Rethinking Third-Party Intervention into Insurgencies: The Logic of Commitment

A Monograph

by

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AY 2010

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED (From - To)
14-04-2010	SAMS Monograph	July 2009 – May 2010

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
Rethinking Third-Party Intervention into Insurgencies: The Logic of Commitment	
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
Major Zachary L. Miller (U.S. Army)	
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER
School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) 250 Gibbon Avenue Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134	

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027	CGSC
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

Since the end of World War II, there have been nearly one-hundred insurgencies of significant size, many of which featured interventions by third-party military forces. While many theories contribute to an explanation of why a government wins or loses a war, there is insufficient understanding of the role intervener commitment plays in the outcome. This monograph examines the mechanisms that translate an intervener's commitment into success or failure. When a third-party intervenes militarily in an insurgency on the side of the government, success is more likely when its commitment is understood in terms of resource levels. When the intervention is on the side of the insurgents, success is more likely when the intervener commits to defeating the incumbent government. It is important that the intervener consider its overall type of commitment and strategy for communicating that commitment, since these choices will engender different reactions from both the insurgent and counterinsurgent Choosing an appropriate strategy for intervention – and not simply deciding on the operational techniques the intervener will use to execute the intervention – significantly affects the implementers of policy, military or otherwise. Choosing the appropriate type of commitment and effectively communicating it to all parties becomes perhaps as important as the specific ways and means employed in execution of that strategy.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Insurgency, Third-Party Intervention, Civil War, Commitment, COIN, Yemen Civil War, Angolan Civil War, Internal Conflict

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: (U)			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Stefan J. Banach COL, U.S. Army
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	56	913-758-3302

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

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Title of Monograph: Rethinking Third-Party Intervention into Insurgencies: The Logic of Commitment

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Abstract

Rethinking Third-Party Intervention into Insurgencies: The Logic of Commitment by MAJ Zachary L. Miller, United States Army, 56 pages.

Since the end of World War II, there have been nearly one-hundred insurgencies of significant size, many of which featured interventions by third-party military forces. While many theories contribute to an explanation of why a government wins or loses a war, there is insufficient understanding of the role intervener commitment plays in the outcome. This monograph examines the mechanisms that translate an intervener's commitment into success or failure. This question is particularly salient to the United States, which has been a party to insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq for the better part of a decade. Furthermore, nearly every strategy document published since the beginning of these wars points to a future in which the American military and its allies remain engaged in insurgencies around the globe.

When a third-party intervenes militarily in an insurgency on the side of the government, success is more likely when its commitment is understood in terms of resource levels. When the intervention is on the side of the insurgents, success is more likely when the intervener commits to defeating the incumbent government. Put another way, the level of commitment can be conceptualized as a choice between helping the favored side win at all reasonable costs or to offer qualified support with defined limits. The latter is the more prudent approach when backing a government in the role of counterinsurgent.

While an actual intervention will likely take on some dynamic combination of these two poles as it unfolds over time, the choices a third party makes persist along this continuum. It is important that the intervener consider its overall type of commitment and strategy for communicating that commitment, since these choices will engender different reactions from both the insurgent and counterinsurgent. Interventions can increase or decrease the aggressiveness of both sides of an insurgency. While the obvious preference is to increase the aggressiveness of the favored side while decreasing that of the opposition, interveners may find that their strategic choices work at cross purposes, driving both sides to move in the same direction, though at different intensities.

Choosing an appropriate strategy for intervention – and not simply deciding on the operational techniques the intervener will use to execute the intervention – significantly affects the implementers of policy, military or otherwise. Most importantly, the decision affects the prospects for success or failure, regardless of whether the intervener is supporting the insurgents or the counterinsurgents. Choosing the appropriate type of commitment and effectively communicating it to all parties becomes perhaps as important as the specific ways and means employed in execution of that strategy.

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Introduction

On September 26, 1962, army officers in Yemen mounted a revolutionary coup against the country's leader, Imam Mohammed al-Badr. He escaped and quickly rallied the country's northern tribes to his cause. An insurgency ensued, fought between the royalist forces of the deposed Imam who hoped to restore the old order and the newly-declared republic. Republican leaders quickly appealed to Egypt for military assistance. Egypt committed itself to a five-year war that would prove unsuccessful and severely damage its own economy and military preparedness.

Following its independence from Portugal in 1975, war erupted in Angola over which of the rival independence parties would ultimately govern the country. As the war escalated, Cuba intervened on behalf of the government and South Africa did the same in support of the rival insurgent groups. By the end of 1976, one of the two major insurgent groups was completely defeated, South Africa was forced to withdraw, and the nascent government had gained significant legitimacy.

These insurgent wars are but two of many that have occurred since World War II. While both of these insurgencies featured military intervention by a third party, the results of the interventions were completely different. What part do the actions of an intervening government play in determining the outcome of an insurgency and more broadly, what constitutes an effective strategy of intervention? The key strategic choice an intervening nation makes is how to structure the interactions between itself and the combatants, and this interaction is moderated via the intervener's commitment.[1] Because the type of commitment is a significant part of the overall

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[1] Of course, the first strategic choice an intervener makes is to actually intervene. This decision is not normally a function of just ending the fighting – the intervener has a stake in who comes out on top, even if the victory is not decisive. Evaluating the potential of an intervention "depends on the divergence between the third party's preferred settlement and that which is expected to arise as a result of the relative strengths of the warring factions." See David Carment and Dane Rowlands, "Three's Company: Evaluating Third-Party Intervention in Intrastate Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 5 (1998): 580. If simply reducing the duration of the conflict is the impetus, then intervention may not be the best strategy.

strategy of intervention, it has a considerable effect on outcomes. This monograph inquires as to what type of commitment is most likely to result in a favorable resolution when a nation intervenes on one side of an insurgency.

This question is particularly salient to the United States, which has been a party to insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq for the better part of a decade. Furthermore, nearly every strategy document published since the beginning of these wars points to a future in which the American military and its allies remain engaged in insurgencies around the globe.[2] Since the end of World War II, there have been nearly one hundred insurgencies of significant size, many of which featured interventions by third-party military forces.[3] While many theories contribute to an explanation of why a government wins or loses a war, there is insufficient understanding of the role intervener commitment plays in the outcome. This monograph aims to add to systemic understanding by examining the mechanisms that translate an intervener's commitment into success or failure.

When deciding on an overall course of intervention, it is crucial to decide how to structure the exchange relationship between the intervener and the internal combatants. This relationship is best conceptualized as a choice between committing to help the favored side win at all reasonable costs, or alternatively committing to provide qualified support with defined limits. This is a choice between committing to the outcome and committing to the inputs, and it can have

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Unilateral interventions tend to lengthen the expected life of a conflict, interventions supporting one side are associated with shorter conflicts relative to neutral interventions and in general most interventions appear to be incapable of reducing the expected length of a conflict. See Regan and Abouharb, "Interventions and Civil Conflicts: Tools of Conflict Management Or Simply another Participant?" *World Affairs* 165, no. 1 (2002): 42.

[2] See, for example, the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report's emphasis on succeeding in counterinsurgency in environments ranging from densely populated urban areas and mega-cities, to remote mountains, deserts, jungles and littoral regions as well as the 2008 National Defense Strategy's support for partners who are countering insurgencies.

[3] For a full listing see David C. Gompert and John Gordon IV, eds., *War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008).

profound effects on the resolution of the conflict.[4] Only after deciding on the type of

commitment should policymakers consider how to best implement this choice.[5]

Choosing an appropriate strategy for intervention – and not simply deciding on the

operational techniques the intervener will use to execute the intervention – significantly affects

the implementers of policy, military or otherwise. Most importantly, the decision affects the

overall prospects for success or failure, regardless of whether the intervener is supporting the

insurgents or the counterinsurgents. If the purpose of intervention in an insurgency is to allow the

favored side to build sufficient capabilities and capacities to effectively govern while

simultaneously discouraging the other side, then it is important to consider the incentives the

intervention strategy creates for both sides of the conflict. Choosing the appropriate type of

commitment and effectively communicating it to all parties becomes perhaps as important as the

specific ways and means employed in execution of that strategy.

International intervention has long been a part of global politics, even predating the

modern state system.[6] Some go so far as to claim that all of international politics is only

intervention in various forms and degrees of politeness.[7] Interveners have been superpowers and

regional powers, democracies and non-democracies. The countries they intervened in have been

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[4] Of course, even the strongest outcome-based commitment is limited in the amount of moral, political and material/economic support it can deliver. Likewise, intervening governments will attempt to maximize the relative importance of even a limited input-based commitment. This monograph will attempt to show how an understanding of these conditions factors into combatants' actions and the resulting outcomes.

[5] Strategies are operationalized through concepts such as clear-hold-build; security sector reform; security force assistance; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and combined action. See Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-24, Counterinsurgency Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009) and Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006). The literature on intervention is also replete with maxims about the importance of selecting "the most appropriate, most indirect and least intrusive form of intervention that will still have a high probability of achieving the necessary effect." See *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, 2009), 40. This quote nicely sums up a line of thinking that has been pervasive in the literature for decades.

[6] Ann Hironaka, *Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 25-6.

[7] See, for instance, Stanley Hoffman, "The Problem of Intervention," in *Intervention in World Politics*, ed. Hedley Bull (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

both distant ones and neighboring ones, and they have supported both incumbent regimes and insurgent movements.[8] As rational actors, states intervene because they believe it is in their best interest to do so. They may ultimately be incorrect in their estimate of interests involved or they may be incapable of affecting the outcome they seek; but in every case, regardless of success or failure, the intervention affects both the societies they fight over and their own. For this reason it is worth understanding what makes for an appropriate intervention strategy.

Without an intervention strategy explicitly understood in terms of commitment, it is possible that those executing the intervention might apply operational approaches incongruent with how policy makers view their commitment. It is also possible that the policy makers themselves do not fully understand how their choices will influence the combatants – friend or foe. Finally, interventions tend to be a significant investment of human and materiel resources that affect not only the military personnel fighting, but also the fate of the political, social and economic fortunes of the intervening state and the target state. In the words of James Rosenau, one of the most influential scholars in the field of international affairs, "one needs only a modicum of humanity to be concerned about the question of when and how it is appropriate for one international actor to intervene in the affairs of another."[9]

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[8] Bruce W. Jentleson and Ariel E. Levite draw attention to the fact that historically speaking there is no archetypal interventionist state and no single type of conflict that draws intervention in "The Analysis of Protracted Foreign Military Intervention," in *Foreign Military Intervention: The Dynamics of Protracted Conflict*, ed. Ariel E. Levite, Bruce W. Jentleson and Larry Berman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 3. The literature also contains significant advice which may be prudent in an ideal world, but little of which is practicable: "intervene only if there is a high probability of success;" "avoid intervening without high confidence it will be relatively brief and inexpensive;" "avoid committing ground forces;" and "secure authorization by the United Nations or other international organization." But even if these ideas are adhered to, they do not help describe what strategy to take *after* the decision to intervene is made. See James Winnefeld et al., *Intervention in Intrastate Conflict: Implications for the Army in the Post-Cold War Era* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1995), 31-33.

[9] James N. Rosenau, "Intervention as a Scientific Concept," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 13, no. 2 (1969): 149. He also argues, "Intervention is the international form of the most pressing moral issues to be found in any community. It involves the human spirit, the liberty of individuals, the structure of groups, the existence of order. It can undermine or enhance the dignity of people and it can facilitate or inhibit their capacity to realize their aspirations and work out their own destinies."

