

RISING CONFLICTS: AN ANALYSIS OF COLD WAR PROXY WARS
AND THEIR MODERN APPLICATION

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TC 660H

Plan II Honors Program

The University of Texas at Austin

May 14, 2019

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ABSTRACT

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Since the end of World War II, regional and super powers alike have increasingly engaged in proxy conflicts. The Cold War represented a period of conflict characterized by a bipolar world and stark ideological differences. This environment resulted in ubiquitous proxy conflicts across the world. With the costs of direct warfare increasing because of economic interdependence and the rise of regional powers, the United States, once again, faces an environment conducive to the spread of proxy conflicts. This thesis aims to case study the Greek Civil War and The Congo Crisis to understand the strategic objectives of proxy wars and derive historical strategic lessons. Then, with those strategic considerations in mind, the thesis will propose a prescriptive matrix based on how the United States has engaged in previous proxy wars and future strategic objectives. Finally, the thesis will apply this matrix to current proxy war in Yemen to assess the utility of a catch-all strategic matrix. The aim of the thesis lies in whether or not proxy conflicts can have a normalized, streamlined response from the United States.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to acknowledge my family. Amma, Pops, Kalyan, Karthik, and Noemi have always provided incredible support and this thesis would not have been possible without all of you.

Second, I would like to acknowledge my advisors. Dougald has been an invaluable advisor and mentor since my junior year of college. I would also like to thank Admiral Bob Inman for his class, allowing me to be his TA, and his time as my advisor.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people and students who make the Plan II program such an amazing educational experience. Since I started at UT, Plan II has defined my academic experience, and, I would surely not be where I am today without my professors and peers in Plan II.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Proxy wars are not unique to modern conflict. For hundreds of years, powerful states have looked to advance their interest through “war on the cheap.” For example, the Romans financially supported factions that opposed Carthage’s rule of Sicily. More recently the rigid state structure, international competition for world power status, and belief in ideological supremacy are only some of the factors that have led to the increased frequency of proxy wars.

During the aftermath of World War II, the United States’ implementation of the Marshall Plan, adherence to containment, and push for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization fomented an ideological conflict that would persist until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Unlike any traditional war between powerful nations, the United States and the Soviet Union never fought an official conflict in a singular region. Instead, the rise of a bipolar world was defined by a series of smaller conflicts, in various parts of the world with the United States and the Soviet Union each seeking to garner the most support and fend off the other’s advances into their respective spheres of influence. The Cold War provided a perfect environment for proxy wars. Whether it was in Vietnam or Afghanistan, the United States and Soviet Union mismanagement of proxy wars destabilized the proxy countries for decades after the respective powers disengaged from the conflict.

Since the Cold War, proxy wars have wreaked havoc in the Middle East. One of the most notable examples of this is the current crisis in Yemen. In his article "Proxy War Ethics," Dr. Anthony Pfaff argues that there is "growing assertiveness by regional state actors; increasingly capable non-state actors that can project power regionally, if not globally."¹ Considering the domestic costs of direct engagement, the United States relies on regional powers to advance national security interests in international armed conflicts.

On top of increased reliance of national security partners, Iran and Saudi Arabia are locked in a heated battle for regional dominance in the Middle East. This rivalry creates proxy conflicts similar to clashes between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Yemen Crisis and the Syrian Conflict--both sites of Iran-Saudi Arabia proxy wars--have created two of the largest humanitarian crises since World War II. With the intensifying conflict between the House of Saud and Iran, increased belligerence by Russia, and the militarization by China of the South China Sea, the United States is bound to be engaged in future proxy conflicts.

I will use the Greek Civil War and The Congo Crisis as case studies, gleaned lessons learned from each conflict. From the lessons that we have gathered from Cold War proxy wars, I will build a strategic matrix to approach proxy wars in the future. I will also assume that the United States must get involved in the proxy conflict. Finally,

¹ Pfaff, Anthony. "Proxy War Ethics." *Journal of National Security Law & Policy* 9, no. 2 (August 27, 2017).

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the paper will evaluate the strategic matrix by applying the strategy to ongoing proxy conflicts in Yemen. Since these conflicts are constantly changing, I will also examine the failures and risks in the application of the strategy model.

Chapter II: Theories on Proxy Wars

There has been some academic debate on what defines a proxy war. Andrew Mumford, in "Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict," argues that a proxy war is a product of a relationship between a benefactor, external to the direct conflict, and the chosen proxies who are the recipient of the benefactor's training, funding, and weapons.² Critically, the Mumford definition requires a benefactor, which could be a non-state or state actor that assists a proxy without direct intervention.

In 1964, in the midst of the Cold War, Karl Deutsch argued that proxy wars are "international conflict[s] between two foreign powers, fought out on the soil of a third country; disguised as conflict over an internal issue of that country; and using some or all of that country's manpower, resources, and territory as a means for achieving preponderantly foreign goals and foreign strategies."³ Mumford argues that Deutsch's theory on proxy wars is limited to a Cold War context since he did not account for non-state actors and regional powers.

Daniel Byman, in "Why Engage in Proxy War? A State's Perspective" argues that proxy wars occur "when a major power instigates or plays a major role in supporting and directing a party to a conflict but does only a small portion of the fighting itself."⁴

² Mumford, Andrew. "Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict." *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 2 (2013): 40-46.

³ Deutsch, Karl. "External Involvement in Internal War." In Harry Eckstein (Ed) Internal War: Problems and Approaches. New York; The Free Press. pp. 100-110. p. 102.

⁴ Byman, Daniel L. "Why Engage in Proxy War? A State's Perspective." Brookings.edu. May 22, 2018. Accessed December 13, 2018.

Much like other academic debates on definitions, each rationale brings some salient points but also presents shortcomings related to the evolution of the conflict or problem over time. The Mumford definition relies on the benefactor being “external to the dynamic of an existing conflict.”⁵ The idea that the benefactor is external to the conflict does not weight the far-reaching effect that national security interests could have on the benefactor’s homeland. Further, I hold that Deutsch’s analysis is too rigid in the modern context. Deutsch’s world view relied on his understanding of a bipolar world which excludes non-state actors with the ability to gain territory and destabilize not only countries but whole regions. Byman’s analysis, the most recent of the three definitions, argues that the benefactor or the power has to engage directly in a small portion of the fighting itself. On the other hand, arms transfers and training missions, which have characterized the American strategy in Yemen, have become an integral part of how the United States engages in proxy wars.

The arguments presented in this paper will define a proxy war as a conflict in which a more powerful benefactor--either a state or non-state--supports politically, militarily, or economically, a proxy to advance their national security interest or achieve regional stability. Relative to other definitions, I put forth a rationale that is broad. As these conflicts continue to evolve, the tenets of what constitutes a proxy war becomes

⁵ Mumford, Andrew. "Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict." *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 2 (2013): 40-46.

muddled because of various factors including rise of non-state actors, violent sectarianism, and regional powers vying for influence.

Proxy War Formation

Though there are proxy conflicts that are rooted in ancient history, proxy wars have become increasingly ubiquitous in a post-Cold War world. Proxy conflicts arise when a great power, defined as a hegemon like the United States or the Soviet Union, or a regional power want to advance a strategic interest at odds with a rival state. Strategic interests include securing a region politically and economically, and combatting rival power consolidation. These conflicts are prevalent in a bipolar world or region. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in proxy conflicts to stem the rise of rival political and economic ideologies in their respective spheres of influence. The United States and the Soviet Union both came to the same conclusion on a direct conflict between each other. The economic and human costs would be too high to justify traditional warfare. Instead, a series of conflicts in less powerful nations tested the resolve of each superpower. For example, the Greek Civil War, discussed in Chapter 3, was the first test of the United States' commitment to minimizing the spread of communism in war-torn Europe.

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran provide a more modern example of how proxy wars form. The two countries vie for regional superiority for a number of reasons, including sectarianism and economic competition. Unsurprisingly, neighboring nations like Yemen, a country prone to political instability, prove attractive

for regional actors to pursue proxy conflicts. Considering the view that strength of alliance strongly correlates with regional influence, it follows that it is easier for a regional power to achieve power through proxy conflicts rather than bearing the brunt of the staggering costs of war.

Analyzing both past and modern examples, a clear picture depicting the components of proxy conflicts begins to emerge. The prerequisite to any proxy conflict is a regional or super power to advance a strategic interest that does not warrant the burden of direct engagement. In recent times, the calculus for war costs has leaned towards to the creation of proxy wars because of nuclearization and economic interdependence. Second, there has to be a viable stage. The right playing fields are often smaller, poorer nations that are in transition. These nations' instability provides avenues for actors to support their respective sides without strict international oversight or condemnation. Finally, there has to be a clear path to victory. Strategically, this is a bit harder to discern and should be determined by the government entering the proxy conflict. The path to victory should depend on a dichotomy that arises from the formation of proxy wars. When working with defined states, the strategic approach usually warrants the use of military assets as we will see in the Greek Civil War. On the other hand, when dealing with insurrectionary forces or transition attempts, the United States often uses intelligence processing as we will see in the Congo Crisis. In the next section, I discuss the history and lessons learned from the Greek Civil War.

Chapter III: Greek Civil War

The Beginning of the Cold War

In many ways the Greek Civil War was a formative conflict for the United States' fight against the USSR. The conflict introduced the notion of using proxies to advance ideology and control the region. Further, the Truman Doctrine was born out of the need for American involvement in Greece. Overall, the Greek Civil War was an incredibly influential conflict for United States foreign policy during the Cold War. This chapter will focus on the JUSPMAG and overhauling the strategy of the Greek National Army during the Greek Civil War.

The Conflict

The Greek Civil War was fought between the existing Greek government – backed by the United States and the United Kingdom – and the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG), the military arm of the Greek Communist Party. The Greek Civil War occurred in three phases. Before international intervention--in 1941--Greece found itself in a power vacuum in the wake of the death of fascist leader General Ioannis Mextas. This marked the beginning of the First Phase of the Civil War. From this vacuum, the Greek Communist Party (KKE), which controlled the National Liberation Front (EAM) took power. Against the EAM, the National Republican Greek League (EDES) formed to expel the communists from power.

In the winter of 1943, war began to break out between the two factions, with Britain backing the EDES. This political and societal unrest set the stage for one of the first proxy wars in the Cold War era. In 1944, Churchill offered control of Romania to the Soviets in exchange for democracy in Greece. In the winter of 1944, the nationalists gained control of Greece, with direct British military support. In 1946, elections were held in Greece, and thought to be corrupt. The EAM, with newly found support, formed the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG), who positioned themselves as fighting for Greek revolution. The DAG's guerilla tactics were supported by communist regimes like Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, and they gained significant territory during the war.

