

ISSUES WITH INTERVENTION

PSC/IR 265: CIVIL WAR AND INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS

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Overview

1. Give War a Chance
2. American Civil War
3. Nuclear Proliferation
4. Moral Hazard
5. Universal Jurisdiction
6. Convention against Torture and Burning Bridges

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Benefits of War

- Wars produce stable resolutions to the issues at stake
- Intervention can prolong tensions

Disadvantages of War

- Pretty much everything else
- War ends tensions because the other side is dead

Realities

- Sometimes interventions don't work
- That's the cost of doing business

An Argument

- “United Nations interventions often end in catastrophic disaster. Therefore, we should not be supporting such interventions.”

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What Caused the Civil War?

- Be careful!
 - If you've been paying attention in class, your most likely answers don't actually answer the question...

Common Answers

- Are you from a northern state?
 - Slavery!
- Are you from a southern state?
 - States' rights!



What Caused the Civil War?

- States rights?
 - Clearly bargainable
- Slavery?
 - Indivisible! A rationalist explanation for war!
 - That's not how people thought 150 years ago

Slavery: Definitely Bargainable

- 3/5^{ths} Compromise
- Missouri Compromise
- Kansas-Nebraska Act
- Compromise of 1850

Lincoln Tried Peaceful Coercion

- Emphasizes commitment to peaceful reintegration in inauguration speech
- Maintains blockade to push the South back to the bargaining table

The War that Wasn't

- Fort Sumter: traditional start of Civil War
 - Except no one died
 - Bull Run didn't occur for another three months

Lincoln's Evolving Strategy

- Original plan: blockade South, bleed them, reach a bargain
- Sudden change of mind: invade to deter international recognition

Great Britain, Great Cause of War

- Great Britain needed South for cotton
- British diplomats discussed recognition of Confederacy
- Lincoln invades to forestall recognition

Preventive War

- Recognition from Britain and others would have built long-term economic strength and increased chances of military assistance
- Large shifts in power => commitment problem => war

Lesson

- Intervention does not just affect the course of war—it affects the outbreak of war
- States concerned about intervention have incentive to adopt anti-intervention technology

Overview

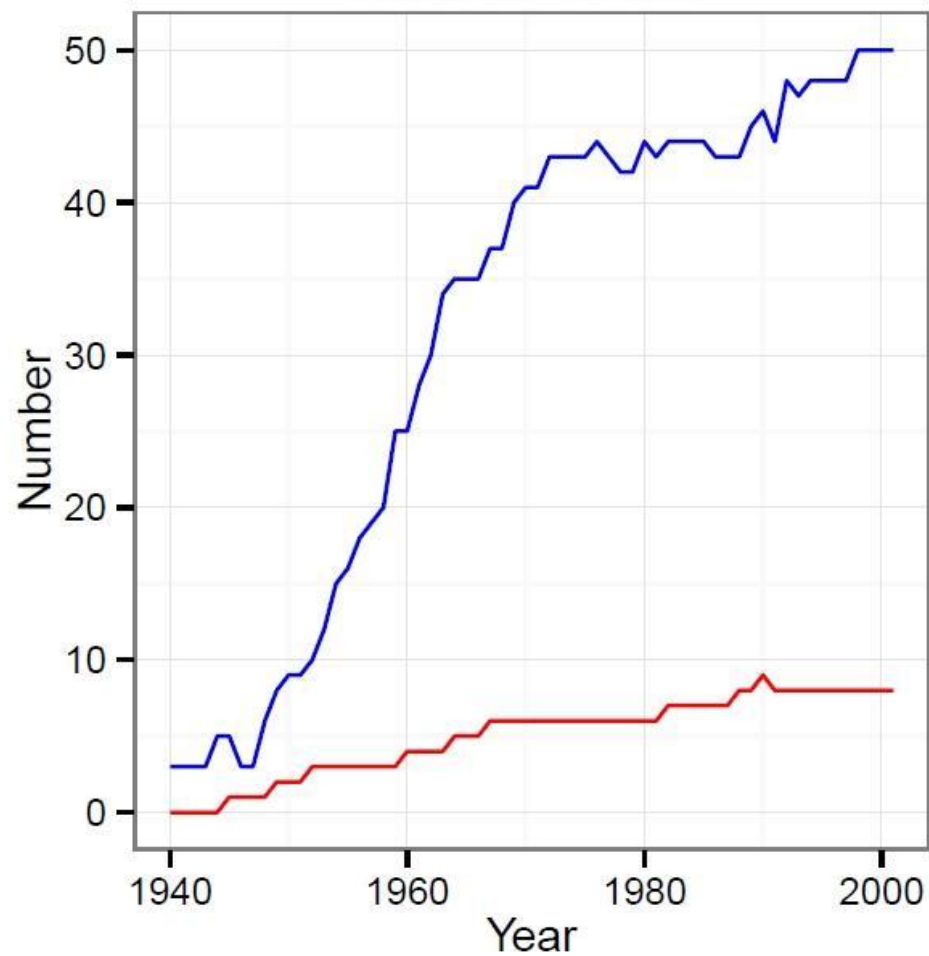
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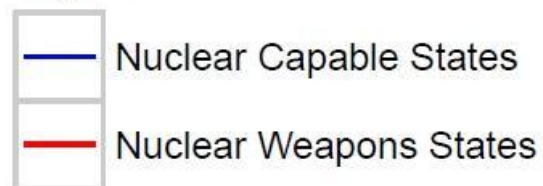
Bargaining Breakdown