In both theoretical literature and empirical assessments, there is significant research on why third-party nations intervene in internal conflict, what side they intervene on behalf of and the effect the intervention has on the level and duration of conflict.[10] This literature most commonly focuses on the internal characteristics of the conflict or on the effects the conflict has on external actors.[11] Other literature takes the decision to intervene as a given and focuses on the types of activities the military employs during the intervention. However, there is limited focus on the importance commitment type plays in bringing about increased stability. The literature does not adequately focus on the characteristics of the intervention strategy vice the nature of the conflict, giving insufficient scrutiny to the fact that once a nation makes the decision to intervene, there are important strategic choices the leaders must make before deciding what specific military ways and means it will employ.

The choice of an outcome-based or input-based strategy links the decision to intervene to the operational approaches through the type of commitment the intervener espouses to those directly fighting the war. In a certain sense, the commitment *is* the strategy. This is true because

[10] The specific objectives which drive a country to intervene may include: territorial acquisitions; regional stability; protection of the intervener's diplomatic, economic or military interests; ideology; human rights concerns; and in a few cases to destabilize the local environment so as to bring about a more appealing set of relationships. See Robert Cooper and Mats Berdal, "Outside Interventions in Ethnic Conflicts," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1993) and Frederic S. Pearson, "Foreign Military Interventions and Domestic Disputes," *International Studies Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (1974). Others focus on intervention in response to other interveners, intervention based on convergent or divergent interests with the government and structural factors in the country from an interests perspective. See Michael G. Findley and Tze Kwang Teo, "Rethinking Third-Party Interventions into Civil Wars: An Actor-Centric Approach," *Journal of Politics* 68, no. 4 (2006): 830-36. Some answer the question of whether to intervene with a resounding "almost never." Edward Luttwak suggests, "Too many wars nowadays become endemic conflicts that never end because the transformative effects of both decisive victory and exhaustion are blocked by outside intervention." See Edward N. Luttwak, "Give War a Chance," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 4 (1999): 44.

[11] In addition to studies already cited, see Dyaln Balch-Lindsay and Andrew J. Enterline, "Killing Time: The World Politics of Civil War Duration, 1820-1992," *International Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2000); Michael E. Brown, *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996); Charles A. Kupchan, "Getting in: The Initial Stages of Military Intervention," in *Foreign Military Intervention: The Dynamics of Protracted Conflict*, ed. By Ariel E. Levite, Bruce W. Jentleson and Larry Berman (New York: Routledge, 2007); Patrick M. Regan, "Substituting Policies during U.S. Intervention in Internal Conflicts: A Little of This, a Little of That," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 1 (2000); Partick M. Regan, Choosing to Intervene: Outside Intervention in Internal Conflicts," *Journal of Politics* 60, no. 3 (1998); Richard Connaughton, *Military Intervention in the 1990s: A New Logic of War* (London: Routledge, 1992); and Barbara Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

images matter. Not only do political leaders care what others perceive their intentions to be, but they also recognize important differences between "you have our support up to a point" and "you have our unqualified support for anything you might attempt." In short, it matters how one expresses a commitment.[12]

Key Concepts

Three key concepts drive the mechanisms that motivate the outcome-versus-input argument: third-party intervention in insurgencies, the consequences of choosing between outcome-based and input-based strategies, and commitment. The first task of explaining how these concepts work together to affect the outcome of a conflict is clearly a conceptual one, and this monograph will first present and illustrate the relationship between these concepts. Next, it will apply the argument to four case studies, and finally it will draw conclusions from these case studies and offer recommendations for policy makers and military leaders. Through this methodology, the monograph will demonstrate that it is not necessary to consider every insurgency so unique that explaining their outcomes becomes an exercise in describing what made each one exceptional in nature. Rather, the concepts introduced here create a logic that yields reasonably predictable responses from all parties to the insurgency.

Insurgency and Intervention

This study examines insurgencies, phenomena within the larger milieu of internal conflict.[13] Precisely defining insurgency can be difficult, and while much of the literature uses the term interchangeably with "civil war" or simply "internal conflict," it is worth describing exactly what insurgency is, in order to apply to results of this study to the correct problems. Joint

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[12] David A. Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 103. Baldwin initially applied this concept to how states influence others with economic policies, but the same set of inducements and incentives applies to non-economic activities such as military action.

[13] This study defines a conflict as internal "when it is primarily generated and waged between different groups expressing grievances over the distribution of political and economic power within a single state." See Andrea K. Talentino, *Military Intervention After the Cold War: The Evolution of Theory and Practice* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 10.

military doctrine defines insurgency as "the organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority."[14] Though not all insurgencies work within the political system, the balance of power vis-à-vis the incumbent government usually drives them to the mechanisms of insurgency in order to address their grievances. The use of insurgency allows time to gain public, external and material support while eroding the incumbent's will, influence, and power.

Describing what constitutes intervention can be somewhat contentious since almost any action affecting outcomes may be classified as intervention. While this monograph specifically examines intervention with military forces, it is useful to frame the larger environment of interventionist activities so that inferences and conclusions can be placed into context. Intervention is to interfere, frequently with force or the threat of force, in another nation's internal affairs.[15] Interstate war – armed conflict between states or nations – is intended to transform the international order while intervention is an attempt to affect the domestic affairs of a state. Rather than a central objective of territorial conquest, interventions focus on the political authority structure.[16] Other authors broadly conceptualize intervention as the attempt of one state to alter the domestic politics of another.[17]

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[14] *Joint Publication 3-24, Counterinsurgency Operations*, I-1. While the exact grievances giving rise to an insurgency vary greatly, they generally exhibit some combination of desire for: political change, government overthrow, resistance against outside actors, or eliminating political control in an area. Insurgents may use a wide variety of strategies, in some cases seeking external intervention in order to drive political change. Some insurgencies may receive safe haven or materiel support from neighboring territories, effectively creating external links to internal problems, or outsiders may use influence to encourage rebellion. Nevertheless, the conflict is still primarily internal in nature and is clearly differentiated from interstate conflict. Also see Talentino, *Military Intervention After the Cold War,* for a discussion of this point.

[15] Hoffman, "The Problem of Intervention," 10. Also see note 7.

[16] Oran R. Young, "Intervention and International Systems," *Journal of International Affairs* 22, no. 2 (1968): 177-8. Interstate war is also concerned with the political structure of the target state, but as a way to achieving territorial conquest. The essential difference here (with insurgencies) is the focus on political structure as the ends.

[17] See, for instance, Douglas J. Macdonald, *Adventures in Chaos: American Intervention for Reform in the Third World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 44.

At the operational level, interventions are convention breaking and they are authority targeted. Convention breaking discriminates between normal international influences and "those relatively few forms of influence peddling we label interventions."[18] Authority targeted means that it is "directed at changing or preserving the structure of political authority in the target society."[19] Even if we define these two criteria precisely, the conceptual boundaries of the term remain vague. For example, if what Stanley Hoffman terms "non-acts" (activities that many would not consider intervention) are assessed in terms of effects rather than processes, then even they could be considered intervention.[20] This study bounds intervention at a much higher threshold than Hoffman's "non-acts," as discussed below.

In many conflicts, the intervener chooses sides, applying a bias to its actions. Unlike interventions whose main aim is to effect a cessation of hostilities, biased interventions apply force to alter how resources are divided, favoring one side at the expense of the other.[21] This monograph examines these biased interventions. However, bounding intervention at biased ones does not sufficiently narrow the universe of interventions to those of greatest concern for the military; further selection is necessary. An additional way to categorize interventions is by the means used to implement the policy.[22] Bard O'Neill disaggregates external support into four

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[18] Patrick Regan, *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Outside Intervention in Intrastate Conflict* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000)*,* 9.

[19] James Rosenau, "The Concept of Intervention," *Journal of International Affairs* 22 (1968): 167.

[20] See Hoffman, "The Problem of Intervention." Richard Little suggests that any definition "wide enough to take in all the meanings attached to the word will be masked by imprecision." In effect, examining every form of behavior that could possibly be considered intervention will not help to discern a concept. Hence the need to bound this study with relative precision. See Richard Little, *Intervention: External Involvement in Civil Wars* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 2. Military interventions reflect only a small portion in the larger field of intervention, with other strategies ranging from "verbal intervention" and other declaratory diplomacy, to economic aid and sanctions, to intelligence activities, covert action, to lesser military strategies such as training, advisors. See Little, 8-11.

[21] Dane Rowlands and David Carment, "Force and Bias: Towards a Predictive Model of Effective Third-Party Intervention," *Defence and Peace Economics* 17, no. 5 (2006): 437.

[22] There are a number of ways to describe and categorize intervention strategies. Patrick Regan suggests categories of economic, military, or mixed in *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers*, 5. The United States Government has adopted the categories of containment, engagement, and compellence [*sic*] in *U.S.*

categories: moral, political, material and sanctuary. The most substantial mode of support, and most meaningful for the military, is material. It includes money, weapons, ammunition, medical supplies, fire support and combat units and grows in importance as the scale and intensity of violence increases.[23] David Carment and Dane Rowlands propose that interventions can take on one of three levels of commitment and may progress between levels: remain aloof from the conflict with no military involvement, low-intensity conventional peacekeeping mission, or forceful intervention that requires substantial and favorable military capabilities.[24] This monograph's focus is the latter category. Specifically, it addresses intervention of the most obvious and most intrusive form – the involvement of military forces. In these interventions, military power serves a principal role; forces are actively engaged in imposing a settlement; and the use of force is permissible for more than self-defense.[25]

    At the strategic level, the goal of intervening is to affect the calculus of the belligerent parties by shifting the factors that are necessary for success. The overall goal of intervention is to make it too costly for one or both sides to continue fighting.[26] Intervention is attractive because

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Government Counterinsurgency Guide, 41-43. The latter category includes traditional military options such as externally enabled indigenous forces, airpower, and forced-entry campaigns with ground forces.

[23] Bard E. O'Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts, eds., *Insurgency in the Modern World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 15. Material support can be broken down further; for the purposes of this study, subcategories are illustrative but not essential as elements of the analysis. Alex Schmid proposes perhaps the most detailed breakdown of military support in Alex P. Schmid, *Soviet Military Interventions since 1945* (Netherlands: State University of Leiden, 1985), 123.

    Types of military assistance: arms donations, arms sales, cash donations for arms sales, supplying mercenaries, training local forces locally, training local forces in friendly countries, supplying specialist forces for peacetime operations, building defense infrastructure, providing satellite and other intelligence to local military, maintenance of military equipment.

    Types of military intervention: peacetime stationing of troops as deterrent against third parties, providing body guards and palace guards to local government, military mission at headquarters for planning local operations without direct combat participation, combat participation of foreign special forces, "volunteers" serving in combat, "regular troops" engaged in combat, providing naval or air protection in or near combat zone, mobilization or troop movements in border areas, special weapons supplies during combat phase, armed blockades, providing logistics for combatants.

[24] Carment and Rowlands, "Three's Company," 577.

[25] Talentino, *Military Intervention After the Cold War,* 13.

[26] Patrick M. Regan, "Conditions of Successful Third-Party Intervention in Intrastate Conflicts," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 2 (1996): 341.

the willingness of the parties in a civil conflict to reach a settlement is often a function of the balance of capabilities, and one of the most effective ways to alter this balance is through outside intervention.[27] A conflict can be viewed as a bargaining situation in which information is gained through all of the actions taken on and off the battlefield, and outside interventions can have an effect on the transmission and content of that information. Therefore, the strategy the intervener adopts and communicates is crucial because it transfers information to both sides about the preferences and intentions of the intervener. The strategy affects estimates each side makes concerning the probability of success and the costs associated with continuing to fight.