Next, we must understand the proxy relationship between the KKE and the global communist power structure. In early 1944, "KKE Politburo members Stergios Anastasiadis and Andreas Tzimas visited Yugoslavia as well as Bulgaria in November 1944 to seek support for actions they were contemplating."⁶ Greek Communists also appealed directly to the USSR. On December 8, 1944, Bulgarian leader Georgi Dimitrov forwarded officials in Moscow a request for intervention from a KKE official.⁷ This offer was denied by the USSR, and the Soviet Bloc countries, who were following the

⁶ Marantzidis, Nikos. "The Greek Civil War (1944-1949) and the International Communist System." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 15, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 25-54.

⁷ *Ibid*, 28.

lead of the USSR. Circumstances changed in 1945 with the return to Athens of KKE leaders such as Nikos Zahariadis. This signaled a new era in the Greek party's quest for closer ties to surrounding communist factions in the Soviet Bloc. By the end of 1945, KKE leaders explored a fresh strategy for a new insurrection. In January of 1946, the year that the Third Phase of the Greek Civil War officially began, a KKE convoy arrived in Moscow to seek political advice and material assistance.⁸ Moscow prescribed a dual pronged strategy: pursue political agitation while also preparing for armed struggle.⁹ This strategy was designed such that if one avenue failed another avenue would be successful at disrupting the democratic efforts. Fundamentally, Moscow was promoting the optimal outcome, which was communist control of the government, or at the very least communist participation in a more legitimate government.

In March 1946, Zahariadis, leader of the KKE, visited Czechoslovakia to meet with Yugoslavian leader Tito and Stalin in the Crimea. This transnational communist tour was aimed at the possibility of obtaining solid support from important communist leaders. In April 1946, Zaharidas "asked the USSR to approve the creation of guerilla and officer training centers to accommodate 8,000 guerrillas in Yugoslavia and 2,000

⁸ Artiom, Ulunian A. "The Soviet Union and 'the Greek Question', 1946-53: Problems and Appraisals." 1996, 144-60.

⁹ Gaddis, John Lewis. *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

each in Albania and Bulgaria.”¹⁰ KKE leaders were clearly ramping up for a serious insurrection. They soon realized that this required international intervention from their communist comrades. This represented a turning point in the conflict, basically ensuring the break out of a civil war. More importantly, Eastern European bloc countries and the Soviet Union escalated commitment to the first armed conflict of the Cold War. In fact, Marantzidas posits that “it would be naïve to suggest that a communist insurrection could have erupted in Greece in 1946 without the express agreement of the leaders of the Soviet and Balkan Communist Parties.”¹¹ In this case, foreign intervention directly sparked the proxy war, by escalating the conflict through an infusion of hard power. Later in 1946, several of Stalin’s top advisors recommended additional aid to the KKE in the form of funds and goods to the insurrection. By 1947,

“The bulk of supplies sent to Greece – weapons, ammunition, and provisions – was transported from Yugoslavia. Initially, the weapons were of German origin in order to conceal the identity of the actual suppliers. Aid arriving from Albania and Bulgaria also was forwarded to the Greek insurgents through Yugoslavia. In addition to weapons, Yugoslavia supplied the KKE with ample support for its propaganda needs: The Communists' Free Greece Radio Station was transmitting from Yugoslav territory, and Yugoslavia also provided

¹⁰ Marantzidis, “The Greek Civil War (1944-1949),” 29.

¹¹ Ibid, 30.

financial assistance for travel, accommodation abroad, contacts, and other services. All told, the aid constituted an impressive amount and variety of materiel and other support, revealing the Yugoslavs' confidence in the prospects of the Greek insurrection."¹²

This intervention from the Soviet Bloc marked the beginning the Second Phase of the Greek Civil War.

On the other side of the conflict, the U.S. and the United Kingdom were also ramping up support. In January of 1945, a USSR communication to the United Nations accused the United Kingdom troops in Greece of "causing extreme tension fraught with the possibility of serious consequences both for the Greek people and for the maintenance of peace and security."¹³ On February 1, 1945, Churchill wrote to his wife: "I am sure in Greece I found one of the best opportunities for wise action that this war has tossed to me from its dark waves."¹⁴ Churchill was referring to British intervention, including close to 50,000 troops that were stationed in Athens during the winter of 1944. In early 1945, the British negotiated a tentative peace between the existing government and the EAM. This so-called Varkiza Agreement specified that

¹² Ibid, 32.

¹³ "Initial Proceedings." In *The Greek Question: USSR Communication*, 301. Proceedings. United Nations.

¹⁴ Iatrides, John O., and Nicholas X. Rizopoulos. "The International Dimension of the Greek Civil War." *World Policy Journal* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 87-103.

the Communist coalition would have to disarm. This stipulation was never followed and the agreement did not impede the inevitable conflict between the KKE and republican forces. Undeterred by Churchill's electoral defeat in July 1945, the United Kingdom "provided economic, military and technical assistance."¹⁵ The British military "trained the new Greek armed forces and police and selected their senior commanders."¹⁶ In an unexpected move, the cash-poor and war ravaged Britain could not sustain support in the conflict.

Almost immediately after Britain had announced a continuation of aid to the Greek government, President Truman went to Congress to garner military support for the Greek government. From Truman's plea, the United States adopted the Truman Doctrine, a policy that established that "the United States would provide political, military and economic assistance to all democratic nations under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces."¹⁷ This policy inherently opened up the United States to enter into proxy wars because it justified military backing of pro-Western factions around the world. In late 1947, the United States created the American Mission to Aid Greece (AMAG) to infuse political support and military aid to the Greek government. Upon Congressional approval, President Truman ordered the War Department to

¹⁵ Ibid, 98.

¹⁶ Ibid, 99.

¹⁷ "The Truman Doctrine, 1947." U.S. Department of State. Accessed May 12, 2019.

assess and deploy the supplies and equipment needs of Greek forces. According to White House documents, Truman appointed Dwight Griswold to head up the AMAG, while Ambassador Lincoln McVeigh was to lead political discussion with the Greek government.¹⁸ Despite \$171 million in US military aid, the national army was not able to defeat insurgent communist forces. The failure of the American strategy led to the Joint Chiefs of Staff escalating military assistance from aid to intensified support.

The initial Greek military strategy had three phases. First, it employed a pincer movement in a particular region to trap the guerrilla bands. The second phase involved mopping up operations to defeat any remaining elements in the region. These stay-back forces were used to secure large swaths of land. Last, the process would be replicated across different regions in Greece. The overarching strategy failed, because of the nature of the enemy. Before the Greek army could execute the pincer movement, rebel forces easily maneuvered out of range. The local population did not cooperate with the army in locating rebels because they feared retaliation from rebel forces. The Greek army committed more stay-behind forces to protect local communities, which significantly weakened the ability for offensive operations. The KKE created communist controlled zones from the substantial loss of the Greek Army. Specifically, the communist forces were able to maintain control of rural mountains. These zones

¹⁸ Monthly Report on American Mission for Aid to Greece, with attachments, September 20, 1947. Truman Papers, President's Secretary's Files. Greece.

provided strategic benefits for the rebels including centralization and organization to conduct operations.¹⁹

American Involvement: the Truman Doctrine

The United States then proposed the formation of the National Defense Corps, diverting funds allocated for the Greek National Army (GNA) to create twenty 500 - man battalions. These battalions would defend towns and take over static defense missions. This freed up the GNA to conduct offensive missions; yet, the threat of communist victory still loomed. On December 31, 1947, the Joint United States Military Advisory and Planning Group (JUSMAPG) was formed. The purpose of JUSMAPG was simple: "to assist Greek armed forces in re-establishment of internal security in Greece at the earliest practicable date and to reduce Communist inspired guerrilla movement."²⁰

The Joint Chiefs gave William C. Livesay command of both JUSMAPG and United States Army Group-Greece (USAGG), a subsection of the American Mission for Aid to Greece (AMAG). Livesay built a new advisory organization as the 170 (90 officers and 80 soldiers) newly assigned personnel began arriving in Greece in December of 1947 and January of 1948.²¹ Livesay had two criteria for the officer

¹⁹ Harris, William. "Instilling Aggressiveness US Advisors and Greek Combat Leadership in the Greek Civil War." *Combat Studies Institute: Art of War Papers*, 2013.

²⁰ "The Ambassador in Greece (Grady) to the Secretary of State." Henry Grady to Secretary of State George Marshall. November 28, 1947.

²¹ Harris, "Instilling Aggressiveness," 49.

advisors: graduation of the Command and General Staff College and combat experience.²² He created four sections to advise the Greek General Staff on personnel, intelligence, operations, and logistics. The General Staff advisors and Livesay, as the chief advisor and member of Supreme National Defense Council, had five tasks: monitoring the military situation, “formulate plans for the employment and coordination of the Armed Forces of Greece,”²³ advise the Joint Chiefs and the Chief of AMAG on how to use the Greek military, provide operational advice, and ensure that “operational returns are commensurate with the aid furnished.”²⁴ The wording of the second and fifth tasks clearly indicates that Livesay and JUSMAPG intended to have a significant level of influence over Greek military operations. Livesay also created eleven field teams to provide operational support and streamline advice to the Greek National Army. The field teams and the General Staff advisors spent the first months in Greece assessing native military capabilities. The assessment was designed to culminate in a plan to win the war for the Greek government. The evaluation also relied on increasing financial aid to the Greek National army to expand forces by

²² Ibid, 49.

²³ Plans and Operations Division, “Future Concept and Objectives of Military Aid for Greece,” Records of the Army Staff, Plans and Operations Division, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Records Group 319, Entry 153, Decimal File 091, Box 74; US Army, JUSMAPG, 46.

²⁴ Ibid, 45.

150,000 men.²⁵ Military advisors soon moved beyond assessment into influencing the strategy of the GNA. Livesay, in his guidance to his advisors, stated “you must insist on aggressive action . . . we must instill aggressiveness in them; they must carry the fight to the bandits.”²⁶ The United States suggested that American advisors use three primary methods to instill aggressiveness: daily mentorship, direct orders, and disciplinary action.²⁷ Livesay specifically directed his subordinates to “maintain close personal contact with lower echelons . . . to insure aggressive action.”²⁸ This aggressiveness of the military soon boiled over to the point where US combat troops were leading operations against rebel forces. In summation, after landing in Greece, United States’ military advisors significantly increased the aggressiveness of the GNA. With increased control of the Greek General Staff by American troops, the Prime Minister of Greece and King Paul began negotiations with the US and British Ambassador to formalize and codify the role of US troops. The main goal of the Greek government in these negotiations was to maintain autonomy for the GNA Chief of Staff as the source of tactical orders for the Greek military. While this meant that US and British Advisors were not allowed to command forces, the new agreement

²⁵ Livesay, William, Cable to Director Plans and Operations, 22 January 1948, Records of Interservice Organizations, Joint United States Military Advisory Group Greece, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Records Group

²⁶ Livesay William, untitled speech, 16 January 1948, William Livesay Papers, Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 4.

²⁷ Harris, “Instilling Aggressiveness,” 80.

