

GREAT POWER **MEDIATION**

Opportunities and Challenges for China

Kenneth Schultz
edited by Jason Li



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China is becoming increasingly active in mediating violent conflicts both within its neighborhood and beyond. Although this role is not entirely new, the last decade has witnessed a significant uptick in Chinese mediation efforts in a variety of high-profile conflicts, including Afghanistan, Syria, South Sudan, and Myanmar. This activity is most pronounced in regions that are strategically important to its Belt and Road Initiative, particularly South Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa, where China has an interest in promoting stability and investment.¹ For a country that has long argued against external interference in domestic affairs of other countries, this trend represents a significant new development that raises questions of interest to both policymakers and academics. Of particular importance is whether China is likely to be effective in this role and what principles should guide its policy.

While some features of China's mediation policies will reflect its specific circumstances and characteristics, there is nothing unique or unprecedented about a state with growing power and global reach extending its diplomatic efforts in this way. By virtue of its economic and military size, its influence within international institutions, and its ambition to be a global leader, China brings to this role the status and resources of a "great power"—one of a small number of states that wields considerable influence within the international system. Mediation by great powers has a long track record and has, consequently, been the subject of considerable academic research seeking to understand the distinctive nature of involvement by these states.² The purpose of this paper is to summarize the main findings of this research, drawing particularly on the experience of the United States, and to distill some key lessons. Of course, China is not the United States. A review of theories and evidence about great power mediation should help shine light into the opportunities and challenges Chinese mediation efforts will face.

Mediation by Great Powers

Mediation by a great power inevitably takes place in the shadow of that state's power and interests, in a way that mediation by private parties or distant, less powerful states does not. Great powers bring a variety of resources to the table due not only to their own capabilities but also their influence over multilateral institutions. On the economic side, they can wield trade and financial concessions, military aid, development assistance, and arms sales as either inducements or threats. Politically, they gain influence from the fact that other states value having good relations with a great power, particularly if they benefit from security and economic ties. And, of course, great powers wield not only their own military capabilities, which give them the option to intervene militarily, but also influence within the United Nations and regional security organizations that can organize the provision of monitors or peacekeepers in the event that a deal is reached.

The other thing great power mediators often bring to the table is bias. In principle, a neutral mediator prioritizes getting a deal and does not have strong preference over the content of the deal and, in particular, which side it favors. But great powers define their interests regionally and globally, meaning that they often have preferences for one side or the other in a conflict. In these cases, the desire to get a deal to end the bloodshed competes with other priorities, such as supporting an allied government or undermining an

1. Helen Legarda and Marie L. Hoffman, "China as a Conflict Mediator: Maintaining Stability along the Belt and Road," Mercator Institute for China Studies China Mapping, August 22, 2018, <https://www.merics.org/en/china-mapping/china-conflict-mediator>.

2. See, e.g., Saadia Touval, "The Superpowers as Mediators," in *Mediation in International Relations: Multiple Approaches to Conflict Management*, eds. Jacob Bercovitch and Jeffrey Z. Rubin (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 232–48; Marieke Kleiboer, "Great Power Mediation: Using Leverage to Make Peace?," in *Studies in International Mediation: Essays in Honour of Jeffrey Z. Rubin*, ed. Jacob Bercovitch (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 127–40; Katja Favretto, "Should Peacemakers Take Sides? Major Power Mediation, Coercion, and Bias," *The American Political Science Review* 103, no. 2 (2009): 248–63. For an excellent overview of the literature on mediation in civil wars, see Jacob D. Kathman and Megan Shannon, "Ripe for Resolution: Third Party Mediation and Negotiating Peace Agreements," in *What Do We Know about Civil Wars?*, eds. T. David Mason and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

adversary. Thus, they may face a temptation to use their power to achieve outcomes favorable for their side or to block outcomes that are unfavorable.³

