PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS: SHOULD THE U.S. MILITARY CONDUCT OPERATIONS IN WEST AFRICA TO SUPPORT STABILITY?

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by

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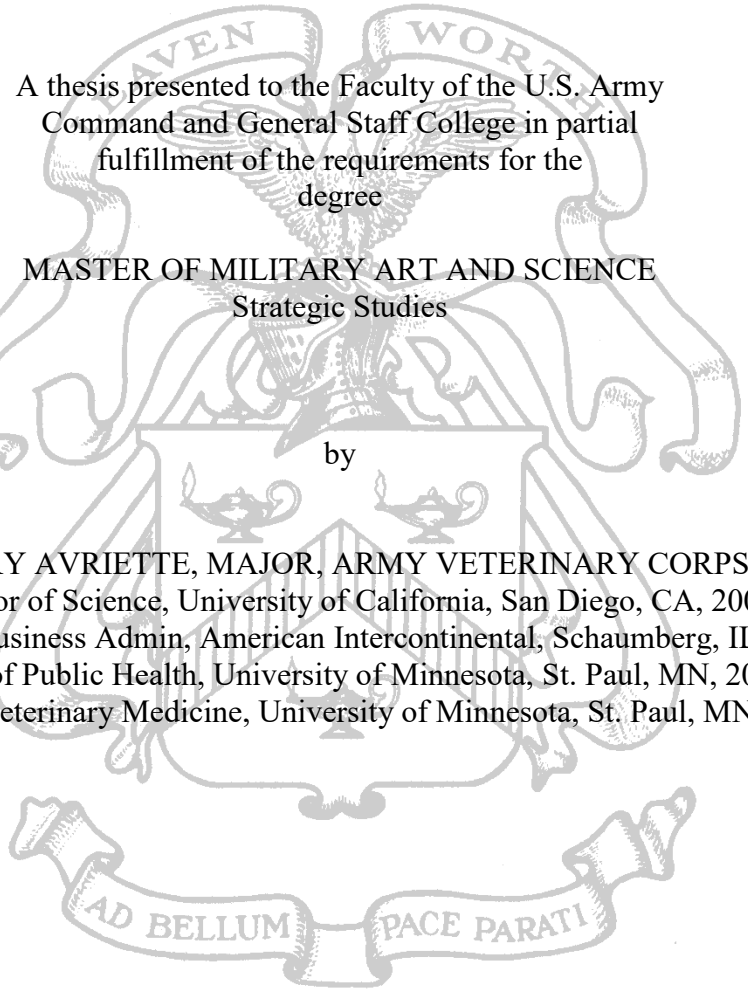

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The U.S. Department of Defense conducts stability operations as part of a whole-of-government approach to minimize and eliminate economic and political instabilty world-wide. Though many of these operations are conducted in post-conflict regions, others are conducted "to the left of boom," during phase 0 shaping operations. Due to the controversy about what causes conflict, there is understandable debate whether DoD-led stability operations can actually increase long-term stability in a region. This paper examines what is known about causes of conflict, and how that can inform DoD-led stability operations and consolidation operations. It then answers the questions if and how the US should conduct operations to support stability in West Africa.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS: SHOULD THE U.S. MILITARY CONDUCT OPERATIONS IN WEST AFRICA TO SUPPORT STABILITY? by MAJ Mary Avriette, 90 pages.

The U.S. Department of Defense conducts stability operations as part of a whole-of-government approach to minimize and eliminate economic and political instabilty world-wide. Though many of these operations are conducted in post-conflict regions, others are conducted "to the left of boom," during phase 0 shaping operations. Due to the controversy about what causes conflict, there is understandable debate whether DoD-led stability operations can actually increase long-term stability in a region. This paper examines what is known about causes of conflict, and how that can inform DoD-led stability operations and consolidation operations. It then answers the questions if and how the US should conduct operations to support stability in West Africa.

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ACRONYMS

AAR	After Action Report
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AOR	Area of Responsibility
CMO	Civil-Military Operations
CPOC	Characteristics Predictive of Conflict
DoD	Department of Defense
FHA	Foreign Humanitarian Aid
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HN	Host Nation
ICRG	International Country Risk Guide
IMF	International Monetary Funds
IPI	Indigenous populations and institutions
JP	Joint Publication
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
SFAB	Security Force Assistance Brigade
SOF	Special Operations Forces
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VETCAP	Veterinary Civil Action Program
WGI	World Bank Worldwide Governance Index

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

> In other words, the military does not have a rigorous way of determining if the vaccination of goats in Djibouti by U.S. Army veterinarians . . . actually makes America safer in very specific ways . . . To my knowledge, no comprehensive, global assessment exists of the development impact of the Defense Departments' foreign assistance activities in the field. There are examples to suggest both the positive and the negative effects of these programs.
>
> —U.S. Congress, House, *Testimony of Dr. Reuben E. Brigety II to the US House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs*

Historians and political scientists alike have examined conflicts ranging from insurgencies to world wars, trying to identify root causes of conflict for decades. To be frank, much of the discourse has been ironically combative. Over the last twenty years, economists have joined the fray, using quantitative methods and aggregative data regarding the so-called causes of conflict. Why "so-called?" Trying to irrefutably prove what caused an insurgency to erupt is often a fool's errand; the causes are not only multitudinous, but inter-related, and thus which cause is most to blame becomes debatable. Through the rock tumbler of Hegelian dialectic, a rough academic consensus has formed regarding so-called causes of conflict. However, lacking hard answers, the military professional is often left with few evidence-based methods with which to evaluate burgeoning hotspots.

Fortunately, if many insurgencies are examined in aggregate, patterns begin to emerge in the hard data from which to derive evidence-based guidance. Nations which experience conflict often have common characteristics present years prior the conflict. Studying these characteristic patterns, economists have determined which are most

correlated with future conflict, and even determined the probability of future conflict once the characteristics are present. Both lend evidence-based guides for the military professional to anticipate where insurgencies are more likely to gain traction. Herein, characteristics predictive of conflict (CPOC) are discussed for what guidance they may offer the military commander.

Ironically, military commanders are often charged with preventing, not fighting in, a conflict. Stability operations are those operations which a military commander conducts in support of an overarching United States Government (USG) strategy to minimize or eliminate economic and political instability and other drivers of violent conflict (JCS 2016, ix). These operations may take place across the conflict continuum: prior to war, immediately following hostilities, or as seen in both Iraq and Afghanistan, even simultaneously with fighting. Military commanders engaged in stability operations are often tasked with preventing insurgencies from reaching or returning to a point of overt war. Stability operations during a joint operation typically require the expertise of civil affairs and support of other USG departments or agencies. However, where there is no alternative competent lead organization, the military commander must be prepared to plan and conduct stabilization efforts until transition to another authority is possible (JCS 2016, x). As a result, military professionals must understand key drivers of conflict to be prepared to conduct stability operations.

This thesis presents four CPOCs with the strongest evidence of predicting conflict, then discusses the implications to the military commander or stability operations professional. There are two major recommendations: (1) monitor countries of interest for development of CPOCs over time to predict insurgency; and (2) focus stability operations

at affecting CPOCs. Conducting engagements for "hearts and minds" does not have any evidence of efficacy; likewise, engagements conducted solely for "access and influence" may be counter-productive to long-term stability if not conducted to impact CPOCs. CPOCs are proven to precede conflict; it is logical therefore that engagements which effect CPOCs may prevent conflict, though data is not yet available for all CPOCs.

The casual reader might question if examining CPOCs derived from civil war eruption rates can inform the modern military commander. The civil war definition used here includes insurgencies which become significant enough to threaten the sovereignty of the state. As a result, examining patterns of CPOCs derived from civil wars is very instructive to modern practitioners of counter-insurgency. Additionally, the last seventeen years in Afghanistan and Iraq are both examples of counter-insurgency, within a world-wide trend of increasing civil war precedence. Hence, a fluent understanding in CPOCs is useful to the now and future commander.

Primary Research Question

This thesis examines the primary research question, "Should the U.S. military conduct operations in West Africa to support stability?" The approach applied to answering this question is first, what contributes to conflict (chapter 2), followed quickly by, can DoD impact these factors (chapter 4)?

Having the wonderful opportunity to work with Civil Affairs for three years, in six different countries, it was not clear to me whether our well-intended, and carefully planned engagements had any long-term effects. Furthermore, I was not sure any other organization had more success. Being particularly interested in the African continent, I enrolled in the West African Strategic Studies program at Command and General Staff

College and set to work to ask and answer my own question with as much academic rigor as possible.

Getting it right is important. Not only has America recently experienced the effects of allowing radical groups to foment in ungoverned spaces, but the scope of DoD's stability operations is significant; a return on this investment should be equally large. $6.2 billion in foreign assistance funds were granted to DoD in 2016 (DoD 2018). DoD tends to work towards short-term security goals, not long-term development policy; this raises the concern that funds routed through the DoD may be inefficiently used, or at worst, at cross-purposes with other USG agencies' efforts.

Secondary Research Questions

To support stability, one must know what causes stability; unfortunately, it is complex. Using an indirect approach, this thesis examines consistent precursors to conflict. By examining large numbers of countries, patterns begin to emerge between pre-existing characteristics, and subsequent conflict. "What factors predict conflict," is followed closely by, "Are these factors applicable to West Africa?" While there is no guarantee that these characteristics predictive of conflict (CPOC) necessarily cause conflict themselves, they are conclusively correlated with onset of subsequent conflict. For the individual interested in preventing conflict, they become focal points for intervention.

After examining CPOCs, the discussion turns to, "Is it reasonable to expect military stability operations to impact these conflict factors?" The concluding chapter then turns to "which types of operations would be expected to be the most effective," and gives evidence-based recommendations to the military professional.

Conflict has been studied for as long as it has existed. Unfortunately, there is much fighting over what causes conflict; most people think they already know what causes conflict, and thus spend much time justifying these *a priori* theories rather than empirically examining evidence. Much historical literature features a researcher picking one cause from multiple contributing causes of a civil war case study, then proceeding to overgeneralize about causes of all civil wars:

> Most people think that they already know the root causes of civil war. Those on the political right tend to assume that it is due to longstanding ethnic and religious hatreds, those in the political center tend to assume that it is due to a lack of democracy, . . . and those on the political left tend to assume that it is due to economic inequalities or to a deep-rooted legacy of colonialism. None of these explanations sits comfortably with the statistical evidence. Empirically, the most striking pattern is that civil war is heavily concentrated in the poorest countries. (Collier, Elliott, Hegre, Hoeffler, Reynal-Querol, and Sambanis, 2003, 53)

To avoid similar anchoring error about the drivers of conflict, this paper examines studies of large numbers of conflicts, and tries to discern underlying patterns with objective data. Statistics confer a large advantage to avoid cognitive biases and protect from anchoring and confirmation bias; with careful methodology, underlying patterns become apparent, often to the surprise of the researcher. To avoid retrospective equivocation about the results, standardized data sets and definitions herein ensure clarity and consistency.

International data sets are used to record the onset of large scale violence annually; many of these data sets are quite lengthy. The typical database has an annual panel for approximately 160 countries, with an average of 35 to 45 observations per country, approximately 5,000 - 7,000 data points (Fearon 2010, 5). Analyzing these data together, patterns begin to emerge from the aggregate. The current academic understanding of what drives conflict is presented in Chapter 2. For now, suffice it to say

that in the study of conflict, statistical analysis helps to avoid unintentional researcher bias in picking one "cause" above others, and helps identify inter-related factors. Furthermore, statistical analysis can quantify effects of many variables, and can disprove anecdotal theories.

First, clarification is necessary regarding the terms stability and conflict. Clearly these terms can be used to describe either political or military stability, which are quite different concepts, and are likely subject to different causes. To determine predictors of conflict herein military stability is used due to interest in improving DoD operations. Furthermore, military conflict can refer to either *intra*state war (civil war, insurgencies) or *inter*state war (cross-border). Because violence caused by a neighboring state's offensive military attack has exogenous drivers, interstate conflict is excluded from consideration, and instead intrastate conflict is the focus. Lastly, the term "intrastate conflict" contains four types of violence: (1) one-sided state violence including genocides, (2) state versus non-state violence including insurgencies, (3) organized societal violence including organized violent crime, and (4) spontaneous societal violence such as riots and opportunistic crime (Watts, Kavanagh, Frederick, Norlen, O'Mahony, Voorhies, and Szayna 2017, 129). Once again, it is necessary to simplify which types of conflict to include; insurgencies are the only relevant type of violence to this discussion. Organized societal violence and organized violent crime does not generally cause the demise of the state, and thus is not germane to this discussion of military stability. Civil war also makes a convenient phenomenon to study due to (1) its ability to be identified when present and (2) long historical records cataloging civil war onset and duration. Thus, herein stability is examined by using civil war as the case definition of conflict.

One last clarification is necessary. Here, "civil war" is used with the conventional academic definition: an identifiable rebel organization challenging the government and the violence results in more than 1,000 combat-related deaths (Collier et al. 2003, 54). Using standard definitions ensures that the outbreak of civil war is recorded accurately, prevents the mis-categorization of similar events, and facilitates finding patterns in the data. In this discussion, this standard definition of civil war is constant, to ensure patterns in stability and conflict can be determined readily. It is important to realize at this juncture that major insurgencies are included in this definition of civil war, and when the term insurgency is used in this paper, the civil war standard definition is implied.

