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Ending Conflict: Raising the Costs of Defection in African Failed States

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ENDING CONFLICT: RAISING THE COSTS OF DEFECTION IN AFRICAN
FAILED STATES

by

Brian Crisher

A Thesis
Submitted to the
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Western Michigan University, 2007

This paper views the civil conflicts in African failed states through the lens of game theory. From the numerous peace agreements and cease-fires that have been broken in these conflicts, it is clear that defecting from such agreements is often more profitable than abiding by them. Why is this so? Furthermore, what can be done to raise the costs of defection and therefore promote cooperation amongst the fighting parties? This paper proposes that the international community has the ability to do just this through one-sided intervention.

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INTRODUCTION

Long-term civil conflicts have plagued Sub-Saharan Africa ever since decolonization. At times these conflicts have rendered the government impotent to the point of failure. This relatively new political phenomenon of failed states has received much attention from the international community as it scrambles to alleviate both humanitarian and international security disasters. The conflicts in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, and Liberia alone have cost the lives of more than 4 million people since 1992.¹ As a result, interventions are undertaken either directly or indirectly to bring about peace. However, the growing list of broken cease-fires and peace agreements show that ending conflicts through negotiation is a difficult task at best. One study estimates that, “the parties to civil war engage in formal negotiations in about half the cases but successfully implement a negotiated settlement ending the war in less than a fifth of all civil wars.”² Much remains to be understood about the calculations of those that choose to defect from agreements. What accounts for this inability to end conflict?

The conflict resolution literature addresses this question from various viewpoints. One viewpoint deals with post-conflict reconstruction. The basic argument in these works is that how the international community reconstructs war-torn states influences whether the conflict resumes. In particular, there is a significant focus on transforming failed states into democracies. Paris (2004) posits that

¹ J. Anyu Ndumbe and Babalola Cole, “The Illicit Diamond Trade, Civil Conflicts, and Terrorism in Africa,” *Mediterranean Quarterly*, (Spring 2005), 52.

² Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Civil Wars: What We Don’t Know,” *Global Governance*, 9:2 (2003), 247-248.

democracy “would shift societal conflicts away from the battlefield and into the peaceful arena of electoral politics, thereby replacing the breaking of heads with the counting of heads.”³ However, while creating stable market democracies is an appropriate long-term solution, as is often the case, theory is different then reality. Ottaway (2003) supports this conclusion, contending that, “The democratic reconstruction model is a well-intentioned response to a growing problem;” however, “while appealing in theory, [it] is proving very difficult and very costly in practice.”⁴

The nature of the failed states hinders the successful transfer to democracy. Ottaway (2003) and Jeong (2005) both note the challenge of implementing democratic and market reforms in states that lack the institutional capacity to deal with their destabilizing effects. Jeong further notes that, “the need for political stability and the desire to reform the institutions of political oppression may be opposed to each other.”⁵ While these authors offer an interesting insight into the reconstruction of failed states, ultimately they presume that conflicts have ended. However, from the growing list of broken peace agreements this is a false presumption.

Other scholars have sought to explain this list of failed peace agreements by focusing on the foundations of the conflicts rather than the post-war reconstruction of the state. A particular question of importance in these works is why certain conflicts persist. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) introduce the classic greed versus grievance

³ Roland Paris, *At War's End* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5.

⁴ Marina Ottaway, “Promoting Democracy after Conflict: The Difficult Choices,” *International Studies Perspectives*, 4 (2003), 314-315.

⁵ *Ibid*, 36.

model. They find that as rebels gain access to commodities their grievance transforms into greed as they develop a capacity to export. War diamonds and narcotics are common examples of these commodities.⁶ Fearon (2004) supports these findings and through quantitative analysis finds two main factors that prolong conflict. The first is the same as Collier and Hoeffler's greed factor. The second factor is what he terms "sons of the soil conflict" that are "land or natural resource conflicts between a peripheral ethnic minority and state-supported migrants of a dominant ethnic group."⁷ While effective at explaining prolonged conflict, these authors do not offer solutions to ending the cycles of violence. Fearon does however advise policy makers to seek international monitoring strategies that allow for mutually advantageous commitments.⁸ While logical, real world implementation of this advice is difficult. One prominent issue would be the continued trade of war commodities. Other solutions are still needed.

