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Director's Speaker Series

Idean Salehyan and Cullen Hendrix

"A House Divided: Threat Perception, Regime Factionalism and Repression in Africa"

Monday, March 4, 2013

3 p.m.

Mershon Center for International Security Studies

1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

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Idean Salehyan is assistant professor of political science at the University of North Texas. He is also affiliated with the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law at the University of Texas at Austin, the John Goodwin Tower Center for Political Studies at Southern Methodist University, and the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway. His research interests include civil and international conflict, forced migration, and the relationship between natural resources and armed conflict.

He is the author of *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2009). In addition, he has published numerous articles in journals such as the *American Journal of Political Science*, *International Organization*, the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, the *Journal of Peace Research*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *World Politics*. Currently, he is part of a research project which examines the relationship between climate change, resource scarcity, and political unrest in Africa.

He holds a PhD in political science from the University of California, San Diego.

Cullen Hendrix is assistant professor of international relations at the College of William & Mary. He has research affiliations with the Centre for the Study of Civil War at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law at the University of Texas at Austin, and the Peterson Institute for



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International Economics. At the Strauss Center, he's a member of the Climate Change and African Political Stability (CCAPS) team. He is a data-driven educator/researcher with interests in the global security and economic implications of climate change, civil conflict, food security, and non-state actors in international politics.

Currently, he is working on a book project on *Natural Resources and Development* (with Marcus Noland, Peterson Institute for International Economics). He is author of several articles in journals such as the *Journal of Peace Research*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Political Geography*, and *Biological Reviews*.

He holds a PhD in political science from the University of California, San Diego.

Abstract

Why do governments in Africa repress certain contentious challenges but not others? This study adopts a blended approach to studying repression by taking seriously both the characteristics of contentious events as well as nature of the regime in power.

We argue that the more threatening a movement is – as measured by the use of violence, opposition demands, and targets – the more likely the state is to use repressive force. However, we relax the assumption that the state is a unitary actor, and allow for the preferences of state leaders and of the security forces to diverge when it comes to carrying out repressive policies.

Countries with a history of factionalism in their security forces face an additional challenge: orders to crack down on protesters, rioters, strikers, etc., may not be followed or could even cause police and military forces to defect. We argue this potential is greatest when the challenge is has ethnoreligious aims.

We test these propositions using the Social Conflict in Africa Database, and find significant support for our core theoretical conjecture: regimes with a history of past military factionalism are generally less likely to use repression. Such regimes are especially unwilling to repress ethno religiously based, ascriptive movements.

These results are robust to several estimators that address the hierarchical nature of the event data. These findings demonstrate the benefits of a blended, event-based approach to studying state repression.

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