²⁸ US Army, JUSMAPG, 153-154.

stipulated that “all questions of command, organization and training, the strategy and tactics of the anti-guerrilla campaign, all plans of contemplated operations, all laws and decrees affecting the army, and all appointments or promotions to the rank of brigadier or higher” had to be approved by U.S. military advisors.²⁹

Almost immediately, after the order went into effect, the JUSMAPG General Staff advisors began putting together an offensive strategy against rebel strongholds in certain regions of the country. More specifically, American advisors suggested an attack on the Roumeli region of Greece (See dark region in Appendix A).³⁰ Notwithstanding protests from Greek officers, the U.S. army officers were able to overrule the Greek officers. The General Staff also begrudgingly adopted US suggestions and built mobile reserve forces aimed at countering guerilla operations. The increased control of the U.S. army changed the GNA’s strategy from static troop placement to a more flexible strategy.³¹

JUSMAPG Operations: 1948

This period of time marked the escalation of the Cold War, and the intensity of support from the United States to different regions began to increase. Instead of focusing on Greece and Turkey, the United States shifted its focus to developments in

²⁹ Ibid, 57.

³⁰ "Map Regions and Prefectures." Map of the Regions and Prefectures of Greece. Accessed May 12, 2019. <https://www.sfakia-crete.com/sfakia-crete/prefecturesregions.html>.

³¹ Ibid, 61.

China. In addition, the Berlin blockade forced the United States to divert air-based support from the Royal Hellenic Air Force. The Democratic Army and the KKE gained momentum in the conflict due to the lack of focus from the United States in early 1948. Support from Soviet bloc countries continued despite the Soviet Union's lack of participation, and had a marked impact on battle outcomes.

In early 1948, the Greek government was losing ground not only due to a stagnant military strategy but also a lack of grassroots support stemming from an ailing economy. The JUSMAPG-based economic advice had stabilized inflation. Economic improvement legitimized the government and U.S. involvement. In September of 1948, Truman appointed Henry Grady as Ambassador to Greece and head of AMAG.³² This improved the unity of command and bypassed many of the problems of dual command from Griswold and McVeigh. Grady oversaw the 1949 Peloponnesian operation which integrated economic reconstruction and development so as to lay down the roots for support for democracy in Greece. In this operation, the American advisors prioritized humanitarian aid, a six-month reconstruction project, and long-term infrastructure project. This economic aid provided an early test for the Marshall Plan's ability to sustain democracy in a war-torn country.

³² US Army, JUSMAGG: History 25 March 1949-30. June 1950, Records of Interservice Organizations, Joint United States Military Advisory Group Greece, Records Group 334, Entry 154, Historical File, Box 146

Alongside economic aid, the United States was able to ramp up its operational aggressiveness. In 1948, facing a shrinking budget, the United States was able to advise on offensive operations that shifted the momentum in the conflict. In April 1948, Operation Dawn, the aforementioned operation in the Roumeli region, represented a significant improvement in the eyes of U.S. military advisors. There were 2,000 communist troops interdicting roads coming in and out of Athens, isolating the capital from the rest of the country.³³ JUSMAPG advisors had a pivotal role in correcting deficiencies present with the GNA's initial plans. More specifically, U.S. advisors found that the structure of the offensive and the double battalion concept were inefficient. The GNA was successful in regaining the territory with a overhauled battle strategy.

In June 1948, JUSMAPG advised the Greek government to build upon the momentum of Operation Dawn with Operation Crown. Operation Crown aimed to "break the back of the bandit gangs [that] year."³⁴ Roughly, the plan was to invade rebel strongholds in the Grammos Mountains, which was "the nerve center of the communist forces in Greece."³⁵ The operation occurred in three phases. First, GNA forces were supposed to clear areas near the rebel-controlled base. Then, the GNA was

³³ Harris, "Instilling Aggressiveness," 74.

³⁴ "Griswold to Secretary of State." Dwight Griswold to Secretary of State George Marshall. June 16, 1948.

³⁵ Ibid, 1.

tasked with attacking certain points along the Democratic Army's outer defense lines. Last, GNA was to isolate the rebels in the Grammos mountains by cutting lines of communication to communist governments like Albania.³⁶ The operation timeline was supposed to be conducted swiftly; nevertheless, the GNA forces moved too slowly and incurred too many casualties. Van Fleet identified one of the leaders of the GNA as the reason for the inefficiency during the offensive. Van Fleet quickly recommended removal to the Greek General staff. This request was immediately supported by the Greek government. The Greek government then put Van Fleet at the head of hiring the new corps leader.³⁷ Apart from the slowness of the operation and many casualties, the offensive was successful in isolating and damaging the headquarters of the rebels.

After a series of operations and strained relations between Stalin and Bloc countries, the rebels began to incur a series of losses. The demoralized DAG had incurred massive casualties as the Soviet Bloc support began to wane due to political movements beyond their control. By the end of 1949, communist factions had been imprisoned, executed, or exiled. The Greek Civil war was an important conflict for the United States because it proved, to the international community and to powers in America, that intervention from the United States on behalf of a proxy could be

³⁶ Abbott, Frank J. *The Greek Civil War, 1947-1949: Lessons for the Operational Artist In Foreign Internal Defense*. School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1994.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 22.

successful in denying the spread of communism. The overhaul of military infrastructure would become positive case study on how the United States can intervene against a guerilla force.

All in all, continual operations that were overseen by JUSMAPG and the United States substantively weakened the power of the DAG and the KKE. In this case, the United States effectively use of military advisors, hard power aid, and economic reconstruction in solidifying democracy in Greece. The following lessons learned from the employment of these resources will analyze and generalize the costs and benefits of military overhaul and the prospect of unified command structure.

Lessons Learned

The overarching lesson learned revolves around the United States' military means of controlling outcomes in the Greek Civil War. The United States used the USAGG and conventional diplomatic channels to monitor the elections. JUSMAPG provided an overarching council that promoted unity of command and organization of naval and air resources. These organizations defined the United States' involvement in the proxy conflict. This section will attempt to generalize the positives and negatives of the operation.

One of the most important takeaways stems from the use of military advisors. The Greek Civil War provides an important case study on how military advisors can interface with a government. The JUSPMAG was not just a military action group, instead its political ties with the Prime Minister and cabinet in Greece facilitated the changes in strategy that were necessary for the success of the GNA. For example, Van Fleet had moderate control over who was leading troops during operations. This meant that the head of JUSPMAG could not only dictate strategy but also choose who executed his strategy. In the context of a military-based proxy conflict, the political relationship between the proxy and the nation supplying support relies on a mutual understanding on level of commitment. The United States' commitment of advisors hinged on the buy-in of the Greek government's General Staff. Extending this further, the political ties with the proxy government determines the accesses of the advisors. In

the early days of the JUSPMAG, military advisors were met with disdain from all levels of the army. After codifying military intervention into a set of rules, aggressive operations and training the GNA became easier. Therefore, the relationship with the proxy government could act as a litmus test for American commitment. The strategic objective for the United States was denying communism a win during the early stages of the Cold War. Without the removal of barriers from the proxy, the United States probably would not have been as effective in organization and the transfer of military aid to the Royal Hellenic Navy and Air Force. The militarization of a political relationship can provide pivotal access to change the strategy and capabilities of the proxy.

Apart from the political posturing, the JUSMAPG was vital for military victory. Specifically, the reliance on makeshift organizations like the JUSMAPG has a number of benefits. First, JUSMAPG provided the infrastructure to move resources and oversee allocation. United States military support faces issues with misuse or loss of resources. Exporting our military logistics and bureaucracy means we can extract more incremental value from our support by minimizing resource loss. Second, JUSMAPG also provided reasons for a unified command when entering proxy wars. Proxy wars can uniquely entangle the power in long term conflicts. One predominant reason for this lies in the lack of unified command for U.S. resources. Unifying efforts under a joint operation sanctioned by the National Security Council clearly defines the strategic

objective and streamlines decision making. An organization like JUSMAPG can limit mission creep, defined as an over commitment of resources, by hedging against the actions of individual organizations and instilling discipline of the advisors. In summation, creating unified bodies of command hedges potential risks of further entanglement.

Lastly, a military overhaul strategy would only be warranted in the wake of total military failure. Our operations in Greece were high risk, high reward in that America could have been ensnared in an unwinnable conflict if the Soviet bloc were a stronger force. That being said, the combination of economic aid and the Marshall Plan aligned the United States short-term and long-term interests. To win the conflict, the United States needed the support of the local population and their belief in their government. If America chooses to enter these future conflicts, then democracy promotion and a stable Western-friendly government is a long-term interest across conflicts. The emphasis on stable economic reconstruction was a boon for the Greek people, and advanced the idea of legitimate democracy as a goal for the native population.

All in all, the United States can use organizations like the JUSMAPG to efficiently advance long-term and short-term conflicts while minimizing the traditional downsides of proxy conflicts.

Chapter IV: The Congo Crisis

In Chapter I of this thesis, I argued that political upheaval provided super powers with the opportunity to advance security interests in a region. The Congo Crisis, which occurred over a five-year span between from 1960 to 1965, forced the United States to engage in conflict in a region where its existing intelligence and diplomatic efforts were weak. The overarching goal was preventing the Soviet Union from attaining vast cobalt reserves that were necessary for a burgeoning weapons development. This chapter will outline the early parts of the Congo Crisis, focusing on the intelligence community's role on goal setting and inciting political change in the country.

Congo Crisis: Early Stages

Post World War II, traditional imperialism was being challenged across the world. During the 1950s, the Belgian Congo was experiencing the precursors to revolution to overthrow their colonial occupiers. There was increasing unrest linked to localized militias and the formation of political organizations. King Leopold II had exploited the natural resources of the Congo, instituted a slave labor system, and massacred millions of native Congolese. The war crimes and misrule committed by King Leopold II had a marked impact on the future of Congolese politics, in that the legacy of his actions fomented economic and political oppression. The dehumanization of the colonized and the exploitation of the natural resources of the land led to political organization in the Congo. Despite the legacy of King Leopold II and the atrocities of

the Congo Free State, the thesis will limit its historical analysis to the 1950s and 1960s due to role of the United States' interest during the Cold War.

Like most colonial rulers, Belgium owned the infrastructure and means of economic development of in the Congo, meaning that the lack of economic advancement for the native population added intense motivation for organization. Larry Devlin, the former CIA Chief of Station for the Congo during the crisis, argued that "the real flaw in the Belgian government's strategy...was that political development lagged way behind the social and economic transformation [of the Congo]." ³⁸ By the late 1950s, Belgium viewed the Congo as still being many years away from independence, while the Congolese began to organize into political parties that were aimed at destabilizing colonial rule.