Counterarguments

Some may argue that an insurrection against a standing government might be, at least in part, characterized as a political act, and thus analyzing civil war onset may only elucidate patterns in political motives. Political grievances against the state are indeed very common in rebel rhetoric, however, it must also be noted that similar grievances occur in every state worldwide. What is it then, which causes a rebel movement to change from a political organization to an army? Most political movements organize rallies, marches, or other political protest actions. Only a rare few of these movements train, organize and equip an army to fight, at which point they must be characterized primarily as militias or private armies.

In most circumstances, funding and supplying a rebel army is dangerous to the leaders and remarkably financially difficult; it is thus exceedingly likely that the feasibility of finances contributes to rebellion occurrence. Raising the funding for a private army is no small undertaking. For example, the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka were

estimated to spend between $200 million and $350 million per year in insurgent activity (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009, 5). This huge sum of money necessary to furnish a rebel army can be a substantial barrier to starting an insurrection. By comparison, the political opposition party in Britain spends only one ten-thousandth of that amount annually. The activity required to fund and furnish a rebel army is more like a large warfare enterprise, and much less like a political rally movement. Thus, studying insurrections will shed light on drivers of violent conflict, not simply political grievance.

So, while political grievances against the state are widespread, the formation of an insurgent force is a militant act and represents taking advantage of an opportunity in a militarily unstable environment. In no way can it be supported that political grievances are necessary and sufficient to cause insurrections. In fact, most common political grievances, such as inequality, political rights, ethnic polarization and religious fractionalization show no relationship with the onset of civil war whatsoever (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 588). While political explanations are common in sociopolitical explanations of rebellion, objective evidence shows no relationship. It is very possible that political environment effects are too difficult to measure reliably, and thus their effects difficult to discern. For the interested reader, there is a lengthier discussion regarding political repression and insurgency presented in chapter 2.

Also in chapter 2, a lengthy literature review presents the global patterns of conflict, as discerned by aggregated data, using the standardized definitions above. These patterns can then be assembled into models, which have highly accurate predictive power for conflict. The discussion then turns to West Africa and evaluates whether the patterns found globally also apply specifically to this region.

Having discerned the underlying factors contributing to conflict, this discussion turns to the capacity of DoD operations to affect these key factors. Another literature review is presented, focused on the abilities, limitations, and typical utilization of stability operations. Can a force, trained and equipped to fight and win the nation's wars also support stability?

A comparison of the two literature reviews evaluates whether it is reasonable to expect DoD stability operations to affect characteristics predictive of conflict (CPOC), and thereby potentially decrease future conflict. A detailed discussion of which types of stability engagements are most likely to be effective follows, with recommendations to the military commander.

Assumptions

It is often exceedingly difficult to know for certain what precisely caused a specific conflict, and which factors merely contributed, in which proportions. However, in studying large aggregated data, patterns emerge which link certain factors more closely to the outbreak of conflict than other factors. With statistics, it is possible to measure how closely each factor is related to the outbreak of conflict. This is not to say that any one factor caused any specific conflict. Instead, it is more useful to view these characteristics as predictive of conflict. More information is in Chapter 2 regarding so-called causes of conflict. For now, it is assumed that it is identifiable what factors predict conflict by using this method.

It is imperative to determine key factors in this way; to do otherwise is to arbitrarily pick one narrative above others. Even well-researched papers which illustrate convincing narratives of a conflict are subject to confirmation bias, anchoring, and other

cognitive biases, subconscious or otherwise. Often, these narratives cannot be generalized to other conflicts, and thus do not illuminate global patterns in conflict. By starting in the aggregate, all key factors identified are by definition, generalizable. Additionally, by using statistical methods, researchers are more protected from subconscious bias. It is assumed herein that using such methods are the best possible method to determine global patterns of conflict development.

Definitions and Terms

Civil war is used with the conventional academic definition: an identifiable rebel organization challenges the government and the resulting violence results in more than 1,000 combat-related deaths. It is important to understand this includes most insurgencies, and the terms insurgency or rebellion is used here only when it meets the civil war definition.

Stability is used to describe the likelihood that a country will not succumb to civil war, a form of intrastate conflict. Other forms of intrastate conflict are not included: riots, drug-related violence, or genocides committed by the state. Conflict of political parties or other forms of state conflict are not included. A longer discussion is included in the "secondary research question" section.

Country, State, and Nation are used interchangeably. All are used to refer to a collection of people who collectively have sovereignty.

Significant is used with the statistical definition. Significant results are those which did not happen purely by chance, e.g.: such results indicate an undeniable, non-random linkage between the variable being tested and the outcome. The nature of this

relationship (correlation or causation), however, must be determined using further testing and analysis.

Limitations and Delimitations

This thesis is delimited to discussing the etiologic factors of civil wars and insurgencies. It does not examine factors of other types of conflict and is thus not applicable to other forms of conflict, such as interstate war. The key factors discussed are not meant to be all-encompassing, and further study may reveal new factors with strong correlation to conflict onset. However, the discussion is meant to be complete to date, considering reputable sources from all disciplines with respect to civil war. Conflicting results between studies have been adjudicated, and results which have not been replicated in time have not been included. No material published after December 31, 2017 is included, except for websites which were accessed during writing.

It is regrettable that only papers published in English were included. The effect of this delimitation is unknown, though it is plausible that diverse cultures, present alternative conflict theories in different languages.

Chapter Conclusion

The U.S. Department of Defense spends $6.2 billion annually in activities to increase stability in nations of strategic interest (DoD 2018). It is far from clear whether these activities achieve the DoD's goal of stability. This paper examines what is known about causes of conflict, the current scope of DoD activities, and whether it is reasonable to expect that DoD's stability operations impact long-term stability objectives.

It is important to note here that none of this discussion is meant to indicate that any key factors are "necessary and sufficient" to cause civil war. The statistical analysis conducted in the source material show a non-random linkage between the factors and civil war onset, and often a very strong relationship. However, this linkage cannot be construed to be causal in the way that germ theory shows *bacillus anthracis* causes anthrax. The factors are linked to the onset of civil war, and to each other, in complicated ways, which will be better understood with further study.

It is logical to conclude that if these factors affect future conflict, that future conflict may be affected by altering these factors. However, this theory is merely a possibility, and far from certain. Wars and insurgencies have many contributing factors and altering only one may be insufficient to deter conflict. Doing so, however, is more plausible than attempting to deter future conflict by altering a factor shown to have no relationship to the onset of insurgency. Similarly, by effecting multiple factors simultaneously, perhaps the likelihood of future conflict is reduced. This paper is focused on examining the possibility that DoD-led stability operations might affect any of the key predictive factors of conflict, and thereby possibly deter conflict, supporting stability in West Africa.

The next chapter provides a thorough examination of the current theories of conflict. A robust effort has been made to include theories from multiple schools of thought, and to deconflict theories which contradict each other. The result is presented to be an academic consensus on patterns of conflict. It is meant to be inclusive, and many notes are added to discuss possible factors which may contribute to conflict, but for which no predictable relationship has been deciphered yet.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> To understand the operational environment, the joint force must understand both the root causes and immediate drivers of instability. The root causes refer to the deep structural features of the host nation that contribute to its vulnerability... These often include a mix of cultural, demographic, sociological, economic, geographic, and/or political factors. The root causes give rise to the more immediate drivers of instability: the opportunity, motive, and means for violence . . . The commander should develop an understanding of the drivers of societal conflict and be an advocate for those development activities that best address the causes of local instability.
>
> —Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability*

Chapter Introduction

To answer the question, "Should the U.S. military be engaged in operations in West Africa to support stability," the thesis must first address two fundamental questions:

1. What are the key predictive factors of conflict?
2. Are these key factors applicable to West Africa?

The causes of conflict have been extensively studied for all modern history, usually with equivocal results. Trying to determine which factor, of many, caused any conflict to "boil over" into war is futile; it quickly devolves into *ex-post facto* justification for one reason above others, with little hard evidence.

Within the last twenty years, economists began to use statistical modelling to test hypotheses objectively and reach mathematical conclusions about country characteristics which were predictive of future conflict. This was a radical departure from using social theory and *ex-post facto* justification to predict future conflict. Over several decades of testing and refining theories, economists developed strong and repeatable results which

conclusively showed relationships between certain existing characteristics and subsequent war within a given time.

They proved an indirect, aggregative approach is more productive when searching for causes of conflict: scholars examine many countries for patterns of conflict development. They examine and catalog countries' characteristics regarding racial characteristics, socioeconomic divides, governance structure, and many, many other traits. The countries are then evaluated annually to determine whether war occurred. Over time and many data sets, patterns emerge which can accurately predict which countries will experience conflict. By this method, pre-existing conditions correlate with later conflict, a keen set of insights for the military planner.

It is important to understand that the characteristics may – or may not – contribute directly to the subsequent conflict; they are not proven to cause conflict, only to predict conflict. Examining characteristics predictive of conflict (CPOC) against which countries experienced war subsequently allows us to understand common patterns and themes in the evolution of conflict. Some CPOCs may eventually be shown to have direct causal relationships with conflict, but at this time the data simply indicates a strong correlative relationship.

To further understand what this relationship means, it may be helpful to think of conflict not as a Boolean variable (a light switch with two settings), but instead as a spectrum: highly stable countries are at one end of the spectrum, and countries with a high likelihood of future conflict at the other end. One can imagine that counties which are highly stable have many shared characteristics. It is possible that countries which fall into war may also have a set of common characteristics. CPOCs are identifiable

characteristics which indicate the country belongs closer to the conflict-likely terminus of the stable-unstable spectrum (see figure 1 below).

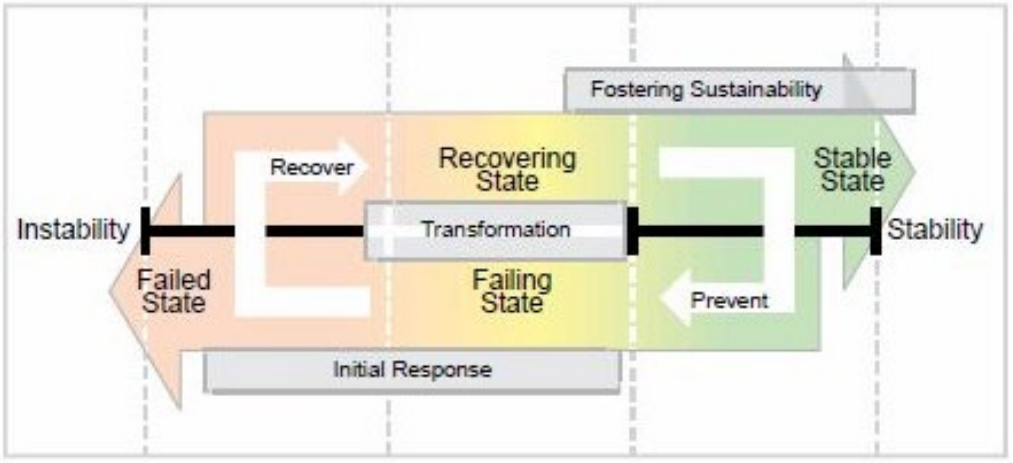

Figure 1. The Stabilization Framework

Source: Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2016), I-24.

By examining many nations' path from stability to conflict, characteristics predictive of conflict (CPOC) can be identified. For each CPOC gained, there is a discrete increase in likelihood of subsequent conflict. As the likelihood of conflict increases, the state moves above from the stable right to the unstable left. It is logical, but unproven, that projects which impact CPOCs can prevent conflict.

How definitive are these relationships between CPOCs and conflict? It is definitively conclusive, mathematically speaking, that countries with certain pre-existing characteristics are likely to experience conflict within the next five years; some of these relationships are remarkably strong. It is important to remember at this point these key

predictive factors are not necessarily causative for the subsequent conflict. They are not infallible; sometimes nations defy the odds. Yet, CPOCs are the most useful information available for the military commander who may be concerned about the stability of a country, and who might want reliable methods to evaluate how concerned to be.

The application of these CPOCs is also nuanced. If these factors are so highly correlated with future onset of civil war, it is logical, though not definitive, that changing any of these characteristics may change the likelihood of future conflict. The possibility is examined in chapter 4.

As for this chapter, the academic consensus on CPOCs is presented, and then the discussion turns to how these CPOCs apply to the patterns of conflict in West Africa. This chapter serves as a summary of the existing literature regarding predictors of conflict, with special attention to those relating to West Africa.

First, clarification is necessary regarding the terms stability and conflict, and which types of conflict this discussion includes and excludes. This can be found in chapter 1. In brief, all data has been delimited to CPOCs related to civil war, as defined previously. Wars of other origins may have different CPOCs, and it is important not to over-extend the findings presented here.

Ironically, despite using similar approaches and methods, academic articles are not known for consensus. Herein, every effort is made to examine the literature for what consensus exists and mention some interesting points where debate remains. Even where multiple methods have brought consensus to a single CPOC, magnitude of the effect may remain debated within esoteric academic circles (Szayna, O'Mahony, Kavanagh, Watts, Frederick, Norlen, and Voorhies 2017, 113). What follows below is a discussion of the

current academic understanding of key factors which predict future conflict, followed by a discussion of whether these causes apply to West Africa. Chapter 4 then turns to whether military operations can be reasonably expected to effect CPOCs and thereby potentiate stability in a region such as West Africa.

