

Why Military Interventions Fail: An Historical Overview

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ABSTRACT

Military intervention occurs in cases where external powers have vested interests in the outcome of an internal conflict in any given state. Yet these interventions often end with the defeat or the frustration of the intervening power(s). Using a series of both historical and contemporary examples, this article provides a framework for understanding the factors that lead to failure in military intervention, and seeks to inform understanding on this complex and controversial aspect of statecraft.

In a memorandum written for the British Cabinet on 1 December 1919, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, summarised the course of Britain's military assistance to the counter-revolutionary (White Russian) forces fighting against the Bolsheviks in northern Russia. British troops had originally been sent to Arkhangelsk and Murmansk in April 1918 to bolster Russian resistance to the Germans during the latter phases of the First World War, but then became participants in the civil war that followed the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917. Wilson observed that an operation which initially began with a few hundred soldiers and Royal Marines ended up absorbing over 18,000 troops, stating that 'once a military force is involved in operations on land it is almost impossible to limit the magnitude of its commitments'. Shortly after British troops were withdrawn in October 1919, the Bolsheviks crushed Britain's local allies.¹ Wilson's gloomy verdict on Britain's military campaign in north Russia and the defeat of the Whites are both reminders of the implications of a state intervening militarily in a conflict beyond its borders.

Both the *National Security Strategy* and *Strategic Defence and Security Review* published by the current British government stresses the requirement to 'tackle threats at source', describing state failure as a potential source for threats to UK security (notably terrorism). While these documents outline non-military means of resolving such problems – emphasising the diplomacy of conflict prevention and the provision

¹ Richard H. Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War. November 1918-February 1920*, (Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1968), pp.199-201.

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of development aid to weak states – the UK’s national security policy has an interventionist ethos,² and the doctrine of Britain’s armed forces lists ‘stabilisation operations’ in conflict zones as a core mission.³ This official commitment to interventionism is not a purely British trait, as shown by France’s intervention in Mali in early January 2013.⁴ However, historical experience from the Allies’ experiences during the Russian civil war to the current imbroglio in Afghanistan demonstrates that military intervention in any external conflict carries with it the risk of frustration and failure. This article examines the generic reasons why such operations come to grief.

There is an existing body of literature covering the ethical and practical aspects of humanitarian intervention (as practised for example by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [NATO] in Bosnia in 1995, and Kosovo in 1999),⁵ the factors influencing the success and failure of military occupations,⁶ the imposition of democracy by external military force,⁷ and the reasons why democratic states fail to win ‘small wars’.⁸ This article however considers military intervention as a distinct activity, separate from counter-insurgency (COIN) campaigns, proxy warfare, covert action or humanitarian interventions.⁹ It also considers cases in which states have engaged in expeditionary interventions in countries far from their borders (such as the USA in Vietnam, and both the USA and Britain in Iraq) as well as those where the intervening power has become involved in a conflict in a neighbouring state (such as the USSR in Afghanistan, Israel in Lebanon, or the African states engaged in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC] between 1998 and 2003).¹⁰

² Cm.7953, *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, (London, The Stationary Office, 2010), p.33; Cm.7948, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, (London, The Stationary Office, 2010), pp.44-45.

³ Joint Doctrine Publication 3/40, *Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution*, (Shrivenham, Ministry of Defence Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre 2009), online at http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C403A6C7-E72C-445E-8246-D11002D7A852/0/jdp_3_40_nov09.pdf.

⁴ Stephen W. Smith, ‘France in Africa: A New Chapter?’ *Current History*, Vol. 112, Iss. 754, (May, 2013), pp.163-168.

⁵ Dana Allin, *NATO’s Balkan Interventions*, (Abingdon, Routledge/International Institute of Strategic Studies Adelphi Paper No.347, 2002); Michael O’Hanlon & Ivo H. Daalder, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo*, (Washington DC, Brookings 2000); Robert A. Pape, ‘When Duty Calls: A Pragmatic Standard of Humanitarian Intervention’, *International Security*, Vol. 37, Iss. 1, (2012), pp.41-80.

⁶ David M. Edelstein, *Occupational Hazards: Success and Failure in Military Occupation*, (Ithaca NY, Cornell University Press. 2008).

⁷ Alexander B. Downes and Jonathan Monten, ‘Forced to be Free? Why Foreign-Imposed Regime Change rarely leads to Democratization’, *International Security*, Vol. 37, Iss. 4, (2013), pp.90-131.

⁸ Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁹ Patrick M. Regan, ‘Conditions of Successful Third-Party Intervention in Intrastate Conflict’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 40, Iss. 2, (1996), pp.336-359.

¹⁰ Deepa Khosla, ‘Third World states as intervenors in ethnic conflicts: implications for regional security’, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20 Iss. 6, (1999), pp.1143-1156.

States that initiate such interventions usually anticipate a short-term use of military power to decisively shape the political process within a target state, usually by either overthrowing its regime or by backing a faction involved in an insurgency or civil war. As this article shows, the fact that such interventions can end either with a protracted occupation or the embroilment of interventionist forces in an internal conflict in the country concerned is in itself a sign of failure.

Terminology

The author defines a *military intervention* as the unilateral or multilateral deployment of armed forces (including ground troops) in a sovereign state, where the interventionists' intentions are to use military power to decisively influence the latter's political future.¹¹ These interventions can be launched either at the request of an indigenous government – in conditions of civil war, insurgency or domestic turmoil – or in support of its internal foes. The objectives can involve either the preservation of the *status quo*, or the overthrow and replacement of a ruling regime. The USSR's involvement in Afghanistan, for example, was intended to prevent the overthrow of the Marxist-Leninist (PDPA) government, although in the initial intervention on 25-27 December 1979, Soviet special forces assassinated the PDPA President Hafizollah Amin to facilitate his replacement by a more politically 'reliable' rival from within the PDPA, Babrak Karmal.¹² Interventions can occur incrementally, with the gradual build-up of 'advisors', special forces personnel and then combat troops (as was the case with the USA in Vietnam during the early 1960s, South Africa in Angola in 1975, and the USSR in Afghanistan in 1978-9),¹³ or they can involve an overt invasion with a substantial ground force (the Soviets in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1956 and 1968 respectively, and the Anglo-American conquest of Iraq in 2003).