Some studies in the conflict literature seek to find the conditions conducive to ending conflict. Addison and Murshed (2004) contend that credibility and reputation are crucial to understanding prolonged conflict. Through a game theory analysis, they find that reputation matters and even evolves throughout the conflict. An honest or dishonest rebel leader will determine whether low or high level conflict will

⁶ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56:4 (2004).

⁷ James D. Fearon, "Why Do Some Civil Wars Last So Much Longer Than Others?," *Journal of Peace Research*, 41:3 (2004), 277.

⁸ Ibid, 298.

persist.⁹ While studies such as Addison and Murshed's focus on the rebel side of the equation, DeRouen and Sobek (2004) choose to focus on the state. They hypothesize that a state with high capacity will limit the possibility of rebel victory. However, high capacity does not guarantee victory for the state but does increase the probability of a negotiated settlement.¹⁰ While these results are indeed helpful, states such as Sierra Leone and Somalia show that prolonged conflict can lead to state failure and an inability to enforce effectively any type of negotiated settlement. The authors offer no discussion as to this effect in their analysis and therefore its applicability to failed states in Africa is somewhat limited.

The question of ending conflict remains. Using the language of game theory, this study asks why the cost of defecting from peace agreements is lower than abiding by them. In other words, what are the incentives for continuing a conflict that has reached stalemate? Axelrod (1984) highlights the problem of increasing the likelihood of cooperation in prisoner dilemma-like situations. One problem in particular is that participants often pursue short-term gains rather than waiting for long-term gains that are by no means guaranteed.¹¹ One solution offered by Axelrod is to alter the payoffs faced by the participants.¹² With this solution in mind, the critical question becomes, how can the international community significantly raise the

⁹ Tony Addison and S. Mansoor Murshed, "Credibility and Reputation in Peacemaking," *Journal of Peace Research*, 39:4 (2002), 498.

¹⁰ Karl R. DeRouen Jr. and David Sobek, "The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome," *Journal of Peace Research*, 41:3 (2004), 308.

¹¹ Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 126.

¹² *Ibid*, 133.

costs of defection to the point where cooperation becomes the best strategy and leaders honor peace agreements?

HYPOTHESES

Borrowing from Collier and Hoeffler, greed and grievance are the two main factors that fuel civil conflict. In African failed states, it is common for elements of both factors to be present. Grievance often manifests itself through ethnic tensions while greed usually manifests itself through rent-seeking mechanisms and the control of natural resources. Given that, if the international community can raise the costs of defection through intervention, under what conditions will this intervention be successful?

The primary hypothesis for this study is that intervention will be most effective in conflicts where: First, agreements recognize that involved parties are motivated by economic incentives and second, the international community actively supports only one party. In conflicts driven by greed, the pursuit of monetary gains outweighs survival and favors a policy of defection. However, if intervention alters this calculation by denying access to resources and decreasing the chances of survival, this creates an environment more conducive to cooperation.

An alternative hypothesis is that ethnic competition will supercede any incentive structure created through intervention. The logic behind this hypothesis being that if grievance is the main incentive for continuing the conflict it will be difficult to create a strategic environment that promotes cooperation. This occurs

when one of the parties believes its survival is at stake regardless of intervention and has little trust in the ability of either its opponent or the international community to ensure its survival.

CASE SELECTION

Sub-Saharan Africa is rife with available countries for analysis. The countries selected for this study were done so as randomly as possible to limit selection among the dependent variable. In instances where multiple conflicts inhabited a single region, one conflict was chosen that represented the region. Therefore, the various cases represent a cross-section of African failed states.

Angola, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Somalia will serve as the cases against which this study's argument is tested. Each case shares some similar characteristics. They suffered a collapse in their national governments and were torn by years of civil conflict. There were also important differences among the failed states. The first is regional, with cases representing Southern, West, Central and East Africa, respectively. Secondly, the cases correspond to the various types of conflicts that affect failed states. While Sierra Leone was primarily a revolutionary conflict, the DRC is a case where revolutionary conflict combined with ethnic tensions. Somalia and Angola are both cases where ethnic tensions and genocide accompanied their conflicts. Finally, the cases represent different levels of regional and international involvement within their conflicts. Prior to the 2006 Ethiopian invasion, there was relatively little regional intervention in

Somalia and only a feeble attempted international intervention between 1992 and 1995. In the DRC it is perhaps easier to ask which of its neighbors was not actively involved in the conflict as the international community remained an indirect actor. Meanwhile Angola fell victim to Cold War intervention from Cuba and South Africa in the first phase of its civil war. Lastly, Sierra Leone's civil war was launched from Liberia with the aid of Charles Taylor and saw the involvement of large contingents of both regional and international peacekeepers.

