Lionel M. Beehner. "A Means of First Resort: Explaining "Hot Pursuit" in International Relations." *Security Studies* 27:3 (January 2018): 1-31. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1416815.

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I n a "Means of First Resort: Explaining 'Hot Pursuit' in International Relations," Lionel Beehner explores variation in the practice of "Hot Pursuit" by different countries. The author defines Hot pursuit as "a limited violation of sovereignty by a state...using military forces in pursuit of violent...non-state actors" (3). Hot pursuit can entail a number of different tactics—from commando raids, to border incursions, to air strikes, and can vary in intensity. However, in Beehner's definition, hot pursuit "must involve the physical transgression of an international territorial border" (4). In framing the article, Beehner argues that there is little work on this subject and that this is likely due to hot pursuit inhabiting a "hard-to-define gray zone between interstate and intrastate wars" and rarely garners media coverage due to low casualties or its covert nature (2). Beehner's main focus is not on whether hot pursuit occurs but in variation in attitudes and practices of hot pursuit across states and time.

Broadly, Beehner argues, hot pursuit is either "punitive" or "permissive." Punitive last resort tends to be larger in scale and to be focused on punishing or embarrassing the state into which non-state actors have fled. It tends to be unilateral and tends not be pursued in coordination with the hosting state. In contrast, "permissive" hot pursuit is not indicative of a state taking punitive action against another state for hosting non-state actors; it is usually indicative of "an equilibrium of sorts, an unwritten set of rules, customs and norms...[and] can presage greater interstate cooperation, not interstate conflict" (9).

Beehner argues that states engaging in hot pursuit can be characterized as "Last Resorters" and "First Resorters." Last Resorters tend to engage in less hot pursuit and when they do, they are more likely to pursue the more cooperative "permissive" variety—generally treating hot pursuit as a law enforcement issue. In contrast, First Resorters, turn more quickly to hot pursuit when facing cross-border non-state actors and see

hot pursuit as lying more firmly in the military realm, tending to practice more punitive hot pursuit. On the domestic side, what causes some states be First Resorters and others to be Last Resorters is the nature of their civil-military relations. Where civil-military relations are characterized by civilian-dominance, the First Resorter approach is more prevalent, and more punitive hot pursuit is practiced. Where the military has a much stronger say in politics and in security policy, the state tends more towards the Last Resorter approach, and practices more permissive hot pursuit. Beehner argues that this is caused by the fact that as states become more developed, they see "their militaries professionalized, and the use of force monopolized by civilian control." In these cases, responses to non-state actors are more formalized, regularized, and "military-focused" (6).

In contrast, Beehner argues, in states without this type of well-developed civilian dominance, the military is resistant to peripheral, "constabulary" (6) conflict not tied to core national security interests. This expectation draws on the civil-military relations literature on the preferences of military officers and their relative conservatisms regarding the use of force—whereas military elites favor the use of force in defense of core national interests and are hesitant about its use outside of those areas.[1] Given this pattern in military preferences, these types of states, with the military taking a major role in security decision-making, tend to view hot pursuit as more of a long enforcement issue and do not militarize it on a large-scale. Given the role of the military in their highest levels, these types of states tend to also establish close coordination with foreign militaries and the military-to-military cooperation that they establish facilitates the more cooperative Permissive hot pursuit.

In addition to this discussion of civil-military relations and Hot Pursuit practices, Beehner also offers an exploration of "Hot Pursuit in International Relations," outlining a puzzle as motivation: with perfect sovereignty, there would be no hot pursuit, but if sovereignty does not matter, then there is no point in non-state actors fleeing across borders. Using this as motivation, Beehner points to an intriguing possibility: "[H]ot pursuit can perversely act as an engine of interstate peace and a mechanism for border normalization, as well as encourage greater military restraint between states" (15). With the permissive type of hot pursuit, states develop regularized cross-border relationships and practices to counter the joint security threat and in the process build more stable frontiers and a more stable bilateral relationship.

Beehner evaluates these theoretical propositions with two case studies: India's Hot Pursuit of Nagaland separatists into Myanmar in June 2015 and Turkey's Hot Pursuit policies regarding Kurdish separatists based in northern Iraq and Syria. In the India case study, Beehner argues that India is characterized by exceptionally strong civilian dominance of the military—even to the detriment of military effectiveness. Historically, this has contributed to doctrines vis-à-vis Pakistan, Jammu, and Kashmir that have emphasized punishment of host states for non-state actor incursions. However, the June 2015 raid into Myanmar by special operations forces of the Indian military "displays elements of both punitive and permissive hot pursuit" (25). The entry of special operations forces into a foreign country in pursuit of rebels suggests escalation—and occurs within the context of civilian dominance and a modernizing military, hallmarks of "First Resorters." However, the

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[1] Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Deborah D. Avant, "Are the Reluctant Warriors Out of Control? Why the U.S. Military Is Averse to Responding to Post–Cold War Low-Level Threats," *Security Studies* 6:2 (Winter 1996/1997); Peter D. Feaver and Christopher Gelpi, *Choosing your Battles: American Civil-military Relations and the Use of Force* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

hot pursuit was carried out in the context of moves towards general cooperation and coordination with Myanmar, and efforts were taken by India to not publically embarrass Myanmar with the violation of sovereignty, so the intent is not clearly punitive. This is suggestive of mixed support for the theory.