States involved in interventions frequently envisage a short-term deployment of armed forces, not a prolonged occupation or the actual seizure of territory, as was the case with Somalia's abortive annexation of the Ogaden from Ethiopia in 1977-8, Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980 and Kuwait ten years later, as well as Argentina's failed seizure of the Falkland Islands in 1982.¹⁴ Interventions are distinct from traditional

¹¹ S. Neil MacFarlane offers a similar definition in 'Intervention and security in Africa', *International Affairs*, Vol. 60, Iss. 1, (1983), p.53.

¹² Odd Arne Westad, 'Prelude to Invasion: The Soviet Union and the Afghan Communists, 1978-1979', *International History Review*, Vol. 16, Iss. 1, (1994), pp.49-69.

¹³ Douglas Borer, *Superpowers Defeated: Vietnam and Afghanistan Compared* (London, Frank Cass, 1999).

Hilton Hamann, *Days of the Generals: The untold story of South Africa's apartheid-era military generals*, (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2001), pp. 21-45.

¹⁴ Gebru Tareke, *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa* (New Haven CT, Yale University Press, 2009), pp.182-217; Gareth Stansfield, *Iraq* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007), pp.109-110; pp. 126-131; Lawrence Freedman & Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse, *Signals of War. The Falklands Conflict of 1982* (London, Faber & Faber, 1991).

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colonial or COIN campaigns, where military power is employed either for imperial conquest – as was the case with the European powers in Africa and Asia during the 19th and early 20th centuries – or to fight a domestic rebellion. They also differ from traditional peacekeeping missions such as those undertaken by the United Nations (UN), where the troops involved are theoretically deployed to supervise the implementation of a peace settlement rather than to confront any of the belligerents; although there are examples of failure which resemble those of intervention operations (for example, the USA's disastrous engagement in Somalia in 1992-4).¹⁵ Military interventions can also converge with inter-state conflicts, as was the case with Allied operations in Russia at the end of the First World War.¹⁶ A common feature of intervention missions is that they usually involve the overt commitment of land forces to combat operations, although there are examples that have required more limited means. In the Baltic from 1918-19 the Royal Navy decisively assisted Latvian and Estonian nationalists fighting against both the Bolsheviks and German *Freikorps*,¹⁷ whilst in Libya in 2011 NATO powers provided air power and special forces units to aid the rebellion that overthrew Muammar Qadhafi's regime.¹⁸

Success can cover a variety of outcomes from the total achievement of the interveners' objectives (the overthrow of a hostile regime, or the military defeat of insurgents, rebels and other internal foes) to the establishment of a settlement broadly compatible with its interests. Failure in this case covers a range of outcomes ranging from the outright defeat of the interventionists, to a prolonged and debilitating occupation, or the inability of the intervening power (or powers) to achieve their initial objectives for military engagement.¹⁹ The specific reasons for failure are as follows.

Over-ambitious Objectives

President Lyndon B. Johnson and his officials hoped that the introduction of US combat troops to South Vietnam in the spring of 1965 would rally the Saigon regime against the *Viet Cong*.²⁰ The South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, ordered a South African Defence Force (SADF) task force into Angola in October 1975 on the presumption that it would oust the pro-Soviet *Movimento Popular de Libertação de*

¹⁵ Alex J. Bellamy, Paul Williams & Stuart Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2006), pp.157-159.

¹⁶ Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (Winchester MA, Allen & Unwin, 1987), pp.45-55.

¹⁷ Geoffrey Bennett, *Cowan's War. The Story of British Naval Operations in the Baltic, 1918-1920* (London, Collins, 1964), pp.11-104.

¹⁸ Alan J. Kuperman, 'A Model Humanitarian Intervention? Reassessing NATO's Libya Campaign', *International Security*, Vol. 38, Iss. 1, (2013), pp.105-136.

¹⁹ Dominic Johnson & Dominic Tierney, *Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2006).

²⁰ David Kaiser, *American Tragedy. Kennedy, Johnson, and the Origins of the Vietnam War* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2000), pp.412-484.

Angola (MPLA) from Luanda.²¹ Qadhafi's Chadian adventure was based on the Libyan dictator's dream of unifying Libya with its southern neighbour as the first step in a process that would make Libya a major power in Africa and the Arab world.²² In Lebanon in 1982 the Israeli Premier and Defence Minister (Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon respectively) concluded that they could use military force not only to evict the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) from the country, but they could also impose the Maronite Christian warlord Bashir Gemayil as Lebanese President.²³ The American administration of George W. Bush and the UK Labour government of Tony Blair concluded in late 2002-early 2003 that Saddam Hussein's overthrow would be followed by the democratisation of Iraq. They were also confident that they had the military and financial means to conduct military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan concurrently.²⁴ In all of these examples the intervening powers optimistically assumed that military operations would last a few months at most.²⁵

In all these cases the political leaders and governments involved showed excessive confidence in the viability of military intervention, and underestimated the challenges involved in their embroilment in the internal affairs of the state concerned. Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney's 'Rubicon Theory' posits that as politicians and officials make the intellectual leap from deliberation to implementation, they become psychologically conditioned to reject any doubts they may have over the efficacy of resorting to the use of military force.²⁶ This theory offers one explanation as to why Leonid Brezhnev and his peers in the Soviet *Politburo*, who were initially unwilling to intervene in the Afghan civil war, eventually ordered the introduction of Soviet combat troops into Afghanistan in December 1979.²⁷ Likewise, the British historian Charles Tripp recalled that when he and other academic specialists on Iraqi history and politics met Blair in November 2002, their efforts to warn the British Prime Minister of the likelihood of political turmoil and internecine violence following Saddam's ouster fell on deaf ears.²⁸ With South African involvement in the Angolan

²¹ Jamie Miller, 'Yes, Minister: Reassessing South Africa's Intervention in the Angolan Civil War, 1975-1976', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 15, Iss. 3, (2013), pp.4-33.

²² Yehudit Ronen, *Qadhafi's Libya in World Politics* (Boulder CO, Lynne Rienner, 2008), pp.157-164.