- Common explanation: North Korea wants more stuff and nukes are coercive
- But _____ wants more stuff and nukes are coercive
 - Yet only ten countries have nuclear weapons

Nuclear Trends



Legend



Saving Grace

- Nuclear weapons are costly but can get you stuff
- War is costly but can get you stuff
- Incentive to negotiate both

Making a Deal

- Think about how much you would have to give up in the future to a nuclear opponent
- Give that opponent most of that now

Making a Deal

- Potential nuclear power has no incentive to proliferate
 - It would be able to coerce a little more, but not worth the cost it would have to pay

Making a Deal

- Rival wins too
 - No proliferation
 - Steals surplus because no cost paid

Bargaining Breakdown

- This is why most states do not have nuclear weapons...
- ...which makes it all the more puzzling why some do.

Credible Commitment

- Credible commitment to non-intervention would remove need to proliferate
 - Nuclear weapons as deterrence

Credible Commitment

- But exogenous shocks can rapidly shift power.
 - Suppose civil war erupts
 - Rivals have a now-or-never chance to intervene
 - Commitment falls flat





**Brotherly Leader and Guide
of the Revolution of Libya**

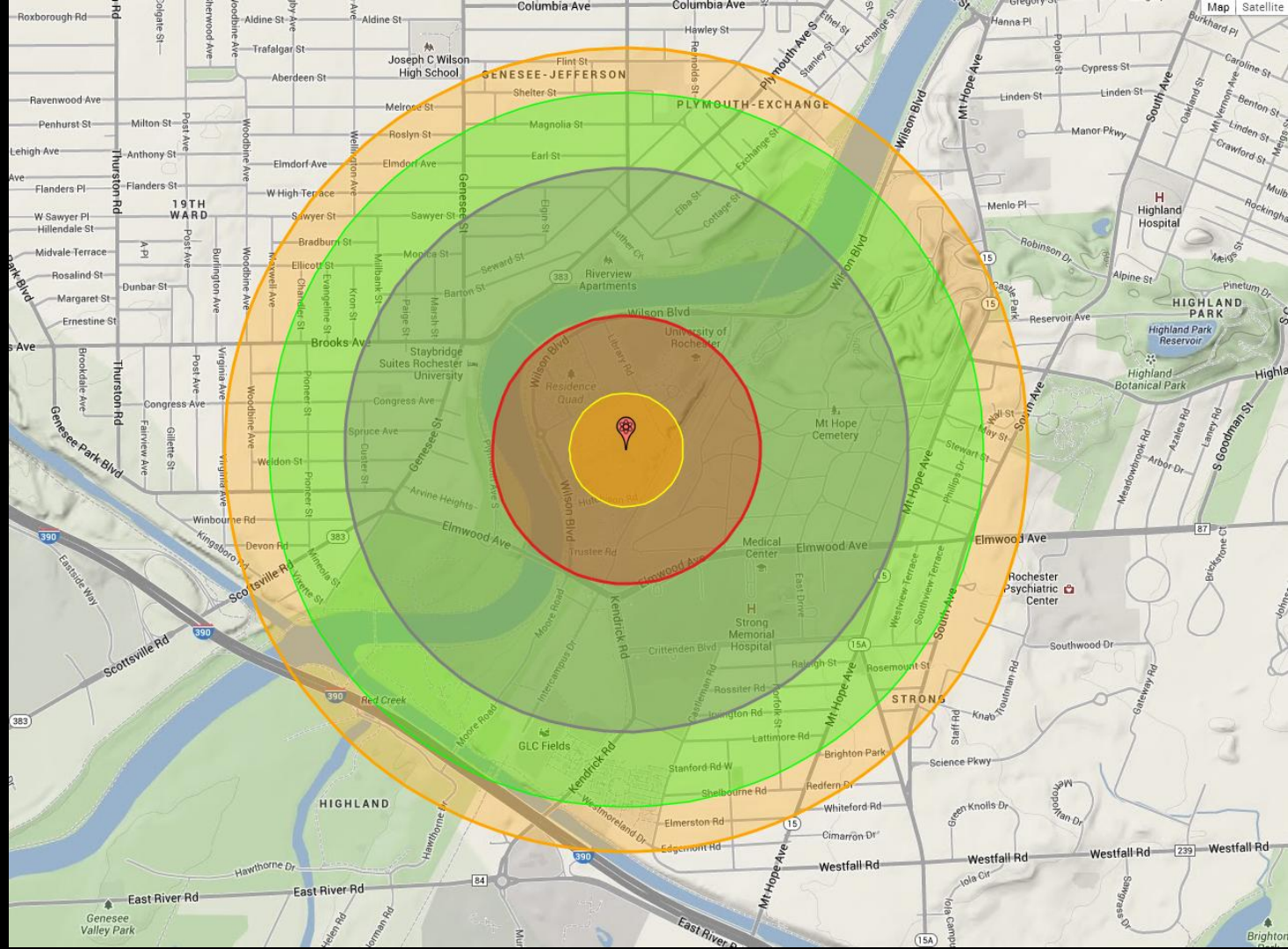


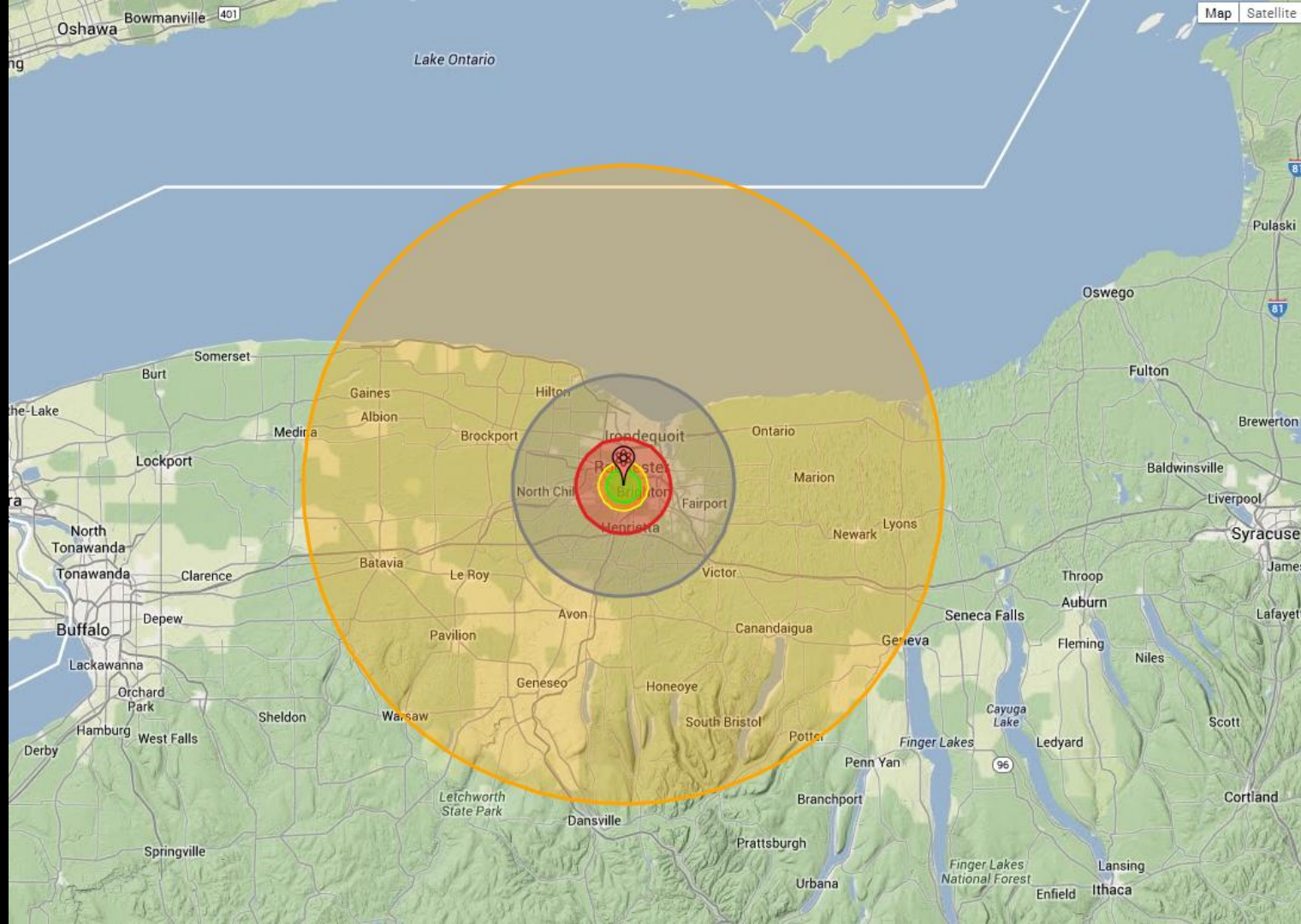




North Korea

- Suppose a Libya-style rebellion erupts in North Korea.
 - Would South Korea/United States intervene today?
 - What about ten years ago?





Casualties

- Seoul has an *average* population density of 43,000/sq. mile
 - A poorly targeted, poorly designed bomb would kill 11,610 people in the air blast radius alone

Conclusion

- Circumstances under which South Korea/United States would intervene are much narrower with nuclear weapons

Outbreak of War

- Would Libyan Civil War began if United States definitely would not have intervened?

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Moral Hazard

1. Hypothetical action by party A would cause party B to take greater risks