Although strict definitions of mediation often exclude cases in which threats or inducements are made by the mediator, the possibility of those strategies looms in the background whenever a powerful state is involved. In conflicts accompanying the breakup of Yugoslavia, for example, the United States at times played the role of mediator, putting its efforts behind various peace plans and mediating talks at Dayton, Ohio, in a successful effort to end the civil war in Bosnia, and Rambouillet, France, in a failed effort to defuse the conflict over Kosovo. But those efforts took place alongside other strategies to manage the conflict, including the imposition of economic sanctions and an arms embargo, support for intervention in multilateral fora such as the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and ultimately military intervention in both Bosnia (1995) and Kosovo (1999) followed by participation in post-conflict peacekeeping operations. Indeed, the fact that multiple conflict management strategies often take place at the same time as mediation efforts presents well-known problems for teasing out the effectiveness of the latter.⁴

Some scholars have argued the combination of mediation with other forms of coercion or inducement—sometimes referred to as “mediation with muscle”—is an important ingredient to halting conflicts that would otherwise prove intractable. This conjecture has intuitive appeal: after all, if the parties to a conflict have been unable to resolve matters on their own, it seems natural to assume that successful conflict management requires an injection of external resources, whether they be economic, diplomatic, or military. However, both theory and evidence suggest a more complicated picture. Power in these contexts is a double-edged sword, presenting both promise and pitfalls. Understanding both the opportunities and challenges of great power mediation is thus essential to doing it right.

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To see why great power mediation can have both beneficial and harmful effects, it is useful to take a step back and think about some of the major obstacles that parties to a conflict might face in trying to stop the bloodshed and craft a durable peace. There are many such barriers, but the literature in political science emphasizes three broad sets of challenges.⁵

First, parties may have different expectations about what they can achieve through continued fighting. When the parties to a conflict each believe they can get more by fighting on than by settling, then there may be no ceasefire deal that both are willing to accept. Second, the parties may refuse to sign a deal because they fear the other side will renege. Ceasefires are often exploited by actors to regroup and rearm, so an adversary might fear that stopping the fight will leave it vulnerable to renegeing by the other side. There is

3. There is an extensive literature on the effects of bias on mediation outcomes; for a review, see Isak Svensson, “Research on Bias in Mediation: Policy Implications,” *Penn State Journal of Law and International Affairs* 2, no. 1 (2013): 17–26.

4. Paul F. Diehl and Patrick Regan, “The Interdependence of Conflict Management Attempts,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32, no. 1 (2015): 99–107.

5. This framework is based on Kyle Beardsley, *The Mediation Dilemma*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011), 26–29; see also Jacob D. Kathman and Megan Shannon, “Ripe for Resolution: Third Party Mediation and Negotiating Peace Agreements,” in *What Do We Know about Civil Wars?*, eds. T. David Mason and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 114–16.

also a well-known problem in the context of civil conflicts that rebel groups are reluctant to disarm without credible guarantees that the government will not break the deal once the threat is past. The third and final barrier arises from the need to overcome opposition to a deal from within the warring parties. A government may fear political opposition to compromising with or even talking to a rebel group. A rebel group may find it difficult to enforce a ceasefire deal among its followers, and in fact accepting a ceasefire often leads groups to fragment between moderates and hardliners.

Great power mediation can both ameliorate and exacerbate these problems. To see why, we can take each one in turn.

Inconsistent Expectations

Adversaries in a conflict will only agree to a deal that gives them at least as much as they can expect to get through continued fighting. In principle, if both sides agreed what the outcome of fighting would be, they would be able to reach an agreement that met this requirement for all sides. In practice, however, combatants may not share the same beliefs about what the battlefield outcome will be. They may not fully appreciate the resources each side can bring to the fight, and they may underestimate one another's willingness to bear the costs of fighting. Under these conditions, there is a danger that the two sides' minimum demands are incompatible: each will demand more than the other side is willing to concede. For this reason, classic works by William Zartman suggest that conflicts are not "ripe for resolution" until they reach a "mutually hurting stalemate," a battlefield equilibrium in which neither side thinks it can prevail but both are paying costs to keep up the fight.⁶ Under these conditions, there is little room for disagreement about the war outcome, and the two sides are best able to cut a deal to avoid continued bloodshed.