²³ Ze'ev Schiff & Ehud Ya'ari, *Israel's Lebanon War* (London, Unwin, 1986), pp.38-43.

²⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *A Choice of Enemies. America Confronts the Middle East* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2009), pp.423-424; British Broadcasting Company, 'No Plan, No Peace', Part One aired 22:15 on 28 October 2007; Part Two aired 22:45 on 29 October 2007.

²⁵ Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* (New Haven CT, Yale University Press, 2007), pp.96-7; Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos. The World's Most Unstable Region and the Threat to Global Security* (London, Penguin, 2008), p.97.

²⁶ Dominic D. P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War: How the Path to Conflict Reaches the Point of No Return', *International Security* Vol. 36. Iss. 1, (2011), pp.7-40.

²⁷ Odd Arne Westad (ed.), 'Concerning the Situation in "A": New Russian Evidence on the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Vol. 8, Iss. 9, (1996-1997), pp.128-184.

²⁸ 'You got rid of one Saddam and left us with 50', *The Guardian* 21 September 2007.

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civil war in 1975, Vorster not only failed to calculate the effect of a SADF presence in Angola on black African opinion throughout the continent, but he also weakened the SADF task force by limiting it to 2,500 troops. During the Cuito Cuanavale campaign of 1987-8 the South African Prime Minister P. W. Botha and his ministers refused to reinforce the SADF brigade fighting alongside Jonas Savimbi's *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA) guerrilla movement.²⁹ In both these instances, South Africa failed to inflict a decisive defeat on the MPLA before the arrival of Cuban reinforcements altered the military balance against South Africa and its Angolan allies.

Internal Reactions

In a discussion with Cabinet colleagues on 6 March 1919, the British Foreign Secretary Earl Curzon of Kedleston noted with dismay the consequences of Britain's military campaigns in the Transcaucasus, which had sustained the newly independent states of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan against the Bolsheviks and White Russians alike. Curzon noted that 'it was a remarkable fact that though ... we were the saviours of the situation, we appeared to be disliked by all parties'.³⁰ Historical experience shows that it is extremely rare for interventionists to be greeted with enthusiasm by the indigenous population, and even in such cases their initial consent can gradually be eroded by the presence of foreign troops, as was the case with the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan after 2001.³¹ There are exceptions, which include the popular acclaim with which British soldiers and marines were received in Sierra Leone in April 2000, where they were seen as saviours from the widely reviled rebel movement, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Likewise, French troops committed to Mali in January 2013 were also greeted with widespread support from the local population.³²

More typical examples include that of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in southern Lebanon between 1982 and 1985. The Shia population initially welcomed the IDF invasion of June 1982 because the majority had come to loathe the Palestinian *fedayeen* and its establishment of a 'state within a state' in southern Lebanon. However, the Israelis subsequently squandered this local goodwill – mainly due to their cultural ignorance of the Shiite branch of Islam, and the heavy-handed behaviour of Israeli soldiers towards civilians – the result was a Shia insurgency and the rise of

²⁹ Timothy J. Stapleton, *A Military History of South Africa: From the Dutch-Khoi Wars to the End of Apartheid* (Santa Monica CA, Security International, 2010), pp.169-185.

³⁰ Ullman, *Russian Civil War*, p.227.

³¹ For the most recent comprehensive poll, see that conducted by the Afghan Centre for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (conducted between 29 October and 13 November 2010), online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/06_12_10_afghanpoll/pdf On signs of popular disaffection with NATO, see 'Fear and loathing in Afghanistan', *The Independent*, 12 March 2013.

³² Andrew Dorman, *Blair's Successful War. British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone* (Farnham, Ashgate Press, 2011); 'Sand on their boots', *The Economist*, 26 January 2013.

Hezbollah.³³ When Ethiopia invaded Somalia in December 2006 to overthrow its Islamist government, *Al-Shabab* and other Somali insurgent groups were able to rally significant popular support against Ethiopia; an invader that was seen as a traditional enemy and as an infidel.³⁴ Indigenous resentment at the presence of foreign troops will intensify if they act abusively towards local civilians, particularly in cases where confrontations are likely (such as at vehicle checkpoints, or in instances where dwellings are searched for weapons). During Operation *Iraqi Freedom* one Sunni Arab sheikh was quoted as saying that '[it] is better to be humiliated by an Iraqi than at the hands of strangers or infidels',³⁵ and as David Kilcullen notes with both the anti-coalition insurgencies in Iraq (2003-11) and Afghanistan (2001 onwards), the ranks of both the Iraqi insurgents and the *Taliban* were swelled by 'accidental guerrillas' whose main grievance was the presence of Western forces in their countries.³⁶

Interventionists can face indigenous resistance whether their mission is to sustain or overthrow the *status quo*. Egyptian troops sent to Yemen to prop up the Republican regime after the coup of October 1962 suffered several thousand casualties inflicted by a popular rebellion in support of the deposed imam.³⁷ Rwanda's invasion of the DRC in August 1998 led to a fierce anti-Rwandan backlash in Kinshasa, which included pogroms against the indigenous Tutsi population.³⁸ In certain cases, the presumption by the intervening power (or powers) that they are acting for enlightened reasons – and in the interests of the population of the target state – can lead policy-makers to automatically presume indigenous acquiescence or support for their actions. Prior to the USSR's involvement in Afghanistan the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, reacted angrily when one of his subordinates drew parallels with British interventions of the 19th century, rhetorically asking '[do] you mean to compare our internationalist troops with imperialist troops?'³⁹ Before the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 policy-makers in Washington and London assumed that the Iraqis (notably the persecuted Shiite and Kurdish communities) would welcome the coalition as liberators from the Iraqi Baathist tyranny. While this was

³³ Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 2007), p.23.

³⁴ 'Some peace but no keepers', *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 48, Iss. 2, (19 January 2007); 'Goodbye, maybe', *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 50 Iss. 3, (6 February 2009).

³⁵ Zaki Chehab, *Inside the Resistance. The Iraqi Insurgency and the Future of the Middle East* (New York, Nation Books, 2005), p.12; Patrick Cockburn, *The Occupation. War and Resistance in Iraq* (London, Verso, 2006), p.127.

