more than others. "The war in the Balkans is a greater danger to international security than civil wars in Somalia, Liberia or Sudan because it may overwhelm Europe's political stability and economic productivity, prerequisites for Third World development."

Likewise, the goals of any intervention still must be clearly defined. "Only a combination of coherent strategy, sufficient leverage, and a keen sense of timing will allow a third party to bring peace. Most civil wars become amenable to settlement only after they have played themselves out with ferocity." A short-term emphasis on ceasefires, or the provision of humanitarian aid, may sometimes only prolong the bloody conflict rather than end it. Many civil wars, in Stedman's view, may just have to be allowed to run their tragic course.

It Can't Happen Here?

"The Origins of the American Military Coup of 2012" by Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., in *Parameters* (Winter 1992–93), U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pa. 17013–5050.

The year is 2012 and the White House is abruptly taken over by General Thomas E. T. Brutus, heretofore merely the uniformed chief of the unified armed forces. Upon the president's death and the vice president's not entirely voluntary retirement, Brutus declares martial law, postpones elections, and names himself permanent Military Plenipotentiary. The coup is ratified in a national referendum.

This scenario may seem like a fanciful Hollywood film treatment, but Dunlap, an Air Force lieutenant colonel, is afraid that it is becoming all too possible.

Casting his argument in the form of a letter from a senior officer imprisoned for resisting the imagined coup of 2012, Dunlap notes that high public confidence in the military after the Persian Gulf War and disillusionment with most other arms of government made it tempting, with the Cold War over, to give the armed forces major responsibilities for dealing with crime, environmental hazards, natural disasters, and other civilian problems. Other institutions did not seem to be up to the job. Even before then, in 1981, Congress had expanded the military's role in combating drug-smuggling. "By 1991 the Department of Defense was spending $1.2 billion on counter-narcotics crusades. Air Force surveillance aircraft were sent to track airborne smugglers; Navy ships patrolled the Caribbean looking for drug-laden vessels; and National Guardsmen were searching for marijuana caches near the borders." Proposals were made to have the military rebuild bridges and roads, rehabilitate public housing, and even help out urban hospitals. U.S. troops were given humanitarian missions overseas, in such countries as Iraq, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Somalia. When several African governments collapsed around the turn of the century, according to Dunlap's imaginary account, U.S. troops were called upon to provide basic services—and never left. At home, the armed forces had gotten involved in many vital areas of American life, and 21st-century legislators called for even greater involvement.

By taking on civilian tasks, Dunlap contends, the military is diverted from its main mission—waging war and preparing to wage war—and "the very ethos of military service" is eroded. Instead of considering themselves warriors, people in the military come to think of themselves as "policemen, relief workers, educators, builders, health care providers, politicians—everything but warfighters."

"With so much responsibility for virtually everything government was expected to do," his imaginary prisoner recalls, "the military increasingly demanded a larger role in policymaking." Well-intentioned officers, accustomed to the military hierarchy of command, "became impatient with the delays and inefficiencies inherent in the democratic process," and increasingly sought to circumvent it. General Brutus's coup was nothing more than the next logical step.

Rambo Retires

"War Without Killing" by Harvey M. Sapolsky and Sharon K. Weiner, in *Breakthroughs* (Winter 1992–93), Defense and Arms Control Studies Program, MIT, 292 Main St. (E38-603), Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

The American military has always gone to great lengths to minimize deaths in wartime. Now, however, it may be going too far.

It is one thing to keep U.S. soldiers and civilians,

and even enemy civilians, from harm's way, note Sapolsky and Weiner, a professor and graduate student, respectively, in the department of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Today, though, Americans seem to have "growing qualms . . . about killing enemy soldiers."

American culture has always bred an extraordinary aversion to death—which is one reason why, to the great consternation of President Bill Clinton, Americans spend so much on health care. In the military, the unusually high value attached to life has long been reflected in a heavy reliance on firepower. "The one sure way to keep American casualties down in war," the authors note, "is to blast away at the enemy"—in effect, as they put it, to substitute capital for labor. This the U.S. military has done with a vengeance. During World War II, it expended one ton of munitions (artillery, bombs, etc.) per "man-year of combat exposure"; in Korea, eight tons; in Vietnam, 26.