In examining Turkey's Hot Pursuit of Kurdish separatists into Syria and Iraq, Beehner looks at change over time in hot pursuit practices within the same country, arguing that these changes stemmed from changes in the country's civil-military relations. Beehner argues that historically, these operations could be characterized as "Permissive," since they were based on treaties and bilateral cooperation, and reinforced by cross-border military-to-military ties. However, hot pursuit by the Turkish military saw increased intensity and frequency beginning in the early 2000s as civilian dominance in the Turkish government and in the making of security policy began to rise. With civilian dominance in the Turkish state, hot pursuit became to be increasingly militarized, unilateral, and took on a punitive character. Given this, the Turkish case provides stronger support for the theory.

Beehner presents a compelling theory of hot pursuit and does an excellent job of tying his argument in with broader debates in comparative politics and international relations regarding domestic politics, international conflict, state borders, and sovereignty. Regular references to contemporary events, such as the "military" approach of President Donald Trump's administration to border security make clear the modern relevance of the topic. There are two key contributions of this article that are worth highlighting. The first is the discussion of states that are "militaristic yet civilian-run." While key to Beehner's argument, this is a useful distinction for the literature on domestic politics and foreign policy more broadly. Beehner's emphasis on a class of civilian-run states with extremely capable militaries and civilian elites sanguine about the use of force places this article in good company in a subset of literature that considers how some civilian-led regimes may be particularly conflict-prone.[2] This strain in the literature provides some welcome nuance to the civilian/militarist dichotomy that is prominent in much of the international relations literature on regime-type and conflict. Given the implication from Beehner's argument that in some ways states where the military has a major role in policy-making exhibit more pacific behavior, however, I would have liked to see more engagement with the recent IR literature on the conflict propensity of military regimes and leaders with military backgrounds.[3] In some ways, Beehner's argument stands in contrast to work that argues that military regimes tend to be more aggressive in foreign policy.

The second key contribution is the Punitive/Permissive typology of hot pursuit. The idea that for a subset of states, hot pursuit into another state is more of an issue of cooperation and coordination rather than conflict and escalation is compelling and contributes more broadly to the literature on sovereignty practices in international relations.[4] Beehner argues that in some cases, strict concepts of state sovereignty are

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[2] See, e.g., Uri Ben-Eliezer, "Rethinking the Civil-Military Relations Paradigm: The Inverse Relation between Militarism and Praetorianism through the Example of Israel," *Comparative Political Studies* 30:3 (June 1997); Jonathan D. Caverly, *Democratic Militarism: Voting, Wealth, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[3] Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Brian Lai and Dan Slater, "Institutions of the Offensive: Domestic Sources of Dispute Initiation in Authoritarian Regimes, 1950-1992," *American Journal of Political Science* 50:1 (January 2006): 113-126; Jessica Weeks, *Dictators at War and Peace* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

[4] Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

impediments to resolving mutual security issues regarding non-state actors, and in such cases, states may suspend sovereignty and "pool" security in the interest of addressing the non-state actors. This may manifest itself in, for example, "a delineated buffer zone or cordon sanitaire, whereby militaries on both sides of a border are permitted to temporally violate the other state's sovereignty" (14).

Beehner is also to be commended for the fact that the theory-building is very well-grounded in examples as varied as the US, India, Greece, Israel, Soviet Union, Morocco (see especially 13 and 16). Even before readers arrive at the case studies, they are introduced to a range of historical and contemporary examples that illustrate the mechanisms of the theory. Such detail not only adds clarity to the theory (and makes for good reading), it adds to readers' confidence that the author has identified an important phenomena and is building generalizable theory.

As with any article that tackles a substantive and complex topic, there are questions and areas for potential improvement in future projects that may stem it. The author is to be commended for seeking to address so many aspects of hot pursuit: civil-military relations, threat environment, and sovereignty. Yet, at times, the end result is the feeling that there are two articles packed into one. To me, the discussion of civil-military relations and that of the "international relations of hot pursuit" read as two distinct topics that might have been explored in-depth in separate articles. The combining of the two in this article leads to a proliferation of multiple (implied) hypotheses that are difficult to keep track of when reading the detailed case studies.