In the absence of such a stalemate, mediators might help overcome the problem of inconsistent expectations by providing information or assisting communication in a way that brings the adversaries' expectations into line. This facilitation role is a central component of mediation. Well-resourced mediators might also be able to bring to the table expertise and specialized information that helps clarify the adversaries' understanding of the conflict and their options for ending it. U.S. mediation efforts at Dayton, for example, were aided by high-resolution digital maps, made possible by significant support from the Army and \$4 million worth of equipment.⁷

Another solution to this problem is to increase the size of the pie: to promise inducements that the parties will enjoy only in the event of a deal. This strategy does not resolve inconsistent expectations, but it can render them harmless by expanding the benefits from peace. This is one way in which a great power mediator can use its resources productively, such as by offering aid to one or both combatants. For example, while mediating the conflict between Italy and Yugoslavia in 1953, the United States and the United Kingdom agreed to compensate Yugoslavia for the loss of the port at Trieste by providing economic aid and financing the construction of a new port at Koper.⁸ Similarly, the United States helped facilitate the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt by promising both sides substantial economic and military aid packages.⁹ More broadly, ceasefires in civil wars often bring with them large packages of foreign aid from the United States and Europe, as well as from multinational development agencies like the World Bank.¹⁰ Although great power mediation is not a precondition for this kind of aid, the direct involvement of an influential state

6. I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*, Updated edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

7. Richard G. Johnson, "Negotiating the Dayton Peace Accords through Digital Maps," *Virtual Diplomacy Report* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, February 25, 1999).

8. Favretto, "Should Peacemakers Take Sides? Major Power Mediation, Coercion, and Bias," 256–57.

9. Saadia Touval, *The Peace Brokers: Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 317.

10. Desha M. Girod, *Explaining Postconflict Reconstruction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015).



LEFT: President Barack Obama shakes hands at a ministerial meeting on Sudan at the United Nations in New York, NY September, 2010.

Official White House Photo by Samantha Appleton

brings with it a credible promise that aid money will flow in the event of a deal. For example, the United States under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama played a major role in facilitating the independence of South Sudan in 2011, after decades of civil war. A desire to see these efforts pay off led to a massive investment of U.S. aid into South Sudan amounting to about \$1 billion per year from 2005-16—an amount which a Congressional Research Service report called “unprecedented in sub-Saharan Africa and...one of the largest U.S. foreign aid investments globally in the last decade.”¹¹

The problem is that great-power interest can also exacerbate the problem of inconsistent expectations by holding out the possibility that the powerful state will intervene in a way that puts its thumb on the scales. Such intervention could take place unilaterally, as in the case of French intervention in Rwanda in 1994, or multilaterally, as in the case of NATO interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo. If both sides expect that intervention, then this possibility does not necessarily undermine the chances for a settlement: it may simply shift the settlement in favor of the side that will benefit. Moreover, if military intervention is sufficiently robust, it might be able to impose a settlement, as NATO intervention in Kosovo did in 1999.¹² The danger is that the prospect of intervention may create additional uncertainty, by raising questions about whether intervention will happen, how extensive it will, and which side will benefit. This danger is particularly severe if the great power might intervene on behalf of the weaker side. An outmatched group that would otherwise have incentives to settle might try to prolong the fight in hopes of luring more powerful partners in on its side.¹³ Moreover, as Alan Kuperman has argued, there is a risk that weak groups might try to escalate the conflict—even at the cost of greater atrocities against their people—in the hopes of compelling third parties to intervene.¹⁴

11. Lauren Bloch Blanchard, “Conflict in South Sudan and the Challenges Ahead,” Congressional Research Service Report R4334, September 22, 2016), 17.