But targets have been chosen with increasing selectivity. "Our one big experiment in killing civilians," Sapolsky and Weiner say, came during World War II, when allied strategic bombing (including the two atomic bombs) killed 600,000 German and Japanese civilians. By contrast, when a civilian bomb shelter in Baghdad was mistakenly blown up during the Persian Gulf War, alarmed leaders in Washington halted the bombing of Baghdad for several days and nearly called off the air war.

Doubts about killing enemy *soldiers* began creeping in during the Vietnam War—when some Americans saw the enemy as "peasant soldiers fighting for their freedom." By the Persian Gulf War, the U.S. military had wised up. Reporters were kept far from the front lines and the public was shown high-tech missiles smashing cleanly into bunkers and tanks. No dead bodies. When some of the old-fashioned blood-and-guts stuff did slip out—a film clip from an Apache helicopter showing Iraqi soldiers being mowed down—the Pentagon quickly recalled the film. Still, "in large part because of [the military's] reluctance to go on with the killing and a fear of the political reaction," the authors say, President George Bush was forced to end the war before Iraq's Republican Guard could be destroyed.

During Persian Gulf War, word spread quickly about the "Highway of Death," in Kuwait. Far from rejoicing at the death of their Iraqi foes, Americans recoiled.

America's future enemies will not all be as stupid as Saddam Hussein, who foolishly suppressed pictures of the "awful gore" inflicted by American weapons until after the war. Shrewd adversaries will locate their military bases in civilian areas or near cultural and religious landmarks. All of America's weapons, the authors warn "will do little to dissuade an antagonist who knows that we like neither to suffer nor inflict casualties, military or civilian." At some point, they predict, the United States will be unable even to contemplate war, and "isolation will eventually be our answer."

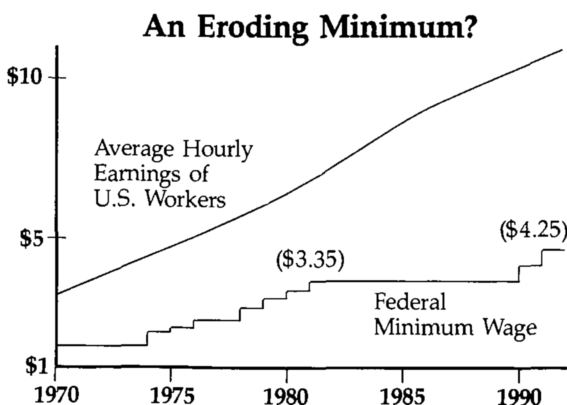
ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

The New Wisdom on Minimum-Wage Laws

A Survey of Recent Articles

The minimum-wage law, that hardy perennial of American political argument, may soon have its last, best hearing on the political stage. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich wants to increase the current federal minimum wage of $4.25 an hour by 10 percent—and then index it, thus removing the issue from the political battlefield.

Reich will have at his disposal some surprising new research. After decades of debate, economists by the early 1980s seemed to be in agreement on the subject of minimum-wage laws. The consensus was that they are a decidedly mixed blessing (perhaps not unlike economists themselves). Studies indicated that, other things being equal, a 10-percent increase in the minimum wage reduced teenage employment by one to three percent. (Nearly half of all teenagers now hold jobs.) Agreement among economists being an unnatural state, it is remarkable how long the consensus held up. But lately it has come under challenge from economist-sleuths who believe they have succeeded in failing to find any evidence that increases in minimum wages cause employment declines, and who, like Sherlock Holmes, discern much significance in the dog that did not bark. The economists present their dissenting findings in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (Oct. 1992)—only to have them immediately subjected, in the same issue, to a large dose of cold water from some fellow economist-detectives.



Harvard economist Lawrence F. Katz (now chief economist at the Department of Labor) and Princeton colleague Alan B. Krueger begin the challenge to the conventional wisdom. They surveyed fast-food restaurants in Texas after the federal minimum wage was hiked from $3.35 to $3.80 an hour in April 1990 and after it was further increased the following April to $4.25. They found that at firms most likely to be affected by the change (i.e. those firms employing relatively more low-wage workers), employment actually *increased.* But they take a bit of the edge off this finding by noting that their surveys would have missed any restaurants forced to close by the higher minimum wage, as well as any slowdown it might have brought about in the rate at which new restaurants opened.

The next challenger to appear in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review's* pages is Princeton economist David Card, who flings two separate stones at the conventional-wisdom Goliath. The first takes advantage of the fact that some states raised their minimum wages above the federal one. As a result, the April 1990 boost in the federal minimum wage had no effect on teenagers in California and several New England states. If the federal law had any negative impact at all, it