This effect is especially strong when the intervention is in an insurgency, as there is a striking correlation between insurgent victory and external assistance, compared to insurgent loss in the absence of foreign intervention.[28] This only makes sense, because even fully-committed insurgents will not be able to win without material resources. Bard O'Neill identifies external support as one of six variables, the relative weights of which determine the insurgents' strategy of politics and violence. He notes that in cases where only low levels of outside intervention were necessary for insurgent success, the insurgents benefited from favorable conditions with respect to the other variables.[29] Jeffrey Record goes a step further and prioritizes support from

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[27] Roy E. Licklider calls this an "attractive alternative" for third parties who would otherwise leave the outcome to chance in *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 311.

[28] Jeffrey Record, "External Assistance: Enabler of Insurgent Success," *Parameters* 36, no. 3 (2006): 42. Record also notes that weaker side victories almost always rest on some combination of stronger political will, superior strategy, and foreign help and that external assistance is a common enabler of victorious insurgent wars, though certainly no guarantee of success in Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2009).

[29] O'Neill, *Insurgency in the Modern World*, 16. The six variables are: popular support, organization, cohesion, external support, the environment, and the effectiveness of the government. O'Neill later combined organization and cohesion into "organization and unity" in Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), 115-138.

interveners as the most important variable, noting "assistance can alter the insurgent-government power ratio even to the point where the insurgency becomes the stronger side."[30]

Other theories of insurgent success abound: the insurgents win because they wage a total war and their enemy wages a limited war;[31] insurgents use a superior strategy of protracted irregular warfare against a conventional adversary;[32] or insurgencies win against democracies because democracies have trouble engaging in a level of violence and brutality necessary to ensure victory.[33] But none of these theories of insurgent success (or conversely, government defeat) explain the mechanisms through which they translate external support into these outcomes. There is clearly a psychological aspect that intervention introduces into this milieu, one that is largely missing from the debate over intervention strategy. If the intervener takes on the role of counterinsurgent, an understanding of these dynamics serves them equally well. Their operations must limit the external support afforded the insurgents and counter signals of support for the insurgents by creating a new set of expectations amongst all actors. Furthermore, this theoretical need for material support, which seems to be well documented in the literature, does not address the manner in which an intervener commits to and delivers such support. Since many insurgencies end well before the relative power has switched, there must be other dynamics at work. These dynamics create expectations in the minds of all parties to the conflict based not

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[30] Record, "External Assistance," 36. Statistical support for this claim is provided in Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson III, "Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars," *International Organization* 63, no. 1 (2009): 67-106 and Gompert and Gordon, *War by Other Means*.

[31] Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics* 27, no. 2 (1975). Also discussed in James S. Corum, *Bad Strategies: How Major Powers Fail in Counterinsurgency* (Minneapolis, MC: Zenith Press, 2008), 243: "Insurgencies might be total war for the insurgent, but for the counterinsurgent they are often limited wars and wars of choice." This raises the question of how much a nation is willing to pay before its own public can no longer be convinced that the fight is in its national interest.

[32] Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[33] Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15.

only on what support has been rendered, but also largely on the expectation of the type and intensity of future support.

Before leaving the concept of intervention, a brief discussion of legal norms is in order since selection of intervention strategy is intertwined with issues of legality, particularly in democracies. In the long history of interventionist activities, it is only since the French Revolution of 1789 that the international community has questioned its legitimacy. Following this watershed event, the principle of non-intervention developed in order to protect nascent nations from traditional European monarchies.[34] However, application of this general legal principle is rarely straightforward since there is no single body of law that is in any way binding on potential interveners. The fundamental presumption is that sovereign governments have the right to hold the monopoly of force in their domains, and therefore third parties can legitimately intervene only when asked by the incumbent government. However, when the government's control and authority erode sufficiently, there is ambiguity over who is actually the legitimate authority. Therefore, the current presumption is that third-party interveners can support whomever they recognize as legitimate.[35] The implications for the argument presented here is that countries face relatively few impediments in strategy selection based on legal conventions covering intervention.[36]

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[34] Hans J. Morgenthau, "To Intervene or Not to Intervene," *Foreign Affairs* 45, no. 3 (1967): 425.

[35] Marie O. Lounsbery and Frederic Pearson, *Civil Wars: Internal Struggles, Global Consequences* (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 86. Also see Talentino, *Military Intervention After the Cold War*.

[36] Today the principle of sovereignty prevails with far less clarity than under previous legal theory. Two trends exist: one that has transformed intervention from a tool of politics to one of conflict resolution, and a more theoretical one that has redefined important conceptual ideas like security and sovereignty. See Talentino, *Military Intervention After the Cold War,* 93. This has tended to recast sovereignty as a responsibility the government has to the governed, and made it acceptable for the international community to take action when states fail in their duties. In a crisis, the "principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect." See Ramesh Thakur, "Outlook-Intervention, Sovereignty, and the Responsibility to Protect," *Security Dialogue* 33, no. 3 (2002): 330. See A. Mark Weisburd, *Use of Force: The Practice of States since World War II* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 315-322 for thorough analysis of state practices and formulations of the international law of force since World War II. Though these conceptualizations of legal norms are commonly understood today, they

Outcome and Input Strategies

The choice between an outcome-based and input-based strategy links the decision to intervene to the operational approaches. Directly or indirectly, the intervener espouses one of these two strategies to those directly fighting the insurgency, which in turn affects their behaviors. While it is not possible to know all the mechanisms that link "X to Y," it is possible to identify some of the most important ones. By identifying these mechanisms and then examining how they unfolded in case studies, it is possible to shift focus from the outcome to the process. Some argue that this understanding of process is actually more important than the ability to explain the outcome.[37]

In attempting to understand how insurgencies unfold, this approach may not tell the entire narrative, but it does account for an important part of that narrative. Again, the choice is between committing to help the favored side win at all reasonable costs or, alternatively committing to provide qualified support with defined limits. This is a choice between committing to the outcome and committing to the inputs. When applied to insurgency, outcome and input-based commitments are "ideal types" in the Weberian sense – the exact phenomenon will not be found in their pure form anywhere in reality, but they serve as useful ways to think about the categories of activities that do take place.[38]

Recent scholarship has applied the phenomena of committing to either a specific goal or the resources one is willing to expend in pursuit of that goal to other highly complex, competitive

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are a result of an evolutionary process and past intervention decisions were made and understood in a different light.

[37] See Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[38] Weber describes an ideal type as "formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct. In its conceptual purity, this construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality." Max Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science" in Max Weber, *The Methodology Of The Social Sciences*, ed. and trans. by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), 89.

environments. It finds that while these situations were more than a simple choice between input and outcome strategies, "considering the situation in terms of this choice helps to explain why things happened the way they did, as well as how the players may have improved their outcomes by acting differently."[39]

In a certain sense, the commitment *is* the strategy. This explanation of commitment as strategy rests on the presumption that the type of commitment affects the "will" of the primary combatants.[40] The commitment, therefore, affects combatant will in different ways based on the situation they find themselves. The mechanisms for each of these situations are described below.

Supporting the Government with an Outcome Commitment

In a theoretical model of outcome and input strategies, Nolan Miller demonstrated that outcome setting makes both the government and insurgents less aggressive. The government knows that if it avoids taking responsibility the intervener will provide the shortfall capabilities, significantly reducing the government's incentive to expend its own resources. The insurgents also know that an increase in their activity will result in an increase from either the government or the intervener, should the government decline to commit more resources; this also reduces the insurgent's incentive to escalate. Hence, Miller suggests that a win-at-all-costs philosophy makes all parties less aggressive. The model suggests that when the benefits of a less aggressive insurgency outweigh the cost of a less aggressive government, outcome-based commitment will

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[39] Nolan Miller and Amit Pazgal, "Budget Or Target: The Choice between Input and Output Strategies," *RAND Journal of Economics* 37, no. 2 (2006): 392-411. Situations examined were the space race, research and development budgets and corporate negotiations. Also, "depending on which posture is adopted, the other parties to the relationship will react differently, and this may cause the players to prefer one posture to the other." The extension of these economic concepts to insurgency is appropriate because when the stakes are high and there are relatively few constituencies, as in most insurgencies, it is reasonable to expect them to act strategically vis-à-vis one another. See Kevin Siqueira, "Conflict and Third-Party Intervention," *Defence and Peace Economics* 14, no. 6 (2003): 399.

[40] There are problems with motivational explanations of outcomes in war. The tautological trap is to infer the intensity of will from the results of the war. In most cases, the balance of interests "inherently favors the underdog, and therefore so does the balance of motivation." It is also difficult to choose a bellwether for the "feelings, strength, motivation, and interests… of the protagonists." See Michael P. Fischerkeller, "David Versus Goliath: Cultural Judgments in Asymmetric Wars," *Security Studies* 7, no. 4 (1998): 1.

be the superior strategy.[41] If this condition is not met, as is usually the case when the government is the favored side, then there may be several negative consequences.

When one power decides to intervene in another state and is determined to prevail, there are three important possibilities. It can increase the supported side's freedom of action, leading to behavior that the intervener does not want. Second, this commitment may reduce the incentives for other third parties to promise assistance. Finally, outcome commitments may provoke the adversary by threatening it or by "inflating what it will gain if it prevails (because the victory would damage the patron state's reputation)."[42] In general, these effects can be termed counterproductive actions, lessening the likelihood for other third-party involvement and targeting the reputation of the intervener.

The adverse effects of inappropriately choosing an outcome-based commitment in an intervention can also be expressed as what Douglas Macdonald terms the "commitment trap." The paradox he describes emanates from the differing ways commitment is used with allies and adversaries. To deter an adversary, the intervener wants to be unambiguous in his commitment to a future line of action. However, to influence the favored side on whose behalf the actor is intervening, it is better to be ambiguous so that they can encourage self-sufficiency or threaten to leave if certain policies are not pursued. "The paradox of power relations occurs because the exigencies of the former largely obviate the possibilities of the later," and it is through this paradox that choosing between outcome and input strategies becomes crucial in shaping the outcome of the insurgency.[43]

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[41] Nolan Miller, "Outcome Commitments in Third-Party Intervention: Theory and Application to U.S. Policy in Iraq" (Cambridge, MA: Faculty Research Working Paper Series, 2008): 32. Miller also demonstrates via Nash equilibrium that the effect is robust, to the inclusion of several extensions: uncertainty, cross-effects, and different objective functions.

[42] Robert Jervis, "Systems and Interaction Effects," in *Coping with Complexity in the International System*, ed. Jack Snyder and Robert Jervis (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 42.

[43] Macdonald, *Adventures in Chaos,* 67. Also see Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 431.

All interveners seek to avoid having the side they support ignore the reality of what is occurring because they feel they can pass responsibility on to their supporters. Outcome-based commitments have the potential to do just that. The commitment trap makes it difficult to disengage from an intervention, allows the incumbent government to pass responsibility on to the intervener and makes the government less aggressive since the intervener's commitment requires them to fill any shortfalls.