12. Favretto, “Should Peacemakers Take Sides? Major Power Mediation, Coercion, and Bias.”

13. For theoretical treatments of this problem, see Arman Grigoryan, “Third-Party Intervention and the Escalation of State-Minority Conflicts: Third-Party Intervention,” *International Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (December 2010): 1143–74; Andrew H. Kydd and Scott Straus, “The Road to Hell? Third-Party Intervention to Prevent Atrocities,” *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 3 (July 2013): 673–84.

14. Alan J. Kuperman, “The Moral Hazard of Humanitarian Intervention: Lessons from the Balkans,” *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (March 2008): 49–80, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2007.00491.x>; Alan J. Kuperman, “Suicidal Rebellions and the Moral Hazard of Humanitarian Intervention,” *Ethnopolitics* 4, no. 2 (June 2005): 149–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449050500147267>.

Fears of Reneging

The second set of barriers to stopping conflicts arises from fears that each side may have that the other will renege on the deal. There are many reasons why parties to a conflict might not trust one another, but there are in particular two common problems that arise in this context. First, there is a danger that a party will agree to a deal simply to gain breathing space to regroup and rearm. Many ceasefires in civil conflicts do not last very long. A detailed study of ceasefires reached in the course of the Syrian civil war from 2011-17 found that 74 out of 106 lasted six months or less, with the shortest lasting only 24 hours.¹⁵ Given this, even a party that genuinely wants peace might be reluctant to strike a deal for fear that its adversary will exploit the pause to gain a strategic advantage. Second, there is a well-known problem in civil conflicts that peace deals which require rebel forces to disarm leave them vulnerable to renegeing by the government. If rebels fear that disarmament will lead the government to revoke any concessions and kill or imprison them, then they will be wary about making any agreement.¹⁶

If a deal comes about because of external pressure, then the adversaries might stick to it only as long as the pressure is on and break it once third-party attention wanders elsewhere.

Great power mediators can help in this regard either by promising to act as a guarantor and/or by using influence in security organizations to provide observers or peacekeepers. These forces can help monitor compliance with ceasefire agreements, investigate violations, position themselves between warring parties, and oversee disarmament, demobilization, and integration of rebel forces. There is evidence from a variety of studies now that the deployment of peacekeepers can reduce violence and increase the durability of ceasefires.¹⁷ Strong states may also be in a position to monitor and sanction governments to ensure that they live up to their commitments.¹⁸

Unfortunately, there is also reason to worry that involvement by strong states can lead to agreements that are short-lived and vulnerable to renewed conflict. If a deal comes about because of external pressure, then the adversaries might stick to it only as long as the pressure is on and break it once third-party attention wanders elsewhere. Kyle Beardsley calls this the “mediation dilemma”: short-term peace may come at the expense of long-term stability. His research on interstate disputes shows that mediation increases the chances of reaching a settlement that holds for three years or less but that settlements reached via mediation are less likely to endure beyond five years than those struck by disputants without third-party assistance. Moreover, this trade-off between short- and long-term effects is starker when the mediator used some form of leverage—including immediate inducements and promises of implementation assistance—to seal the

15. Dogukan Cansin Karakus and Isak Svensson, “Between the Bombs: Exploring Partial Ceasefires in the Syrian Civil War, 2011–2017,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, November 27, 2017, 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2017.1393416>.

16. Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).

17. Virginia Page Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work?: Shaping Belligerents’ Choices after Civil War*, Book, Whole (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008); Lisa Hultman, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon, “United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War,” *American Journal of Political Science*, May 2013, n/a–n/a, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12036>.

18. Walter, *Committing to Peace*; Aila M. Matanock, *Electing Peace: From Civil Conflict to Political Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316987179>.



LEFT: Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian National Authority, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-third session in September of 2018.

Photo by UN Photo/Cia Pak

deal.¹⁹ These results suggest that while inducements are effective in short-term conflict management, they may perversely hamper long-term conflict resolution by leading to deals that do not actually satisfy the adversaries—who will look for an opportunity to revise it once the external pressure is relieved.