The structure of the case studies will be as follows. A brief look into the conflict's origins is followed by a discussion of the ensuing stalemate and broken peace agreements. From this point, the various incentive structures facing the actors are examined to illuminate reasons for defection. Finally, observations on the effectiveness of intervention will show how it is possible for the international community to alter the strategic environment.

CASES

Sierra Leone

In March 1991, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), under the command of Foday Saybannah Sankoh, invaded Sierra Leone from Liberia. An extension of Liberia's civil war, the conflict was rooted in deep socio-economic divisions. The first attempt at peace occurred in November 1996, as the parties signed a peace agreement in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. After a brief lull, the violence resumed and was followed by a military coup in Freetown. A second attempt at peace occurred with

the Lomé Peace Agreement in July 1999. The agreement quickly broke down as the RUF began killing and kidnapping United Nations (UN) peacekeepers. Finally, a ceasefire was signed in November 2000 that reaffirmed the Lomé agreement.

At the time of negotiations, clearly the conflict was a stalemate. Neither side was militarily strong enough to impose its will. One would assume that stalemate would lead to negotiations to solidify any gains made. Indeed, this seemingly was the case as multiple peace agreements were signed. Nevertheless, despite large contingents of both Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and UN peacekeepers, the conflicts resumed. What accounts for this?

Sierra Leone's civil war is inextricably linked with war diamonds. While one might try to argue their importance has been exaggerated, this is not the case. These diamonds were a major source of the socio-economic conditions that triggered the war in the first place. Adebajo (2002) argues that the young fighters of the RUF "saw the war as a chance to plunder, mine diamonds, and perhaps replace the ruling class in Freetown."¹³ Additionally, the RUF was able to recruit disgruntled government soldiers from the same lower classes that sought to gain from the diamond revenues.

Early in the war, the RUF was able to capitalize on the military weakness of the government and seize control of the diamond fields. This income stream allowed the rebels to finance their activities and made defection from the peace agreements an attractive option. The reasons for this are simple. It is nearly impossible for the development of any peace agreement allowing the RUF a peacetime income equal to

¹³ Adekeye Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 79.

their wartime income. With the government unable to break the stalemate, there was no incentive structure to force the RUF into abandoning their weapons. Therefore, a rational calculation dictates that the payoff from maintaining access to diamond fields through conflict outweighs honoring any agreement made with the government.

In April 1998, the international community finally intervened in the conflict. ECOWAS's Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) invaded Freetown in order to restore the government overthrown by the military coup. This was eventually followed by UN peacekeepers in 1999 and 2000 that would come to total nearly 17,500 troops. While initially deployed to enforce the ceasefire, the mandate of the UN troops was expanded to the protection of the government. These forces were, however, ineffective. ECOMOG, while succeeding in restoring the government in Freetown, did so at the cost of nearly 7,000 civilians and two-thirds of the city leveled.¹⁴ The UN peacekeepers were humiliated as they were disarmed by the RUF. Compounding this were attacks by the RUF that killed UN peacekeepers.

Highlighting the ineffectiveness of these forces is the fact that they were adding to the rebels' incentives for continuing the conflict. As the RUF battled ECOMOG and UN forces, they were able to confiscate their weapons and supplies following victories. Additionally, they were able to divert humanitarian aid that was meant for those most affected by the fighting. Not only were the peacekeeping forces contributing to the RUF through their defeats, they also were not immune from the pursuit of diamonds. Anecdotal evidence exists that tells of peacekeeping forces,

¹⁴ J. Peter Pham, "Democracy by Force?: Lessons from the Restoration of the State in Sierra Leone," *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* (Winter/Spring 2005), 134.

especially the Nigerians, trading their arms to RUF forces in return for both diamonds and cash.¹⁵

As internal dissent and defeats began to break up the UN peacekeeping force, a contingent of British paratroopers was deployed to Freetown in 2000. This force protected the government, strengthened the resolve of the UN forces and began training a new Sierra Leonean army. Additionally, the UN expanded the mandate of its forces to allow for the direct confrontation with the RUF. These factors, along with the capture of the RUF leader Sankoh, altered the strategic environment in Sierra Leone.