³⁶ David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla. Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (London, C. Hurst, 2009), pp.34-38.

³⁷ David M Witty, 'A regular Army in counterinsurgency operations: Egypt in North Yemen, 1962-1967', *Journal of Military History*, Vol. 65. Iss. 2, (2001), pp.401-440.

³⁸ Robert Guest, *The Shackled Continent: Africa's Past, Present and Future* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2004), pp.57-61.

³⁹ Artemy M. Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2011), p.60.

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true of the Kurds, American and British officials underestimated the extent of nationalist resentment amongst Iraqi Shias, and the emergence of Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army was therefore completely unexpected.⁴⁰

External Responses

The process of intervention can either provoke an overt response by rival powers, or a more indirect process in which states engage in proxy warfare, backing indigenous insurgents or factions in a civil war.⁴¹ In both cases, external reactions can thwart the objectives of an interventionist state. In Angola in November 1975 the Cuban leader Fidel Castro sent a task force to help the MPLA repel South African and Zairian invasions – both countries having sent troops to back UNITA and the *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* (FNLA) factions respectively. By January 1976 there were 12,000 Cuban troops in Angola, and before 1991 Cuba maintained between 30-50,000 Cuban soldiers based in Angola. In turn, the SADF launched repeated incursions into Angola on UNITA's behalf, culminating in a series of clashes between South African, Angolan and Cuban forces between September 1987 and May 1988 that ended in a stalemate.⁴²

China responded to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia by launching a punitive war against Vietnam while also arming the *Khmer Rouge* guerrillas during their insurgency against Vietnam's occupation.⁴³ Libya's involvement in the Chadian civil war led France to deploy a task force to the country in October 1983 (*Operation Manta*) and again in February 1986 (*Operation Epervier*), thereby preventing Qadhafi's 'National Unity Government' from seizing power in N'Djamena.⁴⁴ The Ugandan-Rwandan invasion of the DRC in the summer of 1998 encouraged Angola and Zimbabwe to send combat troops to the DRC to defend Laurent Kabila's regime. The Angolan President, Eduardo dos Santos, saw Kabila as a useful ally in his ongoing struggle against UNITA, while his Zimbabwean counterpart Robert Mugabe saw Rwandan and Ugandan intervention as a challenge to his claim to regional leadership.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-insurgency in Iraq* (London, C. Hurst, 2006), pp.230-240.

⁴¹ S. Neil McFarlane, 'Africa's Decaying Security System and the Rise of Intervention', *International Security*, Vol. 8, Iss. 4, (1984), pp.133-135.

⁴² Edward George, *The Cuban Intervention in Africa, 1965-1991. From Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2005), pp.69-115 & pp.214-247.

⁴³ Enrico Fardella, 'The Sino-American entente of 1978-79 and its 'baptism of fire' in Indochina', in Max Guderzo & Bruna Bagnato (eds.), *The Globalization of the Cold War: Diplomacy and Local Confrontation, 1975-85* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2010), pp.154-165.

⁴⁴ 'Deby – Caught between Paris and Khartoum', *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 49, Iss. 4, (15 February 2008).

⁴⁵ Gerard Prunier, *From Genocide to Continental War. The 'Congolese' Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa* (London, C. Hurst 2009), pp.181-193.

Hostile states can also choose to react to a military intervention by indirect means. Following Egypt's 1962 intervention in Yemen Britain, Saudi Arabia and Israel armed and trained the Royalist insurgents.⁴⁶ The US, UK, France, China, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and other countries also responded to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan by backing the *mujahideen*. If interventionism threatens the security interests of rival powers – but they lack either the means or the inclination to resort to direct counter-interventionism – proxy warfare represents a course of action which has the appeal of causing the maximum expenditure of blood and treasure to the interventionist state (or states), without the risks involved in deploying one's own armed forces.⁴⁷

Two further points should be noted. International backing for intervention is not necessarily a guarantee for success – the ISAF mission in Afghanistan is, after all, one which is far less controversial globally than was the Soviet presence during the 1980s⁴⁸ – but its absence can be a major handicap for intervening powers. Both the US and Britain paid a diplomatic price for regime change in Iraq in 2003, not least because the lack of a UN Security Council mandate authorising war meant that neither power could use the UN's personnel, resources or corporate expertise when it came to post-conflict reconstruction.⁴⁹ Additionally the self-interest of regional powers may trump the interventionists cause leading to double-dealing. With recent NATO-led operations in Afghanistan the *Taliban* and other insurgent groups clearly relied on Pakistani military and intelligence assistance and sanctuary, even though Pakistan is supposedly an ally of the West. Islamabad's long-standing aim of ensuring a pro-Pakistani political order in Afghanistan supersedes the country's solidarity with the US.⁵⁰ Yet its concerns over the rise of militant Islamism within its own borders has served to further complicate the strategic picture.

Domestic Opposition in Countries Concerned

Military interventions can cause significant domestic controversy, even in cases where public opinion is supportive at first. Although Afghanistan was initially seen by the American and British publics to be a 'good war', domestic support for NATO-led operations in Afghanistan was progressively eroded in both countries. Even in the

⁴⁶ Clive Jones, *Britain and the Yemen Civil War, 1962-1965* (Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 2004).

⁴⁷ Geraint Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics* (Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 2012).

⁴⁸ Although there was no specific UN Security Council resolution authorising regime change in Afghanistan in October-November 2001, SCRs 1378 (14 November 2001) and 1386 (20 December 2001) legitimised both the establishment of a post-Taliban government and the ISAF mission. Both are online at <http://www.un.org>.

⁴⁹ Jack Fairweather, *A War of Choice. Honour, Hubris and Sacrifice: The British in Iraq* (London, Vintage Books, 2012), pp.17-18.

⁵⁰ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan* (London, Bloomsbury, 2013), pp.289-294.

