anti-strategic bombing norm, this models to other actors to follow-suit.

According to Gilpin, the United Kingdom was the hegemon pre-World War I and going into World War I. Before World War I, there was “this Pax Britannica” resulting in relative peace, and the dominance of the United Kingdom’s economy and commerce showing it as the strong leader going into the war.<sup>77</sup> Gilpin describes the bilateral conflicts, specifically, between the British-German naval race and the French-German conflict of Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>78</sup>

With British hegemony entering the war, it is now necessary to look at this conjoined with the hypothesis. For the hegemonic leadership hypothesis, the anti-strategic bombing norm would be weak because the United Kingdom determined it would be in its best self-interest to have a weak norm in wartime, especially during World War I. What is interesting on this take is that the United Kingdom in fact did sign the 1907 Hague Declarations, unlike other actors, but eventually did not comply with the

---

<sup>77</sup> Gilpin 1988, 609.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

Hague agreements in World War I. Although, the United Kingdom was not the first to use aerial attacks on cities, but rather, Germany, the usage by the United Kingdom shows that the hegemon at the period used strategic bombing as a means of warfare.<sup>79</sup> The U.K. also created the Royal Air Force (RAF) much later in the war (1918) whereas other key actors, such as France, established aerial war fleets earlier.<sup>80</sup> The U.K. did use strategic bombing during World War I, but it was not the one setting the trend for strategic bombardment. It was in the U.K.'s best self-interest to go against the anti-strategic bombing norm, especially retaliating against Germany, but this hypothesis would then need Germany to appear as the hegemon, not the United Kingdom.

Germany was not fully seen as a violator of the norm because the norm was nascent and others did not follow the anti-strategic bombing norm, but this hypothesis does not necessarily work because the power setting the trend was not the hegemon, but instead a challenger of the hegemon.

### ***Hypothesis 3: Technology***

Finally, the technology hypothesis: norms will be weak when actors do not use available technology at the time to avoid targeting civilians; norms will be strong when actors use to the greatest extent available technology to avoid targeting civilians. This hypothesis therefore does not mean a linear approach to technology, but instead analyzes if actors employed technology to not target civilians. The technology hypothesis works as

---

<sup>79</sup> See earlier description of 1914 attacks.

<sup>80</sup> France created its Groupe de Bombardment 1 in 1914.

an explanation for the weak norm during World War I because despite very limited developments of airplanes and air warfare, actors still relied on blind bombing tactics to scare the civilian population.

In 1903, the Wright Brothers took flight in the United States for the first time. In the same year, Paul and Pierre Lebaudy produced the dirigible in France. This opened the path for states, such as the United States, France, Germany, and Italy, to start producing aircrafts to be used in war. Later, Germany adopted the zeppelin in 1908 as another form of military tool.<sup>81</sup> The airplane was still in the stages of development throughout World War I, as well as other aerial weapons such as the zeppelin. The zeppelin, which began production in 1874, was a hydrogen-inflated airship seen as a valuable weapon in 1914, specifically due to its ability to hold 1,100 pounds worth of bombs.<sup>82</sup> Going into the war, Germany only had airships, such as the zeppelin, and no airplanes in the Oberste Heeresleitung (German High Command). It used the zeppelin for reconnaissance and for bombing attacks in 1914, with early examples in the war being the Z9 dropping at least 3,750 kilograms of bombs on Antwerp as well as aerial raids on Antwerp, Zeebrugge, Dunkirk, Calais, and Lille.<sup>83</sup> Although these seem like a multitude of attacks with such a new technology, a large constraint was the ability to stay in the air and precisely drop the bombs. There are examples of German zeppelins being hit from groundfire and falling (Z6-August 6, 1914) or being lost in a British bombing attack (Z9-October 8, 1914).<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Kennett 1982, 10-11.

<sup>82</sup> Robinson 1961, 130.

<sup>83</sup> Morrow 1993, 68.

Examples of German zeppelins and Delags in 1914: Z6-8 (zeppelin), Z4-5 (zeppelin), Z7 (zeppelin), Z8 (zeppelin), Sanchsen (Delag), Hansa (Delag), Viktoria Luise (Delag)

<sup>84</sup> Morrow 1993, 68.

The ineffectiveness of the new airplane was widely an issue in World War I. To quote a 2014 news article: “Airships were decent for surveillance, no good for bombing, and great for scaring the hell out of people.”<sup>85</sup> Although the physical effects of bombing were very minimal, the psychological effect bombing had on populations still fit in the category of strategic bombing: inflicting harm on civilians (physical or psychological) to undermine the society’s morale. Even Rear Admiral Paul Behncke, who was the Deputy of the German Naval Staff during World War I, said his argument for bombing London in 1914 was to “cause panic in the population which may possibly render it doubtful that the war can be continued.”<sup>86</sup> This shows the lack of technological development at the time of the war and the blind bombing performed.

As the German military utilized air power, France also started building its air warfare sector: the Groupe de Bombardment (GB1) to combat Germany and stay up to date with aerial technology developments. Commanded by General Louis De Göys, who was deemed the “father of French bombing,” described in his 1930s writings the importance of France being ready to embrace the rapidity of development of day bombing at the start of the war. France signed the order of creating the GB1 on 27 September 1914, with the goal to firstly target “points sensibles”: enemy columns, depots, and heavy-artillery positions, which are not qualified as strategic bombing because they are military target sectors.<sup>87</sup> However, later in the war with the introduction

---

In the British bombing attack, the Z9 attacked five cities near Antwerp, Zeebrugge, Dunkirk, Calais, and Lilly but was lost when Britain attacked the shed of the Z9 in Düsseldorf

<sup>85</sup> Golson 2014 <https://www.wired.com/2014/10/world-war-i-zeppelins/> also see Biddle 2002, 23 on how the zeppelin raids caused strain on the population but did not produce fear, but instead anger

<sup>86</sup> Biddle 2002, 20, (fn 47).

<sup>87</sup> Kennett 1982, 27; Wakelam 2015, 48.



of the Bréguet 14 aircraft, bombing strategies changed due to the speed at which the aircraft could travel. As quoted by De Göys, the “reprisal attacks on the large population centres... [were to] stop... these attacks on [its] own cities.”<sup>88</sup> The rapid development of aerial bombardment was not to increase precision and reduced civilian casualties and targeting, but instead to increase aerial bombardment development to protect its own territory.

In between 1914 and 1915, there was no change in accuracy and precision of technology, leading to German zeppelin night raids having difficulty of finding where to go and even more difficulty hitting a specific target.<sup>89</sup> A study conducted in 1915 showed the high inaccuracy of bombing by Allies, showing that only one in four strikes had a remote chance of hitting a large target, and when targeting a railway station there was a two in one hundred chance it would hit the station.<sup>90</sup> In using technology that had no precision for civilian targeting, this shows actors’ willingness to use undeveloped technology to perform aerial targeting.

The 1915 and 1916 acknowledgement of the advantages of strategic bombing influenced the technological boom that aimed to improve the aviation sector, with the industrialization of the field and the bolstering of the production industry for planes. The rapid turnaround for the technology of the time, however, did not result in absolute precision with bombing strikes.<sup>91</sup> It is evident, with the plane only recently invented, this

---

<sup>88</sup> Wakelam 2015, 46, (fn 9 & 10).

<sup>89</sup> Kennett 1982, 24.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Morrow 1993, 129-130.

new technology of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was not spectacular. Wakelam describes the period where the new *technology* was the Achilles heel of strategic bombing for Germany, although this can be applied to other actors, because the planes and zeppelins were underdeveloped and using new technology in the conflict made it more difficult to get used to and navigate.<sup>92</sup> R.P. Hearne (1908) discusses a high level of inaccuracy the Zeppelin bombings performed with more the main goal being the “principle of psychological influence.”<sup>93</sup> Despite a lack of technological developments for precision, actors continued to use aerial bombardment as a means of warfare, showing the low level of norm strength due to the usage of imprecise technology.

Similarly, 1917 brought in a time of a stalemate. To break this stalemate the German military attempted to use Gotha bombers on the British to “destroy important enemy establishments of various kinds” (quote by Field Marshal Paul von Hindenberg, 1917).<sup>94</sup> On one of the attacks on June 13, the London *Times* reported it as an attack that “made London quiver, not with fear, but with sorrow and anger.”<sup>95</sup> The bombing by the Germans in 1917 in reality caused a small amount of damage and instead bolstered more of the sorrow and anger the *Times* article mentioned.<sup>96</sup>

Leading into 1918, air raids increased as a result of the higher bombing capability of planes as well as retaliatory attacks as a response to the German raids.<sup>97</sup> After the British created the official Royal Air Force (RAF) in April of 1918, Major Sir Hugh

---

<sup>92</sup> Wakelam 2015, 49-50.

<sup>93</sup> R.P. Hearne *Zeppelins and Super-Zeppelins* 1916, referenced in Kennett 1982, 24, (fn 8 and 9).

<sup>94</sup> Biddle 2014, 25, (fn 88- July 1917, quote by Field Marshal Paul von Hindenberg).

<sup>95</sup> Biddle 2002, 29, (fn 93, *Times* article “No Warning of Midday Attack”).

<sup>96</sup> Barros 2009, 423.

<sup>97</sup> Hull 2014, 283, (fn 35).

Trenchard took charge of conducting reprisal attacks, confirming the United Kingdom's usage of aerial bombings during World War I as strategic bombing.<sup>98</sup> In May, the new RAF set out to attack German towns in a systematic way to “disrupt... industry and undermin[e] civilian morale” within Germany, specifically attacking by long-range bombing.<sup>99</sup> On May 30<sup>th</sup>, the German air fleet performed a night raid, dropping bombs on hospitals where it was said that there were American and French “sick and wounded.”<sup>100</sup> Towards the end of the war, Germany raided London and Paris once again, leaving the last attack on Paris on September 15.<sup>101</sup>

With the high inaccuracy of bombings during the period with the new technology of the airplane itself, it is more important to look at the physical targets that actors aimed for during the war. With examples such as the German bombing of Paris and the British bombings on German cities, Germany and the United Kingdom did not fit into the technological precision model of the anti-strategic bombing norm.<sup>102</sup> The main reprisal actor, France, mainly targeted German military bases and factories, therefore trying its best to target valid military targets, instead of blind bombing cities and areas where civilians were. A specific quote of France was “we do not bomb to bomb” but rather “to obtain a precise result.”<sup>103</sup> Despite the imprecision of the period, this quote is to show

---

<sup>98</sup> Hull 2014, 303.

<sup>99</sup> Biddle 2014, 26.

<sup>100</sup> Kennett 1982, 35.

<sup>101</sup> Hull 2014, 283.

<sup>102</sup> Barros 2009, 423.

<sup>103</sup> Barros 2009, 418 and 'Projet d'instruction sur l'aviation de bombardment', 19 Mar. 1918, *ibid.*, dr. I, 1A165.

that there were still some technological efforts to protect civilians and “obtain a [somewhat] precise result” instead of performing total blind bombing.

The technology hypothesis acts as an explanation for the weak anti-strategic bombing norm during World War I. This is a result of actors’ intentions to not be precise with the technology available at the time. This is shown with the United Kingdom and Germany performing blind bombings and night raids, not trying to hit specific targets such as military bases, but instead performing large raids on cities and towns to evoke the psychological fear that belligerents aimed for, such as “the morale effect at present is far greater than the material effect.”<sup>104</sup> France aimed mainly for reprisal bombings, showing a slight strength of the norm of bombing in retaliation but still making efforts to target military areas and abiding somewhat to the anti-strategic bombing norm. With the technology available at the time, France put in its best efforts to not strategically target civilians but ultimately fell flat with that endeavor due to the inefficiency of new technology. Actors such as Germany and the United Kingdom did not even consider efforts to aim at military areas.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the war the Allies dropped almost 2,700,000 tons of bombs and flew more than 1,440,000 bomber sorties and 2,680,000 fighter sorties.<sup>105</sup> At the end of World

---

<sup>104</sup> Barros 2009, 426, (fn 41 quote by Trenchard: Trenchard, ‘Memorandum on the tactics to be adopted in bombing the industrial centres of Germany,’ 23 June 1918, Kew, The National Archives (TNA), AIR/1/2422/305/18/11).

<sup>105</sup> Robinson 1961, 147.

War I, Orville Wright wrote “the aeroplane has made war so terrible that I do not believe any country will again care to start a war.”<sup>106</sup> Main state actors used the new aerial weapon during the war and violated the nascent anti-strategic bombing norm: World War I was the time of bombing and targeting civilians. But despite the war, the low strength of the norm also showcased a need to figure a vulnerable norm out, and how the norm could strengthen. With the anti-strategic bombing norm being new in 1899, it makes sense that the new norm crumbled during World War I. The lack of restraint left a wide range of weapons to be used to hopefully terminate the enemy. Despite the approach by states and the evolution of technology, how did the nascent norm not die after World War I? The answer is that the norm never died during the Great War, it just became weak. The 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions set up the beginnings of a norm and although there were large violations of the anti-strategic bombing norm during the war, there were still moments that kept the norm alive with the protection of civilian targeting.

---

<sup>106</sup> Orville Wright, letter to Wallace Sabine, 7 November 1918, in Marvin W. McFarland, ed., *The Papers of Wilbur and Orville Wright*, 2 vols. (New York, 1953), 1121. (Found in Sherry 1987, 10).

### **Chapter 3: The Interwar Period, a Strange Time, 1918-1939**

#### **Introduction**

After the Great War, aerial warfare was a new benefit for future wars, especially the ability to target behind enemy lines and target the civilian population. World War I practices consisted of “air raids upon cities, towns and villages situated far behind the lines of the operations on land and even in the interior of enemy countries, not part of which had ever been invaded by the land forces, and which were not even ‘defended’ in the sense of land warfare...The vast majority of the victims of these raids were non-combatants and large numbers of them were women and children.”<sup>1</sup> This chapter analyzes the interwar period (1918-1939) and determines the strength of the norm post-World War I as relatively stronger for the period, but still at a low level of norm strength. At this point, the content of the norm consists of only a prohibition of targeting civilians and city areas.

The interwar period is interesting because it shows a time post-World War I of the devastation and perspectives after the war. It shows economic troubles in between the wars and the different perspectives of actors. In addition, there were no “large” wars during the time, but instead various “small” wars.<sup>2</sup> The lack of a large war allows one to see a development in aerial warfare after World War I. World War I and the aerial

---

<sup>1</sup> Garner 1932, 112.

<sup>2</sup> Japanese Invasion of Manchuria (1931-1932); the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939); Second Italo-Ethiopia War (1935-1936)

bombardment from it “yielded relatively little damage, but the deliberate bombing of civilians and the sense of vulnerability that followed were crucial to the transformation of expectations and understandings of how war was fought.”<sup>3</sup> The lack of rules and regulations of aerial warfare within the First World War shows how the development of the anti-strategic bombing norm needed development after the war. What explains the slight, relative strengthen of the anti-strategic bombing norm after World War I?

This chapter finds that the strength of the anti-strategic bombing norm increases relative to the period but does not increase enough on the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon scale to increase to moderate strength levels. Due to the restraint caused by the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon scale, subtle changes that show norm strengthening in the interwar period, ultimately do not qualify to fully increase norm strength. I will argue that the higher enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis, and technology hypothesis function as explanations for the continuation of the low strength of the anti-strategic bombing norm during the period, but also subtle increases in relative norm strength. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not work as an explanation because there is an overall lack of a hegemon to promote the norm strength.

### **Brief Historical Overview for Context**

After the war, civilian fears of bombardment continued into the 1920s. The United Kingdom 1924 RAF study made speculations about France’s air force, predicting that if half the French air force struck London, it would drop at least one hundred tons of

---

<sup>3</sup> Page 2019, 21.

bombs in the first twenty-four hours.<sup>4</sup> Although the United Kingdom was allied with France in the last World War, that is not to say that the fear of having attacks on its own population did not remain.<sup>5</sup> Authors during the time, such as Giulio Douhet and Basil H. Liddell Hart, did not help the persistence of fear, with descriptions such as the supremacy of aerial attack and heavy air raids.<sup>6</sup> Ehlers describes the interwar period as “hard on [the] heels came pacifism [in the 1920s], low military budgets, isolationism in the United States, and quasinationism in the United Kingdom.”<sup>7</sup> France kept a large air force in the 1920s but lagged in the build-up of it until the 1930s during the rise of Hitler.<sup>8</sup> The German army had to “retrench and refocus” its air operations after the Treaty of Versailles, and the Italian air force made strides but resulted in little progress.<sup>9</sup> The fear of bombardment lingered. The devastation post-World War I and lack of resources during the time did not allow for actors to make severe changes. The state actors that began developing aerial warfare more, therefore the actors to look at for strategic bombing, are the United States and the United Kingdom.<sup>10</sup> Actors such as Hugh Trenchard (British) and Edgar Gorrell (American) separately pushed the idea of weakening the enemy by bombing civilians, otherwise known as imposing the “moral effect” on enemies.

The encouragement from individual actors of using the moral effect reflected some sentiments left from World War I. Gorrell wrote in an instructional guide for

---

<sup>4</sup> Meilinger 1996, 254, (fn 26); Biddle 2002, 84.

<sup>5</sup> Meilinger 1996, 254.

<sup>6</sup> See Giulio Douhet, *The Command in the Air* (1921-Italy) and Basil H. Liddell Hart, *Paris or the Future of War* (1925-United Kingdom). Referenced in Biddle 2014, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Ehlers 2009, 41.

<sup>8</sup> Ehlers 2009, 41; Sherry 1987, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Biddle 2014, 27; Sherry 1987, 22.

<sup>10</sup> Biddle 2014, 27.



airmen in 1919, “[t]he basic purpose is to weaken the power of the enemy both directly and indirectly; directly, by interrupting his production, transport and organization through the infliction of damage on his industrial, railway and military centers...indirectly, by producing discontent and alarm among the industrial population. In other words, it aims at achieving both a material and a moral effect.”<sup>11</sup> Gorrell even influenced the first American Air Service doctrinal manual on aerial bombardment in 1923, with the targets such as naval forces, land forces, and assets in “the interior zone of the enemy.”<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Trenchard also emphasized the “moral effect” of strategic bombing as a disruption to daily life of civilians in order to have, in this case the U.K., take control of the opposing side.<sup>13</sup> Trenchard saw every aspect of an area as important to attack the enemy and he emphasized this in his official report after World War I.<sup>14</sup> Although, the topic of the morality and legality was present, Trenchard argued that the “moral effect” was to help in future wars and it was different from “population bombing.”<sup>15</sup> Despite these statements and ideas by Gorrell and Trenchard, the establishment of air forces in both cases was slow, specifically due to the extremity of the ideas of attacking civilians which were advocated for in tandem with other doctrines seen later. For the United Kingdom, with the aftermath of World War I, the cost was too high to have a large aerial

---

<sup>11</sup> Ehlers 2009, 44, (fn 9: the instructional guide was titled “The Future Role of American Bombardment Aviation”-1919).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 45.

The “interior zone of the enemy” included training centers, transportation centers, bridges, dams, locks, power plants, tunnels, war material depots, and industrial centers.

<sup>13</sup> Page 2019, 27.

<sup>14</sup> Meilinger 1996, 249.

These aspects include iron and coal mines, steel mills, chemical production facilities, explosive factories, armament industries, aero engine manufacturers, submarine and shipbuilding works, gun foundries, and engine repair shops

<sup>15</sup> Page 2019, 26.

defense team established.<sup>16</sup> For the United States, it was slow progress in building the air force, and eventually the U.S. Air Service turned into the U.S. Air Corps and Tactical School (ACTS) in 1926.<sup>17</sup>

Although there was a slow development to the airplane and no “large” war, this did not stop main actors from using strategic bombing and further developing its respective air forces. The British Royal Air Force released a training manual in 1926 to help train pilots on “the care and handling of aeroplanes and aeroplane engines.”<sup>18</sup> Manuals like these shows an example of the standardization and development of the airplane after the war, and how the airplane was not forgotten about, which was also seen in the U.S. in the 1920s. The British Parliament approved an expanded home defense air force in 1923, to be fully complete by 1928 but was postponed until 1935 due to economic problems and the focus of then-Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin on domestic problems.<sup>19</sup> Standardization and expansion was not necessarily negative, but instead could hopefully contribute to precision of targeting and ensuring the safety of civilians. Unfortunately, other individual actors saw this standardization differently.

In a 1919 report, United States Secretary of War Newton Baker opposed strategic bombing saying that the air force is to be used to support the troops in the field with observation.<sup>20</sup> Other perspectives, such as a document called “Air Tactics” by Milling, offered a way to have constraints in air warfare by targeting “a definite objective in some

---

<sup>16</sup> Meilinger 1996, 255.

<sup>17</sup> Biddle 2014, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Royal Air Force Flying Training Manual, 1926, [https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b106774](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b106774).

<sup>19</sup> Biddle 2002, 84 & 86.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 132-133.

war industry.”<sup>21</sup> James Garner, author of *The International Regulation of Air Warfare*, said “the problem is not the prohibition of aerial warfare, but its regulation in such a manner as to spare, so far as possible, unoffending non-combatants, private property and public institutions of civil character.”<sup>22</sup> The Laws of Aerial Warfare from 1926, shows how some manuals stated, “[t]he object of the bomber is to get the load of bombs over the target and to discharge them in such a way that the maximum number of hits are registered.”<sup>23</sup> He shows that “when he attacks in this fashion, innocent people are bound to be struck.”<sup>24</sup> Although during this time there *was* a certain amount of standardization, the moral effect dominated. This statement by Colby proved to be true with the British bombing of the Middle East.

In the 1920s, the British conducted multiple “air control operation[s] in the Middle East” to attack and control the population under British rule. These attacks were “bloody and remorseless...against defenseless natives.”<sup>25</sup> The British made the argument that because Afghanistan, for example, did not sign on to the Hague Geneva Conventions, there was no reservation on whether or not to bomb Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> The “Red Scare” marked the 1930s and the Great Depression contributed to political instability.<sup>27</sup> The League of Nations Geneva Disarmament Conference between 1932-1934 failed, contributing to heightened fear of tension and potential for strategic attacks

---

<sup>21</sup> Biddle 2002, 134, (fn 19).

<sup>22</sup> Garner 1932, 113.

<sup>23</sup> Laws of Aerial Warfare, Colby 1926, 207.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>25</sup> Meilinger 1996, 259.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 260, (fn 46).

<sup>27</sup> Biddle 2002, 147.

in the future.<sup>28</sup> Garner stated “[i]n short, the military advantage [of aerial bombing] was only incidental and not sufficient to compensate in any degree for the wrong done to those who were not active participants in the war.”<sup>29</sup> Despite the contradictions and efforts to stifle strategic bombing, then-Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin said “the bomber will always get through,” meaning aerial bombing was not going away.<sup>30</sup>

The wars of the 1930s were where strategic bombing heightened for the interwar period. There was the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia) from 1935-36, the Spanish Civil War from 1936-39, the Japanese attack on China from 1937-39, and the Japanese attacks on Manchuria in 1931.<sup>31</sup> The *Illustrated London News* portrayed photos of the Italian bombings in Abyssinia in 1936. Homes and hospitals marked with the Red Cross flag were destroyed at the hands of Italian bombers.<sup>32</sup> Similarly when the Spanish Civil War began in 1936 following the attempt to overthrow General Francisco Franco, this led to international response, specifically Hitler and Mussolini supporting Franco.<sup>33</sup> The town of Guernica was wiped out by German bomber planes in 1937, with headlines describing the massive damages and civilian lives lost.<sup>34</sup>

The interwar period did not have a definitive side on the anti-strategic bombing norm. Grayzel claims that there were two major turning points during the interwar period:

---

<sup>28</sup> Grayzel 2012, 152.

<sup>29</sup> Garner 1932, 112.

<sup>30</sup> Meilinger 1996, 261.

<sup>31</sup> Garraway 2014, 92; Biddle 2002, 103.

<sup>32</sup> Grayzel 2012, 181, (fn 14).

<sup>33</sup> Grayzel 2012, 182; “Air Raids in Abyssinia. Royal Palace Hit By Bombs. Dessie Damaged,” *The Strait Times*, 7 December 1935, p. 11, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straittimes19351207-1.2.66>.

<sup>34</sup> 28 April 1937: Franco sends for German bombers to flatten Basque town of Guernica, *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/from-the-archive-blog/2011/may/25/newspapers-national-newspapers>.

(1) the Geneva Disarmament Conference, which “raised hopes and then dashed them” and (2) the Spanish Civil War, which “offered a vivid and visceral reminder of the wider and more deadly air war to come.”<sup>35</sup> Both of these instances in the 1930s show the lack of overall norm strengthening for the period. The Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon model determines the strength of the norm as low, with relative strengthening based on these historical events.

### **Norm Strength Analysis**

To determine the strength of the anti-strategic bombing norm I will use the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon scale. The interwar period shows signs of a continued *low* norm strength of the anti-strategic bombing norm, despite having a relative strengthening of the norm for the time.

### ***Concordance***

The fact that actors standardized and built up military aviation shows that World War I was not the last time that airplanes would be used.<sup>36</sup> In 1919, then-U.K. Prime Minister Lloyd George and his cabinet adopted the “strategic axioms”: (1) there would be no war for the next five to ten years, and the chief concern was to police colonial areas, (2) service strengths similar to those of 1914, including the RAF, would meet those

---

<sup>35</sup> Grayzel 2012, 176.

<sup>36</sup> An example of this is the Royal Air Force Flying Training Manual, 1926 and the United States Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) created after WWI

needs, and (3) scientific weapons should, to the greatest extent, replace manpower.<sup>37</sup>

Although this doctrine is U.K. specific, it exemplifies sentiments during the period of the acknowledgment of aviation development.

During the interwar period, the norm strengthened relative to the time, but did not raise from low to moderate. Based on Table 1.1, the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon model describes the moderate level for concordance as “regular, positive references...[to] reports and resolutions” and the “adoption and/or compliance rhetorically supported by some INGOs and IOs” with “violations [being] inconsistently criticized by IOs, INGOs, and states.”<sup>38</sup> The low level described for concordance is “few or sporadic references in... reports and resolutions; no or very low rhetorical support...[and] violations [which are] not noted by [actors].”<sup>39</sup> Here, violations of the norm were not duly noted, with the strongest example as the British using strategic bombing in the Middle East, but also the low level of action taken with the conflicts in the 1930s. The norm began to strengthen with state actors taking steps to standardize the airplane and began to look at civilian protection, but not all actors agreed with this notion, like individuals such as Trenchard and Gorrell that strategic bombing was still seen as an asset.

The U.S. Air Service in World War I released Volume IV of Postwar Reviews after the war. The largest criticism from bombing was “the lack of a predetermined program carefully calculated to destroy by successive raids those industries most vital in

---

<sup>37</sup> Biddle 2002, 82.

<sup>38</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

maintaining German's fighting forces.”<sup>40</sup> Within the same document, it also stated that another “criticism is also directed against the bombing of a town rather than some definite objective of military value in the town.”<sup>41</sup> France advocated for the Tardieu Plan at the 1932 Geneva Conference, which was the internationalization of civil aviation, once again showing that positive documents for standardization could lead to clear cut rules for aerial bombardment. During this Conference, Germany, Sweden, and Spain called for the abolition of military aviation whereas Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and Belgium advocated for the prohibition of the bombing aircraft.<sup>42</sup> Organizations, such as the International Red Cross Committee, show the relative strengthening of concordance. The ICRC wrote a letter to the League of Nations, on 22 November 1930, demanding the prohibition of aerial bombardment, because “there was no satisfactory criterion for distinguishing between open or undefended towns and those which were not,” but actors like the ICRC played a small part in the prohibition of strategic bombing.<sup>43</sup> This statement by the ICRC shows a slight infrequency of encouraging the anti-strategic bombing norm, however it does exemplify concordance.

The British bombing in the Middle East is an example of why concordance also stayed at a low during the period. The British design of “imperial policing” was air control applied to Iraq and later in the Turkish Empire. Before targeting the Middle East, the British used the RAF as a way to “subdue a festering uprising in Somaliland,” in

---

<sup>40</sup> Maurer 1974, 501: The U.S. Air Service in World War I, Volume IV: Postwar Review

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Grayzel 2012, 165, (fn 49).

<sup>43</sup> Garner 1932, 120.

1920, keeping the cost of pacification only to £77,000 instead of £6,000,000.<sup>44</sup> This “cheaper” way of targeting later led to the attacks of the Middle East, by using the RAF to patrol certain areas and bombing villages and tribes during periods of unrest.<sup>45</sup> Some air control operators admitted the purpose of the attacks were to terrorize the population. The Chief of the General Staff of the Indian Army, General Sir Claude Graham, expressed that because Afghanistan “was not a signatory to the Hague or Geneva Conventions, the Afghan mutilated and ill-treated wounded opponents, they were not a civilized nation and he assumed, therefore, that there were no reservations.”<sup>46</sup> The actions of the RAF were not largely criticized, nor were sanctions put in place by allies. Critiques were prominent in the press and in Parliament where many looked at the attacks on Iraq as “outdated imperial foolishness.”<sup>47</sup>

Higher levels of references to anti-strategic bombing, such as laws, regulations, and conferences, analyzed in the institutionalization section, were not enough to balance out the large violations. This shows a representation of the “adoption and/or compliance rhetorically supported by [only] some.”<sup>48</sup> Italian air forces raided Abyssinia, German planes aided Franco in the Spanish Civil War, and the Japanese attacked certain parts of China. The Italian bombings on Abyssinia consisted of attacks on civilian areas and hospitals, which was a violation of the norm only briefly criticized mainly by newspapers.<sup>49</sup> German bomber planes engaged in the full bombardment of cities during

---

<sup>44</sup> Meilinger 1996, 253.

<sup>45</sup> Satia 2006, 16.

<sup>46</sup> Satia 2006, 34; Meilinger 1996, 260, (fn 46).

<sup>47</sup> Satia 2006, 35-36, (fn 84- This criticism is exemplified by *Illustrated London News* 1936).

<sup>48</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>49</sup> Grayzel 2012, 181, (fn 14).



the Spanish Civil War, specifically in 1937.<sup>50</sup> Grayzel notes that the criticism from the bombardment of the Germans on Spanish cities such as Madrid and Guernica were more by local newspapers instead of the British government at large. British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden took a “neutral” stance and stated, “the Government deeply deplore[s] the bombardment of the civil population in Spain, wherever it may occur, or whoever may be responsible.”<sup>51</sup> The Japanese attacks on Manchuria did bring policymakers such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands to think about sanctions in order to stop these attacks from 1931 to 1932, but this cannot be counted as something of criticism, and ultimately the U.S. did not impose sanctions.<sup>52</sup> In these attacks, aerial bombardment was used, and newspaper criticisms of the attacks on innocent civilian lives trumped large actor criticism. In the case of the Japanese attacks, criticism is not noted but instead the thought of taking action to prevent the attacks was.<sup>53</sup>

In the case of the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon scale, the interwar period has a relative increase of anti-strategic bombing as compared to World War I. References to anti-strategic bombing and regulations for the norm did increase during the period, but it was not at a “regular, positive” rate and the “adoption and compliance rhetorically” was similarly not the case.<sup>54</sup> Violations of the norm continued to persist in the interwar period, although there was consistently less violations with the exit of the war, but with the

---

<sup>50</sup> Grayzel 2012, 186.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 186, (fn 34).

<sup>52</sup> Mulder 2022, 180 & 187.

<sup>53</sup> See 28 April 1937: “Franco sends for German bombers to flatten Basque town of Guernica”; 7 December 1935: “Air Raids in Abyssinia. Royal Palace Hit By Bombs. Dessie Hospital Damaged”; and 2 April 1938: “Japanese Raids Around Canton.”

<sup>54</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

violations were no consistent criticisms from international actors. One could see the nascent norm of World War I move from a very low point to a higher point within the low category, but due to the restraint of the scale, the norm stays in the low measurement for concordance.

### ***Institutionalization***

Institutionalization was also at a low level for the strength of the norm. Whereas concordance is the frequency of references to the norm, institutionalization is the frequency of laws, actions, and agreements passed. The low level of institutionalization is defined as “may be extrapolated from international law(s),” where “international organizations either do not or only sporadically promote adoption or monitor compliance” to international laws and agreements.<sup>55</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon define moderate institutionalization as “may be affirmed and codified in international and/or regional court decisions [and] may be codified in international law, but not yet widely ratified” with “international organizations formally promot[ing] adoption and implement[ing an] idea.”<sup>56</sup> The interwar period had consistent talks about aerial flight and laws to regulate aerial warfare, but these proposed regulations were never signed nor ratified. Like concordance, institutionalization relative to the interwar period was an increase from the nascent norm of World War I, but the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon

---

<sup>55</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

scale is restrictive to making this difference not as large of a drastic change for norm strength levels.

Immediately after World War I, the Paris Convention was held in 1919 for the “regulation of International Air Navigation agreed by the representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers.”<sup>57</sup> This convention was not directed at limiting aerial bombardment, but instead creating standardization of airplane rules across states, which could be applied to commercial and war planes. This convention formally defined what an “aircraft” was: it comprises all balloons, whether fixed or free, kites, airships, and flying machines; the word ‘balloons,’ either fixed or free, shall mean an aircraft using gas lighter than air as a means of support, and having no means of propulsion; the word ‘airship’ shall mean an aircraft using gas lighter than air as a means of support, and having means of propulsion.”<sup>58</sup> One of the first ambiguities coming from Pre-World War I was the language used of the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conferences, on what an aerial aircraft meant, and so this increased clarity of what a flying aircraft was. This convention also established in Article 38 that all parties would have the freedom of action in time of war to use airplanes.<sup>59</sup> Unlike, the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions, this convention was signed by twenty-seven powers, but was only binding in times of peace.<sup>60</sup> The 1919 Convention failed to address the issue of aerial warfare, but represents the first step to

---

<sup>57</sup> Convention Relating to International Air Navigation, 1919, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015021320265>.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 122.

<sup>60</sup> Garner 1932, 105.

Signatory powers included Great Britain, France, and Japan; the United States did not sign due to the ties it had to the League of Nations

standardizing airplanes, making it known that airplanes could be used in the future and in times of war.

At the Fourth International Congress of Aerial Legislation in 1921, the Paris Convention of 1919 received criticism for not addressing aerial bombardment and that it should be regulated similarly as land and naval warfare was regulated.<sup>61</sup> This criticism relatively strengthens the norm but does not affirm a moderate level of institutionalization.

The 1921-22 Washington Conference on the Limitation of Arms established broad restrictions on aircraft construction and briefly mentioned that military objectives should be the only targets for aerial bombardment.<sup>62</sup> Similarly to the Paris Convention of 1919, the Washington Conference on the Limitation of Armament failed to come to an agreement on air warfare and focused more on naval armament limitations.<sup>63</sup> The conference did, however, define what an aircraft carrier was: “an aircraft carrier is defined as a vessel of war with a displacement in excess of 10,000 tons standard displacement designed for specific and exclusive purpose of carrying aircraft.”<sup>64</sup> This definition, like the Paris Convention, develops the legal standardization and definitions during the interwar period, while at the same time not fully detailing limitations to aerial bombardment.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Garner 1932, 105.

<sup>62</sup> Sherry 1987, 33; Scott 1921, 503-510.

<sup>63</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 122; Garraway 2014, 91.

<sup>64</sup> Washington Limitation of Armament Conference, 1921-22, 17.

<sup>65</sup> Garner 1932, 106.