Characteristics Predictive of Conflict (CPOC)

It is important to diverge somewhat at this point to discuss causality in depth. Clearly, most insurgencies and rebellions take place due to a multitude of contributing factors. Many well-researched papers and historical accounts exist which discuss "all" the nuances of a given conflict. These studies usually carefully review first-hand accounts and discuss nuances to be learned from the conflict, often in great detail. However, first-hand accounts are prone to confirmation bias, and the researchers' subconscious bias; just because the common narrative regarding a conflict points to a cause, does not mean that cause is correct. Pinpointing a factor or factors which "caused" the rebellion is futile, though numerous such case studies exist, particularly within the political science literature. To be plain, there is no way to definitively prove one cause over another in a singular conflict. However, anecdotal theories of causality can be debunked with aggregation.

For example, a patient may present to a doctor, complaining of vomiting and diarrhea, and blame his symptoms on the chicken salad lunch eaten an hour prior. Who knows more about that patient's symptoms than the patient? Surely, his first-hand account is correct? However, a physician educated in disease patterns (themselves derived from statistical study) might prove conclusively that rather the patient is succumbing to norovirus from his cruise ship vacation two days ago.

Similarly, first-hand anecdotal theories abound about the cause of civil wars; often the authors subscribe to anthropologic narratives which are not borne out by data. Commonly, ethnic tensions are blamed. Ethnic tensions exist in every country on earth, but (thankfully) civil war does not erupt with similar prevalence. If ethnic tension was the cause of civil war, every country would have a civil war every year, which clearly does not happen. Surely there are better explanations for which countries suffer from conflict. Such defensible explanations are found only by examining large collections of conflicts and looking for underlying patterns.

Sometimes the underlying pattern may only illustrate a correlation. It should not be summarily dismissed due to this distinction; correlations can be illuminating. For example, studying patterns of disease begins to inform us of underlying causes. If many similar patients are examined, patterns begin to emerge. The cholera epidemic of 1854 London was stopped by a doctor who mapped the homes of all known cholera patients. Examining the clustered pattern made on the map, he hypothesized that the Broad Street water pump had something to do with the outbreak. He destroyed the pump, which halted the epidemic! The doctor's hunch, thirty years before the cause of cholera was identified, saved lives based on correlation. At the time, prevailing medical theory postulated that cholera was due to foul miasmas, but after his work showed cholera was correlated with water sources, research was able to isolate the causative organism from the water, *vibrio cholerae*. Eventually, scientists showed how to prevent and treat cholera infections; today most developed nations do not suffer from cholera. Progress is made by moving from correlation to causation.

Similarly, by examining large numbers of conflicts, patterns emerge in the onset of civil war. By studying these patterns, academics learn more about root causes of conflict. While CPOCs are not likely to identify factors, which will meet the "necessary and sufficient" label that is used in germ theory, learning more about underlying factors contributing to conflict is beneficial to those who wish to reduce it. To be clear, none of this discussion is meant to explain completely and fully the causes of conflict. This discussion focuses on the characteristics of states which statistically predicate civil war. It is the sincere hope that by such study, operations meant to stabilize countries might attain more success. With full understanding of the limits of knowledge, the discussion now turns to what is known about CPOCs.

In 1998, using data in aggregate from 161 nations gathered over 40 years, researchers from Oxford produced a seminal work evaluating the causes of civil war, and described the so-called Collier-Hoeffler model, which first determined statistically defensible predictors of conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 1998). The Collier-Hoeffler model calculated the likelihood of civil war eruption for a given country over a five-year period, based on key predictive factors. The years following the seminal work of Collier and Hoeffler ignited raucous controversy in political science, sociology, and economics academic circles; flurries of papers were published, each trying to disprove the findings of the previous paper. The following are the most salient literature articles to the discussion at hand: what are the key predictive factors of civil war?

The Collier-Hoeffler model was founded on the principle that the likelihood of civil war was a business-like function of three variables: the probability of winning, the gains from winning, versus the costs of rebellion. Publishing this model for the first time

in 1998, they concluded that the four most potent factors predicting civil war incidence were: per capita income, presence of natural resource endowments, size of population, and ethnic heterogeneity of the population (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 9).[1] Despite the age of the Collier-Hoeffler model, it is important to not discount its findings; they certainly capture relevant aspects of conflict. Using their model, a theoretical country with the most favorable of each of their four identified stability factors would have a probability of civil war of one in a million over the next 32 years. Alternatively, were a country to be so unfortunate to have the least favorable situation with each factor, the country would have a 99 per cent probability of a civil war erupting in the same time frame.

Clearly their model holds insight into causes of conflict; its factors can account for a million-fold probability variation. However, the completely economic angle of the study appears to lack empathy; most civil wars appear to occur for social and political reasons, not merely economic ones. Surely civil wars cannot be described simply as a money-grab or profiteering, they must have some sort of political grievance at their core?

Unfortunately, ethnic antagonisms and political grievances prove very poor predictors of when civil war will erupt; however, economic factors such as per capita

[1] They found that the higher the per capita income, the higher the cost to recruit rebels, and the lower the risk for civil war. Initially, increased natural resources increase the likelihood of war; understandably, it increases the gains from victory. However, at very high endowment levels, a reduced risk of civil war is found, likely due to an enhanced financial capacity of the government to defend itself. The size of the population also increases the payoff from victory (the size of population is proportional to the future tax base), and thus increases the likelihood of civil war onset. Collier and Hoeffler found that ethnic heterogeneity had a non-linear relationship with civil war onset: very highly fractionalized societies had the lowest likelihood of civil war, while societies evenly divided between two factions had the highest likelihood of civil wars.

income and availability of financing remain robustly related to eruptions of civil war (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 88). In fact, researchers at Oxford and Cambridge were so bold as to state, "our results substantiate the 'feasibility hypothesis' that where civil war is feasible it will occur without reference to motivation," (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009, 5). Many economic studies reach conclusions about economic predictors of civil war, and indeed their studies are compelling.

However, many studies followed the Collier-Hoeffler; each posited, tested, and refined theories in Hegelian fashion. The academic furor following the 1998 Collier-Hoeffler paper took sides regarding the causes of civil wars, and came to be known under the moniker, greed or grievance: one side arguing in support of the feasibility hypothesis, and the other arguing in support of sociopolitical conflict theory.

Two researchers at Yale University wrote a strong paper which found twenty variables to be significantly predictive of armed conflict. However, they used a data set which included armed conflicts short of the standard civil war definition: annual deaths of 25 or more, and not limited to state versus non-state actor (Hegre and Sambanis 2006, 533). Despite the noisier data set, they found robust significance with Collier-Hoeffler model variables, including population size (p-value of 0.00092), and per capita income (p-value of 0.0053). Of interest, they also found some social factors to be predictive of armed conflict (though could draw no conclusions regarding civil war due to data set): governmental institutional conflict, low level of democracy, and an inverse relationship to military strength. The findings of Hegre and Sambanis were notable in that they validated existing sociopolitical theories on armed conflict, using economic data and

methods. However, their work also clearly demonstrated economic models are vastly more robust in predicting the onset of civil war than sociopolitical theories.

The academic discourse did not only hinge on definitions of civil war, but also was interrupted by the periodic release of new data sets, each of which enabled different analyses with new variables, in both better quality and quantity. Three major schools of thought emerged: one which focused primarily on sociopolitical motivations, another which focused on economic motivations, and the last which focused on economic opportunity (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009, 4). Ironically, even the sociopolitical theorists caved to the economists' power of statistical modeling: "Several plausible causal mechanisms can be identified [using social theory] . . . though testing the significance of these mechanisms and rank-ordering them is probably done best by . . . the statistical models" (Sambanis 2004, 263).

After nearly twenty years of conflict theories were posited, debated, and steadily refined, RAND Corporation released a 314-page meta-analysis in 2017 which sought to even the field with respect to data sets, variables, and statistical effects (Watts et al. 2017). Their findings include ten characteristics related to intrastate conflict, and this discussion focuses on the four with the strongest evidence of being key factors predictive of conflict:

1. State institutional capacity
2. Economic factors
3. Demography
4. Legacy of prior conflicts

Interestingly, economic causes are still prevalent, and amongst the most strongly correlated on the list of CPOCs, but sociopolitical factors are also represented. Finally, a modicum of academic consensus has been reached as to the fundamental drivers of civil war, using global data sets, consistent definitions, and a myriad of tools spanning the economic, social, and political science fields. It is important not to confuse consensus with a simple unified theory however, identifying causes of wars can be highly complex and undeniably contentious. The consistent themes which have arisen in the last nineteen years with strong statistical support across data sets are worth examining closely; other theories which are widely believed, but not supported by the data, are discussed thereafter with a note to each. The remainder of the chapter discusses how CPOCs might apply to West Africa.

State Capacity

Three aspects of state institutions hold strong predictive relationships with the onset of civil war:

1. Newly independent states are more prone to conflict
2. States with large and more-disciplined security forces are less prone to conflict
3. Poorly governed states are more prone to conflict

It should not surprise anyone that a weak government is more likely to experience insurgencies, but it is rewarding that such a common-sense answer is robustly and consistently supported, using statistics, within the academic literature. The strength of correlation may be surprising, however, especially considering how difficult it can be to quantify an imprecise concept: governance quality. Generally, the capacity of state

institutions is described as a triad between military capacity, administrative capacity, and political institutional coherence (Szayna et al. 2017, 43); using this as a scaffold helps constrain the nebulous concept. Once governance is boiled down into these components, categorization of a nation's governance is possible, and patterns emerge. The failings of state capacity which are closely linked to conflict can take several forms: poor political governance and policies, small or less-disciplined security forces, and newly independent states.

First a short discussion is necessary about how to systematically evaluate governance and rate it on a spectrum of effectiveness. For example, it is qualitatively understandable that if a state lacks the capacity physically control its territory, it is likely to experience an insurgency; quantifying the capacity of a state to do so is more difficult. There are however, several institutions which publish widely accepted indexes of governance; the three most reputable are the World Bank's Country Policy Institutional Index, the Worldwide Governance Indicators, and the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG). To further reduce single-point inaccuracies in any single governance index, researchers correlated patterns across all three.

The World Bank Worldwide Governance Index (WGI) is a tool to examine trends in governance within individual countries or across regions which pulls data from more than 30 reputable universities and think tanks and is compiled annually. They classify a country's governance by six categories: voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption (World Bank 2018). Due to its annual release, this index is less useful in evaluating characteristics immediately predating conflict.

The ICRG seeks to assess risky political, social, and economic environments for international financiers, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and is published monthly. The ICRG tends to be more useful than the WGI due to its increased publication frequency. It uses characteristics from political, social, and economic categories to quantitatively describe a country's investment environment.[2] The ICRG index has been produced since 1980 with only small modifications; it has been widely used as a proxy for governance and state institutions since a seminal work in 2002 by Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson.

Using these three validated governance indexes, the chair of the Department of Political Science at Stanford University showed that countries experiencing a decrease in governance scores one year had sizeable and statistically significant increases in civil war risk in subsequent years (Fearon 2010, 48). This effect held true for all three governance indexes tested, and the contrary proved true as well: that improvements in governance scores decreased future conflict risk. The author, marveled that it did not appear to matter which governance aspect was being measured; "government effectiveness," "corruption," and "rule of law" all held similar relationships to civil war. The higher the score achieved on the governance indicator, the less likely the country was to experience civil war, even

[2] Each risk value is established by assessing the country against a rubric of risk sub-components. For example, political risk is determined by using a rubric of 13 risk components, while social and economic risk each have their own rubrics. As part of determining political risk, government stability is quantified by scoring the ability of the government (1) to govern, and (2) to stay in office. To measure this capacity, the assessor scores government unity, legislative strength, and popular support using the rubric (The PRS Group n.d.). The outcome of each risk component and subcomponent is scored and tallied, and combined used to comprehensively and repeatedly quantify the ability of the state to constrain risk caused by national conflict. This type of methodology is used for all 22 components, and produces three scores: political, social, and economic risk values.

when controlling for per capita income and other confounding variables. Not only was poor governance highly correlated with future conflict, it even had a "dose-response" relationship: the worse governance, the higher the risk of conflict. This also gives optimism to the military commander: if governance can be improved through a whole-of-government engagement, the data suggest conflict can be avoided.

Many of the reasons poor governance predicted insurgency incidence were related to economic performance of the state. Low institutional capacity to levy taxes or implement economic policy leads to low economic development, which in turn, is strongly linked with an increased likelihood of civil war (discussed below). Weak governance contributed to rebellion in the following ways: (1) inability of the state to provide public services leads to grievances and recruitment opportunity, (2) inability of the government to secure loot-able resources (natural, capital or otherwise) creates financing for conflict, (3) weak states are incapable of establishing security once violence has started, and (4) inability of weak states to levy taxes limits its ability to provide public services (Watts et al. 2017, 132). Interestingly, the form of governance was not relevant; democracies did no better than autocracies at avoiding civil war, given the same level of state capacity (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 21), which supports an economic understanding of conflict rather than political.