Political Barriers

Overcoming political barriers to settlements is one of the thorniest problems. Governments often face pressure to take a hard line against foreign and domestic adversaries, fearing that any concessions will make them vulnerable to attack by political opponents. For this reason, they frequently refuse even to negotiate with armed groups, preferring to treat them as terrorists or criminals rather than granting legitimacy to their political goals. On the other side, rebel groups may also face internal barriers to reaching a settlement, since compromise often bring about disagreements between moderates and hardliners that cause groups to fracture.²⁰

Mediation can help address this problem by providing political cover for actors to engage in talks or strike a deal.²¹ Third-party intermediaries can make it possible for adversaries to exchange messages without direct talks and to open a channel of communication that can be denied or disavowed if necessary. Mediation by a great power can enhance this effect if the strong state is willing to lean on the government or bring multinational pressure to bear. Under these conditions, a government might be able to use that pressure to answer its internal opponents: “look, we didn’t really have a choice.” Indeed, the political cover logic has been found to operate in other kinds of third-party involvement, such as arbitration and adjudication.²²

19. Beardsley, *The Mediation Dilemma*, chap. 5.

20. Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, “Conciliation, Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence,” *International Organization* 59, no. 01 (January 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818305050022>.

21. Beardsley, *The Mediation Dilemma*, 38–40.

22. See, e.g., Todd L. Allee and Paul K. Huth, “Legitimizing Dispute Settlement: International Legal Rulings as Domestic Political Cover,” *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 2 (2006): 219–34; Beth A. Simmons, “Capacity, Commitment, and Compliance: International Institutions and Territorial Disputes,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 6 (2002): 829–56.

The use of positive inducements can increase the chances of success by increasing the rewards from peace. But great power involvement can make things worse if it creates expectations of intervention in a way that draws out a conflict.

The flip side is that the heavy hand of a powerful state can worsen the political costs of making a deal by making it illegitimate. The United States has to tread carefully in Latin America because the history of U.S. meddling there means that people look at its efforts with suspicion.²³ Similarly, the United States has struggled to be an effective mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, particularly in recent years as U.S. policy has become more explicitly pro-Israel. In a speech to the UN General Assembly in September 2018, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas rejected the idea of the United States serving as a mediator unless it was in cooperation with other members of the Middle East Quartet: “Anyone can join the Quartet to act as mediators between ourselves and the Israelis. But the U.S. alone? No, because they are too much biased to Israel.”²⁴

Lessons

So what lessons can we draw from this? When a strong power like the United States or China gets involved in mediating disputes, the hope would be that it use its leverage in ways that are productive while avoiding the pitfalls that can make problems worse. Three lessons in particular stand out:

1. The use of positive inducements can increase the chances of success by increasing the rewards from peace. But great power involvement can make things worse if it creates expectations of intervention in a way that draws out a conflict. These considerations imply that a strong mediator has to credibly signal its willingness to invest resources in peace, while at the same time making clear that there are limits to its involvement (unless the intention is to intervene and impose a settlement, in which case that should be signaled clearly as well). A strong commitment to non-intervention, which Chinese officials regularly espouse, might help in this regard. In principle, restraint might also be conveyed when the mediator binds itself to work within multilateral institutions; however, the experience of the United States suggests that great powers struggle to bind themselves through this route, because of both their influence within those organizations and their ability to operate without explicit approval.²⁵
2. Great power pressure can lead to short-term peace deals that are vulnerable to renegeing unless they are accompanied by continuing efforts to monitor and enforce the deal. This means the process does not end when a deal is signed but requires sustained attention. While this is true of all peace efforts, those agreements that come as a result of great power leverage may be the most susceptible to backsliding. Indeed, a harsh fact of both civil and interstate conflicts is that those that end in the decisive victory by one side are the least likely to recur in the future; indecisive wars are the ones most likely

23. Carrie Kahn and Alex Leff, “Trump’s Venezuela Moves Follow Long History Of Intervention In Latin America,” *National Public Radio*, February 22, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/22/696057482/trumps-venezuela-moves-follow-long-history-of-intervention-in-lat-in-america>.