The most prominent conference for aerial bombardment was the 1923 Hague Conference. The 1923 Hague Conference produced the *Rules of Aerial Warfare*, a draft banning all bombardment on civilians and limiting bombardment strictly to military targets.<sup>66</sup> Article 22 specifically shows the harsh line of not using aerial bombardment on civilians: “Aerial bombardment for the purpose of terrorizing the civilian population, of destroying or damaging private property not of military character, or of injuring non-combatants is prohibited.”<sup>67</sup> The strictest rules on aerial warfare also meant that the 1923 Hague Draft Rules were never signed or ratified.<sup>68</sup> This is one of the most poignant signs of the low level of institutionalization but represents a relative increase in the anti-strategic bombing norm post-World War I. Unlike the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions which briefly banned the use of bombardment but had vague definitions, the purpose of the 1923 Hague Draft Rules was to ensure that bombardment by aviation would not happen. The inaction of abiding by the 1923 Hague Draft Rules shows in a 1933-34 ACTS “International Aerial Regulations” book that said, “since the Hague Rules of Air Warfare had not been ratified by any nation, there were ‘no conventional rules in actual force which directly affect aerial bombardment.’”<sup>69</sup> Even later in 1937, an essay by Jonathan Mitchell said that the Hague Rules “still remain unratified, and many experts believe them too vague to be of practical importance.”<sup>70</sup> The action of creating a specific conference in order to limit aerial bombardment shows the progress towards the

---

<sup>66</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019, 44.

<sup>67</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 126.

See Roberts & Guelff 1982, 123: 1923 Hague Conference for the full document.

<sup>68</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 121.

<sup>69</sup> Biddle 2002, 158.

<sup>70</sup> Biddle 2014, 29, reference to Jonathan Mitchell essay *The New Republic*, 1937.

strengthening of the anti-strategic bombing norm, but the lack of execution of the conference results in the low level of institutionalization.

A decade later, in 1932, the Geneva Conference of Disarmament also failed to regulate aerial warfare.<sup>71</sup> This conference was to reduce offensive weapons, but Germany opposed signing on because its army and navy were limited by the Treaty of Versailles and wanted other states to reduce its arms to the level of Germany's.<sup>72</sup> The two biggest disarmament measures proposed were air warfare and chemical weapons, but with Germany's opposition and the rise of Nazism, disarmament was once again stifled.<sup>73</sup> The Geneva Conference seems to be one of the later attempts at institutionalizing laws against aerial bombardment but fell flat in execution. A 1939 article by J.M. Spaight, who wrote texts on air power, said that aerial laws were "in a state of baffling chaos and confusion which makes it almost impossible to say what in any given situation the rule really is."<sup>74</sup> These interwar period agreements represent this chaos and confusion and the relative strengthening of the anti-strategic bombing norm.

The interwar period for institutionalization saw extreme feats of proposing disarmament rulings and aerial warfare regulation but were not widely signed, ratified, or adopted. These propositions dominate over the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions with precision of aerial warfare law and a higher frequency of propositions for arms limitation. Some conferences, which did not necessarily limit aerial warfare but instead standardized

---

<sup>71</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019, 44.

<sup>72</sup> Disarmament Conference 1933, [https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl\\_11592/?r=-0.379,-0.103,1.692,0.776,0](https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_11592/?r=-0.379,-0.103,1.692,0.776,0)

<sup>73</sup> Grayzel 2012, 168.

<sup>74</sup> Biddle 2014, 29, reference to article by J.M. Spaight "The Chaotic State of International Law Governing Bombardment," 1939.

aerial flight rules, were one's actors were more willing to sign on to not limit air power. Stricter limitation rules, such as the 1923 Hague Draft Rules, were not signed and followed. These actions fit into the definition of the low level of institutionalization, being international laws that are sporadically promoted, but not widely ratified and international organizations, like the ICRC, adopt and implement the idea of limitation but state actors do not sign on.

### **Hypotheses Analysis**

The anti-strategic bombing norm of the interwar period is at a low level of strength, with concordance and institutionalization both stronger relative to the period. I analyze here that the norm strength in the interwar period is explained through two hypotheses: high enforcement, strong norm and technology. High enforcement explains this phenomenon because the lack of economic sanctions shows the norm at a low point, but the increase in verbal condemnations shows a relative strengthening of the norm. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis mainly exemplifies an overall lack of a hegemon, with the most relative, dominate power as the United States, ultimately resulting in weak influence but does not determine norm strength. Technology explains the relative increase in norm strength with some improvements in technology but there were not large efforts to use this technology in bombing raids.

### ***Hypothesis 1A: High Enforcement, Strong Norm***

Enforcement is defined as a strategy of a state to establish certain expectations on state leaders and bureaucrats to show what negative consequences there are when there is noncompliance with a law or treaty.<sup>75</sup> Returning to Erickson's description, the three main tools in the international system are (1) social sanctions (removal of social status and targets embarrassment, rhetorical condemnation, diplomatic isolation), (2) economic sanctions (deliberate government inspired withdrawal or threat to withdrawal trade and financial relations), and (3) military action.<sup>76</sup> The interwar period consisted of efforts to impose economic sanctions against dissenters, but due to the lack of actors to follow through, this shows that enforcement was at a low point, with relative strengthening due to verbal condemnations.

Firstly, no conferences regulating aerial bombardment were ratified in the interwar period, therefore making it difficult to enforce something when actors did not sign on to bombardment limitations. Like the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions, if there is a limited number of actors to sign on to the treaties and no actors fully ratifying them, then there is nothing to fully enforce. The 1923 Hague Draft Laws, the strictest set of laws banning strategic bombardment, were not signed nor ratified and so if actors violate these laws, there are no large consequences.<sup>77</sup> There was little usage of strategic bombing in the 1920s, except for the British campaigns in the Middle East policing the area. These

---

<sup>75</sup> Downs 1998, 321.

<sup>76</sup> Erickson 2020, 100 & 101.

<sup>77</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 121.



bombings were met with little to no sanctioning and criticism.<sup>78</sup> At the same time, talks of regulation continued but actors did not ratify any agreements (the most prominent example is the 1923 Hague Draft Laws). Mulder notes that in the 1930s, sanctioning was something designed relatively recent to stop actors from violating imposed agreements and the first sanctions were not relevant to strategic bombing.<sup>79</sup>

Leading up to the Japanese attack on China, states did little action to punish violators due to the lack of doctrine.<sup>80</sup> Newspapers mentioned some attacks, such as the Italian attack on Abyssinia, but this does not represent condemnation from state actors.<sup>81</sup> Sanctions were imposed on Italy, Germany, and Japan, not for the strategic bombing performed but to stop the overall attacks. The sanctions had little effect because internal nationalist and fascist regimes built up resources to survive without international imports.<sup>82</sup> The sanctions were imposed because of a normative obligation to protect civilians but did not consist of a legal obligation. The best example of enforcement with the lack of sanctioning, but still wide condemnation, is the Japan case.

In August of 1931, the Committee on Economic Sanctions was going to release a full report in 1932 after the Geneva Disarmament Conference. However, the Committee on Economic Sanctions' plan had failed because Japan bombed the South Manchurian

---

<sup>78</sup> Meilinger 1996, 259.

<sup>79</sup> The Ezra Klein Show, 4 April 2022, Interview with Nicholas Mulder, ~minute 34.

The first sanctions were Yugoslavia in 1921, only as a threat, and Greece in 1925

See Mulder, *The Economic Weapon*, 2022 for a description of economic sanctions in WWI, the Interwar Period, and WWII

<sup>80</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019, 44.

<sup>81</sup> "Air Raids in Abyssinia. Royal Palace hit by Bombs. Dessie Hospital Damaged," *The Straits Times*, p. 11, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19351207-1.2.66>

<sup>82</sup> The Ezra Klein Show, 4 April 2022, Interview with Nicholas Mulder, ~minute 34.

Railroad on 18 September 1931 and continued to bomb other parts of Manchuria in seeking raw materials for the Japanese industry.<sup>83</sup> A mass boycott erupted in China, dropping Japanese exports to Manchuria by 68%. This was not actor enforcement, though, but instead action from the ground up.<sup>84</sup> During this time, it was also the early years of the Great Depression, with international trade already contracting and an overall reduction of exports to other states.<sup>85</sup> Unlike the Chinese population, large actors did not know what to do to condemn the Japanese's actions. The United States and other states criticized Japan but did not enact any economic sanctions or military intervention.<sup>86</sup> Specifically, Herbert Hoover believed sanctions were an act of war and therefore in the early 1930s the U.S. did not engage in blockades, embargoes, or overall economic sanctions on Japan, and was not obligated to because there was no legal doctrine to hold Japan accountable.<sup>87</sup> Instead the United States adopted the "Stimson Doctrine" which did not recognize the state of Manchukuo as that of the Japanese to respond to the January 1932 attack by the Japanese Army on Shanghai.<sup>88</sup> The United States encouraged the whole League of Nations to adopt this doctrine, which ultimately prompted Japan to be the first Council member to leave the League of Nations in March 1933.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Mulder 2022, 182 and *Invasion of Manchuria*, The Truman Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/invasion-manchuria>

<sup>84</sup> Mulder 2022, 182, the boycott was a grassroots non-purchase campaign.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>86</sup> *Invasion of Manchuria*, The Truman Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/invasion-manchuria>

<sup>87</sup> Mulder 2022, 183, (fn 25).

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

The first case of an attempt at enforcement did not happen. During the Great Depression, actors did not impose sanctions on Japan as punishment for breaking the anti-strategic bombing norm. First, there were no documents that outright banned strategic bombing, only documents on the standardization of flying. Second, actors, such as Herbert Hoover, did not want to apply sanctions for fear that this would start a war. Third, once the United States did impose some enforcement measure, in this case the “Stimson Doctrine,” this led to Japan retracting from the League of Nations, furthering a separation and divide over the anti-strategic bombing norm instead of enforcement which ends in positive results. In this case, the doctrine was supposed to put Japan back in line, but instead the doctrine created more conflict.

Japan’s aggression continued into the late 1930s, for example in 1937, a Japanese aircraft sank “the gunboat USS *Panay* on the Yangtze River, killing five and wounded forty-eight passengers.”<sup>90</sup> By 1937, Japan controlled large sections of China. When Japan began to target Indochina, the United States finally placed an embargo on scrap metal, oil, and aviation fuel and ultimately froze Japan’s assets in the U.S., demanding Japan to leave China and Indochina.<sup>91</sup> The U.S. State Department and Senate condemned Japanese bombing on China as “barbarous” in 1937 and 1938 and put an embargo on aviation equipment sales.<sup>92</sup> Even the *New York Times* condemned the Japanese bombing saying it was “as stupid as it is brutal.”<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Mulder 2022, 254.

<sup>91</sup> *Invasion of Manchuria*, The Truman Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/invasion-manchuria>

<sup>92</sup> Sherry 1987, 59, (fn 27).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 70, (fn 58).

The League of Nations verbally condemned the actions of Japan, declaring “no excuse can be made for such acts which have aroused horror and indignation throughout the world” and the overarching opinion turned against Japan.<sup>94</sup> With Roosevelt, then as president in 1937, in private, he started to discuss matters of wanting to impose “quarantines” on Japan to punish them without having military intervention.<sup>95</sup> The difficulty to impose the sanctions were that the United States and Great Britain had significant trade ties with Japan and the effect of economic sanctions would not appear until two years after the imposition of them, therefore it would be ineffective to establish them.<sup>96</sup>

Ultimately, enforcement, or lack thereof, works as an explanation for the anti-strategic bombing norm to be low after World War I but relatively stronger. There were no legal agreements among actors to hold violators accountable, therefore there was nothing to enforce in the first place. Actors, such as the United Kingdom, looked less at sanctioning and more of the future implications of the bombardment that happened during the interwar period, especially after the attacks on Guernica and Barcelona in Spain. These attacks did not result in the imposition of sanctions, but instead resulted in the want and need to build up arms for a future war.<sup>97</sup> Enforcement for strategic bombardment was non-existent in the 1920s with the low use of strategic bombardment, and in the 1930s enforcement was not as strong but somewhat present. The lack of

---

<sup>94</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019, 45; Mulder 2022, 254.

<sup>95</sup> Mulder 2022, 254. “Quarantines” were just a better way to say “economic sanctions” without making it appear as harsh, fn 181.

<sup>96</sup> Mulder 2022, 254.

<sup>97</sup> Page 2019, 70.

signatures and adoption of regulatory laws means that there was little that actors needed to comply to, and when acts were deemed horrific enough to impose some level of enforcement, in the case of the interwar period mainly economic sanctions, there were not many economic sanctions imposed. The limited number of sanctions imposed was a result of the amount of trade between large actors during the Great Depression and the political aspect of keeping peace. The conversations about enforcement are an increase from World War I when there was almost no talk of enforcement. The largest part of enforcement and progress that is seen in the interwar period are verbal condemnation of actions, specifically the actions that took place in Japan. Although there were little economic sanctions and no military intervention, the verbal condemnation can be a sign of norm strengthening.

Despite the verbal condemnation of violators' actions, it does not contribute to a strengthening of the norm. The 1920s had the British bombing of the Middle East with no large enforcement taking place. Besides the Middle Eastern bombings, there were no other large civilian bombing campaigns during the time, therefore, not much to condemn. The 1930s had the verbal condemnations but no strong sanctions enacted. Therefore, due to the limited number of verbal condemnations and lack of sanctions during this period, this hypothesis works to explain the relative strengthening of the anti-strategic bombing norm post-World War I but also the low strength of the norm.

### ***Hypothesis 1B: Heightened Enforcement, Weaker Norm***

The heightened enforcement, weak norm hypothesis determines that the norm is weak due to heightened levels of enforcement mechanisms. This hypothesis does not work because there was a low level of enforcement mechanisms but a weak norm. The failure of the 1923 Hague Drafts and the 1932 Geneva Disarmament Conference represents this hypothesis as the dependent variable. Both were strict regulations on banning aerial bombardment and coming to an agreement on disarmament, respectively. Both, symbols of high enforcement, were not ratified because of its heightened restrictions. The non-ratification of them would then mean that there would be a strengthening of the norm because there was heightened enforcement within the treaty, the actors are not bound to the treaties because they did not sign them. The 1923 Hague Draft Rules were not adopted but were “at the time of their conclusion... regarded as an authoritative attempt to clarify and formulate rules of air warfare, and largely corresponded to customary rules and general principles and underlying laws of war on land and sea.”<sup>98</sup> This means that the Draft Rules were rules to stop aerial warfare and regulate actors.

With the norm at a low level of strength, according to this hypothesis, one would expect to see heightened levels of enforcement tactics during the 1920s and 1930s which would result in the weak norm. During the 1920s, there were conferences and conventions to discuss regulations of aerial flight as well as aerial warfare limitations, but none were ratified, therefore having no enforcement tactics in place. The only strategic

---

<sup>98</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 121.

bombing in the 1920s was the British bombing campaign in the Middle East, which was met with no verbal condemnation and no sanctions.<sup>99</sup>

Turning back to the Japan case, this shows why this hypothesis does not work. During the early attacks by Japan in 1931, Herbert Hoover did not want to impose sanctions on Japan because he saw that as an “act of war.”<sup>100</sup> The United States did, however, impose the “Stimson Doctrine” to refuse the recognition of the Japanese-supported state of Manchukuo, which later prompted Japan to leave the League of Nations in 1933.<sup>101</sup> Due to these weak tactics of “non-enforcement” on Japan in the early 1930s, Japanese power and bombing actions continued to rise up until 1937. This ultimately shows that this hypothesis does not work because although there was a low level of enforcement during the period, there was still a weak norm. By 1937, Japan occupied large parts of China and continued bombing attacks, such as the example of the bombing of the USS Panay.<sup>102</sup> This shows that the lack of enforcement did not strengthen the anti-strategic bombing norm in the 1930s but instead stayed at the weak stage. It was not until the Roosevelt administration which began thinking about economic sanctions to stop Japanese attacks, but this ultimately was not put in effect due to the lag of the sanction’s effects (it would take two years to work).<sup>103</sup>

Overall, Japan’s attacks were met with verbal condemnation (a low-cost sanction), a sign of the relatively higher level of norm strength, but further enforcement

---

<sup>99</sup> Satia 2006, 49.

<sup>100</sup> Mulder 2022, 183.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>102</sup> Mulder 2022, 254.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 254.

actions such as sanctions were not pursued. Because these sanctions were not pursued, this would then qualify as a low level of enforcement during this period. The lack of enforcement on Japan resulted in it using strategic bombing more in its favor to claim land and resources in China. With the potential of sanctioning on Japan later in the 1930s, specifically with the United States placing an embargo on scrap metal, oil, and aviation fuel, this did not lead to more of a decrease in the anti-strategic bombing norm, but instead resulted in a consistent low level.<sup>104</sup> Ultimately, this hypothesis does not work because the low cost enforcement of the period resulted in a small increase in norm strength, not a weakening of it, and with enforcement levels being weak during the period, one would expect to see an extreme jump in norm strength, which is not the case.

### ***Hypothesis 2: Hegemonic Leadership***

The hegemonic leadership hypothesis looks at the hegemonic influence in the interwar period. Because this period experiences low norm strength, hegemon encouragement of norm violations is expected. Based on Gilpin's model of structural leadership, states' material capabilities which can shape the world political order with its natural resources, capital, technology, military force, and economic size, specifically with aerial development, would be the ones to qualify as the hegemon of the time.<sup>105</sup> Exiting the Great War, there is a large difficulty to declare a hegemon because the war severely hindered the capabilities of actors. Although the United Kingdom did act during the

---

<sup>104</sup> *Invasion of Manchuria*, The Truman Library.

<sup>105</sup> Gilpin 1981, 186-210; Ikenberry 1996, 389.



interwar period, its hope of being the hegemon was no longer valid. The United States on the other hand had more of a capability to be the hegemon, but lacked the overarching want to be it. An example of this is with the founding of the League of Nations, which the United States did not join despite the idea coming from President Woodrow Wilson.<sup>106</sup> The hegemonic leadership hypothesis states that the norm is strong when the hegemon finds it in its best interest to be strong and weak when the hegemon finds it in its best interest to be weak. With an overall lack of hegemony, this automatically shows a weak representation of the norm but not in support of this hypothesis. This hypothesis explains that the norm is weak because the hegemonic actor finds it in its best interest to be weak, but the lack of a hegemon to determine the norm to be relatively weak is different.

The inconsistent criticisms on norm violators, such as Japan in the 1930s (criticism) and the United Kingdom in the Middle East (no-criticism), shows that the anti-strategic bombing norm was not strong. The overall lack of general leadership and failure to implement serious laws and regulations to protect civilians from strategic bombing does not support the hypothesis because this hypothesis is based on what is in the hegemon's best interest and if there is no hegemon present, then it is difficult to explain the waning of the norm. The relative increase in norm strength during the period can be seen with the United States' encouragement of regulations, but failure to implement them or sign on to certain regulations as a major power. The United States' best interest was to not be the hegemonic power, therefore decreasing its amount of involvement in anti-strategic bombing talks, but still exemplifying some support.

---

<sup>106</sup> The League of Nations: <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/overview>.

The British want to stay a hegemon is apparent in the British Air Staff Bombing reports of 1918, 1919, and 1920, which concluded that the “moral effect” on the German population and infrastructure during World War I was “considerable.”<sup>107</sup> This “moral effect” and damage described exemplifies the thought of “importance” of the bombing for the British. The RAF argued for the use of the moral effect in future wars, stating in the Air Staff Memorandum that “aircraft[s] depend to a great extent on the moral effect they create: this is a present considerable owing to ignorance in the native mind.”<sup>108</sup> RAF papers of the early 1920s argued for the moral effect and by “exploiting” the “French air threat” after the war, which encouraged the buildup of aerial warfare in case of an attack.<sup>109</sup> The 1923 British Parliament approved the expansion of the defense air force but this was stalled for years.<sup>110</sup> Despite the British encouragement for build-up post-World War I, the state did not have power to be a large influence over the world with setting the example for arms build-up.

For the United States, the semi-hegemon during the period, Gorell wanted to look at the *U.S. Air Service in World War I: Volume IV Postwar Review* to evaluate what effects were by aerial bombardment. The United States performed systematic analyses of different cities and discovered that the moral effect was largely on a town’s population.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Page 2019, 22, (fn 13).

<sup>108</sup> Biddle 2002, 82, (fn 48).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 71, 72, 79, & 84.

*Biddle fn 11*: the RAF January 1921 paper “Air Power and National Security” argues “in the offensive lies the surest defence and it will be necessary to carry the war into the enemy’s country, to attack his aerodunes, factories, military, and naval establishments and generally force upon him a defensive rule”

*Biddle fn 13*: the 1923 RAF Staff College Paper, described that air raids “could cause long periods of delay and disruption at a factory, even when the raid itself did little or no physical damage”

<sup>110</sup> Biddle 2002, 84.

<sup>111</sup> The U.S. Air Service in World War I: Volume IV, Maurer 1974, 498-499.

“Judging by the information received, night bombing appears to have had the greatest moral effect, probably because the largest percentage of people lost sleep because of night raids and because they would not see the airplanes which were dropping the bombs while, in the event of a day raid, they merely stayed in a shelter.”<sup>112</sup> Based on the hypothesis, this would mean that due to the United States’ opinion on the effectiveness of aerial bombardment, this would explain a low norm exiting World War I with the influence of the weak hegemon. Because there is relatively no hegemon during this time, this also means there is little influence directly exiting the war on aerial bombardment tactics.

The RAF proceeded to use aerial attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Egypt, and Sudan.<sup>113</sup> In 1919, an Afghan commander-in-chief reported that the British dropped explosives on Basawal and Jalalabad resulting in “heavy losses on the civil population and army of Afghanistan.”<sup>114</sup> The RAF also bombed villages and tribes in Iraq which were deemed as “subversive activities,” labelling these attack as “air control.”<sup>115</sup> Officials considered the bombing “acceptable” because it was on colonial ruled territories.<sup>116</sup> The United Kingdom took over Iraq in 1922 with the help of aerial bombing tactics, which had the purpose of terrorizing the civilian population in order to give up.<sup>117</sup> It became know that the Middle East, “the Land of the RAF,” was where the United Kingdom

---

<sup>112</sup> Maurer 1974, 499.

<sup>113</sup> Meilinger 1996, 253.

<sup>114</sup> Colby 1926, 209.

<sup>115</sup> Satia 2006, 16.

<sup>116</sup> Page 2019, 25.

<sup>117</sup> Satia 2006, 32.

perfected some aspects of aerial warfare.<sup>118</sup> However, the U.K. was not the hegemon at the time to deem that the norm needed to be weak in this instance for its own personal gain. The bombing of the Middle East shows lack of a hegemon setting the example for the norm and instead a weak actor determining the norm strength. After the Middle East episode, the U.K. held the stance on strategic bombing that it was overall useful. The quote of then-Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin in 1932 saying “the bomber will always get through” makes it seem as if there was less rhetorical compliance to anti-strategic bombing from the British side, thinking the only way to prevent attacks on Great Britain was to have the ability to destroy others’ cities.<sup>119</sup>

The Paris Convention in October of 1919 defined what an aircraft was and introduced necessary standardization for aerial flight.<sup>120</sup> This convention did not look at aerial bombardment nor at regulations for it but represents efforts to regulate aerial flight. This was ratified by at least 27 powers but not the United States because the convention was a part of the League of Nations.<sup>121</sup> The weak semi-hegemon not taking responsibility to begin action post-World War I show the struggle to have a leader not only encourage the anti-strategic bombing norm, but also not encourage flight standardization. Despite low inaction from the United States at the time, the U.S. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes called the Washington Conference on the Limitation of Arms together in 1921, which spoke a little about regulations for aerial flight.<sup>122</sup> Gradually trying to strengthen

---

<sup>118</sup> Satia 2006, 49.

<sup>119</sup> Meilinger 1996, 261.

<sup>120</sup> Garner 1932, 105.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>122</sup> Sherry 1987, 33.

the norm, the 1923 Hague Draft Rules, which would have regulated aerial flight and warfare, took place with representatives present from the United States, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the Netherlands and was headed by American John Bassett Moore.<sup>123</sup> With such strict rules limiting warfare, no actors signed on to the Hague Draft Rules, including the United States. This continues to be an example of weak leadership during the time. The United States failed to encourage strategic bombing reform due to not taking on the role of the hegemon.

The U.S. Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) in 1926 proposed that “strategical” bombardment could be used against enemy troops, to hinder war manufacturing, and to ultimately target “political centers.”<sup>124</sup> Whereas the first two are within the war time rules, the targeting of political centers was rationalized to be within the laws of warfare because the “nerve centers of the nation...[were] important targets for bombardment in reprisal attacks made by the enemy on such centers in our own country.”<sup>125</sup> A declaration like this did not outright allow the strategic bombardment of civilian centers, but instead allowed reprisal raids if enemies attacked those in the United States. The ACTS proposal represents a weak example of hegemonic leadership. A continuation of the weak norm during this period makes sense with the advocacy of the hegemon to continue to use strategic bombardment because of its positive contribution to war time tactics.

---

<sup>123</sup> 1923 Hague Draft Rules: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/hague-rules-1923#:~:text=The%20Commission%2C%20presided%20over%20by,February%201923%20at%20The%20Hague.>

<sup>124</sup> Biddle 2002, 139.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 139, (fn 45).

Towards the end of the 1930s, Neville Chamberlain became the British Prime Minister in 1938 and declared the fundamental principles of international law for aerial warfare being: (1) direct attack against the civilian population is unlawful, (2) targets for air bombardment must be legitimate, identifiable military objectives, and (3) reasonable care must be taken in attacking military objectives to avoid bombardment of a civilian population in the neighborhood.<sup>126</sup> These laws set a precedent for the League of Nations to adopt in September of 1938.<sup>127</sup> This suggests that Great Britain tried to take a leadership position as the hegemon to promote the anti-strategic bombing norm throughout the end of the 1930s, but continued to lack the capabilities to actually be the hegemon. In contrast, the United States would not adopt these laws because they are associated with the League of Nations. The absence of the hegemon in a leadership role once again shows the norm's weakness at the time.

British rearmament during this period was to ensure state protection. The British government stressed the importance of rearmament with the rise of Nazism in Germany, therefore Chamberlain opted for an aerial deterrent.<sup>128</sup> Attacks in the Spanish War by Germany were not seen as a large threat to the British, but instead the overall build-up Germany was undergoing for a future war.<sup>129</sup> This build-up from a non-hegemonic actor also shows the lack of control during the time. Attacks, such as the one by Germany on Spain, occurred with little violation criticism. If the United States' best interest was to

---

<sup>126</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 122.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>128</sup> Biddle 2002, 112; Page 2019, 69; Meilinger 1996, 265.

<sup>129</sup> Biddle 2002, 112.

have a weak norm, this chaos would make sense during the interwar period, but the lack of strength the U.S. exemplified makes it difficult to explain this ultimately weak norm. Instead, this shows the lack of the hegemon as an explanation to the weak norm, but relatively stronger norm with minimal U.S. promotion.

This hypothesis states that hegemons will determine the norm is strong or weak based on what is ideal for the actor. For the interwar period, which was still at a low level of norm strength, it saw some relative norm strengthening of anti-strategic bombing discussions. During this time, the United States' efforts to try and at least moderate conferences and rules, such as the 1923 Hague Draft Rules, exemplify this relative increase in norm strengthening, but also explains the norm weakness of being low. The failure to be a true hegemonic leader by not taking part in the League of Nations and refusing to sign onto actions associated with it shows the removal of the United States from other actors. If the U.S. was a strong power during this time, norm strengthening is expected, but due to the lack of power, the U.S. had difficulty spreading and implementing anti-strategic bombing norm restrictions. This hypothesis does not work because the relative increase in norm strength can be attributed to the semi-influence of the United States, but there was an overall lack of a hegemon to influence the norm.

### ***Hypothesis 3: Technology***

The want to develop the airplane lingered after the war, especially with standardization. In 1930, J.M. Spaight said that “machine-power” warfare or “the machines behind the machines” changed what it meant to conduct warfare and the

“person who makes the killing machine is more dangerous than the soldier or sailor who uses it.”<sup>130</sup> It is evident that in World War I, with the little technology developed for the new airplane, that tactics and flight plans in general would not be very precise, especially with blind bombing techniques which did not target one specified area. American surveys found that of the 15,700 bombs dropped on Germany, this resulted in the death of 740 people and 1,900 injured, but it showed that once people began to take shelter from bombings, the casualty rates fell to almost zero.<sup>131</sup> The survey noted that the best way to have at least some bombing effectiveness, not even precision, was to study the area such as the industries and vulnerabilities.<sup>132</sup>

The technology hypothesis states that with the improvement of technology, the norm will strengthen if actors use to the best possible extent with the technology available at the time. This hypothesis works to explain the low level of norm strength during this period, but also a relative increase in norm strength. Post-World War I, technology advancements came not mainly for targeting but for the airplane in general. Coming from weak technology strength during the war, the developments made during the interwar period would not explain a heightened strengthening of the norm, but a relative strengthening of anti-strategic bombardment with technology improvements and the slight willingness to use this technology.

The interwar period was an opportunity to develop certain precision to the airplane in general but also with aerial bombing tactics, in hopes to eliminate accidental

---

<sup>130</sup> Page 2019, 28, (fn 41, 42, & 44).

<sup>131</sup> Ehlers 2009, 39, (fn 27 & 28).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 38.



strategic bombing. Descriptive handbooks, such as the B.R.2 Aero Engine manual, started to emerge after the war.<sup>133</sup> The U.S. released a “Tentative Manual for the Employment of Air Service” in 1919.<sup>134</sup> Indicators like this, alongside certain standardization laws and treaties, show the emergence of the airplane as something to be standardized with the hopes in the 1920s and 1930s to undergo testing on technology, equipment, and other airplane matters.<sup>135</sup> Individuals, such as Lord Tiverton, described how the precision of target selection instead of blind bombing could move moral bombing to a target-system focus type of bombing.<sup>136</sup> The 18<sup>th</sup> Division British Intelligence report of 1921 reported disorientation, visibility problems, and inability to identify objects from the sky and it “was not uncommon for aircraft[s] to make a ‘demonstration’ over or bomb the wrong town” in the instance of the British attacks in Iraq.<sup>137</sup> This represents the weak technology advancements leaving the war, and also showing the weak norm continuing alongside it.

One of the biggest improvements for aerial reconnaissance, to contribute to aerial bombardment, was aerial photography. Although aerial photography was used in World War I, the development of it and defining its purpose leads to a relative improvement to aerial targeting. George Goddard and F.C.V. Laws were some of the few who developed

---

<sup>133</sup> B.R.2 Aero Engine, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/pst.000009586031>

This was a descriptive handbook on the engine’s information and guidance.

<sup>134</sup> Biddle 2002, 132.

<sup>135</sup> Meilinger 1996, 255.

<sup>136</sup> Ehlers 2009, 34, (fn 4: Tiverton’s “The Possibilities of Long Distance Bombing”).

Page 2019, 23: other actors had the idea that “with the progress in air science that seems likely to continue, it will be possible in a few years... for a powerful military nation... to obliterate cities in a night and produce the stunning moral effect necessary to victory,” but this was more fiction than reality (fn 16)

<sup>137</sup> Satia 2006, 32-33, (fn 67 & 68).

aerial photography to be used as air intelligence.<sup>138</sup> According to an American document in 1924, “The aerial camera is the vigilant and searching eye of the command.”<sup>139</sup> First thought of as to use the photography to map the land, aerial photography was later seen “of inestimable value in compensating to a great for the deficiencies of the human eye, and the successful development...has vastly increased the scope of air observation.”<sup>140</sup> Using the air camera could open the amount of precision guided attacks from aerial bombardment. Instead of blind bombing large areas and city centers, aerial photography could do reconnaissance ahead of time to identify military buildings and targets.

The three main uses of aerial photography were “(i) the provision of military information regarding the enemy and his territory, (ii) the provision of permanent records of the results of operations, and (iii) the production of military maps.”<sup>141</sup> The installation of cameras on bombers for intelligence purposes did not come until 1939, but this still shows progress in trying to target specific spots and performing reconnaissance, such as gathering data and examining bombing of the Spanish Civil War and studying Germany.<sup>142</sup> The development of camera installations and testing on areas for the interwar period shows a weak example of relative norm strengthening. With the ability to take photoreconnaissance photos, this allows pilots to decide and target specific military targets ahead of time instead of blanket bombing whole cities. This contributes to the

---

<sup>138</sup> Ehlers 2009, 52.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 52, (fn 32).

<sup>140</sup> Air Photography, Organization and training, first published 1936, [https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433069\\_039638](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433069_039638)

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ehlers 2009, 66 & 71.

relative norm strength because it is not the precision of bombs, but instead that of something to help bomb planning.

With the Great Depression starting in the 1930s, this raised concerns on the level of development with technology with limited resources.<sup>143</sup> Even during this period the British developed the speed and altitude of aircrafts, but “target acquisition intelligence, tactics, and navigation” were inadequately looked at.<sup>144</sup> The development of the bomber itself was probably one of the bigger feats with a comparison between the MB-2 bomber of the 1920s versus the MB-10 bomber of the 1930s, showing drastic increases in speed and size.<sup>145</sup> Despite the Great Depression, the U.S. Air Corps expenses jumped from \$30 million in 1935 to \$83 million in 1939.<sup>146</sup>

Specifically to bombing, the U.S. developed high-altitude precision bombing between 1927 and 1934 and in 1938 started a Bombing Policy Sub-Committee to discuss methods of bombing and aircrafts to pair with it.<sup>147</sup> With precision bombing, this would allow plan bombers to target “key components” instead of the entire state.<sup>148</sup> According to Sherry, “precision bombing satisfied all the forces (humane and targeted),” by using it as a tactical skill instead of raining down bombs on civilians.<sup>149</sup> Plans such as the 1937

---

<sup>143</sup> Sherry 1987, 47.

<sup>144</sup> Biddle 2002, 91 & 123.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 146.

MB-2 bomber (1920s) versus the Martin B-10 (1930s): “the service ceiling was raised from 7,700 to 24,000 feet, the normal bomb load from 1,040 to 2,260 pounds, and the top speed from 98 MPH to 213 MPH. B-10 marked a new generation of machines: it proved that greater size did not necessarily mean slower speeds ; but B-10 did not extend beyond the required for support missions,” (fn 76: CC, 1:60-61) Biddle 2002, 165: USA: Also the development of the B-9, B-10, B-12, and B-17 bombers, all-modern combat aircrafts with improved speed

<sup>146</sup> Biddle 2002, 145, (fn 74).

<sup>147</sup> Ehlers 2009, 78; Biddle 2002, 123, (fn 244).

<sup>148</sup> Sherry 1987, 51.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 53.

Air Ministry plan outlined attacks with instructions to target industries and military bases in Germany.<sup>150</sup>

The standardization agreements, heightened development of the bomber, and photoreconnaissance developments changed the norm in a small way. Strategic bombing in World War I occurred because there was a severe lack of development and precision, but the interwar period represents small progress in bombing development. Despite bombing standardization, an RAF document released from 1938 stated that the “ideal bombing tactics...are to bomb from the highest possible height in order to keep out of range of anti-aircraft defences,” to protect the bombing squad, but if one is bombing from the highest point during this time, there is less precision with regards to where the bomb is dropped, showing how actors did not use the new technology to the fullest.<sup>151</sup> Other instances, such as the Spanish civil war attacks, the Japanese attacks, and the Italian attacks, these actors conducted the attacks with the intention of bombing the civilian population and ignored the direct targeting of technologies to target military bases.

Despite these setbacks by actors, technological developments contributed to the relative strengthening of the norm post-World War I. Actors took steps to standardize and make more efficient the bomber and took steps in making reconnaissance more accurate to avoid targeting civilian areas. Spoken before World War II, Ehlers said that the best

---

<sup>150</sup> Ehlers 2009, 72.

WA 1: attacks on German Air Striking Force, its maintenance, and the aircraft industry; WA 2: attacks on German rail, canal, and road communications during concentration of German armies in the west and to delay their invasion of France and the Low Countries; and WA 5: attacks on German manufacturing centers inside and outside of the Ruhr and on inland waterways (fn 31: Air Ministry conference, 1 October 1937, AIR 2/2731.)