The relationship of poor governance to the onset of civil war is also notable within newly formed states; in fact, it has the strongest causal relationship of all studied. Newly independent states, regardless of whether their freedom was gained by civil war or through legislation, all suffer an approximate 6-fold increase in civil war risk in the years following secession (Fearon 2010, 39). Many colonial powers left legacies of poorly

educated civil servants, weak governing institutions, and populations with little loyalty to the new independent government. When a colony receives independence, its central government loses the security resources of the colonial army, and thus becomes profoundly less capable of deterring or fighting rebels, whilst simultaneously trying to establish itself as a governing authority. The result is predictable: many civil wars erupt shortly after independence within post-colonial powers. However, over time, those countries which avoid civil war steadily strengthen governing institutions, and a significant drop in conflict incidence (Watts et al. 2017, 130).

It may appear that newly independent states simply have the difficulties of poorly governed states. Yet on closer examination, they have their own difficulties: tensions caused by the independence movement; losers from the transition to statehood can spark conflict; new states may also struggle to reintegrate former fighters; these conditions contribute to the onset of civil war more than simply poor governance (Watts et al. 2017, 134). The combination of these hostilities and reduced capacity to secure the state leads to a potently volatile environment for the first five years following statehood.

Another characteristic of state capacity which is directly correlated to onset of civil war is the capability of security forces. States with large and well-disciplined security forces are less prone to conflict; however, politicized or ineffective security and justice systems tend to motivate populations to rebel against police corruption (Watts et al. 2017, 135). The data suggest that not only are incompetent security forces unable to de-escalate violence once a rebellion has started, their repressive or unprovoked aggression may have contributed to insurrection in the first place. Fearon and Laitin emphasize that it is the state's military, policing, and administrative capabilities which

enable the state to detect and suppress dissent before it becomes an organized insurgency capable of threatening the state (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 40). While insurrection may be potentiated in response to either a heavy-handed, repressive police force or in response to an incompetent, weak security force, it is unfortunate there is no data to prove that a state can avoid civil war by improving its security forces, even though the premise is logical.

In sum, there are three CPOCs which relate to state institutional capacity: newly independent states are more prone to conflict; states with large and more-disciplined security forces are less prone to conflict; poorly governed states are more prone to conflict. The ability of military stability operations to impact these CPOCs is discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

Economic Factors

Three state economic factors hold strong predictive relationships with the onset of civil war:

1. Economic inequality leads to an increased incidence of violent conflict
2. Low personal incomes increase violent conflict incidence through decreasing opportunity costs of rebellion
3. Sudden declines in income levels weaken the states' ability to prevent or end violent conflicts

The link between poverty, economic variables, and intrastate conflict is amongst the most robust findings in the literature researching the predictive factors of civil war. There is broad consensus regarding the correlation of economic characteristics predicting future conflict; the magnitude of effect and interpretation of these relationships remain disputed.

As with characteristics of state institutions, the economic CPOCs are multiple. Broadly speaking, a grievance with the governmentparticularly economic ones) must be sufficient for a group of rebels to take tremendous risks personally, socially, and financially to violently confront the state; secondly, alternatives to insurgency are insufficient; and lastly the state must be lacking the capacity to detect or deter the conflict. The specifics of economic CPOCs are discussed below.

Economic inequality tends to drastically increase the rate of conflict. This effect is closely tied with economic growth: high growth rates tend to ease distribution differences and provide increased resources to the state to fight insurgencies. Collier et al. found that if the national economic annual growth rate is increased one percentage point, the risk for conflict decreases by a modest, yet significant 0.6 per cent (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009, 10).[3] A country which is one standard deviation behind global rates of GDP per capita growth suffers nearly a 12 per cent increase in the likelihood of conflict (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009, 10), further illustrating that differences in wealth distribution, and particularly those exacerbated by uneven growth tend to predate conflict. In fact, using sub-national data, one study was able to show that conflicts emerged in regions which had incomes substantially below the nation's average per capita income, even if the nation was as a whole, not particularly poor (Buhaug, Gleditsch, Holtermann, Ostby, and Tollefsen 2011, 4). Conflict is more likely in the face of economic disparity and a low rate of economic growth.

[3] Others have estimated this effect to be as high as 2 per cent (Miguel, Satyanath and Sergenti 2004).

A method of understanding economic CPOCs may be helpful. A pivotal work in economic conflict theory by Jack Hirshleifer in 2001 proposed a "paradox of power," where people have a choice of either producing wealth or commandeering wealth through violence. As a productive group of individuals becomes wealthier, they reach economies of scale by investing further in productive work. At the same time, a less productive group of individuals is better served to invest what means they have in fighting over the produced goods. The rational conclusion is thus for the poorer to engage in conflict while the wealthier specialize in production (Hirshleifer 2001, 94). The system reaches a balance when the wealthy population develops military technology adequate to deliver victory over the poorer population, or when the productive class sues for peace, agreeing to wealth redistribution, so that they may resume production. In either instance the wealth distribution becomes more equal and reduces future conflict.

Using Hirshleifer's model, it is understandable why poorer nations tend to be more prone to conflict. Individuals with fewer means stand will gain more by violently appropriating goods, rather than trying to compete in production against individuals with competitive market advantages. Many economic studies reach economic conclusions about the predictors of civil war, and indeed their studies are compelling, most of which conclude violent rebellion is concentrated in the poorest countries. However, broadly shared economic growth reduces disparity, increases the capacity of the state to resist insurgencies, and increases the population's opportunity to participate in licit labor pools (Collier et al. 2003, 54), all of which strongly correlate with decreased incidence of civil war.

Sudden decreases in economic growth, or market crashes have long been understood to potentiate conflict. The reason is rather straight-forward: without tax revenues, states struggle to appropriate resources adequate to successfully detect, deter, or destroy a rebel organization (Watts et al. 2017, 184). Price crashes are associated with severe recessions that substantially and directly increase the risk of civil war, and furthermore can destabilize economic management for long periods (Stern 2003, x), or potentiate recurring civil conflict (Collier et al. 2003, 4). The effects of these shocks can be quite surprisingly large. A growth shock to a country which decreases GDP growth by 5 per cent increases the likelihood of civil war by nearly 50 per cent the following year (Miguel, Satyanath, and Sergenti 2004, 746). Such large effects on conflict rates are only seen in two categories of CPOCs: economic and state capacity.

In sum, there are three CPOCs which relate to states' economic factors: economic inequality leads to an increased incidence of violent conflict; low personal incomes increase violent conflict incidence; sudden declines in income levels weaken the states' ability to prevent or end violent conflicts. The ability of military stability operations to impact these CPOCs is discussed in chapter 4.

Demography

Two aspects of state demography hold strong predictive relationships with the onset of civil war:

1. Populous countries are more prone to conflict
2. Countries with so-called "youth bulges" are more prone to conflict, while aging populations may have a pacifying effect

Demographic characteristics can predict intrastate violence. More populous countries are directly and significantly more prone to conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003). It is unclear whether the larger population increases Malthusian competition for valuable resources, and the resulting tensions erupt into violence, or whether a larger population simply increase the numbers of individuals in each ethnic, racial, or religious category, thereby increasing the likelihood of violent clashes along existing divides. There are a small handful of studies which did not find population to be correlated with increased violence, however these studies focused a few states which were able to solve demographic-driven resource scarcity by technological innovation, and thereby avoid violent rebellions (Watts et al. 2017, 133). The effect of this CPOC is smaller than the effects of economic CPOCs: for a doubling in total population, an increase in intrastate conflict rose 21 per cent. The authors suggested that perhaps the state's capacity to deter rebellion reached economies of scale, and thus large increases in population only increased the likelihood for conflict modestly (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009, 12). The pattern of higher conflict incidence remains robustly significant amongst larger populations yet does not have the outsized effects as state institutional capacity CPOCs or economic CPOCs.

A more potent way demographic changes can predict intrastate conflict is a so-called "youth bulge," where a sudden and sustained increase in birthrate causes an unusually large number of young males over a decade. Researchers found that an increased population of males, aged 15-29 years, is a significant predictor of insurrection; a doubling of this demographic percentage of the population increased the risk for civil war from 4.7 per cent to nearly 32 per cent, a nearly 6-fold increase (Collier, Hoeffler,

and Rohner 2009, 15). In fact, the Arab Spring is partially attributed to a youth bulge, where 60 per cent of the population was under the age of 25 at the time of rebellion (Watts et al. 2017, 131).

Due to the modest effects of demographic CPOCs, the effect of youth bulges and other demographic factors may be surmountable if a nation has strong state institutional capacity and relatively robust economic growth. Demographic CPOCs may be of less interest to the military commander; they cannot be manipulated to prevent conflict. However, they are useful in the prediction of burgeoning conflict zones, and certainly are relevant to West Africa's future, as is discussed later in the chapter.

Legacy of Prior Conflicts

The last national characteristic which holds strong predictive relationships with the onset of civil war is:

1. Civil wars leave behind organizational and material legacies that make the return to conflict more likely

States which suffer one civil war are extremely likely to suffer subsequent conflicts due to several intermediate factors: weak state capacity post-conflict, suppressed economic development, and diaspora creation. In fact, nearly half of civil wars will recrudesce within 5 years, causing a toxic feedback loop of further decline in hampered economic development and decreased state capacity, called the conflict trap (Collier et al. 2003, 53). While many well-respected scholars and international bodies propose that relapsed conflict is caused by hatred and suspicions between former fighters, such an anecdotal proposition is extremely difficult to rigorously evaluate; this discussion thus focuses on quantifiable causes of civil war recurrence.

Civil wars reverse economic development due to both fighting expenses, opportunity costs, and resource destruction; these economic effects explain a large portion of the increase in risk for subsequent civil wars. Governments fighting civil wars divert resources from productive ends towards fighting, which directly reduces the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The typical country increases its military spending by approximately 2.2 per cent of GDP during a civil war; over the typical 7-year duration of intrastate conflicts, this represents an annual loss of 17 per cent GDP, after fighting has stopped (Collier et al. 2003, 21). As discussed previously, poorer states, and states which have suffered sudden drops in economic circumstances are very prone to civil war. This effect is prominent even before the destructive costs to the state have been considered. Additionally, public services are degraded during and after the war. Post-conflict states tend to have lower-scoring democratic institutions, political freedoms, and poor policies (Watts et al. 2017, 229). States with poor capacity to provide services are much more likely to fail to deter further conflict; this effect compounds with economic effects and causes a very high risk for post-conflict states to encounter civil war again.

Civil wars not only cost money to fight, but also lead to the destruction of infrastructure. Mozambique suffered a 40 per cent loss of all agricultural, communications, and administrative infrastructure; Liberia's main economic hub, Monrovia, suffered major damage while electricity infrastructure was all but destroyed (Collier et al. 2003, 15). The effects of this destruction lower per capita income approximately 15 per cent, which raises the absolute poverty level approximately 30 per cent (Collier et al. 2003, 15). The resulting poverty and reduced economic growth both potentiate renewed conflict as discussed in the economic section above.

The military commander may initially disregard conflict-legacy CPOCs, but this would be unwise. While the military commander cannot change the past, they can use knowledge of CPOCs to predict civil war recrudescence and conduct stability operations in post-conflict states aimed at rebuilding state capacity and economic infrastructure. This possibility is further discussed in chapter 4.

Additional Issues for Consideration

There are several additional conditions which have not been correlated with conflict, either because the difficulty associated with measuring the condition, or due to no relationship existing. However, it is worth examining these characteristics due to their commonly-held presumption to be root causes of civil war and conflict. It is possible that the conditions discussed below do contribute to conflict, but the manner is difficult to determine due to interdependence with other variables; equally, it is possible these characteristics are not correlated with future conflict and instead represent merely fictional, convenient narratives for an insurrection.

A Note on Ethnicity

One of the many difficulties in assessing the effect of ethnicity on a state's stability is the difficulty in measuring ethnicity. While all humans identify themselves as belonging to a family, clan, race, or ethnicity, these identities are subject to choice to some degree. As a result, due to political conditions, expressed identity may change, and thus represents a variable which is vexingly difficult to measure accurately. Even if ethnicity were to be measured accurately somehow, the effect of ethnicity on violence is likely indirect:

> Identity is an inevitable part of human existence. Many of the forms of identity that allegedly drive conflict – such as national, ethnic, and communal identities – have existed for a century or more. Thus, these identities themselves are poor predictors of recent changes in the incidence of violent conflict. Rather, it is the political salience of these identities that might have changed. (Watts et al. 2017, 161)

Scholars who investigate the link between ethnicity and conflict have concluded that ethnicity provides one strategy for group mobilization which can be exploited when fighting for economic and political goals.

If ethnicity is not a causal factor, ethnicity may be a modifying factor, with effects on either the intensity of fighting or the duration of violence. Some studies have found rates of conflict double in societies which are polarized between two major opposing groups, while societies marked by either high ethnic heterogeneity or high homogeneity have less conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2002, 22). Without evidence of more direct effects, it is likely that ethnic identities modify existing CPOCs, and become powerful recruitment tools in developing rebellion forces. It is possible overlapping dichotomies, for instance economic disadvantage combined with ethnic rivalry, prove very potent in sowing conflict, but the inter-related nature precludes measurement.

A Note on Political Repression

The discussion has thus far examined CPOCs which are seemingly tangential to the common image of civil war: masked rebels in the street, yelling and raising weapons. Where does the passion come from? Surely rebels are not shouting "Our ICRG value is too low," nor "there are too many men aged 15-29 here." No, the rebels in the street are often yelling about political repression. Political repression may directly increase passionate rebellion and likelihood of violence, by increasing grievances and driving

rebel recruitment, albeit the effect is slow and incrementally if at all (Watts et al. 2017, 208). However, it is important to note that there are many repressive regimes throughout the world which do not experience uprisings; therefore, the cause of rebellion must be multifactorial. In other words, political repression has not been shown to be a reliable CPOC.