2. Party A cannot effectively monitor those risks
3. Leads to inefficiency

Insurance

- Suppose you do not have renter's insurance
 - How careful will you be about leaving the coffeemaker on?
- Suppose you have renter's insurance
 - How careful will you be about leaving the coffeemaker on?

Insurance

- The insured person has less incentive to care
 - Insurance covers his worst case scenario
 - So insured people will have more house fires

Insurance

- But this drives up the cost of insurance!
- Leads to some people not to get insurance
 - They would get insurance if the company knew they would check the coffeemaker, as premiums would be lower

Great Recession

- Concern about bailout: propping up banks encourage other banks to take risks that cannot be monitored

Rebellions

- Institutions often intervene when governments abuse citizens
- But the abused might want an intervention
- So there is incentive to induce abuse

Rebellions

- Institutions could resolve the problem if they observed all actions
 - But that is not so easy
 - Firefighting versus police patrols

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Pinochet

- Became “President” of Chile in 1973 after an American-sponsored coup dispatched civilian government
- Completely revitalized Chile’s economy...

Pinochet

- ...but also
 - Placed all other political parties in “indefinite recess”
 - Killed 1200-3200 in purges
 - Jailed 80,000 political opponents
 - Tortured 30,000 others

Downfall

- International pressure for election in 1988
- Loses, but granted amnesty

Universal Jurisdiction

- Idea that international bodies have right to prosecute individuals regardless of where a crime was committed
- Goes to UK in 1998 for medical treatment
- Surprise!

1998 Arrest

- Watershed moment
- Afterward, leaders had to be worried that they could be arrested abroad

Price of Justice?

- You are a dictator
- You **are** culpable pre-1998
- A civil war breaks out in your country in 2002
- Are you more or less likely to give up power?