Supporting the Government with an Input Commitment

Because the balance of power almost always favors the government forces over those of the insurgents, the mechanisms discussed above suggest that an intervention favoring the government should pursue an input-based strategy. The intervener's commitment to augmenting government forces, rather than substituting for them, will drive a different set of choices by the conflict's belligerents. It will help to encourage rather than discourage capacity building and self-sufficiency within the government since they will not feel they can rely as heavily on the intervener to indefinitely come to their aid. Insurgents will have more difficulty targeting the reputation of the intervener and will find it no less costly to escalate their activity against the combined forces of the government and the intervener. An input commitment will also lessen the psychological barrier to withdrawal or reduction of inputs that an intervener often faces when involving itself in an insurgency.

Supporting the Insurgent with an Outcome Commitment

An outcome-based commitment is more desirable when favoring the insurgent, which is typically the weaker military force.[44] This type of commitment implies that the insurgent and its intervening client will match any increased government activity. The relatively weaker insurgent group will be emboldened since they know the intervener will underwrite its capability shortfalls;

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[44] See Gompert and Gordon, *War by Other Means*. Their analysis shows that since World War II incumbent governments have almost always held the balance of power advantage.

and if effective, the government's aggressiveness may wane when it realizes that its actions only serve to increase the overall level of activity.

An outcome commitment to the government is self-defeating, in part, because it allows the incumbent to feel that they can pass responsibility on to its supporters.[45] This psychological effect is actually advantageous if the favored side is significantly weaker, as is initially the case for insurgents. Ultimately, the intervener wants to: reverse the relative balance of power so that the insurgent has the advantage, build confidence in the insurgency, embolden insurgent activity and underwrite their shortfalls. Outcome commitments to insurgents significantly contribute to all of these goals.

Supporting the Insurgent with an Input Commitment

If an intervener only commits to inputs for the insurgent, it forgoes most of the aforementioned advantages of an outcome-based commitment. The government's aggressiveness is less likely to be tempered since it does not feel as strong a threat from the intervener. This will accentuate any capability or capacity shortfalls already exhibited by the insurgent. It will reduce the assertiveness of an insurgency that feels aggressive behavior may threaten its existence. And in many cases it will still leave the insurgent under-resourced for the military and political tasks at hand. In cases where government and insurgent forces are fairly evenly matched, these effects may not be as pronounced. This fact emphasizes the importance of understanding the exact circumstances of each insurgency and serves as a reminder that commitment decisions must persist along a continuum.

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[45] See discussion in Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 5-52. If a good or service is provided regardless of one's actions, it is logical to be inactive.

**Summary of Strategies and Mechanisms
(Ideal Types)**

Supported Side	Outcome Commitment	Input Commitment
Government	Counterproductive government actions Reduce other third-party contributions Reputation targeting by insurgent Commitment trap Decreased government aggressiveness	Encourage self-sufficiency Force augmentation Easier exit for intervener
Insurgent	Balance of power reversal Confidence building Emboldened insurgent activity Intervener underwrites shortfalls	Government aggressiveness Insurgent reluctance Insurgent under-resourced

stance of the others with which it is interacting. But we cannot predict the results from only

looking at the type and quantity of support the intervener gives in relation to the threat (the non-

favored side of the insurgency). Simply put, the strategy must depend on the strategies of others

so that actors can "appreciate both the degree to which their strategies are sensitive to those of

others and the ability of the adversary to change its behavior in reaction to what the actor is

doing."[46] The practical, and frequently observed, implication is that if a commitment drives one

side to escalate, the other may be forced to do the same.[47] The introduction of ground forces, a

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[46] Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 45. In an open system, the manifestations of intervener behavior "can neither be assumed static over the course of the conflict, nor independent of other interveners." See Findley and Teo, "Rethinking Third-Party Interventions into Civil Wars," 836. Also, deciding on one line of action will trigger decisions from competitors and change the lines of action available to each of the competing actors. See E. Abramson et al., "Social Power and Commitment: A Theoretical Statement," *American Sociological Review* 23, no. 1 (1958): 16.

[47] Rowlands and Carment, "Force and Bias," 451. Also noted in Siqueira, "Conflict and Third-Party Intervention," 390: "Policy can frequently have unintended effects if the third party does not have precise information as to where the fighting factions stand in relations to one another in terms of the conflict. Intervention in favor of the government can lead to an overall increase in the combined efforts of both parties."

threshold that is a difference in kind rather than degree of intervention, will likely "trigger a set of reactions along all three dimensions – international, intervener-domestic and target-indigenous – which alters the environment in and over which the intervener seeks to exert influence."[48] Many of those reactions will be ones that the intervener did not or could not expect to have happened. These changes extend over time and have multiple effects, reinforcing the fact that it is almost impossible to act on one part of a complex system without affecting other parts in unpredictable ways.

In political activity such as war these connections are often harder to discern, but their existence guarantees that most actions, no matter how well targeted, will have multiple effects. As an example, if military action of a given sort has yielded insufficient effects, supporters will often ask for increased effort. The logic inherent in this is simple – if a little military force or economic aid has done some good, then more will create even greater effects – but flawed. The very use of the instrument has changed the environment. These are the complexities involved in choosing an intervention strategy.

Commitment

The aforementioned mechanisms depend on the credibility of the commitment. Both the incumbent government and the insurgent will respond as hypothesized above only when they credibly believe the intervener will follow through on the promises inherent in their commitment. For this reason, it is essential to understand how commitments are credibly communicated to all sides of a conflict. The hardest part of influencing enemy actions is persuasively communicating one's intentions so that others behave as you want them to, and this may be especially true for insurgencies where the behavioral and psychological aspects of conflict are so important. The

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[48] Bruce W. Jentleson, Ariel E. Levite, and Larry Berman, "Foreign Military Intervention in Perspective," in *Foreign Military Intervention: The Dynamics of Protracted Conflict*, ed. Ariel E. Levite, Bruce W. Jentleson and Larry Berman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 303. Stated even more concisely: "We can never do merely one thing" in Jervis, *System Effects*, 10.

concept of commitment is the way in which actors communicate those intentions. From a sociological perspective, Howard Becker describes commitment in terms of four elementary properties: it tries to account for consistent lines of activity, it persists over some period of time, it pertains to activities in pursuit of a chosen goal and it drives people to act consistently because it would be morally wrong, practically inexpedient, or both to do otherwise.[49] Thomas Schelling offers one of the most often quoted definitions of commitment: "an action or series of actions, including declarations, taken by a state that heighten the predictability of future actions, that is, they are actions and promises that reflect upon the reputation of the initiator."[50]

Though verbal indications are an important component of commitment, there must be more to commitment than just words, particularly in the complexity of an insurgency. An international actor cannot enter into a genuine commitment using only verbal means; neither can an actor get out of one with only words. If one could end a commitment by declaration, it would be essentially worthless to begin with. The very idea of the commitment process is to "attach honor and reputation to a commitment [in order to] make it manifestly hard to get out of on short notice."[51] The idea of commitment being more flexible over time is an important facet of the process. In his study of the social power of commitment, Abramson noted, "the nearer the time horizon, the fewer alternative courses of action are consistent with the expectation. Conversely, the further the time horizon of expectation, the greater the number of lines of action open to the actor."[52] This is relevant because when a third-party makes a commitment to one side of an insurgency, the commitment figures prominently in how both sides of the conflict judge the prospects for future activity by the intervener.

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[49] Howard S. Becker, "Notes on the Concept of Commitment," *American Journal of Sociology* 66, no. 1 (1960): 32. Because decisions of "states" and "militaries" are made by individuals, it is appropriate and essential that the understanding of what commitment is begins with sociological aspects.

[50] Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 49.

[51] Ibid., 65-6.

[52] Abramson, "Social Power and Commitment," 19.

Evaluating whether an intervener is committed to an outcome or only to providing certain inputs requires understanding how the insurgents and counterinsurgents interpret the intervener's actions. This, in turn, requires understanding the methods of communicating commitment and the ambiguity associated with those methods. At the highest level of abstraction, there are two categories of commitment – behavioral and psychological – though they will almost always appear in tandem. Behavioral commitment deals with implementing promises that one actor has made to another. They are programmatic and material in nature and include written treaties, security agreements, declaratory policies and foreign aid. Psychological commitments include moral obligations that arise from a general identification with the "governing order, broad political programs, or society of another country."[53] These types of commitments are much more about abstract expectations of behavior based on intention. The pairing of psychological and behavioral commitments leads to "sequences of action with penalties and costs so arranged as to guarantee their selection."[54] Expectations are developed or reinforced when promises are made (new psychological commitments) and when actions are implemented (behavioral commitment).

Thomas Schelling describes making credible commitments as an art that can be practiced skillfully or clumsily, with much of that art bound up in the methods by which an actor communicates its commitment. Method of communication might seem a trivial consideration since nations of great means certainly have the capabilities, capacities and track records that should suffice in most circumstances. But, as Steven Metz has noted in his thorough study of insurgency, "much of strategy is communicating intent."[55]

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[53] Roland A. Paul, *American Military Commitments Abroad* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 8-10.

[54] Abramson, "Social Power and Commitment," 16.

[55] Steven Metz, *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy* (Dulles, VA: Potomac, 2008), 195. The most obvious difficulty with allowing national credibility to suffice as proof of commitment is the fact that different messages come from different parts of a government, all nuanced in different ways, all with the potential to contradict other messages.

The first-order solution to this predicament is normally to point to actions since they often "prove something" to others. However, actions can be equally as ambiguous as words. There is rarely only one obvious prediction about how an actor will behave in the future based on his actions, especially if actions were taken with the purpose of deceiving.[56] Recognizing this, Robert Jervis developed a novel set of categories to analyze how entities project and interpret images: signals and indices. Though the line between these two categories is often difficult to draw, it is important to recognize that their use by third-party interveners has important ramifications on the credibility of their commitments, and the subsequent action taken by the parties to the insurgency.

Signals are "statements or actions the meanings of which are established by tacit or explicit understandings among the actors… they do not contain inherent credibility."[57] Though they may be transmitting a completely accurate image of intentions, signals do not provide proof that an actor will uphold the promise contained in the signal. Examples include a direct statement of intention, military gestures that would have little impact on the outcome of hostilities, diplomatic notes and extending or breaking diplomatic relations. When an actor analyzes a signal, it must make two types of assumptions. It must decide what the actual message is, and whether or not the signal is an accurate reflection of what the sender will do in the future. When an actor sends a signal, he must recognize that "getting the message understood at the first (semantic) level does not guarantee getting it accepted on the second level."[58] In fact, because actors understand these types of messages as attempts to influence the image others have of them and their intentions, receivers tend to discount them to some degree.

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[56] Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1989), 18. Jervis devotes considerable effort to describing how actors manipulate the images associated with their actions in order to deceive, avoid the reputation of liar and leverage the ambiguity of most actions.

[57] Ibid., 18-24. Analysis often incorrectly attributes behavior to what was actually interpreted as an ambiguous signal. While the message may have coincided with other, more reliable, communications, the ambiguous nature of signals means they cannot automatically be assumed true.

[58] Ibid.

Unlike signals, indices are "statements or actions that carry some inherent evidence that the image projected is correct because they are believed to be inextricably linked to the actor's capabilities or intentions." These types of messages are "believed by the perceiver to tap dimensions and characteristics that will influence or predict an actor's later behavior and be beyond the ability of the actor to control for the purpose of projecting a misleading image."[59] Examples of indices include major actions that involve high costs or the personal behavior of those in power. Outcome-based and input-based commitments contribute to the success or failure of an insurgency via the signals and indices transmitted by the intervener. The argument considers how both sides of the conflict interpreted the signals and indices and how the conclusions each side reached concerning the likelihood of future action by the intervener affected their behavior.