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USA, where *Operation Enduring Freedom* was seen as a legitimate and necessary response to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington of 11 September 2001,⁵¹ Barack Obama's administration came under pressure both from the Democratic party and the US public to withdraw American troops from what became widely regarded domestically to be an unpopular and unaffordable war. In those countries allied to the US that have not experienced mass casualty attacks by *al-Qaeda* on the scale of 9/11, and where there is less of a popular perception of the stakes involved in the 'war on terror', the loss of public support for the Afghan was even more pronounced.⁵²

Public dissatisfaction may be widespread at the beginning of an intervention, or it may become more prevalent as time progresses and the popular mood reacts against military embroilment. The deaths of troops in combat, sobering accounts of the consequences of intervention by returning service personnel, and media reports of atrocities and abuses committed by one's own military can intensify domestic dissent.⁵³ The conduct of local allied forces can also have its effect on public perceptions. During the Lebanese civil war the massacre of Palestinian civilians by the Maronite *Kataib* militia in Sabra and Shatilla (September 1982) aroused public fury in Israel, where the IDF were seen as having facilitated a war crime by cordoning off the two refugee camps and remaining inactive during the massacre. In previous conflicts with Arab states, Israeli society rallied in the belief that war was a just means of self-defence, and the loss of popular support over Lebanon has been particularly important given the IDF's character as a citizen-force. Sabra and Shatilla therefore discredited Israeli intervention in Lebanon, and popular protests also led to the resignations of Sharon and Begin.⁵⁴

Moral concerns over intervention can co-exist with the widespread conviction that national interests are not served by involvement in foreign conflicts, and in conditions of economic austerity, political critics can argue that the financial costs of military interventions are unaffordable. Governments can also be undermined by a 'credibility gap'. The Vietnam war provides an obvious example where public scepticism over the progress reports issued by the Johnson administration and Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) had become evident even before the Tet Offensive (January 1968). Following Tet the MACV's pronouncements that US and allied forces

⁵¹ 'Bombing gets support of 74%', *The Guardian*, 12 October 2001; American Enterprise Institute Studies in Public Opinion, *America and the War on Terror*, (24 July 2008), p.57 Online at: http://www.aei.org/files/2008/07/24/20050805_terror0805.pdf.

⁵² Dana H. Allin & Erik Jones, *Weary Policeman: American Power in an Age of Austerity* (Abingdon, Routledge International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2012), pp.84-85; 'Allies look to speed up Afghan exit next year', *The Times*, 13 March 2012.

⁵³ Jeffrey Kimball, *Nixon's Vietnam War* (Lawrence KS, University Press of Kansas, 1998), pp.215-218.

⁵⁴ Ahron Bregman, *Israel's Wars: A History since 1947* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2000), pp.175-178.

had inflicted a major defeat on the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) were greeted with widespread domestic disbelief.⁵⁵

Military disaffection can itself be a considerable constraint. There were mutinies within the Royal Navy and British Army units committed to the north Russian and Baltic campaigns of 1919. These were caused by frustration within the ranks that conscripted service personnel remained mobilised a year after the end of the war with Germany.⁵⁶ In Vietnam, the US Army and Marine Corps experienced severe problems with discipline such as 'combat refusal', racial strife, drug-abuse, and the 'fragging' (killing) of unpopular officers. This was especially pronounced after mid-1968, when it was evident that the USA was preparing to disengage militarily from South-East Asia. Some of the US armed forces' problems were a reflection of social problems at home (notably tensions between black and white servicemen), but others reflected the increasing reluctance of military personnel to become the last casualties of an unwinnable war. The fragility of morale was clearly one factor influencing the Nixon administration's efforts to seek 'peace with honour' in South-East Asia; Richard Nixon himself regarded the presence of Vietnam veterans in American anti-war demonstrations as a key factor in mobilising popular opposition to the conflict.⁵⁷ In both Russia and Vietnam, the servicemen involved were conscripts and draftees, rather than professionals and volunteers, although the morale of British troops in Afghanistan – all of whom were volunteers – was reportedly strained by the intensity of combat in Helmand province in 2009-10.⁵⁸

Domestic anti-interventionist sentiment and declining military morale are not problems confined to liberal democracies. Authoritarian and totalitarian states have equally suffered from the same problems despite their greater scope to use force to suppress dissent. In the summer of 1976, the Syrian President Hafez al-Assad and his regime reportedly faced riots and demonstrations when Syrian troops in Lebanon clashed with the PLO. Although Syria suffered an untold number of casualties during the Lebanese civil war, it was eventually able to co-opt or crush the warring factions in that country by 1991; maintaining an occupation force in Lebanon until March 2005.⁵⁹ Conversely, with the Soviet war in Afghanistan there was popular dissent within the USSR even before the onset of *glasnost* in the late 1980s, particularly amongst non-Russian nationalities (notably in the Baltic States and in Central Asia). Such opposition was manifested by draft-dodging, ethnic strife within the military

⁵⁵ Gregory A. Daddis, *No Sure Victory. Measuring US Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.126-135.

⁵⁶ Ullman, *Russian Civil War*, pp.46-48; pp.201-203.

⁵⁷ Gerard J. DeGroot, *A Noble Cause? America and the Vietnam War* (Harlow, Pearson Education, 2000), pp.288-295; Daddis, *No Sure Victory*, pp.187-193; Kimball, *Nixon's Vietnam War*, p.251.

⁵⁸ Anthony Loyd, 'The Ten Years War against the Taliban', *Standpoint*, (January/February 2012).

⁵⁹ Adeed Dawisha, *Syria and the Lebanese Crisis* (Basingstoke, Macmillan 1980), p.138; p.150.