1959-1960: Revolution Galvanizes

During the late 1950s, the Congolese did receive some democratic concessions from the Belgian government, including the formation of political parties in 1956 and their first local elections in December 1957. This was part of a larger plan to let the Congolese have political freedoms, but to centralize economic and military power around the Belgian government. ³⁹ The plan for a politically autonomous Congo was summarized in the 30-year Plan, published in February 1956 by Colonial University at Antwerp professor A. A. J. Van Bilsen. There were two main reactions from the

³⁸ Devlin, Larry. *Chief of Station, Congo: A Memoir of 1960-67*. New York: Public Affairs, 2007.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

Congolese. The first reaction came from a group of African Catholic intellectuals called African Consciousness.⁴⁰ This group had many figures that would go on to play an influential role in Catholicism in Central Africa. They endorsed the plan as a jumping off point for civil discourse over the future of the Congo. There was a more radical response from the Alliance des Bakongo (ABAKO), led by Joseph Kasavubu. In a “manifesto,” ABAKO rejected the Van Bilsen plan as too reserved and demanded immediate emancipation from the Belgian government. The counter manifesto stated “to the question whether we want later to remain united with Belgium we reply: we do not in any way want the Congo to be integrated with the Belgian State.”⁴¹ Over the next three years, political revolution fomented around complete political, economic, and military autonomy from the Belgian State.

In January 1959, Leopoldville (Kinshasa), a major population center in the Belgian Congo, broke out into massive riots in response to political repression by the Belgian government. A 1959 edition of “The World Today,” a publication from the Royal Institute of International Affairs, wrote that “the riots in Leopoldville of January 4, 1959 ended the illusion that the Belgian Congo was a country of ever-increasing prosperity, with a contented population whose standards of living were rising.”⁴² After witnessing post-colonial revolutions in Algeria and Ghana, the Belgian government decided to abandon the notion of slowly phasing in political freedom. To all the

⁴⁰ Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges. *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*. New York City: Zed Books, 2002.

⁴¹ *Africa Today* Vol. 7, No. 5 (Sep., 1960), 5-9,12-13.

⁴² *The World Today* Vol. 15, No. 9 (Sep., 1959), 351-364

traditional colonial powers, it was clear that political revolution had gripped the whole continent of Africa, and Belgium was reacting to the winds of change.

The ABAKO party, led by the Bakongo people, received blame for inciting the riots. On the other hand, this did not result in the political stability that the Force Publique anticipated, instead, the Bakongo people organized and staged a boycott of government services in the Lower Congo.⁴³ While the Bakongo were beginning to organize, the European population were uneasy, especially considering the bloody conflict between France and Algeria's independence movement. Vanthemsche argued that though the riots were "quickly and bloodily repressed [and] they had a major psychological impact on both black and white populations."⁴⁴ The sense of urgency intensified due to both the political revolutionaries within the Congo and in domestic politics in Belgium. In a radio speech on January 13, 1959, King Baudoin I, the King of Belgium at the time, revealed his support for Congolese independence on certain conditions.

The term independence ended any ongoing political debates within the Belgian legislature on potentially retaining the Congo. But, Vanthemsche posed a question that had to be answered: "what did the term independence actually mean?"⁴⁵ There was a semblance of a plan put forth by the Belgian government soon after the statement from

⁴³ Weiss, Herbert. "A History of Resistance in the Congo." *African Futures*. Accessed May 12, 2019.

⁴⁴ Vanthemsche, Guy. *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 89.

the king. This statement lacked clarity in regards to the time table for a fully independent Congo. The plan included a transitional period where people would have limited access to executive and legislative power, racial discrimination would be abolished over time, and implementation of a parish election system. Furthermore, the proliferation of Congolese political parties demanded different forms of independence. The loudest voice at this point came from ABAKO who demanded immediate, unequivocal independence and championed themselves as the party for Congolese independence. During the crisis, *Civilisations*, characterized the ABAKO sentiment as “not interested in a type of independence which is granted [them] or even pressed upon [them] by the Metropolitan country; independence [was] something that must assert itself.”⁴⁶ While the ABAKO garnered political support from their Bakongo base, there was increasing political fragmentation based on ethno-political lines. For example, the Congolese National Movement (MNC) gained most of its supporters from the Balubas in the Kasai region and ethnic groups from the Orientale Province. Along with ethnicity question, political parties had to answer the constitution question. This created infighting in the parties themselves. Returning to the MNC example, the party divided into the MNC-Lumumba and MNC-Kalouji, each with differing views on whether the Congo should be a unitary state. Like the MNC-Kalouji, ABAKO argues for a federal Congo, with decentralized federalism. In Katanga, the Conakat party led by, Moise Tshombe, was a separatist party that believed that the mineral rights of Katanga

⁴⁶ Rubbens, A. "Political Awakening in the Belgium." *Civilisations* 10, no. 1 (1960).

belonged to the ethnic Katanganese.⁴⁷ In early 1960, Belgium hosted the Roundtable Conference, which was a meeting between grassroots political leaders from the Congo and members of the Belgian government. There it was decided to grant autonomy to the Congo on June 30, 1960. This included a phasing in of concessions that would move the Congolese towards full autonomy. There would still be vestiges of the Force Publique, Belgian technical experts, and businesses monitoring natural resource investment. The reason for the rapid call for independence from the Belgian government related to outpacing radicalization to preserve the Belgian economic position. That being said, on the cusp of independence, in the Congo the formation of tribal associations would prove paramount for super powers interested in gaining a foothold in the region.

May to June 1960

On June 30, 1960, the Congo officially declared independence. Before the official declaration, the Congolese held national elections in May of 1960. Elections so soon after the Roundtable Conference created cleavages that harkened back to the radical versus moderate divide centered on the federalism question during the 1950s. Also, there was distrust among three of the most influential political leaders of the time: Patrice Lumumba, Moise Tshombe, and Joseph Kasavubu. According to Leo Zeilig, Tshombe and Lumumba clashed at the Roundtable meetings, because Lumumba “feared that federalism for Tshombe was a cloak for concealing ambitions to head an

⁴⁷ Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges, “A People’s History,” 85.

independent Katanga.”⁴⁸ During the revolution process, Kasavubu and Lumumba clashed on the nuances of revolution, with Kasavubu arguing that Lumumba’s plan for independence was far too moderate.⁴⁹ From the Roundtable Conference, Lumumba ,out of imprisonment from Elisabethville, dominated the rhetoric from the Congolese. He gained notoriety for publicly rejecting the idea that the Belgian King could be head of the new Congolese state. This garnered negative views from the Belgian government, who began to characterize Lumumba as a communist revolutionary. Lumumba was solidified as the leader of the revolution towards Congolese independence.

On May 22, 1960, the MNC, led by Lumumba, won 33 seats in the federal government including Lumumba himself becoming Prime Minister of the new state. The next two parties, Parti Solidaire Africain (PSA) and ABAKO, won 13 and 12 seats respectively. Political power was to be shared due to the Senate, just a couple of days later, electing Joseph Kasavubu as the first president of the Congo. Considering the power sharing between the Prime Minister and President codified in the *Loi Fondamentale*, these two men were pitted against each other at the outset of the new nation. The government was now solidified and tasked with developing an economy, workable political system, and avoiding ethnic conflicts

⁴⁸ Zeilig, Leo. *Lumumba: Africa's Lost Leader*. London: Haus Publishing.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 57.

July 5, 1960

During the transition to independence, the Roundtable Conference stipulated that Belgian officers would remain in the country to lead new the Congolese army and more importantly to protect the existing European population. On July 5, 1960, the Congolese armed forces mutinied against the existing Belgian officers, marking the beginning of the Congo Crisis. The demands from the Congolese fighting force included higher pay and advancement opportunities. There was also pent-up resentment over the continued subservience to white military officers. The revolution spread to other military bases, causing mass panic among the European settlers. International media received reports of grotesque violence against the existing Europeans. Four days later the Belgian government intervened, sending military forces to squash the rebellion. To maintain international autonomy, Lumumba and Kasavubu made an appeal to the United Nations to condemn the actions of the Belgian government as an autonomous state. After another four days, the United Nations accepted the claim that Belgium was recolonizing the Congo. On the same day, Tshombe declared that Katanga would secede from the newly formed state. As stated before, the Katanga region was vital for future economic growth for the Congo via the exporting of natural resource. The Belgian government viewed this favorably since much of the private capital into the Congo flowed through Katanga and Belgian mining companies feared nationalization from the “radical” MNC government. It’s worth noting that the United States voted with the USSR to pressure Belgium “to withdraw

troops from the Republic of Congo.”⁵⁰ Along with the condemnation of the Congo, the United Nations also instituted the United Nations Operation in the Congo (UNOC). UNOC represented one of the first multilateral peace keeping missions from the United Nations. The aim of UNOC was to keep the integrity of Congolese autonomy, maintain law and order, and provide governmental technical assistance.⁵¹ One important tenet of UNOC was impartiality, meaning UNOC remained neutral on the internal secession movement from Katanga. A National Security Briefing dated July 25, 1960, describes Lumumba as a “major negative factor in [the] present Congo situation.”⁵² The briefing also describes potential Soviet ties to Lumumba, due to the President’s threats to seek out Soviet assistance in stabilizing the new state.⁵³ CIA intelligence also pointed to early Soviet involvement in the region. With revolutionary conflicts in Ghana and Guinea, the Soviet Union sensed the opportunity for economic and political influence in the region and moved personnel into key strategic areas of the Congo in July and August of 1960.¹² Moreover, the CIA found Red Cross marked crates filled with Soviet weaponry. The thesis from the CIA station chief was that the USSR were planning support for another rebellion before July 5, 1960.⁵⁴ Due to the events of July 1960, Central Africa was in play for the United States and the USSR.