<sup>151</sup> Ehlers 2009, 64, (fn 14).

way to target is to “consult engineers, industrialists, and technicians” and this statement affirms that by consulting specialists on targeting, it would make targeting more discriminate.<sup>152</sup> Although actors developed discriminate targeting tactics and measures, the norm ultimately not strengthen so much so that it moved to a moderate level due to the relative lack of large technological developments at the time. Therefore, this hypothesis explains the weakness of the norm but also relative strengthening.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the interwar period saw rapid growth with not only standardization of the airplane but also relative development of the anti-strategic bombing norm. Although the norm was at a low level during the interwar period, with a lack of increase in strength on the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon scale, the anti-strategic bombing norm relatively strengthened during the time with the overall encouragement of acknowledging the norm. The fact that laws were in discussion on several occasions to regulate bombing is a feat post-World War I.

Looking at all four hypotheses, heightened enforcement, strong norm and technology contribute as valid explanations as to why there was a relative increase in norm strength but overall lack to support norm strengthening to a moderate level. For higher enforcement, strong norm, the lack of something to enforce, such as rules or treaties, contributes to the norm weakness during the time. Although there was a lack of something to enforce, the efforts to try to impose economic sanctions on actors (but

---

<sup>152</sup> Ehlers 2009, 33.

ultimate failure) represents some efforts to strengthen the norm. hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not work due to the overall lack of a large hegemon in the 1920s and 1930s, making it difficult to encourage following or dissenting from the anti-strategic bombing norm. During this period, the relative encouragement of the United States for some conferences and rules shows the thought of the United States' somewhat present, but lacked overall influence complicated the effect of influence on others. Finally, technology advancements during the period were small but contributed to a relative heightening of norm strength with photoreconnaissance to hopefully reduce blind bombing and the further development of precision bombing however these tactics were not used in the bombings in the Middle East, Spain, Abyssinia, and Manchuria.

The norm strengthened during this period but leading into the end of the 1930s with the denial of the Geneva Disarmament Conference by Germany and the aerial attacks in the Spanish civil war, it appears that the norm began to deteriorate once more. Leading into World War II with all this new technology and potentials for doctrine, this started to deteriorate again. "The bomber will always get through" and entering World War II, the puzzle continues with the then strengthened norm come crashing down.<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>153</sup> Meilinger 1996, 261: quote from Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin.

## Chapter 4: The Bomber Returns in World War II, 1939-1945

*“We shall bomb Germany by day as well as by night in ever-increasing measure”*  
-Prime Minister Winston Churchill, 22 June 1941<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Leading into World War II, the anti-strategic bombing norm slowly, and then rapidly, declined. Despite a relative decline from the low norm of the interwar period, the norm resembled that of World War I: near death. This chapter shows leading into the war how the norm stayed relatively strong when there was little bombing, but rapidly deteriorated when actors began to heavily target cities. Certainly, as LeRoy points out in 1941: “The increasing and inevitable integration of land, naval, and air warfare...broadened and complicated the problem of limitation of air warfare.”<sup>2</sup> Whereas in World War I where the airplane itself was a new technology, in World War II, “The airplane has revolutionized warfare in that it has furnished a means of striking directly not only at the army and navy of the enemy but also at the source of enemy power, his citizens, his capital city, and his industrial and commercial centers.”<sup>3</sup> The airplane was a prominent tool in World War II.

This chapter engages the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon model for norm strength analysis and then performs a hypotheses analysis on World War II. Ultimately, this

---

<sup>1</sup> British Bomber Command: The Air Ministry account of Bomber command’s offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941 <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015032015367>, 127.

<sup>2</sup> LeRoy 1941, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

chapter will show the decline of the anti-strategic bombing norm during this period due to low enforcement mechanisms and actors not using available technology to conduct precision targeting. The content of the norm in this instance continues to reflect a prohibition of targeting civilians. Leaving the interwar period, the anti-strategic bombing norm stays at a low level. I argue that the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis best explains the decrease in norm strength. The technology hypothesis also explains the weak norm in World War II. In this case, the low amount of enforcement on the anti-strategic bombing norm results in the weak norm strength and the lack of available technology used also weakens the norm.

### **Norm Strength Analysis**

Entering World War II, there is a shift of how actors start to behave differently from World War I with the airplane as a new technology. The relatively stronger norm of the interwar period reflects that of an understanding of the norm, especially with the 1923 Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare. Concordance drops from the relatively stronger low norm strength in the interwar period to the very low norm strength of the war. Few references to protecting civilians and avoiding targeting them in the beginning of the war, especially during the “Phoney War,” shows this. Similarly with institutionalization, the low level from the interwar period completely disappears during World War II.

### **Concordance**

The restriction of the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon model makes it difficult to show a shift between periods. According to the model, the relatively strong, but low level



of concordance norm strength from the interwar period, was still “with few or sporadic references in reports and resolutions” and low rhetorical support from actors.<sup>4</sup> The relatively stronger concordance strength continued briefly into World War II, specifically with the promotion of the prohibition of aerial bombardment from the ICRC during the interwar period.<sup>5</sup>

Most of World War II represents concordance as the “few or sporadic reference in... reports and resolutions,” “no or very low rhetorical support from relevant [actors],” and “violations not [being] noted.”<sup>6</sup> The only promotion for the norm during the time would either come from the ICRC or the League of Nations, but with the weakness of these international organizations, it is difficult to show the promotion of norm strength, especially after regulation failures in the interwar period.

Rhetoric entering the war reflects the relatively stronger norm strength of the interwar period, even somewhat supporting anti-strategic bombing. “The orders for the attacks on the German Fleet on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1939, were explicit. ‘The greatest care is to be taken not to injure the civilian population. The intention is to destroy the German Fleet. There is no alternative target’.”<sup>7</sup> This quote from the Bomber Command’s offensive shows norm compliance during the time, not norm concordance. The Bomber Command offensive continues to describe avoidance of populated areas, for example, after Germany’s attacks on the Orkney Islands (16 March 1940) and killed British

---

<sup>4</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>5</sup> Haun 2019, 197, (fn 4).

<sup>6</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>7</sup> British Bomber Command: The Air Ministry account of Bomber command’s offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941 <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015032015367>, 22.

civilians, the Bomber Command was ordered to not drop bombs on ships in the quay, therefore only attacking ships at sea or in “wide roadsteads,” therefore not directly retaliating to German actions.<sup>8</sup>

The moral effect that Trenchard mentioned in the interwar period was encouraged in targeting alongside physical damage. In 1940, the British Air Staff declared that the “moral effect, although an extremely important subsidiary result of air bombardment, cannot in itself be decisive. There must be material destruction as a primary object.”<sup>9</sup> The simultaneous German attack on Holland, Belgium, and France on 10 May 1940 resulted in deterrence attacks from the United Kingdom.<sup>10</sup> The United Kingdom was left with the choice of either “interfer[ing] with the enemy’s lines of communication by bombing railways, roads, points of assembly, ‘bottle-necks,’ dumps, etc., and it can also in certain circumstances give close support by bombing enemy troops engaged in close action.”<sup>11</sup> With statements like these, there was not a counteractive condemnation of using strategic bombing by state actors.

The relative level of concordance dropped further into World War II. An author in 1941 described how “Nations generally have refused to outlaw the use of a new and effective military weapon,” in this instance, the bomber.<sup>12</sup> This quote shows a non-state actor describing the overall lack of norm compliance by actors, but also a lack of

---

<sup>8</sup> British Bomber Command: The Air Ministry account of Bomber command’s offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941 <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015032015367>, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Biddle 1995, 116, (fn 127).

<sup>10</sup> British Bomber Command: The Air Ministry account of Bomber command’s offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941 <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015032015367>, 42.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>12</sup> LeRoy 1941, 33.

promotion of norm concordance from international organizations. After the start of the German Blitzkrieg (the ‘Blitz’), strategic bombing became more prominent; it was “unpleasant and unavoidable.”<sup>13</sup> The British argued to conduct incendiary raids on the German population to further “internal disruption” and bring down population morale.<sup>14</sup> Although the United Kingdom pushed for German bombing, the Butt Report, conducted by Winston Churchill’s scientific advisor Lord Cherwell and published on 18 August 1941, revealed the ineffectiveness of the bombings performed by the United Kingdom. These examples show a lack of norm compliance but also shows a lack of condemnations on “bad actors.”

The Allies condemned the attacks by the German Luftwaffe, but this is not something that changes the norm strength. In wartime, the condemnations are not about upholding the norm strength, but instead are a way to combat an enemy. During the Luftwaffe’s attack on Malta, three cities were bombed, with a British RAF estimating 200 houses destroyed and 500 damaged.<sup>15</sup> In other accounts, “over 10,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged during April [1942]. The lovely baroque façades crashed down, the painted roofs of the churches were broken open to the sky, the palaces of the Knights of St. John and their hewn bastions were scored and wounded.”<sup>16</sup> The account describes the action of Germany: destroying civilian areas such as homes, churches, and palaces.

---

<sup>13</sup> Page 2019, 95, (fn 2-quote from a 1942 psychoanalytic survey).

<sup>14</sup> Biddle 2002, 193, (fn 74).

<sup>15</sup> R.A.F. Middle East, the official story of air operations in the Middle East, from February 1942 to January 1943, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015027912792>, 24.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

Outrage for this case is not necessarily promoting the norm, but instead expressing outrage against an enemy.

Raids continued specifically on cities such as Essen, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Wuppertal, Bochum, Cologne, and Hamburg.<sup>17</sup> In a statement made on September 1944 by the Bombing orders, the new target was to destroy all means of the German military: “The overall mission of the Strategic Air Forces is the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial and economic systems and the direct support of land and naval forces.”<sup>18</sup> The support for bombing was to stop the German military. Separately, German industry and economy were also tied to the civilian population. Due to the bombings, the German population was forced to disperse and sometimes stop production.<sup>19</sup> An RAF RE8 report taken to assess damage from March and December 1943 said that in that time 190 million square feet of industrial areas were destroyed and 590 million square feet of non-industrial property was destroyed.<sup>20</sup> The United States Strategic Air Force (USSTAF) reported in 1944 “The evidence is already conclusive that these operations have had a disastrous effect on enemy logistics.”<sup>21</sup> In the eyes of other actors, it is difficult to see condemnation of U.S. and British actions during the time. Bellamy notes that due to the emphasis of targeting military and industrial targets, this ultimately misled others into believing these targeting tactics were just war. His references are to the British population perspective, but this could apply to other

---

<sup>17</sup> Ehlers 2009, 145.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 151, (fn 26).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 225, (fn 130).

actors as well.<sup>22</sup> If other actors believed that the U.S. and British were only targeting military industrial and non-industrial targets, there is ultimately no criticism. Some original British targeting lists omitted “[and targeting] the morale of the German people” because criticism of these actions could be a result.<sup>23</sup> Therefore this also shows how the norm is not dead, but also shows a very weak point within U.S. and British rhetoric.

U.S. bombing in Japan also reflects targeting civilian morale. A 1946 United States Strategic Bombing Survey reported that “roughly one-quarter of all people in cities fled or were evacuated, and these evacuees, who themselves were of singularly low morale, helped spread discouragement and disaffection for the war throughout the islands.”<sup>24</sup> Decrease in morale supported strategic bombing efforts to try and end the war. The nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is the ultimate low point for the norm. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were targets directly on the civilian population.<sup>25</sup> The U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey described how in Hiroshima, “The bomb exploded a little northwest of the center of the built-up area... Approximately 60,000 to 70,000 people were killed, and 50,000 were injured.”<sup>26</sup> Although this campaign was marketed as that to target Japan’s military, the Bombing Survey reports that “the big plants on the periphery of the city were almost completely undamaged and 94 percent of their workers unhurt. These factories accounted for 74 percent of the industrial production of the city.”<sup>27</sup> This

---

<sup>22</sup> Bellamy 2012, 142.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 141-142.

<sup>24</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War) 1 July 1946, [https://marshall.csu.edu.au/Marshalls/html/WWII/USSBS\\_Summary.html#josp](https://marshall.csu.edu.au/Marshalls/html/WWII/USSBS_Summary.html#josp), 21.

<sup>25</sup> Tannenwald 2007, 14.

<sup>26</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War) 1 July 1946, 24.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

shows that the bombing was purposefully targeted at the city center, not the industrial factories. Concordance is at the lowest point, because there are no evident condemnations of using the atomic bomb. The report on Nagasaki also reflected civilian population fears: “the primary reaction of the populace to the bomb was fear, uncontrolled terror, strengthened by the sheer horror of the destruction and suffering witnessed and experienced by the survivors.”<sup>28</sup> The bombing of these two locations reflects the exact definition of strategic bombing, and in no way support the anti-strategic bombing norm and shows the direct correlation between strategic bombing and atomic bombing.<sup>29</sup>

Concordance levels during World War II were at a very low level, with the restrictions of the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon scale making it difficult to label overall subtle changes into different categories. Although there was a brief part of the interwar period’s higher-low levels in World War II, the lack of resolutions in promotion of the anti-strategic bombing norm shows a lack of concordance during the war. Moving into institutionalization, this also represents a low point category with the lack of laws going into World War II and a weak number of institutional propositions mentioned immediately post-World War II.

### **Institutionalization**

For World War II, actors still did not codify limitations on aerial bombardment. LeRoy notes in 1941 that “Air warfare is not now subject to international legal limitation.

---

<sup>28</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War) 1 July 1946, 25.

<sup>29</sup> Lifton & Greg 1995, 34-35.

Attempts at such limitation made in good faith have not been effective,” which is mainly in reference to the 1923 Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare.<sup>30</sup> In the interwar period, institutionalization rose relatively in the low level. With no agreements signed and/or ratified entering World War II, institutionalization was already at a low level. During the war, the lack of agreements prohibiting aerial bombardment and targeting civilians shows how the norm strength moved to a relatively lower point. Institutionalization is described as “may be extrapolated from international law(s) and independent organizations either do not or only sporadically promote adoption or monitor compliance” to international agreements.<sup>31</sup> The weak norm strength results from no international laws or agreements signed and ratified, nor a promotion of these agreements’ values.

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declared on 21 June 1938 that attacking civilians purposefully was against international law and targeting should be limited to “legitimate military objectives.”<sup>32</sup> This statement shows the higher-low level of institutionalization from the interwar period. At the start of the war, U.S. President Roosevelt released an appeal to have actors sign on saying they would not be the first to target civilians or “unfortified cities,” and as a result, France and the United Kingdom declared to not be the first to target civilians.<sup>33</sup> France and the United Kingdom also claimed adopt the principals of the 1923 Hague Draft Rules, in an attempt to define military targeting as “military forces, works, establishments or depots, factories

---

<sup>30</sup> LeRoy 1941, 31.

<sup>31</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>32</sup> Biddle 2002, 181, (fn 20).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 182, (fn 25- 1 September 1939 & 26).

constituting important and well-known centres engaged in the manufacture of arms, munitions or distinctively military supplies.”<sup>34</sup> Defining military targets and excluding civilians from the list represents the extrapolation of international law. The moderate restrictions through international appeals at the start of the war exemplifies the relative norm strength leading into the war.

There were no international agreements developed in World War II for strategic bombing. LeRoy wrote in 1941 that “[a]lthough the growing use of aircraft has changed the technique of modern warfare there are no international agreements to limit aerial warfare,” further confirming the lack of international laws at the time.<sup>35</sup> Other proposals, such as Hitler’s 1935 limitation of air warfare, offered an “establishment of demilitarized zones with immunity from air bombardment,” which did not hold as a value in the war.<sup>36</sup> The overall lack of institutionalized development ultimately is why institutionalization still stays at a low level during World War II.

### **Hypotheses Analysis**

This section analyzes why the norm went from a high-low level of concordance and institutionalization during the interwar period to very low in World War II. I analyze that the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis functions to explain the fall in the anti-strategic bombing norm strength, whereas the hypotheses high enforcement, weak norm

---

<sup>34</sup> Bomber Command : The Air Ministry account of Bomber command’s offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941 <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015032015367>, 20.

<sup>35</sup> LeRoy 1941, 22.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 30.



and hegemonic leadership do not function as explanations to the fall in norm strength. The technology hypothesis slightly explains the weakness of the anti-strategic bombing norm.

***Hypothesis 1A: High Enforcement, Strong Norm***

Enforcement for strategic bombing is difficult to prove during this period due to retaliation tactics during the war and larger mechanisms for enforcement for the war effort. Enforcement includes social sanctions, economic sanctions, and military action to deter actors from dissenting from a norm, in this case to deter actors from using strategic bombing.<sup>37</sup> Based on theories of enforcement, this hypothesis explains that norms are weak when there are few enforcement mechanisms used by state actors, such as sanctions and military actions. Norms will be strong when there are many enforcement mechanisms used by state actors. Therefore, this hypothesis reflects few enforcement mechanisms during the war in explanation of the weak norm. The enforcement hypothesis works to explain the low levels of the anti-strategic bombing norm because there were no enforcement mechanisms to strictly prohibit strategic bombing.

General sanctions between actors during World War II were ultimately ineffective. The sanctions imposed were also not for stopping strategic bombing by the enemy combatants, but instead were sanctions mainly due to war time. As LeRoy notes: “although the peace-time sanctions of international law are difficult of application, the war-time sanctions are infinitely more difficult. The frequent failure of these sanctions

---

<sup>37</sup> Erickson 2020, 100 & 101.

under the fury of belligerent attack in total war constitutes no sweeping challenge to the great fabric of international law.”<sup>38</sup> Both the Allies and Axis powers used strategic bombing during the war, and it was overall difficult to enact sanctions. An example of the lack of sanctions can be seen with the campaigns against German oil. Instead of putting sanctions on the energy industry of Germany to stop energy supplies to fuel military vehicles, including airplanes, the British Bomber Command instead targeted oil refineries. This targeting was not an enforcement tactic for the anti-strategic bombing norm, but instead a military tactic to stop military production in Germany.

Actors saw strategic bombing as the enforcement tactic against the enemy for other means besides the anti-strategic bombing norm. Sometimes “air warfare carr[ied] its own sanctions. The certainty of speedy retaliation and reprisals compensates for lack of legal sanctions.”<sup>39</sup> The United Kingdom and France ministries created branches that were for economic warfare, but under the category of economic warfare enforcement included naval blockades, blacklisting, submarine interdiction, and strategic bombing.<sup>40</sup> A quote from *The Economist* in 1940 said “The Ministry of Economic Warfare was never a mere Ministry of Blockade, and it was always intended that the bombing operations of the R.A.F. should be guided by this ministry’s economic experts... Bombing is the accelerator of blockade.”<sup>41</sup> This shows that bombing was not something that sanctions were imposed on but instead was used as an enforcement tactic under economic

---

<sup>38</sup> LeRoy 1941, 19.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>40</sup> Mulder 2022, 260.

<sup>41</sup> “Bombing and Blockade,” *The Economist* 139, no. 5070 [26 October 1940].

sanctions. Therefore, the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis is difficult to analyze because military actions within wartime blur the line between strategic bombing and using strategic bombing as a means of enforcement for something else. In addition, it is difficult to argue for a high level of enforcement of the norm, when there were no regulations for strategic bombardment that actors signed on to. Most actors “refused to outlaw the use of a new and effective military weapon,” therefore making it even harder to justify instilling sanctions.<sup>42</sup>

For military purposes, there were instances of strategic sanctioning, specifically to try to stop the production and development of airplanes. In 1940, U.S. President Roosevelt began oil restriction to Spain and raw materials to Japan, purchasing supplies to restrict the advancements of the Axis powers.<sup>43</sup> This supply purchasing went alongside the U.K. economic war policy of the “oil famine in Europe,” which included destroying oil facilities and restricting oil supplies.<sup>44</sup> The main form of economic retaliation, however, was through bombing oil refineries. Under the name Operation Abigail Rachel, after the beginning of the German Blitzkrieg, the British War Cabinet supported bombing German cities and urban centers, furthermore, using strategic bombing as a weapon of enforcement to stop the war.<sup>45</sup> This is to show that although there were not sanctions to support the anti-strategic bombing norm, there were sanctions to support respective

---

<sup>42</sup> LeRoy 1941, 32.

<sup>43</sup> Mulder 2022, 269.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 269, (fn 62).

<sup>45</sup> Mulder 2022, 270, (fn 64).

military efforts. This also shows the capabilities to impose sanctions to stop strategic bombing, but this was not a concern during the war.

In Asia, similar economic sanctions took place against the Japanese to stop the war. In December 1940, the United States restricted iron ore, hydraulic pumps, and lubrication oil and in January and February placed sanctions on copper, zinc, nickel, and potash.<sup>46</sup> On 25 July 1941, the U.S. froze all Japanese assets within itself.<sup>47</sup> On 30 July 1941, Roosevelt then created the Economic Defense Board to conduct economic warfare.<sup>48</sup> Like the Britain and France example, the U.S. prohibited raw materials to cut the production of military weapons. This once again shows the ability to impose sanctions, but how actors did not impose sanctions for the anti-strategic bombing norm.

For the high enforcement, strong norm/low enforcement, low norm hypothesis, France, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. used sanctions as a means for the war effort, not to enforce the anti-strategic bombing norm. Particularly, these actors used economic sanctions to cripple the German and Japanese war production and war capabilities. Therefore, due to the lack enforcement against strategic bombings on all actors including the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, and Japan, this hypothesis functions as an explanation for the low level of the norm.

---

<sup>46</sup> Mulder 2022, 278, (fn 104).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 278, (fn 114).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 278.

### ***Hypothesis 1B: Low Enforcement, Strong Norm***

The low enforcement, strong norm hypothesis argues that the anti-strategic bombing norm will be weak when there is a *high* level of enforcement, and the norm will be strong when there is *low* level of enforcement. Leading into the war, there were no new agreements which would have a high level of enforcement provisions for dissenters to the anti-strategic bombing norm. With the low level of enforcement during the war, it is expected that the norm would be strong with this hypothesis. This is not the case, showing how this hypothesis does not work to explain the low norm.

The U.S. imposed financial isolation on Japan and restricted its oil supply in 1941.<sup>49</sup> Alongside the U.S., the United Kingdom and the Netherlands also put a freeze on Japanese assets.<sup>50</sup> These actions, however, were not for the anti-strategic bombing norm. Therefore, there continued to be no enforcement mechanisms on Japan against its actions of using strategic bombing. Despite the low enforcement mechanisms against the Japanese, aerial bombardment continued, including the attack on Pearl Harbor at the end of 1941.<sup>51</sup>

Separately, there were no sanctions on the U.S. for using strategic bombardment on 9-10 March 1945 on Tokyo, killing 100,000 residents.<sup>52</sup> After this raid, the U.S. launched an incendiary weapons campaign on 66 Japanese cities.<sup>53</sup> After that was the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 August 1945 and 9 August 1945,

---

<sup>49</sup> Mulder 2022, 279, (fn 118).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>52</sup> Biddle 2014, 44.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 45.

respectively.<sup>54</sup> In both of these examples, no sanctions were placed on Japan nor the U.S. for aerial bombardment or strategic bombing usage. Contrary to this hypothesis, the norm was weak despite no enforcement mechanisms in place.

Other examples from the high enforcement, strong norm section show the lack of enforcement during World War II and how the anti-strategic bombing norm was not strong. This contradicts this hypothesis, showing that although there were low enforcement mechanisms for the anti-strategic bombing norm during World War II, this did not strengthen the norm in accordance with the high enforcement, low norm hypothesis. If this hypothesis worked as an explanation, the norm would either have been stronger during the period or there would have been higher levels of enforcement.

### ***Hypothesis 2: Hegemonic Leadership***

The hegemonic leadership hypothesis states that norms will be weak when the hegemonic leader determines it is less in its self-interest to have an anti-strategic bombing norm; and norms will be strong when the hegemonic leader determines it is in its self-interest to have an anti-strategic bombing norm. For the World War II case, this is difficult to describe because the emerging hegemon, the United States, was not active during some of the war, and at first did not want to take on a hegemonic leadership role. Like the interwar period, the lack of an initial hegemon makes it difficult to describe in this hypothesis with the interest of the hegemon, but instead describes the weakness of the norm with an overall lack of one.

---

<sup>54</sup> Biddle 2014, 45.

This hypothesis is not based on enforcement by the hegemon on other actors but instead shows a hegemonic example. Hegemonic leadership does typically induce enforcement, but it first does not start with hegemonic enforcement. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis is difficult to explain norm strength with the United States because it did not enter World War II until 1941 after Pearl Harbor. This does show, however, the lack of the hegemon and the deterioration of the norm. The attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which ultimately encouraged civilian targeting to finish the war, did not set off a chain reaction to deteriorate the anti-strategic bombing norm further, therefore not setting an example for norm deterioration.

The first usage of strategic bombing in the war was not by the U.S. but by Germany. At the start of the war, the U.S. was not active. The goal of the German Blitzkrieg in September 1940 was to target Britain's industrial sector and scare the population.<sup>55</sup> Phase One of the Blitz was to target London, phase two was to target war production within fourteen cities in Great Britain, and phase three the Luftwaffe targeted ports.<sup>56</sup> In the first phase of the Blitz, about 13,000 people died in the attacks; phase two resulted in the destruction of 21 industrial sites and included 554 civilians killed; and phase three resulted in two waves of death: about a 1,000 civilians on 16 April 1941 and 1,436 civilians on 10 May 1941.<sup>57</sup> Although the Luftwaffe claimed to not target civilians, but instead target "Factories, docks, the government quarter of Whitehall, and the

---

<sup>55</sup> Downes 2008, 142.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 142.

economic and financial centre of the City of London,” civilian casualties still happened.<sup>58</sup> The United States was not in the war during this time and wanted to stay neutral, and at the same time did not condemn nor support the German strategic bombardment. This shows the lack of leadership from the potential hegemon.

After the Blitz, the British Air Staff stated that the “moral effect, although an extremely important subsidiary result of air bombardment, cannot in itself be decisive. There must be material destruction as a primary object.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore encouraging physical destruction of towns and hurting civilian morale. This is another wartime actor which encouraged strategic bombardment, but was not the U.S. With the lack of presence, it is hard to describe the acceptance of using strategic bombing, but instead describes norm deterioration from the lack of a hegemon. From 1940 to 1941, the German Luftwaffe performed night raids on smaller cities (Conentrieren) with the goal of “the physical and psychological destruction of an entire city,” and not giving enough time or warning for civilians to take cover.<sup>60</sup> The United Kingdom slowly shifted targeting from oil to the “general dislocation of industry by mass attacks on industrial centres.”<sup>61</sup> Both actors, not the hegemon, promoted strategic bombing more.

---

<sup>58</sup> Downes 2008, 143, (fn 120): As well, another quote by Hitler stated “although the target area has been extended, air raids on London will continue to be directed primarily against installations of military importance and vital facilities in the city, including train stations. Terror raids on purely residential areas should only be a last resort to exert pressure, and therefore, should not be used at this time (Downes 2008, 149-fn 167).

<sup>59</sup> Biddle 1999, 116, (fn 127).

<sup>60</sup> Page 2019, 114.

<sup>61</sup> Biddle 1999, 632, (fn 1-Portal to Peirse on 28 February 1941).



During 1941, the British RAF began to target the morale of German civilians.<sup>62</sup> On the night of 10-11 February 1941, the United Kingdom attacked oil plants in Holland, then targeted cities.<sup>63</sup> Railway junctions, such as Münster, were bombed multiple nights in a row.<sup>64</sup> In November 1941, the Bomber Command attacked railway stations and streets within the cities of Lehrter, Stettiner, and Unter-den-Linden.<sup>65</sup> The Bomber Command report stated: “So much for material damage. What, however, has been the effect of our raids on the morale of the Germans?... As soon as German morale begins to wilt, victory will be in sight.”<sup>66</sup> Continuing in to 1941, the decrease of the anti-strategic bombing norm continued to not be supported by a hegemon but instead by other actors that were already engaged in warfare.

The U.S. started making military plans in 1941. Although the U.S. had not yet entered the war, on 20 June 1941, it created the U.S. Army Air Forces.<sup>67</sup> The Air War Plans Division-1 (AWPD-1), written in August 1941, designated the top targets to combat the German war economy, including electric power, transportation, oil, and

---

<sup>62</sup> Biddle 1995, 117, (fn 134).

<sup>63</sup> Ehlers 2009, 113.

<sup>64</sup> British Bomber Command: The Air Ministry account of Bomber command’s offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015032015367>, 120-121. (Münster was bombed five nights in a row from 6-10 July 1941)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>66</sup> British Bomber Command: The Air Ministry account of Bomber command’s offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941, 120-121. (Münster was bombed five nights in a row from 6-10 July 1941), 122.: The report also emphasized “Morale took a downward curve after the heavy raids on Kiel on the nights of 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> April 1941. Complaints began to be made about the inadequacy of the A.R.P. and fire-fighting services. A feeling of depression spread abroad over Hamburg and the citizens are still under its influence.”

Another document titled Bomber command continues, Great Britain, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001700903e> (July 1941-June 1942) quotes “It was accordingly decided to attack factories known to be engaged in working for the Germans, with the object of dislocating or destroying production” (p. 38)

<sup>67</sup> Biddle 2002, 208.

aircraft production.<sup>68</sup> The AWPD-1 was based on “selective targeting,” but as Biddle notes, also focused on the “moral effect” to wear down Germany.<sup>69</sup> U.S. late preparation in the war once again shows the lack of leadership with using strategic bombardment and the lack of involvement of a power capable of being the hegemon.

The ineffectiveness found from the Butt Report did not deter the British Bomber Command from bombing cities, but instead encouraged the blanket bombing. The new goal, as of 14 February 1942, was to aim at urban areas to attack the population’s morale.<sup>70</sup> The persistence to use city bombing as a justification to get better results is prominent among British reports during this time. However, there was a large disagreement between the U.K. and U.S. on day-precision raids versus night-blanket bombing.<sup>71</sup> The U.K. advocated heavily for night-blanket bombing attacks, whereas the U.S. advocated for day-precision raids. With the U.K. advocating for more strategic bombing tactics, the U.S. continued to not contribute to the drop in norm strength during this time.

The first group of American officers did not arrive until April 1942, but only advocated for day-raids. The United States was “firmly convinced of the inadequacy of the night bombing and consequently of the need to intensify the day bombing effort.”<sup>72</sup> The Casablanca Conference in January 1943 best represents the conflict between the United States and the United Kingdom. The conference was where the Combined Chiefs

---

<sup>68</sup> Haun 2019, 199; Biddle 1995, 117-118, (fn 141).

<sup>69</sup> Biddle 1995, 117.

<sup>70</sup> Biddle 1995, 117, a quote stating to “render the German industrial population homeless, spiritless, and, in so far as possible, dead...” (fn 136).

<sup>71</sup> Ehlers 2009, 136.

<sup>72</sup> Ehlers 2009, 137; Biddle 2002, 209, (fn 138).

of Staff (CCS) met to discuss bomber tactics. The ultimate goal was “the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial and economic system, and the undermining of the morale of the German people to a point where their capacity for armed resistance [was] fatally weakened,” but the two actors disagreed on how to go about the attacks.<sup>73</sup> The United States continued with precision targeting whereas the British Bomber Command continued with night city raids, especially on the Ruhr Valley.<sup>74</sup> The lack of U.S. advocacy for strategic bombing in comparison to the U.K. shows the overall lack of power from the U.S.

The U.S. silently promoted using strategic bombing in partnership with the U.K. during joint attacks. While appearing to support anti-strategic bombing, the U.S. performed incendiary bombings on “suitable precise industrial objectives” and “start[ed] fires by day in the densely built-up portions of cities and towns to serve as beacons for the RAF to exploit at night.”<sup>75</sup> This continues to show the lack of outward promotion by the U.S. of anti-strategic bombing while the norm continued to deteriorate. Even within the war, the United States was not the leading actor with strategic attacks in the first years it entered.

By the time Operation Argument (“Big Week”) occurred from 20-25 February 1944, the Bomber Command and USAAF targeted the German Luftwaffe and military production.<sup>76</sup> The U.S. and U.K. continued to debate over day raids versus night raids but

---

<sup>73</sup> Haun 2019, 203, (fn 19); Ehlers 2009, 142, (fn 4).

<sup>74</sup> Ehlers 2009, 143; Haun 2019, 204.

<sup>75</sup> Biddle 2002, 229, (fn 64-Memorandum on 26 April 1943).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 232, (fn 80).

overall cooperated with attacks. Specifically, the United States started to attack transportation lines in 1944 in Operation Overlord.<sup>77</sup> In June 1944, the United States performed outright strategic bombing, because “The desire to see the war over in 1944 was strong-so strong in fact, that it caused U.S. air planners to hope that by creating enough disillusionment and chaos in Germany, it might force an internal crisis.”<sup>78</sup> At this point, the promotion of using strategic bombing already deteriorated the anti-strategic bombing norm. The actions of the U.S. in 1944 do not mark a turning point for this hypothesis because the norm was already weak at this point. By the time the U.S. started to promote strategic bombing, this was already the norm.

The United States bombed Berlin nine times between March and June of 1944.<sup>79</sup> Finally, the Luftwaffe began to break down between 1944 and 1945 with the oil and transportation bombing campaigns, but also with the land and factory campaigns, ultimately destroying Germany’s railroads and waterways.<sup>80</sup> The Dresden raid, on 13-14 February 1945, was specifically to bring “psychological shock” to Germany.<sup>81</sup> As it was “the American slide to terror bombing,” the Dresden raid shows the full promotion of strategic bombing by a leading power.<sup>82</sup> Despite the “slide to terror bombing,” this once again shows how the power capable of being the hegemon is not the one who initially

---

<sup>77</sup> Ehlers 2009, 208: Eisenhower announced the transportation plan on 25 March 1944, with the encouragement of Operation Overlord where the first target was still the Luftwaffe but then the second target was enemy transportation, especially locomotive repair shops and marshalling yards.

<sup>78</sup> Biddle 2002, 239, (fn 113).

The COA report from the Combined Bomber Offensive listed, in June 1944, ordered the priority of targets to be: aircraft, coke, oil, electronics, bearings, urban areas, and shipping; and allowed blind bombing for urban areas (Biddle 2002, 265)

<sup>79</sup> Biddle 2002, 239.

<sup>80</sup> Ehlers 2009, 150-151 & 295; Maier 2005, 435.

<sup>81</sup> Biddle 1999, 647; Sherry 1987, 260.

<sup>82</sup> Biddle 1995, 125; Biddle 1999, 647.

promoted strategic bombing. Especially with the Dresden raid, this shows how late into the war the U.S. supported using strategic bombing for its own gain. The United States participated in the Dresden raid, specifically for implementing the psychological effect on Germany, deteriorating the anti-strategic bombing norm, which was already weakened.<sup>83</sup>

The hegemonic leadership hypothesis, “norms will be weak when the hegemonic leader(s) determines it is less in its self-interest to have an anti-strategic bombing norm,” works only as an explanation later in the war in bombing Germany. However, the overall hesitancy of the U.S. to use strategic bombing, such as during the Casablanca conference in 1943, shows the norm not dying out during this time. This also shows weak hegemony, not necessarily aligning with the decrease in norm strength. Once the United States began strategic bombing in 1943/44, Ehlers describes how on 29 March 1944 the U.S. targeted transportation ways in Operation Overlord, also “plan[ned] to warn civilians living near rail yards to move away.”<sup>84</sup> This example shows how the norm was not dead during the time due to small encouragements of civilian protection even in wartime. This also shows how the U.S. did not lead the decrease of the norm when it began to use strategic bombardment.

The U.S. attacks on Japan are another example of strategic bombing used during the period. On 9 March 1945, the U.S. began Operation Meetinghouse, an incendiary campaign against Tokyo.<sup>85</sup> In this raid, the U.S. dropped 1,665 tons of incendiary bombs, mainly targeting densely populated areas in the city, especially houses made of paper and

---

<sup>83</sup> Maier 2005, 435.