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contingent in Afghanistan, and unauthorised demonstrations in Soviet cities. There were also reports of widespread draft-evasion in Libya during the 1980s, reflecting popular reluctance for Qadhafi's disastrous war in Chad.⁶⁰ Zimbabwe's intervention in the DRC (1998-2003) was also domestically unpopular, in spite of Mugabe's efforts to suppress critical media reportage on both the Zimbabwe Defence Force's (ZDF) casualties and the venality and incompetence of its officer corps. Following the DRC President Laurent Kabila's assassination on 18 January 2001 there was spontaneous rejoicing in Zimbabwe, due to the popular conviction that it would bring about an end to the war and the ZDF's travails in the DRC.⁶¹

Political Loss of Will

During the Russian civil war Winston Churchill, the UK Secretary of State for War and Air in David Lloyd-George's coalition, was a fervent advocate of Allied intervention to 'strangle Bolshevism at birth', but other ministers were more half-hearted. By 1918-9 the British armed forces had to contend with an insurgency in Ireland, a troubled occupation of Iraq and popular disturbances in Egypt, as a result Lloyd-George's government had no wish to escalate yet another overseas military commitment in Russia. Two further constraints for ministers included the war-weariness of the British public, and the fierce opposition to military operations in Russia from the Labour party and trade union movement. There was therefore a political and popular consensus that rejected Churchill's proposals for an anti-Bolshevik crusade.⁶²

In much the same way that Vorster restricted the size of the SADF contingent sent to Angola in October 1975, there was a similar level of restraint exercised by P. W. Botha's government with the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1987-8. South Africa imposed restrictions on its commitment to UNITA resulting in the SADF only deploying one armoured brigade to the campaign. In both these Angolan interventions the South African troop presence was far exceeded by the Cuban military build-up. In 1987-8 Botha also faced anti-interventionist disaffection within South Africa's white community, which coexisted with a growing consensus within the National Party itself that the *apartheid* system was no longer defensible.⁶³ With the USSR's intervention in Afghanistan, the Soviet leadership's will to pursue a victory against the *mujahideen* had been weakened even before Mikhail Gorbachev's

⁶⁰ Rafael Reuveny & Aseem Prakash, 'The Afghanistan war and the breakdown of the Soviet Union', *Review of International Studies* (25/4, 1999), pp.693-708; Ronen, *Qadhafi's Libya*, p.117.

⁶¹ Cullen Nutt & M. L. R. Smith, 'Muffling the Sound of Murder: Re-interpreting Zimbabwe's Strategic Choices in the Congo' *Civil Wars*, Vol. 13, Iss. 3, (2011), pp.232-258.

⁶² Keith Jeffery, *The British Army and the Crisis of Empire 1918-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1984), pp.50-54. Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime 1919-1924* (London, HarperCollins, 1995), p.30; pp.63-64.

⁶³ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War. Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.390-393.

rise to power. Yuri Andropov (Brezhnev's successor) had previously sought a diplomatic resolution to the conflict that would allow the USSR to withdraw its troops. The financial costs of a prolonged intervention can also have a crucial effect in forcing governments to disengage militarily, and to seek a negotiated settlement. This was as true of the Johnson administration with reference to Vietnam in 1968 as it was for Gorbachev with Afghanistan in 1986, particularly as the latter's priority was to reform the ailing Soviet economy.⁶⁴

Political leaders may defy ministerial or official sentiment that favours withdrawal. George W. Bush's decision to order a 'surge' of 30,000 additional American troops into Iraq in January 2007 was made despite military reluctance and Congressional opposition (the Democrats had won control of the Senate and House of Representatives in the November 2006 elections and the majority within this party favoured a withdrawal).⁶⁵ In Britain's case, the Labour government's own divisions over Iraq were complemented by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Department for International Development (DFID) having their own internal rifts over intervention. Several UK civil servants were unwilling to volunteer for reconstruction work in Iraq because of their moral qualms over the war, while the delay in integrating DFID into inter-ministerial planning for post-conflict Iraqi reconstruction was partly due to Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International Development, having publically opposed Britain's intervention. The British occupation of South-Eastern Iraq, and the consequent military casualties, created ministerial unease contributing to both policy paralysis in London and the loss of control of Basra between 2005 and 2007. The withdrawal of the British garrison from Basra in August 2007 reflected the intention of Blair's successor, Gordon Brown, to end the UK commitment to Iraq at the earliest opportunity. It also reflected the fact that senior military commanders also favoured withdrawal, most notably General Sir Richard Dannatt, the Chief of the UK General Staff.⁶⁶

Decrepitude of Local Allies

Daniel Byman argues that when interventionist forces are drawn into COIN campaigns their efforts to assist the indigenous government against its internal foes are often hampered by the latter's inherent weaknesses.⁶⁷ The South Vietnamese regime of *Ngo Dinh Diem* (1955-63) and its successors,⁶⁸ the PDPA in Kabul,⁶⁹ the

⁶⁴ Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Time For War. The United States and Vietnam, 1941-1975* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.242-3; pp.263-7; Kalinovsky, *Long Goodbye*, pp.54-73; pp.80-92.

⁶⁵ Peter D. Feaver, 'The Right to be Right? Civil-Military relations and the Iraq surge decision', *International Security*, Vol. 35, Iss. 4, (2011), pp.87-125.

⁶⁶ Geraint Hughes, 'Iraqnophobia: The dangers of forgetting Operation Telic', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 157, Iss. 6, (2012), pp.54-60.

⁶⁷ Daniel Byman, 'Friends like these. Counterinsurgency and the War on Terrorism', *International Security*, Vol. 31, Iss. 2, (2006), pp.79-115.

⁶⁸ Kaiser, *American Tragedy*, pp.150-1, pp.173-6, pp.213-20, pp.290-1; pp.341-345.

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Ethiopian-backed Transitional Federal Government in Somalia (2006-9),⁷⁰ the post-Baathist Iraqi government⁷¹ and Hamid Karzai's regime in Afghanistan (2001-14);⁷² all share common negative characteristics in the form of endemic official corruption, intense factionalism, and often internecine violence. If the objective of the intervening power(s) is to establish or to sustain a government that will be perceived as legitimate by the indigenous population, and be able to sustain itself in power against armed opposition, then the inability of the host nation regime to do so can be a key cause of failure. The US Marines in Afghanistan's Helmand province in July 2009 who were told by a local elder that '[we] cannot trust the government or the Taliban ... We can only trust you' may have concluded that their efforts to win 'hearts and minds' were coming to fruition, but the fact that their interlocutor had shown no confidence in Karzai or his officials hinted at a wider strategic problem for ISAF.⁷³

If interventionists have to reconstitute indigenous military and security forces, local constabularies and armies they can often be hamstrung by low morale, poor training, combat ineffectiveness and criminalisation. Even in peacetime conditions the armed forces of authoritarian and totalitarian states may have to sacrifice military efficiency for political reliability.⁷⁴ In times of internal conflict the weaknesses of such militaries can contribute to failure. If one acknowledges Napoleon's dictum that '[there] are no bad regiments, only bad colonels',⁷⁵ then it is not surprising that indigenous military and security force personnel tend to be unwilling to fight for corrupt superiors who appropriate their pay, or incompetent commanders whose promotion depends on party allegiance or ethnic/clan loyalties rather than professional military expertise. For example, some South Vietnamese military and paramilitary units fought well, but collectively the Saigon regime's armed forces were no match for either the *Viet Cong* or the NVA unless supported by US forces.⁷⁶ During the 1980s the Afghan government's forces were hampered by low morale, desertions, and debilitating rivalries caused by factional feuds within the PDPA. *Mujahideen* leaders such as Ahmed Shah Massoud could rely on sympathisers within the PDPA to provide both

⁶⁹ Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan. State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven CT, Yale University Press 2002, 2nd Edition), pp.111-145.