24. See, e.g., Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’ speech to the UN General Assembly, Sept. 27, 2018; full text available at <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/full-text-palestinian-president-mahmoud-abbas-2018-un-general-assembly-speech-1.6513131> (accessed 3/11/2019).

25. Erik Voeten, “Outside Options and the Logic of Security Council Action,” *The American Political Science Review* 95, no. 4 (2001): 845–58.



LEFT: President Donald J. Trump's visit to China in November 2017.

Official White House Photo by Shealah Craighead

to re-ignite.²⁶ Thus, third-party efforts to stop conflicts before one side or the other is completely defeated may perversely set the stage for the conflict to continue later on. As Beardsley emphasizes, this trade-off is often worth making: if exerting pressure can stop the bloodshed now, a higher chance of conflict recurrence a decade down the line may be a small price to pay.²⁷ Nevertheless, policymakers need to be aware of this trade-off and take steps to minimize the risks of relapse.

This is where working through multilateral security organizations can help, because they provide institutional support for monitoring and peacekeeping missions over the long run, and they reduce the costs to any one state of providing this support. The experience of the United States in Bosnia is instructive in this respect. When the Dayton Accords were struck in 1995 after several weeks of NATO bombing, there were fears that intervention on the side of the weaker Muslim-Croat side had ended the war artificially and that fighting would resume as soon as the international presence wound down.²⁸ In fact, while the situation in Bosnia two decades later is not ideal, the worst fears have not come true. A large UN-authorized peacekeeping mission went in to monitor implementation of the accords, and over time that mission gradually wound down; in 2004, it was replaced by a European Union mission that is much smaller in both size and scope. Similar dynamics played out in Kosovo. In both cases, the United States, after having led the military intervention and contributed a large share of the initial peacekeeping forces, was able to wind down its presence and shift the remaining burden onto others. These cases underscore the value even to strong states of working through multilateral institutions.

3. Mediators need to be sensitive to whether their efforts provide adversaries with political cover to make concessions or exacerbate the problem due to their perceived biases. In cases where the great power is seen as being biased toward one side of the dispute, its efforts are more likely to be productive when it puts pressure on the side that it favors, thereby creating political cover for that side to

26. Virginia Page Fortna, *Peace Time: Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004); Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work?: Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War*.

27. Beardsley, *The Mediation Dilemma*.

28. Edward N. Luttwak, "Give War a Chance," *Foreign Affairs* 78 (1999): 36–44.

make concessions. As Zartman notes, biased mediators often need to “deliver their side.”²⁹ Of course, this can be a hard policy prescription to follow, since it requires elevating an abstract interest in peace and stability over what may be a more concrete interest in helping, or at least not alienating, an ally. For example, while there is a plausible argument that a peace deal with the Palestinians would serve the long-term interest of both the United States and Israel, it has proven politically difficult for U.S. presidents to put sustained pressure on Israel to make the necessary compromises. A strong mediator may of course be able to put pressure on the side it does not favor and try to impose a deal through threats or sanctions. Doing so, however, risks creating political backlash in the adversary, making it harder for their leaders to accept such an outcome. In cases where a biased great power is unwilling to pressure its own side, it may have to relinquish the lead role and operate alongside other, more neutral countries in order to give the adversary some cover to make concessions.

Ultimately, despite the risks discussed here, great powers like the United States and China are likely to be actively involved in regional and global conflicts going forward. Not only do they have wide-ranging interests that can be affected by ongoing conflicts, but there is often pressure on powerful states to bring their resources to bear on intractable problems. The key lesson from this analysis is that they are often better off undertaking these efforts through multilateral fora or in concert with other states. Although the strongest states often seem to need such institutions the least, pursuing mediation in this way provides the best hope of avoiding some of the downsides that come with great power.

29. I. William Zartman, “Dynamics and Constraints in Negotiations in Internal Conflicts,” in *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*, ed. I. William Zartman (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution, 1995), 3–29.

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