<sup>84</sup> Ehlers 2009, 213-214.

<sup>85</sup> Downes 2008, 116, (fn 1).

wood.<sup>86</sup> This raid resulted in almost 88,000 deaths and more than one million Japanese homeless.<sup>87</sup> On 2 August 1945 the United States dropped 6,632 tons of incendiary bombs on Hachioji, Toyama, Nagaoka, and Mito.<sup>88</sup> According to a U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, due to the threat of air attacks “roughly one-quarter of all people in cities fled or were evacuated, and these evacuees, who themselves were of singularly low morale, helped spread discouragement and disaffection for the war throughout the islands.”<sup>89</sup> U.S. strategic bombing heightened in the Japanese campaigns showing encouragement by the hegemonic leader towards the end of the war. This shows the U.S. taking the hegemonic leadership role with the case of Japan and showing the encouragement of using strategic bombing.

The U.S. incendiary attacks led up to the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 August and 9 August 1945, respectively. Both attacks exemplify the brief near death of the norm in the hands of the hegemonic power. The U.S. targeted Hiroshima for having key industries for war production, but “the [nuclear] bomb exploded a little northwest of the center of the built-up area. Everyone who was out in the open and was exposed to the initial flash suffered serious burns were not protected by clothing.”<sup>90</sup> The attacks overall represent a U.S. lack of normative concern in decision making on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Targeting was mainly aimed at the city center to

---

<sup>86</sup> Downes 2008, 116.

The population density in Tokyo was about 103,000 residents per square mile.

<sup>87</sup> Downes 2008, 116.

<sup>88</sup> Biddle 2002, 268, (fn 227).

<sup>89</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War), [https://marshall.csu.edu.au/Marshalls/html/WWII/USSBS\\_Summary.html#josp](https://marshall.csu.edu.au/Marshalls/html/WWII/USSBS_Summary.html#josp), (July 1946), 21.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 23.

undermine the Japanese population. In this attack, between 60,000 and 70,000 people were killed and about 50,000 injured.<sup>91</sup> Although the nuclear attack was marketed as targeting the crucial industrial production parts of the city, the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey reported otherwise. The survey said “the big plants on the periphery of the city were almost completely undamaged and 94 percent of their workers unhurt. These factories accounted for 74 percent of the industrial production of the city... The railroads running through the city were repaired for the resumption of through traffic on 8 August, two days after the attack.”<sup>92</sup> The targeting on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ultimately had no effect on the war effort and was not fully intended to force the Japanese to give up with having no war supplies. The Strategic Bombing Survey analyzed that the population experienced “fear, uncontrolled terror, [which was] strengthened by the sheer horror of the destruction and suffering witnessed and experienced by the survivors.”<sup>93</sup> Unlike with the hesitancy of performing blanket bombing on Germany, the United States used strategic bombing targeting civilian morale and ultimately killing a lot of civilians without any purpose. Nagasaki, also a populated city near a harbor, had already had some incendiary attacks before the nuclear attacks.<sup>94</sup>

Post-Hiroshima and Nagasaki represented an opportunity for few actors to attack enemies with an atomic weapon.<sup>95</sup> According to Page, a report from January 1946 stated, “the net effect [of atomic weapons] is to give an overwhelming advantage to the attack in

---

<sup>91</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War), [https://marshall.csu.edu.au/Marshalls/html/WWII/USSBS\\_Summary.html#josp](https://marshall.csu.edu.au/Marshalls/html/WWII/USSBS_Summary.html#josp), (July 1946), 23.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>93</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War), (July 1946), 25.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>95</sup> Page 2019, 133.

the case of large targets, but no comparable advantage to the attack on small or dispersed targets,” the result being a larger advantage with the war effort but also destroying everything in a certain area.<sup>96</sup> This statement ultimately means that strategic bombing, and nuclear attacks, were seen as something incredibly advantageous to overall war tactics but also was not something prominently developed. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis states that hegemonic powers set the leadership example for the anti-strategic bombing norm, and the norm is weak when hegemonic leaders decide that it is more advantageous to them to make it weak. In the case of nuclear bombing, these events were so horrendous, this did not set off a chain reaction of other powers using nuclear weapons at the end of the war. Therefore, the United States deemed it necessary to use nuclear bombs then, but then the bombs were not used in future endeavors.

Overall, this hypothesis does not work as an explanation of the fall of strength in the anti-strategic bombing norm, with no direct correlation between the decline of the anti-strategic bombing norms during the rise of United States hegemony towards the end of the war. There was no U.S. presence in the beginning of the war despite the continuous fall of the norm. Once the U.S. did enter the war, not as a hegemonic power, there was an overall hesitancy to use strategic bombardment. Finally, once the U.S. used nuclear bombing on Japan, this did not show encouragement for other actors to develop or support nuclear war in World War II.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> Page 2019, 134, (fn 7).

<sup>97</sup> Lifton & Greg 1995, 37.



### *Hypothesis 3: Technology*

The third and final hypothesis expects that norms will be weak when states do not use available technology to minimize targeting civilians; norms will be strong when states employ available technology to target military targets. This comes from Zehfuss' outline of fighting with more precise weapons results in the reduction of destruction and casualties of non-combatants during wartime.<sup>98</sup> "Precision" does not mean a complete elimination of casualties, but instead means an overall decrease.<sup>99</sup> Technology improved during the interwar years, specifically general airplane developments. With this hypothesis, it is expected for low norm strength that despite relative technological advancements during the time, states chose not to use this technology which avoids civilian harm in World War II. During World War II, states used this technology sometimes to target civilian areas. The biggest example of this can be the targeting of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Therefore, this hypothesis somewhat functions as an explain to the decrease in the anti-strategic bombing norm during World War II but does not work as the clearest explanation. States either did not use technology available, proceeding to conduct blind bomb raids, or states used available technology to target cities, not supporting the hypothesis.

Leading up to the war, actors continued to develop airplanes and mechanisms to use within war. Main developments were aerial photography and photoreconnaissance. During the war, "[t]he main sources of information about damage [were] photographs

---

<sup>98</sup> Zehfuss 2010, 543.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 561.

and reports of all kinds, from statements made in the enemy and neutral press and radio to the tales of returned travelers.”<sup>100</sup> Sidney Cotton, an Australian inventor who worked under the British, developed photoreconnaissance capabilities which led to the creation of the Photographic Reconnaissance Units (PRUs) and Allied Central Interpretation Unit (CIU) to conduct reconnaissance on factories and high-value targets.<sup>101</sup> Although there was photoreconnaissance development, this ultimately did not prove very effective, especially in the midst of the “Phoney War.” The only plane that could make it into German territories for photoreconnaissance was the Blenheim bomber, and of the first eighty-nine missions in Germany in 1939, sixteen were shot down and did not make it back and half of the total missions did not produce photographs to be able to use for targeting specific areas.<sup>102</sup> Issues with the limited amount of photos able to be produced in the beginning of the war made it difficult to use as an effective technology. However, increased efficiency of annotating and labelling photographs for filing certain areas later gave pilots intelligence of their targets.<sup>103</sup> For the beginning of the war, photoreconnaissance helped plan where military targets were to avoid civilian targeting. This can explain the relatively stronger norm at the beginning of the war. Photoreconnaissance as a war time technology helped to have more precise targets, but progressing in the war, photoreconnaissance was not used as much. Therefore, the

---

<sup>100</sup> British Bomber Command: The Air Ministry account of Bomber command’s offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941,

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015032015367&view=1up&seq=8>, 115.

<sup>101</sup> Ehlers 2009, 86 & 88: The PRUs and CIU were both created in September 1939.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 90.

technology hypothesis slightly explains the decrease in norm strength because actors did not use to its full capability technology at the time.

Germany invaded Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg in May 1940, ending the Phoney War.<sup>104</sup> After the Phoney War, technology advancements were to make bombers faster and more efficient. The RAF hoped that the four-engine Lancaster bomber would be superior to the German twin-engine bombers, and even later the Air Corps Tactical School's AWPD-1 from 1941 hoped that the British bombers could depend on speed, high-altitude, and defensive power developed to defeat Germany.<sup>105</sup> In 1940, the Bomber Command began targeting the German oil industry. Due to the poor weather and navigation issues, the RAF struggled to hit precise targets and ended up with area bombardment.<sup>106</sup> The limited amount of photoreconnaissance photos produced led to bombers missing their targets and multiple unsuccessful attacks on barges and oil targets.<sup>107</sup>

Clarity in aerial photos improved, especially with showing details on the ground. "Hydrogenation stalls at synthetic oil plants, reduction houses at aluminum plants, and assembly sheds at aircraft factories," listed by Ehlers, shows the identification of certain military targets.<sup>108</sup> Although aerial photography helped determine targets, bombers had serious limitations in actual operations. The limitations included sensitivity to weather conditions, inability to defend itself in flight, vulnerability of individual airplanes, the

---

<sup>104</sup> Haun 2019, 197.

<sup>105</sup> Haun 2019, 198, (fn 7); Biddle 2002, 207, (fn 131).

<sup>106</sup> Haun 2019, 198.

<sup>107</sup> Haun 2019, 207; Ehlers 2009 94: unsuccessful small-scale targeting against oil in the Ruhr.

<sup>108</sup> Ehlers 2009, 102.

need for ground organization, limited flight times, and lack of air power experience.<sup>109</sup>

This continues to show the earlier period of the war as actors using photoreconnaissance to target military areas, therefore in accordance with the relatively stronger norm of the interwar period. Despite using the technology, the limitation with operations showed a difficulty of using the technology as the war progressed.

Between 1939 and 1941, actors developed and improved new aircrafts, specifically in size and holding capacity. Larger modelled aircrafts included Stirlings, Manchesters, Halifaxes, and Flying Fortresses.<sup>110</sup> Some British Bomber Command aircrafts, such as Wellingtons, Whitleys, and Hampdens, were so new that airmen were not well trained to handle these aircrafts.<sup>111</sup> A Bomber Command Air Ministry doctrine encouraged that “Great accuracy in navigation is therefore essential if the mine is to be laid where it will do most damage. The navigator takes his aircraft by the usual methods to a point on the enemy’s coast near to the selected place.”<sup>112</sup> Pre-selection of targets shows the usage of photoreconnaissance, but the norm was very weak and so this does not align with a normative weakness explanation.

Once Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal took charge of the Bomber Command in 1940, he encouraged the attack on oil production, airfields and aircraft production, and facilities.<sup>113</sup> In 1941, cloud coverage over certain areas made it hard to target areas from photoreconnaissance photos but also gave an advantage to bombers to hide them from the

---

<sup>109</sup> LeRoy 1941, 22.

<sup>110</sup> British Bomber Command: The Air Ministry account of Bomber command’s offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941, 9.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>113</sup> Ehlers 2009, 95.

enemy. One bombing method included flying over targets that were covered in clouds so the bombers could go farther distances without being seen.<sup>114</sup> Starting in January 1941, oil targeting was the main form of attack by the Bomber Command mainly executed by using the aerial photos from the PRUs to initiate plans, drawings, locating fire decoys, and attack methods.<sup>115</sup> Despite the encouragement of using photoreconnaissance for targets, the U.K. executed night bombing raids from June to July 1941, meaning the bombers were unable to see the targets on the ground.<sup>116</sup> This shows that the only advancement technology relative to the time to have more precise targeting, ultimately failed to be used.

On 18 August 1941, the Butt Report showed through photoreconnaissance that damage done by bomber crews was minimal.<sup>117</sup> This shows that even with the pre-planning from aerial photography, the Bomber Command mainly performed blind bombing targeting, resulting in missed targets and minimal damage. Not only did photoreconnaissance not fully help the precision of targeting, but it was also not used in an effective way. This shows how an actor did not use the available technology of the time to strengthen the norm.

In 1941, photo interpreters did not see that Germany sometimes purposefully shut down oil and industrial plants after air raids, no matter what level of damage, to make it seem as if plants had been shut down due to the raids. This error was not found until

---

<sup>114</sup> Bomber Command: The Air Ministry account of Bomber command's offensive against the Axis, September, 1939-July, 1941, 72.

<sup>115</sup> Ehlers 2009, 96.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>117</sup> Biddle 2002, 195.

1942.<sup>118</sup> 1942 bombing methods and targeting technology began to improve, specifically with light defenses and navigation skills. An example is the bombing of Lübeck on the night of 28 and 29 March 1942. These bombing methods resulted in more than 50% of bombs hitting the city and 30% of the city area destroyed.<sup>119</sup> However, despite higher targeting accuracy, the RAF used technology to continue to target cities instead of military areas. The technology hypothesis explains norm strengthening when the available technology at the time is used to have more precise targeting to avoid civilians, however in this instance that is not the case because the technology improvements are to target civilians.

Ehlers describes the 30-31 May 1942 attack on Cologne as one of high accuracy but was an attack on a city.<sup>120</sup> This shows the higher precision technology of the time was not used to protect civilians. The Pathfinder Force, in August 1942, also exemplified accuracy with aerial bombardment, but was carried out alongside night attacks against cities within the same month.<sup>121</sup> In 1943, Great Britain used the Gee, a navigational device, and Oboe, a blind-bomber aid, to navigate over targets to drop bombs below within 300 yards of the target point.<sup>122</sup> Great Britain had access to the new Mosquito light bomber pathfinder which made nighttime raids more accurate.<sup>123</sup> Despite the developments of navigational aids, these were still not fully used to avoid targeting cities. The technological hypothesis that the norm will be weak when actors do not use the

---

<sup>118</sup> Ehlers 2009, 111, (fn 87).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>123</sup> Haun 2019, 215, (fn 51).

available technology of the time to avoid civilian casualties, proves true, however it used new technology to target civilians.

For the U.S., photoreconnaissance was not used until 1942.<sup>124</sup> The largest struggle for bombers was the amount of cloud coverage over certain areas. The USAAF increased targeting accuracy with heightened training, taking vulnerability notes of target areas, and having the Norden bombsight.<sup>125</sup> However, the U.S. did not reflect this heightened accuracy in the war, eventually not using precision targeting at all. The Norden bombsight, a development to make daylight bombing more accurate, only functioned well in good weather. In most of 1943, there was extreme cloud coverage over Germany, restricting the usage of the Norden bombsight to attack military.<sup>126</sup> Due to this awful cloud coverage, on 1 November 1943 General Henry (Hap) Arnold, the USAAF commander, allowed “blind bombing” on cities. Although the bombsight was used in instances when there was good weather, the lack of usage of it shows how the U.S. did not use available technology to improve targeting.

Overall, actors frequently used blind bombing, despite relative technological improvements which could strengthen the norm. According to Biddle “whereas the RAF improved its accuracy throughout the war, the USAAF continued to aim badly in bad weather: in the autumn of 1943, its accuracy rates were no better than those recorded in the Butt Report of 1941.”<sup>127</sup> Even with heightened British accuracy, the U.K. night raids

---

<sup>124</sup> Ehlers 2009, 135; Biddle 2002, 223 (“American attempts at ‘precision bombing’ were consistently hindered by pervasive cloud cover over northern Europe, and by the extreme altitudes force upon the bomber pilots by German flak, fired by increasing numbers of anti-aircraft guns.”)

<sup>125</sup> Ehlers 2009, 166.

<sup>126</sup> Haun 2019, 196

<sup>127</sup> Biddle 1999, 646.

in Germany were not representative of precision targeting. During bad weather, the U.S. “aimed” at railroad marshalling yards but ultimately did not use any of the new technology to hit its targets.<sup>128</sup> Specifically, the 1944 campaigns against transportation had immense cloud coverage making it impossible to see through. The new methods of technology were not advanced enough to see through the clouds, but the technology could also have improved targeting more than the actions reflected. Most of these raids were based on blind bombing methods and incendiary bomb usage on cities, showing ultimately a neglect of new technology.<sup>129</sup> Even a 1944 quote from General Hap Arnold stated, “we must develop bomb sights and bombardiers which, under all weather conditions, cannot only literally drop bombs in a ‘pickle barrel’ but in the correct barrel.”<sup>130</sup> Although General Arnold wanted this dream of bomb sights to come true, the USSTAF continued area bombing through the clouds, specifically targeting “cities and towns” in July 1944.<sup>131</sup>

U.S. bombing in Japan had similar issues with weather, making it difficult for the U.S. to see through the conditions in the Pacific.<sup>132</sup> Despite difficulty to see, the U.S. conducted incendiary raids throughout Japan, which meant that precision technology was not needed. Dropping incendiary raids on Japanese cities was to bring certain areas to ashes.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, this shows a prime example of the lack of new technology used to

---

<sup>128</sup> Biddle 1999, 646.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Biddle 1995, 126, (fn 184).

<sup>131</sup> Biddle 2002, 243, (fn 128).

<sup>132</sup> Downes 2008, 130.

<sup>133</sup> Sherry 1987, 227, (fn 18): Prime Minister Winston Churchill said to American Congress “the process, so necessary and desirable, of laying the cities and other munitions centres of Japan in ashes, for in ashes they must surely lie before peace comes back to the world”



conduct more precise raids, but instead of using techniques which would cause the most collateral damage. When the incendiary attacks began on 24 November 1944, the USAAF barely hit its targets.<sup>134</sup> Due to the high altitudes of the planes, bombers either flew right over targets and missed them or were dangerously too close to them, both instances resulting in highly inaccurate bombing.<sup>135</sup> After the inaccurate bombing campaigns on Japan were the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Both the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki reflect how the technological advancements during this time were used to target the civilian population. The inaccurate fire-bombing attacks before these two events led many Japanese to flee their home cities.<sup>136</sup> When the first nuclear bomb hit Hiroshima “Everyone who was out in the open and was exposed to the initial flaps suffered serious burns were not protected by clothing...Most of the people in the flattened area were crushed” and between 60,000 to 70,000 people were killed.<sup>137</sup> The development of the nuclear bomb was in order to destroy a large areas with no discrimination between combatants and non-combatants. The nuclear attacks are not developments for precision attacks but does show how the available technology of the time was used not to avoid civilian casualties but to target city centers. This continues to support the technology hypothesis in showing how actors did not use available technology to pursue discriminatory attacks. The U.S. dropped both nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the middle of the city center instead of on

---

<sup>134</sup> Sherry 1987, 257.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War) 1 July 1946, 21.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 23.

the outskirts of the city where the military production facilities were, continuing to show the lack of technological usage in avoiding civilians.<sup>138</sup>

In other instances, the U.S. determined “precision” attacks based on radars which were known for imprecision. The USAAF also used the radars to continuously target city areas, using the technology not to strengthen the norm.<sup>139</sup> According to Downes “it is a misnomer to describe U.S. bombing from November 1944 to March 1945 as ‘precision bombing.’ Precision was what these strikes aspired to rather than what they achieved.”<sup>140</sup>

The technology hypothesis functions somewhat as an explanation in the fall of norm strength during World War II. Technology available included photoreconnaissance, the Norden bombsight, and other reconnaissance tactics to pre-determine certain targets. Despite, this ability, blind bombing, and incendiary raids were ultimately still the most prominent ways of targeting, heavily disregarding the capabilities at the time to conduct more precise raids. The ultimate technological development, the nuclear bomb, shows how new and available technology used was in pursuit of destroying the civilian population, where this technology targets individuals indiscriminately by wiping out a lot of people in a certain area.

---

<sup>138</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War) 1 July 1946., 24.

<sup>139</sup> Downes 2008, 129: Downes continues “Even raids conducted in clear weather that struck the primary target managed to place less than 15 percent of their bombs within a thousand feet of the aim point”

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 129, (fn 55).

## **Conclusion**

After a relative rise in norm strength during the interwar period the onset of World War II resulted in a very low level of norm strength. The best explanation for this drop in norm strength is the high enforcement, strong norm/weak enforcement, weak norm hypothesis. All combating actors actively disregarded the anti-strategic bombing norm during World War II, using strategic bombing as either retaliation tactics or using it for military gain. During the war, there were sanctions on enemy actors, but none of the sanctions were used to stop actors using strategic bombing, therefore not inhibiting actors to stop bombing. The technological hypothesis also explains the fall in the anti-strategic bombing norm because although there were certain pieces of technology able to conduct more precise raids, actors disregarded bomber aids and continued to use blind bombing or carpet-bombing tactics.

The hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not work as an explanation for the fall in norm strength due to the overall lack of a hegemon during most of the war. Actors, such as the U.K., Germany, and the U.S., utilized city bombing at a large extent to ultimately benefit them but the American leadership fell short with the consistency of the drop in the norm. The lack of U.S. presence at the beginning of the war shows how this explanation does not work because the norm continued to drop in strength without U.S. presence. As well, U.S. hesitancy to outright support strategic bombing alongside the U.K. shows the lack of power in determining norm strength.

## **Chapter 5: The Bomber Strikes Back? The Norm Post World War II**

“Many governments, however, have preferred to use military means including aerial bombing with civilians as the principal victims.”

-Mallison & Mallison 1973<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

After World War II, the 1949 Geneva Conventions brought a normative shift to the anti-strategic bombing norm. The Korean War (1950-1953), the Vietnam War (1955-1975), and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989) took place during the Cold War. In each case study, actors used aerial bombardment and civilian targeting as methods of warfare. The content of the norm in this period consists of a prohibition of targeting civilians in wartime. With the 1949 Geneva Conventions, this shows the initial content of the institutionalization of the norm, but then in 1977 with the Geneva Protocols, the content of the norm begins to include the prohibition of targeting civilians and infrastructure related to civilian food supplies, etc. What is interesting about this period is that civilian targeting tactics are less evident in reports and doctrines due to the strengthening of the norm and the support of actors protecting civilians, especially with the 1949 Geneva Conventions. What does the 1949 Geneva Conventions mean for the shift in the norm? What happens when there is an addition to the shift with the 1977 Geneva Protocol?

---

<sup>1</sup> Mallison and Mallison 1973, 14.

This chapter analyzes three case studies with each of the hypotheses. The norm strength during this period is overall at a moderate level of concordance and institutionalization. The case studies will show that increased enforcement is the best explanation for the widely moderate norm strength.

## **Case Studies**

### **The 1949 Geneva Conventions as a normative shift**

After World War II, the 1949 Geneva Conventions increased institutionalization to a moderate level, specifically Convention IV Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.<sup>2</sup> Although the Conventions addressed the treatment of civilians in wartime, it does not explicitly prohibit strategic bombing. The vague citation of protecting civilians within the Conventions instead forbids the overarching targeting of civilians. The norm strength in this case resulted in moderate and not high levels due to the ratification of it for years after 1949.<sup>3</sup> Part II, Article 15 states that “in the regions where fighting is taking place, neutralized zones intended to shelter from the effects of war the following person, without distinction: (a) wounded and sick combatants or non-combatants; (b) civilian persons who take no part in hostilities, and who, while they reside in the zones, perform no work of a military character.”<sup>4</sup> Part II, Article 28 states “The presence of a protected person may not be used to render certain points of areas immune from military operations,” showing that states cannot use civilians as immunity

---

<sup>2</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 271. (1949 Geneva Convention- 21 April to 12 August 1949)

<sup>3</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>4</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 278.

protection in certain military areas but also making it difficult for when civilians are near military targets.<sup>5</sup> Despite the civilian protections addressed, there was the U.S. and the U.K. opposition to including bombing restrictions within the convention.<sup>6</sup>

The 1949 Geneva Conventions overall represent a huge normative shift for civilian protection and strategic bombardment. In acknowledging the need for civilian protection, states agreed and codified into an international agreement this necessity. Although “strategic bombing” is not a phrase within the conventions, it falls into the category of the prohibition of civilian targeting, representing the importance of the norm. Many actors, such as France, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and others<sup>7</sup> signed the 1949 Geneva Conventions, but the international agreement was not fully ratified by many actors until the 1950s and some did not ratify it until the 1990s.<sup>8</sup> The low institutionalization of no agreements signed or ratified before and during World War II, turned into the moderate level of institutionalization of “may be codified in international law, but not yet widely ratified,” in the 1950s.<sup>9</sup> The normative shift of the 1949 Geneva Conventions also starts a different perspective about how actors go about the norm. Because civilian protection is codified into international agreements, this shows how if actors violate the norm there could be consequences. Therefore, by codifying civilian protection into an international agreement, this also forces actors to be more careful in targeting civilians.

---

<sup>5</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 279.

<sup>6</sup> Conway-Lanz 2014, 59.

<sup>7</sup> See Roberts & Guelff 1982, 326-330 for all signatories.

<sup>8</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 326-330.

<sup>9</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

## **The Korean War (1950-1953)**

### ***Norm Strength Analysis***

Leading into the Korean War, concordance levels are moderate, and institutionalization continues to be moderate. Moderate concordance levels are represented in reports encouraging civilian protection, mainly through the United Nations and the ICRC. Post-World War II, with the lead-up to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, international organizations overall supported this step.<sup>10</sup> Institutionalization is also moderate due to the recent signing of the 1949 Geneva Conventions by state actors.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, when the United States did violate the anti-strategic bombing norm, there were infrequent violation criticisms by actors. Both the United Kingdom and India supported the initial part of the war, but once it was apparent that civilian casualties were an issue, both actors expressed doubts about the air campaign.<sup>12</sup> British Prime Minister of the time, Winston Churchill, expressed doubts in 1951 about the effectiveness of the air bombing of Korea and also using napalm illegitimately.<sup>13</sup> The inconsistencies of criticisms as well as lack of large actions to stop the strategic bombing in Korea shows the representation of the moderate concordance level.

---

<sup>10</sup> ICRC Preliminary Remarks to the Geneva Conventions:  
<https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-0173.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> See Roberts & Guelff 1982, 326-330 for list.

Actors such as the United Kingdom (1957), Cambodia (1958), Canada (1965), Laos (1956), Qatar (1975), and Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North) (1957), did not ratify the Conventions until later whereas actors like France (1951), Egypt (1952), India (1950), Italy (1951), Japan (1953), Provisional Revolutionary Government of Republic of South Vietnam (1953) did prior to the Vietnam War.

<sup>12</sup> Bellamy 2012, 169.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 170.

### *The Korean War Case*

The Korean War is an interesting case, starting just four years after World War II. It is interesting because of the use of strategic bombing in wartime right after the signing of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. According to Conway-Lanz “the Korean War followed the pattern set by World War II of massive civilian destruction inflicted by bombing.”<sup>14</sup> U.S. involvement in the Korean War represents an overall difficulty in explaining the norm through the hegemonic leadership hypothesis. U.S. reports supported the anti-strategic bombing norm with explicitly mentioning targeting military targets and avoiding civilian harm, but, acted differently and targeted cities.<sup>15</sup> Although the U.S. was the hegemon coming out of World War II, this was not the main actor supporting the strengthening of the norm. Therefore, I determine for this case study that the higher enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis explains best why the anti-strategic bombing norm strengthened during this time. The technology hypothesis also does not work to explain the strengthening of the norm during the time, because the main actor using strategic bombing in the Korean War, the U.S., did not utilize available technology to avoid targeting civilian areas, but instead continued to use blanket bombing tactics and incendiary raids.

Entering the war in 1950, the United States Air Force, in correlation with Republic Aviation, looked to find a new bomber, resulting in the F-84F.<sup>16</sup> This bomber, though, was not one of greater precision, but instead was able to carry a nuclear weapon

---

<sup>14</sup> Conway-Lanz 2014, 47.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Werrel 1998, 88.



and have lighter avionics. For the technology hypothesis, this is an example of the lack of precision development post-World War II and instead the want to participate in nuclear warfare.<sup>17</sup> This shows that the new technology developed at the time was not to protect civilians, but instead to be able to target larger areas with nuclear weapons. In the same year entering the war, the United States' representatives did not authorize civilian targeting, using the unratified 1949 Geneva Conventions as a guide, but slowly as the war continued, started to use strategic bombing.<sup>18</sup>

In the beginning, the United States rejected fire-bombing of North Korean cities.<sup>19</sup> According to Gibbons and Lieber, "Bombing was employed when it was deemed militarily necessary by the U.S."<sup>20</sup> This shows the hegemon's actions during the time but does not exemplify an encouragement of norm strengthening. Whereas other actors who signed and encouraged the 1949 Geneva Conventions were not actively involved in war during the time and were not actively using strategic bombardment, the U.S. was encouraging bombardment for military necessity. If the military necessity of the U.S. using bombardment reflected the norm during the time, this would put norm strength at a low level.

The U.S. ordered air attacks on 25 June 1950 on North Korea, explicitly outlining these attacks to be "purely military targets."<sup>21</sup> These instructions exemplify the United States' efforts to *verbally* support the anti-strategic bombing norm. During the war, the

---

<sup>17</sup> Werrel 1998, 88.

<sup>18</sup> Bellamy 2012, 162.

<sup>19</sup> Conway-Lanz 2014, 51.

<sup>20</sup> Gibbons & Lieber 2019, 48.

<sup>21</sup> Conway-Lanz 2014, 51, (fn 9).

United States progressed into bombing Korean cities, towns, and villages.<sup>22</sup> Despite this promotion of only targeting military entities, the U.S. definition of a military target is somewhat vague, leading to the United States to violate the anti-strategic bombing norm while still promoting it. U.S. General Stratemeyer requested to burn the city of Sinjuju to send a warning to China, something seen as of military value. U.S. General MacArthur replied to this request saying “burn it if you so desire. Not only that, Strat, but burn and destroy as a lesson any other of those towns that you consider military value to the enemy.”<sup>23</sup> The hegemon, while promoting the norm on paper, did not comply with the same standards when acting, hence not showing leadership to strengthen the norm. At the end of November 1950, multiple cities were destroyed by incendiary bombing, including: Kanggye (65%), Manpojin (95%), Hoeryong (90%), Namsi (90%), Chosan (85%), Sakchu (75%), Huichon (75%), Koindong (90%), and Uji (20%).<sup>24</sup> Continuous attacks by incendiary bombing from 3 to 5 January 1951 had the goal of “burning the cit[ies] to the ground.”<sup>25</sup> All of these examples are to show the U.S. actions as not promoting the anti-strategic bombing norm.

The continuous incendiary bombing of Korean towns is a clear violation of the anti-strategic bombing norm. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not work as an explanation to the norm strength because the incendiary bombs were destined for whole areas and cities, not for military objectives. Despite hegemonic promotion of the norm in

---

<sup>22</sup> Bellamy 2012, 162, (fn 5).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 165, (fn 24).

<sup>24</sup> Bellamy 2012, 165-166, (fn 28); Conway-Lanz 2014, 55.

<sup>25</sup> Bellamy 2012, 166, (fn 30- quote by General Ridgeway).

documents, the actions are different in not promoting the norm. For the incendiary raids, the technology hypothesis does not work as an explanation for the strengthening of the norm because these raids resulted in indiscriminate targeting, not fully using technology available at the time to avoid cities.

During the British election of 1951, Prime Minister Winston Churchill “expressed doubts” about the United States bombing Korea, specifically using napalm and incendiary raid tactics.<sup>26</sup> This exemplifies the higher enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis as a reasonable way to explain the strengthening of the norm to a moderate level post-World War II. This is a verbal hesitancy and not sanctions on the U.S. but does show the strengthening of the norm from other actors that are not the hegemon. The United Kingdom did not ratify the 1949 Geneva Conventions until 1957 but exemplifies the promotion of the norm against a dissenting actor.

In the last week of June 1952, the FEAF began to attack North Korea’s hydroelectric plants, which were formerly banned targets.<sup>27</sup> In July of the same year, at least 1,200 planes struck military targets in Pyongyang.<sup>28</sup> In March 1953, the FEAF continued to attack hydroelectric plants and irrigation systems to destroy rice crops to starve out the civilian population.<sup>29</sup> Before these attacks, the FEAF dropped leaflets on the towns as a “warning” to civilians, therefore pre-qualifying itself as not attacking

---

<sup>26</sup> Bellamy 2012, 170, (fn 58).

<sup>27</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 17.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>29</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 17 and Bellamy 2012, 166.

civilians.<sup>30</sup> These instances exemplify the violation of the norm from the hegemon, showing the hegemon not being the main promoter of the stronger norm.

The bombing by the United States was condemned by communist reports, for example the London's *Daily Workers* described U.S. bombing as "indiscriminate" and the North Korean government wrote to the United Nations stating that "inhuman slaughter of peaceful citizens" took place in the state.<sup>31</sup> Both instances show how the higher enforcement, stronger norm, is the main promoter of norm strength during the time instead of from a hegemonic leadership role. Relative to the time, the outward condemnations and hesitancy of U.S. bombardment shows the international norm at a stronger point.

Separately, the United Kingdom and India heavily criticized the escalation of the war with the fear of the U.S. using atomic weapons and the increases in civilian casualties.<sup>32</sup> The U.K. continued to support the war but encouraged U.S. restraint. India, who once encouraged the war, eventually outright opposed it.<sup>33</sup> From the British perspective, in 1952, multiple Labour Party members<sup>34</sup> released a statement saying "we have been deeply disturbed by the continued use of bombs containing napalm... and to the indifference of the Governments concerned to the widespread disquiet which this form of warfare has evoked."<sup>35</sup> As well the Indian Prime Minister Nehru "expressed

---

<sup>30</sup> Bellamy 2012, 167.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 168, (fn 48).

<sup>32</sup> Bellamy 2012, 169: "Perhaps the most significant indicators of the impact of the bombing on the war's legitimacy, however, were the British and Indian responses. Both initially supported the war..."

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>34</sup> Including Labour Party members Barbara Castle and R.H.S. Crossman.

<sup>35</sup> Bellamy 2012, 170, (fn 60- Marjory Allen of Hurtwood et al. 'Napalm Bombs,' *The Times*, 8 July 1952.).

concerns” about civilian targeting, arguing that bombardment was ineffective and that the “horrible things called napalm bombs” severely damaged the civilian population.<sup>36</sup> In both cases, the British and Indian verbal condemnations are not sanctions on the United States to stop the war, but exemplifies “violations... criticized... by states,” an indicator of the concordance of norm strength at a moderate level relative to the time in the international system.<sup>37</sup> The verbal condemnations are also enforcement mechanisms on the United States, showing the strengthening of the norm through the higher enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis. This hypothesis correlates perfectly because the enforcement mechanism is not very strong, therefore not intensely strengthening the norm, but somewhat representing the moderate norm strength.

On 13 May 1953, the FEAF bombed the Toksan dam, and bombed Kusonf and Toksang on 13 and 18 June, respectively.<sup>38</sup> At this point in the war the United States still did not yet ratify the 1949 Geneva Conventions, therefore not fully held accountable for dissenting from the codification of an agreement. Relatively speaking, the international norm continued to remain strong with the 1949 Conventions widely signed, but the adoption and implementation of the idea was not executed properly by the hegemon.

This short case shows the norm strengthening post-World War II with the beginning of the adoption of values from the 1949 Geneva Conventions, although it was not yet ratified by many actors. The encouragement of civilian protection and the outward

---

<sup>36</sup> ‘UN Criticized by Mr. Nehru’, *The Times* 13 June 1952; and ‘Mr Nehru “Aghast”’, *The Times*, 27 June 1952, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

<sup>38</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 18.

condemnation of violations by the United States show the increase of norm strength levels and shows how the high enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis works to explain the norm strength. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis and technology hypothesis do not work as explanations for the rise in the norm strength. The U.S. as the hegemon was not promoting overall strengthening of the anti-strategic bombing norm, especially as a primary actor using aerial bombardment, whereas other actors were not using strategic bombing. The technology norm also does not explain the strengthening of the norm because despite having further advanced technology coming from World War II, the main type of bombing used in the Korean War was incendiary bombing, which was not the most precise way of targeting military structures. The U.S. also used incendiary bombing to target cities, therefore using bombing technology in pursuit of targeting civilian areas.