⁷⁰ ICG Africa Report No.147, *Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State*, (23 December 2008), pp.4-7.

⁷¹ ICG Middle East Report No.99, *Loose Ends: Iraqi Security Forces between US drawdown and withdrawal*, (26 October 2010), pp.1-17.

⁷² ICG Asia Report No.207, *The Insurgency in Afghanistan's Heartland*, (27 June 2011), pp.22-28.

⁷³ MacFarlane, 'Africa's Security System', 143. Rumu Sarkar, *A Fearful Symmetry. The New Soldier in the Age of Asymmetric Conflict* (Santa Barbara CA, Praeger Security International, 2009), p.56.

⁷⁴ Risa Brooks, *Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes* (Adelphi Paper No.324, 1998), p.10; pp.38-9; pp. 48-50.

⁷⁵ Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-15, *Leadership Statements and Quotes* (Washington DC: Department of the Army 1985), p.14.

⁷⁶ Schulzinger, *Time for War*, pp.289-290. Mark Philip Bradley, *Vietnam at War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), p.155; p.161.

intelligence and defectors.⁷⁷ With the occupation of Iraq the police and other security forces recruited by the Americans and the British were infiltrated both by insurgents and by Shiite militias,⁷⁸ while the current Afghan National Army (ANA) is perceived in the predominantly Pashtun south to be dominated by the northern Tajik minority.⁷⁹

Intervening powers are often obliged to support allies that cannot fend for themselves against their opponents. In Lebanon in 1982 the Israelis were drawn into battle in Beirut because its Maronite clients were 'paper soldiers' lacking the stomach for a fight against the PLO. In its occupation of southern Lebanon (1985-2000) the Israelis supported a surrogate force (the South Lebanon Army) whose militiamen were qualitatively inferior to *Hezbollah* fighters.⁸⁰ Likewise, Soviet troops sent into Afghanistan in December 1979 were originally supposed to protect Kabul and other cities whilst the Afghan armed forces recovered control of the countryside; yet over the following year the former were dragged into the civil war against the *mujahideen* because of the combat ineffectiveness of the Afghan military and security forces.⁸¹ With other conflicts the fragility and unreliability of the interventionists' own local allies has led to military disaster. In Chad during the late 1980s the pro-Libyan National Unity Government forces disintegrated as its fighters flocked to join Hissein Habre's army; the result was the annihilation of Qadhafi's expeditionary force by Habre's troops in the 'Toyota War' of 1986-7. In the war against the DRC the Zimbabweans suffered several humiliating defeats against anti-Kabila rebels and their Rwandan backers because of the desertion – or often the treachery – of supposedly loyal Congolese government troops.⁸²

In Afghanistan the ANA and police recruits have, on occasion, turned their guns on ISAF personnel. This fostered negative public opinion in the troop-contributing nations of ISAF, while the increased rate of 'green on blue' attacks four years ago became a serious concern for ISAF military authorities. From 2008 to 2013 Afghan soldiers and policemen killed at least 132 ISAF soldiers and have wounded a further 148 (86 attacks took place in 2012-3). For domestic critics of Afghan intervention

⁷⁷ Russian General Staff (translated and edited by Lester A. Grau & Michael A. Gress), *The Soviet-Afghan War. How a Superpower Fought and Lost* (Lawrence KS, University of Kansas 2002), pp.48-52; Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars* (New York, Penguin, 2005), p.117.

⁷⁸ Eric Herring & Glen Rangwala, *Iraq in Fragments: The Occupation and Legacy* (London, C. Hurst, 2006), pp.121-123; pp.196-198.

⁷⁹ ICG Asia Report No.190, *A Force in Fragments. Reconstituting the Afghan Army*, (12 May 2010).

⁸⁰ Thomas Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem: One Man's Middle Eastern Odyssey* (London, HarperCollins, 1998), p.140; Augustus Richard Norton & Jillian Schwedler, 'Insecurity Zones in Southern Lebanon', *The Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 23, Iss. 1, (1993), pp.64-68.

⁸¹ Kalinovsky, *Long Goodbye*, pp.24-30.

⁸² Ronen, *Qadhafi's Libya*, 168-171. Nutt & Smith, 'Zimbabwe's Strategic Choices', pp.244-245; p.247

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these attacks on ISAF personnel by their supposedly Afghan allies are a symptom of a wider failure to stabilise and reconstruct Afghanistan itself.⁸³

Conclusions

The factors discussed above should be seen as generic causes of failure. The interaction between these factors is complex, although from the cases considered in this article, indigenous resistance and external support for it are the primary contributors to failure. Political and strategic incoherence, domestic disaffection and the weaknesses of local allies are important secondary factors. On its own, indigenous resistance – and the casualties incurred by the interventionists – may erode the will of an intervening state, but examples such as Syria's intervention in Lebanon demonstrate that this is not always the case.