The RUF now found itself without a leader facing a proactive UN force and a British contingent that did not appear to be leaving the country in the near future. Indeed the strategic environment was altered and the prospects for survival began to outweigh the possible riches to be gained through war. Soon after, in November 2000 the final peace agreement was signed. Now with 17,500 peacekeepers in the country and the RUF finally disarming, the conflict dwindled. Presidential and parliamentary elections, relatively free of violence, were held in May 2002 and the conflict in Sierra Leone was officially seen as ended.

The Democratic Republic of Congo

In 1994, the genocide of the Tutsi minority in Rwanda was halted after Tutsi fighters gained control of the government. Subsequently, more than one million

¹⁵ Ibid, 139.

Hutus fled to the Congo. With the consent of the DRC's leader Mobutu Seso Seke, Hutu dissidents launched attacks against the ruling Tutsi government in Rwanda. These incidents, along with widespread anti-Mobutu sentiments led to a concerted effort by both insurgent groups and foreign governments to remove Mobutu from power in 1996. Following a brief war, Laurent Kabila, leader of the Alliance des forces democratiques pour la liberation (AFDL), became leader of the DRC in May 1997. Playing upon anti-Tutsi sentiments within the country, Kabila removed Tutsi-members of his cabinet and ordered all foreign troops out of the country shortly after his ascension to power. By August 2, 1998, Rwanda and Uganda set off an anti-Kabila movement that embroiled the country in its second war since 1996.

The second war was characterized by its complexity. Not only did it involve numerous foreign actors, but also internal and external insurgent groups. At the beginning of the conflict, these groups had legitimate security claims for becoming directly involved. Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola all wanted to deny rebel groups a staging area for attacks against their respective countries. Additionally, Tutsi groups within the DRC were fearful of Kabila's new policies and began fighting for what they felt was their survival. Unlike the fast-moving decisive first war, the second war quickly bogged down in stalemate.

Negotiations on a peace settlement began during the first war, but Kabila's strong military position ensured his unwillingness to compromise. With the outbreak of the second war, negotiations were renewed. What resulted was the Lusaka Accords in 1999 that called for peace between the various factions, disarming the

militias, a UN peacekeeping force, and the beginning of an Inter-Congolese dialogue (ICD). All parties were guilty of defection from the accords. Therefore, the situation on the ground failed to improve and the conflict continued.

The mineral wealth of the country was a major factor behind the defections. The DRC, like many of its neighbors, has both the fortune and misfortune of being endowed with abundant natural resources. Diamonds, gold, timber, and coltan are all plentiful. These resources became even more tempting for all actors involved as the conflict reached a stalemate. In short, greed replaced the grievance that sparked the second war.

Evidence of this greed is plentiful. For instance, Rwanda and Uganda prior to their invasion of the DRC had no history of diamond production. However, for the period between 1997 and 2001 they reported \$4.75 and \$3.5 million in exports respectively.¹⁶ Additionally, it has been estimated that towards the end of 2000 the Rwandan army was selling coltan for as much as \$20 million per month.¹⁷ Rwanda and Uganda were not the only participants to gain. Anti-Kabila rebels used the monetary gain from mineral exports to purchase arms and fill their leaders' coffers. Onusumba, leader of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), admitted his organization was able to raise \$200,000 a month in diamond exports and up to \$1

¹⁶ Emizet F. Kisangani, "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Mosaic of Insurgent Groups," *International Journal of World Peace*, 20:3 (September 2003), 68.

¹⁷ Ola Olsson and Heather C. Fors, "Congo: The Prize of Predation," *Journal of Peace Research*, 41:3 (2004), 326.

million in coltan exports.¹⁸ All sides were benefiting from the mineral wealth of the Congo.

At the signing of the Lusaka Accords, the incentive structure favored a prolonged conflict. The anti-Kabila rebels could not operate without the backing of Rwanda and Uganda. However, due to Angola and Zimbabwe intervening on Kabila's behalf, the rebels and their foreign backers were unable to gain a victory despite their early successes. While Kabila was able to stave off disaster, the help he received was not enough to defeat his enemies. Adding to this was the continued fractionalization of the RCD and the infighting that occurred between the splinter groups. The conflict produced a strategic environment in which no actor was able to break the stalemate. Since no group was able to take direct control over the valuable resources, they began to appropriate through pillaging and extraction.¹⁹ Each group feared that if they chose to cooperate, their stake in the spoils would be lost to those that defected.²⁰ This meant a continued military presence that ensured access to minerals and an extended conflict.