### **The Vietnam War (1955-1975)**

#### ***Norm Strength Analysis***

During the Vietnam War, concordance and institutionalization are at moderate levels. The ratification of the 1949 Geneva Convention continued throughout the Vietnam War. Wide ratification occurred during this period; therefore, representing a movement from the moderate level of institutionalization in the ten years post-World War II to a high level of institutionalization for *civilian protection*. To Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon, this is defined as “explicitly codified in international law and ratified by a

majority of eligible states.”<sup>39</sup> For the anti-strategic bombing norm, institutionalization continues to rest at a *moderate* level, because (1) the 1949 Geneva Conventions only broadly protects civilians and (2) the 1977 Geneva Protocols, which explicitly prohibits targeting civilians by projectiles and specifies civilian areas, was not ratified by many actors until the post-Cold War period.

Throughout most of the war, the only institutionalized document was the 1949 Geneva Conventions, setting the example for actors to ratify and encourage civilian protection. During the Vietnam War, states gradually began to ratify the Convention, therefore showing an increase in relative institutionalization and the strengthening of the international norm. After the war, the stricter 1977 Geneva Protocol was signed but not ratified by many states until later into the 1980s and 1990s, therefore showing the ultimate strength of the anti-strategic bombing norm did not come until later. For the 1977 Geneva Protocol, this can be the main reason as to why institutionalization rests at a moderate level.

The 1977 Geneva Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 included within Part III, Article 35 “2.) It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering” and Part IV, Chapter 3, Article 54 “1.) Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited; 2.) It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water

---

<sup>39</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.

installations and supplies and irrigation works.”<sup>40</sup> Finally, Chapter 1 in Part IV stated “the Parties to the conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly shall direct their operations only against military objectives.”<sup>41</sup> The 1977 Geneva Protocol exemplifies the content of the norm of not only targeting civilians, but also targeting civilian population “objects.” The detailed prohibition of civilian targeting resulted in actors taking longer to sign on, and the U.S. never ratified it stating, “to be bound by [the provisions only] to the extent that they reflect customary law.”<sup>42</sup> This leaves institutionalization at a continued moderate level for the time, with widespread ratification later.<sup>43</sup>

Concordance levels echo the norm strength of the Korean War. After the Korean War, the United States pushed for the protection of civilians, ratifying the 1949 Geneva Conventions and releasing the revised U.S. Army’s field manual (1956) stating, “It is a generally recognized rule of international law that civilians must not be made the object of attack directed exclusively against them.”<sup>44</sup> Although the U.S. as a state actor does not determine the concordance, this quote exemplifies that with the institutionalization of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, civilian targeting was universally promoted as something that was wrong. With widespread ratification of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the promotion of the Conventions by the UN, this shows concordance strengthening.

---

<sup>40</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 409-416.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 414.

<sup>42</sup> Canestaro 2004, 448-449.

<sup>43</sup> See Roberts & Guelff 1982, 459-460 for whole list of signatures and non-ratification

<sup>44</sup> Conway-Lanz 2014, 59, (fn 32).



However, U.S. bombing operations started later in the Vietnam War, but concordance stayed at a moderate level with actors not condemning actions of the U.S. frequently because strategic bombing instances were hidden. The international norm continued to stay strong with other actors seeing U.S. tactics as part of norm compliance, therefore not condemning U.S. actions, and continuing to support the norm. When attacks by the U.S. in Operation Rolling Thunder (1965-1968) started to violate the norm by attacking points within Hanoi and Haiphong (targets previously banned to attack) this was met with strong criticism from China, North Vietnam, Poland, and the USSR and weak criticism from France, Great Britain, India, Canada, and Norway.<sup>45</sup> This supports the moderate concordance level of the norm due to the inconsistency in strength of the criticism, but still having criticism on dissenter's actions.

In the bombing of Laos and Cambodia (1965-1973), concordance rests at a relatively strong level. Many actors did not know about these targeting campaigns by the U.S., therefore making it difficult to predict criticisms within the analysis.<sup>46</sup> The United States claimed at first that there was no bombing taking place in the two respective locations, and then later claimed that it was only hitting military targets. After denial about the campaigns, President Nixon finally insisted that the bombing was only on "North Vietnamese supply routes," using rhetoric which does not violate the norm of anti-strategic bombing.<sup>47</sup> The overall secrecy of the U.S. hindered most actors from being

---

<sup>45</sup> Bellamy 2012, 176,

<sup>46</sup> Bellamy 2012, 200: "at the time, international criticism was muted by the veil of secrecy, uncertainty as to the nature of the US campaign and the apparent consent of the Cambodian government"

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 193, (fn 190)

able to criticize the norm violation for this instance. However, this secrecy does show how the norm continues to be strong during the time because if the norm was not strong, actions by the U.S. would be more open. Only Southeastern Asian actors close to the war condemned the U.S. Cambodian Prince Sihanouk condemned the U.S. bombing of Cambodia, stating “the Cambodian population [who were] ... peaceful Cambodian farmers” and civilians died by U.S. bombardment. However, this criticism ultimately did not make a large impact, but does reflect the inconsistency of norm criticism.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, Operation Linebacker I and II continued norm strength. Rail yards, communication and transportation lines, bridges, warehouses, and military storage facilities were the primary target of the United States.<sup>49</sup> However, within this targeting operation, the Bac Mai Hospital in Hanoi was also hit, resulting in the damage of several buildings.<sup>50</sup> U.S. documents continued promotion of only targeting military targets, therefore complying to the norm, but ultimately did not stick to its word. Concordance is consistent because at the same time the ICRC promoted the beginning of the 1977 Geneva Protocol, which laid out a more explicit agreement in targeting areas. This was promoted by multiple states. International criticism was mainly by newspapers, articles, and forty-one religious figures, showing evidence of U.S. bombing known to the public.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Bellamy 2012, 200, (fn 240).

<sup>49</sup> Smith Jr. 1977, 188.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Bellamy 2012, 179, (fn 106).

### *The Vietnam War Case*

In contrast to the short period of the Korean War, the Vietnam War lasted about 20 years. Those 20 years are important to evaluate the anti-strategic bombing norm, including looking at the continuance of norm strength and United States violations of the norm. This case study is in sections: General Overview/Non-Explicit Air campaigns, Operation Rolling Thunder, the bombings of Laos and Cambodia, Operation Linebacker I & II, and the 1977 Geneva Protocol I. I find that norm strength is best explained with the high enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis. This is the best explanation because although enforcement was weaker from international actors, strategic bombing usage was secretive with fears of enforcement if an actor violated the norm. This shows how the norm was still strong and how high enforcement mechanisms are what kept the norm strong. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not function as an example for norm strength due to the hegemon being the main violator of the norm, and the technology hypothesis also does not explain norm strength due to late developments of technology, and the lack of usage of such technology to not target civilian areas. Enforcement mechanisms, mainly as verbal condemnations, does show evidence of the norm being apparent with international actors.

#### *General Overview/ Non-Air Campaigns*

With the normative shift of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and especially the ratification of the Conventions, civilian targeting was no longer outright acceptable for means of war tactics. According to Conway-Lanz, the “Vietnam War was a turning point

in U.S. policy, it became less acceptable among military professionals and the public to deliberately target civilians or to strike in ways that could lead to foreseeable harm.”<sup>52</sup> However, the Vietnam War had “massive bombing throughout Indochina [which] was a hallmark of the conflict,” and shows how strategic bombing did not stop with the ratification of the Geneva Conventions.<sup>53</sup> A list of U.S. tactics included: “the heavy use of airborne (helicopter) infantry; the use of herbicides against crops in food denial programmes...the designation of ‘free-fire zones’, for artillery and air-dropped weapons, within which there were few distinctions between ‘civilian’ and ‘military targets’...the very extensive use of air support and of the incendiary, napalm; [and] carpet bombing by B-52s.”<sup>54</sup> The usage of napalm and incendiary raids are examples of the norm violation.<sup>55</sup>

Estimations show that from 1965 to 1971 almost 75% of aerial bombing campaigns in Indochina took place over South Vietnam.<sup>56</sup> The U.S. plans of attack included using air support for ground operations, air attacks to stop military supplies manufacturing, and Cambodia and Laos bombings to stop the flow of supplies and troops.<sup>57</sup> Amidst the plans to attack military targets, civilians were caught in the crossfire. The United States Rules of Engagement (ROEs) stated that all U.S. airstrikes had to be approved by local Vietnamese chiefs before executing, but this approval was easy to receive.<sup>58</sup> Civilians in these areas were to receive warning about attacks, but many of

---

<sup>52</sup> Conway-Lanz 2014, 50.

<sup>53</sup> Kocher, Pepinsky, Kalyvas 2011, 204.

<sup>54</sup> Leitenberg 1972, 268.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Kocher, Pepinsky, Kalyvas 2011, 205.

<sup>57</sup> Conway-Lanz 2014, 53.

<sup>58</sup> Smith Jr. 1977, 178; Kocher, Pepinsky, Kalyvas 2011, 205.

these zones were still considered “Specified Strikes Zones/free-fire zones” because “no friendly forces or populace existed” there.<sup>59</sup> That is to say that United States compliance with the norm continued leading into the war, as civilian casualties are not qualified as civilian targeting.

The U.S. Strategic Air Command had long-range strategic bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles to use in the war.<sup>60</sup> Kocher, Pepinsky, and Kalyvas state that “[U]ntil the perfection of the ‘smart bomb’ during the last stage of the Vietnam War, bombing was an inherently inaccurate process,” however with technology developments up to the point of the Vietnam War, actors such as the U.S. had access to targeting technologies that still would result in less city and civilian targeting.<sup>61</sup> Kocher, Pepinsky, and Kalyvas continue to describe that “Despite sophisticated computer equipment, the precision of the bombing was degraded by errors involving boresight, release mechanisms, bomb dispersion, aiming, and the computational system errors. Unknown winds at altitudes below the release point further complicated the pilots’ tasks” ultimately resulting in “it [being] impossible to hit a small target with bombs except by sheer luck.”<sup>62</sup> Bombing precision was not at a high-success rate for hitting targets, but methods conducted throughout the war, such as targeting cities, blanket bombing on certain areas, or incendiary raids ultimately shows a lack of using any technology to have some form of precision. Therefore, for the technology hypothesis, this does not describe why the norm

---

<sup>59</sup> Kocher, Pepinsky, Kalyvas 2011, 205 (quote from Congressional Record 1985).

<sup>60</sup> Smith Jr 1977, 175-176.

<sup>61</sup> Kocher, Pepinsky, Kalyvas 2011, 205, (fn 7- quote from Lewy 1978, 404).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

was still strong during this time. Other international actors were not using aerial bombardment in Vietnam and overall continued to promote the norm, whereas the U.S. as the actor using airplanes and technology in Vietnam, did not try to use the technology to reduce civilian targeting in cities.

The main technological advancement, precision-guided munitions (PGMs), are not sufficient to explain the norm strength once the U.S. developed and implemented them. The war started with free-fall bombs/“dumb bombs” to execute air attacks, therefore conducting indiscriminate targeting on large areas and cities.<sup>63</sup> After Operation Rolling Thunder, the development of lasers for PGMs increased.<sup>64</sup> Laser-guided bombs underwent testing in mid-1967 and by 1969, 61% of laser bombs had direct hits on targets.<sup>65</sup> Despite this progression, nine out of sixty-six of the tests suffered malfunctions and smoke, haze, and clouds became a large problem of the aftermath of the bombs.<sup>66</sup> “PGMs proved to be excellent weapons in two diverse roles in the 1972 campaign: precise bombing of the North Vietnam homeland and the repulse of the North Vietnamese army in the field.”<sup>67</sup> This statement shows how the U.S. used precision bombing to attack the “North Vietnam homeland.” The technology hypothesis would work as an explanation here if the U.S. fully used PGMs and other technology possible to protect civilians, however in this instance, PGMs are used to directly target a civilian area. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis and technology hypothesis are weak in this

---

<sup>63</sup> Werrel 1998, 93.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

case of the general overview of the Vietnam War because available technology was not used to protect civilians and the hegemon continued to be the main violator of the anti-strategic bombing norm.

Cluster Bomb Units (CBUs), gunships, laser-guided bombs, fire location sensors, and air countermeasures all were used in the Vietnam War, but these developments were not for the anti-strategic bombing norm.<sup>68</sup> Leitenberg stated that “Vietnam has become a test-bed for the proof testing and de-bugging of new hardware, new tactical concepts, [and] new logistics systems,” therefore using Vietnam as a test ground for new technology that did not promote civilian protection, like cluster bombs, but instead used Vietnam as a testing ground for strategic bombing technology.<sup>69</sup>

*Operation Rolling Thunder (2 March 1965 to 2 November 1968)*

The goal of Operation Rolling Thunder was to interrupt the flow of people and materials into South Vietnam to force North Vietnam into peace negotiations.<sup>70</sup> President Lyndon B. Johnson’s speech “Peace Without Conquest” on 7 April 1965, described the necessity of air attacks to win independence for South Vietnam.<sup>71</sup> He stated: “In recent months attacks on South Viet-Nam were stepped up. Thus, it became necessary for us to increase our response and to make attacks by air. This is not a change of purpose. It is a change in what we believe that purpose requires.”<sup>72</sup> This speech shows how the United

---

<sup>68</sup> Leitenberg 1972, 269.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Bellamy 2012, 174.

<sup>71</sup> Address at Johns Hopkins University: “Peace Without Conquest,” April 7, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

States' usage of air warfare in 1965 was described as "necessary" to achieve its goal but did not mention the necessity of civilian targeting.

Although the goal of this campaign was to enter into negotiations with the Saigon government, this did not happen and the campaign was one of "the greatest failed air campaign[s] in history."<sup>73</sup> The original eight-week campaign turned into a three year campaign targeting supplies, with an ammunition depot at Xom Bay the first target.<sup>74</sup> Targeting the National Liberation Front's (NFL) supply chain was U.S. priority.<sup>75</sup> However, throughout the campaign, over half of the oil storage, power plants, and bridges in North Vietnam were destroyed and at least 10,000 vehicles and 2,000 railroad cars were also destroyed.<sup>76</sup> All of these attacks resulted in minimal effect on bringing the North to come to negotiations.<sup>77</sup>

U.S. outward commitment to protecting civilians shows norm strength and how fear of enforcement mechanisms keeps the norm strong. The Johnson administration and civilian advisors promoted a rigorous targeting selection process.<sup>78</sup> A 1967 source stated that "the short point is that although U.S. air power has been used with some restraint-if less than hitherto revealed- it has been used to the fullest extent which the White House thinks compatible with a limited war."<sup>79</sup> The U.S. "restraint" resulted in other

---

<sup>73</sup> Wilson 2001, 42.

<sup>74</sup> Crawford 2014, 53; Wilson 2001, 43.

<sup>75</sup> Parker 2004, 60.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Wilson 2001, 44 & Correll 2005, 63: these selection meeting included President Johnson, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, and Press Secretary Bill Moyers

<sup>79</sup> Verrier 1967, 159.



international actors not making criticisms during Operation Rolling Thunder. In the first months of Rolling Thunder, bombing restrictions on B-52 bombers were only to the southern part of the panhandle near the 19<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>80</sup> Hanoi and Haiphong were initially declared as “restricted” areas that were not allowed to be targeted (this was later changed in October and November of that year) with the restricted zone being 60 miles wide and 20 miles wide, respectively.<sup>81</sup> President Johnson stated “I won’t let those Air Force generals bomb the smallest outhouse...without checking with me.”<sup>82</sup> Overall instructions included that targeting highly populated areas was prohibited, unless having approval from the White House. If the White House did approve targeting on a usually restricted area, the White House would then put in place other limitations to try and reduce civilian casualties.<sup>83</sup>

The United States promoted discriminate targeting, however, estimates for Operation Rolling Thunder go up to 17,900 civilian casualties between March 1965 and September 1966, reaching 52,000 civilian deaths by the end of Operation Rolling Thunder.<sup>84</sup> Civilian casualties are different from strategic bombing, however with bombing accuracy developments, this shows that targeted areas were intentional. Development of bombing accuracy increased from a range of landing within 1,000 feet of the target in World War II to 420 feet at the start of the Vietnam War.<sup>85</sup> With increased bombing accuracy, this means that dropping bombs in military areas would result in little

---

<sup>80</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 118; Correll 2005, 63.

<sup>81</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 119; Correll 2005, 63.

<sup>82</sup> Correll 2005, 63.

<sup>83</sup> Bellamy 2012, 174; Correll 2005, 63.

<sup>84</sup> Bellamy 2012, 175.

<sup>85</sup> Emerson 2019, 55.

civilian casualties. However, the high number of civilian deaths for a period of three years shows that this campaign resulted in strategic bombing instances, mainly targeting areas too close to the civilian population. Explicit restrictions on area targeting were not written into an agreement until the 1977 Geneva Protocol I, therefore shows the U.S. abiding by the 1949 Geneva Conventions in the public sphere. By describing efforts to not aim at civilians, this deterred international actors from acting on enforcement mechanisms. This example also shows the misuse of present technology, meaning that the technology hypothesis is not an explanation to strengthen the norm.

In Operation Rolling Thunder, technology continued to advance. The first smart bomb, “Walleye,” was used in 1967 and relied on a television tracking system, therefore, targeting ultimately failed with bad weather when the bomb could not lock onto a target.<sup>86</sup> This then led to the U.S. development of the Hobo bomb (Homing Bomb System) to improve accuracy through electro-optical guiding, but this was not met with big improvement.<sup>87</sup> The seeker and guidance parts of regular bombs were then advanced into laser-guided munitions, but was not fully developed.<sup>88</sup> Usage and testing of the laser-guided bombs (LGBs) began in 1968 but were later halted with the bombing halt on 1 November 1968.<sup>89</sup> All of the technology above shows the development and efforts for precision bombing to not target civilians and also avoid civilian casualties, however these items were clearly misused, which is mainly represented by the high number of civilian

---

<sup>86</sup> Emerson 2019, 55.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Canestaro 2004, 448.

deaths with the technology that was available at the time to avoid a high casualty rate. This also shows U.S. hegemony not as the leader of the anti-strategic bombing norm strengthening. Outward promotion of the norm to other international actors hid the large number of casualties that happened.

In the Operation Rolling Thunder attacks about 80 percent of the total casualties were civilian casualties based on “targets of opportunity”: trucks, cars, and trains.<sup>90</sup> “Interdiction campaigns” increased throughout Rolling Thunder, ultimately targeting North Vietnamese lines of communication, trying to cut off communication between the North and the South by destroying truck convoys, roads, railroads, bridges, marshalling yards, and supply depots.<sup>91</sup> The targeting of roads and railways was because most of the oil came from the Soviet Union to North Vietnam. On 29 June 1966 the United States attacked petroleum, lubricant, and oil (POL) facilities at Hanoi and Haiphong, destroying more than 80 percent of the facilities.<sup>92</sup> By the time 1967 came, the restrictions by the Johnson administration eased resulting in the bombardment of the Thai Nguyen steel complex, multiple MiG bases, the bombing of the Doumer Bridge, and other targets that were within the Hanoi and Haiphong restricted area.<sup>93</sup> In easing the restrictions this also opened up the opportunity to target places closer to civilian areas.

---

<sup>90</sup> Bellamy 2012, 175.

<sup>91</sup> Wilson 2001, 45.

<sup>92</sup> Correll 2005, 64.

<sup>93</sup> Crawford 2014, 53; Correll 2005, 65.

Wide support for Operation Rolling Thunder came from Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and South Korea.<sup>94</sup> Main criticisms of Operation Rolling Thunder were from mainly the communist bloc which was in support of North Vietnam.<sup>95</sup> North Vietnam labelled the attacks as a “war crime,” an obvious criticism because it was the enemy of the U.S., but this still shows an outright condemnation of the bombings. China vocalized potential intervention as necessary means of enforcement after the attacks near Hanoi and Haiphong, but this was never followed through with.<sup>96</sup> Polish demonstrators sponsored by the government labeled Americans as “murderers and fascists,” showing verbal condemnations of the attacks.<sup>97</sup> Finally, a USSR news station labelled the attacks as “unprecedented barbarity.”<sup>98</sup> The support and criticism in Operation Rolling Thunder show the inconsistent criticisms on the norm strength scale but also further shows enforcement mechanisms as the driver of norm strength.

Bellamy notes that the U.S. “privileged strategic concerns over civilian immunity” and the communist bloc “exaggerated the extent to which the USA was violating civilian immunity,” therefore showing U.S. targeting strategies including civilians and the over exaggeration of verbal condemnation from the communist bloc.<sup>99</sup> Other milder criticisms came from France, the United Kingdom, India, Norway, and Canada. France and the United Kingdom criticized attacks which were disproportionate

---

<sup>94</sup> Bellamy 2012, 176: a July 1967 Harris poll showed that 72% of respondents supported Operation Rolling Thunder in the United States; Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and South Korea supported the campaign in pursuit of defeating communism

<sup>95</sup> Bellamy 2012, 176.

<sup>96</sup> Bellamy 2012, (fn 89 & 90).

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., (fn 89 & 90).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

to war aims where civilian immunity was compromised, and France, the United Kingdom, and India criticized raids in Hanoi and Haiphong on oil storage facilities and in power plants in 1966 and 1967.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, Norway “deplored” aerial bombardment in Vietnam and Canada “urged against escalation.”<sup>101</sup> Overall, Bellamy notes that “European governments” did not sanction the U.S. with changing policies nor imposing costs.<sup>102</sup> The subtle forms of verbal condemnation of actions do show the concordance levels of the norm strong here. The reactions of other international actors also show how enforcement mechanisms, no matter how small, continue to be the reason why the norm is at a moderate level.

Bellamy notes that “Not only did the USA publicly commit not to deliberately target civilians and act accordingly, but it also took measures to avoid unintentional killing- though some of these restrictions were eventually relaxed.”<sup>103</sup> Overall, despite criticisms from the communist bloc, Operation Rolling Thunder exemplified a milder approach to bombardment. This case exemplifies the strengthening of the institutionalization of the norm with actors not only ratifying the 1949 Geneva Conventions, but also executing the agreement.

---

<sup>100</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 142.

<sup>101</sup> Bellamy 2012, 177, (fn 93).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>103</sup> Bellamy 2012, 177.

*Laos and Cambodia (1965 to 1973)*

The bombing of Laos and Cambodia, 1965 to 1973, is different from Operation Rolling Thunder. Unlike the public transparency of Operation Rolling Thunder, these bombings were secretive, due to the targets outside of Vietnam heavily damaging the civilian population. In this case, the norm strength continues to stay the same at a moderate level. I argue that the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis still works best in this case because the U.S. secrecy shows not only the strength of the norm, but also the fear of enforcement from international actors from its violations. International actors could not shape views of U.S. violations of the norm in Laos and Cambodia, therefore making it difficult to predict international reactions if this was public. However, the secrecy of the U.S. with this case shows a fear of high enforcement mechanisms on the U.S. if the knowledge became public, therefore showing how this hypothesis works.

In Laos, the United States dropped conventional bombs, herbicide Agent Orange, and 80-90 million cluster bomblets from 1965 to 1973.<sup>104</sup> The “dud rates” of the cluster bombs were between 20% and 40%, resulting in the continued detonation of the bombs after the end of the Laos campaign.<sup>105</sup> The attacks on Laos were to sequester the Pathet Lao communist movement by destroying food sources, interrupt communication lines to North Vietnam, and overall prevent the spread of Chinese communism.<sup>106</sup> With these attacks in Laos, this resulted in the death of at least 350,000 civilians, about one tenth of

---

<sup>104</sup> Crawford 2014, 54.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Crawford 2014, 54; Bellamy 2012, 191.

the population.<sup>107</sup> Similarly with the campaign in Cambodia, an estimation of between 600,000-750,000 Cambodians were killed between 1969 and 1972 during carpet bombing attacks.<sup>108</sup> When Nixon took office in 1969, the campaign in Cambodia became highly secretive, and was not shut down until Congress was aware of the actions in 1973.<sup>109</sup>

In neither campaign, the hegemon did not strengthen nor complying with the norm. But it is also necessary to note the secrecy of the campaign. If the norm was weak, then the hegemon would be encouraging the use of strategic bombing to conduct war. Because the United States had a level of secrecy with this campaign, this shows that the norm is strong during this time and U.S. violations are not in accordance with other actors. This also shows how the hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not work as an explanation for norm strength because the hegemon does not outwardly encourage the decrease of the norm strength and instead hides norm violations. The Johnson and the Nixon administrations performed a total of 28 covert operations during the Cold War, including Laos and Cambodia as two of them.<sup>110</sup> The Laos covert operation was in “pursuit of democracy” but was also an opportunity to deteriorate allies of North Vietnam and of the USSR.<sup>111</sup>

The United States denied targeting Laotian and Cambodian civilians and in 1969 directly claimed only targeting “military targets.”<sup>112</sup> The campaign in Laos was the three Ds: “demoralization [of the civilian population], deprivation [of rice, vegetables, and

---

<sup>107</sup> Crawford 2014, 54.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> O’Rourke 2018, 98.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>112</sup> Bellamy 2012, 190.

livestock] and destruction [of commerce and trade].”<sup>113</sup> The first wave of bombing against Laos, between May 1964 to October 1966, consisted of sporadic targeting by Laotian aircrafts on the Pathet Lao. The second phase, from October 1966 to early 1968, consisted of U.S. aircrafts targeting villages.<sup>114</sup> According to Bellamy, U.S. officials denied that the military was engaged in Laos and testified it stayed strictly in Vietnam.<sup>115</sup> This once again shows the denial of U.S. involvement in strategic bombing, discrediting the hegemonic leadership hypothesis of the time with the strong norm still present.

In Cambodia, a campaign run in March 1969 under the Nixon administration proposed a “short-duration, concentrated” attack on houses assumed to be housing communists known as COSVN. This group was non-existent.<sup>116</sup> This attack was then authorized, and later turned into a campaign, conducted mainly in secrecy.<sup>117</sup> Because COSVN did not exist, this can be seen as large norm violations of bombing civilian homes. During this time U.S. doctrine mentions the usage of smart bombs but did not contribute to the anti-strategic bombing norm. The usage of “smart bombs” by the United States on Cambodia did not contribute to the avoidance of targeting civilians either. The smart/target seeking bombs were justified “on legal and moral grounds” to target specific spaces within densely populated areas.<sup>118</sup> Mallison and Mallison wrote in 1973 “the availability of the ‘smart’ bomb to attack military targets renders it unnecessary to

---

<sup>113</sup> Bellamy 2012, 191, (fn 176).

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>115</sup> Bellamy 2012, 193: “from May 1964 to March 1970, when Nixon finally acknowledged that the USA was bombing Laos, American officials denied that the military was engaged there. Instead, they insisted that bombing was confined to the Ho Chi Minh trail and ‘North Vietnamese supply routes,’ (fn 190)”

<sup>116</sup> Bellamy 2012, 195, (fn 206).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Mallison & Mallison 1973, 25-26.



conduct an aerial bombing that results in large civilian casualties,” this however was not the case.<sup>119</sup> According to Bellamy, Cambodia was treated as a “free-fire zone,” indiscriminately targeting rural areas.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, despite the higher availability of technology, such as the “smart bomb,” civilians were still the target of attacks due to the U.S. deeming large areas as “free-fire zones.” The technology hypothesis does not work to explain the stronger norm here due to heightened technology by lack of the employment of it.

In both campaigns, enforcement mechanisms were not possible due to the secrecy of the attacks. The United States outward concordance to the norm appeared strong, for example Henry Kissinger stated that Cambodian Prince Sihanouk consented to the attacks, although this was not true.<sup>121</sup> The Cambodian government stated that the United States “attacked villages, peasants working in the fields, and fishermen” and in March 1969, Prince Sihanouk condemned the attacks: “the Cambodian population living in the border regions... almost daily by US aircraft” directing the targeting at “peaceful Cambodian farmers.”<sup>122</sup> This shows a small condemnation from a state that is targeted, but otherwise the overall secrecy of the campaign led to little condemnation.

The secrecy of the campaigns in Laos and Cambodia shows that the anti-strategic bombing norm was strong. If the norm was not, the U.S. would have been open about the attacks. This shows the hegemonic leadership hypothesis not working as an explanation

---

<sup>119</sup> Mallison & Mallison 1973, 25-26.

<sup>120</sup> Bellamy 2012, 197.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 200, (fn 237).

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 200, (fn 239 & fn 240).

to the norm strength of the time due to the hegemon still being the main violator and covering up the norm violations. The technology hypothesis is not strong to explain norm strength either because even with the usage of smart bombs in Cambodia, this did very little to perform discriminate targeting against military objectives and many areas were deemed “free-fire zones.” Finally, the heightened enforcement, strong norm hypothesis is difficult to analyze because there was no enforcement, but that can be accredited as well to U.S. secrecy. It is not reasonable to speculate if there would be enforcement at the time, but one can assume that the U.S. expected enforcement measures to come into play if it was exposed that indiscriminate bombing was taking place, therefore showing a strong norm.

*Operation Linebacker I (9 May 1972 to 23 October 1972) and Operation Linebacker II (18 December to 29 December 1972)*

Overall, Operation Linebacker was an enhanced targeting campaign resulting in civilian deaths alongside military targets. The U.S. bombers (B-52s) attacked communication, highway bridges, railway lines, and supply lines. All of these targets are legitimate military targets, but overall took a “gloves off” approach to bombing.<sup>123</sup> On the first day of Linebacker I, B-52 bombers conducted 400 sorties, totaling 41,653 sorties for the campaign from April to October resulting in 13,000 civilian deaths.<sup>124</sup> Due to the shorter period, Linebacker II resulted in 1,600 civilian deaths.<sup>125</sup> At the end of

---

<sup>123</sup> Parker 2004, 116; Emerson 53-54.

<sup>124</sup> Crawford 2014, 54.

<sup>125</sup> Bellamy 2012, 178, (fn 99).

Linebacker, the U.S. destroyed 70% of electric power facilities and almost all oil storage facilities.<sup>126</sup> This targeting was mainly for military purposes, but at the same time happened close to civilian areas. The 1977 Geneva Protocol was not yet written, which determined explicit areas forbidden to target and forbidding cutting off supplies for civilians. By targeting power lines and other communication rails also used by civilians, this appears as attacks on both the military and civilian morale.

One Air Force report stated, “the prevailing authority to strike almost any valid military target during LINEBACKER was in sharp contrast to the extensive and vacillating restrictions in existence during ROLLING THUNDER.”<sup>127</sup> Linebacker I and II consisted of high indiscriminate targeting despite the original directive for Operation Linebacker being “It is essential that strike forces exercise care in weapons selection to minimize civilian casualties and avoid third country shipping, known or suspected PW (Prisoner of War) camps, hospitals, and religious shrines.”<sup>128</sup> This shows U.S. compliance with civilian protection, but also actions are in contrast to civilian protection with high indiscriminate targeting.

The U.S. only dropped 25% of the tonnage of bombs in Rolling Thunder on North Vietnam during Linebacker I (155,548 tons) but “more damage was done to the North Vietnamese lines of communication during Linebacker than during all [the] previous efforts.”<sup>129</sup> Within this heightened amount of damage, smart bombs caused most of it.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 167.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 164, (fn 53).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 164, (fn 54).

<sup>129</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 167, (fn 60).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 166.

Bridges, such as the Paul Doumer Bridge in Hanoi, which took 113 sorties from USAF F-105 bombers to destroy in 1966 and 1967, only took 7% of that amount to destroy it in 1972.<sup>131</sup> The United States used and tested laser-guided bombs (LGBs) in 1968 before the bombing halt by Johnson on 1 November 1968.<sup>132</sup> Once bombing began again with Operation Linebacker I, LGBs were employed to destroy the Doumer Bridge, using a fraction of the bombs from previous attacks.<sup>133</sup> Since the bombing of the bridge in Operation Rolling Thunder, it was rebuilt and operational since then, therefore “necessary” to bomb due its linkage between Hanoi and Haiphong.<sup>134</sup> The technology hypothesis briefly works here with the U.S. using available technology to target bridges and other precise targeted areas.

The technology hypothesis, however, does not explain other parts of this case. Precision-guided munitions were used near population areas to “reduc[e] the likelihood of collateral damage.”<sup>135</sup> However, only 1% of all bombs dropped during the war were precision guided, especially once PGMs were established, there was a critical shortage of the pods used for the bombs.<sup>136</sup> Pape notes that the targeting of Linebacker I (and II) were targeting against military targets with discriminate tactics, showing the U.S. complying with norm strength.<sup>137</sup> The limited amount of access to PGMs and laser-guided bombs

---

<sup>131</sup> Canestaro 2004, 448.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Emerson 2019, 50.

<sup>135</sup> Bellamy 2012, 178, (fn 97).

<sup>136</sup> Emerson 2019, 70, (fn 28).

<sup>137</sup> Pape 1992, 459.

later in the war shows that even with the more advance technology to perform discriminate targeting, it was not used to the fullest extent with available technology.

Contrary to other bombing campaigns, “elite level criticism of Linebacker was much sharper” because U.S. bombardment was public in the international realm.<sup>138</sup> For example, *Newsweek* charged that Linebacker was causing mental and physical toll on civilians, and *Time* deplored the attacks due to the civilian casualties. However, such public criticisms did not come from states.<sup>139</sup> Forty-one religious figures also criticized the campaign at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and encouraged peace from the operation, but this is an example of domestic criticism.<sup>140</sup>

Parallel to the Linebacker I and II attacks, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) adopted a resolution in 1969 to create a supplementary agreement to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, specifically in protecting civilians.<sup>141</sup> In 1971 and 1972, the ICRC held a conference in Geneva to create draft protocols.<sup>142</sup> This is an indirect example of the continuation of strength in the norm. Although the U.S. continued to violate the norm more subtly, the proposition by the ICRC and cooperation by other states to create a protocol shows the concordance of the norm.

Operation Linebacker II (18 December 1972 to 29 December 1972) was a B-52 campaign attacking complexes in Hanoi and Haiphong.<sup>143</sup> In the short eleven-day operation, the United States killed 1,300 North Vietnamese most of whom were in the

---

<sup>138</sup> Bellamy 2012, 172.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 179, (fn 106).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 387.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Smith Jr. 1977, 188.

target complexes.<sup>144</sup> Smith Jr. describes how aerial photography showed “that the results of the bombing were very effective, and it was almost surgical in its discrimination. Rail yards, power plants, bridges, port facilities, warehouses, repair facilities, military storage yards, and airfields were either destroyed or severely damaged.”<sup>145</sup> Walne describes how Hanoi wrongly charged the U.S. of “carpet bombing” and “barbarism,” stating that the Linebacker II raids evidently avoided civilian structures.<sup>146</sup> The description of Linebacker II targeting shows discrimination of military facilities. However, included in these attacks was the partial destruction of the Bac Mai Hospital in Hanoi, which had some severely damaged buildings.<sup>147</sup> Even before the 1977 Geneva Protocol, hospitals have always been prohibited targets and it is a violation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions to hit one.

The majority of targets were on the outside of Hanoi because Nixon sanctioned strikes around the Bac Mai communication center but the hospital was still hit.<sup>148</sup> The United States used smart bombs more frequently due to the “good weather” of the time, and mainly targeted the Hanoi Rail Yard, making it seem as if civilian targeting was taken away.<sup>149</sup> Major George Thomas, the Director of Targets for 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Intelligence, even stated “we were not allowed to bomb many targets much more lucrative because of [possible] civilian casualties.”<sup>150</sup> Yet, in the 11 day operation, a total of 729 sorties were flown and 15,237 tons of bombs dropped, mainly destroying rail lines

---

<sup>144</sup> Smith Jr. 1977, 188.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> AFP 110-31: International Law, Walne 1987, 9.

<sup>147</sup> Smith Jr. 1977, 188.

<sup>148</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 190.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 190, (fn 41).

and warehouses.<sup>151</sup> This case continues to be interesting with the slight promotion of not bombing civilian targets but still seeing results and actions that were in civilian areas. Operation Linebacker I and II resulted in less outright criticisms of norm violations, but also U.S. compliance to the norm shows a continued strength. Concordance also continues to keep the norm strong with the ICRC talks in 1971 and 1972 on the promotion of making explicit bans on certain civilian areas that actors could not target.