The most convincing evidence regarding repression supports that certain types of repression in combination with the nature of the political regime is much more predictive of violence (Watts et al. 2017, 208), though this relationship is feeble at best. Due to this interwoven nature with other contributing factors, political repression is not a useful tool to forecast conflict, nor to understand it as either a necessary or sufficient cause of conflict. Nevertheless, to neglect it completely seems remiss, so a brief discussion follows.

Many theories posit that countries with high political repression may experience more frequent or more intense intrastate violence. However, this is unsupportable by the data, regardless of data set, researcher, or other explanations. “Surely ethnic antagonisms, nationalist sentiments, and grievances often motivate rebels and their supporters. But such broad factors are too common to distinguish the cases where war breaks out,” (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 76). The confounded nature of these variables does not negate that they may contribute in some way to conflict, though the sheer ubiquity of grievance and political repression makes determining the nature of the relationship nearly impossible. In fact, one author attempted to write his conclusion that repression by the state will cause violence when applied one way, and yet will prevent violence if repression is applied consistently; he continued to caveat his theory, and ultimately

contradicted himself by stating simply that increasing repression can lead to an increase in violence (Lichbach 1987, 293). His confusion is understandable due to the multivariate nature of the relationship between a politically repressive state and the outbreak of civil war; the relationship is statistically unclear.

Again, the strongest predictor of violence comes not from the grievance perspective of conflict, but instead from the feasibility of rebellion. Using carefully curated case studies, a professor at Yale University was able to illustrate a relationship between state capacity, repression, and violence outbreak: Sambanis wrote that political repression prevents rebellion in a state with strong capacities, but in weak states, it likely not only provokes opposition, but is incapable of stopping the violence once it is ignited (2004). Arguably this is an argument for the state institutional capacity theory above (#1), and for which there is strong statistical evidence of effects. Beyond this however, there is little statistical support that political repression, by itself, predicts nor causes violent intrastate conflict. Additionally, continued gradual spread of democratic norms internationally may make the case moot in the future.

A Note on Democratization

There is strong consensus regarding the stability of a state with strong democratic institutions, though the degree stability of states with varying degrees of democratic institutions are the subject of debate (Watts et al. 2017, 187). Several scholars have tried to clarify the relationship between strong democratic institutions and the likelihood of conflict. It remains a common belief that democracy in any form is better than an autocratic regime: democratic institutions allow for political dissent without resorting to violence. However, the literature does not support this theory. The misunderstanding can

be traced to early literature which studied the relationship and used a "polity index" to describe partial democracies, also called anocracies. However, the index defines one of its components as "political competition which is intense, hostile, and frequently violent." Not surprisingly, papers relying on elements of the polity index show a strong relationship between anocracies and civil war, though when the "violent" components of the polity index are removed from the study, the data do not support any link between levels of democracy and onset of civil war (Vreeland 2008, 419). The data indicating democracies are more peaceful are thus confounded; they correlate violence with violence.

Early research also attempted to evaluate the relationship between democratization, and the onset of civil war. Similarly, the polity index proved to be confounding, with mixed findings as a result. There were no consistent results between onset of democratization and civil war, especially once constrained to using the conventional academic definition of civil war in this discussion (Collier et al. 2003, 54). It would seem logical that the process of democratization may potentiate rebellion, given the recent events of the Arab Spring, however, the effects are probably too multifactorial or too modest to be robustly supported with statistics.

A Note on Natural Resource Endowments

Early economic research on conflict focused on the presence of natural resource endowments as a CPOC. However, more recent, nuanced studies have determined conflict associated with natural resource endowments are attributable to the above causes (state capacity, economic factors, and demography). Natural resource endowments are usually geographically concentrated, which often leads to regional economic disparities,

and incentives for separatism. Additionally, such regional iniquities tend to be large in developing countries, and the state often displays a strong tendency towards systemic neglect of peripheral areas; such income disparities and redistribution to central power are likely to cause conflict (Buhaug et al. 2011, 4). States with plentiful hydrocarbon or other natural resource endowments tend to have greater capacity to fend off potential rebellions (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 9), and thus tend to have lower levels of intrastate conflict than countries without such plentiful endowments. As a result, the mere presence or absence of natural resource endowments cannot be used to predict future conflict.

The financial expense of recruiting, supplying, and mobilizing a private militia is astonishing; it is thus not surprising that countries with easily appropriable natural resources increase the potential funding for such rebellion, and thus increase the frequency of conflict. In the past, foreign-state sponsored separatism was common, particularly during the proxy wars of the Cold War era. More recently, however, this trend has decreased, and thus the capacity of would-be rebel forces to secure funding has figured more prominently in rebellion. Collier et al. find countries with double the average natural resource endowment to have more than double the likelihood of civil war and increases in the likelihood that the ensuing civil war is secessionist in nature by 20 per cent (Collier et al. 2003, 60). All these points seemingly indicate a profiteering motive for rebellion, and thus the ability of the state to secure loot-able resources may play a part in rebellion incidence. However, the mere presence of natural resource endowments is not directly correlated with the onset of conflict, and is thus not a CPOC.

Large natural resource endowments are also associated with a degradation of state capacity, namely an increase in corruption; this effect is enormously supported in the

literature (Watts et al. 2017, 127). States with large natural endowments are less reliant on a compliant population remitting taxes, and in turn, are less responsive to the demands of their citizens. These governments are less compelled to provide services to assuage their citizens; discontent amongst the citizenry may result. While this effect may not be sufficient to ignite a civil war, it likely compounds other existing problems to increase conflict (Collier et al. 2003, 61). Easily exploitable resources not only increase the feasibility of financing a revolution, but also contributes to the decline of state capacity; combined these two effects raise the likelihood of civil war through the CPOCs discussed above.

Despite large natural resource endowments having no predictive value, the contrary is true. Violent conflict is much more likely in states where water, arable land, and forests are scarce. In fact, the word "rival" comes from the same root word as "river," implying that a rivalry was formed from individuals using the same water source (Merriam-Webster 2017). As with many causes of civil war, the effect of resource scarcity is likely to be a combination of factors, including: resource scarcity, population pressures (as covered in Demography, above), and poor state institutions (as covered in State Capacity, above) (Watts et al. 2017, 134). The effects of natural resource endowments, or lack thereof, are interconnected with the CPOCs discussed above, and thus are not CPOCs themselves. However, the military commander would do well to understand resource pressures in this context, given the current global trend of climate change, desertification, and environmental degradation across sub-Saharan Africa.

Characteristics Predictive of Conflict in West Africa

Many scholars have argued that due to the seeming conflagration of small wars in Africa, that West Africa may have different causes and dynamics than those seen elsewhere. “A major locus for civil wars in recent years has been sub-Saharan Africa, where 29 of 43 countries suffered from civil conflict during the 1980s and 1990s” (Miguel, Satyanath, and Sergenti 2004, 726). It is certainly possible that Africa has unique conflict drivers and dynamics once conflict has started. However, there is a remarkable symmetry in African conflicts to those characteristics predictive of conflict (CPOC) elsewhere in the world. Not only are the CPOCs parallel, the relative magnitude of effect is also consistent. African conflict was also grossly similar to global trends where weak government forces, history of previous conflicts, and economic inequality were key factors effecting future conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2002, 25).

Some conflict which may appear to be resulting from fractionalization may be explicable by CPOCs. When large populations are divided into increasing numbers of countries, each states’ capacity to deliver public services or security is diminished, and thus a region such as Africa, would be expected to experience higher levels of intrastate conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2002, 9). Some conflict which may appear to be stemming from fractionalization may in fact be resulting from weak state institutions.

Also destabilizing is the continent’s rapid rate of social and economic transformation, which have challenged state institutions’ capacity to retain legitimacy and adapt to the needs of increasing numbers of urban citizens (Marc, Verjee, and Mogaka 2015, 3). Paradoxically, some of the rapid economic growth, a stabilizing force, drives

social transformation, which in turn, challenges state institutions to maintain legitimacy and peace.

Additionally, a new trend of settling civil wars by creating new countries, such as South Sudan and Eritrea, bring additional risk for renewed violence due to several reasons established above: prior conflict, newly independent country, decreased economic output, and weak state institutions, to name just a few. The combined effects of splitting a region into many countries and the legacy of prior conflict will increase the likelihood of civil war by more than 10-fold in the five years following independence (Watts et al. 2017, 229).[4] This effect, known as the conflict trap due to the self-reinforcing cycle of conflict preventing development, and low levels of development leading to conflict, is likely to continue unless economic development of these nascent countries is achieved organically or with foreign development. Put simply, African countries may appear more prone to conflict than countries in other regions, but their conflict rate is explained by global CPOC patterns.

Many researchers have emphasized the economic CPOCs in West African conflict, a region known for its remarkable poverty. However, the relative effects of poor economic development are roughly comparable as those found in other regions. In fact, economic factors for armed conflict appears to be more potent an indicator than the severity of grievance or injustice, globally speaking (Hegre 2004, 249). Thus, a region which is substantially poorer than another will likely experience more frequent

[4] The increased relative risk continues for more than two decades following civil war, and only slowly decreases to zero thereafter (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner 2009, 13).

insurgencies or civil wars. Being a poor region, West Africa is more likely to suffer from insurgency, but no more likely to suffer due to economic causes than similarly poor regions.

Other researchers examined economic shocks in Africa to evaluate whether they had the same predictive value for conflict as found elsewhere. It was indeed consistent with other regions:

> In the sample of African countries, the impact of economic shocks is also approximately the same across countries with a range of different economic, social, and political institutional characteristics, suggesting that economic conditions are . . . critical determinants triggering civil conflict in Africa. (Miguel, Satyanath, and Sergenti 2004, 746)

The economic characteristics predictive of conflict, including economic underdevelopment, and economic shocks, are consistent in West Africa as elsewhere. Even more remarkable is the magnitude of the effects are similar in West Africa to those patterns found globally.

Thankfully, there is much reason for optimism, as the continent of Africa, including West Africa, has been growing rapidly recently. There is already some evidence that the improved economic fortune is decreasing conflict:

> Africa . . . was the fastest-growing continent of the past decade . . . since income levels are so closely tied to violent conflict, widespread economic development has likely been one of the major factors contributing to the general decline in intrastate wars in the past two to three decades. So long as that broadly based economic growth continues, we can expect to see continued declines in conflict. (Watts et al. 2017, 205)

West Africa, in particular, has realized the best growth rate on the continent, reaching 7.4 percent in 2014 (Marc, Verjee, and Mogaka 2015, 1); this growth rate has been stabilizing, as expected. West Africa is home to some of Africa's most stable countries: Ghana and Senegal, while others have successfully transitioned from civil wars to peace:

Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Some of this stability may be directly attributable to the strong economic growth in the region.

Demographic predictors of conflict derived from global data also are relevant to West Africa. There is a rapidly growing youth population across the continent. As mentioned above, the Arab Spring was attributed to a youth bulge, where 60 per cent of the population was under the age of 25 at the time of rebellion (Watts et al. 2017, 131). This is particularly destabilizing in West Africa, as the rapid economic and social changes are also undermining the ability of the state institutions to retain legitimacy.

> Many institutions in Africa are strained by these rapid changes and are increasingly out of sync with social groups' expectations and needs. For instance, an increasing number of people, especially youth, do not recognize the legitimacy of either local customary institutions or national and global institutions (Marc, Verjee, and Mogaka 2015, 3).

As mentioned above, a state with multiple CPOCs has a particularly elevated risk for insurgency or civil war. In West Africa, many nations have multiple CPOCs. The apparent higher incidence of violent conflict is not due to novel patterns of conflict unique to the African continent, but due to CPOC patterns consistent with global trends, and is only novel in the manner in which they are overlapped.

A concerned military leader can apply the global patterns of CPOCs to West Africa with great confidence. How they might use these patterns to tailor stability operations is discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, there are several key factors which are strongly predictive of future insurgency incidence, which have been proven quantitatively beyond scientific doubt: state institutional capacity, economic factors, demography, and legacy of prior conflict.

The literature has proven sufficiently robust to conclude that the causes of conflict in West Africa are wholly akin to those found elsewhere. The military commander can use a fluency in these key factors in tailoring their military stability operations in West African pre-conflict states.

The next chapter will discuss the methodology of this thesis, then turn to the capabilities and limitations of DoD to attain stability using stability operations in chapter 4. The discussion will then turn to the possibility of deterring future conflict by seeking to alter the characteristics predictive of conflict (CPOCs) in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter Introduction

This thesis addresses, "should the U.S. military conduct operations in West Africa to support stability," using peer-reviewed, previously published literature and scholarly books. Two separate literature reviews are presented to answer different facets of the question. Both literature reviews queried the JSTOR database. Using the results of these journal searches, the most-cited authors' books were studied for additional context.