⁵⁰ "The United Nations Operation in the Congo." United Nations. Accessed May 12, 2019. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/onucB.htm>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² United States. Department of State. *National Security Breifing*. Vol. 22. Office of Historian. Central Intelligence Agency Files, Job 79R00890A, Box 13, Folder 1, NSC Briefings, July 1960. Top Secret;

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

To reiterate, the American view of Lumumba was that of a communist sympathizer; but, as Devlin stated, there was no reason to believe that Lumumba was directly a Soviet Agent. Against this notion, a telegram from the station in the Congo to the CIA on August 11, 1960, reveals that Lumumba was moving left and communist influence was increasing.⁵⁵ The thesis from the agency was that unless Lumumba was removed from power he would install a communist regime, or at the very least, a regime predisposed towards supporting the Soviet cause.⁵⁶ In the same telegram, the station recommends support for political minorities to exacerbate ethno-political conflict, use embassy contacts to influence the Senate as a counter balance to Lumumba, and directly infiltrate the government through U.S. controlled assets. These actions could only be described as a political warfare, a common component of the power-proxy relationship. This strategy would prove difficult because of massive political party turnover. Even compared to prerevolutionary political conditions, the Congo was beginning to further divide on ethno-political lines. Kasavubu and Lumumba detested each other based on a number of factors including difference of ethnicity, the power sharing agreement codified in the Constitution, and Lumumba's actions during the Roundtable Conference. Taking into consideration the division of the political system and United States' reservations about Lumumba, many political actors sought help from America in hopes of unseating the Lumumba administration. On the topic of

⁵⁵ "Telegram From the Station in the Congo to the Central Intelligence Agency." Letter to CIA Headquarters. August 11, 1960. In Office of Historian.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

recruiting assets, Devlin noted that his visitors included Congolese politicians and tribal leaders like Albert Kalonji, the leader of the Baluba tribe in Southern Kasai. His faction of the MNC broke off from Lumumba, because he saw the prime minister as responsible for the death of many of his tribesman. Efforts at creating political instability to undermine Lumumba picked up after unsuccessful meetings with the new prime minister in Washington D.C.⁵⁷ By August 1960, Lumumba “appeared to many Western nationals to be on the same track as other leaders who believed they could use the Soviet Union without falling under its sway.”⁵⁸ Devlin goes on to state that the Soviets had developed a reputation for incentivizing dependence from developing countries via aid packages and military support. Once the dependence was created, the Soviets “could be expected to remove their velvet gloves and demand payment in the form of control.”⁵⁹

By early August of 1960, the relationship between Lumumba and the Secretary General of the UN Dag Hammarskjöld had drastically deteriorated. Lumumba wanted the United Nations to expel Belgian troops and run the operation to reunite Katanga and the Congo. Hammarskjöld held the view that the matter of Katanga secession was an internal political matter and that he could only guarantee expulsion of Belgian troops. Lumumba vitriolically attacked the United Nations. These attacks were publicly backed by the Soviet Union, who blamed the United Nations for an incident in which

⁵⁷ Devlin, “Chief of Station, Congo,” 49.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 49.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 50.

eleven Canadian Airmen were beaten by Congolese troops at the Ndjili airport. The USSR also noted that the use of NATO technicians could warrant further action from Soviet Union. Lumumba, aiming to gain more control over the internal affairs of the country, demanded that the United Nations vacate control over the Ndjili Airport. In early August, South Kasai seceded from Katanga with support from Belgian mining companies, calling themselves "the Mining State of Kasai." The second secession movement was led by Albert Kalonji who was a leader in the Baluba tribe. Lumumba was tasked with reeling in two newly independent states, to the Congo, another new state fraught with violent ethnic and political conflict. The Soviet Union knew this to be the case and acted swiftly. Seeing the disorganization of the Congolese military, the Soviet Union told the Congolese government that they were sending Ilyushin-14 planes, complete with crews, technicians, and interpreters.⁶⁰ The Soviets were making a move that the United States had been worried about. The Soviet Union "intended to intervene directly in the Congo rather than channeling its assistance through the United Nations."⁶¹ Ministers and close advisors of Lumumba began to posture towards the rhetoric used by communist leaders. For example, Lumumba's minister of information and minister of education used public statements and enacted policies that had underpinnings of Soviet influence. The CIA and NSC seemed to be witnessing the beginning of a communist takeover in the Congo. This takeover would provide the Soviet Union access to the rest of Central Africa. Tangibly, this meant that the Soviet

⁶⁰ Ibid, 65.

⁶¹ Ibid, 65.

Union would have a near monopoly over strategic minerals like cobalt, a mineral used in a variety of defense technologies.⁶² Control over these resources would hamstring the United States' own weapon and space programs. The United States would act at all costs to prevent the Congo from falling into the hands of the Soviets. That meant that the only course of action was unseating Lumumba by any means possible. On August 12th, a telegram from Langley to the CIA station in the Congo states that "state reps, while fully concurring in assessment as Lumumba as continuing threat to Western and UN purposes and increasingly susceptible Commie line and tactics, felt this removal might breed more problems."⁶³ The CIA was cautious about their strategy to unseat Lumumba, in that removal would further destabilize the Congo, leaving the Soviets with another opening to take control over the country. By August 27th, approximately two weeks later, a similar telegram from Langley stated:

"In high quarters here it is the clear-cut conclusion that if Lumumba continues to hold high office, the inevitable result will at best be chaos and at worst pave the way to Communist takeover of the Congo with disastrous consequences for the prestige of UN and for the interests of the free world generally."⁶⁴

These two telegrams give insight as to how fast the crisis was moving, and the United States realized that the removal of Lumumba was a prerequisite for a pro-American

⁶² Ibid, 48.

⁶³ "Telegram From the Central Intelligence Agency to the Station in the Congo." Letter to CIA Headquarters. August 12, 1960. In Office of Historian.

⁶⁴ "Telegram From the Central Intelligence Agency to the Station in the Congo." Letter to CIA Headquarters. August 27, 1960. In Office of Historian.

Congo. Only ten days later, the CIA station received reports that Kasavubu announced that he would remove Lumumba from his position as prime minister and replaced him with Joseph Ileo. According to U.S. intelligence, Kasavubu's transition plan included UNOC coordination to maintain order and guarantee his safety. In response, Lumumba announced that he was dismissing Kasavubu as president of the Congo. At this point, the United States and Soviets were at odds from an information perspective. Soviet and Eastern European journalists were able to file their story at the behest of Lumumba's government, while Western journalists were denied access to the radio stations, barring them from filing their version of political upheaval. Information warfare would be important in shaping the views of the international community. Western journalists provided stories of how the youth of Leopold supported Kasavubu. The United States' next step was to incite a vote of no confidence against Lumumba in the Senate. However, this plan was defeated when Lumumba, an incredibly skilled orator, spoke on the floor of the Congolese senate for close to two hours. The vote ended 47 to 2 and 7 abstentions against the vote of no-confidence. Notwithstanding the vote of no confidence, Lumumba's days as Prime Minister of the country were numbered.⁶⁵

The Rise of Mobutu

The answer to the Lumumba question came in the form Colonel Joseph Mobutu, the chief of staff of the army under the sitting prime minister. On initial reflection, Clare Timberlake, the ambassador to Congo during the crisis, had "Mobutu pegged for

⁶⁵ Devlin, "Chief of Station, Congo," 66.

moderate, a really competent guy.”⁶⁶ Most importantly, Mobutu was not sympathetic to the communists. During his first meeting with Devlin, Mobutu expressed concerns with Soviet involvement in the economy of the Congo. He argued that the Soviets were attempting to re-colonize the Congo. Most importantly, Mobutu took issue with Soviet involvement with the military affairs with the fledgling country.⁶⁷ At this juncture, Mobutu sought help from the United States to install a government, unseating Kasavubu and Lumumba. In a truly amazing feat of bravery, at the initial meeting with Mobutu, Devlin promised that the United States would recognize the government that Mobutu would install without approval from CIA headquarters. Devlin also promised economic resources to the coup and the subsequent government that Mobutu would install. On September 14, 1960, Mobutu suspended the constitution and removed Lumumba from power. In his first radio address to the people of the Congo, Mobutu decried the Soviet Union intervention in the military and immediately expelled the communist contingent from the country. A key feature of the new government was the elevation of college-educated Congolese technocrats to positions of power. This governing body was called the “College of Commissars.” When reporting the coup d’état to CIA Headquarters, he used the code word “flash,” signifying a declaration of war. According to Devlin, this was the first time that Eisenhower had heard a detailed account of the United States involvement in the coup in the Congo.⁶⁸ In recognizing the

⁶⁶ Ibid, 71.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 75.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 85.

government, the State Department had an issue because the coup was in direct conflict with the post-revolution constitution. In a meeting with the CIA post-coup, Mobutu was adamant that reinstating Kasavubu would further delegitimize the new government. Devlin argued that the coup government, as it was, did not garner international legitimacy. Many of his CIA colleagues argued that Devlin was mishandling this situation by handling Mobutu as a cooperator rather than a recruited agent. With an agent, it would be easier to direct orders and policy coming from the central government of the Congo.

“Joe from Paris”

Another important event in this crisis occurred on September 19, 1960. In a telegram from CIA Headquarters to the Congo Station, there were orders to conduct an operation to assassinate Lumumba. The assassin introduced himself to Devlin as “Joe from Paris.” In Devlin’s meeting with “Joe,” it was revealed that “Joe” came to the Congo with poison to kill Lumumba.⁶⁹ “Joe” was a CIA scientist with poison meant to exhibit similar symptoms to a native disease of the Congo. The poison was supposed to be slipped into his food or his toothpaste. Naturally, Devlin’s first question regarded around the authorization of the operation. The answer was clear, President Eisenhower had approved of the operation. This plot ultimately failed, as Devlin did not have a clear opening nor the will to conduct the operation. Devlin identifies some interesting concerns with pursuing political transition via the Third World. He posits that

⁶⁹ Ibid, 94.

assassinations of foreign leaders hurts the United States' legitimacy in the Third World.⁷⁰

The New Government

The post-coup government was a troika made up of Mobutu, Bomboko and Victor Nendaka, the new director of the Sûreté Nationale. Lumumba was still under protection from the United Nations and received support from surrounding African countries like Ghana. In the Fall of 1960, Mobutu garnered political support from the Congolese. Like Lumumba, Mobutu was a gifted orator and appealed to an intelligencia of younger, college educated Congolese. Mobutu gained enough political capital to consider ignoring the United Nations protection of Lumumba. The new government was trying to find the most expedient path to silence Lumumba, who was the only legitimate threat to the coup. Mobutu's eventual desire was to be a fully recognized head of state. According to CIA reports, the government "considered that Colonel Mobutu [did] not have sufficient administrative or political ability to run the government."⁷¹ It was then decided that the United States should leverage moderate political elements to solidify a new government with Mobutu in a clear power position. The CIA had a systematic way to conduct a moderation effort to transition the coup to a legitimate democratic government that the United Nations could support. On November 27, 1960, the new government was again challenged as Lumumba escaped

⁷⁰ Ibid, 96-97.

⁷¹ "Memorandum for the Special Group." Subject: Covert Action in the Congo. August 27, 1960. In Office of Historian.

into Katanga, which at this point was a pseudo-state. Lumumba was eventually killed by firing squad in January of 1960. Mobutu had cleared a path towards political supremacy in the Congo.

The Gizenga Government

In November 1960, a follower of Patrice Lumumba, Antoine Gizenga formed a new government in West Congo called the Free State of Congo. The Free State was supported financially by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.⁷² Even with the support of anti-Western factions, the Gizenga government ultimately failed because of a lack of military infrastructure and international support from international organizations like the United Nations. The importance of this event was that it represented another attempt from the Soviet Union to garner natural resources in Central Africa.

Post-1960: Key Events

Over the next four years, the United States, through political maneuvers like vote buying and financial support for pro-Western candidates was able to influence the internal politics of the Congo. To keep Mobutu under Western influence, America provided aid for the Congolese government under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. By 1963, after numerous clashes between the UNOC troops and Katanga forces, the United Nations was able to regain the Katanga province for the

⁷² Mazov, Sergei. "Soviet Aid to the Gizenga Government in the Former Belgian Congo (1960-61) as Reflected in Russian Archives." *Cold War History* 7, no. 3 (June 12, 2007): 425-37.