### *1977 Geneva Protocol*

Post-Vietnam War, the United Nations facilitated a protocol to increase civilian protections. The treaty was ultimately decided as necessary due to the “new methods of combat [that] had been developed and the rules applicable to the conduct of hostilities had become outdated.”<sup>152</sup> Therefore, in 1977, states negotiated the Geneva Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts.<sup>153</sup> In Part III of the Protocol, Methods and Means of Warfare, “It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering,” therefore preventing bombardment on civilian populations.<sup>154</sup> Part IV of the Protocol, Civilian Population states, “The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack. Acts of threats of violence the primary purpose

---

<sup>151</sup> Clodfelter 1989, 194.

<sup>152</sup> Factsheet on the 1977 Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions 31-05-2007 Legal Fact Sheet: <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/legal-fact-sheet/protocols-1977-factsheet-080607.htm#:~:text=This%20treaty%20came%20into%20being,from%20the%20effects%20of%20war.>

<sup>153</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 387.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 409.

of which is to spread terror among the civilian population is prohibited.”<sup>155</sup> Finally, “Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited; 2.) It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works.”<sup>156</sup>

The U.S. performed these prohibited actions in the past 25 years in both the Korean War and the Vietnam War, specifically in using bombardment to attack the civilian population and destroy supplies for food. Especially in the Korean War, it was known that the U.S. aimed to destroy rice fields to starve the population, and with the Vietnam War, attacks on supplies included electricity and water. These norm violations fall under violation of the anti-strategic bombing norm but cannot yet be seen as violations of the protocol because states had not yet institutionalized it. Although the protocol was deemed necessary, not many actors ratified it until later. Most, including the United States, United Kingdom, USSR, Vietnam, Norway, Spain, and others all signed the protocol in 1977, but did not ratify it until the 1980s and 1990s. The specificity of the 1977 Geneva Protocol allows the anti-strategic bombing norm to strengthen more. Specifying the prohibition of dropping projectiles to prevent human suffering as well as preventing attacks on foodstuffs shows an attempt to strengthen the norm. After the drafting of the protocol, the ratification in the 1980s and 1990s shows institutionalization as “explicitly codified in international law and ratified by a majority of eligible states.”<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 415.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 416.

<sup>157</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 527.



Because the protocol was not widely ratified until the end of the 1990s and into the 2000s, this shows institutionalization staying at moderate for the end of the Cold War.

Exiting the Vietnam War, the 1977 Geneva Protocol began to raise institutionalization to a high level of norm strength because of the specificity of civilian protection. The slow progress of ratification, but signed protocol, rests the norm at a moderate level of institutionalization. Moving into the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it is interesting to see if norm strength changed with the U.S. promotion of the norm.

### **Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan (24 December 1979 to 15 February 1989)**

#### ***Norm Strength Analysis***

Finally, the Soviet-Afghan War continued to be at a moderate level of norm strength. Concordance is at a moderate level due to the criticisms by the United States on the Soviet Union for the attacks performed in Afghanistan, specifically on the civilian population. In this case, the U.S. was one of the only actors to criticize the Soviet attacks, whereas many Western powers stayed mute on the issue.<sup>158</sup> Concordance levels are not raised to a high level during this time due to the “inconsistent criticisms” of norm violators. Concordance also continues to be at a moderate level with the recent discussions of the 1977 Geneva Protocols and the encouragement from the United Nations to implement them.

Institutionalization during this period also stays at a moderate level. Although the 1977 Geneva Protocol I was not ratified until later into the 1980s and 1990s, actors

---

<sup>158</sup> Leitenberg 1986, 279 & 289.

signed the protocol to promote the norm. Another agreement, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), was signed by states in 1980. The Convention stated “(1) the prohibition on the use of weapons that are indiscriminate and (2) the prohibition on the use of weapons of a nature to cause unnecessary suffering or superfluous injury” specifically the prohibition of incendiary weapons.<sup>159</sup> States signed on to this when it was first drafted in 1980 but was not widely ratified until later in the 1990s all the way up until the 2000s.<sup>160</sup> Therefore, like the 1977 Geneva Protocol I, the CCW keeps institutionalization at a consistent moderate level due to the late ratification.

### *The Soviet-Afghanistan Case*

After the U.S. exit from Vietnam, war arose in another part of the world. Southeast Asia was “bomb-cratered, herbicide-wilted ruins, at the cost of approximately fifty-eight thousand American and three million Vietnamese lives.”<sup>161</sup> In December of 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and imposed military and political control in Kabul, beginning a decade of conflict and struggle for power.<sup>162</sup> The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) took over in a coup in April of 1978 but lacked

---

<sup>159</sup> 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/1980-convention-certain-conventional-weapons>

<sup>160</sup> See Signatures and Ratification Statistics of the 1980 CCW: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/ccw-1980/state-parties?activeTab=undefined>.

<sup>161</sup> Hunt 2021, 47 & 49.

<sup>162</sup> Collins 1987, 201.

overarching power, therefore needing support and aid from the USSR.<sup>163</sup> Leading up to the Soviet invasion, the U.S. gave no response to these attacks and no direct response to the first invasion in 1979.<sup>164</sup> By the time the Soviet Union fully invaded, the U.S.S.R. set up “counterrevolutionary detachments” in eighteen out of twenty-six provinces in Afghanistan mainly to advance Soviet interests of power.<sup>165</sup> Throughout the ten years of fighting, the Soviet Union failed to rebuild the Afghan government.<sup>166</sup>

The best way to explain the norm strength of this case study is with the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis. This is due to the U.S. imposing sanctions on the USSR in response to the invasion and bombing raids. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis also works due to the high promotion of the anti-strategic bombing norm against the Soviets by the U.S., but there is an inconsistency of norm promotion. The U.S. mainly promoted norm strength when its enemy used strategic bombing.

The decade-long campaign consisted of not only ground forces, but also air brigades, almost 500 helicopters, MiG-21s and MiG-23s (Mikoyan-Gurevich, jet fighter), and Su-25 attack aircrafts. This shows a large presence of military aircrafts used during the U.S.S.R. campaign, which is relevant to the anti-strategic bombing norm and shows how U.S. sanctions mainly pertained to the air campaign. The Soviet Union therefore

---

<sup>163</sup> Collins 1987, 199: invasion reasons included: doctrine, pressure of events, Soviet security concerns, and commitment.

<sup>164</sup> Leitenberg 1986, 275, (fn 5).

<sup>165</sup> Collins 1987, 200; in Article 4 of the friendship treaty between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan it stated both countries will “take appropriate measures with a view to ensuring the security, independence and territorial integrity of the two countries.”

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 198.

used bombing campaigns to suppress the rebel groups fighting the PDPA.<sup>167</sup> Soviet strategies were to attack the rebel groups at a minimal cost, including using air power to burn crops and destroy villages, forcing civilians to flee to Pakistan or Iran.<sup>168</sup> The destruction of lines of communication were in addition to destroying entire cities, termed as a combination of “scorched earth” and “migratory genocide.”<sup>169</sup> If the U.S.S.R. suspected a town to have resistance members, it would execute reprisal bombings.<sup>170</sup> In addition to the attacks on Afghanistan, air attacks were also executed on Pakistan to create tension between Afghan refugees and Pakistani people.<sup>171</sup> At least 200 air space violations happened in Pakistan in 1985, resulting by the end of 1986 at least 700 violations.<sup>172</sup>

The actions taken by the Soviet Union and Afghanistan exemplify violations of the 1949 Geneva Conventions of indiscriminate targeting of areas, despite both actors ratifying the agreement on 10 May 1954 and 26 September 1956, respectively.<sup>173</sup> Similar to other actors, the U.S.S.R. signed the 1977 Geneva Protocol I, but did not ratify it until 1989, and Afghanistan did not ratify the protocol until 2009.<sup>174</sup> The USSR and Afghanistan violated the anti-strategic bombing norm, but the institutionalization of the norm was strong, especially with the CCW in 1980. The CCW was discussed and signed

---

<sup>167</sup> Collins 1987, 203: roughly 118,000 Soviet troops and 30,000 Afghan troops were fighting 120,000 resistance forces (resistance forces (7) included the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujaheddi)

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Collins 1987, 205.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Roberts & Guelff 1982, 326-330.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 459-460.

in 1980 by actors such as the United States (signed in 1982, ratified in 1995), the Soviet Union (signed in 1981, ratified in 1982), and Afghanistan (signed in 1981, ratified in 2017).<sup>175</sup> The signature and agreement of the CCW show combatant parties in war promoting the strength of the norm although these actors also violated the norm.

U.S. violation of the anti-strategic bombing norm from the past thirty years did not stop condemnation of the actions taken by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. After the involvement of the Soviet Union, the Reagan administration imposed embargos and sanctions such as: a grain embargo, a fertilizer embargo, export license restrictions, fishery sanctions, truck component export embargo, Olympics Export embargo, and finally, a boycott of the Olympics.<sup>176</sup> The then-West German Democratic Chancellor Helmut Schmidt marked U.S. responses to the invasion as too quick and excessive, especially since the U.S. did not act in Afghanistan until the Soviet Union was involved.<sup>177</sup> This relatively fits with the hegemonic leadership hypothesis because the U.S. only promoted the strength of the norm and civilian protection for its own gain. The United States was not involved in Afghanistan when the coup first broke out in 1978, only getting involved once the Soviet Union invaded.<sup>178</sup>

---

<sup>175</sup> Signatures and Ratification Statistics of the 1980 CCW: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/ccw-1980/state-parties?activeTab=undefined>.

<sup>176</sup> Leitenberg 1986, 279; the grain sale embargo to the USSR was blocked sales beyond 8 million metric tons, meaning that 17 million metric tons were withheld from the USSR; as well, the U.S. stopped the sale of superphosphates (agricultural fertilizer) and other technological items such as computers and energy equipment

The boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics ultimately did not have any effect on international action and, according to Leitenberg, “in all likelihood the USSR was quite satisfied to have the consequence which received a major portion of the attention of international public opinion relegated to a sports and public relations event. West Germany, for example, increased its exports to the USSR by 31 percent in the first nine months of 1980 at the same time as it boycotted the Olympic games” (p. 279)

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 271.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 275.

The U.S. embargos and sanctions, however, were not necessarily strictly for the anti-strategic bombing norm, but instead an overall opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Soviets did use a large amount of air weaponry and so the sanctions can pertain to this, but the enforcement mechanisms the U.S. used were not explicit as a criticism to civilian bombardment. The high enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis is still applicable to this case because although the enforcement mechanisms were for a wider goal, this shows sanctions on something that was a big part of the war between Afghanistan and the Soviets. Concordance levels for the norm are moderate because a lot of Western European actors did not criticize or condemn the actions of the U.S.S.R. nor Afghanistan, putting no diplomatic pressure on the Russians.<sup>179</sup> Similarly for institutionalization, with the signing of the CCW, shows the beginning of the promotion of restricting incendiary raids. Incendiary raids are not a direct correlation with anti-strategic bombing but shows the prohibition of dropping harmful elements from the sky, encouraging norm strength. The enforcement by the United States on the Soviet Union represents the strength of the norm, which holds true with the norm analysis. This also shows that the high enforcement, weak norm hypothesis does not work with the information given (more enforcement does not weaken then norm). Similarly, the U.S. as the hegemon in this instance is encouraging the anti-strategic bombing norm in pursuit of its own interest, that being condemning the Soviet Union to sequester a rising power.

Heightened criticism from the United States is interesting during this time due to a similar replication of actions it performed ten years prior: ‘free fire’ zones; destroying

---

<sup>179</sup> Leitenberg 1986, 289.

civilian villages; indiscriminate targeting; destruction of foodstuffs; and high-altitude bombing.<sup>180</sup> In total, estimations of Afghans killed during this time range from 300,000 to one million.<sup>181</sup> Within that number, only a small percentage of the killed were active combatants.<sup>182</sup> The Helsinki Watch Report listed the violations of the Soviet Union, including the indiscriminate bombings and destruction of agriculture, noting that these actions were in violation of the Geneva Conventions.<sup>183</sup> Sanctions such as the ones that the U.S. imposed on the Soviet Union, as well as recognition in reports such as that of Helsinki Watch, shows the heightened consistency of norm strength but still overall lack of hegemonic leadership.

The U.S. acted on the Soviet Union norm violations, however, other Western powers did not, representing not only the inconsistency of criticisms when there are norm violations but also the lack of power the hegemon had in promoting the norm more. The U.S. promoted the anti-strategic bombing norm by imposing sanctions, because it was in its best interest, but did not convince others to enforce the norm as well, therefore showing a weak explanation for the hegemonic leadership hypothesis. Overall, the best explanation for norm strength during this time is the high enforcement, strong norm by the United States, which is different from the hegemonic leader determining the norm is strong in its best self-interest.

---

<sup>180</sup> Leitenberg 1986,, 283.

<sup>181</sup> Leitenberg 1986, 284: the 10 December 1985 *New York Times* article estimated about 500,000 dead.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 285.

## **Conclusion**

Shockingly, the anti-strategic bombing norm after World War II through the 1980s stayed at a moderate level of norm strength, varying in different causes by decades and events. The strength of the norm through civilian protection after World War II automatically was a positive sign of norm strength and the promotion of the norm by states. With the ratification of the 1949 Geneva Conventions throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the institutionalization of the norm increased, and concordance was stronger with certain actors condemning the U.S. norm violations in the Korean War. Separately, the secrecy of the U.S. makes the Vietnam War a difficult case, but the norm continued to stay strong with some actors continuing to condemn norm violations. Although the 1977 Geneva Protocol I was not ratified in this time, the 1980 CCW kept the anti-strategic bombing norm strong, specifically with the prohibition of the usage of incendiary weapons that cause suffering on the innocent. The CCW was not widely ratified until the 1990s and 2000s but shows the signatory of actors to norm strength. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the CCW signatures shows the moderate level of institutionalization.

In all these cases, the higher enforcement, stronger norm hypothesis best explains the consistent norm strength. Overall, weak enforcement mechanisms such as the condemnation by different actors within different events shows the strengthening of the norm more than in World War II, but not drastic strengthening of the norm with high sanctions only coming at the end of this period by the U.S. The high enforcement, weak norm hypothesis does not work with these cases because more enforcement did not result



in the weakening of the norm. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not function as an explanation for all cases, only as an explanation with the Soviet/Afghanistan case. Finally, the technology hypothesis does not work as an explanation of norm strength because technology advancements increased during the time, but actors failed to use the new technology as a means of precision to avoid civilians.

## **Chapter 6: Wars, Conflicts, and Drones: The Norm in the 1990s/2000s**

### **Introduction**

With further developments in technology and the increase in conflicts, especially in the Balkans and the Middle East, aerial bombardment became an object of high usage in the 1990s and 2000s, sometimes as the sole means of intervention. The Gulf War, intervention in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, show actors, such as the United States and NATO, intervening and using bombing as a means of enforcement, regime change, or to combat terrorism.<sup>1</sup> In many of these cases, targeting is seen as a necessity to stop larger humanitarian violations. In these conflicts, interventions, and wars, civilian casualties are not eliminated but it is not a norm violation when main actors use bombardment that results in some civilian casualties.

This chapter evaluates the period from 1990 to the 2010s and specifically the usage of aerial bombardment in conflicts. Based on concordance and institutionalization, this period reflects a moderate/high norm strength due to moderate concordance levels of actors with either a promotion of the 1977 Geneva Protocol I and a high level of institutionalization with the ratification by most international actors of the 1977 Geneva Protocol I. I argue that the best explanation for norm strength in this chapter is the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis, showing the threat of enforcement mechanisms in encouraging the anti-strategic bombing norm results in the stronger norm. Hegemonic

---

<sup>1</sup> Allen & Vincent 2011, 1.

leadership is not an explanation of the stronger norm, with the United States not necessarily the state that determines the strength of the norm. Finally, the technology hypothesis explains the strengthening of the norm at the time because technology significantly improved throughout the period of twenty years and resulted in a more precise way of technology that actors used in the conflicts, especially in targeting only military areas. In these cases, the difference between civilian targeting and collateral damage is prominent. Despite cases with collateral damage, norm strength is stronger with a decrease in civilian targeting.

### **Norm Strength Analysis-Institutionalization**

Based on the case studies, the anti-strategic bombing norm heightens to a moderate level of concordance and a high level of institutionalization. The high level of institutionalization comes from the ratification of the 1977 Geneva Protocol I to encourage civilian protection and concordance spurs from this promotion. The norm focuses on purposeful, civilian targeting and so collateral damage is not considered as a norm violation. Concordance level analyses are before each case study, whereas institutionalization is analyzed here.

The context of the norm for this chapter mainly spurs from the 1977 Geneva Protocol. In including the prohibition of civilian starvation, this opens strategic bombing to targeting civilians and targeting some forms of infrastructure in this case. For the period of the 1990s, institutionalization raises to a high level, mainly due to an increase in ratification of the 1977 Geneva Protocol I by actors in the late 1980s and 1990s. Actors

such as Belgium (1986), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992), Canada (1990), Germany (1991), Kuwait (1985), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (1998), and others ratified the 1977 Geneva Protocol I.<sup>2</sup> Part IV, Chapter 3, Article 54 states that “1.) Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited; 2.) It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works.”<sup>3</sup> Other actors such as Serbia (2001), Iraq (2010), Japan (2004), and France (2001) did not sign until the early 2000s and other actors such as the United States, Pakistan, and Iran never ratified the 1977 Convention, resulting in not a total ratification but a “majority of eligible” states ratifying.<sup>4</sup>

With the Kosovo case, most of the concern by international actors was about territorial sovereignty and the violation of human rights by Serbia.<sup>5</sup> Anderson does acknowledge violations by NATO in the Kosovo case such as “(i) The bombing of Yugoslavia resulted in the destruction of many Serbian religious and historical sites, some of which had stood from the ninth century” which violated the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and “(ii) A key part of the NATO strategy was to destroy the infrastructure of Yugoslavia.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Protocol Additional to the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/state-parties?activeTab=1949GCS-APs-and-commentaries>

<sup>3</sup>Roberts & Guelff 1982, 409-416.

<sup>4</sup> Ben-Josef Hirsch & Dixon 2021, 587.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson 2000, 33. The UN Charter: Chapter I, Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter: All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner

Mass destruction of chemical plants, gas storages and oil refineries was carried out and admitted” therefore violating the protection of the environment.<sup>6</sup> Most of these targets were legal to be targeted by NATO on the topic of civilians. Finally, in April 1999, Yugoslavia invoked the violation by NATO of the 1949 Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, due to the large number of Serbs killed which “could not just be collateral damage.”<sup>7</sup> However, collateral damage continues to be a justification for regional bombardment and if civilian deaths were unintentional, this is not a violation of the 1977 Geneva Protocol I.

### **Case Studies**

In these case studies, the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis, best explains why the norm during the 1990s and 2000s is stronger overall. The high enforcement, weak norm hypothesis, therefore, does not work. The technology hypothesis explains the stronger norm, with a continuation of new technology advancements and the employment of this technology in conflicts. Finally, the hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not function as an explanation, because the U.S. was not the one that determined the strength of the norm in each case.

---

<sup>6</sup> Anderson 2000., 34.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 35.

## **The Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm-Kuwait and Iraq), 1990-1991**

### ***Concordance***

The Gulf War shows the rise in further norm strength after the Soviet Afghanistan invasion in the 1980s. After Iraq invaded Kuwait, the U.S., Great Britain, France, and others took armed action against Iraq, resulting in these actors using aerial bombardment to force Iraq to withdrawal from Kuwait. The anti-strategic bombing norm is stronger here coming from the Soviet Afghanistan conflict. Although the phrasing of “anti-strategic bombing” was not necessarily used in this short intervention, the intentions of actors were to only target the Iraqi military.<sup>8</sup> Criticism for bombing usage only came from international press, including a piece in the Tokyo newspaper *Shimbun*, by Yasuo Kurata stating that U.S. bombers attacked an air-raid shelter and “slaughtered more than 400 people, including about 100 infants and young children.”<sup>9</sup> The U.S. suspected the air-raid shelter to be a communication center for the Iraqi military, and so the bombing of the shelter was unintentional.<sup>10</sup> Despite not a high amount of criticism on potential strategic bombing actions, the concordance of the norm is reflected with the subtle, continued promotion of the signing and ratification of the 1977 Geneva Protocol I. With state actors continuing to ratify the protocol throughout the 1990s, this not only shows the institutionalization of the norm but also the promotion of the norm from state actors and from the United Nations and ICRC. For this case, I have not found official declarations

---

<sup>8</sup> Mueller, et al 2015, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Crane 2018, 25.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

from the UN or ICRC, however, the constant promotion for the 1949 and 1977 Geneva Conventions and Protocol represents the moderate level of concordance.

### ***The Gulf War Case***

In August 1990, the Iraqi Republican Guard invaded Kuwait.<sup>11</sup> Immediately after the invasion, President George H.W. Bush outlined goals within the Gulf to intervene, including “(1) Secure the immediate, unconditional, and complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, (2) Restore the legitimate government of Kuwait, (3) Assure the security and stability of the Persian Gulf region, [and] (4) Protect American lives.”<sup>12</sup> Separately, in November 1990, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution Number 678, requesting the withdrawal of Iraqi troops that were in Kuwait. Overall, this request was a failure, with Saddam Hussein staying within Kuwait. On 17 January 1991, the U.S. and its coalition intervened.<sup>13</sup> This war was supported by the United Nations Security Council and 36 states which led the military coalition to Iraq out of Kuwait.<sup>14</sup>

Phase I of the air campaign consisted of targeting “Iraq’s strategic air defenses, aircraft/airfields, strategic chemical, biological, and nuclear capability; leadership targets; command and control systems; Republican Guard Force Command (RGFC) forces; telecommunications facilities; and key elements of the national infrastructure, such as...electric grids, petroleum storage, and military production facilities.”<sup>15</sup> The main

---

<sup>11</sup> Beagle 2001, 51.

<sup>12</sup> Biddle 2019, 45-46; Beagle 2001, 51, (fn 2).

<sup>13</sup> Pape 20014, 121; van der Heide 2013, 289.

<sup>14</sup> Mueller et al. 2015, 3.

<sup>15</sup> Beagle 2001, 52, (fn 5).

press for targeting television transmitters was ultimately in order to destroy communications within Iraq.<sup>16</sup> Other targeting mechanisms included destroying water, power, and transportation facilities in Baghdad.<sup>17</sup> All of these targeting mechanisms were in order to harm the Iraqi military, however with the new context of the norm, targeting infrastructure makes it difficult to determine if this is a dual-use target or not. Dual-use target is when it is used by the military and by civilians. Targeting water, power, and transportation was not to harm the civilian population, but this could have secondary effects. Air war plans, such as the Black Hole planners led by Lieutenant Colonel David Deptula, heavily emphasized targeting overlapping targets that would have similar and drastic effects to hurt the Iraqi military. This means that instead of targeting certain priority targets, strategic tactics resulted in bombing certain areas consecutively.<sup>18</sup> With the efficiency of targeting, bombers hit the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, the Baghdad Conference Center, the Military Intelligence Headquarters, and other military operation areas.<sup>19</sup>

When NATO and the United States targeted Iraqi oil production, this ultimately had little effect due to the short operation of the war, leaving Iraq to rely on stored supplies.<sup>20</sup> Before the war, Iraq placed military structures and assets near and around civilian areas, such as neighborhoods, in order to either stall aerial attacks or be able to denounce the U.S. and NATO attacks as against the Iraqi people.<sup>21</sup> On top of military

---

<sup>16</sup> Beagle 2001, 54.

<sup>17</sup> Crane 2018, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Biddle 2019, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 22-23, (fn 5).



efforts placed near neighborhoods, Iraq took 4,900 hostages and used at least 106 of these hostages as human shields.<sup>22</sup> This suggests that Iraq tried to rely on enforcement mechanisms of other actors to denounce the actions of the U.S., especially after the beginning of the ratification of the 1977 Geneva Protocol and the already established 1949 Geneva Conventions. However, the U.S. encouraged the anti-strategic bombing norm more and made it clear that the attacks of military areas could result in civilian casualties. By targeting the military centers near the civilian areas, the U.S. did not face high enforcement mechanisms because it followed the anti-strategic bombing norm. This also does show that if a state had a norm violation, high enforcement is an explanation for the strong norm.

During the Gulf War, the “Al Firdos bunker incident,” on 13 February 1991, was the hardest incident with accidental civilian casualties.<sup>23</sup> During the bombardment of Baghdad, two 2,000-pound bombs hit the Al Firdos bunker, a civil defense shelter, which was used as a command-and-control facility. This Iraqi military used this facility, therefore targeting a military target, but this attack resulted in the deaths of 200 to 300 civilians, 100 of which were children.<sup>24</sup> Because this was targeting for the purpose of military tactics, this does not violate the norm nor does it violate the Geneva Conventions, therefore showing enforcement mechanisms not necessary on the U.S., however it did result in a high number of civilian casualties.

---

<sup>22</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 22-23.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 43, (fn 33).

By the start of the Gulf War most states signed and ratified the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and some states ratified the 1977 Geneva Protocol I. Both codify the norm of not targeting civilians and because of the strength of the agreement, this encourages actors to not violate the norm. This shows the enforcement mechanisms in place if an actor breaks this agreement. Therefore, the potential enforcement mechanism shows that the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis is what explains this phenomenon. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not work as an explanation in this instance for this reason. If the hegemonic leadership hypothesis worked as an explanation, the U.S. would use strategic bombardment in all of Iraq to force its military to withdrawal from Kuwait. The norm strength with the explanation of a potential high enforcement mechanism shows that the U.S. did not violate the norm for that reason.

Technological developments leading into the 1990s, and specifically within the Gulf War, focused less on precision and more on “modern electronics and computers.”<sup>25</sup> The technology hypothesis works as an explanation for a strong norm when actors use technology available to them at the time to encourage more precise targeting. In this case, the usage of PGMs shows this effort. The U.S. began to promote precision-guided munitions (PGMs) usage within the Gulf War, but PGMs were only periodically used.<sup>26</sup> Out of the 118,700 sorties flown during the two-month campaign, only 6% were PGMs, and the U.S. was the only actor who used them.<sup>27</sup> This is a relatively high number of PGM usage for the time. PGMs consisted of only 6,250 tons of the 88,500 tons of bombs

---

<sup>25</sup> Perry 1991, 69.

<sup>26</sup> Mueller et al. 2015, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Mueller et al. 2015, 3; Perry 1991, 70; Canestaro 2004, 451.

used on Iraq. 90% of the precision smart bombs hit the target whereas 25 percent of the unguided bombs hit its target.<sup>28</sup> This means that 62,000 tons of bombs missed its target within the two-month campaign, leaving large space for civilian casualties to occur and ultimately scaring the population.<sup>29</sup> Despite the small amount of PGMs available, the U.S. used them to some extent which also fits into explaining the norm. This then shows that the strength of the norm can be attributed to the technology used and the want of state actors to use it.

The U.S. and other belligerents used other technology, including Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) and Joint Surveillance and Targeting Radar Systems (JSTARS). Both focused on radar systems to detect either other planes in the air or ground vehicles.<sup>30</sup> AWACS was used mainly in air-to-air combat and JSTARS was for detecting ground vehicles.<sup>31</sup> Ultimately, neither contributed to the precision of targeting mechanisms but instead contributed to target detection. This also shows a means of targeting that was used in the war.

Estimated civilian deaths ranged from 1,000 to 3,500, with the U.S. Department of Defense never publicly releasing its own estimates.<sup>32</sup> Baghdad estimated 2,248 Iraqi civilian deaths and a Greenpeace study estimated 3,500 civilian deaths.<sup>33</sup> This number is relatively small in comparison to the population of 17.42 million in 1990.<sup>34</sup> Crane notes

---

<sup>28</sup> Crane 2018, 25; Canestaro 2004, 451.

<sup>29</sup> Crane 2018, 25.

<sup>30</sup> Perry 1991, 70.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>32</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 21-22, (fn 2).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-25.

<sup>34</sup> 1990 Iraq Population: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1066952/population-iraq-historical/>

that the USAF emphasized “great restraint regarding sacred sites and residential areas, though some collateral damage resulted from near misses or downed cruise missiles” stating that “Learning their lessons from Vietnam, leaders in Southwest Asia and Washington responded quickly to counter claims of indiscriminate bombings with explanations and photographs.”<sup>35</sup> This suggests a fear of enforcement if other states thought the U.S. performed strategic bombing attacks. By backing up claims with photos and explanations this shows anti-strategic bombing norm compliance, but also how the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis explains the norm strength.

Overall, the Gulf War case study begins the period of moderate/high norm strength. The U.S. used PGMs, hitting on target about 90% of the time. This is a large amount for the time, showing the U.S. using the technology available. Therefore, the technology hypothesis works with the technological application of the time. However, the enforcement hypothesis is the best way to explain the strength of the norm. International actors did not need to employ enforcement mechanisms due to norm compliance, however, the U.S. and other states rested within norm compliance due to the fear of enforcement mechanisms if it violated the norm. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis states that the norm will be weak when the hegemon decides it is in its best interest for it to be weak. In this case, this does not work because the U.S. does comply to the norm, however, is not the one determining norm strength. The U.S. complied with the norm for fear of enforcement, not because it was in its best interest to strengthen the norm, especially within a war.

---

<sup>35</sup> Crane 2018, 24.

## **Kosovo/Operation Allied Force 1999**

### ***Concordance***

Kosovo is an example for the 1990s of continued norm strength with the anti-strategic bombing norm, although NATO used aerial bombardment as the sole means of intervention. In the UN Security Council Resolution 1199, the UN expressed concern of the “excessive and indiscriminate use of force by Serbian Security forces” on the Kosovar Albanians.<sup>36</sup> This mainly exemplifies norm strength with civilian protection. Civilian casualties and civilian displacement, however, was not caused by strategic bombing, but instead by on the ground soldiers, which led to NATO intervention on 24 March 1999, headed by the United States.<sup>37</sup> NATO justification for pursuing aerial bombardment came from “refugee flows, inter-ethnic violence, and human rights violations” by Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Serbia, and further claimed to be enforcing international norms of civilian protection.<sup>38</sup>

Civilian casualty estimates range from 1,200 to 5,700 due to NATO bombardment which is a small amount for the 11-week campaign.<sup>39</sup> The civilian casualties in Serbia were unintentional, with Milosevic as the main target. Overall, NATO rhetorically supported the effort to avoid civilian casualties and expressed regret if innocent civilians were caught in the crossfire, exemplifying strategic bombardment as not a method in the

---

<sup>36</sup> Steinke 2015, 47.

<sup>37</sup> Steinke 2015, 47; Naidu 1999, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Schroeder 2006, 182.

<sup>39</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 64.

intervention.<sup>40</sup> The large number of actors who supported NATO involvement shows a strong rhetorical support for avoiding purposeful civilian targeting.<sup>41</sup>

Criticisms came from then-United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson. She stated the NATO intervention was a potential war crime, mainly criticizing NATO's usage of cluster bombs and environmental destruction.<sup>42</sup> The criticism by Robinson shows the norm still moderately strong with concordance of a criticism from an international organization. China, Russia, and Namibia also created a draft resolution condemning the bombings, but 12 other states overruled this.<sup>43</sup> This criticism does not really target the usage of strategic bombing, but instead was a criticism to support Serbia. Other actors, such as Human Rights Watch, criticized the NATO targeting tactics and determined that half of the civilian casualties could have been avoided.<sup>44</sup> Despite the criticisms by some international actors, NATO and other actors affiliated with it supported the anti-strategic bombing norm more. This leaves the concordance level of the norm at moderate because there were some criticisms aimed at NATO targeting, but also had ulterior motives. Public claims, such as U.S. Deputy Secretary Hamre's, describe how it was "never the intention" for civilians to be killed, resulting in "unintended damage," showing that NATO targeting claims rest within the norm.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 74.

<sup>41</sup> Anderson 2000, 36; Steinke 2015, 49-50.

<sup>42</sup> Schroeder 2004, 188, (fn 61).

<sup>43</sup> Steinke 2015, 49-50.

<sup>44</sup> Crane 2018, 32.

<sup>45</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 67: Deputy Secretary Hamre stated "Of the 30 instances of unintended damage, one third were instances where we damaged the target we wanted to destroy, but innocent civilians were killed at the same time.... We never wanted to destroy that train or kill its occupants. We did want to

### *The Kosovo Case*

The case of Kosovo, an 11-week bombing operation against Serbia, shows a relative continuation of norm strength during a time when main state actors used aerial bombardment to stop human rights violations.<sup>46</sup> The anti-strategic bombing norm is moderate/high during this time. NATO argued for the necessity of an aerial campaign to stop further civilian targeting on Serbia's part. Individual actors, such as British Prime Minister Tony Blair condemned the actions of Serbia as "awful crimes" and "ethnic cleansing, systematic rape, [and] mass murder" therefore justifying the intervention of NATO as that to protect civilians.<sup>47</sup> In this case, high enforcement, strong norm explains norm strength. The humanitarian rights norm is strong with NATO's effort to protect the Albanian Kosovars as well.

Violence between Serbian Yugoslavians (90% of the population) and Kosovar Albanians (10% of the population) broke out in 1998.<sup>48</sup> On 24 March 1999, NATO launched Operation Allied Force to stop the conflict and ensure a withdrawal of forces from Kosovo.<sup>49</sup> The launching of the campaign was headed by the United States as purely an air war, to stop "ethnic cleansing" taking place in Kosovo.<sup>50</sup> NATO advocated

---

destroy the bridge and we regret this accident" (U.S. House of Representatives, 1999); other cases included mistargeting or hitting the wrong building

<sup>46</sup> Mueller et al. 2015, 5.

<sup>47</sup> Steinke 2015, 50.

Haulman 2015, 8: "The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, acknowledged 'excessive and indiscriminate use of force by Serbian security forces and the Yugoslav Army which has resulted in numerous civilian casualties and... the displacement of more than 230,000 persons from their homes'." This was incorporated into the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1199 passed on 23 September 1998 that demanded a ceasefire in Kosovo.

<sup>48</sup> Haulman 2015, 8; Naidu 1999, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Allen & Vincent 2011, 3; Haulman 2015, 11.

<sup>50</sup> Haulman 2015, 11, (fn 20); Naidu 1999, 2.

for the aerial campaign because it would refrain from having military on the ground and was a last resort option because diplomatic and economic pressure was not going to work.<sup>51</sup> With the aerial campaign “there was relatively widespread support in the international community for NATO’s actions” except from China and Russia.<sup>52</sup> Aerial bombardment and attacks on Serbia’s military and government shows this as an enforcement mechanism to the humanitarian norm. This intervention also shows NATO as an actor to protect civilians, therefore using bombardment to do so.

On the opening night of the campaign, 214 strike aircrafts, including those from Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, and the United States, began to destroy air defense systems and military command and control targets.<sup>53</sup> All of these targets fit into wartime and conflict targeting compliance, therefore not bombing the civilian population. The highest level of technology used by the U.S. on the first night was AIM-120 missiles with homing radars in them for pilots to “launch and leave” at MiG-29s, as opposed to guiding the missiles to target.<sup>54</sup> This shows a new level of technology used on aerial bombardment.

Lambeth notes that NATO needed large technological improvements to have “better means for locating moving targets, better discrimination of real targets from decoys, and a way of engaging those targets with smart submunitions rather than with more-costly PGMs and cruise missiles.”<sup>55</sup> Despite the setbacks of not having the highest

---

<sup>51</sup> Allen & Vincent 2011, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Steinke 2015, 49.