The first literature review sought to discern what academic consensus existed on predictors of conflict, both globally speaking, and to West Africa. The results are reviewed in Chapter 2, and address the following secondary research questions:

1. What factors predict conflict?
2. Are these factors applicable to West Africa?

The second literature review seeks to evaluate what is the typical scope, and reasonable effects of military stability operations, given the activities objectively recorded in the last four decades. Much of the recorded synopses were only assessed and documented by the participating military forces and tended to be quite optimistic regarding long-term effects. For example, a sample of 200 veterinary-engagement related After Action Review findings were data mined from OHASIS (Online Humanitarian Assistance Shared Information System); each recorded mission success in both short- and long-term effects (Avriette and Hollier 2016). A perfect record in such a difficult and nuanced field is suspicious. Many of the AAR authors may have felt compelled to convey mission success to ensure their annual performance reviews were sufficiently laudatory to

enable career progression. As written, it is extraordinarily difficult to assess objectively the value and difficulties of the mission without any other information, for example, partner-nation government officials, partner-nation civilians, or U.S. embassy staff.

As a result, only sources within peer-reviewed literature, validated testimony, and similar sources without conflicts of interest were included. The two questions addressed by the second literature review presented in Chapter 4 are:

1. What is the practical scope of stability operations in recent history?
2. What types of effects are reasonable for stability operations to achieve?

Following the two literature reviews, the conclusions of the first are compared to the conclusions of the second, to answer the primary question, "should the U.S. military conduct operations in West Africa to support stability?" In chapter 5, conclusions and evidence-based recommendations are made to the military professional regarding the best practices in stability operations.

Threats to Validity

Many literature articles are not considered here due to lack of objective data. This systematically reduces the number of articles considering the "soft science" explanations of conflict, namely historical, ethno-political struggles. However, in attempt to fairly consider all angles, meta-analyses are included which address sociological theories in aggregate. By aggregating similar case studies into series, numerical results can be drawn, and are included in the data presented in Chapter 2.

Interstate conflict is not considered in this analysis due to the exogenous nature of such conflicts. As a result, the key factors driving conflict discussed should not be considered all-inclusive.

Economic studies are often limited to the factors which can be quantified, which creates exclusion bias. Hence, studies which rely on economic data for inferences will likely find relationships only with quantifiable (economic) variables. However, more recent studies quantify otherwise "soft" data by objectively scoring these variables, and as a result generate results which include variables previously excluded. This discussion lends more weight to more recent studies, and results which have been replicated, especially those replicated outside the realm of economic study.

Table 1. Threats to Validity

Study type	Individual Study	Aggregate Study
Economic	Low Statistical Power	Bias towards Quantitative Variables
Political Science	Confirmation Bias	Confirmation Bias, Aggregated error
Social Science	Anecdotal	Confirmation Bias, Aggregated error

Source: Created by author.

Chapter Conclusion

The goal of using this type of research methodology is to succinctly answer the primary research question given the delimitations. The review of literature guides this study toward answering the primary research question, "should the U.S. military conduct operations in West Africa to support stability?" The next chapter, Chapter 4, contains an analysis of the effects which may be reasonably achieved by military stability operations.

CHAPTER 4

CAPABILITIES OF MILITARY STABILITY OPERATIONS

> Forced by circumstance and by direction, the U.S. military has taken on many burdens that in the past were the purview of civilian agencies; despite its gallant efforts, the military is no replacement for civilian involvement and expertise.
>
> –Dennis Penn, "The Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy"

Chapter Introduction

To answer the primary research question, "should the U.S. military conduct operations in West Africa to support stability," it is worth examining the secondary research question, "Is it reasonable to expect military operations to affect key drivers of conflict (as identified in Chapter 2)?" The approach used in this thesis is to identify key drivers of conflict (chapter 2), then examine the capacity of military operations to impact these key drivers (below). This chapter below discusses the findings of a literature review to answer what effects the military may have on key drivers of conflict, using the current scope of operations as laid out in doctrine. The chapter conclusion then answers the question whether it is reasonable to expect military operations to impact the identified key factors driving conflict globally, and particularly in West Africa. The chapter begins with an examination of the typical size and scope of military operations, then examines the practical effects of these military operations. This chapter itemizes current capabilities and limitations of stability operations to affect characteristics predictive of conflict (CPOCs) and the following chapter makes recommendations to incorporate the findings of this thesis in future military stability operations.

For the reader unfamiliar with stability operations on the African continent, it may come as a surprise that DoD has a robust presence on the continent in the absence of war. The size and scope of operations is understandable after examining a historical context.

USAID is the premier civilian agency within the United States Government (USG) to conduct development operations which support long term stability of foreign states. The agency has robust subject-matter expertise and charter to conduct capacity-building abroad. However, the agency is substantially smaller than the DoD in both size and budget and has a bumpy past. USAID restructured and downsized its Foreign Service and Civil Service staff from about 12,000 personnel during the Vietnam War to about 2,000 more recently (Binnendijk and Cronin 2009, 2); the number is approximately 2,500 as of 2016 (USAID 2016). When the agency began using implementing partners to conduct projects in the late 1970s, the agency gained efficiency. These changes re-formed the agency to a more administrative body which identified development needs, granted contracts, and oversaw the performance of the projects.

Even with the efficiencies gained through restructuring, however, the scope of current operations challenges USAID. Not only are USAID personnel reduced more than 80% relative to their support to Vietnam's counterinsurgency, but the agency's current operations include missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, which together have double the population of 1970s-era Vietnam, when USAID was largest. Meanwhile, non-theater USAID mission has expanded to encompass 120-plus countries world-wide. Dramatic expansion is most visible in Africa, where the number of USAID missions went from eight in 1973 to 43 today (USAID 2018). Even after the 17% reduction in force of the

1970s, additional human capital was lost from USAID in the 1990s which hampered its ability to perform:

> Due to a decrease in staff numbers between 1990 and 2008 . . . USAID lost much of its technical and professional expertise and, consequently, contracted out much work that previously had been performed in-house. Historical data on USAID staffing is weak and often contradictory, but figures suggest that the long-term slide in staff numbers that began in the early 1970s accelerated substantially in the 1990s, exacerbated by budget cuts in mid-decade... According to USAID, direct hire staff numbers fell from 3,262 in FY1990 to a low of 1,947 in FY2000. (Tarnoff 2015)

As stated previously, through restructuring, USAID has gained efficiencies, and may still be capable of reaching its goals, but within this discussion it is worth noting how drastically the agency's manpower has shrunk over the last several decades. It is less surprising therefore, when DoD, with seventy times the manpower and eight times the budget begins to conduct stability operations.

Regardless of actual capacity and efficiency gained with restructuring, certain experts are pessimistic regarding the combined capacity of USAID and Department of State to conduct their missions with their current manpower and budgets. "The United States today manifestly lacks adequate civilian capacity to conduct complex operations… including operations for stabilization and reconstruction, humanitarian and disaster relief, and irregular warfare and counterinsurgency" (Binnendijk and Cronin 2009, 1). Civilian capacity refers to the combined capacities of the State Department and USAID, but the named missions are all core missions of USAID, and thus can be read in this instance to almost exclusively refer to that agency. More specifically, a report on USAID's Operations from the Congressional Research Service concludes:

> Reported impacts [of manpower cuts] on the USAID program included a disruption of regular monitoring and evaluation practices, an increased reliance on large-scale contracting, fewer staff-intensive small projects, and a substitution for

> hands-on direct hire management by scores of personal service contractors… Moreover, the agency's management capacity reportedly worsened in the 2000s as program responsibilities expanded exponentially in the health sector and in crisis countries… with no comparable rise in operating expense funding. (Tarnoff 2015)

Not only has USAID had repeated and dramatic manpower reductions between 1970s and 2000s, but it has expanded its missions in Africa, maintained global operations, and with an unaccommodating budget. Organizational stress is understandable. Equally understandable is a willingness, in these circumstances, to rely on DoD partnership to conduct operations in states such as Afghanistan and Syria, two operations amongst the largest USAID missions (Tarnoff 2015).

It is common perception that DoD conducts development and stability operations only in post-conflict areas, where the civilian sector is not yet present. However, DoD also conducts stability operations in pre-conflict states. Some argue that DoD has always conducted conflict prevention operations, but not until the post-Cold War era were these operations captured in policy; likewise, not until USAFRICOM was established, was there a solitary military organization whose role was to conduct stability operations, in equal compliment to the diplomacy and development operations of the Department of State and USAID, respectively (Penn 2008, 78). Ten of the largest USAID missions are on the African continent (Tarnoff 2015), where DoD is extensively involved in stability operations.

In 2005, a DoD published a directive instructing all troops that stability operations were equally important as offensive and defensive action. After several years of the Afghanistan counterinsurgency campaign, DODD 3000.05 clarified that not only were service members supposed to conduct stability operations, but that stability was now an

explicit priority of the post-9/11 era DoD. It laid the foundation for DoD to conduct stability operations for which they had neither the skills, training, nor expertise:

> Decidedly broad in scope, this directive extends DoD's mandates and programs to a wide range of activities that are typically the province of civilian agencies, including reforming the security sector, establishing institutions of governance, reviving market activity and rebuilding infrastructure. While the directive openly recognizes that many of these tasks are more appropriately carried out by civilian actors and agencies, it also states that this may not always be possible in highly insecure environments or where such civilian capabilities do not yet exist. (Patrick and Brown 2007, 2)

After years of economizing the appropriate civilian agencies with mandate for development and building long-term stability, the size and funding of the DoD increased drastically to fight terrorism in the 2000s. With the simultaneous growth in DoD resources came a new orientation, codified in DODD 3000.05, which emphasized stability operations to prevent the drivers of conflict, to prevent terrorism before it started (Penn 2008, 75). Less than two years later, USAFRICOM stood up to blend hard and soft power to those ends on the African continent. It should come as no surprise that the military's take-charge, "can do" attitude, coupled with its large manpower and budget, catapulted it to the front of USG agencies in its ability to implement and support stability operations (Penn 2008, 75).

What might surprise the reader is the use of DoD to conduct stability operations in pre-conflict areas around the world; indeed, the imbalance between defense, diplomacy, and development (3D) operations has even alarmed some within the development sector, leading to many articles discussing the so-called "militarization" of U.S. foreign policy. The historical context reviewed above explains how development became a balance between DoD, USAID, and the Department of State 3D operations organically after the downsizing of the 1990s. Then the rapid expansion of the DoD in the early 2000s with

DODD 3000.05 directing DoD to prevent conflict led to a much larger role for DoD in stability operations, particularly once USAFRICOM activated. DoD now conducts stability operations on the African continent with sufficient mandate, manpower and budgetary resources, in complement to Department of State leadership and USAID development operations.

What then is the capacity of the DoD to conduct stability operations to prevent conflict, and how effective is it likely to be?

Types, Size and Scope of Military Stability Operations

The types, sizes, and scope of military stability operations is impressively varied, spanning from so-called "phase 0" operations, before a conflict begins, to "phase 5," a post-conflict period when authority transfers fully to civilian authorities. This section overviews the division of stability operations efforts with emphasis on phase 0; subsequent sections draw conclusions whether DoD can achieve the desired effects with their efforts.

The first joint stability function in Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability*, is "establish security," which is a natural sequel to offensive operations, but must be adapted within diplomatically-determined limits in the pre-conflict state. Security operations in pre-conflict stability operations often entails military-to-military engagements to share best practices. Topics covered during these security cooperation programs range from homeland defense and medical casualty care, to combat arms maneuver and airborne operations. The size of the engagements varies widely from Joint Combined Exercise Training (JCET) where hundreds or thousands of troops take part, to small teams consisting of one or two subject-matter experts.

Whether these types of engagements have long term effects on stability of a country has not been supported by an organized collection of data. However, countries with strong security institutions tend to be more stable; it is logical that engagements which enhance the ability of partner-nation security forces directly impact long-term security. Of note, the academic literature emphasizes the discipline of partner-nation security forces, so engagements of this variety have more data to support long term stability effects than other military engagements.

Secondly, Joint Publication 3-07 discusses foreign humanitarian aid (FHA). The reader is likely familiar with images of armed forces personnel delivering food and rations to nations effected by natural disasters. A lesser-known utilization of FHA includes relief from "other endemic conditions that present a serious threat to life or that can result in great damage to or loss of property" (JCS 2013).

A recent example of such assistance includes Operation United Assistance (OUA), an operation which deployed hundreds of servicemembers to assist West African countries during the Ebola outbreak of 2014, and is commonly considered a resounding success. It is important to note that the disease itself is not necessarily destabilizing (that is, there has been no data to support such a conclusion), but the resulting economic effects of the epidemic are consistent with sudden severe economic shocks which are drastically destabilizing. Thus, engagements such as OUA may impact this CPOC.

Economic stabilization and infrastructure comprises the third joint stability function. Surprisingly, JP 3-07 immediately descends into technical jargon, "a sustainable economy is characterized by market-based macroeconomic stability" (JCS 2016, 90). The technical jargon continues as the manual recommends instituting monetary reform,

initiating market reform, and mobilizing foreign investment. As part of a whole-of-government approach to this function, the land component commander may direct: to support economic enterprise creation; support monetary institutions; support private sector development; protect natural resources and the environment; support agricultural development programs; and restore transportation, telecommunications, and general infrastructure (JCS 2016, 12).

The last two stability functions directed by JP 3-07 are to establish rule of law and enhance governance and representative government participation. The two sections provide a substantial framework for the service member to understand that technical partnerships are necessary to conduct this work.