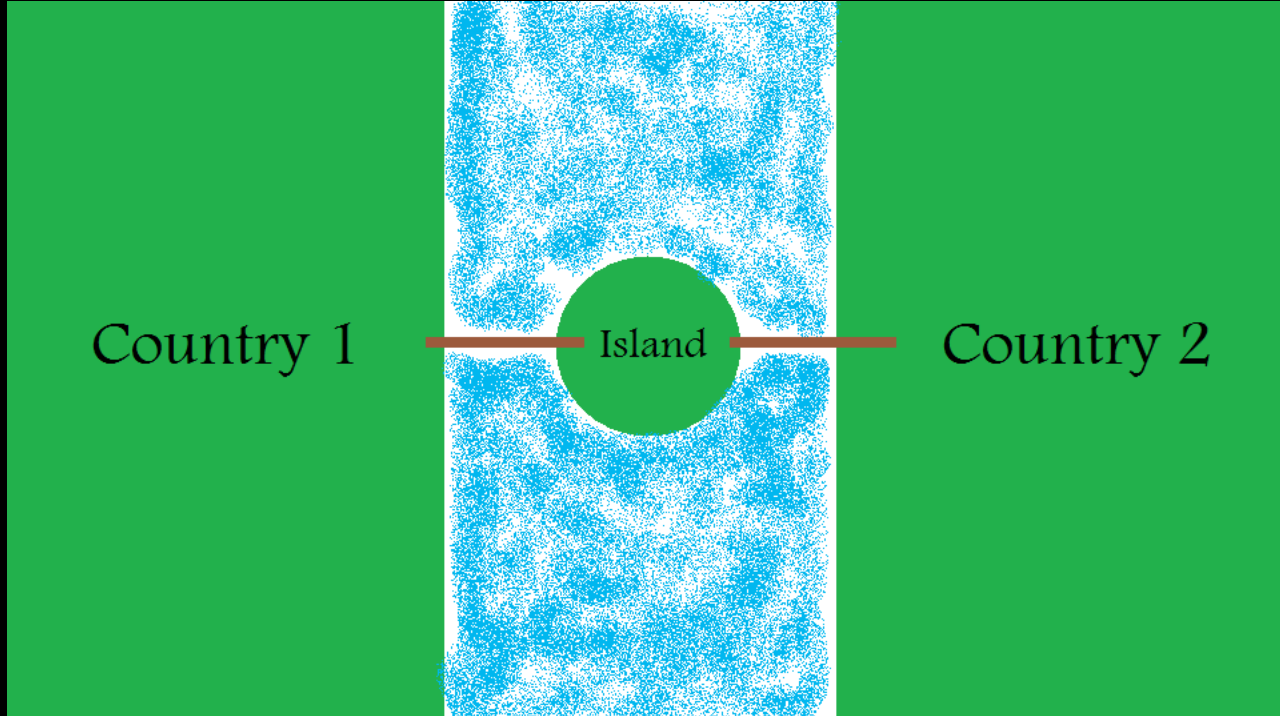
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