<sup>53</sup> Haulman 2015, 11.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Lambeth 2001, 247-248 (fn 66).



technology, NATO still used to its best ability the technology available. Technology issues occurred in the beginning of the conflict, with bad weather and altitude requirements limiting the amount of bombing campaigns that could be conducted in certain areas.<sup>56</sup> In comparison to World War II, this shows the restraint of NATO to not conduct blind bombing operations in areas where sight was limited. Therefore, this shows the continuous strength of the norm through NATO's actions. Overall, with limited sight, NATO cancelled three out of the first six night-bombing campaigns due to clouds affecting the targeting function.<sup>57</sup> NATO was limited to laser-guided bombs (LGBs) and so did not hit targets accurately but waited to perform the raids when weather had improved.<sup>58</sup>

NATO expressed efforts to avoid civilian casualties with precision attacks and "regret for the deaths of innocent civilians that may have occurred."<sup>59</sup> This shows the rhetoric for norm strength according to the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon scale continuing to be strong. The outward verbal commitment to try to keep civilian casualties low continues to exemplify norm strength. Initial targeting was strict, not allowing Lieutenant General Michael Short to target power supplies, communication facilities, and command bunkers on the first nights of the campaign, which do qualify as military targets. NATO leaders feared that striking barracks would lead to too high of a kill count.<sup>60</sup> This suggests that NATO was also fearful of enforcement mechanisms put in place if it violated the

---

<sup>56</sup> Allen & Vincent 2011, 4.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Lambeth 2001, 247.

<sup>59</sup> Lambeth 2001, 224; Larson & Savych 2007, 74 (quote).

<sup>60</sup> Crane 2018, 29.

anti-strategic bombing norm even slightly. The strictness of targeting did relax, where targets became enemy command-and-control centers and communication structures, but these were still military targets.<sup>61</sup> NATO even was precise in targeting by having lawyers in Germany approve if specific targets were legal to hit within the Geneva Conventions, showing how the norm strength here is high with the additional institutionalization of the 1977 Geneva Protocol to encourage concordance support.<sup>62</sup>

After efforts to comply to the Geneva Conventions fully and outwardly by targeting clear military and government operations, by the end of March 1999 it was clear that Serbia was not going to stop the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians.<sup>63</sup> Entering into April, the ground conflict intensified, leading to the air war to intensify as well.<sup>64</sup> With this intensification, precision targeting became less rigorous especially with hitting targets that were not supposed to be the target. On 3 April 1999, NATO struck the center of Belgrade for the first time resulting in the destruction of the Yugoslavian and Serbian interior ministries, which is targeting something of military value.<sup>65</sup> However, targeting a city center allows for a higher chance of civilian casualties. Near the same time NATO accidentally bombed an Albanian Kosovar convoy resulting in the death of 70 Kosovars, violating the norm.<sup>66</sup> Senior active and retired Air Force generals stated in April 1999 an overall “disappointment that air power is being so poorly employed [and] frustration over

---

<sup>61</sup> Haulman 2015, 11.

<sup>62</sup> Crane 2018, 29.

<sup>63</sup> Haulman 2015, 12.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>65</sup> Haulman 2015, 13.

<sup>66</sup> Naidu 1999, 4.

the false promise of a perfect war and zero casualties” persisted.<sup>67</sup> This quote shows a disappointment in a false promise of no casualties, but it also does show that there was a want to not target civilians at all. The instances of civilian casualties were not civilian targeting but instead sloppiness of targeting precision.

During the more aggressive, initial attacks in April, the United States encouraged targeting fixed electrical grids, communication hubs and lines, transportation means, and industrial structures within Belgrade as opposed to targeting military equipment that was in “the forests of Kosovo.”<sup>68</sup> Although the targets were in the cities, this still qualifies as military targets, especially because this infrastructure was food supplies related. There were some operations that were classified as “U.S. Only,” representing the status of the U.S. as the hegemon and main actor within the conflict.<sup>69</sup> The U.S. targeting more high-risk areas, representing a potential for more civilian casualties, shows the hegemon pushing the boundary between military targets and civilian areas. However, because the hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not explain the strength of the norm, this shows that the U.S. continues to comply with the norm for fear of enforcement mechanisms put in place and criticism on attacks that are purposefully on civilians. Certain restraint from other NATO actors expressed a want for limitation on targets struck in the capital, contrary to the U.S. want to target Belgrade.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Lambeth 2001, 235, (fn 38).

<sup>68</sup> Haulman 2015, 13.

<sup>69</sup> Tolbert 2006, 27.

<sup>70</sup> Haulman 2015, 13.

According to Haulman, the first air raid that caused a “significant” number of civilian casualties was on 12 April 1999. A F-15 bomber dropped a precision-guided munition on a railroad bridge near Lekovac. The PGM caused severe civilian casualties because a passenger train was crossing the tracks at the time, resulting in the death of 30 civilians.<sup>71</sup> This does not appear to be a norm violation because the bomber was targeting a means of transportation that was associated with the military, however this does blur the line between what counts as civilian infrastructure versus military infrastructure. The train that crossed the tracks at that exact moment was a train that was delayed earlier that day, therefore not a purposeful target.<sup>72</sup> This shows that the technology hypothesis continues to support the norm strength with the usage of a PGM in this situation, however the timing resulted in an accident. Another accident includes on 14 April, when NATO bombers hit two refugee convoys.<sup>73</sup> This happened due to the pilots thinking the tractors in the field were enemy tanks.<sup>74</sup>

After Phase I of the campaign, NATO entered Phase 2+ on 20 April 1999.<sup>75</sup> Phase 2+ targeted TV stations, radio stations, Milosevic’s party headquarters, and other places affiliated with Milosevic.<sup>76</sup> Phase 2+ targets are still affiliated with the military and Milosevic. Included in expanding the target list was also the increase in sorties flown, growing from 115 per day to 500.<sup>77</sup> After the start of Phase 2+, on 21 April, a cruise

---

<sup>71</sup> Haulman 2015, 14, (fn 43).

<sup>72</sup> Crane 2018, 29.

<sup>73</sup> Haulman 2015, 14.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Allen & Vincent 2011, 5.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 5: Spokesman Jamie Shea stated, “From now on, any aspects of [Milosevic’s] power structure is deemed a legitimate target” (NATO 1999)

<sup>77</sup> Allen & Vincent 2011, 5.

missile hit radio and television stations, inhibiting Milosevic for communicating with the population.<sup>78</sup> In the beginning of May, NATO bombardment on power supplies, specifically a hydroelectric power plant, resulted in power outages to 70% of the population, some for at least seven hours.<sup>79</sup> NATO's intention with this bombing was to disrupt relationships between Milosevic and the population, especially dropping leaflets that said "How long will you suffer for Milosevic?"<sup>80</sup> With the bombing of water areas, which is one of the dual-purpose targets, this shows a violation of the norm by NATO.

On 7 May 1999, three JDAMs hit the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, which killed 4 people and injured 26.<sup>81</sup> The bombers mistook the building for one of Milosevic's. Seven days after the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy, NATO struck Korisa, a southern Kosovo village, killing 79 people and wounding 58.<sup>82</sup> On May 24<sup>th</sup>, one bomber hit five power transmissions stations causing 80% of Serbia to not have power.<sup>83</sup> Cutting the power stopped the Serbian's command-and-control centers and banking system, but also cut off power to hospitals and water-pump stations.<sup>84</sup> The plan to cut the power was to target Milosevic, but direct consequences on the population, showing the violation of the norm, specifically the 1977 Geneva Protocol.

---

<sup>78</sup> Haulman 2015, 14.

<sup>79</sup> Tolbert 2006, 34; Gregory 2015, 79, (fn 76); Haulman 2015, 15.

<sup>80</sup> Tolbert 2006, 34, (fn 34). Another quote from Gregory 2015, 79 was "No gasoline, no electricity, no trade, no freedom, no future," (fn 80).

<sup>81</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 106.

<sup>82</sup> Haulman 2015, 16.

<sup>83</sup> Gregory 2015, 79; Biddle 2019, 51; Crane 2018, 30.

<sup>84</sup> Crane 2018, 30.

This intervention resulted in 496 missions using UAVs, a 29% usage of PGMs, and 38,000 NATO sorties flown.<sup>85</sup> In a testimony by United States Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre he stated “[w]e flew over 9,300 strike sorties and attacked over 900 targets, dropping over 24,000 bombs or missiles. All together, we had 30 instances when we caused damage we did not intend.”<sup>86</sup> The Deputy Secretary proceeded to defend the accidental attacks which resulted in civilian casualties, including the attack on the train tracks that hit a moving train car, other targets based on human error, and finally, the bombing of the Chinese embassy, stating the bomber located the wrong building.<sup>87</sup> The ownership of some of the attacks shows the strength of the norm, especially with fears of actors retaliating against the actions of NATO and the U.S. In conflict, civilian casualties are inevitable, but this shows effort to continue to comply with the norm in some instances, but also violating the norm with dual-use infrastructure. The ownership of civilian casualties also shows states needing to clarify purposefully civilian targeting or not, suggesting that high enforcement mechanisms would be put in place if one violates the norm.

Overall, norm strength did not dip down during the intervention in Kosovo. Bombing within highly populated areas does mean a higher risk of civilian casualties, but NATO complied to the norm to a certain extent. Compliance to this norm can be seen as a fear of having enforcement mechanisms imposed on states members to NATO if it outright targeted civilians. Technology used at the time also was the best available to

---

<sup>85</sup> Gregory 2015, 74; Haulman 2015, 17; Mueller et al. 2015, 4.

<sup>86</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 66: quote from U.S. House of Representatives, 1999.

<sup>87</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 67: source from U.S. House of Representatives, 1999.

conduct the aerial bombings performed. Civilian deaths for the Kosovo case are estimated between 1,200 and 5,700.<sup>88</sup> As Schroeder puts it “The conflict left tens of thousands of homes, businesses, and schools burned, and it resulted in attacks on power stations, oil refineries, factories, roads, bridges, television stations, water supplies, and sewage treatment plants.”<sup>89</sup> Among the list of the attacks, Schroeder further mentions that 20 hospitals, 190 schools, a refugee convoy, public housing projects, and the Chinese embassy, were all affected by the bombing, showing that it was not just military targets that were harmed.<sup>90</sup> Therefore this shows a violation of the norm by NATO, not outright targeting civilians, but instead destroying many dual-use areas, violating the 1977 Geneva Protocol.

## **Afghanistan/Operation Enduring Freedom 2001-2014**

### ***Concordance***

The war in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, represents a moderate/high level of concordance. After 11 September 2001 (9/11), the United States entered Afghanistan to combat the Taliban and other terrorist groups.<sup>91</sup> One of the key elements in this intervention included using aerial bombardment on large portions of Afghanistan.

---

<sup>88</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 64.

<sup>89</sup> Schroeder 2004, 188, (fn 57).

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 188, (fn 58).

<sup>91</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 125.

Throughout the war, transparency was not the priority for the United States, therefore, as according to Lambeth, “detailed information from CENTCOM about the war’s progress remained sketchy at best, making it hard for outside observers to judge how well the campaign was proceeding.”<sup>92</sup> This meant that it was difficult for outside actors to see if the U.S. performed norm violations. Some critics of U.S. actions state that the U.S. “failed to prevent a disturbingly high number of civilian casualties.”<sup>93</sup> However, in cases with civilian casualties, these deaths are unintentional. Individuals under the U.S., such as Admiral Stufflebeam, described how engagement-zone areas were not necessarily free-fire areas but instead stated that targets had to be confirmed as valid, showing the U.S. supporting target choices as purely military. Others, such as Colonel Gary Brown, claimed “We explicitly guarantee extra benefits to civilians,” ensuring the United States rested within the binds of the Geneva Conventions, therefore promoting norm strength.<sup>94</sup> When the U.S. introduced drone usage, the precision from drone strikes encouraged insurgent targeting as more accurate to avoid targeting civilians.<sup>95</sup> The actions of the U.S. do not constitute concordance, however, this reflects the actions of the U.S. as a means for other international actors to view U.S. actions.

Similar actors that the United States partnered with in the past continued to support the U.S. in Afghanistan. Great Britain, Turkey, Canada, and Australia all either supplied personnel, equipment, and airplanes to the U.S. and the U.S. separately formed a

---

<sup>92</sup> Lambeth 2005, 97.

<sup>93</sup> Burke 2004, 335.

<sup>94</sup> Shanker, Thom, New York Times, “Civilian Risk Curbing Strikes in Afghan War,” 23 July 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/23/world/asia/23military.html>.

<sup>95</sup> Walsh 2013, 12.



coalition with Great Britain.<sup>96</sup> The Secretary General of NATO, George Robertson, also supported higher involvement from NATO members, including Germany, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy.<sup>97</sup> The support for the U.S. was for the whole campaign not just bombardment, but it is assumed the support is for both.

For concordance, the only large criticisms came from the Taliban itself. The Taliban's ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zayeeef, accused the U.S. of killing up to 20 civilians in a night raid in Afghanistan.<sup>98</sup> The U.S. deemed these criticisms as "probably false," due to its "commitment to avoiding civilian casualties."<sup>99</sup> Zayeeef also accused the U.S. of "genocide," stating that 1,000 civilians died in the initial 16 days of the bombing attacks.<sup>100</sup> Larson and Savych state that "the United States was criticized by international and nongovernmental organization for the civilian casualties that were resulting from the war" but they do not mention what actors were the ones criticizing the U.S., and these criticisms were about civilian casualties and not civilian targeting.<sup>101</sup> All of the criticisms against the U.S. were on civilian casualties and not civilian targeting, however this also shows a moderate level of concordance with international organizations criticizing potential norm violations.

---

<sup>96</sup> Lambeth 2005, 116. \*Lambeth notes that the United States did not extend the coalition past Great Britain for fear of unwanted political complications against the campaign

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 98-99 (fn 76).

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>101</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 127-128.

### *The Afghanistan Case*

Based on norm strength levels during this period, the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis and technology hypothesis best support the explanation of a strong norm in Operation Enduring Freedom. In 1996, the Taliban assumed power in Afghanistan years after Soviet occupation.<sup>102</sup> After 9/11, the United States began Operation Enduring Freedom as the start of the U.S. war on terrorism.<sup>103</sup> Operation Enduring Freedom began on 7 October 2001, targeting the Taliban and al Qaeda in order to change the regime which controlled 90% of the region.<sup>104</sup> The opening night of the operation had preplanned targets, including in Herat, Shindand, Shibarghan, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Kandahar which was a southern Taliban area.<sup>105</sup> In one of these preplanned attacks, the U.S. dropped hundreds of unguided bombs and JDAMs onto al Qaeda training camps.<sup>106</sup> In this case, al Qaeda is qualified as having “military” areas, although it is a non-state actor, leaving these attacks to be within the laws of war by attack the opposing side’s military.<sup>107</sup> Overall, attacks were on al Qaeda and Taliban areas and “military” affiliated targets.<sup>108</sup> However, a spokesman stated “The only objectives were to kill obvious things out in the open [so as] to allow us to fly with impunity day and night, when we’ll work on harder targets,” which leaves this more open to civilian casualties.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Lambeth 2005, 76.

<sup>103</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 125.

<sup>104</sup> Lambeth 2005, 76; Larson & Savych 2007, 125.

<sup>105</sup> Lambeth 2001, 78.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Mueller et al. 2015, 5.

<sup>109</sup> Lambeth 2005, 83, (fn 28).

After the start of Operation Enduring Freedom, United States Secretary Rumsfeld stated that initial targets were not specific and instead “to create conditions for sustained operations,” but the first priority of the operation was to target military affiliated areas.<sup>110</sup> Within the initial attacks, 31 targets were hit inside Afghanistan which were warning radars, ground forces, command-and-control facilities, infrastructures, and airfields.<sup>111</sup> This shows that the U.S. did not execute blind bombing raids on certain areas but instead targeted operation facilities, showing norm compliance. On the second day of attacks, the United States struck the Garmabak Ghar training camp, a SAM battery outside of Kandahar, and two Taliban airfields. These attacks were conducted by using 5,000-pound bombs and cluster bombs.<sup>112</sup> On the third day of attacks, the United States military struck Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat aiming for a military academy, artillery areas, and training camps.<sup>113</sup> The targeting of “military” areas continues to represent norm strength and norm compliance leading in to the 2000s. The effect the attacks have on the civilian population is always something to take into consideration when attacking whole cities, but by targeting military areas of operations, this type of aerial bombardment is justified. Within the first five days of Operation Enduring Freedom, the United States dropped 740 JDAMs, 1,000 unguided bombs, and 50 cluster bombs over Afghanistan.<sup>114</sup> The unguided bombs and cluster munitions seem to be more imprecise, therefore not supporting the technology hypothesis in this instance. However, the U.S. required aircrafts to validate

---

<sup>110</sup> Lambeth 2005, 83, (fn 29).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 88, (fn 46).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 89, (fn 50).

targets, therefore not executing initial blind bombing raids.<sup>115</sup> Some scholars suggest that there were U.S. restraints on bombing areas, but at the same time, “these failed to prevent a disturbingly high number of civilian casualties and other potential violations of the laws of war.”<sup>116</sup> Despite the “disturbingly high civilian casualties” this does not fit into the realm of civilian targeting and strategic bombing. If U.S. claims for intentionality were only at military targets, then this continues to comply with the norm.

The largest criticism at the start of the war was the Taliban’s ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zayeeef.<sup>117</sup> Because this figure was tied to the Taliban, this criticism as a means of enforcement does have a large impact and represents ulterior motives. Abdul Salam Zayeeef claimed that on the opening night of the attacks, at least 20 Afghan civilians were killed, but this claim was later dismissed by Secretary Rumsfeld.<sup>118</sup> Another criticism of Zayeeef accused the United States of “genocide,” stating that 1,000 civilian deaths occurred within the first 16 days of Operation Enduring Freedom and 1,500 civilian deaths within the first 25 days.<sup>119</sup> This criticism more reflects the Taliban, therefore not really a means of enforcement. Civilian casualties are also unintentional therefore continuing U.S. norm compliance.

The United States claimed responsibility for multiple instances of civilian casualties within the first month of the war, including: a TLAM (tomahawk) missile striking a UN facility in Kabul (near a Taliban communications center) killing four

---

<sup>115</sup> Lambeth 2005, 95, (fn 66).

<sup>116</sup> Burke 2004, 335- Wheeler suggests the restraint of the U.S., but Burke states that this did not prevent the high number of civilian casualties.

<sup>117</sup> Lambeth 2005, 98-99.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 98-99, (fn 76).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 99, (fn 79).

employees and a 2,000-pound JDAM which was accidentally dropped on a residential neighborhood in Kabul instead of a Taliban airfield, killing four civilians. Other instances included a bomber dropping a JDAM on a warehouse that was suspected to house Taliban troops but was an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) emergency food and shelter area for refugees. In another instance two 500-pound bombs missed its Taliban vehicle target and instead struck a Kabul residential area.<sup>120</sup> Finally, the DoD took responsibility for bombing the same ICRC warehouse in Kabul again because the U.S. did not remove this target from the CENTCOM list.<sup>121</sup>

The above examples reflect civilian casualties of the time, but none of them were intentional civilian targeting operations. This not only continues to show U.S. norm compliance, but also shows how the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis explains norm strength. The U.S. outwardly took ownership of civilian casualties. In accordance with the anti-strategic bombing norm, this suggests that the U.S. wanted other international actors to know that the targeting was not purposeful. Announcing civilian casualties represents a fear of enforcement mechanisms put in place by other states if the norm appears to be violated. This also shows that the hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not work as an explanation to norm strength because if the U.S. decided the norm strength of the time, it would not have to take ownership of the civilian casualties in the respective areas and continue to bomb wherever.

---

<sup>120</sup> Lambeth 2005, 100-101, (fn 84, 85, 86, 87).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

After the commencement of Operation Enduring Freedom, the United States moved its targeting to Bagram, Taloqan, Kunduz, and Mazar-i-Sharif, on November 4<sup>th</sup>, which were places suspected to be near the Taliban.<sup>122</sup> Alongside the expansion of targeting, the U.S. put new technology into the war, including the BLU-82/B high-explosive bomb, the Air Force RQ-1 Predator drone, and AC-130 gunships with lasers.<sup>123</sup> This technology could contribute to targeting only military targets, representing the strength of the norm due to the technology hypothesis.

Burke notes that between the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom to mid-January 2002, between 8,000 and 18,000 Afghans died of starvation, injuries, or exposure from illness, and of this number 40% “are attribute[able] to the effects of the crisis and war.”<sup>124</sup> There were also 560,000 refugees during this time.<sup>125</sup> It is important to note the number of civilian deaths, however, this does not fit into the strategic bombing narrative because the deaths were attributed to aftermath effects. However, if the facilities targeted were dual use targeting, this complicates the violation of the norm.

In 2004, “the majority of munitions employed were PGMs” with nearly 60% of the bombs guided and almost all of them JDAMs with GPS guides.<sup>126</sup> This correlates with the technology hypothesis of using more precise weapons to an actor’s best ability. Technological advancements also focused on the production of bombs, such as a 500-pound version of the JDAMs and the 250-pound Next Generation Small Diameter Bomb

---

<sup>122</sup> Lambeth 2005, 126, (fn 156).

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>124</sup> Burke 2004, 344, (fn 62).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 344.

<sup>126</sup> Canestaro 2004, 452, (fn 136, 137).

(SDB).<sup>127</sup> The technological development of the bomb was in order to have smaller bombs resulting in a less likely chance to target civilians, especially to reduce “unintended damage and the number of missions to be flown.”<sup>128</sup> The statement of smaller bombs to minimize civilian targeting shows the technology hypothesis in correlation with norm strength.

Similarly, unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) production and usage was first majorly employed and noted in the war in Afghanistan. According to Deptula, the technology of a drone is something that is changing the way warfare is thought about, which “greatly compresses the time required for successful closing of the ‘observe, orient, decide, and act’ loop” of aerial targeting.<sup>129</sup> In the case of Afghanistan, drones were initially used to target only high-ranking al Qaeda officials.<sup>130</sup> However this resulted in the United States going after “many of whom appear to have only tenuous links to al Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks, and many of whom arguably pose no imminent threat to the United States.”<sup>131</sup> Drones, having the ability to hover in certain areas for a long time, exemplify the utmost highest precision of aerial targeting. With the access to the drone and the usage of the drone, this shows how norm strength is implemented.

President Barack Obama argued in 2013 that drones are effective and “Dozens of highly skilled al Qaeda commanders, trainers, bomb makers and operatives have been taken off the battlefield...[T]he primary alternative to [drones] would be the use of

---

<sup>127</sup> Canestaro 2004, 453.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., (fn 144).

<sup>129</sup> Biddle 2019, 60, (fn 125).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>131</sup> Biddle 2019, 57: quote by Professor Rosa Brooks, (fn 57).

conventional military operations... Conventional airpower or missiles are far less precise than drones.”<sup>132</sup> This precision of the drone explains the strength of the hypothesis. A study done from 2009 to 2013 showed that United States drones killed an estimated 3,300 al Qaeda, Taliban, and other terrorist organizations, including 50 senior leaders of al Qaeda and the Taliban.<sup>133</sup> Under Obama in 2012, it was noted that the U.S. had 7,500 drones under its control.<sup>134</sup>

Operation Enduring Freedom lasted from 1 October 2001 to 31 December 2014. The U.S. flew over 23,900 sorties, with 57% of the attacks PGMs.<sup>135</sup> Estimated civilian casualties in the beginning of the war ranged from 1,500 in 2001, to between 1,000 to 5,000 in 2002.<sup>136</sup> A recent figure states that of the 243,000 people who died in the warzone of Afghanistan and Pakistan, 70,000 of those were civilians (this figure is from 2022).<sup>137</sup> There were significant civilian casualties during this time, however not all were due to air strikes, nor were all caused by U.S. and allied combatants. Also, because these were civilian casualties, and not civilian targeting, this keeps the anti-strategic bombing norm strong.

Overall, this evidence supports the moderate/high concordance of the norm, especially in analyzing the start of the war and targeting military objectives.

Institutionalization is high, especially in this case with the use of lawyers on cases for

---

<sup>132</sup> Coyne & Hall 2018, 53: quote from President Barack Obama 2013.

<sup>133</sup> Byman 2013, 2: study done by the New American Foundation.

<sup>134</sup> Keene 2015, 1.

<sup>135</sup> Mueller et al. 2015, 4.

<sup>136</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 125-126; see these pages for more estimates, including Human Rights Watch and Associated Press.

<sup>137</sup> <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/civilians/afghan#:~:text=About%20243%2C000%20people%20have%20been,those%20killed%20have%20been%20civilians.>



targeting, making sure the U.S. continuously complied to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.<sup>138</sup>

## **Iraq/Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003-2011**

### ***Concordance***

During almost the same period as Operation Enduring Freedom, the U.S. conducted Operation Iraqi Freedom, reflecting moderate concordance. With efforts to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime, the United States invaded Iraq on 19 March 2003.<sup>139</sup> Various sources estimate between 1,700 and 7,800 civilians deaths in 2003 due to combat operations, including on the ground and aerial targeting.<sup>140</sup> Human rights organizations commented most on U.S. attacks in Iraq, stating that the U.S. "car[ed] more about protecting oil reserves than the welfare of the Iraqi people."<sup>141</sup> The criticisms were against the usage of cluster bombs in Baghdad, specifically in populated areas.<sup>142</sup> Schroeder claims that there "[were] 7,800 civilian Iraqi deaths, 20,000 injured civilians, and limited access to clean water in sanitation," when this piece was written in 2004.<sup>143</sup> Whether or not the targeting by the U.S. was intentional or not, it is clear that international actors criticized potential civilian targeting, continuing to show norm strength.

---

<sup>138</sup> See Larson & Savych 2007, 125: "As in the other military operations we examined, DoD has not, as of this writing, offered its own estimates of civilian casualties in the war in Afghanistan."

<sup>139</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 159.

<sup>140</sup> See Larson & Savych 2007, 159-160 for all estimates.

<sup>141</sup> Schroeder 2004, 194.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

France, Germany, Canada, and Russia all were against military intervention in Iraq.<sup>144</sup> Other authors state that actors “appeared to be uneasy with the direction of the US policy.”<sup>145</sup> However, the criticisms from these actors were against war intervention in general instead of potential strategic bombing violations. Part of the criticism can be attributed to wanting to deter civilian deaths. Concordance, therefore, continues at a moderate level with a concern for civilian casualties and civilian targeting.

### *The Iraq Case*

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, in correlation with Operation Enduring Freedom, norm strength continues to be best explained through the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis and the technology hypothesis. Operation Iraqi Freedom and the invasion of Iraq began on 19 March 2003 with the goal to overthrow Saddam Hussein.<sup>146</sup> Before the invasion in November 2002, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1441 giving Saddam Hussein “a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations,” specifically with cooperating with UN weapons inspectors to make sure that Iraq was not in possession of cruise missiles and WMDs.<sup>147</sup> Separately from the UN, the United States expanded the war on terror to include Iraq in 2003. United States Undersecretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, stated: “I think one has to say it is not just simply a matter of capturing people and holding them accountable, but removing the sanctuaries, removing

---

<sup>144</sup> van der Heide 2013, 297.

<sup>145</sup> Fizzah Ali 2009, 69.

<sup>146</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 159.

<sup>147</sup> van der Heide 2013, 287.

the support systems, ending states who sponsor terrorism. And that's why it has to be a broad and sustained campaign.”<sup>148</sup> Therefore, intervention was inevitable.

Before the war, criticism by many European states on the U.S. was about acting in Iraq in general. Many states did not see Iraq as an imminent threat.<sup>149</sup> The United States, Great Britain, and Spain were the only actors who created an 18<sup>th</sup> Resolution at the beginning of 2003 to make a deadline for Iraq to comply with Resolution 1441 or these states would take military action.<sup>150</sup> The 18<sup>th</sup> Resolution failed and the United States proceeding with enacting a military operation. Right before entering the war, as opposed to the aid given with Operation Enduring Freedom, France, Germany, Canada, and Russia were all opposed to the U.S. intervention in Iraq. These states promoted diplomacy instead.<sup>151</sup>

In March 2003, the U.S. invaded Iraq. Pape argues that in 2003, the United States took over Baghdad quickly with relatively few casualties, specifically from the usage of air power.<sup>152</sup> He states that due to the air raids, the U.S. ground forces were able to move throughout Iraq quickly to take over “major Iraqi combat units.”<sup>153</sup> Within the first year of the war, Pape states that half of the 28,000 bombs used were directed towards the Iraqi Republican Guard.<sup>154</sup> Once again with the U.S. operation, main targets were militarily affiliated, continuing compliance of the anti-strategic bombing norm. Of those strikes,

---

<sup>148</sup> van der Heide 2013, 294: quote from Paul Wolfowitz, the United States Undersecretary of Defense.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>152</sup> Pape 2004, 127.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 128.

about two-thirds of them were precision aimed at armor and moving vehicles, disabling ground resistance.<sup>155</sup> This continues to show heightened usage of available technology, specifically in aiming for military targets, supporting the technology hypothesis. The “major combat phase” of the war in 2003, used aerial power to enter Baghdad.<sup>156</sup> The U.S. used remotely piloted vehicles to target individuals quicker.<sup>157</sup> In using remotely piloted vehicles this allowed for more precise targeting to take place, once again showing the effectiveness of drones and the strength it carries to execute norm strength.

After the U.S. captured Saddam Hussein on 14 December 2003, the war continued for eight more years.<sup>158</sup> With al Qaeda still in Iraq leading into 2004, the U.S. military stayed. Air strikes continued to target military areas and individuals related to al Qaeda. Examples of this are the 2006 strike against the AQI leader Zarqawi, who was killed by a U.S. air strike near Baquba.<sup>159</sup> With the continuation of U.S. military presence, civilian casualties are estimated between 1,000 and 3,500 for the month of July 2006.<sup>160</sup> Once again, not representing civilian targeting nor strategic bombing.

Overall, civilian casualties in 2003 alone, are estimated to be between 5,425 and 7,041 due to the war.<sup>161</sup> These estimates do not separate those between aerial bombardment casualties and on the ground casualties. A recent estimate from 2003 to 2019 states that between 275,000 and 306,000 civilians died from war violence in Iraq,

---

<sup>155</sup> Pape 2004, 128.

<sup>156</sup> Biddle 2019, 54.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>158</sup> Iraq War: <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/iraq-war>

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Larson & Savych 2007, 159-160, see this page for more estimates.

including “aerial bombing, shelling, gunshots, suicide attacks, and fires started by bombing.”<sup>162</sup> In all these instances, civilian casualties continue to stay outside of a qualification of the norm. A high number of civilian casualties do not mean a violation from the norm. However, the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis is still implemented here. In conducting research on Iraq, most civilian deaths are noted as civilian casualties and none are conducted as civilian targeting. However, there can be an assumption made that if there was civilian targeting, there would be condemnations of the U.S. involvement.

For this case, the anti-strategic bombing norm for concordance stayed at moderate. The usage of PGMs, drones, and precision strikes show the technology hypothesis continuing the strength of the norm. The high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis works as an explanation for the norm to continue at a moderate/high level. Enforcement mechanisms that could be put in place against the U.S. if it violated the norm shows the U.S. restraint of targeting civilian areas. This, again, shows how the hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not work as an explanation for norm strength because although the U.S. complied to norm strength, it is not the one determining it.

## **Conclusion**

The twenty years after the Cold War exemplify continued conflict and aerial campaigns. If anything, the continuation of technological improvements led to actors promoting more precise aerial bombardment to protect its own combatants and to protect

---

<sup>162</sup> Civilian Casualties: <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/civilians/Iraqi>

civilians. The example in Kosovo shows the direct intention of that. With the rise of drone usage, this also shows a shift in the dynamic of the relationship between aerial bombardment and the targets below. Being more efficient with drone usage has led to another promotion of many actors wanting to obtain drones for its own war benefits. Although PGMs, JDAMs, and drones have promoted blind bombing less, civilian casualties persist and continue to incite fear among the civilian population as well.

As seen in the concordance and institutionalization norm strength section, the norm here is moderate in concordance with a promotion of the 1977 Geneva Protocol I in place. Institutionalization is high with the ratification of the 1977 Geneva Protocol I throughout the 1990s, except for the U.S. not ratifying it. The high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis best explains this strength of the norm especially with the potential for enforcement mechanisms put in place. The hegemonic leadership hypothesis does not function as an explanation for this period because although the U.S. complied with the norm at the time, U.S. norm compliance was due to the fear of enforcement mechanisms. The U.S. was not the actor determining the strength of the norm. Finally, the technology hypothesis also explains the strength of the norm. Technological advancements during this time increased at a large rate, especially with an increased usage of PGMs and drones. With the development and increased usage of the technology, this shows how technology strengthened the norm.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

Over the past 120 years, the anti-strategic bombing norm reflects an interesting norm proliferation with high enforcement mechanisms as the most prominent way the norm is strengthened. The nascent norm from the 1899 Hague Conventions set up the question of what aerial bombardment meant and how this affects the civilian population. With the new development of the airplane in 1903, the nascent norm was further solidified with the 1907 Hague Conventions but lacked overall signatures and ratification by state actors. Therefore going into World War I, the norm was incredibly weak, attributing this mainly to the lack of enforcement by actors. The hegemon, in this case the United Kingdom, did not contribute as the driving reason why the norm was weak during this time. In the interwar period, the norm strengthened relatively with discussions of the 1923 Hague Draft Laws. Unlike the 1899 Conventions, the 1923 Hague Draft Laws specified that targeting civilians from aerial bombardment should be prohibited. This failed as an agreement, but the relative strengthening of the time can be attributed to the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis and subtle improvements in technology but a lack of the technology usage. This weakening of the norm is not attributed to the hegemonic leadership hypothesis because there is an overall lack of a hegemon during this period to weaken the hypothesis.

Leading into World War II, the norm weakened relatively in the low norm category. With overall norm violations, this is ultimately the weakest point of the norm,

especially with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, right after this period, there is an overall normative shift with the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the protection of civilians. The conventions raised the norm to a moderate level of concordance and institutionalization with the continued ratification of the conventions throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. The high enforcement mechanisms in place during the time shows how this strengthens the norm overall. In the cases of the Korean War and Vietnam War, the hegemon (the U.S.), is the ultimate norm violator and not the main actor strengthening the norm. The norm strength comes from the potential enforcement mechanisms that could come from other state actors. Enforcement as an explanation to the norm is seen with the cases in chapter 6 with the U.S. complying to the moderate/high norm strength during this time due to fears of enforcement mechanisms.

The case studies selected for this thesis show that the anti-strategic bombing norm strength is ever changing. The 1949 Geneva Conventions was a substantive normative shift for civilian protections connected to the anti-strategic bombing norm. In codifying the protection of civilians, this further protects civilians from aerial bombardment targeting. The strength of the anti-strategic bombing norm can be attributed to the “high enforcement, strong norm” hypothesis. Throughout all the cases, when there are low enforcement mechanisms in place, the norm is evidently weaker. When there are enforcement mechanisms in place or a potential for high enforcement mechanisms, the norm is stronger.

The hegemonic leadership hypothesis is a poor explanation for the anti-strategic bombing norm strength. In some cases, such as the interwar period and World War II,



there is an overall lack of a hegemon to determine the strength and weakness of the norm. This automatically shows how this hypothesis does not function as an explanation with a missing hegemon. In other cases where the norm is stronger, such as during the Vietnam War and the 1990s cases, the hegemon (in these cases, the U.S.) are either the main violator of the anti-strategic bombing norm or also are the primary users of aerial bombardment. If this hypothesis proved true, such that the hegemon determined the strength and weakness of the norm, in these cases the norm would then appear weaker, or the hegemon would be more vocal about norm violations. Overall, the hegemon is often a primary norm violator, not an enforcer.