The strategic environment finally changed with the assassination of Kabila in January 2001 and his son Joseph taking control of the country. The elder Kabila, much like his predecessor Mobutu, was a kleptocratic ruler unwilling to compromise with rebel groups in order to maintain his firm grip on power. Joseph however was interested in bringing about an end to the conflict and placing the DRC on the path to

¹⁸ Kisangani, 69.

¹⁹ Olsson, 327.

²⁰ Kisangani, 12.

democracy.²¹ With strong diplomatic pressure being exerted against the foreign occupiers and the promise of a large peacekeeping force, various agreements were signed that reaffirmed the principles of the Lusaka Accords.²² Neither Rwanda nor Uganda were willing to challenge the nearly 18,000 strong UN force and were pleased with Kabila's willingness to pursue and detain foreign rebel groups. Without this direct support, the anti-Kabila groups' fighting ability were greatly diminished. They had little choice but to cooperate with the government and finally the Global and Inclusive Agreement was signed. This agreement contained provisions for the transitional period, with extensive power-sharing arrangements in the political and military spheres.

The agreements held and the main violence ceased. However, fighting continued between various ethnic groups and the uprising in Kinshasa that followed the 2007 elections highlights that the country has yet to stabilize fully and the reoccurrence of conflict remains a threat.

Angola

The origins of the Angolan civil war date back to its independence from Portugal in 1975. Following independence, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA/current government), the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) all fought for control of the country. As the FNLA fell to the

²¹ Olsson, 362.

²² Kisangani, 63-64.

wayside, Cold War politics entered the fray with the United States allying with UNITA and the Soviet Union allying with the MPLA. Following the end of the Cold War, strong international pressure forced the parties into the Bicesse Agreement in 1991. The agreement held until UNITA leader Savimbi declared the 1992 elections a fraud and plunged the country into its deadliest fighting to date. A second attempt at peace was made in 1994 with the signing of the Lusaka Protocol. The Protocol proved as successful as its predecessor with both low-level conflict and the absence of Savimbi from the capital undermining the Protocol. By 1998, implementing the Protocol was abandoned and full-scale conflict resumed.

In the conflict during the Cold War and the mid-to-late 1990s, neither side had a clear advantage. While resources from the superpowers enhanced the fighting abilities of both sides, neither contribution was sufficient to tip the military balance. Additionally, the peace agreements in the 1990s allowed the combatants to reorganize and resupply when they found themselves on the defensive. The conflict settled to stalemate with both sides adhering to their policies of defection from the peace agreements despite the presence of UN forces.

The main incentives for defection were the monetary gains to be made from mineral resources, including both oil and diamonds. UNITA financed its military operations through the illicit trade of diamonds. The international diamond community went so far as to help protect UNITA-controlled diamond mines with helicopter gunships provided by British Mine Police, an organization working with

De Beers.²³ On the other hand, the government was able to finance the war through the discovery of large offshore deposits of oil – immune from attacks by rebels because of its offshore location. This made investment from foreign oil companies attractive since equipment and employees were safe from the fighting. It is important to note that the oil did more than just create revenue for the government. Government officials negotiated arms contracts – paid for by the oil revenue – and in the process gained commissions that reached as much as millions of dollars per deal.²⁴ Therefore, prolonging the war allowed officials to justify spending oil revenue on arms, thereby increasing their number of commissions.

US support for UNITA began to weaken once UNITA defected from the Bicesse Agreement. It is critical to understand that the international community, while unwilling to admit any fault of its own, was keen to place blame for the outbreak of violence in 1992. UNITA was an easy target. While the international community was reluctant to intervene directly in the conflict, this did not prevent indirect intervention. For the first time the US acknowledged the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola officially marking the end of US support for UNITA. Following this, the UN Security Council (UNSC) levied weapon sanctions against UNITA and imposed an embargo against its diamond trades.

With the shifting of US support to the government, clearly the strategic environment had altered. UNITA was now effectively cut off from its arms supplies and its capacity to generate revenue was diminished. To make matters worse for

²³ Ndumbe, 56.

²⁴ Anna Richardson, "Angola's Oil Boom Fuels Civil War," *The Independent (London)*, (Feb 27, 2000). <http://www.findarticles.com> (accessed March 19, 2007).

UNITA, the discovery of offshore oil gave the international community, especially the US and Britain, an incentive to support the government. Soon, revenues from oil income were being spent on technologically advanced weaponry. With the tacit consent of the international community, the Angolan government undertook a massive campaign against UNITA with no regard for humanitarian concerns. This led to the death of Savimbi and UNITA was virtually unable to continue the fighting.