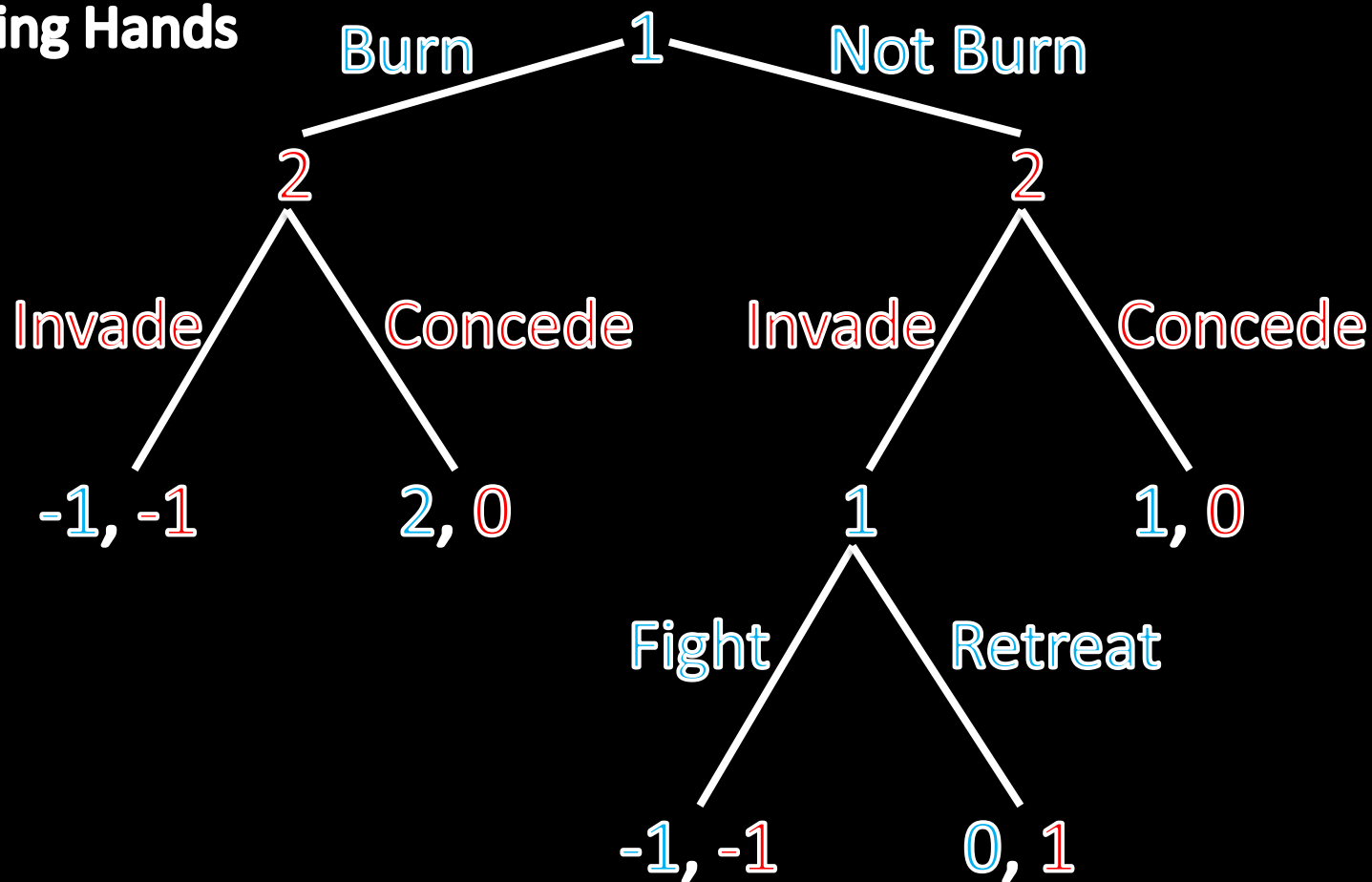
Country 1