Finally, the technology hypothesis is overall a weak explanation for anti-strategic bombing norm-strength changes. This hypothesis explains norm strength through the lens of state actions. When states use available technology at the time to protect civilians, then the norm should be stronger. However, in some cases, such as World War II, states used available technology, such as the Norden bombsight and other photoreconnaissance tools, to target civilian areas purposefully. In other cases, such as the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this advanced, technological weapon was used to purposefully target the city center. Therefore, for these cases, this does not necessarily fit into the hypothesis. In other instances where there were further technological advancements, such as PGM development and the introduction of unmanned aerial vehicles, this shows actors using more precise technology to avoid civilian targeting. However, although the technology hypothesis does correlate with the norm strength of the time, potentially

determining the norm strength, the high enforcement, strong norm hypothesis is a strong explanation with states hesitant to use strategic bombing due to potential consequences.

With the anti-strategic bombing norm, there is a significant variation within the low/moderate/high norm strength. Existing theory explains big changes in norm strength but does not account for more subtle changes that are still important. The most prominent example of this is between World War I and the interwar period after the emergence of the nascent norm. When the norm was weak, the interwar period on a large scale does not reflect norm strength changes, however, with examples such as the 1923 Hague Draft Laws, it is evident that the norm strengthened relative to the time.

The purpose of this thesis is to exemplify the changes in the strength and weakness of the anti-strategic bombing norm in conflicts and wartime and analyze how the norm can be strengthened over time. Especially with certain case studies today, strategic bombing is still a prominent tactic used by state actors, and so this thesis exemplifies a way that states can implement a stronger anti-strategic bombing norm to protect civilians.

The most prominent and relevant case today is the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This case was not included in the thesis because it is currently taking place and difficult to analyze. In a July 2022 *New York Times* article, it described “Since late February [2022], when Russia began pummeling Ukraine with missiles and artillery on a scale unseen in Europe for decades, civilian deaths have been as inevitable as the Russian

excuses that follow.”<sup>1</sup> The Russian air attacks consisted of targeting playgrounds, apartment blocks, theaters, and hospitals; however, in all of these cases Russia made the argument that these attacks were militarily justified, claiming to aim “only at targets of military value,” despite being far from the front lines of war.<sup>2</sup> Specific examples of this include an attack on an apartment complex in Chasiv Yar which was at least 12 miles from the front line, killing at least 30 people. In another instance, Russian missiles struck a shopping mall in Kremenchuk, killing at least 20 people and in another case a missile struck a maternity hospital in Mariupol.<sup>3</sup> As the war continues, norm violations for anti-strategic bombing continue to persist.

In response to these attacks, the White House released a statement in February of 2022 condemning the attacks by Russia onto Ukraine. Especially condemning the “flagrant violation of international law,” including the violation of territorial sovereignty and targeting civilians.<sup>4</sup> The authorization of sanctions on the Russian economy were to stop these violations, however this has so far not stopped the war. The U.S., the U.K., Canada, Germany, Italy, France, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and others also encouraged sanctions and other criticisms on Russia.<sup>5</sup> The sanctions specifically are “to

---

<sup>1</sup> Victor, Daniel & Nechepurenko, Ivan. July 11, 2022. “Russia Repeatedly Strikes Ukraine’s Civilians. There’s Always an Excuse.” *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/russian-civilian-attacks-ukraine.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> “Remarks by President Biden on Russia’s Unprovoked and unjustified Attack on Ukraine,” February 24, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/24/remarks-by-president-biden-on-russias-unprovoked-and-unjustified-attack-on-ukraine/>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

maximize the long-term impact on Russia and to minimize the impact on the United States and [its] Allies.”<sup>6</sup>

The content of the norm continues to be strong with the 1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Geneva Protocol combined to encourage civilian protections. The condemnations from these states show strong norm strength, but the sanctioning actions also show the high enforcement, strong norm continuing to be what is the driver of the strong norm. In this instance, without looking at technology, this appears to be why the norm is still strong. Continuing to reflect concordance sentiments include statements such as President von der Leyen’s at the European Parliament Plenary. The acknowledgement of “thousands of people fleeing from bombs, camped in underground stations-holding hands, crying silently” shows the reprimand from the international community about the civilian attacks.<sup>7</sup> Because of this, the European Union also instituted sanctions on Russia, including on the financial system, high-tech industries, and “corrupt elite.” The main goal was to target the Russian banks.<sup>8</sup>

The very recent Russian attacks are just one example of how the anti-strategic bombing norm is still immensely relevant today, and this reflects the importance of further analyzing norm strength and how to keep the norm strong despite norm violations. Domestic examples of strategic bombing also continue to persist. In the Syrian War, which has been going on since 2011 between pro-democratic movements and President

---

<sup>6</sup> “Remarks by President Biden on Russia’s Unprovoked and unjustified Attack on Ukraine,” February 24, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/24/remarks-by-president-biden-on-russias-unprovoked-and-unjustified-attack-on-ukraine/>.

<sup>7</sup> “Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the Russian Aggression against Ukraine,” March 1, 2022. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech\\_22\\_1483](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_22_1483).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Bashar al-Assad, there were bombings on childcare centers, refugee camps, hospitals, and schools; all of these are prominent examples of norm violations of the Syria government.<sup>9</sup> Like in other cases, these targets are prohibited within the Geneva Conventions and prohibited with the ASB norm. The United Nations began to document the violations in 2019, only being able to look at 7 of them, whereas the *New York Times* noted at least 60 violations of targeting health facilities.<sup>10</sup> One example of the indiscriminate bombing is when three barrel bombs, which are unguided bombs, were dropped on the Kafr Nabl Surgical center in Syria.<sup>11</sup> This exemplifies the lack of precise technology in these attacks and the indiscriminate nature of attacks on prohibited areas. However, in this instance, the norm is strong with the UN condemnations.

In other case, air strikes have been used to suppress the population, such as in Myanmar. The Myanmar military conducted attacks on towns and villages after the ousting of Aung San Suu Kyi, using air power to try to win the civil war.<sup>12</sup> In parts of the state, helicopter gunships (nicknamed “flying tanks”) flew over towns, shooting down on the town centers, including shooting schools.<sup>13</sup> The helicopters carry rapid-fire cannons and pods with multiple rockets. This technology, therefore, does not reflect that of precision but instead technology to do the utmost damage to towns to suppress the population. In Israel-Palestine, Israel used “rocket fire and airstrikes that destroyed

---

<sup>9</sup> Browne, Malachy, et al. “Hospitals and Schools are Being Bombed in Syria. A U.N. Inquiry is Limited.. We Took a Deeper Look,” December 31, 2019. *NYT*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/12/31/world/middle-east/syria-united-nations-investigation.html>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Head, Jonathan. “Myanmar: Air Strikes have become a deadly new tactic in the civil war.” January 31, 2023. *BBC*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-64397397>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

residential buildings and pushed the death toll to at least 24” people in Palestine.<sup>14</sup> This is just one example of the air strikes employed within this conflict. Both domestic examples are also to show the relevance of the norm in a domestic context that should be analyzed in more detail.

Even today, the content of the norm is shifting, further protecting civilians not only through a prohibition of aerial bombardment on civilians and civilian areas, but also protecting civilians from the psychological harm that comes from aerial bombardment. The Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA) agreement was recently discussed at a conference in Dublin, Ireland in 2022. This agreement, which concluded consultations on 17 June 2022, acknowledges the harm explosives have on civilians: “The use of explosive weapons in populated areas can have a devastating impact on civilians and civilian objects. The risks increase depending on a range of factors, including the weapon’s explosive power, its level of accuracy, and the number of munitions used” and “The use of explosive weapons in populated areas can also result in psychological and psychosocial harm to civilians.”<sup>15</sup> The agreement stressed “the importance of full compliance with International Humanitarian Law as a means to protect civilians and civilian objects and to avoid, and in any even minimize, civilian harm when conducting military operations.”<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the agreement “condemn[s] tactics designed to exploit the proximity of civilians or civilian objects to military objectives in

---

<sup>14</sup> Kingsley, Patrick & Kershner, Isabel. “Israel-Gaza Fighting Flares for a Second Day.” August 2, 2022. *NYT*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/06/world/middleeast/fighting-israel-gaza.html>

<sup>15</sup> EWIPA, Part A, Section 1.2 and 1.6: <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/peace-and-security/ewipa-consultations/>

<sup>16</sup> EWIPA, Section 2.2.

populated areas, as well as the use of improvised explosive devices directed against civilians or civilian objects.”<sup>17</sup> This agreement further shows the strengthening of the norm on the Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon scale, where an international organization is promoting the anti-strategic bombing norm. This also continues to show the relevance and necessity to analyze norm strength today.

Finally, this thesis analysis can have other implications in other civilian targeting sectors, for example the coming evolution of cyber warfare norms. Whereas the anti-strategic bombing norm was born over a century ago, the cyber warfare norm of targeting civilians is very new, especially with the evolution of technology itself.<sup>18</sup> Cyber warfare consists of conducting computer network attacks (CAN) on systems.<sup>19</sup> Mazanec notes how strategic bombing norms were an emerging-technology, which is a weapon “based on new technology or a novel employment of older technologies to achieve a certain affect,” before World War II.<sup>20</sup> This comparison between the two emerging technologies, strategic bombing and cyber warfare, shows the possibility of applying this thesis analysis to other emerging technologies and questioning if international actors will approach the cyber warfare norm similarly to the anti-strategic bombing norm.<sup>21</sup> However, different from the strategic bombing norm which has an apparent norm evolution, Mazanec mentions how “international order in cyberspace is far from inevitable” with “many hurdles facing development.”<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> EWIPA Section 2.4.

<sup>18</sup> Mazanec 2016, 107.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 100 & 107.

Different from cyber warfare, strategic bombing norms emerged before the plane was even invented. With the 1899 Hague Conference, the emerging norm was established by states before it could be further employed by more efficient technology. Mazanec notes that it is better for a norm to strengthen if there is a norm in place before the technology is established.<sup>23</sup> However, cyber security “is a huge and booming business.”<sup>24</sup> With China, Russia, and the U.S. using cyber warfare it is difficult to implement an emerging norm when main powers are norm violators to cyber protection, especially with civilians.<sup>25</sup> In the case of cyber warfare in targeting civilians, it is first important to apply the 1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Geneva Protocol as “the humanitarian norm underlying the existing laws of armed conflict, particularly the norm regarding the protection of civilians and minimalization of collateral damage.”<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the implication of enforcement from non-hegemonic actors would be a way to establish a stronger norm, especially in the case of targeting civilians. The norm evolution of the anti-strategic bombing norm can similarly be reflected with the cyber warfare case study presented by Mazanec. Where Mazanec briefly touches upon strategic bombing norms as an example of an emerging-technology, I reflect how it is possible for an emerging technology to have further norm strengthening. This is just one example of how the anti-strategic bombing norm can be used for further analysis.

---

<sup>23</sup> Mazanec 2016, 105.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 102-104.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 104-105.



## Bibliography

1971. Bombing operations and the prisoner-of-war rescue mission in North Vietnam. Hearing, Ninety-first Congress, second session, with Hon. Melvin R. Laird, Secretary of Defense. November 24, 1970.
- 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons  
<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/1980-convention-certain-conventional-weapons>. Accessed on 28 January 2023.
- High Contracting Parties:  
<https://www.un.org/disarmament/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/high-contracting-parties-and-signatories-ccw/>  
Accessed on 28 January 2023.
- Air Ministry. 1926. Royal Air Force (RAF) Flying Training Manual, Great Britain, London: H.M. Stationary office. [https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b106774](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b106774). Accessed on 24 November 2022.
- Air Photography, organization and training... By command of the Air Council. Revised 1936. London: H.M/ Stationary Office. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433069039638>. Accessed on 26 November 2022.
- Ali, Syeda Fizzah. 2009. International Law, Human Rights and the Iraq War. *Pakistan Horizon*, 62(2/3), 63–75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24710997>. Accessed 20 March 2023.
- Allen, Susan, & Vincent, Tiffany. 2011. Bombing to Bargain? The Air War for Kosovo. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 7(1), 1–26. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24909813>. Accessed 3 March 2023.
- Alnasrawi, Abbas. 2001. Iraq: Economic Sanctions and Consequences, 1990-2000. *Third World Quarterly*, 22(2), 205–218. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993407>. Accessed 5 March 2023.
- Anderson, Jack. 2000. Kosovo and the Legality of NATO's Actions. *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 11, 31–39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30001910>. Accessed 6 March 2023.
- Barros, Andrew. 2009. Strategic Bombing and Restraint in “Total War”, 1915-1918. *The Historical Journal*, 52(2), 413–431. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40264177>. Accessed on 20 September 2022.

- Beagle, T. W. 2001. Operation Desert Storm. In *Effects-Based Targeting: Another Empty Promise?*, 51–67. Air University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep13830.12>. Accessed 7 March 2023.
- Bellamy, Alex. 2012. *Massacres & Morality: Mass Atrocities in an Age of Civilian Immunity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ben-Josef Hirsch, Michal & Dixon, Jennifer. 2021. Conceptualizing and assessing norm strength in International Relations. In *European Journal of International Relations*, 27(2), 521–547. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066120949628>. Accessed on 20 August 2022.
- Biden, Joe. 2022, Feb. 24, *Remarks by Biden on Russia's Unprovoked and Unjustified Attack on Ukraine* [text of speech], The White House President Joe Biden, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speechesremarks/2022/02/24/remarks-by-president-biden-on-russias-unprovoked-and-unjustified-attack-on-ukraine/>. Accessed 10 August 2022.
- Biddle, Tami Davis. 1999. Bombing by the Square Yard: Sir Arthur Harris at War, 1942–1945. *The International History Review*, 21(3), 626–664. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40109079>. Accessed on 1 December 2022.
- Biddle, Tami Davis. 1995. British and American approaches to strategic bombing: Their origins and implementation in the World War II combined bomber offensive, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 18:1, 91–144, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402399508437581>. Accessed on 1 December 2022.
- Biddle, Tami Davis. 2002. *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey.
- Biddle, Tami Davis. 2014. Strategic Bombardment: Expectation, Theory, Practice in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, from Flying Fortresses to Drones*, edited by Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, 27–46. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Bomber Command Continues, Great Britain, The Air Ministry Account of the Rising Offensive Against Germany, July 1941–June 1942*. 1942. London: H.M. Stationary Office. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951001700903e>. Accessed on 3 December 2022.

- Bomber Command: The Air Ministry Account of Bomber Command's Offensive Against the Axis, September 1939-July, 1941*. 1941. London: H.M. Stationary Office. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015032015367>. Accessed on 3 December 2022.
- Boyle, Andrew. 1962. *Trenchard*. Collins Press: London.
- Boyle, Michael. 2013. The costs and consequences of drone warfare. *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, 89(1), 1–29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23479331>. Accessed 8 March 2023.
- B.R.2 Aero Engine. 1925. London: H.M. Stationary Office. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/pst.000009586031>. Accessed on 20 November 2022.
- Burke, Anthony. 2004. Just War or Ethical Peace? Moral Discourses of Strategic Violence after 9/11. *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, 80(2), 329–353. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3569245>. Accessed 9 March 2023.
- Byman, Daniel. 2013. “Why Drones Work.” *Foreign Affairs*, June 30. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/Somalia/2013-06-11/why-drones-work>. Accessed 19 March 2023.
- Canestaro, Nathan. 2004. Legal and Policy Constraints on the Conduct of Aerial Precision Warfare. *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, 37(2), 431–484. Accessed 27 February 2023.
- Chayes, Abram, & Chayes, Antonia. 1993. On Compliance. In *International Organization*, 47(2), 175–205. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706888>. Accessed 5 July 2022.
- Chayes, Abram, & Chayes, Antonia. 1998. *The New Sovereignty: Compliance with International Regulatory Agreements*. 10-15. MA: Harvard University Press.
- Clodfelter, Mark. 1989. *The Limits of Air Power: The American Bombing of North Vietnam*. New York: The Free Press.
- Colby, Elbridge. 1926. "Laws of Aerial Warfare." *Minnesota Law Review*. 1243. <https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/mlr/1243>. Accessed 4 November 2023.
- Coleman, James. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Collins, Joseph. 1987. Soviet Policy toward Afghanistan. *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, 36(4), 198–210. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1173843>. Accessed 20 February 2023.
- Conventions (II) and (IV) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, The Hague, 29 July 1899. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Treaty.xsp?documentId=CD0F6C83F96FB459C12563CD002D66A1&action=OpenDocument>. Accessed 5 October 2022.
- Convention (IX) concerning Bombardment by Naval Forces in Time of War. The Hague, 18 October 1907. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Treaty.xsp?documentId=F13F9FFC628FC33BC12563CD002D6819&action=OpenDocument>. Accessed 8 October 2022.
- Convention Relating to International Air Navigation. 1919. London: H.M. Stationary Office. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015021320265>. Accessed 9 October 2022.
- Conway-Lanz, Sahr. 2014. Strategic Bombardment: Expectation, Theory, Practice in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, from Flying Fortresses to Drones*, edited by Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, 47-64. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Correll, John. 2005. *Rolling Thunder*. Air Force Magazine, March 2005. <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/PDF/MagazineArchive/Documents/2005/March%202005/0303thunder.pdf>. Accessed 5 February 2023.
- Corum, James. 2004. The Luftwaffe and its Allied Air Forces in World War II: Parallel War and the Failure of Strategic and Economic Cooperation. *Air Power History*, 51(2), 4–19. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26274547>. Accessed 5 January 2023.
- Coyne, Christopher, & Hall, Abigail. 2018. The Drone Paradox: Fighting Terrorism with Mechanized Terror. *The Independent Review*, 23(1), 51–67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26591799>. Accessed 9 March 2023.
- Crane, Conrad. 2018. *Creating Great Expectations: Strategic Communications and American Airpower*. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20081>. Accessed 9 March 2023.
- Crawford, Neta. 2014. Strategic Bombardment: Expectation, Theory, Practice in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, from Flying Fortresses to Drones*, edited by Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, 64-87. New York: Cornell University Press.

- Declaration (XIV) Prohibiting the Discharge of Projectiles and Explosives from Balloons. The Hague, 18 October 1907. <https://ihldatabases.icrc.org/g/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Treaty.xsp?documentId=10BB640A9FF13B49C12563CD002D6895&action=OpenDocument>. Accessed 10 October 2022.
- Dill, Janina. 2014. The American Way of Bombing and International Law: Two Logics of Warfare in Tension. In *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, from Flying Fortresses to Drones*, edited by Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, 131-144. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Disarmament Conference. 1933. Geneva. <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.wdl/wdl.11592>. Accessed 10 October 2022.
- Donnelly, Ignatius. 1890. *Caesar's Column*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge.
- Downes, Alexander. 2012. *Targeting Civilians in War*, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Downs, George. 1998. Enforcement and the Evolution of Cooperation, In *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 19(2), 319-344, [https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjil/vol19/iss2/2/?utm\\_source=repository.law.umich.edu%2FmFmj%2Fvol19%20%2Fiss2%2F2&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjil/vol19/iss2/2/?utm_source=repository.law.umich.edu%2FmFmj%2Fvol19%20%2Fiss2%2F2&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages). Accessed 10 October 2022.
- Downs, George, Rocke, David, & Barsoom, Peter. 1996. Is the Good News about Compliance Good News about Cooperation? In *International Organization*, 50(3), 379–406. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2704030>. Accessed 10 July 2022.
- Drezner, Daniel. 2019. Technological Change and International Relations, In *International Relations*, 33(2), 286-303. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pub/10.1177/0047117819834629>.
- Dunlap, Charles. 2014. Strategic Bombardment: Expectation, Theory, Practice in Early 20th Century. In *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, from Flying Fortresses to Drones*, edited by Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, 109-134. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Ehlers, Robert. 2009. *Targeting the Third Reich: Air Intelligence and the Allied Bombing Campaign*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas.
- Ellickson, Robert. 1991. *Order without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Emerson, Stephen. 2019. *Vietnam's Final Air Campaign: Operation Linebacker I and II, May-December 1972*. South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military.
- Erickson, Jennifer. 2020. Punishing the violators? Arms embargoes and economic sanctions as tools of norm enforcement. *Review of International Studies*, 46(1), 96-120. Doi: 10.1017/S260210519000329. Accessed 15 August 2022.
- Falk, Richard. 1966. International Law and the United States Role in the Viet Nam War. *The Yale Law Journal*, 75(7), 1122–1160. <https://doi.org/10.2307/794923>. Accessed 4 January 2023.
- Finnemore, Martha, & Sikkink, Kathryn. 1998. International Norm Dynamics and Political Change. In *International Organization*, 52(4), 887–917. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2601361>. Accessed 15 July 2022.
- Garner, James. 1932. International Regulation of Air Warfare. *Air Law Review*, 3(2), 103-126.
- Garraway, Charles. 2014. The Law Applies, But Which Laws? *A Consumer Guide to the Laws of War*. In *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, from Flying Fortresses to Drones*, edited by Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, 87-105. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Gibbons, Rebecca Davis, & Lieber, Keir, 2019. How durable is the nuclear weapons taboo? In *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 42(1), 29-54. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01402390.2018.1529568>. Accessed 4 August 2022.
- Gilpin, Robert. 1981. Hegemonic War and International Change. In *War and Change in World Politics*, 186-210. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511664267.007. Accessed 20 August 2022.
- Gilpin, Robert. 1988. The Theory of Hegemonic War. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18(4), 591–613. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/204816?origin=crossref>. Accessed 20 August 2022.
- Golson, Jordan. 2014. WWI Zeppelins: Not Too Deadly , But Scary as Hell, *Wired*. <https://www.wired.com/2014/10/world-war-i-zeppelins/>. Accessed 25 October 2022.
- Grayzel, Susan. 2012. *At Home and Under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Gregory, Robert. 2015. *Clean Bombs and Dirty Wars: Air Power in Kosovo and Libya*, 72–101. University of Nebraska Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1d988hr.10>. Accessed 10 March 2023.
- Gusterson, Henry. 2014. Strategic Bombardment: Expectation, Theory, Practice in Early 20th Century. In *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, from Flying Fortresses to Drones*, edited by Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, 191–207. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Haulman, Daniel. 2015. The U.S. Air Force in the Air War Over Serbia, 1999. *Air Power History*, 62(2), 6–21. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26276597>. Accessed 10 March 2023.
- Haun, Phil. 2019. High-Altitude Daylight Precision Bombing in World War II. In *Lectures of the Air Corps Tactical School and American Strategic Bombing in World War II*, 195–224. University Press of Kentucky. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc77n9f.13>. Accessed 15 January 2023.
- Harry S. Truman Library. 2018. “Invasion of Manchuria.” National Archives, Accessed December 16, 2022. <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/invasion-manchuria#materials>. Accessed 3 January 2023.
- Horowitz, Michael, & Kreps, Sarah, & Fuhrmann, Matthew. 2016. Separating Fact from Fiction in the Debate over Drone Proliferation. *International Security*, 41(2), 7–42. <https://doi.org/10.1162/ISECa00257>. Accessed 5 March 2023.
- Hull, Isabel. 2014. *A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law during the Great War*. Cornell University Press: New York. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt5hh030>. Accessed 5 September 2022.
- Hunt, Andrew. 2021. *We Begin Bombing in Five Minutes: Late Cold War Culture in the Age of Reagan*. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Ikenberry, G. John. 1996. The Future of International Leadership. In *Political Science Quarterly*, 111(3), 385–402. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2151968>. Accessed 10 October 2022.
- Johnson, President Lyndon Baines. 1965. Address at Johns Hopkins University: “Peace Without Conquest,” 7 April 1965, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/january-31-1966-statement-resumption-bombing-north-vietnam>. Accessed 5 February 2023.

- Johnston, Patrick, & Sarbahi, Anoop. 2016. The Impact of US Drone Strikes on Terrorism in Pakistan. *International Studies Quarterly*, 60(2), 203–219. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43869067>. Accessed 10 March 2023.
- Karma Rogé (Host) & Mulder, Nicholas (Guest), April 1, 2022, “Putting Sanctions on Russia Is a Form of War. We Need to Treat It Like One,” Audio Podcast episode, The Ezra Klein Show, New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/01/podcasts/transcript-ezra-klein-interviews-nicholas-mulder.html>. Accessed 15 October 2022.
- Keene, Shima. 2015. *Lethal and Legal?: The Ethics of Drone Strikes*. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11765>. Accessed 8 March 2023.
- Kennett, Lee. 1982. *A History of Strategic Bombing*. Scribner: New York.
- Klotz, Audie & Lynch, Cecilia. 2007. Constructivism. In *Strategies for research in Constructivist International Relations*. New York: ME Sharpe, 7-8.
- Kocher, Matthew, Pepinsky, Thomas, & Kalyvas, Stathis. 2011. Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(2), 201–218. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23025046>. Accessed 15 February 2023.
- Kratochwil, Friedrich & Ruggie, John Gerard. 1986. International Organization: A State of the Art on an Art of the State. In *International Organization*, 40(4), 753–775. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706828>. Accessed 20 July 2022.
- Lambeth, Benjamin. 2001. *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment*, 219–250. RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mr1365af.17>. Accessed 6 March 2023.
- Lambeth, Benjamin. 2005. The United States Strikes Back. In *Air Power Against Terror: America’s Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom*, 73–134. RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg166centaf.1>. Accessed 6 March 2023.
- Lambeth, Benjamin. 2007. The Watershed of Desert Storm. In *Combat Pair: The Evolution of Air Force-Navy Integration in Strike Warfare, 1*, 13–16. RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg655af.9>. Accessed 6 March 2023.



- Larson, Eric, & Savych, Bogdan. 2007. *Misfortunes of War: Press and Public Reactions to Civilian Deaths in Wartime*. RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg441af.11>. Accessed 8 March 2023.
- Legro, Jeffrey. 1997. Which Norms Matter? Revisiting the “Failure” of Internationalism. In *International Organization*, 51(1), 31–63. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2703951>. Accessed 3 August 2022.
- Leitenberg, Milton. 1972. “America in Vietnam: Statistics of a War”, *Survival*, 14(6), 268-274, DOI: 10.1080/00396337208441366. Accessed 5 February 2023.
- Leitenberg, Milton. 1986. United States Foreign Policy and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, *Contemporary Security Policy*, 7(3), 271-298, DOI: 10.1080/01440388608403849. Accessed 4 February 2023.
- LeRoy, Howard. 1941. Limitation of air warfare. *Air Law Review*, 12(1), 19-33. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/airlr12&collection=journals&id=21&startid=21&enend=35>. Accessed 5 January 2023.
- Lifton, Robert Jay and Greg Mitchell. 1995. *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial*. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons.
- Lushenko, Paul. 2022. The Moral Legitimacy of Drone Strikes: How the Public Forms Its Judgements. *Psychology of War*, 6(1). <https://tnsr.org/2022/11/the-moral-legitimacy-of-drone-strikes-how-the-public-forms-its-judgments/>. Accessed 10 March 2023.
- Maier, Charles. 2005. Targeting the city: Debates and silences about the aerial bombing of World War II. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 87(859), 429-444. DOI:10.1017/S1816383100184322. Accessed 5 January 2023.
- Mallison, William Jr., & Mallison, S. S. 1973. The concept of public purpose terror in international law: doctrines and sanctions to reduce the destruction of human and material values. *Howard Law Journal*, 18(1), 12-28. Accessed 7 February 2023.
- Marrow, John. 1993. *The Great War in the Air: Military Aviation from 1909 to 1921*. Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington and London.
- Maurer. 1974. *The U.S. Air Service in World War I, Volume IV: Postwar Review*. Alabama: The Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA074433>. Accessed 5 September 2023.

- Mazanec, Brian. 2016. Constraining Norms for Cyber Warfare Are Unlikely. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 17(3), 100–109. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26395979>
- Mearsheimer, John. 2001. Anarchy and the Struggle for Power. In *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 30-31.
- Meilinger, Phillip. 1996. Trenchard and “Morale Bombing”: The Evolution of Royal Air Force Doctrine Before World War II. *The Journal of Military History*, 60(2), 243–270. <https://doi.org/info:doi/>. Accessed 3 November 2022.
- Mitchell, Ronald. 1994. Regime Design Matters: Intentional Oil Pollution and Treaty Compliance. In *International Organization*, 48(3), 425–458. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706965>. Accessed 6 July 2022.
- Mueller, Karl. 2015. Examining the Air Campaign in Libya. In K. P. Mueller, G. Alegi, C. F. Anrig, C. S. Chivvis, R. Egnell, C. Goulter, C. Grand, D. C. Kidwell, R. O. Mayne, B. R. Nardulli, R. C. Owen, F. Wehrey, L. Mahnad, & S. M. Worman (Eds.), *Precision and Purpose: Airpower in the Libyan Civil War*, 1–10. RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt16f8d7x.7>. Accessed 8 March 2023.
- Mulder, Nicholas. 2022. *The Economic Weapon: The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War*. New Haven: Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv240df1m.7>. Accessed 3 October 2023.
- Naidu, M. V. 1999. NATO’s War on Yugoslavia: Issues, Actors and Prospects. *Peace Research*, 31(2), 1–23. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23607664>. Accessed 3 March 2023.
- Nixon, President Richard. 1969. Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam, 3 November 1969, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/november-3-1969-address-nation-war-vietnam>. Accessed 13 February 2023.
- O’Rourke, Lindsey. 2018. Overview of US-Backed Regime Changes during the Cold War. In *Covert Regime Change: America’s Secret Cold War*, 97–124. Cornell University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt21h4v86.9>. Accessed 20 February 2023.
- Page, Adam. 2019. *Architects of Survival: Air war and urbanism in Britain, 1935-52*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- Panke, Diana, & Petersohn, Ulrich. 2016. Norm challenges and norm death: The inexplicable? In *Cooperation and Conflict*, 51(1), 3-19.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836715597948>. Accessed 5 August 2022.
- Pape, Robert Jr. 1992. "Coercion and military strategy: Why Denial Works and Punishment Doesn't", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 15(4), 423-475, DOI:10.1080/01402399208437495. Accessed 3 January 2023.
- Pape, Robert Jr. 2004. The True Worth of Air Power. *Foreign Affairs*, 83(2), 116-130.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/20033906>. Accessed 6 March 2023.
- Parker, Chad. 2004. American Bombing Strategy and Teaching the Vietnam War, *OAH Magazine of History*, 18(5), 59-62, <https://doi.org/10.1093/maghis/18.5.59>. Accessed 3 January 2023.
- Perry, William. 1991. Desert Storm and Deterrence. *Foreign Affairs*, 70(4), 66-82.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/20044914>. Accessed 4 March 2023.
- Posner, Richard & Rasmusen, Eric. 2000. Creating and Enforcing Norms, with Special Reference to Sanctions. *John M. Olin Program in Law and Economics Working Paper No. 96*, 379-382. [https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/law\\_and\\_economics/147](https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/law_and_economics/147). Accessed 4 August 2022.
- Record, Jeffrey. 2003. *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism*. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11240>. Accessed 10 March 2023.
- Roberts, Adam, and Richard Guelff. 1982. *Documents on the Laws of War*. 1st ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Robinson, Douglas. 1961. The Zeppelin Bomber: High Policy Guided by Wishful Thinking. *The Air Power Historian*, 8(3), 130-147.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/44513116>. Accessed 4 October 2022.
- Satia, Priya. 2006. The Defense of Inhumanity: Air Control and the British Idea of Arabia. *The American Historical Review*, 111(1), 16-51.  
<https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.111.1.16>. Accessed 17 October 2022.
- Schroeder, Emily. 2004. The Kosovo Crisis: Humanitarian Imperative versus International Law. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 28(1), 179-200.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/45289265>. Accessed 3 March 2023.

- Scott, James Brown. 1915. *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907, accompanied by Tables of Signatures, Ratifications and Adhesions of Various Texts of Reservations*. Oxford University Press: New York.  
<https://archive.org/details/hagueconventions00inteuoft/page/n5/mode/2up?view=thetext>. Accessed 10 September 2022.
- Scott, James Brown. 1921. Conference on the limitation of armament and problems of the pacific. *American Journal of International Law*, 15(4), 503-510.<https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/ajil15&id=509&collection=journals&index=>. Accessed 15 October 2022.
- Scott, James Brown. 1920. *The Proceedings of the Hague Peace Conferences: The Conference of 1899*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Sheehan, James. 2008. *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? The Transformation of Modern Europe*. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Sherry, Michael. 1987. *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sherry, Michael. 1995. *In the Shadow of War*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Smith, Melden. 1977. The Strategic Bombing Debate: The Second World War and Vietnam. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 12(1), 175–191.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/260242>. Accessed 9 January 2023.
- Spaight, James M. 1926. *Aircraft and Commerce in War*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co. LTD.
- Steinke, Ralph. 2015. A Look Back at NATO's 1999 Kosovo Campaign: A Questionably "Legal" but Justifiable Exception? *Connections*, 14(4), 43–56.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/26326417>. Accessed 4 March 2023.
- Tannenwald, Nina. 2005. Stigmatizing the Bomb: Origins of the Nuclear Taboo. *International Security*, 29(4), 5–49. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137496>. Accessed 10 August 2022.
- The Air Battle of Malta, The Official Account of the R.A.F in Malta, June 1940 to November 1942*. 1945. London: H.M> Stationary office,  
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015027912792>. Accessed 10 January 2023.
- Thomas, War. 2001. *The Ethics of Destruction: Norms and Force in International Relations*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Tolbert, Julian. 2006. Operation Allied Force: A Case Study. In *Crony Attack: Strategic Attack's Silver Bullet?*, 27–40. Air University Press.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep13815.11>. Accessed 2 March 2023.
- United Nations. 1925. 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Geneva: League of Nations.
- United States Senate. 1922. Washington Limitation of Armament Conference. Washington D.C. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044103261996&view=1up&seq=7>. Accessed 15 December 2023.
- United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War) 1 July 1946. 1946. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office.  
[http://marshall.csu.edu.au/Marshalls/html/WWII/USSBS\\_Summary.html](http://marshall.csu.edu.au/Marshalls/html/WWII/USSBS_Summary.html). Accessed 10 January 2023.
- van der Heide, Liesbeth. 2013. Cherry-Picked Intelligence. The Weapons of Mass Destruction Dispositive as a Legitimation for National Security in the Post 9/11 Age. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, 38(1 (143)), 286–307. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23644501>. Accessed 4 March 2023.
- Vergun, David. 2019. Strategic Bombing Matured Quickly during WWII. *U.S. Department of Defense*, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/1995480/strategic-bombing-matured-quickly-during-wwii/>. Accessed 5 January 2023.
- Verrier, Anthony. 1967. Strategic Bombing—The Lessons of World War II and the American Experience in Vietnam, Royal United Services Institution. *Journal*, 112(646), 157-161, DOI: 10.1080/03071846709420393. Accessed 19 February 2023.
- Wakelam, Randal. 2015. Strategic Bombing If Possible, but Possibly Not Strategic Bombing: An Examination of Ends, Ways, and Means and the Use of Strategic Airpower during the Great War. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 16(1): 42–60.
- Walne, George. 1987. *AFP 110-31: International Law - The Conduct of Armed Conflict and Air Operations and the Linebacker Bombing Campaigns of the Vietnam War*. Center for Naval Analyses Alexandria VA Resource Analysis Research Department. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA191278>. Accessed 10 February 2023.

- Walsh, James. 2013. *The Effectiveness of Drone Strikes in Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism Campaigns*. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11764>. Accessed 5 March 2023.
- Wheeler, Nicholas. 2004 The Kosovo bombing campaign. In: Reus-Smit C (ed.) *The Politics of International Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 189–216.
- Wilson, Stephen. 2001. Taking Clodfelter One Step Further: Mass, Surprise, Concentration, and the Failure of Operation Rolling Thunder. *Air Power History*, 48(4), 40–47. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26274260>. Accessed 18 February 2023.
- Zehfuss, Maja. 2011. Targeting: Precision and the production of ethics. *European Journal of International Relations*, 17(3), 543-566. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066110373559>. Accessed 20 August 2022.