On March 13, 2002, the government announced a unilateral ceasefire and the fighting officially ended. On August 26, the parties signed the "Memorandum of Commitment for the Final Implementation of the Lusaka Protocol," which finalized minor changes made to the Protocol in the previous months. Finally, on November 21 the UN declared that the peace process had concluded.

Somalia

In 1991, the United Somali Congress (USC) overthrew Siad Barre and a new government was proclaimed with Ali Mahdi as leader. Mahdi's government was not in control of the entire country, however, and other opposition groups refused to recognize its authority. Chief among these groups was a faction of the USC led by Mohammad Farrah Aideed. With Mahdi and Aideed controlling different parts of Mogadishu and the country, the conflict for control of government power continued. Despite numerous attempts at peace between 1993 and 2004 Somalia remained without an official government.

The conflict was soon mired in stalemate due to the fractured nature of Somalian society. While Mahdi and Aideed's factions were the primary combatants, there were numerous groups involved. Evidence of this is to be found in a 1997 peace agreement signed by twenty-two faction leaders. Nevertheless, progress was made and a Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed in 2000 fueled by the development of a new partnership between Mahdi and Aideed.²⁵ Any hope for the restoration of peace was short-lived as opposition groups boycotted the TNG, forming an umbrella group known as the Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC). By 2003, the mandate for the TNG lapsed, an official government failed to materialize, and the low-level conflict continued between militia and clan factions.

As with numerous other African conflicts, economic incentives played a key role in prolonging the Somalian conflict. While common war commodities such as diamonds or gold were not a factor, other resources were available. The southern regions of Somalia prior to and early in the conflict were fertile grounds for the growth of bananas. In 1990 alone, the banana industry accounted for over \$25 million in exports and employed over 10,000 workers.²⁶ Faction leaders anxious to tap into this monetary source created export taxes and began a system of protectionism. Multinational corporations (MNC) operating the plantations were forced to hire personal militias in order to protect both land and transported goods.

²⁵ The elder Aideed died in 1996 and his son Hussein Aideed took his place. This had little effect on the strategic environment as fighting continued between the two factions. From this point, all references to Aideed are referring to the son rather than the father.

²⁶ Christian Webersik, "Fighting for the Plenty: The Banana Trade in Southern Somalia," *Oxford Development Studies*, 33:1 (March 2005), 85.

Furthermore, once its goods reached the ports for shipment, the militia controlling the port levied an export tax. The Aideed faction was particularly successful and revenue from this action began to tip the military balance in Mogadishu. Mahdi intervened militarily and soon the MNCs abandoned their fields as the costs of protection rose steeply. The battle over ports and taxes of other cash crops continued as militia leaders profited by defecting from peace agreements.

One of the most infamous moments of the conflict occurred when the international community intervened. In 1992, brutal fighting combined with a draught led to severe famine. The UN responded to the crisis by launching the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I). Aideed's USC faction opposed the presence of UN troops and began launching attacks. In response, Operation Restore Hope was initiated by the US, which included 28,000 US and another 17,000 international troops. Following the death of twenty-five UN troops in 1993, the US launched an attack aimed at capturing Aideed. The resulting fight left hundreds of Somalis dead along with eighteen US soldiers. With the international media broadcasting scenes of the US soldiers dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, the US soon withdrew its troops in 1994. The UN troops that remained played a minor role in the conflict and were quietly removed by 1995. While the intervention saved countless lives through much needed humanitarian aid, little was done to alter the strategic environment as the combatants continued fighting.

While direct intervention failed to end the conflict, something of a status quo emerged. War gave way to low-level conflict as informal institutions replaced the

central government in controlling disputes. Clan, kin, and religious connections held society together as Somalia transformed into a collection of city-states. Businessmen were at the forefront of this development as they realized full-scale conflict was bad for business, although low-level conflict was acceptable. Even with this development, there were clear economic incentives for continuing conflict and opposing the formation of a central government. Businessmen make money from monopolies and taxes, revenue any government would tap into to fund its operations.

Living in Somalia remained dangerous as both clan and militia violence persisted as a regular feature of life. The 2006 invasion by Ethiopia once again submerged the country into the same high-intensity conflict that brought about the humanitarian crises of the early 1990s. As of mid-2007, it is too early to tell how this development will affect Somalia. Although, it is clear that a long-term insurgency had begun, thereby ensuring the continuation of conflict.

