

CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT

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Summary

This chapter provides an overview of how armed conflict is defined and studied as inter-state and intra-state conflict, and which root causes lead to these two different types of armed conflict. It also examines the major trends in armed conflicts and concludes with a commentary on the prevention of such conflicts.

1. Introduction

The seminal work of Clausewitz (1776), *On War*, argues that war is merely an instrument of policy and that armed conflict is not mindless all-out military struggle. Schelling (1966) agrees that conflict is indeed another form of strategic bargaining and it should be treated as such in the study of war as a security issue. These and other prominent scholars of International Relations (IR) posit that armed conflict is widespread and it is a continuation of political interactions between actors in international relations. Several causes lead to a breakup in diplomatic relations of states and conflict ensues when other means of communication are exhausted.

This chapter provides an overview of widely accepted causes of armed conflict, by focusing on inter-state and intra-state conflict. The IR literature has separately studied the causes of these two forms of military conflict by using different levels of analysis. This essay will sort out the most prominent causes of conflict in a multidimensional

framework and concluding remarks will include comments on prevention of armed conflict.

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