Island

Country 2



Tying Hands



Takeaway

- Burning the bridge improves 1's bargaining position
 - Costly
 - But makes otherwise incredible threat credible

Treaties

- All sorts of human rights treaties
- Tough to deduce their effectiveness

Treaties

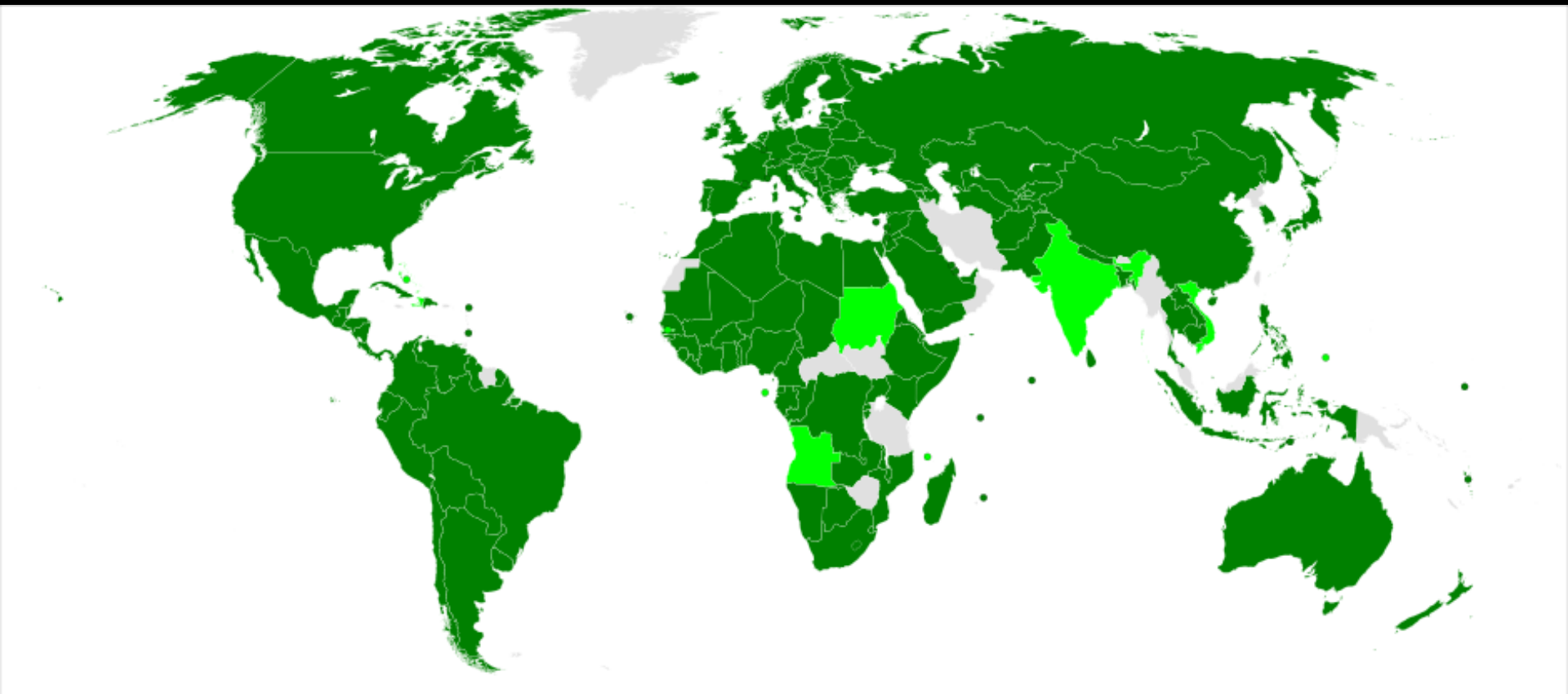
- Suppose we observe overwhelming compliance to the treaty
 - Why might the treaty not be effective?
 - Hint: Selection problem

Treaties

- On the whole, thought to be useful
- Rallying point for domestic opposition groups, commit future leaders from violation
- But not all treaties work that way...