While this monograph is not about the process of decision making (that is, the internal calculus by which a strategy is chosen), examining the role multiple audiences have on the communication of commitment is key to understanding that stimuli, perceptions, processes, intentions and projected images are inseparably mixed together.[60] Commitments serve a range of interests and are aimed at a variety of audiences, and this invariably shapes and constrains the nature of the messages an intervener can communicate.[61] In an effort to simplify analysis of the

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[59] Ibid., 18. Statements can also be indices if the receiver feels that they were meant exclusively for a different audience or not meant to influence others. The classic example of this is a document or statement obtained through espionage or against the will of the government. In these cases, the actor analyzing the sincerity of the message believes other actors are "either not aware of what aspect of his behavior is being observed… or, more frequently, is not able to control that aspect of his behavior to give a desired, but misleading, perception." Two other categories of indices may be of usefulness in examining commitment in the case of insurgency: "performative utterances" – cases in which "in saying what I do, I actually perform that action," such as declarations of war and ending diplomatic recognition and statements and actions that "alter the distribution of power among the actors" such as measures to increase armed forces. See Thomas Sebeok, "Coding in the Evolution of Signaling Behavior," *Behavioral Science* 7 (1962): 434 and Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations*, 38.

[60] For full discussion of this aspect of commitment, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1976).

[61] The classification of audiences can take a number of forms, but one of relevance to the study of insurgency is the division between systemic/local adversaries, the supported side, allies, nations similar to

complex interactions all these audiences have on each other, this study is most concerned with messages amongst the conflict's belligerents, but in every case other audiences will play a role.[62] The degree to which leaders of intervening states tailor their communications to audiences external to the conflict will significantly impact the authenticity of the commitment and how the primary belligerents interpret them.

Hypothesis

When a third-party intervenes militarily in an insurgency on the side of the government, success is more likely when its commitment is understood in terms of resource levels. When the intervention is on the side of the insurgents, success is more likely when the intervener commits to defeating the incumbent government. In other words, the level of commitment can be conceptualized as a choice between helping the favored side win at all reasonable costs or to offer qualified support with defined limits. The latter is the more prudent approach when backing a government in the role of counterinsurgent.

While an actual intervention will likely take on some dynamic combination of these two poles as it unfolds over time, the choices a third party makes persist along this continuum. It is important that the intervener consider its overall type of commitment and strategy for communicating that commitment, since these choices will engender different reactions from both the insurgent and counterinsurgent. Interventions can increase or decrease the aggressiveness of both sides of an insurgency. While the obvious preference is to increase the aggressiveness of the

the one intervened in looking for intentions of the intervener towards them and the intervener's domestic population. See James Rosenau, *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1967).

[62] Domestic audiences will play an especially important role, even in non-democratic societies where the perceived need for public approval is less. There will still be crucial internal audiences, even if they are not the public-at-large, from which the intervention will require resources. Because leaders must make commitments not only to the supported side of the insurgency, but also to their domestic audiences, two phenomena can arise. The first is the perceived need to oversell a problem and its solution, and the second is ambivalence between the domestic audience's desire not to lose and its desire not to become overly involved. These phenomena can cause "confusion and oscillation in policies, or sometimes in a middle-of-the-road policy that is acceptable politically at home, but wholly inadequate to meet the particular challenge abroad." See Macdonald, *Adventures in Chaos,* 69.

favored side while decreasing that of the opposition, interveners may find that their strategic choices work at cross purposes, driving both sides to move in the same direction, though at different intensities.

Case Studies

One of the overarching themes of this study is that it is not necessary to consider every insurgency so unique that explaining their outcomes becomes an exercise in describing what made each one exceptional in nature. Since the interaction of variables is so complex in war, it is easy to treat every case of intervention as a unique situation bound only by its own systemic logic. The wide conceptual boundaries of intervention and the associated analytical problems were briefly explored in the key concepts section of this paper. Most inclusive (large-N) studies implicitly assume some level of homogeneity exists within this type of conflict. While homogeneity is not the standard for comparison, having "enough" similarity is important, and the present study achieves this by explicitly focusing on direct military intervention. While the conclusions will certainly not hold across all types of interventions, they will be relevant to cases of direct military intervention, which are of most interest to the military professional.

There is no attempt to analyze biased third-party insurgency interventions quantitatively, though this has been done with varying levels of usefulness by many researchers over the years. It is inherently difficult, in part, because the very decision to intervene imposes a selection bias. States do not intervene when they do not expect to succeed. In effect, we have analytical data on the determinants of success only in cases where the intervener expected to succeed.[63] Other research has shown that when the expectation for success was low, states chose not to intervene.[64]

In keeping with the logic described above, this study looked for interventions in which an outside state pursued political influence by attempting to install or maintain a local ally in power

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[63] Regan, "Conditions of Successful Third-Party Intervention," 342.

[64] See James D. Fearon, "Signaling Versus the Balance of Power and Interests: An Empirical Test of a Crisis Bargaining Model," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38, no. 2 (1994): 236.

and used a variety of strategies that ultimately included direct use of military forces. Furthermore, to evaluate the argument it is necessary to look at variations of the phenomena of interest. That is, there needed to be intervention on behalf of both the incumbent government and the insurgents, and for each type of case an intervener needed to pursue an outcome-based strategy and an input-based one. This requires four cases.

The 2008 RAND Counterinsurgency Study provides the pool of available cases.[65] Of the eighty-nine insurgencies this study identified, twenty-nine featured interventions. Twenty-one of these interventions involved the direct use of military power, and three of these insurgencies are currently unresolved. In several cases, the intervention was undertaken by primarily by a collective security organization, which introduces additional dynamics of coalition warfare that this study sought to isolate from analysis.[66] Another criterion used to select cases was availability of indices that show how the conflict's warring parties received and interpreted the intervener's commitment. This does not mean that non-selected cases lacked these indices, but only that obtaining and explaining them would require much more space. The case studies also give emphasis to lesser-known insurgencies in the interest of focusing attention on the mechanisms of support described in the monograph and reducing the need to devote space to the tangential factors that would be distracting from the central thesis. Finally, the cases reflect variety both geographically and with respect to the insurgent's goals. These cases were not selected only because they support the hypothesis. In fact, a cursory analysis of all the possible cases shows that important aspects of the mechanisms described in this monograph hold true across every case of direct military intervention. Rather, these cases most clearly lay bare the key concepts that

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[65] Gompert and Gordon, *War by Other Means*. This study began with 127 insurgencies taken from James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003): 75-90, added insurgencies that occurred after their data cutoff date of 1999 and subtracted conflicts that were coups, countercoups, or insurrections.

[66] These cases included United Nations intervention in Congo/Katanga, NATO intervention in Bosnia and Afghanistan (also an on-going insurgency) and the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) intervention in Liberia.

motivate the outcome-versus-input argument. With an acknowledgement that understanding the process may actually be more important than the ability to explain the outcome, the following cases emerged:

Summary of Case Studies

Supported Side	Outcome Commitment	Input Commitment
Government	Egypt in Yemen	Cuba in Angola
Insurgent	United States in Afghanistan	South Africa in Angola

Egyptian Intervention in Yemen, 1962–1970

Conflict Origins

On September 26, 1962, army officers in Yemen mounted a revolutionary coup against the country's leader, Imam Mohammed al-Badr, and declared the Yemen Arab Republic. Al-Badr escaped and quickly rallied the country's northern tribes to his cause. An insurgency ensued, fought between the royalist forces of the deposed Imam who hoped to restore the old order and forces of the newly-declared republic. Republican leaders quickly appealed to Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser for military support. President Nasser committed Egypt to what would ultimately be a five-year ground war.[67]

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[67] This request for assistance was not the first involvement Egypt had in contemporary Yemen affairs. Nasser's desire for Arab socialism (and the overthrow of conservative Arab monarchies) led to the ending of a pact with Yemen in December 1961 and the escalation of propaganda attacks, which openly called for the end of the Imamate. Before the coup, the opposition in Yemen and Egyptian officials held meetings where Egypt agreed to protect the new republic after it was established. See Saeed M. Badeeb, *The Saudi-Egyptian Conflict Over North Yemen, 1962-1970* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 33-6.

Egyptian Intervention

The Egyptian intervention was outcome-based, and this commitment was clearly communicated to both sides of the insurgency. The first one hundred Egyptian troops arrived in Yemen in October 1962, and by the end of the year there were 15,000. The Egyptians initially thought that meeting the goal of safeguarding the republic would take no more than three months. However, their initial plan (known as Operation 9000) failed to defeat the Royalists, who by this point were an effective insurgent force, and Egypt was faced with the choice of withdrawing or significantly increasing the number of troops.[68] This would be the first of many decisions on the size of the Egyptian presence in Yemen. Throughout the intervention, Egyptian force levels served as an index of the state's commitment, helping mark it as an outcome-based strategy. By 1963, there were 36,000 troops; by the end of 1964, 50,000; and in late 1965 forces reached 70,000.[69] Along with a dramatic increase in forces, Egypt adopted what would come to be termed the "Triangle Strategy," named for its focus on the three cities of Sana, Hodeidah and Taiz while abandoning areas outside this triangle. This strategy also proved ineffective, in large part due to the ineptness of the Republican army, and the Egyptians decided to fight the war almost completely by themselves until 1966.[70] This near abandonment of coalition warfare, apparent to observers throughout the region, was a powerful index of Egypt's commitment to defeating the insurgents at nearly any cost.

Egypt conducted a nationwide offensive during Ramadan in February and March of 1963. Even though the Egyptian Army regained control of most provincial towns and major roads, it found its units could not wrest control of the country from the Royalists without occupying the land. This led to further troop increases and more unilateral military action. The

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[68] David M. Witty, "A Regular Army in Counterinsurgency Operations: Egypt in North Yemen, 1962-1967," *Journal of Military History* 65, no. 2 (2001): 411.

[69] Accounts of peak troop levels vary, but the most authoritatively referenced numbers are from Edgar O'Ballance, *The War in the Yemen* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1971), 155.

[70] Witty, "A Regular Army in Counterinsurgency Operations," 413.

Royalist insurgent's victory during this phase of the war had predictable effects. Al-Badr understood this as a great victory over the Egyptians and was emboldened by the prospect of luring in (and defeating) an even greater number of foreign troops. At this point, the Royalists began to earnestly develop their military and political strategies, and were able to shift from the tribal system as a power basis to more effective semi-regular forces.[71]

So intense was the Egyptian commitment that, over course of the intervention, almost the entire Egyptian army served in Yemen, and many units rotated there two or three times.[72] In addition to military force levels, Egypt demonstrated its outcome-based commitment by assuming almost full administrative control of Yemen. The results of this clearly show the mechanism through which commitment affects the behavior of both sides of an insurgency. Egyptian actions significantly discouraged the growth of Yemeni institutions. The Egyptian lead caused "Republican leaders to become apathetic towards the conduct of the war, which came to be viewed as a conflict between the Egyptians and the Royalists."[73] Additionally, while the Egyptians were running the nascent government, they were not building sufficient capacity within the Yemeni military or government. The Republican army still numbered less than 10,000 as late as 1967.

After adopting yet another strategy, the "Policy of Concentration" from 1964–1965, Egyptian performance against the Royalists continued to decline. The army suffered its worst year in 1965, and it became obvious that if things did not change rather quickly none of the Egyptian policy objectives in Yemen would be met.[74] In an attempt to end the war in August of

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[71] Ali Abdel Rahmy, *The Egyptian Policy in the Arab World: Intervention in Yemen* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1983), 196.

[72] Witty, "A Regular Army in Counterinsurgency Operations," 416.