Effects of Military Stability Operations

Little data exists which demonstrates conclusively whether military stability operations are effective in pre-conflict environments. This may be because determining the long-term effects of stability operations is exceedingly difficult; there is likely no direct cause-and-effect relationship between any singular military operation and any specific decision made by a would-be insurgent. Indeed, most stability operations do not have long-term follow-up evaluations (Brigety 2009, 2); determining patterns between many military stability operations and long-term stability is thus difficult.

In fact, even one of the largest objective studies of military stability operations does not clarify whether modern-day military stability operations of today can be expected to have direct effects on stability. The Brookings Institution in 1978 examined 251 uses of the military to enhance stability, post-World War II, to evaluate whether such preventive measures were effective. They concluded that military operations were

effective at achieving stability effects, but that the effects were short-lived, generally less than three years' duration (Blechman and Kaplan 1978, 8). However, the study consisted predominantly of naval visitations, fly-overs, and similar show-of-force demonstrations to foreign powers. The authors concluded that threat of U.S. military force averts conflict in foreign nations, and therefore represented successful stability operations. While show-of-force demonstrations are still used in the establish security function, such demonstrations are a small fraction of stability operations. The applicability of this study to modern stability operations in West Africa is questionable; stability operations there commonly use more nuanced stability functions. Outside this one study, there is little objective data whether military stability operations in support of other functions, such as economic development, infrastructure, rule of law, or governance have long term effects on a nation's stability.

Practical Limitations of Military Stability Operations

Expertise

The USG has been conducting stability operations since the Marshall Plan, with some notable successes along the way. However, it is unclear whether DoD should continue to conduct development-type stability operations due to several factors: manpower expertise, contradicting other USG efforts, and appropriateness.

The military is specialized to conduct or directly support lethal operations which require a different skill set than those necessary in governance, economics, and rule of law. Within the military, the U.S. Army conducts most stability operations. Within the Army active force, there is only one brigade of individuals specially trained to work with civilians, Civil Affairs, which represents less than 0.2 per cent of the Army's manpower.

> The U.S. military is not well-equipped, by its mandate and personnel, to expertly address the structural sources of underdevelopment, alienation and conflict in target countries. Although requisite skills can sometimes be found within the civil affairs component of the U.S. Army, few soldiers possess deep expertise on matters of governance, development, and the rule of law. (Patrick and Brown 2007, 12)

This is not to say that all Civil Affairs (CA) personnel are inadequately trained to perform such tasks as governance, development, and rule of law; many civil affairs soldiers do have deep expertise, particularly in the reserve component and within the new 38G military occupational specialty. However, there is no coherent talent management of these rare skills, and CA personnel deploy without regard to their civilian skill sets (Unda 2009, 17).

Some military stability operations designed to impact economic factors require expertise not found within the armed forces. Engagements to improve agricultural production or infrastructure are readily employed using organic military assets; supporting monetary institutions or foreign direct investment are not. The ramifications for engaging in economic stability operations without sufficient technical knowledge are significant. Market failure, and subsequent sudden economic shocks, is one of the most reliable predictors of conflict, even if the market failure is only localized within a state. The link between sudden economic disruption and the onset of conflict is strong, and self-perpetuating. The economic shock then contributes to lower GDP growth through decreased economic activity, and possibly decreases revenues to the government, which in turn weakens state institutions to prevent rebellion. Doctrinal discussion of economic engagements is not adequate information to conduct this type of operation without substantial interagency civilian assistance. Stability operations conducted within West

Africa currently occur with the concurrence of the ambassador usually; the country mission may provide military operations appropriate civilian expertise.

Manpower expertise is not the only concern, interference with other agencies' development operations is also a concern. As previously discussed, the size of the U.S. military is substantially larger than both USAID and the U.S. Department of State combined, in fact, the military workforce is more than seventy times larger, and has more than eight times the budget. The potential for DoD stability operations to interfere with USAID and Department of State development priorities is significant:

> Given the resource imbalance between the U.S. military, on the one hand, and the State Department, USAID and other civilian agencies, on the other, there is risk that the aid activities of the Pentagon and its Regional Combatant Commands could come to overshadow both symbolically and substantively the non-military aspects of U.S. engagement in the developing world. (Patrick and Brown 2007, 14)

In West Africa, stability operations are conducted by the military usually with the consent of the U.S. Ambassador. Interagency relationships within the country mission may obviate some of the expertise gap present within the DoD with regards to governance, economics, and the like, and at the same time reduce any interference between USG stability and development efforts.

Military stability operations have impressive scope on paper. However, it is important to understand the capabilities of the average service member. Advising on fiscal policy, central banking, and other highly technical aspects of economic development require not only advanced knowledge, but years of experience as well; regardless, these topics are included in joint publications. Also, worth mentioning, is failure, particularly in the realm of economic markets and money supply, can very potently potentiate a conflict, as discussed in chapter 2. "While you will find [certain]

Soldiers within the CA ranks that have extensive civil-sector experience and skills, as a whole CA does not have the institutional knowledge required for the more complex aspects of nation building" (Unda 2009, 6). Using stability operations in West Africa, the force must understand stability requires interagency coordination, with subject matter expert civilians supplementing the manpower and resources of the DoD. This knowledge gap is the largest, yet mitigatable limitation of military stability operations.

Suitability

Civil Military Operations are not always employed in support of stability, as doctrine suggests that they do; this raises the question whether CMO are employed appropriately. For example, U.S. AFRICOM holds several annual training exercises on the continent to enhance interoperability with African Union countries; these operations frequently incorporate Civil Military Operations:

> The stated objective for U.S. AFRICOM's SOUTHERN ACCORD exercises that enhances the ability of the U.S. and Southern African Development Community Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) to plan, deploy, employ, sustain and redeploy forces in support of A.U./U.N.-mandated peace operations in a regional crisis. (USAFRICOM 2014)

In 2016, SOUTHERN ACCORD took place in South Africa, and employed a VETCAP, a type of CMO. However, contrary to doctrine, the VETCAP was not employed to support the military objective of stability, but for the endstate of "U.S. and TCCs to deploy, employ, and redeploy forces." Similarly, some CMO-type engagements are conducted for short-term security goals of "access and influence," rather than prioritizing long-term stability effects. Thus, some DoD stability-type operations may be applied for short-term security gains, not long-term stability. If the engagement is planned without prioritizing long-term stability, effects on stability may still be achieved, but equally

possible are deleterious effects on long-term stability. The suitability of using stability-type engagements for non-stability end states limits the likely outcomes of such engagements.

Chapter Conclusion

U.S. armed forces' doctrine is insufficient working knowledge to conduct stability operations but succeeds in laying out a robust framework to comprehend the difficulty of such operations, and encourage the service member to seek interagency support.

The effects of stability operations are likely as variable as the background knowledge and experience of the tactical level commanders conducting them. However, there is no definitive way to determine effectiveness of these operations due to lack of evaluation, difficulty in measuring effects, and a multitude of concurrent, non-military effects on stability.

However, it is logical that military engagements with partner-nation militaries strengthen that nation's security institution, and thus impact long-term stability. Equally, FHA engagements might logically mitigate the economic destabilizing effects of natural disaster or disease outbreaks, even if there is no data to support such a conclusion. Military stability operations focused on improving economic infrastructure and markets also likely effect long-term stability of an area, even if only localized. Other such engagements, such as rule-of-law and monetary policy are outside the expertise of the military to conduct without substantial civilian interagency partnership, and may have more limited effects on long-term stability.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Introduction

This thesis seeks to determine whether stability operations conducted by the Department of Defense can reasonably be expected to have any influence on a nation's long-term stability and examines whether such operations in West Africa should be continued. Unfortunately, this is a difficult question to answer directly. Generally, a simple experiment would answer such a question: a military operation is conducted in one country, while a similar country serves as a control. In such an experiment, the stability of the two countries would be analyzed at 1-, 5-, and 10-year intervals, and conclusions drawn about the military operation's impacts. However, even if such an experiment were run (given the ethical dilemmas), the factors contributing to a nation's stability are too numerous to count. Therefore, directly and conclusively proving whether any single military operation has direct effects on a country's stability is next to impossible.

Instead, an indirect approach proves more illuminating. Political economists studied more than 160 countries for similarities, and then monitored them for several decades; convincing patterns emerged between certain pre-existing characteristics and subsequent outbreaks of conflict. These pre-existing characteristics which are correlated with subsequent conflict are herein termed CPOC: characteristics predictive of conflict. Each CPOC represents a non-random relationship between the characteristics' presence and subsequent conflict. However, the mechanism of the relationship is not yet known with clarity.

CPOCs are valuable for those interested in stability. Their effects may result from any or all of: direct, indirect, second-order effects, or a series of interacting factors which causes the subsequent conflict. However, it is mathematically irrefutable that relationships exist between CPOCs and the onset of future conflict. Until such time that root causes of conflict have been determined, it is more logical to attempt to affect CPOCs to enhance stability rather than a state characteristic with no relationship with conflict.

To the busy reader who did not have the opportunity to fully absorb chapter 2, this thesis examines what is known about causes of stability and what evidence-based guidance military professionals might successfully incorporate into stability operations. The busy reader should also note at this point this paper only discusses stability as far as it pertains to insurgencies and civil war; its conclusions should not be over-extended.

There are several key factors which are strongly predictive of future insurgency incidence, which have been proven quantitatively beyond scientific doubt: state institutional capacity, economic factors, demography, and legacy of prior conflict. The literature has proven sufficiently robust to conclude that CPOCs in West Africa are analogous to those found elsewhere. The military commander can use a fluency in these key factors in tailoring their military stability operations in West African pre-conflict states.

Three CPOCs relate to states' institutional capacity: newly independent states are more prone to conflict; states with large and more-disciplined security forces are less prone to conflict; poorly governed states are more prone to conflict. Three CPOCs relate to states' economic factors: economic inequality leads to an increased incidence of

violent conflict; low personal incomes increase violent conflict incidence; sudden declines in income levels weaken the states' ability to prevent or end violent conflicts. Two demographic characteristics are reliable in predicting future conflict: populous countries are more prone to conflict; countries with so-called "youth bulges" (an increased population of males, aged 15-29) are more prone to conflict. The last CPOC is the legacy of prior conflicts: nearly half of all countries emerging from civil war see violence recrudesce in the five years after the original conflict.

These characteristics all predict future conflict, but some are associated with higher probability of conflict than others. Below, best practice recommendations are presented to the military commander given the relative effects of some CPOCs, and the ability of DoD stability operations to impact individual CPOCs.

Conclusions

Yes, the Department of Defense should continue to conduct military stability operations in West Africa, and other regions in the world of strategic interest. However, these military stability operations should be constrained to those focused on impacting CPOCs. While there is little hard evidence that military operations have direct effects on stability, it is possible that military stability operations could impact CPOCs, and thus affect long-term stability of a country.

Not all CPOCs are equally impacted by military operations, however. Below, each evidence-based CPOC is examined for applicability to the military stability professional, and best practices are recommended.

Despite much academic debate, there is consensus around characteristics which predict future conflict. The four major categories of characteristics predictive of future

conflict (CPOC) are: state institutional capacity, economic factors, demography, and legacy of prior conflicts. Each CPOC and their implications on military stability operations are discussed below. Other so-called "root causes of conflict" commonly espoused have been examined for validity in chapter 2 and found to have less objective support for predictive ability. For the military planner attempting to increase stability in a nation, it is more logical to attempt to affect CPOCs, rather than any of the anecdotal "root causes of conflict." However, as it becomes readily evident, some CPOCs are easier to effect with military stability operations than others. Nations of U.S. strategic interest should be monitored for CPOC development, then resources mobilized to impact CPOCs within a whole of government approach. As discussed in chapter 2, CPOCs are additive in nature, and thus nations with multiple CPOCs should be identified as objectively more prone to conflict than nations with one or fewer.

One such CPOC which is difficult for military stability operations to effect is demography changes. Demography changes can predicate future conflict: large (populous) countries are more prone to conflict; countries with so-called "youth bulges" are more prone to conflict. Quite clearly, changing population size and characteristics is outside the scope of ethical military stability operations. To the military planner, however, knowledge of the relationship between demography and future conflict is useful for predicting flashpoints within a military theater, geographic combatant command, or area of responsibility (AOR). A savvy military planner seeking to stabilize an AOR will watch for a sustained increase in the male population aged 15 - 29 and recognize an increased risk of conflict. According to the prioritization of the country within U.S. strategic goals, the military professional may then choose to mobilize resources within a

strategic response framework, or monitor the situation closely for other CPOCs to develop.

Another CPOC which is difficult for military operations to effect is legacy of prior conflict. Military interventions simply cannot change the past; they can neither undo the civil war nor change the fact the state is newly independent. Both characteristics are predictive of conflict. Despite not being able to change that the conflict took place, military engagements can impact some of the problematic facets of civil war legacies, such as the organizational and materiel legacies that make the return to conflict more likely. A focused effort on such legacies with military stability operations may thereby reduce the likelihood of future conflict stemming from this CPOC, as discussed below.

Organizational legacies of conflict such as lingering insurgent networks and infrastructure destruction are commonly addressed by special operations and civil military operations, respectively. Separating insurgent networks from the populations who support them is a classic mission for special operations forces (SOF) through using simultaneous influence operations and foreign internal defense operations. Special operations forces employed to disrupt insurgent networks in countries of strategic interest are likely to reduce recrudescence of conflict. Prioritizing these forces and operations in a nation with a history of civil war in the past five years is crucial to mitigating this CPOC, and potentially may reduce the likelihood of future conflict resulting from the organizational legacies of previous civil wars.