ANALYSIS

In each case, there was at least one attempt at peace negotiations. These negotiations led to peace agreements that generally collapsed in short order. An actor's decision to either cooperate or defect from an agreement conforms to a Prisoner's Dilemma. In its classic form, the dilemma offers the greatest combined payoff for actors who cooperate as shown in Table 1. The table represents two actors in the dilemma with the payoff structure based on a zero-to-five scale.

Table 1: Traditional Prisoner's Dilemma Payoff Structure

	Cooperate	Defect
Cooperate	A = 3, B = 3	A = 0, B = 5
Defect	A = 5, B = 0	A = 1, B = 1

Note: A represents the row player, while B represents the column player.

Logically, one would assume that through repeated interactions, actors would begin to realize the potential payoffs of cooperation. Axelrod's work shows this to be the case. While this conclusion may hold for the traditional dilemma, repeated failures in African failed states suggest otherwise.

While the overall structure of the dilemma remains the same, there is a difference in the payoffs. The different payoff structure is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Payoff Structure in African Failed States

	Cooperate	Defect
Cooperate	A = 1, B = 1	A = 0, B = 5
Defect	A = 5, B = 0	A = 3, B = 3

Note: A represents the row player, while B represents the column player.

It can be seen that cells one and four have reversed and the greatest combined payoff is offered through mutual defection. Uncertainty, distrust, and economic motivations all serve to alter the strategic environment. Ultimately, actors will give-in to short-term gains rather than wait for uncertain long-term gains. Why is this true?

A more in-depth look into the incentive structure facing the actors reveals some insights. The government can either cooperate or defect from a peace agreement. If it cooperates, generally the rebels form an opposition and participate in a power-sharing arrangement. While overall the government has defended its majority hold on power, it nevertheless must give up ministerial posts. In rent-seeking states, power means the ability to allocate resources to friends, clan members, party members and other clients. Hence, a concession by the government of any ministerial positions also means a concession of the power and privileges that accompanies them. If the government continues fighting, it faces possible backlash from the international community, in turn creating sympathy for the rebels. However, defection also allows the government to continue cashing in on arms deals or the trade of other commodities such as diamonds or drugs. Therefore, the government faces a situation in which it could lose both economic and political power through cooperation. This favors defection, the option that reduces the likelihood of the loss of either.

Conversely, the rebels have the same decision to make. If they choose to cooperate, generally they disarm and form an opposition party to take part in a power-sharing government. While this certainly increases the group's power and prestige,

ultimately it falls short of a control of government. If the rebels choose defection, like the government, they can continue to enjoy the monetary gains from trading war commodities. Additionally, there is hope that continued fighting would weaken the government to the point of collapse at which point they could fill the power void. A final point for consideration is that if the rebels choose to cooperate and disarm, they become defenseless against the effects of government defection. Therefore, the incentive structure favors defection.

The question remains of how to deal with this new payoff structure. What is necessary is to create incentives for cooperation that outweigh short-term incentive through defection. The cases suggest that this can be accomplished through intervention. However, this paper argues that the nature of the short-term incentives might affect the effectiveness of intervention. It is imperative to revisit the two hypotheses.

First, it was hypothesized that intervention will be most effective in conflicts where the involved parties are motivated by economic incentives and the international community actively supports only one party. Second, it was hypothesized that intervention will be ineffective in conflicts where ethnic tensions are present. Critical to determining which hypotheses better explains the results in the four cases is the nature of their conflicts.

From the cases, it is obvious that ethnic tensions were present. The genocides witnessed in Angola, the DRC, and Somalia lends support to this. Furthermore, in both the DRC and Somalia, ethnic identity served as an organizational tool and was

utilized to recruit fighters. While the ethnic dynamics cannot be ignored, it is important to determine whether they were driving the conflicts.

All four cases show that economic incentives trumped ethnic tensions. Both of the conflicts in the DRC were sparked by grievances. Mobutu's support of Hutu rebels attacking Rwanda led to the first war and Laurent Kabila's anti-Tutsi policies led to the second. However, grievance quickly gave way to greed. Therefore, the best explanation for the duration and intensity of the conflict is the country's vast resources.²⁷ A similar conclusion can be applied to Somalia. While ethnic and clan affiliation became an important part of daily survival, this resulted from the lack of a state. When the conflict was at its highest intensity between 1992 and 1998, it was driven by economic motives such as controlling export taxes.²⁸ In Angola, the ethnic tensions surfaced mainly in the war dominated by Cold War politics and the pursuit of oil and diamonds dominated the war throughout the 1990s. Finally, the conflict in Sierra Leone had its origins in socio-economic divisions rather than ethnic identities and control of the diamond mines became the main goal for reconciling those divisions.