[73] J. C. Hurewitz, *Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 256. Until 1966 the Republican army did not even provide its own food. See O'Ballance, *The War in the Yemen*, 85-86.

[74] Witty, "A Regular Army in Counterinsurgency Operations," 426. Though not discussed here, policy goals also included expelling the British from Aden and spreading the revolution to Saudi Arabia.

1965, Nasser met the Royalists' patron, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, and both rulers signed the

Jeddah Agreement, agreeing to end the war. It is telling of the type and level of commitment that

it was the Egyptian leader who attempted to negotiate the end to the insurgency, and not the

Yemeni leadership. This agreement was never fully implemented because it was contingent on

Royalists and Republicans coming to terms, which they were not prepared to do – a further

consequence of an intervener who was committed to an outcome that was not fully supported by

the incumbent government.

Egyptian leaders responded with strong signals that their commitment remained outcome-

based. Nasser stated, "if anyone believes that, because of the length of time, we have become fed

up or tired, then we say we are a struggling and capable people."[75] He later added, "we are thus

revising our plans so that we may stay in Yemen for five years or longer if necessary."[76] Field

Marshall Abdul Hakim Amer, first vice-president and commander of the Egyptian armed forces,

declared that Egypt would stay in Yemen for twenty years if necessary.[77] Thus began the final

Egyptian strategy – "The Long Breath" – which was famously cut short by the Six-Day War,

waged June 5–11 of 1967, where defeat in the Sinai made withdrawal from Yemen an Egyptian

necessity.

By far, the greatest indicator of Egyptian commitment to an outcome-based strategy is the

actions they took with respect to troop levels and the almost complete control of military action

for much of the conflict. However, there were psychological and behavioral commitments other

than those already discussed. In undertaking its intervention, Egypt linked its actions to the

Tripartite Jeddah Pact of 1956, which stated:

> The contracting states consider that any armed aggression upon any one of them,
> or upon its forces, is an aggression directed against all of them, and hence… they
> are all bound to hasten to the relief of the country aggressed upon, and to take at

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[75] O'Ballance, *The War in the Yemen,* 165.

[76] Rahmy, *The Egyptian Policy in the Arab World,* 154.

[77] "Captive in Egypt," *The Economist* 221 (8 October 1966): 147.

once all necessary measures… to repel the attack, and re-establish security and peace.[78]

This collective security agreement meets the strictest definition of a behavioral commitment as laid out by Roland Paul.[79] It also appeals to Becker's dictum of commitment driving consistent action because it would be morally wrong to do otherwise, as well as the idea of psychological commitment as a moral obligation arising from identification with political programs. Further, it is an illustration of the legal ambiguity discussed earlier, as Egypt encouraged a change in government and then recognized its treaty and legal rights to defend the new government from the previously legitimate one it had supplanted.

Nasser was also psychologically committed to fully supporting the new republic from the beginning, since the revolution in Yemen was the exact type he had been advocating throughout the Arab region; and this fact should not be minimized.[80] It played on the moral identification with a governing order and Nasser's reputation. It was well understood that failure in Yemen would signal a major victory for Arab reactionaries, and it would have "damaged the hopes for social justice that the Egyptian leader had aroused among the Arabs."[81] Much of this was widely understood by actors in the region, to include both sides of the Yemen insurgency, because of the incredible amount of editorializing Nasser did in *al-Ahram*, Egypt's semi-official newspaper. Because the paper's editor had a close relationship with Egypt's leader, Narrer made the paper's weekly editorials important policy statements reflecting and articulating his perceptions and attitudes, further reinforcing the commitment of Egypt to defeating the Royalists at almost any cost.[82]

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[78] Cited in Rahmy, *The Egyptian Policy in the Arab World,* 102.

[79] See "Key Concepts" section of this monograph and note 53.

[80] Witty, "A Regular Army in Counterinsurgency Operations," 406.

[81] Rahmy, *The Egyptian Policy in the Arab World,* 98.

[82] A. I. Dawisha, "Perceptions, Decisions and Consequences in Foreign Policy: The Egyptian Intervention in the Yemen," *Political Studies* 25, no. 2 (1977): 210.

Outcome

The war dragged on until 1970, when both sides reached an agreement on a compromise government and Al-Badr was given political asylum in Great Britain.[83] In the end, the intervention was unsuccessful in eliminating the influence of the Royalists on the final settlement, produced a weak state with low levels of governmental capacity, a poor security apparatus and an economy dependent on foreign assistance.[84] When Egypt disengaged from Yemen, the Republic was no more secure than in 1962.

Implications for the Hypothesis

Rather than support the government with an input-based strategy, Egypt clearly communicated its full commitment to the Yemen Republic. This resulted in little growth of Yemen's government or military while simultaneously offering the Royalist insurgents a regional power around which to rally their cause. Thus, the Yemen case supports the hypothesis that an intervener supporting the counterinsurgent should not articulate an outcome-based commitment because it will embolden the insurgent while stunting the development of government capacity to meet its own security needs. Egypt created an environment whereby Yemen relied almost completely on the efforts of an intervener, transferring both internal and external responsibility for the outcome to a third party.

Though a recent study of global counterinsurgencies suggests that the intervener's competence in waging counterinsurgent warfare is not a significant factor in success, it should be noted that Egypt has been heavily criticized for waging conventional operations when they should

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[83] The agreement created a government from both sides of the conflict, though on an unequal basis. Royal family members were barred from participating, though their supporters took up minority positions throughout the government and, most importantly, they were allowed to retain administrative control of areas in their control at the time of the agreement. See Robert D. Burrowes, *The Yemen Arab Republic: The Politics of Development, 1962–1986* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

[84] J.E. Peterson, *Yemen: The Search for a Modern State* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 16.

have been conducting counterinsurgent ones.[85] Some also suggest that with the tactically

ineffective Yemen forces at Egyptian disposal the chances for victory were prohibitively small

and that the intervention was doomed from the start.[86] Another important variable was Saudi

Arabian support for the Royalists, which may lead to the question of how the insurgents could

have been successful in the absence of an outcome-based intervention. However, the argument of

this monograph is about the strategic interaction of the combatants with respect to each other

based on the likelihood of future actions. The outcome versus input argument is not relevant

because Saudi Arabia did not commit military forces to the war. The insurgents received only

indirect aid from Saudi Arabia: moral support, safe havens and military equipment. The

Royalists' actions were based on the support they thought they would receive, which tended to

increase their aggressiveness. At the same time, the aggressiveness of the Republican regime was

decreased – not because of any support the insurgents did or did not have – but primarily because

of expectations they held with respect to the Egyptian intervention.

Cuban and South African Intervention in Angola, 1975–1976

Conflict Origins

After more than five centuries of colonial rule by the Portuguese, an Angolan war of

independence erupted in 1961. Two major nationalist movements, the FNLA and MPLA, fought

the Portuguese to end colonial rule, with a third movement, UNITA, joining the fray in 1965.[87]

The war continued until 1974 when a coup in Portugal and the increasingly bloody fight for

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[85] Gompert and Gordon, *War by Other Means,* 393. Among the 21 cases of direct intervention, the competence of the intervener's forces is not a particularly good predictor of outcomes; nor, for that matter is the question of whether or not the intervener or its forces are considered popular in the country.

[86] See Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948–1991* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 56-7.

[87] Organization names are from the Portuguese: FNLA (*Frente National de Libertacao de Angola*) translated as National Liberation Front of Angola; MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola*) as Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola; and UNITA (*Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola*) as National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

independence in Angola led Portugal to grant independence to the colony. Representatives of FNLA, MPLA, UNITA and Portugal signed the November 1975 Alvor Agreement amidst chaos. There was significant domestic strife in Portugal from the coup as well as fighting between the rival independence movements in Angola's capital city of Luanda. Because of Portugal's intense desire to be done with the colony, as well as ambiguity over which independence movement could claim a legitimate hold on a new government, the agreement effectively transferred sovereignty to all three "Angolan national liberation movements [as the] sole legitimate representative of the people of Angola."[88] Because the MPLA controlled Luanda at the time Alvor was signed, it effectively became the incumbent government, even as the fighting continued.

Much of the international community quickly recognized MPLA as the legitimate government, but UNITA continued its struggle for control of the country, while FNLA slowly dissolved. Though the movements had received varying levels of external support previously, it had been under the auspices of fighting the Portuguese. The movements now turned to third parties in an effort to legitimize themselves vis-à-vis each other. As the internal war escalated, Cuba intervened on behalf of MPLA and South Africa did the same in support of UNITA.[89]

Cuban Intervention

The first Cuban military forces arrived in Angola in May of 1975, shortly after MPLA officials met in Havana and the Cuban ambassador to Kinshasa visited Luanda.[90] These meetings

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[88] Portugese Ministry of Mass Communication, *The Alvor Agreement*, reproduced in W. Martin James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola 1974-1990* (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992).

[89] In all, more than thirty nations provided moral, political, material or sanctuary support for MPLA and UNITA. However, only the Cuban and South African interventions surpassed the threshold that this monograph examines.

[90] The MPLA attracted Cuba to address the "neo-colonialist challenge." Most African states did not view the Cuban presence as neo-colonialism. Cuba was too far away and too small to harbor imperialistic intentions, and the community of African states recognized this. Its intervention was primarily explained by feelings of solidarity and by Fidel Castro's wish to be a leading figure in the third

developed the outlines for cooperation that would eventually see 18,000 Cuban troops and military advisors deployed to Angola.[91] While the primary task was originally to run training camps for MPLA soldiers, Cubans were also involved in fighting throughout the war. These actions were a continuation of the long-standing relationship between the two countries, going back to the mid-1960s.

As described earlier, direct and personal communication between leaders can be a strong index of commitment. There were a number of such contacts between Cuban and Angolan leaders. Even before the declaration of independence, Portuguese officials who had interests in supporting the communist MPLA met with Fidel Castro in Havana to solidify the type, duration and intensity of support Cuba might offer. Castro also met with MPLA leader Agostinho Neto to obtain permission to send troops and conduct war exercises.[92] Castro also reinforced his message of solidarity and personal support of Neto in public messages.[93]

Cuba's input-based commitment was clearly demonstrated when it later made declarative statements concerning the reduction in forces, especially powerful since the military and political situation was not yet clearly resolved. Writing to the Swedish Prime Minister, Castro stated that Cuba would reduce its forces to 5,000 by the end of 1976. While there was much dispute about the exact number of Cuban troops in Angola and the veracity of Castro's pledge, the fact remains

world. See Inge Tvedten, "U.S. Policy Towards Angola since 1975," *Journal of Modern Africa Studies* 30, no. 1 (1992): 32-3. Cuba also had historical ties of blood and culture with Africa – 40% of Cubans were of African ancestry, a fact glorified since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. See Wayne E. Smith, "The Cuban Role in Angola" in *Regional Conflict and U.S. Policy: Angola and Mozambique*, ed. Richard J. Bloomfield (Algonac, MI: Reference Publications, 1988), 120-123. Additionally, "their credibility stems from its aid in fighting the hated South African regime. By pitting itself against South Africa, Cuba has gained legitimacy for its foreign adventuring, in Angola and elsewhere." See Owen Ellison Kahn, "Cuba's Impact in Southern Africa," *Journal of Interamerican Affairs and World Studies*, 29 no. 3 (1987): 50.

[91] Fernando Guimarães, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 103. Troop strengths cited in Kahn, "Cuba's Impact in Southern Africa," 38.