Legacy of prior conflict is also reflected in damaged critical infrastructure; fortunately, this is a reasonably simple CPOC to effect with military stability operations. DoD has substantial manpower, equipment and subject-matter expertise in horizontal and

vertical engineering projects to shore up critical infrastructure damaged during a recent civil war. However, not all construction is the same. The engineering expertise within tactical military engineers' and reservist civil affairs communities may not be directly applicable to long-term, resource-constrained, civilian environments. A whole-of-government approach is crucial to close this expertise gap. Infrastructure projects must engage stakeholders in the embassy country team, including USAID to prevent duplication of efforts, Department of State to ensure appropriate prioritization, and other interagency or international partners for technical expertise.

Other CPOCs are much easier to effect than demography shifts and prior conflict; those CPOCs associated with strength of state institutions are such an example. Poorly governed states are more prone to conflict; monitoring governance indices thus informs the commander where conflict is most likely to erupt. Using governance indexes published regularly may help the busy military commander quickly sift through a given AOR and predict states with greater likelihood of conflict. The World Bank Worldwide Governance Index is such a tool to examine trends in governance within individual countries or across regions. The index aggregates data from multiple reputable universities and think tanks to give the most accurate representation. However, only three of the index's categories relate directly to CPOC; these three are the most important for monitoring. "Political stability and absence of violence" captures perceptions of the likelihood of political conflict or politically-motivated violence. "Government effectiveness" captures perceptions of the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. "Regulatory quality" captures perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate

and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development (World Bank 2018). These three categories of the World Bank Worldwide Governance Index align well with "poor governance" CPOCs and thus a downturn in these categories will predict an increased likelihood of impending conflict.

Unfortunately, the Worldwide Governance Index is only published annually due to its aggregation of many sources to reduce pinpoint error; the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) is produced monthly and helps the military commander to more closely monitor at-risk countries in an AOR. Regrettably ICRG reports tend to be expensive unless institutional access is gained. ICRG variables which align with CPOC monitoring include: government stability (A), socioeconomic conditions (B), internal conflict (D), and the economic risk composite score. Monitoring countries in a given AOR on these four scores over time will reveal trends in a country's tendency towards or away from future conflict related to CPOCs and is as close to "real time" as possible.

As with demography and conflict legacy CPOCs, state institution CPOCs may be monitored to assist the military professional in predicting flashpoints in a given AOR. The state institution CPOCs are different, however, for the military commander is well-enabled to directly improve a partner nations' security institutions. The military commander may increase the number of military-to-military professional engagements in countries showing CPOCs. End state goals of these engagements should focus on enhancing military order and discipline.

It is crucial at this point to mention that militaries in other countries often have widely varied employment relative to DoD; it is imperative that ground-level U.S. forces understand and make recommendations within this new context. Often, foreign militaries

have a large domestic utilization, and thus offensive, force-on-force training is not always highly relevant nor appropriate. Additionally, many foreign nations do not actively physically control their entire territory due to lack of resources, which commonly leads to so-called ungoverned spaces, often used by insurgent organizations to consolidate and gain strength. Merely recommending more troops or better equipment, a common theme, will not suffice; wholly different tactics, emphasizing efficiency of force, must be developed in partnership with the partner nation. Ultimately, an unconventional solution may be devised, prioritizing the allocation of scant security resources. Determining tiers of a partner nation's territory, and prioritization of security assets may be necessary: terrain which cannot be lost at any cost (e.g.: the capitol city), terrain which is key to maintaining power such as regions with resources (e.g.: economic hubs, population centers, natural resource endowments), and terrain desirable to control, but not crucial (e.g.: sparsely populated austere terrain). Through annual exercises and stability engagements, a military solution to ensuring physical security of crucial regions given constrained-resource armed forces may be forged. Regardless of specifics, countries with poor security institutions are significantly more likely to progress towards violence and conflict. The U.S. military certainly can assist to develop nations with skills training, foreign military sales (FMS), and international military education funds (IMET) to reduce future conflict from such weak security institutions.

To bolster the state's security institutions, the combatant commander might also use the newly formed Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB). As of the time of this paper, none of these units has activated. However, the current concept is to utilize senior NCOs and officers with additional language, cultural, medical, and foreign-military

training to engage with partner nation forces to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of those partner nation forces (Lopez 2017). It is possible these brigades will effectively enhance the security institutions; the SFABs will be purpose-built and trained to do so. This is the clearest example of a DoD-led operation which can directly impact a CPOC, and thereby very likely reduce the probability of insurgency in that partner-nation.

It is reasonable that carefully planned military stability operations can impact CPOCs related to economic issues as well: economic inequality leads to an increased incidence of violent conflict; low personal incomes or declines in personal incomes increases violent conflict incidence; sudden declines in income levels weaken the states' ability to prevent or end violent conflicts. However, planning military stability operations for economic end states is particularly difficult for a military without depth of economic expertise. It is recommended that military commanders seeking to improve the economic CPOCs existing within a country do so in close conference with interagency partners such as USAID, U.S. Department of State, and the host nation's Ministry of Commerce (or equivalent) and local government officials.

If appropriate subject matter expertise is gained through partnership, the U.S. military has strength in providing manpower and expeditionary experts to enhance economic opportunity. It is imperative that any stability operation focused on economic outcomes reaches for broad-based economic growth; merely regional effects may be in fact, destabilizing. Medical, dental, and veterinary civic action projects are common methods of enhancing the health of a nation's labor force or increasing the efficiency of their agricultural industry. These projects are reasonably easy to conduct but can be thorny in ensuring that they are not disruptive to existing markets. For example, most

nations have some form of healthcare, and some form of a veterinary advisor. Delivery of these services by a qualified U.S. service member for free undermines the ability of the partner nation professional to demand fees for services. The service member may also conduct medical decisions differently, undermining the trusted relationship with partner nation professionals. It is important to note here that many junior U.S. military medical staff have scarce experience working with exotic diseases in resource-constrained environments and are thereby potentially less knowledgeable about regional illnesses than local healthcare providers. Partnership with local medical providers can reduce this gap, enhance knowledge transfer, and sustainably improve medical outcomes of the partner nation health system.

Recommendations

Military commanders can use CPOCs to identify nations and regions within their AOR which are more likely to encounter conflict. The four CPOCs with highest academic consensus are: weak state institutional capacity, economic factors, demography, and legacy of prior conflicts within the last five years. For the interested reader, these characteristics predictive of conflict (CPOC) were discussed at length in chapter 2. To measure these characteristics, the keen commander is referred to helpful resources such as the ICRG, World Bank WGI, and economic reports of nations of interest. Once high-risk nations are identified, resources can be prioritized based on U.S. national security interests. Resources should be focused on effects closely related to CPOCs present; resources focused elsewhere likely has little effect on stability of a nation.

For the nation with demography changes and few other CPOCs, there are few effects a military stability operation can reasonably achieve. However, with whole-of-

government effects and host nation support, it is possible that ethical effects can be achieved even in this sector.

For the nation with poor security institutions, military-to-military engagements are recommended, but with strong caveat. Principally in each partnered U.S. service member's mind must be, "we're not building a little U.S.A. here," but instead an appropriate and sustainable solution for the nation in which they find themselves conducting stability operations. Creative and analytical thinking, paired with extensive technical expertise, will be paramount in these troops to ensure recommendations are appropriate. Also, to be noted, military-to-military engagements to increase security institutional strength should emphasize military order and discipline.

This thesis is not the only document recommending military-to-military engagements to stabilize a country. However, such engagements should focus on increasing professionalism, order and military discipline in partner nations.

> While the Pentagon conducts training programs to promote professionalism and civilian control of these foreign militaries, it gives relatively less attention to broader security sector reform (SSR) – including the effort to ensure that military, police, and intelligence services and ministries are accountable to democratically-elected governments. (Patrick and Brown 2007, 15)

Such focus on discipline, professionalism, and accountability might strengthen the nation's security institution, especially if partnered with security sector reform. Such improvements are highly correlated with increased stability, as discussed in chapter 2. In fact, this is one engagement type which the DoD is well-suited which seems to have a dose-response relationship with stability: every increment increase in institutional strength incrementally increases stability. The savvy commander should leverage this CPOC for that unique ability.

For the nation with poor economic institutions, a strong interagency and whole-of-government effort must be made to ensure appropriate local expertise is paired with U.S. military manpower, equipment and skills. The annals of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom are littered with anecdotes regarding well-intended economic engagements gone awry. Partnerships with local partners and subject matter experts, often in Department of State or USAID, are crucial to preventing such errors in the future. Direct services provided by medical, dental, or veterinary professionals should be conducted in partnership with the partner nation's medical equivalents, medical teaching institutions (if present), and with a watchful eye towards potentially damaging an existing market.

For the nation with a legacy of prior conflict, military stability operations can alleviate the consequences of prior conflict. Often, a multifaceted approach is appropriate. SOF is keenly trained and equipped to identify and eradicate insurgent networks; while civil affairs is trained to isolate insurgent influence over civilian populations. Infrastructural damage due to prior conflict may be addressed by one of many military organizations. However, constructing a long-term civilian project differs in meaningful ways from short-term operational engineering projects. Partnering with local experts, USAID, or other experts within the U.S. Embassy to ensure proper planning is crucial to ensuring project suitability.

It is important to remark that some CPOCs cannot be directly influenced, such as demography. However the keen military commander can use all CPOCs to monitor their AOR, and prioritize stability resources. Leveraging what is known about CPOCs improves the efficiency of stability operations.

Even were it possible, not all conflict needs prevention; for example, regimes which perpetrate human rights abuses against their citizens, or countries without strategic interest to the U.S. A military leader might monitor the ICRG or similar stability indexes, then identify pending hotspots and realign available resources to minimize collateral risks to U.S. strategic interests in surrounding areas.

A mission-minded combatant commander may choose to identify countries of strategic interest, and simply align resources to conduct "access and influence" operations without consideration of long-term stability impact. While this approach does conform to short-term security objectives, it may patently interfere with USG efforts to enhance the long-term stability of the nation of strategic interest. Access and influence missions can be modified to simultaneously affect CPOCs with few additional resources; such efforts should be considered best practice.

According to JP 3-07, stability operations are conducted in all phases of the operation, including during consolidation of gains. To be clear, "consolidation of gains is not a synonym for stability, counter-insurgency, or nation-building," (U.S. Government 2017). However, the purpose of consolidation is to set the conditions for stability and transition to legitmate authorities. It is during consolidation operations where this thesis may inform the commander of large scale combat operations. After all, the above discussion is focused on preventing (recurring) conflict, which is the same position the commander of large-scale combat operations finds themselves in during consolidation operations. Consolidation operations thus should put special emphasis on affecting CPOCs: build and train partner-nation security forces and institutions; set the conditions for normalized and broad-based economic activity; interrupt insurgency networks;

provide essential health services broadly to enhance the health of the nation's labor force. The evidence-based approach to stability informs a military professional where the best return-on-investment may occur during the consolidation phase, and how to set conditions favoring stability. It should be noted that impacting CPOCs are not exclusive to the Army's primary stability tasks: establish civil security, establish civil control, restore essential services, support governance, support economic and infrastructure development, and conduct security cooperation. There is substanital overlap between the two; a well-informed commander will emphasize the Army stability tasks which overlap with CPOCs during the consolidation of gains. After all, how successful a major operation is remembered is often a reflection on how well gains were consolidated, and how successful the transition to long-term stability was achieved.

Final Thoughts

At the start of this study, there was much skepticism about what could be learned about "root causes of conflict," and even more regarding the possible "adjust fire" implications to military stability operations. However, given that mankind will likely not soon understand definitive "root causes of conflict," professionals who wish to prevent conflict must attempt to affect predictors of conflict. In the past, many stability missions were conducted in the antiquated model of "hearts and minds," where access and influence is paramount over long-term stability effects; the two are not mutually exclusive. Missions with strategic priority on access and influence can also be conducted in such a way to impact CPOCs; such missions are more likely to support the long term stability of a country than missions which omit this consideration. With an evidence-

based approach, presented here, the military commander is better prepared to impact long-term stability during stability operations.

The military is somewhat limited in which predictors of conflict military stability operations can impact. Best candidates are, in order: security force assistance missions to improve partner nation security institutions' expertise and discipline; special operations, including foreign internal defense and civil affairs' influence campaigns to disrupt insurgent networks, remaining from a prior conflict; and interagency engagements to bolster broad-based economic growth, such as infrastructure restoration, and medical, dental, and veterinary engagements designed to broadly improve the overall health of the national labor force. Some of these missions require substantial technical knowledge and regional experience; interagency cooperation is imperative to long-term mission success and partner nation stability.

In addition to these stability operations, the prepared military commander should monitor their AOR for CPOC development to anticipate hotspots and prioritize resources according to national security importance. The commander can then prioritize resources based on CPOC presence, and tailor engagements towards mitigating effects of CPOCs. By anticipating future conflict based on CPOC presence, then targeting resources to those CPOCs, it is very likely that U.S. military stability operations in West Africa and elsewhere will reduce future conflict. We will be able to take the first step towards a force without war.

> Grave security concerns can arise as a result of demographic trends, chronic poverty, economic inequality, environmental degradation, pandemic diseases . . . and other developments no state can control alone. Arms [alone] can't address such concerns.
>
> —Ban Ki-moon

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