Geographical factors do not automatically affect the success or failure of intervention. A contrast can be drawn between conducting operations in a small coastal country (such as the UK's intervention in Sierra Leone in 2000) and a state such as the DRC that is the two thirds the size of Western Europe and lacks a functioning transport infrastructure.⁸⁴ When suppressing the military mutinies in its former East African colonies in January 1964 the British were fortunate enough to have a brigade of troops stationed in Kenya at that time.⁸⁵ In contrast, the following year the British Chiefs of Staff ruled out a military intervention to suppress the white separatist regime in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) because of the lack of any bases in neighbouring states.⁸⁶ Yet proximity should not be seen as an inevitable asset for an intervening power. With Angola the SADF had a base of operations in Namibia (which was illegally occupied by South Africa until 1990), whereas the Cubans had to conduct an expeditionary campaign from across the Atlantic (albeit with Soviet support). Yet even a careful examination of the mythology surrounding the battle of Cuito Cuanavale leads to the conclusion that it was Cuba, rather than South Africa, which came closest to achieving its political objectives in the Angolan wars.⁸⁷ ISAF was hampered by the financial burden of supporting forces in Afghanistan, but the USSR

⁸³ 'Two British troops killed in Afghanistan: timeline of 'green on blue' killings', *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 March 2012; Bill Roggio, 'Afghan soldier kills 2 ISAF in latest green-on-blue attack', *Long War Journal*, (4 May 2013), online at http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/05/afghan_soldier_kills_4.php.

⁸⁴ Dorman, *Blair's Successful War*, passim. Prunier, *Genocide to Continental War*, passim.

⁸⁵ Timothy H. Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport CT, Praeger, 2003), p.120.

⁸⁶ David French, *Army, Empire & Cold War. The British Army and Military Policy 1945-1971* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.254-255; pp.285-286.

⁸⁷ William Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.75; Leopold Scholtz, 'The Standard of Research on the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale', *Scientia Militaria* (39/1, 2011), pp.115-137.

did not benefit from having a shorter logistical train when it came to sustaining its combat operations in the same state during the 1980s.⁸⁸

The tactical abilities of interventionist forces, equipment, training, doctrine and their command and control vary from the lamentably poor (Libyan forces in Chad during the 1980s) to highly proficient (US, British and other Coalition troops in Iraq, 2003-2011), but deploying highly-trained and well-motivated troops rather than draftees does not guarantee success either. ISAF soldiers were far better trained and equipped than the majority of Soviet conscripts who fought in Afghanistan three decades ago, but the fact that they generally defeated the *Taliban* in pitched battles and inflicted heavy losses on the insurgents did not translate into an ISAF victory.⁸⁹ Moreover, following the withdrawal of NATO combat forces the long-term prospects of the Kabul government remain uncertain.⁹⁰ Regarding the racial identity of the interventionist, a common or shared ethnicity with the indigenous population does not make successful intervention more likely. For example, Yemeni pro-Royalist tribesmen had no qualms about killing Egyptian soldiers despite the fact they were fellow Arabs.⁹¹

A common, but not necessarily unifying, feature of the interventions discussed is over-confidence on the part of the decision-makers concerned, and an under-estimation of the likely challenges involved. A good example of this tendency concerns the insouciance with which the British government and senior military leadership deployed a British battle group to Helmand in April 2006.⁹² As noted above, the 'Rubicon theory' offers an explanation as to why the Soviet *Politburo* rejected PDPA appeals to send troops to Afghanistan in March 1979, but reversed this decision nine months later. It also explains why Dick Cheney could argue in February 1992 that overthrowing Saddam Hussein would drag the USA into an insurgency and civil war in Iraq, whilst forgetting these dire predictions a decade later when he was Bush's Vice-President. In the latter case, Cheney and other officials who advocated intervention in Iraq rejected estimates (such as that offered by the Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, in February 2003) that the USA would need a far

⁸⁸ Todd Harrison, *Analysis of the FY 2011 Defense Budget* (Washington DC, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2011); Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan 1979-89* (London, Profile Books, 2012), pp.173-175.

⁸⁹ Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan 1979-89* (London, Profile Books, 2012), pp.170-173; Stephen Grey, 'Understanding the Taliban', *The New Statesman*, 24 April 2008.

⁹⁰ ICG Asia Report No.260, *Afghanistan's Political Transition*, (16 October 2014).

⁹¹ Duff Hart-Davis, *The War that Never Was: The True Story of the Men who fought Britain's Secret Battle* (London, Century, 2011).

⁹² Matt Cavanagh, 'Ministerial Decision-Making in the Run-up to the Helmand Deployment', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 157, Iss. 2, (2012), pp.48-54.

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larger force than the 116,000 troops committed to *Operation Iraqi Freedom* in March 2003.⁹³

Finally, it is worth remembering that even 'successful' interventions can at best have ephemeral results, and they can often have long-term negative consequences. The US military intervention that ended Lebanon's civil war in 1958 also fuelled Lebanese perceptions that the US was an imperialist power hostile to Arab nationalist aspirations.⁹⁴ The long-term effect of Soviet military interventions to preserve Communist regimes in East Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia during the Cold War can be seen to have created a pronounced Russophobia within the region, manifested in particular by the successful efforts of the ex-Warsaw Pact states to subsequently secure NATO membership.⁹⁵ France's support of the Rwandan government against the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1990 bolstered a regime that committed genocide against the Rwandan Tutsi minority only four years later, and was a contributory cause to the destabilisation of the neighbouring Zaire (now the DRC).⁹⁶ The Saudi/UAE intervention in Bahrain in March 2011 has done nothing to reconcile the Shia majority with the Sunni, al-Khalifa ruling dynasty. Sectarian tensions within the kingdom remain high.⁹⁷ As such, even the apparently successful use of military force to influence the internal politics of a foreign state may ultimately have unforeseen and unwelcome results, not least for the interests of the intervening power.

⁹³ Freedman & Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995), p.413; Michael Gordon & Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (London, Atlantic Books, 2006), pp.38-43; pp.101-103.

⁹⁴ Maurice Jr. M. Labelle, 'A New Age of Empire? Arab 'Anti-Americanism', US Intervention, and the Lebanese Civil War of 1958', *International History Review*, Vol. 35, Iss. 1, (2013), pp.42-69.

⁹⁵ Jonathan Eyal, *Who Lost Russia? An Enquiry into the Failure of the Russian-Western Partnership* (London, RUSI Whitehall Paper No.71, 2009), pp.28-35.

⁹⁶ Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (London, Verso, 2006), pp.14-15.

⁹⁷ ICG Middle East/North Africa Report No.111, *Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (VIII): Bahrain's Rocky Road to Reform*, (28 July 2011).