Congolese government. With the Katanga situation stabilized, the United Nations left the Congo in 1963. Following the end of Katanga secession, there were political negotiations on the constitution of the Congo, which ushered in a modern governmental structure, centralizing more power on the presidency and doing away with dual executive power. Considering the new constitution, Kasavubu had the power to appoint an interim Prime Minister, turning to Tshombe.⁷³ During this time two rebellions, the Simba and Kwilu rebellion, began in the Eastern part of the country. The philosophy of these movements has roots in Maoism and communism. The Johnson Administration intervened with hard power straying from the largely political influence that America had exercised in the region. After additional unrest post-March 1965 elections, the United States government went on to support another successful coup attempt from Mobutu. From 1965, Mobutu preserved power over the country for the next four years.

⁷³ "Moise Tshombe." <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Moise-Tshombe>. April 26, 2019.

Lessons Learned: Congo

The thesis focused the scope of the history of the Congo on the early parts of the crisis. Political transition focused strategy on the prowess of the intelligence infrastructure in the region and the communication between headquarters and the station. The Congo provides an illustrative example on how the United States intelligence apparatus plays a key role in determining winners and losers in this conflict. First, the intelligence community often sets the objective of the conflict. The intelligence community, in cases of political upheaval, identifies what winning the conflict means in relation to the United States' strategic interests. From the CIA telegrams cited earlier in the chapter, the intelligence community first determined that the Congo was of vital importance due to its abundance of natural resources. Extending this further, the CIA was also the first to identify Lumumba as a threat to the United States long term interests. Setting mission or success criteria fell to the judgement of the intelligence decision makers on the ground. In a proxy conflict, especially in a bipolar world or region, outright hard power intervention is almost never an option. Therefore, the early stages of political-based conflicts, rely heavily on intelligence decision making.

The Congo Crisis also provides insight on the development of long-term political assets in the context of proxy wars. As stated before, denying the Soviet Union access to natural resources in the Congo represented the most important security interest for the United States. The intelligence community realized an investment needed to be made in the political future of the Congo. The investment calculus prioritized a pro-Western

government that would deny the natural resource to the Soviet Union. Devlin made this investment in Mobutu in September of 1960. He saw a clear anti-Soviet streak in Mobutu and took the opportunity to support his coup effort. Devlin's colleagues defined an issue with Devlin's strategy. The CIA chief was developing a cooperator rather than a pure political asset. The cooperator in this case lacks the incentive alignment necessary to take direct orders from the United States. To ensure incentive alignment, I argue that the United States, in a position against an established government, should pursue support for democratic revolutionaries rather than military-based authoritarians. Apart from an idealistic rationale for supporting emerging democracies, there are practical reasons to support stable democratic efforts. For example, the lack of stable democratic ideals, including political participation of political and ethnic minorities, incited the Simba and Kwali rebellions. I argue that, after the death of Lumumba, the United States' should have focused on political integration to maintain stability. The Congo was in a precarious position, with multiple ethno-political secessions over a three-year period. The response from the United States should have been to provide the same sort of financial support for Mobutu with the caveat of democratic concessions. Since America offered Mobutu a cooperator relationship, it became difficult to maintain a quid pro quo relationship with Mobutu. This had adverse consequences as China and the Soviet Union successfully supported secession movements in resource-rich Eastern Congo. The overarching political goal of long-term assets focuses on stability which closes the door for future adversary involvement.

Even though the Church Committee named the Congo Crisis one of the few Cold War successes, there were clear issues with the intelligence processing at the station level. Devlin supported a coup attempt without presidential approval, and from accounts around the president there seemed to be a lack of clarity on the direction of the conflict. Supporting a nebulous revolution was unnecessary and could have led to a disastrous engagement for the United States. Presidential authority and executive oversight are necessary to prevent mission creep, a term that defines incremental involvement in the conflict. With the introduction of clearer communication lines, the intelligence apparatus is able to share information rapidly. Proxy wars present environments that encourage risk taking, because the nation investing resources in the conflict is not sacrificing military forces. To mitigate some of the risk taking made by singular intelligence assets, the United States should follow clear, existing protocol on decision making. Without the existing chain of command, the United States can commit resources it cannot easily deploy or support engagements that warrant support far beyond what is initially thought. Clearly, the chain of command is needed to visualize the proverbial "bigger picture." To be clear, the United States shouldn't mistrust its intelligence officers on the ground. However, giving Station Chiefs and other lower level officers control over the direction of U.S. engagement in a proxy war can substantially damage the flexibility to exit the conflict. To deal with these pervasive conflicts, the United States has to incentivize clear communication across the command chain to avoid mission creep.

The Congo Crisis provides the United States a critical case study on how the intelligence community interacts with proxy conflicts. The early stages of a proxy war present an opportunity for the intelligence community to advance American interest, preempting the need for hard power and the escalation of violence.

Chapter V: The Strategic Matrix: Understanding the Themes

What is the Strategic Matrix?

The strategic matrix attempts to synthesize the lessons learned from previous conflicts and put forth a generalized set of considerations for decision makers in the Department of Defense, Congress, and the Executive. We can think about the strategic matrix as the initial considerations in the decision makers planning process. The reason for this sort of analysis is due to the lack of historical scholarship on general strategy in proxy wars and the view that serious, ensnaring proxy wars are black swans that require a solely off-cuff reactive approach. The strategic matrix takes into account the dichotomy between military-based strategies versus intelligence-based strategies. These strategies are definitely not mutually exclusive; however, in previous examples we found that conflicts usually rely more on one function.

Mission Creep

This thesis presumes that the United States is engaged or will have to engage in a proxy conflict. Mission creep represents a common trend among proxy wars mentioned in this thesis. Mission creep will be defined as an overextension of military or intelligence resources in a conflict. This trend should be one of the first notions that a decision maker needs to consider as they move forward with engagement. In the context of the military-based strategy, the focus should be on unified command. Unified command allows for streamlined decision making and for the military to better judge the commitment of resources. Unified command organizations, like JUSMAPG, can avoid escalation of commitment and provides organization for the military that the

United States' is influencing. A military-based strategy in a proxy war requires an organized, multifaceted operation focused on objectives like proxy military overhaul, without overcommitting resources.

In terms of the intelligence-based strategies, avoidance of mission creep relies on tamping down support for political cooperators and demanding or creating incentive alignment for the United States. The intelligence community should disincentivize "cowboy operations," or operations that do not have proper authorization. Without the decision-making process codified in the intelligence community, the United States could find itself supporting a coup or a political party that requires the escalation of commitment. Though it seems obvious to use the proper channels to conduct intelligence operations, proxy wars put intelligence officers in a more difficult position than traditional conflict. Often times, the intelligence community has to gamble on political players in the region rather than tacit intelligence gathering. Developing political assets becomes trickier, because political support is often covert and runs counter to the rival's political support.

For U.S. engagement it is imperative to prevent overextension; but, in the case of proxy wars it becomes increasingly important. Proxy wars can entangle the United States' resources for longer periods of time because American control is tempered by the existence of the proxy. Despite the idea of "war on the cheap," these conflicts have a habit of requiring the United States to commit resources to achieve short-term objectives. Therefore, the decision makers should be conscious of mission creep.

Military-specific Considerations

During a proxy war, military advisors will be tasked with overhauling the proxy's military capabilities and strategy. Like the JUSMAPG, a unified and multifaceted organization could provide a solution for proxy wars that require a military based strategy.

The first consideration for decision makers should be the political relationship between the power and the proxy. The power's access to the existing and future capabilities is defined by the power's ability to work with the proxy's government. The resources provided by the power becomes efficiently allocated if the proxy's government works with the power on removing barriers, obtaining buy-in from native military leaders, and legitimizing the advice from the power's military advisor. Therefore, decision makers, if implementing a program like JUSMAPG, should unify the political and military decision when entering proxy wars.

Second, implementing a unified organization should have a multifaceted approach. More specifically, military overhaul often warrants an extension of resources and can lead to a failure to fulfill long term objectives. Military overhaul should be focused on long-term stability and the setup of a pro-Western government. For example, during the Greek Civil War, economic aid provided important benefits for the short-term strategy implemented by military strategy. Controlling inflation was an important legitimizing factor for the government and U.S. involvement. Having

grassroots support for the government denies rebels or usurpers the ability to gain new recruits and promotes stability in the status quo.

Finally, another consideration for a military strategy lies in overhauling military strategy. The media portrays military advisors as training operations, which are important when overhauling an army. However, more importantly the United States should ensure relationships with the proxy's military at every echelon. This ensures that advisors can garner control to push or influence operations. Like in the Greek Civil War, knowledge of the inner-workings and inefficiencies that are present with the proxy wars can be revealed with a multilevel relationship between the organization and the proxy government. Furthermore, as this relationship develops, military advisors from the power begin to increase their influence over proxy's military affairs. Increasing control over the proxy gives the power the ability to dictate military strategy, but more importantly if victory is in the cards, prevent human rights violations that threaten future stability.

Intelligence-specific Considerations

Often times in political-based conflicts, the advancement of the power's interest relies on the intelligence community. The intelligence community -- in the context of a proxy war--supports political actors like parties or specific players. The use of the intelligence apparatus as the centerpiece of the proxy engagement strategy usually occurs during times when the proxy undergoes political transition. This fragile time in the history of a nation provides a perfect opportunity for rivals to engineer positive

outcomes that run counter the power's interest. This phenomenon defined U.S. involvement in a number of proxy wars during the Cold War. In essence, the political situation often warrants an intelligence-based approach to intervention.

A consideration for the intelligence community centers on incentive alignment. The United States, to ensure short-term and long-term objective fulfillment, should focus on building long-term pro-Western governments by developing assets rather than focusing on cooperators. The difference between an asset and cooperator centers on the alignment of incentives between the political actor and the power. The proxy-based political asset is incentivized, by the power, to take direct orders, and support the interests of the power regardless of length of time. However, a cooperator creates a mutual relationship that only supports the power for the short-term. This relationship yields less control for the power, but also avoids some risks that the thesis will address in the Risks portions of this chapter. In addition to control in the short term, the intelligence community, with an asset, can dictate terms of support for a future military intervention or political intervention. For most cases, it would be in the best interest for the power to develop assets in the proxies that the power chooses to use.

A second intelligence consideration, related to the asset versus cooperator dichotomy, is continual, grassroots political development. This portion of strategy relies more on individual people rather than political parties or collective bodies of governance. To preface, one can think about this like a venture investment. These investments have lower chances of return; yet, can provide massive payoff if successful.