[92] Daniel Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention: From Local Bush War to Chronic Crisis in Southern Africa* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1993), 176.

[93] Fidel Castro, *We Stand with the People of Angola* (December 22, 1975), 9. Cited in Arthur J. Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War: A Study in Soviet Policy in the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 120.

that Cuba did reduce its forces. The mechanisms of input-based commitment were on full display. Despite the continued threat from UNITA, MPLA recognized the limits of its foreign backers and began to develop a nonaligned foreign policy aimed at luring in capital, credit and technology.[94] Other observers of Cuban commitment have noted that Cuba's military assistance enabled the MPLA to cling to power, but not to consolidate its control over the whole of Angola.[95] Because the MPLA-led government understood Cuba's commitment had relatively well-defined limits, they never became dependent on the Cubans to the point that they neglected long-term development of social and security institutions.

These facts should not mask the key role Cuban forces played in defeating UNITA from 1975–1976. For example, the majority of MPLA troops were not able to operate the sophisticated Soviet equipment they had at their disposal. Not only were Cuban troops indispensable in training them on this equipment, but the Cubans were able to use it themselves in engagements with UNITA forces. Without the Cuban intervention, it is unlikely that the MPLA would have resisted the attacks from the combined forces of UNITA and South Africa.[96] However, the Cuban presence bought time for MPLA to build military capabilities as well as internal and international legitimacy.

South African Intervention

South Africa desired a strong UNITA, but it was focused on the insurgency's survival rather than on a complete victory against the MPLA's government.[97] This directly emanated

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[94] The MPLA Central Committee met in Luanda from 23-29 October 1976 to further develop these themes. See *Documents of MPLA Central Committee Plenary*, cited in James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola,* 191.

[95] See, for instance, Kahn, "Cuba's Impact in Southern Africa," 51.

[96] Guimarães, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War,* 153.

[97] South Africa had a number of reasons to intervene. South Africa had an economic stake in the Cunene River hydroelectric complex, private investments in the Benguela Railroad, diamonds and other mineral wealth, as well as fighting the ideological war against the "communist threat" posed by MPLA. More importantly, Angola was a safe-haven for the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) and the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC). South West Africa (now named Namibia)

from its acknowledged national security objectives. The publically available *White Paper on Defense 1977* spelled out the need to counter Marxist influence in neighboring states which could be used to "force [South Africa] to change its domestic policy in favour of Pan-Africanism."[98] The indirect method to accomplish this, and the one that South Africa pursued, was to provide enough support for UNITA to dominate southeast Angola so that MPLA would not be able to shield the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) forces operating there. This would reduce SWAPO's ability to affect the Pan-Africanism that was at the root of South Africa's fears.[99]

South Africa's first and most significant military intervention in Angola was Operation Savannah, which pitted units of the South African Defense Force against MPLA and Cuban forces outside Luanda. South African soldiers would also take part in operations against SWAPO, operations in defense of infrastructure, large-scale raids, as well as other missions involving a strike force code-named "Zulu." Though these operations all met with success, and South African forces never suffered a serious defeat at the hands of the MPLA or their Cuban backers, the intervention failed. While it is easy to ascribe this loss to the superior numbers of Cuban and MPLA forces, this explanation does not account for the fact that UNITA was never decisively defeated.

The leader of UNITA, Jonas Savimbi, left little doubt that he perceived South Africa's commitment as input-based. Since the creation of UNITA, Savimbi had proudly proclaimed a

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borders South Africa and instability there threatened South Africa. See James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola,* 152: "South Africa was trying to establish a neutral buffer zone along the Namibia/Angola border… A border controlled by UNITA would ease SWAPO pressure in Namibia… South Africa could realize the benefit of a stalemate on the independence of Namibia." The ANC threatened the apartheid regime and South Africa wished to deny Angola as a base for ANC operations. This led to what many observers termed a strategy of regional destabilization. See Michael McFaul, "Rethinking the Regan Doctrine in Angola," *International Security* 14, no. 3 (1990) and Kahn, "Cuba's Impact in Southern Africa," 33-54.

[98] Republic of South Africa, Ministry of Defense, *White Paper on Defense 1977* (Pretoria, South Africa, 1977), 10.

[99] Hilton Hamann, *Days of the Generals: The Untold Story of South Africa's Apartheid-Era Military Generals* (Cape Town, South Africa: Zebra Press, 2001), 73-4.

self-sufficiency strategy. He continually referred to UNITA as the only liberation group with leadership active inside Angola and stated that he "could not move around lobbying African countries for [military] support."[100] In early 1975, Savimbi twice met with South African officials but refused assistance. It was not until August that Savimbi accepted assistance, and never to the point where it would appear that outsiders were doing the fighting for UNITA.[101] In many ways, this defines the separation between input and outcome-based support.

As described earlier in this monograph, direct and personal communication between leaders can be a strong index of commitment. There are numerous such contacts between Savimbi and senior South African officials. Accounts of most of these contacts paint the South African decision to support UNITA with military force as a step they took very reluctantly.[102] The result of these contacts was a shared understanding concerning the limits of military support. This was further demonstrated through the considerable restraint in the number of South African troops actually deployed into Angola, never numbering more than 1,000.

South African commitments were also publicly proclaimed by its leadership, which indexed its true commitment. It became apparent that the United States would not match Cuban troop commitments to the MPLA, as South Africa hoped they would. Soon thereafter, the South

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[100] UNITA Central Committee, "Memorandum to the Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries Held in Lusaka, Zambia," *Kwacha Angola* (1970), quoted in James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola,* 143. It is well know that UNITA did in fact accept significant military assistance post-independence. However, the point remains that the organization's leader had for many years allowed UNITA to remain militarily weaker than its rivals because of little more than principles. While these may have wavered, they still held sway within Africa. Consider that as late as 1981, when the Regan administration considered supporting UNITA, Savimbi traveled to the United States and declared that UNITA wanted all foreign troops out of Angola. See James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola,* 154-5.

[101] James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola,* 144-5. This also precipitated the most often quoted Savimbi statement: "If you are a drowning man in a crocodile-infested river and you've just gone under for the third time, you don't question who is pulling you to the bank until you're safely on it." Linda Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 199.

[102] Robin Hallett, "The South African Intervention in Angola, 1975-76," *African Affairs* 77, no. 308 (1978): 385. The earliest meetings between Savimbi and South Africa were in Paris in March 1975. Initially, his request for support was turned down. Hallett also notes that throughout these meetings, the leaders never lost sight of the possibility of withdrawal.

African Prime Minister publicly proclaimed that he was "not prepared to fight on behalf of the free world alone" and that they would likely remove troops, leaving only "important items of material."[103] In support of this sentiment, the Minister of Defense stated, "we are not prepared to fight the battle of the free world to the last South African soldier."[104] This clearly indexed the input-based commitment and emboldened the government forces. MPLA immediately increased the intensity of their ongoing offensive against UNITA.

In this case, the reasons for intervening also provide powerful insight into the type of commitment by South Africa. The overall strategy has been termed "regional domination through military destabilization."[105] The goal of destabilization is compatible with an input-based commitment to an insurgent group, but it is not indicative of an outcome-based commitment. Total victory was neither necessary nor desirable for South Africa, and the country's track record bore out this fact to all the concerned nations and leaders. Throughout their direct military involvement, South Africa maintained that it did not seek a total defeat of the MPLA, but only wanted to ensure the survival of UNITA so that it would remain vital to a coalition government. Every signal South Africa sent reinforced this type of commitment, with predictable results. UNITA was under-resourced and intervener actions increased government aggressiveness without providing sufficient capacity to underwrite the insurgent's shortfalls.

Outcome

By accepting support from South Africa, UNITA sowed the seeds of their own undoing. While many African leaders had supported Savimbi's efforts, the politics of Africa ensured they could no longer do so once they understood that South Africans were actually fighting with

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[103] Speech by Prime Minister B. J. Vorster before the South African Parliament on Angola, January 30, 1976.

[104] Tom Lambert, *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 1975, cited in Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War,* 54.

[105] Christopher Pycroft, "Angola – The Forgotten Tragedy," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, no. 2 (1994): 242.

UNITA forces. Because South Africa was pursuing an input-based strategy, the relative gains in military power that initially benefited the weaker UNITA were quickly offset by the increased aggressiveness of those opposed to the insurgents. For South African backing to have made strategic sense to UNITA, it should have been one based on a commitment to an outcome of defeating the incumbent government; and this is a commitment that neither side sought. Additionally, because of the galvanizing effect of an alliance with an apartheid regime, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) moved to recognize the MPLA's government in February of 1976.

Following MPLA recognition by OAU, UNITA was left without its most important supporters. Sensitive to the mood of neighboring African states and mindful of its strategic objectives, which as previously noted did not necessarily include a UNITA victory, South Africa announced its forces would withdraw to the Namibian border. Now fighting alone, UNITA was routed by the MPLA, effectively ending the insurgency.[106]

Implications for the Hypothesis

Unlike the other cases, the insurgency in Angola featured significant third-party military intervention on both sides of the conflict. This provides a chance to see how not only the actions of their own coalition, but also those of the opposition affected the strategic calculations of each side. In this instance, the very presence of South African intervention created powerful effects for the incumbent government, as well as other regional actors. Most literature on the South African intervention in Angola points to these political consequences as proximate causes of the intervention's failure; this is a fair assessment.[107] However, the type of strategic commitment is a

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[106] UNITA would reappear several years later and fight another unsuccessful insurgency up to 2002, when the death of Savimbi and the defeat of UNITA's military forces once again ended the fighting. Nevertheless, the first two years of war mark a separate and distinct insurgency.

[107] See, for instance, Guimarães, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War,* 121-135. "The revelation of the presence of the SADF on Angolan soil represented the beginning of the end of the civil war… South African intervention became the most reviled act of the civil war."

significant component of the mechanism through which failure came about. Because South Africa's commitment was input-based, and its desired outcome less than a total victory for UNITA, many African nations were able to take political actions (e.g., recognition of an MPLA-led government) with little concern for adverse consequences. Similarly, this type of commitment did not serve as a substantial deterrent for MPLA and Cuban forces. The government could escalate its actions with little worry that it would engender a commensurate escalation by South Africa.

As suggested by the monograph's argument, the side pursuing an inappropriate type of commitment lost the insurgency while the side following the recommended strategy was successful. Unlike the Yemen case, where relative aggressiveness of the two sides seemed to be the dominating byproduct of the strategic commitment, this case demonstrates the importance of deterrent effects. The most important consequence of South Africa's input-based strategy was the reaction it engendered from an international and regional community that could act confidently in the knowledge that the intervener's commitment would not precipitate escalatory actions. On the other side of the intervention, Cuban commitment did just enough to support the government militarily, without causing unwanted reactions from within the region, and it never provided incentives for the incumbents to cease developing their own security and governance apparatuses.

United States Intervention in Afghanistan, 2001–2002

Conflict Origins

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 immediately focused the United States' intelligence, diplomatic, financial and security institutions on the challenge of global terrorism. The nation's leaders quickly determined it was essential that they "drain the swamps" in which

terrorists lived and trained.[108] The most important of these swamps was in Afghanistan, a country that had lapsed into near anarchy and had seen its economy crumble since the exit of the Soviet Union in 1989. These conditions allowed the Taliban to gain power beginning in 1996, with near full control wrested by 2001. The exceptions were small areas held by the Northern Alliance in the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul and several pockets of resistance to the northwest. Desiring to attack the Taliban regime, but faced with numerous logistical, political and geographic problems, the United States chose to support the Northern Alliance in a bid to topple the incumbent rulers and install a government that would support the new global war on terror.