The ethnic dynamics brought into question by the alternative hypothesis seemed an appropriate explanation for the long duration of conflicts in Africa. However, the evidence shows that while ethnicity is an effective way to disperse resources and recruit fighters, ultimately greed drives the conflicts. That suggests that economic incentives can overcome ethnic identities.

²⁷ Olsson, 322.

²⁸ Webersik, 95.

While it is clear that economic incentives drive the conflicts in question, the primary hypothesis contains a second element: one-sided intervention. The cases show that intervention, regardless of whether regional or international, fails to end the conflict when support is given to both sides. Intervention can also fail if the intervener attempts to act as a neutral party to the conflict. In Angola, the support from the superpowers cancelled out one another, while in the DRC the intervention by Angola and Zimbabwe saved the government from attacks by Rwanda and Uganda. The early intervention in Sierra Leone by ECOWAS troops failed to prevent the RUF from continuing the conflict, or even preventing the eventual military coup in Freetown. In fact, the cases suggest that one-sided intervention can be an effective means to ending conflict.

Dependent upon the situation, two main types of intervention are possible. One type is the direct intervention employed by the British in Sierra Leone. This case showed how a small but effective force could embolden both government and UN forces. Additionally, it appeared that the British force would be in place long-term, thus presenting the rebels with a formidable fighting unit. This was enough to tip the military balance in Sierra Leone. Soon, Sankoh was captured and the RUF was brought back to the bargaining table for the last time. However, the case also suggests that the long-term commitment of troops is a necessity for success. The unwillingness of the US to maintain its presence in Somalia after the death of eighteen soldiers was a key factor in the failure to end the conflict. The international

force had already proved effective at relieving humanitarian pressure; however, without American support its peacekeeping mission was bound to fail.

The second type of intervention is the indirect intervention that was successfully utilized in Angola. When US support shifted to the government, UNITA soon faced economic and military embargoes. Making matters worse was the ability of the government to buy advanced military technology with its oil revenues. These changes along with the death of Savimbi left UNITA with a strong incentive to cooperate. A similar change took place in the DRC with the ascension of Joseph Kabila. The younger Kabila lacked the predatory nature of his father and valued peace over looting the Congo's resources. With strong diplomatic pressure and the promise of a significant peacekeeping force from the UN, Kabila was able to engineer the removal of the occupying troops. Without the direct support from these troops, the rebel groups in the DRC were unable to remain effective fighting forces and agreed to the power-sharing arrangement they had fought against for so long.

These interventions altered the strategic environment and the rebels recalculated the payoffs they faced. On one hand, they could lose both monetary gains from illicit trade and arms due to sanctions. On the other hand, the increased strength of the government through superior military equipment or direct foreign troop support made government collapse and survival dubious. Soon, the gains through cooperation and acceptance of the previous peace agreement were more appealing. Ultimately, as the cases of the DRC, Sierra Leone, and Angola show, the

final agreements signed are often proclamations reaffirming the initial peace agreements accompanied by minor changes.

CONCLUSION

This study has presented two main questions. First, what are the incentives to continue fighting once stalemate is reached and peace agreements have been signed? Clearly, the case studies show that economic incentives play a crucial role in prolonging conflicts. Both governments and rebels receive large revenues from arms deals, trading war commodities, and rent-seeking behavior. It is difficult for any peace agreement to displace these incentives. In addition, both sides distrust their counterparts and fear that cooperation will end their access to resources.

Second, how can the costs of defection be raised to the point where cooperation becomes the best strategy? Intervention on the side of one combatant or the other, if used properly, is an effective policy for raising the costs of defection. Through this intervention, whether direct or indirect, the strategic environment is altered and the payoffs facing the actors change accordingly. Ultimately, defection is no longer effective and a strategy of cooperation will offer the greatest rewards.

St. Augustine once wrote that, "For even they who intentionally interrupt the peace in which they are living have no hatred of peace, but only wish it changed into a peace that suits them better."²⁹ This statement aptly sums up the conflicts in African failed states. Until a peace minimally acceptable to all is found, the conflicts

²⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*. trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Random House, 1994), 687.

will persist and the international community will be needed to exert its power and alter the payoffs facing these war-torn states.

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