Convention against Torture

- Forbids torture on signatory's soil
- Prohibits transport of people to countries where there is reasonable belief that they might be tortured

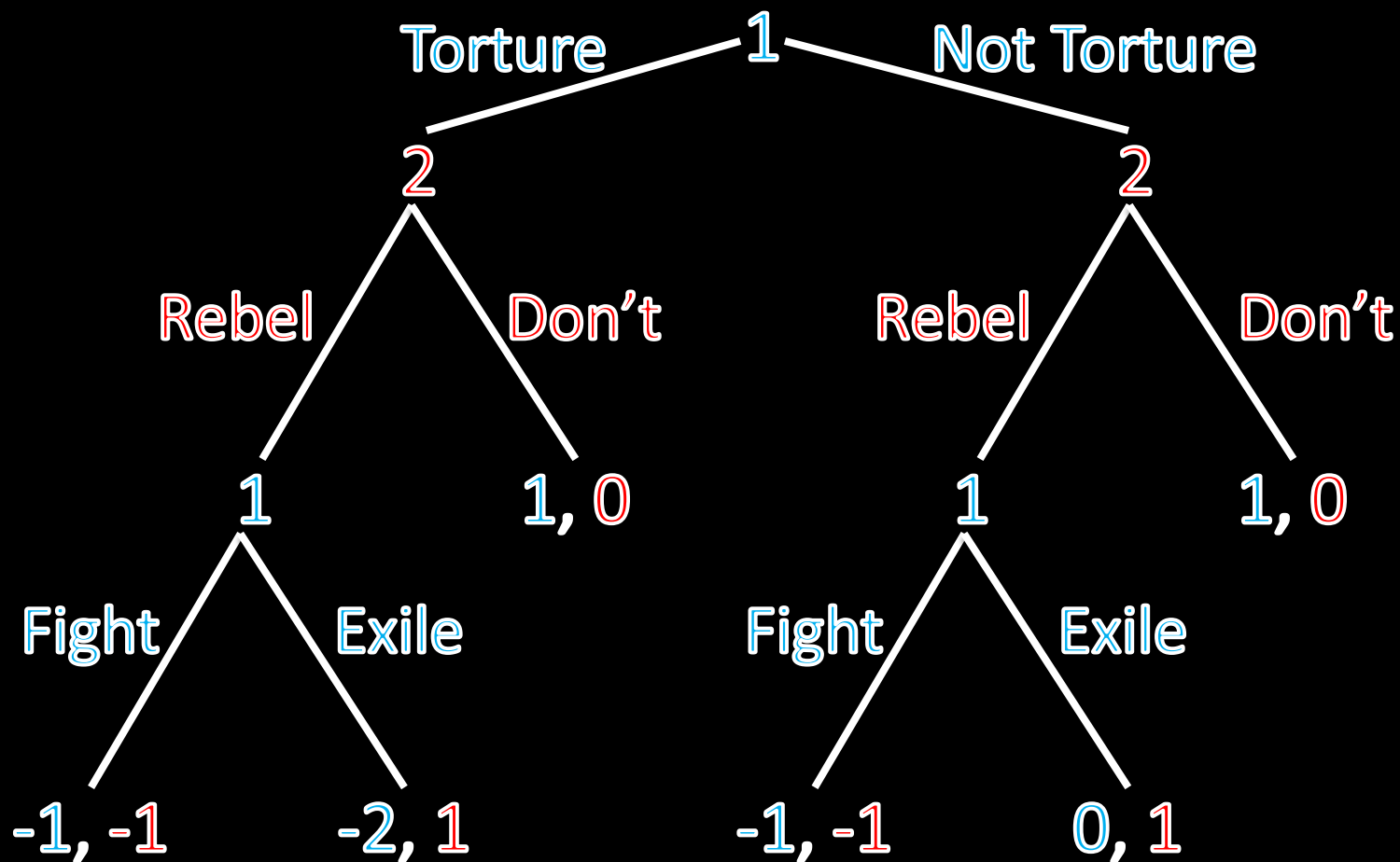


Puzzle

- Some authoritarian regimes sign treaty and then immediately violate it
- Why sign?

