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# Winning The War On War: The Decline Of Armed Conflict Worldwide

"The greatest untold story of the past two decades."—STEVEN PINKER

## WINNING THE WAR N WAR

THE DECLINE OF ARMED CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

JOSHUA S. GOLDSTEIN



## Synopsis

Everyone knows: wars are getting worse, more civilians are dying, and peacemaking achieves nothing, right? Wrong. Despite all the bad-news headlines, peacekeeping is working. Fewer wars are starting, more are ending, and those that remain are smaller and more localized. But peace doesn't just happen; it needs to be put into effect. Moreover, understanding the global decline in armed conflict is crucial as America shifts to an era of lower military budgets and operations. Preeminent scholar of international relations, Joshua Goldstein, definitively illustrates how decades of effort by humanitarian aid agencies, popular movements—and especially the United Nations—have made a measureable difference in reducing violence in our times. Goldstein shows how we can continue building on these inspiring achievements to keep winning the war on war. This updated and revised edition includes more information on a post-9-11 world, and is a perfect compendium for those wishing to learn more about the United States' armed conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

## Book Information

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Every day, we turn on the news, and the world seems to be getting more and more violent. In his new book, *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide*, Joshua S. Goldstein argues that, contrary to popular belief, armed conflict is actually decreasing around the world. The central theme of *Winning the War on War* is the role that the UN and its peacekeeping missions plays in this decline. Goldstein first reviews the trends in war since 1945. In spite of an upswing in civil war in the early 1990s, there has been actually been a significant decline in both the number of wars and war-related deaths in the post-Cold War era. There were 1.5 million deaths in the Vietnam war, compared with 55,000 deaths during the Salvadoran civil war. Also missing are the large-scale, violent interstate wars, which have virtually disappeared from the world stage. Although Goldstein acknowledges there are a variety of possible explanations for the decline in violent conflict, he attributes a large part of it to the development of the international community, specifically the UN and peacekeeping. While he admits that there are still many inadequacies in the UN's structure and ability to make policy, he places strong emphasis on its abilities to change war-making into peace-building. The second section of the book analyzes several stages of peacekeeping—from the early years when the invention of peacekeeping was still new to more recent missions and the improvements that have been made. Goldstein pays careful attention to the failures and successes in peacekeeping in the early 1990s, and argues that the UN has learned from its mistakes, allowing it to function more effectively in the realm of peacekeeping.

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