Similarly, the development of grassroots assets can “payoff” through pro-Western or pro-power sentiment from up and coming leaders. This should be a continual process, assuming a political transition to democracy. This also helps solve some of the tension between long-term and short-term strategic objectives for the power, ensuring future stable, pro-Western leaders in proxies that would be vital for advancing interests in the long term.

Risks of the Matrix

This section will discuss two tensions that arise from generalizing a strategy on proxy wars. The first being the positive relationship between control and entanglement in the proxy war. Essentially, as the power seeks control of the intelligence and military operations, the power commits more resources, which further entangles the power in the conflict as to garner a “return on investment.”

Many of the above recommendations seek to maximize control for the United States so as to optimize the value of resources into the conflict. However, entanglement acts as the counterbalance to control, in that the extension of control increases the reliance of the proxy on the power. Powers can rapidly commit resources to a proxy to receive compensatory control over the operations. For example, considering intelligence-based strategy, the development of an asset in high offices could increase reliance on the power and turn to the power for legitimacy. The alignment of incentives, inherent to an asset relationship, are often related to increasing resource commitment from the United States. Moreover, military overhaul, as described in the Greek Civil

War, maximizes control; yet, increases military reliance on the advisors of the power. Military advisor involvement can escalate the proxy conflict warranting an increase in resources from the power. Control over the proxy can force a power into a position where they ignore sunken costs and escalate resource commitment, further entangling the power in the conflict.

The second source of tension in proxy wars lies in divergence of long-term and short-term interests. The optimal proxy war outcome for the power is the alignment and fulfillment of interests disconnected from time. This would rarely be in the cards for the power. Therefore, the power must evaluate each decision, militarily and in the intelligence community, through the lens of short and long-term interests. For the Congo, the United States focused on the short-term interest of allowing the Soviet Union to absorb Central Africa into their sphere of influence. To achieve its short-term goal, the United States supported Mobutu and sacrificed long-term stability as seen through political instability that persists to this day. The United States could have balanced their support for Mobutu, the short-term, with future democratic concessions that could have further closed the door for Soviet involvement in Central Africa. This balance is harder for decision maker to account for because proxy wars feel like random, isolated events. Keeping the long-term interests in mind can clarify the allocation of resources and the terms of support for the United States. The Greek Civil War case study highlights an overlap between long-term and short-term interests. JUSMAPG forced all facets of the proxy war to be viewed through a single unified

structure that balanced a number of missions. This meant that the information moving into the organization was refined such that decision makers could implement a grand strategy that set up a pro-Western government.

In summation, long-term and short-term interests are often at odds in these conflicts. One of the hardest tasks for decision makers will be understanding how to bridge the gap between the two time periods. This decreases the risk that the decision makers in the intelligence community and the military are implementing strategy that leads to regional instability or counter to any other long-term interest.

Chapter VI: Application to Yemen

Last, we need to stress test the application of historical lessons learned to current proxy wars. To be clear, there are substantive differences between the Cold War environment versus the bipolar regionalism present in the Middle East currently. This section will take a similar approach as the previous case study; however, as this conflict remains ongoing the thesis will only briefly diagram the beginning of the conflict. Instead of dissecting lessons learned, we will attempt to stress test the conclusions drawn from the strategic matrix.

Before diagramming the conflict, it is pertinent to discuss the coverage the Yemen Crisis has received. The Trump administration has had a generally positive relationship with Saudi Arabia, so criticism of Saudi actions has been relatively quiet. News cycles have tended to focus on internal political affairs, with foreign policy discussions centered on relations with Russia and China. Yemen has been put on the back burner by the American political consciousness as a remnant of the Arab Spring. In reality, since January 2016, 60,000 Yemeni people have been killed, and international organizations have called the conflict the “world’s worst humanitarian crisis.”⁷⁴ On top of the proxy conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the Yemeni people have suffered from a famine that has left thousands of dead. Appendix B⁷⁵ gives us a spatial

⁷⁴ United States. Congressional Research Service. *Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention*. By Jeremy Sharp.

⁷⁵ Walsh, Declan. "The Tragedy of Saudi Arabia's War in Yemen." *The New York Times*. October 26, 2018. Accessed May 12, 2019.

understanding of the hunger crisis. The Obama and Trump administrations have called for a political solution to the problem; however, the two opposing sides fundamentally disagree on the framework and the terms of the agreement.⁷⁶ More recently, the Senate recently passed a joint resolution to remove U.S. military assistance in Yemen.⁷⁷

The Conflict

The first signs of conflict began in 2011, alongside the Arab spring. Political unrest took the form of popular youth protests aimed at removing President Ali Abdullah Saleh. By 2012, a coalition of the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the UN Security Council had put forth a transition plan to transfer power to Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi who was the Vice President at the time. While President Hadi attempted to enact political change, the northern based Houthi rebel group planned to change political order with the use of force.⁷⁸ The Houthi movement (also known as Ansar Allah or Partisans of God) is a predominantly Zaydi Shiite insurgent group.⁷⁹ Iran's support for the Houthi's have religiopolitical implications. Iran and Saudi Arabia have religious differences based on the Shiite-Sunni divide. Yet, this fight has more to do with regional hegemony. Recently, the Iran-Saudi Arabia conflict has intensified for a

⁷⁶ CRS. "Yemen: Civil War," 1.

⁷⁷ U.S. Congress. Senate. Foreign Relations. *A Joint Resolution to Direct the Removal of United States Armed Forces from Hostilities in the Republic of Yemen That Have Not Been Authorized by Congress.* By Bernard Sanders, Sen. 115th Cong., 2d sess. S. Res. S.J.Res.54.

⁷⁸ CRS. "Yemen: Civil War," 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 1.

number of reasons including U.S. involvement in Iraq during the 2000s and the Arab Spring in 2011.

By 2014, Houthi rebels took control of Sanaa, the capital of Yemen. In 2015, the Houthi rebels continued the assault South, violating existing power sharing agreements. By March 2015, President Hadi had fled to Saudi Arabia, while the House of Saud scrambled to put together an international coalition to repel the Houthi forces and limit Iran's influence in Yemen. Though there was the Stockholm Agreement and Hudayah Cease Fire in late 2018, the fighting has resumed, and there is evidence that the Houthi rebels have begun to use drones to attack government forces.⁸⁰ The use of drones and technology from non-state actors could mean the spread of the conflict past Yemen's borders.⁸¹ Iranian involvement has been mostly weapons support including ballistic missiles and UAV. Also, Iran seems to have invested less in the conflict; however, support from Iran has caused internal budget issues and exacerbates an ongoing currency crisis.⁸²

U.S. involvement in Yemen

In the early days of the conflict, political support was the limit of American involvement in the proxy war. For example, as stated above, the United States ensured the transition from Saleh to Hadi. So as part of the Saudi coalition, America had

⁸⁰Nissenbaum, Dion, and Warren P. Strobel. "Mideast Insurgents Enter the Age of Drone Warfare." *The Wall Street Journal*. May 02, 2019. Accessed May 12, 2019.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 1.

⁸² "Karim Sadjadpour: Tehran May Seek to Wait out Trump Administration." Interview. October 17, 2018.

participated in regime change. Furthermore, in 2015, the Obama Administration established “a Joint Planning Cell with Saudi Arabia to coordinate U.S. military and intelligence support.”⁸³ U.S. CENTCOM personnel were deployed to provide related support, and U.S. mid-air refueling of coalition aircraft began in April 2015 and ended in November 2018.⁸⁴ Additionally, during this period from 2015-2018, Saudi Arabia has conducted naval and special forces operations in Yemen. In December of 2018, the Trump administration, which has close ties to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, announced, that the U.S. military aid would:

“continue to provide military advice and limited information, logistics, and other support to regional forces combatting the Houthi insurgency in Yemen; however, aerial refueling of regional forces’ aircraft ended in November 2018.”⁸⁵

In this conflict, the United States provides intelligence, military advice, and logistics to the Saudis and Emiratis.

Along with the proxy conflict, the Al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) and Islamic State affiliates have wreaked havoc on the people and political institutions of Yemen. CENTCOM has conducted 36 airstrikes and counting on strategic objectives in

⁸³ CRS. “*Yemen: Civil War*,” 10.

⁸⁴ Tilghman, Andrew. “U.S. Launches Aerial Refueling Mission in Yemen.” *Military Times*. August 08, 2017.

⁸⁵ “Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.” Donald Trump to The Speaker of the House of Representatives and Pro Tempore of the Senate. December 7, 2018.

Yemen since 2019.⁸⁶ The Trump administration has justified the use of airstrikes as an extension of national interest post 9/11.

The United States has also attempted to address the underlying humanitarian crisis. Between 2017 and 2018, the United States has committed \$720.8 million in emergency humanitarian aid for Yemen.⁸⁷ In 2019, the Hudaydah port has presented a unique problem for USAID, since the port city is vital for moving goods in and out of the country. Appendix C⁸⁸ gives a complete breakdown of USAID flowing into the country. On top of the starvation, a massive cholera outbreak has ravaged the population in Yemen. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), supported by the Saudi-coalition and the international community, has begun operations to solve some of the source issues of the cholera outbreak. The aforementioned efforts only represent a handful of the operations and organizations receiving aid from the United States.

Application to the Strategic Matrix

To conduct the stress test of the strategic matrix, we will consider the conflict from the point of view of the decision maker entering the proxy war. First, we need to define the objective. In this case, The United States' goal would be to deny the spread of Iran's influence in the Middle East. From rhetoric and media put out by both

⁸⁶ US Central Command. "CENTCOM Counterterrorism Strikes In Yemen 2019 Rollup." News release, January 7, 2019.

⁸⁷ US AID. "Yemen - Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #7, (FY) 2019." February 26, 2019.

⁸⁸ CRS. "*Yemen: Civil War*," 13.

administrations, the importance our national interest in Yemen is suspect. Second, we need to make the distinction between military and intelligence-based strategies.

At the beginning of the conflict, the United States structured the transition to President Hadi. This would fall under the grassroots political development under intelligence-based strategies. Hadi was not the reformer that the country needed, nor did he have the political capital. Instead of focusing on the political actor in question, the United States subsumed the Saudis plan to install a northern-Sunni leader with name recognition. Essentially, the intelligence community had and still have a failed political asset because of a lack of due diligence related to American interests tied to Mohammad Bin Salman. To be fair, the Hadi government had to fight an uphill battle against a coalition of Iran, the Houthis, and Saleh supporters who would be expelled from the coalition in 2014. Taking a secondary role seemed like the best course of action in terms of diplomatic relations. The United States made a critical mistake by taking a back seat to the Saudi's in terms of intelligence operations. To ensure a clear path the victory, the United States should have either committed more resources in the early days of the conflict or disengaged from the conflict entirely. Controlling information flow would give American decision-makers better control over political asset choice; a clear failure of the Saudi operation.

As far as a forward-looking political strategy, the United States needs to start investing in new grassroots political leaders that can unite the country in the future. The Hadi government has fragmented and the United States needs to begin the cycle of

developing future assets.⁸⁹ The grassroots political development would be high-risk; however, if we assume that we have a national interest in Yemen, we can no longer support Hadi as the solution to Yemen's problem.