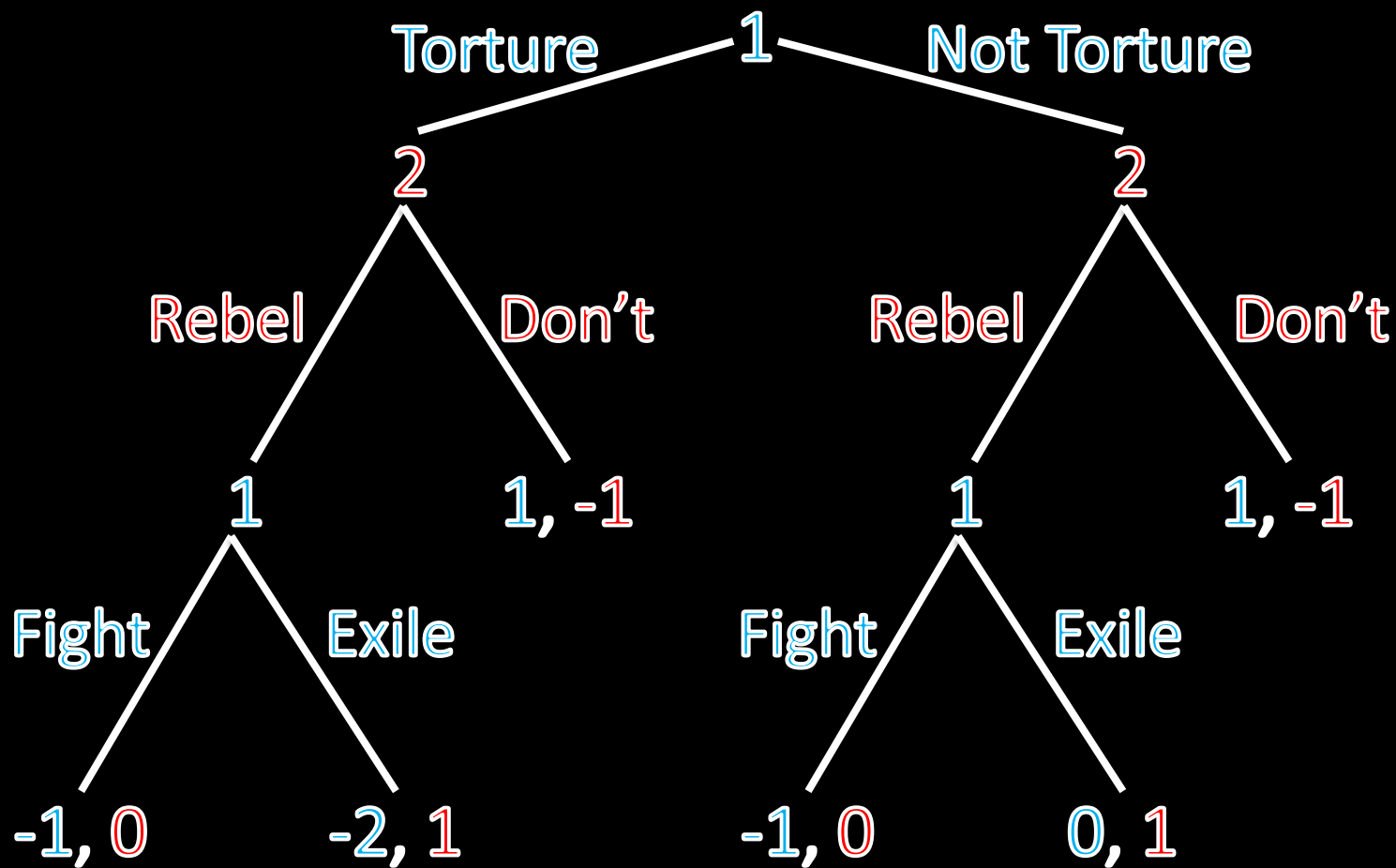
Puzzle

- Torturing after signing leaves a leader vulnerable to prosecution from international community
- If you know you are going to torture, why just not sign at all?



Takeaway

- Signing CAT and breaking it burns a leader's exile bridge
- Makes commitment to fight credible
 - If commitment to fight deters rebels from initiating conflict, worth burning the bridge



Takeaway

- If commitment to fight does not deter rebels from initiating conflict, better to keep your options open