United States Intervention

The United States initially supported the Northern Alliance primarily through the use of small numbers of special operations forces and massive close air support. Ultimately, the campaign included conventional ground forces. The intervention began on October 7, 2001 with nighttime air strikes against Taliban airfields and headquarters. By December, combat had moved to the high-mountain caves at Tora Bora, where many al Qaeda and Taliban fighters had fled. Concerned that these fighters might threaten the nascent interim government of Hamid Karzai, the coalition launched an operation to capture or kill enemy fighters in this area. Named Operation Anaconda, it was led by conventional United States ground forces and supported by special operations forces and allied Afghans. They encountered unexpected enemy resistance, but after several days, the remaining al Qaeda and Taliban fighters were dispersed and the operation ended successfully. Al Qaeda and Taliban fugitives escaped into Pakistan, but at the conclusion of the campaign, the Northern Alliance and its American backers had defeated the Taliban regime.[109]

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[108] Center for Military History, *The United States in Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom, October 2001–March 2002* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), 3.

[109] Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror: America's Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005).

The United States supported the Northern Alliance based on an outcome commitment. Though the most widely known narrative of the first months of the intervention focuses on the actions of American forces, the strategy clearly relied on the native opposition group to do the bulk of the fighting. George Tenet, director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, candidly admitted that "it was decided at the front end that the tribals were going to do the bulk of the ground fighting and not the U.S. military."[110]

Though a relatively small number of special operations and air forces were initially involved, there was no confusion on either side that the United States planned to fully support the insurgent effort to remove the Taliban from power. At the political level, statements from the American leadership were unequivocal and all pointed at almost supreme resolve to remove the incumbent government. The American president's constitutional war powers and commensurate legal responsibilities provide another clear index to the type of commitment. He is required to report on the use of military forces in hostilities abroad and detail "the estimated scope and duration of the hostilities or involvement."[111] In this statement, as well as in subsequent consultations, President Bush clearly indicated that the United States would take all "actions necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States."[112]

Over the course of just the first four months following the attack, the President directly addressed the issue of removing the incumbent government at forty-nine separate public briefings and meetings. The net effect of these was to leave little doubt of the ultimate goal of the intervention. An indicative statement of this outcome-based commitment was delivered to a joint session of the US Congress on September 20, 2001, "The Taliban must act and act immediately.

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[110] Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 230.

[111] *War Powers Resolution of 1973*, Public Law 93-148, codified at *U.S. Code* 50, §1542. This requirement epitomizes Jervis' index that taps dimensions and characteristics that will influence or predict an actor's later behavior and be beyond the ability of the actor to control for the purposes of projecting a misleading image, as well as a performative utterance. See note 59.

[112] George W. Bush, "Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of Forces in Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, September 24, 2001," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 2001* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 1157.

They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate," and a few months later, "The definition of success is making sure the Taliban is out of existence."[113] All of these statements from the leader of the United States, combined with similar statements from allied nations, left little doubt in the minds of all sides as to the nature of the commitment.

Outcome

In just a few months, the combination of Northern Alliance forces, US forces and air power decisively defeated the Taliban-run government. The Taliban would later reemerge and the newly installed government would require massive amounts of foreign assistance. However, the initial campaign to support an insurgent movement's bid to defeat an incumbent government proved successful.

Implications for the Hypothesis

This case exhibits all the hypothesized mechanisms of insurgent victory over an incumbent government. The key factor was reversing the balance of power, and it was accomplished in three ways. First and foremost, the United Stated underwrote the Northern Alliance's severe capability deficits that existed prior to the intervention. One need look no further than the overwhelming intelligence, surveillance and air power provided by the intervener. What was previously a weaker force suddenly had at its disposal the most advanced and lethal weapons of war. This directly led to the second and third links in the causal chain of victory. It served to build confidence in the Northern Alliance's chances for victory over the Taliban, which then emboldened their activity.

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[113] Number of time the President addressed the removal of the Taliban compiled from the *Public Papers of the Presidents*. Quote from George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, September 20, 2001," and "Remarks on New Year's Eve and an Exchange With Reporters in Crawford, Texas December 31, 2001," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 2001* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 1141, 1557.

In part, the need for an outcome-based commitment was necessary to unify and focus the Northern Alliance, which was really a loose amalgam of anti-Taliban resistance fighters. Russia, India and Iran had previously funded them — to no avail. These input-based commitments had not stoked the type of confidence and strength of purpose necessary to defeat the Taliban. Outnumbered two-to-one by the CIA's estimate, the Northern Alliance was essentially a guerrilla force with very limited armor or artillery and had shown no ability to defeat the Taliban. Before September 11, there was little confidence that it was really an "alliance," since various warlords generally supported the highest bidder and were often bought off by the Taliban.[114] The outcome-based commitment by the United States provided not only the material resources necessary to defeat the Taliban, but the psychological commitment necessary to forge a true alliance that could fight together long enough and with enough purpose to achieve its aims.

Conclusion

How a third-party intervener expresses its commitment to those fighting an insurgency affects the outcome. While this result is far from formulaic, logical trends emerge when examining the mechanisms of support in detail. In the four cases explored in this study, effective support of either the insurgency or the incumbent government was dependent on the choice of commitment type. Interveners that used their commitment to create appropriate psychological conditions and behaviors were successful, while those that did not were unsuccessful.

Of course, simple rules of intervention are inadequate to the task of choosing strategies. But having a clear sense of expectations is important, given the choice of how a third party decides to intervene. Insurgent wars, even the most successful ones, usually end with a negotiated solution whereby the government makes concessions in order to stop the fighting.[115] In the absence of a complete victory, it is the responsibility of leaders to use all means at their

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[114] Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror,* 45-6.

[115] Corum, *Bad Strategies,* 256.

disposal to create favorable conditions for these negotiations. This includes creating the right set of incentives and deterrents for all sides of the conflict.

The mechanisms of outcome-based commitments best create these conditions when the intervener supports the insurgent. Conversely, mechanisms associated with an input-based commitment are more appropriate when supporting the government. However, third parties supporting a government sometimes run into difficulty because outcome commitments are bold and very effective rhetorically. When leaders have better information than internal constituencies or allies about the chances of success, outcome-based commitments can be used to better relate the likelihood of success to them. Whatever the effect on the domestic and international audiences, the strategy may send counterproductive signals to the war's belligerents. An intervening nation will invariably need to persuade or pressure a local government to "give up counter-productive behaviors, take genuine steps to reform its actions, win the support of its people and demonstrate effectiveness and legitimacy."[116] To do this, civilian and military leaders must consider more than the types of operations they will employ. They must first consider what constitutes an effective strategy of intervention and answer the key strategic question of how to structure support for the combatants. Leaders must recognize that even well thought out operations incompatible with the appropriate type of commitment cannot be taken as a guarantee of success, and may in fact provoke undesirable consequences.

Extensions and Further Research

This monograph describes and illustrates four ideal types of third-party intervention in an insurgency. But these observations also suggest two extensions of the general concept – both of which are evocative of the United States' current wars. The counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan present the opportunity for further study aimed at more thoroughly understanding

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[116] *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide*, 29.

both the continuum of a commitment and the transition from one side of an insurgency to the other.

Commitments must be somewhat flexible. When they persist over a relatively long time, the environment changes and therefore objectives may diverge, despite previous agreement over goals by the parties involved. This reinforces the idea of a continuum of commitment rather than a black-or-white delineation between outcome and input. While this continuum exists over the course of a conflict, the intervener's initial choice of strategy remains extremely important. It affects not only the possibilities open to the intervening nation, but also dramatically influences the behavior of other groups involved in the conflict. While the choice of strategy must depend on the specific circumstances of the conflict, how the conflict evolves is highly, though not solely, dependent on the initial choices made by the intervener.

In the case of Iraq, the intervener encountered conditions that initially necessitated a sub-optimal commitment. Having dissolved the incumbent government of Iraq in 2003, the American-led coalition had little choice but to pursue an outcome-based strategy during the initial stages of counterinsurgency. The nascent Iraqi political and security apparatuses were insufficient for an input-based strategy. But this did not abrogate these leaders' responsibility to shift their commitment along the outcome–input continuum as the conflict progressed. It now seems, as the American effort in Iraq winds down, that the strategy has shifted to an input-based commitment. However, the question remains if it came too late or if circumstances might have been significantly improved had the shift come earlier. While it will take more time to discern the full implications of the timing and intensity with which the strategy changed, relevant data exists in the short-term. The wide-ranging metrics of violence, stability and progress are well known, and there are years of detailed "operational readiness assessments" of Iraqi security forces and political institutions. Analyzing the American commitment over time and evaluating the commensurate changes in these assessments could further validate the hypothesis, while

simultaneously yielding insights into how to best shift a commitment along the outcome–input continuum as part of a broad operational approach.

The case of Afghanistan offers the opportunity to examine what happens once the insurgent defeats the incumbent government. It illustrates the danger inherent in failing to revisit the initial assessment and policy evaluation that occurred at the beginning of the intervention. If the type of commitment is not reframed, a government may soon find itself committed to an intervention in a manner that was not reached through logical deliberation. This is the case in post-Taliban Afghanistan. The case study in this monograph explored intervention up to the point of the initial victory over the Taliban regime. Obviously, the conflict did not end there. What was initially the theoretically correct, and successful, intervention strategy became inappropriate and ineffective. One needs look no further than the American Ambassador's own assessment for verification of this fact:

> President Karzai is not an adequate strategic partner. The proposed counterinsurgency strategy assumes an Afghan political leadership that is both able to take responsibility and to exert sovereignty in the furtherance of our goal of a secure, peaceful, minimally self-sufficient Afghanistan hardened against transnational terrorist groups. Yet Karzai continues to shun responsibility for any sovereign burden, whether defense, governance or development. He and much of his circle do not want the U.S. to leave and are only too happy to see us invest further.[117]

This statement suggests a fundamental flaw in logic – that the United States can or should choose "partners" that support its strategy, rather than choose a strategy that fits the circumstances in which it finds itself. Having transitioned from intervening as insurgent to intervening as counterinsurgent, the United States and its allies failed to transition the type of commitment and are now confronted by the consequences. The Ambassador's statement suggests that strategic and operational leaders should look more closely at the mechanisms described in this study.[118] If

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[117] Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, Diplomatic Cable for SECSTATE, Subject: Coin Strategy: Civilian Concerns, (Embassy Kabul, November 6, 2009), 3.

[118] As suggested by the monograph's ideal types argument, the conflict exhibits the commitment trap, counterproductive government actions, reputation targeting by the insurgent forces and decreased aggressiveness by the incumbent government (politically and militarily).

this monograph's argument provides one explanation for how the coalition found itself in the present situation, the prescripts of the hypothesis may also be suggestive of a prudent way out of such a confound.

Interventions by their very nature have a high potential for unpleasant surprises and policy makers considering intervention in another state must be prepared to confront a partner that desires to only do the minimum necessary to defeat an insurgency or incumbent government before returning to their old ways. This can create tensions between the intervener and their client. An appropriate commitment type can help induce a more suitable set of actions by the client, which is essential if the conflict is to avoid becoming endemic. This also demonstrates the limits of military intervention. Even after a military victory, conditions are not necessarily set to create a stable, self-sustaining peace. Nevertheless, those directing the military instrument of power must do everything possible to support the creation of a viable peace. Understood in these terms, implementing the appropriate intervention strategy is essential.

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