As we move along in the crisis, we start to foray from a political or intelligence-based strategy to a military-based strategy in the latter portion of the Obama Administration. Though substantive details on the Joint Planning Cell with Saudi Arabia are unclear, outcomes from the beginning of the conflict until now create a picture of disorganization. The military strategy in place seemed to run through Saudi Arabia, as they provided the forces for offensive operations in Yemen. Additionally, rhetoric from the Obama and Trump administrations has made it clear to an increasingly isolationist electorate that U.S. military aid would be relatively hands off. Airstrikes which have been the primary mode of direct intervention have been directed at AQAP targets rather than Houthi targets. The lack of unified command and reliance on Saudi military operations have been a losing strategy for the United States. If we assume that we are committed to the national interest of denying power to Iran, ending organizations like the Joint Cell with the Saudi government substantively damages the ability for the United States to influence operations in the proxy. U.S. military advisors have been subsequently hamstrung by the fragmentation of the Hadi Administration. The benefit of the unified command organizations revolves around integration of political and military support. Simply put, militarily we are taking our queues from the

⁸⁹ Ibid, 20.

Saudi government, and it is a strategy that has not worked. A unified command, advanced by the United States, could better train Yemeni military forces, be in position for a military overhaul, and influence strategy from local and Saudi forces

Military oversight of aid has also been lackluster. One of the objectives of the Joint Cell was overseeing the allocation of aid. This became increasingly complicated with fighting with impediments at the port of Hudaydah. Rather than intelligence and USAID oversight, a unified military command to oversee aid shows the international community that the United States is committed to stabilization of the humanitarian crisis. Moreover, a unified command allows the United States to enforce proper aid distribution far beyond USAID or the United Nations. To be clear, this should not be done unilaterally so as not to emulate an Iraq-esque invasion of Yemen. Instead, the United States should renegotiate the Joint Cell agreement, demanding more authority over local and Saudi forces so as to ensure aid is getting to the right places at the right time.

We see a common thread between the military and intelligence-based strategies. We have a commit or lose problem. Often times, taking ancillary roles in the proxy war leaves the power without the power to dictate the outcome of the conflict. This is not to say that the power should intervene in every case. Instead, the power must be careful in determining whether they should intervene in the first place and the objective or interest is worth committing resources too.

The United States needs to be involved militarily in the day-to-day operations of the proxy war. If we are not willing to make a commitment, then we should approve the Senate resolution and abandon our objectives in Yemen. Taking the middle ground has been detrimental for overall strategy toward the Saudi coalition.

Risk Assessment

As previously stated, the bipolar environment that gives rise to the Yemen Conflict and the Cold War environment are inherently different. Initially, the Cold War was due to world-wide bipolarity that was rooted in ideological differences, impacting almost every continent. On the other hand, the current bipolar conflict takes on underlying sectarianism and vying for power on a smaller scale. We can think of the Iran-Saudi Arabia rivalry as bipolarity within a region rather than the world. This difference matters because the Yemen conflict has less coverage from the international community. Looking at the Congo Crisis and the Greek Civil War, the Soviet Union and United States went to war in the Security Council, using political maneuvers to change opinions in the First and Third World. Additionally, the proxies, during the Cold War, were in transition because of a notable world event: World War II. There are a number of ways to rationalize the transition of Yemen; yet, none of them involve the upheaval of the world order. Finally, the political willingness to commit U.S. resources has drastically changed post-Iraq War. The Middle East, to Americans, seems like an unwinnable sectarian conflict. That being said, proxy wars need Congressional or public support, which was readily available to the Truman Doctrine.

As for risks related to the matrix, the United States needs to identify how the objective relates to the vested interest. Rhetoric and hesitance from both the Trump and Obama administrations indicates that the calculus on Iran controlling Yemen remains unclear. Additionally, the Senate resolution reveals a similar line of thinking, in that the politics of war are negative unless the Trump administration provides detail on the implications of losing the Yemen Conflict.⁹⁰ The lack of definition relates to comprehending the trade-offs between our short-term and long-term interests. The short-term interest of reducing death toll and saving the vestiges of Hadi administration maybe at odds with long-term interests such as regional stability and preventing the rise of Al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula. Essentially, the Trump administration has to define the short-term outlook strategy on Iran, and cross reference that to a strategic matrix on how to proceed. If the goal is to win the conflict, I recommend that the United States start pushing their short-term interest; denying the growth of Iran's sphere of interest. This requires increased commitment from the United States. As for long term interests, as per the matrix, I would recommend finding political assets rather than cooperators. This hedges against the situation of Iran winning the proxy war. Finding political assets would allow the United States to have strong allies in the event of a future crisis.

The strategic matrix could be an interesting lens through which to view the Yemen Conflict. The matrix does give the United States a strategic path forward, but

⁹⁰ Levine, Marianne, Heather Caygle, and Andrew Desiderio. "Senate Fails to Override Trump's Veto on Yemen." POLITICO. May 02, 2019. Accessed May 13, 2019.

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there are risks associated with pursuing this path including justifying future political upheaval and emboldening Iran or AQAP.

Chapter VII: Conclusion

The proxy war has always been a method of warfare for powerful societies to advance security interests. With the rise of the non-state actor and economic interdependence, state-to-state war has given way to the use of proxies because it hedges the risks of direct engagement. Proxy wars are cheaper both politically and economically. As we have seen, engaging with proxies allows for different risks that can destabilize a region and lead to massive humanitarian issues. Proxy wars are operationally opaque as its hard to pin down what or who you are supporting. That being said, decision-makers have to refrain from viewing these conflicts as outliers. Instead, we need to learn from past successes and failures to standardize how we engage in these conflicts. Standardization of process, through military and intelligence operations, will begin to standardize our outcomes.

The strategic matrix does achieve some standardization, but still fails in some areas. The matrix gives us some guideline considerations when dealing with a proxy. Despite these considerations, the guidelines could be enriched by discussing the rival power and their internal weaknesses. Adding the rival to the equation would add an important dimension to the matrix that would improve the validity of the findings. Further, understanding the breakdown or mix between intelligence and military considerations could improve the validity. Identifying this breakdown would refine decision making from available information.

In terms of refining the strategic matrix and improving the thesis, we could consider more data points in the Cold War. The strategic matrix functions very much like a statistical model, in that the larger the sample size the more refined the model becomes. As we analyze more scenarios, we derive more failures and successes, meaning we can better formulate a strategy based on the matrix. If I could propose one conclusion it would be that the United States needs some sort of model to determine how to better engage in these volatile conflicts.

Appendices

Appendix A.

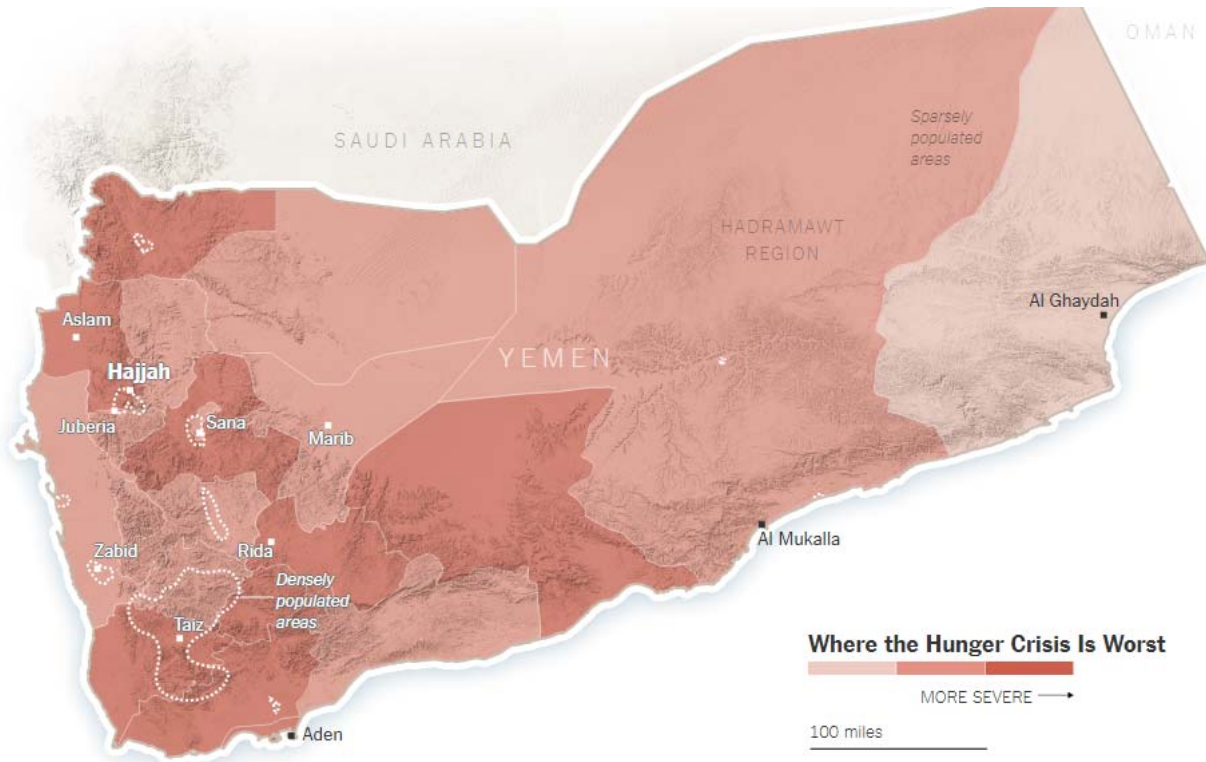


Citation: "Map Regions and Prefectures." Map of the Regions and Prefectures of Greece.

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*For reference, the Roumeli region is shaded blue.

Appendix B.



Citation: Walsh, Declan. "The Tragedy of Saudi Arabia's War in Yemen." The New York Times. October 26, 2018. Accessed May 12, 2019.

Appendix C.

**Table 2. U.S. Humanitarian Response to the Complex Crisis in Yemen:
FY2015-FY2018**

(in millions of dollars)

Account	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
IDA (USAID/OFDA)	62.030	81.528	229.783	179.065
FFP (USAID/FFP)	71.486	196.988	369.629	368.243
MRA (State/PRM)	45.300	48.950	38.125	18.900
Total	178.816	327.466	637.537	566.208

Citation: United States. Congressional Research Service. *Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention*. By Jeremy Sharp.

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Biography

Karna Venkatraj was born in New York City on September 10, 1997, and moved with his family to College Station, Texas. He enrolled in the Plan II Honors program and the Business Honors program at the University of Texas at Austin in 2015. In college, Karna was an active member of the University Securities Investment Team and played prop for the UT Rugby Club. He graduated with a dual degree, and plans to pursue a career in finance.