 Related to this is the role that threat environment plays in the argument. The discussion of threat environment draws on Michael Desch's[5] theory of threat environment and civilian control of the military, where higher levels of external threats are generally associated with greater civilian control of the military and high internal threats with less civilian control and a stronger military role in government. The author makes the connection between threat-environment, civil-military relations, and hot pursuit practices, arguing that that a high external/low internal threat environment is associated with greater civilian control and "less hot pursuit overall, yet pursuit is carried out for punitive reasons" (9-10).[6] This additional emphasis on threat environment has the potential unintended consequence of reducing civil-military relations to an intermediate process in between threat environment and hot pursuit practices. If so, is the main independent variable really civil-military relations, or is it threat environment? The discussion of threat environment, while interesting and well-grounded in the literature, seems to add an unnecessary layer to the theory that also contributes to the proliferation of (implied) hypotheses that have to be keep in their mind when evaluating the evidence.

Essentially the main critique here—that there is 'a lot going on' in the article—stems from a major strength of the work: that the author has uncovered some very compelling patterns in international relations and has worked exhaustively to uncover the mechanisms and the multiple factors that contribute to hot pursuit. In total, this is a compelling and fascinating article, but it may be the kernel of a much broader project—well-suited to a book or a multi-article research agenda—which I hope the author will consider pursuing.

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[5] Michael Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

[6] Beehner argues that hot pursuit is permissive, in contrast, in a low external/high internal threat environment—where the military's role is greater. A "high-high" threat environment is associated with reduced hot pursuit overall, and a low-low threat environment sees greater civilian rule and more punitive hot pursuit.

In terms of some more minor critiques, I would take slight issue with the author's statement that "States essentially face two options when combating non-state actors across borders: Pursue the actors with direct force or outsource the use of force to other armed actors--local militias, proxy forces, or another state's military..." (6). It is arguable that there are at least two other options available to a state: do nothing, or pursue diplomatic channels, sanctions, etc. I would have liked to see the author pay at least cursory attention to this possibility. Further, the discussion of why militaries will be less sanguine about the use of military force in "peripheral" or "constabulary" actions reflects a strong understanding of the existing literature on military attitudes regarding the use of force. However, as such it suffers from a weakness inherent in this literature— that it draws disproportionately on work on the attitudes of American military officers in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This issue in the literature is not the author's responsibility—and reflects the inherent difficulty facing civil-military relations research in gathering detailed evidence on the attitudes of military officers across a broad range of countries and political contexts—but I would have welcomed an argument of how the findings of this literature are relevant to non-U.S. cases, given the author's objective of generating generalizable theory.

Aside from these critiques, Beehner's article presents a strong argument with detailed and compelling evidence, and I will end by suggesting possible extensions of this work: Beehner's approach is primarily qualitative—though there is some descriptive discussion of new data on hot pursuits from 1975-2009. Future quantitative work could combine Beehner's dataset with existing data on threat environment, regime-type, and civil-military relations to provide tests of the many hypotheses that can be generated from the rich theory in this article. Are states with more challenging external or internal threat environments more likely to engage in hot pursuit, and if so, what type? What civil-military arrangements in executives and other decision-making bodies are associated with greater propensity to engage in hot pursuit and to practice its punitive or permissive varieties? Recent innovations in data collection on regime type and the role of militaries in government and politics would allow for additional tests to address these questions.[7]

A potential theoretical extension would be an explicitly dyadic theory of civil-military relations and hot pursuit. Beehner's theory is largely monadic, considering the domestic politics and threat environment of "State A" in a hot pursuit interaction. However, if we explicitly consider Beehner's "State B" (the state hosting the non-state actor), then we can form hypotheses about what dyads are most likely to see Punitive or Permissive hot pursuit. The theory here suggests that dyads where both sides have relatively autonomous militaries are more likely to form strong military-to-military ties that will facilitate permissive hot pursuit. Civilian-dominated dyads will be more likely to see punitive hot pursuit. Mixed dyads may present a mixed pattern of punitive and permissive hot pursuit.

In "Means of First Resort: Explaining 'Hot Pursuit' in International Relations," Beehner tackles and under-explored topic in international relations, presenting a detailed and compelling theory for variation in hot pursuit practices. While in some ways, this article is a little 'crowded' with multiple mechanisms, causal chains, and hypotheses—this reflects a strength of the article, its detail, and its sophisticated consideration of

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[7]Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set," *Perspectives on Politics* 12.2 (June 2014): 313-331; Peter White, "Crises and Crisis Generations: The Long-term Impact of International Crises on Military Political Participation, *Security Studies* 26:4 (July 2017): 575-605.

an under-explored topic. This article should be a first step in further research that can explore, unpack, and test the drivers of hot pursuit in international relations.

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